



Full length article

From Street Courage to Digital Governance: Assessing the Behavioral Intention of Post-Revolution Youth of Kathmandu to Adopt E-Government Services - An Integrated UTAUT and Trust Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The recent Gen Z Revolution of 2025, which demanded an end to corruption, has reshaped how young citizens in Kathmandu view the role of the government. Against this background, the present study examines the behavioral intention (BI) of post-revolution youth of Kathmandu to make use of digital government services since e-governance is globally accepted as a tool for transparency, efficiency and accountability in the government. By extending the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) framework with Trust Expectancy (TE), the study explores how Performance Expectancy (PE), Effort Expectancy (EE), Social Influence (SI), Facilitating Conditions (FC), and Trust Expectancy (TE) influence the technology adoption intentions. Gender (GEN) and prior experience with the Government of Nepal's "Nagarik" App (EXP) are included as moderators. Data were obtained from 350 respondents (N = 350) through an online survey. Using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the moderated model showed strong explanatory power with 78.6% of the variance in BI ($R^2 = 0.786$). Among the direct effects, PE ($\beta = 0.261$, $p < 0.001$) and FC ($\beta = 0.250$, $p < 0.001$) were the most influential predictors followed by TE ($\beta = 0.187$, $p = 0.004$), highlighting its importance amongst the youth that had very low trust in the government. Further, EE ($\beta = 0.174$, $p = 0.010$) and SI ($\beta = 0.093$, $p = 0.010$) also contribute to BI, though less significant. Regarding moderation, Gender has significant impact on SI ($\beta = -0.130$, $p = 0.019$), suggesting that peer-driven adoption dynamics differ between male and female youth. Overall, this study provides evidence-based findings about the key drivers of e-governance adoption amongst youth of developing countries like Nepal and highlights the implications for policymakers looking to answer to the demand of the youth for transparency and accountability in governance.

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1. Introduction

Across the world, young people are increasingly using digital media to organize political movements and demanding changes in the systems and the revolution has hit multiple developing nations including Nepal where corruption remains a major problem (Smith et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2023; Ariyo, 2024). In September 2025 the Gen-Z youth conducted a nationwide protest against corruption and nepotism amongst others, and managed to overthrow the government. The youth managed to communicate and organize the protest by extensively using social media platforms (The Guardian, 2025; India Today, 2025) to raise their dissatisfaction against the government (Kathmandu Post, 2025). This moment has become a turning point for majority of the youth and their active participation in dialogues and policy has surged in recent times.

In this context, e-governance becomes an important way to respond to the demands of the protest. Digital platforms can support more transparent, accountable and efficient public services, and can reduce the bureaucratic gaps that allow corruption to continue (Consult Nepal, 2024; MyRepublica, 2025). Kathmandu, being the political and technological center of the country, is positioned very well for such transition because of its higher literacy rates, strong internet access and increasing digital skills among young residents (Nepal SDG Forum, 2023; Gurkha Technology, 2025). Nepal has already taken some steps in this direction, including the introduction of the Nagarik App, which brings several government services into one digital platform (Shah, 2023; Nepali ICT, 2025).

However, the acceptance of e-government technologies depends on the willingness of residents to use them. Even though this behavioural intention of people is commonly studied through UTAUT framework, (Venkatesh et al., 2003) and existing body of literature shows three important gaps. Firstly, the UTAUT covers Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, Social Influence and Facilitating Conditions, but it does not fully consider the political environment in places like Nepal where people are very skeptical of the government. Recent studies show that in developing countries like Nepal, trust and perceptions on security strongly affect the decision to adopt e-government services, sometimes even more than technological features (Wang et al., 2023; Martinez & Silva, 2023; Fadrial et al., 2024; Ghimire & Kaur, 2026). Secondly, there is only little research focusing on the literate tech-savvy youth in the digital transition of South Asia, particularly in Nepal. This gap is notable because the youth of Kathmandu were central actors of the 2025 revolution, yet their views on e-governance adoption remain under-studied. And finally, having established itself as the most used Government Mobile Application by general public with above 5.5 million downloads and 62 services (Onlinekhabar, 2024), studies have not been conducted on how experience with Nagarik Application has altered the behavioural intention of people for the usage of e-governance in Nepal.

To address these gaps, this study examines the behavioural intention of the post-revolution youth of Kathmandu to use e-government services. The research extends the UTAUT model by adding Trust Expectancy (TE) and uses PLS-SEM with data collected from 350 respondents under 30 years of age. The study contributes in two important ways. Theoretically, it provides evidence supporting an extended UTAUT framework that highlights the key role played by trust expectancy in adoption of e-governance in politically sensitive environments with low level of trust in government. Practically, it offers insights for policymakers by highlighting the factors that could potentially accelerate e-governance adoption amongst the youth of Kathmandu while also revealing the impact of Nagarik Application on the mindset of the youth towards e-governance. The study helps shape a way

to take actionable steps to fulfill the Gen-Z movement's demands for corruption free, transparent, ethical and accountable governance with e-governance.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

This study has on Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) as its main theoretical model which states that technology adoption is mainly influenced by Performance Expectancy (PE), Effort Expectancy (EE), Social Influence (SI), and Facilitating Conditions (FC) (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Even though UTAUT is used widely in e-governance studies, the current situation of Nepali youth after the revolution requires an extended approach (Shareef et al., 2025). For this reason, Trust Expectancy (TE) is added as a key factor because lack of trust in the government institutions was one of the major reasons behind the Gen Z revolution (Paudel & Phuyal, 2025). Research in Nepal has shown that trust in local governments depends on the transparency, responsiveness and participation of the government (Local Governments' Accountability & Public Trust, 2024). Many other studies also concluded that people's willingness to utilize e-governance is strongly linked to the level of trust in data security along with the reliability of government systems (Phuyal, 2024; Fadrial et al., 2024). By adding TE to the UTAUT model, this study better represents how willing young Nepali users are to use digital government services like the Nagarik App. Gender and past experience with the Nagarik App are used as moderators to see how these factors shape trust and adoption behaviour. Focusing on youth under 30 is important because they are already digitally literate and are becoming a major force in shaping how citizens interact with the state, making this extended framework suitable for studying e-governance adoption in the post revolution Nepal.

