

Generative AI adoption and employee empowerment in tourism: ChatGPT use for text-based customer communication and its effects on workplace power dynamics

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Abstract

This study investigates tourism and hospitality employees' behavioral intentions to adopt ChatGPT for text-based customer communication and examines how generative AI use shapes psychological empowerment and internal power dynamics within service teams. Drawing on a mixed-methods design that integrates survey data from 322 employees in Sri Lanka's tourism sector with qualitative thematic analysis, the study applies an integrated framework combining the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). PLS-SEM results indicate that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use positively influence employee attitude toward ChatGPT, while attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control together account for 64.3% of the variance in intention to use. The integrated model demonstrates strong explanatory power, with attitude emerging as the dominant predictor of adoption intention. Qualitative findings reveal that ChatGPT use enhances psychological empowerment across four dimensions: meaning, self-determination, competence, and impact. Critically, increased employee autonomy in communication tasks is accompanied by a redistribution of communicative authority within teams, shifting control from supervisory gatekeepers toward frontline and back-office staff. These results establish that generative AI functions not merely as a productivity instrument but as a structural force reshaping work roles, decision-making authority, and organizational power relations in tourism settings. The study contributes novel empirical evidence at the intersection of AI adoption theory, empowerment theory, and power-agency perspectives in the context of an emerging economy's tourism sector.

Keywords: Generative AI, ChatGPT Adoption, Employee Empowerment, Psychological Empowerment, Power Dynamics, Text-Based Communication, Tourism and Hospitality, Technology Acceptance Model, Theory of Planned Behavior, Sri Lanka

JEL Classification: L83,O33, J24

1. Introduction

The tourism and hospitality industry has long been at the forefront of digital transformation (Perelygina et al., 2022) driven by its reliance on information-intensive, time-sensitive, and customer-centric service encounters (Stylos & Zwiendelaar, 2019). In recent years, travelers have increasingly relied on information and communication technology for their travel needs (Shawal et al., 2023). Moreover, text-based customer service is becoming an important channel for companies to support their customers (Gao et al., 2023). Text-based communication plays a central role in this sector for customer interactions via email, online reviews, booking platforms, and instant messaging channels (Brownell & Newman, 2009; Sousa et al., 2024). These interactions require employees to simultaneously manage customer inquiries, linguistic diversity, and the expectation of personalized, rapid responses (Brownell & Newman, 2009). In this context, advances in artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI, are transforming the way service work is performed in tourism organizations (Shawal et al., 2023).

Recent advances in large language models, such as ChatGPT, enable employees to produce texts that meet professional and linguistic standards with limited effort (Limna & Kraiwanit, 2023). Nevertheless, there is a lack of studies investigating employees' behavioral intentions regarding the adoption of ChatGPT (Limna & Kraiwanit, 2023; Lu et al., 2024), specifically for text-based customer communication. Existing studies on AI in tourism have also focused largely on organizational adoption or customer-facing technologies, such as chatbots and recommender systems (Scarpi, 2024; Sousa et al., 2024). However, there is limited understanding of the employee-driven use of generative AI tools for daily work progress (Hai et al., 2025), and research on the effects of ChatGPT in the tourism and hospitality sectors is still in its early stages (Sigala et al., 2024). Moreover, Tourism organizations operate in environments characterized by high workloads, time pressure, multilingual communication demands, and emotional labor (Xu et al., 2020). Frontline and back-office staff are often expected to manage customer communication alongside operational tasks (Kearney et al., 2017), with limited formal support for writing and language-related work (Lassus, 2021). These conditions create uneven distributions of effort and authority in communication tasks, where supervisors or experienced staff frequently control message quality and final decisions. The introduction of generative AI tools changes this arrangement by allowing employees to independently draft, revise, and translate messages (Limna & Kraiwanit, 2023), which alters how communication work is performed within teams.

From a power-and-agency perspective, AI-assisted writing tools can redistribute communicative capacity among employees. When workers rely less on managerial approval or linguistic expertise held by a few individuals, decision-making autonomy in routine communication increases. This shift has implications for team dynamics, role boundaries, and perceptions of empowerment at work. Prior tourism research has examined AI adoption mainly in terms of efficiency, service quality, and customer experience outcomes (Ivanov & Webster, 2019). Limited attention has been



given to how generative AI affects internal power relations and employees' sense of agency in communication-intensive roles.

This study addresses these gaps by examining the drivers of ChatGPT adoption for text-based customer communication, drawing on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and how ChatGPT use empowers employees in managing text-based customer communication. Moreover, the study highlights how empowerment effects can reshape power dynamics within teams, using data collected from tourism and hospitality employees in Sri Lanka. The tourism and hospitality sector in Sri Lanka provides a relevant empirical context for this study, given its dependence on foreign markets, multilingual customer interactions, and a diverse workforce. Employees in this setting frequently engage in cross-cultural communication while upholding service standards aligned with international norms. Therefore, AI-assisted writing tools have implications for communication tasks at both the functional and organizational levels. Accordingly, this study has three main objectives. The study first integrates TAM and TPB to investigate factors influencing tourism and hospitality employees' intention to use ChatGPT for text-based customer communication. Second, it investigates how the use of ChatGPT empowers employees in managing text-based customer communication. Third, the study discusses how empowerment effects can reshape power dynamics within teams.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Generative AI in Tourism and Hospitality

Generative AI refers to systems that generate human-like text from large datasets. In tourism and hospitality, large language models such as ChatGPT are gaining attention because they support writing, translation, summarization, and problem-solving tasks that are central to service work (Carvalho & Ivanov, 2024; Limna & Kraiwanit, 2023). Tourism services rely heavily on fast, accurate, and personalized text-based communication via emails, booking platforms, online reviews, and messaging applications. Recent studies show that tourism and hospitality organizations increasingly use generative AI for customer communication, marketing content, and internal documentation (Dogru et al., 2025; Sigala et al., 2024). Generative AI provides more flexible and relevant responses than traditional chatbots, resulting in greater consistency and faster responses across different service channels (Huang & Rust, 2024). These tools are particularly helpful in multilingual settings, where employees need to communicate with international customers in languages they do not know well (Dwivedi et al., 2023). Research highlights several operational benefits of generative AI in tourism. These lead to faster responses, improved language quality, and reduced cognitive stress for employees handling repetitive communication (Dwivedi et al., 2026; Noy & Zhang, 2023; Sousa et al., 2024). Generative AI is also used as a learning support tool, helping employees draft messages, correct language, and understand how to respond to customer situations when formal training resources are limited (Brynjolfsson et al., 2025; Limna & Kraiwanit, 2023).



