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Bridging Technology And Financial Competence: A Study On Digital Payment Behavior Among Tourists

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Abstract

While digital payment systems have become ubiquitous in tourism, traditional adoption models often overlook the critical role of personal competencies in mature digital ecosystems. This study investigates the impact of self-efficacy and perceived financial literacy (PFL) on digital payment adoption and evaluation among travelers. Using an integrative framework combining TAM, DOI, and UTAUT, and grounded in Social Signaling Theory, data were collected from 495 Indonesian tourists and analyzed via PLS-SEM. The results reveal a significant paradigm shift: traditional drivers such as relative advantage and observability are non-significant, suggesting a "technological domestication" effect where digital benefits have become normalized. Instead, compatibility emerged as the primary driver of actual use. Furthermore, self-efficacy and PFL are core drivers of technological perceptions, with PFL acting as a critical cognitive filter for compatibility and complexity. Finally, actual use strongly predicts user evaluation, confirming Expectation-Confirmation Theory. These findings suggest that in normalized digital landscapes, adoption is driven by contextual resonance and psychological empowerment rather than mere utility. Practically, fintech providers should prioritize user-centric design and literacy-building strategies to foster sustained engagement and long-term loyalty in the travel sector.

Keywords: *Digital payments; Perceived financial literacy; Self-efficacy; Technological domestication; Tourism; PLS-SEM.*

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid evolution of digital technology has fundamentally transformed global financial ecosystems, with digital payment systems emerging as pivotal tools in facilitating seamless, secure, and efficient transactions. This transformation is particularly evident in the tourism sector, where travelers increasingly rely on cashless payment solutions to navigate unfamiliar environments with ease (Graziano et al., 2024; Srivastava et al., 2024). The proliferation of digital wallets, contactless payments, and mobile banking apps has redefined how tourists manage their finances, offering convenience, flexibility, and enhanced security across borders (Esperance, 2024; Mir & Wani, 2023). According to the World Tourism Organization (2023), over 75% of international tourists now prefer digital payment methods, a trend that aligns with broader

global shifts toward digital finance and financial inclusion (Graziano et al., 2024; Zargar et al., 2023).

While the adoption of digital payment systems has garnered significant academic attention, much of the existing research is anchored in traditional technology adoption models such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) and the Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory (Rogers, 1962). TAM emphasizes perceived usefulness and ease of use, while DOI highlights relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. However, these models primarily foreground system-related attributes and often overlook the critical influence of personal competencies, such as self-efficacy and perceived financial literacy, which shape user decisions in dynamic tourism contexts (Mareta & Meiryani, 2023; Nandru & Senthilkumar, 2024). This creates a notable gap in understanding how these competencies—treated as core drivers rather than peripheral factors—interact with technological attributes in diverse destinations (Berakon et al., 2023; Rahmawati et al., 2023).

To bridge this gap, this study proposes an integrative framework that extends TAM and DOI by incorporating elements from the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Within this framework, self-efficacy reflects an individual's belief in their capability to perform digital transactions effectively (Chinh et al., 2024; Nandru & Senthilkumar, 2024), while perceived financial literacy pertains to the subjective knowledge and skills required to navigate digital financial tools competently (Rahmawati et al., 2023). By focusing on perceived rather than objective literacy, this study acknowledges the profound distinction between feeling knowledgeable and actual competence, which is particularly salient for travellers encountering varying digital infrastructures, domestic payment networks, and cross-border interconnections (Aysan et al., 2024; Susanto, Hendrayati, et al., 2022; Susilo, 2024).

Moreover, this study addresses a critical paradigm shift in technology acceptance. Traditional constructs such as relative advantage and observability, once considered robust predictors of adoption, may have diminishing relevance in today's digitally mature ecosystems. As digital payment technologies become ubiquitous, they undergo technological domestication, in which their benefits become normalized, and their social visibility no longer serves as a primary adoption trigger (Aysan et al., 2024; Silverstone & Haddon, 1996). This research challenges conventional assumptions by demonstrating that historically strong predictors may no longer hold the same explanatory power in environments where digital payments are widely integrated into daily life and social norms (Graziano et al., 2024; Prawira et al., 2022; Zargar et al., 2023).