2. Review of Literature and Hypothesis

In recent years, studies have increasingly highlighted that youth in developing countries like Nepal are a key group for understanding e-government usage efforts as they are the ones who use technology the most. A youth-specific report shows that only a small share of young Nepali citizens feels confident enough to take part in governance which clearly highlights major trust (Centre for Social Change, 2022). Other research in Nepal also shows that trust in government bodies and confidence in the security of online platforms strongly shape how digitally literate youth adopts e-services, with social media being an important channel for building trust (Phuyal, 2024; Paudel & Bhattarai, 2025). Beyond Nepal, evidence from other developing Asian countries suggests that the main UTAUT factors (performance expectancy and facilitating conditions) continue to be strong predictors of youth intention to use digital services, but at the same time, institutional trust and perceived risk play a major role in youth contexts (Zeebaree et al., 2022; Zeebaree et al., 2023). Many cross-national studies have also expanded UTAUT by adding system trust, confirming its positive effect on the behavioural intention (Shareef et al., 2025). Overall, findings of past studies highlight how the core four UTAUT variables, along with Trust Expectancy (TE), help to explain the behavioural intention of Kathmandu's youth toward e-governance usage.

Performance Expectancy (PE) and Behavioral Intention (BI) to use E-Government Services

Performance Expectancy (PE) explains how much an individual believes that using a technology will assist him to execute tasks more effectively (Venkatesh et al., 2003). In the context of e-governance, it means how strongly young users believe that digital technologies like as the Nagarik App can deliver faster and more efficient services by reducing delays, paperwork, and everyday corruption during face to face service seeking. Previous studies repeatedly show that PE remains an influential factor that motivates to use technology, especially among digitally

literate users (Pusposari et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024; Ramli et al., 2025). In many developing countries, PE becomes even more important because young people switch to digital solutions to avoid the complicated bureaucracy and stay away from petty corruption in routine interactions (Hendrajaya et al., 2024; Madaki et al., 2024). For Kathmandu's post-revolution youth, performance expectations are closely tied to whether the platform can support the reforms they protested for by delivering services efficiently and effectively (Basnyat, 2022; Dhakal et al., 2023).

H1: Performance Expectancy (PE) has a significant positive influence on the Behavioral Intention (BI) of young citizens in Kathmandu to use e-governance services.

Effort Expectancy (EE) and Behavioral Intention (BI) to use E-Government Services

Effort Expectancy (EE) explains the ease of using a system (Venkatesh et al., 2003), so EE covers simplicity and usability of e-governance and factors like how quickly they can learn to use the system and how much effort is needed to use it. For the youth accustomed to high end global digital technologies, this is an important factor (Wang et al., 2024). As a result, this group expects user interfaces that require minimal learning effort and they lose interest quickly when the design is confusing (Dbesan et al., 2023). Studies show that complicated and lengthy registration steps, unclear menus, or too much data entry reduce EE and often lead young users to not using the service (Hendrajaya et al., 2024; Ramli et al., 2025). In many developing Asian countries, differences in digital literacy and infrastructure make ease of use even more important because systems that are not designed for diverse users often fail in practice (Madaki et al., 2024). In Nepal's case also, the widespread use of e-governance depends heavily on whether the youth of Kathmandu find the government platforms simple to use or not (Basnyat, 2022; Dhakal et al., 2023). So, EE remains a basic requirement for technology adoption, especially among youth who prioritize convenience.

H2: Effort Expectancy (EE) has a significant positive influence on the Behavioral Intention (BI) of young citizens in Kathmandu to use e-governance services.

Social Influence (SI) and Behavioral Intention (BI) to use E-Government Services

Social Influence (SI) in the UTAUT framework explains the how much encouragement by important others influences the use of a new technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003). For the politically active youth in Kathmandu, these "important others" include friends, online peer groups, and local influencers, all of whom play a major role in spreading adoption (Mastran & Bhandari, 2022; Neupane et al., 2023). International findings show that SI is especially strong in digital environments, where young users often rely on peer recommendations and visible success stories when deciding whether to use e-government platforms or not (Manap, 2024; Junnonyang, 2024). In the context of the anti-corruption movement, SI also reflects a shared sense of civic responsibility. When young people see popular figures or a large number of peers using tools like the Nagarik App to access government services, they feel socially encouraged to start using it (Li & Shang, 2025). In South Asian societies, where collectivism and high social media use are common among youth (Dhakal et al., 2023), SI tends becomes a strong driver of technology adoption and can even help to overcome the initial doubts about new government systems. For Kathmandu's youth who are demanding more transparency, seeing influential peers support the platform turns its use into a shared and collective action.

H3: Social Influence (SI) has a significant positive influence on the Behavioral Intention (BI) of young citizens in Kathmandu to use e-governance services.

