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GUEST-CENTRIC FACTORS INFLUENCING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION IN HOTELS

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Abstract:

Rapid technological advancements and increasing consumer expectations are reshaping the hotel industry, with smartphone check-ins, Internet of Things (IoT) services, and artificial intelligence (AI)-driven personalisation becoming increasingly common. However, guests with limited digital literacy may experience difficulties using these technologies, and the impact of digital transformation on overall guest experience remains insufficiently examined. This study applies the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to examine how digital transformation affects hotel guests' experiences in Malaysian hotels, focusing on perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). This study employed a cross-sectional quantitative design. Data were collected from 244 guests of 4- and 5-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur who used digital technologies. Descriptive, correlation, and regression analysis were performed to examine the relationships among PU, PEOU, and technology adoption. Most respondents were educated professionals. A moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.395$)

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was found between PU and PEOU, and both significantly influenced guests' intention to adopt digital technologies, with ease of use having a slightly greater impact. The findings highlight the importance of designing digital hotel services that are both functional and user-friendly to enhance guest satisfaction and encourage technology adoption.

Keyword:

Digital Technology, Hotel Guest, Hotel Industry, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)



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Introduction

Digital transformation turns the tourism industry upended at the global level to affect guest experience and satisfaction closely. Where Malaysia is concerned, it is at such point where hotel is hastily adopting digital technologies to drive operational improvement while attending to new and more dynamic wants of guest, mostly from tourists. According to Shin and Jeong (2022), digital technologies like contactless check-ins, IoT-enabled services, and AI driven personalization paves the way for modernization in hotel operations and satisfies guests' expectations. Such technologies do not only provide time saving on streamlining operations, but they also contribute to a frictionless and improved experience for guest, which guarantees a competitive position in the market.

Moreover, the hotel industry has undergone significant changes in recent years, driven by advance in technology and changing consumer expectations. In Kuala Lumpur, a city known for its vibrant hospitality scene, hotel is increasingly leveraging digitalization to enhance the guest experience and stay competitive. According to Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, 2020 the article provides an overview of hotel start rating and digitalization in Kuala Lumpur, with a focus on 4- and 5-star hotels. The hotel start rating system is recognized measure of a hotel's quality and amenities. In Malaysia, the star rating system is administered by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, which awards hotels with a rating of 1 to 5 star based on factors such as cleanliness, comfort, and amenities (Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, 2020).

The Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture governs the hotel star classifications in Kuala Lumpur, ranging from 1 to 5 stars (Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture, 2020). This study focuses on 4- and 5-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur, examining their characteristics, facilities, and services. 4-star hotels offer quality accommodation with at least 100 rooms, en-suite facilities, air conditioning, flat-screen TVs, and minibars (Kamarudin et al., 2019,). They also provide

dining options such as restaurants, bars, and room service (Tan et al., 2020), along with amenities like gyms, swimming pools, and spas (Lee et al., 2020). Notable examples include The Westin Kuala Lumpur, The Sheraton

Imperial Kuala Lumpur, and The Hilton Kuala Lumpur. 5-star hotels provide luxury services with a minimum of 200 rooms and modern comforts like air conditioning, flat-screen TVs, and minibars (Kamarudin et al., 2019). They feature fine dining (Tan et al., 2020), wellness facilities, fitness centres, swimming pools, and spas (Lee et al., 2020). Examples include The Ritz-Carlton, Four Seasons Hotel, and Mandarin Oriental.

Industry 4.0 technologies, including the Internet of Things (IoT), big data, analytics, and cloud computing, have significantly influenced financial technology transformation (Soni et al., 2022). Many tourist destinations and hotels increasingly adopt these innovations to enhance service promotion. IoT enables tourism and hospitality businesses to improve customer satisfaction while reducing operational costs (Car et al., 2019). It is commonly defined as the electronic interconnection of physical objects, machine-to-machine communication, or smart sensor-enabled remote device pairing (Li et al., 2015).

