Technology Assessment in the Financial Sector

Felix Sie, Rafaa Khalifa, Raghunath Viswanatha, Yasaswi Deepak Kancherla, Kenny Phan, and Tugrul Daim

Abstract

The advancement of the internet and information technology has been a great vehicle for the development of solutions for all human endeavors. The banking and the financial services sector is a beneficiary of the advancement in information and communication technology, as banking has evolved from traditional services to internet-based. Examples of these are, online ATM Locator, electronic check deposit, quick bank-to-bank transfers and many more. However, the general adoption of mobile banking solutions worldwide is still not that encouraging. There are several drivers which affect the adoption of these internet-based banking solutions, such as socio-economic factors, mobile device adoption, and user behavior. This research focuses on enumerating the key factors for user adoption of mobile banking solutions. The factors are grouped into multiple perspectives and prioritized by using the Hierarchical Decision Model (HDM). Even though all the factors are shown to be important, solution reliability and consumer privacy emerged as the two to be prioritized when developing a consumer-based banking solution. The research recommends that banks should concentrate on identifying features that makes life convenient to the consumer with little to no cost involved.
2.1 Introduction

Mobile banking is a system which allows the customers of a financial institutions to conduct transactions through mobile communication technology in conjunction with mobile devices such as a smartphone or a tablet. The earliest form of mobile banking was SMS banking which allowed users to receive simple messages about changes on their account and assessing their account balance [1]. In recent years, this system of banking has evolved and expanded mainly due to the proliferation of smartphones and other mobile devices which allow the creation of rich software applications and content. Consequently, banks and financial institutions in their quest to reach more customers and sustain their existing customers, are creating robust solutions for mobile platforms. In addition to reaching more customers, this will allow them to provide their services to the customers in a very flexible fashion at a reduced cost. This does not require many banking outlets or ATM machines as can be noted with traditional banking.

The US banking market saw the introduction of the mobile banking system in 2007 as an extension of the features of the existing online banking which had been quite successful at the time [1]. As of the beginning of 2014, the US mobile banking market has seen a growth with 33% of mobile phone users using a mobile banking services in the last 12 months [2]. The global adoption rate is expected to keep growing as mobile devices keep penetrating different countries and the consumer markets [2].

The adoption of mobile banking services is incumbent on different factors such as technology development, consumer lifestyle, and socio-economic environments [3]. For instance, as mobile devices and communication technology become more robust, financial institutions will be able to leverage that to create more sophisticated solutions to satisfy customers’ needs. Our research focuses on investigating the mobile banking adoption factors from a customer’s perspective. We recognize that the financial institutions main goal is to find out what the key factors are that customers consider while making an adoption decision of mobile banking applications. The knowledge of these factors will help them to develop the best possible solution in a very cost effective way.

Although mobile banking has been shown by [1] and other papers to be cost effective and provides personalized and convenient services, the adoption rate is still not encouraging. For instance [4] shows that though mobile phone adoption has jumped to about 105% in the US, the adoption rate of mobile banking services is still around 30%. This trend can be noted in developed markets where mobile phone adoption is high [4].

This research aims to investigate the factors which influence the decision of a potential customer to adopt mobile banking application. The research assumes that other barriers, such as mobile phone adoption, wireless network communication, and socio-economic factors have been considered and found suitable.

The chapter is organized in the following way:
• A literature review of mobile banking adoption factors was performed to analyze and identify various factors.
• The factors are then grouped in perspectives using Hierarchical Decision Model (HDM) to group the factors into perspectives, and
• Conduct an expert judgment quantification to evaluate which of the factors are important.
• The results are analyzed, and conclusion are drawn.

2.2 Background

According to the prior research [2] cognitive challenges are hindering the use new information technology. To conduct this kinds of user behavior studies about technology adoption, researchers have used tools such as the technology adoption model (TAM) and the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) to study the importance of various determinants [3].

2.2.1 Evolution of Mobile Banking

Mobile banking allows users to access banking services conveniently through their mobile devices such as a smartphone or a tablet. The concept of mobile banking has being in existence in the late 90’s [3], taking off from advancement in online banking which allowed customers to perform basic transactions via the internet browser. The earliest form of mobile banking was introduced by European banks in the form of SMS banking, where users had basic functionality on their account through SMS alerts and notifications [5]. Mobile Internet allowed users to access the existing online banking channels through optimized browsers for the mobile devices. This allowed for many more banking services to be delivered on mobile devices [1].

