

Investigating Accountants' Perceptions and Adoption Intentions Towards Artificial Intelligence in Malaysian Public Sector Accounting

Azwadi Ali, Zaira Aniza Samsudin*

*Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Development,
Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Kuala Nerus, Terengganu, Malaysia*

*Corresponding Author: z.aniza@umt.edu.my

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Abstract

Purpose: The current study aims to investigate the awareness and potential readiness among accountants in Malaysian governmental departments to adopt artificial intelligence (AI) in anticipation of the implementation of an AI-embedded accounting system.

Design/ Methodology/ Approach: A quantitative online survey was employed to assess the awareness and potential readiness for AI adoption among Malaysian governmental accountants. The unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT2), which is a well-established framework in technology acceptance research, guided the conceptualisation of adoption readiness.

Findings: The results demonstrated that accountants had a moderate level of AI awareness as compared to their previous knowledge. Nonetheless, most respondents expressed a high willingness to adopt AI in daily tasks, while only minimal job security concerns regarding the substitution by AI were expressed. The UTAUT2 revealed that only performance expectancy emerged as a significant predictor of AI usage intention, which posited that Malaysian public sector accountants primarily focused on the perceived benefits when considering adopting AI. Comparatively, other factors, such as effort expectancy and facilitating conditions, played a less prominent role.

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Research Limitations/ Implications: The limitations included a relatively low response rate and the sole focus on UTAUT2, which did not incorporate other potential factors explored in different research frameworks.

Practical Implications: Training that emphasises real-world benefits for accountants can assist in bridging the gap between willingness and AI usage in Malaysian public sector accounting, apart from prioritising functionalities that can improve existing workflows. Resultantly, higher accountant confidence and AI adoption are achieved.

Originality/ Value: The findings contributed valuable insights pertinent to the current Malaysian governmental efforts in promoting AI adoption across various sectors.

Keywords: Malaysian public sector accounting, AI adoption, accounting information systems, UTAUT2

1.0 Introduction

The rapid evolution of AI has disrupted while simultaneously transforming numerous industries, including the accounting field. Specifically, AI-powered accounting systems may significantly revolutionise existing accounting systems by streamlining workflows, enhancing data accuracy, enabling accountants to dedicate more time to strategic decision-making, and improving overall efficiency and effectiveness (Ahn & Chen, 2022; Brown et al., 2020; Wirtz et al., 2018). Meanwhile, user awareness and readiness are key factors to successful AI adoption in the accounting domain. While a growing interest in AI adoption for accounting has been observed, relevant studies exploring Malaysian public sector accountants' readiness in terms of AI-embedded accounting systems remain scarce. Moreover, existing studies concentrate on private firms or specific AI functionalities (Brown et al., 2020; Lee & Tajudeen, 2020). Nonetheless, incorporating AI in public sector accounting presents both opportunities and challenges. AI can potentially lead to enhanced efficiency, effectiveness, and decision-making processes (Wirtz et al., 2018). Understanding public sector accountants' preparedness for AI adoption is also vital as the Malaysian government actively promotes AI integration across various sectors, including the Malaysia National Artificial Intelligence Roadmap 2021-2025, 'AI untuk Rakyat' and AI Sandbox 2024. Therefore, determining the factors that can significantly influence AI adoption in public sector accounting is essential to ensure successful integration while effectively addressing potential obstacles (Al Wael, 2023) and maintaining highly accountable, transparent, and ethical AI usage (Bracci, 2022).

The present study aims to address the existing literature gap by investigating the awareness and potential readiness for AI adoption among accountants in Malaysian governmental departments. Predominantly, a quantitative survey approach was applied to explore Malaysian public sector accountants' current levels of awareness, potential adoption willingness, and job security concerns regarding AI in daily job responsibilities. The unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT2), which is a well-established framework in technology acceptance research, was also employed to identify the key factors influencing adoption intentions by analysing performance expectancy (belief in AI usefulness), effort expectancy (perceived

ease of using AI), and social influence (impact of colleagues' opinions) to understand the behavioural intention to adopt alternative technologies (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Resultantly, valuable insights that could inform future policy decisions and capacity-building initiatives were contributed. Thoroughly comprehending the current state of preparedness will aid policymakers in developing targeted training programmes to elevate accountants' knowledge and skills in mastering AI-powered accounting systems. Additionally, addressing potential concerns while fostering a positive attitude towards AI can facilitate a smoother transition and maximise the benefits for Malaysian public sector accounting. The findings also contributed to the growing knowledge corpus on AI adoption in accounting by focusing on the unique Malaysian context.