The digital technology in hotel industry divide poses challenges in adopting and using in-room technologies in the hospitality industry, particularly for guests who are not IT-savvy. Besides that, most studies on digitalization technologies in hospitality focus on IT and AI (Eriksson & Fagerström, 2018; Lai & Hung, 2018; Leung, 2019; Morosan & DeFranco, 2016; Murphy et al., 2016; Ozturk et al., 2016; Petrevska et al., 2016), less attention has been given to guest experience towards the use of the digitalization technology in hotel. Therefore, this research examines the correlation between digital transformation and guest experience in Malaysian hotels, emphasizing on the perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) towards the use of digitalization.

An enabling environment for innovation, collaboration, and responsible digitisation practices in the hospitality industry is important, as the study demonstrates. With an emphasis on the opportunities and challenges presented by digitalisation, the study informs policymakers about the changing needs and expectations of consumers in the digital age. The digital divide poses challenges in adopting and using in-room technologies in the hospitality industry, particularly for guests who are not IT-savvy. For instance, studies show that there are differences in digital literacy. For example, older adults or people from areas with low incomes have trouble using new technologies like smart systems, IoT-enabled services, or automated hotel interfaces. This gap diminishes the potential benefits of these technologies, creating barriers to seamless experiences for less tech-savvy guests (Minghetti & Buhalis, 2009). Furthermore, researchers argue that unequal access to technology in tourist settings perpetuates disparities and limits the inclusiveness of services and opportunities for underserved travellers.

The hotel industry is currently facing a digital transformation driven by technological advancements and changing consumer behaviour. The research aims to explore how digital transformation in hotel management can optimize the guest experience in the industry 4.0 era. Although digital technology is on the increase in hotels, guests nonetheless continue to complain about a lack of personalization of service from hotel staff and experiences; this thus exacerbates an already degraded experience (Kumar et al., 2019). Several of Kuala Lumpur hotels have trouble with digital infrastructure, such as slow Wi-Fi and outdated technology, which frustrates guests and contributes to negative guest experiences (Tan et al., 2020).

Moreover, hotel employees may not be thoroughly trained in digital technologies in Kuala Lumpur, thus feeling insufficiently confident and competent in their use to enrich guest experience (Lee et al., 2020). Furthermore, Kuala Lumpur hotels tend to rarely utilize digital means, some of them being social media and mobile applications, to keep their guests engaged, which tends to breed disloyalty and lose retention (Wong et al., 2019). Finally, because of digitalization in hotels, data security and privacy are becoming a concern and can drive the guests' trust and confidence away from the hotel (Kamarudin et al., 2019). Therefore, to address these gaps and problems mentioned above, this research aims to examine the effect of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness towards the use of digitalization in hotel.

Literature Review

Digital technologies in hotels are increasingly focused on their potential to streamline operations, personalize services, and enhance guest experiences (Buhalis et al., 2019; Kitsios et al., 2023). The cloud-based property management systems (PMS) for hotels are one very important technology integrating the various divisions of a hotel, from reservation to room management and billing (Dang & Nguyen, 2023). Hotels are getting information about customers' behavior and preferences via an advanced PMS powered by data analytics (Mariani & Borghi, 2021).

Digital Technology in the Hospitality Industry

Digital technology is the focus of hotels after the pandemic, which forges technological advancements for a better guest experience. According to Ivanov and Webster (2020), the hospitality industry integrates several types of digital technology to deliver customer satisfaction and create fresh revenue streams through improvements in operational efficiency. Technology has become a means to somewhat radically change hotels' interactions with their guests and allow for unique journey experiences that comply with the ever-changing needs of modern travellers. Increased contactless check-ins, customised room settings, AI-based customer support utilities, and improved safety and comfort are the expected outcomes. In conjunction with emerging contactless experiences, this helps ensure hoteliers can cater to tech-savvy preferences going forward, not just in creating brand loyalty and repeat guests, but also in an extremely competitive environment.

Guest Experience and Satisfaction

According to Kwortnik and Thompson (2009), digital tools, such as mobile check-ins or customized service recommendations, enhance guest satisfaction. These modern technologies can thus help hotels accommodate individual preferences while fostering guest loyalty. Also, the use of data analytics enables hotels to anticipate guests' needs even before they arrive, resulting in a more personalised and satisfying experience. Nonetheless, this fast-tracks manner provides a stagger of some days for the long-term establishment of guests who feel valued and heard. According to Zarezadeh et al. (2022), large data analysis tools would therefore empower hotel companies to have a holistic view of their guests to enhance overall guest satisfaction through the personalization of services.

