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Understanding the Formation of E-book Usage Intention: Evidence from University Students in Yunnan, China

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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates the key factors influencing postgraduate students' intention to use e-books and their actual usage behavior. **Research design, data and methodology:** A quantitative research design was employed. Data were collected from 500 postgraduate students in the Schools of Foreign Languages at three universities in Yunnan Province, China. A mixed sampling strategy, including purposive, stratified, and convenience sampling, was used. The data were analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling to examine the relationships among performance expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, perceived usefulness, attitude, behavioral intention, and actual use. **Results:** The results show that all proposed hypotheses are supported. Attitude (β = 0.428) and Facilitating Conditions (β = 0.324) have strong positive effects on Behavioral Intention. Behavioral Intention (β = 0.459) significantly predicts Actual Use. Performance Expectancy, Social Influence, and Perceived Usefulness also show significant positive relationships with Behavioral Intention. **Conclusions:** The findings indicate that positive attitudes and adequate support conditions play an important role in encouraging students to adopt e-books. Universities should strengthen digital infrastructure, provide training to improve students' familiarity with e-book functions, and integrate digital reading resources into teaching practices. These measures can help increase students' engagement with e-books and support more effective digital learning environments in higher education.

Keywords: Behavioral Intention, Actual Use, E-book Adoption, Postgraduate Students, China

JEL Classification Code: A23, D12, D83, I23, O88

1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has fundamentally reshaped educational practices and learning environments. Traditional instruction, once centered on teachers, students, and printed textbooks, has gradually shifted toward technology-enhanced learning models that emphasize interactivity and accessibility (De Jong & Bus, 2002). Among emerging digital tools, e-books have gained particular prominence in higher education due to their portability, multimodal features, and integration capabilities. Compared with printed materials, e-books provide searchable content, annotation functions, multimedia integration, and immediate accessibility. These features may enhance learners' autonomy and engagement (Ravid et al., 2008).

The conceptualization of e-books has evolved from simple digital replicas of printed texts (Anuradha & Usha, 2006) to interactive multimedia learning platforms that integrate audio, video, animation, and hyperlinks (Weber & Cavanaugh, 2006). Empirical studies indicate that students perceive e-books as efficient tools for highlighting key information, monitoring learning progress, and improving accessibility (Alhammad & Ku, 2019). In addition, interactive e-books have been found to increase learning engagement and improve academic outcomes across disciplines (Asrowi et al., 2019).

China has experienced rapid growth in digital publishing in recent years. Official statistics indicate that electronic publications have expanded faster than other publishing sectors and now account for a significant share of industry revenue. National reading surveys also show that digital reading participation has exceeded 80 percent among adults.

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This trend reflects a clear societal transition toward electronic reading formats. The development is further supported by the widespread use of smartphones and mobile internet services. In Yunnan Province, mobile phone penetration has surpassed 100 devices per 100 people, and the number of mobile internet users continues to grow annually. These conditions provide a strong technological foundation for digital reading adoption.

Within higher education, the transition toward digital learning resources has accelerated. Universities around the world increasingly integrate e-books as important academic resources (Aharony, 2014). As digital natives, contemporary university students are generally considered more familiar with digital technologies and more capable of adapting to new learning tools (Srirahayu et al., 2022). Chinese universities have also invested heavily in digital libraries and electronic databases. E-books are now widely integrated into teaching and research systems, suggesting that technological and institutional conditions support their adoption.

However, favorable infrastructure does not automatically lead to students' acceptance of e-books. Previous studies have reported positive outcomes associated with e-book use and have identified factors such as perceived usefulness, social influence, facilitating conditions, and attitude as important determinants of technology adoption. Although these findings provide valuable insights, previous research has primarily focused on the benefits or outcomes of e-book usage, while relatively limited attention has been given to understanding how these factors jointly shape students' intention to use e-books. In addition, evidence from less economically developed regions remains limited. Concerns about reading comfort, usability, and learning effectiveness may also influence students' attitudes toward digital reading. As a result, the factors that influence students' intention to adopt e-books in these contexts remain insufficiently understood.

