Information Management and Business Review (ISSN 2220-3796)
Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 164-175, March 2023 (SI)

Accelerating digital talent readiness in Malaysian banking sector: A study on technology adoption through the intention to use customer-focused digital solutions

Nur Hazlinda Azleen Abdul Halim[1], Mohamed Ainuddin Mohamed Azlan[2], Muhammad Nur Ammeerul Nor Adzhar[3] & Norashikin Hussein[4*]

[1,2,3,4]Arshad Ayub Graduate Business School, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia
[4]Faculty of Business Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 42300 Puncak Alam, Selangor, Malaysia
nurhazlindaazleen@gmail.com, m.ainuddinazlan@gmail.com, ammeeruladzhar92@gmail.com, shikin6320@uitm.edu.my*

Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the digital transformation of the banking sector, both globally and locally. As the adoption of new technology relies on the perception and behavior of users towards the system, bank employees need to have the intention to use digital solutions implemented by the organization. The purpose of this research is to examine the influence of job relevance, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and perceived self-efficacy on the intention to use digital solutions. A quantitative approach using a purposive sampling technique was carried out, where a survey was conducted involving 313 employees at a local retail bank's headquarters in Kuala Lumpur. The results showed that job relevance and perceived usefulness had a significant positive influence on the intention to use digital solutions, with job relevance being a unique and important predictor. However, perceived ease of use and perceived self-efficacy did not have a significant impact on the intention to use digital solutions among the retail bank's employees. These findings suggest that the employees are already adept and comfortable in using digital solutions as they have developed the necessary skills and aptitude. This research contributes to the understanding of factors that can influence the intention of banking employees to use digital solutions, based on an extended Technology Acceptance Model developed for this study. This research further recommends the implementation of change management strategies, focus on acquiring on-premise database management and developing a digital talent readiness roadmap for talent acquisition & retention and investing in advanced technologies such as machine learning, data analytics and the Internet of Things.

Keywords: *Digitalization, Digital Transformation, Technology Acceptance Model, Perceived Usefulness, Job Relevance, Malaysian Banking Sector.*

1. Introduction and Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to rapid digitalization and changes in business models. With the adoption of hybrid working arrangements, where employees can work both in the office and remotely, many business processes that previously required physical engagement can now be completed virtually and instantly using platforms such as Cisco, Google Meet, Teams, and Webex. It has also become common for customers to submit electronic or email orders and for contactless door-to-door delivery of purchases. As the post-pandemic phase brings new challenges and opportunities, there is an increasing trend toward digitalization. For organizational members to demonstrate digital dexterity, organizations must ensure that their ecosystem is digitally ready, including the system, process, and people. The key factor here is the people, as talent readiness in adopting technology is necessary for the system and process to fall into place. The task-technology fit model, developed by Goodhue and Thomson (1995), suggests that if the technology aligns with the duties performed by an employee, it will benefit their performance.

The Technology Acceptance Model, developed by Davis (1989) and extended by Venkatesh and Bala (2008), Venkatesh and Davis (2000), and Venkatesh et al. (2003), states that individual-level IT adoption and use are based on behavioral intention, which is determined by two beliefs: the belief that using IT will enhance job performance and the belief that it will be effortless. A study by Mbama and Ezepue (2018) found that customer experience in UK banks is affected by the perceived usability of mobile and internet banking services and consumers' stickiness behavior towards the WeChat wallet is influenced by social influences and satisfaction with its ease of use (Matemba & Li, 2018).

While there has been extensive research on digital transformation in the financial and banking (FB) sector, there is a lack of focus on technology adoption in the local sector (Kannan & Garad, 2021; Kumar et al., 2021). Banks should consider how quickly evolving technological applications can impact their business models (Morkunas et al., 2019). Carbó-Valverde et al. (2020) are among the few researchers who have studied technology adoption in areas such

as cryptocurrencies, payment gateways, smart contracts, digital accounting, and regulatory networking. However, much of the current attention on technology adoption has focused on its ability to fundamentally change the financial services industry (Daluwathumullagamage & Sims, 2021), rather than on the digital dexterity of the industry's workforce.

The modern global trends in retail banking, including the adoption of digitalization and biometric techniques for client identification, the decrease in the number of physical branches, and the development of challenger business models and shared services ecosystems, highlight the significant gap between Malaysian retail banking performance and the reality of the bank in question in providing retail banking services to customers (Kannan & Garad, 2021; Miraz et al., 2020). The recent awarding of digital bank licenses to three consortia by the Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) poses a threat to the bank, which has previously enjoyed a competitive advantage in serving underserved and unserved communities. With the agility, flexibility, and broad coverage of digital banks, they will be able to challenge the status quo and potentially result in the bank losing its edge over the new entrants as reported by Rella (2019) and further supported by Wati and Manaf (2019), therefore exposing it to the risk of high churn rates and lower loyalty retention, particularly among underserved and unserved communities. There are still sizeable customer segments that are only comfortable dealing with physical bank branches; however, traditional players may face a significant reduction in their customer base due to the digital nativity of the current demographic (Baicu et al., 2020; Jeník et al., 2020). Therefore, traditional players need to consider collaborating with fintech players and focus on specializations in business segments that cannot be easily replicated by non-traditional players.

