



**Understanding the Self-Service Checkout Consumer**  
Qualitative Project Report

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## **PARTICIPATION REFLECTION**

The “Multi-screening Media Consumption” and “Evaluation of Branded Social Media Posts” online studies were chosen for participation.

The Multi-screening Media Consumption study appealed to me as I have been reflecting on how much I multi-screen, and as a result, had been making an effort to limit how much I do this. This study involved a video that explained exactly what multi-screening is and how there is much debate about whether it is good or bad. I found this visual stimulus more effective and interesting than if a large amount of text was used. Following this, were questions asking what devices I used when I multi-screened, and when I was most and least likely to do so. The questions were open-ended and designed in a way where I could type, instead of only choosing pre-determined answers. I appreciated this semi-structured approach as well as the option to complete the study online. This meant I felt less pressure and could take my time to think and answer – which would not have been the case in a different setting e.g. focus group, phone interview etc.

The second study - Evaluation of Branded Social Media Posts – included a lot more visual stimuli in the form of images. Initially it involved comparing and choosing which post I felt was most informative about the brand – highlighting something different/ unique about the brand, compared to similar service/ category brands. I found this interesting however a bit confusing as some messages did not inform about brand USP's, and were instead generic posts. For the second part of this study, I was asked to recall, describe and rate brand posts. I felt this could have been more accurate if the post was included as I was exposed to so many posts it was difficult to remember some. This definitely would have affected my ratings and could lead to skewed results. I disliked the set criteria options as I felt restricted and the criteria was not clearly defined.

I would use these experiences to inform my own research by ensuring the participant understood clearly what I meant/ was asking. I would ensure the participant felt at ease and knew there was no rush to answer. I would ensure I asked open-ended questions and that I did not lead when asking questions to avoid skewing the results. I feel it is extremely valuable for researchers to take part in research as a participant so they can avoid mistake other researchers make. They can also pinpoint what may be annoying or confusing to a participant – which can be detrimental to results.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This Qualitative Project Report aims to present, analyse and discuss data, regarding consumers' usage of self-serve technology in grocery stores and what influences usage. For this Qualitative Project, the target audience is limited to English speaking Australian adults who have previously used self-serve technology (checkouts) when purchasing groceries. Also, only self-serve checkout terminals in physical stores are considered, excluding self-serve technology used as part of online purchases.

Exploration of user experiences, examining user motivations, and understanding the types of people who use self-serve technology in grocery stores was critical to achieving this.

Primary and secondary data from a range of sources are utilised within this project, including one-on-one interviews with self-serve technology users across a range of demographics.

These are also thematically analysed to identify common trends and make recommendations.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Whilst consumers demand choice, speed and convenience in their shopping experience (Berry, 1999), there is no denying that the primary driver behind the rollout of self-service technology by retailers is the potential cost savings (Bitner et al., 2002). Self-serve checkouts are a technology that retailers have been introducing more and more, despite needing to invest large amounts of resources (both time and money) to do so.

The pay-off for the retailer includes increased speed of delivery, reduced labour costs and competitiveness via differentiation through reputation (Meuter and Bitner, 1998). Therefore, it is safe to say that they are not going away anytime soon, and it is essential for marketers to understand what influences a consumer's choice to queue and be served by a person, instead of utilising this technology. This understanding of consumer influences allows for improvements and changes to be made – for retailers to maximise on their investment and achieve a greater return.

Automation of retail transactions is increasingly common. The trend began with the introduction of the automated teller machine (ATM) several decades ago, and it continues today with online banking, online purchase of goods from a retailer's website, self-service checkout at grocery stores, pay at the pump gasoline sales, and automated airline check-in and ticketing. (Dwayne, 2008). For this report, self-serve checkouts in grocery stores are the focus, with consumers defined as English speaking Australian adults who have previously used self-serve technology in a physical grocery store.

From the outset of this project, information and understanding has been sought to answer the question: What influences usage of self-serve technology in grocery stores?

This question was guided by three specific objectives:

1. To explore experiences with self-serve technology in grocery stores
2. To examine motivations for using self-serve technology in grocery stores, and
3. To understand the types of people who use self-serve technology in grocery stores.

Comparisons are made between self-service checkouts and conventional checkouts, including the difference of experience and motivations between the two types of checkouts.

Comparisons between users and non-users are also made. Opportunities for improvement are

identified and recommendations are made to better appeal this technology to consumers, as well as how to engage non-users. Furthermore, relevant insights are presented in regards to current operations that is beneficial for consumers, marketers and retailers alike.

## **METHOD**

Exploratory research has been used to explore the topic of influences behind self-serve checkouts and to gain insight. Perhaps summed up best from this research, are the identified factors by (Walker and Johnson 2006) that influence the adoption and use of self-serve checkouts:

- personal capacity (self-belief that the user is capable of using the machine successfully)
- perceived risk (extent to which the machine is believed to be reliable and personal information is believed to be secure)
- relative advantage (extent to which self-serve checkouts are believed to be more convenient and faster than a traditional face-to-face encounter) and,
- preference for personal contact (the degree to which the consumer prefers human interaction over interaction with a machine).

