Aalto University
School of Business

Exploring value alignment in shopping center mobile solutions
A case study of Citycon

Marketing

Master's thesis

Fanny Vakkila

2016

Department of Marketing
Aalto University
School of Business

Abstract

Author Fanny Vakkila	
Title of thesis Exploring value alignment in shopping center mobile solutions: A case study of Citycon	
Degree Master of Science in Economics and Business Administration	
Degree programme Marketing	
Thesis advisors Olli Rusanen & Lasse Mitronen	
Year of approval 2016	**Number of pages** 69 **Language** English

Research objective
The decentralized nature of shopping centers creates challenges in value alignment. There is a lack of case-based research for exploring value alignment from a service-dominant logic perspective within multiple stakeholder environments. The information technology provides new opportunities to distribute knowledge and collaborate with stakeholders. Therefore, the aim of this study is to identify enabling and preventing factors for value alignment from a customer perspective in the context of shopping center mobile solutions.

Methodology
This study adopts a qualitative single-case approach by interviewing ten different tenants in one of Citycon's shopping centers. The data was gathered by using thematic semi-structured interviews. The theoretical framework of this study combines an iterative process model of value alignment with key benefits of mobile technology.

Research findings
This study identifies enabling and preventing factors for value alignment in the shopping center mobile services. Value alignment could be enabled through knowledge sharing, service integration and mutual service provision. The preventing aspects included heterogeneity of actors, unclear responsibilities and challenges in implementation. The importance of this work lies in addressing complexity in order to achieve unity. This study suggests that adopting a service-dominant logic perspective within a multiple stakeholder environment could contribute to value alignment particularly in the context of new service innovations. Facilitating dialogue and finding mutual goals between stakeholders is the key in aligning value within a shopping center environment. This study broadens the focus from a firm-customer perspective to a strategic one where tenants are regarded central to the success of the shopping center.

Keywords Service-dominant logic, value alignment, IT, stakeholders of the firm

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of figures and tables

1. Introduction

The decentralized nature of shopping centers creates challenges in value alignment. Creating value for customers in this environment has become even more challenging as interactive technologies blur the lines between customers and service providers. Managing a shopping center customer experience is a complex process, which requires integrating the offerings and resources of diverse service providers. The shopping center tenants use information technology to drive their own business but a fundamental question within the shopping center context relies on how it could be used for the mutual benefit of all stakeholders. Shopping centers' role has become vital in handling service exchange and integrating value propositions for and with customers through managing networks of business partners. Mobile technologies place huge opportunities for shopping centers to provide customers' context-specific offerings and services but this context also sets a challenging environment for utilizing these kinds of solutions as it includes many different service providers, which might even compete against each other. According to Frow & Payne (2011) service-dominant logic enables companies to address value propositions in a more holistic and integrated way. Due to its complex nature the shopping center provides a fruitful context to explore how mobile technology could enable value alignment within a multiples stakeholder environment.

1.1 Research gap

It has been acknowledged that information technology significantly enhances collaboration of all entities within a value-creation network (Lusch et al. 2007). However it has not been explored how information technology enables this especially within a complex decentralized market environment including multiple service providers and customers. There is a lack of case-based research in service-dominant logic for exploring value alignment within a multiple stakeholder environment. This research aims to fill this research gap. According to Frow & Payne

(2011) there is a lack of studies exploring the value proposition concept and stakeholder perspective within service-dominant logic and a need to further the understanding of value proposition as an alignment mechanism within a multiple stakeholder environment and how this kind of value alignment could be achieved.

1.2 Research objective

In order to contribute to the research gap the objective of this study is to answer: ***How to enable value alignment within a multiple stakeholder environment?***

This research question is explored within the context of shopping center mobile solutions. The aim of this study is to identify preventing and enabling factors of value alignment, which will further serve as a valuable foundation to develop mobile services within the case company. For answering the research question the purpose of this study is to take a service-dominant lens in exploring value propositions of mobile solutions within a shopping center context. Value alignment through the mobile service is understood as a state in which the shopping center manager can better serve the tenants and tenants can better serve the end customers. Therefore, the perspective is extended from a firm-customer perspective to also other important relationships between stakeholders, like customer to customer.

Viewed from the perspective of service-dominant logic the decentralized nature of shopping center provides a fruitful context to explore value alignment. This offers an alternative viewpoint for traditional shopping center management, in which the whole entity is developed and managed as a single property. The new interactive technologies blur the lines between these actors making the traditional top-down management approach challenging. Furthermore, the shopping center may include tenants, which have conflicting interests and even compete against each other. Thus, understanding value from the perspective of customers in relation to other key stakeholders can enable to achieve value alignment and balance between conflicting interests.

This study of explores one of Citycon's shopping centers and the main focus is on tenants' value perceptions of a shopping center mobile service. The overall shopping center customer experience is strongly dependent on the tenants, which provide services to the end customers and operate between Citycon and end customers in the value network. Exploring perceptions of value from the perspective of different service providers could contribute to the understanding of value alignment within a decentralized market environment and the role of mobile technology in the overall shopping center customer experience.

This study adopts a qualitative single-case approach through exploring value from the perspective of 10 tenants within one of Citycon's shopping centers. By using thematic semi-structured interviews the study utilizes a theoretical framework combining an iterative process model for exploring value alignment with key benefits of mobile technology. This case study contributes to the service science and service-dominant logic literature by providing in-depth insight into value alignment in the context of mobile services. This illuminates the role of information technology as an enabler in the shopping center value alignment. This case study suggests that mobile technology has the potential to align value within a multiple stakeholder environment in several ways but this requires adopting a customer-centric approach, which aims to understand the needs and goals of different stakeholders in order to balance them. Thus, enabling value alignment through mobile services will prove challenging unless dialogue is facilitated with different actors within the value network. The importance of this work lies in broadening the focus from a firm-customer perspective to a strategic one in which tenants are regarded as central business partners and central to the success of the shopping center competitiveness.

2. Value alignment in shopping center mobile solutions

Rust (2004) proposes that information technology drives the demand for and approval of service-dominant logic. Information technology enables to spread knowledge and business processes through the value network thereby supporting the service-centered view (Lusch et al. 2010). This is especially relevant for shopping centers where the customer experience is broadened from the one time customer visit to what happens before and after the visit. By viewing the shopping center customer experience as a combination of different service touch points and channels scattered across time the importance of alignment is emphasized. Two key trends in digitalization create challenges for value alignment within today's business environment: increasingly interconnected marketplace and growing power of customers. These trends further shift our view of market exchange in today's business environment. Traditionally marketing included a model of exchange from economics, which concentrated on amongst others tangible resources and transactions. According to this goods-dominant view value is defined by the producer, fixed in goods and expressed in terms of "exchange value". (Vargo & Lusch 2004) Thus, the ultimate goal for business is profit maximization. The firm is primarily responsible of the value creation and the roles of producers and consumers as separate (Vargo et al. 2008). The shopping center management involves maximizing the profit gained from the leased spaces and building an attractive tenant base to draw end customers to the location. However, the traditional role of physical stores and shopping centers is changing as mobile technologies blur the lines between physical and online environments. Moreover, the role of flexible pick-up points, modular spaces and customized services may create the need for new operating models, which raise the importance of closer collaboration between the stakeholders. Consequently the traditional focus on a goods-dominant logic might restrict opportunities to create customer loyalty and grasp the customer lifetime value, which has lead to alternative schools of thought (Ballantyne et al. 2011).

2.1 Service-dominant logic and the extended view of value

The new dominant logic in marketing regards customers as active participants in relational exchanges and coproduction in firm-customer interactions. In this paradigm the focus is moving away from a goods-oriented view to a service-centered one, emphasizing, among others, interactivity, connectivity and ongoing relationships. (Vargo & Lusch 2004) Expressed by Vargo & Lusch (2008a) service-dominant logic is a mindset or a lens to look at economic and social exchange phenomena. It draws the focus from tangible goods to intangibles, like skills, information and knowledge, which are continuous and dynamic by nature, rather than static, discrete and infinite. Thus, the view shifts from the object exchanged to the process of exchange. (Vargo & Lusch 2004) This perspective is especially relevant within multiple stakeholder environments, which require a broader perspective for viewing economic activity.

Abela & Murphy (2008) have found that service-dominant logic is a positive development in marketing ethics since it aims to increase the value of firms' relationships and thereby the interests between the firm and its multiple stakeholders' are more closely aligned. Further, Lusch & Webster (2011) suggest that service-dominant logic is particularly apt in the highly networked world where the interests of multiple actors ought to be unified. The shopping center management involves integrating the needs and offerings of diverse service providers in order to deliver a coherent customer experience. This places emphasis on collaboration and dialogue between stakeholders. The information technology adds speed to this development as communication between stakeholders becomes easier and timelier. Even though not all companies build their core competencies around information technology it is increasingly used to support the firm with integrated information resources required to adapt and sustain competitive advantage (Lusch et al. 2010).

The shopping center tenants use information technology to drive their own business, but a fundamental question within the shopping center context relates to how it could be used for the mutual benefit of all stakeholders. Thus, organizations are confronted

with a challenge to create value to different stakeholders and simultaneously balance the value co-created within a marketing system (Frow & Payne 2011). This is particularly evident within the shopping center context, which is developed and managed as a single property and comprises of several retail and other commercial enterprises. Hence, there is a need to further the understanding of value proposition as an alignment mechanism within a multiple stakeholder environment and how this kind of value alignment could be achieved (Frow & Payne 2011).

2.2 Value propositions as an alignment mechanism

Value propositions form connections among service systems (Vargo et al. 2008). As stated by Maglio & Spohrer (2008) the starting point for understanding service systems lies in the distribution of capabilities among entities and the value propositions connecting them. Within the shopping center context each firm is specialized in a certain field and together they constitute the shopping center service offering. According to Frow & Payne (2011) not many organizations consider value propositions in a multiple stakeholder context and propose that they can play an integral role in aligning value within a marketing system. This applies also to the context of a shopping center mobile service, which could potentially enable value alignment within a wider stakeholder environment. Payne et al. (2008) address the cross-functional view on planning for value co-creation, which enables to align among those organizational functions formulating the customer value proposition and those delivering it. Applied to a multiple stakeholder context like the shopping center the shopping center manager should align processes with tenants who ultimately deliver it to the end customers.

Layton (2011) exemplifies shopping malls as marketing systems in which the participating actors may be micro or meso level organizations competing or collaborating within a system. In line with this view, the complexity of value alignment within a shopping center comes evident when different stakeholders and their value-creating processes are recognized. Chandler & Lusch (2014) have characterized the importance of a value proposition by its "intensity", meaning how strong the invitation

is from one actor to another to engage in a service or to align the relations with each other. According to Frow & Payne (2011) companies' and their stakeholders should recognize the different benefits and sacrifices as each stakeholder will perceive value differently based on their knowledge, goals and context, which may bring up conflicting interests between resource-integrating actors. This is particularly the case within shopping centers where tenants have different operating logics and may even compete for the end customers. Frow & Payne (2011, p. 233) suggest an iterative framework for value propositions as mechanisms for value alignment within a value network:

1) Identify stakeholders.
2) Determine core values.
3) Facilitate dialogue and knowledge sharing.
4) Identify value co-creation opportunities.
5) Co-create stakeholders VPs.

As value co-creation is not the primary focus of this study the mobile solutions are rather seen as an enabler for value alignment within the value network. Thus, value alignment through the mobile service is understood as a state in which the shopping center manager could better serve the tenants and tenants could serve the end customers. Skålén et al. (2014) suggest that service innovation is not dependent on having the right resources but proven approaches and practices are also needed to formulate them into appealing value propositions. When applying this notion to a shopping center mobile service it is essential to sell the idea to the different stakeholders in order to fully integrate it to the shopping center context. In terms of value alignment it should further be acknowledged that value propositions are not static by nature. Frow et al. (2014) address that in todays' increasingly interconnected world formulating evolving value propositions is essential to successful market relations. Thus, the new service should be continuously developed based on evolving customer needs.

2.3 Managing versus balancing stakeholders

It is challenging for organizations to produce value to different stakeholders and simultaneously keep a balance in the value co-created within a marketing system (Frow & Payne 2011). This is particularly true in the case of a shopping center, which includes heterogeneous organizations within one property, which is developed and managed centrally. Suggested by Kowalkowski et al. (2012) customers should be understood as resource-integrating actors with many faces. This is especially the case with shopping centers, whose tenants' are positioned in between the value network by being customers as well as service providers. The tenants operate as separate business units aiming to maximize their profit within the single property and the shopping center manager acts as a service provider for the tenants. Hence the tenants and shopping center manager are in an exchange relationship and depend on each other. What is more, they both attempt to attract end customers to the same location, raising the importance of the shopping center competitiveness. Thus, it can be questioned if the traditional top-down management approach is effective in this kind of environment.

