

# Enhancing the Intention to Use E-Tourism among Tourists in the Digital Era

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## Abstract

This study delves into the complex interplay of direct and indirect relationships among perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and intention to use, with trust and attitude acting as mediators within the tourist context. Grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) theory, the research employed a meticulous survey questionnaire to gather data, resulting in a robust dataset of 417 valid responses. Utilizing the advanced analytical tools of SmartPLS 4, the results highlight attitude and trust as key determinants, exerting significant influence as mediators in the relationship between perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and intention to use. The implications of these findings are far-reaching, suggesting targeted interventions to enhance perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness through the mediating factors of trust and attitude, ultimately boosting tourists' intention to use e-tourism services. The study underscores the importance of travel agencies promoting the ease and usefulness of e-tourism, while also calling for further research into the impact of new technologies and organizational culture on the evolving landscape of artificial intelligence in tourism. By taking a comprehensive approach, the study provides actionable recommendations for both individuals and organizations, facilitating the development of holistic strategies to enhance technology adoption in modern digital tourism.

**Keywords:** Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Trust, Attitude, Intention to Use

## Introduction

E-tourism, a fusion of electronic and tourism elements, has emerged as a transformative force in the travel industry, reshaping the way individuals plan, book, and experience their journeys (Hamid et al., 2021). In today's digitally-driven era, e-tourism encompasses a broad spectrum of online activities, ranging from researching destinations and accommodations to booking flights and sharing travel experiences on social media platforms (Gretzel et al., 2020). This convergence of technology and tourism has not only revolutionized the traveler's experience but has also presented unprecedented opportunities and challenges for stakeholders within

the industry (Leung, 2022). Globally, the development of e-tourism has been nothing short of remarkable. With the proliferation of internet access and the widespread adoption of smartphones and other mobile devices, the online travel market has witnessed exponential growth (Mohammed et al., 2023). According to recent statistics, many travel bookings are now made online, with digital platforms serving as the primary channel for travel-related transactions. This shift towards e-tourism has democratized travel, empowering individuals to explore destinations and customize their experiences with greater flexibility and convenience (Wahyuningtyas et al., 2023). In Malaysia, e-tourism has also gained traction in recent years, propelled by the government's initiatives to promote digitalization and enhance the country's tourism infrastructure. With its diverse array of attractions ranging from pristine beaches and lush rainforests to vibrant cultural heritage sites, Malaysia has positioned itself as a prime destination for both domestic and international travellers. As a result, there has (Mohammad et al., 2022) been a concerted effort to leverage digital technologies to enhance the tourism experience and attract a larger share of the global travel market. However, despite the promising growth of e-tourism in Malaysia, several challenges persist. One of the primary issues is the digital divide, which refers to the gap between those who have access to digital technologies and those who do not (Luqman et al., 2023). In Malaysia, disparities in internet connectivity and digital literacy levels remain significant barriers, particularly in rural and remote areas. Additionally, concerns regarding cybersecurity and data privacy have raised apprehensions among potential tourists, impacting their willingness to engage in online transactions (Zainol et al., 2023). Given the multifaceted nature of e-tourism and its implications for various stakeholders, understanding the factors influencing individuals' intention to use e-tourism platforms is paramount (Tam et al., 2022). Policymakers, tourist operators, travel agents, and tourists themselves stand to benefit from insights derived from studies focusing on e-tourism intention to use. By addressing the challenges and opportunities inherent in e-tourism, policymakers can formulate strategies to promote digital inclusivity and enhance the competitiveness of Malaysia's tourism industry. Tourist operators and travel agents, on the other hand, can refine their marketing strategies and service offerings to better cater to the evolving needs and preferences of digital-savvy travelers. Ultimately, a deeper understanding of e-tourism intention to use can facilitate the creation of a more seamless and enriching travel experience for tourists while driving sustainable growth and development within the tourism sector. This study aims to examine the direct and indirect relationship between perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and intention to use e-tourism with attitude and trust as mediators.

## Literature Review

### *Underpinning Theory*

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) Davis (1989) serves as a foundational framework for understanding user acceptance and adoption of technology. Specifically, in the realm of e-tourism, TAM elucidates the intricate interplay between perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and intention to use electronic platforms for tourism-related activities. Perceived ease of use refers to the user's subjective assessment of how effortless it is to interact with the technology, while perceived usefulness pertains to the perceived benefits or advantages gained from its usage. Both factors significantly influence an individual's intention to utilize e-tourism services. However, TAM Venkatesh & Davis (2000) suggests that this relationship is not direct but is mediated by other psychological variables such as attitude and trust. Attitude reflects the user's overall evaluation or predisposition towards e-tourism platforms,

influenced by their perceptions of ease of use and usefulness. Trust, on the other hand, embodies the user's confidence in the reliability, security, and credibility of the technology. Through the lens of TAM, researchers explore the complex web of relationships, positing that attitude and trust serve as mediators between perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and intention to use e-tourism services. This comprehensive understanding aids in designing and implementing effective strategies to enhance user acceptance and adoption of e-tourism technologies, ultimately shaping the future landscape of digital tourism experiences.