In 2007, banks in the United States started to create mobile software applications which were specially developed to work with mobile devices and was perceived by the industry as the most cost effective as compared to the existing channels [1].

2.2.2 Common Features and Services of Mobile Banking

Most large banks especially in the U.S offer a basic mobile banking solution for their consumers [6]. “The most common services available today are:

• Account alerts, security alerts and reminders
• Account balances, updates and history
Advancement in technology has allowed many complicated and robust solutions such as e-commerce payments, contactless payments using Near Field Communications (NFC), to become easily accessible to bank customers [6].

Table 2.1 is a summary of the factors mentioned in most literatures affecting technology adoption in general and specifically mobile banking.
2.3 Technology Adoption Perspectives

Michalisin et al. [25] and Majharul [3] have discussed the fact that there are several perspectives toward an individual’s decision to adopt a technology; some of being include organizational factors such as training, economical benefits and social networks. For our purposes, we limit our research to two mobile banking end user perspectives: Technical perspective and Personal perspective.

The technical perspective reflects a technology’s functioning and observable characteristics as depicted in [26]. In this research the technical perspective covers all the user adoption factors relating to how a mobile banking application functions. The personal perspective similarly is shown in [26], as the subjective opinions of individuals which can have an impact on decision making. The personal perspective in this research mirrors a user’s subjective perception about mobile banking solution.

From summary of factors in Table 2.1 the factors which directly impacts a user’s decision assuming a mobile banking application has been developed and is introduced into the market are selected. There are grouped in Table 2.2.

2.3.1 Personal Perspective

This section will review the adoption criteria under the personal perspective.

Privacy
Privacy relates to the user’s trust that their information will not be compromised in the process of using the ensuing solution. Dass and Pal [9] identifies this factor as

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adoption perspective</th>
<th>Adoption criteria</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td>Users faith in the bank, application developer, and the mobile platform to keep the information safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Perceived cost reflects either direct or indirect charges associated with mobile banking application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perceived ease of use</td>
<td>Perceived ease of use can be defined as the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system is free of effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perceived usefulness</td>
<td>Perceived Usefulness reflects the quality and quantity of services delivered via mobile banking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Reliability reflects level of confidence that the user has that he/she will be able to able to successfully complete a task/service begun from the mobile application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compatibility</td>
<td>Technical compatibility related to the current version of mobile environment and its compatibility with the mobile application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ubiquity</td>
<td>“Ubiquity means that with the help of mobile terminals and networks, users can access mobile banking at anytime from anywhere” [22]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
trust and was cited as the contributing factor which inhibits the adoption of a mobile application. This factor relates with security is much concerned with who is authorized to see the customer’s information during the process of transactions. Federal Reserve Board’s Division of Consumer and Community Affairs [10] mentions that during the adoption of mobile banking solutions, customers are concerned about their information being available to third parties. Mobile Marketing Association [6] presents privacy as a dominant factor to consider in the design of a mobile banking deployment. Claessens et al. [27] places authorized access as one of the key factors to the design requirement of a mobile bank application for which customers will be satisfied. We have selected it to reflect this highly recommended position by the reviewed literatures.

Perceived Cost
Prior research [4, 13, 14, 15, 16, 28] highlights cost as an important factor in their research, which reviewed the key factors stimulating and hindering the adoption of mobile-banking. Results indicate that cost have a significant negative effect [15] and thus stated that low cost can encourage customers to use e-banking [16].

Perceived Ease of Use
Perceived ease of use was defined in [19] as “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system is free of effort”. Zhou [12] indicates that Perceived ease of use reflects the difficulty of using mobile banking due to constraints such as small screens, inconvenient inputs and difficulty in operating in the absence of a good interface. An easy to use mobile application will provide an intuitive interface, innovative entry methods, ample tips and suggestions on how to perform a task, and corrective feedback when necessary. This will allow the user to spend less time in the application figuring out the structure and menu system and efficiently get through the task.