In line with the service-dominant logic perspective the focus is drawn from mere property management to balancing business relationships within the value network. The business environment is no longer about controlling but balancing within a dynamic and complex network of actors. Kowalkowski et al. (2012) have identified the formation of value proposition as a co-creative practice of reciprocal knowledge exchange. The researchers further suggest that addressing the complexity of this process enables to create coherence in the analysis. Hence, addressing complexity within a shopping center might also contribute to enhanced unity. As coined by Ballantyne et al. (2011) the value propositions can assist resource integration actions between participants across multiple stakeholder of the firm, which means extending the view of resource integration from pre-sale to post-sale. Accordingly, the shopping center customer experience is broadened from the one time customer visit to what happens before and after the visit. By viewing the shopping center customer

experience as a combination of different touch points and channels scattered across time, the importance of integration is emphasized.

According to Frow & Payne (2011) value propositions can provide a key mechanism for value alignment within a marketing system but it may also reflect conflicting interests. This is due to the fact that stakeholders have different views about what is valuable to them, which may also be the case with different tenants whose value perceptions depend on their context, knowledge and goals. Therefore, the value perceptions might differ and change in time, which places challenges for the shopping center manager to balance between these views to provide an optimal solution.

The importance of balancing stakeholders' stems from the unique dynamics of the shopping center. The market interaction may happen within integrated networks in which the firms might even be competing against each other, which is increasingly the case with the ongoing convergence of mobile & software technology (Ballantyne et al. 2011). Within shopping centers the competition might happen on many different levels. This context might involve two tenants with similar kinds of offerings competing against each other, like sports apparel and women's clothing stores. But essentially all of the tenants compete about the end customer's limited amount of time to be spent inside the shopping center. Furthermore, the competition might happen between physical and online stores adding even more complexity.

Lusch et al. (2007) suggest that a truly service-dominant retailer would regard the whole community as a storehouse of assets to co-operate with in order to aid the community and provide competitive advantage. Thus, in order to provide a coherent shopping center customer experience the importance of dialogue and collaboration is emphasized. Ballantyne & Varey (2006) suggest that the application of specialized skills and knowledge is the core 'enabler of exchange' including three enablers: relating, communicating and knowing. In line with this notion shopping center stakeholders cannot operate in silos but need to open up for collaboration. According to Frow & Payne (2011) the stakeholder perspective emphasizes the broader role of

value propositions in the success of the enterprise. This is specifically the case in deeper stakeholder relationships where value propositions are more prone to be carefully tailored to support the success of the relationship (Frow & Payne 2011).

2.4 Service dynamics of shopping centers and the role of technology

Even though value creation is not in the primary scope of this study it is an important aspect to consider. This is due to the fact that value alignment refers to harmonizing value co-creation opportunities within the stakeholder system (Frow & Payne 2011). The research of value creation among service systems stems from *service science*, which studies service systems and aims to form a basis for systematic service innovation (Maglio & Spohrer 2008). In the light of this study the mobile service is understood as an enabler through which the shopping center manager can better serve the tenants and tenants can serve the end customers (see Saarijärvi 2012). Since this study explores tenants' rather than end customers' value perceptions of a mobile service it cannot draw conclusions about value creation in itself but rather about how it could enable this process.

The service-dominant logic has been suggested to provide a foundation for service science and to the study of value creation among service systems (Maglio & Spohrer 2008; Vargo et al. 2008). From a service-dominant logic perspective service systems have been defined as individuals or groups of individuals, which survive, adapt, and develop through mutual service exchange and resource application to co-create value for themselves and others (Vargo et al. 2008). In the light of this study the most important characteristics of service systems in terms of value alignment include the value proposition concept explained earlier and the nature of exchange.

The exchange within service systems is dynamic (Edvardsson et al. 2011). It expands from momentary to emergent as well as from dyadic to extended (Vargo & Lusch 2008b). This relational view of exchange broadens the focus from a single transaction to what follows it when the firm forms a relationship with customers (Vargo & Lusch 2004). This blurring of stakeholder roles becomes even more

prevalent in the context of new technology-based services, which are unique in a sense that they don't require service employees interacting with customers. From a service system perspective all participants play a role in the value creation and the distinction between the producer and consumer no longer exist (Vargo et al. 2008). This also makes it challenging for managers to grasp the customers' service experience, the factors influencing that experience and how it connects to the value perceptions of the firms' service offering (Sandström et al. 2008). This applies to shopping centers since multiple service providers influence the service experience in addition to online interactions happening before, during and after the visit. Further, the nature of exchange within shopping centers can be presumed to include a constellation of service interactions happening simultaneously between and across actors along time. This signifies the complexity of the exchange within the shopping center environment. Thus, the fundamental question boils down to what should be the role of mobile solutions within the shopping center environment, which could bring mutual value to the key stakeholders.

Information technology enables to spread knowledge and business processes throughout the value network (Lusch et al. 2010). In addition, the technology affects the connectivity of market actors making the market system timely and quick in reacting to changes in demand and supply (Lusch et al. 2007). This stresses the importance of collaboration. According to Lusch et al. (2007) information technology significantly enhances collaboration and innovation of all entities in a value-creation network including the customer. Thus, the value of an innovation is defined in terms of how the firm can better serve, rather than the output produced (Vargo & Lusch 2008a). The mobile service value chain involves a number of partners and thus co-operation is crucial for success (Pura 2005). From a service system perspective market actors (e.g. firms) cannot retain service experiences by themselves but need to also engage others (Chandler & Lusch 2014). Lusch et al. (2010) discuss the role of infomediaries in value networks and propose that these intelligent technologies add more context to web content and can act as intelligent agents helping companies to react to changes more quickly. Lusch et al. (2010) imply that the technology brought by these infomediaries to meet the company's value propositions

is not the biggest challenge, but rather the involvement of all actors in a complex and interdependent value network. By letting users become co-creators, aspects of personalization will be anticipated (Sandström et al. 2008). This places emphasis on processes for knowledge sharing and dialogue.

2.5 Key features of mobile technology enabling value alignment

The mobile technology inherits several features, which have the potential to enable value alignment. To understand mobile technology in a shopping center context it is important to comprehend its unique benefits on an individual level. Even though the mobile services are inherently the context of this study their features are important to understand in order to comprehend value alignment. According to Lusch et al. (2010) information technology supports the service-centered approach by spreading knowledge and business processes throughout the value network. Further, Saarijärvi et al. (2014) suggest that mobile services enable retailers to expand the interaction from the in-store to pre- and post-purchase processes. Accordingly the mobile service within a shopping center could be utilized to support customers' value-creating processes and therefore the unique features of the mobile technology could be regarded as potential enablers of value alignment within the shopping center context. The generic value proposition typology by Clarke (2001) is used to explore different value dimensions of the shopping center mobile service in this study. According to Clarke (2001) service providers embracing the mobility-enabled *value-for-time* of mobile devices can offer superior value propositions and possibly receive greater mobile user satisfaction. The underlying dimensions of value-for-time are reflected by the unique value propositions related to mobile commerce (m-commerce), namely ubiquity, convenience, localization, and personalization (Clarke 2001). These value dimensions are described in the following sub-sections.

Ubiquity

Ubiquity of mobile phones enables the consumer to receive information and perform transactions at a real-time basis regardless of time or location (Clarke 2001). This

ubiquitous mobility enables to complete transactions efficiently since they are not dependent on time or place. From a retailers' perspective the value dimension of ubiquity can be seen from two different perspectives. On the one hand it should be acknowledged that the ubiquitous interactivity gives the customer increasingly control over what they see, read and hear (Barnes 2002). This might mean that the consumer walks into a retail store to check prices and decides to buy the product from a competitors' store, like Amazon, using his/her mobile device (Shankar et al. 2010). On the other hand, the ubiquitous connectivity might enable collecting behavioral data about the location and time the consumer visits a certain place and potentially the context of why the individual might be there (Sultan & Rohm 2005). Hence, services could be provided in a context-relevant manner, deepening customer relationships (Barnes 2002).

Localization

The localization of mobile devices relates to the ability to recognize the geographic location of the mobile user making it possible for m-commerce providers to send and receive location-specific information (Clarke 2001). For retailers and advertisers localization could enable sending targeted ads and promotional content in real-time (Sultan & Rohm 2008). However, it is important to realize that the utilization of personal and location data may also involve some privacy issues (Shankar & Balasubramanian 2009). Despite the challenges related to localization the context-specifity has also been identified to elicit positive effects in a service setting like affecting the trust formation of business relationships. Price & Arnould (1999) found that situational service context might result in a commercial friendship but this friendship is delimited to the situational context.

Personalization

Because of the personal nature of the mobile device it could potentially enable an intimate relationship between a customer and the retailer (Shankar et al. 2010). Thus, identifying customers' preferences is essential in order to succeed in

personalization (Sinisalo et al. 2007). Further, personalization in technology-based services is an important aspect since not all customers acquire the same skills or desire to use a particular service (Sandström et al. 2008). Thus, the new electronic media requires an approach in which the segmentation is database-driven in order to take full advantage of its unique features (Peltier et al. 2003). Mobile phones enable gathering data at a very specific level. The personalization of mobile devices could be applied to a scenario where a consumer had a personal shopping list on a mobile device and the mobile device would send a notification in real-time when he/she would be detected nearby a shopping neighborhood where the items could be bought (Shankar et al. 2010). This example portrays the mobile device's ability to communicate both the spatio-temporal location as well as the product needs of the consumer (Shankar et al. 2010).

Convenience

Service convenience implies the perceived time and effort associated with purchasing or using a service (Berry et al. 2002). Due to the agility and accessibility enabled by mobile devices people are able to access activities regardless of place or time. Eliminating some of the efforts of everyday life like queuing or being stuck in traffic consumers can experience unique contentment, which could improve the quality of life. Thus, the ability to find information and conduct transactions ubiquitously is very valuable to consumers potentially increasing customer loyalty through more convenient services. (Clarke 2001)

The key features of mobile technology explained previously serve as a foundation for understanding the research context. Concerning the broader theoretical discussion about value alignment, the following section provides a summary of key studies.

2.6 Summary of the literature review

According to the literature review there are plenty of papers addressing the importance of service-dominant (S-D) logic in today's increasingly networked market

environment. The literature remains fragmented but the discussion around service-dominant logic, stakeholders of the firm and value alignment can be divided into two key themes. The themes are illustrated in the figure below (Figure 1).

Figure 1: *Key themes of literature and research gap*

Frow & Payne (2011) is currently the only study addressing this gap properly. Case-based studies are still lacking.

Learning

Relationship development

Reciprocal value knowledge sharing

Crafting value propositions through mutual knowledge sharing

S-D logic as a basis to rethink exchange and value creation

Value alignment

Value co-creation

Interaction & engagement

Resource integration

Value propositions connecting service systems

Service systems

S-D logic as a basis to rethink stakeholder networks and value creation

Service experience

Service innovation

Adaptability & survivability

Blurring stakeholder roles

Service science

The first theoretical discussion addresses service-dominant logic as a basis to rethink exchange and value creation. Within this domain the studies take a dialogical orientation in crafting value propositions and emphasize the importance of interaction between stakeholders. The second theoretical discussion broadens the focus to wider stakeholder markets and views value propositions as essential mechanism in connecting service systems. Within this domain the service-dominant logic is viewed as a basis to rethink stakeholder markets and value creation within them. As

illustrated in the figure these studies don't explicitly address value alignment but relate to it indirectly. On the other hand Frow & Payne (2011) address both of these perspectives by taking into account the formation of value propositions in multiple stakeholder markets. However, as coined by Frow & Payne (2011) there is still lacking case-based research on how the value alignment could be achieved in practice within a multiple stakeholder environment. Furthermore, there is no previous knowledge about the role of mobile technology in value alignment within a decentralized market environment like the shopping center. Within this study the multiple stakeholder environment means extending the view from an enterprise and its stakeholders to also other relationships between stakeholders, like customer to customer. This extends the perspective from one organization to a constellation of service systems, which interact based on their own knowledge and context but still strive for mutual benefit. In today's increasingly interconnected market environment the mobile technology adds a rich context to address this gap. To add more detail to the research gap, the following table (Table 1) provides a detailed summary of the key studies concerning service-dominant logic and value alignment.

