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Factors Influencing Intention to Adopt Social Media Platform among Rural Homestay Operators in Malaysia

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to develop a direct effect understanding of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, trust, and attitude on homestay operators' intention to adopt social media platform in their homestay business in Malaysia. The Structural Equation Model (SEM) was used to analyze the causal relationships between independent variables and dependent variables. The model was developed and later tested by adopting the Partial Least Square (PLS) procedure on data collected from a survey that yielded 307 usable questionnaires. The findings showed that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and trust have a significant and positive influence on homestay operators' attitudes. Attitude, then found to positively and significantly influence the homestay operators' intention to adopt social media platform in their homestay business. The findings imply that the relationship amongst perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, trust, and attitude on homestay operators' intention to adopt social media platform will lead to the increase of their homestay guests. This study uses Smartpls 3.0 and SPSS 18.0 to test the hypothesis and analyze respondents' profiles, respectively.

Keywords: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, trust, attitude, intention, homestay operator

1. Introduction

The tourism industry plays a pivotal role in driving the service sector in Malaysia. The 11th Malaysia Plan is emphasizing on obtaining high-value tourists to fuel the contribution of this industry to the economy. In order to give more industry vibrancy, domestic tourism will be further strengthened. The main objective is to maximize in highlighting the uniqueness and potency of Malaysia by increasing targeted promotional activities (Tourism Malaysia Report, 2018). The arrivals of tourists in Malaysia are projected to increase by an average of 4% per year to hit 36 million in 2020. The projected receipt is expected to increase by the yearly average rate of 13.6% to attain RM168 billion in the year 2020 (Tourism Malaysia Statistics, 2018). One of the tourism activities that been emphasized by the government is homestay. Homestay has been declared as one of the tourism products by the government in 1995. According to Bhuiyan, Siwar & Mohamad Ismail, (2013), homestay is one of the important factors that adding earning to the economy. Many tourists who are looking for lifestyle and cultural experiences of local people choose Malaysia as their destination and this indirectly promotes Malaysia as a tourist attraction for homestay (Ali, 2015).

Rapid development in technology has provided vast opportunities for the homestay operator in Malaysia especially in the rural area to expand their business. In 2010, the homestay e-marketing campaign was launched by the ex-deputy

prime minister to promote Malaysia's homestay through mobile phones (Tourism Malaysia, 2010) Currently, there is less than 28% of rural homestay operators in Malaysia rely on social media medium for their business (MOTAC 2018). The rationale behind the promotion is to enable the homestay operators to reach a wider segment of tourists, locally and internationally. Since then, it has been reported by MOTAC (2018), under the homestay Malaysia unit, that there are approximately 4,070 homestay owners in 2018, an increase of 13.5 percent compared to 3, 519 homestay owners in 2014. The highest number of homestay providers originates from Sarawak, Sabah, Selangor, and Johor. It was further reported by MOTAC, that from January to June 2019, the international arrivals for homestay program in Malaysia mainly come from South Korea amounting to 12, 791 tourists, secondly from China with 8, 361 tourists and Singapore with 5, 696 tourists totaling to more than 70 percent of the international market for homestay. Other noticeable international market is that shown interest in the homestay program comes from Japan, Europe, and Indonesia. Sabah receives the highest number of tourists from Korea (57.8%) and China (35.9%). Melaka comes next with 77% of arrivals coming from Singapore and Sarawak with 40.3% mainly coming from the European market. Selangor receives the highest tourist participation from the Japanese market with 57%. The reported growth of homestay arrivals and providers in Malaysia proves that this market has its potential to be marketed even further.

In the recent global market trend, the population in the world connected to the daily internet usage is 51.7% (Internet World Stats, 2017). The highest percentage of internet users which inculcated to almost half of the world's population of internet user are from the Asian region (49.8%) and China leads the highest number amounting to almost 1.5 billion users, an escalation of 3.5% from the year 2000 in which 98 percent of them are mobile users (Internet World Stats, 2019). Interestingly, 1.92 billion people use the internet to conduct online purchases, 4 million blog posts were published on the internet every day, 500 million tweets, and 5 billion searches via the Google search engine is done on a daily basis (Internet stats and facts, 2019). Since internet has changed many parts of people's daily life, the tourism activities operator also has been affected by the technology in the way they do their business when coming to customer interaction (Meiliana, Irmanti, Hidayat, Amalina & Suryani, 2017). The same situation is happening in Malaysia, where tourism sector is experiencing a major shift due to rapid changes in technology and facilities used such as websites, Facebook and Instagram(Meiliana et al., 2017; Musa, Janiffa, Mior Harris, Adam, Dzahar, Haussain, & Wan Lokman, 2016). The government has taken steps and initiative in encouraging the rural homestay operators to learn and use technology in managing and operating their homestay business. It is assumed that if the adoption of the social media platform could enable the homestay providers to promote their businesses to a wider reach, especially the tourists from overseas and experience the unique local traditional culture and lifestyle that a homestay would provide. Boon (2018), wrote that rural tourism has become one of the most developed areas in Malaysian tourism and brought along varied economic advantages to the rural areas partly coming from the homestay program.

