

# Technology Acceptance in a Mature Social Media Platform: Evidence from Facebook Marketing among Entrepreneurs

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## ABSTRACT

Social media marketing research has largely examined the adoption of new digital platforms or the marketing outcomes generated by social media. Less attention has been paid to why entrepreneurs continue to use a mature platform after the novelty of adoption has passed. This study examines continued use of Facebook marketing among entrepreneurs in Melaka, Malaysia, by extending the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) with a safety-and-trust interpretation of perceived risk. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was administered online to members of a business community who used Facebook for business-related marketing. Using a non-probability convenience approach, 130 usable responses were obtained. Perceived ease of use (PEOU), perceived usefulness (PU), perceived risk/safety-trust (PR), and Facebook marketing use (UF) were measured using five-item Likert scales. Internal consistency was satisfactory (Cronbach's alpha = .852-.896). Multiple regression explained 76.1% of the variance in Facebook marketing use ( $R^2 = .761$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .756$ ,  $F(3,126) = 134.078$ ,  $p < .001$ ). PR, whose positively phrased items represent greater safety and trust and therefore lower conventional risk, had the largest standardized coefficient ( $\beta = .433$ ,  $p < .001$ ), followed by PEOU ( $\beta = .317$ ,  $p = .001$ ) and PU ( $\beta = .184$ ,  $p = .005$ ). Because PEOU and PR were highly correlated ( $r = .889$ ), the relative magnitudes of the individual coefficients should be interpreted with caution. The findings extend TAM from initial adoption to the continued entrepreneurial utilization of a mature social media platform and show that sustained use is associated not only with functional value and ease of use but also with confidence in the platform's safety and trustworthiness.

**Keywords:** Facebook marketing, social media marketing, technology acceptance model, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, perceived risk, entrepreneurs

## INTRODUCTION

Social media has become embedded in the marketing architecture of small firms. Entrepreneurs use social platforms to communicate with customers, distribute promotional content, build brand communities, support transactions, gather market feedback, and complement other digital channels. Social media marketing is therefore not simply a communication activity; it is part of a broader strategic process through which firms integrate customer interactions, content, monitoring, and relationship management into marketing decisions (Li et al., 2021). However, the platform environment is increasingly fragmented. Long-established platforms coexist with short-form video services, messaging applications, marketplaces, and social-commerce ecosystems. For entrepreneurs with limited time and resources, the managerial issue is no longer only whether to adopt social media, but which platforms remain sufficiently useful, manageable, and trustworthy to justify continued attention.

This distinction is theoretically important because platform maturity changes the meaning of technology acceptance. The original Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) explains user acceptance primarily through perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989). Most acceptance studies are framed around initial adoption or behavioral intention. By contrast, post-adoption research shows that the determinants of continued use can differ from those that motivate first-time acceptance, because users evaluate a system after accumulating direct experience with it (Mishra et al., 2023). For a long-established social media platform such as Facebook, the relevant question is therefore not merely whether entrepreneurs are willing to adopt it, but why they continue to retain it in their marketing portfolio after years of use and in the presence of competing platforms.

Prior research demonstrates that social media can support customer engagement, brand development, entrepreneurial marketing, and broader marketing strategy (Dubbelink et al., 2021; Fink et al., 2020; Ibrahim, 2022; Li et al., 2021; Lim & Rasul, 2022). Malaysian evidence likewise indicates that SMEs use Facebook to reduce promotional costs, attract customers, strengthen engagement, and build brand awareness (Lee et al., 2021). However, much of this literature emphasizes marketing outcomes, customer responses, or strategic practices rather than the technology beliefs associated with entrepreneurs' continued use of a particular mature platform. Applying TAM to this post-adoption context enables the study to examine whether usefulness and ease of use remain relevant once a platform has become familiar and routinized.

