

Factors That Affect Customers Willingness to Use Self Service Technologies at Hospitality Organizations

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Abstract:

Many hotels and restaurants have installed self service check in out and have recently provided new self service technologies. To successfully implement and use self service technologies, it is important for the hospitality operators to understand the factors that determine both willingness and resistance of the customers to use self service technologies. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore factors that affect customers willingness to embrace the usage of self service technologies. Comprehensive understanding of customers behavior related to their demographic factors and readiness will promote successful implementation of new SSTs as well as effective modifications of existing SSTs. Structural equation modeling was conducted to test hypotheses with a sample of 180 consumers. The results indicate that consumer's extrinsic motivation had the most significant impact on their likelihood of using new SSTs. Also, younger customers and those who do not believe in interactions with employees at hospitality industry were also more likely to use these SSTs.

Keywords: self service technology (SST)

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Introduction:

The use of self service technologies SST is evolving as more hotels and restaurants adopt the technology and seek new applications for it. ⁽¹⁾ Many major hotel chains have followed the lead set by airlines and installed self service kiosks to expedite their check in process. ⁽²⁾ It appears that hotels are trying to lever this trend in technology. For example, implement a self service ordering device at each of the pool lounge chairs as a way to improve guest service levels. ⁽³⁾ Also, touch screen tables for food and bar orders were recently adopted to meet the younger customers' needs. ⁽⁴⁾ Benefits of using SST opportunities from implementing SSTs appear to have strong preference because of there is cost savings involved in operators. ⁽⁵⁾ Some hotels could increase selling by providing more products or services available on the screen of a kiosk without increasing labor costs. ⁽⁶⁾ Furthermore, using SSTs will assist hospitality operators to increase customer retention, displaying more personalized information on the kiosk screen or other devices. ⁽⁷⁾ Also, SST gave shorter wait times, the feeling of control and the privacy. ⁽⁸⁾ Moreover a number of people can be served by a single employee. ⁽⁹⁾

The impact of consumer readiness to use SST:

Consumer readiness is defined as a condition in which a consumer is prepared and likely to use an innovation for the first time. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Processing high levels consumer readiness is likely to lead to usage of new technology; On the other hand low levels of readiness may slow down the usage. ⁽¹¹⁾ Understanding customer readiness is specifically significant to the adoption of new technology at hospitality settings because of service inseparability and variability. Service inseparability means that customers are a part of the product, indicating that a customer must know how to use SST service variability means that service quality depends on who provides them and when and where they are provided. ⁽¹²⁾

Role clarity:

Role clarity refers to how well a consumer understands what role or performance is required to adequately produce a service using SSTs. ⁽¹³⁾ since services in the hospitality industry are usually provided by employees, the usage of SSTs requires new consumer coproduction behavior. In addition, many SSTs are performed separately from service employees or other customers, thus reduced the opportunity for customers to learn or observe skills to use SSTs. ⁽¹⁴⁾ Previous studies suggest that the consumers' participation in using an innovation can be affected by their lack of understanding of their roles in the process. Thus, if potential users of an SST understand the role to be performed (how to knowledge), they will be more likely to use it. ⁽¹⁵⁾

Ability:

The ability concept relates to what an individual can do rather than knowing how to do it. Ability also refers to having the necessary skills required to perform a certain task. ⁽¹⁶⁾ Industrial psychology literature has supported the relationship between ability and the performance of a task. ⁽¹⁷⁾ Other previous research proposed that the adoption of technology is influenced by users' ability to develop the basic skills and their perceived confidence in the ability to engage in specific tasks. ⁽¹⁸⁾ Similarly, ⁽¹⁹⁾ It is contended that customers who use SSTs are usually found to have a high level of self efficacy in using technology and assumes that the likelihood of using SSTs will be affected by perceptions of individual capability to perform the task.

Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation:

Having alternative service delivery options available (human or SST), it is necessary to understand how to encourage customers to put their additional effort to produce service through the use of SSTs. This encouragement may come in the form of either extrinsic or intrinsic motivation. ⁽²⁰⁾ According to ⁽²¹⁾ self determinant theory, extrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it leads to a distinguishable outcome, and intrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable. Moreover, extrinsic is motivational forces as increased pay, cost savings, time savings, promotions, and other fringe benefits and intrinsic is motivational forces as feelings of accomplishments, personal growth, or others that related to the pleasure of engaging in the activity⁽²²⁾

It was found that there is a significant relationship between extrinsic motivation (incentives) and performance of life insurance salesmen. ⁽²³⁾ Also revealed that extrinsic motivation, such as pay and promotions, is superior to intrinsic motivation in predicting employee effort. ⁽²⁴⁾ Moreover that extrinsic motivation is necessary if the intrinsic motivation is not sufficient to motivate consumers to use SSTs. It is rational to assume that offering extrinsic rewards, such as price discount or fast transaction, will increase the likelihood of using SST⁽²⁵⁾

Intrinsic motivation has been found to affect an individual's technology acceptance level. It was found that intrinsic motivation has a significant direct effect on the intention to use computers in the workplace.⁽²⁶⁾ Similarly⁽²⁷⁾ found the support for a positive relationship between perceived enjoyment and internet usage. In the hospitality Industry, some customers will find participation in the production of service via SSTs to be intrinsically attractive. Therefore, it is appropriate to assume that consumers with high intrinsic remarks, such as enjoyment or empowerment, will be more likely to use SSTs

The impact of individual difference on likelihood of using SSTs

It was found that females with children and single males aged 40 years and younger were most likely to use SSTs⁽²⁸⁾ Also, consumers who use new technology tend to be male, younger, and more educated. ⁽²⁹⁾ It was revealed that females are increasingly using technology, there by limiting influence of genders differences in technology adoption behavior. ⁽³⁰⁾

The positive impact of previous experience on the technology adoption play an important role in the likelihood of using SSTs.⁽³¹⁾ The familiarity with technology from experience reduces the cognitive effort required to use it, thus increasing the likelihood of using it. Additionally, it is has been found that early adopters of technology are more likely to use new technology. Also, experienced users require little introduction to understand how to use a software ⁽³²⁾

Package whereas inexperienced users needed significant help. means that the users with a higher level of computer experience will be more likely to try the new software⁽³³⁾

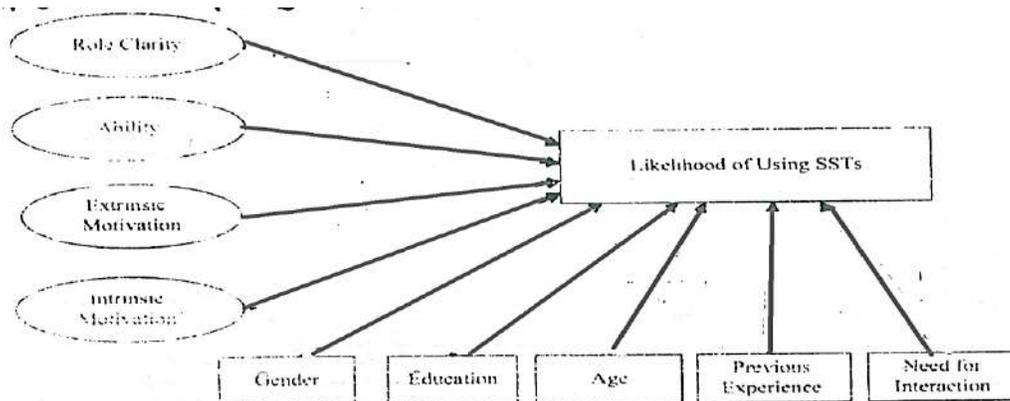
Need for interaction:

Is defined as a consumer's desire to have personal contact with others during service encounters ⁽³⁴⁾ It was found that the need for interaction with service employees has a negative impact on the attitude toward a new SST⁽³⁵⁾ Also, some consumers prefer to use SSTs to stay away from the interpersonal interactions if customers feel an increased need for interpersonal encounters at a hospitality industry, the need will have a negative effect on service quality of SSTs, and thus they will be less likely to use SSTs⁽³⁶⁾ Thus the purpose of this study was to explore influential factors related to individual differences and customer readiness on the likelihood of using SSTs.