To address this threat, the bank needs to develop a robust digital strategy and accelerate its implementation through digital talent readiness, which is gauged based on successful technology adoption. For the strategy to be successful, it is necessary for employees to be on board, demonstrated through their behavioral intention to use digital solutions implemented by the bank. While digital transformation in the financial and banking sector has been well-researched globally, there is a lack of focus on technology adoption in the Malaysian sector (Lehominova & Goloborodko, 2020; Sajjad & Zaman, 2020). To address this gap, the present study aims to examine its employees' intention to use customer-focused digital solutions based on identified job-related and individual-related factors and to map out actionable strategies to accelerate digital talent readiness in the organization. Furthermore, it will provide the bank with insights into what it needs to do to improve its business processes, integrate digital service platforms into its activities, and provide personalized human interaction to meet customer expectations and remain relevant in the Malaysian banking ecosystem. The acceptance and adoption of new technology depend on the perception and behavior of users towards the system, including the belief that the technology is relevant and useful for their tasks, easy to use, and requires minimal training to learn how to use it. These requirements can be defined as job relevance, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and perceived self-efficacy, which contribute to behavioral intention.

2. Literature Review

Intention to use digital solutions as a reflection of digital talent readiness: The digital readiness of an individual, as defined by Nasution et al. (2021), will determine their predisposition to accept and adopt new technology and is influenced by behavioral intention. Behavioral intention, or intention to use, refers to the intensity of an individual's intention and desire to perform a targeted or expected behavior (Alambaigi & Ahangari, 2015). Grewal et al. (2017) also suggest that an individual's digital proficiency is determined by their willingness and purposefulness in wanting to use digital tools. This study proposes that several factors influence employees to engage in a specific work-related behavior, such as adopting technology in digital solutions, for both internal and external customers. The Theory of Planned Behavior states that behavioral achievement depends on both motivation (intention) and ability (behavioral control). Fahmi et al. (2020) posit that attitude toward change is a critical factor in transforming individual capability toward digital transformation.

Individuals who are open to digital technology and have a positive view of its various impacts will believe that great benefits can be obtained through various digital applications (Kitsios et al., 2021; Nasution et al., 2021). In that respect, the intention or determination to adopt IT is crucial as a driver for digital talent readiness. In addition to organizational policies, several factors may influence an individual's decision to exhibit the intention to use digital solutions, such as observing others within the organization actively using technological tools in their tasks or considering the benefits of using these digital tools, such as improved productivity and quality of work. This

aligns with Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which suggests that environmental and cognitive factors interact to influence human learning and behavior. Successful change management in any digital transformation process includes creating a systematic approach and preparation for its implementation. Kitsios et al. (2021) argue that an individual's attitude towards change also determines the success or failure of any venture that could potentially risk their employment status quo.

Several factors influence the intention to use digital solutions. Initially developed by Davis (1989) as having two determinants – perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use – other researchers have subsequently studied and used several factors within various iterations of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), including perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and perceived risk of technology adoption (Nasution et al., 2021; Venkatesh & Bala, 2008); perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and perceived self-efficacy (Alambaigi & Ahangari, 2015; Chao, 2019; Kitsios et al. 2021); and job relevance (Alambaigi & Ahangari, 2015; Manapragada, 2017). According to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, systems are dynamic and constantly changing, and an individual's behavior is influenced by multiple levels of systems, including the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. These systems interact with and influence one another, and an individual's behavior is the result of this complex interaction.

Job relevance: Job relevance, or the degree to which technology is considered applicable to an individual's job, influences an employee's intention to use it (Venkatesh et al., 2012). With the shift to virtual workplaces and virtual banking activities, employees have been forced to adopt the use of online productivity tools to connect and perform tasks. Therefore, if bank employees consider the use of digital solutions critical to the effective functioning of their business and consider it relevant to their job, they may be more likely to have the intention to use said solutions or technology. This is supported by findings that the business criticality of technology use influences an individual's intention to use technology (Alambaigi & Ahangari, 2015; Manapragada, 2017).
H1: Job relevance will positively influence the intention to use customer-focused digital solutions.