Yunnan Province provides a meaningful context for addressing this issue. While digital infrastructure has improved substantially, regional economic disparities and differences in institutional resources may influence students' perceptions and technology acceptance. This represents a research problem because universities continue to invest in digital learning resources without clear evidence regarding the factors that encourage students to adopt e-books. Understanding these factors is important for promoting effective digital learning strategies.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the determinants of university students' intention to use e-books in Yunnan, China. Drawing on technology acceptance perspectives, the study investigates how cognitive evaluations, social influence, and facilitating conditions shape students' behavioral intention. By addressing the limited evidence available in Yunnan Province, the study extends current understanding of e-book adoption in higher education and provides practical insights for universities seeking to promote effective digital learning resources.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Actual Use (AU)

Actual use is commonly defined in technology adoption research as the observable and measurable engagement with a system after intention has been formed. Within the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), actual use refers to the real implementation of a system in users' daily tasks (Davis, 1989). TAM proposes that behavioral intention acts as a direct antecedent of actual usage. This means that once users develop favorable attitudes and intentions toward a technology, they are more likely to translate those intentions into actual usage behavior. Therefore, actual use represents the final stage of the technology acceptance process and serves as an important indicator of technology adoption.

Beyond its conceptual relationship with behavioral intention, actual use has been operationalized mainly through objective or self-reported behavioral indicators. Gillenson and Sherrell (2002) suggest that actual use is commonly measured by the frequency with which users interact with a system over a specific period. Expanding this view, Malhotra and Galletta (1999) propose that actual use should be assessed using two dimensions: frequency of use and quantity of use. Frequency of use refers to how often the system is accessed, while quantity of use indicates the extent or intensity of engagement. This multidimensional approach allows researchers to capture both the regularity and the depth of user interaction.

In addition, Igbaria et al. (1997) highlight the importance of the temporal dimension of actual use. They suggest that usage frequency within a defined time frame, such as the number of interactions per week, can provide a structured and reliable measurement indicator. Taken together, these perspectives describe actual use as a behavioral construct that reflects sustained and measurable engagement with a technology. In the context of e-book adoption, actual use refers to the extent to which students integrate e-books into their academic activities through repeated and meaningful interaction.

2.2 Performance Expectancy (PE)

Performance expectancy refers to the degree to which individuals believe that using a particular technology will enhance their task performance or produce beneficial outcomes. In the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of

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Technology (UTAUT), Venkatesh et al. (2003) describe performance expectancy as users' cognitive evaluation of the usefulness of a system. It reflects the belief that technology can improve efficiency, productivity, or goal achievement. The construct includes several related dimensions such as relative advantage, extrinsic motivation, work fit, perceived usefulness, and outcome expectations. Relative advantage refers to the perception that a technology offers greater benefits than existing alternatives (Moore & Benbasat, 1991). Outcome expectations also involve anticipated work-related gains and personal benefits that influence users' behavioral decisions (Compeau et al., 1999). In the context of e-book adoption, performance expectancy reflects students' expectations that using e-books can improve academic performance, facilitate access to learning materials, and increase learning efficiency. Lin (2019) notes that these expectations often form before adoption and influence how students evaluate digital reading tools.

Previous studies consistently show that performance expectancy significantly influences behavioral intention. Venkatesh et al. (2003) demonstrate that users are more likely to adopt technologies that they believe will improve their performance. Similarly, Martins et al. (2018) confirm that perceived performance benefits strengthen users' intention to adopt digital systems. In the context of e-books, students who believe that digital reading tools enhance learning outcomes are more likely to use them (Okocha, 2019). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Performance expectancy has a significant impact on behavioral intention.

2.3 Social Influence (SI)

From a broader socio-cultural perspective, social influence refers to the impact of environmental opinions, social pressure, and group norms on individuals' technology adoption decisions. Taylor and Todd (1995) describe social influence as a social process through which individuals internalize new ideas and behaviors. This view suggests that technology acceptance is influenced by social environments rather than being determined only by individual cognition. Chiang and Chen (2014) further explain that social influence often arises from comments, recommendations, and feedback from others. Poon (2014) also highlights the importance of public opinion, usage visibility, and the frequency of technology use among close contacts in shaping individuals' perceptions. In educational contexts, Bulur and Gönül (2020) note that classmates and shared learning environments play an important role in influencing students' willingness to shift from printed books to e-books. Therefore, social influence includes both direct recommendations and indirect signals that come from observing the behavior of others within a social group.

