

Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and Attitude Toward Using Instagram in Small and Medium-Sized Tourist Hotels in Sri Lanka

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Perceived
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Abstract

Small and medium-sized enterprises play an important role in the economic health of Sri Lanka. Concurrently, the contribution of tourism is vital for its socioeconomic and sociocultural development. There appears to be a vast opportunity for improving gross development product growth by strengthening the business performance of small and medium-sized tourist hotels (SMTHs), since rapid growth has been observed in those accommodation establishments during the past few years. Such entities are currently in the process of regaining lost market share due to the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic and other macroeconomic challenges. Conversely, effective communication efforts for key global source markets are vital, and Instagram is considered to be an important social media network to use. It facilitates photo-centric activities to connect with people and share important content online. Less acceptance of social media networks by digital immigrants is considered a negative aspect. The main objective of this research is to assess the relationships of perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEU) with the attitude toward using (AU) Instagram in SMTHs in Sri Lanka. This study is a survey-based, cross-sectional quantitative study, and the SPSS Statistics 20.0 software package was relied upon for data analysis. A total of 59 SMTHs have been selected as the sample, and simple random sampling has been employed for data collection. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was employed as the base model guiding this research. Moderate positive correlations have been recorded, indicating statistically significant linear relationships between PU-AU, PEU-AU and PU-PEU. 33.9% of the variation in AU is explained by the movements in PU and PEU.

Keywords: Attitude toward using, Instagram, Perceived usefulness, Perceived ease of use, Small and medium-sized tourist hotels in Sri Lanka.

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Introduction

Background of the Study

In line with Gibson and van der Vaart (2008), small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of sustainable economies. Sri Lanka is no exception (Rathnayake & Bogahalande, 2022). In terms of accounting for 90% of total enterprises, 45% of employment opportunities, and approximately 52% of the total gross domestic product (GDP), SMEs play an important role in the economic health of Sri Lanka (Ministry of Industry and Commerce, 2016).

The Sri Lankan economy contracted by 7.8% in 2022 and was 2.3% negative in 2023 (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2022, 2023). Such detrimental GDP growth since 2015 is mostly due to the economic slowdown brought on by several macroeconomic weaknesses, including the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic (Rathnayake & Bogahalande, 2022). This economic drawback has a significant effect on domestic economic activities, in particular the tourism industry (Ministry of Finance, 2019). However, the economy of Sri Lanka advanced by 5% in 2024 (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2024), making the fastest expansion since 2017, as the country continued to recover from its worst financial crisis in decades.

Tourism was the third-largest foreign exchange-earning source in Sri Lanka, only behind worker remittances and exports of apparel, with a contribution of approximately 14% of the total foreign exchange earnings during 2017–2019 (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2018, 2019). Perusing the deteriorated tourist arrivals from 2.33 million to 0.19 million and the lowered earnings from tourism from US\$ 4,381 million to US\$ 507 million during 2018-2021, the tourism industry is currently in the process of formulating effective strategies to restore its business opportunities. It has witnessed remarkable growth in 2023, generating revenue exceeding US\$ 2 billion with cumulative tourist arrivals reaching 1.48 million (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2018, 2021, 2023). Simultaneously, 2,053,465 tourists have visited Sri Lanka in 2024, which was the first time since 2020 that tourism-related income exceeded US\$ 3 billion.

Even with the recent instability in the economic health as a whole, a positive sectoral distribution of GDP growth has been recorded in accommodation and food service activities during 2015–2022, followed by a decline in 2019–2020 (Ministry of Finance, 2019). In the first quarter of 2024, accommodation and food services grew by 40.4%, which is the highest growth rate since Q2 2021. Thus, accommodation and food service activities are recognized to be a promising segment for upholding the GDP growth of Sri Lanka. 48.81% of classified hotels registered with the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) are one- and two-star hotels that operate with 26.08% of the total room inventory (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2023). Such hotels are considered small and medium-sized tourist hotels (SMTHs) for the study.