Generative AI not only improves efficiency but also changes how communication works. In many tourism organizations, supervisors or senior staff traditionally review and control tasks to maintain service standards (Chen, 2013). Generative AI allows employees to independently draft, revise, and translate messages (Carvalho & Ivanov, 2024; Noy & Zhang, 2023), reducing reliance on hierarchical approvals and changing how communication tasks are shared within teams.

Despite these advantages, studies also report challenges associated with the adoption of generative AI. These include the risks of misinformation, misinterpretation of context, ethical issues, and accountability for AI-generated results (Abou-Shouk et al., 2021; Dwivedi et al., 2023). Tourism organizations need guidelines to effectively manage AI use (Dwivedi et al., 2023), ensuring employees can benefit from its support while emphasizing that generative AI should complement, not replace, human judgment in service interactions (Ivanov & Webster, 2019). Most existing tourism research on generative AI focuses on technology capabilities (García-Madurga & Grilló-Méndez, 2023), customer experience (Duong et al., 2025), and organizational value (Šakyatė-Statnickė & Budrytė-Ausiejienė, 2025). There is limited empirical evidence on how employees adopt generative AI in their daily communication work and how this use affects work roles and team dynamics. Understanding employee-driven use of generative AI is therefore important for explaining its broader impact on work practices in tourism and hospitality.

2.2 Employees' Psychological Empowerment and AI

Psychological empowerment is described as the intrinsic motivation for tasks that gives a sense of self-control over one's work and encourages active involvement in one's work role (Kim & Lee, 2016). Psychological empowerment consists of four key elements: meaning, self-determination, competence, and impact. Accordingly, "meaning" refers to the extent to which a person's work role aligns with their beliefs, values, and standards. "Self-determination" refers to an individual's sense of autonomy and control over initiating and regulating their actions. "Competence" refers to confidence in one's ability to carry out work-related tasks effectively, and "impact" is the belief that one can contribute to the managerial process and influence operational outcomes within their work unit (Seibert et al., 2011). Previous research indicates that technologies that improve data access, decision-making, and connectivity help users become more skilled, independent, and influential in their jobs (Coun et al., 2022). Recent advancements in AI have increased the potential for psychological empowerment by automating complex tasks and streamlining decision-making processes (Shi, 2024). Moreover, AI-powered knowledge systems enhance job performance by assisting employees in handling complex tasks more efficiently (Chen et al., 2022). Tourism and hospitality work is communication-intensive and team-based. Employees handle customer inquiries, complaints, and service coordination while managing time pressure and ensuring accuracy, tone, and cultural sensitivity (Kanjanakan et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2020). These demands often involve communicating in multiple languages and managing emotions, which can increase stress and workload for both frontline and back-office employees (Karatepe & Uludag, 2008). In



many tourism organizations, supervisors or senior employees traditionally control written communication quality due to their stronger language skills or organizational experience (Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999).

Employee empowerment in service roles means giving workers more independence, control over their tasks, and confidence in their jobs (Spreitzer, 1995). In tourism and hospitality, empowered employees often provide better service, are more engaged, and experience less stress. Previous research has mainly looked at general decision-making empowerment (Hoang et al., 2021; Scheyvens & Van Der Watt, 2021), and has paid little attention to communication-specific empowerment. Communication-related empowerment and relief for employees' ability to work independently during text-based customer interactions. Generative AI tools like ChatGPT empower employees by assisting with drafting messages, correcting language, translating content, and preparing customer responses. Recent studies indicate that employees use these AI tools as on-demand support, supplementing their limited formal training and providing guidance in daily work activities (Limna & Kraiwani, 2023; Lu et al., 2024). These tools make communication easier and enable employees to handle tasks that previously required assistance from supervisors or experts.

2.3 AI and Power-Agency

The rise in employee capability directly affects power dynamics within teams, particularly in service organizations where power is linked to control over information, communication, and quality assurance (Hoang et al., 2021). When employees rely on supervisors to review or rewrite messages, power stays with the supervisors. However, generative AI helps employees create their own communication, reducing their reliance on supervisors. This leads to a more balanced distribution of communication authority among team members, rather than its concentration at the top. From a power-and-agency perspective, agency refers to employees' capacity to act independently in their work, whereas power refers to the allocation of control over resources, tasks and decisions within teams (Goller & Paloniemi, 2017; Greer et al., 2017). AI-supported communication strengthens employee agency by expanding what employees can accomplish independently. Generative AI changes the balance of power in communication by giving more control to employees. It can reduce hierarchies in tasks, promoting collaboration without eliminating managerial roles, resulting in workflows that are less dependent on approval (Y. Liu et al., 2025; Seifdar & Amiri, 2025). In tourism and hospitality, teamwork relies on quick communication and consistent messaging (Ntalakos et al., 2023). While the use of AI can boost team efficiency, it also introduces new expectations regarding responsibility and trust (Dwivedi et al., 2026). Existing research has not fully explored how generative AI affects the power dynamics within teams. Understanding this is important for assessing how AI affects both performance and the structure of work in tourism organizations.

2.4 Adoption of AI Tools

Studies on the adoption of AI in the tourism sector leverage well-known frameworks like the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to analyze the reasons behind the acceptance of new technologies by both employees and organizations (Ho et al., 2022; Islam et al., 2023; Srivastava et al., 2024; Wang & Hou, 2025). Studies show perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use remain strong predictors of intention to use AI tools, including ChatGPT, in tourism settings (Ho et al., 2022; Solomovich & Abraham, 2026). Field studies show that social influence and perceived control affect employees' decisions to adopt AI for tasks involving customers (Ho et al., 2022; Zhang & Hao, 2025). Case studies of hotels and airlines indicate that using generative AI for routine communication leads to quicker response times and more consistent messaging (Limna & Kraiwanit, 2023; Sigala et al., 2024). Survey-based studies with frontline staff show that language support, error correction, and time savings increase employees' intention to use generative AI (Limna & Kraiwanit, 2023; Lu et al., 2024). At the same time, organizational policies, training availability, and managers' attitudes play a major role in actual use and continued adoption (Islam et al., 2023; Q. Liu et al., 2026). Common concerns are the accuracy of AI responses, loss of authenticity, ethical use of customer data, and accountability for AI-generated messages (Abou-Shouk et al., 2021; Dwivedi et al., 2023). Research in tourism shows these concerns lower trust and slow adoption unless organizations provide clear guidelines and review mechanisms (Afroogh et al., 2024; Yu et al., 2025).

