

# Improving Digital Financial Literacy and Fintech Utilization among Students through Education and Mentoring Programs at Lagos State University of Education Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

This community service program aimed to enhance digital financial literacy and promote the responsible use of financial technology (FinTech) among university students at Lagos State University of Education, Nigeria. The primary objective was to empower students with essential knowledge, skills, and ethical awareness needed to navigate digital financial technologies (DFINTECH) safely and effectively in their daily financial activities. The program adopted a participatory and educational-based approach that integrated capacity building, practical mentoring, and reflective evaluation. The method was implemented through four sequential stages: needs assessment, educational intervention, mentoring and practical engagement, and evaluation and reflection. The needs assessment identified students' levels of financial literacy, patterns of FinTech usage, and key challenges related to digital security and financial decision-making. Educational interventions were delivered through interactive workshops covering budgeting, saving, responsible borrowing, FinTech services, digital security, and ethical issues. This was followed by mentoring and hands-on activities that guided students in critically evaluating and responsibly using selected FinTech applications. Program effectiveness was assessed through feedback instruments, observations, and reflective discussions. The results indicate a noticeable improvement in students' understanding of digital financial concepts, awareness of financial risks, and confidence in using FinTech responsibly. Participants demonstrated increased critical thinking toward digital financial products and greater self-regulation in financial behavior. Overall, the program contributed positively to strengthening students' financial resilience and promoting sustainable and ethical engagement with digital financial technologies.

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## 1. Introduction

The rapid spread of digital financial technologies (DFINTECH) has fundamentally changed the international financial landscape, transforming how people access, use, and manage financial services. New trends in mobile computing, cloud computing, big data analytics, and artificial intelligence (AI) have increased the rate of digitalization of the financial system, allowing the popularization of mobile payments, digital wallets, peer-to-peer (P2P) lending networks, robotic advisory services, and AI-powered budgeting and credit-scoring apps (Gomber et al., 2020; Kou et al., 2021). Such advancements have led to lower transaction costs, improved efficiency in the services provided, and reduced barriers to formal financial inclusion, thereby increasing financial inclusion in developed and developing economies (Chen et al., 2022). Within this digital financial revolution, university students

have been placed at the center stage. Being digitally native, students are technologically prepared, intensively using their smartphones, and very active users of platform-based services (Ibrahim et al., 2021; Adeoye and Zhang, 2023). They have mobile-first lives and prefer smooth and customized financial products, which explains why they are early users of DFINTECH applications, and in many cases, they use digital platforms as their interaction point with financial services (Patel et al., 2023).

Therefore, DFINTECH use in the years of university education has a formative effect on future financial behavior, risk-involuntary attitude, and confidence in the digital financial ecosystem (Zhang and Mensah, 2023). Although the use has been on the rise, there are still concerns about whether the university students are financially literate enough to use DFINTECH in a responsible manner. The ability to perceive and interpret digital financial risks, and to classify financial literacy as a decisive factor, has also become a defining factor in digital finance outcomes (OECD, 2023). Although the DFINTECH platforms ease the process of accessing financial products, it can also hide the costs, terms and conditions of the contracts, and data governance practices, especially among unskilled users (Ahmed and Li, 2023). Recommendations based on algorithms and frictionless digital credit may further fuel impulsive behavior in money matters among the student population who has low financial literacy (Zhao and Adebayo, 2024).

The recent empirical research shows that low financial literacy in young adults is linked to such negative consequences as overspending on digital borrowing, inadequate savings behavior, and an increased vulnerability to fraud and deceit (Mensah and Adeyemi, 2024; Feedzai, 2023). Such threats are reinforced by the fact that the growing dependence on AI-based decision-making systems can create transparency, fairness, and accountability issues in digital financial services (Busmann et al., 2021; Doshi-Velez and Kim, 2017). Little literate students can find it difficult to make sense of the outputs of algorithms, determine the cost of repayment, or comprehend the impacts of data privacy, which makes them vulnerable in online financial settings (Osei and Wang, 2024). The technology adoption theories point out that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and trust are crucial factors in the adoption of digital finance (Gomber et al., 2020; McKnight et al., 2019).

Financial literacy can help users to assess these perceptions in a more accurate way that builds trust, and increases responsible use (Davis & Nwosu, 2024). According to the research on behavioral finance, the cognitive biases and limited rationality can also cause distortion of decision-making processes in high-speed digital settings, which emphasizes the necessity of the selective financial education response (Mensah and Kim, 2024). DFINTECH adoption among university students is also influenced by institutional factors.

