



Understanding Users' Decisions to Adopt Canva: The Roles of Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Behavioral Control, and Word of Mouth

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to examine the influence of Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Behavioral Control, and Word of Mouth on the decision to use the Canva application. This research employed a quantitative approach using a survey method. Data were collected from 133 Canva users selected through purposive sampling and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 3. The findings indicate that Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Behavioral Control, and Word of Mouth each have a positive and significant effect on the decision to use the Canva application. Among these variables, Word of Mouth demonstrates the strongest influence, indicating that user recommendations play a crucial role in encouraging application usage decisions. These findings imply that Canva should prioritize enhancing user experience by improving ease of use and strengthening users' confidence in using the application while encouraging positive user recommendations to increase adoption and usage decisions. The study also contributes to the understanding of technology adoption by highlighting the importance of behavioral and social factors in influencing users' decisions.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of internet access and social media usage has transformed the way individuals communicate, obtain information, and create digital content. By the end of 2025, Indonesia recorded approximately 230 million internet users, representing an internet penetration rate of 80.5%, while social media users reached 180 million or 62.9% of the total population (O'Dea, 2025; Shi et al., 2025). This digital transformation has increased the demand for attractive visual content because visual communication is generally more

effective than text in capturing audience attention and conveying information efficiently (Handoyo, 2024). Consequently, individuals, educational institutions, businesses, and content creators increasingly rely on digital graphic design platforms to produce professional-quality visual materials without requiring advanced technical expertise (Jiao & Cao, 2024; Naatu et al., 2024). The emergence of web-based design applications has therefore become an important technological innovation that supports digital creativity, productivity, and communication in various sectors (Elvionita & Armianti, 2025). These developments demonstrate that understanding the factors influencing the adoption of graphic design applications is becoming increasingly important for both technology developers and society as digital transformation continues to accelerate.

The decision to adopt digital applications can be explained through several established behavioral theories. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposes that users' acceptance of technology is primarily determined by their perceptions of its usefulness and ease of use, with Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) reflecting the extent to which individuals believe that using a system requires minimal effort. Technologies perceived as simple to learn and operate are more likely to be accepted and continuously used by users. Complementing TAM, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explains that behavior is influenced by individuals' perceptions of their ability to perform a particular action, conceptualized as Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC), which reflects the availability of skills, resources, and opportunities to execute the intended behavior (Lim et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2023). In addition to these theoretical perspectives, Word of Mouth (WOM) has become an influential social communication mechanism through which recommendations, user experiences, and online interactions shape perceptions and encourage technology adoption in digital environments.

Among various online graphic design platforms, Canva has become one of the most widely adopted applications because it offers drag-and-drop functionality, diverse design templates, and collaborative features that simplify the creation of presentations, posters, educational materials, and digital marketing content (Skourdoumbis, 2024). Indonesia represents Canva's third-largest user market after the United States and Brazil, with more than 2.7 million designs created every day throughout 2024, indicating its substantial contribution to digital content production (Ilyas et al., 2023; Liao et al., 2022; Lim et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2023). Nevertheless, high usage statistics do not necessarily indicate that all individuals experience the same decision-making process when adopting the application (Mahardiyanto et al., 2024; Tirta et al., 2024). Users continue to encounter challenges related to operating advanced

features, producing more sophisticated designs, and utilizing collaborative tools effectively. These limitations suggest that application popularity alone cannot fully explain users' adoption decisions, highlighting the importance of examining technological, behavioral, and social factors that influence individuals' decisions to use Canva in different contexts (Agustin & Khasanah, 2023).

Previous studies have extensively investigated the determinants of technology adoption and usage decisions by applying the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and marketing communication perspectives. Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) positively influences users' decisions to adopt digital platforms because technologies that are easier to learn and operate reduce users' cognitive effort and increase their willingness to use them. Similar findings have been reported across various digital contexts, including e-commerce platforms, digital services, and online applications, where ease of use significantly enhances users' adoption decisions. Likewise, studies based on the Theory of Planned Behavior indicate that Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) positively affects technology usage because individuals who perceive themselves as capable of using a system are more likely to adopt it. In addition, Word of Mouth (WOM), particularly electronic Word of Mouth, has been identified as an important social influence that shapes users' perceptions and encourages purchasing and technology usage decisions through recommendations, online reviews, and interpersonal communication.