TPB and TAM effectively forecast initial intentions to adopt generative AI in the tourism sector. However, contextual elements such as the need for multiple languages, the emotional effort involved, and the level of managerial support play a crucial role in determining whether those intentions lead to ongoing use (Islam et al., 2023; Lu et al., 2024). Additionally, empirical studies indicate that operational advantages, such as quicker response times and decreased workloads, offer tangible benefits for frontline employees. This enhances the perception of usefulness and encourages the adoption of technology (Limna & Kraiwanit, 2023; Sigala et al., 2024). Concerns about accuracy, ethics, and oversight show that adopting new technology is not just a technical matter. It needs proper training, governance, and clear roles to ensure that the tools are used safely and effectively (Abou-Shouk et al., 2021; Dwivedi et al., 2023). Tourism employees are more likely to adopt generative AI if it clearly improves their daily tasks. This study combines the TAM and TPB to examine the tourism and hospitality employees' intention to adopt ChatGPT for text-based customer communication in the workplace.

2.5 Integrated TAM-TPB Framework for ChatGPT Adoption

Research on technology adoption in tourism often uses the TAM or TPB to understand employees' intentions to use digital systems (Ho et al., 2022; Srivastava et al., 2024). TAM examines employees' perceptions of technology, particularly its usefulness and ease of use. These factors help determine their attitudes towards using the technology at work (Davis, 1989). In contrast,

TPB explains intention through attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, capturing social influence and perceived capability, which are especially relevant in organizational and team-based work settings (Ajzen, 1991).

Tourism employees base their decisions not only on how efficient or easy the technology is to use, but also on factors such as management expectations, peer influence, and the support and resources available to them (Ho et al., 2022; Islam et al., 2023). TAM constructs have been widely used in hospitality research to explain attitudes toward smart technologies. Perceived usefulness has been shown to directly influence attitude and intention in contexts such as mobile apps and service automation (He et al., 2018). Perceived ease of use increases the likelihood of adoption when technologies reduce the effort required for work tasks (He et al., 2018).

TPB constructs are also relevant in tourism contexts: subjective norms influence adoption when supervisors or peers encourage new systems, and perceived behavioral control reflects employees' confidence in their ability to use the system (Ho et al., 2022; Zhang & Hao, 2025). The integration provides a comprehensive understanding of intention by merging cognitive assessments of technology with relevant social and control factors in workplace decision-making. In the context of generative AI, this integration is important. Employees use ChatGPT directly for communication tasks rather than merely as a background tool. Its use depends not only on perceived benefits and ease of use but also on whether employees feel encouraged and able to use it in accordance with the organization's rules. Combining the TAM and TPB provides a better understanding of why employees intend to use ChatGPT for customer communication in tourism and hospitality. Based on this integrated framework, as described in the following section, the hypotheses are developed to examine the relationships among perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and intention to use ChatGPT.

2.6 Research Model and Hypothesis Development

2.6.1 Perceived Usefulness and Attitude towards using ChatGPT

Previous studies consistently indicate that perceived usefulness significantly influences positive attitudes toward AI and smart technologies in tourism and hospitality. Sujood et al. (2024), found that users who perceived smart tourism technologies as improving task performance reported significantly more favorable attitudes toward adoption. Lu et al. (2024) showed that the perceived benefits of ChatGPT in tourism services influenced employees' evaluations of the tool. Furthermore, the study indicated that users valued AI systems that reduced response times and improved service consistency, resulting in more positive attitudes toward technology use (Chi et al., 2022). These findings indicate that when employees perceive clear benefits from AI tools, they tend to hold a positive view of them. For ChatGPT, usefulness is tied to its effectiveness in writing, translating, and customer communication. Therefore, studying how perceived usefulness

affects attitude is crucial for understanding how performance beliefs influence employees' acceptance of generative AI.

H1: Perceived usefulness has a positive effect on employees' attitudes toward using ChatGPT.

2.6.2 Perceived Ease of Use and Attitude towards Using ChatGPT

Empirical evidence shows that how easy people find AI to use influences their attitudes toward adopting it in the tourism industry. Shrivastava (2025) indicates that ease of interaction with generative AI systems may reduce user resistance and increase favorable evaluations. Wang and Hou (2025) suggest that tourism workers held more positive views of AI tools that were easy to use. Furthermore, Ho et al. (2022) showed that ease of use was a significant factor in positive attitudes toward AI among hospitality employees. These suggest that tourism employees are more willing to accept AI tools when they are simple and intuitive. ChatGPT is typically accessed through familiar interfaces and does not require advanced technical skills. Therefore, we developed the following hypothesis:

H2: Perceived ease of use has a positive effect on employees' attitude toward using ChatGPT.

2.6.3 Attitude towards using ChatGPT and Intention to use ChatGPT

Previous research consistently demonstrates that attitude is a strong predictor of intention to use technology in tourism contexts. Sujood et al. (2024) found that positive attitudes toward smart tourism technologies directly increased intention to adopt them and Ho et al. (2022) reported that hospitality employees with favorable attitudes toward digital technologies showed a higher intention to use these systems in service delivery. Additionally, positive attitudes toward ChatGPT strongly predicted the intention to use it for tourism services (Abou-Shouk et al., 2026). These findings indicate that attitude acts as a motivational mechanism that translates beliefs about technology into behavioral intention. Since ChatGPT directly affects employees' daily communication work, understanding how attitude influences intention is essential for explaining adoption behavior in the tourism and hospitality context. Based on this reasoning, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: Attitude towards using ChatGPT has a positive effect on employees' intention to use ChatGPT for text-based customer communication.

2.6.4 Subjective Norms and Intention to Use ChatGPT

Previous studies indicate that social influence is crucial to technology adoption in the tourism industry. Islam et al. (2023) discovered that support from management boosts employees' willingness to use AI-based services. Additionally, Ho et al. (2022) showed that subjective norms significantly predict hospitality employees' intention to adopt AI.