The newest technological advancements, such as contactless check-in and Internet of Things (IoT) enabled services, have utterly transformed the hotel guest experience. The services not only broaden operational efficiency but also induce a smooth guest experience, which is crucial

in an extremely competitive market today, according to Shin and Jeong (2022). The authors contend that the pandemic has simplified life, with contactless technology emerging as a crucial safety feature that enables guests to access without physical contact. Such a development may also pose a significant challenge for the hospitality industry in the future. Guests will consistently demand convenience and health safety during their travels, necessitating changes to the contactless solution model. Hotels, therefore, need to change and continuously develop their services to accommodate such transformations in the expectations of future guests.

Digitalization: Internet of Things (IoT), 5G telecommunication Internet of Things (IoT):

Hotel chains can take advantage of IoT in several ways to make the guest experience more seamless, contact less, and more comfortable as follows (Car et al., 2019):

- Digital Key Card: Providing hotel guests with an electronic key card on mobile devices is one of the best ways to save time, money and overall security. It helps hotel management to collect data about room preferences and improve future guest experience.
- Smart Rooms: IoT can be utilized to let visitors control in-room amenities through mobile apps. This includes preferences for lighting, thermostat settings, and media libraries. All these services make the guest's experience more comfortable and enjoyable. Making smart rooms available to visitors has a lot of advantages. Beginning with the ability to customize their experience, guests will have control over their comfort and have access to a variety of amenities.
- Self-check-in: Using the mobile application, hotel chains can allow guests to check in themselves. This reduces waiting time and gives the guest great flexibility.

5G Telecommunications:

These 5G wireless networks have low latency, greater capacity, and improved data transmission speed. These networks' download speeds are substantially faster than those of earlier generations (3G and 4G), which affects the quality of service for the hotel guest (Simko & Mattsson, 2019).

Challenges of Digital Technology Transformation

Despite the numerous benefits of digital transformation, there are still some obstacles to overcome. Some of these difficulties are those related to the digital divide. Minghetti and Buhalis (2009) explain how there are types of gaps with respect to digital literacy that do impede the adoption of technologies by certain segments of the population. These include people from an underprivileged background as well as older adults. The gap may, therefore, lead to unequal access to services as well as restrict the inclusiveness of the experience that guests have. Moreover, Goodman Lantern (2024) explains that while digital tools make services more convenient, they may not always be friendly to those guests lacking technical know-how again mentioning the barriers that they place between the user and the very integration of experience.

Opportunities for Malaysian Hotels

In any case, the hotel sector was now aware that it needed to execute digital transformation to cater to tech-savvy visitors in the Malaysian context. Devi (2022) noted that property management systems and Internet of Things devices are being invested in by Malaysian hotels mainly for the purpose of service delivery and enhancing the experience for guests. As such, the investment will not only enhance the functioning of the hotels but also increase Malaysia's competitiveness in the tourism market compared to other hotels in Southeast Asia. Additionally, it will assist hotels in refining their marketing strategies and services to attract more devoted guests (Youssofi, 2023). Extensive guest data analysis could accomplish this. The hotels could then use advanced analytics to identify trends and preferences, resulting in more significant improvements to their guest services. Ultimately, this data will form a sense of loyalty among guests—the very reputation that will put Malaysian hotels on the global panorama.

Underpinning Theory: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The conceptual framework of this article integrates the technology acceptance model's (TAM) concepts (Davis, 1989), which explain the phenomenon of digitalisation in the hospitality industry. The TAM model mostly looks at how useful and easy to use a technology is seen to be by the person accepting and using it (Davis, 1989). The study of technology adoption in the hospitality sector has had widespread applications of the model (Buhalis et al., 2019; Kansakar et al., 2019).

TAM aspects integrated into the proposed framework make it a comprehensive tool to explore organizational and individual challenges in the digital transformation of hotel management (Dang & Nguyen, 2023). For this paradigm, it also considers some oddities related to the hospitality industry, such as the extremely important aspects of human interaction and guest enjoyment (Mariani & Borghi, 2021; Tusseyadiah, 2020). We would like to use this conceptual framework to generate some interest in theorising about the interplay between digital transformation and hospitality. Also, it is with the intention of ensuring that the adoption of digital technologies and its impact on hotel management are recognised, explained, and duly considered (Kitsios et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2016).