The study extends this logic by incorporating perceived risk. Online business activity can expose users to risks of privacy breaches, data misuse, financial loss, reputational damage, and information disclosure. Perceived-risk research has shown that anticipated losses can inhibit the adoption of electronic services (Siagian et al., 2022), while trust can operate alongside TAM beliefs to explain online behavior (Almaiah et al., 2023). In the present instrument, however, the construct labeled perceived risk (PR) is operationalized through positively phrased items concerning safety, trust, protection of personal information, financial security, and non-disclosure to competitors. Consequently, a higher PR score represents stronger safety/trust assurance and lower risk in the conventional conceptual sense. Retaining this distinction is essential because interpreting a positive coefficient as evidence that 'more risk' increases use would be substantively incorrect.

Facebook is an appropriate setting for examining mature-platform continuance because it is no longer a novel technology for most business users. Its long-standing role in entrepreneurial and SME marketing means that respondents are evaluating a familiar platform rather than forming impressions of an unfamiliar system. This makes the context theoretically useful: if continued use is still explained by perceived usefulness and ease of use, TAM retains relevance beyond initial adoption; if safety and trust assurance also contribute independently, the findings support a broader post-adoption interpretation in which confidence in the platform becomes part of the value calculation.

Accordingly, this study addresses two research questions: (RQ1) To what extent do perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and perceived safety/trust assurance explain continued use of Facebook marketing among entrepreneurs in Melaka, Malaysia? (RQ2) Which of these factors shows the largest unique statistical association with continued Facebook marketing use after the other predictors are controlled? By reframing acceptance as continued utilization, the study contributes to the literature on technology use in mature digital environments and provides evidence from an entrepreneurial context in Malaysia.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES**

### ***Technology Acceptance and Continued Platform Use***

TAM proposes that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are central beliefs underlying technology acceptance (Davis, 1989). Perceived usefulness refers to the extent to which a person believes that using a system will improve performance. In contrast, perceived ease of use concerns the extent to which system use is perceived as requiring relatively little effort. Although TAM was originally developed in organizational information-system settings, it has subsequently been applied across diverse digital-service contexts, where perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use continue to shape technology acceptance and usage-related outcomes (Bashir et al., 2022; Jumbri et al., 2024a). In Malaysia, for example, Jumbri et al. (2024a) found that both perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use significantly influenced customer acceptance of self-service

technologies. For entrepreneurs, these beliefs can remain relevant after initial adoption because platforms must continually justify the time, attention, and learning effort invested in them.

Post-adoption research further suggests that continuance should be conceptually distinguished from first-time acceptance. Mishra et al. (2023) showed that continued information-system use reflects users' evaluation of the system after experience, particularly whether the system remains useful and satisfactory. In the present study, Facebook is treated as a mature platform, and UF reflects ongoing marketing use rather than a first-adoption intention. The model, therefore, applies TAM beliefs to an experienced-use setting.

### ***Perceived Ease of Use***

For small firms and entrepreneurs, perceived ease of use can reduce the time and effort required to learn platform features, prepare content, interact with customers, and manage digital marketing activities. According to the Technology Acceptance Model, technologies perceived as easier to use are more likely to be accepted because they require less cognitive and operational effort (Davis, 1989). This consideration is particularly relevant for SMEs, where limited managerial resources can make usability an important factor in the adoption and continued use of social media platforms (Bashir et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2021). In the context of Facebook, a familiar and accessible interface may facilitate its integration into routine entrepreneurial marketing activities and support ongoing customer engagement (Fink et al., 2020). Even for an established platform, ease of use remains relevant because entrepreneurs must evaluate the effort required to use a digital channel relative to its expected marketing benefits. Accordingly, the study proposes:

*H1: Perceived ease of use is positively associated with continued Facebook marketing use among entrepreneurs.*