Facilitating Conditions (FC) and Behavioral Intention (BI) to use E-Government Services

Facilitating Conditions (FC) refer to the extent to which a person believes that the needed technical, infrastructural and organizational support is available for using a system (Venkatesh et al., 2003). For young users, FC mainly involves two areas: access to the right resources like internet connectivity, devices, and access to knowledge, including digital literacy and technical help. So, FC mainly deals with the external environment that enables or restricts technology adoption (Madaki et al., 2024; Ghimire & Kaur, 2026). Even though many young people own digital devices like smartphones, FC continues to be a major challenge worldwide because adoption depends heavily on affordable internet, reliable system performance, and sufficient user skills (Wang et al., 2024). Studies show that e-government services often fail when users lack the digital literacy and resources required or the user does not get support to solve technical problems (Dbesan et al., 2023; Hendrajaya et al., 2024). Digital literacy therefore becomes a key part of FC, as it turns basic access into meaningful use (Ramli et al., 2025). In South Asia, issues like uneven infrastructure and the digital divide make these challenges even more serious (Shakya, 2025). For Kathmandu, FC plays a central role because the youth's intention to adopt e-governance is linked to their push for accountability and it depends on whether they believe the government has provided stable resources and proper support systems.

H4: Facilitating Conditions (FC) will have a significant positive influence on the Behavioral Intention (BI) of young citizens in Kathmandu to use e-governance services.

Trust Expectancy (TE) Behavioral Intention (BI) to use E-Government Services

Trust Expectancy (TE) refers to how much young users believe in reliability, and security of government technologies and the agency running it (Teh et al., 2024). TE differs from the other UTAUT factors because it reflects a deeper political sentiment. It captures concerns that the government might misuse personal information (Li & Wang, 2023). Further, for digital government payments via digital wallets, trust is vital (Pramono et al., 2023). Global studies show that when digital services involve sensitive data, trust often becomes a stronger predictor of adoption intention (Hosseini et al., 2023; Song et al., 2024; Pusposari et al., 2024). In developing and politically tense Asian contexts, low trust can cancel out the effects of high PE or EE, especially among youth who have many doubts (Madaki et al., 2024; Teh et al., 2024; Ooi & Li, 2024). For Kathmandu's youth that has low trust in government, it is a vital construct to be studied.

H5: Trust Expectancy (TE) has a significant positive influence on the Behavioral Intention (BI) of young citizens in Kathmandu to use e-governance services.

Moderating Role of Gender (GEN)

In a country like Nepal with strong patriarchal dominance and strong gender definitions, gender (GEN) can affect the behavioural intention towards e-governance (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Literatures suggest that men are influenced by Performance Expectancy (PE), while women are affected by Effort Expectancy (EE) and Social Influence (SI) and these trends still continue (Wang et al., 2024; Ramli et al., 2025). Specifically, male users give high priority to the efficiency (Ramli et al., 2025) while in the Asian context, female users give more priority to Social Influence (SI) and Facilitating Conditions (FC) because of social and cultural boundaries that exist (Dhakal et al., 2023; Madaki et al., 2024). Further, recognition of "Others" gender by the Government of Nepal (GON, 2024) highlights the need of an inclusive model, as they might have low Trust Expectancy (TE) (Li & Wang, 2023; Dbesan et al., 2023). In the context of Kathmandu with almost equal male and female residents, and open "Others" gendered people, gender can have a significant impact on the relations that have been developed for the study.

H1a: The influence of Performance Expectancy (PE) on Behavioral Intention (BI) to use e-government services is moderated by gender.

H2a: The influence of Effort Expectancy (EE) on Behavioral Intention (BI) to use e-government services is moderated by gender.

H3a: The influence of Social Influence (SI) on Behavioral Intention (BI) to use e-government services is moderated by gender.

H4a: The influence of Facilitating Conditions (FC) on Behavioral Intention (BI) to use e-government services is moderated by gender.

H5a: The influence of Trust Expectancy (TE) on Behavioral Intention (BI) to use e-government services is moderated by gender.

Moderating Role of Experience with Nagarik App (EXP)

In the original UTAUT model, Prior Experience (EXP) is considered an important moderator because it changes how users first-time and experienced users perceive and evaluate technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003). In this study, EXP is the citizen's previous use of the Nagarik Application, Nepal's main digital governance platform (GON, 2024). Research worldwide shows that users with little or no experience focus more on Effort Expectancy (EE), since their main focus is learning and using the system easily (Hendrajaya et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024). On the other hand, users with experience give more priority to results which makes Performance Expectancy (PE) significant (Ramli et al., 2025). In the context of Asia, experience can also strongly affect Trust Expectancy (TE) because positive prior experiences build confidence in the system (Hosseini et al., 2023) while negative experiences can weaken perceptions of Facilitating Conditions (FC) (Ooi & Li, 2024). For Kathmandu's youth, good experience with Nagarik App proves the system is functional and trustworthy.

H1b: The influence of Performance Expectancy (PE) on Behavioral Intention (BI) to use e-government services will be significantly stronger for experienced young citizens.

H2b: The influence of Effort Expectancy (EE) on Behavioral Intention (BI) to use e-government services will be significantly stronger for inexperienced young citizens.

H3b: The influence of Social Influence (SI) on Behavioral Intention (BI) to use e-government services will be significantly stronger for inexperienced young citizens.

H4b: The influence of Trust Expectancy (TE) on Behavioral Intention (BI) to use e-government services will be significantly stronger for experienced young citizens.

H5b: The influence of Facilitating Conditions (FC) on Behavioral Intention (BI) to use e-government services will be significantly stronger for experienced young citizens.

The comprehensive review of literature has established a strong theoretical foundation along with the contextual relevance of the Extended UTAUT framework for understanding e-governance adoption among Kathmandu's youth with a total of 15 testable hypotheses for analysis.

3. Research Methodology and Data Collection

A quantitative, cross-sectional research design tested this extended UTAUT model with five independent, one dependent and two moderating variables. Data collection was done with a non-probability purposive sampling method and survey questionnaire (Google Form) was distributed amongst youth under 30 via social media platforms. Purposive sampling was the most suitable to reach the target audience under 30 who are most active on social media platforms. With 350 respondents, sample size is enough for PLS-SEM analysis (Hair et al., 2017).