The digitalization of the homestay business operations would enable the providers to promote their business and complete their transactions within 'a click' away. In Sarawak, the Bawang Assan Homestay program, gained receipts from international visitors coming from Sweden, Canada, England, Holland, France, China, and Korea and it was stated that there will be an extension of their business plan to selling handicrafts via the internet. Despite the reported success obtained by the homestay provider, however, there are still many homestay operators in a rural area in Malaysia, which about 72% who are still reluctant to adopt the social media technology into their daily business. Hence, the aim of this study is to assess the influence of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and trust on attitude and the influence of attitude on the intention of homestay operators to adopt social media platforms in their business.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Underpinning Theory

The underpinning theory of this study is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), first developed by Davis (1989). TAM model is an information system theory that can describe the information system usage and has the capability to foresee the user acceptance of the technology. TAM was originated from Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory to demonstrate that their attitude firstly affected by personal belief and then will lead to their intention, which eventually would lead to their behavior. By taking into consideration social media platform in homestay business, this study adopted TAM to evaluate the homestay provider's intention to use social media platform into their business setup. TAM has founded on the idea that an individual's attitude relies on the perceived belief which determines the intention and leads to the usage. Technology acceptance models (TAMs) such as those proposed by Venkatesh, Morris, Dabis & Davis (2003), Venkatesh, Thong & Xu (2012) and others present a structure for the evaluation of technology adoption decisions but focus mainly on input variables that correlate to the adoption of technology rather than output application behaviors. Previous studies on the use of digital technology by tourists (Bader Baldauf, Leinert & Liebrich, 2012; Lai, 2015; No & Kim, 2014). Similarly, they centered on clarifying the adoption or purpose to adopt, rather than on particular usage habits, once the technology has already been implemented. Knowing how consumers actually use their mobile systems is important as Neuhofer et al. (2014) have shown that technology has the potential to substantially improve communication between businesses and consumers in the tourism industry.

Kim, Lee & Law, (2008) estimate that the conceptual model of traveler adoption of mobile technology has also shown that perceived usefulness and, to a lesser extent, perceived ease of use has been strong determinants of the attitudes

of tourists regarding mobile devices and their willingness to use them in the tourism context. Bader et al. (2012) also estimate the TAM, finding that it aims to just use mobile services in the tourism context was strongly driven by usefulness, ease of use, and trust.

Perceived usefulness and perceived of use are the two TAM elements of information systems. Perceived usefulness gauge the degree of respondents believe work efficiency can be achieved by applying the information system. Perceived ease of use, on the other hand gauge the degree of respondents to get the intended result with less time and effort needed. The attitude of the user will be more optimistic if the information system can be used easily and offers more valuable information. Perceived usefulness can be affected by perceived ease of use. However, perceived usefulness does not have any influence on the perceived ease of use. In addition, perceived usefulness has more influence on intention than perceived ease of use.