2.0 Literature Review

The accounting profession is undergoing a significant transformation propelled by rapid AI advancement, which allows for more streamlined workflows, improved data accuracy, and a higher focus on more strategic tasks (Brown et al., 2020; Fedyk et al., 2022). Successful AI adoption also depends on sufficient user awareness, readiness, and acceptance. This study explored current research on AI adoption in the Malaysian public sector accounting domain. Numerous past researchers have examined the potential benefits and challenges associated with AI implementation in accounting. The findings underscored the capabilities of AI to automate repetitive tasks, generate real-time insights, and increase accountants' decision-making abilities (Cifuentes-Faura, 2024; Hussin et al., 2024). Task automation, including data reconciliation, transaction processing, and fraud detection, allows accountants to dedicate more valuable work time to higher-level analyses and strategic planning (Brown et al., 2020). Incorporating AI in public sector accounting can also generate and capture higher public value through various applications, such as knowledge management, process automation, predictive analytics, and data visualisation (Maione & Leoni, 2021). Therefore, AI adoption in the public sector necessitates a deep understanding of the key elements contributing to successful implementation (van Noordt & Misuraca, 2020). Developing frameworks extending beyond technical aspects and considering contextual elements, including public management, agency characteristics, and individual involvement can assist the public sector in effectively embracing and applying AI technologies (van Noordt & Misuraca, 2022). Reliability in the public sector is critical due to assessing risk acceptability and accountability in decision-making processes (Kindzeka, 2023; Loukis et al., 2020). Concerns regarding job displacement and the need for human oversight also remain prevalent (Marr, 2018).

Rawashdeh (2023) discovered a significant linkage between AI adoption in accounting and job displacement, which propounded that the ability of AI to automate tasks (data analyses and repetitive work) would lead employers to integrate AI for cost-saving and productivity enhancement purposes. The finding also postulated potential job losses, especially for accountants whose roles involved the aforementioned tasks. The finding also corresponds to the contemporary belief that AI will simultaneously create alternative jobs while rendering existing accounting positions obsolete. Accordingly, regulations, such as the recently passed European AI Act 2024, seek to mitigate risks associated with human interaction and AI. Moreover, effective human oversight (Sterz et al., 2024) requires four (4) key qualities, namely (a) causal power to influence the system and corresponding outcomes, (b) access to relevant information, (c) self-control, and (d) alignment with respective roles, which can aid in establishing user trust and fostering user acceptance to ensure successful implementation (Maican et al., 2021; Rana et al., 2015). While more research on AI adoption in accounting has been observed,

the focus has primarily been on private corporations (Lee & Tajudeen, 2020). Limited findings on the specific context of public sector accounting and the unique challenges (Amalia, 2023) may become a significant concern when governments worldwide actively promote AI integration across various sectors, including public finance (Workday, 2021). Therefore, comprehending public sector accountants' preparedness for AI adoption is pivotal to ensuring a smooth transition while maximising the benefits of AI for governmental accounting practices.

Sustainable implementation necessitates dialogue, deliberation, and collaboration among multiple stakeholders to guarantee an ethical transformation and efficacious AI governance (Leikas et al., 2022). Furthermore, engaging developers, decision-makers, deployers, end users, and the general public in the AI implementation process enables public sector organisations to promote innovation and ensure the responsible utilisation of AI technologies (Leikas et al., 2022; Samsurijan et al., 2022; Selten & Klievink, 2023). The co-creation of toolkits to facilitate multi-stakeholder discussions can also improve transparency, accountability, and decision-making procedures (Kawakami et al., 2024; McBride et al., 2021). The Malaysian government has actively pursued initiatives to promote AI integration across various sectors, including public sector accounting. The national AI roadmap emphasises a collaborative approach, urging governmental agencies, industries, academia, and society to effectively collaborate to deploy AI solutions for top national priorities (MOSTI, 2021). Therefore, the prioritisation requires exploring the preparedness of the public sector workforce, including accountants, to adapt to and leverage the latest technologies.