The online questionnaire contained 30 items for the six latent constructs and made use of a Likert scale with 5 points where one (1) meant Strongly Disagree while five (5) meant Strongly Agree. Questionnaire items for four core UTAUT constructs and the dependent variable, Behavioral Intention, were adapted from validated scales of Venkatesh et al. (2003), with modifications to fit the study on “e-government services” in the context of Nepal (Wahi & Berényi, 2023). Trust Expectancy (TE) items were adapted from recent studies on trust as extension to technology acceptance models in Asian context (Teh et al., 2024; Hosseini et al., 2023). The final items, hence, were validated scales and can be used for comparison with prior research in Nepal and abroad on the technology adoption (Sabani, 2020).

To confirm questionnaires’ clarity, comprehensibility and internal consistency reliability, pilot study was executed with only 40 respondents from the target population which confirmed that all questionnaire items were understandable as constructs achieved satisfactory reliability over the threshold of 0.70. Further, a screening question confirming the residency of the respondent was included in the questionnaire to ensure that only residents of Kathmandu District participated in the survey. The data was then analyzed with PLS-SEM for measurement and structural model assessments.

4. Results

The final analysis of data considered 340 valid responses out of 350 as ten submissions from were from the non-residents and hence they did not qualify. The demography of respondents captured the vibrant youth of Katmandu as illustrated in Table 1 below. Amongst the respondents, 43.23% were under 20 years while 56.77% were between 21 and 30 years which aligned closely with the National Population and Housing Census 2021 (NPHC, 2021) which reported that the 20–29 age group has the highest proportion in Kathmandu District. This supports the relevance of the study as the study targets the most digitally active generation of Kathmandu (National Statistics Office, 2023).

Further, reflecting the gender ration of Kathmandu which is almost 50% for each gender (Bhandari & Desruisseaux, 2025), the respondents were 52.35% male and 47.65% female while no respondents indicated “Other” gender. The sample reflected high literacy rate as 81.6% of the respondents held at least a high school education confirming the sample had the literacy necessary to interact with e-governance platforms like the Nagarik App (National Statistics Office, 2023).

Table 1, Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Description	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Demographics: Gender</i>		
Male	178	52.35%
Female	162	47.65%
Others	0	0.00%
<i>Demographics: Age</i>		
Under 20 Years	147	43.23%
21 to 30 Years	193	56.77%
<i>Demographics: Education</i>		
PhD Degree		
Master's Degree	16	4.70%
Bachelor's Degree	122	35.90%
High School (Grade 12)	155	45.60%
Secondary School (Grade 10)	43	12.60%
General Reading and Writing	4	1.20%
<i>Demographics: Occupation</i>		
Student	162	47.65%
Employed (Government)	45	13.25%
Employed (Private)	73	21.50%
Self Employed (Business)	16	4.70%
Homemaker	3	0.90%
Retired	0	0%
Unemployed	41	12.00%
<i>Experience with Nagarik App</i>		
Never	91	26.70%
Less than 1 Year	69	20.30%
1 - 2 Years	73	21.50%
More than 2 Years	107	31.50%

Source: Author's own creation from the primary data

Further, in terms of occupation, nearly half (47.65%) were students while 34.75% were employed in either government or private sectors. Interestingly, almost 3 in 4 respondents (73.3%) had some level of experience with the Nagarik App which provides a strong basis to test technology acceptance models as digital innovations generally start from Kathmandu (Shakya, 2025).

Measurement Model

Evaluation of Measurement Model was done confirm the psychometric properties scales by following the standard PLS-SEM guidelines (Hair et al., 2017). After the analysis of outer loading, with threshold set at 0.70 for the study, four items were removed (EE1, SI5, FC4 and BI3). Consequently, the model showed strong convergent validity as all remaining item had loadings above 0.762 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranging from 0.662 to 0.758 and they surpassed the 0.50 threshold. In addition, reliability was confirmed with the

Composite Reliability values (ρ_c) between 0.891 and 0.926 while the Cronbach's Alpha (α) findings for all constructs exceeded 0.837 as listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Construct Reliability and Validity Overview

Construct	Cronbach's alpha (α)	Composite reliability (ρ_a)	Composite reliability (ρ_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
PE	0.871	0.873	0.907	0.662
EE	0.88	0.881	0.917	0.735
SI	0.837	0.846	0.891	0.671
FC	0.893	0.896	0.926	0.758
TE	0.888	0.903	0.918	0.691
BI	0.89	0.892	0.924	0.753

Source: Author's own creation from the primary data

Discriminant validity was examined using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criterion where the HTMT values were below the 0.90 threshold for all constructs as illustrated in Table 3 below. Amongst all constructs, the highest calculated ratio was between Performance Expectancy (PE) and Effort Expectancy (EE), suggesting some degree of relevance between the two but highlighting that constructs of the study was empirically distinct.

Table 3 Discriminant Validity (HTMT Matrix)

Constructs	BI	EE	FC	PE	SI	TE
BI						
EE	0.883					
FC	0.873	0.856				
PE	0.895	0.9	0.77			
SI	0.376	0.336	0.331	0.367		
TE	0.825	0.671	0.69	0.824	0.418	

Source: Author's own creation from the primary data

With measurement model having satisfactory findings, PLS-SEM was employed by bootstrapping with 5,000 iterations in order to test the hypothesized relationships and to check the models' predictive power using R^2 . Further, as listed in the hypothesis, ten moderating effects, five of Gender and five of Prior Experience were also tested.

Structural Model

The findings of the structural model assessment confirm that the Extended UTAUT model of the study effectively predicts Behavioral Intention (BI) of the Kathmandu youth towards e-governance, as R^2 value was 0.786, confirming that the model of study accounts for 78.6% of the variance in BI.