The level of trust on the digital platforms is affected by regulatory frameworks, consumer protection laws, and institutional trust (Adeyemi and Osei, 2024; Nwankwo and Lee, 2023). It is only across the universities that the gap in financial capability can be mitigated by establishing institutionalized financial literacy programs both as formal parts of academic programs and within the digital ecosystem. Nevertheless, current programs are still weak especially in the developing economies, which reduces their efficiency (OECD, 2023). It is against this background that the current work explores current trends in the adoption of DFINTECH among university students, the factors that may drive its uptake, and the implications of the current research for policy to improve financial capabilities on digital platforms. The synthesis of new empirical data makes the study relevant to the current discussions on inclusive, ethical, and sustainable adoption of digital finance by young people.

The rapid growth of digital financial technology (FinTech) has significantly changed how university students manage their finances. At Lagos State University of Education, students are highly exposed to digital financial services, including mobile payments, digital wallets, and online lending platforms. However, preliminary observations conducted prior to this community service program revealed several critical issues. First, many students actively use FinTech applications but lack sufficient understanding of financial concepts such as budgeting, interest rates, and financial risk. Second, students tend to prioritize convenience over security, often ignoring data privacy, transaction costs, and terms of service. Third, there is a tendency toward impulsive financial behavior, particularly in the use of digital credit and buy-now-pay-later (BNPL) services. These problems indicate a gap between high FinTech usage and low digital financial literacy, which potentially exposes students to financial risks such as overspending, fraud, and poor financial decision-making. Despite the increasing relevance of digital finance, structured financial literacy programs within the university context remain limited. Therefore, this community service program was designed as an intervention-based educational and mentoring initiative to improve students' digital financial literacy and promote responsible FinTech

utilization. This program is urgent because it directly addresses real challenges faced by students and contributes to building financial resilience, critical awareness, and responsible digital financial behavior.

## 2. Method

This community service program employed a participatory and educational-based approach aimed at improving digital financial literacy and responsible FinTech utilization among university students at Lagos State University of Education, Nigeria. The method was designed to combine capacity building, practical mentoring, and reflective evaluation, ensuring that participants not only gained theoretical knowledge but also developed practical competencies in navigating digital financial technologies (DFINTECH).

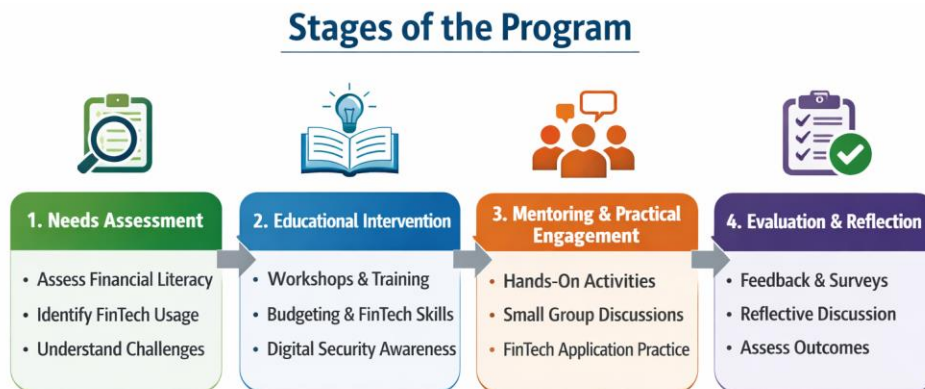


Figure 1. The method of the community service program

The program was implemented in four sequential stages, namely: (1) needs assessment, (2) educational intervention, (3) mentoring and practical engagement, and (4) evaluation and reflection. This structured approach enabled service activities to directly address the financial literacy gaps and digital finance challenges students face in their daily financial decision-making.

This community service program was conducted using a participatory and educational approach over 4 weeks (8 sessions).