### ***Perceived Usefulness***

For small firms, perceived usefulness reflects the instrumental value that entrepreneurs expect to obtain from using a digital platform. Facebook may remain useful by enabling firms to reach customers, communicate promotional offers, strengthen customer engagement, enhance market visibility, and complement other marketing channels. Prior social media research suggests that strategic value is created when firms integrate platform interactions into broader marketing activities and convert those interactions into customer relationships and marketing resources (Li et al., 2021). Consistent with the Technology Acceptance Model, perceived usefulness also remains an important belief influencing users' acceptance and continued use of social media technologies (Bashir et al., 2022). Therefore, when entrepreneurs perceive Facebook as contributing meaningfully to their marketing objectives and business performance, they are more likely to view the platform favorably and continue using it for marketing. Accordingly, the study proposes:

*H2: Perceived usefulness is positively associated with continued Facebook marketing use among entrepreneurs.*

### ***Perceived Risk, Safety, and Trust***

Digital marketing involves the exchange and storage of information, customer communication, and, in some cases, paid transactions or advertising. These activities can make perceptions of security, privacy, and trust important for continued platform use. Prior research on technology adoption shows that perceived security and trust can influence behavioral intention in digital environments, particularly when users are concerned about the safety and reliability of online transactions and information exchange (Siagian et al., 2022; Almaiah et al., 2023). Trust can also complement perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use by reducing uncertainty and strengthening confidence in the digital platform (Almaiah et al., 2023). In the present study, however, the perceived risk items are positively worded. Therefore, higher PR scores indicate stronger perceptions that Facebook is safe, secure, and trustworthy rather than higher conventional risk. The directional hypothesis is consequently framed in terms of safety and trust assurance:

*H3: Perceived safety and trust assurance have a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurs' intention to use Facebook for marketing.*

## METHODOLOGY

### *Research Design and Sampling*

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. The target population comprised members of the business community in Melaka, Malaysia, who used Facebook for business marketing. Respondents were recruited using a non-probability convenience approach through the accessible business community. The questionnaire was distributed online using Google Forms. Participation was voluntary, and the unit of analysis was the individual entrepreneur/business user. A pilot test with 30 respondents was conducted before the main survey to assess whether the instrument could be administered consistently and to examine internal reliability. The main data-collection period ran from 2022 to early 2023 and yielded 130 usable responses for analysis. Because the sampling frame was confined to one accessible business community rather than a probability sample of all entrepreneurs in Melaka, the findings should be interpreted as evidence from this study population rather than as population estimates for Malaysian entrepreneurs generally.

The sample size was evaluated against established benchmarks for multiple regression with three predictors. Green's (1991) rule of thumb ( $N \geq 50 + 8m$ , where  $m$  is the number of predictors) indicates a minimum of 74 cases for testing the multiple correlation. An a priori power calculation using a medium effect size ( $f^2 = .15$ ),  $\alpha = .05$ , power = .80, and three predictors indicates a minimum of approximately 77 observations. The achieved sample of 130 exceeds both benchmarks. This supports adequate power for the regression model, although statistical power does not remove limitations associated with non-probability sampling, common-method measurement, or multicollinearity among predictors.

### *Measurement Instrument*

The questionnaire comprised three sections. Section A captured respondent characteristics: gender, age, education level, and years of business experience. Section B measured perceived ease of use (PEOU), perceived usefulness (PU), and perceived risk/safety-trust (PR), while Section C measured Facebook marketing use (UF). Each construct contained five items rated on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The construct structure follows TAM reasoning for PEOU and PU (Davis, 1989) and extends it by adding a risk-related dimension, consistent with prior e-service research (Almaiah et al., 2023). The present dataset provides evidence of internal consistency for these scales, but it does not include any reported exploratory or confirmatory factor analyses. Cronbach's alpha is therefore treated as evidence of reliability rather than as a substitute for convergent or discriminant construct validity.