2.2   Conceptual Development

Perceived usefulness (PU) was described by Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw as 'the prospective user's subjective probability that using a specific application system will increase his or her job performance within an organizational context'. Syed, Umer & Shah, (2017) in their study on 300 users of mobile banking in Pakistan have found that perceived usefulness has a positive significant relationship with attitude. Shanmugam, Savarimuthu & Wen, (2014) when conducting their study on mobile banking users in the universities revealed that attitude is positively and significantly affected by perceived usefulness. Renny, Guritno & Siringoringo (2013) in their study on 283 consumers in Indonesia have found that perceived usefulness has a strong positive and significant influence on intention compare to ease of use and trust which are less influence on attitude. A study done by Gouri (2017) on 473 bank customers in Chennai city, India, has revealed that perceived usefulness was the major determinant to influence attitude in e-banking services. Ali, Wong & Fung (2016) conducted a study on 318 private and public higher education students in Libya has found that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (PEU) play a positive and significant role in shaping the attitude which leads to the intention to use the technology. Syed et al. (2017) revealed that perceived ease of use has a positive and significant influence on attitude when conducting a study on 300 users of mobile banking in Pakistan. Mohammad, Sedigheh, Suhaiza & Sunghyup (2018) in their study on medical tourism Muslim tourist in Iran, has revealed that trust (TRU) plays a very important role and has a positive and significant influence on attitude. Wang (2011) suggested that trust has found to be the most significant factor that influences attitude (ATT) compare to perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use in the beginning of online shopping adoption. This has been supported by Eaga & Gonzales (2011) when they found that attitude is strongly influenced by trust among medical professionals to use EHCR systems. Furthermore, Mc Cole, Ramsey & Williams (2010) in their study has also revealed that trust has positively and significantly influenced attitudes towards online purchases. Ha & Stole (2009) also suggested that attitude is positively and significantly influenced by the trust when conducting s study on e-shopping acceptance. AlSomali, Gholamiand, Clegg (2009) when conducting a study on online banking adoption has found that trust positively and significantly influences attitude. Syed et al. (2017) have found that intention is positively and significantly influenced by the attitude in their study on 300 users of mobile banking in Pakistan. Li, Cai & Qiu (2016) in their study on Chinese tourists in China have found that attitude plays a vital role and positively and significantly affects intention (INT). Zurina, Koay & Mohsen (2017) have revealed in their study on 300 international tourists in Penang, Malaysia that intention is strongly influenced by the attitude in a sustainable tourism destination. Ngah, Halim & Aziz (2018) in their study on tourist attraction in Terengganu suggested that attitude has a positive and significant impact on tourist intention to visit.

Based on the above conceptual development, the following hypotheses for this study have been developed:

H_1: There is a positive relationship between perceived usefulness and attitude.
H_2: There is a positive relationship between perceived ease of use and attitude
H_3: There is a positive relationship between trust and attitude H_4:
There is a positive relationship between attitude and intention.

Figure I illustrates the research model of this study. The details of the model will be further explained in the Methodology section.
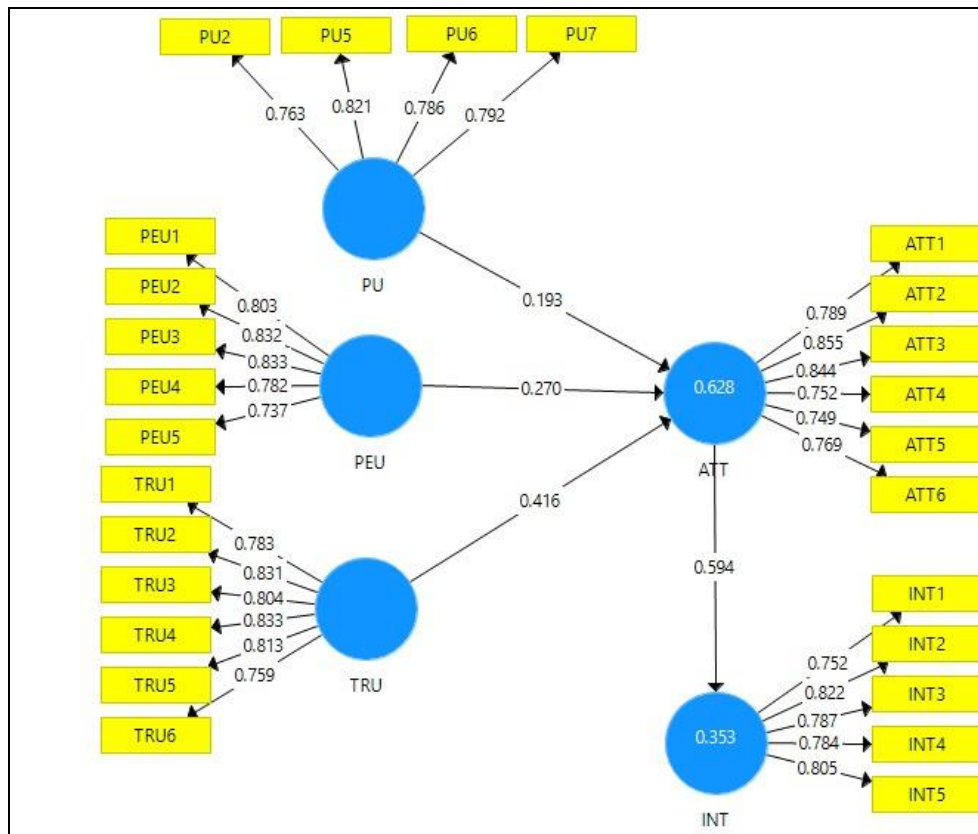
Fig. 1 - Research model