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) serves as a foundational framework for understanding how users' perceptions of technology influence their acceptance and usage behaviours (Davis, 1989). By examining key factors such as perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, the formulated hypotheses that explore the determinants of technology adoption in various contexts as follows:

H1: There is a significant relationship between perceived usefulness and intention to use digital technology in hotels.

H2: There is a significant relationship between perceived ease of use and intention to use digital technology in hotels.

Below proposed research framework based on Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).
Independent variables Dependent variable

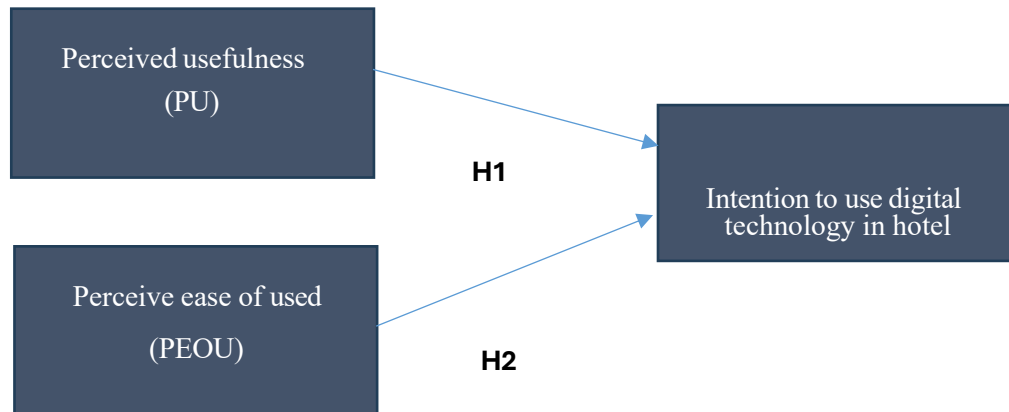


Figure 1.0: Research framework based on Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989)

Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative methodology to identify the factors that influence hotel guests' experiences with the adoption of digital technology in the hotel industry and to examine the relationship between the factors influencing hotel guests' experience with the adoption of digital technology in the hotel industry. This study adopts a quantitative methodology for analysing the connections between digital technologies and guest experiences in Malaysian hotels. In quantitative studies, statistical techniques are applied to numerical data collected from respondents to discover patterns, relationships, or trends as they relate to one phenomenon or another. The survey method was adopted for this study, where data was collected with the help of a structured questionnaire distributed to hotel guests, who were able to experience digital means during their stay.

The target population for this study consists of hotel guests in Malaysia who have used digital tools such as mobile check-in, IoT-enabled services, AI-driven personalization, and other digital technologies during their stay. The sample size was determined using G*Power, ensuring that every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected. G*Power was utilized to estimate the unknown population of hotel guests who stay and engage with digital technology in hotels. The valid sample size collected for this study is 244 respondents, which is considered more than minimum sample size (107) respondents. The respondents are selected from various hotel across Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, including 4star and 5star, to ensure a diverse representation of guest experiences. The primary instruments for data collection are a structured questionnaire divided into several sections: Section A is to identify and select respondents who meet specific criteria for a study (4 items), Section B measured perceived usefulness (PU) (4items), Section C measured perceive ease of use (PEOU) (4items), Section D measured the use of digitalization in hotels (3items) while Section E measured Demographic Profile (5 items). The questionnaire uses a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "1 = Strongly Disagree" to "5 = Strongly Agree," to measure respondents' perceptions and experiences.