Perceived usefulness: Perceived usefulness, or the degree to which an individual feels that using a certain technology will enhance their job performance, influences the intention to use it. External variables such as system characteristics and system training can also influence perceptions of usefulness. Employees are more likely to engage in the behavior of using technology if they believe it will make them better performers, increase productivity, and/or aid in completing tasks more efficiently (Manapragada, 2017; Talwar et al., 2020). When bank employees feel that technology improves the quality of their work in terms of efficiency and productivity, regulates tasks, and supports the essential aspects of their work, they will be more inclined towards using digital solutions introduced by the organization. Since the adoption of digital solutions can be considered an organizational citizenship behavior, individuals who consider engaging in this behavior to increase their job performance or productivity will be more likely to intend to use said solutions (Guo & Liang, 2016; Hwang et al., 2021; Venkatesh, 2003; Venkatesh et al., 2003).
H2: Perceived usefulness will positively influence the intention to use customer-focused digital solutions.

Perceived ease of use: Perceived ease of use refers to how easy an individual thinks it is to use a particular system or technology. According to Kitsios et al. (2021), it is the degree of comprehension that consumers have of new branchless banking systems. In the context of this study, perceived ease of use is defined as the degree to which employees at the local retail bank think that adopting technology in customer-focused digital solutions would be effortless. If employees feel that the technology is easy to learn and use, they will be more likely to have the intention to use it. Studies have shown that perceived ease of use is a key factor in the adoption of digital banking services (İmamoğlu, 2021; Suhaimi & Hassan, 2018) and can enhance acceptance of branchless digital banking among Generation Y in Malaysia (Suhaimi & Hassan, 2018). In the banking industry, digitalization requires employees to be trained on new technologies, and if a new technology is easy to use and set up, employees will be more motivated to embrace it (Kitsios et al., 2021).
H3: Perceived ease of use will positively influence the intention to use customer-focused digital solutions

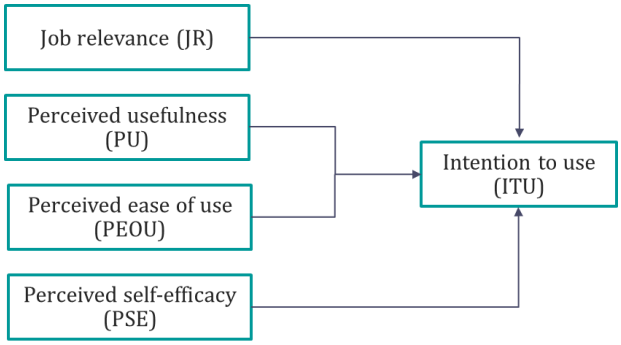
Perceived self-efficacy: Self-efficacy, or the personal belief in one's ability to successfully perform tasks related to technology, is an important factor in determining an individual's intention to use a particular system or product. This is especially relevant in the current digital age, where many employees are working remotely or in hybrid arrangements and relying on technology to complete business processes. In a study of Taiwanese university students, Chao (2019) found that self-efficacy had a significantly positive effect on the perceived enjoyment of

mobile learning. Additionally, Mbama & Ezepue (2018) explored the relationship between perceived usability and customer experience in UK banks, highlighting the importance of understanding how perceived self-efficacy influences the intention to use a specific system.

H4: Perceived self-efficacy will positively influence the intention to use customer-focused digital solutions.

Research framework: The proposed research framework as illustrated in Figure 1 comprises four independent variables i.e. job relevance, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness and perceived self-efficacy. The TAM model was adopted and extended by incorporating the constructs of TAM2, i.e. perceived self-efficacy and job relevance in addition to perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness in investigating bank employees' intention to use digital solutions in their daily work. The modified model was then empirically tested.

Figure 1: Research Framework



3. Research Methodology

This research is a correlational study to examine the relationship between job relevance, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and perceived self-efficacy and the intention to use digital solutions. Four independent variables i.e. job relevance, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and perceived self-efficacy were tested to determine each variable's relationship to intention to use. Our research instrument of choice is an online questionnaire, developed from tested measures of studies conducted by Kitsios et al. (2021), Manapragada (2017), and Venkatesh & Bala (2008) for perceived usefulness; perceived ease of use, perceived self-efficacy and intention to use adopted from Kitsios et al. (2021) and Venkatesh & Bala (2008); while job relevance is adopted from Manapragada (2017).

The unit of analysis was individual bank employees who are attached to various departments within the headquarters and are required to use customer-focused digital solutions such as Microsoft Suite and internal digital solutions like SAP and MIRO. As such, from the headquarters' existing workforce population size of 1,795 employees, the sample size selected was 313 employees.

The questionnaires were distributed by the administrative assistant of each division and department through Google Form link sharing, who assisted to blast the link to their respective department and division members through Teams and Whatsapp. Google Form was selected as the medium due to its convenience and because to date, the bank is still practicing a hybrid working arrangement. A purposive sampling method was deployed whereby the questionnaire was distributed to employees in departments housed in the headquarters to eliminate any form of biases that may arise. The purposive sampling method is adopted as researchers do not have a list of respondents for questionnaire distribution.