This study aims to address the identified gap in knowledge by investigating awareness and potential readiness for AI adoption among accountants in Malaysian government departments. We employ a quantitative survey approach utilising the UTAUT2 model to explore their current level of awareness, potential adoption willingness, and job security concerns regarding AI in their daily tasks. Focusing on public sector accountants and their specific context within the Malaysian government's AI initiatives, this research offers valuable insights that can inform future policy decisions and capacity-building programs to facilitate a smooth and successful transition towards AI-powered accounting practices in Malaysia's public sector. Performance expectancy, which refers to the belief in the technology's usefulness, is identified as a significant predictor of technology adoption in various contexts (Venkatesh et al., 2012). In the context of AI adoption in accounting, accountants are likely to adopt AI if they perceive it to enhance their job performance by improving efficiency and accuracy. Effort expectancy, or the perceived ease of use, also plays a crucial role in technology adoption. However, research shows mixed results on its impact, suggesting that while ease of use is important, it may not always be the primary factor driving adoption decisions (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Therefore, consistent with previous research utilising UTAUT2, we propose the following hypotheses:

- H1: Performance expectancy positively influences the intention to adopt AI in Malaysian public sector accounting.
- H2: Effort expectancy positively influences the intention to adopt AI in Malaysian public sector accounting.

Another critical factor is social influence, which encompasses the impact of colleagues' opinions and organisational culture. In the public sector, where hierarchical structures and peer influence are significant, the attitudes and behaviours of colleagues can significantly affect an individual's intention to adopt new technologies (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Facilitating

conditions, referring to the availability of resources and support systems, are essential for enabling AI adoption. Organisational infrastructure, training programs, and technical support ensure accountants have the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively use AI systems (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Hence, our subsequent hypotheses are stated as follows:

- H3: Social influence positively influences the intention to adopt AI in Malaysian public sector accounting.
- H4: Facilitating conditions positively influence the intention to adopt AI in Malaysian public sector accounting.

Hedonic motivation refers to the fun or pleasure derived from using technology. It is an intrinsic motivator that significantly influences technology acceptance and use, particularly in contexts where the technology offers enjoyable experiences (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Research has shown that hedonic motivation can strongly predict behavioural intention to use technology, especially in non-work-related contexts where enjoyment plays a crucial role (Brown & Venkatesh, 2005; Venkatesh et al., 2012). In addition, habit refers to the extent to which people tend to perform behaviours automatically because of learning. It reflects how individuals have become accustomed to using technology as part of their routine (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Habit is a significant predictor of technology use, often mediating the relationship between behavioural intention and actual usage (Limayem et al., 2007; Venkatesh et al., 2012).

Therefore, our final hypotheses are:

- H5: Hedonic motivation positively influences the intention to adopt AI in Malaysian public sector accounting.
- H6: Habit positively influences the intention to adopt AI in Malaysian public sector accounting.

This literature review provides a foundational understanding of AI adoption in accounting, highlighting the potential benefits, existing frameworks for understanding user acceptance, and the limited research on public sector adoption. By focusing on the specific context of Malaysian public sector accountants, this study contributes to the ongoing dialogue on AI and its potential to transform the accounting profession in a government setting.

3.0 Research Design

The current study utilised a quantitative research design through a web-based survey to assess the awareness and potential readiness for AI adoption among Malaysian public sector accountants.

3.1 Participants

The target population included accountants between W21 and W54 job grades in Malaysian governmental departments. A representative sample was ensured and data collection was facilitated by administering the survey with the Institut Perakaunan Negara (IPN) in June 2024. The IPN assisted in distributing the survey to relevant members within the targeted governmental departments to increase the study's reach and credibility.