(PU: perceive usefulness, PEU: perceived ease of use, TRU: trust, ATT: attention INT: intention)

3. Methodology

Homestay operators who operate their homestay business were selected for this study based on their rural location in Malaysia. This study focuses on homestay business in rural areas because the adoption of social media mediums still very low compared to homestay operators in urban areas. This study covers rural area homestay operators in the west coast and east coast of peninsular Malaysia and also Sabah and Sarawak. Questionnaires were personally handdelivered to those selected rural homestay operators as a method a data collection method. The survey was conducted over a period of three and a half months. This study employed a survey questionnaire that was designed by extensively assessing previous studies to get appropriate scales that being used that have strong reliability and validity. A total of 26 observed variables constitute the measurement of the independent variable of 4 items for perceived usefulness, 5 items for perceived ease of use, 6 items for trust, 6 items for attitude, and 5 items for intention. A five-point Likert scale was used from strongly disagree to strongly agree. to maximize the response rate and response quality and reduce the "frustration level" of the respondents (Babakus and Mangold 1992; Sachdev, S. B., & Verma, H. V., 2004). Out of 420 questionnaires distributed, 337 were returned. This constitutes an 80.2% response rate and it is sufficient to perform data analysis by using the SEM technique. After screening and removing the outliers, 307 questionnaires were found to be clean and ready for data analysis. In this study, Smartpls3 was used to perform multivariate data analysis and proposed hypotheses testing. To assess the model measurement and structural model measures, the PLS-SEM technique was employed due to its estimation capability (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). This study utilized the PLS-SEM technique for model measurement evaluation by using the PLS-SEM algorithm and then evaluated the structural model via Bootstrapping.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Common Method Bias

One main concern in management research is the common method bias. This will happen when the variance is featured in the method of measurement instead of the variables the measures supposed to represent in the study. Full collinearity testing was utilized to examine the bias of the measurement items in this study as recommended by Kock & Lynn, (2012). If the VIF is 3.3 and above, it signifies the issue of collinearity, and also indicate the model could be affected by common method bias. In view of that, the model is deemed to be free from common method bias if the results of this are equal to or less than 3.3. Table 1 depicts the VIFs acquired for all the latent variables by conducting a full

collinearity assessment, of common method bias test as per suggestion by Kock & Lynn (2012). The full collinearity test procedure appears to be successful in indicating the model is free of common method bias.

Table 1 - Full collinearity test

	INT	PU	PEU	TRU	ATT
INT		2.757	2.667	2.566	1.492
PU	2.221		2.234	1.974	2.186
PEU	2.537	2.528		2.165	2.393
TRU	2.642	2.679	2.789		2.667
ATT	2.613	1.599	1.614	1.623	

4.2   Respondents' Profile

Based on the 307 usable questionnaires used for data analysis, the homestay owners' gender constitutes 197(64.17%) male and 110(35.83%) female. Malay homestay owners are 210 (68.40%), then followed by Chinese 47(15.31%), Indian 21(6.84%), and others 29(9.45%). Age of homestay owners <30 years old are 23(7.49%), 30-40 years old are 136(44.3%), 40-50 years old are 104(33.88%), 50-60 years old are 26(8.47%) and >60 years old are 18(5.86%). 131(42.67%) of homestay owners operate their business on the west coast of Malaysia, 127(41.37%) on the east coast of Malaysia, 23(7.49%) in Sabah, and 26(8.47%) in Sarawak.