An online questionnaire was administered using Google Forms, WhatsApp, and Telegram to gather the data. The online survey was selected as the most cost- and time-effective method for collecting responses from a broader audience. The survey link was distributed to hotel guests who had experienced star in 4- or 5-star hotel in Kuala Lumpur and had used various digital applications during their stay. The data collection process is conducted over a period of 4 weeks, during which reminders are sent to encourage participation. Google Forms automatically records the responses, ensuring accuracy and minimizing data entry errors. Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Branch Research Ethics Committee (REC): BERC/3/2025(PG/MR/337). The collected data was analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 30. The analysis includes both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Findings and Discussion

Reliability Analysis

Based on the analysis, Cronbach's Alpha for perceived usefulness (PU) are 0.897, perceived ease of used (PEOU) are 0.853, and intention to use digital technology in hotel (ITU) is 0.803. This shows that every item of each variable indicates a high level of reliability. Thus, a reliability score of each person's value is higher 0.7 (Perry et al., 2004), which shows that survey questions in each part are valid.

Respondent's Demographic Profile

Based on Table 1, the demographic profile indicates that most respondents are early adulthood, with 79 (32.4) aged between 26-35 years old followed by 70 (28.7) aged 36-45 years old.

Based on Table 1, the demographic profile indicates that most respondents are early adulthood, with 79 (32.4) aged between 26-35 years old followed by 70 (28.7) aged 36-45 years old. The demographic profile in Table 1 shows that the survey had a balanced gender distribution, with females slightly outnumbering males. Of the total responses, 52% were female (127), and 48% were male (117). This fair gender mix helps to guarantee that the conclusions include opinions from both sides. In terms of age, most respondents were between the ages of 26 and 35, accounting for 32.4% (79 persons), followed by those aged 36 and 45, accounting for 28.7% (70 individuals). The youngest group, 18-25 years, had 23% (56 respondents), while the lowest group was 46 years and older, with 16% (39 respondents). This suggests that most respondents were working adults in their prime earning years, which could influence their hotel preferences and experiences.

The racial split of responses reveals a rather diverse representation. The largest racial group was Indian, with 29.9% (73 respondents), followed by Chinese, who made up 29.5% (72 respondents). Malays accounted for 24.6% (60 respondents), while the remaining 16% (39 respondents) were categorized as 'Others.' This racial variety is particularly crucial in Malaysia, where multiculturalism influences customer choices and service expectations. The inclusion of people from various racial backgrounds in the sample improves the data, making it more applicable to the diverse population found in Malaysia's hospitality business.

Table 1: Respondent Demographic Profiles

Demographic Profiles		Total (n)	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	117	48
	Female	127	52
Age	18-25 years old	56	23
	26-35 years old	79	32.4
	36-45 years old	70	28.7
	46 years old and above	39	16
Races	Melayu	60	24.6
	Cina	72	29.5
	India	73	29.9
	Others	39	16
Education Background	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM)	21	8.6
	Diploma	58	23.8
	Degree	64	26.2
	Master	44	18
	PhD	35	14.3
	Others	22	9
Frequency of Hotel Stays	Once a year	73	29.9
	2-3 times a year	94	38.5
	More than 3 times a year	76	31.1

Respondents reported a reasonably high degree of education. The largest group had a degree qualification, accounting for 26.2% (64 respondents), followed by diploma holders at 23.8% (58 respondents). Master's degree holders accounted for 18% (44 respondents), while 14.3% (35 respondents) had earned a PhD. Those with only a high school qualification (SPM) accounted for 8.6% (21 respondents), while 9% (22 respondents) fell into the 'Others' category. This shows that most respondents are well-educated, which could lead to higher expectations for hotel services, digital experiences, and overall guest satisfaction. Educated consumers frequently expect higher quality and are more aware of industry norms.

The research shows that most respondents stay in hotels many times per year. Specifically, 38.5% (94 respondents) reported staying in hotels 2-3 times per year, while 31.1% (76 respondents) stayed more than three times per year. Meanwhile, 29.9% (73 respondents) stayed only once every year. This suggests that most respondents are frequent hotel guests, which may imply that they have more educated perspectives and experiences with hotel services and digital transformation in the hospitality industry. Their opinion is likely to be useful in assessing current trends and visitor expectations.

Table 2 shows the findings of a Pearson correlation study designed to investigate the correlations between three major variables: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and intention to use digital technology in hotels. The Pearson correlation coefficient, which ranges from -1 to +1, assesses the degree and direction of a linear relationship between two variables. A score closer to +1 suggests a significant positive link, whereas a value near 0 indicates no or extremely weak correlation. All the correlations in this table are statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), implying that the observed relationships are less than 1% likely to be attributable to chance.