3.2 Research Instruments

This study employed a web-based survey instrument to assess the awareness and potential readiness for AI adoption among Malaysian governmental accountants. The questionnaire was developed based on the well-established UTAUT2 by Venkatesh et al. (2003), who explored various factors influencing technology adoption intentions (AI-Okaily et al., 2023; Ismatullaev & Kim, 2022; Razzak & Jassem, 2021; Mohd Thas Thaker et al., 2021). The survey incorporated several key factors. Specifically, performance expectancy (PE) was measured by assessing accountants' beliefs about the capability of AI to enhance job performance and efficiency via the perception of benefits and the overall usefulness of AI in daily tasks. Effort expectancy (EE) was appraised by determining the perceptions of difficulty or complexity in applying AI-powered accounting tools. The dimension reflected the perceived ease of use and learning of AI systems. Meanwhile, the social influence (SI) factor was evaluated by examining the extent to which accountants perceived encouragement or discouragement by colleagues, superiors, and professional networks to adopt AI, which captured the impact of social circles on technology adoption. Facilitating conditions (FC) were gauged by investigating the perception of whether belonging organisations provided the necessary resources, technical support, and infrastructure for successful AI adoption. The variable highlighted the perceived availability of the aforementioned factors. Hedonic motivation (HM) was measured by determining the degree to which accountants perceived AI as an enjoyable or stimulating instrument for performing daily tasks. The dimension represents the enjoyment and fun derived from utilising an alternative technology. Habit (HAB), a relevant factor in technology adoption theories, was also assessed, although the factor was not initially included in the UTAUT2. Particularly, the variable explored the level of accountants' developed routines or habits that might significantly impact the AI adoption willingness. The intention to adopt AI (INT), the core dependent variable, reflected accountants' willingness and intention to employ AI in daily work.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The specific population of accountants employed between the W21 and W54 job grades in Malaysian public sector organisations was targeted. The IPN aided in distributing the web-based survey to relevant members working within the targeted governmental departments, which significantly elevated the reach and credibility of the study. The one-month data collection period ensured a sufficient timeframe for acquiring a meaningful sample size. The collected data underwent partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), which is highly suitable for investigating complex relationships between multiple variables, including latent constructs (Hair et al., 2021). The procedure can be summarised in three (3) key stages:

- i. The initial stage involved the measurement model assessment, which focused on evaluating the reliability and validity of the scales employed to represent the study constructs. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) were utilised to assess internal consistency, whereas convergent validity was appraised through average variance extracted (AVE) scores. The stage ensured adequate accuracy for the measures employed to explore the intended constructs.

- ii. The focus shifted to analysing the hypothesised relationships between the constructs outlined in the UTAUT2 and the additional factor of habit via the structural model assessment after establishing the measurement model. Path coefficients and significance levels were utilised to evaluate the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables, which assisted in understanding the degree of impact of the identified factors on public sector accountants' AI adoption intention.
- iii. While conventional PLS-SEM assessed model fit through indices, such as R-squared (R^2) and normed fit index (NFI), the present study prioritised appraising the explanatory and predictive power of the research model. The difference reflected the PLS-SEM objective in developing robust models that could effectively explain relationships between variables and predict future outcomes. The R^2 value of each endogenous construct and path coefficients indicated the strength of relationships by serving as crucial indicators of explanatory power. Two (2) other techniques, including blindfolding and effect sizes (f^2), which predict values for a subset of the data, were also employed to compare the values of both techniques with actual values to estimate predictive accuracy.

Resultantly, the PLS-SEM analysis offered significant insights into the factors contributing to the awareness and potential readiness for AI adoption among Malaysian public sector accountants.