4.3   Measurement Model

This study used the PLS-SEM algorithm to assess the structural model and to assess the construct measurement validity and reliability (Figure 1). According to Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt, (2017), reliability and validity are the two main criteria applied in PLS_SEM for goodness outer model evaluation analysis. As depicted in table 2, the composite reliability ranged from 0.870 to 0.916 for the first-order constructs, therefore fulfilled the requirement of 0.70 and above (Hair et al., 2017). Furthermore, the result showed that average variance extracted (AVE) ranged from 0.625 to 0.647 which are all higher than of 0.50, therefore showed the presence of convergent validity for all the latent constructs (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle & Mena, 2013). Table 3, the AVEs is demonstrated on the diagonal side and the correlations are off the diagonal side of the table. The figure showed that all the AVE square roots are greater than the correlations of each construct and confirm the presence of discriminant validity. To further substantiate the presence of discriminant validity in this study, the item cross-loadings were evaluated. The result showed that all items' loadings were greater than their corresponding cross-loadings (Table 4). HetrotraitMonotrait(HTMT) ratio was calculated to further confirm the presence of discriminant validity where all the ratios of three variables were <0.9 (Table 5) (Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2015). The HTMT inference was also done by running the complete bootstrapping. Therefore, this study proved the reliability and validity of the latent variables (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2014).

Table 2 - Constructs validity & reliability

Construct	CA	rho_A	CR	AVE	R^2
ATT	0.882	0.886	0.911	0.631	0.628
INT	0.851	0.856	0.893	0.625	0.351
PEU	0.857	0.858	0.898	0.637	
PU	0.800	0.800	0.870	0.625	
TRU	0.890	0.891	0.916	0.647	

CA=cronbach alpha, CR=composite reliability, AVE=average square root

Table 3 - Variables correlations against AVE square root

	ATT	INT	PEU	PU	TRU
ATT	**0.794**				
INT	0.594	**0.791**			
PEU	0.695	0.509	**0.798**		
PU	0.650	0.522	0.591	**0.791**	
TRU	0.756	0.533	0.746	0.715	**0.804**

Table 4 - Cross loading

	ATT	INT	PEU	PU	TRU
ATT1	**0.789**	0.516	0.564	0.571	0.606
ATT2	**0.855**	0.513	0.587	0.538	0.658
ATT3	**0.844**	0.471	0.565	0.517	0.634
ATT4	**0.752**	0.414	0.455	0.471	0.509
ATT5	**0.749**	0.408	0.526	0.474	0.589
ATT6	**0.769**	0.496	0.598	0.519	0.592
INT1	0.401	**0.752**	0.354	0.368	0.359
INT2	0.469	**0.822**	0.440	0.399	0.421
INT3	0.422	**0.787**	0.387	0.387	0.353
INT4	0.504	**0.784**	0.399	0.398	0.481
INT5	0.532	**0.805**	0.423	0.495	0.469
PEU1	0.545	0.401	**0.803**	0.466	0.571
PEU2	0.539	0.429	**0.832**	0.474	0.598
PEU3	0.527	0.423	**0.833**	0.441	0.552
PEU4	0.605	0.415	**0.782**	0.496	0.656
PEU5	0.545	0.359	**0.737**	0.474	0.587
PU2	0.515	0.392	0.466	**0.763**	0.598
PU5	0.511	0.441	0.532	**0.821**	0.563
PU6	0.519	0.359	0.435	**0.786**	0.546
PU7	0.511	0.459	0.437	**0.792**	0.555
TRU1	0.608	0.483	0.629	0.625	**0.783**
TRU2	0.603	0.403	0.620	0.547	**0.831**
TRU3	0.549	0.414	0.592	0.589	**0.804**
TRU4	0.623	0.467	0.664	0.599	**0.833**
TRU5	0.646	0.377	0.557	0.563	**0.813**
TRU6	0.607	0.427	0.536	0.528	**0.759**

Table 5 - Hetrotrait-monotrait ratio correlations (HTMT)

	ATT	INT	PEU	PU	TRU
ATT					
INT	0.677				
PEU	0.793	0.593			
PU	0.773	0.628	0.712		
TRU	0.848	0.605	0.851	0.848	

Table 6 - Path coefficients

Path	Beta	T-value	P Values
ATT -> INT	0.594	14.224	0.00
PEU -> ATT	0.270	4.552	0.00
PU -> ATT	0.193	3.535	0.00
TRU -> ATT	0.416	5.532	0.00

This study assessed the structural model by evaluating the Path coefficient and the R2 value (Hair et al., 2013). 500 subsamples bootstrapping by PLS was utilized to confirm the path coefficient significance level in his study. Table 6 demonstrates the result of the hypotheses test, path coefficients, and t-values. In table 7, hypothesis 1 predicts a positive relationship between perceived usefulness and attitude and the result shows that there is a positive and significant influence of perceived usefulness on attitude (ß = 0.193, t = 3.535); as a result, *H1* is supported. The result of hypotheses 2 also shows a significant and positive relationship between perceived ease of use and attitude (ß = 0.270, t = 4.552); thus supporting *H2*. The hypotheses 3 result also shows that there is a positive and significant relationship present between trust and attitude (ß = 0.416, t = 5.332); therefore, *H3* is supported. Lastly hypotheses 4 result reveals that there is a positive and significant relationship between attitude and intention (ß = 0.594, t = 14.224) and thus *H4* is supported. This study also assessed the R2 of the endogenous construct of intention. The R2 shows moderate values which signify results meaningfulness for interpretation.