Social media is an important tool for destination marketing organizations to reach global source markets with relatively limited resources (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). It enhances the ability of visitors to share travel experiences while promoting tourism, facilitating tourism service providers, and obtaining visitor feedback (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). In view of regaining lost

market share in the tourism industry, effective links with both existing and potential global source markets are extremely vital, and Instagram is considered to be an important social media network to use. It facilitates photo-centric activities to connect with people and share important content online. Concurrently, Crammond et al. (2018) found that SMEs are now motivated to achieve their business goals more effectively through social media networks. Such networks provide a platform for tourism service providers to market their products and services at a comparatively lower cost.

Problem Statement

According to the Digital 2025: Global Overview report, Instagram is the most favorite social media platform in the world. However, only 8.4% of the total population of Sri Lanka is considered to be the potential reach of advertisements on Instagram (The Asia Pacific Institute of Digital Marketing & Department of Marketing Management, University of Kelaniya, 2025). Simultaneously, preliminary investigations reveal that the usage of Instagram is relatively low in SMTHs in Sri Lanka. Facebook and YouTube are the most used social media networks. Thus, an argument can be made that perceived ease of use and/or perceived usefulness may be the reasons for the relatively low use of Instagram.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) has been applied by a range of studies to understand the adoption of IT usage by customers (McColoskey, 2003; Pavlou, 2003). Although TAM has been popular in predicting acceptance of new technology in various fields, current empirical evidence on the usage of Instagram is somewhat inadequate. Consistent with Sarathchandra et al. (2020), there are a limited number of studies on the impact of social media marketing associated with the tourism industry in Sri Lanka.

Social media applications have been observed as one of the most influential implications that have been progressively engaged in most aspects of routing human activities. Currently, most accommodation establishments are widely using social media networks to interact with both foreign and local guests. Despite Instagram being one of the favorite social media platforms in the world, perused literature does not provide sufficient empirical evidence on the relationships of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness with the attitude toward using Instagram in SMTHs in Sri Lanka.

Research Questions

1. Is there a significant relationship between perceived ease of use and attitude toward using Instagram in small and medium-sized tourist hotels in Sri Lanka?
2. Is there a significant relationship between perceived usefulness and attitude toward using Instagram in small and medium-sized tourist hotels in Sri Lanka?
3. Is there a positive combined effect of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness on the attitude toward using Instagram in small and medium-sized tourist hotels in Sri Lanka?
4. Is there a significant relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness when using Instagram in small and medium-sized tourist hotels in Sri Lanka?

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the relationship between perceived ease of use and attitude toward using Instagram in small and medium-sized tourist hotels in Sri Lanka.
2. To assess the relationship between perceived usefulness and attitude toward using Instagram in small and medium-sized tourist hotels in Sri Lanka.
3. To determine the combined effect of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness on the attitude toward using Instagram in small and medium-sized tourist hotels in Sri Lanka.
4. To assess the relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness when using Instagram in small and medium-sized tourist hotels in Sri Lanka.

Significance of the Study

In line with the perused literature, many researchers have conducted their studies of the relationships between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness with the attitude toward using technology in different industries and market sectors (Gunawan et al., 2019; Indarsin & Ali, 2017; Karahanna & Straub, 1999; Makmor et al., 2019; Ramayah & Ignatius, 2005), but not specifically in the tourism industry. Moreover, current literature does not provide sufficient empirical evidence of such relationships in SMTHs in Sri Lanka. Thus, this work substantially mitigates these knowledge gaps.

The current investigation constructs a conceptual framework that (i) assesses the relationship between perceived ease of use and attitude toward using Instagram; (ii) assesses the relationship between perceived usefulness and attitude toward using Instagram; (iii) determines the combined effect of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness on the attitude toward using Instagram; and (iv) assesses the relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness when using Instagram in small and medium-sized tourist hotels in Sri Lanka.