The questionnaire underwent a pilot study first, where it was conducted to determine the feasibility of the instrument used. The questionnaire was randomly distributed to 30 employees from the headquarters, and upon receipt of responses, a reliability test was carried out. This research adopted recommended pilot study sample size of 30 by Browne (1995). Upon obtaining satisfactory results, the questionnaire subsequently was distributed to the masses, with these pilot study participants excluded from the main data collection. Finally, using SPSS (Statistical Package for The Social Science), researchers run the required data analyses including data screening, descriptive analysis, reliability analysis, correlation analysis and also multiple regression.

4. Results

This section presents sets of results relating to the profile of respondents' experiences in using work-related digital tools/solutions, the characteristics of the total sample, and the comparison of participants regarding their experience based on demographic and geographic characteristics (gender, age, level of education, work experience and position level).

Profile of Respondents: Table 1 displays a summary of the characteristics of the total sample of bank employees who participated in the study.

Table 1: Demographic and Geographic Information Pertaining to Respondents

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
GENDER		
Males	147	47%
Females	166	53%
Total	**313**	**100%**
AGE		
21-30	97	31%
31-40	89	28.4%
41-50	70	22.4%
51-60	57	18.2%
Total	**313**	**100%**
EDUCATION		
Bachelor's Degree	135	43.1%
Master's Degree	18	5.8%
SPM	90	28.8%
STPM/Diploma	70	22.4%
Total	**313**	**100%**
CUMULATIVE WORK EXPERIENCE		
> 20 years	100	31.9%
0-5 years	126	40.3%
11-15 years	32	10.2%
16-20 years	6	1.9%
6-10 years	49	15.7%
Total	**313**	**100%**
CURRENT POSITION LEVEL		
Clerical/Administrative	120	38.3%
Executive	141	45%
General Manager	2	0.6%
Manager	44	14.1%
Senior Manager	6	1.9%
Total	**313**	**100%**
AVERAGE TIME SPENT ON DIGITAL TOOLS/SOLUTIONS AT WORK		
>7 hours	104	33.2%
1-3 hours	56	17.9%
3-5 hours	65	20.8%
5-7 hours	88	28.1%
Total	**313**	**100%**
READINESS TO USE DIGITAL TOOLS/SOLUTIONS		
Strongly Disagree	4	1.3%
Disagree	1	0.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	42	13.4%
Agree	117	37.4%
Strongly Aee	149	47.6%
Total	**313**	**100%**

Reliability Analysis: In essence, each variable with an alpha of >0.9 demonstrated good internal consistency. In summary, all constructs exceeded the recommended cutoff of 0.7 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2018), thereby suggesting high internal reliability.

From the table below, the value of Cronbach's alphas for perceived ease of use and perceived self-efficacy are recorded at 0.85 and 0.87 respectively. This indicates that the strength of association is very good for these constructs. The Cronbach's alpha for the remaining three constructs' alpha values is above 0.9. The key model adopted is by Hair et al. (2018), whose rule of thumb stated that where the value of the alpha coefficient range is above 0.9 (>0.9), the strength of association is excellent. This guideline was adopted by numerous researchers of various fields; as seen in among others human capital investment research by Nawi et al. (2020) and mobile health application by Yen & Atan (2021). In addition, several studies were identified to record alpha value above 0.9 for the TAM constructs such as Ha (2020) recorded 0.92 for behavioral intent in online shopping intention, as well as Yen & Atan (2021), where the perceived ease of use and perceived risk alpha values were 0.90 and 0.95 respectively.

Table 2: Value of Cronbach's Alpha for all dimensions–Reliability Test

No.	Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach α
1	Job relevance	6	0.92
2	Perceived usefulness	10	0.97
3	Perceived ease of use	10	0.85
4	Perceived self-efficacy	4	0.87
5	Intention to use	4	0.92

Descriptive Statistics: In this research, the characteristics and background of the respondent are described in the frequency in the form of percentages, according to the items asked such as gender, age, education level and years of working experience. Table 3 below displays the outcome.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Descriptive Statistics Factor Name	Mean	Std. Dev.
ITU	Intention to Use	4.34	0.67
JR	Job Relevance	4.30	0.64
PU	Perceived Usefulness	4.26	0.68
PEU	Perceived Ease of Use	3.29	0.57
PSE	Perceived Self-Efficacy	3.92	0.74

The mean scores ranging from 4.30, 4.26, 3.29 and 3.92 were obtained from the job relevance, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and perceived self-efficacy. For perceived self-efficacy, a significant number of respondents were on the fence between neutrality and agreement, which may require further deep dive into the neutral ground sought. The mean scores for intention to use, job relevance and perceived usefulness are higher than 4, which means most of the respondents agree with the items presented for each variable.