Care is required in interpreting PR because the original instrument labels the construct as perceived risk. In contrast, the items are worded positively regarding safety, trust, privacy protection, and information security. For example, respondents were asked whether they felt that the Facebook system was safe for their business, trusted Facebook to protect their personal information, and believed that Facebook would not disclose their information to competitors. Consequently, a higher PR score reflects greater confidence in platform safety, privacy protection, and trustworthiness, which corresponds to lower perceived risk in the conventional sense. To maintain consistency with the original dataset, the article retains the variable label PR, while interpreting the construct substantively as perceived safety/trust assurance.

### *Data Analysis*

Data were analyzed using SPSS. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe respondent characteristics. Internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. Pearson correlations were examined to describe bivariate associations among PEOU, PU, PR, and UF. Multiple linear regression was then used to estimate the joint explanatory power of PEOU, PU, and PR for Facebook marketing use, as well as the unique coefficient associated with each predictor while the others were held constant. Statistical significance was evaluated at  $p < .05$ . Given that all variables were self-reported in a single questionnaire at a single time point, the analysis is associative rather than causal. In addition, the predictor correlations were inspected for signs of multicollinearity, and the high correlation between PEOU-PR and the other predictors is explicitly considered when interpreting

the regression coefficients. Common method bias was not formally tested in the available dataset; this is reported as a methodological limitation rather than inferred from reliability statistics (Hair et al., 2022).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Respondent Profile*

Table I summarises the demographic profile of the 130 respondents. Women represented 63.8% of the sample, and the largest age group was 28-32 years (53.8%). Respondents were generally well educated: 39.2% held diplomas and 46.2% held bachelor's degrees, giving a combined 85.4% with diploma- or degree-level qualifications. Business experience was concentrated at less than 10 years, with 50.0% reporting fewer than 5 years and 42.3% reporting 5 to 10 years. The sample, therefore, represents a relatively young and moderately experienced entrepreneurial group rather than the full diversity of firm owners in Melaka.

TABLE I. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS (N = 130)

| Variable            | Category           | n  | %    |
|---------------------|--------------------|----|------|
| Gender              | Female             | 83 | 63.8 |
|                     | Male               | 47 | 36.2 |
| Age                 | 18–22              | 16 | 12.3 |
|                     | 23–27              | 30 | 23.1 |
|                     | 28–32              | 70 | 53.8 |
|                     | 33–37              | 10 | 7.7  |
|                     | Above 38           | 4  | 3.1  |
| Education           | SPM                | 13 | 10   |
|                     | Diploma            | 51 | 39.2 |
|                     | Degree             | 60 | 46.2 |
|                     | Master             | 4  | 3.1  |
|                     | PhD                | 2  | 1.5  |
| Business experience | Below 5 years      | 65 | 50   |
|                     | 5–10 years         | 55 | 42.3 |
|                     | More than 10 years | 10 | 7.7  |

Notably, 67.7% of respondents reported frequent use of Facebook for business marketing (Fig. 2). This descriptive result supports the study's mature-platform framing: the platform was not merely known to respondents but remained actively integrated into the marketing practices of a substantial majority of the sample. Fig. 1 further shows the age concentration of respondents, with the 28-32 group forming the largest segment.