Literature Review, Hypothesis and Conceptual Framework

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model is one of the widely used models of technology acceptance, developed by Fred D. Davis in 1989 based on the Theory of Reasoned Action by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). It assumes that the behavioral intention of an individual for the acceptance of technology is predicted by the perceived usefulness of performing the task and the perceived ease of its use (McColoskey, 2003). This model has been employed as the base model guiding this research.

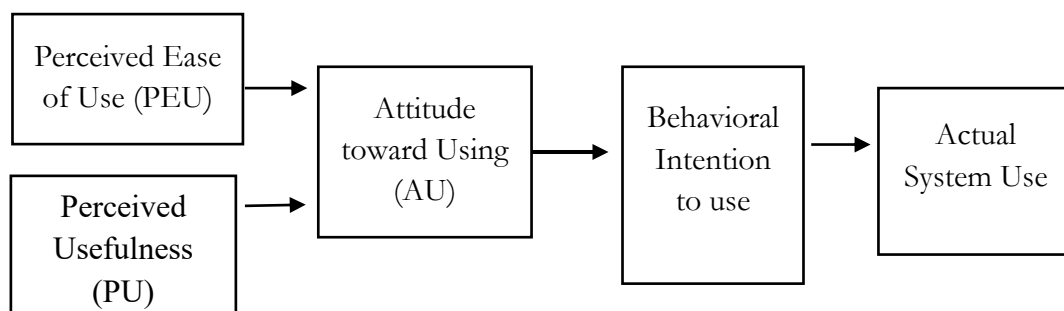


Figure 1. The TAM model

Source: Davis, 1989

TAM also suggests that perceived ease of use influences perceived usefulness, since technologies that are easy to use can be more useful (Davis et al., 1989). This model has been widely used in explaining and predicting the acceptance of information systems by individuals (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000).

Perceived Ease of Use (PEU)

Perceived ease of use is a vital factor influencing usage behavior of information technologies. It is defined as the degree to which people believe technology is simple to use (Davis, 1989). According to Hussein and Hassan (2017), perceived ease of use is the degree to which a user believes that using a particular system would be effort-free. Moreover, perceived ease of use is an important determinant in the acceptance of technology (Liao et al., 2007; Guriting & Ndubisi, 2006; Jahangir & Begum, 2008). Rogers (2003) found that complexity has a negative effect on the adoption of technology. It reflects the valuation of technology usage by an individual (Davis, 1989).

Ease of navigation, fast response, having a good and easy-to-understand display or interface, and anywhere and anytime accessibility are several dimensions of perceived ease of use (Susanto & Aljoza, 2015). According to Lin (2007a), perceived ease of use may assist users in selecting social media sites to accomplish their objectives easily.

Perceived Usefulness (PU)

Davis (1989) defines perceived usefulness as the degree to which a person believes that adopting a certain system will improve their job or real-life performance. In the context of social media, Shin (2010) defined perceived usefulness as the capability of being employed advantageously. Each social media platform provides different services to users through various tools and applications. Since users communicate with each other via text, images, hyperlinks, and videos, social media interactive activities provide many advantages. When features and interaction are coupled with enjoyment and fun, people find social networking sites to be more valuable.

Lin (2007a) found perceived usefulness of social media as the confidence of users in the features and capabilities of such networks for fulfilling their requirements and decision-making. When users feel that social media is essential for the effective sharing of information, their intention to use such tools will be better, and they will be motivated to learn from experts who are aware of its importance (Read et al., 2019).

Perceived Ease of Use (PEU) and Attitude toward Using (AU)

The perceived ease of use has been discovered to be the major predictor of the acceptance of social media (Guriting & Ndubisi, 2006; Jahangir & Begum, 2008; Liao et al., 2007). According to Rogers (2003), the complexity of a system or technology has an adverse impact on its adoption. As Bandura (1982) explained, perceived ease of use promotes attitude

and behavior, resulting in actual usage through two primary mechanisms: self-efficacy and instrumentality. The stronger the user's perception of efficacy, the easier a system is to interact with. Consistent with Chen and Wells (2000), usage barriers must be removed to achieve ease of use. When social media users believe that the usage of social media is simple, it yields them comfort (Lau & Lee, 2018).