Method:

A sample was randomly selected from five star hotels in Alexandria city, including 180 customers, to collect data. A structured interviewing questionnaire was designed and consists of the following items the first item was about gender, age and education level of customers. The second item asks customers if they have ever used self service technologies (SST), hesitating of using technology for fear of making mistakes believe that using self service technologies in hospitality industry is useful and if they believe that self service technologies in hospitality industry are easy to use. The third item were adapted customers opinions about SSTs, if there are understandable instructions regarding how to use SSTs, the capability of using SSTs, if customers feel independence, enjoyment and worthwhile. The respondents were requested to respond on a five point likert scale with 5 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree. The fourth item adopted the self service technologies that customers preference degree for likelihood of using SSTs such as touch screen table to order food, check in/out at hotel lobby, language translation in a conference, on line purchases, and ordering food or other service at pool areas and internet information access kiosks in a restaurant on 5 point likert type scales, the endpoints of scales were very unlikely was coded as number 2, neutral as number 3, likely as number 4 and very likely as number 5. five factors were measured: role clarity, ability, extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation and likelihood of using SSTs to achieve that a measurement model were built according to⁽³⁷⁾ The statements for role clarity, ability, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and the likelihood of using SSTs are used as indicators (table1).

Figure1 : Research Framework of the study



Test validity:

The questionnaire was reviewed by four professors in faculty of tourism and hotel to improve clarity of wording and to enhance the construct and content validity of the questionnaire.

Table.1 indicators in the measurement model

Indicators for likelihood of using SSTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1- touch screen table to order food or other service at restaurants or bars 2- kiosks for ordering food or service at pool areas 3- kiosks for ordering food at quick service restaurants 4- kiosks for ticket redemption or cash change.
Indicators of ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1- I believe I am fully capable of using SSTs. 2- I am confident in my ability to use SSTs. 3- Using SSTs is well within the scope of my abilities.
Indicators of role clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1- usually there are understandable instructions regarding how to use SSTs in a hospitality industry. 2- I know what is expected from me if I use SSTs 3- The steps in the process of using SSTs in hospitality setting are clear to me.
Indicators of extrinsic motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1- when I am in hospitality industry, convenience while ordering services/ making transactions is desirable. 2- When I conduct transactions in hospitality industry being able to do them fast is desirable 3- When I conduct transactions in hospitality industry being able to conduct them when ever I want is desirable
Indicators of intrinsic motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1- When I conduct a transaction using SSTs in hospitality industry, a personal feeling of worthwhile accomplishment is desirable 2- When I conduct a transaction using SSTs in hospitality industry, a personal feeling of enjoyment (e.g cool and fun) is desirable. 3- when I conduct a transaction using SSTs in a feeling of independence is desirable

Test reliability:

The value of reliability odd was 0.94 and it's a statistical value.

Statistical analysis:

Data was fed to the computer using FoxPro data and SPSS version 16.0 for tabulation and analysis as follows: percentage, means and SD used for continuous variables. T.test was used to compare two means of continuous variables, and path coefficient (β) was used.

Results:

Table 2. Shows that more than half of the sample were male (60.0%) and 53.30% of the sample were of 33 to 43 years old. Most of the respondents had graduate degree (88.30%)

Gender	N.	%
Male	108	60.0
Female	72	40.0
Age		
19- 32	15	8.4
33- 43	96	53.3
44 – 63	69	38.30
Education:		
Undergraduate degree	5	2.80
Graduate degree	159	88.30
Postgraduate degree	16	8.90

Table 3. shows the distribution of the sample according to likelihood of using self service technologies. 94.4% of the sample believe that using SSTs is useful and 88.3% of them didn't fear of making mistakes. This consider a reasonable percentage. Aspasilly, It was found that fear of making mistakes has negative effect on using self service technologies.⁽³⁸⁾

Table 3. Distribution of the sample according to likelihood of using SSTs

Statement	Yes		No	
	n.	%	n.	%
You ever used any self service technologies				
It is important to you to interact with employees in a hotel or restaurant	129	71.7	51	28.3
You hesitate to use most forms of technology for fear of making mistakes you cannot correct	69	38.3	111	61.7
Using self service technologies in a hospitality industry is useful.	21	11.7	159	88.3
You believe that self service technologies in hospitality industry are easy to use.	170	94.4	10	5.5

Table 4 shows the opinion of using self service technologies in hospitality setting. Most of the sample (82.8%) strongly agree that using SSTs gave a feeling of enjoyment. Almost half of the sample (53.8%) strongly agree that always there are understandable instructions regarding how to use SSTs. 53.8% of the sample agree that they are fully capable of using SSTs. Also, ⁽³⁹⁾ found that if customers feel capable of using SSTs. this will have a positive effect on using it, and thus will be more likely to use it.

