

Parents' Readiness to Nurture their School Children Adopting Digital Payment

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Abstract: Normalizing in adoption of digital payment will contribute to a digital economy environment. This conceptual paper describes the literature review on a proposal for a study of the parents' behavior towards the use of digital payment by their primary school children. The proposed factors derived from the TAM and UTAUT model that would explain the adoption and non-adoption factors. The main objective of the study is to investigate the relationship between parents' readiness and the factors influencing their acceptance of technology, especially the use of digital payment systems by their primary school children. The proposed research method uses convenience sampling. The questionnaire will be disseminated to parents who have primary school children aged 6 to 12 years old. The response of 200 questionnaires was assumed as suitable for drawing a conclusion for the study. The findings aim to provide insight into the various factors, including digital literacy, financial awareness, and accessibility of technology, that influence parents' readiness to adopt digital payments. The result of this study will assist the banking industry in improving its facilities and strategies in its digital payment. The result would also help government agencies (such as schools and the education ministry) in improving their policy and management.

Keywords: *Digital economy, Digital payment, Technology acceptance*

1. Introduction

In this modern era of technological advancements, the acceptance of new technology has become a critical field of interest and debate. The perception that technology is more efficient and effective in various situations increases the adoption of these technologies. One of the significant technological innovations is financial technology or is also known as fintech. The growth of the digital payment system in education and financial transactions has transformed how transactions are conducted. Adaptation of digital payment methods for tuition fees, stationery purchases, canteen or cafeteria payments and extracurricular activities is increasing. However, the success of this shift largely depends on the parents' readiness to embrace and navigate these digital tools.

Recently, in Malaysia, schools have begun integrating digital payment systems to streamline transactions within the educational environment. These systems allow students to make purchases from buying food at the school canteen to other school-related expenses using e-wallets or contactless cards. These initiatives are to reduce the reliance on cash, enhance transaction efficiency and inculcate financial literacy from a young age. The introduction of contactless student cards for digital payments will allow students to conduct transactions without relying on their mobile phones, which are frequently prohibited in Malaysian educational environments, especially for school students. The cards are associated with parental accounts, enabling parents to oversee and regulate their children's expenditures. Moreover, the features such as pre-purchasing meals and setting daily spending limits have been well-received by parents, offering convenience and peace of mind (The Edge Malaysia: Bringing children into the digital payments universe).

Adopting the digital payment systems provides a multitude of advantages, improving convenience, security and financial accountability. Digital payments streamline the transaction process, enabling parents to swiftly and effortlessly pay school fees and other expenses from any location, thereby minimizing the necessity for in-person visits to schools or banks (Colline et al, 2022; Ritthitraphop & Hamra, 2019 and Nasution, 2022) and it is also improving the security measures to combat fraud (Sundararaj & Meera, 2024).

Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI) has planned to expand the Digital Economy's economic contribution to 22.6% of Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by the year 2025. MITI is also committed to making Malaysia one of the regional leaders in the Digital Economy. One of the segments in the digital economy

is digital financial services. Therefore, to emerge as a leader of the digital economy, the adoption of digital financial services should be at par with the ambition.

The ambition to become a leader of the digital economy in the future will require the young generation to possess a strong foundation in adopting digital financial services. Consequently, the young generation will be more committed to adopting other digital economy segments in the future. However, parents are responsible for shaping the young generation's minds. Their support to allow their young children to adopt digital finance services is important. Therefore, it is essential to examine the behavior of parents towards the use of digital financial services by their children.

This article explores the factors influencing parental adaptation to digital payments, the challenges they face and strategies to support them in nurturing their children's financial transactions in a digital world. Thus, the main objective of the study is to investigate the relationship between parents' readiness and the factors influencing their acceptance of technology, especially the use of digital payment systems by their primary school children. This study will also outline plans for digital financial services providers in improving their products and will strengthen the foundation of digital economy adoption. Subsequently, the ambition of making Malaysia one of the regional leaders in the digital economy will be realized.