Despite these findings, previous studies have reported inconsistent results regarding the influence of these variables on technology adoption, indicating that further investigation remains necessary. Several studies found that Perceived Ease of Use did not significantly influence decisions to use digital investment applications, suggesting that ease alone may not always determine technology adoption. Similarly, Perceived Behavioral Control was reported to have no significant effect on users' intentions or decisions in certain technological contexts, implying that individual capability may depend on contextual factors and user characteristics. Contradictory findings also appear in studies of electronic Word of Mouth, where some researchers reported insignificant effects on purchasing decisions despite its theoretical importance in influencing consumer behavior. Furthermore, most previous studies examined these variables separately or focused on different digital platforms such as e-commerce, investment applications, and online marketplaces rather than graphic design applications. Consequently, limited empirical evidence explains how technological perceptions, behavioral control, and social influence simultaneously shape users' decisions to adopt Canva. Addressing this gap is important because Canva combines technological simplicity, user competence,

and social interaction within a single digital platform, thereby providing a unique context for extending the application of TAM and TPB in digital technology adoption research.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research design using a survey method to examine the causal relationships between Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Behavioral Control, Word of Mouth, and the decision to use the Canva application (Fang et al., 2026; Ngafeeson et al., 2024). A quantitative approach was selected because it enables the measurement of relationships among variables through statistical analysis and provides empirical evidence to test the proposed hypotheses. Furthermore, this study adopted a causal-associative design to determine whether changes in the independent variables contribute to changes in the dependent variable. The research focused on Canva users because the platform has become one of the most widely used digital graphic design applications in educational, professional, and creative activities. Rather than limiting the investigation to a specific geographical location, the study emphasized users' experiences with Canva across digital environments, allowing broader representation of technology users and increasing the relevance of the findings for digital platform adoption research (Amanda & Marsasi, 2024; Li et al., 2023).

The target population comprised individuals who had experience using the Canva application for digital design activities. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling because this technique allows researchers to recruit participants who meet predetermined characteristics relevant to the research objectives. Two inclusion criteria were established: respondents had to be at least 17 years old to ensure sufficient maturity in providing responses, and they had to have used Canva within the previous month to ensure that their evaluations reflected recent usage experiences. The minimum sample size was determined based on the SEM-PLS rule of thumb, which recommends a sample of five to ten times the total number of research indicators. With 21 indicators, the minimum requirement was 105 respondents. To improve statistical power and reduce potential errors resulting from invalid responses, the study collected data from 133 respondents, exceeding the recommended minimum and remaining within the acceptable range for SEM-PLS analysis (Hair et al., 2021).

Primary data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed using Google Forms via social media and other digital communication platforms. The research instrument was adapted from validated scales to ensure the validity and reliability of each construct. Perceived Ease of Use was measured using indicators of ease of understanding, ease of use, and flexibility. Perceived

Behavioral Control was assessed through four reverse-coded items reflecting users' perceived ability and control in using Canva. Word of Mouth was measured through indicators of positive experience sharing, recommendations, and encouragement to use the application, while the decision to use Canva was measured using indicators of usage intensity and frequency. The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 3 because this method is appropriate for analyzing latent variables, testing causal relationships, and evaluating both the measurement and structural models simultaneously (Amiruddin et al., 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Respondent Characteristics

The analysis of respondent profiles in this survey is based on the following demographic data and includes only Canva users:

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 133)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Canva Usage Frequency During the Past Month	1–3 times	81	60.90
	4–7 times	36	27.10
	8–15 times	13	9.80
	>15 times	3	2.30
Gender	Male	51	38.30
	Female	82	61.70
Age	17–25 years	66	49.60
	26–35 years	20	15.00
	≥36 years	47	35.30
Occupation	Student	54	40.60
	Private/BUMN Employee	22	16.50
	Civil Servant	8	6.00
	Self-employed	14	10.50
	Freelancer	7	5.30
	Others	28	21.10

Data source: questionnaire processed by the author, 2026.