Table 1: *Detailed summary of the literature review*

Author(s) / Year	Journal	Methodology	Key discussion	Key concepts
Description of theme				
Crafting value propositions through mutual knowledge sharing and thereby unifying processes, S-D logic as a basis to rethink exchange and value creation				
Ballantyne & Varey 2006	Marketing Theory	Inductive and theory generating	Communication is essential in facilitating the S-D logic and forming value propositions, interaction with stakeholders facilitates learning and knowledge renewal	Communicative interaction, reciprocal value propositions, relationship development
Ballantyne et al. 2011	Industrial Marketing Management	Interactive approach / case examples	Value propositions created with an S-D logic orientation, or communicative interaction across stakeholders, can bring different business processes together	Reciprocal value propositions, communicative interaction, stakeholders of the firm
Kowalkowski et al. 2012	Journal of Marketing Management	Practice theory / conceptualiza-tion	Knowledge exchange is understood as a co-creative practice between stakeholders, a conceptualization of developing a value proposition is suggested	Co-creative practice, value proposition, reciprocal knowledge exchange

Value propositions connecting service systems and balancing value, *S-D logic as a base for rethinking stakeholder networks and value creation*				
Abela & Murphy 2008	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	Conceptual	S-D logic is proposed as an integrative orientation which overcomes tensions and conflicts	Ethical violations, integrity, marketing performance measurement, integration
Chandler & Lusch 2014	Journal of Service Research	Conceptual	The role of value propositions is essential in service systems by inviting to engage in service or align connections	Value propositions, engagement, service experience, service systems
Frow et al. 2014	Marketing Theory	Conceptual	Value propositions play a key role in sustaining the network of relations especially in today's interconnected world	Value propositions, service ecosystem, resource integration, value co-creation
Layton 2011	European Journal of Marketing	Conceptual	Marketing systems are acknowledged and classified as evolving patterns in flows of transactions	Marketing systems
Lusch & Webster 2011	Journal of Macromarketing	Conceptual	S-D logic approach is especially beneficial in an increasingly networked world in which the interests of many stakeholders need to be integrated with the customer and the company	Co-creation, value proposition, stakeholder
Lusch et al. 2010	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	Conceptual	S-D logic is identified as a fitting paradigm for rethinking marketing and supply chain management and converging them into a unified process to boost firm performance	Value networks, IT, supply chain management, service, learning, infomediaries
Payne et al. 2008	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	Conceptual analysis / interaction research	The cross-functional view on planning for value co-creation enables to align among those organizational functions formulating the customer value proposition and those delivering it	Co-creation, co-production, value
Skålén et al. 2014	Academy of Marketing Science	Multiple case study	Value propositions should be assessed and service innovation should be led from the viewpoint of customers' value creation	Resource integration, service innovation, value proposition
Vargo et al. 2008	European Management Journal	Integrative literature review	By integrating mutually beneficial resources service systems foster the adaptability and survivability of all service systems involved in exchange	Service science, service system, value co-creation
Applying both themes: Developing value propositions in multiple stakeholder environments and exploring their role in balancing stakeholder relationships				
Frow & Payne 2011	European Journal of Marketing	Stakeholder analysis	Developing value propositions in multiple stakeholder environments can provide a tool for aligning value between stakeholders within a marketing system	Value propositions, stakeholder perspective

3. Theoretical framework

Based on the literature view of value alignment and service-dominant logic the following theoretical framework is used in this study. The iterative process by Frow & Payne (2011) identifies how the value proposition concept viewed from this broader system perspective can provide insight into value alignment. This also fits the multiple stakeholder environment as it is not limited to dyadic, two-way promises of value, but views value propositions within a stakeholder system (Frow & Payne 2011). Further, the general typology by Clarke (2001) captures the key benefits of mobile solutions and provides a foundation for exploring perceived mobile service value within the shopping center context. The framework is presented in the following figure (Figure 1).

Figure 2: *Research framework*
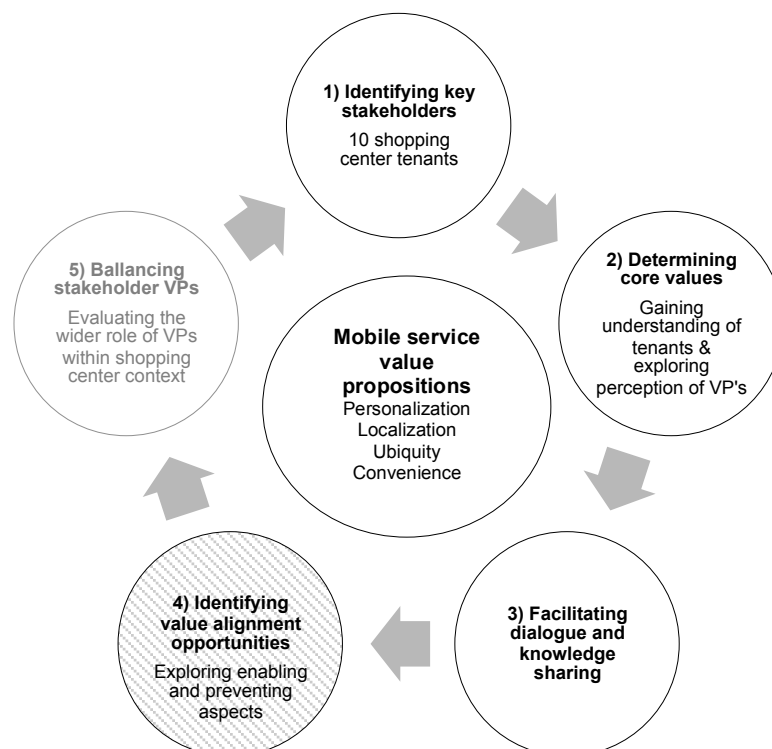
As the mobile service is seen as an enabler of value alignment rather than a co-creation mechanism the original framework proposed by Frow & Payne (2011) has been applied to fit this study. The research framework is applied to the shopping center context as follows:

1) **Identifying key stakeholders within the shopping center:** A group of 10 tenants within the shopping center will be chosen for the study. These stakeholders will present diverse businesses and cover different locations within the shopping center.

2) **Determining core values of the mobile service:** The aim is to gain an understanding of the tenants' value-creating processes more generally and within the shopping center context. Further, perceptions of the mobile service value propositions will be explored from the perspective of each tenant.

3) **Facilitating dialogue and knowledge sharing with tenants**

4) **Identifying opportunities for value alignment:** The aim is to identify preventing and enabling factors for value alignment from the tenants' perspective.

5) **Balancing stakeholder VP's:** This part includes evaluating the wider role of mobile service value within the shopping center context. In this final part the mobile service value will be discussed within a broader service system context and it provides the theoretical discussion of this study.

4. A single-case study approach

4.1 Single-case research design

Qualitative research has been identified especially relevant when prior knowledge about the phenomenon is scarce and the nature of the study is explorative (Gerring 2004). Since both the service-dominant logic and value alignment literature remain fragmented, qualitative research is justified. For answering the research question and contributing to the research gap a single case study was chosen as the qualitative research method. Case studies are particularly suitable in producing context-dependent knowledge (Flyvbjerg 2006). Yin (1994) has listed different principles to determine if case study is a suitable method for a study. According to Yin (1994) case studies can be defined by 'how' and 'why' research questions, by phenomenon that is uncontrollable by the researcher and by the studied subject, which should be a real-life problem. According to this criterion case study is a fitting method for this research. There are several ways for conducting case studies, which are guided by the nature of the research questions (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). One way of dividing case studies is the number of cases studied. Case studies can be divided to single-case or multiple/collective studies. Since the studied phenomenon is very complex in nature the single-case study was chosen as the research method. As stated by Dubois & Gadde (2002, p. 558), *"when the problem is directed towards analysis of a number of interdependent variables in complex structures, the natural choice would be to go deeper into one case instead of increasing the number of cases".*

Further, case studies can be divided to intensive or extensive case studies (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). In extensive case study research the cases are regarded as instruments for examining certain business-related phenomena whereas in intensive case studies the case is regarded as a unique and configurative unit of analysis (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). This study adopts an intensive approach. Distinctive to the qualitative inquiry as well as intensive case studies is the role of the researcher as a constructor as well as analyzer of the case, addressing the

perspectives, interactions and sense making practices of stakeholders involved in the study (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). In addition, in-depth case studies are the pre-eminent way to understand interaction between a phenomena and its context (Dubois & Gadde 2002). In intensive case studies the uniqueness of the case is considered as a key issue of research interest rather than an obstacle (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). The case company provided a suitable context for this study due to its adoption of a shopping center mobile application and its goal to offer a personalized customer experience. The research process started off by interviewing the case company and getting to know it. This gave the research a workable frame, which was further specified when starting the interviews with the tenants.

According to Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008) a researcher using case studies as a research method should pay careful attention to the criteria used to define the boundaries of a case. This research was conducted by studying one shopping center of Citycon. This provided a workable framework to explore the research phenomenon. Further, the key stakeholders from a business perspective were identified within the shopping center including the shopping center manager, tenants and end customers. As the tenants position in the midst of the value network they were chosen as the primary group of stakeholders for the interviews. In addition to the qualitative interviews with the case company and tenants, other materials like webpages, press releases and annual reports were read in order to get a comprehensive understanding of the case company.

4.2 Abductive approach and systematic combining

As stated by Eisenhardt & Graebner (2007) inductive theory building from cases creates new theory from data whereas deductive theory testing uses data to test theory. Dubois & Gadde (2002) further suggest an abductive approach, which is a combination of deductive and inductive approaches. This abductive approach is applied in this study. According to Dubois & Gadde (2002) the abductive approach is particularly suitable if the researcher aims to develop theory by discovering new aspects, meaning other variables or relationships. Moreover in the abductive

approach the original theoretical framework evolves throughout the research process as a result of unforeseen empirical findings as well as theoretical insights obtained during the process (Dubois & Gadde 2002).

As stated by Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008) theory generation and confirmation are integral processes in case study research, which should be treated as such. Dubois & Gadde (2002) call this 'systematic combining' in which the need for theory is created during the research process. During the interviews it became evident that the shopping center tenants hadn't adopted the mobile service and thus value propositions turned out to be a relevant aspect to explore. The flexibility during the research process ensured the refocusing of the research problem and choosing the most suitable theoretical framework for the study.

4.3 Semi-structured interviews

The in-depth interviews are the key source of data in case studies (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). Thus, the thematic semi-structured interviews were chosen as a research method. As coined by Hirsjärvi & Hurme (2008) the thematic interviews suppose that all experiences, thoughts and feelings of individuals can be studied with this method. When studying interviewees' perceptions of value propositions this research method provided the best fit. The studied phenomena and the basic concepts describing them are formulated when the researcher becomes familiar with the theory and research data (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008). Accordingly the basic themes for the interviews were formulated based on the literature and initial interviews with the case company. In thematic semi-structured interviews both the interviewee and the interviewer specify the themes during the interviews (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008). Thus, the relevant themes were further specified with interview questions during interviews. It was important to keep a sense of flexibility during these interviews in order to gain a diverse and rich picture of the phenomena.

The purpose of the data collection was to interview tenants from different industries in order to gain a rich understanding of different stakeholders in the shopping center.

All of the interviewed tenants shared a common interest in the opportunities of mobile services in the shopping center context. Since the study explored the possibilities of a shopping center mobile service the location of the tenants inside the shopping center was also relevant when choosing interviewees. This enabled to take into account different aspects related to location and space. The following table (Table 2) represents the interviewees.

Table 2: *Interviewees selected for the study*

Interviewee	Tenant	Organization type	Location
T1 (female)	Library	Public services	Level 2
T2 (male)	Retail store/ hypermarket	Chain	Level 0
T3 (male)	Gym	Chain	Level 2
T4 (female)	"Restaurant World"	Chain	Level 1
T5 (female)	Bank	Chain	Level 1
T6 (male)	Movie theatre	Chain	Level 2
T7 (female)	Occupational healthcare service provider	Chain	Second floor
T8 (male)	Specialty store	Chain	Level 1
T9 (male)	Retail store / hypermarket	Chain / merchant	Level 0
T10 (female)	Specialty store	Chain / merchant	Level 2

The 10 semi-structured interviews of this study were conducted between 25th March and 12th May and the average duration of the interviews was one hour. All of the interviews were held in the shopping center, which provided a natural setting for the tenants. The interviews were conducted in Finnish and recorded with a voice recorder. Each interview produced about 10 pages of transcribed interview data, which was later translated into English. The theoretical framework provided a general structure for the interviews, which were further specified during the research process. The first part of the interviews aimed at gaining an understanding of the core business of the tenants and their customers. Thereafter, perceptions of value propositions by Clarke (2001) were explored from the perspective of each tenant. The interview guide used in this study consisted of six parts: 1) Background information about tenant and use of mobile in own strategy 2) Perceptions of

personalization 3) Perceptions of localization 4) Perceptions of convenience 5) Perceptions of ubiquity and finally, 6) Open discussion on general customer feedback or ideas. In line with the typology by Clarke (2001) the aim of the interviews was to explore the value-in-use perspective by asking e.g. "what individual-based target marketing can be offered?" This way the experienced consequences of using the mobile service could be examined. The full interview guide can be found in Appendix 1.