#### *Relationship between Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness*

In both tourism and technology, the perceived ease of use significantly influences the perceived usefulness of a product or service (Mazan & Cetinel, 2022). The concept of perceived ease of use, derived from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), suggests that individuals are more likely to perceive a technology or tourism service as useful if they find it easy to use (Madi et al., 2024). This principle holds across various technological and tourism contexts. In tourism, for instance, the ease of booking accommodations, planning itineraries, and accessing information about destinations can greatly impact travelers' perceptions of usefulness (Asnawati et al., 2022). User-friendly interfaces, intuitive navigation systems, and seamless transaction processes contribute to a positive user experience, enhancing perceived usefulness. Conversely, complex or cumbersome systems may deter travelers, even if the underlying service is valuable. Likewise, in technology, whether it's a mobile app, a website, or a digital device, users are more inclined to perceive technology as useful if they find it easy to interact with (Sari, 2023). This ease of use can manifest through clear instructions, minimal learning curves, and efficient functionalities. The perceived ease of use acts as a catalyst for perceived usefulness in both tourism and technology realms, shaping individuals' attitudes and behaviors towards adopting and utilizing these offerings. As such, designers and developers must prioritize usability considerations to maximize the perceived usefulness of their products and services (Hateftabar, 2023). Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed for this study:

*H1: There is a relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness on the intention to use e-tourism among tourists.*

#### *Relationship between Perceived Ease of Use, Attitude and Intention*

In the realm of e-tourism, the relationship between perceived ease of use, attitude, and intention is intricate and influential. Perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which individuals believe that using a particular e-tourism platform or service will be effortless and straightforward (Alkindi et al., 2022). This perception significantly impacts users' attitudes towards the technology and ultimately influences their intentions to engage with it further. When users perceive an e-tourism platform as easy to use, it tends to foster positive attitudes (Saidi et al., 2022). A seamless and intuitive interface, coupled with smooth navigation and clear instructions, contributes to a favorable perception of the platform. This positive attitude, in turn, enhances users' intentions to utilize the platform for their travel-related activities (Prastiawan et al., 2021). Conversely, if users encounter complexities or obstacles in navigating an e-tourism website or application, their attitudes may become negative. This negative attitude can dampen their intentions to continue using the platform, leading to decreased engagement and potential abandonment (Nathania & Anandya, 2021). Therefore, designers and developers in the e-tourism sector must prioritize the enhancement of

perceived ease of use to cultivate positive attitudes and intentions among users. By ensuring that e-tourism platforms are user-friendly and accessible, businesses can effectively promote engagement and loyalty, ultimately driving success in the competitive online travel market (Gupta et al., 2021). Thus, the following hypotheses were proposed for this study:

*H2:* There is a relationship between perceived ease of use and attitude toward the intention to use e-tourism among tourists.

*H3:* There is a relationship between perceived ease of use and intention to use e-tourism among tourists.

*H4:* There is a mediating effect of attitude on the relationship between perceived ease of use and intention to use e-tourism among tourists.

#### *Relationship between Perceived Usefulness, Attitude and Intention*

In e-tourism, the relationship between perceived usefulness, attitude, and intention plays a crucial role in shaping user behavior and determining the success of online tourism platforms (Mazan & Cetinel, 2022). Perceived usefulness refers to the extent to which users believe that using a particular e-tourism service will enhance their travel experiences or facilitate their trip-planning process. When users perceive an e-tourism platform as useful, it tends to elicit positive attitudes towards the service. Features such as comprehensive destination information, personalized recommendations, and efficient booking systems contribute to this perception of usefulness (Madi et al., 2024). These positive attitudes, in turn, influence users' intentions to engage with the platform further, whether it be making bookings, exploring additional services, or recommending the platform to others. Conversely, if users perceive an e-tourism platform as lacking in usefulness or failing to meet their needs effectively, it can result in negative attitudes (Chatterjee et al., 2022). This negative attitude may lead to intentions to discontinue using the platform or seek alternatives for their travel-related activities (Willaddara, 2023). Therefore, in the competitive landscape of e-tourism, businesses must prioritize the enhancement of perceived usefulness in their platforms. By continuously refining features and services to better meet users' needs and expectations, e-tourism platforms can foster positive attitudes and intentions among users, ultimately driving engagement, loyalty, and success in the online travel market (Mendieta-Aragón & Garín-Muñoz, 2023). Hence, the following hypotheses were proposed for this study:

*H5:* There is a relationship between perceived usefulness and attitude toward the intention to use e-tourism among tourists.

