Examining Students' Intentions to use Digital Tools: A Theory of Planned Behaviour

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ABSTRACT

The use of digital tools in education has significantly increased since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Digital tools like ChatGPT, Plagiarism Checker, and Citation tools are increasingly becoming students' most-used tools to complete their assignments. Although these tools contribute substantially to increasing productivity and understanding the process of assignment, they also raise concerns for educators and the education system regarding students' academic integrity, particularly in terms of plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty. The study aims to examine how students' attitudes towards digital tools, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control influence students' intentions concerning the use of digital tools in completing assignments. Based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), this study will investigate the effects of these factors on students' intention to use digital tools responsibly and align with academic integrity standards. The study employed a purposive sampling method to specifically target 450 undergraduate accounting students from Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, in which, 85 students were fully completed the survey, using a structured questionnaire through Google Forms link. The data was analysed using IBM SPSS version 26.0. The finding reveals that despite high perceived and frequent use of digital tools, only subjective norms significantly predicted students' intention to use these tools. Attitude and perceived behavioural control were not statistically significant predictors of the students' intentions, indicating that social influences were more dominant than individual factors. This study emphasizes the influence of perceived social expectation and aligns with the TPB in the academic context. Higher institutions aiming to promote responsible digital use should focus on educating positive peer culture and reinforcing academic expectations.

Keywords
Digital tools; Ethical behaviour; Students' intention; Theory of Planned Behaviour

Introduction

Online technology is one of the significant activities transforming all areas of modern society, including higher education (Djokovic et al., 2022). Online digital tools are one of the examples of how technology has advanced. The phrase "online digital tools" refers to various online platforms, including software, applications, or websites that can be accessed through an internet connection that can enhance students' ability to learn, communicate, complete assignments, and more (Dancsa et al., 2023). These tools are important for enhancing students' online experiences as they recognize how technology works in this digital age. They have also become useful in shaping students to write in broader ways. Additionally, these platforms, such as interactive learning materials, multimedia tools, and educational games, enhance the learning experience more creative and engaging for students, where students can improve engagement and motivate their active involvement.

Since technology affects nearly every aspect of our lives, it is important to establish a sense of responsibility in students, especially when they use technology in completing assignments. According to Susanto and Nurjannah (2023), digital education helps students become more aware of issues like online privacy, respecting others, and avoiding plagiarism. Similarly, Abdullah, Rahim, & Tan (2023) found that university students who understand digital rights and online ethics are less likely to misuse technology or engage in dishonest behavior. When students become responsible, they tend to show good ethical behavior while doing assignments. The impact of digital technology on learning has found positive benefits, but it has been noted that how technology is used is the key to demonstrating users' ethical behavior.

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Digital tools have transformed how assignments are prepared and submitted by students. Students can access study materials and resources whenever and wherever they choose, allowing them to adjust their education to fit their individual needs and pace (Josué et al., 2023). This can enhance their understanding of challenging topics and subjects.

Digital tools have also increased the probability of students being dishonest while completing assignments (Désiron & Petko, 2022). According to studies, students engage in academic dishonesty for several reasons. Notably, 92 percent of them do so to improve their marks, and 75 percent do so because they are overwhelmed with lessons and assignments (Mustapha et al., 2017). From the statistics, students are increasingly faced with challenges such as heavy workloads, fear of failure, and the desire for better grades, all of which can lead them to cheating and academic dishonesty (Mulenga & Shilongo, 2024). Academic dishonesty can be divided into three categories, which are cheating, plagiarism, and collusion (Ahmed, 2018). Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else's work or ideas and presenting them as your own without providing proper credit (Mulenga & Shilongo, 2024). Having honesty, responsibility, trust, sincerity, and transparency while doing assignments is important to students. As a result, such values will help to shape a person's integrity. In addition, ethics and integrity involve positive actions in everyday life and are closely linked to religious teachings and human responsibility (Yusoff et al., 2020). The concept of ethics in general is the discipline concerned with what is morally good and bad. Ethical behavior is the act of acting in a way that respects moral principles and values. It involves making ethical decisions and taking appropriate steps to determine outcomes, while also demonstrating professional courage, self-accountability, and the ability to manage relationships on all levels (Hertig & Davenport, 2010). Students need to follow an ethical code while doing assignments because it helps students develop strong character traits such as honesty, integrity, responsibility, and respect. These attributes are crucial for personal development and success in both academic and professional aspects.