Previous studies consistently show that social influence positively affects behavioral intention. Jaradat and Rababaa (2013) report that social influence significantly predicts students' intention to adopt mobile commerce. Similar findings are observed in studies on mobile technologies in Saudi Arabia (Alwahaishi & Snášel, 2013) and Taiwan (Yu, 2012), where social approval strengthens intention formation. In higher education settings, Maduku (2015) also finds that social influence significantly affects students' intention to continue using e-books. These findings indicate that social environments provide important cues that shape students' motivation to adopt digital technologies. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Social influence has a significant impact on behavioral intention.

2.4 Facilitating Conditions (FC)

Facilitating conditions refer to individuals' perceptions of the availability of resources and support necessary to use a particular technology. In the UTAUT framework, Venkatesh et al. (2003) define facilitating conditions as the degree to which users believe that organizational and technical infrastructures exist to support system use. This construct includes three components: perceived behavioral control, supporting conditions, and compatibility. Perceived behavioral control reflects users' assessment of their ability to operate the system. Supporting conditions refer to the availability of technical or organizational assistance. Compatibility describes the alignment between the system and users' needs or existing practices. Earlier studies emphasize the environmental dimension of facilitating conditions. Thompson et al. (1991) define them as external factors that make task performance easier, such as computer support and technological infrastructure. Similarly, Triandis (1979) describes facilitating conditions as the material and financial resources required to complete a task successfully. In the context of e-book adoption, facilitating conditions reflect students' perception that sufficient infrastructure, institutional support, and personal capability exist to support digital reading.

Previous studies show that facilitating conditions can influence behavioral intention. Venkatesh (2000) suggests that facilitating conditions may predict intention when ease-of-use constructs are not explicitly included in the model. Empirical studies support this relationship. Yang (2010) reports that facilitating conditions positively influence users' intention to adopt mobile payment services. Chong (2013) also finds a positive relationship between facilitating conditions and behavioral intention in mobile commerce. In online banking research, Yeoh and Chan (2011) show that perceived technical and organizational support strengthens users' intention to adopt digital services. These findings

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suggest that adequate resources and infrastructure can reduce uncertainty and support technology adoption. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Facilitating conditions have a significant impact on behavioral intention.

2.5 Perceived Usefulness (PU)

Perceived usefulness refers to users' belief that a technological system can improve their task performance or outcomes. Mathwick et al. (2002) define perceived usefulness as the degree to which users believe that a system can enhance their performance. Fenech (1998) also suggests that when a technology is perceived as simple, seamless, and capable of improving task performance, users are more likely to evaluate it as useful. From a behavioral theory perspective, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) explain that individuals' behavioral decisions are influenced by their beliefs about performance improvement. This idea later became a core concept in the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989). In digital environments, perceived usefulness also relates to system quality characteristics. Shih and Fang (2004) identify factors such as precision, security, network speed, convenience, and user participation as important elements that shape perceived usefulness. Aharony (2015) further notes that individual characteristics, including innovativeness and perceived challenges, may influence users' evaluation of usefulness. Therefore, perceived usefulness reflects both system attributes and users' cognitive assessment of performance benefits.

Empirical research consistently shows that perceived usefulness positively influences behavioral intention. Jin (2014) reports that perceived usefulness significantly predicts students' intention to adopt e-books. Similarly, Maria and Puthusserry (2022) find that college students' behavioral intention toward e-books is strongly influenced by perceived usefulness. Nelson and Webb (2007) also identify perceived usefulness as a key predictor of students' future adoption of e-books. Additional studies confirm this relationship in digital learning environments (Farzana et al., 2021; Yapa & Ranasinghe, 2023). These findings indicate that when students recognize clear academic benefits from e-books, their intention to adopt the technology increases. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Perceived usefulness has a significant impact on behavioral intention.