4.4 Thematic coding

The thematic coding was used to analyze the qualitative data. According to Hirsjärvi & Hurme (2008) thematizing means reviewing such emerging features from the data, which are similar to all interviewees. These may follow the themes from thematic interviews but may also raise new themes. Following the abductive approach, Dubois & Gadde (2002) talk about abductive matching, which implies the constant interplay between the framework, data sources and analysis. Accordingly, the data analysis is guided by existing theory but not restricted by it. This approach creates new combinations with mixing proven theoretical models and new concepts resulting from the real-life case (Dubois & Gadde 2002).

As the interviewees were quite heterogeneous by nature, finding similarities between their views wasn't an end in itself. Instead, the aim was to remain flexible and explore each theme as broadly as possible. The interview data was first analyzed based on the thematic interviews, which followed the research framework. This gave a general picture about how the different dimensions of mobile service were perceived by the interviewees. The interplay between the mobile value dimensions revealed new connections, which enabled to develop the initial theoretical framework. The deeper understanding of the underlying themes enabled to categorize the data in terms of two relevant perspectives: enabling and preventing factors of value alignment. From these perspectives, the data was further categorized into sub-themes, which occurred under the main themes.

4.5 Validity and reliability

The accuracy of this study can be evaluated from several different aspects related to case study research. Dubois & Gadde (2002) signify three different aspects affecting the credibility of case studies: they cannot rely on statistical inference, relationships and patterns in complex structures and processes cannot be tested and the fact that the researcher describes everything and at the same time nothing. As argued by Dubois & Gadde (2002) studies concentrating on processes need to come to an end, while in the real world they continue.

Concerning the first aspect, the depth and width of this case study have been carefully defined. As argued by Dubois & Gadde (2002) when the problem relates to the examination of several interdependent variables in complex configurations the researcher should dive deeper into one case rather than growing the number of cases. The shopping center context is defined by the interrelation of key stakeholders, which constitute the service system. Gerring (2004) argues that well constructed case studies allow shedding light on causal mechanisms. The shopping center provides a workable context to justify a clear relation between the key stakeholders, including shopping center manager, tenants and the end customer. The tenants selected for this study act as embedded subcases in this study. In line with research design signified by Dubois & Gadde (2002) the purpose of this study is not to compare these subcases but rather analyze the variations among them, which could be better understood as they are studied in a single setting. This kind of approach increases the subcases' individual contribution to the total case rather than being considered as independent cases.

Concerning the second aspect the role of theory is very different in this study compared to confirmatory studies. It is clear that relationships and patterns in complex structures cannot be tested and this is not the aim of this study. As stated by Dubois & Gadde (2002) the aim of the abductive approach is to discover novel concepts and develop theory instead of verify existing theory. In this approach the theory generation and confirmation are inseparable. As argued by Dubois & Gadde

(2002) logical coherence is an imperative criterion for quality in case research. Thus, this research has aimed to provide an adequate description of the research process and grounding of the theory.

The final aspect of related to the evaluation of this study concerns the selectiveness of the researcher. As argued by Dubois & Gadde (2002) in systematic combining the phenomenon under study is redirected several times and the researcher needs to pay careful attention to singling out pieces which don't fit the final puzzle. Within this case study the research process has involved a continuous move between the theoretical framework, analysis and data. This enabled to arrive at the optimal fit between theory and reality.
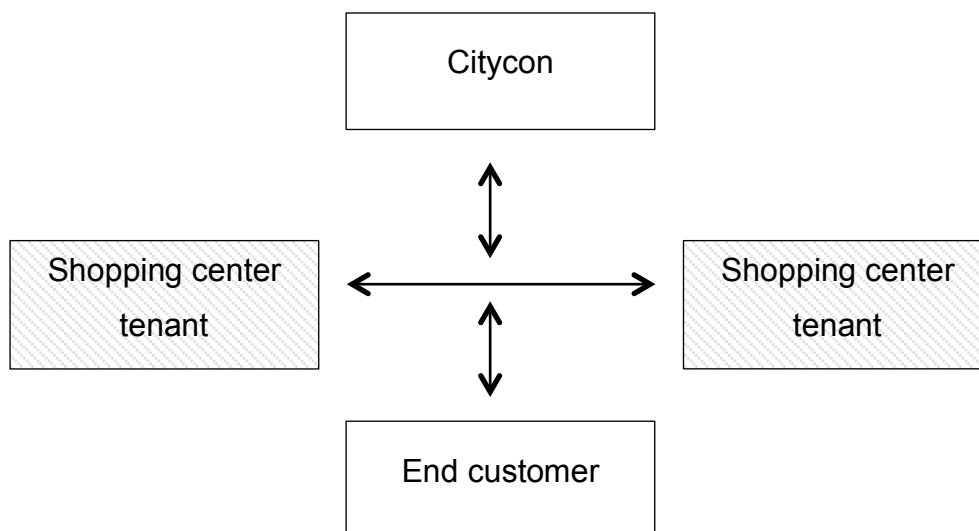
5. Overview of Citycon

Citycon is an owner, developer and manager of shopping centers in the Nordic and Baltic region. The company owns over 50 shopping centers in Finland, Norway, Sweden, Estonia and Denmark and employs over 150 people. The core business of Citycon is to develop and manage urban grocery-anchored shopping centers in the Nordic and Baltic region. Citycon's goal is to better utilize interactive technologies in its overall shopping center customer experience.

Citycon was among the first in Finland launching a mobile app in one of its shopping centers in 2012. Now the company provides the application in its largest shopping centers. This research explores one of Citycon's shopping centers, which is currently using this mobile application. Further, this specific shopping center is undergoing a big renewal, which will make it one of Finland's largest shopping center bringing forth opportunities to provide digital solutions to new and existing customers. In terms of this research the attractiveness of the case is two-fold. On the one hand a shopping center provides a rich context to explore perceptions of value from the perspective of tenants, which operate in very different industries and are the closest link to the end customers. On the other hand, exploring different value dimensions from the tenant-perspective brings forth insights on how the current mobile application should be developed to enable value alignment and integration to the overall service experience.

As a household brand Citycon needs to manage the network of different stakeholders and offer a platform for service integration for different tenants in order to deliver a personalized customer experience. In order for Citycon to reach its goal in leveraging interactive technologies to build a personalized customer experience the perceptions of mobile service value are explored from the perspective of tenants. The shopping center mobile service has the potential to deliver very context-specific content and offers for the shopping center customers and thereby provide value to all actors in the service system. The following figure (Figure 2) describes the interaction of the key stakeholders in the light of this study.

Figure 3: Key stakeholders within the shopping center context

```
                      ┌──────────────────┐
                      │     Citycon       │
                      └──────────────────┘
                              ↕
┌──────────────────┐                      ┌──────────────────┐
│ Shopping center   │  ←───────────────→   │ Shopping center   │
│     tenant        │                      │     tenant        │
└──────────────────┘         ↕            └──────────────────┘
                      ┌──────────────────┐
                      │   End customer    │
                      └──────────────────┘
```

As illustrated in the figure the tenants are situation in relation to the shopping center customers as well as the shopping center manager. This is also an important aspect when evaluating the perceived value of the shopping center mobile service as it provides valuable insight to perceived value in relation to both stakeholders. In the following sub-section the shopping center tenants are introduced in more detail.

5.1 Shopping center tenants

The interviewees' of this study operate in different industries and provide diverse services and offerings in the shopping center. Half of the interviewees provide tangible goods whereas the rest provide intangible goods. All of the interviewees are chain businesses or operate like one implying that most of their marketing is determined centrally. However, all of the tenants have the possibility to localize marketing actions in the shopping center. The specialty stores have precisely defined customer groups, whereas the others define their customers in broader segments like age groups. In general, families are stated as a big customer group to many of the tenants. In addition, the shopping center customers seem to include more elderly people on average, since there are many retirement homes nearby. All

in all, the interviewees have very precise knowledge of their key customer groups in the shopping center and they are continuously striving to develop this understanding.

All of the interviewed tenants utilize the mobile channel somehow in their marketing strategies. Almost all of the tenants have at least a mobile-optimized website which seems to be a prerequisite these days. Further, both of the specialty stores have a mobile-optimized web store. Few of the service providers utilize the mobile channel in supporting the service process through making reservations, check-ins and sending reminders or other notifications. The mobile channel is also used in sending text message marketing in case the customer has separately demanded it. Almost half of the tenants state that they have a mobile application or are currently developing one. The growing role of mobile technology in customers' everyday lives is acknowledged by almost all of the interviewees. Concerning the current shopping center mobile application, only one interviewee had used the application ones or twice before and the others had either never used it and/or never heard about it. Generally, all of the interviewees shared a common interest in mobile services and its potential within their own business and the shopping center context.

6. Findings and analysis

The interviews revealed that tenants' evaluations of the shopping center mobile service divided into two aspects. The preventing aspects captured views in which the mobile service was not seen to fit the tenants' business or it was seen challenging to utilize in terms of unclear responsibilities or issues related to implementation. The enabling aspects on the other hand encompassed views where the mobile service was clearly seen as an enabler to align value within the value network. These included opportunities for knowledge sharing, service integration and mutual service provision. The conceptual categories and their sub-categories of the research findings are summarized in the following figure (Table 3).

Table 3: *Findings in conceptual categories and sub-categories*

Factors preventing value alignment	Description	Examples
Heterogeneity of service providers	Variation in business-related goals and context, brand fit, internal & external competition	Variation in the need for personalized communication and ubiquitous connectivity between tenants - some aiming for efficiency of service some for maximizing time spent within shopping center, internal competition - both inside shopping center and within tenants' chain
Unclear responsibilities	Lack of clearly defined roles and marketing responsibilities within shopping center context	Mobile service adoption of mobile services dependent on clearly defined value propositions on tenant & end customer levels, shopping center manager perceived as the concept owner and enabler for service platform, shopping center manager perceived as initiator in localized shopping center marketing
Implementation	Concerns of technical issues and complex data, permission & privacy	Dealing with complex data to achieve personalization, technical specification of customer tracking and recognition, challenge of gaining permission, risk of violating privacy and hindering customer experience
Factors enabling value alignment	***Description***	***Examples***
Facilitating knowledge sharing	Distributing knowledge between key stakeholders to optimize service processes and provide customized service; gaining data about local customers through interaction	Sharing data about local customer preferences, & queuing, end customer ratings and recommendations, facilitating crisis communications (e.g. harmful products), providing cross-recommendations to end customers

Integrating service offerings	Distributing information and processes between key stakeholders to enhance convenience, meaning and coherence of customer experience	Providing customer ratings, post-sales services, point-of-need information and context-specific offers e.g. coffee coupon between shopping, integrating mobile service with shopping center events
Providing mutual services	Providing shopping center specific mobile services to enhance enjoyment and convenience of customer experience, open community-based platform with shopping center manager perceived as platform provider	Security communications, navigation, car locator, bus & metro schedules, customer reviews & ratings, information about queuing, service selection, events, opening hours and locations

6.1 Factors preventing value alignment

The preventing aspects of value alignment from the tenants' perspective existed on all levels of the shopping centers' key stakeholders. It seemed to be impossible to successfully implement such services unless the tenants were first interviewed. According to the interviews, facilitating dialogue and acting upon this knowledge seemed to be the only means to ease the tensions concerning these aspects.