Digital Economy Within The Malaysian Context

As a leader of the digital economy, the majority of economic transactions will be conducted online. Thus, conducting online economic transactions should be the norm among citizens. Normalcy can be achieved when it is nurtured from a young age. Subsequently, digital payment is one of the elements in the digital economy (Shen et al., 2021) that could nurture the younger generation to adopt online economic transactions. According to Statista.com, Malaysia's digital payments gross transaction value was USD165 billion in 2023, an increase of 9% from 2022.

The mission of digitalizing economic transactions will not be successful if Malaysians are not ready to change their current norm. Readiness for change refers to two features (Weiner, 2009). Firstly, members and employees collectively determine to implement a change. Secondly, members and employees collectively believe that they are capable of implementing the change. If the readiness for change is high, the implementation of digitalisation will likely be effective. Thus, parents should determine and embrace this cashless culture.

A cashless school program has been introduced by "Bank Rakyat" and "Bank Simpanan Nasional". The program has been conducted in collaboration with "Jabatan Pendidikan" and secondary school management by introducing the method of cashless payment at the school canteen, bookstore and cooperative store. This program should be extended to primary school as facilities provided by Banking institutions are important to ensure adoption (Shehadeh et. al, 2024). However, changes usually will face resistance (Dimitrova, 2023).

2. Literature Review

Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use

Davis (1989) introduced the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which states that users tend to use a system if the system is perceived as easy to use and beneficial to them. The concept is introduced as a basis for understanding user behaviour in receiving and adopting information systems. While the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model posits that the actual utilization of technology is influenced by behavioural intention. The perceived likelihood of adopting the technology is dependent on the direct effect of four key constructs, namely performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. The effect of predictors is moderated by age, gender, experience and voluntariness of use (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Most researchers investigating the adoption of financial technology used the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) (Arvian et al., 2023). The perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are the main variables in those two theories.

The adoption of digital payment systems by parents is significantly influenced by their perceptions of usefulness and ease of use. These elements are essential in determining their willingness to engage with such technologies, as they enhance convenience and efficiency in financial transactions. Perceived usefulness reflects

an individual's strong belief in technology and is considered a critical factor in enhancing performance (Davis, 1989). Kabir et al. (2017) clarified that perceived usefulness is the most frequently utilized independent variable in prior research for assessing people's readiness to adopt digital payments, both at the individual and organizational levels.

Digital payment applications facilitate transactions, allowing parents to handle payments rapidly and effortlessly. Convenience and efficiency by applying digital payments, optimizing transactions and allowing parents to manage payments quickly and easily, which is particularly beneficial in busy lifestyles (Purwanto et al., 2024). A study by Sundararaj & Meera (2024) targeted 250 millennials has found that there is a significant relationship between perceived usefulness and adoption of digital payment by the millennial. The ease of use and the perceived security of digital payment systems are also vital factors that encourage parents to integrate these methods into their children's financial education (Sundararaj & Meera, 2024).

Individuals believe that using the system will enhance its effectiveness. This can be interpreted as the perceived usefulness of the level of confidence of individuals that the positive impact on their performance and achievements. By enhancing the security of digital payments, parents will be ready to use digital payments. That's why many digital payment systems offer improved security features compared to cash transactions, which can reassure parents about the safety of their financial information (Hanafi & Toolib, 2020). Integration with the other services features like cashback, promotions and with other platforms also will increase the perceived value of using the digital payments (Purwanto et al., 2024).

The ease of use is the one factor in TAM that reflects the extent to which users are confident that technology can be understood and easily used. It also refers to the ability of young children to use digital payment. Chawla, D & Joshi (2019) stated that the concept of ease of use can be defined as a system that is easy to learn and use by the users, or it can be referred to as user-friendly. It also involves the extent to which an individual is confident that using the technology does not require more effort (Rodiah & Melati, 2020). Teo et al. (2020) identify that parents are more inclined to adopt digital payments that are user-friendly and demonstrably beneficial.

