**Covering Letter**

**Exploring the Chatbot usage intention-A mediating role of Chatbot initial trust**

Many companies have adopted chatbots with the aim of enhancing customer services. Companies see them as an innovative touchpoint offering conversation with prospects and customers (Chung, Ko, Joung, & Jin, 2018). According to (Shawar & Atwell, 2014) Chatbots are computational systems capable of engaging in conversations with humans through the use of natural language. Chatbots has recently become more popular due to technological advancements and the fact that texting has replaced face-to-face interactions as the principal method of both personal and professional communication (Araujo, 2023). Customer engagement can improve organizational performance and eventually lead to the development of a lasting business-customer connection (Yau et al., 2021). Numerous customer online engagement behaviors, such as social interactions, frequent website visits, as per (Jenneboer & Herrando, 2022), there are several ways in which word-of-mouth recommendations, reviews, knowledge sharing/storage, blogging, customer assistance, and legal action can greatly impact the brand. The significance of trust in enhancing customer relationships with new technologies has been highlighted in various research on technology adoption (Asadi, Abdullah, Safaei, & Nazir, 2019).. In this way, (Singh & Sinha, 2020) highlighted that a customer's willingness to adopt new technologies is greatly influenced by his level of trust.

**Conceptual Model**