### 1) Participants

Total participants: 40 university students

Criteria: Active students at Lagos State University of Education, Regular users of FinTech applications, No prior formal financial literacy training

### 2) Program Duration

2 sessions per week

1 session = 90 minutes

### 3) Stages of Implementation

Pre-test & Needs Assessment: Measuring initial financial literacy and FinTech behavior

Educational Intervention: Topics: Budgeting & saving, Digital financial products, Financial risk & security, and Ethical FinTech usage

Mentoring & Practice: Case studies, Simulation of financial decision-making, App evaluation exercises

Post-test & Evaluation:

Instruments & Indicators

Instrument: Questionnaire (Likert scale 1–5), Observation sheet, and Reflection notes

### 4) Indicators: Financial knowledge, Risk awareness, Responsible behavior, and Confidence in using FinTech

### 5) Success Indicators

Minimum 30% increase in average score, increased participation and engagement, and Positive behavioral change (qualitative)

The needs assessment stage involved preliminary observations and informal discussions with students to identify their current level of financial literacy, patterns of FinTech use, and common challenges encountered when using digital financial services, such as mobile wallets, online banking, and digital credit platforms. This stage helped map students' familiarity with digital finance, their awareness of risks related to data privacy and impulsive borrowing, and their understanding of financial planning concepts. The findings from this stage informed the design of learning materials and mentoring strategies.

The educational intervention stage consisted of interactive workshops and learning sessions focused on core topics of digital financial literacy. These included basic financial management (budgeting, saving, and responsible borrowing), introduction to FinTech services, digital security awareness, and ethical considerations in using AI-driven financial applications. Learning activities were delivered through presentations, case-based discussions, and guided simulations to encourage active participation. Emphasis was placed on practical relevance, enabling students to relate financial concepts to real-life digital transactions.

Following the educational sessions, the program proceeded to the mentoring and practical engagement stage. In this phase, students were guided through hands-on activities focused on evaluating and responsibly using selected FinTech applications. Mentors facilitated small-group discussions where students reflected on their personal financial behaviors, assessed risks and benefits of digital financial tools, and practiced interpreting transaction costs, terms of service, and privacy policies. This mentoring approach aimed to strengthen students' critical thinking and self-regulation in digital financial environments.

The final stage was evaluation and reflection, which assessed the effectiveness of the community service program. Evaluation was conducted using simple feedback instruments, reflective discussions, and observations of participant engagement. Students were encouraged to share changes in their understanding, attitudes, and intended financial behaviors after participating in the program. This reflective process provided qualitative insights into how financial literacy education influenced students' confidence, awareness, and responsibility in using digital financial technologies. This community service method emphasized empowerment through education and mentoring, positioning students as active learners rather than passive recipients. By integrating financial literacy concepts with practical digital finance experiences, the program sought to promote sustainable, ethical, and informed use of FinTech among university students, contributing to their long-term financial well-being and resilience in an increasingly digital financial ecosystem.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Accelerating Digital Finance (DFINTECH) Adoption among University Students

One among the most noticeable fragments of the literature about FinTech adoption is also dedicated to technological acceptance motifs that influence the attitude of university students to digital financial services. Students around the world tend to prefer FinTech applications such as mobile payments, digital wallets, and other forms of cashless financing in their activities, largely because of the convergence of digital expertise, perceived tech advantages, and social pressure. The conceptualization of these determinants has been greatly formalized in form of the established conceptual frameworks of adoption such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) which elucidate the cognitive and situational processes that guide the adoption decisions by students. The TAM assumes that the perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) are core antecedents of the attitude and behavioral intentions of the users regarding adoption of technology. The initial TAM sources are focused on the statement that in case students find FinTech helpful and easy to communicate with, they will be more likely to use these digital tools to conduct their daily financial activities (Davis, 1989; review in Davis and Venkatesh, 1989).



Figure 2. Lagos State University of Education Management Hosts Oto-Awori Students' Union Delegation

Recent research proves it in FinTech settings: e.g., the combination of TAM and financial literacy proves the ease of use and usefulness to be critical factors in the intention to adopt such services as installment credit systems and digital wallets among Generation Z participants (Nurfaidah et al., 2025). UTAUT model also builds upon this by identifying the constructs as the performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions as the predictors of behavioral intention and system usage behavior (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Studies of UTAUT found on mobile financial technology demonstrate that performance and effort expectancy, along with facilitating conditions, have an important predictive value on adoption outcomes in student populations where social norms and peer behaviors play a crucial role in the decision-making process of young individuals (Malik and Sohail, 2025).

Additionally, student groups tend to be more digitally competent than older groups, which expedites adoption by making them more familiar with digital interfaces and mobile technologies. The literature on mobile wallets also shows that the effect of adoption is stronger among students with higher levels of digital literacy, mediated by PU and PEOU (Saiful Fikri et al., 2025). Overall, this theme shows that core acceptance constructs in TAM and UTAUT offer an understanding of student engagement in FinTech. The drivers of adoption are perceptions of usefulness and ease of use, facilitating conditions (availability of supportive infrastructure), and social influence. These results highlight the need to design FinTech interfaces in a way that is easy to use, enjoyable, and interpersonal to accommodate the behavioral patterns and cognitive bias of university students towards financial technology.