4.0 Findings

The current section presents the key findings derived from the data collected through the web-based survey. A total of 167 usable responses were obtained from the targeted population. The PLS-SEM was conducted to assess the factors influencing public sector accountants' awareness and potential readiness for AI adoption. Table 1 summarises the key demographic characteristics of the respondents. Specifically, a majority of respondents were females (68%), with a strong presence of experienced professionals (58% with over 16 years of experience). The most common educational background was a bachelor's degree (47%), and job grades ranged from W19 to W54, with the highest concentration being W41 and W48 (32%). All respondents were employed in various Malaysian governmental departments, which reflected the successful targeting of the intended population (W21 to W54 job grades). Most respondents exhibited a wide range of accounting experience, with tenures varying from one (1) to over 16 years. The majority (78%) possessed at least 11 years of public sector experience, demonstrating a robust accounting knowledge foundation within the sample.

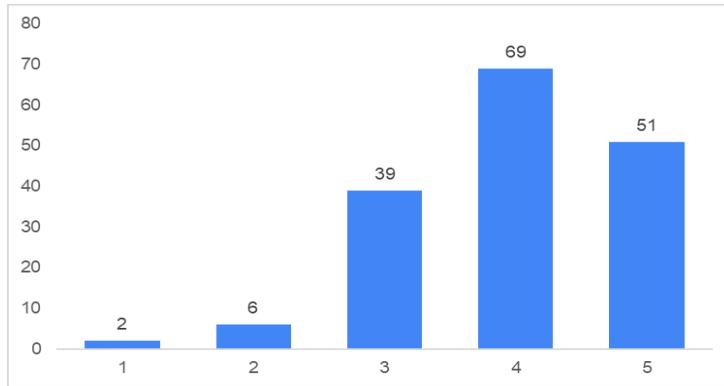
Table 1: Respondents' Descriptive Statistics

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	53	32
Female	114	68
Total	167	100
Education		
Certificate	21	13
Diploma	30	18
Bachelor's Degree	78	47
Master's or Professional	34	20
Ph.D.	4	2
Total	167	100
Experience		
0 to 2 years	5	3
3 to 5 years	10	6
6 to 10 years	21	13
11 to 15 years	34	20
16 years and above	97	58
Total	167	100
Accountant Job Grade		
W19 to W22	35	21
W26 to W36	41	25
W41 to W48	54	32
W52 to W54	37	22
Total	167	100

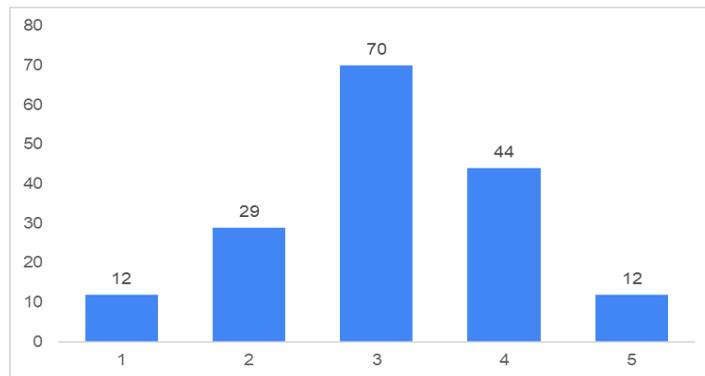
4.1 AI Awareness in Accounting

This section uses three (3) survey questions to explore the awareness level regarding AI features in accounting-related functions. The histograms portray a potential knowledge gap, wherein most respondents were highly aware of AI features while only a certain proportion of respondents were moderately familiar with AI accounting features and had applied AI features in current jobs. The findings suggested that a significant proportion of the respondents possessed limited knowledge about the integration process of AI into accounting practices. Hence, the potential requirement exists for implementing educational initiatives and awareness programmes to elevate AI understanding and adoption within the accounting domain. Meanwhile, approximately one-third of the respondents indicated that the current accounting systems contained several AI functionalities. Table 2 presents a ranking of the employed AI functionalities, arranged in order of frequency of usage. Notably, the functionalities were rated based on respondents' perceptions without being independently verified. Nevertheless, bank reconciliation automation was the most prevalent AI function employed by respondents (35%), followed by account receivables ageing analysis (22%). Anomaly detection within the general ledger was also utilised at a 19% rate while forecasting tasks, including inventory usage and sales, which demonstrated lower adoption rates (11% and 4%, respectively). The findings