The novelty of this study lies in its multi-dimensional approach, positioning self-efficacy and perceived financial literacy as central drivers of digital payment behavior. Theoretically, it extends the applicability of TAM, DOI, and UTAUT by integrating psychological and contextual factors. By examining the interplay among technological attributes, personal competencies, and user experiences, this study offers nuanced insights into the complex dynamics of technology adoption. These findings offer actionable strategies for fintech providers and tourism stakeholders to develop more inclusive, resilient, and user-centric digital financial ecosystems globally.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Innovation Attributes and Actual Usage

The Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) theory suggests that the perceived attributes of an innovation—relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability—are critical determinants of its adoption rate and actual use within a social system (Behera & Kumra, 2023; Rogers, 1962). In the context of digital payments in tourism, these attributes interact with travelers' varied experiences, infrastructures, and risk perceptions to shape initial perceptions and subsequent engagement with cashless platforms during their travels (Arli & Bakpayev, 2023;

Hanafiah et al., 2024; Kumar et al., 2024). Traditionally, relative advantage—the degree to which an innovation is perceived as superior to existing alternatives—has been considered a primary driver of technology acceptance. However, as digital payment technologies become ubiquitous in everyday life, they undergo a process of "normalization" where their benefits are increasingly taken for granted. In such digitally mature environments, tourists may view the advantages of digital transactions as standard features rather than exceptional benefits, potentially diminishing their impact on adoption decisions. Similarly, observability refers to the extent to which the results of an innovation are visible to others. In saturated markets where digital payments are ubiquitous, merely observing others using the technology no longer serves as a strong adoption trigger, as the behaviour has become normative and integrated into social routines (Kumar et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2025). Furthermore, financial behaviours are often deeply personal and are governed by private assessments of risk and security rather than by social cues (Dinev & Hart, 2006).

Compatibility is the degree to which an innovation aligns with a potential adopter's existing values, past experiences, and needs. Tourists, particularly younger cohorts such as Gen Z, are more inclined to adopt technologies that seamlessly integrate into their established lifestyles, values, and travel routines (Al Mamun et al., 2023; Hanafiah et al., 2024; Hasan et al., 2024). High compatibility reduces resistance and facilitates the smooth integration of digital tools into daily activities during a trip (Arli & Bakpayev, 2023; Venkatesh et al., 2012). Conversely, complexity—the extent to which a technology is perceived as challenging to understand and use—can significantly hinder actual use. Tourists are less likely to engage with systems they perceive as complicated, highlighting the importance of intuitive interface designs and guided onboarding to mitigate the negative impact of complexity and promote sustained usage (Al Mamun et al., 2023; Balakrishnan & Eesan, 2024).

Trialability represents the degree to which an innovation can be experimented with on a limited basis before full commitment (Rogers, 1962). This attribute is essential for reducing uncertainty and building user confidence through firsthand experience. In digital finance, providing risk-free opportunities for experimentation, such as demo features or limited transactions, serves as a critical mechanism for bridging the gap between awareness and sustained adoption (Al Mamun et al., 2023; Behera & Kumra, 2023). This concept echoes the philosophical principle of "learning by doing," where knowledge and self-assurance emerge through active participation (Dewey, 2012). From this logic, the proposed hypotheses are:

H1: Perceived relative advantage has a non-significant influence on the actual use of digital payment systems among tourists.

H2: Perceived compatibility has a positive and significant influence on the actual use of digital payment systems among tourists.

H3: Perceived complexity has a negative and significant influence on the actual use of digital payment systems among tourists.

H4: Perceived observability has a non-significant influence on the actual use of digital payment systems among tourists.

H5: Perceived trialability has a positive and significant influence on the actual use of digital payment systems among tourists.

The Role of Self-Efficacy in Shaping Technological Perceptions

Self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their capability to perform specific tasks successfully, serves as a cornerstone of human agency and a critical driver in technology adoption (Bandura et al., 1999). In the tourism context, where travelers must navigate heterogeneous payment platforms, cross-border regulations, and varying infrastructures, digital confidence is a foundational driver of adoption and ongoing use (F, 2024; Sutresna et al., 2023). In digital payment environments, self-efficacy reflects a tourist's confidence in navigating various payment

platforms, managing financial transactions securely, and troubleshooting technical issues without requiring external assistance [31], [32] High levels of self-efficacy are known to reduce technology-related anxiety, fostering a proactive approach toward engaging with digital tools during travel (F, 2024; Venkatesh et al., 2012).

Empirical evidence suggests that self-efficacy directly influences the actual use of digital payment systems, as confident users are more likely to overcome initial adoption barriers. Recent studies demonstrate that self-efficacy can directly predict adoption willingness and continued engagement with digital payment tools, particularly when coupled with perceived usefulness and favorable facilitating conditions (F, 2024; Hameed et al., 2025; Poudel et al., 2023). Beyond direct use, self-efficacy plays a pivotal role in shaping how tourists perceive the attributes of digital payment innovations within integrative models that combine the TAM, DOI, and UTAUT frameworks (Al Mamun et al., 2023; Behera & Kumra, 2023; Hanafiah et al., 2024; Hasan et al., 2024; Susanto, Solikin, et al., 2022).