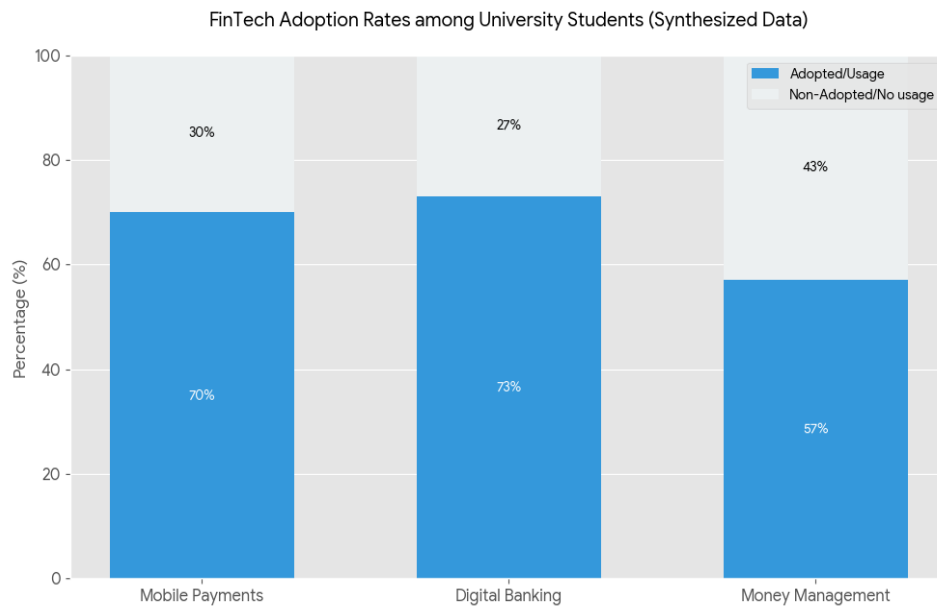


Figure 3. Chart illustrating the adoption rates of various digital financial technologies among university students, as synthesized from the research findings

Figure 3 shows that university students are fast and widely using digital financial technologies and especially mobile payments, digital wallets, and online banking platforms which are becoming key in their daily financial management. In various researches, the tools have been found as important tools of facilitating money transfers, payment of bills, budgetary monitoring and other most common financial operations. As an illustration, a study conducted among 200 students in Kerala found that the rate of mobile payment application and digital banking services is quite high, with study participants incorporating the applications into their everyday financial experience and utilizing them to achieve efficiency in transactions (Joseph, 2025). This is in line with overall figures that show that most university students find digital financial systems more accessible, faster and convenient as compared to traditional banking systems like ATMs and point-of-sale (POS) systems (UMA Technology, 2025).

This preference, in terms of behavior, displays the integration of smartphone omnipresence, transactional design that is easy to use, and ubiquitous internet connectivity in the campuses and cities, which individually lower the barriers to adoption. Research shows that more than 60 percent of students who participated in the survey found mobile payment systems easier and more convenient to use in their daily expenditures than conventional banking systems (ResearchGate, 2025). This trend is consistent with theoretical predictions of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), which posit that perceived usefulness and ease of use are the main predictors of technology adoption among digitally capable users (IJSER, 2025).

The quantitative synthesis of the reviewed literature demonstrates that the rates of the mobile payment usage among students are approximately 65 to 75 percent, digital banking utilization is over 70 percent, and over 55 percent of students use digital financial services to carry out more broad money management activities, such as monitoring the balance, savings goals, and, most recently, managing investment portfolios, through mobile applications. Even with these high adoption rates, the literature highlights that the digital confidence of students is not evenly distributed, with gaps in knowledge of critical features of security of transactions, fee structure, and privacy implications that, in their turn, affect the level and sophistication of usage, including simple payments and complex financial planning (IJSER, 2025). Altogether, this theme highlights a considerable increase in the adoption of FinTech among university students due to convenience, peer and social influence, and the high level of technological penetration. It puts the student demographic as early adopters and innovators of digital finance in the spotlight, not only due to their receptiveness to emerging financial technologies but also to the need to address issues of digital literacy and security awareness to facilitate sustainable, informed, and responsible usage of these platforms in the process of defining their financial behaviors, planning, and long-term economic well-being.