Correlation Analysis: Correlation analysis is used to define the direction and strength of a linear relationship between two variables. In Pearson Correlation, the coefficient value can only be from -1 to +1 with the positive sign indicating a positive relationship between two variables and vice versa. Table 4 denotes the correlation between job relevance, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and perceived self-efficacy to use digital tools/solutions.

Table 4: Correlation Coefficient Matrix

Job Relevance	Pearson Correlation	1	.86**	.58**	.58**	**.83****
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	313	313	313	313	313
Perceived Usefulness	Pearson Correlation	.86**	1	.59**	.58**	**.78****
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	313	313	313	313	313
Perceived Ease of Use	Pearson Correlation	.58**	.59**	1	.56**	**.51****
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001

	N	313	313	313	313	313
Perceived Self-Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.58**	.58**	.56**	1	**.47****
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001
	N	313	313	313	313	313
Intention to Use	Pearson Correlation	**.83****	**.78****	**.51****	**.47****	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	313	313	313	313	313

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

There was a strong and positive correlation between job relevance and intention to use, r = .83, p < 0.01. In addition, a strong and positive correlation was noted between perceived usefulness and intention to use, r = .78, p < 0.01. In short, job factor elements of job relevance and perceived usefulness r values are larger than 0.7, demonstrating a strong and positive association between these variables and intention to use. Perceived ease of use and intention to use were found to be moderately positively correlated, r = .51, p < 0.01. Similarly, perceived self-efficacy and intention to use were found to be moderately positively correlated as well, r = .47, p < 0.01. In terms of individual factors, both perceived ease of use and perceived self-efficacy demonstrate moderate and positive correlations to use.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA, and Multiple Regressions): Multiple linear regression was used to test if job relevance, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and perceived self-efficacy will significantly influence the intention to use digital tools/solutions. The coefficient of determination, R^2, provides information about the goodness of fit of the regression model (Gujarati, 2006). Several assumptions need to be evaluated on the data of the results obtained to ensure that the analysis generated is valid and reliable.

Table 5: Model of Summary – Regression analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.840[a]	0.71	0.70	0.37

a. Predictors: (Constant), JR, PU, PEOU, PSE

Table 5 contains the model summary for this study. The R^2 is 0.71 and the adjusted R^2 is 0.70. These values indicate that 71% of the variance in intention to use is described by the independent variables job relevance, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and perceived self-efficacy. The F statistic in Table 6 is 185.05 with 312 degrees of freedom (4 from the regression and 308 from residuals), and the significance value is less than p < 0.05 (0.00). Therefore, the model is significant.

The ANOVA was performed to compare the effect of job relevance, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and perceived self-efficacy on intention to use. Table 6 revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in mean intention to use between at least two groups (F (4,308) = [185.05], p = 0.00). The ANOVA table demonstrates a test of significance for the overall regression model.

Table 6: ANOVA statistics of regression

Model	**Sum of Squares**	**DF**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	98.70	4	24.67	185.05	<.001[b]
Residual	41.07	308	.13		
Total	139.77	312			

a. Dependent Variable: ITU
b. Predictors: (Constant), JR, PU, PEOU, PSE

Table 7: Coefficient Summary

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	β	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.55	.15		3.64	<.001
Job Relevance	.64	.06	**.61**	9.94	**<.001**
Perceived Usefulness	.27	.06	**.27**	4.40	**<.001**
Perceived Ease of Use	.02	.04	.02	.50	.621
Perceived Self-Efficacy	-.05	.04	-.06	-1.39	.165

From Table 7 above, there was a statistically significant relationship between job relevance, perceived usefulness and intention to use. Job relevance and perceived usefulness had a significantly positive influence on the intention to use digital solutions (β values of 0.61 and 0.27 respectively, $p<0.01$). Therefore, Hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported. Job relevance was a unique and crucial predictor of intention to use.

On the other hand, there was statistically no significant relationship between perceived ease of use, perceived self-efficacy and intention to use. This could be interpreted to imply that the dimension of perceived ease of use and perceived self-efficacy had no significant impact on the intention to use digital solutions among the employees. Therefore, Hypotheses 3 and 4 were not supported. The result for perceived ease of use was inconsistent with previous studies which reported a positive and significant relationship between the variable and intention to use (Chao, 2019; Kitsios et al., 2021; Suhaimi & Hassan, 2018; Tiong, 2020). However, with regard to perceived self-efficacy, the results of this study were consistent with the findings of Kitsios et al. (2021).

Discussion: The findings denoted that job relevance has the highest significant influence on the intention to use customer-focused digital solutions. The bank's employees place high importance on the technology to be relevant and useful to them in performing their daily work. This is supported by Alambaigi & Ahangari (2015) who identified that demonstrating the technology's abilities and capabilities in helping the employee perform their duties better is one way of breaking down resistance to technology acceptance. Additionally, perceived usefulness has a significant influence on the intention to use digital solutions as well. As suggested and supported by Manapragada (2017), individuals' perception of the degree to which they think using emails is useful for their job performance has a strong influence on one's decision to use work-related emails.