The applications designed with user-friendly interfaces will reduce the learning curve for parents, making them more likely to adopt the digital payment technologies (Ramdhani et al., 2024). Not only the interface, but also the accessibility to conduct transactions via smartphone or computers when making digital payments, especially to the parents, will help them manage multiple responsibilities (Pratama & Anas, 2024).

Srivastava et al. (2024) explained that the less effort needed to learn and use digital payment would increase the adoption. The usage of debit cards is no doubt easy to use by young children to use. However, the security of keeping the debit cards is probably a deterring factor to using them. The misplaced, missing or damaged issues may not be favourable in supporting to use of digital payment. The ease of digital payment methods, including mobile wallets and online banking, streamlines the payment process, facilitating users' ability to monitor their spending. Sundararaj & Meera (2024) expose that the individuals from the millennial generation, specifically, are attracted to the user-friendly nature and the ability to track expenses through digital payment platforms.

Digital payment is perceived as useful, as parents no longer need to have exact cash on hand to give to their young children for daily pocket money. This would be incredibly convenient for working parents who are normally busy during the workdays. If parents handed in a larger note of money, the spare change is difficult to track by parents. As Talwar et al. (2023) described that consumers viewed this innovation as having greater value by the alternative method of payment, namely, using cash.

Although perceived usefulness and ease of use are pivotal, additional elements like trust and social influence also play a role in the acceptance of digital payment systems. Understanding these dynamics can help developers create more appealing applications for parents. Another usefulness discussed in the previous study is the ability to audit spending habits. Information on transactions of spending using digital payments can be accessed through the facilities provided by digital payment providers. The ability to audit spending is a

significant factor in the adoption of digital payments, as it enhances financial awareness and promotes responsible spending.

Digital payment systems provide users with the capability to track and control their expenditures in real-time, which is an appealing aspect for numerous consumers (Bhoopathy & Kanagaraj, 2023). This transparency in financial transactions promotes the adoption of digital payment methods, as it facilitates enhanced budgeting and financial planning. The ease of digital payments, along with the capacity to oversee spending, makes them an appealing choice for consumers looking to improve and enhance their financial management. Bhoopathy & Kanagaraj (2023) reveal that the ability to audit spending habits encourages responsible spending and better financial management.

While the ability to audit spending habits is a strong motivator for adopting digital payments, other factors such as security, trust, and convenience also play critical roles. The interactions of these factors vary across different demographics and regions, influencing the overall adoption rates of digital payment systems. Understanding these dynamics can help stakeholders tailor strategies to enhance the adoption of digital payments.

Perceived Risk (Security Concerns)

Perceived risk or security is the belief of consumers that their private data cannot be accessed, manipulated or stored by other parties during online transactions. Cybercrimes emerged as a threat to digital economic transactions (Xia Loh et al, 2021). Many believe that hackers and fraudsters could steal money from their digital payment facilities (Krishna et. al., 2023). Users are worried that they might become one of the victims of these digital crimes.

This fear is defined as the perceived risk that could be a deterrent for parents to allow their children to adopt digital payment. It becomes the biggest concern of the parents while making any online transactions. Ensuring that the digital payment systems have strong security protocols is imperative for a responsible parent. Studies by Shafie et al. (2020) show that perceived trust or security concerns do affect the adoption of e-payment systems. Handoko et al. (2022) reveal the concerns about the security risk, like fraud and unauthorized transactions can deter parents from adopting digital payments, as they prioritize the safety of their financial assets.

Bhuiyan et al (2024) proved in their study, perceived risk did not negatively influence the adoption of digital payment. Nevertheless, young children should be educated and trained on the basic knowledge to keep their digital payments safe. For example, they should never allow a friend to use it to pay for their purchase. They should also be educated on procedures for losing or missing their digital payment card. Another risk is system errors that could raise disputes among users and digital payment providers (Talwar et al.,2023).