Several scholars carried out their studies on perceived ease of use and the attitude toward using. Sarathchandra et al. (2020) found that perceived ease of use of social media has a positive relationship with purchase decisions in the tourism industry in Sri Lanka. However, the happiness of the user is substantially correlated with perceived usefulness (Mawhinney & Lederer, 1990). According to Davis et al. (1989), the perceived ease of use of technology is positively associated with its perceived usefulness and attitude toward using it. Considering such findings, hypothesis 1 has been established.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between perceived ease of use and the attitude toward using Instagram in small and medium-sized tourist hotels in Sri Lanka.

Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Attitude toward Using (AU)

In line with Marangunic and Granic (2015), perceived usefulness is the primary factor influencing users' intentions to adopt technology. Concurrently, many scholars have studied perceived usefulness and social media usage together and found positive correlations (Castaneda et al., 2009; Guriting & Ndubisi, 2006; Lurn et al., 2015).

Bhatiasevi and Yoopetch (2015) and Constantinides et al. (2013) found that perceived usefulness has a positive influence on behavioral intention. The type of desire to use a certain technology is determined by one's attitude toward its use, whereas the intention to use technology by an individual affects its actual use (Abu-Dalbouh, 2013; Davis & Venkatesh, 2004; Davis et al., 1989). According to Sarathchandra et al. (2020), perceived usefulness of social media has a positive relationship with purchase decisions in the tourism industry in Sri Lanka. Based on such empirical evidence, hypothesis 2 has been established.

H₂: There is a significant relationship between perceived usefulness and the attitude toward using Instagram in small and medium-sized tourist hotels in Sri Lanka.

Considering the above empirical facts, Hypothesis 3 was established.

H₃: There is a positive combined effect of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness on the attitude toward using Instagram in small and medium-sized tourist hotels in Sri Lanka.

Perceived Ease of Use (PEU) and Perceived Usefulness (PU)

Davis (1989) reveals that enhanced perceived ease of use has a direct impact on improved perceived usefulness. This perspective is sufficiently supported by several other empirical studies (Amin, 2007; Chau, 2001; Hong et al., 2002; Lallmahamood, 2007; Ramayah & Aafaqi, 2004; Ramayah et al., 2004; Shim & Viswanathan, 2007). Hypothesis 3 has been established, based on such concerns.

H₄: *There is a significant relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness when using Instagram in small and medium-sized tourist hotels in Sri Lanka.*

Consistent with the above hypotheses, the conceptual framework below has been established.

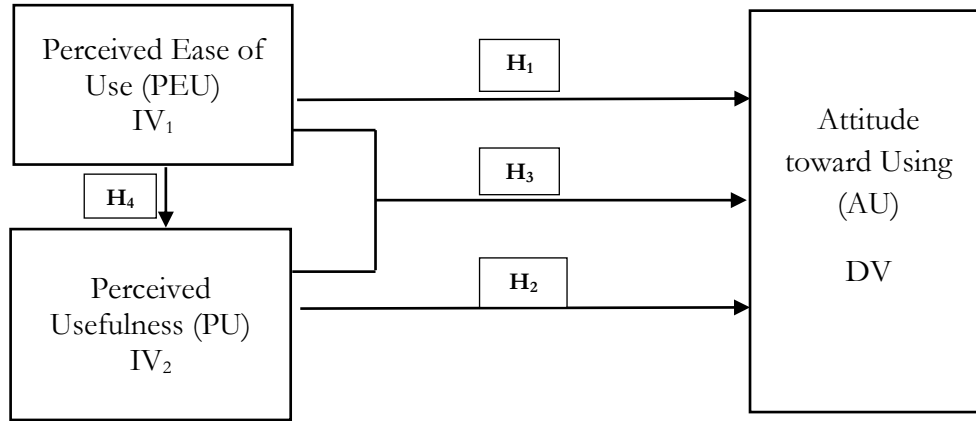


Figure 2. Conceptual framework

Source: Authors' presentation

Note: *The other components of the TAM model, behavioral intention to use and the actual system use, have been intentionally ignored in line with the objectives of the study.*