6.1.1 Heterogeneity of service providers

The heterogeneity of the tenants was clearly indicated in the perceived value of mobile services. In a shopping center context the tenants' business-related goals and context clearly affected the relevance of the perceived value of mobile value dimensions. The heterogeneity was present on all levels of the core value network including shopping center manager – tenant, tenant – tenant and tenant – end customer. In addition to these aspects, some answers also indicated the internal conflict within the tenants' own chain. The personalization, ubiquity and localization were the mobile-related aspects, which brought up variations in views. From

shopping center manager – tenant as well as tenant – tenant aspects, the personalized communication through the mobile was seen challenging in terms of differentiating between actors. This indicated the difficulty of balancing between differentiation and centralization in terms of mobile communication within the shopping center. The answers indicated that finding a balance between marketing roles would be essential in providing value to different stakeholders. One of the interviewees thought that the way customers should be approached through the mobile channel should to be relevant to their brand and stand out from the competitors:

"We should definitely engage with our customers more. It is very important in our industry these days… However, we don't want to do it the same way as others. We want to find our own way of doing it." -T8

Majority of aspects raising different views on mobile service value seemed to occur on tenant – tenant level and tenant – end customer level. These related to the operating model of tenants and customer-related goals. The perceived value of personalization between tenants was regarded more important by the service providers as it was a natural way to enhance their customer service whereas a bigger retailer thought going to an individual level might hinder the efficiency of service. Thus, the efficiency of service process was perceived to reduce the need for customer engagement. One of the bigger retailers thought that customer engagement could disrupt a customary service experience:

"Customers come to buy groceries many times a week and the customer experiences are often quite similar. We think that if the customer gets off easily during that shopping time, so that there wouldn't be any situations we need to intervene in then it's good. The ease of service is our advantage. Of course we would want to hear customer wishes regarding product selection and why not service too… but not in a same manner as in a specialty shop." -T2

The perceived value of reaching customers regardless of place or time further brought up variation in operating models between tenants. This divided the interviewees in half in terms of their views. Almost half of the interviewees regarded it as a sensitive issue and necessary only in problem situations if at all. The other half thought it was a central aspect in the service process or a possibility to gain customer flow. Generally ubiquity was regarded more important from the perspective of service providers like the healthcare service provider and bank compared to retailers or specialty shops, as it was perceived as a natural part of the value-creating process. The following comment by the healthcare service provider illustrates this:

"For us this is at the moment a very big thing. The digitalization of healthcare services has made it necessary to be ubiquitous and available everywhere and this is a growing issue also in the future." -T7

The operating model of tenants naturally affected also their customer-related goals. On a tenant – end customer level the localization-enabled aspect of prolonging the time spent inside the shopping center wasn't perceived equally important by all of the interviewees. The specialty stores, café and movie theater were more favorable about customers spending longer time within the shopping center as their customers needed to be in a spontaneous or "shopping mode" in order to visit them. On the other hand, the healthcare service provider, bank and grocery store didn't perceive it equally important as their offerings related to more mundane things. For example, the healthcare service provider emphasized the convenience of service, which related to "getting things done" as efficiently as possible, as illustrated in the following comment:

"This is a challenging question for us since customers don't just hang around here. The convenience and immediacy of service is our approach." -T7

Related to the aforementioned aspects the internal competition within the shopping center was evident. However, conflicting interests further arose from the chain

operators, which saw the challenge of causing competition between their own chains' stores if the customers were reached outside the shopping center context. On the other hand, distinguishing too strongly between different shop locations wasn't regarded beneficial either from the perspective of the specialty store:

"For us this aspect is a bit challenging since we have stores all over the place. We don't want to compete weather the customer goes to our store in this shopping center or some other location. We want to talk about our brand as a whole and not necessarily this specific store in this shopping center." -T8

All of the answers indicating the heterogeneity of perceived value of mobile services emphasized the multifaceted role of actors and the competition within the value network including internal competition within the tenants own company. The answers suggested that these aspects were not barriers for mobile services but rather important issues, which should be taken into account in the development of such services. According to the interviews understanding the business goals and context of different tenants seemed to be essential in order to provide value to different actors.

6.1.2 Unclear responsibilities

Within a shopping center environment the division of roles and responsibilities seemed to be one of the most fundamental questions when discussing about mobile solutions. It seemed that the new technologies were breaking silos within the tenants' own businesses as well as the shopping center environment. This seemed to create a demand for defined roles on a higher level, while keeping the opportunity for flexibility in the shopping center environment. The unclear roles seemed to exist on shopping center manager – tenant level as well as tenant – tenant level. Further, this was seen as an aspect, which added confusion in adopting mobile services within the shopping center context. Since all of the tenants utilized the mobile channel somehow in their own businesses they wanted to know a clearly communicated value proposition why they should use such services. Thus, dialogue

with the tenants seemed to be essential before adopting these kinds of services as indicated in the following quote:

"I haven't tried the shopping center application. I should first know why I would need it. Someone should tell me why it is important to me..." -T3

The clearly communicated value proposition was further perceived essential both on tenant and end customer levels. This highlighted the importance of dialogue between key stakeholders within the value network. One of the interviewees referred to the existing shopping center mobile application and the ease-of-use its adoption:

"The reason why I haven't tried the mobile app myself is the fact that I haven't received instructions and clear reasons why I should start using it. I think the mobile channel should be promoted to the service providers but also the end customers and communicate the value propositions." -T7

In addition, the communication through the mobile channel seemed to raise some confusion amongst the interviewees. This related to the challenge of balancing between tenant and shopping center -specific communication. According to most of the interviewees the shopping center manager should initiate the communication through the mobile channel but it should be in parallel with the different tenants' brands and business-specific goals. On the other hand, this could not be done without continuous dialogue between the actors. Majority of the interviewees thought this communication should be targeted to the local community or be context-relevant in order to add value to them. In several responses the act of reaching out to customers was seen as the responsibility of shopping center manager. This is indicated in the following answer:

"I think it is an important aspect especially when reaching the customers living nearby this shopping center. But I think it is important that the shopping center would send the messages and not an individual store. That would be much more holistic." -T10

According to the interviews the tenants realized they were the closest link to the end customers. Thus, mobile solutions within a shopping center context would ideally enable tenants' to serve end customers better. The shopping center managers' role would be to provide this opportunity or platform for engagement. It was evident that if the shopping center manager would try to interact with end customers past the tenants this would hinder the overall service experience as the physical service touch points within the shopping center wouldn't coincide with the online service touch points.

6.1.3 Implementation

Majority of the interviewees had some apprehensions related to implementation of the mobile service including privacy concerns and technical integration. On the shopping center manager – tenant and tenant – tenant levels the technical implementation and data-related aspects were brought up. For example, a bigger retailer expressed his concern about dealing with complex data and technical aspects in order to achieve personalization. According to him succeeding in personalization would require customized content, flexible user interface and letting customers become co-creators of the service:

> *"The content is challenging in the sense that some people search for special offers, others product range… so the user interface should be really flexible, a bit similar to a news service where you can block things you don't want to use and choose the ones you prefer. For a retailer the customer base is so broad that the application should be really flexible content-wise…" -T9*

Thus, keeping data in silos seemed to restrict the development of an optimal shopping center mobile service. The implementation seemed to require open source data and knowledge sharing in order to provide context-relevant services and achieve mutual benefit. The context-relevance further related closely to the concern of gaining permission for mobile communication. The following answer suggests that

this challenge exists on a tenant – end customer level, but which might be needed to solve through collaborative efforts:

"The content should be carefully considered and how it would technically work. Would it be a Bluetooth-based thing or some location-based service? And would require some sort of marketing permission before approaching customers? If it would be an easily solvable way to communicate with customers, then it is interesting."-T9

The aspect of permission was further perceived to influence to the overall customer experience. Disturbing customer privacy was seen to hinder service experience and customer satisfaction. This view was shared by nearly all of the interviewees, which further raised the importance of ease-of-use and data-driven communication. In addition the aspect of context was emphasized. For example, reaching customer anytime was perceived beneficial if it was utilized within the context of shopping center, namely within or to the close proximity to the shopping center. Further, personalization was perceived relevant if it related to the shopping process in the shopping center, either before, during or after. Several interviewees regarded ubiquity as a sensitive issue and acknowledged the risk of annoying customers. Thus, context-relevance and user control were seen as important aspects to consider when approaching customers. One of the bigger retailers talked about permission-based and context-relevant mobile communications:

"This is an extremely sensitive issue and one should be careful with ubiquity. If the customer is in a store it would be fine since he/she is in the 'mode'. But when he/she is at home e.g. watching TV it's not okay to approach with commercial content. The marketer should have permission or some sort of agreement about when it is okay to approach the customer." -T9

Ubiquity was further regarded central in providing a seamless shopping center customer experience. One of the interviewee emphasized the importance of easily accessible information of different service providers in order to deliver a seamless

customer experience. This was further indirectly linked to service convenience by integrating the online and offline environments:

"It is essential to integrate the mobile to different webpages so that it is easy to move between different devices. If a customer for example sees a special offer in this shopping center in some specific store he/she needs to be able to easily go to their webpage to see more information about it." -T10

Another interviewee expressed the need for customer control in achieving personalization and context-relevant offerings:

"This is a very sensitive aspect and the messages should be sent at a right time. And the customer should be able to choose what messages he/she wants to receive." -T1

According to the interviews the implementation seemed to encompass the whole value network. The collaboration and dialogue on all levels was emphasized as the need for real-time and context relevant data was signified. In addition to the fact that the content should be relevant for the tenants it should also be targeted in the right context to the right end customer. Thus, the need for context-relevant mobile services emphasized the evolving nature of customer situations, where the shopping center manager as well as the tenants should have shared knowledge of the end customers. The interviewees indicated the importance of real-time open source data, where the different stakeholders would be able to provide value to end customers and enhance the shopping center customer experience.

6.2 Factors enabling value alignment

The key aspects enabling value alignment in shopping center mobile solutions related to facilitating knowledge sharing, integrating service offerings and providing mutual services. All of these aspects seemed to align the stakeholder's goals and target towards enhanced convenience of shopping center customer experience.

6.2.1 Facilitating knowledge sharing

According to the interviews the growing power of consumers seemed to raise the importance of collaboration and dialogue between key stakeholders within the value network. For example, the role of sharing data between tenants and shopping center manager as well as between tenants was perceived important as the information technology was shifting the power from service providers to end customers. In addition, knowledge sharing was seen to enhance learning and service optimization within the whole shopping center. For example, sharing real-time data about shopping center visitors was seen as a valuable aspect of convenience and a possibility to co-operate between stakeholders. One of the bigger retailers illustrated an imaginary situation in which real-time customer data could be shared between tenant and shopping center manager to optimize the service process:

"In practice the shopping center manager could inform the tenants that e.g. 'now there are a lot of customers in the shopping center' since the shopping center manager has the data. And of course we see how many customers there are inside our shop but we record it only when the customer leaves. So some interaction like this would be beneficial." -T9

The same interviewee went on to describe in more detail how the convenience of end customers' could be enhanced, while simultaneously increasing sales through optimizing customers' time in-store:

"When we know from our system the number of customers coming in and the ones going out we know how many customers there are in our store. Then we could estimate how long they spend inside the store. Simultaneously, we know what the situation at the cashiers is. If the customer had a mobile application, which showed the estimated queuing time he/she could still make some purchases before going to the cashiers. It would give relevant information to the customer, which would relate to the goal of checking out of the store. This could be a way to prolong the time inside the store."-T9

Mobile service was further seen as a tool in achieving mutual goals through getting data about local customer preferences. In achieving this, the healthcare service provider mentioned the importance of collaborating and facilitating dialogue between shopping center manager and tenants:

"The mobile could be used in examining what healthcare services customers want at this specific location. This could be done in collaboration with the shopping center manager in the same way that the shopping center manager wants to know what services customers want to this specific shopping center we want to know this in our industry and also locally so that we can provide the right specialists here. The healthcare industry is so specialized these days that it is important to know which specialists are wanted by the local customers."-T7

On a tenant – end customer level the mobile service was seen to enable both acquiring data about end customers but also facilitating dialogue with them. Some concrete examples of gaining data related to queuing, customer preferences, ratings and recommendations. Queuing was seen as a challenging aspect especially from the perspective of the bigger retailers. Thus, gaining data about queuing could add more convenience to the customers and thereby streamline the service process. One of the bigger retailers talked about the benefit of gaining queuing-related data and thereby improving convenience:

"The first thing that comes to my mind is queuing. It would be very interesting to gain data about queuing times of our customers. If the mobile could be somehow utilized in this aspect." -T2

The mobile technology was further considered to increase the transparency of information as end customers could access e.g. price-related information in-store. However, this seemed to be an aspect, which was perceived normal especially from the perspective of the specialty stores. Providing transparent information was perceived to add convenience to shopping, as they would anyway check products online. One interviewee from the specialty store referred to the need of providing

product ratings and price comparisons in-store since customers want to check information online before buying:

> *"The same thing that Amazon and others use that you can scan a code with your mobile and get product information, price comparisons etc. There's so much information available these days that customers want to double check things that salespeople tell them." -T8*

Another specialty store emphasized the easiness of searching products and prices across online and offline channels to add convenience:

> *"I think that convenience means the webpages and relevant information when you go searching for some specific product, e.g. price comparisons. All of our products are already online… The customers can recommend to each other where some specific product should be bought." -T10*

One of the interviewees suggested that utilizing customer-specific data could enhance service experience across different service providers. He didn't see a problem in cross-recommending similar products to the customer based on previous buying behavior. The interviewee thought that the mobile could activate the customer to try something new, like meeting the new merchant within the shopping center:

> *"Since the mobile enables to collect such rich data about the user it could facilitate customized shopping center-specific content… not necessarily special offers since they are the easy ones… But something that gets you to think or even challenge you, like 'Hi, we know you like to go to this specific shop but have you met the new merchant of this other shop at the shopping center. There's coffee for visitors today so why not go and meet the local merchant.' I always like everything personal as mass messages get lost." -T3*

Within the shopping center context one specific aspect related to tenant – end customer level communications concerned crisis communications. The mobile-

enabled ubiquity was regarded beneficial in problem situations when the customer needed to be reached as soon as possible. One of the bigger retailers regarded ubiquity valuable in reaching customers to warn about harmful products:

"Reaching the customer is very important in situations when there is some dangerous or harmful product which needs to be pulled back from the market. In these situations reaching customers as soon as possible is essential." -T2

In addition, the ability to track customers within the shopping center was seen as a valuable aspect in enhancing customer engagement within the shopping center. By locating customers when they enter the shopping center the gym operator emphasized the possibility of starting a dialogue with the customer:

"If the customer would log in to the shopping center Wi-Fi when he/she enters the shopping center we could send a message like 'Hi, welcome. If you are interested we offer you a free try at our gym', and if the customer accepts the offer we could call the customer and ask if he/she finds us or if we should go and get him/her… So that an open dialogue would start at the very beginning." -T3

In general, the mobile technology was seen to distribute information amongst key stakeholders within the shopping center context. The mutual value gained from this seemed to be strongly related to context-specifity where the data would be utilized to support location- and time-specific needs. The dialogue and collaboration seemed to be an equally important aspect for all interviewees as long as it was related to the aspect of locality. On a higher level the interviewees perceived that this collaboration might enhance the competitiveness of the shopping center, as it would enable to be more proactive towards customer needs.

