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Fintech Adoption for Inclusive Finance: The Mediating Role of Trust in Government Support, Social Influence, and Performance Management

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the factors influencing trust in FinTech services and their role in promoting the use of FinTech for financial inclusion in Saudi Arabia. Adopting a cross-sectional study design, data was collected from employees in the manufacturing sector using an online survey. Structural equation modeling with SmartPLS was used to analyze the data, focusing on the measurement and structural models. The findings reveal that government support ($\beta = 0.518$), social influence ($\beta = 0.431$), and performance management ($\beta = 0.792$) significantly influence trust in FinTech services. Trust, in turn, has a strong direct effect on the use of FinTech for financial inclusion ($\beta = 0.85$). Additionally, trust mediates the indirect effects of government support ($\beta = 0.453$), social influence ($\beta = 0.396$), and performance management ($\beta = 0.673$) on the use of FinTech for financial inclusion. The study underscores the pivotal role of trust in fostering FinTech adoption, particularly in the context of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 goals, which emphasize digital transformation and financial inclusion. By addressing the factors that influence trust, stakeholders can create an enabling ecosystem that encourages the widespread use of FinTech services, ultimately contributing to sustainable economic growth and development.

Keywords: FinTech, Performance, Finance, Technology, Trust

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of financial technology (FinTech) has revolutionized the global financial landscape, offering innovative solutions that enhance accessibility, efficiency, and convenience in financial services (Rizvi et al., 2024). FinTech encompasses a wide range of technologies, including mobile banking, digital wallets, peer-to-peer lending, and blockchain-based systems, all of which have the potential to democratize access to financial services (Choudhary & Thenmozhi, 2024; Pandey et al., 2024). In Saudi Arabia, the push toward digital transformation, as outlined in Vision 2030, has positioned FinTech as a key driver of economic diversification and financial inclusion (Albarrak & Alokley, 2021; Al-Matari et al., 2022). Vision 2030 aims to reduce the Kingdom's dependence on oil, foster a knowledge-based economy, and increase the share of non-cash transactions to 70% by 2030. FinTech is central to achieving these goals, as it enables greater financial access for underserved populations, including women, small businesses, and low-income individuals (Giglio, 2021).

However, despite the transformative potential of FinTech, its adoption remains contingent on users' trust in these services. Trust is a critical factor that influences individuals' willingness to adopt and use FinTech, particularly in regions where traditional banking systems have historically underserved large segments of the population (Sampat et al., 2024). In Saudi Arabia, while the government has made significant strides in promoting FinTech through regulatory reforms and infrastructure development, challenges related to trust persist (Oladapo et al., 2022). Many individuals remain skeptical about the security, reliability, and transparency of FinTech services, which can hinder their adoption (Almuhammadi, 2020). Understanding the factors that build trust in FinTech is therefore essential for unlocking its full potential to drive financial inclusion.

This study focuses on exploring the factors that influence trust in FinTech services and their role in promoting the use of FinTech for financial inclusion in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, it examines the impact of government support, social influence, and performance management on trust, and how trust, in turn, drives the adoption of FinTech services. Government support, such as favorable regulations and infrastructure development, can enhance trust by creating a secure and enabling environment for FinTech innovation. Social influence, including recommendations from peers and respected individuals, can shape perceptions and encourage adoption. Performance management, which refers to the perceived benefits of FinTech in enhancing productivity and convenience, can also play a significant role in building trust.

The research is particularly relevant in the context of Saudi Arabia's manufacturing sector, where digital transformation is gaining momentum. Employees in this sector represent a diverse demographic, many of whom may benefit from FinTech solutions to access financial services. However, the adoption of FinTech in this group remains understudied, highlighting a gap in the literature. By addressing this gap, the study aims to provide valuable insights for policymakers, FinTech providers, and financial inclusion advocates, helping them design strategies to foster trust and promote the widespread use of FinTech services. Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader goal of achieving financial inclusion and sustainable economic growth in Saudi Arabia.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Government Support and Trust in FinTech Services

Government support is a critical factor in fostering trust in FinTech services. Governments play a pivotal role in creating an enabling environment for FinTech innovation through regulatory frameworks, infrastructure development, and public awareness campaigns (Balaskas et al., 2024). When governments actively support FinTech, they signal to the public that these services are secure, reliable, and beneficial (Han et al., 2024). This support reduces perceived risks and uncertainties, which are significant barriers to trust in new technologies. For example, government initiatives such as regulatory sandboxes, favorable legislation, and investment in digital infrastructure can enhance public confidence in FinTech services (Roh et al., 2024). These efforts not only provide a legal and operational framework for FinTech companies but also reassure users about the safety and reliability of these platforms (Alhajjaj & Ahmad, 2022). In the context of Saudi Arabia, the government has taken significant steps to promote FinTech as part of its Vision 2030 agenda. Initiatives like the Saudi Central Bank's FinTech regulatory sandbox and the National FinTech Strategy demonstrate the government's commitment to fostering a robust FinTech ecosystem. These efforts are likely to enhance trust among users, encouraging them to adopt FinTech services. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H1: Government support influence on trust in FinTech services