In addition to this, qualitative research was employed, including techniques that allow the researcher to provide elaborate interpretations of phenomena.

This was performed as an extensive one-on-one interview. This semi-structured context, allowed for a conversational and relaxed environment, where open-ended questions could be used. Richness of detail and explanation is encouraged through the use of probing questions, attention to verbals and non-verbals, and the ability to clarify interpretation. This, coupled with consent to record the interview, allowed for a verbatim transcript which is accessible within this report (Appendix B).

For this project, qualitative research was most appropriate, as a researcher could not possibly understand different consumer's influences using quantification and numerical descriptions.

The sample used for this report, consists of four respondents from the following demographics:

- a 24-year-old male
- a 48-year-old female and,
- Two 18-year-old females.

Whilst, it may have been better to include only one eighteen-year-old female, when comparing frequency of use (Appendix A), this varies between the two female eighteen year olds. The criteria are fulfilled by all participants: being English speaking Australians that have used a self-serve checkout previously.

Data was collected with the use of a Qualitative Research Topic and Interview Guide. This framework was provided by Queensland University of Technology, and outlined a questions designed to best achieve the three project objectives (see Introduction and Background). These questions could be modified, and in the case of the first interview (Appendix B), this was not overly necessary, with questions only slightly changed and a question added.

## **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The interview was conducted following the signing of a detailed consent form which stated defined participation as entirely voluntary. The participant was able to withdraw at any time during the interview without comment or penalty, and able to ask for data to be discarded at any point up until the completion of the interview. All comments and responses in the project are de-identified to ensure they cannot be linked to the participant. In this case, the participant (Appendix B) agreed to be recorded for the purpose of transcription of the interview. The consent form hard-copy is stored at Queensland University of Technology.

## **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

The following is the Coding Table which is used to analyse research undertaken. (This can also be accessed as Appendix A).

KEY	CODE
	Frequency of use
	Positive – for use Themes: convenience, no human interaction, fast, control
	Negative – against use Themes: machine limitations, less space, technical issues, wait for assistance, worried about job losses
	User description - define characteristics/ demographics of users Themes: young, embrace technology, time poor/ impatient, don't want human interaction
	Non-user description - define characteristics/ demographics of non-users Themes: older generation, parents, anti-technology, value customer service & human interaction more, patient, worry about job loss
	Other user motivations/ observations/ comments relevant to researcher
	Other user motivations/ observations/ comments relevant to retailers

When analysing respondent answers, frequency of use ranges from whenever possible, to once a week, to 90% of the time, to 50% of the time with that respondent (Appendix E) preferring not to use self-serve checkouts.

Throughout the four interviews, positive factors which influenced use of self-serve checkouts are obvious. These are stated multiple times by respondents as:

- Convenience
- No human interaction (“no small talk”)
- Fast
- Having control (not having to queue, ability to pack own bags)

When examining a consumer’s experience, it is not difficult to understand why a consumer would want a ‘convenient’ and ‘fast’ alternative to queuing at manned checkouts. Preferring

not to engage in small talk could also be a symptom of this, as this interaction can take up time.

‘Control’ is important to consumers and allowing them to bag their own groceries, choose which product they are weighing, and who they interact with is valuable to them. In fact, when this control is taken away from them, that is when the consumer views the technology negatively. To expand on this, when analysing the themes of why a consumer would choose not to use a self-serve checkout – common circumstances are evident. These include needing to ask and wait for assistance when a check-out does not recognise an item, or when it is unable/ too awkward to scan an item. Furthermore, the space for items which is compromised on, can often end up cancelling out the benefit of being quick or convenient.

An example being when you spend more time trying scan a bulky item or finding space on the floor for multiple bags, versus lining up and loading everything on a checkout belt.

This can cause frustration and result in the user feeling short-changed.

Another factor for users not wanting to use self-serve checkouts is not wanting to contribute to the loss of jobs for other individuals. This is an interesting juxtaposition when respondents discuss how they would prefer not to engage with small talk. One could hypothesise that consumers want human employees available, however in a different role within the store.

When respondents were asked to describe a user of self-serve checkouts, a common theme was young people who were impatient, good with technology and time-poor. Whilst older people or families were described as non-users. This was linked to the technical issues exacerbated by children often leaning on scales or scanning items multiple times and not enough room for multiple people. For older consumers: being anti-technology and finding it difficult to use the machines were suggested negative deterrents. If convenience and faster check-out times are cited as an advantage for younger, technologically-confident consumers, it is sensible to deduct that this is not the case for older Australians. This is supported by (Jiun-Sheng, 2011), who states that although the potential benefits of self-serve checkouts are enticing, they cannot be realised unless customers embrace and use the new technologies.