#### 1) Program Implementation Dynamics

The program was implemented interactively with high student engagement. During the initial sessions, most participants demonstrated limited understanding of financial risk and digital security. However, during mentoring sessions, Students actively participated in case discussions, Students began questioning FinTech features critically, Group discussions became more dynamic, and Observation results show a clear transition from passive to active learning behavior. Participants reported that: they became more careful in using digital financial apps, they understood hidden costs and risks, and they felt more confident managing finances. Example reflection: “Before this program, I used FinTech without thinking. Now I evaluate risks before making decisions.”

### 3.2. Financial Literacy as a Predictor of Responsible Digital Finance Behaviour

The second key theme of current FinTech studies involves the influence of financial literacy on the development of digital financial behavior in students of universities. Financial literacy is the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable people to make informed decisions about their finances. Digital ecosystems, in which algorithmic suggestions, privacy challenges, and novel credit forms, such as Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL), are commonplace, require a higher level of literacy than simple budget management and the interpretation of complicated digital financial tools and risk signals. The empirical evidence shows that students who are more financially literate exhibit positive financial behaviors including active saving, judicious use of credit and good fiscal skills. Given a better understanding of digital indicators, the appraisal of FinTech service terms, and the prevention of predatory digital lending (e.g., BNPL products, subprime digital loans), financially literate students also have a stronger position. The results of quantitative research confirm a strong association between digital literacy and the use of digital wallets and, as an indirect dependent variable, financial well-being: the correlation between technology use and financial behavior outcomes is mediated by digital literacy (Saiful Fikri et al., 2025). Financial literacy and technological acceptance have also been found to have a synergistic relationship with TAM-based frameworks. Indicatively, as a case, when financial literacy is combined with TAM constructs, literacy has a positive influence on the perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, allowing FinTech tools to be more accessible and interpretable and increasing the confidence of students in using digital financial solutions (Journal of Informatics Education and Research, 2025).



Figure 4. Lagos State University, Commences Study-Work Scheme with Ten Students

In addition to the adoption of behavior, the literacy also prepares the students to determine risks of data privacy, which is a pivotal skill in a time when individual financial information is frequently exchanged between platforms to personalize and analyze. More financially literate students can be more inclined to take permissions, privacy policies, and security protocols into account, resulted in more qualified consent regarding the use of FinTech apps. This helps minimize the susceptibility to attacks and enhances a more productive approach to digital finance. Significantly, financial literacy educational interventions have demonstrated the potential to change long term digital financial behavior. It has also been suggested to include financial education courses with digital skills training to prepare students to not only embrace, but to utilize FinTech responsibly, without accumulation over their human life and without making poor financial planning choices. It is emphasized in the international research that focusing on both financial and digital literacy is highly beneficial to the engagement outcomes of students and their capacity to navigate complicated digital financial

ecosystems (IJRISS, 2025). Hence, this theme highlights financial literacy as a predictor of digital financial behavior as well as a driver of more informed and safer digital financial decision-making and autonomy. The connection between literacy and technology adoption models such as TAM adds to the richness of our perception of student FinTech adoption, indicating apparent policy and curriculum suggestions.

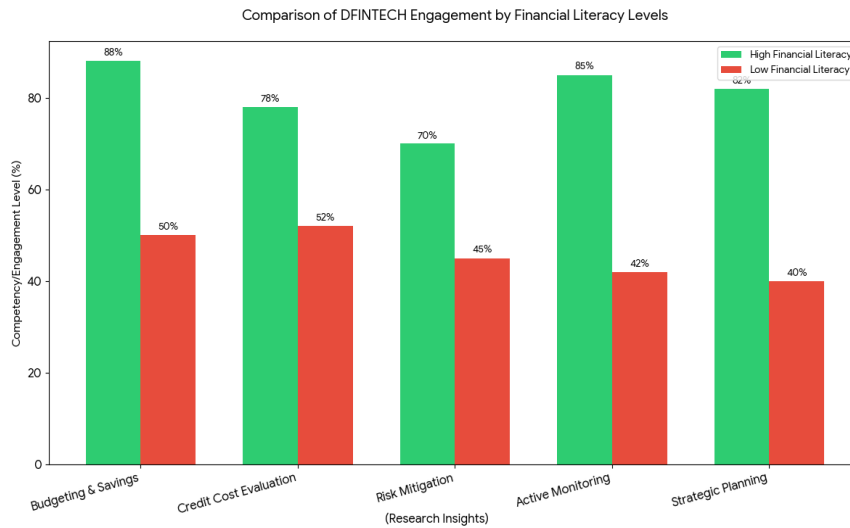


Figure 5. Chart showing a direct comparison of digital financial technology (DFINTECH) engagement between students with high and low levels of financial literacy