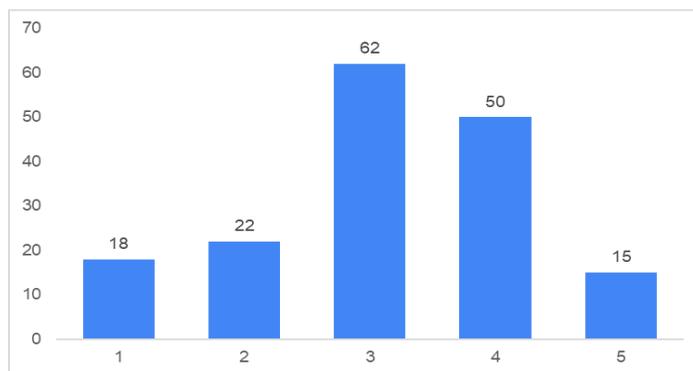
propounded that the low usage level for sales forecasting was due to the limited sales function in most governmental departments. The overall trend highlighted the focus on leveraging AI to automate well-defined tasks in accounting practices.



Awareness Regarding AI Features in Accounting-Related Functions



Familiarity with AI Features in Accounting



The Current Application of AI Features in Daily Tasks

Figure 1: Public sector Accountants' AI Awareness Levels

Table 2: AI Functionalities Employed in the Current Accounting Systems

AI Functionalities	Percentage (%)
Automating bank reconciliation	35
Performing account receivables ageing analysis	22
Detecting anomalies in the general ledger	19
Forecasting inventory usage	11
Forecasting future sales	4
Others	9

4.2 Anticipated Impacts and Potential Concerns

The results revealed a generally positive outlook on the future of AI in accounting. Most respondents (95%) agreed with the statements regarding the expansion of AI features in accounting systems and the potential to improve public sector accounting effectiveness. The finding postulated that Malaysian public sector accountants acknowledged the potential of AI to improve existing work practices and lead to higher efficiency and effectiveness, with the benefits listed in Table 3 expected to materialise in the future. Improved accuracy in financial reporting emerged as the top priority, with 64% agreeing that AI potentially engenders more reliable financial statements. Streamlining data analyses (78%) and time-savings on routine tasks (81%) were also highly anticipated, which propounded that Malaysian public sector accountants perceived AI as an instrumental tool to increase efficiency and accuracy within accounting practices. Therefore, continuous training and support programmes are integral to equipping public sector accountants with the necessary skills to work effectively with AI technologies. Nonetheless, the positive outlook does not necessarily negate potential concerns. Table 4 depicts the ranking of potential concerns based on the percentage of respondents who endorsed each option. A perceived over-reliance on AI was the top concern (75%), followed by security risks associated with AI usage (66%). While job displacement due to AI automation was a worry for 38% of the respondents, 34% of the respondents also expressed concerns about inadequate transparency in AI decision-making processes. The results posited that Malaysian public sector accountants were apprehensive about potential overdependence on AI and security vulnerabilities, whereas job displacement concerns were less pronounced.

