

# **Towards a Taxonomy of Critical Success Factors for Mobile Applications in Cruise Tourism**

## **Bachelorarbeit**

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# 1 Introduction

Characterized by rapid growth rates and significant economic impacts on a variety of stakeholders in all parts of the world, the cruise tourism has emerged over the last three decades to become a highly relevant segment of the tourism sector. Particularly after suffering severe losses due to travel bans and operation suspensions during the COVID-19 pandemic, cruise companies are constantly searching for means and methods to increase their (potential) customers' experience and satisfaction in order to achieve loyalty among existing customers and in order to attract new customers. In the course of global digital transformation and digitization, information and communication technologies have been developed that can be adopted by cruise companies in order to address this issue.

While cruise companies have already recognized importance of information and communication technologies, research combining the domains of cruise tourism and information systems is very limited. The role of mobile applications for cruise tourism in particular has not been examined in the scientific literature yet. The adoption of mobile applications by various cruise companies with the purpose to increase their customers' experience and satisfaction in combination with the lack of research in this field motivates the following research questions:

1. How can existing mobile applications in the cruise tourism sector be classified and distinguished from each other regarding the functionality they provide?
2. Which of those functionality aspects can be interpreted as critical success factors?

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows. The next chapter provides an overview of the characteristics of the cruise tourism sector and mobile applications in the tourism sector as well as over the theoretical foundations in these fields. Thereafter, the taxonomy development method of Nickerson et al. (2013) is explained and applied in order to answer the first research question. The foundations resulting from the taxonomy and other important factors are discussed in order to derive critical success factors for the development of mobile applications in the cruise tourism sector with the purpose to answer the second research question. In the end, the limitations of this thesis are stated, implications for further research are provided and the most important results are summarized.

## **7 Conclusion and Outlook**

In this thesis, mobile applications in the cruise tourism sector were classified in regard their functionality aspects through the development of a taxonomy which enables the distinguishment of these applications and provides companies and (potential) cruise tourists with assistance for further analysis and decision-making. It might also assist researchers in further work and provide incentives and implications for further research. Functionality aspects derived from the taxonomy as well as important other aspects were discussed in order to derive critical success factors that ocean cruise companies should take into account when developing or reworking a mobile application.

This thesis represents one of the first studies that combine the research domain of cruise tourism with the domain of information systems in general or with the domain of mobile applications more particularly. As the role of mobile applications and information systems in the cruise tourism sector increases, a substantial amount of topics will emerge to be considered in future research. However, researchers have already identified the importance of this area (e.g., see Papathanassis (2019a)) and a trend shift in future research is to be expected.