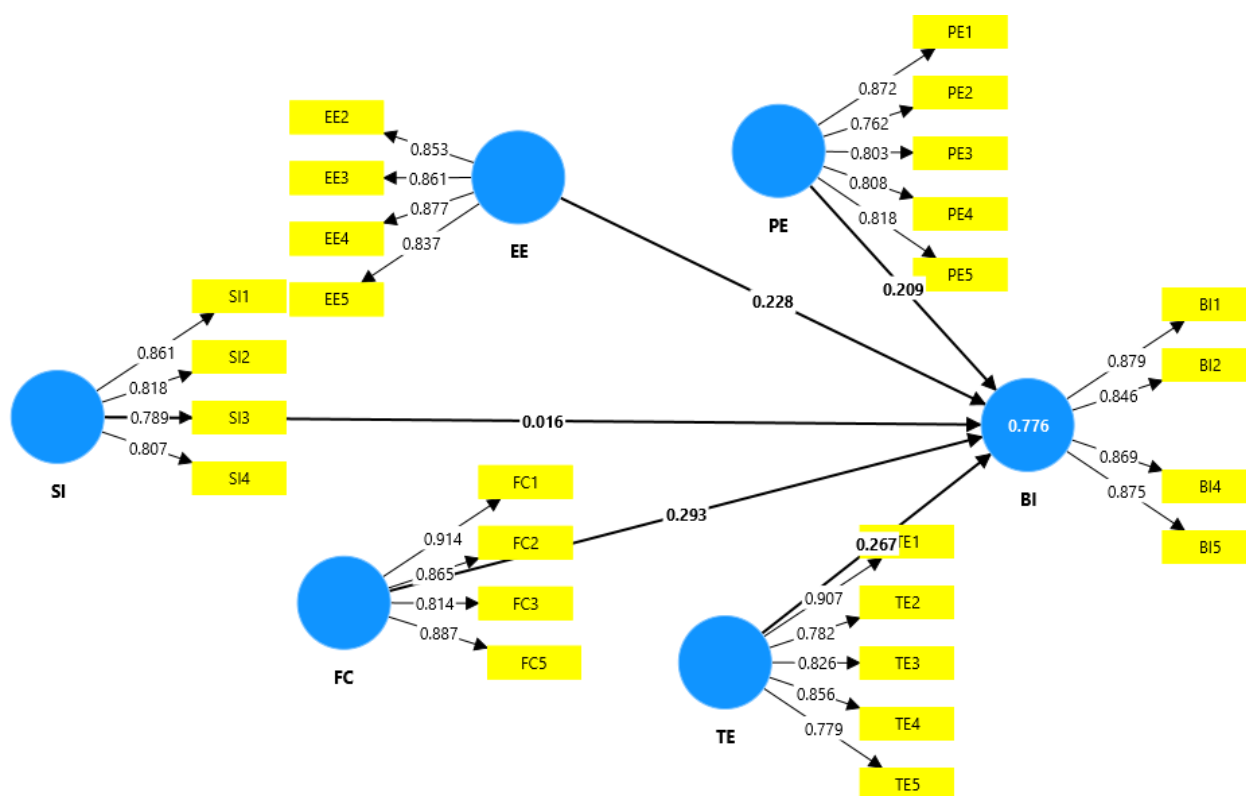


Figure 1: PLS SEM Model Created

Source: Author’s own creation from the primary data

The PLS SEM model illustrated in Figure 1 above presents the significant path coefficients (β) amongst the six constructs of the study. The Table 4 below lists the findings of study followed by explanation of the same.

Table 4 Direct Path Results (H1-H5)

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient (β)	P-Value	Result	Finding
H1	PE \rightarrow BI	0.261	0	Supported	Strongest Predictor
H4	FC \rightarrow BI	0.25	0	Supported	Second Strongest Predictor
H5	TE \rightarrow BI	0.187	0.004	Supported	Significant Predictor
H2	EE \rightarrow BI	0.174	0.01	Supported	Significant Predictor
H3	SI \rightarrow BI	0.093	0.01	Supported	Weakest Significant Predictor

Source: Author’s own creation from the primary data

Performance Expectancy (PE \rightarrow BI):

PE was the most influential predictor of Behavioral Intention ($\beta = 0.261, p < 0.001$). This strong positive relationship aligns with core UTAUT theory (Venkatesh et al., 2003) as well as recent research on e-governance adoption in developing countries. The finding emphasizes that the youth place high importance on the perceived usefulness and efficiency of government applications when forming their intention to use them (Raihan et al., 2024; Ahmed et al., 2025).

Facilitating Conditions (FC → BI)

FC was the second most important factor ($\beta = 0.250, p < 0.001$). Numerous global and regional studies (Almaiah & Nasereddin, 2020; Zeebaree & Zeebaree, 2022; Raihan et al., 2024; Ahmed et al., 2025) as well as local studies in Nepal studies (Maharjan et al., 2025) on e-governance adoption have highlighted that the perceived support mechanism and infrastructure are critical for the youth to use e-governance. Even with high internet connectivity (Rana, 2023) and literacy (National Statistics Office, 2023) amongst the youth of Kathmandu, their concerns over government infrastructure and support remain critical.

Trust Expectancy (TE → BI):

Amongst the Kathmandu youth, trust expectancy significantly influenced their Behavioral Intention ($\beta = 0.187, p = 0.004$). This result is consistent with global past research that included the trust factor (Hosseini et al., 2023; Oliveira et al., 2023; Bélanger & Carter, 2023; Nguyen, 2024; Choudhury & Islam, 2025) as well in studies in Nepal (Rai, 2024). For the Kathmandu youth that overthrew the government recently mainly as they lacked trust in governance (Adhikari, 2025), significance of trust expectancy is high.