*H6:* There is a relationship between perceived usefulness and intention to use e-tourism among tourists.

*H7:* There is a relationship between attitude and intention to use e-tourism among tourists.

*H8:* There is a mediating effect of attitude on the relationship between perceived usefulness and intention to use e-tourism among tourists.

#### *Relationship between Perceived Ease of Use, Trust and Intention*

In the domain of e-tourism, the relationship between perceived ease of use, trust, and intention is fundamental to understanding user behavior and the success of online tourism platforms (Raza et al., 2021). Perceived ease of use refers to users' perceptions of how effortless and straightforward it is to navigate and utilize an e-tourism platform for trip

planning or booking activities. When users perceive an e-tourism platform as easy to use, it fosters a sense of trust in the platform's reliability and functionality (Nasrolahi & Jalilvand, 2023). A seamless and intuitive interface, coupled with clear instructions and smooth navigation, contributes to this perception of ease of use. This trust in the platform's usability influences users' intentions to engage with it further, whether it involves making bookings, exploring destination information, or interacting with additional features (Mollik et al., 2024). Conversely, if users encounter complexities or difficulties in using an e-tourism platform, it can lead to distrust and skepticism about its reliability. This lack of trust may deter users from intending to continue using the platform or conducting transactions through it (Hateftabar, 2023). Therefore, in the competitive landscape of e-tourism, businesses need to prioritize enhancing perceived ease of use to cultivate trust among users. By ensuring that e-tourism platforms are user-friendly and intuitive, companies can instill confidence in users, ultimately driving positive intentions, engagement, and loyalty in the online travel market (Ukpabi et al., 2021). Therefore, the following hypotheses were proposed for this study

*H9:* There is a relationship between perceived ease of use and trust toward the intention to use e-tourism among tourists.

*H10:* There is a mediating effect of trust on the relationship between perceived ease of use and intention to use e-tourism among tourists.

#### *Relationship between Perceived Usefulness, Trust and Intention*

In the realm of e-tourism, the interplay between perceived usefulness, trust, and intention shapes users' interactions with online tourism platforms. Perceived usefulness refers to users' beliefs about the extent to which an e-tourism platform can enhance their travel experiences or facilitate their trip-planning process (Mollik et al., 2024). When users perceive an e-tourism platform as useful, it fosters trust in its ability to deliver on its promises and meet their needs effectively. Features such as comprehensive destination information, reliable booking systems, and personalized recommendations contribute to this perception of usefulness (Luqman et al., 2023). This trust in the platform's capabilities influences users' intentions to engage further, whether it involves making bookings, exploring destination content, or utilizing additional services. Conversely, if users perceive an e-tourism platform as lacking in usefulness or failing to deliver value, it can erode trust in the platform's reliability and integrity (Alharmoodi et al., 2024). This lack of trust may lead users to reconsider their intentions to continue using the platform or to seek alternative solutions for their travel-related needs. Therefore, in the competitive landscape of e-tourism, businesses need to prioritize the enhancement of perceived usefulness to cultivate trust among users (Wang et al., 2024). By consistently delivering valuable features and services that meet users' expectations, e-tourism platforms can instill confidence in users, ultimately driving positive intentions, engagement, and loyalty in the online travel market (Nindito et al., 2023). Hence, the following hypotheses were proposed for this study:

*H11:* There is a relationship between perceived usefulness and trust toward the intention to use e-tourism among tourists.

*H12:* There is a relationship between trust and intention to use e-tourism among tourists.

*H13:* There is a mediating effect of trust on the relationship between perceived usefulness and intention to use e-tourism among tourists.