2.6 Attitude (ATT)

Attitude refers to an individual's overall evaluative judgment toward performing a specific behavior. In the context of information technology adoption, attitude reflects users' positive or negative feelings about using a technological system. Davis et al. (1989) define attitude toward use as an individual's affective evaluation, indicating feelings of favor or disfavor toward system usage. Similarly, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) describe attitude as a subjective evaluation that influences behavioral tendencies. From the perspective of innovation diffusion, Rogers (1983) explains that attitude includes cognitive beliefs, emotional responses, and behavioral tendencies toward an innovation. He also notes that attitudes develop through stages such as knowledge acquisition, persuasion, decision making, and confirmation. Hsiao and Tang (2014) further describe attitude as an individual's favorable or unfavorable evaluation of performing a specific behavior. In the context of e-books, attitude reflects students' cognitive and emotional evaluations of digital reading, which are shaped through interaction with technological features and environmental influences.

Previous studies confirm that attitude plays an important role in shaping behavioral intention. According to the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behavior, behavioral intention is strongly influenced by individuals' attitudes toward a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Davis (1989) also suggests that users with positive attitudes toward a system are more likely to adopt and use it. Empirical studies in technology adoption provide consistent evidence for this relationship. Dimitriadis et al. (2019) show that readers' attitudes significantly predict their behavioral intentions. Tsai (2012) also finds that attitude is a strong predictor of e-book usage intention. Similarly, Masa'deh et al. (2022) confirm that attitude significantly influences behavioral intention. These findings suggest that when students develop favorable evaluations of e-books, their intention to use them increases. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Attitude has a significant impact on behavioral intention.

2.7 Behavioral Intention (BI)

Behavioral intention can be understood as a cognitive decision that occurs before an individual performs a behavior. Yaseen (2012) describes intention as an initial expectation that precedes behavior when a person is ready to act. Yapa and Ranasinghe (2023) further explain that behavioral intention reflects an individual's decision to use a product or service before actual usage takes place. In this sense, behavioral intention represents both motivational commitment and readiness to perform a behavior. Farzana et al. (2021) suggest that behavioral intention may be expressed through proactive activities such as searching for product information or comparing alternatives before adoption. In marketing research, behavioral intention is often used as a predictor of future consumption behavior

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(Malhotra, 1996). In the context of e-books, behavioral intention therefore reflects students' deliberate planning and psychological readiness to adopt digital reading tools.

Previous studies consistently show that behavioral intention plays a key role in predicting actual technology use. Agarwal and Karahanna (2000) identify behavioral intention as an important predictor of technology adoption behavior. Empirical research across different technological contexts confirms that stronger intention leads to greater levels of actual system use. In e-book research, Gao and Deng (2012) find that users' intention to use mobile e-books significantly predicts their actual usage behavior. Gillenson and Sherrell (2002) also report that consumers' behavioral intentions toward virtual stores directly influence their online purchasing behavior. Wu and Wang (2005) further confirm that behavioral intention strongly affects actual system use. Martins et al. (2018) also demonstrate that behavioral intention significantly influences actual e-book usage. These findings suggest that behavioral intention is an important determinant of actual technology adoption. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Behavioral intention has a significant impact on actual use.

3. Research Methods and Materials

3.1 Research Framework

This study develops its conceptual framework by integrating three well-established theories in technology adoption research: the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). These theories provide the theoretical foundation for explaining how users form intentions and subsequently engage in technology usage.

TAM explains how users' cognitive evaluations influence technology adoption. In this study, TAM supports the inclusion of Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Attitude (ATT), which represent users' evaluation of the benefits and their overall perception of the technology. UTAUT extends this perspective by incorporating Performance Expectancy (PE), Social Influence (SI), and Facilitating Conditions (FC). These constructs capture the expected performance benefits of technology, the influence of social environments, and the availability of technical and organizational support. TPB contributes the concept of Behavioral Intention (BI) as the immediate predictor of behavior. According to TPB, intention represents an individual's readiness to perform a behavior and serves as the most direct antecedent of Actual Use (AU).

Based on these theoretical foundations and prior empirical studies (Chang et al., 2015; Letchumanan & Tarmizi, 2011; Qazi et al., 2018), the proposed model integrates PU, PE, SI, FC, and ATT as predictors of BI. Behavioral intention is then expected to influence students' actual use of e-books. This integrated framework allows the study to examine the determinants of university students' intention and actual use of e-books in Yunnan Province. Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesized relationships among the constructs used in this study.