Table 4. Distribution of the sample according to their opinions about self service technologies in hospitality

Statement	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither disagree nor agree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%
Usually there are understandable instructions regarding how to use SSTs	8	44	27	15.4	5	2.8	156	86.6	97	5.8
I know what is expected from me if I use SSTs.	9	5.0	71	89.40	70	38.9	163	90.5	70	38.9
The steps in the process of using SSTs are clear to me	4	2.2	27	5.6	54	30.0	102	56.7	71	39.4
I believe I am fully capable of using SSTs.	5	2.8	27	15.0	85	47.3	97	53.8	99	55.0
I am confident in my ability to use SSTs	7	3.8	26	14.4	54	30.0	99	55.8	54	30.0
Using SSTs is well within the scope of my abilities	2	101	18	10.0	27	15.0	97	53.8	70	38.9
When I am convenience while ordering services or making transactions is desirable	7	3.8	27	15.0	70	38.9	163	90.5	70	38.9
When I conduct transactions, being able to do them fast is desirable.	10	5.5	54	30.0	27	15.0	159	88.3	70	38.9
When I conduct transactions, being able to conduct them whenever I want is desirable.	13	7.3	24	13.3	54	30.8	103	54.3	157	87.2
When I conduct a transactions using SSTs setting personal feeling of worthwhile accomplishment is desirable.	2	1.1	18	10.0	54	30.0	99	55.8	99	55.0
When I conduct a transaction using SST a personal feeling of enjoyment (e.g, cool and fun) is desirable.	4	2.2	5	2.8	26	14.4	171	95.0	149	82.8
When I conduct a transaction using SST, a feeling of independence is desirable.	9	5.0	26	14.4	54	30.0	102	56.7	99	55.0

Table 5. Shows the preference degree of likelihood of using SST. 88.9% very likely use touch screen table to order food, 95.0% very likely order food or other service at pool areas. Also, more than half of the sample (55.0% - 56.7%) very likely use vending machines and ATMs. respectively. This results agree with ⁽⁴⁰⁾ who found that 60% of the respondent being very likely to use them.

Table 5 Distribution of the sample according to the preference degree of likelihood of using SST

Statement	Very unlikely		Unlikely		Neutral		Likely		Very likely	
Price checker in shopping malls	7	3.8	16	8.9	70	38.9	70	38.9	16	8.9
Kiosks for car rental return	5	2.8	13	7.3	54	30.0	102	56.0	99	55.0
Kiosk for theater ticketing	2	1.1	5	2.8	64	35.5	123	68.3	47	26.2
Check in/out kiosks at a hotel lobby	5	2.8	13	7.3	171	95.0	103	39.4	85	47.3
Airline check in/boarding pass printing kiosks at a hotel lobby or via internet	10	5.0	24	13.3	85	47.3	71	39.4	85	47.5
kiosks for language translation at a ferance	4	2.2	17	9.4	160	88.9	54	30.0	149	82.8
Internet information access kiosks in a hotel lobby, convention center, or other public venues.	2	1.1	4	2.2	27	15.0	159	88.3	103	57.3
Internet information access kiosks	8	4.4	27	15.0	102	56.7	99	55	123	68.3
Touch screen table to order food or other service at restaurants	5	2.8	19	10.6	70	38.9	97	53.8	160	88.9
Kiosks for ordering food or other services at pool areas	2	1.1	17	9.4	85	47.3	159	88.3	171	95.0
Kiosks for ordering food at quick service restaurants	7	3.8	27	15.0	156	86.6	170	94.4	102	56.7
DVD kiosks at a hotel	6	3.4	13	7.3	102	56.7	163	90.5	101	56.2
Kiosks for cash change	4	3.2	24	13.3	71	39.4	170	94.4	103	57.3
Vending machines	2	1.2	13	7.3	70	38.9	102	56.7	99	56.0
ATMs	3	1.7	7	3.8	99	55.0	103	57.3	102	56.7
Voice automated response systems	5	2.8	6	3.4	70	38.9	85	47.3	99	55.0
Pay at the pump (gas)	2	1.2	8	4.4	97	53.8	70	38.9	85	47.2
Internet self help (medical. Computer support, etc.)	5	2.8	7	3.8	70	38.9	103	57.3	159	88.3