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 133 respondents who participated in this study. All respondents were Canva users who met the predetermined sampling criteria. Based on gender, female respondents constituted the majority of the sample, accounting for 61.70%, while male respondents represented 38.30%. Regarding age, respondents aged 17–25 years

formed the largest group (49.60%), followed by those aged 36 years and above (35.30%) and those aged 26–35 years (15.00%). In terms of occupation, students accounted for the largest proportion of respondents (40.60%), followed by respondents classified under other occupations (21.10%), private or state-owned enterprise employees (16.50%), self-employed individuals (10.50%), public servants (6.00%), and freelancers (5.30%). These figures indicate that the sample included respondents from diverse demographic backgrounds and occupational groups, providing a broad representation of Canva users included in the survey.

Regarding the frequency of Canva usage during the previous month, the largest proportion of respondents reported using the application between one and three times (60.90%). Meanwhile, 27.10% of respondents used Canva four to seven times, 9.80% reported using it eight to fifteen times, and only 2.30% indicated using the application more than fifteen times during the same period. The distribution of usage frequency shows that respondents had varying levels of experience with Canva, ranging from occasional to intensive users. Such variation is important because it reflects differences in respondents' interaction with the application, allowing the study to capture perceptions from users with different usage patterns. Overall, the demographic profile and usage characteristics demonstrate that the collected sample consists of active Canva users with heterogeneous backgrounds, thereby providing an appropriate basis for subsequent analyses of the proposed research model.

Measurement Model Results

The results of the suitability, validity, and reliability tests are as follows:

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha (CA), Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Construct	Items	CA	CR	AVE
Perceived Ease of Use (X1)	The Canva app uses language that is easy for users to understand	0.964	0.969	0.798
	The Canva app has an easy-to-understand menu and set of features			
	The Canva app provides comprehensive instructions and information on how to use the app			
	The Canva app makes it easy for users to find the templates, design elements, or features they need			
	The Canva app makes it easy to save, download, and share designs			
	The Canva app can be used anytime, depending on the user's needs			

Perceived Behavioral Control (X2)	The Canva app can be used anywhere, regardless of location	0.963	0.973	0.899
	The Canva app can be accessed on various devices connected to the internet, such as computers, tablets, or smartphones.			
	I feel like I need to spend more time working on designs in Canva.			
	When I'm in a hurry, I tend to hesitate before deciding to use the Canva app.			
Word of Mouth (X3)	The difficulty of determining the right time has hindered my decision to use Canva.	0.920	0.940	0.757
	Due to time constraints in preparing the design, I don't always decide to use the Canva app.			
	I share my positive experiences with others because the Canva app offers collaboration features that can be used directly by multiple users.			
	I share my positive experience with the many free features on the Canva app with others.			
Decision (Y)	I recommend the Canva app to the design community because it can be used to create professional visual content.	0.911	0.937	0.789
	I recommend the Canva app to my friends because it's a quick and convenient way to create graphic designs.			
	I often recommend the Canva app to my friends after experiencing how easy it is to create various design projects.			
	I decided to use the Canva app when I needed a creative design with lots of template options.			
Decision (Y)	I decided to use the Canva app whenever I need a professional design or a custom design.	0.911	0.937	0.789
	I decided to use the Canva app because it's accessible anytime and anywhere, so I use Canva more often than other apps			
	I decided to use the Canva app because the design process is more convenient and the results can be shared with others right away, so I use Canva more often than other apps.			

Source: Processed by the Author, 2025.