Effort Expectancy (EE → BI):

The effort expectancy also significantly influenced the Behavioral Intention ($\beta = 0.174, p = 0.010$) and this backs global findings in studies of similar nature (Aviyanti et al., 2021; Zeebaree & Zeebaree, 2022; Tremblay-Cantin, 2023) as well as past studies in Nepal (Rai, 2024; Maharjan et al., 2025) and even with recent studies on AI-enabled platforms and e-government platforms (Hasan et al., 2024; Raihan et al., 2024). The digitally literate and connected youth of Kathmandu uses global social media platforms, digital wallets, mobile banking and more technologies regularly and hence have high level of expectation from e-government platforms as well.

Social Influence (SI → BI):

Amongst the five constructs of this study, social influence had the smallest direct effect but it was still significant ($\beta = 0.093, p = 0.010$) confirming that opinions of peers, family, and influential figures help shape adoption behavior (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Recent global studies (Nguyen, 2024; Raihan et al., 2024; Puspita et al., 2025) as well as studies in Nepal (Maharjan et al., 2025) have confirmed that social recommendations is important during early adoption stages of e-governance. For the youth of Kathmandu that overthrew the government by communicating and organizing the activism via social media, (Adhikari, 2025) influence of role models and seniors can help share their adoption behavior.

Summary of the path coefficients is listed in Table 5 below showcasing the significant direct effects and important moderations of the study.

Table 5, Significant Path Results

Path	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
EE → BI	0.174	0.174	0.067	2.589	0.010
FC → BI	0.25	0.25	0.068	3.667	0.000
GEN → BI	-0.092	-0.092	0.056	1.65	0.099
PE → BI	0.261	0.262	0.065	4.039	0.000

SI → BI	0.093	0.093	0.036	2.56	0.010
TE → BI	0.187	0.185	0.065	2.871	0.004
GEN x FC → BI	0.06	0.068	0.108	0.556	0.578
GEN x TE → BI	0.134	0.136	0.1	1.348	0.178
GEN x SI → BI	-0.13	-0.132	0.055	2.351	0.019
GEN x EE → BI	0.095	0.095	0.12	0.791	0.429
GEN x PE → BI	-0.1	-0.108	0.111	0.899	0.369

Source: Author's own creation from the primary data

The moderation analysis concluded that Experience with Nagarik App had no significant influence on any of the five relationships. Even though experience has moderated the relationships in original UTAUT and many studies (Venkatesh et al., 2003), for the digitally active young populations of Kathmandu (Negm, 2023), it had no effect. For the youth of Kathmandu known as digital natives with high digital literacy and well versed with technology, there is no difference in adoption behavior of experienced and inexperienced users while the high direct effects of the five constructs cancel out the moderation by experience amongst the digitally literate youth (Khan & Ul Abideen, 2023), thus rejecting the five hypothesis of moderation by experience.

In contrary, on the relationship between Social Influence and Behavioral Intention was moderated by gender significantly ($\beta = -0.130, p = 0.019$) only while it had no impact on other relationships as seen in Figure 2. The findings revealed that female users relied less on the social influence while their male counterparts needed push from the society for the adoption of technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003; Liu et al., 2025). For the politically charged young men of Kathmandu after the revolution (Adhikari, 2025), the influence of social media and hence societal influence makes the technology adoption feel like a common cause for common good.

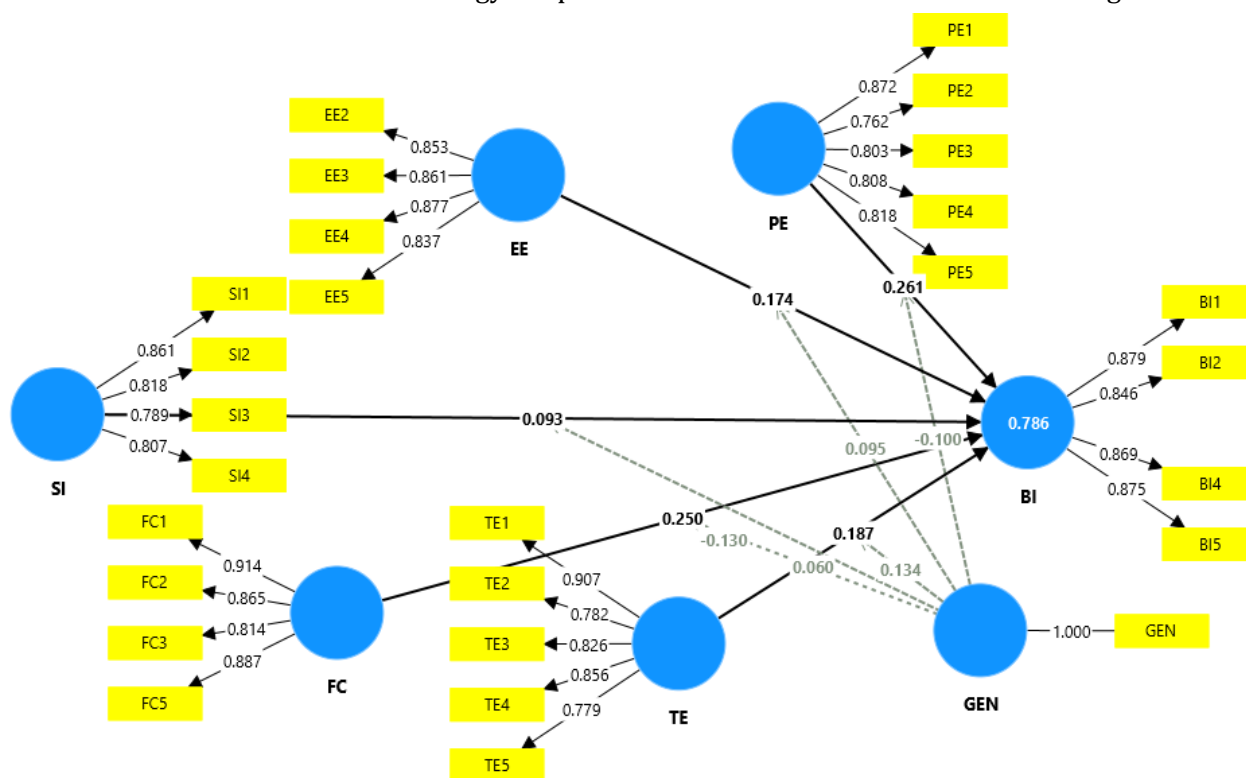


Figure 2: Moderating Effect of Gender

Source: Author's own creation from the primary data

Findings revealed that most historic drivers still remain relevant while the moderation expected by experience was not significant which revealed an impact of digital literacy.