Problem Statement

Information and communication technology (ICT) has undoubtedly created new learning opportunities, but it has also, unfortunately, created opportunities for cheating (Désiron & Petko, 2022). The high usage of digital tools in the education system has changed how students do their assignments. The usage of technology and the Internet in higher education has been growing since the COVID-19 pandemic, and most educational institutions were forced to switch to online-based learning. As a result, academic dishonesty has gained recognition as one of the main issues in higher education (Djokovic et al., 2022). Given how quickly various digital technologies are being absorbed into learning environments in higher education, it is essential to understand how students interact with these tools to create flexible and highly adaptive learning environments that can fit students' learning preferences. Also, understanding how digital tools affect students' ethical behaviour is crucial as the education system uses them regularly for completing assignments. The shift from traditional methods to digital technology can offer both advantages and disadvantages, particularly concerning students' ethical behaviour (Dancsa et al., 2023).

We can explore how digital tools influence students' perspectives on academic integrity. ChatGPT, Plagiarism Checker, Citation Tools, Grammarly, Paraphrasing Tools, and online research databases could potentially impact whether students are more likely to engage in unethical practices, such as plagiarism or unauthorized collaboration, when using digital resources or not. The rapid growth of technology, especially the use of AI tools like ChatGPT, has led to an increase in academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, cheating, and other unethical behaviours. According to a recent study, it was found that 47% of students and 68% of lecturers believe that AI makes it easier to cheat (Williams, 2024). In addition, as digital tools have revolutionized the education system, students have more opportunities to participate in dishonest behaviour that is harder to control. Although having easy access to any online resources can improve learning, it can also influence students to avoid putting in the effort needed to complete assignments authentically. The urge to copy and paste information or buy pre-written assignments is a significant concern, especially under academic pressure. This behaviour is quite common, particularly when students face tight deadlines, leading them to copy content from articles, websites, or other students' work (Mulenga & Shilongo, 2024).

This unethical behaviour demonstrates the evidence that a lack of 'perfect honesty' arises in situations where the returns of academic dishonesty while using digital tools are high (Bilen & Matros, 2020). The rise in academic dishonesty, particularly in completing assignments, not only makes it easier for students to cheat but also threatens the quality of education, potentially reducing student knowledge and decreasing the value of their degree (Goff et al., 2020). If students' grades fail to reflect their actual skills and learning, it can harm the institution's reputation and credibility. Moreover, academic dishonesty can have broader negative effects, influencing students' future careers and society.

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Cheating fosters an attitude that undermines the value of hard work, which can lead to lower life satisfaction and a tendency to engage in dishonest behaviour after graduation (Ababneh, Ahmed, and Dedousis, 2022). The impact of unethical behaviour can extend beyond the classroom, affecting future workplaces and other aspects of life. Therefore, it is crucial for students today to demonstrate strong integrity, as they are the leaders of tomorrow.

To understand the factors influencing students' intention when utilizing digital tools, it is helpful to apply a behavioural framework. TPB proposed by Ajzen (1991), is a useful model for understanding a student's intention when completing assignments. According to this theory, there are three independent factors that drive a person's intention to behave in a certain way, such as attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). A main principle in TPB is that an individual's intention reflects their determination to act, capturing the motivational aspects that influence how much effort people are willing to invest and how committed they are to a particular behaviour. (Bosnjak et al., 2020).