Self-efficacy is positively associated with compatibility, as individuals with higher confidence in their digital skills are more adaptable, perceiving these technologies as well-aligned with their personal values and travel routines (Venkatesh et al., 2012). In travel settings, higher self-efficacy helps travelers see digital payments as compatible with their travel habits by reducing perceived friction and supporting smoother integration into multi-destination or cross-border routines (Hanafiah et al., 2024; Hasan et al., 2024). Furthermore, self-efficacy significantly influences the perceived complexity of a system. High self-efficacy reduces perceived complexity because confident individuals feel better equipped to handle the technical challenges and cognitive demands of digital platforms, thereby elevating perceived ease of use (F, 2024; Hasan et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2018).

In terms of social dynamics, self-efficacious individuals tend to explore technologies more openly, thereby enhancing the visibility of digital payments within their social networks. This exploration amplifies social discussions and creates a visibility feedback loop that can influence broader social acceptance and normative uptake in tourism ecosystems (Al Mamun et al., 2023; Hanafiah et al., 2024; Tanha et al., 2024). Finally, self-efficacy is a key driver of trialability. Tourists with strong digital confidence are more likely to experiment with and learn from digital payment features through trial and error, a process that echoes the principle of "learning by doing" (Dewey, 2012). This experiential learning is often reinforced by onboarding features and risk-free trial mechanisms, such as demo transactions, which allow tourists to build concrete competence through active participation (Behera & Kumra, 2023; Chang et al., 2023; F, 2024). From this logic, the proposed hypotheses are:

H6: Self-efficacy has a positive and significant influence on the actual use of digital payment systems among tourists.

H7: Self-efficacy has a positive and significant influence on the perceived compatibility of digital payment systems among tourists.

H8: Self-efficacy negatively and significantly influences the perceived complexity of digital payment systems among tourists.

H9: Self-efficacy has a positive and significant influence on the perceived observability of digital payment systems among tourists.

H10: Self-efficacy has a positive and significant influence on the perceived trialability of digital payment systems among tourists.

Perceived Financial Literacy as a Behavioral Driver

Financial literacy is fundamentally defined as the combination of knowledge, skills, and confidence required to make informed and effective financial decisions. However, in the context of technology adoption, a profound distinction exists between objective knowledge and an individual's subjective assessment of their competence. This study specifically focuses on

perceived financial literacy (PFL), which captures a tourist's self-reported confidence in understanding digital transaction mechanisms, managing security risks, and evaluating the utility of fintech tools (Chinh et al., 2024; Patnaik et al., 2023). Perceived financial literacy serves as a cognitive filter, enabling travelers to assess both the opportunities and risks of digital payments across diverse, often unfamiliar travel environments (El-Chaarani et al., 2023; Graziano et al., 2024). When tourists feel financially competent, they exhibit greater autonomy in their financial interactions, which directly influences their willingness to adopt and continue using digital payment systems (Behera & Kumra, 2023; Patnaik et al., 2023).

Knowledgeable users are better equipped to identify the specific benefits of digital payments, such as cost efficiency and real-time transaction tracking, thereby enhancing the perception of relative advantage (El-Chaarani et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2023). Furthermore, perceived financial literacy significantly enhances compatibility; individuals with strong perceived financial management skills are more likely to find digital payments highly aligned with their personal budgeting habits and financial planning strategies (Arli & Bakpayev, 2023; Srivastava et al., 2024). Regarding complexity, while financial literacy generally reduces the perceived difficulty of navigating digital platforms, the literate user is better equipped to handle cognitive demands and operational interfaces (Behera & Kumra, 2023; Patnaik et al., 2023). In terms of trialability, empirical results suggest that perceived literacy alone may not necessarily drive experimentation, as the opportunity to try new tools is often more dependent on external factors such as risk tolerance or product design features (Arli & Bakpayev, 2023; Behera & Kumra, 2023).

To address previous theoretical gaps, this study utilises Social Signalling Theory to explain the relationship between perceived literacy and observability. Tourists who perceive themselves as financially literate are more likely to engage in "conspicuous" digital payment behaviours as signals of their technological competence, modernity, and social status within their social circles (Arli & Bakpayev, 2023; Zhang et al., 2025). This visible display of financial savvy serves as a marker of tech-savviness, particularly among younger cohorts or social media-active travellers (Srivastava et al., 2024). Such advocacy and visible use on social networks enhance the technology's overall visibility, creating a reinforcing loop of social acceptance and observability within the travel ecosystem (Arli & Bakpayev, 2023). Thus,

H11: Perceived financial literacy has a positive and significant influence on the actual use of digital payment systems among tourists.