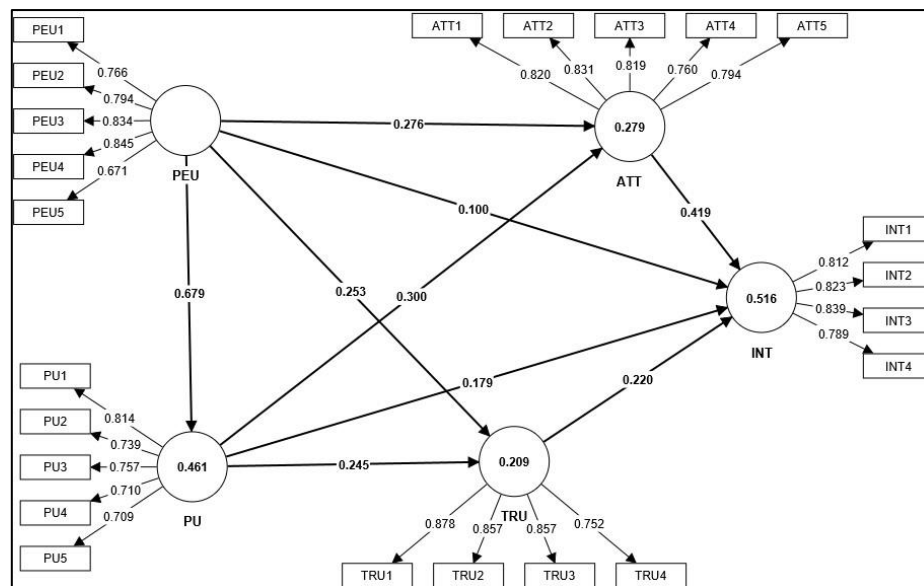


Figure 1: Research Framework

Note: PU=Perceived Usefulness PEU=Perceived Ease of Use TRU=Trust ATT=Attitude INT=Intention to Use

## Methodology

The methodology employed in this study targeted tourists engaged in both domestic and international travel experiences. The research design adopted was that of a causal-effect relationship study, with the unit of analysis focused on local tourists. A survey questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data collection, encompassing measurement items including Perceived Usefulness adopted from Lee et al (2005) (5 items), Trust adopted from Chu & Kim (2011) (4 items), Attitude adopted from Lee et al (2005) (5 items), Perceived Ease of Use adopted from Lee et al (2005) (5 items), and Intention adopted from Shang et al (2011) (4 items). The data utilized in the study were primary. The sampling technique employed was a non-probability purposive sampling technique. A total of 546 survey questionnaires were distributed, with 432 returned, indicating a response rate of 79.1%. After screening for completeness and quality, 417 responses were deemed suitable for analysis. In this study, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) serves as the selected analytical approach, with analysis conducted using the Smartpls4 software tool. Smartpls4 is acknowledged for its adeptness in managing intricate SEM models, as documented by (Ringle et al., 2022).

## Data Analysis

### Respondents Profile

The analysis of respondent profiles reveals noteworthy insights into the demographics of the sample population. Regarding gender distribution, the data indicate a nearly equal split, with 48.4% being male and 51.6% female. In terms of age, the majority of respondents fall within the 41-50 years age bracket, comprising 31.4% of the sample, followed by those aged 31-40 years (21.6%) and 51-60 years (21.8%). Respondents under 30 years and over 60 years constitute smaller proportions of 19.7% and 5.5%, respectively. Educationally, a significant portion of respondents hold postgraduate qualifications, with 79.4% reporting postgraduate education. Undergraduate education accounts for 9.1%, while secondary and primary school levels contribute 4.3% and 7.2%, respectively. Finally, examining income levels, the majority

fall within the RM4,851 – RM10,970 bracket, representing 57.1% of respondents, followed by those earning less than RM4,850 (29.0%) and those earning over RM10,971 (13.9%).

#### *Common Method Bias*

Kock (2015); Kock & Lynn (2012) introduced an inclusive methodology known as the collinearity test, which addresses both vertical and horizontal collinearity aspects. The identification of pathological collinearity relies on variance inflation factors (VIFs) exceeding 3.3, indicating a notable concern for common method bias within the model (Kock & Lynn, 2012). Consequently, if the VIFs derived from the comprehensive collinearity assessment fall below 3.3, it can be deduced that the model remains unaffected by common method bias (Kock, 2015). As illustrated in Table 1, the VIFs resulting from the overall collinearity assessment were found to be below 3.3, confirming the absence of any common method bias issue within the model

Table 1  
*Full Collinearity Test*

	MINT	MPEU	MPU	MTRU	MATT
MINT		2.021	1.974	1.893	1.617
MPEU	1.979		1.492	1.960	1.958
MPU	2.001	1.544		2.040	2.039
MTRU	1.277	1.350	1.358		1.375
MATT	1.395	1.724	1.735	1.758	

#### *Measurement Model*

In this investigation, we adopted the methodology recommended by Hair et al. (2017) to assess each measurement in both the first and second order, facilitating the identification of items with loadings below the 0.7 threshold. The analyses of construct reliability and validity unveiled that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all constructs ranged from 0.558 to 0.701, surpassing the 0.5 benchmark, thereby indicating well-established convergent validity (Hair et al., 2017) (Table 2). Furthermore, the composite reliability for all constructs exceeded 0.7, falling within the range of 0.802 to 0.868. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs were greater than 0.7, varying from 0.801 to 0.864 (Table 2). To ensure discriminant validity, the initial step involved the evaluation of cross-loadings, ensuring appropriate representation and measurement of respective constructs (Table 3). Subsequently, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio was employed for further assessment, adhering to the recommended criterion for examining discriminant validity in Variance-Based Structural Equation Modeling (VB-SEM) (Henseler et al., 2015). Table 4 presented the HTMT ratios, original sample, and 95% confidence intervals, affirming compliance with the HTMT threshold of 0.85.