6.2.2 Integrating service offerings

In addition to the mobile-enabled aspect of distributing information the interviews indicated that mobile services would enable to distribute service processes within the

shopping center context, for example through feedback, post-sales services, context-based offers and point-of-need information. These aspects seemed to be relevant on all levels of the service system. Thus, based on the interviews the mobile service could enhance the seamlessness of the shopping center service experience. Compared to the perceived benefits of personalization and ubiquity the value dimensions of convenience and localization seemed to bring the tenants goals more closely together. The interviewees' answers related to the common goal of enhancing the coherent and convenient shopping center customer experience. In contrast to personalization and ubiquity the privacy issues weren't stated as a big concern in localization and convenience, which might suggest that these value aspects could offer opportunities for value alignment through context-specific content and services as well as applications, which could enhance service convenience within the shopping center context.

The mobile technology seemed to be a driver for the need of integrating services as the offline and online environments were blurring as well as the roles between key stakeholders. Two of the interviewees talked about the blurring roles of customer and service provider within the shopping center. One of the interviewees suggested that also the personnel in the shopping center are end customers, which indicates the interchangeability of service provider and customer roles. The following comment illustrates that the actual customer can also be the shopping center personnel and tenants:

> *"I think any marketing cooperation with the shopping center manager is very important and this should also be increased in order to add convenience and impulsive purchasing. In addition since our customers are also all of the other tenants and personnel in the shopping center, cooperating with other tenants is also important."-T7*

The growing role of information technology in the shopping center customer experience seemed to further raise the need for flexible spaces and movement. Few of the interviewees perceived the mobile technology as a mechanism, which was blurring the 'industrial boundaries' within the shopping center. This meant that the

end customer and even tenants could break out of their specific locations within the shopping center and thereby enhance the flow of movement within the space. One of the interviewees started to speak about the shopping center as a "third place" and the role of enjoyment in prolonging the time spent there:

> *"We hope that customers enjoy their time here and we talk about this kind of 'third place'… Shopping center is also a 'third place'. It's not home or workplace but something else. What I've heard from customers is the fact that they feel the space as their own, for example that they can see themselves in the personnel…" -T1*

As a result of the blurring organizational boundaries within the shopping center the interviewee further described an example how mobile could be utilized to streamline the service process and enhance time utility. The interviewee described how the mobile service could enable customers to move freely inside the shopping center by estimating queuing times:

> *"In the new shopping center extension when the customer e.g. comes and pre-registers for the doctor's appointment and it requires waiting the customer could wander around the shopping center and receive a message e.g. 5 minutes before his/her turn so something like this. These organizational boundaries are blurring…" -T1*

By being able to access the customer regardless of space of time was further perceived valuable if it was context-specific in a sense that it supported the customers' buying process. One of the interviewees described an imaginary future scenario, in which mobile could be used to integrate the shopping center customer experience:

> *"In a perfect future scenario I wouldn't need a wallet. When I would enter the shopping center, I would be immediately recognized and greeted through the mobile. Then the mobile could give me options about what I could do there. If I would choose to go to the grocery store the mobile would automatically download my shopping list, which I had planned earlier. Then the mobile would suggest me my most frequently bought food*

products that are currently on sale… When I had found all the products. I would go to the self-checkout, which would immediately recognize me and I would tap a code, which would send the bill straight to my bank account. After that I could be offered with some discount for a car wash at a gas station on my way home. This might sound a bit farfetched but actually the technology already exists." -T3

In addition, the mobile service was seen as a way to interact with end customers and thereby enhance the shopping center customer experience. Through customer reviews, feedback, post-sales services, user-generated content and real-time offers and information, the mobile service was perceived as a valuable mechanism in strengthening the link to the local community and inviting the end customers to influence the shopping center experience. For example, the personalization was perceived to enable customer engagement after point of sale, thereby continuing the service experience. This aspect was further seen as a way to provide co-operation opportunities in terms of service integration between shopping center stakeholders. One of the interviewees suggested that customers could give reviews of their service experience, which could also add value to the service provider:

"If we know some specific customer has been to movies here at the shopping center the customer could be asked to rate that specific movie with mobile… We actually hope that the service experience would continue somehow." -T6

Being able to access product-related information at the point-of-need was mostly regarded as a way to outsource some service-related processes in physical stores to the customer. This was especially important to the bigger retailers, whose sales clerks might not always be present when customer service was needed. One of the retailers described how information technology had changed the role of their personnel in-store:

"These days customers know more and more about products and our salesclerks have hard time keeping up with everything they know. Customers can access Internet between the shelves so our salesclerks cannot brag about knowing things. Their role is

more about integrating the relevant information and helping the customer by suggesting options." -T9

Further, providing context-specific offers was thought to streamline the service experience within the shopping center. Using location-specific data was perceived valuable in providing these kinds of offers. One of the interviewees illustrated a situation in which customers' time spent inside the shopping center could be prolonged:

"The mobile could enable estimating the time customer has spent inside the shopping center through mobile tracking. And if the customer had for example spent 2 hours going to different stores he/she could be offered with some coupon to a café. This would be a way for the customer to have break and calm down in between shopping." -T6

Another interviewee also thought localization could be utilized in prolonging the time spent inside the shopping center by integrating knowledge about previous shopping behavior with location-specific data in targeting personalized offers:

"The customer could be located through the mobile when he/she enters the shopping center and provided with some real-time message about offers e.g. in a clothing store. If it could be integrated with data about previous shopping behavior even more customized offers could be offered through the mobile device." -T2

In addition to the data-related aspects, the mobile service was seen as an important tool during shopping center events. Majority of the interviewees expressed the importance of events in integrating the different service offerings and providing enjoyment to the end customers. Some examples included informing about and navigating to shopping center events. The healthcare service provide talked about the importance of enjoyment and entertainment in the shopping center. She described the future role of the shopping center as a place where people want to come to spend their free time:

"In the future the role of entertainment will be very important to our shopping center. As people increasingly value free time in the future the shopping center should focus more on this aspect and communicate it." -T7

The events were seen as a central aspect also in attracting more customers to the shopping center. One of the interviewees talked about the importance of context-specific content in evoking feelings and attracting customers to the shopping center:

"If we think about the shopping center communicating about events to customers is important. And I think communicating about new and leaving shops here is important too. But also the communication which evokes emotions, for example if it is a cold weather outside the shopping center could post a picture on the social media of a warm soup of one of our restaurants and this mobile content would then attract people nearby. I think this kind of content attracts more people than mere discounts." -T3

The localization enabled by the mobile was also seen as important in communicating about and locating shopping center events. The shopping center events were also seen as a way to prolong the time spent inside the shopping center. However, the interviewees expressed that the events should be of right size in order to enhance customer movement in the shopping center and avoid distraction from shopping activities:

"I think localization enables communicating about events since shopping center is growing and there will be more events in the future. Customers could get information about them through their mobile devices and help them to navigate to those events. I think those are the most important things what customers wait for, even more than special offers. The different events have an essential role in prolonging the time customers spend here. However, the events should encourage walking around the shopping center so they should be smaller and scattered around the shopping center…" -T10

The mobile-enabled localization was even seen as a way to nurture the experienced pride of the local shopping center and to raise the overall competitiveness of the whole shopping center. The interviews indicated that the warm atmosphere and uniqueness of the shopping center was specifically strong. Thus, the mobile service was seen as a way to embrace this unique atmosphere through customer engagement and enjoyment. Related to the mobile-enabled localization few interviewees talked about the need for closer collaboration between shopping center stakeholders. The role of co-operation was regarded as a key aspect in strengthening the local shopping center brand, as illustrated in the following quote:

"In terms of localization the collaboration inside the shopping center should be enhanced. At the moment it is pretty scarce as we are undergoing a big change. But when the extension is completed more co-operation is needed in order to get this shopping center to stand out and so to say 'keep us on the map'." -T7

The localization also brought up the need to emphasize the local community and the unique brand identity of the shopping center. The following quote illustrates how the shopping center as a whole should move closer to the local community:

"Each shopping center should have its own identity since it has its own clientele. The distinctiveness from other shopping centers is very important and that should be emphasized so the local community can be proud of their own shopping center." -T10

All in all, the interviews showed the unique ability of mobile services to add meaning and context to different service touch points within the shopping center. This was further perceived to enhance the coherence of the overall shopping center customer experience. The context-aware content and offers seemed to align mutual goals by enabling to serve the end customers better according to their needs. The mobile services were further seen as an important aspect in supporting shopping center events, which would add enjoyment to all key stakeholders.

6.2.3 Providing mutual services

The final aspect enabling value alignment in shopping center mobile solutions related to mutual services, which all key stakeholders could utilize. These services seemed to bring the stakeholders goals closer together and the shopping center manager was perceived to provide a platform for these kinds of applications. All of the suggested applications related to enhancing the convenience of the shopping center customer experience. The three core aspects included safety, navigation and point-of-need information.

The aspect of security was regarded as an important goal for all stakeholders in improving enjoyment and prolonging the time spent within the shopping center. This aspect was especially important to the library where younger people spent a lot of time:

> *"Actually safety is an important aspect and it relates to the whole shopping center…*
> *When we had questionnaires to the teens they mentioned the importance of security*
> *cameras to protect from being subjected to violence. And I think seniors also regard*
> *these thing as important." -T1*

The healthcare service provider also mentioned the role of security. Mobile was seen as a useful tool in enhancing shopping center safety through real-time mobile communication:

> *"Security is one aspect which could be improved with the aid of mobile communication.*
> *If there is for example a bomb threat at the other end of the shopping center the mobile*
> *could be used to inform different stakeholders in the shopping center." -T7*

Another service application that was mentioned by almost all of the interviewees related to shopping center navigation and finding the right shops and services. This seemed to be an important aspect by majority of the tenants. The mobile was seen valuable in supporting the overall movement to/within and from the shopping center.

The interviewees suggested several aspects, which would bring context and time utility to the shopping center customers. The interviewee from the specialty store thought that navigation would be valuable when the customer arrives to the shopping center:

> *"When you've parked your car you could grab your mobile device, click where you want to go and it would show you the route." -T10*

However, the level of specificity in locating offerings varied. Some of the interviewees thought that location of shops and services were enough, whereas some perceived shelf-specific localization as a valuable aspect. The interviewees suggested potential applications like an in-house navigator and an interactive shopping center map. The bigger retailers seemed to have different views about the required accuracy of locating offerings. The other retailer expressed the future need to aid customers in finding specific products within the retail store:

> *"It is a future thing that you would get a mobile application in which you could find the layout of each shop and you could locate certain products at a shelf accuracy… And if that could be a way to enhance the service convenience that would be great." -T2*

The other retailer didn't see a demand in shelf-specific guidance but suggested an interactive map, which would pop up on the mobile based on the customers' location:

> *"I don't think the customer wants to search for specific products once he/she is inside the shopping center. It is way easier to walk to the shop, check the selection quickly and leave. The most important thing is that the customer sees what services/shops there are, and can quickly find the place he/she wants to go. There could pop-up a map of the second floor when you enter the second floor so you would see immediately the layout and shops." -T9*

The same interviewee continued to suggest a car locator, which would add convenience for shopping center visitors:

"A 'Find your car' service would be really handy for me. If you are visiting a shopping center for the first time you cannot remember the floor not to mention the specific spot you left your car." -T9

In addition to shopping center navigation the point-of-need information seemed to be a potential aspect for mutual services, which would further enhance convenience of end customers. One of the interviewees expressed the importance of providing information about the shopping center opening hours and selection of services and their locations. In specific, the mobile was perceived as a more useful channel to communicate this compared to info boards, which were perceived clumsy and outdated. Further, providing information about queuing times was seen as a potential future application. One of the interviewees also suggested that by providing bus and metro schedules through the shopping center app, convenience could be enhanced to end customers:

"The metro and bus schedules could be provided in a shopping center app easily. It would work with some GPS or something and you could easily see based on your location which transportation you should use to get here." -T2

Finally, one of the interviewees suggested that restaurant and shop reviews would be a good way to engage local customers at the shopping center and add convenience through easing decision-making:

"The shopping center customers could rate services in our shopping center, a bit like in TripAdvisor. Visitors could give ratings and comments to shops and services and customer interactivity could also be improved this way." -T8

As indicated by the interviewees, there were several potential service applications, which could align value between different stakeholders. These all related to enhancing convenience of the shopping center customer experience. However, the

interviews also indicated that the shopping center manager would essentially enable a platform for these kinds of services, which all key stakeholders could then utilize.