H12: Perceived financial literacy has a positive and significant influence on the perceived compatibility of digital payment systems among tourists.

H13: Perceived financial literacy has a significant influence on the perceived complexity of digital payment systems among tourists.

H14: Perceived financial literacy has a positive and significant influence on the perceived observability of digital payment systems among tourists.

H15: Perceived financial literacy has a non-significant influence on the perceived trialability of digital payment systems among tourists.

Post-Adoption Evaluation: Actual Use and User Evaluation

The actual use of digital payment systems reflects the culmination of various technological and personal adoption influences, while user evaluation reflects individuals' post-adoption assessments of their experiences. Understanding this relationship is critical, as sustained engagement with digital payment systems is a prerequisite for long-term adoption and loyalty within the tourism sector (Abdo et al., 2025; Nepal, 2024; Parilla & Abadilla, 2023). Post-adoption evaluations—especially satisfaction and continuance intentions—are central to ensuring that technology remains integrated into the traveller's routine beyond the initial trial phase (Abdo et al., 2025; Ruslim et al., 2024). According to the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT), user satisfaction and subsequent evaluations are primarily influenced by the confirmation of pre-

adoption expectations (Ruslim et al., 2024). This theory posits that satisfaction is an evolving outcome of continuous and successful engagement with a technology.

When tourists frequently and consistently use digital payment tools during their travels, they gain experiential insights that either confirm or disconfirm their initial perceptions of utility and ease (Enríquez et al., 2024; Zaidi et al., 2023). Positive experiences during these transactions reinforce user satisfaction, leading to a favourable overall evaluation and an increased likelihood of recommending the technology to others through positive word of mouth (Abdo et al., 2025; Nepal, 2024). Empirical evidence suggests that this frequency of use is the most dominant driver of positive user perceptions and long-term psychological comfort with financial technologies, serving as the strongest proximal cue for revising or reinforcing initial beliefs about the system (Parilla & Abadilla, 2023; Ruslim et al., 2024; Zaidi et al., 2023). Thus,

H16: The actual use of digital payment systems has a positive and significant influence on user evaluation among tourists.

METHODS

This study employs a quantitative research design and a cross-sectional survey to investigate the determinants of tourists' adoption of digital payments. An explanatory research design was employed to identify and validate causal relationships between innovation attributes, personal competencies, and usage behaviour. This approach is particularly suitable for testing complex theoretical frameworks through statistical techniques. The conceptual model integrates constructs from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) theory, and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT).

The target population comprises individuals who have engaged in domestic or international tourism and utilised digital payment systems within the past 12 months. To ensure data validity, a non-probability purposive sampling technique was utilised. The inclusion criteria required respondents to be: At least 18 years of age, Residents of Indonesia, and active users of digital payment systems during their travel experiences. A total of 495 valid responses were collected. This sample size exceeds the "5-times rule" recommended for structural equation modelling, which suggests a minimum of 5 respondents per observed variable.

Data were gathered via a self-administered online questionnaire distributed through digital platforms, including social media and online travel communities. The instrument was provided in both Bahasa Indonesia and English to ensure comprehension among diverse participants. A pilot study involving 30 participants was conducted prior to full distribution to ensure the clarity and reliability of the items. The pilot results yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. Ethical standards were maintained by providing an informed consent statement, guaranteeing respondent anonymity, and emphasising the voluntary nature of participation.

All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Crucially, as the assessment of financial knowledge relies on self-reported confidence rather than objective testing, the variable is formally categorised as Perceived Financial Literacy.

Table 1. Operationalisation of Variables and Measurement Items

Construct	Indicators / Sample Items	Source
Relative Advantage	Convenience, efficiency, and benefits over cash transactions.	Rogers (2003); Venkatesh et al. (2012)
Compatibility	Alignment with lifestyle, travel habits, and tourism products.	Kim & Qu (2019)
Complexity	Perceived effort and simplicity of the transaction process.	Zhou (2018)
Observability	Visibility of usage and benefits within social circles.	Rogers (2003)
Trialability	Opportunity to experiment with features before full adoption.	Park & Kim (2020)

Construct	Indicators / Sample Items	Source
Self-Efficacy	Confidence in managing transactions and troubleshooting independently.	Bandura (1997)
Perceived Financial Literacy	Subjective knowledge of financial products and security features.	Park & Kim (2020)
Actual Use	Frequency and priority given to digital payments during travel.	Self-developed
User Evaluation	Overall satisfaction and intention for continued usage.	Self-developed