The underestimation and overestimation of risks and security factors that support parents put on payment systems vary greatly based on trust, security, and accessibility. Examining these aspects is important in meeting the expectations of parents using digital payment systems. Parents frequently express their concern about the safety of their personal and financial information when using digital payment methods, fearing data breaches or misuse (Nurabiah et al., 2024). The potential for technical issues or lack of internet access can also create hesitation, particularly among those who are unfamiliar with technology.

The safety of financial transactions is a primary concern for parents. Ensuring that digital payment platforms have robust security measures is crucial in gaining parental trust. Research indicates that perceived security positively influences the adoption of e-payment systems (Mat Shafie et al., 2020). Trust in technology will become a significant factor in the adoption of digital payments. The level of trust amongst the parents will shape the trust and acceptance of digital technologies and service providers. Research by Rezza et al. (2024) and Saragih et al. (2025) found that trust greatly influences the intention to use e-wallets. While these perceived risks and security concerns are significant, some studies suggest that as digital literacy increases, parents may become more comfortable with digital payments, potentially leading to higher adoption rates in the future (Susanto et al., 2022).

Social Influence

Social influence has been demonstrated to affect human behaviour in technology adoption. Social influence explores how individuals' beliefs, attitudes and behaviours are shaped by their interactions with others. A study by Ghouse et al. (2025) confirms that the influence of subjective norms affects the adoption of mobile wallets. Mun et al (2017) found that social influence has a significant impact on affecting the consumers' intention to use mobile payment services in Malaysia. Shafie et al. (2020) and Saragih et al. (2025) also agreed that social influence has a significant relationship with the adoption of e-payment.

Parents' decisions to use digital payments may be influenced by peers and the broader community. When digital payment becomes the norm within a community, parents may feel more compelled to adopt similar practices for their children. The adoption of digital payment systems among parents is significantly influenced by various social factors. These influences stem from the recommendations and behaviors of peers, family, and community, which shape perceptions and intentions towards using digital payment methods. Understanding these social influence factors can help in promoting digital payment adoption among parents.

Peer effects are a strong determinant in adopting digital payments. Individuals are likely to mirror the payment behaviors of their peers, which can lead to increased adoption of digital payment systems (van der Cruisen & Knoben, 2021). A study by Sundararaj & Meera (2024) reveals that peer networks and community practices significantly impact parents' decisions to adopt digital payments, as cultural norms dictate acceptable behaviors regarding technology use. Peer recommendations also influence the parents to adopt digital payments. Parents often rely on advice from friends and family when considering new technologies, including digital payments. This reliance can enhance their willingness to adopt such systems (Viony & Widodo, 2024).

In China, social influence plays a more significant role in mobile payment adoption compared to the USA, where users are more rational and risk-averse. This suggests that cultural contexts can amplify the impact of social norms on digital payment adoption (Zhang et al., 2018). Community norms also become a social influence on the acceptance of digital payments. The presence of a National Non-Cash Movement encourages collective behaviour towards digital payments, reinforcing social acceptance and usage within communities (Kartika et al., 2023).

While social influence plays a pivotal role in promoting digital payment adoption, barriers such as technological challenges and financial literacy can hinder this process. Addressing these barriers is essential for fostering a more inclusive digital payment environment for parents (Lakhaiyar & Mani, 2022) and (Oktafian, 2022). Social influence will also enhance trust in digital payment systems, which is crucial for parents who may be hesitant due to concerns about security and usability (Syafaastuti et al., 2024).

In this study will also use the Diffusion of Innovation theory, where the study will identify which category of adopters the parents. The innovators who are venturesome and interested in new ideas will be ready to allow their young children to adopt digital payment. The parents who are Early Adopters and Early Majority categories may have doubts about allowing their young children to adopt digital payment, even though they are aware of the need to change. Most of them most likely will be influenced by friends and relatives to adopt digital payment (Linh T, et al, 2024). The Late Majority category is sceptical of change and digital payment providers need to educate them in allowing their young children to adopt digital payments. The laggard's category is bound by tradition and very conservative and the hardest to tackle.