Other motivations for using the self-serve checkouts include it being easier for theft, including entering a cheaper product when weighing items or not scanning a product at all. It is acknowledged that QUT researchers are studying the effects of extreme personalisation and moral triggers to combat this (Brook, 2017).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

When predicting the acceptance of technology, researchers use the technology acceptance model (TAM) (Appendix F) which includes the following concept: perceived ease of use. Perceived ease of use is “the degree to which an individual believes that using a particular system would be free of physical and mental efforts” (Davis, 1989, p. 323). In a study by (Dwayne, 2008), when compared to younger subjects, older subjects used self-service checkout in retail stores less often when the option was available, had less confidence in using these technologies, and missed human interaction more. Recommendations for future research directions include how to market self-serve checkouts less intimidating for older Australians. This could occur with the trialling of very large font as older consumers are prone to vision impairments or as a couple of the respondents suggested – a discount for choosing to use the machines. As older generations prefer human interaction, it is also recommended that staff be trained to assist and encourage these consumers to use the machines – approaching those in line at conventional checkouts.

When marketers look to understand what influences usage of self-serve technology in grocery stores, it is evident that it is not one motivation, but a mix of motivations, benefits and compromises that a consumer makes. It is these factors which allow the consumer to form an overall opinion on self-serve technology, and then decide if it truly is convenient for them.

## LIMITATIONS

Limitations that could reduce confidence in findings may consist of not extending sample to include non-users of self-serve technology, limited access to up-to-date studies on older Australians’ views on self-serve checkouts, missing observations (not just relying on verbal accounts) and lacking input from retailers whom invest in the technology.

Despite this, findings of the current research are trustworthy and successfully answer the project question.

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## APPENDICES

### CODED INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

#### APPENDIX A

#### CODING TABLE

KEY	CODE
	Frequency of use
	Positive – for use Themes: convenience, no human interaction, fast, control
	Negative – against use Themes: machine limitations, less space, technical issues, wait for assistance, worried about job losses
	User description - define characteristics/ demographics of users Themes: young, embrace technology, time poor/ impatient, don't want human interaction
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	Other user motivations/ observations/ comments relevant to researcher
	Other user motivations/ observations/ comments relevant to retailers

#### APPENDIX B

#### INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT ONE

Jessica Rivas

N8605475

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 19 August, 5pm

DURATION OF INTERVIEW: 17 minutes

**RESPONDENT AGE: 24**

**RESPONDENT GENDER: Male**

**Interview Topic: Self-Serve Technology in Grocery Stores**

**Interviewer:** Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. In order to be able to answer the questions, you must be an Australian adult who has previously used self-serve technology when purchasing groceries – specifically, self-serve checkouts. Have you used these before?

**Respondent:** Yes, I use them all the time.

**Interviewer:** There are no right or wrong answers to the questions that we will discuss. I am simply interested in your opinions and experiences. Please feel free to elaborate on your responses, as the extra detail will help to answer my research questions. This is a completely confidential conversation. Your name will not be linked to your responses in the final report, and your details will not be used for any other purpose by QUT. So, today's process involves an interview. I expect it will take about 30 minutes. I would like to record the interview, so that I can transcribe the conversation for analysis purposes. Is that okay?

**Respondent:** Yeah, that's okay.

**Interviewer:** Are you over 18 years of age?

**Respondent:** Yes, I'm over 18.

**Interviewer:** I also require that you complete the ethical clearance form. The ethical clearance form outlines that the research team will treat your information your details confidentially and that any information discussed here today will not be used to personally identify you in any publications or conference discussions.

Respondent: Okay.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so to start, can you tell me how frequently you usually shop for groceries (in-store, not online)?

**Respondent:** I would say I shop for groceries in store about twice a week

**Interviewer:** And do you normally buy a lot of things in one go, or just a few?

**Respondent:** I would do one big shop every two to three weeks, and at least one smaller shop every week.

**Interviewer:** How would you define a 'big shop' versus a 'small shop'?

**Respondent:** A big shop would cost around \$200, whereas a small shop would be closer to sort of, \$50.

**Interviewer:** Can you tell me about the first time you noticed self-serve checkouts in your grocery store?

**Respondent:** Um, it would have been at Woolworths since I usually shop at Woolworths more than Coles, so I think I would have used the Woolworths checkout first before the Coles one... and I'm pretty sure **the first time I saw them I started using them**. Instead of checkouts.

**Interviewer:** How long was it before you first tried using a self-serve checkout, and why did you try it?

**Respondent:** I would say that it would have been pretty much immediately and I think the one **benefit of them is not having to make small talk with cashiers**.

**Interviewer:** Do you remember your initial thoughts or reactions?

**Respondent:** Uh, I think my **initial reactions would have been pretty positive**, um, you know, just being able to **quickly, you know, checkout items and bag them yourself and leave**.