6.3. Summary of findings

The following figures (Figure 4 & Figure 5) summarize the findings of this study. The figures are divided into preventing and enabling factors of value alignment, where different factors are positioned within the case company's value network. The figures enable to evaluate which factors relate to shopping center manager – tenant, tenant – tenant and tenant – end customer relationships.

In addition to the key stakeholders, other relations like the tenant – chain relationship was also identified. Further, some of the enabling factors related to all stakeholders within the shopping center value network, which is marked as a separate circle in Figure 5.

Figure 4: *Factors preventing value alignment*
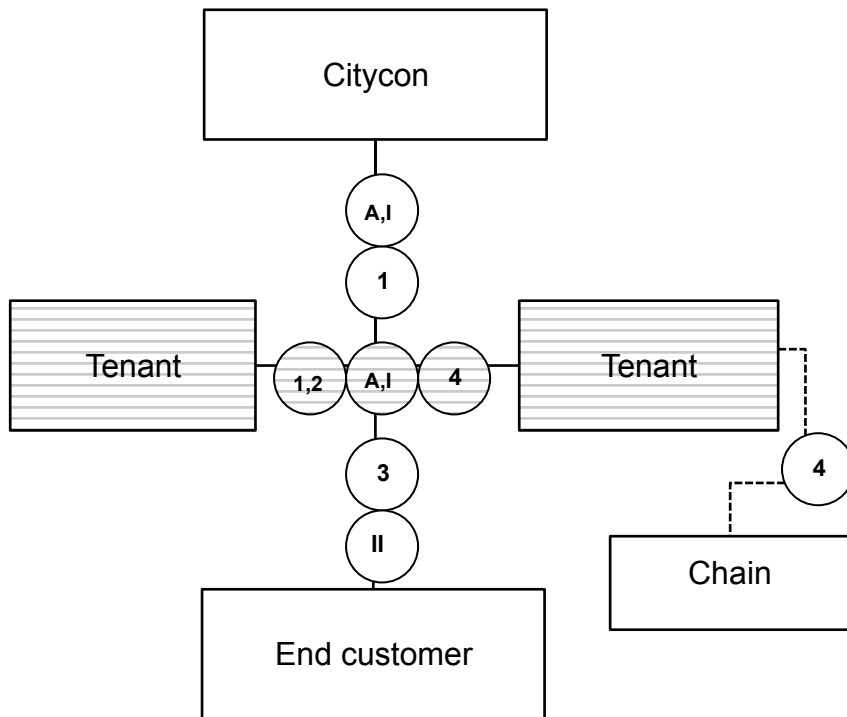
Heterogeneity of actors
1) Brand fit - differentiation vs. centralization
2) Operating model - efficiency vs. personalization
3) Customer-related goals - getting customers spend more time in shopping center vs. not
4) Competition - differentiation vs. centralization

Unclear responsibilities
A) Need for clear responsibilities – Shopping center manager as the concept owner, providing service platform for interaction
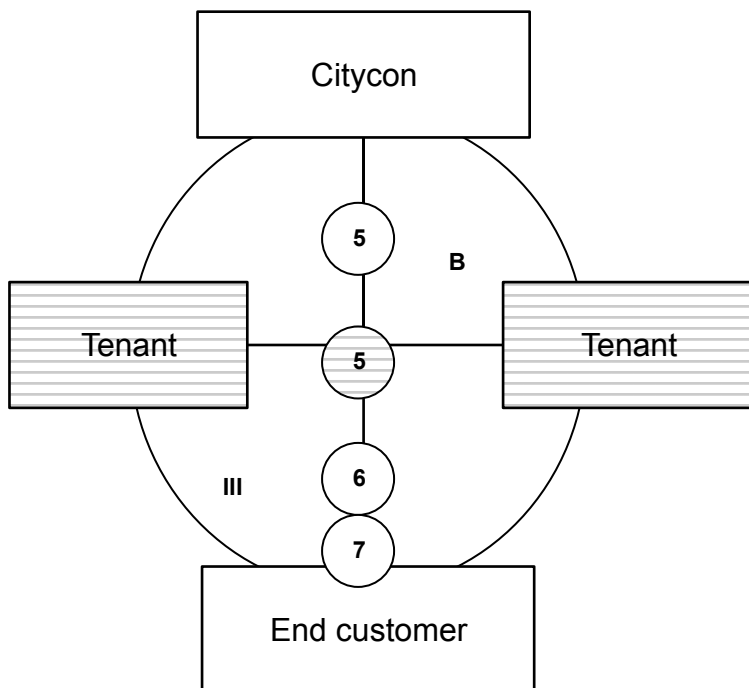
Implementation
I) Technical issues & complex data
II) Permission & privacy concerns

Stakeholder link
A,I,1   Citycon-tenant related
1,2,A,I,4   Tenant-tenant related
3,II   Tenant-end customer related
4   Tenant-chain related

Figure 5: *Factors enabling value alignment*

Facilitating knowledge sharing
5) Distributing customer-related data to enhance service optimization
6) Gaining customer data about e.g. queuing, preferences, ratings, recommendations
7) Daily customer dialogue and crisis communications e.g. harmful products

Integrating service offerings
B) Data-enabled service integration through all levels, e.g. feedback, post-sales services, context-based offers and content, point-of-need information

Providing mutual services
III) Open community-based platform of services for all stakeholders to utilize and develop: security communications, navigation, car locator, point-of-need information: opening hours, bus & metro schedules, events, ratings & reviews

Stakeholder link
5   Citycon-tenant related
5   Tenant-tenant related
6,7   Tenant-end customer related
B,III   All stakeholders

7. Discussion

This case study contributed to the theories of service science and service-dominant logic by suggesting that mobile technology has the potential to enable value alignment within a multiple stakeholder environment in several ways. This study extended the perspective from one organization to a multiple stakeholder environment where end customers, tenants and shopping center manager were all identified as important stakeholders within the shopping center context. Thus, this study suggested that service-dominant logic enables to view tenants as active participants within the shopping center who possess skills and knowledge about end customers, which are essential to understand in order to integrate new services. The customer-centric approach further enables to understand the needs and goals of different stakeholders and use this knowledge as a baseline to create value propositions for new services.

In line with the study by Frow & Payne (2011) this research supported the notion that value propositions can play a key role in enabling value alignment within a marketing system but they may also reflect conflicting interests. Accordingly, this study identified both enabling and preventing factors for value alignment. The mobile service could enable value alignment within a shopping center context through knowledge sharing, service integration and mutual service provision. However, several preventing aspects were also identified, including heterogeneity of actors, unclear responsibilities and challenges in implementation. The enabling and preventing factors identified in this research contribute to existing theory by allowing visioning an ideal shopping center environment. The key theoretical aspects of this study from a service-dominant perspective include facilitating dialogue as a prerequisite for value alignment, the art of balancing stakeholders and information technology as the key driver for service integration and collaboration.

7.1. Dialogue facilitation a prerequisite for value alignment

Within a decentralized market environment like the shopping center understanding value perceptions of different stakeholders is essential in grasping how they are linked to other service systems within the value network. The study indicated that forming a clear value proposition about mobile services would be essential in order to facilitate adoption of such solutions. Supporting Frow & Payne (2011), facilitating dialogue and involving value network participants in service development and creation of value propositions would be essential in order to achieve value alignment. In addition, understanding heterogeneous actors within the value network proved to be crucial in order to balance stakeholders and utilize mobile services in the best possible way.

This study illustrated how interviewing only one layer of stakeholders within a value network could provide valuable insight into the dynamics of how different actors link to each other within a value network. In line with Skålén et al. (2014), this study suggested that possessing the right resources is not enough but the key to successful service innovation is the ability to integrate them into attractive value propositions. This means adapting and communicating the value of such services to multiple stakeholders based on their goals and context in order to facilitate adoption. Thus, supporting the definition of value proposition by Chandler & Lusch (2014) they should be customized based on the relevance to different actors. Within a perfect scenario this means that shopping center manager is aware of the needs and goals of different tenants and is able to develop mobile services, which tenants perceive valuable in serving end customers better. Thus, in line with Frow et al. (2014) the value propositions could potentially results in mutual benefit for all stakeholders within the value network by enhancing the overall shopping center competitiveness.

Implied by this study the simple act of facilitating dialogue between participants could provide an extended view of the value network and synergies between the service providers. Supporting Ballantyne et al. (2011) this study illuminated how knowing mobile service value propositions between participants could extend the view of

resource integration from pre-sale to post-sale. Thus, the mobile service could be used to create a sense of flow in shopping center customer experience and used to support the customer journey. Based on the customer preferences the services would be context-relevant and support all interactions with different service providers throughout the shopping center customer experience.

7.2. The fine art of balancing stakeholders within shopping centers

Layton (2011) describes shopping malls as marketing systems in which the participating actors may be micro or meso level organizations competing or collaborating within a system. This description applies perfectly also to the shopping center context. This study illustrated how conflicting interests and internal competition are inevitable within a shopping center context. However, mobile services could ease these tensions by contributing to mutual goals of participants, like enhancing service convenience. The art of balancing stakeholders within the shopping center includes two aspects. On the other hand this study suggested that mobile services within a multiple stakeholder environment requires clearly defined roles where the shopping center manager would be the concept owner. On the other hand the blurring of stakeholder roles within this context further implied that managing the system is impossible. As pointed out by Vargo et al. (2008) the distinction between the producer and consumer no longer exist in service systems. The mobile technologies seemed to speed up to this trend as online and offline environments blurred also the roles of tenants and end customers, for example through the increase in self-service and in-store mobile use. As stated by Sandstrom et al. (2008) this might also post challenges on grasping the factors influencing the service experience and how it connects to the company's value offerings. Therefore, facilitating dialogue between different stakeholders could ease this problem by giving a better understanding about how different offerings are linked to the overall shopping center service offering.

Pointed out by Kowalkowski et al. (2012) customers should be regarded as resource-integrating actors with many faces. Accordingly, this study suggested that

the key aspect in terms of value alignment within shopping centers lies in understanding the multiple roles of tenants. Despite the fact that they are service providers within the value network they are also customers. Moreover, the growing role of self-service and peer-to-peer platforms further shift these roles as the end customers increasingly act as service providers to each other. This increases the complexity of relationships within the value network. Therefore, staying sensitive to the dynamic nature of roles within the shopping center is central in achieving value alignment through new services.

Based on this study, an optimal shopping center mobile solution would include the shopping center manager as the platform owner and prime service integrator. This notion relates to Lusch et al. (2007) who suggest that a truly service-dominant retailer would regard the whole community as a storehouse of resources to co-operate with in order to aid the community and give competitive advantage. Similarly the shopping center manager could provide a platform for knowledge sharing and service provision, where different services would be customized according to context and preferences of customers. Thus, the shopping center manager would have a facilitator role in the service innovation platform, which would be open for the whole shopping center community including tenants and end customers.

7.3. Mobile technology as the key driver for collaboration and service integration

This study supported Lusch et al. (2010) by suggesting that mobile technology could enable to spread knowledge of end customers and business processes throughout the shopping center value network. In line with Rust (2004) the information technology seemed to drive the focus towards service-dominant logic. This was illustrated by descriptions of increased interactivity, connectivity and integration between actors. By viewing the shopping center customer experience as a combination of different touch points and channels scattered across time the importance of alignment is emphasized.

As suggested by this study the importance of facilitating dialogue and exploring value perceptions of new services is essential before integrating such solutions. Within an ideal shopping center scenario this means that tenants are able to serve end customers better through service customization and enhanced convenience. On the other hand, end customers perceive the value-for-time of such services and experience a smooth service experience within the shopping center. However, if the services were only developed to the end customers without the input of tenants the value of such solutions would fall short at the point when end customers interact with tenants. This is due to the fact that tenants are the closest link to the customer interface and position in the midst of the value network. Therefore, it is essential to involve tenants to the service development in order to achieve full service integration and seamless customer experience. In conclusion, this study suggests that by adopting a service-dominant logic perspective within a multiple stakeholder environment could contribute to value alignment particularly in the context of new service innovations. To achieve value alignment within this context, the focus should be drawn from profit maximization to customer lifetime value.