Based on this, tourism employees often rely on their supervisors and colleagues when considering new technologies. Since using ChatGPT can raise concerns about its suitability and accountability, social approval is especially important. Thus, we developed the following hypothesis:

H4: Subjective norm has a positive effect on employees' intention to use ChatGPT for text-based customer communication.

2.6.5 Perceived Behavioral Control and Intention to Use ChatGPT

Previous studies highlight the importance of perceived behavioral control in predicting technology adoption in service settings. Zhang and Hao (2025) indicate that employees who felt confident using AI systems were more likely to want to adopt them. Studies showed that having resources and feeling competent greatly influenced employees' intentions to use AI tools (Srivastava et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2025). Additionally, Wu et al. (2025) reported that the availability of training and support from the organization increased employees' sense of control and their AI usage. These findings indicate that the intention to use AI is influenced by both positive attitudes and employees' confidence in their ability to use the technology effectively. For successful adoption of ChatGPT, it is essential to provide clear usage guidelines and access to resources, making perceived behavioral control a key factor in employees' willingness to use the tool. Based on this reasoning, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5: Perceived behavioral control has a positive effect on employees' intention to use ChatGPT for text-based customer communication.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

This study is a part of a larger study and used both quantitative and qualitative data and a deductive approach to explore employees' intentions to use ChatGPT for text-based communication with customers in the tourism and hospitality industry and to explore how the use of ChatGPT empowers employees in managing text-based customer communication.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The study focused on tourism and hospitality employees with experience using ChatGPT. The sample was selected by combining purposive and snowball sampling methods, which is recognized as an effective technique for data collection in quantitative research (Memon et al., 2024). Researchers contacted lecturers at Sri Lankan state universities that offer tourism and hospitality degree programs to distribute an online questionnaire to their graduates employed in the industry. These graduates were then asked to share the questionnaire with colleagues, leveraging a snowball sampling method to broaden the participant pool. Moreover, another online survey was conducted, and email invitations were sent to registered service providers listed by the Sri Lankan Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA). Kline (2016) notes that a sample size of 200 is considered large

for structural equation modeling (SEM). With 322 respondents, this study has a sufficiently large and robust sample for SEM analysis.

3.3 Instrument Development

The survey had three parts: demographic information and questions assessing the study's main concepts. The TAM items were based on Davis (1989), while the TPB constructs followed Ajzen (1991). Behavioral intention to use ChatGPT was measured using adapted items from Al-Mamary et al. (2024) (see Appendix 1). The third section included open-ended questions about employees' reasons for using ChatGPT for text-based customer communication and their use of ChatGPT at work. Two screening questions were included to confirm respondents' employment in the tourism and hospitality sector and their utilization of ChatGPT for work. Experts in tourism and information systems reviewed the items for face validity and confirmed their clarity and relevance.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Data were gathered through an online questionnaire and analyzed using SmartPLS 4.1.0.3. PLS-SEM was applied to test the hypotheses and evaluate the research model. We assessed the model's quality by checking indicators' reliability, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, following established guidelines (Hair et al., 2019, 2022). The structural model was analyzed by examining path coefficients and their significance using bootstrapping. Additionally, we measured the model's explanatory power and predictive relevance using R^2 values, Q^2 , and effect sizes (f^2) for the dependent variables (Hair et al., 2019, 2022).

The qualitative data received for the open-ended question were analyzed using thematic analysis. Responses to the open-ended question were first copied into a Microsoft Word document. To become deeply familiar with the data, the researchers read through the responses multiple times. Initial codes were identified by highlighting significant phrases, words, or sentences that conveyed meaningful concepts, which were then organized in accordance with the guiding theoretical framework of psychological empowerment theory. The results are reported by presenting each theme with supporting evidence from participant responses.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Profile of the Respondents

The demographic profiles of the respondents show that 61.2% were female and 38.8% were male, indicating that more women participated in the survey. Most respondents (70.2%) were aged 20-29, with 19.9% aged 30-39, 7.4% aged 40-49, and 2.5% aged 50-59. In terms of education, 68.9% had a bachelor's degree, 14.6% had a diploma or certificate, 12.7% held a postgraduate degree, and 3.8% had completed Advanced Level education. Regarding employment, 49.1% worked in hotels or resorts, 32.6% in travel agencies or tour operations, 11.5% in destination management companies, 3.1% in airlines or airports, and 3.7% in other sectors.

4.2 Analysis of Measurement Model

The measurement model was assessed for construct reliability and validity according to the PLS-SEM procedures by Hair et al. (2019, 2022). This evaluation included indicator reliability, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. As shown in Table 1, all indicator loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019, 2022), ranging from 0.774 to 0.949, indicating that the items adequately represent their corresponding constructs. Cronbach’s alpha values ranged from 0.888 to 0.919, well above the acceptable level of 0.70. Composite reliability (rho_c) values also ranged from 0.922 to 0.946, indicating strong construct reliability (Hair et al., 2019, 2022). Convergent validity was confirmed, as all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were between 0.784 and 0.854, which is above the threshold of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019, 2022).

Table 1. Measurement Items, Descriptives, Factor Loading, Reliability Statistics

Items	Mean	SD	Loadings	Cronbach’s alpha	rho-a	rho_c	AVE
Perceived Usefulness	4.314			0.889	0.896	0.924	0.753
PU1	4.155	0.793	0.774				
PU2	4.348	0.685	0.896				
PU3	4.332	0.699	0.926				
PU4	4.422	0.719	0.868				
Perceived Ease of Use	4.477			0.919	0.923	0.943	0.804
PEU1	4.525	0.679	0.903				
PEU2	4.512	0.679	0.896				
PEU3	4.425	0.684	0.916				
PEU4	4.447	0.763	0.872				
Attitude towards using ChatGPT	4.272			0.914	0.918	0.946	0.854
AT1	4.248	0.838	0.918				
AT2	4.317	0.722	0.908				
AT3	4.252	0.753	0.946				
Subjective Norms	3.821			0.908	0.936	0.942	0.843
SN1	3.696	0.933	0.882				
SN2	3.817	0.929	0.949				