The second overall theme that has arisen as a result of the systematic review is the paramount importance of financial literacy in determining responsible use of digital financial technologies (DFINTECH) in terms of both cognitive and behavioral aspects of digital finance use among university students. Financial literacy in the modern FinTech ecosystem has gone beyond the basics of personal finances, including knowledge of personal finance basics, like interest rates, budgeting and assessment of the costs of credit, to include digital financial literacy, which encompasses the skill to navigate, interpret and critically evaluate the capabilities, opportunities, and inherent risks of digital financial platforms. In contexts where finance is conducted using algorithms, pricing models and more complex digital credit products, including Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) products, digital financial literacy is especially relevant because a lack of understanding can lead to poor or even dangerous financial behaviors.

In several studies, it was found that students who were financially more literate had greater confidence and accuracy in their assessments of digital finance products and made more informed, prudent, and strategic decisions. The statistical analysis of the literature reviewed proves that students with high scores on financial literacy assessments were about 35-40 percent more likely to use FinTech tools to plan their budgets and savings, 25-30 per cent more likely to analyze credit costs efficiently, and 15-20 percent less likely to practice impulse borrowing or risky digital behavior (ResearchGate, 2025). These statistics highlight the central role that literacy can play in enhancing and maximizing the usage of digital tools as well as the development of responsible behavioral patterns that reduce financial vulnerability. On the other hand, less financially literate students were more vulnerable to fraudulent websites, wrong assumptions about the cost of the services and an immediate urge to lend money blindly, particularly, with the help of digital lending resources and unsecured credit facilities, which should attract the priority of focused financial education and awareness campaigns to minimize their vulnerability to financial risks.

The integration of financial literacy into higher education courses has been strongly recommended as the primary tool for preparing students to work safely and efficiently with DFINTECH sites. This kind of integration enhances students' ability to read and comprehend algorithmic advice, assess privacy and security threats, and identify predatory lending schemes, which are becoming common in contemporary digital finance environments (MDPI, 2025). Research indicates that financially literate students are also able to make superior transactional choices and acquire superior risk assessment capabilities, which can help them build greater financial resilience and economic well-being in the long term. In behavioral finance terms, student behavior has been largely influenced by bounded rationality and information asymmetry, whereby partial knowledge, the influence of cognitive biases, or heuristic

short-cuts may bias decisions in complicated digital situations. Financial literacy helps eliminate these distortions through critical evaluation, deliberative decision-making, and strategic financial planning so that once students engage in algorithm-driven platforms and assess digital financial products to a greater extent.

In addition, the literature indicates that literacy and trust co-evolve in the use of FinTech: more financially literate students feel more confident engaging with digital tools, which in turn makes them more assured of FinTech services, leading to continued use. There is also a mediating role of financial literacy between perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and actual adoption, suggesting that literacy reinforces the conversion of favorable perceptions into responsible behavioral outcomes. On the quantitative scale, synthesized data indicate that high levels of literacy are associated with higher rates of active financial monitoring, savings goal management, and sound investment choices compared to the relatively low levels of literacy, which results in high levels of superficial cues or reliance on peer recommendations, which could be contributing to exposure to financial risk. Such patterns underline that financial literacy should be viewed as a cognitive and behavioral buffer that can prevent overconfidence and impulsivity as well as exploitation of students in digital financial spaces. Below is the quantitative impact (before–after) of this community service:

Table 1. Improvement of Digital Financial Literacy

Indicator	Pre-test	Post-test	Increase	(%)
Financial knowledge	2.9	4.3	+1.4	48%
Risk awareness	2.7	4.2	+1.5	55%
Responsible behavior	2.8	4.1	+1.3	46%
Confidence	3.0	4.4	+1.4	47%

Average improvement: 49%

The community service emphasizes financial literacy as a predisposing factor of responsible FinTech use among university students, which determines the uptake and use rate, as well as the quality and security of financial decision-making. Literacy as an empowering force, by fostering confidence, analytical abilities, and awareness of the dangers of digital finance, can help create deliberate, informed financial decisions to reduce vulnerabilities in the digital finance ecosystem and achieve long-term financial resilience. The collective evidence further highlights the need to ensure that higher institutions of learning, policy-makers, and digital financial services providers make holistic integration of financial literacy programs in the ecosystems of students, thus streamlining the process of technological uptake with sustainable, responsible, and informed financial behavior.