Social Influence and Trust in FinTech Services

Social influence is another key factor that shapes trust in FinTech services. People are often influenced by the opinions, recommendations, and behaviors of those around them, particularly when it comes to adopting new technologies (Cassandra et al., 2024). Social influence can come from various sources, including family, friends, colleagues, and respected individuals within the community (Alhajjaj & Ahmad, 2022). When people see others using and benefiting from FinTech services, they are more likely to trust and adopt these services themselves (Kurniasari et al., 2022). This is especially true in collectivist societies, where social ties and community opinions hold significant weight. In Saudi Arabia, where social networks play a crucial role in shaping individual behaviors, social influence is likely to have a strong impact on trust in FinTech services. For instance, recommendations from peers or respected community leaders can significantly enhance the perceived credibility and reliability of FinTech platforms. Additionally, social influence can help overcome initial skepticism or resistance to new technologies by providing real-life examples of successful adoption. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H2: Social influence impact on trust in FinTech services

Performance Management and Trust in FinTech Services

Performance management refers to the perceived benefits of FinTech services in enhancing productivity, efficiency, and convenience. When individuals perceive that FinTech services can help them accomplish tasks more quickly, avoid bureaucracy, and access services 24/7, they are more likely to trust these platforms (Song et al., 2022). Performance management is a critical factor in building trust because it addresses the practical benefits that users derive from FinTech services (Kurniasari et al., 2022). FinTech platforms that offer seamless transactions, integration with multiple financial systems, and user-friendly interfaces are more likely to gain users' trust (Vasquez & San-Jose, 2022). In the context of Saudi Arabia's manufacturing sector, employees who value efficiency and convenience in financial transactions are likely to trust FinTech services that deliver these benefits. Moreover, the ability of FinTech services to integrate various government and financial systems can further enhance their perceived usefulness and reliability. When users see tangible benefits from using FinTech services, their trust in these platforms increases, leading to greater adoption. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H3: Performance management influence on trust in FinTech services

Trust in FinTech Services and Use of FinTech for Financial Inclusion

Trust is a critical determinant of technology adoption, particularly in the financial sector. When individuals trust FinTech services, they are more likely to use these platforms for various financial activities, such as banking, savings, investments, and payments (Okello Candiya Bongomin & Ntayi, 2020). Trust reduces the perceived risks associated with using FinTech services, such as concerns about data security, fraud, and financial loss. In the context of financial inclusion, trust is especially important because it encourages underserved populations to adopt FinTech services (Mehmood et al., 2024). Financial inclusion aims to provide access to financial services for individuals and businesses that are excluded from the traditional banking system. FinTech has the potential to bridge this gap by offering affordable, accessible, and user-friendly financial solutions (Jafri et al., 2024). However, without trust, individuals may be hesitant to adopt these services, even if they are available. In Saudi Arabia, where financial inclusion is a key goal of Vision 2030, building trust in FinTech services is essential for expanding access to financial services. When individuals trust FinTech platforms, they are more likely to use them for financial inclusion, thereby contributing to the broader goal of economic empowerment and development.

Government support not only directly influences trust in FinTech services but also indirectly affects the use of FinTech for financial inclusion through trust. When governments create a supportive environment for FinTech innovation, they enhance public confidence in these services (Asif et al., 2023). This increased trust, in turn, encourages individuals to adopt FinTech platforms for financial activities. For example, government initiatives such as regulatory sandboxes, favorable legislation, and investment in digital infrastructure can enhance trust in FinTech services. This trust then drives the use of FinTech for financial inclusion, as individuals feel more secure and confident in using these platforms (Amnas et al., 2024). In Saudi Arabia, the government's efforts to promote FinTech as part of Vision 2030 are likely to enhance trust among users, thereby encouraging the adoption of FinTech services for financial inclusion.

Social influence can shape trust in FinTech services, which in turn drives their adoption for financial inclusion. When individuals see others using and benefiting from FinTech services, they are more likely to trust these platforms and adopt them themselves. Social influence can come from various sources, including family, friends, colleagues, and respected individuals within the community. In Saudi Arabia, where social networks play a crucial role in shaping individual behaviors, social influence is likely to have a strong impact on trust in FinTech services. For instance, recommendations from peers or respected community leaders can significantly enhance the perceived credibility and reliability of FinTech platforms. This increased trust then encourages individuals to use FinTech services for financial inclusion, as they feel more confident in the safety and effectiveness of these platforms.