The positive relationship between job relevance and perceived usefulness to use customer-focused digital solutions can be interpreted as follows; an employee who has a high intention to use digital solutions or tools, in general, will find a specific system useful, and easier to use than someone who has a low intention to use it. Conversely, employees do not find it important for them to have a technology that is easy to use, and for them to have a sense of familiarity with the system. To deep dive into this phenomenon, we must understand the talents currently in employment.

On that note, between the two constructs which are job relevance and perceived usefulness, job relevance is found to have been placed as the most significant determinant of intention to use. As such, it is posited that the bank must ensure that the digital solution is highly relevant to the job for employees to demonstrate the intent to adopt its usage. Therefore, it must pay attention to the job deliverables in crafting its digital strategy, where the technology must be relevant and useful to its employees at most. It is imperative that in its communication with the organizational members on digital solutions rollout, employees are briefed on the relevance of the digital solution to the job they hold.

Regarding individual factors that are perceived ease of use and perceived self-efficacy, it was seen that as far as perceived ease of use is concerned, a significant percentage of the employees consider that familiarity with new technologies does not require special skills and learning sessions. This is evident in the results for perceived self-efficacy as well. As supported by Kitsios et al. (2021), employees who have prior knowledge of the use of similar applications and who are given less guidance appear to have high perceived self-efficacy and thus do not affect their choice to use digital banking. As the adoption of technology has been integrated into the employees' daily lives during the pandemic, regardless of how difficult and unfamiliar it may be for employees to use the technology, they will still need to use it.

Based on our results, the question that arises is how can perceived ease of use and perceived self-efficacy not influence the intention to use? One possible explanation is that perceived ease of use and perceived self-efficacy would easily cease to become determinant as people become more intuitive in adopting new technologies due to experience, aptitude and self-confidence. In explaining the results further, it is worthwhile to note that this result is sample-specific and may not translate into how the population behaves or respond considering that from the demographic distribution of respondents' profile, whereby most or 61.3% of them spend more than 5 hours using digital solutions at work, as work processes within the organization have been digitalized during the pandemic onset. This is further driven by the need for hybrid working arrangements during movement control order which forces the organizational members to adopt the use of digital tools in their work. As they have already possessed the needed skills and required aptitude, it can be construed that there is no change in their behavioral intention.

This is exceptionally true with the young workforce this retail bank boasts. The younger generation especially those who have been in the organization for less than 10 years have, to a certain degree, developed aptitude and skills in using digital solutions, especially during the pandemic. The various movement control orders up until the end of 2021 saw between 50-80% of the employees adopting work-from-home arrangements. To ensure no disruption to business, the bank was forced to adopt the use of digital platforms for internal communication, alignment and work deliveries; as well as revamping its in-house internet banking solution and rolling out duitNow to enable instantaneous money transfer and as a national initiative supported by PayNet to modernize Malaysia's retail payments to facilitate and drive innovation in e-Payments. The pandemic is seen to be a significant determinant for providing applicable practices to formulate strategies to improve banking services, increase the acceptance of digital banking by employees and make changes to traditional working processes.

5. Managerial Implications and Recommendations

There are several implications of the study identified to bring significant impact to the bank specifically and the industry as a whole. First, to successfully develop digital talent readiness within the organization, for any new digital solutions or tools introduced, the bank needs to focus on the usefulness and relevance of new technologies to the job and job holder. Hence, to communicate this effectively, change management must be implemented. One of the best practices is setting up a Project Management Office where change management activities will be managed by the PMO. The various workshops, engagements and focus group sessions, should put more weightage on communicating the benefits digital technologies bring to employees' job performance.

Other than that, to become a digitally dexterous organization, digital talent readiness not only requires members of the organization to be accepting of digitalization, but it also includes getting the right talents in the right positions. As such, this research serves as an opportunity for the bank specifically and the banking industry as a whole, to promote policies and strategies to enhance the adoption of digital banking. For example, there should be a consideration in developing a realistic job preview (RJP), a talent acquisition approach that communicates important aspects of the job before making the offer. One of the quick wins in doing so is creating a "day in the life of" which not only provides a glimpse into what are the expected deliverables, but also the bank's digital culture, career development opportunities as well as the skills required of a potential candidate. Nowadays, proficiency in Microsoft 365 is a basic requirement, with more organizations on the lookout for data analytics, machine learning and data architecture skills.

From the recommended strategies, in terms of priority, the bank should consider these worst, base and best-case scenarios.

Worst case scenario: Suppose the operating expenses continue to increase due to its responsibility of serving the underserved and unserved communities, and the digital banking landscape becomes more competitive. In that case, the bank should deploy the bottom-line optimization and network rationalization strategy and direct capital gained from this into digital product development and deployment.

