

Exploring the Influence of Perceived Usefulness, Ease of Use, and Subjective Norms on Online Hotel Booking Intentions: The Mediating Roles of Trust and Satisfaction in Aqaba, Jordan

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the factors influencing the intention to book hotels online in Aqaba by examining the roles of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and subjective norms, with trust and satisfaction acting as mediators. The findings provide insights into how psychological, technological, and social factors interact to affect booking intentions, and they offer practical recommendations for hotel managers and platform developers aiming to enhance digital engagement and conversion in the Jordanian hospitality industry.

Keywords: Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, Subjective Norms, Satisfaction, Intention to Book Hotels

Introduction

The growing influence of social media in shaping consumer behavior has become especially critical in the tourism and hospitality industry (Aljawarneh et al., 2025; Ghaderi et al., 2024; Mohammad et al., 2024). In particular, conversion rates for bookings made through social media remain significantly lower than those generated through traditional booking (Dadić et al., 2022; Malkawi et al., 2023; Manadi, 2024). Despite its rapid adoption, the actual effectiveness of social media in driving hotel booking decisions remains underexplored, particularly in developing regions such as Jordan (Angeloni & Rossi, 2021; Dadić et al., 2022). This gap highlights the importance of exploring the technological and psychological factors that drive users' intention to book hotels online (Akhtar et al., 2022; Vrontis et al., 2022). While social media has become an important awareness and promotional tool, its conversion to actual bookings remains inconsistent (Ghaderi et al., 2024). Therefore, the motivation to conduct this study stems from the need to bridge this knowledge gap by investigating the underlying constructs that may mediate or influence consumers' booking behavior namely, perceived usefulness, ease of use, subjective norms, trust, and satisfaction (Bano & Siddiqui, 2024; Fang et al., 2014). Aqaba, as a rising tourist destination in Jordan, provides an ideal

setting for this research due to its strategic economic importance and the growing competition among hotels for digital visibility and customer engagement (Bazazo et al., 2022). The rapid evolution of digital technologies has revolutionized consumer behavior, particularly in the hospitality sector, where online platforms have become the primary channel for hotel bookings (Dredge et al., 2019). The shift from traditional to online booking systems has been driven by technological advancements, increased internet penetration, and the proliferation of smartphones and mobile applications (Cordova-Buiza et al., 2025). According to Statista (2023), over 60% of global travel bookings were made online, highlighting a dramatic change in consumer preference for digital interaction. This transformation necessitates a deeper understanding of the factors influencing consumers' intention to book hotels through digital platforms.

In Jordan, the tourism sector is a vital contributor to the national economy, and Aqaba holds a strategic position as the country's coastal city and a key tourism hub (Albahrat et al., 2024). Aqaba's hotels range from luxury resorts to affordable accommodation, all competing for visibility and customer engagement through online booking channels (Bazazo et al., 2022). Understanding what drives customers to book online specifically in Aqaba, is crucial for optimizing hotel performance in this competitive environment (Alananzeh et al., 2018).

While the convenience and accessibility of online booking systems are widely acknowledged, the decision-making process underlying such intentions remains complex (Chen, 2025). Several interrelated factors, including perceptions of technology, social influences, and emotional responses, play pivotal roles (Arora & Sahney, 2018). To unpack these dynamics, this study adopts a dual-theoretical lens: the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). TAM explains how perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use shape technology adoption, while TPB emphasizes the influence of subjective norms on behavioral intentions.

Moreover, trust and customer satisfaction have emerged as essential mediators in the context of e-commerce and digital services (Fang et al., 2014). Trust reduces perceived risk in online transactions, and satisfaction reflects the users' evaluation of their booking experience, both of which contribute to future behavioral intentions (Azhar et al., 2025). Although prior studies have examined individual factors such as perceived usefulness or satisfaction. Satisfaction can enhance psychological safety and decision-making. (Amayreh & Arshad, 2024), This study is important because it addresses a pressing practical and academic need to understand how social media platforms can move beyond promotion and awareness to actively influence users' booking intentions. Moreover, exploring this area is essential not only for advancing digital marketing strategies in the hotel sector but also for enhancing service design, customer engagement, and economic performance in tourism-driven economies like Aqaba. few have comprehensively integrated these constructs into a unified model to predict hotel booking intention particularly within a regional context like Aqaba, Jordan.