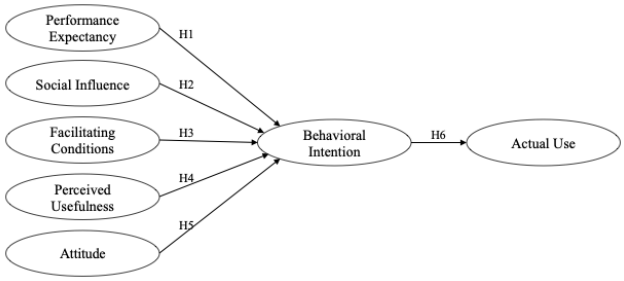

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.2 Research Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative survey design to examine the determinants of university students' behavioral intention and actual use of e-books in Yunnan Province. Data were collected from postgraduate students in the Schools of Foreign Languages at Yunnan University, Kunming University of Science and Technology, and Yunnan Normal University. A structured questionnaire was developed and administered online through Questionnaire Star. The survey link was distributed through WeChat with the assistance of university staff to ensure respondent authenticity and controlled participation. Participation was voluntary and respondents were informed about the academic purpose of the study. No personal identifying information was collected, and responses were kept confidential and used only for research purposes. Each participant was allowed to submit only one response to maintain data validity.

The research procedure involved several stages, including questionnaire design, online distribution, data collection, response screening, Excel data export, and transformation into SPSS datasets for statistical analysis. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: screening questions, measurement items using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), and demographic information such as gender, age, education level, reading habits, and prior e-book experience.

Prior to large-scale data collection, a pilot study involving 30 participants was conducted to examine item clarity and content validity. Content validity was assessed

using the Item-Objective Consistency (IOC) index, where values above 0.67 indicate acceptable agreement between items and research objectives (Turner & Carlson, 2003). Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, with all constructs exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 for internal consistency (Hair et al., 2010). After confirming the validity and reliability of the instrument, 500 valid responses were collected for the final analysis. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS and JAMOVI. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) were performed using AMOS to evaluate the measurement and structural models.

3.3 Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Technique

A mixed sampling strategy that combined purposive, stratified, and convenience sampling was adopted to survey postgraduate students from the Schools of Foreign Languages at three universities in Yunnan Province. Yunnan University, Kunming University of Science and Technology, and Yunnan Normal University were selected based on their CNUR rankings and their different institutional orientations, which helped improve the representativeness of the sample. Postgraduate students majoring in foreign languages were considered an appropriate population because multimedia e-books support advanced academic reading, digital literacy, and computer-based learning environments (Chou, 2012).

The total population of postgraduate students in the selected Schools of Foreign Languages was 1,085. Proportional stratified sampling was used to determine the number of respondents from each university. Based on this distribution, a target sample size of 500 students was established to ensure balanced representation across the three institutions.

Table 1 presents the distribution of the population and the proportional sample size for each university.

Table 1: Population and Sample Distribution by University (Schools of Foreign Languages)

University	Population Size	Proportional Sample Size
Yunnan University	435	201
Kunming University of Science and Technology	200	92
Yunnan Normal University	450	207
Total	**1,085**	**500**

The survey was conducted between January and November 2025. To improve participation, the questionnaire was promoted through student associations and university online platforms. These channels helped increase the visibility of the survey and supported the collection of a sufficient number of valid responses.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Information

A total of 500 postgraduate students from the Schools of Foreign Languages at three universities in Yunnan Province participated in this study. The gender distribution was relatively balanced, with females representing 54.0% of the sample and males accounting for 46.0%.

Most respondents were between 23 and 26 years old (75.0%), followed by those aged 19 to 22 (16.8%). A smaller proportion of participants were aged 27 to 30 (6.8%), while only 1.4% were older than 30 years. This distribution reflects the typical age profile of postgraduate students.

In terms of reading preferences, students reported diverse reading habits. Nearly half of the respondents (45.6%) used both e-books and printed books, suggesting that many students combine digital and traditional reading formats. Meanwhile, 28.8% preferred e-books, and 25.6% mainly used printed books.