**Interviewer:** How often have you used it since?

**Respondent:** Um, I would say that I've **used it pretty much whenever possible** since, so pretty much always at Woolworths and Coles, and obviously, Aldi doesn't have them.

**Interviewer:** So exactly how long ago would you say you first started using them?

**Respondent:** I would say **I started using them pretty much as soon as they were implemented**, so pretty much as soon as Woolworths started using them which would have been **at least three or four years ago**.

**Interviewer:** How do you find the experience in general?

**Respondent:** Um, I find the experience to be pretty good for the most part. Apart from, obviously. Some self-serve checkouts being card only or the occasional weight issue that requires assistance.

**Interviewer:** Can you tell me about any other particularly good or bad experiences with these?

**Respondent:** Um, well in terms of bad experiences, what I said before – you know, putting in light items into the bag and because, you know, the weight can't detect what you put in the bag, you need to call an attendant over or, sometimes it might not be overly user friendly like a watermelon's got a barcode on it so you scan it and put it in the bag, forgetting that you need to weigh it – things like that.

**Interviewer:** Is there anything you would change about these checkouts if you could?

**Respondent:** Um, I would make them all take both cash and card, rather than having a lot of card only checkouts. Um, and with some of them, like the Coles one, they don't necessarily make the discounts clear until the end of the transaction which can cause confusion.

**Interviewer:** Great. What types of reasons do you think usually lead people to use self-serve checkouts?

**Respondent:** I think most people that use them, either don't wanna have to make small talk with checkout staff, or there are always gonna be people who are dishonest and you know, get an expensive fruit and put them through as the cheapest fruit and things like that.

**Interviewer:** And what about reasons for using a conventional checkout?

**Respondent:** Um, people who are sort of anti-technology would use conventional checkouts, or if people can't be bothered packing their own bags, they would use these. Or, people who don't wanna see people lose their jobs in general.

**Interviewer:** Can you think of any reasons people might totally avoid or dislike self-serve checkouts?

**Respondent:** Um, I think it's seen as a corporate cost-cutting measure and a lot of people are just like, you know 'when I give you my money, I expect a certain amount of customer service, so I'm gonna use a human not one of your machines.'

**Interviewer:** And why do you think stores have introduced this type of technology?

**Respondent:** Well I think the aim is to save money – whether or not they actually are with the amount of theft. Um, you know, it's easier to have an area of, you know, six to twelve self-checkouts than one employee, it's cheaper than having you know obviously, six to twelve employees on different checkouts.

**Interviewer:** And would you consider that a good thing?

**Respondent:** Um, I mean it's a good thing for the corporate businesses, though whether or not it's a good thing for consumers, probably not.

**Interviewer:** Do you think there are certain types of people who are particularly likely to use self-serve checkouts? Who are they?

**Respondent:** Um, probably **younger people**, um I don't know, people that are sort of **25 and under** who, you know, are **pretty good with technology** and **don't want the human interaction** and **just want to quickly get something and go**. Um, yeah mainly them.

**Interviewer:** So, you mentioned people against technology who might not use them, are there other people you think will simply never use them? Why would that be?

**Respondent:** Um, I'd say that **older people** would never use them, **maybe 60+ in particular**, I mean they **aren't very savvy with computers** in the first place. They aren't going to embrace self-serve checkouts, I mean they just see it as a big headache and replacing people's jobs – that kind of thing. They'd probably never attempt to use them and always go towards traditional checkouts.

**Interviewer:** Do you think this applies to self-serve technology in general like check-in kiosks at airports), or just checkouts? What about more established self-serve technologies like ATMs?

**Respondent:** Um, **I think there a bit of a different category**. Um, I think you know, the vast majority of people are willing to use ATMs regardless of age, I'm sure you have you know, 60, 70, 80 year olds using ATMs these days. Um, I think more people also, probably be willing to use self-checkouts at airports because you know, you really don't wanna be late to a flight, I mean it's in your best interest to get there as quickly as possible. Um, so yeah

definitely I think it's a bit different to those two situations because there's a bigger element of customer service involved.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So now some final general questions. What things might you say to someone who had never used a self-serve checkout if you wanted to encourage them to try it?

**Respondent:** Um, I'd tell them they would get in and out of the store more quickly, because obviously, these days you go to a supermarket, you only have two or three people on a checkout whereas you have at least six self-serve checkouts at Woolworths, you know, up to twelve at some places. So, you get in and out a lot more quickly, especially if you only have only a couple of items. Um, you know, you don't have to worry about making small talk, if that's not something you like doing. Yeah, just convenience really.

**Interviewer:** Any thoughts on what this all suggests for retailers, if they want to encourage use? Could you give me an example?