Discussion

This study is motivated by the young generation (primarily Gen Z) that brought a revolution in Nepal demanding transparency, accountability and corruption (Sharma & Karki, 2024), which resulted in overthrowing of the government in 2025. To achieve good governance, digital government technologies and e-governance play a significant role to enhance transparency and accountability (Choudhury & Islam, 2025). To study the intention of youth, extension of UTAUT was done with trust. High explanatory power of the model ($R^2 = 0.786$) confirms its robustness and its ability to capture the behavior digitally literate generation.

The study revealed that Performance Expectancy ($\beta = 0.261$) had the biggest impact on Behavioral Intention. PE has been a historically dominant factor as the main objective of using e-governance is to seek service and get desired results and hence value the system brings to the youth is critical which is supported by global (Zeebaree & Zeebaree, 2022; Tremblay-Cantin, 2023; Raihan et al., 2024; Ahmed et al., 2025) and local (Rai, 2024; Maharjan et al., 2025) studies. The literate youth of Kathmandu must see the value in government technologies to use them and the services have to deliver efficient service to retain the youth. This finding highlights the significance of PE even in a very unique setting, a post revolution urban city amongst the youth under 30.

Secondly, Facilitating Conditions ($\beta = 0.250$) was the second most significant predictor indicating that the youth sees the need for technical support and infrastructure development. Policymakers and technology departments need to make sure that services are not only functional but easily accessible with proper support when needed (Aviyanti et al., 2021; Ahmed et al., 2025). In the same context, the budget of NPR 7.4 billion allocated for this fiscal year by the Government of Nepal for digital infrastructures and supporting ecosystems development (Chapagain & Whale, 2025) is an important step that meets the demand of the youth as well.

Trust Expectancy ($\beta = 0.187$) was found to be a significant factor as the youth must have confidence in security and privacy due to sensitivity of data in e-governance (Hosseini et al., 2023). The results highlight the need to extend the UTAUT framework to make it more relevant to current digital era where cyber-crime and data theft are increasing and instances of hacking are equally high, especially in a developing country like Nepal (Rana et al., 2024; Ghimire & Kaur, 2026). So, the potential risk directly involved with sensitive personal in e-governance data make trust an important factor to study (Negm, 2023). In Nepal, the trust in the government is low as reflected by the recent uprising of the youth and in these post revolution circumstances, trust becomes more important (Al-Hujran et al., 2023) and the Government of Nepal needs to take action to build trust of the citizens via social media campaigns and showcasing the security measures used in government technologies like the Nagarik App.

Further, ease of use also showed significant impact on behavioural intention of the youth of Kathmandu which clearly highlight the need for the technology to be easy to register and use. As the youth of Kathmandu is used to using global technologies like gaming, social media, banking and others, the ease of use delivered with seamless design and interface is vital (Wang et al., 2024) and technology should be easy to learn with minimal effort (Dbesan et al., 2023). Considering the short attention span of the youth, designers must ensure seamless flow and navigation (Hendrajaya et al., 2024; Madaki et al., 2024; Ramli et al., 2025). If the technology depart can

ensure easy registration and smooth flow, more youth will be motivated to use e-governance and existing youth can be retained (Basnyat, 2022; Dhakal et al., 2023).

Amongst the five constructs, Social Influence ($\beta = 0.093$) had the weakest direct effect which clearly highlights that even though less significant than others, societal pressure from friends, family or influencers still helps the youth make that decision of using digital government services in Kathmandu (Mastran & Bhandari, 2022; Neupane et al., 2023). In the context of Kathmandu youth, they make up their minds from social media and social influence from friends or celebrities helps shape their perception on technology adoption as well (Dhakal et al., 2023; Manap, 2024; Junnonyang, 2024; Li & Shang, 2025), which has been reflected in many studies and this study confirms the same. Leveraging the high engagement on youth on social media, the government can have some influencers advocate for e-government services on social platforms that can help draw the attention of and onboard many youth of Kathmandu.

With almost 75% of the respondent having some level of experience with the Nagarik App, the study found no moderation by the experience on any of the 5 relationships. The impact of experience was minimized by the fact the youth are digitally literate and have experience with technologies like banking, gaming or entertainment and hence the impact of experience was non-significant (Hasan et al., 2024). The finding also states that the non-users of Nagarik App and other e-government platforms do have the skillset needed for adoption as they are digitally active (Negm, 2023) with matching skill level with existing users. The government has done well by putting services like police clearance certificate, traffic violation fines and others in the Nagarik App that has drawn hundreds of thousands of youth, but more can be done by adding more relevant services to the youth like road condition updates and government exam registrations, which draw the attention of the youth.

The gender moderation had interesting finding, while it was not significant on other relations, gender moderated the social influence to behavioural intention path significantly with strong effect on male while no effect was there on female (Rana et al., 2024). The finding is justified by gender roles in community participations and activities (UN Women, 2023) as the male youth participate more in social debates be it online or physical leading to e-governance adoption perception as a communal activity rather than a personal one (Al-Shahrani & Walker, 2025). On the other hand, female youth in Kathmandu make adoption decision independently based on their personal or household needs rather than social pressure (Al-Hujran et al., 2023; UN Women, 2023). So, the government of Nepal can target to influence more male youth via social campaigns and making e-governance a societal matter while females need to be clarified on the benefits of technology and other factors.