Cultural and Educational Factor

Cultural factors that influence values, norms, beliefs and social norms that shape parental attitudes to use and adapt to the new technology significantly impact how people embrace digital technology. A study by Shafie et al. (2020) shows that culture was not significant in the adoption of e-payment. Ritthitraphop & Hamra (2019) stated that trust and security are the main factors that parents prioritize in digital payment systems, influenced by cultural perceptions of security and reliability.

Not only the cultural factors, the educational factor, or it can refer to the level of digital literacy among the parents play vital roles in the adoption of digital payment. Digital financial literacy combines the skills needed to navigate financial services with the knowledge and skills to use digital technologies. Here it shows the

parents' ability to understand and effectively use various financial skills, including acquiring the knowledge, skills, confidence and competencies to safely use digitally delivered financial products and services, to make informed financial decisions. The educational initiatives will form and train parents on the use of digital payments will enhance readiness and adoption of the system.

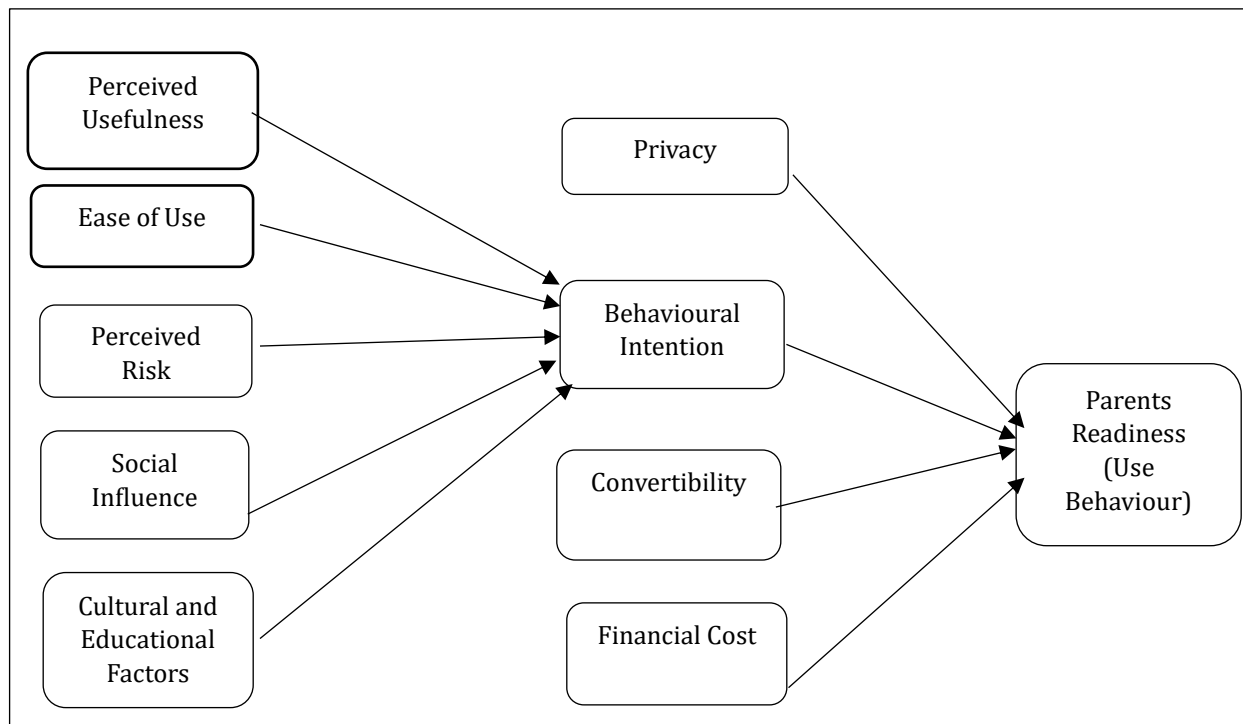
Adopting digital payments for children is significantly influenced by parents' readiness and various educational factors. It encompasses financial literacy, educational attainment and the perceived benefits of digital transactions. The level of digital literacy among parents that combines the skills to navigate financial services with the use of digital technologies is closely linked to the parents' readiness. Those with higher self-efficacy in using technology are most likely to adopt digital payments (Zhao et al., 2023). Parents with higher financial literacy are more likely to teach their children about managing money and using a digital payment system (Wang et al., 2024).