Table 2

*Construct Reliability and Validity & Hetrotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratios*

Constructs	Indicators	Loadings	CA	CR	AVE	HTMT			
						ATT	INT	PEU	PU
Attitude	ATT1	0.820	0.864	0.868	0.649				
	ATT2	0.831							
	ATT3	0.819							
	ATT4	0.760							
	ATT5	0.794							
Intention	INT1	0.812	0.833	0.835	0.666	0.735			
	INT2	0.823							
	INT3	0.839							
	INT4	0.789							
Perceived Ease of Use	PEU1	0.766	0.843	0.859	0.615	0.554	5.599		
	PEU2	0.794							
	PEU3	0.834							
	PEU4	0.845							
	PEU5	0.671							
Perceived Usefulness	PU1	0.814	0.801	0.802	0.558	0.579	0.653	0.812	
	PU2	0.739							
	PU3	0.757							
	PU4	0.710							
	PU5	0.709							
Trust	TRU1	0.878	0.857	0.864	0.701	0.383	0.557	0.483	0.498
	TRU2	0.857							
	TRU3	0.857							
	TRU4	0.752							

Note: CA=Cronbach Alpha CR=Composite Reliability AVE=Average Variance Extracted

*Structural Model*

In this study, the evaluation of the structural model followed the methodology outlined by Hair et al (2017), which involved scrutinizing pathway coefficients ( $\beta$ ) and coefficients of determination ( $R^2$ ). The Partial Least Squares (PLS) method was utilized, employing 5000 sub-samples to ascertain the significance level of path coefficients. The findings from hypothesis testing for confidence intervals, covering path coefficients (beta), corresponding t-statistics, and p-values, are presented in Table 3. This rigorous examination offers valuable insights into the significance and robustness of the relationships among the variables within the structural model. The detailed hypotheses testing results in Table 3 provide a nuanced analysis of each hypothesis, with a focus on Beta coefficients, T-statistics, P-values, and the final decisions regarding hypothesis support. For *H1*: PERCEIVED EASE OF USE  $\rightarrow$  PERCEIVED USEFULNESS: The beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.679$ ) indicates a significant positive relationship, supported by a high t-value ( $t = 23.267$ ) and a low p-value ( $p = 0.000$ ). Therefore, this hypothesis is supported, suggesting that perceived ease of use positively influences perceived usefulness. *H2*: PERCEIVED EASE OF USE  $\rightarrow$  ATTITUDE: The beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.276$ ) shows a significant positive relationship, supported by a high t-value ( $t = 4.516$ ) and a low p-value ( $p = 0.000$ ). Hence, this hypothesis is supported, indicating that perceived ease of use positively affects attitude. *H3*: PERCEIVED EASE OF USE  $\rightarrow$  INTENTION TO USE: The beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.100$ )



suggests a weak relationship, as evidenced by a low t-value ( $t = 1.799$ ) and a p-value ( $p = 0.072$ ) exceeding the threshold of 0.05. Therefore, this hypothesis is not supported, indicating that perceived ease of use does not directly influence intention to use. *H4: PERCEIVED EASE OF USE -> ATTITUDE -> INTENTION TO USE*: The beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.116$ ) indicates a significant positive relationship, supported by a high t-value ( $t = 4.032$ ) and a low p-value ( $p = 0.000$ ). Thus, this hypothesis is supported, suggesting that attitude mediates the relationship between perceived ease of use and intention to use.