Perceived Usefulness
Technology adoption model (TAM) proposes that a consumer of a given innovation or solution considers its usefulness in their quest to adopt it. This perceived usefulness according to researchers affects a user’s intent to buy into the solution or not [20]. With regard to mobile banking adoption, perceived usefulness is crafted as relative advantage by [20], where it is defined as “the degree to which the application is a better alternative relative to current products and services”. Also, Pousttchi and Schurig [7] discusses design requirements emanating from customer needs for a mobile application development and created variables surrounding how the application can be personalized, scaled and have functionalities aside from the core banking needs. These variables constitute perceived usefulness. Suoranta [29] argues that customers do not chose the mobile banking solutions because they are
not sufficiently diversified. Furthermore, Hanafizadeh et al. [4] conducted a survey on the factors affecting the adoption of mobile banking and concluded that perceived usefulness was a key factor to the adoption.

2.3.2 Technical Perspective

This section will review the adoption criteria under the technical perspective.

Reliability
Reliability reflects level of confidence that the user has that he/she will be able to successfully complete a task/service begun from the mobile application. It is nothing but a consumer’s confidence that a new technology performs its job precisely and consistently [24]. Reliability and other factors may also differ from person to person. For example a student may need mobile banking application for less cost and may want more functionality, whereas professionals may need reliability of the application and ease of use [30].

Ubiquity
Ubiquity has been explained by [12] as the availability of mobile banking services with the help of mobile terminal and networks allowing users access at anytime from anywhere without any restrictions. Tiwari et al. [31] describes ubiquity as a means by which the user should be able to access the mobile banking services independent of his or her current geographic location. In today’s fast paced world an average user wants to be able to access information instantaneously. With availability of ‘smart’ technologically advanced mobile devices with connectivity services, such as Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi) and cellular services, users enjoy freedom from time and location.

Technical Compatibility
Compatibility has been found influential in the adoption of the virtual store [33]. Al-Gahtani [23] referred to the likely relation between compatibility and adaption that will hold in the context of mobile banking [33]. Compatibility is an important aspect of innovation as conformance with users’ lifestyles can propel a faster rate of adoption [32]. A number of previous researches have examined the important factors with the involvement of the mobile banking adoption including some attributes that have relationship with innovation adoption [33]. Compatibility had significant correlation with computer adaption, the relation between compatibility and adaption will hold in the context of mobile banking [23, 33].
2.3.3  Security

From our literature review, Security has been found as the most important factor. One of the key challenges that a customer faces in adoption of mobile banking is the lack of confidence in security [34]. Since the security risk of a banking system is of importance not only to the customers but could expose the bank to exploitation, it was a dominant concern raised in all the literatures as major factor banks need to be concerned about. Since security is an important factor that needs to be considered at all costs, it was taken out of the analysis.

2.4  Methodology

We have opted for HDM—a multi criteria decision tool to evaluate and prioritize our factors because it refines the classic analytic hierarchy process (AHP) by evaluating subjective judgements. This process evaluates factors by pairwise comparison and measures them with a constant-sum measurement scale from 1 to 99 values (Fig. 2.1).

Using the rubrics of the HDM methodology, we organized the technology adoption criteria into the two categories which portray the logical organization of ideas as is known for multi criteria decision tools. The top level of the HDM method is the objective of the decision; in our case this refers to the prioritization of the customer mobile banking adoption factors. The second level shows the technology adoption perspectives discussed in the previous sections ie., Technical (Technology) and Personal perspectives. The factors under investigation: Privacy, Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Cost, Technical Compatibility, Ubiquity, and Reliability are organized as shown the Fig. 2.1.

Since our research was to study and prioritize the factors which influence the adoption decision of customers, we designed our analysis to target existing customers and potential customers of banking solutions. Each of the people in

![Fig. 2.1  HDM research model for factor prioritization](image-url)
our sample space was educated and have at least a first degree. Also they each have used or were aware of mobile banking software applications (Table 2.3).

The HDM model was created using the web-tool developed in house at ETM department. The link to the web-tool with the hierarchical model was then sent out random number of individuals. Sufficient care was taken that the experts either understood English language or were native English speakers. Also ample information was provided as to what the definitions of the factors are and the purpose of the analysis so as to lessen the burden on the experts. A total of 20 individuals responded.

The results produced are further analyzed to see if some conclusions can be drawn either about the selections made by the experts or the experts stake of interest in the technology adoption as applied to Mobile Banking Application.

### 2.5 Results

The line chart shows the weighted factors of 20 experts, A1 thru A20, across all seven factors (privacy, cost, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, reliability, compatibility and ubiquity) (Fig. 2.2).