SN3	3.950	0.897	0.922				
Perceived Behavioral Control	4.201			0.888	0.901	0.922	0.784
PBC1	4.115	0.903	0.883				
PBC2	4.118	0.852	0.898				
PBC3	4.298	0.848	0.861				
PBC4	4.273	0.743	0.815				
Intention to Use ChatGPT	3.989			0.908	0.910	0.936	0.784
IN1	3.984	0.817	0.882				
IN2	3.978	0.733	0.855				
IN3	3.975	0.803	0.914				
IN4	4.019	0.796	0.890				

Source: Survey data, 2025

Descriptive statistics indicated generally positive perceptions among respondents. Mean scores for perceived usefulness (4.314), perceived ease of use (0.477), perceived behavioral control (4.201), attitude (4.272), and intention to use ChatGPT (3.989) were above the midpoint of the scale, reflecting favorable evaluations of ChatGPT for text-based customer communication. Subjective norms showed a comparatively lower mean (3.821), indicating moderate social influence from supervisors and peers. Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio (Table 2) and the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Table 3).

Table 2. Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6
Intention to Use ChatGPT (1)						
Perceived Ease of Use (2)	0.719					
Perceived Usefulness (3)	0.734	0.831				
Attitude (4)	0.847	0.673	0.735			
Subjective Norms (5)	0.588	0.438	0.343	0.536		
Perceived Behavioral Control (6)	0.568	0.623	0.724	0.760	0.663	

Source: Survey data, 2025

All HTMT values were below 0.85, indicating that the constructs are distinct (Hair et al., 2019, 2022). Additionally, the Fornell-Larcker results supported this, as the square roots of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct were higher than the correlations between the constructs (Hair et al., 2019, 2022).

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criteria

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6
Intention to Use ChatGPT (1)	0.885					
Perceived Ease of Use (2)	0.521	0.897				
Perceived Usefulness (3)	0.659	0.753	0.868			
Attitude (4)	0.773	0.622	0.670	0.924		
Subjective Norms (5)	0.546	0.407	0.317	0.500	0.918	
Perceived Behavioral Control (6)	0.665	0.566	0.658	0.697	0.610	0.865

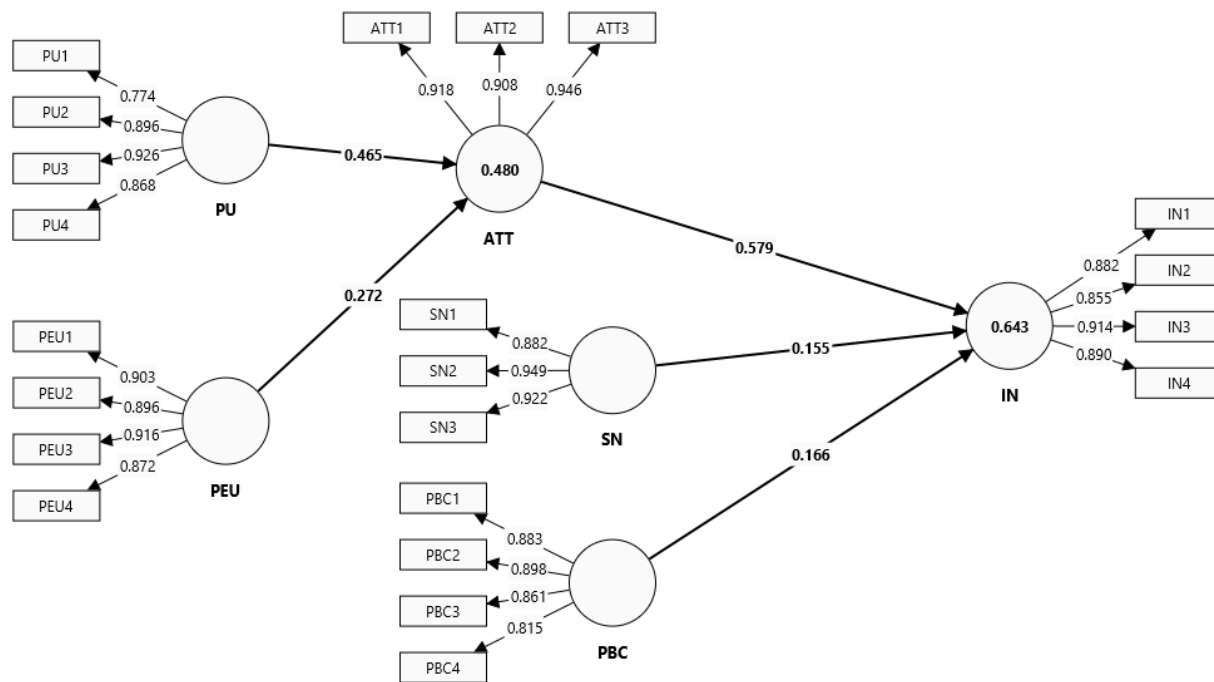
Source: Survey data, 2025

Collinearity was examined prior to hypothesis testing. Inner VIF values ranged from 1.619 to 2.363, which are well below the recommended threshold of 5.0, indicating that multicollinearity was not a concern in the model (Hair et al., 2019, 2022). Additionally, the VIF values obtained from the full collinearity test are below 3.3, indicating that the model can be regarded as free from common method bias (Kock, 2015).

4.3 Structural Model Analysis

The structural model (Figure 1) was analyzed to evaluate the proposed relationships and hypotheses.

Figure 1. Structural Model



Source: Survey data, 2025



The coefficient of determination (R^2) for attitude was 0.480, indicating that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use account for 48.0% of the variance in employees' attitudes toward using ChatGPT. The R^2 for intention to use ChatGPT for text-based communication was 0.643, indicating that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control explain 64.3% of the variance in behavioral intention (Hair et al., 2019). These results highlight the strong explanatory capability of the integrated TAM-TPB model.

f^2 values of 0.02 or higher, but less than 0.15, signify small effects; values exceeding 0.15 and up to 0.35 indicate medium effects; and values of 0.35 or above denote large effects (Hair et al., 2019). Effect size (f^2) analysis revealed that perceived usefulness had a medium effect on attitude toward using ChatGPT (0.180), whereas perceived ease of use had a smaller effect (0.062). Attitude had a large effect on the intention to use ChatGPT for text-based communication with customers (0.475), highlighting its key role in predicting behavior. Additionally, subjective norm (0.042) and perceived behavioral control (0.033) had small but notable effects on the intention to use ChatGPT for text-based customer communication.