According to TPB, a person's intention is influenced by three main factors. First, attitude towards performing a behaviour, involves how they view the potential outcomes of doing it. Second is the subjective norm, which is the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behaviour. Lastly, perceived behavioural control refers to how much they believe they can perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). When it comes to academic dishonesty, research suggests that several factors can contribute to why students might cheat, such as the pressure to keep a high-Grade Point Average (GPA), as well as differences related to age or gender (Ahmed, 2018). Additionally, McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield (2001) pointed out several contributing factors, including a lack of personal responsibility, weak integrity, low self-confidence, laziness, pressure from parents, and a strong desire for success.

Research Question

Given the above information and discussion, this study aims to examine the impact of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on students' intention to use digital tools in completing their assignments. Below are the specific research questions of the study:

1. Is there a significant relationship between students' attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control and their intention to use digital tools for assignment completion? This research question was examined using Pearson correlation analysis to determine the strength and direction of the relationships among the variables.
2. To what extent do students' attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control predict their intention to use digital tools for assignment completion? This research question was tested using multiple regression analysis to assess the predictive power of the independent variables.

Literature Review

The integration of digital tools in education has significantly transformed the landscape of learning and academic achievement. With more online resources, educational technologies, and digital platforms, students have easier access to information and more ways to be creative. However, relying too much on these tools has raised concerns about academic honesty and how students choose to use these tools, especially when it comes to completing assignments. Krecar, Kolega, and Jurcec (2024) highlight a significant difference between students' and professors' perspectives on AI tool usage. Students often see ChatGPT as a useful resource that improves their understanding and supports them in completing their assignments, while educators worry it might lead to dishonest behaviour. This difference shows the importance to understand what motivates students and what their intentions are when they use digital tools.

TPB proposed by Ajzen (1991) offers a solid framework for understanding students' ethical behaviour, especially when it comes to cheating. This theory explains how students decide whether to engage in dishonest behaviour by looking at three main factors, their attitude toward the behaviour, the social pressures they feel (subjective norms), and how much control they believe they have over their action (perceived behavioural control) (Ababneh et al., 2022). Beck and Ajzen (1991) applied TPB to academic dishonesty and found that these three factors strongly influence students' intention to cheat. Firstly, attitudes are an individual's overall evaluation of the behaviour. Secondly, subjective norms, perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a behaviour by peers. Thirdly, perceived

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behavioural control, the extent to which the individual feels able or not able to perform a behaviour (Skoglund et al., 2020). Figure 1 shows the TPB of Ajzen (1991).

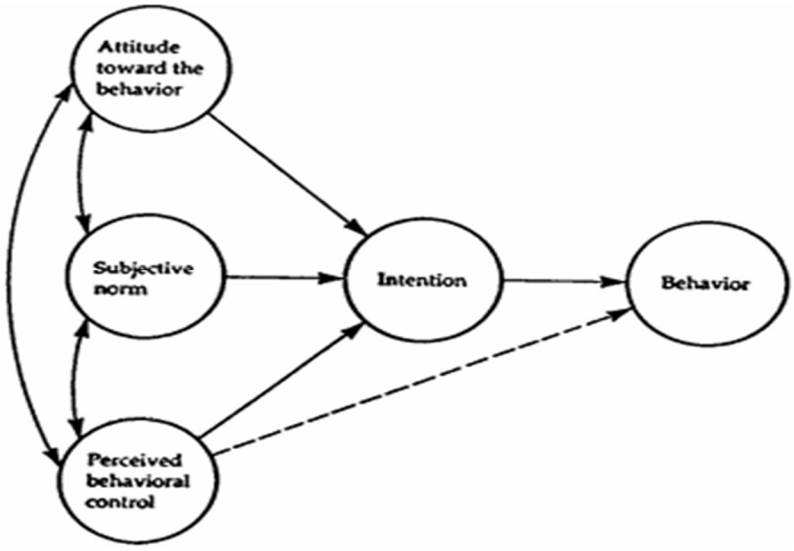

Figure 1. Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen,1991)