Implications of the Study

Study findings indicate that behavioural intention of youth of Kathmandu under 30 to use e-governance is mainly influenced by perceived ease of use, infrastructure support, and institutional trust (Li et al., 2021; Sihotang et al., 2023; Kenesei, 2025). This clearly highlights the need for the a practical step to be taken as government and people in the technology department of the government need to ensure that Nagarik App and other e-government platforms are easy to use with user friendly interfaces and seamless navigation. Further, the findings justify the allocation budget worth NPR 7.4 billion by the Government of Nepal in fiscal year 2025/26 to develop digital infrastructures and supporting ecosystems (Chapagain & Whale, 2025) as facilitating conditions was identified by the study as the second strongest predictor and such funding should be retained to ensure that the youth develops a perception that government has the technology and infrastructure necessary to deliver services

digitally. Further, the study highlights how young people depend on trust expectancy to use digital government technologies and hence, government should formulate campaigns to assure public about the safety of the data and their privacy (AlSaleh et al., 2019). Further, capacity-building programs aimed at the youth can help to accelerate e-governance adoption by nullifying their concerns over facilitating conditions and trust (Bashir et al., 2023; Kumar et al., 2024). Collectively, the findings of the study provides actionable steps for the IT Department of the Government of Nepal along with the policymakers to take clear and necessary steps towards e-governance usage in larger scale amongst the youth as envisioned by the Government of Nepal (Hair et al., 2021).

Limitations and Future Directions

This study has a few shortcomings; firstly, being a cross-sectional study, it investigated the behavioural intention at a point in time (post-revolution) which limits the ability to evaluate changes in Behavioral Intention with the maturity of e-governance policies and applications. In future, researchers can consider a longitudinal study to evaluate the changes in behavior with increasing experience level (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Secondly, purposive sampling used in the study focused on youth that is digitally literate and active on social media, and hence generalization to rural are and the whole country is difficult. Future research can evaluate the Extended UTAUT framework in broader Nepal considering rural population as well.

With Artificial Intelligence being the next big thing and cyber security a primary concern for all residents, the study lack the examination of AI in governance and perceived risk of technology usage. These shape the future of e-governance as the youth today is the primary user tomorrow. Such studies in future would help pave ways to build trust amongst the youth towards e-governance (Choudhury & Islam, 2025; Ghimire & Kaur, 2026). Also, studies of post intention stages and towards actual usage stages can be carried out in the future (Ahmed et al., 2025) with the impact Nagarik App plays in the adoption process. Finally, qualitative research in future can help reduce the self-reported and social desirability biases while also diving deeper into personal perspectives in behavioural intention to get more detailed perspective of respondents.

5. Conclusion

The youth that lead the revolution in Nepal is not just content with the e-governance adoption but wants to make it as a mechanism for sustainable development with e-governance. The extended UTAUT model of the study with an R^2 of 0.786 has confirmed that usage of e-governance is mainly driven the performance of the system and the governmental support (Raihan et al., 2024). Further, the trust factor is vital amongst the youth with high level of distrust in the government (Choudhury & Islam, 2025). Further, one of the most significant findings that experience with Nagarik Application does not moderate the relationships clearly tells the ground zero reality of Kathmandu youth as almost all the young people are well versed with technology to an extent that it experience is no longer relevant to adoption. This study related the technology adoption to the demands of youth for transparency, suggesting clear pathways for the governments to understand the youth psychology towards e-governance usage and implementing policies to accelerate the same (Hosseini et al., 2023; Ahmed et al., 2025).

Declaration

The authors of this article hereby declare that this work was prepared independently by the authors and that no AI-based applications or tools or software were used to generate any part of the manuscript and that no A-based technology was used for data analysis, tables and diagrams included in this article.

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SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM SUMMARY

CONSTRUCT	ITEMS
Performance Expectancy (PE)	PE1: I would find e-government services useful to get government services.
	PE2: Using e-government services enables me to get Government services more quickly.
	PE3: Using e-government services increases my productivity.
	PE4: If I use e-government services, I will increase my ability to get services.
	PE5: Using e-government services will help me complete my obligations towards Government in time.
Effort Expectancy (TE)	EE2: It is easy for me to become skillful in using e-government services.
	EE3: I would find e-government services easy to use.
	EE4: Learning to operate e-government services is easy for me.
	EE5: I can learn to use e-government services if I have proper training.
Social Influence (SI)	SI1: People who influence my behaviour think that I should use e-government services.
	SI2: People who are important to me think that I should use the e-government services.
	SI3: The elected personnel in the Government encourage people to use e government services.
	SI4: In general, the Government has supported the use of e-government services.
Facilitating Conditions (FC)	FC1: I have the resources that are necessary to use e-government services.
	FC2: I have the knowledge that is necessary to use e-government services.
	FC3: E-government services are compatible with other technologies that I use.
	FC5: I have enough internet experience to use e-government services.
Trust Expectancy (TE)	TE1: I trust using software for e-government services.
	TE2: I trust the security mechanisms of e-government services.
	TE3: I trust e-government services.
	TE4: I trust the information provided to me via e-government services.
	TE5: I trust my government to have access to my personal information.
Behavioural Intention to Use e-government Services (BI)	BI1: I plan to start / continue using e-government systems.
	BI2: I like / would like to get government services digitally.
	BI4: If available, I would use e-government systems for every service I seek from the government.
	BI5: I plan to recommend my colleagues to use e-government services.
	BI3: (Missing item)