Students also reported varying levels of experience with e-books. About one-third of the respondents (32.8%) had used e-books for less than one year. Others reported longer experience, including 1 to 3 years (25.4%), 4 to 6 years (27.8%), and more than six years (14.0%). These results indicate that although many students have relatively recent experience with e-books, a considerable proportion have already developed longer-term familiarity with digital reading tools.

The detailed demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic and Behavior Data (N=500)		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	270	54.0
	Male	230	46.0
Age	19-22 years	84	16.8
	23-26 years	375	75.0
	27-30 years	34	6.8
	More than 30 years	7	1.4
Reading Style	E-books	144	28.8
	Printed books	128	25.6
	Both	228	45.6
Duration of Using E-books	Less than 1 year	165	33.0
	1-3 years	126	25.2
	4-6 years	139	27.8
	More than 6 years	70	14.0

Source: Created by the author

4.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to evaluate the measurement model and to verify whether the observed indicators adequately represented the proposed constructs. The results show that all measurement items loaded

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significantly on their respective constructs, indicating a satisfactory relationship between the empirical data and the theoretical model. The standardized factor loadings ranged from 0.501 to 0.939 and all values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50, indicating acceptable indicator reliability (Hair et al., 2010). In addition, all loading coefficients were statistically significant with p-values lower than 0.05.

Internal consistency and convergent validity were also assessed using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). As shown in Table 3, Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.721 to 0.959, exceeding the recommended minimum value of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Composite reliability values ranged from 0.731 to 0.959, which are above the acceptable threshold of 0.70 and indicate good construct reliability (Hair et al., 2010). The AVE values ranged from 0.410 to 0.855. Although some values were slightly below the recommended level of 0.50, they remained acceptable because the corresponding CR values exceeded 0.60, which still supports convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. As presented in Table 4, the square roots of the AVE for each construct were greater than the correlations between that construct and other variables in the model. This result confirms that each construct is empirically distinct and adequately captures a unique concept.

Model fit was further examined using several goodness of fit indices. The results shown in Table 5 indicate that all indices meet the recommended thresholds. The values of CMIN/DF, GFI, AGFI, NFI, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA fall within acceptable ranges, indicating that the measurement model provides a satisfactory fit with the observed data. Overall, these findings confirm that the measurement model demonstrates acceptable reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, supporting the suitability of the constructs for subsequent structural equation modeling analysis.

Table 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Results

Variable	Source of Questionnaire (Measurement Indicator)	No. of Item	Cronbach's Alpha	Factor Loading	CR	AVE
Performance Expectancy (PE)	Chang et al. (2015)	4	0.721	0.501-0.801	0.731	0.413
Social Influence (SI)	Chang et al. (2015)	5	0.769	0.547-0.724	0.775	0.410
Facilitating Conditions (FC)	Okocha (2019)	4	0.840	0.636-0.867	0.844	0.579
Perceived Usefulness (PU)	Dimitriadis et al. (2019)	4	0.856	0.718-0.889	0.857	0.602
Attitude (ATT)	Letchumanan and Muniandy (2013)	3	0.733	0.651-0.740	0.734	0.480
Behavioral Intention (BI)	Dimitriadis et al. (2019)	4	0.959	0.912-0.939	0.959	0.855
Actual Use (AU)	Srirahayu et al. (2022)	2	0.834	0.818-0.847	0.835	0.717

Note: CR = Composite Reliability, AVE = Average Variance Extracted

Table 4: Discriminant Validity

Variable	Factor Correlations						
	PE	SI	FC	PU	ATT	BI	AU
PE	**0.643**						
SI	0.265	**0.640**					
FC	0.408	0.398	**0.761**				
PU	0.252	0.374	0.380	**0.776**			
ATT	0.348	0.359	0.353	0.317	**0.693**		
BI	0.489	0.526	0.566	0.494	0.569	**0.925**	
AU	0.214	0.379	0.353	0.329	0.351	0.480	**0.847**