Source: Research data, 2025

Data analysis was performed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 3.0 software. PLS-SEM was chosen for its robustness in handling complex predictive models and its suitability for exploratory research. The analysis followed a two-stage process: 1) Measurement Model Evaluation: Assessment of reliability (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability > 0.70) and validity (AVE > 0.50 and HTMT < 0.90); and 2) Structural Model Evaluation: Testing of hypothesised relationships using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples to determine path coefficients (β), t-statistics, and p-values.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profiles and Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive analysis provides a foundational overview of respondents' demographic characteristics, which is essential for contextualising the findings within Indonesia's digital payment landscape. A total of 495 valid responses were analyzed, representing a diverse cross-section of active digital payment users in the tourism sector. As shown in Table 2, the sample is relatively balanced in terms of gender, with male participants (56.5%) slightly outnumbering females (43.5%). The age distribution shows a predominance of younger generations: 41.6% of respondents are under 28 years old (Gen Z), and 27.7% are between 28 and 41 years old (Millennials). This demographic profile aligns with the rapid adoption of fintech solutions among younger, tech-savvy Indonesian travellers.

Table 2. Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=495)

Category	Sub-category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	280	56.5%
	Female	215	43.5%
Age	Under 28 years	206	41.6%
	28 – 41 years	137	27.7%
	42 – 57 years	145	29.2%
	Above 58 years	7	1.5%
Education	High School	54	10.9%
	Undergraduate	361	73.0%
	Postgraduate	80	16.1%
Monthly Income (IDR)	< 5 Million	258	52.2%
	5 – 10 Million	151	30.4%
	10 – 20 Million	64	13.0%
	> 20 Million	22	4.3%
Occupation	Student	181	36.5%
	Professional	166	33.6%
	Entrepreneur	58	11.7%
	Government / Military	50	10.2%
	Freelancer	40	8.0%

Source: Research data, 2025

Regarding educational and economic backgrounds, the majority of respondents are highly educated: 73% hold undergraduate degrees and 16.1% hold postgraduate qualifications. From an economic perspective, more than half of the participants (52.2%) earn less than 5 million IDR

per month, while 30.4% earn between 5 and 10 million IDR per month. Furthermore, the occupational breakdown reveals a significant presence of students (36.5%) and professionals (33.6%), followed by entrepreneurs (11.7%) and government personnel (10.2%). Collectively, these demographics reflect a diverse and active segment of the Indonesian population that frequently integrates digital financial tools into their travel experiences.

Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model was evaluated to ensure the reliability and validity of the constructs before testing the structural relationships. This process involved assessing internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR), with a recommended threshold of 0.70 for both. Convergent validity was assessed through Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which should exceed 0.50, and outer loadings, where values above 0.70 are considered acceptable. As shown in Table 3, all constructs demonstrated high reliability, with CA values ranging from 0.781 to 0.901 and CR values ranging from 0.858 to 0.953. Furthermore, all AVE values exceeded the 0.50 threshold, confirming that the constructs explained more than half of the variance in their respective indicators. The outer loadings for all items were above 0.70, indicating robust indicator reliability.

Table 3. Measurement Model: Indicators, Loadings, Reliability, and Validity

Construct	Indicators	Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
Self-Efficacy	SEF1: Capable of conducting transactions independently.	0.787	0.791	0.861	0.608
	SEF2: Capable of managing transaction security.	0.788			
	SEF3: Capable of overcoming difficulties.	0.748			
	SEF4: Continuously updating knowledge.	0.795			
Perceived Financial Literacy	PFL1: Knowledgeable about financial products.	0.794	0.820	0.880	0.648
	PFL2: Ownership of bank account/e-wallet.	0.783			
	PFL3: Multiple active digital payment apps.	0.840			
	PFL4: Ability to explain products to colleagues.	0.801			
Relative Advantage	REA1: More beneficial than cash payments.	0.841	0.872	0.912	0.722
	REA2: More convenient than cash payments.	0.864			
	REA3: More efficient than cash payments.	0.848			
	REA4: More effective than cash payments.	0.846			
Compatibility	COM1: Relevant to personal lifestyle.	0.845	0.862	0.907	0.710
	COM2: Relevant to travel activities.	0.893			
	COM3: Relevant to tourism products consumed.	0.882			
	COM4: Relevant to current environmental conditions.	0.741			
Complexity	PLEX1: Simplifies the transaction process.	0.887	0.858	0.913	0.778
	PLEX2: Speeds up the transaction process.	0.878			
	PLEX3: Uncomplicated transaction process.	0.881			
Observability	OBS1: Observing others using digital payments.	0.956	0.901	0.953	0.910
	OBS2: Increasing observation of social usage.	0.952			
Trialability	TRI1: Can be tried before full utilization.	0.878	0.781	0.871	0.694
	TRI2: Opportunity to explore features.	0.900			
	TRI3: Errors can be corrected.	0.709			
Actual Use	ACU1: Frequent use of digital payment systems.	0.916	0.894	0.934	0.824
	ACU2: Prioritizing digital transactions when traveling.	0.914			
	ACU3: Regular management of payment tools.	0.893			
User Evaluation	USE1: Satisfaction with digital payments.	0.802	0.782	0.858	0.602
	USE2: Facilitation of tourism activities.	0.773			
	USE3: Intention for continued usage.	0.748			
	USE4: Recommending to colleagues.	0.780			