Among all these, reliability ranked highest amongst all factors with a mean of 0.20, while the cost ranked the lowest with 0.07. The privacy factor followed reliability with 0.18. Perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use ranked after privacy with 0.17 and 0.13 respectively. Finally, the ubiquity and compatibility factor show equal weights with 0.12.

The following section will review the results presented in Table 2.4.

**Reliability**  The mean indicates that this factor was the most preferred of the factors considered. With a low standard deviation it indicates that the preference was in general for reliability of the mobile banking application.

**Privacy**  The mean indicates that privacy was preferred after reliability. The min and max are far apart on this factor with a standard deviation of 0.15, which seems to indicate that the experts were not too consistent in their selection of privacy. This is surprising as many articles that were researched, as referenced in Table 2.2, privacy was given a high importance in being a critical factor while considering the adoption of mobile banking application.

**Cost**  The min, max and the standard deviation seem to indicate that the experts consistently chose something else over cost of services or application.

**Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness**  The data indicates that these options in general were favored less with a given few favoring it more than the others.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expert</th>
<th>Privacy</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Perceived ease of use</th>
<th>Perceived usefulness</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Compatibility</th>
<th>Ubiquity</th>
<th>Inconsistency</th>
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<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.10</td>
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</tr>
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<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.07</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
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<td>A5</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.10</td>
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<td>0.01</td>
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<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.06</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.05</td>
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<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.05</td>
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</tr>
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<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>A17</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.06</td>
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<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A18</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.11</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.04</td>
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<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A20</td>
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<td>0.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Max</td>
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<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.13</td>
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<td>0.12</td>
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<td>STD</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Disagreement = 0.1
The data indicates that these are the least favored after cost. The experts were consistent in their low ranking for these two technology factors.

### Table 2.4  Scaled ranking results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Mean (overall)</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of use</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ubiquity</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatibility</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Compatibility and Ubiquity* The data indicates that these are the least favored after cost. The experts were consistent in their low ranking for these two technology factors.

### 2.6  Conclusions

This chapter identifies the key factors that typically affect the adoption of a mobile banking application. This analysis was not intended to present a winner or loser as all the factors chosen here are all carefully considered and selected after research in the field of mobile banking adoption around the world.

The highest ranking factors here were reliability and privacy with reliability leading slightly over privacy. This can inferred as the user of the mobile application would prefer that the application be consistent and reliably provide services. That would essentially provide a sense of trust [12] and cultivate faith in the bank
providing the mobile application and hence relieve some of the privacy concerns that the user may have.

The lowest ranking factors are Cost, Compatibility and Ubiquity with Cost as the least favorite. Cost of the mobile application and/or the services provided seem to be not a matter of concern as long as the application was reliable and provided the services needed.

From the correlation analysis, it seemed obvious that the users who picked Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness did not really care for Reliability/Privacy or some of the other technology related factors. This seems to indicate that the user group that these factors were important for someone who was invested in latest technology and carried a level of personal innovation and perhaps can be said to be ones who are willing to take the risk. This user group is more likely to adopt a newer technology or application.

Correlation analysis also indicated that technology factors Compatibility and Ubiquity when favored seem to be less concerned with the personal factors which suggests the user group is less technology savvy and perhaps carried older technology products. This group is less likely to adopt newer technology or application.

One of the key factors that was carefully omitted during the research was Security. It was agreed and understood that Security was a very important factor in Mobile banking application adoption. It is so important that if it was to be included in the analysis, it would have undermined importance of other factors under this research. Even though the research indicates reliability, Security should be given utmost importance while considering the factors that affect Mobile Banking Adoption.

HDM web-tool proved to an excellent aid when considering such analysis. It is powerful enough to crunch the numbers and provide the data so most time is spent on analyzing the data and not trying to do the PCM cumbersome math.

Banks need to take this analysis into consideration while investing in the development of mobile banking applications and should push for security, reliability, and privacy as key factors. On an average the user will adopt and pay for any banking services, if the application possess such qualities.

Even though the analysis provides excellent results, it is not without limitations. The analysis was limited to individuals residing in United States and hence the results apply to only that market.

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Research and Development Management
Technology Journey through Analysis, Forecasting and Decision Making
Daim, T.; Kim, J.; Phan, K. (Eds.)
2017, XII, 292 p. 101 illus., 68 illus. in color., Hardcover
ISBN: 978-3-319-54536-3