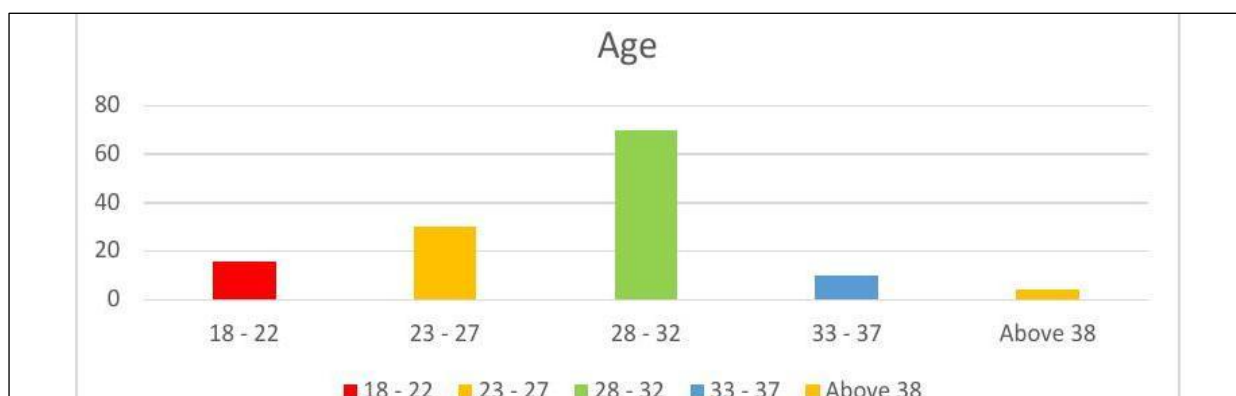


Fig. 1. Age distribution of respondents.

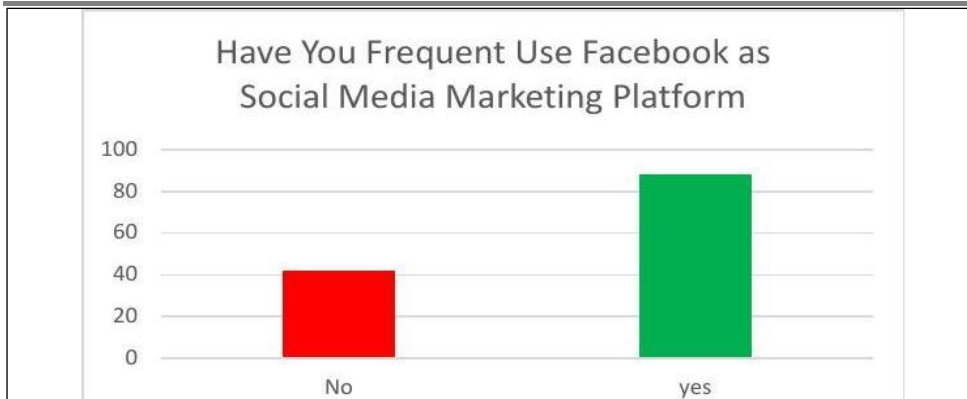


Fig. 2. Frequency of Facebook use for business marketing.

### Reliability

Table II reports Cronbach's alpha for the four five-item scales. Values ranged from .852 for UF to .896 for PEOU, indicating satisfactory internal consistency across the sample. These results suggest that the items within each scale covary reliably. However, alpha alone does not establish that the constructs are empirically distinct; this distinction is especially important given the high correlations reported in Table III.

TABLE II. RELIABILITY STATISTICS (N = 130)

| Construct                          | Items | Cronbach's $\alpha$ |
|------------------------------------|-------|---------------------|
| Perceived ease of use (PEOU)       | 5     | .896                |
| Perceived usefulness (PU)          | 5     | .895                |
| Perceived risk / safety-trust (PR) | 5     | .873                |
| Facebook marketing use (UF)        | 5     | .852                |

### Correlation Analysis

Table III presents the Pearson correlation matrix. All four constructs were significantly and positively related ( $p < .001$ ). The strongest bivariate relationship was between PEOU and PR ( $r = .889$ ), followed by PR and UF ( $r = .849$ ) and PEOU and UF ( $r = .826$ ). PU was also positively related to UF ( $r = .715$ ) and to the other predictors ( $r = .676-.732$ ). The strong PEOU-PR correlation indicates that respondents who regarded Facebook as easier to use also tended to regard it as safer and more trustworthy. Substantively, this overlap is plausible for an experienced user group. However, statistically, it raises multicollinearity concerns and suggests that the predictors should not be treated as fully independent dimensions without additional construct validity testing.