Methodology

Operationalization

Previously used validity- and reliability- tested scales have been employed to measure the variables. A questionnaire by Hussein and Hassan (2017) has been slightly revised and modified without compromising its core content.

Table 1. Measurements for variables

Variables	Scales	Adopted From	Measurement Scale
Perceived Usefulness (PU) – IV ₁	04 items	Hussein & Hassan (2017)	5-point Likert scale questionnaire (1- totally disagree, 5- totally agree)
Perceived Ease of Use (PEU) - IV ₂	05 items	Hussein & Hassan (2017)	
Attitude toward Using (AU) - DV	04 items	Hussein & Hassan (2017)	

Source: Authors' estimation

Table 2. Perceived Usefulness (PU)

Variable	Indicators	Source
Perceived Usefulness (PU)	I think Instagram is very useful in our business in general.	Hussein & Hassan (2017)
	I think Instagram helps improve our business performance in general.	
	I think Instagram will help enhance the effectiveness of our business in general.	
	I think Instagram provides very useful information and services for our business.	

Source: Authors' estimation

Table 3. Perceived Ease of Use (PEU)

Variable	Indicators	Source
Perceived Ease of Use (PEU)	Instagram is easy to interact with.	Hussein & Hassan (2017)
	I find Instagram easy to use.	
	It is easy to become skilled at using Instagram.	
	I find it easy to get Instagram to do what I want to do.	
	My interaction with Instagram is clear and understandable.	

Source: Authors' estimation

Table 4. Attitude toward Using (AU)

Variable	Indicators	Source
Attitude toward Using (AU)	Using Instagram is a good idea.	Hussein & Hassan (2017)
	Using Instagram is a wise idea.	
	Using Instagram is a likable idea.	
	Using Instagram is a pleasant idea.	

Source: Authors' estimation

This empirical research has been designed as a survey-based, cross-sectional quantitative study.

Sampling Procedure

The population of the study has been identified from the database of SLTDA as of 2021. A total of 159 classified tourist hotels registered with SLTDA have been recognized as the absolute population of the study. Since there is no specific definition available for the SMTHs in Sri Lanka, the definition devised by Ingram et al. (2000), having up to 100 rooms and employing fewer than 250 employees, and the defining criteria for SMEs in Sri Lanka (Ministry of Industry and Commerce, 2016) have been considered to identify the sample. This definition has been previously employed by Ahamed and Arif (2016). A total of 80 one- and two-star hotels out of 159 registered hotels with SLTDA were satisfied with such a definition and defining criteria.

Since 12 hotels were closed or inoperative during the data collection process, the sampling frame and the sample size were selected as 68 and 59, respectively (Table 5). The sample size was calculated based on the formula for determining the sample size by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). 59 such hotels are distributed in nine provinces of Sri Lanka. Simple random sampling has been employed, considering the similarities between both one- and two-star hotels.

Table 5. Computing Sample Size

Classified tourist hotels registered with SLTDA as of 2021	159
Tourist hotels that were satisfied with the definition of Ingram et al. (2000) and the defining criteria for SMEs in Sri Lanka (listed one-and two-star hotels)	80
Closed or inoperative hotels	12
Sampling frame	68
Sample size (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970)	59

Source: Authors' estimation

Research Instrument

A questionnaire consisting of 24 closed-ended questions, including 13 five-point Likert scale questions (Table 1), and 10 open-ended questions was employed as the main research instrument. The back translation method has been employed to translate the questionnaire into Sinhala and present it to respondents in both languages, ensuring quick and more accurate responses.