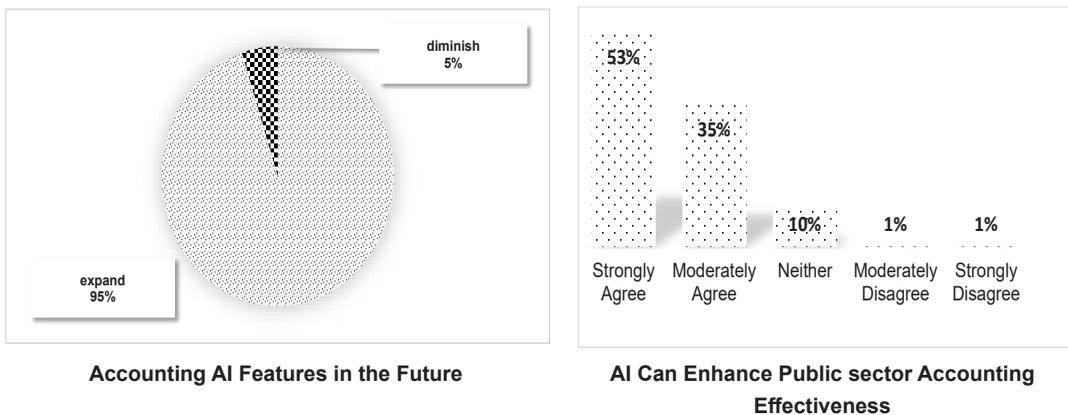


Figure 2: Perceived Expansion of AI Features

Table 3: Perceived Benefits of AI in Accounting Tasks

Benefits of AI	Percentage (%)
Time savings in routine tasks	81
Increased efficiency in data analyses	78
Improved accuracy in financial reporting	64
Enhanced decision-making capabilities	61

Table 4: Perceived Concerns Regarding AI Adoption

AI Functionalities	Percentage (%)
Over-reliance on AI	75
Security risks	66
Biases in AI algorithms	39
Job displacement	38
Lack of transparency	34

4.3 Factors Influencing AI Adoption Intentions

This section assesses the key factors contributing to Malaysian public sector accountants' AI adoption intentions in daily work practices. The PLS-SEM was performed to analyse the hypothesised relationships between the constructs delineated in the UTAUT2: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, and the intention to adopt AI.

4.3.1 Measurement Model Assessment

The initial measurement model assessment prioritised establishing reliability and validity to ensure the survey instrument accurately captured the intended constructs. Figure 3 illustrates that all constructs utilise reflective measures. Hair et al.'s (2021) recommended procedure was adhered to by evaluating individual item reliability within each construct, followed by assessing internal consistency, convergent validity (measuring the intended concept), and discriminant validity (ensuring the constructs are distinct). Item ee4 was initially included in the analysis to measure the EE construct. A high score would indicate a low EE level as the item was reverse-coded. The analysis also revealed that the item achieved a weak loading score (-0.398), which postulated that Item ee4 did not adequately represent the EE construct. The results in Table 5 support the decision, wherein all constructs exhibit acceptable reliability by surpassing the thresholds of 0.708 for indicator loadings, 0.70 for consistency reliability, and 0.50 for AVE after removing Item ee4. The discriminant validity assessment was performed by adhering to Hair et al.'s (2021) guide and accepting constructs with a heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio below 0.90. Table 6 portrays that all constructs fulfil the criterion.

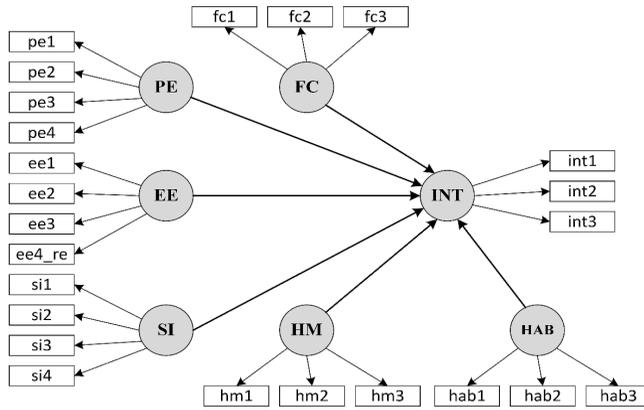


Figure 3: The Current Conceptual Framework

Table 5: Measurement Model Assessment

Constructs	Loadings	Rho _a	Rho _c	Alpha	AVE
PE		0.913	0.917	0.891	0.822
pe1	0.939				
pe2	0.941				
pe3	0.829				
pe4	0.826				
EE		0.884	0.891	0.812	0.737
ee1	0.927				
ee2	0.957				
ee3	0.660				
SI		0.916	0.921	0.888	0.746
si1	0.878				
si2	0.917				
si3	0.848				
si4	0.808				
FC		0.885	0.867	0.806	0.686
fc1	0.885				
fc2	0.828				
fc3	0.768				
HM		0.928	0.916	0.901	0.858
hm1	0.935				
hm2	0.910				
hm3	0.864				

Table 5: Measurement Model Assessment (continued)