In light of this gap, the current study investigates the influence of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and subjective norms on intention to book hotels online, mediated by trust and satisfaction. By focusing on these variables within the context of Aqaba's hotel industry, the study aims to provide theoretical advancement and practical recommendations

for platform developers and hospitality marketers in Jordan. This research not only extends the applicability of TAM and TPB to the digital hospitality context but also offers a nuanced understanding of the mediating roles played by trust and satisfaction.

By identifying and explaining the psychological and technological factors that encourage or hinder booking behaviors, this study offers valuable insights for hotel marketers, digital platform designers, and tourism policymakers. It responds to the growing need for data-driven strategies in online hospitality, particularly in competitive and evolving markets where digital presence is becoming a decisive factor for business success.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Recent studies have increasingly acknowledged the growing role of social media and digital platforms in shaping consumers' travel and booking behaviors. However, there remains limited empirical work that links these trends to measurable outcomes in terms of confirmed bookings, particularly in developing economies such as Jordan (Arabeyyat & Aldweik, 2024; Samawi et al., 2025). According to Dadić et al. (2022) and Malkawi et al. (2023), although digital engagement through platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and hotel websites is on the rise, actual booking conversions remain relatively low, suggesting a gap between user interest and behavioral execution (Conner & Norman, 2022; Islam et al., 2024). This disconnect highlights the importance of understanding the underlying cognitive and affective factors that influence booking intentions, especially in touristic cities like Aqaba, where hotels compete for online visibility and customer trust (Fang et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2021).

In the context of the Middle East and Jordan, factors such as cultural norms, technology acceptance levels, and trust in online systems add further complexity to digital consumer behavior (Ajzen, 2002; Han & Anderson, 2022). Research by Aljawarneh et al. (2025) and Mohammad et al. (2024) emphasizes that even when platforms are technically advanced, the absence of perceived credibility or user satisfaction can significantly deter consumers from completing online transactions. Therefore, by incorporating both technological and behavioral constructs, this study offers a more comprehensive perspective on hotel booking intention that accounts for both individual attitudes and social influences. This dual focus is especially critical for understanding how emerging digital tourism destinations like Aqaba can enhance their online strategies to drive actual bookings.

Hypotheses Development

Drawing from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) are expected to significantly influence behavioral intentions. PU refers to the extent to which consumers believe that using an online booking platform enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of their hotel search and reservation process (Davis, 1989). PEOU refers to the extent to which consumers perceive that using such a platform is effortless and user-friendly (Kahar et al., 2019). Prior studies confirm the positive effects of PU and PEOU on technology adoption and consumer decisions (Raza et al., 2017).

Additionally, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) introduces subjective norms (SN) as a social component influencing individual decision-making (Hagger et al., 2022). SN reflects the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a particular behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In

collectivist cultures like Jordan, the opinions of friends, family, and online communities significantly impact online purchase behavior, including hotel bookings.

Trust and satisfaction serve as mediators in the digital decision-making process (Fang et al., 2014). Trust is defined as the belief in the platform's reliability, security, and honesty. It reduces perceived risk in online transactions (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015; Williams & Baláž, 2021). On the other hand, satisfaction is a post-consumption evaluative response that determines whether consumers would reuse or recommend a platform (Amayreh & Arshad., 2025; Azhar et al., 2025; Cetin et al., 2022). Trust and satisfaction are both influenced by PU, PEOU, and SN, and in turn, affect intention to book.