Note: Diagonal values represent the square root of AVE for each construct

Table 5: Goodness of Fit

Index	Criterion	CFA Value	SEM Value
CMIN/DF	< 5.00 (Al-Mamary & Shamsuddin, 2015; Awang, 2012)	1.756	3.177
GFI	≥ 0.85 (Sica & Ghisi, 2007)	0.931	0.857
AGFI	≥ 0.80 (Sica & Ghisi, 2007)	0.913	0.828
NFI	≥ 0.80 (Wu & Wang, 2006)	0.932	0.870
CFI	≥ 0.80 (Bentler, 1990)	0.969	0.907
TLI	≥ 0.80 (Sharma et al., 2005)	0.964	0.896
RMSEA	< 0.08 (Pedroso et al., 2016)	0.039	0.066

Note: CMIN/DF = The ratio of the chi-square value to degree of freedom, GFI = goodness-of-fit index, AGFI = adjusted goodness-of-fit index, NFI = normalized fit index, CFI = comparative fit index, TLI = Tucker Lewis index and RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation

4.3 Structural Equation Model (SEM)

The structural equation model was evaluated to determine whether the proposed relationships among the study variables adequately fit the observed data. The analysis was performed using SPSS AMOS version 26. Model modification procedures were applied where necessary to improve the overall model fit while maintaining theoretical consistency.

The results show that the structural model achieved an acceptable level of fit. All goodness-of-fit indices met the recommended criteria, indicating that the proposed model adequately represents the relationships among the constructs. This suggests that the structural relationships between performance expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, perceived usefulness, attitude, behavioral intention, and actual use are statistically supported.

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Overall, the acceptable model fit confirms that the proposed model is appropriate for examining the hypothesized relationships in this study. The detailed goodness-of-fit results are presented in Table 5.

4.4 Research Hypothesis Testing Result

The research hypotheses were examined using the structural equation model. The results were evaluated based on standardized path coefficients, standard errors, and t-values. Overall, the analysis indicates that all proposed hypotheses were supported, demonstrating significant relationships among the study variables.

Table 6 presents the hypothesis testing results of the structural model. The findings show that Performance Expectancy, Social Influence, Facilitating Conditions, Perceived Usefulness, and Attitude all have significant positive effects on Behavioral Intention. In addition, Behavioral Intention significantly influences Actual Use. All structural paths are statistically significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that the proposed relationships in the research model are supported.

Table 6: Hypothesis Result of the Structural Model

Hypothesis	Standardized path coefficients (β)	S.E.	t-value	Test Result
H1: PE→BI	0.268	0.051	6.190*	Supported
H2: SI→BI	0.305	0.046	6.910*	Supported
H3: FC→BI	0.324	0.044	7.800*	Supported
H4: PU→BI	0.277	0.037	6.877*	Supported
H5: ATT→BI	0.428	0.047	8.712*	Supported
H6: BI→AU	0.459	0.057	9.465*	Supported

Note: *=p-value < .05

The results show that Performance Expectancy significantly influences Behavioral Intention (β = 0.268), indicating that students are more likely to intend to use e-books when they believe the technology can improve their academic performance. Social Influence also demonstrates a significant positive effect on Behavioral Intention (β = 0.305), suggesting that encouragement or opinions from peers and the academic environment can affect students' adoption decisions.

Facilitating Conditions show a significant positive relationship with Behavioral Intention (β = 0.324). This finding indicates that the availability of technical resources and institutional support can encourage students to adopt e-books. Perceived Usefulness also has a significant effect on Behavioral Intention (β = 0.277), suggesting that students are more willing to use e-books when they recognize their academic value.

Among the predictors, Attitude demonstrates the strongest effect on Behavioral Intention (β = 0.428). This result indicates that students' positive perceptions and feelings toward e-books strongly influence their willingness to adopt them. Finally, Behavioral Intention significantly predicts Actual Use (β = 0.459), confirming that students who intend to use e-books are more likely to integrate them into their learning activities.

5. Conclusions and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusions

This study investigated postgraduate students' adoption of e-books in Yunnan, China, using an extended technology acceptance framework. The research examined six hypotheses derived from established models including TAM, UTAUT, and TPB. The model proposed that performance expectancy (PE), social influence (SI), facilitating conditions (FC), perceived usefulness (PU), and attitude (ATT) would positively influence behavioral intention (BI), while behavioral intention would influence actual use (AU).