Table 2 presents the results of the measurement model evaluation, including Cronbach's Alpha (CA), Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct. The results show that all constructs satisfy the recommended reliability criteria, with Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.911 to 0.964 and Composite Reliability values ranging from 0.937

to 0.973, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values range from 0.757 to 0.899, indicating that each construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its respective indicators. All measurement indicators also achieved outer loading values greater than 0.70, confirming adequate indicator reliability and convergent validity. Overall, these findings demonstrate that the measurement model meets the required standards of reliability and convergent validity, indicating that the constructs are appropriate for subsequent structural model analysis using SEM-PLS.

Discriminant Validity

Following the assessment of convergent validity and reliability, discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. The results of this assessment are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Fornell Larcker

	Decision to Use	PBC	PEOU	WOM
Decision to Use	0,888			
PBC	0,656	0,948		
PEOU	0,797	0,623	0,893	
WOM	0,815	0,658	0,806	0,870

Source: SmartPLS 3.3 output, 2026

Table 3 presents the results of the discriminant validity assessment using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. The results show that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct is greater than its correlations with the other constructs. Specifically, the diagonal values for Decision to Use (0.888), Perceived Behavioral Control (0.948), Perceived Ease of Use (0.893), and Word of Mouth (0.870) all exceed the corresponding inter-construct correlation coefficients. These findings indicate that each construct demonstrates stronger relationships with its own indicators than with other constructs in the model. Therefore, the measurement model satisfies the Fornell–Larcker criterion, confirming adequate discriminant validity and demonstrating that the constructs are empirically distinct and measure different underlying concepts.

Inner Model Test

After evaluating the measurement model, the structural model was assessed by examining the coefficient of determination (R^2). The R^2 values indicate the proportion of variance in the endogenous construct explained by the exogenous constructs included in the model. The results of the R^2 analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. R-square

Decision to Use	Value
R Square	0,733
R Square Adjusted	0,726

Source: SmartPLS 3.3 output, 2026

Table 4 presents the coefficient of determination (R^2) for the endogenous construct, Decision to Use. The results show an R^2 value of 0.733 and an adjusted R^2 value of 0.726, indicating that the model explains 72.6% of the variance in the Decision to Use construct through Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Behavioral Control, and Word of Mouth. The remaining 27.4% of the variance is attributable to other factors not included in the proposed research model. According to the recommended evaluation criteria for SEM-PLS, the obtained R^2 value indicates substantial explanatory power, suggesting that the structural model has a strong ability to explain users' decisions to use the Canva application.

Examination of the Inner Model or Structural Model

After confirming that the measurement and structural models satisfied the required evaluation criteria, hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure in SEM-PLS. Bootstrapping was performed to estimate the significance of the structural relationships among the proposed constructs. The results of the structural model are illustrated in Figure 2.