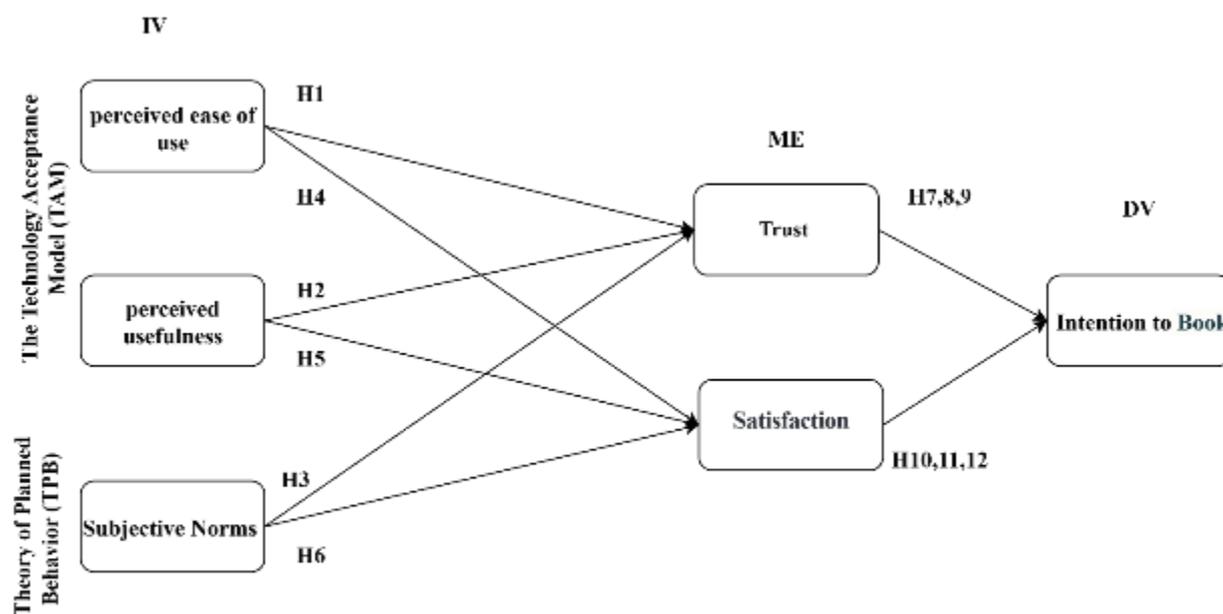


Figure 1: theoretical framework

Based on this theoretical foundation, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), a fundamental construct in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), refers to the extent to which individuals perceive a system as effortless to use (Davis, 1989), particularly within the context of hotel bookings via social media platforms where intuitive navigation, clear functionality, and low cognitive effort are essential (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). PEOU significantly contributes to trust and satisfaction key psychological outcomes influencing booking intentions (Aluri et al., 2016; Zahidah & Rostiani, 2021) by enabling users to easily access reviews, compare options, and complete bookings. When platforms are perceived as user-friendly, users often infer professionalism and credibility, reinforcing trust (Gefen et al., 2003; Nguyen et al., 2024). Empirical evidence confirms this relationship, highlighting that ease of use enhances users' trust by reducing cognitive load and perceived risks (Azhar et al., 2025; Chen et al., 2021; Kimes, 2010).

Perceived Usefulness (PU), a core component of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), reflects users' belief that a system enhances decision-making and performance (Davis, 1989), particularly in hotel bookings via social media platforms where it aids in simplifying and improving the reservation process (Kucukusta et al., 2015). Closely related, Perceived Ease of

Use (PEOU) refers to the perceived effortlessness in using these platforms, influencing users' ability to interact effectively with digital booking tools (Zhang, 2021). PU plays a pivotal role in fostering trust, especially in online contexts where users rely on cues like reviews and platform design to assess credibility (Gefen et al., 2003). When platforms are perceived as useful, they enhance users' trust by reducing uncertainty, as supported by empirical studies (Casaló et al., 2011; Ho et al., 2022), ultimately strengthening booking intentions through increased psychological assurance.

Subjective Norms (SN), a core component of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), represent the perceived social pressure from significant others to engage in specific behaviors (Ajzen, 1991), and in the context of hotel bookings via social media, they capture how family, peers, and influencers shape users' trust and satisfaction with digital platforms (Dwivedi et al., 2021). SN influence trust by acting as social heuristics where positive recommendations and online endorsements substitute for direct experience leading users to perceive platforms as reliable and credible (Gefen et al., 2003). Empirical studies affirm this link, showing that SN significantly predict trust in online travel communities (Casaló et al., 2011; G. Kim et al., 2009), although individual factors like innovativeness and prior experience can moderate this relationship, suggesting its context-dependent nature, particularly in emerging markets like Aqaba (Tang & Jiang, 2024; Tarazi, 2023).

Trust is a central construct in digital consumer behavior, especially in online hotel booking through social media platforms, where it reflects users' belief in the reliability, integrity, and performance of service providers (Zahidah & Rostiani, 2021). As consumers often commit to services without physical validation, trust functions as a psychological mechanism that mitigates uncertainty and shapes behavioral intentions (Lăzăroiu et al., 2020). Theoretically rooted in both the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), trust is influenced by perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU), attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (PBC) (Ajzen, 1991; Davis, 1989). Empirical studies further support trust's mediating role in converting positive perceptions and social validations into booking intentions (Casaló et al., 2011; Chouykaew et al., 2024; G. Kim et al., 2009).