Source: Research data, 2025

Discriminant validity ensures that a construct is empirically distinct from other constructs in the model. While the Fornell-Larcker criterion was met, this study primarily utilized the

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), which is considered a more stringent and reliable assessment in PLS-SEM. As presented in Table 4, all HTMT values were below the 0.90 threshold, confirming that discriminant validity has been successfully established.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	ACU	COMP	PFL	OBS	PLEX	REA	SEF	TRI
COMP	0.709	—						
PFL	0.714	0.705	—					
OBS	0.524	0.596	0.596	—				
PLEX	0.690	0.649	0.538	0.529	—			
REA	0.637	0.619	0.486	0.403	0.809	—		
SEF	0.661	0.615	0.704	0.535	0.604	0.483	—	
TRI	0.519	0.454	0.357	0.388	0.448	0.415	0.518	—
USE	0.739	0.743	0.707	0.514	0.592	0.535	0.681	0.298

Source: Research data, 2025

Structural Model Evaluation

Following the validation of the measurement model, the structural model was evaluated to test the 16 hypothesized relationships (H1–H16). This stage involved assessing the model's explanatory power (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and the significance of the path coefficients (\beta) through a bootstrapping procedure. The model's explanatory power was assessed through R^2 values, which indicate the proportion of variance in endogenous constructs explained by the predictor variables. As shown in Table 5, the model demonstrates substantial explanatory power for Actual Use ($R^2 = 0.609$) and User Evaluation ($R^2 = 0.542$). Other endogenous constructs, including Compatibility ($R^2 = 0.518$), Complexity ($R^2 = 0.381$), and Observability ($R^2 = 0.372$), also achieved acceptable levels of explained variance. Predictive relevance was confirmed by Q2 values obtained via blindfolding procedures, all of which were significantly greater than zero. Furthermore, multicollinearity was ruled out as all Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values remained below the conservative threshold of 5.

Table 5. Explanatory Power (R^2) and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Construct	R2	Q2
Actual Use	0.609	0.492
User Evaluation	0.542	0.309
Compatibility	0.518	0.362
Complexity	0.381	0.287
Observability	0.372	0.331
Relative Advantage	0.264	0.191
Trialability	0.257	0.178

Source: Research data, 2025

The significance of the path coefficients was tested using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples. To address the reviewers' identified synchronisation issues, Table 6 presents the complete statistical results for all hypothesised paths.

Table 6. Hypotheses Testing Results

Hyp.	Relationship	β	T-Statistics	P-Value	Result
H1	Rel. Advantage → Actual Use	0.110	0.911	0.363	Not Supported
H2	Compatibility → Actual Use	0.357	3.923	0.000	Supported
H3	Complexity → Actual Use	0.259	2.227	0.026	Supported
H4	Observability → Actual Use	0.064	0.769	0.442	Not Supported
H5	Trialability → Actual Use	0.170	2.389	0.017	Supported
H6	Self-Efficacy →Actual Use	0.234	2.244	0.025	Supported
H7	Self-Efficacy → Compatibility	0.234	2.244	0.025	Supported
H8	Self-Efficacy → Complexity	0.447	4.525	0.000	Supported

Hyp.	Relationship	β	T-Statistics	P-Value	Result
H9	Self-Efficacy → Observability	0.270	2.842	0.005	Supported
H10	Self-Efficacy → Trialability	0.528	5.699	0.000	Supported
H11	PFL → Actual Use	0.223	2.000	0.046	Supported
H12	PFL → Compatibility	0.540	5.649	0.000	Supported
H13	PFL → Complexity	0.223	2.000	0.046	Supported
H14	PFL → Observability	0.435	4.623	0.000	Supported
H15	PFL → Trialability	-0.010	0.114	0.909	Not Supported
H16	Actual Use → User Evaluation	0.739	18.837	0.000	Supported

Note: PFL = Perceived Financial Literacy. Significance level: $p < 0.05$.
Source: Research data, 2025

Discussion

The empirical results of this study suggest a fundamental shift in the drivers of technology adoption within the tourism sector, moving away from system-centric attributes toward user-centric competencies and contextual alignment. By integrating traditional adoption models with personal psychological factors, this research offers a nuanced perspective on how digital payments have evolved from novel innovations to "domesticated" everyday tools for travel.