The first major finding is a 0.395 link between perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. This is a moderately positive association, indicating that while people find digital technology simple to use, they also consider it as more valuable. Similarly, the correlation coefficient for perceived usefulness and intention to use digital technology in hotels is 0.280, indicating a weaker but still significant positive association. This means that the more beneficial respondents believe the technology is, the more likely they are to plan to use it during their hotel stay.

The Perceived Ease of Use measure also demonstrates significant connections. It shows a positive connection of 0.343 to using digital technology in hotels. This suggests that when hotel guests believe the technology is simple to use, they are more likely to use it. This is consistent with the well-established Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which asserts that perceived ease of use promotes perceived usefulness as well as behavioural intention to utilize technology. In this scenario, ease of use directly influences hotel guests' propensity to participate in digital services. The table's associations are statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ level, as proven by the "Sig. (2-tailed)" values of " $<.001$." This extremely low p-value significantly confirms the validity of these findings (McLeod, S. 2023, October 13). The sample size for each variable is consistent, with $N = 244$ respondents, providing a solid foundation for the statistical analysis and ensuring that the findings are generalizable within the study's context.

The findings of this correlation research emphasize the need for hotels not only to introduce digital technology but also to ensure that it is both beneficial and simple to use from the guest's standpoint. Improving the usability of digital services such as mobile check-in, room automation, and digital concierge systems can boost their perceived usefulness, increasing visitors' propensity to use these technologies. To satisfy guests' changing expectations, hotel management should prioritize user-friendly interfaces, proper guest education, and ongoing advancement of digital services.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

		Correlations		
		Perceived usefulness	Perceived ease of use	Intention to use digital technology in hotel
Perceived usefulness	Pearson Correlation	1	.395**	.280**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001
	N	244	244	244
Perceived ease of use	Pearson Correlation	.395**	1	.343**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001
	N	244	244	244

Intention to use digital technology in hotel	Pearson Correlation	.280**	.343**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	
	N	244	244	244

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3: Coefficients Table

			Coefficients			
Model	Unstandardized		Coefficients	Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	St. Error	Coefficients		
				Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.029	.205		9.917	<.001
	Perceived ease of use	.368	.065	.343	5.682	<.001
2	(Constant)	1.744	.229		7.607	<.001
	Perceived ease of use	.295	.070	.275	4.242	<.001
	Perceived usefulness	.167	.063	.171	2.639	.009

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to use digital technology in a hotel

The first model in Table 3 investigates the impact of perceived ease of use on the intention to use digital technology in hotels. The unstandardized coefficient(B) for perceived ease of use is 0.368, implying that for every one-unit increase in perceived ease of use, the intention to utilize digital technology rises by 0.368 units. The standardized beta coefficient of 0.343 indicates a somewhat positive effect. This link is statistically significant (t-value = 5.682, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that when hotel visitors view digital technology as easier to use, their willingness to adopt it improves dramatically.

The second model incorporates both perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness as predictors of intention to utilize digital technology. Perceived ease of use still has a positive and substantial influence ($B = 0.295$ and $Beta = 0.275$, $p < 0.001$), but the strength decreases significantly when usefulness is included. Meanwhile, perceived usefulness has a coefficient $B = 0.167$ and a beta of 0.171, indicating a significant positive influence ($p = 0.009$). This suggests that both simplicity of use and utility are essential factors in determining visitors' intentions to utilize digital technology, with ease of use having a slightly greater impact. The findings show that hotels must guarantee that their digital offerings are not only practical and beneficial but also intuitive and simple to use to increase guest acceptance.

Table 4: Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses	Result	Supported
H1: There is a significant relationship between perceived usefulness and intention to use digital technology in hotels.	0.368	Supported
H2: There is a significant relationship between perceived ease of use and intention to use digital technology in hotels.	0.167	Supported

Based on the findings presented in Table 4, both hypotheses are supported through regression analysis. The results indicate that perceived usefulness ($\beta = 0.368$) and perceived ease of use ($\beta = 0.167$) both have a positive relationship with the intention to use digital technology in hotels. This analysis highlights the importance of enhancing the perceived usefulness and ease of use of digital technology to encourage its adoption within the hotel industry.