*H5: PERCEIVED USEFULNESS -> ATTITUDE*: The beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.300$ ) demonstrates a significant positive relationship, supported by a high t-value ( $t = 5.156$ ) and a low p-value ( $p = 0.000$ ). Consequently, this hypothesis is supported, indicating that perceived usefulness positively influences attitude. *H6: PERCEIVED USEFULNESS -> INTENTION TO USE*: The beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.179$ ) indicates a significant positive relationship, supported by a high t-value ( $t = 3.093$ ) and a low p-value ( $p = 0.002$ ). Hence, this hypothesis is supported, suggesting that perceived usefulness positively influences the intention to use. *H7: ATTITUDE -> INTENTION TO USE*: The beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.419$ ) demonstrates a significant positive relationship, supported by a high t-value ( $t = 9.487$ ) and a low p-value ( $p = 0.000$ ). Therefore, this hypothesis is supported, indicating that attitude positively influences intention to use. *H8: PERCEIVED USEFULNESS -> ATTITUDE -> INTENTION TO USE*: The beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.126$ ) suggests a significant positive relationship, supported by a high t-value ( $t = 4.574$ ) and a low p-value ( $p = 0.000$ ). Hence, this hypothesis is supported, indicating that attitude mediates the relationship between perceived usefulness and intention to use. *H9: PERCEIVED EASE OF USE -> TRUST*: The beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.253$ ) demonstrates a significant positive relationship, supported by a high t-value ( $t = 3.488$ ) and a low p-value ( $p = 0.000$ ). Thus, this hypothesis is supported, suggesting that perceived ease of use positively influences trust. *H10: PERCEIVED EASE OF USE -> TRUST -> INTENTION TO USE*: The beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.056$ ) indicates a significant positive relationship, supported by a high t-value ( $t = 3.170$ ) and a low p-value ( $p = 0.002$ ). Therefore, this hypothesis is supported, indicating that trust mediates the relationship between perceived ease of use and intention to use. *H11: PERCEIVED USEFULNESS -> TRUST*: The beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.245$ ) demonstrates a significant positive relationship, supported by a high t-value ( $t = 3.613$ ) and a low p-value ( $p = 0.000$ ). Hence, this hypothesis is supported, suggesting that perceived usefulness positively influences trust. *H12: TRUST -> INTENTION TO USE*: The beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.220$ ) indicates a significant positive relationship, supported by a high t-value ( $t = 4.721$ ) and a low p-value ( $p = 0.000$ ). Thus, this hypothesis is supported, indicating that trust positively influences the intention to use. *H13: PERCEIVED USEFULNESS -> TRUST -> INTENTION TO USE*: The beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.054$ ) suggests a significant positive relationship, supported by a moderate t-value ( $t = 2.527$ ) and a low p-value ( $p = 0.012$ ). Therefore, this hypothesis is supported, indicating that trust mediates the relationship between perceived usefulness and intention to use.

Table 4 presents a comprehensive summary of effect sizes, assessed independently of sample size, by Cohen's criteria (1992): small (0.020 to 0.150), medium (0.150 to 0.350), or large (0.350 or greater). The observed effect sizes ranged from small (0.010) to large (0.855). Intrinsic Value Inflation Factor (VIF) values, outlined in Table 4, remained below the more lenient threshold of 5, with the highest value recorded at 2.035. This level of collinearity facilitates meaningful comparisons of sizes and interpretation of coefficients within the structural model. A noteworthy degree of explained variance for the endogenous construct is

apparent, with an  $R^2$  value of 0.516 (Figure 1). Concerning the mediator, the model explained approximately 27.9% of the variance in the structure, as indicated by an  $R^2$  value of 0.279.

The assessment of the model's inference and managerial recommendations was conducted through out-of-sample predictive analysis utilizing the PLSpredict method (Shmueli et al., 2016, 2019). Table 5 demonstrates that PLS-SEM yielded superior Q2 predictions ( $>0$ ) compared to naive mean predictions, while consistently displaying lower RMSE values than linear model (LM) benchmarks, indicating its predictive strength. Furthermore, the RMSE values for PLS-SEM predictions were consistently lower than those of the linear model (LM) prediction benchmark in fourteen out of eighteen instances, highlighting the predictive capability of the proposed model as depicted in Table 6. The introduction of the Cross-Validated Predictive Ability Test (CVPAT) by Hair et al (2022), and its utilization in combination with PLSpredict analysis by Liengard et al (2021), are noteworthy. Table 8 reaffirms the superior predictive capabilities of PLS-SEM, with lower average loss values compared to indicator averages and LM benchmarks, providing further evidence of its enhanced predictive performance.

Ringle and Sarstedt (2016); Hair et al (2018) proposed Importance Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) to assess latent variable significance and effectiveness in explaining acceptance, as detailed in Table 8. The overall impact on intention was most pronounced for perceived ease of use (0.515), followed by attitude (0.419), perceived usefulness (0.359), and trust (0.220), indicating their relative importance in intention. Perceived usefulness scored highest (67.776), while attitude had the lowest score (60.538) on a 0-100 scale, reflecting better performance by perceived usefulness and lower achievement for attitude. Despite ranking second in intention importance, the attitude displayed the lowest performance. These results suggest prioritizing activities to improve attitude among the tourists, potentially enhancing overall intention to use e-tourism.

Table 3

*Hypotheses Testing Results*

Hypotheses	Beta	T statistics	P values	2.50%	97.50%	Decision
H1: PEU -> PU	0.679	23.267	0.000	0.613	0.730	<i>Supported</i>
H2: PEU -> ATT	0.276	4.516	0.000	0.154	0.396	<i>Supported</i>
H3: PEU -> INT	0.100	1.799	0.072	-0.015	0.207	<i>Not Supported</i>
H4: PEU -> ATT -> INT	0.116	4.032	0.000	0.063	0.174	<i>Supported</i>
H5: PU -> ATT	0.300	5.156	0.000	0.178	0.409	<i>Supported</i>
H6: PU -> INT	0.179	3.093	0.002	0.073	0.298	<i>Supported</i>
H7: ATT -> INT	0.419	9.487	0.000	0.325	0.500	<i>Supported</i>
H8: PU -> ATT -> INT	0.126	4.574	0.000	0.075	0.182	<i>Supported</i>
H9: PEU -> TRU	0.253	3.488	0.000	0.106	0.392	<i>Supported</i>
H10: PEU -> TRU -> INT	0.056	3.170	0.002	0.026	0.098	<i>Supported</i>
H11: PU -> TRU	0.245	3.613	0.000	0.106	0.374	<i>Supported</i>
H12: TRU -> INT	0.220	4.721	0.000	0.122	0.306	<i>Supported</i>
H13: PU -> TRU -> INT	0.054	2.527	0.012	0.018	0.102	<i>Supported</i>