Table 4 presents the path coefficients, t-values, p-values, and the results of hypothesis testing. All hypothesized relationships were statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4. Path coefficients and hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient (O)	T-statistic	P-Value	f^2	Decision
Perceived Usefulness → Attitude	0.465	8.146	0.000	0.180	Accepted
Perceived Ease of Use → Attitude	0.272	4.474	0.000	0.062	Accepted
Attitude → Intention to Use	0.579	7.390	0.000	0.475	Accepted
Subjective Norms → Intention to Use	0.155	2.872	0.004	0.042	Accepted
Perceived Behavioral Control → Intention to Use	0.166	2.277	0.023	0.033	Accepted

Source: Survey data, 2025

According to the results, perceived usefulness significantly affects attitude toward using ChatGPT ($\beta = 0.465$, $t = 8.146$, $p < 0.001$), supporting hypothesis H1. Employees who perceive ChatGPT as beneficial to their work tend to have more positive attitudes toward its use. Additionally, perceived ease of use positively affects attitudes towards using ChatGPT ($\beta = 0.272$, $t = 4.474$, $p < 0.001$), supporting hypothesis H2. This indicates that when employees find ChatGPT easy to learn and use, they are more likely to have favorable attitudes towards it. Attitudes towards using ChatGPT significantly influence the intention to use it for text-based customer communication ($\beta = 0.579$, $t = 7.390$, $p < 0.001$), providing strong support for hypothesis H3. This finding indicates that employees' overall perceptions of ChatGPT are crucial to their willingness to use it for text-based



customer communication. Perceived behavioral control also positively influences intention to use ChatGPT for text-based customer communication ($\beta = 0.166$, $t = 2.277$, $p = 0.023$), supporting hypothesis H5. This shows that employees who feel capable and have the necessary resources are more likely to intend to use ChatGPT. Subjective norm also positively influences intention to use ChatGPT for text-based customer communication ($\beta = 0.155$, $t = 2.872$, $p = 0.004$), supporting hypothesis H4. This suggests that influence from supervisors and colleagues helps shape employees' intention to adopt ChatGPT. Furthermore, predictive relevance was assessed using the Stone-Geisser Q^2 statistic. The Q^2 values indicated strong predictive relevance for both attitude (0.401) and intention to use ChatGPT (0.497), as they were both above zero (Hair et al., 2019).

4.4 ChatGPT as a Driver of Employee Empowerment and Power Shift in Tourism and Hospitality Work Teams

Respondents were asked to indicate the tasks for which they use ChatGPT in their work. A total of 51 respondents answered this question. Fifty-one respondents reported their work-related uses of ChatGPT. The most frequently cited applications were written communication (15 references) and content creation (13 references), followed by writing assistance and translation (10 each), brainstorming (9), data organization (8), self-directed learning (7), problem-solving and research (4 each), and training (3). A total of 62 respondents provided insights into the reasons for using ChatGPT for text-based customer communication, which were analyzed to assess ChatGPT's potential to empower tourism and hospitality employees in this context. The results indicate that employees' use of ChatGPT is closely linked to four dimensions of psychological empowerment: meaning, self-determination, competence, and impact (Table 5).

Table 5. Summary of qualitative data analysis

Category	Description	Representative Codes
Meaning	Reflects employees' sense that using ChatGPT adds value to their work, enhances the quality of customer interactions, and aligns with professional standards.	Professional responses, Improved communication with customers, enhanced customer service through professional responses, stay polite, avoid informal communication, maintain brand image through professional communication, Customer satisfaction through professional responses, improve the quality of responses, Clear responses, Consistent responses, Valuable tool
Self-Determination	Captures employees' perception of autonomy and control in handling customer interactions,	Ease of use, convenience, availability, quick responses, time saving/time management, handling multiple conversations, managing multiple customers during busy schedules,



	including the ability to respond efficiently, manage multiple tasks, and communicate confidently with customers.	drafting customer emails, responding to customer inquiries, information searching, explanations, useful/user-friendly
Competence	Represents employees' perceived skill improvement and confidence in performing tasks accurately, effectively, and creatively, supported by ChatGPT in language, problem-solving, and personalized responses.	Accurate responses, correcting grammar mistakes, English language / average English skills, translations support / multiple language support / reduce language barriers, professional responses, reliable responses, helpful, problem solving/asking help, assistance with unfamiliar tasks, report writing / written tasks, drafting creative answers / generating new ideas/creativity, clear responses, personalized answers based on customer needs
Impact	Highlights operational outcomes of using ChatGPT, such as performance and productivity, including improved efficiency, reduced workload, faster responses, and better overall service outcomes.	Effectiveness and efficiency/productivity, cost-effective, reducing the need of large support team, improving the quality of responses, enhancing customer service through professional responses, customer satisfaction through professional responses, managing multiple customers during busy schedules, handling multiple conversations, quick responses

Source: Survey data, 2025

The data analysis reveals that ChatGPT functions not merely as a technological tool but also as an empowerment mechanism that shapes employees' perceptions of their roles, capabilities, autonomy, and influence on organizational outcomes.

Meaning is defined as the alignment between one's work role and one's own beliefs, values, and standards. Employees indicated that ChatGPT enhances the value and purpose of their work by enabling them to deliver professional responses, improve communication with customers, and maintain the brand image, while ensuring interactions are clear, consistent, polite, and of high quality. One employee (Receptionist) explained, *"I use ChatGPT for customer communication because it helps me respond quickly, clearly, and professionally. It suggests the right words, corrects grammar, and helps me stay polite and helpful in every message. This saves time and improves the quality of my replies."* Similarly, a travel coordinator noted, *"It ensures that all*

customer messages are consistently professional, friendly, and on-brand, which helps maintain a strong, trustworthy image.” These statements demonstrate that using ChatGPT for text-based customer communication supports employees’ personal values and aligns with organizational standards.