**Respondent:** Um, well if they actually gave you an actual benefit, because obviously they're saving money by using self-serve checkouts instead of employing people, if they actually said you know, 'use our self-serve checkouts and you'll save like 1% of your grocery bill' or something like that, I mean that would be a legitimate benefit for people using them.

**Interviewer:** And, is there anything else you would like to add that you think might be helpful in better understanding this topic?

**Respondent:** No, not in particular.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Thank you so much for your time. This interview has now concluded.

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## APPENDIX C

### INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT TWO

**Stephanie Baker**

**N9451111**

**DATE OF INTERVIEW: 11th August, 11am**

**DURATION OF INTERVIEW: 20 Minutes**

**RESPONDENT AGE: 48**

**RESPONDENT GENDER: Female**

**Interview Topic: Self-Serve Technology in Grocery Stores**

**Interviewer:** Can you tell me how frequently you usually shop for groceries (in-store, not online)?

**Interviewee:** At least once a week.

**Interviewer:** Do you normally go more than once a week?

**Interviewee:** Yes sometimes I normally do a big shop at the end of the week but usually mid-week I will pick up a few items we are short on, example, fresh fruit and vegetables and things like that.

**Interviewer:** And do you normally buy a lot of thing in one go, or just a few?

**Interviewee:** No I normally do one big shop and then on the in-between shop it will just be a few items.

**Interviewer:** Can you tell me about the first time you noticed self-serve checkouts in your grocery store?

**Interviewee:** It was a bit of a shock because we were used to walking up to the register and them processing the sales and items. But then it became intriguing and I thought why not give it a shot. I found that the staff usually try and push you that way to get through the crowds quicker instead of standing in line.

**Interviewer:** How long was it before you first tried using a self-serve checkout, and why did you try it?

**Interviewee:** Not very long. It was when they had just first come out at Woolworths Carindale and as I say, it was just because a staff member prompted you that way and they tended to help you in the beginning because it was so new and no one really knew what to do so they seemed to have more staff members on hand to help you through the process and make it easier.

**Interviewer:** Do you remember your initial thoughts or reactions?

**Interviewee:** I thought it was good to cut down on time because everyone is time poor. It doesn't matter what you do for a living, you are always in a rush and groceries always seem to be a chore that everyone wants to avoid so I thought it was good. But the thing that can delay you which can end up costing time is when there is a problem and something doesn't scan properly so then you have to wait for a staff member to come and put their code in and fix it. If you have a number of problems in one go, it can delay you worse than going to a checkout.

**Interviewer:** How often have you used it since?

**Interviewee:** I would say every week I use it because when I go in for my few items I tend to do it myself because it's a period of time now you have been doing it over and over and they seem to have picked up in the reliability of their machines and they are more reliable than they were.

**Interviewer:** Do you find it better that you can manage your own packing and can control everything?

**Interviewee:** Yes to a degree because I know that the staff are trained but sometimes when they are new they tend to put things in with something you don't like to and you can put more into a bag than what they necessarily would and distribute the weight evenly I guess.

**Interviewer:** How do you find the experience in general?

**Interviewee:** I find it quite ok; I don't have any challenges with it.

**Interviewer:** So you're not turned off from it?

**Interviewee:** No, I think it has its purpose. In the beginning I thought oh would this cut people out of jobs and affect people the much needs jobs because employment is a concern in our company so I worried about that but I don't think so and don't think it has because there seems to be still a lot of Woolworths employees on at the one time and I think it has made it easier for people with a few items to quickly get through versus standing behind someone with 100 items and waiting to get through, because that takes time.

**Interviewer:** Can you tell me about any particularly good or bad experiences with these?

**Interviewee:** The good experiences as I say is basically time where you are able to process your own things, get them through as quick as you go, the machine goes and you are out of there rather than waiting in queues. The bad experiences would be when you go to one and I don't know what it is but it doesn't scan properly.

**Interviewer:** So it's a lack of good technology?

**Interviewee:** Yeah the lack of technology to keep it up to date and that can be frustrating. Really the only negative thing I have for them.

**Interviewer:** Is there anything you would change about these checkouts if you could?

**Interviewee:** A little bit more room. Sometimes the staff will send you there with a trolley and you often impose on other people's space. You don't have enough room to stand and process your items from one side to the other without being in the way of others, let alone if you have a person with you helping you. Two people trying to stand there is awful.

**Interviewer:** What types of reasons do you think usually lead people to use self-serve checkouts?

**Interviewee:** Just for the time factor, they have a few items and can put them through themselves. I think the whole reason for bringing them in was the time factor, people can get in and out with their groceries and don't have to wait behind people with huge grocery shops or 20 people in the express lane.

**Interviewer:** And what about reasons for using a conventional checkout?

**Interviewee:** Well you go to a conventional checkout when you have a large amount of groceries and its too many to put through yourself because you can't get into that small area with a trolley.