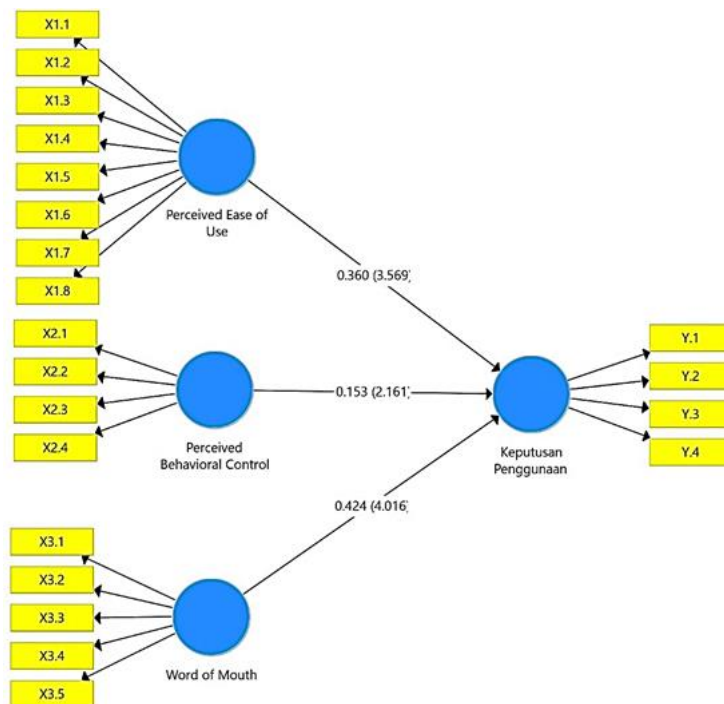


Figure 1: Inner Model from SEM-PLS Bootstrapping Results

Figure 1 presents the structural model obtained from the SEM-PLS bootstrapping analysis. The model illustrates the direct relationships between Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Behavioral Control, and Word of Mouth as exogenous constructs and Decision to Use as the endogenous construct. The standardized path coefficients indicate positive relationships for all proposed paths, with Word of Mouth showing the largest path coefficient ($\beta = 0.424$), followed by Perceived Ease of Use ($\beta = 0.360$) and Perceived Behavioral Control ($\beta = 0.153$). The corresponding t-statistics shown in the model indicate that all structural paths exceed the minimum significance threshold, providing initial evidence that the proposed relationships are statistically supported.

To determine the significance of the proposed hypotheses, the direct effects among the constructs were evaluated using the bootstrapping results. The hypothesis testing results, including the path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values, are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Direct Effect

Hypothesis	Path	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O /STDEV)	P Values	Result
H1	PEOU-> Decision to Use	0,360	0,360	0,101	3,569	0,000	accepted
H2	PBC-> Decision to Use	0,153	0,159	0,071	2,161	0,016	accepted
H3	WOM-> Decision to Use	0,424	0,420	0,106	4,016	0,000	accepted

Source: SmartPLS 3.3 output, 2026

Table 5 presents the results of the direct effect analysis for the proposed hypotheses. The findings indicate that all three hypothesized relationships are positive and statistically significant. Perceived Ease of Use has a positive effect on Decision to Use ($\beta = 0.360$, $t = 3.569$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. Perceived Behavioral Control also positively influences Decision to Use ($\beta = 0.153$, $t = 2.161$, $p = 0.016$), supporting H2. In addition, Word of Mouth exhibits the strongest positive effect on Decision to Use ($\beta = 0.424$, $t = 4.016$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H3. Among the three exogenous variables, Word of Mouth demonstrates the largest standardized path coefficient, indicating that it contributes the greatest direct influence on users' decisions to use the Canva application. Overall, the results confirm that all proposed hypotheses are supported by the empirical data.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Behavioral Control, and Word of Mouth positively and significantly influence users' decisions to adopt the Canva application. These results indicate that technology adoption is shaped not only by users' perceptions of system characteristics but also by their confidence in operating the technology and the social influence they receive from others. Collectively, these findings support the integration of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), suggesting that technological, behavioral, and social factors jointly explain users' decisions to adopt digital applications. The relatively high explanatory power of the structural model further indicates that the proposed framework adequately captures the major determinants of Canva usage decisions. Therefore, the findings reinforce the argument that technology adoption should be examined from multiple theoretical perspectives rather than relying on a single behavioral model, thereby providing a more comprehensive explanation of users' decision-making processes in digital environments (Hair et al., 2021).

Perceived Ease of Use was found to have a positive and significant effect on the decision to use Canva, indicating that users are more likely to adopt the application when they perceive it as simple to learn, understand, and operate. This finding is consistent with the Technology Acceptance Model, which proposes that technologies requiring less effort are more readily accepted by users because they reduce cognitive burden and improve user experience. The result also supports previous studies reporting that perceived ease of use positively influences decisions to use digital platforms and online services across various contexts. Canva's intuitive interface, drag-and-drop functionality, extensive template library, and cross-device accessibility may explain why users perceive the application as convenient and efficient for completing design tasks. From a practical perspective, these findings suggest that continuous improvements in interface simplicity, navigation, and feature accessibility remain essential for increasing user adoption and long-term engagement with the platform (Mahardiyanto et al., 2024; Tirta et al., 2024).