Table 4

*Effect Size ( $f^2$ ) & Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)*

	f <sup>2</sup>				VIF			
	ATT	INT	PU	TRU	ATT	INT	PU	TRU
ATT		0.258				1.406		
PEU	0.057	0.010	0.855	0.044	1.835	2.022	1.06	1.825
PU	0.067	0.032		0.041	1.857	2.035		1.846
TRU		0.078				1.282		

Table 5

*PLSpredict*

Indicators	Q <sup>2</sup> predict	PLS_RMSE	LM_RMSE	PLS-LM
ATT1	0.176	0.641	0.644	-0.003
ATT2	0.147	0.636	0.640	-0.004
ATT3	0.107	0.693	0.696	-0.003
ATT4	0.132	0.692	0.696	-0.004
ATT5	0.154	0.632	0.635	-0.003
INT1	0.239	0.675	0.665	0.010
INT2	0.175	0.646	0.648	-0.002
INT3	0.184	0.712	0.714	-0.002
INT4	0.078	0.752	0.757	-0.005
PU1	0.309	0.623	0.623	0.000
PU2	0.200	0.603	0.606	-0.003
PU3	0.199	0.616	0.619	-0.003
PU4	0.271	0.617	0.609	0.008
PU5	0.265	0.692	0.700	-0.008
TRU1	0.151	0.779	0.785	-0.006
TRU2	0.135	0.754	0.758	-0.004
TRU3	0.07	0.787	0.786	0.001
TRU4	0.104	0.785	0.792	-0.007

Table 6

*Cross-Validated Predictive Ability Test (CVPAT)*

	Average loss difference	t value	p value
ATT	-0.072	4.610	0.000
INT	-0.099	5.310	0.000
PU	-0.135	7.247	0.000
TRU	-0.079	3.492	0.001
Overall	-0.097	7.250	0.000

Table 7

*Importance Performance Map Analysis (IPMA)*

	Total Effect	Performance
ATT	0.419	60.538
PEU	0.515	66.640
PU	0.359	67.776
TRU	0.220	66.557

## Discussion & Conclusion

In the dynamic realm of the travel industry, the successful adoption of e-tourism platforms hinges greatly on tourists' perceptions of ease of use and usefulness. To enhance these perceptions and thus promote the uptake of e-tourism, travel companies and agents can employ several strategic approaches while recognizing trust and attitude as crucial mediators. First and foremost, prioritizing a user-friendly interface and seamless navigation is imperative, as it fosters intuitive engagement with e-tourism platforms. Simple booking processes, clear labeling, and user-friendly functionalities contribute significantly to enhancing perceived ease of use. Moreover, personalization and customization play a pivotal role in boosting perceived usefulness, as offering tailored experiences and personalized recommendations based on user preferences can significantly enhance the appeal of e-tourism services. Leveraging data analytics and AI technologies enables travel companies to deliver relevant content, thereby enriching tourists' experiences. Additionally, transparency is key in building trust among tourists, with transparent information about destinations, accommodations, pricing, and reliable customer reviews being essential elements. Transparent pricing policies and responsive customer support further bolster trust and confidence in e-tourism services, fostering positive attitudes towards the platform. Establishing credibility and reputation is equally vital, as it instills confidence in tourists and reinforces positive perceptions of e-tourism platforms. By implementing these strategies effectively, travel companies and agents can enhance perceived ease of use and usefulness, with trust and attitude serving as critical mediators in influencing tourists' intentions to embrace e-tourism services.