**Interviewer:** Can you think of any reasons people might totally avoid or dislike self-serve checkouts?

**Interviewee:** Yeah I know someone that thinks that there are people there to do that job, that's their roll, and that they are meant to serve them and that's their duty and their job description so they aren't going to do that job for them and pay the same price.

**Interviewer:** Why do you think stores have introduced this type of technology?

**Interviewee:** To save time and for people to get less frustrated.

**Interviewer:** Is this a good thing?

**Interviewee:** Yes I think it is good.

**Interviewer:** Do you think there are certain types of people who are particularly likely to use self-serve checkouts? Who are they?

**Interviewee:** Time poor people. Professional and mums running into the shop to get a few items with the three kids and doesn't have time to stand in line and wait in a queue.

**Interviewer:** Are there people who you think will simply never use them? Why?

**Interviewee:** I think the elderly people. The majority of elderly people are not technology savvy and they were brought up with Ma and Pa corner shops where they had their groceries put into paper bags and you hand-picked everything off the shelf, it was hand-wrapped and they paid in cash. So this whole new technology, the way of the future, is very different to them and I don't think they would feel comfortable using it because they need that face to face communication.

**Interviewer:** Do you think this applies to self-serve technology in general (e.g., check-in kiosks at airports), or just checkouts?

**Interviewee:** No I think it applied to everything in general. When they are ordering things or even ordering online, they would need someone to help them, would feel uncomfortable, and would rather pick up the phone and call someone to order something or go in face to face than go online or use any of the new technology we are so familiar with.

**Interviewer:** What about more established self-serve technologies like ATMs?

**Interviewee:** Some of them would use ATMs but I don't think a lot of them would. I think they would still go into the bank and would have a day a week where they would fill out their forms and get their money out that way.

**Interviewer:** What things might you say to someone who had never used a self-serve checkout if you wanted to encourage them to try it?

**Interviewee:** I would encourage them by saying it's a lot easier than it seems and the staff are there to do their job and if they want to succeed they need to help customers. By all means if it is an elderly person and they want to try it, they should walk up to staff member and ask for help because that will be another person added to their consumer base.

**Interviewer:** Any thoughts on what this all suggests for retailers, if they want to encourage use?

**Interviewee:** I think they need to market it in that way that there is help available and it is easily accessible. Maybe make more room at them and ask for more feedback. Market it so its user friendly and there is help there and make it as easily accessible as possible.

**Interviewer:** Is there anything else you would like to add that you think might be helpful in better understanding this topic?

**Interviewee:** Maybe if you are doing self-serve all the time, they should lower your bill and give you a discount because they aren't paying someone to process your order but you are still paying the same amount at the end of the day. So for all self-serve checkouts they could give a percentage off for consumers which would encourage more people to use them.

**Interviewer:** Thank you for your time.

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## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT THREE

**Sophie Walter**

**N9659889**

**DATE OF INTERVIEW: 7:00pm, 18 August 2017**

**DURATION OF INTERVIEW: 25 minutes**

**RESPONDENT AGE: 18**

**RESPONDENT GENDER: Female**

**Interview Topic:** Self-Serve Technology in Grocery Stores

**Interviewer:** To start off with, can you tell me how frequently you usually shop for groceries (in-store, not online)?

**Respondent:** One to two times per week. Sometimes more, but always at least once a week.

**I:** And do you normally buy a lot of things in one go, or just a few?

**R:** I mostly buy lots of things in one go. I try to minimise my trips to the grocery store.

**I:** Can you tell me about the first time you noticed self-serve checkouts in your grocery store?

**R:** It was probably a few years ago now, in my local Coles. I remember they started with just one or two at first, and I thought, I'll give it a go. The first time I saw I wanted to use it.

**I:** Do you remember your initial thoughts or reactions?

**R:** I thought it was a really interesting and fun process – a bit of a game. I wasn't hesitant to try it out.

**I:** How often have you used it since?

**R:** About 90% of the time.

**I:** How do you find the experience in general?

**R:** I think it's a lot faster and efficient because you can do it yourself. But yes, it is a machine, and there can often be technical issues. Overall, I enjoy the experience, and prefer self-serve checkouts over going to the cashier.

**I:** Can you tell me about any particularly good or bad experiences with these?

**R:** The only bad experience I have is when I go to put my groceries on the scale and it says you haven't put your items there, or you've put too much. Then you have to call someone over to come scan their card. That can take a while. In terms of a good experience...well it's just usually so much faster. You get in, get out, without having to interact with anyone.

**I:** Is there anything you would change about these checkouts if you could?

**R:** Maybe a bigger platform to put your items onto. I find when I'm doing a big shop, it becomes more difficult to manage scanning and bagging everything.

**I:** What types of reasons do you think usually lead people to use self-serve checkouts?

**R:** I think they're for people who are impatient, who don't like to wait in line for the cashier to scan the items of the person in front of them. Also, for people who like trying out new things, who like change, who like to play around with new technology. Also, probably younger people. They are more intrigued by it, whereas some people are just happy to wait in line.