TABLE III. CORRELATION MATRIX (N = 130)

|      | PEOU   | PU     | PR     | UF     |
|------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| PEOU | 1      | .676** | .889** | .826** |
| PU   | .676** | 1      | .732** | .715** |
| PR   | .889** | .732** | 1      | .849** |
| UF   | .826** | .715** | .849** | 1      |

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

### Regression Analysis

The regression model was statistically significant and explained a large proportion of variance in Facebook marketing use,  $R = .873$ ,  $R^2 = .761$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .756$ ,  $F(3,126) = 134.078$ ,  $p < .001$  (Table IV). All three

coefficients were significant (Table V). PR had the largest standardised coefficient ( $\beta = .433$ ,  $p < .001$ ), followed by PEOU ( $\beta = .317$ ,  $p = .001$ ) and PU ( $\beta = .184$ ,  $p = .005$ ). H1, H2, and H3 were therefore supported at the conventional significance level. Because PR is scored as a safety/trust assurance, its positive coefficient indicates that greater confidence in the platform's safety and trustworthiness is associated with greater use of Facebook marketing. The result should not be described as evidence that higher conventional risk increases use.

TABLE IV. REGRESSION MODEL SUMMARY AND ANOVA

| R     | R <sup>2</sup> | Adj. R <sup>2</sup> | F (3,126) | Sig.  |
|-------|----------------|---------------------|-----------|-------|
| 0.873 | 0.761          | 0.756               | 134.078   | <.001 |

TABLE V. STANDARDISED REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS (DV = UF)

| Predictor  | B     | $\beta$ | t     | Sig.  |
|------------|-------|---------|-------|-------|
| (Constant) | 0.624 | —       | 3.444 | <.001 |
| PEOU       | 0.292 | 0.317   | 3.33  | 0.001 |
| PU         | 0.153 | 0.184   | 2.868 | 0.005 |
| PR         | 0.407 | 0.433   | 4.207 | <.001 |

### Diagnostic Considerations

The high model  $R^2$  should be interpreted alongside the correlations among the predictors. PEOU and PR correlate at  $r = .889$ . Using the predictor correlation matrix, the implied variance inflation factors are approximately 4.80 for PEOU, 2.17 for PU, and 5.62 for PR, with corresponding tolerances of approximately .21, .46, and .18. These values suggest notable overlap between PEOU and PR, especially for PR. The model remains statistically significant, but the high shared variance can make individual beta coefficients sensitive to relatively small changes in the data. Consequently, the ranking of PR as the 'strongest' predictor is better interpreted as the largest unique standardized coefficient in this regression model, rather than as definitive evidence that safety/trust is universally more important than ease of use. Future studies should use factor-analytic validity assessment and, where possible, larger sample sizes to more rigorously distinguish these constructs.

## DISCUSSION

The results provide qualified support for extending TAM to continued use of a mature social media platform. PEOU and PU remained significant even though respondents were not encountering Facebook as a new technology. This indicates that functional convenience and instrumental value continue to matter after adoption: entrepreneurs are more likely to keep using a platform when it remains easy to incorporate into routine marketing work and continues to deliver perceived business value. The finding is consistent with the central logic of TAM (Davis, 1989) and with social media research identifying usefulness-related beliefs as important for usage intention (Bashir et al., 2022). At the same time, the continued-use framing is consistent with post-acceptance theory, which emphasizes that continuance decisions are shaped by users' evaluations following experience with a technology, rather than by pre-adoption expectations alone (Mishra et al., 2023).

The PR result adds an important qualification. When interpreted correctly, respondents who expressed greater confidence that Facebook was safe, trustworthy, and protective of business or personal information also reported greater use of marketing. This finding is consistent with contemporary extensions of TAM, which show that trust complements perceived usefulness and ease of use in shaping acceptance of digital and social media platforms, particularly among SMEs (Siagian et al., 2022). Conversely, perceived risk and security concerns can undermine trust and discourage technology adoption by heightening users' concerns about privacy, data protection, and potential losses (Almaiah et al., 2023). For a mature platform, trust may become especially salient because continued use entails accumulated exposure: entrepreneurs repeatedly share content, interact with customers, manage account information, and potentially spend money on platform-based promotion. However, because PR is operationalized as positive safety or trust assurance rather than as conventional perceived risk, the construct should be renamed or validated separately in future studies to avoid conceptual ambiguity.