Table 7 - Hypotheses testing & results

Hypothesized Relationship	Path Coefficient	T-Value	Conclusion
H1: There is a positive relationship between perceived usefulness and attitude	0.211	4.127	Supported
H2: There is a positive relationship between perceived ease of use and attitude	0.279	6.064	Supported
H3: There is a positive relationship between trust and attitude	0.383	6.714	Supported
H4: There is a positive relationship between attitude and intention.	0.602	20.945	Supported

5. Discussion & Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

This study aims to establish an understanding of direct effect of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and trust on attitude and direct effect of attitude on intention to adopt social media platform among homestay operators in Malaysia. Past studies review has been done on perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, trust, attitude and intention. Preliminary academic studies' findings have been used as the basis to form the model and it has shown that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and trust has a positive and significant influence on attitude and intention is positively and significantly influenced by attitude. The proposed research model of this study is to empirically assess the direct effect of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and trust on attitude and direct effect of attitude on intention. To accomplish this objective, the PLS technique data analysis was utilized. The above results clearly show that trust has the strongest impact on attitude of the of the rural homestay operators with path coefficient of 0.416. This confirms how important the trust element is in determining the attitude of rural homestay operators to adopt social media platform in their homestay operations. The findings of this study are consistent with the finding of the studies conducted by No & Kim, 2014 and Meiliana et al., 2017. Homestay operators must convince and have a strong trust that the social media platform they will use is safe and secure in running their homestay operations. The homestay operators must be ensured that the trust they put in the usage of social media platform in their business will bring better financial returns compared to the traditional way running their business.

The second strongest factor that has impact on attitude is perceived ease of use, with the path coefficient of 0.270. This evidence shows that the degree rural homestay operators believe by adopting and using social media platform in their homestay operations is free of effort and not difficult for them to use it. This will lead to the forming of their attitude towards adopting social media platform in their business. Through proper training in using and operating the computer, homestay must be informed that it is not difficult to apply and use the social media platform. Proper guidance must be given to them; so that they will have the right perception using internet is not difficult.

The third strongest factor that has impact on attitude is perceived usefulness with the path coefficient of 0.193. The degree of rural homestay operators believes that by adopting and using social media platform will strengthen their job performance in homestay business operations and could form their attitude to adopt social media platform. The result also confirms that attitude has a strong and significant impact on the intention of rural homestay operators to adopt social media platform with the path coefficient 0.594. This study has revealed how attitude is very important in influencing the intention of rural homestay operators to adopt social media platform. Emphasis must be given on perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and trust in forming the effective attitude which eventually will strengthening the intention of rural homestay operators in Malaysia to adopt social media platform in their homestay business operations.

5.2 Conclusion

This study concentrates on perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and trust, attitude, and intention of rural homestay operators in Malaysia to adopt social media platform in their homestay business operations. in Malaysia. The results have shown that the direct effect of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and trust on attitude and direct effect of attitude on the intention to adopt social media platform were statistically positive and significant. Tourism policymaker and tourism training consultant need to apply the approach where perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and trust and attitude can be boosted which eventually strengthen the intention of rural homestay operators in Malaysia to adopt social media platform in order to elevate their business performance. The ministry of tourism should consider allocating a certain amount of funds or grants for the homestay operators to use to upgrade and strengthen their information technology skills especially in using social media platforms for their business operations. Since trust has the biggest influence on attitude in this study, security features such as an online payment system and data storage system need to be strengthened from being illegally misused by outside parties. The key players to inculcate the approach and adoption of the use of the technology would include the Homestay Unit, department of industrial development under MOTAC, and also the institute for rural advancement (INFRA). The training by the key players could also include the development of skills to utilize the use of social media platform, for example, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogposts, and Youtube to reach a wider segment particularly the millennials in which a large number of the users are mainly between the ages of 18 and 34 years.

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