**I:** And what about reasons for using a conventional checkout?

**R:** I think they've come to the grocery store and they're not in a rush. They're there to do their daily shop, they're happy for the person who's employed there to just do their job. A lot of people just get used to their routine, and don't want to change that.

**I:** Can you think of any reasons people might dislike or totally avoid self-serve checkouts?

**R:** Perhaps if they enjoy human interaction, and want more of an experience at the grocery shop instead of just doing their own thing and being independent. Also, I guess it's more work, because you are doing it all yourself essentially.

**I:** And why do you think stores have introduced this type of technology?

**R:** I think it's because consumers demand new and updated processes.

If stores want to stay competitive with, say, online shopping, where people don't even have to come in store. By having the new, self-serve technology, people can come in and do it just as quickly.

**I:** Is this a good thing?

**R:** Yes, I do think it is a good thing, although I guess it can be damaging to the employees. They don't need as many people anymore, there aren't as many jobs available. Not every grocery store has self-serve checkouts though, and there still are plenty of job opportunities

**I:** Do you think there are certain types of people who are particularly likely to use self-serve checkouts? Who are they?

**R:** Yes, people who a) like to try new things, embrace the future and be on top of technology and b) people who are a bit impatient who just want to get in and get it done without waiting in line.

**I:** Are there people who you think will simply never use them? Why?

**R:** I think older generations are the least likely to use self-serve checkouts, because they're just used to what they know, what they've grown up with and don't see any need to change that. They're not in a massive rush. Also maybe young mothers or fathers with lots of kids, because you have to do it yourself when your kids might be running around, whereas if you're in a line, the parents can just look after their kids. There are lots of families in grocery stores, it's a family-oriented place, and so it's a lot easier for them if someone else is doing the scanning for them.

**I:** Do you think this applies to self-serve technology in general – for example, check-in kiosks at airports – or just grocery store checkouts?

**R:** I think it's the same principle at airports. People who just want to go in, check in, are more likely to use the self-serve facilities, whereas families who have lots of kids and luggage – it's a bit stressful in an airport because there're lots of people everywhere. They'd be least likely to use it – as well as older generations, they aren't as good with technology and it's a bit complicated so they'd rather just speak to a person.

**I:** So what about more established self-serve technologies like ATMs?

**R:** I guess ATMs have been around for a lot longer, so more people are accustomed to them

**I:** What things might you say to someone who had never used a self-serve checkout if you wanted to encourage them to try it?

**R:** I would just say, you won't know if you like it until you try it, and that it's very efficient if you're after a fast trip.

**I:** Any thoughts on what this all suggests for retailers, if they want to encourage use?

**R:** I personally think the self-serve checkouts could be more user-friendly – separated apart further, so people can take their time instead of just rushing through. More room for trolleys and anything like that. Maybe even a rewards system?

**I:** For using a self-serve check out?

**R:** Yes, because it saves stores money because they don't have to pay for staff.

**I:** Lastly, is there anything else you would like to add that you think might be helpful in better understanding this topic?

**R:** I think a major factor is your generation that you live in and how adaptable you are to new technology. Young people have been brought up in a more, fast-paced environment, with computers, smart phones, stuff like that. They're a lot more likely to be encouraged to use these kinds of things, whereas older people are more hesitant and even resistant to change.

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## APPENDIX E

### INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT FOUR

**Lachlan Sands**

**N9717625**

**DATE OF INTERVIEW: 18 August, 2:20pm**

**DURATION OF INTERVIEW: 14 minutes**

**RESPONDENT AGE: 18**

**RESPONDENT GENDER: Female**

Interview Topic: Self Serve Technology In Grocery Stores

**Interviewer:** Thank you for agreeing to partake in this interview. In order to be eligible to answer the questions in the survey, you must be an Australian adult who has previously used self-serve technology, specifically self-service checkouts, when purchasing groceries. Have you used a self-service checkout before?

**Respondent:** Yep.

**Interviewer:** I'd like to let you know that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions that I will be asking you in our discussion today. I am simply interested in your opinion and experiences you have endured whilst using self-serve checkouts at a grocery store. Please feel free to elaborate on your responses, any extra detail you provide will help to answer my research questions.

This interview will be completely confidential. Your name will not be linked to your responses in my final report and your details will not be used for any other purpose by QUT. This

interview will take no more than 30 minutes. If this okay with you, I would like to record the interview, so I can transcribe the conversation for analysis purposes.

**Respondent:** That's okay.

**Interviewer:** I also require that you complete the ethical clearance form. The ethical clearance form outlines that the research team will treat your personal details as confidential and that any information discussed between us today will not be used to personally identify you in any publications or conference discussions.

**Respondent:** Too easy.

**Interviewer:** Can you tell me how frequently you shop for products in a store and not online?

**Respondent:** I tend to go the grocery store once a week but other stores whenever I need something from there and that can be multiple times in a week.