Digital competency is often linked to educational attainment. Digitally competent parents can better manage their children's financial activities through the systems, where the gap in digital financial culture is more pronounced among less educated demographics, impacting their willingness to adopt digital payment methods (Buenestado-Fernández et al. 2023). Parents' level of education directly impacts their comfort and trust in using digital payment technologies. Educated parents tend to have higher levels of social trust and are more inclined to adopt financial technology solutions (Wang et al., 2024). A study by Ritthitraphop & Hamra (2019) reveals that parents with higher education levels are more aware of security features and benefits of digital payments, which influence their decision to adopt them.

3. Research Methodology

The purpose of this study is to develop a conceptual framework that includes the perceived usefulness, ease of use, perceived risk, social influence and cultural & educational factors in explaining the use behaviour of use behaviour of parents' readiness to nurture their school children adopting digital payment. In terms of theoretical underpinnings, the conceptual framework incorporated aspects of TAM and the UTAUT, including the Diffusion of Innovation theory, in deriving the constructs of the study. The conceptual framework is as visualised in Figure 1, is adopted from Tomić et al. (2023)

Figure 1: Proposed Theoretical Framework of Parents' Readiness to Nurture Their School Children Adopting Digital Payment.



This study will use a survey technique for data collection. It will be feasible for the researcher to obtain quantitative data, which then can be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to offer information about possible relationships between the variables. Questionnaires will be designed using previous studies that were conducted on digital payment adoption. A pilot test on the questionnaire will be done to ensure its validity. In 2025, The Malaysian Reserve reported that there were 126,608 primary students in Melaka. Assuming a parent has three primary school children, the proposed population would be 42,203. Since the population is large and has limited funding, a sample size of 200 is sufficient to conclude the study.

The questionnaire will be disseminated to parents who have primary school children aged 6 to 12 years old. A Google Form questionnaire was randomly distributed to customers using a social media platform. The accepting response in the Google form will be deactivated once the response achieved targeted responses are achieved. The data collected will be analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

4. Discussion

In this dynamic environment, parents' readiness to nurture their school children in adopting digital payments is crucial as schools increasingly shift towards cashless transactions. Numerous factors affect their preparedness, including digital literacy, trust in digital payment systems, financial awareness and ease of accessing the technology. Parents who are familiar with mobile banking, e-wallets and online security measures can better equip their children to use these tools safely. However, those with limited technology skills or concerned about the safety or fraud may be reluctant, highlighting the need for educational programs to build confidence.

Additionally, financial literacy enables parents to instill responsible spending habits in their children, while access to a stable internet and devices facilitates seamless transactions. Despite challenges like resistance to change or security concerns, promoting digital payments offers benefits such as convenience, enhanced financial management and reduced cash-handling risks. Schools, financial institutions, and policymakers can assist or support parents through training sessions, secure platforms and affordable internet connectivity. Nurturing parental readiness will lead to smoother transactions with digital payment systems, empowering children to adeptly and responsibly navigate cashless environments.

5. Conclusion

This study will provide important information regarding whether parents are ready to allow their primary school children to adopt digital payment. Factors that will be studied, including perceived usefulness, ease of use, perceived risk, social influence, cultural and educational background, will be tested to determine whether they have a significant relation with the intention of parents allowing their children to use digital payment. The adoption factors and non-adoption factors of digital payment among the parents also provide significant determinants of parents' behaviour towards the digital economy in the future. Other than that, digital payment providers such as banks will use the results of this study to improve their facilities and strategies in their digital payment products. The result would also help government agencies such as the education ministry to improve their policy and school management.

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