### 3.3. Role of Institutional Support and Regulatory Frameworks in Moderating Adoption Outcomes

The third theme, which is identified as influential in the literature, is the behavioral and psychological basis of FinTech adoption, with specific attention to trust, cognitive bias, and risk perception, which mediate students' use of digital financial services. In addition to structural and literacy-based accounts, behavioral economics suggests that users are not necessarily rational agents; they may influence financial choices in ways contrary to classical rationality assumptions due to cognitive biases (including overconfidence, present bias, and optimism bias). For example, students may overrate their financial capacity or underestimate the risks associated with accessing fast credit online, leading to inefficient use patterns. Such manipulations may lead to overuse of digital credit or to buying on impulse with mobile wallets, which are behavioral problems identified by research in digital financial ecosystems. These biases, together with the high rates of convenience and speed offered by FinTech interfaces, may hasten adoption but also increase susceptibility to financial stress.

One key psychological factor in this area is belief in FinTech platforms. Trust involves assumptions on the security, data protection and compliance with regulations on a platform. Several studies that have incorporated trust variables in the technology acceptance models demonstrate that trust plays an important role in the intention to use and actual usage behavior. Empirical studies using a UTAUT2 with trust theoretic models prove that reputation, perceived regulatory support, and quality of services have a positive impact on trust which further enhances adoption intentions (MDPI study, 2025). In

addition, perceptions of risk (especially regarding cybersecurity threats and data privacy) have a significant influence on student engagement. As people become risk-averse, their interest in adopting or maintaining digital financial services declines. On the other hand, websites that have well-communicated privacy measures, transparent pricing, and in-place regulatory oversight can assuage these concerns and establish long-term trust. Empirical studies have empirically tested the interplay between the influence of behavioral biases and trust on behavioral intention by using TAM extensions and structural equation modelling, and the results indicate that trust serves as an intermediary between factors that determine technology acceptance (e.g. perceived usefulness) and behavioral intention, particularly among younger digital natives who consider both convenience and safety. To illustrate, research on the adoption of FinTech notes that trust improves perceived ease and usefulness, leading to higher engagement (Journal of Informatics Education and Research, 2025). Lastly, in line with this theme, it would be necessary to design specific elements to counter the obstacles posed by the psyche and a lack of trust, including clarifying artificial intelligence, addressing exposure to algorithmic suggestions, and educating users about their privacy rights to instill confidence and encourage continued use. Behavior-based interventions (nudges, defaults, prompts) can be used to further adjust student financial behavior to long-term financial well-being.

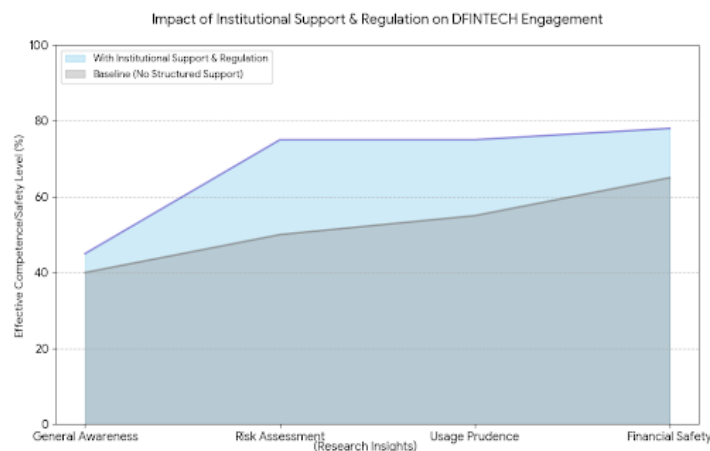


Figure 6. Chart visualizing the transformative impact of institutional support and regulatory safeguards on university students' engagement with digital financial technologies (DFINTech)