**Interviewer:** When you visit these stores, do you purchase large quantities of items or just a few products?

**Respondent:** I spend \$100-\$200 on groceries per week so I guess you could say that is a large amount.

**Interviewer:** Fantastic. Can you tell me about the first time you noticed self service check-outs in your local store?

**Respondent:** Probably around four years ago? I remember at the time, I had asked my mum if we could use them because I had wanted to be like the cool shopping assistants when scanning the products.

**Interviewer:** From the moment they were implemented, how long did it take you to use the self-service registers?

**Respondent:** It was actually my first visit that I saw them and I used them straight away. If something looks interesting or enticing, I'm always keen to investigate further.

**Interviewer:** Is there any reason you found it interesting and/or enticing?

**Respondent:** It looked quicker and more engaging and it was a new technology I wanted to try out.

**Interviewer:** Do you remember your initial thoughts after using the self service checkouts

for the first time?

**Respondent:** I was frustrated as I didn't quite understand how the system worked and I was constantly scanning products more than once.

**Interviewer:** It's been four years since that day you first used them, how often do you use self-service machines when shopping?

**Respondent:** About fifty percent of the time? I prefer going to the normal check outs.

**Interviewer:** Now that you know how they work, how do you find the experience?

**Respondent:** It's fairly easy to use, at some places I shop, the machines can be temperamental and this requires assistance from a staff member which can be annoying.

**Interviewer:** Are there any stories that particularly stand out as good or bad?

**Respondent:** A good shopping experience with self-service never stands out as that is the way they are designed to operate and if a service is functioning the way it's designed, there shouldn't need to be a stand out moment. I did have an unfortunate experience at Kmart one time. I had quite a large item that was difficult to scan on the register as I couldn't locate the barcode and it was difficult to lift onto the machine. Fortunately I was able to receive assistance from the checkout assistant who helped me scan my item.

**Interviewer:** What changes would you make to the self service checkout machines to make the system work more effectively?

**Respondent:** In my experience, I have found that they are not worthwhile and I would actually remove them. I was recently at Target and felt quite upset that there were many young workers whose jobs had been taken by these machines. People also have a misconception that self service is quicker but it actually hasn't been in my experience. There are people who are trained to process items at the register and they are much quicker to wait for than your everyday customers.

**Interviewer:** Why do you think people tend to use self service checkouts?

**Respondent:** I know people use them to steal items as it's easier for them to misrepresent products in order to pay less - or not pay at all. People also like to have control over how quickly they scan their items. This works well if you have one or two items and are well accustomed to the machines but when people are doing their weekly shopping trip and are using up the spaces, it can slow down the efficiency of the system.

Self service machines should have an item restriction so the lines can be quickly processed.

**Interviewer:** You've obviously stated one earlier, but are there any other reasons to avoid self-service checkouts?

**Respondent:** They take jobs away from real people who are possibly looking to feed their families or provide shelter for their loved ones. Another reason is that **some people simply don't like technology.**

**Interviewer:** Do you think it's good that stores have introduced this technology and why do you think they have?

**Respondent:** I think in some situations it is beneficial. In terms of the businesses, they no longer have to spend as much money on staff.

**Interviewer:** Do you believe there a certain demographic that is more likely to use or not use, this technology?

**Respondent:** The **older generations of consumers are definitely less likely to as they may feel like they can't grasp the technology involved.** Another group of **people less likely to use it is parents who have brought their children to the shops with them. Having small children crowding around and possibly playing with the registers could be an issue and might deter these mothers or fathers from using them.** **I feel that millennials are the most likely to embrace the checkouts**

**Interviewer:** Do you think these groups of people will ever use them or do you feel it's a generational thing?

**Respondent:** **I think as millennials grow older and more people grow up with this technology, the more it will be embraced.**

**Interviewer:** What are your opinions on ATMs and other more established self service technologies? Do the same rules apply?

**Respondent:** I hadn't actually thought about ATMs in the context of self service machines before, so you raise a good point. I guess it's less obvious as **ATMs have been around for longer and are more integral to our daily lifestyle. I would argue that ATMs are more necessary to society as they mostly operate 24 hours of the day whereas the self service checkouts are only when the store is open. There is an ease of access with ATMs** and they make

life easier every single day as it doesn't matter about the time. These self service registers are only operational within certain hours.

**Interviewer:** What are your thoughts on large businesses planning to streamline their services by removing most of their employees and providing self service registers, computers and other technologies, like the one that Amazon is developing, that don't even require check outs?

**Respondent:** There are definitely some benefits to these technologies for the consumer but for those who will lose their job as a result of this, is it worth it? I don't really think so.

**Interviewer:** Alright, thank you for your time and for answering these questions

**Respondent:** No worries. Thank you.

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## APPENDIX F

### TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE MODEL (TAM)