Base case scenario: If the current market condition maintains i.e., digital banking grows at pace, the bank should accelerate its current digitalization plan by focusing on resolving the pain point of data management through transitioning on-premise database management onto cloud platforms like Amazon Web Services (AWS). In addition, the development of a digital talent readiness roadmap in terms of talent acquisition and talent retention should be accelerated, with a focus on ensuring digital solutions implementation are useful and relevant to the job

performed by the employees.

Best case scenario: If digital finance literacy continues to increase and the bank continues to be backed by the Government, it needs to prioritize investment in advanced technologies such as machine learning, data analytics and the Internet of Things. In tandem, the bank is proposed to invest in digital talents by developing and launching Digital Academy to upskill and reskill its employees and expand its digital talent pool through aggressive talent recruitment and an attractive retention plan.

Conclusion

The objective of this research was to test the relationship between job relevance, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and perceived self-efficacy to use customer-focused digital solutions in the retail bank. As mentioned earlier, the key focus is for the bank to capitalize on its internal strength by leveraging its young workforce to prepare for external factors such as growing digital literacy as well as digital fintech and banking services which may prompt intense competition in the market. Job factors i.e., job relevance and perceived usefulness are the factors influencing the employees' intention to use customer-focused digital solutions, while individual factors (perceived ease of use and perceived self-efficacy) do not influence the employees' intention to use. Moreover, key strategies to accelerate digital talent readiness were proposed, focusing on the acquisition of on-premise database management, digital talent roadmap for talent acquisition and retention, and investment in advanced technologies such as machine learning, data analytics and the Internet of Things.

There are several limitations to be mentioned regarding this study. First, by testing the model on four constructs from the different iterations of TAM simultaneously, the total outcome may be presented to be biased. For instance, the subgroups within our sample display demographic differences. The significant number of clerical/administrative position level respondents at 38.3% and cumulative working experience of more than 20 years at 31.9% may be reflected in the response relating to perceived ease of use and perceived self-efficacy constructs; as the definition of digital solutions is not restricted to administrative work i.e. record keeping and data management; but also data analytics which may require more time for this demographic group to assimilate, as compared to the executive level respondents who are exposed to digital technology from their university days. The different kinds of homogeneity in position level, working experience and average time spent may have biased the results too.

In addition, generalizing these results to other technologies and other industries should be done with caution. Depending on the speed of technological growth within an industry, the results may vary. For example, adopting the framework of this research for the agriculture industry may be skewed, as the various key players may be at different levels of technology adoption, especially the frontliners or farmers who may not be heavily reliant on digital tools and solutions to grow their business due to education level, digital awareness level, etc.

An aspect to be considered for future research is testing technological readiness and technological acceptance in the banking industry through the integration of two key concepts of the Technology Readiness Index by Parasuraman (2000) and the Technology Acceptance Model by Davis (1989). We believe the link between these two dimensions is worthy of further consideration. Additionally, investigating the effects of psychological dimensions on behavioral intention or intention to use technology may be a worthy endeavor.

References

Alambaigi, A. & Ahangari, I. (2015). Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as a predictor model for explaining agricultural experts behavior in acceptance of ICT. International *Journal of Agricultural Management and Development, 6*(2), 235-247.

Baicu, C. B., Gardan, I. P., Gardan, D. A., & Epuran, G. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on consumer behavior in retail banking. Evidence from Romania. *Management & Marketing. Challenges for the Knowledge Society, 15*, 534-556.

Browne, R. H. (1995). On the use of a pilot study for sample size determination. *Statistics in Medicine, 14*, 1933-1940.

Carbo-Valverde, S., Cuadros-Solas, P., & Rodrı´guez-Ferna´ndez, F. (2020). A machine learning approach to the digitalization of bank customers: Evidence from random and causal forests. *PLoS ONE 15*(10): e0240362.

Chao, C. M. (2019). Factors determining the behavioral intention to use mobile learning: an application and extension of the UTAUT model. *Front. Psychol. 10*:1652.

Daluwathumullagamage, J., & Sims, A. (2021). Fantastic Beasts: Blockchain-based banking. *Journal of Risk and Financial Management 14*: 170.

Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly, 13*(3), 319-340.

Fahmi, T. A., Tjakraatmadja, J. H. & Ginting, H. (2020). Digital talent capability model for transforming technology-based holding companies. *The Asian Journal of Technology Management Vol. 13*(3), 190-201.

Goodhue, D. L., & Thompson, R. L. (1995). Task-Technology Fit and Individual Performance. *MIS Quarterly, 19*(2), 213–236.

Grewal, D., Roggeveen, A., & Nordfält, J. (2017). The Future of Retailing. Journal of Retailing, 93.

Gujarati, D. N. (2006). *Essentials of econometrics* (3rd Ed.). McGraw-Hill.