In the context of digital tools, students' attitudes play an important role in deciding whether these tools are used in alignment with academic integrity. Students who have a positive attitude toward using digital tools responsibly tend to maintain high academic integrity. According to Ajzen and Fishbein (2005), a person's attitude towards a behaviour reflects their evaluation of that behaviour and its potential consequences. In the academic context, students who have a positive attitude toward AI-based digital tools and understand ethical standards are more likely to use such tools responsibly. In contrast, students with a negative attitude toward digital tools might not care much about ethics. They may copy and paste from online sources without citing, assuming it will not be detected by conventional plagiarism checkers. Choi et al (2023) revealed that some students intentionally exploit AI-generated content like ChatGPT to complete assignments dishonestly, knowing that such content may not trigger anti-plagiarism algorithms. Similarly, Yang and Li (2024) reported on an increasing trend in AI misuse among university students, emphasizing the need for clearer guidelines and academic policies to address ethical boundaries in digital tool usage.

Moreover, students perceived behavioural control, or how confident students feel when using digital tools, also affects their intention in academic choices. Students who feel comfortable using digital tools are more likely to act ethically. But those who lack digital skills or face other challenges might feel pressured to cheat because they do not see any other option (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005; Skoglund et al., 2020). According to Amigud and Lancaster (2019), students often turn to outsourcing their work not because they want to cheat, but because they are overwhelmed by stress, fear of failure, or have tight deadlines. Similarly, Eret and Gokmenoglu (2010) found that some students start their assignments to complete them honestly but turn to dishonest methods out of frustration halfway through. These results suggest that ethical behaviour is not just about personal integrity, but is also influenced by both external pressure and internal struggles.

Additionally, subjective norms that defined as the perceived social pressure to perform or avoid certain behaviours by peers, instructors, and academic institutions (Ajzen, 1991), play a crucial role in shaping students' intention in using digital tools. Recent studies by Lee, Tan, & Lim (2023) found that when students perceive their academic environment and peers as valuing ethical digital tool use, they are more likely to follow suit. TPB holds that subjective norm is a function of belief. Thus, when a person believes that their peers, family, and lecturer think that a behaviour should be performed, then such pressure will trigger the individual's intention to perform the behaviour in question. For instance, if a student is aware that their peers strongly value academic honesty and frequently use digital tools to ensure the

originality of their work, they may feel a strong social pressure to follow the behaviour. This is because the student perceives that their peers expect them to follow these ethical guidelines to maintain their reputation and acceptance within the group (McCabe et al., 2001).

In addition to behavioural factors, psychological and lifestyle factors also influence people's intention to use digital tools. Muksin and Makhsin (2021) found that students with low self-discipline, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, were more likely to engage in procrastination, as they spent more time on enjoyable activities, such as vacations, movies, parties, and trips to the mall. In return, they do not have much time to do their reading and writing to complete their assignments. Ababneh et al (2022) further emphasized that during the pandemic, the shift to online exams and assignments made it easier for students to cheat, particularly when institutional monitoring was weak.

Based on the above discussions, the following hypotheses have been proposed for further analysis:

H1a: There is a significant positive relationship between students' attitudes and their intention to use digital tools for assignment completion.

H1b: There is a significant positive relationship between subjective norms and students' intention to use digital tools for assignment completion.

H1c: There is a significant positive relationship between perceived behavioural control and students' intention to use digital tools for assignment completion.

H2: Attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control significantly predict students' intention to use digital tools for assignment completion.

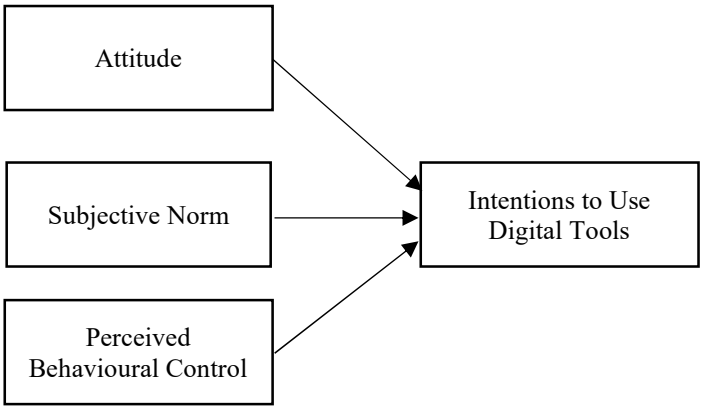

Figure 2. Proposed conceptual framework
Source: Authors' own work, adapted from Ajzen (1991)