The results also reveal that Perceived Behavioral Control has a positive and significant influence on the decision to use Canva, indicating that users who feel capable of utilizing the application's features are more confident in deciding to adopt and continue using the platform. This finding is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior, which emphasizes that individuals are more likely to perform a behavior when they perceive sufficient skills, resources, and opportunities to do so. The result is also consistent with previous studies

reporting a positive relationship between perceived behavioral control and technology adoption, although it differs from studies that found no significant effect in other technological contexts. These differences suggest that the role of behavioral control may vary depending on the characteristics of the technology being examined. Practically, Canva should continue providing user tutorials, interactive guidance, and educational resources to strengthen users' confidence and improve their ability to utilize more advanced design features (Nurhidayat et al., 2023; Erwin et al., 2023).

Word of Mouth was identified as the strongest predictor of the decision to use Canva, indicating that users are highly influenced by recommendations, reviews, and positive experiences shared by others before deciding to adopt the application (Al-Kaabi et al., 2025; Ding & Chiu, 2024). This finding is consistent with the growing importance of interpersonal communication and electronic word of mouth in digital environments, where consumers frequently rely on social media, online communities, and digital content creators as trusted sources of information. Positive recommendations reduce uncertainty regarding application quality and encourage potential users to try the platform based on the experiences of existing users. The dominant influence of Word of Mouth also supports previous studies reporting that user-generated recommendations significantly affect technology adoption and purchasing decisions. However, this finding differs from studies that reported an insignificant effect of electronic Word of Mouth, suggesting that the effectiveness of social influence depends on the characteristics of the digital platform and its user community.

The present study extends previous research by integrating Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Behavioral Control, and Word of Mouth into a single research model to explain users' decisions to adopt Canva (O'Dea, 2025; Shi et al., 2025). While earlier studies primarily examined these variables separately or focused on different digital platforms, this study demonstrates that technological, behavioral, and social factors simultaneously contribute to technology adoption within a digital graphic design application (Mahardiyanto et al., 2024; Kim, 2021). The inclusion of Perceived Behavioral Control as a replacement for Brand Image also broadens the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior in the context of digital creativity platforms, providing additional empirical evidence regarding the importance of users' perceived capability in technology adoption. Consequently, this study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that the integration of TAM and TPB provides a more comprehensive explanation of users' decision-making than relying on a single theoretical perspective alone.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide several implications for digital platform developers, particularly Canva. Since Word of Mouth exerts the strongest influence on usage decisions, Canva should encourage users to share positive experiences through referral programs, online communities, and social

media engagement to strengthen organic promotion. At the same time, maintaining a user-friendly interface, expanding intuitive design features, and providing accessible tutorials remain essential to enhance users' perceived ease of use and behavioral control (Granić, 2022; Lee et al., 2025). These improvements may increase users' confidence in utilizing more advanced features while encouraging sustained application usage. Overall, this study contributes both theoretically and practically by providing empirical evidence that technology adoption decisions are influenced by the interaction of technological characteristics, users' behavioral perceptions, and social communication, thereby offering a more comprehensive framework for understanding digital application adoption and serving as a reference for future studies in similar contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that users' decisions to adopt the Canva application are jointly influenced by technological, behavioral, and social factors, with Word of Mouth emerging as the most influential determinant, followed by Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Behavioral Control. These findings highlight that successful technology adoption depends not only on the usability of the application and users' confidence in operating it but also on positive recommendations and shared experiences within users' social networks. The study contributes to the technology adoption literature by integrating the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and Word of Mouth into a unified framework, thereby providing a more comprehensive explanation of users' decisions to adopt a digital graphic design platform. Despite these contributions, the study is limited by its reliance on self-reported online questionnaire data, a relatively modest sample size, and the inclusion of only three explanatory variables. Future research is encouraged to incorporate additional determinants, apply mixed-method or longitudinal approaches, and examine different digital platforms or user groups to improve the generalizability and robustness of the findings.

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