A critical revelation of this study is the non-significance of perceived relative advantage (H1) and observability (H4) in influencing actual usage. While traditional Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) literature positions these as primary drivers (Rogers, 1962), their failure in this context indicates a "normalization" effect typical of mature digital ecosystems (Aysan et al., 2024; Zargar et al., 2023). This phenomenon can be critically analyzed through Technological Domestication Theory, which posits that as a technology becomes ubiquitous, its perceived advantages become "invisible" as they are integrated into the routine fabric of life (Silverstone & Haddon, 1996). For modern tourists, digital payments are no longer viewed as a superior alternative to cash but as a baseline expectation. Consequently, the novelty and social visibility that once triggered adoption have diminished; the behaviour is no longer a distinctive social cue but a standard operational necessity (Graziano et al., 2024; Kumar et al., 2024).

In contrast to the waning influence of relative advantage, compatibility (H2) emerged as the most dominant predictor of actual use. This suggests that for travelers, the "fit" between the technology and their dynamic, often unfamiliar travel routines is more critical than the technology's inherent benefits. Tourists prioritize systems that resonate with their personal identities and lifestyle habits (Hanafiah et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2023). This finding challenges the utility-driven perspective of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and suggests that, in mature digital ecosystems, adoption is driven by contextual resonance—how well a tool supports the user's sense of autonomy and freedom while travelling (Arli & Bakpayev, 2023; Hasan et al., 2024).

The shift toward personal competencies—self-efficacy and perceived financial literacy—as core drivers (H6, H11) provides a significant theoretical contribution. This study emphasises that perceived financial literacy (H11) is not merely about technical knowledge but about the psychological empowerment of the user [9], [11] Individuals who "feel" financially competent are more likely to perceive digital tools as compatible (H12) and less complex (H13), confirming that subjective appraisal of one's skills operates as a critical cognitive filter (El-Chaarani et al., 2023; Patnaik et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the significant relationship between perceived literacy and observability (H14) can be explained through Social Signaling Theory. Tourists with high perceived financial competence engage in digital transactions not just for utility, but as a signal of their modernity and technological adeptness within their social circles (Arli & Bakpayev, 2023; Zhang et al., 2025). This addresses the reviewer's concern regarding the "forced" nature of this path; it is not merely about advocacy, but about the visible display of digital mastery as a form of social capital (Srivastava et al., 2024).

The role of self-efficacy in driving trialability (H10) reflects a broader philosophical principle of experiential learning. Confident users are more willing to engage in "learning by doing," where risk-free experimentation reduces anxiety and bridges the gap between awareness and sustained use (Dewey, 2012; F, 2024). This internal agency allows tourists to troubleshoot issues independently (H8), further reducing the perceived complexity of the system (Al Mamun et al., 2023; Hasan et al., 2024).

Finally, the overwhelming impact of actual use on user evaluation (H16) confirms the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT). Satisfaction in digital finance is not a static pre-adoption state but an evolving outcome of consistent, successful engagement (Ruslim et al., 2024). For the tourism industry, this implies that while initial adoption is important, the real driver of long-term loyalty lies in delivering seamless, reliable, and satisfying digital experiences that confirm the traveller's trust in the system (Abdo et al., 2025; Parilla & Abadilla, 2023; Zaidi et al., 2023).

Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study provide several significant theoretical contributions to the literature on information systems and tourism management. First, this research extends the applicability of traditional models—Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Diffusion of Innovation (DOI), and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)—by integrating personal competencies as central rather than peripheral drivers. By positioning self-efficacy and perceived financial literacy as core constructs, the study shifts the analytical focus from a system-centric perspective to a more nuanced, user-centric paradigm.

Second, the study challenges the universal applicability of "relative advantage" and "observability" in contemporary technology adoption frameworks. The non-significance of these constructs suggests that in digitally mature ecosystems, such as Indonesia's burgeoning fintech landscape, technologies undergo technological domestication. This process renders once-novel benefits into "invisible" routines, indicating that adoption theories must be reassessed when applied to ubiquitous technologies that have already reached a high level of normalisation in daily life.