With the TPB as its underlying foundation and the hypotheses that have been built, the conceptual framework has been developed as portrayed in Figure 2. However, since the objectives of the study are to understand what drives the intention of digital tools usage, the framework only highlights the relationship between TPB's dimensions and students' intention in the use of digital tools. As intention is the most direct predictor of behaviour, understanding what influences intention is a meaningful step in predicting responsible digital tool usage among students.

Methods

This section discusses the methodology employed in this study. The research examined the role of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control in students' intention to use digital tools in completing assignments. The increasing use of digital tools makes it important to understand how these factors influence students' intention, particularly regarding academic integrity and ethical decision-making.

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The study employed a purposive sampling method, a non-probability sampling technique, to specifically target undergraduate accounting students from Universiti Malaysia Terengganu. This group was selected because accounting students are not only exposed to digital tools throughout their coursework but are also introduced to professional ethical standards expected in the accounting field since year 1 of study. A structured questionnaire was distributed via a Google Forms link to 450 students from year 1 to year 4, utilizing institutional email lists and academic program networks. The use of purposive sampling ensured that only students with relevant exposure to digital tools and a foundational understanding of academic and professional ethics were included. Of the 450 distributed questionnaires, 85 were fully completed and valid for analysis, resulting in a usable response rate of approximately 18.9%.

The items of study constructs were measured using a 5-point Likert scale from '1' represents *'strongly disagree'* to '5' represents *'strongly agree'*. Table 1 provides a summary of constructs/items used in the questionnaire survey. The data collected was analysed using IBM SPSS software version 26.0 to summarize the demographics information, digital tool usage patterns, and students' attitudes, norms, controls, and intention in using digital tools.

Table 1. Questionnaire

Variables	Type of questions	Source
Attitude toward digital tools	1) I believe digital tools can support ethical assignment completion. 2) I see no harm in using tools like ChatGPT as long as I understand and paraphrase the output. 3) Using AI tools makes it easier to comply with academic integrity if used responsibly. 4) I feel it is acceptable to use digital tools to help generate ideas and structure for my assignments. 5) I believe responsible use of digital tools is part of being a modern student.	Désiron, & Petko (2022)
Subjective norms	1) My friends support the ethical use of digital tools like ChatGPT. 2) My lecturers expect me to use digital tools responsibly and honestly. 3) My lecturers support the use of AI tools to help with assignments. 4) I feel encouraged by my peers to maintain academic integrity while using AI tools. 5) Most students I know use digital tools to help them complete their assignments. 6) Since AI tools are freely available and widely used, I see no reason not to use them for completing assignments.	Amigud, & Lancaster, (2019)
Perceived behavioral control	1) I have enough knowledge to use AI tools without breaking academic rules. 2) Even when I am short on time, I can choose to use AI tools ethically. 3) I am confident that I can complete assignments on my own without relying too heavily on AI tools. 4) I know how to properly cite or acknowledge content inspired by AI-generated output. 5) I can resist peer pressure to misuse digital tools when completing assignments.	Krecar et al. (2024)
Intention to use digital tools	1) I intend to use AI tools like ChatGPT in a way that supports academic integrity. 2) I will use AI tools to improve the quality of my work, not to cheat. 3) I use AI tools when I struggle to complete assignments on my own. 4) When I face time pressure, I use AI tools to help me complete my work. 5) I have considered using AI tools to finish assignments because I feel overwhelmed by the workload.	Krecar et al. (2024)

6) I use AI tools to improve my academic performance.
7) I use AI tools for deeper analysis of a subject matter.
8) I use AI tools to complete my assignments faster when I have limited time.