Self-Determination captures employees’ sense of autonomy and control in managing their work related to text-based customer interactions. ChatGPT was perceived as enabling employees to respond quickly, handle multiple conversations simultaneously, and manage their workload more efficiently. Participants highlighted that the tool provides convenience and constant availability, streamlines time management, and supports drafting emails and responding to inquiries, allowing them to perform tasks independently and confidently. A travel executive explained, *“Because it offers fast, 24/7 support, consistent answers, and handles many chats at once, it improves efficiency.”* Similarly, a travel designer noted, *“ChatGPT is used for customer communication because it provides fast, 24/7 responses, ensuring customers get instant support at any time... and handles multiple conversations at once.”* These accounts indicate that ChatGPT enhances employees’ perceived control over their text-based customer communication.

Competence, defined as the belief in one’s capability to successfully perform work activities, was evident in employees’ perceived skill enhancement and confidence in delivering accurate, reliable, and effective customer service through text-based communication. ChatGPT was reported to support language skills, problem-solving, and creativity, enabling employees to generate personalized responses, draft reports, and complete written tasks with greater accuracy. Participants highlighted improvements in grammar, translation support, and handling unfamiliar or complex customer requests. A hotel supervisor explained, *“My English writing skills are average, so I use it.”* An F&B service expert noted, *“With ChatGPT, I can easily reply to customer inquiries in their own language, even if I don’t speak it. At the same time, I can understand what they are saying without any trouble. It makes communication smooth and easy for both sides.”* Similarly, a barman remarked, *“Easy to manage ...any kind of task which we don't know,”* and a front office agent stated, *“I copy-paste customer texts into ChatGPT and ask for help.”* These examples indicate that ChatGPT enhances employees' perceived competence by supporting their ability to perform tasks accurately, confidently, and effectively, even in situations where they might otherwise feel limited by language or expertise.

Impact highlighted the outcomes of ChatGPT use on performance, efficiency, and service quality. Participants reported that the tool enabled faster responses, more effective management of multiple customers, and higher overall productivity, while also reducing reliance on larger support teams. ChatGPT was perceived as supporting cost-effective, high-quality service delivery through text-based customer communication, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction and improving operational outcomes. A travel designer explained, *“ChatGPT reduces the need for large support teams, making it highly cost-effective. Additionally, it can deliver smart, personalized answers*

based on customer needs, improving overall service quality.” Similarly, a junior travel executive noted, *“It enhances efficiency and better support customer engagement.”* These accounts indicate that employees perceive ChatGPT as contributing to service outcomes through text-based customer communication.

Overall, the findings suggest that ChatGPT empowers tourism and hospitality employees psychologically by enhancing the meaningfulness of their work, providing autonomy and control, supporting skill development, and generating performance benefits.

As described previously, the use of ChatGPT for text-based customer communication in the tourism and hospitality sectors enhances employees’ sense of empowerment, which in turn leads to a shift of power within teams. Employees highlighted several specific ways in which the tool enables this shift.

First, ChatGPT enables employees to manage multiple customer conversations simultaneously, which is particularly beneficial during busy periods. By managing interactions independently, individuals reduce their reliance on colleagues or supervisors for coordination, shifting responsibility and control from the team to the individual. Second, the tool increases efficiency. By reducing the need for a large support team, employees can complete tasks more effectively independently, concentrating operational decision-making at the individual level rather than distributing it across the team. Third, ChatGPT provides assistance with tasks that employees may be less familiar with. This support enables individuals to undertake responsibilities that previously required collaboration or guidance from team members, thereby shifting authority from collective team knowledge to individual capability. Fourth, the tool supports problem-solving. Employees can resolve issues independently or seek assistance as needed, thereby enabling them to take initiative and make decisions without relying on supervisors or team members.

Finally, ChatGPT reduces language barriers, minimizing the need for colleagues to provide translation or communication support. This allows employees to communicate directly with customers and take ownership of interactions, further shifting influence from team interdependence to individual action.

As a result, employees can independently manage their workloads and prioritize tasks without extensive coordination with colleagues. Collectively, these effects indicate that ChatGPT empowers individuals while redistributing power within teams, transferring authority and control from the team as a unit to individual members.

4.5 Discussion

This research provides empirical evidence for an integrated TAM-TPB model to clarify the intention of employees in the tourism and hospitality industry to use ChatGPT for text-based communication with customers. The results indicate that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use have a significant impact on attitudes, which strongly affect the intention to use ChatGPT.



These findings align with previous studies in the tourism sector that demonstrate employees are more likely to adopt AI tools that enhance work efficiency and lessen effort (Ho et al., 2022; Wang & Hou, 2025). The influence of perceived usefulness on attitudes highlights that performance-related advantages, such as quicker response times, higher language quality, and decreased cognitive load, are essential for gaining employee acceptance of generative AI in service environments (Carvalho & Ivanov, 2024). The importance of perceived ease of use highlights the daily challenges of working in the tourism industry. Employees operate under time pressure and multitasking conditions, making usability a critical factor for technology acceptance (Scholtz et al., 2016). The finding that ease of use improves attitudes supports the idea that user-friendly AI interfaces reduce resistance and help integrate technology more smoothly into everyday work (Wang & Hou, 2025). Collectively, these findings indicate that both functional value and usability are crucial for encouraging employees to embrace generative AI tools like ChatGPT. This study shows that, in addition to personal beliefs, social factors and control issues matter too. Norms from others and the ability to act influenced intentions positively, supporting research that highlights how support from managers, influence from peers, and access to resources affect the adoption of technology (Islam et al., 2023; Srivastava et al., 2024; Zhang & Hao, 2025). These findings indicate that ChatGPT adoption is not only an individual decision but also a socially embedded and institutionally conditioned process. Employees are more willing to use ChatGPT when its use is socially legitimized and when they feel capable of using it within organizational constraints.

This study expands adoption research by connecting the use of ChatGPT to employee empowerment and change in workplace power dynamics. It shows that employees who have a positive attitude toward ChatGPT are more likely to use it and to feel more independent in their communication tasks. This aligns with psychological empowerment theory, which emphasizes meaning, competence, self-determination, and impacts as key components of empowered work behavior (Seibert et al., 2011; Spreitzer, 1995). By enabling employees to independently draft, revise, and translate messages, ChatGPT increases perceived competence and self-determination, thereby strengthening employees' agency in their daily work (Limna & Kraiwant, 2023; Sigala et al., 2024). In traditional tourism organizations, written communication is usually managed by supervisors or senior staff because of their language skills, knowledge of the organization, and responsibility for quality (Chen, 2013; Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999). The adoption of ChatGPT alters this structure by redistributing communicative capacity across team members. When employees need less approval from managers for everyday messages, communication authority becomes more spread out. This supports the idea that generative AI can reduce hierarchical structures in tasks and allow for more shared decision-making, while still keeping managerial roles in place.