Data Collection

The business owners of such hotels have been considered the unit of analysis. Operational heads of some hotels were approached during failures to interact with business owners after a reasonable effort. Both general managers and operational managers were recognized as the operational heads of such hotels.

Initially, the questionnaire was piloted on a smaller sample of 10 respondents to determine its clarity and scale reliability.

It has been presented to respondents as a Google form, via email or WhatsApp. Personal visits were made to 18 hotels. Necessary qualitative data were gathered during those visits. The response rate was 90.7%.

Goodness of Data

A factor analysis has been carried out. The model was considered satisfactory since the KMO value and the BT sig. were 0.845 and 0.000, respectively (Hair et al., 2010). The test of reliability revealed a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.947, 0.934, and 0.881 for perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and attitude toward using, respectively, which indicate a good internal consistency for research purposes.

Data Analysis Method

The SPSS Statistics 20.0 software package was relied upon for data analysis. Pearson's correlation coefficient, regression, and descriptive statistics were employed as statistical data analysis methods.

Data Analysis

Demographics Profiles of Respondents

The majority of the respondents were professionally qualified males above 31 years of age with sufficient job-related industry experience.

Table 6. Demographic Profiles of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	%	Variable	Frequency	%
Age			Gender		
Between 19 - 30	7	11.9	Female	11	18.6
Between 31 - 40	30	50.8	Male	48	81.4
Between 41 - 55	17	28.8	Total	59	100.0
Between 56 - 65	5	8.5			
Total	59	100.0	Current Qualifications		
			Exactly job related	36	61.0
Level of Education			Significantly related to the job	13	22.0
Primary Education	1	1.7	Somewhat related to the job	7	11.9
Secondary Education	3	5.1	Unrelated to the job	3	5.1
Professional Qualifications	16	27.1	Total	59	100.0
Vocational Training	7	11.9			
Diploma	16	27.1	Previous Work Experience (Years)		
First Degree	12	20.3	Less than 10	19	32.2
Postgraduate	3	5.1	Between 11 - 15	16	27.1
Ph.D.	1	1.7	Between 16 - 20	8	13.6
Total	59	100.0	21 and above	16	27.1
			Total	59	100.0

Source: Authors' estimation

No missing data was found in the main dataset. Both skewness and kurtosis values were found to be within the accepted level to ensure normal distribution of data. It has been further revealed that there was no multicollinearity among the independent variables, ensuring that the independent variables do not correlate with one another excessively.

Correlation Analysis

The relationship between perceived ease of use (PEU) and attitude toward using (AU)

A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between perceived ease of use and attitude toward using. A positive moderate correlation has been recorded ($r = .558$, $p < .01$), indicating a statistically significant linear relationship between two variables. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

The relationship between perceived usefulness (PU) and attitude toward using (AU)

A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between perceived usefulness and attitude toward using. A positive moderate correlation has been recorded ($r = .466$, $p < .01$), indicating a statistically significant linear relationship between two variables. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

The relationship between perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEU)

In view of understanding the fundamental theoretical precision, the correlation between perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use has been further examined. A positive moderate correlation has been recorded ($r = .597$, $p < .01$), indicating a statistically significant linear relationship between two variables. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 7. Pearson Product-moment Correlation Matrix

		AU	PU	PEU
AU	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
PU	Pearson Correlation	.466**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
PEU	Pearson Correlation	.558**	.597**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), N=59

Regression Analysis

A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict the attitude toward using Instagram based on perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. A significant linear regression equation was recorded ($p < .05$) with an R-Square value of .339. Accordingly, 33.9% of the variation in attitude toward using Instagram can be explained by the movements in perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness.