Reliability Analysis

The reliability analysis presented in the study indicates a strong internal consistency across all measured constructs, as determined by Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. According to Bonett and Wright (2014), a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher is acceptable for basic research, indicating sufficient internal consistency. This threshold is still widely supported in other literature, for instance, Sekaran and Bougie (2016), Taber (2018), Haq and Wang (2021), and Smith and Chan (2022) affirm that a value of 0.70 or above reflects and acceptable level of reliability in social science research instruments.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis

Constructs	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Attitude	5	0.923
Subjective Norms	6	0.771
Perceived Behavior Control	5	0.874
Intention of Digital Tool Usage	8	0.920

In this study, the alpha values of the reliability analysis for all four constructs, as shown in Table 2, exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70, confirming that the measurement items for each construct are consistent and acceptable. The items for the constructs of attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and intention in using digital tools achieved reliability coefficients of 0.923, 0.771, 0.874, and 0.920, respectively. In conclusion, it shows that all the construct reliability levels are adequate.

Results and Discussion

Assumption Testing

Multicollinearity was assessed to determine whether the independent variables (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control) were highly correlated with one another. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance values were examined from the coefficients table.

Table 3. Multicollinearity

Predictor	Tolerance	VIF
Attitude	0.417	2.396
Subjective Norms	0.309	3.233
Perceived Behavior Control	0.521	1.920

Based on the results presented in Table 3, it shows that all Tolerance values ranged from 0.309 to 0.521, and all VIF values ranged from 1.920 to 3.233, which are within the acceptable thresholds value of Tolerance > 0.10 and VIF < 10, as suggested by Hair et al. (2019). These results indicate that multicollinearity is not a concern in this study.

In addition, the normality of residuals was also evaluated using visual inspection of the histogram and normal P–P plot generated in SPSS. The histogram showed a distribution that was roughly bell-shaped, and the points on the P–P plot closely matched the diagonal line. These results support the multiple regression assumption of normality by showing that the residuals were approximately normally distributed.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation between attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and students' intention to use digital tools was examined using Pearson correlation analysis. This method was selected because of the variables were measured on continuous Likert scales and preliminary tests indicated that the data were approximately normally distributed (Hair et al., 2019). The purpose of the correlation analysis was to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between all the constructs of the study. The result showed that all constructs were positively correlated with one another, with all coefficients significant at the 0.01 level, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Correlation Analysis

Variables	Attitude	Subjective Norms	Behavioural Control	Intention
Attitude	1	.763**	.545**	.630**
Subjective Norms	.763**	1	.692**	.712**
Behavioral Control	.545**	.692**	1	.575**
Intention	.630**	.712**	.575**	1

*Notes: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); N = 85*

According to Cohen (1988), the strongest correlation was observed between attitude and subjective norms, r = 0.763, suggesting that students with a positive attitude toward using digital tools are likely to feel support or pressure from peers or lecturers to use these tools responsibly. Attitude also showed moderate to strong correlations with intention (r=0.630) and behavioural control (r=0.545). Subjective norms were strongly correlated with intention (r=0.712) and behavioural control (r=0.692), which shows that social pressure plays a significant role in shaping both intention and behavioural control. Intention shows strong correlations with attitude (0.630) and subjective norms (0.712), supporting the idea that intention is a key predictor of students' actual use of digital tools in completing assignments. The correlation analysis supports all three hypotheses (H1a – H1c) proposed in this study, indicating that all variables, attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control have a positive relationship with students' intention to use digital tools for assignments completion.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the influence of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control on students' intention to use digital tools for assignment completion (H2). According to the results summarized in Table 5, the model was statistically significant ($F = 30.846$, $p < .001$), with an R value of 0.732, indicating a strong overall relationship between all three predictors and intention (Hair et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the R^2 value of 0.536 indicates that 53.6% of the changes in intention can be explained by the three predictors, which are attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control.