The high PEOU-PR correlation also suggests a substantive possibility that warrants examination in future research. Experienced entrepreneurs may infer safety from familiarity and ease: a platform that is well understood, predictable, and easy to navigate can feel less risky. Conversely, a trusted platform may be perceived as easier because users are more willing to engage with its features. The present cross-sectional design cannot determine the direction of this relationship. A longitudinal design could establish whether ease and trust reinforce one another over time, while structural equation modeling with validated latent constructs could test whether they are empirically distinct and whether trust mediates or moderates continued use.

From a managerial perspective, the findings imply that platform retention is not explained by functionality alone. Small firms operate under resource constraints and may maintain several digital channels simultaneously. A mature platform can remain strategically relevant when it is easy to manage, demonstrably useful, and sufficiently trusted for repeated business interaction. Business-support agencies and digital-marketing trainers should therefore treat privacy awareness, account security, and trust-building practices as part of platform capability, alongside content creation and campaign skills. This interpretation also aligns with the broader view of social media marketing as a strategic portfolio of activities rather than a mere platform presence (Li et al., 2021).

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examined continued use of Facebook marketing among entrepreneurs in Melaka, Malaysia, using an extended TAM framework. The analysis of 130 respondents showed that PEOU, PU, and PR/safety-trust assurance were all significantly associated with Facebook marketing use and jointly explained 76.1% of its variance. PR had the largest standardized regression coefficient, followed by PEOU and PU. Because the PR items are positively phrased, the result means that greater safety and trust assurance—equivalent to lower conventional perceived risk—is associated with greater continued use. The findings, therefore, extend technology-acceptance reasoning beyond first-time adoption by showing that familiar platforms must continue to deliver functional value, low usage effort, and confidence in their safety to remain part of entrepreneurs' marketing portfolios.

The practical implication is that entrepreneurs should evaluate mature platforms using a portfolio perspective rather than assuming that age alone makes a platform obsolete. Continued use can be justified when the platform still reaches relevant customers, integrates efficiently into business routines, and provides an acceptable level of trust and security. Platform providers can support retention by simplifying business-facing features, demonstrating measurable marketing utility, improving privacy and security communication, and providing transparent controls over business and personal data. Business support agencies can likewise strengthen digital marketing programs by combining functional platform training with cyber safety, privacy, and account protection practices.

Several limitations qualify these conclusions. First, the study used a cross-sectional design, so the regression coefficients represent associations and cannot establish causal direction. Second, the non-probability convenience sample was drawn from one business community in Melaka; it may not represent entrepreneurs in other Malaysian states, industries, firm sizes, or stages of digital maturity. Third, all constructs were measured using a single self-report questionnaire administered at a single time point, which may introduce common method variance and response bias (Hair et al., 2022). Because no formal assessment of common method bias was conducted in the available dataset, its potential influence cannot be ruled out. Fourth, reliability was assessed with Cronbach's alpha, but convergent and discriminant validity were not examined through factor analysis. This is particularly important because PEOU and PR were highly correlated ( $r = .889$ ), and the implied VIF for PR is above 5, suggesting notable construct overlap and coefficient instability. Fifth, the variable labeled perceived risk is operationalized using safety- and trust-oriented positive items; future research should distinguish perceived risk, perceived security, privacy concerns, and trust as separate constructs, each measured with validated scales. Future studies should also use larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal designs, and SEM or other latent-variable approaches; incorporate additional determinants such as social influence, facilitating conditions, digital skills, cost, platform satisfaction, and competitive pressure; and compare Facebook with platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp Business to explain multi-platform marketing decisions over time.

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