Guo, Y. & Liang, C. (2016). Blockchain application and outlook in the banking industry. *Financial Innovation, 2*:24.

Ha, N. T. (2020). The impact of perceived risk on consumers' online shopping intention: An integration of TAM and TPB. Management Science Letters 10, 2029–2036.

Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2018). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review 31*(1), 2-24.

Hwang, I. D., Lustenberger, T., & Rossi, E. (2021), Does communication influence executives' opinion of central bank policy? *Journal of International Money and Finance, 115*(C).

İmamoğlu, S. (2021). The impact of technostress and technology acceptance on the performance of bank employees. Marmara Universitesi (Turkey) ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Jeník, I., Flaming, M. & Salman. A. (2020). *Inclusive Digital Banking: Emerging Markets Case Studies*. Working Paper. Washington, D.C.: CGAP.

Kannan, K. & Garad, A. (2021). Competencies of quality professionals in the era of industry 4.0: A case study of electronics manufacturer from Malaysia. *International Journal of Quality and Reliability Management, 38*(3).

Kitsios, F., Giatsidis, I., & Kamariotou, M. (2021). Digital transformation and strategy in the banking sector: Evaluating the acceptance rate of e-services. *Journal of Open Innovation Technology, Market, and Complexity, 7,* 204.

Kumar, V., Ramachandran, D., & Kumar, B. (2021). Influence of new-age technologies on marketing: A research agenda. *Journal of Business Research, 125*, 864-877.

Lehominova, S. & Goloborodko, A. (2020). Technology of management of economic intellectual systems in digital economics. *The economic discourse, 1.*

Manapragada, A. (2017). The always-on employee: The antecedents and consequences of work-related email use after hours. Florida International University Digital Commons.

Matemba, E. & Li, G. (2018). Consumers' willingness to adopt and use WeChat wallet: An empirical study in South Africa. *Technology in Society*, 53.

Mbama, C. & Ezepue, P. (2018). Digital banking, customer experience and bank financial performance: UK customers' perceptions. *International Journal of Bank Marketing, 36* (2), 230-255.

Miraz, M., Hassan, M., & Mohd Sharif, K. (2020). Factors affecting implementation of blockchain in the retail market in Malaysia. *International Journal of Supply Chain Management, 9*(1).

Morkunas, V. J., Paschen, J., & Boon, E. (2019). How blockchain technologies impact your business model. *Business Horizons, 62*(3), 295-306.

Morris, M.G., & Venkatesh, V. (2000). Age differences in technology adoption decisions: Implications for a changing workforce. *Personnel Psychology*, 375.

Nasution, R.A., Arnita, D. & Azzahra, D. F. (2021). Digital readiness and acceptance of mobile advertising. *Australasian Marketing Journal, 29*(1), 95-103.

Nawi, F.A.M., Tambi, A.M.A., Samat, M.F., & Mustapha, W.M.W. (2020). A review on the internal consistency of a scale: The empirical example of the influence of human capital investment on Malcom Baldridge Quality Principles in TVET institutions. *Asian People Journal, 3*(1), 19-29.

Parasuraman, A. (2000). Technology Readiness Index (TRI): A multiple-item scale to measure readiness to embrace new technologies. *Journal of Service Research, 2*, 307-320.

Rella, L. (2019). Blockchain technologies and remittances: From financial inclusion to correspondent banking. *Frontiers in Blockchain, 2.*

Sajjad, M. & Zaman, U. (2020). Innovative perspective of marketing engagement: Enhancing users' loyalty in social media through blogging. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity, 6*(3).

Suhaimi, A., & Hassan, M. (2018). Determinants of branchless digital banking acceptance among Generation Y in Malaysia.

Talwar, S., Dhir, A., Khalil, A., Mohan, G., & Najmul Islam, A. K. M. (2020), Point of adoption and beyond. Initial trust and mobile-payment continuation intention. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 55* (C).

Tiong, W N. (2020). Factors influencing behavioral intention towards adoption of digital banking services in Malaysia. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*. 10.

Venkatesh, V., & Bala, H. (2008). Technology Acceptance Model 3 and a research agenda on interventions. *Decision Sciences, 39*(2), 273-315.

Venkatesh, V., & Davis, F. D. (2000). A theoretical extension of the Technology Acceptance Model: Four longitudinal field studies. *Management Science, 46*(2), 186-204.

Venkatesh, V., Morris, M. G., Davis, G. B., & Davis, F. D. (2003). User acceptance of information technology: Toward a unified view. *MIS Quarterly, 27*(3), 425–478.

Wati, A. & Manaf, A. (2019). Fintech and the challenge of digital disruption in takaful operation. *Asia Proceedings of Social Sciences, 4*(1), 1-3.

Yen, S. L., & Atan, S. A. (2021). Adoption of mobile health applications among adults in Kulai, Johor. *Research in Management of Technology and Business 2*(1), 308-320.