Constructs	Loadings	RhoA	Rhoc	Alpha	AVE
HAB		0.867	0.875	0.861	0.828
hab1	0.963				
hab2	0.877				
hab3	0.850				
INT		0.765	0.859	0.756	0.670
int1	0.817				
int2	0.840				
int3	0.938				

Table 6: Discriminant Validity

	PE	EE	SI	FC	HM	HAB	INT
PE							
EE	0.830						
SI	0.692	0.745					
FC	0.587	0.636	0.875				
HM	0.855	0.870	0.749	0.749			
HAB	0.314	0.400	0.715	0.787	0.331		
INT	0.699	0.696	0.489	0.437	0.605	0.286	

4.3.2 Structural Model Assessment

The structural model assessment focused on examining the associations hypothesised between the constructs. Hair et al. (2021) developed a framework for structural model assessment in PLS-SEM by emphasising the importance of examining path coefficients, relevant significance, and the explanatory and predictive power of the model. The comprehensive evaluation ensures that the model reflects the theorised relationships and offers valuable insights for prediction and decision-making. Accordingly, the absence of multicollinearity was confirmed by ensuring that all variance inflation factors (VIFs) between constructs were below the recommended threshold of 5. Subsequently, the significance and relevance of each path coefficient and the explanatory power (R^2) were investigated. Table 7 portrays only PE emerges as a significant INT predictor among Malaysian public sector accountants. The findings suggest that the other predictors might not directly impact the intention. The model exhibited moderate explanatory power with an R^2 value of 0.379, which indicates a moderate proportion of the variance in the intention to adopt AI.

Table 7: Structural Model Assessment

	f^2	Path	t-value	Significance
PE → INT	0.051	0.400	3.356	Yes
EE → INT	0.013	0.172	1.390	No

Table 7: Structural Model Assessment (continued)

	<i>f</i> ²	Path	<i>t</i> -value	Significance
SI → INT	0.002	- 0.081	-0.723	No
FC → INT	0.000	0.015	0.112	No
HM → INT	0.006	0.097	0.745	No
HAB → INT	0.003	0.073	0.902	No

5.0 Conclusion

The present study sought to examine the factors contributing to Malaysian public sector accountants adoption of AI intention in existing accounting practices. The PLS-SEM approach was applied to analyse the relationships between the proposed constructs and the intention to adopt AI via the UTAUT2. Empirical data were collected through a survey questionnaire distributed to Malaysian public sector accountants. All UTAUT2 constructs, namely performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions, were hypothesised to positively influence the intention to employ AI. The model assessment corroborated the satisfactory reliability and validity of all constructs. Nonetheless, only performance expectancy proved a significant predictor, whereas other UTAUT2 constructs did not exert direct impacts. The model also demonstrated moderate explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.379$), which called for further research to appraise the contrasting results. The current study contains several limitations. Focusing only on UTAUT2 constructs might have overlooked other relevant factors contributing to AI adoption in the accounting domain. Variables like organisational readiness, regulatory compliance, or external pressures could offer a deeper understanding of AI adoption dynamics in public sector accounting. The study context was also specific to the Malaysian public sector, with unique cultural, organisational, and regulatory aspects that could influence the results, making the findings less applicable elsewhere. Lastly, this study's snapshot approach, collecting data at a specific time, does not consider the evolving nature of AI technology and public sector policies. Future researchers can assess potential variables moderating or mediating the correlations between the UTAUT2 constructs and the intention to adopt AI. For instance, perceived security concerns could act as a moderator, weakening the influences of other UTAUT2 constructs. Additional constructs relevant to the information technology (IT) or innovation context, such as perceived security, complexity, and compatibility, can also be evaluated in future studies. The factors may contain higher explanatory power in technology adoption settings. Moreover, exploring these factors could identify potential barriers to adoption that might not be immediately evident, offering insights into mitigating these obstacles. This holistic approach could pave the way for more effective strategies to promote AI adoption across different sectors and contexts. Finally, future research should consider the potential impact of organisational policies and external pressures, such as regulatory requirements or industry standards, which could significantly influence AI adoption.

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