On line purchases (travel bookings, retail)	4	3.2	6	3.4	70	38.9	149	82.8	70	38.9
PDA's/ smart phones for ordering food or other services	2	1.2	7	3.8	71	39.4	103	57.3	99	55.0

Table 6. shows the mean and standard deviation for likelihood of using self service technologies to understand different levels of preference toward each SST. The mean values of likelihood of using each SST were sorted from most preferable to least preferable SSTs. As a result, pay at the pump, online purchase (e.g. travel bookings and retail), in room check out, and ATMs were the SSTs used often (higher than 1.0 mean values in likelihood). More than 80% of the respondents were likely or very likely to use these SSTs.

SSTs with mean values of likelihood between 3.5 and 4.0 were the following: internet self help (medical, computer support, etc.) vending machines, airline check- in/ boarding pass printing kiosks at the hotel lobby or via internet, price checker in shopping malls, check out kiosks at grocery stores or other retail outlets, check in/check out kiosks at a hotel lobby, kiosks for ordering food at quick service restaurants, touch screen table to order food or other services at restaurants or bars, and internet information access kiosks in the hotel lobby, convention center, or other public venues. Approximately 60% to 70% of the respondents were likely or very likely to use these SST.

SSTs with mean values of likelihood ranging from 3.0 to 3.5 were the following: kiosks for ticket redemption or cash change, kiosks for ordering food or other, kiosks for theater ticketing, kiosks for car rental return, voice automated response systems, and DVD kiosks at the hotel lobby, supermarket, or other locations. About 40% to 57% of the respondents were likely or very likely to use these SSTs.

The least preferable SSTs (with less than 3.0 mean values in likelihood) include the following: PDA's/ smart phones for ordering food or other services, kiosks for language translation at a business center, and internet information access kiosks in a bar. For these SSTs, only 22% to 29% of the respondents were likely or very likely to use them.

Table 6. Mean and standard deviation of likelihood of using SSTs

SSTs	Mean	SD
Pay at the pump at gas stations	4.47	0.891
On line purchases (e.g, travel bookings, retail)	4.22	1.001
In room check out	4.1	0.996
ATMs	4.06	1.229
Internet self help (e.g. medical, computer support)	3.94	1.035
Vending machines	3.91	1.11
Airline check in/boarding pass printing kiosks at a hotel lobby or via internet	3.84	1.268
Price checker in shopping malls	3.71	1.295
Check in/out kiosks at a hotel lobby	3.67	1.168
Kiosks for ordering food at quick service at restaurants	3.6	1.185
Touch screen table to order food or other service at restaurants	3.6	1.185

Internet information access kiosks in a hotel lobby, convention center, or other public venue	3.58	1.178
Kiosks for ticket redemption or cash change at a casino	3.45	1.365
Kiosks for ordering food or other service at pool areas	3.43	1.22
Kiosks for theater ticketing	3.42	1.265
Kiosks for car rental return	3.32	1.276
Voice automated response systems	3.32	1.125
DVD kiosks at the hotel lobby, supermarket. Or other location	3.19	1.301
Ability to use PDAs/ smart phones for ordering food or other services	2.78	1.313
Kiosks for language translation at a business center	2.76	1.254
Kiosks for language translation at a business center	2.76	1.254
Internet information access kiosks in a bar	2.42	1.264

Table 7. Shows coefficient β and t value, where significantly positive directs of role clarity, extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation on likelihood of using SSTs were observed. The results indicate that consumers who believed that SSTs provide clear instructions for users and understand the instructions clearly were more likely to use SSTs. Similarly, consumers who showed higher levels of extrinsic motivation (i.e., convenience faster transactions and no time constraint) and intrinsic motivation (i.e., feeling of accomplishment, enjoyment and independence) in using SSTs were more likely to use SSTs. On the other hand, age and need for interaction had significantly negative direct effects on likelihood of using SSTs. That is, consumers who believe that interaction with personnel at hospitality setting is important were less likely to use SSTs than consumers who do not. Older consumers (i.e., at the age of 43 years and older) were also less likely to use SSTs compared with the younger consumers (i.e., age between 19 and 43 years).