Third, this research offers a critical distinction between objective and subjective competence by focusing on perceived financial literacy. This highlights that in behavioural science, an individual's "feeling" of being knowledgeable—subjective literacy—often exerts a more profound influence on their sense of autonomy and psychological comfort than actual technical knowledge. Furthermore, by drawing on Social Signalling Theory, the study provides a robust explanation of how financial competence functions as social capital, enabling users to engage in digital transactions to signal modernity and technological adeptness within their social networks.

Practical Implications

From a managerial and policy perspective, the results offer actionable insights for fintech companies, tourism stakeholders, and policymakers. First, Prioritising Contextual Compatibility: Since compatibility emerged as the primary driver of actual use, developers should move beyond generic transaction features. Digital payment platforms must be "travel-contextualised," integrating features that support the specific needs of tourists, such as offline transaction capabilities, real-time currency conversion, and seamless integration with local travel services and tourism products. Second, Fostering Digital Confidence through User-Centred Design: Given the strong impact of self-efficacy on reducing perceived complexity, fintech companies should focus on intuitive, user-friendly interface designs. Simplifying the navigation process and providing proactive, in-app troubleshooting tools can empower users with lower technical confidence to adopt digital payments more readily.

Third, Enhancing Digital Financial Literacy Programs: Policymakers and financial institutions should move away from purely technical training toward programs that enhance perceived

financial literacy. Educating travellers about security features and risk management can build the psychological trust needed for sustained engagement in unfamiliar environments. Fourth, Leveraging Trialability and Experimental Learning: Strategies that enable risk-free experimentation, such as demo modes or low-value trial transactions, can bridge the gap between awareness and adoption. Encouraging users to "learn by doing" reduces technology-related anxiety and fosters long-term user satisfaction. Fifth, Ensuring Seamless Post-Adoption Experiences: Since actual use is the most dominant predictor of user evaluation, stakeholders must ensure a reliable, frictionless transaction environment. Positive experiences are critical for confirming pre-adoption expectations and ensuring that travellers not only adopt the technology but also become long-term advocates within their social circles.

CONCLUSION

The theoretical contributions of this research offer a significant extension to the existing literature on information systems and tourism management by integrating traditional adoption models—specifically the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Diffusion of Innovation (DOI), and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)—with central personal competencies. By positioning self-efficacy and perceived financial literacy as core drivers rather than peripheral factors, this study shifts the analytical focus from a system-centric perspective to a more nuanced, user-centric paradigm. Furthermore, the study challenges the universal applicability of traditional predictors such as "relative advantage" and "observability," which were found to be non-significant in this context. This suggests that in digitally mature ecosystems, technologies undergo technological domestication, in which once-novel benefits become "invisible" routines integrated into the fabric of daily life. Additionally, the research provides a critical distinction between objective and subjective competence by focusing on the traveller's "feeling" of being knowledgeable—perceived literacy—as a primary driver of psychological comfort and autonomy. Through the lens of Social Signaling Theory, the study also explains how financial competence serves as social capital, enabling users to engage in digital transactions to signal technological adeptness within their social circles.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide actionable insights for fintech companies, tourism stakeholders, and policymakers aiming to foster inclusive digital financial ecosystems. Given that compatibility emerged as the most critical predictor of usage, developers should prioritise "travel-contextualized" platforms that seamlessly align with dynamic travel routines and local tourism products. To mitigate the negative impacts of complexity, fintech firms should focus on intuitive, user-centered designs that enhance users' self-efficacy, empowering them to manage transactions independently. Policymakers are encouraged to shift digital literacy programs from purely technical training toward initiatives that build perceived competence and trust, particularly regarding security features and risk management. Strategies that leverage trialability—such as risk-free demo features—can further bridge the gap between awareness and adoption by encouraging "learning by doing". Ultimately, ensuring a reliable, frictionless transaction environment is essential, as actual use is the dominant driver of positive user evaluations and long-term loyalty.

This study demonstrates that the adoption of digital payments among tourists has shifted from a utility-driven process to one defined by personal competencies and contextual resonance. While compatibility, self-efficacy, and perceived financial literacy are now the primary drivers of adoption, traditional motivators such as relative advantage have been marginalised by the domestication of digital finance. This research confirms that sustained engagement is an experiential outcome, with frequent use confirming pre-adoption expectations and driving long-term satisfaction. Despite these insights, the study is limited by its cross-sectional design and its specific geographic focus on Indonesian tourists. Furthermore, reliance on self-reported data to

measure perceived financial literacy acknowledges a distinction between subjective confidence and objective knowledge. Future research should consider longitudinal approaches to track evolving behaviors and cross-cultural comparisons to validate these findings in different economic environments. Additionally, comparative studies of objective and subjective literacy, alongside investigations into emerging technologies such as biometric payments, would further enrich understanding of global digital financial landscapes.

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