8. Conclusion

8.1 Research summary

This research was motivated by the lack of case-based research in service-dominant logic aimed at exploring value alignment within a multiple stakeholder environment. The decentralized nature of shopping centers creates challenges in value alignment. However, the new interactive technologies create opportunities to collaborate between stakeholders. Therefore, the aim of this study was to shed light on the complexity of the shopping center service system and explore how mobile solutions could enable value alignment in this context. The objective was to identify both enabling and preventing factors of value alignment.

This study adopted a customer-centric approach by exploring tenants' value perceptions of a shopping center mobile service and how it could offer opportunities for value alignment. By using thematic semi-structured interviews the study utilized a theoretical framework combining an iterative process model for exploring value alignment with key benefits of mobile technology. Value alignment through the mobile service was understood as a state, in which the shopping center manager could better serve the tenants and tenants could better serve the end customers.

The findings of this study illuminated both enabling and preventing factors for value alignment. The mobile service could enable value alignment within a shopping center context through knowledge sharing, service integration and mutual service provision. However, several preventing aspects were also identified, including heterogeneity of actors, unclear responsibilities and challenges in implementation. According to the findings facilitating dialogue between key stakeholders and understanding their value perceptions is the starting point for achieving value alignment in the context of shopping center mobile solutions.

This case study contributed to the service science and service-dominant logic literature by providing in-depth insight into value alignment in the context of shopping

center mobile services. Further, it illuminated the role of information technology as an enabler in the shopping center value alignment. The importance of this work lies in addressing complexity in order to achieve unity. This case study suggested that mobile technology has the potential to align value within a multiple stakeholder environment in several ways but this requires a customer-centric approach, which aims to understand the needs and goals of different stakeholders in order to balance them. Thus, this study suggested that service-dominant logic enables to view tenants as active participants within the shopping center who possess skills and knowledge about end customers, which are essential to understand in order to create mutual value and integrate new services. Therefore, enabling value alignment through mobile services will prove challenging unless dialogue is facilitated with different actors within the value network.

8.2 Managerial implications

The most important managerial implication of this study relates to understanding the complexity of value alignment within a decentralized shopping center environment and what kind of business challenges and opportunities it creates. The importance of this work lies in broadening the focus from a firm-customer perspective to a strategic one, in which tenants are seen as essential business partners and central to the competitiveness of the shopping center. This study illuminated the multifaceted nature of the shopping center environment and how mobile solutions could support value alignment within this context. The findings showed concrete preventers and enablers, which should be considered when adopting such services.

New technologies add complexity to grasping customer experience within shopping centers as the online and offline environments converge. Simultaneously, the growing role of end customers shifts the dynamics between service providers and customers. However, the new solutions also add major opportunities to tap into unique service solutions for integrating offerings and adding value to the end customers. This study suggested that facilitating dialogue and finding mutual goals between stakeholders is the key in aligning value within a shopping center

environment. It is also important to understand the goals of different tenants, which might be chain operators, service providers or specialty stores. These actors have different perceptions based on their context and goals, which further influence their value perceptions of mobile services. In order to provide value-adding solutions to the end customers, these solutions should also be synced with the tenants', which provide the closest link to the customer interface. Therefore, facilitating dialogue and inviting shopping center tenants to mobile service development could result in bigger adoption rates and enhanced shopping center customer experience. Moreover it is essential to identify mutual goals, which in the shopping center relate to enhancing service convenience and coherence of the customer experience.

Based on this study there is a need to think about shopping centers as comprehensive solutions for end customers where mobile technology enables seamless service integration between actors. The online environments demand physical environments to adapt. Thus, the traditional retail business based on large square meters might prove inefficient in the near future as smaller modular spaces are customized based on seasonal and local customer needs. This further raises the importance of open data and breaking silos between private and even public services in order to deliver superior service experiences to the end customers. As suggested by this study the key to sustaining competitiveness lies in collaborating with value network stakeholders with mutually beneficial ways. This is the only means to survive in the increasingly networked business environment.

8.3 Limitations and future research

Several limitations of this study provide fruitful avenues for further research. The findings of this study are limited to the shopping center under exploration and aren't therefore generalizable to other contexts. However, similar kinds of studies from other shopping centers could create interesting insights into the factors affecting value alignment. One of the key limitations of this study relate to the point of time. As value alignment is an aspect, which is continuously changing it would be important to conduct a longitudinal study where its development could be encountered. This

could mean for example exploring how value perceptions of tenants change over time as dialogue is facilitated and they are incorporated to develop the mobile service. Alternatively, value alignment could be explored before and after adopting a shopping center mobile service, and comparing results how perceptions change.

Secondly, one of the key limitations of this study related to the lack of data about end users' value perceptions. In future studies end customers' perceptions could be compared to other stakeholders. This would provide a more holistic view about value alignment of the shopping center service system. If the mobile service prototype would already exist, user experimentations and field studies could also give more concrete value-in-use data to explore value alignment.

Finally, one limitation of this study relates to addressing different stakeholders views at the same time. One research method, which would bring interesting insight into value alignment, would be focus groups. Each focus group could include people from end customers, tenants and shopping center manager. This would provide a fruitful context to explore how interaction between different stakeholders affects value perceptions. This kind of method could further provide rich insight into how different conflicting aspects would be resolved within a group situation.

References

Abela, A. V., & Murphy, P. E. (2008). Marketing with integrity: ethics and the service-dominant logic for marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *36*(1), 39-53.

Ballantyne, D., & Varey, R. J. (2006). Creating value-in-use through marketing interaction: the exchange logic of relating, communicating and knowing. *Marketing Theory*, *6*(3), 335-348.

Ballantyne, D., Frow, P., Varey, R. J., & Payne, A. (2011). Value propositions as communication practice: Taking a wider view. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *40*(2), 202-210.

Barnes, S. J. (2002). Wireless digital advertising: nature and implications. *International Journal of Advertising*, *21*(3), 399-420.

Berry, L. L., Seiders, K., & Grewal, D. (2002). Understanding service convenience. *Journal of Marketing*, *66*(3), 1-17.

Chandler, J. D., & Lusch, R. F. (2014). Service Systems A Broadened Framework and Research Agenda on Value Propositions, Engagement, and Service Experience. *Journal of Service Research*, 1094670514537709.

Clarke, I. (2001). Emerging value propositions for m-commerce. *Journal of Business Strategies*, *18*(2), 133.

Dubois, A., & Gadde, L. E. (2002). Systematic combining: an abductive approach to case research. *Journal of Business Research*, *55*(7), 553-560.

Edvardsson, B., Tronvoll, B., & Gruber, T. (2011). Expanding understanding of service exchange and value co-creation: a social construction approach. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39(2), 327-339.

Eisenhardt, K. M., & Graebner, M. E. (2007). Theory building from cases: opportunities and challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, *50*(1), 25-32.

Eriksson, P., & Kovalainen, A. (2008). Qualitative methods in business research. Sage.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative inquiry*, *12*(2), 219-245.

Frow, P., & Payne, A. (2011). A stakeholder perspective of the value proposition concept. *European Journal of Marketing*, *45*(1/2), 223-240.

Frow, P., McColl-Kennedy, J. R., Hilton, T., Davidson, A., Payne, A., & Brozovic, D. (2014). Value propositions A service ecosystems perspective. *Marketing Theory*, 1470593114534346.

Gerring, J. (2004). What is a case study and what is it good for?. *American Political Science Review*, *98*(02), 341-354.

Hirsjärvi, S. & Hurme, H. (2008). Tutkimushaastattelu. Teemahaastattelun teoria ja käytäntö. Gaudeamus Helsinki University Press, Helsinki.

Kowalkowski, C., Persson Ridell, O., Röndell, J. G., & Sörhammar, D. (2012). The co-creative practice of forming a value proposition. *Journal of Marketing Management*, *28*(13-14), 1553-1570.

Layton, R. A. (2011). Towards a theory of marketing systems. *European Journal of Marketing*, *45*(1/2), 259-276.

Lusch, R. F., & Webster, F. E. (2011). A stakeholder-unifying, cocreation philosophy for marketing. *Journal of Macromarketing*, *31*(2), 129-134.

Lusch, R. F., Vargo, S. L., & O'Brien, M. (2007). Competing through service: Insights from service-dominant logic. *Journal of retailing*, *83*(1), 5-18.

Lusch, R. F., Vargo, S. L., & Tanniru, M. (2010). Service, value networks and learning. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *38*(1), 19-31.

Maglio, P. P., & Spohrer, J. (2008). Fundamentals of service science. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *36*(1), 18-20.

Payne, A. F., Storbacka, K., & Frow, P. (2008). Managing the co-creation of value. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *36*(1), 83-96.

Peltier, J. W., Schibrowsky, J. A., & Schultz, D. E. (2003). Interactive integrated marketing communication: combining the power of IMC, the new media and database marketing. *International Journal of Advertising*, 22(1), 93-115.

Price, L. L., & Arnould, E. J. (1999). Commercial friendships: service provider-client relationships in context. *The Journal of Marketing*, 38-56.

Pura, M. (2005). Linking perceived value and loyalty in location-based mobile services. *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal*, *15*(6), 509-538.

Rust, Roland T. (2004), "If Everything Is Service, Why Is This Happening Now, and What Difference Does it Make?" in "Invited Commentaries on 'Evolving to a New Dominant Logic for Marketing," *Journal of Marketing*, 68 (1), 18-27.

Saarijärvi, H. (2012). The mechanisms of value co-creation. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, *20*(5), 381-391.

Saarijärvi, H., Mitronen, L., & Yrjölä, M. (2014). From selling to supporting–Leveraging mobile services in the context of food retailing. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *21*(1), 26-36.

Sandström, S., Edvardsson, B., Kristensson, P., & Magnusson, P. (2008). Value in use through service experience. *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal*, *18*(2), 112-126.

Shankar, V., & Balasubramanian, S. (2009). Mobile marketing: a synthesis and prognosis. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *23*(2), 118-129.

Shankar, V., Venkatesh, A., Hofacker, C., & Naik, P. (2010). Mobile marketing in the retailing environment: current insights and future research avenues. *Journal of interactive marketing*, *24*(2), 111-120.

Sinisalo, J., Salo, J., Karjaluoto, H., & Leppäniemi, M. (2007). Mobile customer relationship management: underlying issues and challenges. *Business Process Management Journal*, *13*(6), 771-787.

Skålén, P., Gummerus, J., von Koskull, C., & Magnusson, P. R. (2014). Exploring value propositions and service innovation: a service-dominant logic study. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *43*(2), 137-158.

Sultan, F., & Rohm, A. (2005). The coming era of" brand in the hand" marketing. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 47(1), 83.

Sultan, F., & Rohm, A. J. (2008). How to market to generation m (obile). *MIT Sloan Management Review*, *49*(4), 35.

Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2004). Evolving to a new dominant logic for marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, *68*(1), 1-17.

Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2008a). Service-dominant logic: continuing the evolution. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *36*(1), 1-10.

Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2008b). Why "service"?. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 36(1), 25-38.

Vargo, S. L., Maglio, P. P., & Akaka, M. A. (2008). On value and value co-creation: A service systems and service logic perspective. *European Management Journal*, *26*(3), 145-152.

Yin, R. K. (1994). Case study research: Design and methods (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview guide

Background

    // Name // Title // Company // Revenue // Chain operator or entrepreneur

    // If a chain operator - Marketing centralised or decentralised

    // Main customer segment

    // Participation in shopping center development

    // Mobile use in own marketing strategy? How?

    // Thoughts about Citycon's mobile app? Development ideas for the mobile app?

Personalization – What kind of personalised marketing could be offered?

- What is the meaning of this value aspect? What is kind of things they currently do around this value aspect?
- How could mobile-enabled personalisation be used for your customers?
- How could mobile be used to engage with your customers?
- What is the role of social media in this?

Localization – What kind of location-based marketing could be utilised in the shopping center context?

- What shopping center related communication means to you and what is currently done in this?
- What kind of location-based service/content could be offered within the shopping center?
- How to prolong the time spent within the shopping center?

Convenience – How mobile can be used to enhance the convenience within shopping center? Aspects enabling time/context utility?

- What is the meaning of convenience to your business and what is currently done related to this aspect?

- How can mobile enable making service process more convenient?
- How can mobile help the findability of your location?
- How to enhance the service experience?

Ubiquity – **What ubiquitous services could be offered?**

- What does continuous connectivity to customers mean to your business? What is currently done within this domain?
- How to attract customers to the shopping center?
- Views to mobile integration?
- How to utilise mobile in making shopping center more attractive?

Any specific wishes from the customers? Ideas? Comments?