Table 7. Distribution of the sample according to coefficient β and t value.

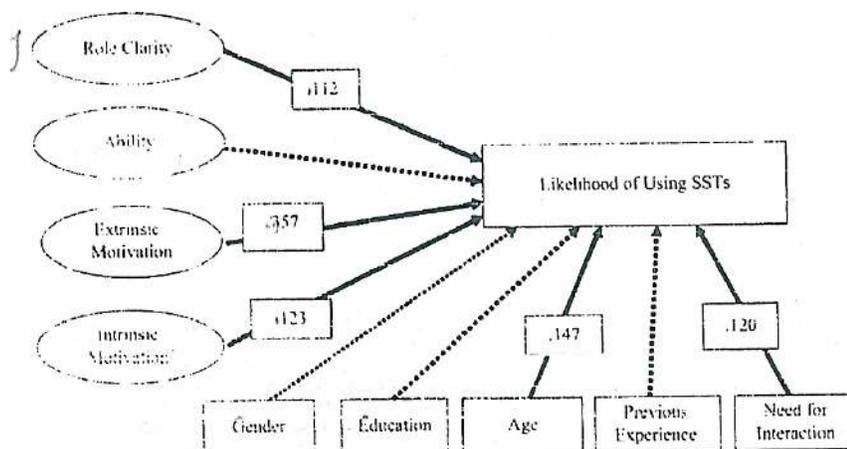
Item	coefficient (β)	T value
On likelihood of using SSTs of role clarity	175	1.930
Of ability	-.031	-.402
Of extrinsic motivation	0.453	5.119*
Of intrinsic motivation	0.147	1.972*

Of need for interaction	-.122	-3.246
Of education	0.135	1.267
Of experience	-.009	-.129
Of age	-.282	-3.593*
Of gender	-.120	-1.788
Of education	-.009	-.129
Of experience	.135	1.267
Of need for interaction	-0.222	-3.070

* $p < .05$

The final model with significant standardized regression coefficients β is presented in figure 2; dotted arrow indicates an insignificant relationship.

Figure 2. Final model



Conclusion:

The results in this study indicated that the majority of the sample believe that using SSTs is useful. Also, most of the sample strongly agree that using SSTs in hospitality industry gave a feeling of enjoyment. Most of the sample were very likely to use touch screen table to order food. Older consumer (43 years and older) were less likely to use SSTs compared with younger consumers (19 and 43 years).

Recommendations:

Based on the results the following recommendations could be suggested

- Self service technology must provide clear instructions to understand the steps and other expected roles.
- Adding function allowing users to cancel their process within next 12hours to help decrease their fears of making mistakes.
- Assisting consumers by having an employee standing by a kiosk, this approach can take care of the perception of the need for interaction since the employee is ready to interact with the customers.
- Providing SSTs in areas where younger customer usually go to such casual restaurants, because they are more likely to use SSTs than older customer.

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العوامل التي تؤثر في ترحيب العملاء باستخدام تكنولوجيا الخدمة الذاتية في صناعة الضيافة

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يستخدم عدد من الفنادق والمطاعم نظام الخدمة الذاتية، ولكي يحقق هذا النظام النجاح المطلوب لابد من دراسة العوامل التي تؤثر في مدى ترحيب العملاء لاستخدامه. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى اكتشاف العوامل التي تؤثر في استخدام تكنولوجيا الخدمة الذاتية وإدراك وتفهم سلوك العملاء المرتبط بتقبل هذا النظام. وقد تم تصميم استمارة لعينة عشوائية قوامها 180 عميل وأوضحت النتائج أن العملاء صغار السن أكثر تقبلاً لنظام تكنولوجيا الخدمة الذاتية.