Satisfaction, on the other hand, is defined as a positive emotional evaluation of one's booking experience, reflecting the extent to which expectations have been met or exceeded (Amayreh & Arshad, 2025a; Hao & Chon, 2022). In hotel bookings via social media, satisfaction encompasses users' cognitive and affective responses to the platform's ability to facilitate efficient search, comparison, and booking decisions (Ruiz-Alba et al., 2022). Within the TAM framework, satisfaction is shaped by PU and PEOU, as platforms that are both useful and easy to navigate tend to foster stronger emotional fulfillment (Manoharan & Ashtikar, 2025; Shen et al., 2013). Ultimately, satisfaction plays a key mediating role by transforming favorable platform experiences into behavioral commitment, reinforcing the influence of technological and usability factors on users' booking decisions (Bano & Siddiqui, 2024). Based on this theoretical foundation, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Perceived ease of use positively affects trust.

H2: Perceived usefulness positively affects trust.

H3: Subjective norms positively affect trust.

H4: Perceived ease of use positively affects satisfaction

H5: Perceived usefulness positively affects satisfaction

H6: Subjective norms positively affect satisfaction.

H7: Trust mediates the relationship between Perceived ease of use and booking intention.

H8: Trust mediates the relationship between perceived usefulness and booking intention.

H9: Trust mediates the relationship between subjective norms and booking intention.

H10: Satisfaction mediates the relationship between perceived usefulness and booking intention.

H11: Satisfaction mediates the relationship between perceived ease of use and booking intention.

H12: Satisfaction mediates the relationship between Subjective norms and booking intention.

Methodology

This study will be used a quantitative research design with purposive sampling to survey the opinions of 92 individuals who had previously booked or were planning to book hotels via social media in Aqaba. Data will be gathered through online distribution channels targeting experienced users of digital booking platforms. Analysis involved SPSS for descriptive statistics, reliability testing, and data screening, while SmartPLS 4 was used for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The measurement model was assessed for reliability and validity, and the structural model was tested to evaluate the proposed hypotheses, including the mediating roles of trust and satisfaction.

Contributions and Conclusions

This study offers several valuable contributions to both academic research and practical hospitality management. From a theoretical standpoint, it bridges key elements of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), integrating them into a single conceptual framework that effectively captures the determinants of online hotel booking intention in Aqaba. The study advances current literature by not only validating the direct effects of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and subjective norms but also exploring the mediating mechanisms of trust and satisfaction, which have received limited attention in regional hospitality research like (Fang et al., 2014; Jabeen et al., 2024; Ruiz-Alba et al., 2022; Williams & Baláž, 2021). This comprehensive framework extends the boundaries of existing models and contributes to a deeper understanding of customer behavior in the digital travel economy.

From a practical perspective, the research yields actionable insights for hotel operators, tourism marketers, and digital platform developers operating in Aqaba and other comparable tourist destinations. These concepts are confirmed underscore the critical role of perceived usefulness and ease of use in enhancing the digital experience, thus improving the chances of converting online interactions into actual bookings. Moreover, trust and satisfaction emerge as crucial psychological outcomes that can be fostered through secure interfaces, transparent policies, responsive customer service, and intuitive design (Amayreh & Arshad, 2025). Hotel managers can leverage these insights to develop user-centered digital strategies that not only attract potential customers but also convert them into loyal guests.

Future studies can expand on the findings of this research by incorporating additional variables such as price sensitivity, mobile usability, brand image, or customer loyalty programs, which may also influence booking intentions. Longitudinal research could be

conducted to observe changes in behavior over time, particularly as digital literacy and trust in online platforms evolve. Comparative studies between different regions of Jordan or between domestic and international tourists could also uncover context-specific patterns. Moreover, qualitative approaches such as interviews or focus groups could provide deeper insights into the psychological and emotional factors driving hotel booking decisions. As technology continues to advance and travelers' expectations shift, future research should also consider the impact of artificial intelligence, chatbots, and personalized marketing in shaping trust, satisfaction, and ultimately, booking behavior in the digital hospitality landscape.

Lastly, understanding the psychological and technological determinants of hotel booking intentions is vital for sustaining competitiveness in the digital hospitality industry (Altinay et al., 2023; Ruiz-Alba et al., 2022), particularly in regional tourist destinations like Aqaba. By identifying the key drivers and mediators of online booking behavior, this study lays the groundwork for more effective user-centered platform designs, marketing campaigns, and long-term customer relationship strategies that align with consumers' evolving expectations and behaviors. Future studies may build on this model by incorporating other contextual variables such as pricing dynamics, mobile usability, and post-booking service quality to further enrich our understanding of digital decision-making in the tourism industry.

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