Discussion

The study's findings provide insight into the elements that influence hotel guests' intention to use digital technology, with a particular emphasis on perceived ease of use and usefulness. The demographic profile found that most respondents were young to middle-aged individuals, with a balanced gender distribution and a high level of education. This demographic is especially crucial because younger and more educated consumers are more likely to accept new technology, which is consistent with the study's emphasis on digitalization in the hotel business (Priporas et al., 2017). The racial diversity of the respondents improves the findings' generalizability, reflecting the multicultural makeup of Malaysia's hospitality industry (Henderson, 2003).

The correlation study revealed strong positive correlations between the essential variables. Perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness both had a positive correlation with the intention to use digital technology in hotels. The largest link was discovered between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness ($r = 0.395$), implying that when hotel technologies are user-friendly, visitors see them as more valuable. Furthermore, the positive correlations between both predictors and intention to utilize technology suggest that improving the ease of use or perceived benefits of digital systems can have a favourable impact on visitor behaviour (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000).

The regression analysis verified these correlations. In Table 3, perceived ease of utilization alone strongly predicted intention to utilize digital technology, with a standardized beta value of 0.343. This finding is consistent with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which states that simplicity of use is an important factor in technology adoption (Davis, 1989).

Meanwhile, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness were found to have a substantial influence on guests' intentions, with beta values of 0.275 and 0.171, respectively. Although ease of use remained the strongest predictor, adding perceived usefulness increased the framework explanatory power, demonstrating that visitors are concerned not only with how easy the technology is to use but also with whether it provides genuine value to their hotel experience.

The findings have significant practical consequences for hotel management. To encourage the use of digital technology like self-check-in kiosks, mobile apps, and smart room controls, hotels must prioritize usability and perceived benefits. User-friendly interfaces, intuitive design, and clear instructions can all improve ease of use, while emphasizing the convenience, timesaving, and personalization benefits can increase perceived usefulness (Morosan & DeFranco, 2016). Because both elements positively influence behavioural intention, an integrated approach that tackles both components are likely to produce the best outcomes in terms of increasing visitor pleasure and digital engagement.

Finally, the study emphasizes the importance of both ease of use and usefulness in influencing hotel customers' readiness to use digital technology. The sample's demographic mix implies that younger, tech-savvy, and educated guests are driving this digital transition. To remain competitive in the digital era, hotels must invest not just in novel technology but also in making these technologies accessible, meaningful, and seamlessly integrated into the guest journey (Gretzel et al., 2015).

Conclusion

Finally, this study gives valuable insights into the fundamental elements influencing hotel guests' intention to adopt digital technology, with a special emphasis on perceived ease of use and usefulness. The demographic statistics, which show a predominance of young, educated, and frequent hotel users, indicate that the present generation of travellers is becoming more open to digital advancements in the hospitality industry. This presents both an opportunity and a difficulty for hotels in meeting the growing expectations of tech-savvy customers.

The statistical analysis indicated that both ease of use and usefulness are important factors in determining customers' willingness to employ digital technology in hotels. Notably, the simplicity with which guests can interact with hotel technology has a greater impact on their behavioural intention, albeit the perceived benefits of the technology are still relevant. These findings are consistent with the concepts of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), validating the notion that practical usability paired with clear benefits drives technological adoption.

To remain competitive and relevant in the digital age, hotels must not only implement innovative digital solutions but also guarantee that these technologies are intuitive, smooth, and capable of improving the whole guest experience. By concentrating on these essential areas, hotel management can boost client happiness, stimulate return visits, and create a more efficient service environment that meets the changing expectations of modern visitors.

Limitations of the Study

While this study provides valuable insights into the impact of digital tools on guest experience in Malaysian hotels, it has some limitations. The sample size, although sufficient for quantitative analysis, may not fully represent the diverse experiences of all hotel guests in Malaysia. Additionally, the study focuses on specific digital tools, which may not encompass all technological innovations in the hospitality industry. Future research could expand the scope to include a broader range of digital technologies and a larger sample size.

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Ethics Statement: This study was conducted in accordance with ethical research standards. All procedures involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Branch Research Ethics Committee (REC): BERC/3/2025(PG/MR/337). Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The data collected were used solely for academic purposes.

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