From a perspective of power and agency, this research indicates that ChatGPT increases employees' autonomy by broadening their ability to work independently (Noy & Zhang, 2023).

At the same time, it alters power dynamics by transferring control of communication processes away from traditional hierarchical gatekeepers. This dual effect reflects the reconfiguration of work authority rather than its simple removal. Employees have more freedom and decision-making power, while managers focus more on overseeing and coordinating rather than controlling everyday communications (Ivanov & Webster, 2019; Shi, 2024).

5. Conclusion, Implications and Future Research Directions

This study examined tourism and hospitality employees' intentions to use ChatGPT for text-based customer communication by integrating TAM and TPB and linking ChatGPT use to empowerment and power dynamics. The results indicate that perceived usefulness and ease of use significantly affect attitudes towards ChatGPT, and attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control together influence the intention to use it. Particularly, attitude is the strongest predictor, emphasizing the role of employees' evaluations of generative AI in its adoption. The findings show that ChatGPT empowers employees by giving them more control over communication tasks and lessening their reliance on supervisors or the team. This change leads to a more equal distribution of communication authority within teams and promotes shared decision-making. Thus, generative AI acts not just as a tool for productivity but also as a way to transform work relationships and enhance employee independence in tourism organizations.

5.1 Theoretical Implication

This study contributes significantly to tourism and hospitality research on artificial intelligence by enhancing technology adoption theory. It combines the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in the context of generative AI from an employee perspective and confirms their effectiveness in explaining technology adoption. The strong mediating role of attitude further supports the argument that adoption decisions in service organizations are not purely rational or technical but are also evaluative and effective. Secondly, this research enhances empowerment theory by connecting the adoption of generative AI to shifts in employee agency. The findings demonstrate that favorable attitudes toward ChatGPT lead to a greater intention to adopt the technology and increased autonomy in communication tasks, offering empirical evidence that digital tools can enhance psychological empowerment by fostering greater competence, self-determination, and a sense of impact. The study contributes to emerging debates on power and agency in AI-enabled workplaces by demonstrating that generative AI does not simply improve productivity but also redistributes task-level authority. The reduced dependence on supervisory approval for routine communication tasks reflects a shift from centralized control toward more distributed decision-making structures. These findings show that generative AI can reduce micro-level hierarchies while keeping managers in their roles, changing power dynamics instead of replacing them. This study examines how generative AI affects text-based customer communication in tourism, highlighting its impact on service work beyond just automation. It

shows how AI influences not only how organizations operate but also the roles, authority, and voices of employees in the tourism and hospitality industry.

5.2 Practical Implications

The findings provide several actionable insights for tourism and hospitality managers, HR professionals, and system designers. Managers should present ChatGPT and similar AI tools as aids for employees, not as ways to monitor productivity. By highlighting their usefulness in everyday tasks like writing emails, managing complaints, and translating messages, they can improve employee attitudes and encourage quicker adoption. Second, ease of use should be a priority during implementation. Organizations should offer simple interfaces, ready-made templates, and brief training sessions to make it easier for users and reduce resistance, especially in busy service settings. Third, social influence is important. When leaders support AI use and show how to use it responsibly, it encourages adoption. Fourth, providing training, guidelines, and tech support helps employees feel confident using generative AI. When they understand what is expected regarding accuracy, ethics, and accountability, they are more likely to adopt it. Managers should recognize that generative AI changes internal power dynamics. As employees become more independent in communication tasks, supervisory roles should evolve from direct control to coaching, oversight, and quality assurance. This shift requires new governance structures that balance employee autonomy with service standards and ethical safeguards. By reducing language barriers and assisting less experienced staff, tools like ChatGPT can lessen reliance on a few “expert” communications and encourage wider involvement in customer-facing roles. Organizations that focus on empowering employees with AI, rather than controlling them, are more likely to successfully adopt the technology, enhance employee engagement, and improve service quality. This shows that implementing generative AI is not just a technical task but also requires strong leadership and attention to trust and teamwork.

5.3 Future Research Directions

Future research should explore how empowerment and power dynamics change over time and in various cultural and organizational settings. Longitudinal and qualitative methods could offer valuable insights into the impact of generative AI on trust, accountability, and leadership in tourism organizations. Additionally, further studies are needed to investigate how organizations can maintain a balance between employee autonomy and service quality as AI-supported communication becomes integral to daily work.

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Appendix 1: Items

Variable	Item code	Item
Attitude (AT)	AT1	Using ChatGPT is a good idea.
	AT2	Overall, using ChatGPT is enjoyable.
	AT3	I am satisfied with using ChatGPT
Subjective Norm (SN)	SN1	My senior colleagues always encourage me to use ChatGPT
	SN2	My colleagues think that I should use ChatGPT
	SN3	My manager believes that there are advantages to using ChatGPT
Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)	PBC1	Whether or not I use ChatGPT for text-based communication with customers is entirely up to me.
	PBC2	I am confident that I can use ChatGPT for text-based communication with customers if I choose to.
	PBC3	I have the necessary resources to use ChatGPT.
	PBC4	I have the opportunity to use ChatGPT for text-based communication with customers
Perceived Usefulness (PU)	PU1	It does not require much effort to use ChatGPT.
	PU2	Using ChatGPT in my work allows me to increase my productivity.
	PU3	Using ChatGPT in my work allows me to increase my effectiveness
	PU4	Overall, I believe that ChatGPT is very useful for my work.
Perceived Ease of Use (PEU)	PEU1	ChatGPT is easy to use.
	PEU2	ChatGPT is easy to learn.
	PEU3	ChatGPT is easy to understand.
	PEU4	ChatGPT is convenient
Intention to use ChatGPT for text-based customer communication (IN)	IN1	I plan to regularly use ChatGPT for text-based communication with customers.
	IN2	In the future, I intend to rely on ChatGPT as a key tool for text-based communication with customers.
	IN3	I would encourage my colleagues to use ChatGPT for text-based communication with customers.
	IN4	ChatGPT will likely become an essential tool for me when handling text-based communication with customers.