The empirical results supported all proposed hypotheses. Performance expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, perceived usefulness, and attitude all showed significant positive effects on behavioral intention. Among these factors, attitude demonstrated the strongest influence on behavioral intention (β = 0.428), suggesting that students' positive perceptions and feelings toward e-books play a major role in shaping their willingness to adopt digital reading tools. Behavioral intention also had a significant positive effect on actual use (β = 0.459), indicating that students who intend to use e-books are more likely to incorporate them into their academic activities.

These findings are consistent with previous research in technology adoption. Studies have shown that performance expectancy significantly influences users' intention to adopt digital technologies (Martins et al., 2018; Okocha, 2019). Similarly, social influence has been found to shape technology adoption decisions in educational contexts (Maduku, 2015). The significant effect of facilitating conditions also supports prior research suggesting that access to technical resources and institutional support can enhance technology adoption (Chong, 2013; Yeoh & Chan, 2011). In addition, the positive relationship between perceived usefulness and behavioral intention aligns with earlier studies demonstrating that perceived academic benefits increase students' willingness to adopt e-books (Jin, 2014; Yapa & Ranasinghe, 2023). The strong influence of attitude on behavioral intention is also consistent with findings from Dimitriadis et al. (2019) and Tsai (2012), who emphasized the importance of users' evaluative perceptions in predicting technology adoption.

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Overall, the results indicate that the integrated TAM, UTAUT, and TPB framework effectively explains e-book adoption among postgraduate students in Yunnan Province. The findings highlight that both cognitive evaluations and contextual support play important roles in shaping students' behavioral intention and actual use of e-books in higher education.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several practical recommendations can be proposed to increase e-book usage among university students. These recommendations focus on improving students' attitudes, perceived usefulness, and supporting conditions, which were identified as important factors influencing behavioral intention.

Universities should strengthen students' familiarity with e-books by providing orientation sessions and digital literacy training. Training activities can introduce key functions such as annotation tools, search functions, bookmarking, and multimedia features. When students understand how to use these functions effectively, their perception of the usefulness of e-books may improve. Prior research indicates that improving students' knowledge of digital reading tools can enhance their perceived value and willingness to use e-books (Al Masuudi et al., 2024).

Improving the design and usability of e-book platforms is also important. Universities and e-book providers should ensure clear layouts, readable text sizes, and intuitive navigation to make digital reading more comfortable. Interactive elements such as hyperlinks, videos, and embedded learning materials may further increase student engagement. Enhancing the user experience can strengthen students' attitudes toward e-books and support continuous use.

The integration of e-books into teaching practices can further promote adoption. Instructors can demonstrate how e-books support academic tasks by using them during lectures or assigning digital reading materials in coursework. When students observe instructors using e-books in academic contexts, the perceived usefulness of digital reading may increase. Previous studies show that teacher engagement with digital learning resources can positively influence students' acceptance of electronic textbooks (Raible et al., 2015).

Institutional support also plays a crucial role in encouraging e-book adoption. Universities should maintain reliable digital infrastructure, including stable internet access and accessible digital library platforms. Providing technical assistance through libraries or online help channels can reduce potential barriers and increase students' confidence in using digital learning resources.

These recommendations highlight the importance of combining user education, platform usability, instructional integration, and institutional support. By addressing these areas, universities can create a more supportive environment for digital reading and promote broader adoption of e-books among students.

5.3 Limitation and Further Study

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. These limitations relate to the research sample, research context, and research methodology.

One limitation concerns the composition of the sample. Participants were postgraduate students from foreign language programs, which often have a higher proportion of female students in China (Cheng et al., 2022). This gender imbalance may influence the findings and may not fully represent male students' perspectives. Future research should consider a more balanced gender distribution or examine gender differences in e-book adoption.

Another limitation relates to the research context. Data were collected from three universities in Yunnan Province. Although these universities represent different institutional types, the regional context may limit the generalizability of the findings. Expanding the study to other provinces or academic disciplines would improve the external validity of the results (Faber & Fonseca, 2014).

Methodological limitations should also be considered. The study used a cross-sectional survey and relied on self-reported data. This approach captures perceptions at one point in time but may not reflect changes in behavior over time. Future research may apply longitudinal designs or mixed methods to gain deeper insights. Additional variables such as digital literacy or content quality could also be explored to further explain e-book adoption in higher education.

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