### *Theoretical Implications*

The study explores how tourists' intention to use e-tourism platforms is influenced by perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, with trust and attitude acting as mediators, and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) providing the theoretical framework. This research holds substantial theoretical implications for understanding the factors driving tourists' adoption of e-tourism services. Firstly, by incorporating TAM, a well-established theoretical framework in technology adoption research, the study contributes to enriching the understanding of e-tourism adoption behavior within the context of tourists' perceptions. TAM posits that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are key determinants of individuals' intention to use technology, thus providing a solid foundation for investigating tourists' intentions to use e-tourism platforms. Secondly, the inclusion of trust and attitude as mediators in the model extends TAM's applicability in the tourism domain, highlighting the importance of psychological factors in shaping tourists' technology adoption behavior. This expands the theoretical scope of TAM and underscores the multifaceted nature of tourists' decision-making processes when engaging with e-tourism services. Furthermore, by empirically testing the relationships between perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, trust, attitude, and intention to use e-tourism, the study contributes valuable insights to both the TAM framework and the broader literature on e-tourism adoption. It helps elucidate the mechanisms through which trust and attitude mediate the effects of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness on tourists' behavioral intentions, thereby advancing theoretical knowledge in both technology acceptance and tourism studies. Overall, the theoretical implications of this study underscore the relevance and utility of integrating established theoretical frameworks like TAM with nuanced factors such as trust and attitude to better understand tourists' adoption of e-tourism platforms.

### *Contextual Implications*

The contextual implications of the study investigating the influence of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness on tourists' intention to use e-tourism, with trust and attitude as mediators, extend beyond theoretical frameworks to practical applications within the tourism industry. As the tourism sector increasingly relies on digital platforms for booking accommodations, planning itineraries, and accessing destination information, understanding tourists' perceptions of e-tourism platforms becomes paramount. By uncovering how factors like perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, trust, and attitude shape tourists' intentions to utilize e-tourism services, the study offers valuable insights for businesses and destination management organizations. For instance, tourism companies can leverage these findings to design user-friendly interfaces, personalize services, and build trust with customers, ultimately enhancing their competitiveness in the digital marketplace. Similarly, destination marketers can tailor their promotional strategies to emphasize the convenience and utility of e-tourism platforms, while also fostering positive attitudes and trust towards these digital resources. Overall, the study's contextual implications highlight the importance of aligning e-tourism offerings with tourists' preferences and expectations, thereby facilitating seamless and enjoyable travel experiences in an increasingly digitized world.

### *Practical Implications*

The practical implications of the study on the influence of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness on tourists' intention to use e-tourism, with trust and attitude as mediators, are significant for stakeholders in the tourism industry. By understanding the key factors influencing tourists' decisions to engage with e-tourism platforms, businesses and destination management organizations can devise targeted strategies to enhance customer experiences and increase adoption rates. For example, travel companies can prioritize improving the user interface and navigation of their websites or mobile apps to make booking processes more intuitive and convenient. They can also invest in personalized recommendations and tailored offerings based on individual preferences to enhance the perceived usefulness of their services. Moreover, fostering trust through transparent information, reliable customer support, and secure payment systems can mitigate concerns and encourage tourists to utilize e-tourism platforms with confidence. Additionally, shaping positive attitudes towards e-tourism through effective communication and promotional campaigns can further incentivize tourists to explore and utilize these digital resources. Overall, the practical implications of the study empower stakeholders to implement targeted initiatives that optimize the usability, utility, trustworthiness, and appeal of e-tourism platforms, ultimately enhancing customer satisfaction and driving business success in the competitive tourism market.

### *Suggestions for Future Study*

Future studies in this domain could delve deeper into several avenues to expand our understanding of tourists' adoption of e-tourism platforms. Firstly, exploring the role of demographic factors such as age, gender, education level, and cultural background in shaping perceptions and intentions towards e-tourism could provide valuable insights into segment-specific preferences and behaviors. Additionally, investigating the impact of emerging technologies such as augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and artificial intelligence (AI) on tourists' perceptions and adoption of e-tourism services could offer novel perspectives on the evolving landscape of digital tourism. Moreover, longitudinal studies tracking tourists' usage patterns and behaviors over time could provide insights into the dynamics of e-tourism

adoption and the long-term effects of interventions aimed at enhancing perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, trust, and attitude. Lastly, comparative studies across different destinations and tourism contexts could shed light on the contextual factors influencing tourists' adoption of e-tourism platforms, facilitating the development of tailored strategies for diverse markets.

### Conclusion

This study has illuminated the intricate interplay between perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, trust, attitude, and tourists' intention to use e-tourism platforms. Drawing on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) framework, we have demonstrated the significance of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness as key determinants of tourists' behavioral intentions, with trust and attitude serving as crucial mediators in this process. Our findings underscore the importance of user-friendly interfaces, personalized recommendations, transparent information, reliable customer support, and effective communication in fostering positive perceptions and intentions towards e-tourism services. Furthermore, by uncovering the nuanced relationships between these factors, we have provided valuable insights for stakeholders in the tourism industry to develop targeted strategies aimed at enhancing e-tourism adoption and improving customer experiences. As the tourism sector continues to evolve in the digital age, the implications of this study extend beyond theoretical frameworks to practical applications, empowering stakeholders to navigate and thrive in the ever-changing landscape of e-tourism.

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