Hypothesis Testing

Corresponding to hypotheses 1,2 and 4, positive moderate correlations were recorded ($r = .558$, $p < .01$, $r = .466$, $p < .01$, and $r = .597$, $p < .01$), indicating statistically significant linear relationships. Such relationships were significant at the 0.01 level to support those hypotheses.

Moreover, a significant linear regression equation was recorded ($p < .05$) with an R-Square value of .339 to support hypothesis 3.

Discussion

The outcome of this study validates the research findings of several academics. The statistically significant moderate relationship between attitude toward using Instagram and perceived ease of use ($r = .558, p < .01$) is in line with Liao et al. (2007), Guriting & Ndubisi (2006), and Jahangir & Begum (2008). Moreover, the current study reveals a statistically significant moderate relationship between attitude toward using Instagram and perceived usefulness ($r = .466, p < .01$). This result is similar to the findings of Castaneda et al. (2009), Guriting & Ndubisi (2006), and Laurn et al. (2015). According to the research findings, perceived ease of use has a comparatively higher correlation with attitude toward using Instagram than perceived usefulness. These findings are further in line with Sarathchandra et al. (2020).

The TAM model further suggests that perceived ease of use influences the perceived usefulness (Davis et al., 1989). In this research, a statistically significant moderate relationship has been recorded between the perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. Moreover, 33.9% of the variation in attitude toward using Instagram is explained by the movements in perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Consistent with Ban et al. (2015), new technologies and social media are the key drivers for the growth of the tourism industry. However, many researchers have conducted their studies on the relationships between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness with the attitude toward using technology in various industries and market sectors (Gunawan et al., 2019; Indarsin & Ali, 2017; Karahanna & Straub, 1999; Makmor et al., 2019; Ramayah & Ignatius, 2005), but no sufficient empirical studies have been found in the SMTHs in Sri Lanka. Thus, the current research substantially mitigates such empirical gaps.

Consumers respond favorably to social media platforms that are seen as being easier to use (Lin, 2007b). According to Scott et al. (2016), employing user-friendly technology would be beneficial. During our survey, respondents further emphasized that the design of Instagram should be more user-centric in order to support a diverse demography of social media users. Consistent with Rupak et al. (2014), social media platforms may provide a simple and clear overview of services, as well as complete navigation and solid interactive ways. The design of Instagram should be heavily reliant on usability, with the primary goal of ensuring smooth interaction. Sarathchandra et al. (2020) further indicated that the social media content should be supportive of selecting travel destinations and easy to use. The campaigns through Instagram should ensure easy access to content. Sarathchandra et al. (2020) further reveal that the travelers often read social media reviews of other travelers to select ideal destinations for their next trip.

Instagram ranks 3rd in Sri Lanka's social media penetration with 49% of active users (The Asia Pacific Institute of Digital Marketing & Department of Marketing Management, University of Kelaniya, 2025). In line with the Digital 2025: Global Overview report, 63.9% of the global

population are social media user identities, and Instagram is the favorite social media platform among the top 15 networks for both males and females.

Consistent with the above research findings, SMTHs in Sri Lanka may share important and attractive content with global source markets through Instagram, ensuring improved ease of use and usefulness. These efforts may substantially improve the tourist arrivals, performance of SMTHs, and the economic health of Sri Lanka.

The focus of the current study is limited to SMTHs in Sri Lanka. Hence, this study invites future researchers to carry out similar analysis on the contribution of large-scale accommodation establishments, being one of the major contributors to the economic health of Sri Lanka.

Limitations

Out of a total of 80 SMTHs, 59 (73.75%) were selected for data collection. Therefore, the detrimental impact of employing simple random sampling in terms of potential biases like non-response bias, self-selection bias, and undercoverage bias is minimal. Operational heads of some hotels have been approached for data collection with proper attention to collecting demographic information of business owners, failing to interact with business owners after a reasonable effort. SMTHs not registered with SLTDA and registered after 2021 have not been covered by the current study.

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