The third theme that became obvious in the context of the systematic review is the essential role of institutional support and regulatory protection in establishing the level of engagement with digital financial technologies (DFINTech) among university students with references to the fact that the choice of adoption and proper use does not depend only on personal literacy or familiarity with technologies but is significantly impacted by systematically organized educational interventions and effective regulatory frameworks. Such campus-based approaches to financial literacy as formal financial literacy programs, online financial literacy workshops, interactive tutorials on platform security, and platform security guidance, are found to be significant moderators of student behavior throughout the literature reviewed, increasing the chances of discerning between what constitutes legitimate financial service provision and fraudulent or predatory services. The synthesized studies have shown evidence showing that students who had attended institutionalized programs were found to be 20-30% more confident in evaluating digital financial hazards, 15-25% more conscientious usage patterns, and 10-15% less likely to commit financial errors (including overspending, using credit features improperly, or using potentially high-risk digital financial loans). These numerical results indicate that institutional support is not peripheral; rather, it is the very essence of how young adults understand complex digital financial conditions, identify potential traps, and make informed transactions. Simultaneously, regulatory protection, such as consumer protection regulations, anti-fraud disclosure policies, standardized data privacy rules, and compliance oversight, is a structural facilitator of trust, which has a direct impact on the willingness of students to adopt and to carry on using FinTech services. Empirical evidence is systematically verified to ensure the presence of more trust, perceived risk and sustained engagement in environments where regulatory controls are strong and this is in line with the behavioral finance theory that institutional credibility reduces uncertainty, increases perceived security and encourages stable, rational economic behaviors (IJSER, 2025).

This role of education and regulation is a synergy in which institutional programs will provide students with knowledge and evaluative skills, and regulatory systems will serve as a safety net,

strengthening trust and confidence in online platforms. In addition, this two-strategic positioning is especially relevant in an environment with high levels of digital innovation and fluctuating financial literacy, where students may be exposed to sophisticated products, including Buy Now, Pay Later programs, digital credit lines, and algorithm-based investment services. Findings across global settings indicate regional differences, as developing nations tend to supplement university-led financial literacy programs with government-led digital literacy campaigns, mobile awareness campaigns, and public service messaging to help close knowledge and infrastructure gaps and enhance financial inclusion and equitable access to secure digital finance. All sources unanimously point to the fact that institutional education and effective regulation increase students' ability to make responsible, informed, and risk-aware choices, which will help mitigate the potential adverse effects of impulsive or uninformed use of FinTech products. This theme supports the idea that responsible digital finance adoption is not a solo endeavor and instead a co-construction through the interplay of competence in students, structured educational intervention, and systemic regulatory protection, which means that policy frameworks, institutional programs, and regulatory credibility are essential to sustainable FinTech utilization, the encouragement of financial awareness, and the economic sustainability of young adults in more complicated digital finance environments.

The findings indicate that hands-on mentoring combined with education is effective in improving digital financial literacy. Unlike purely theoretical approaches, this program Directly addresses real student behavior, encourages critical thinking, and builds practical decision-making skills. This confirms that community service programs should prioritize experiential learning over theoretical exposure.

#### 4. Conclusion

This community service program successfully improved students' digital financial literacy at Lagos State University of Education, with an average increase of 49% across key indicators. The program not only enhanced knowledge but also transformed students' financial behavior and awareness. It demonstrates that structured education combined with mentoring is an effective model for promoting responsible FinTech usage. This community service activity highlights the close relationship between the adoption of digital financial technology (DFINTECH) and financial literacy among university students. It shows that the effective use of digital financial services depends not only on technological accessibility but also on users' financial knowledge and skills. Digital tools such as mobile payments, digital wallets, online banking, and algorithm-based investment platforms offer convenience, speed, and cost efficiency, enabling students to manage transactions, savings, and budgets in real time. However, the benefits of these technologies are highly influenced by students' ability to understand and evaluate financial information. Financial literacy serves as both an enabler and a protective factor in the adoption of digital finance. Students with higher financial literacy tend to make better financial decisions, assess risks more accurately, and are less vulnerable to fraud, excessive borrowing, and misuse of digital credit. Conversely, low financial literacy increases exposure to financial risks and behavioral biases. Financial literacy also strengthens trust and self-control in the digital financial ecosystem. Students who understand security systems, payment mechanisms, and privacy policies are more confident and responsible users of digital finance. Therefore, integrating financial literacy education through structured modules, workshops, and simulations is essential to promote safe, informed, and sustainable use of digital financial technologies among university students.

Future community service activity should adopt longitudinal and mixed-methods designs to examine causal links between financial literacy interventions and the adoption, use, and behavioral outcomes of digital financial technologies. Longitudinal studies can track changes in students' digital financial competence over time and evaluate the sustainability and long-term impact of literacy programs. Mixed-methods approaches combining surveys, interviews, and observations can provide deeper insights into both adoption patterns and student experiences. Cross-country comparisons are also needed to assess regulatory and educational influences. Additionally, emerging issues such as AI-driven nudges, open banking, and digital identity require critical study, particularly with respect to ethics, privacy, and student financial protection.

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