Table 5. Results of multiple regression analysis

Predictor	**β (Standardized)**	**t-value**	**p-value**	**Result**
Attitude	.202	1.717	.090	Not Significant
Subjective Norms	.454	3.317	**.001**	Significant
Perceived Behavioral Control	.149	1.403	.164	Not Significant
F value	30.846**			
R	.732			
R^2	.536			
Adjusted R^2	.519			

Dependent Variable: Intention

Among the predictors, only subjective norms had a statistically significant and strong positive effect on intention (β = .454, p = 0.001), supporting H1b, which is that strong social pressure does influence students' intention in using digital tools. Attitude (β = .202, p = .090) and perceived behavioural control (β = .149, p = .164) were not statistically significant, because the p-value is greater than 0.05, indicating that students' attitude and perceived behavioural control did not strongly affect students' intention. Therefore, these results partially support H2, as only subjective norms

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significantly predict students' intention to use digital tools for assignment completion. While attitude and perceived behavioural control did not show statistically significant influence, the regression model was significant. Overall, the findings show that social pressure is the strongest factor in shaping students' intention to use digital tools in an academic context as reported by Choi et al. (2023), and Abdullah et al. (2023).

Conclusion

The context of this research falls within the area of higher education, specifically focusing on university students. In this environment, students have broad access to both traditional educational resources and modern digital tools. The growing use of digital tools, particularly in ChatGPT, Grammarly, plagiarism checkers, and citation generators, has sparked excitement and concern in the education system. While these tools offer benefits in terms of productivity, creativity, and access to information, students' misuse of technology raises concern among educators and higher education institutions about their academic integrity in using digital tools. In this study, we used the TPB of Ajzen (1991), to investigate what influences students' intentions to use digital tools and how these intentions impact their academic decisions

According to this research, although most students are aware and actively use digital tools for their assignments, their subjective norms, the influence from peers, instructors, and academic institutions are positively affect students' behavioural intention to use digital tools (Alsubaie et al., 2025). This indicates that social influence plays an important role in shaping how students approach digital tools in completing assignments. Students are significantly influenced by the behaviour and expectations of their surrounding peers. If students perceive that their environment values and upholds integrity, they are likely to act accordingly. This shows the importance of developing an ethical culture in the use of digital tools. Research by Nguyen and Goto (2024), highlights that students who observe peers using AI unethically are more likely to do the same, particularly when academic monitoring is weak. Conversely, attitude and perceived behavioural control did not significantly predict intention in this study, suggesting that students' beliefs and self-efficacy in using digital tools ethically are less influential than social expectation. This may reflect a broader trend where students' personal beliefs or confidence in using digital tools ethically are overshadowed by peer pressure and institutional expectations.

The findings of this study reveal that among the three predictors in the TPB, only subjective norms significantly influenced students' intention to use digital tools for assignment completion. This aligns with previous studies that emphasize the strong impact of social influence on behavioural intention, especially in academic settings. Studies by Beck and Ajzen (1991) suggest that students tend to prioritize maintaining a positive image among peers and lecturers, particularly when academic integrity is perceived as a shared norm within institution and environment. The influence from peer becomes more pronounced in group-oriented cultures, such as Malaysia, where expectations are highly values (Ababneh et al., 2022).

Limitations and Future Studies

These results show that universities need to take immediate action to address the way students use digital tools in academic settings. Many students are still unsure about what is considered acceptable or ethical when it comes to using these tools, such as, ChatGPT, citation generators, and plagiarism checkers. Without clear policies, rules and ethical guidance from their institutions, students are more likely to use these tools inappropriately, thereby, it will encourage more unethical practice. Educational institutions must take an active role in maintaining academic integrity by establishing a clear policy for identifying academic dishonesty to ensure fair and equal assessment of all students. Given the findings of this study, which suggests that subjective norms are the strongest predictor of students' intention to use digital tools, future research should explore how peer influence and students' communication shape students' perceptions of ethical digital tool usage. By doing so, academic institutions can develop more effective strategies to uphold academic integrity in a digital age that continues to evolve rapidly.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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