Performance management influences trust in FinTech services, which subsequently affects their use for financial inclusion. When individuals perceive that FinTech services can help them accomplish tasks more quickly, avoid bureaucracy, and access services 24/7, they are more likely to trust these platforms (Dawood et al., 2022). This trust, in turn, drives the adoption of FinTech services for financial inclusion. For example, FinTech platforms that offer seamless transactions, integration with multiple financial systems, and user-friendly interfaces are more likely to gain users' trust. In the context of Saudi Arabia's manufacturing sector, employees who value efficiency and convenience in financial transactions are likely to trust FinTech services that deliver these benefits. This trust then encourages them to use FinTech platforms for financial inclusion, as they see tangible benefits from using these services. Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H4: Trust in FinTech services influence on use of fintech for financial inclusion
H5: Trust in FinTech services mediates between government support and use of FinTech for financial inclusion
H6: Trust in FinTech services mediates between social influence and use of FinTech for financial inclusion
H7: Trust in FinTech services mediates between performance management and use of FinTech for financial inclusion

Figure 1 shows the research model.

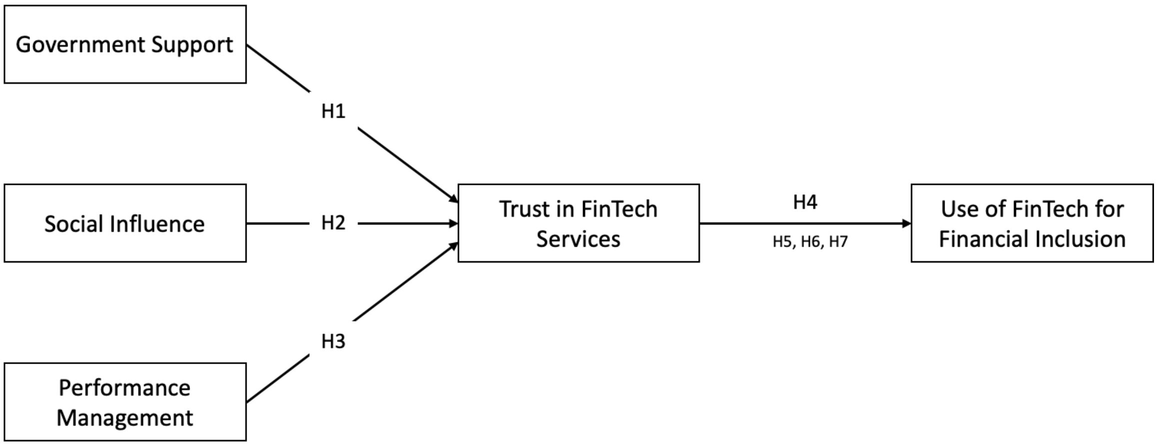

Figure 1. Research Model

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a cross-sectional study design to investigate the factors influencing trust in FinTech services and their role in promoting financial inclusion. Data collection was conducted in February 2025, targeting employees working in the manufacturing sector in Saudi Arabia. The convenience sampling technique was used to select participants, ensuring accessibility and feasibility in data collection. An online survey was distributed to employees across various manufacturing organizations in the Kingdom, allowing for efficient and widespread data collection.

The survey instrument utilized a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," to measure participants' responses. This scale was chosen for its ability to capture nuanced attitudes and perceptions. The constructs and their corresponding items were adapted from established studies to ensure reliability and validity. Specifically, Government Support was measured using three items adapted from Setiawan et al. (2021), while Social Influence was assessed with three items adapted from Senyo et al. (2020) and Venkatesh et al. (2012). Performance Management was evaluated using six items adapted from Venkatesh and Davis (2000) and Alkhwaldi et al. (2022), and Trust in FinTech Services was measured with three items adapted from AlAwadhi (2019) and Colesca (2009). Finally, Use of FinTech for Financial Inclusion was assessed using three items adapted from Asif et al. (2023).

Data analysis was performed using “structural equation modeling (SEM)” with “SmartPLS”, a powerful tool for analyzing complex relationships between constructs. SEM was chosen for its ability to handle multiple dependent and independent variables simultaneously. This approach ensured a rigorous and systematic analysis of the relationships between the constructs.

RESULTS

The demographic profile of the study participants, as presented in Table 1, highlights that out of 267 respondents, the majority were male, accounting for 75%, while female participants made up 25%. This indicates a significant gender imbalance, reflecting a predominantly male sample in the study. In terms of age distribution, most participants fell within the younger age groups, with 34% aged below 25 and 37% between 25 to 34 years, while 26% were aged 35 to 44. Only a small fraction, about 2%, were aged between 45 to 54 years, showing that the sample is largely composed of younger individuals. Regarding educational qualifications, the majority of participants, about 66%, held a bachelor's degree, while 30% had a high school diploma or less, and only 4% possessed a master's degree. This suggests that most respondents were reasonably well-educated, with a significant number holding undergraduate qualifications. In terms of current job positions, the data shows that 48% were mid-level managers, followed by 44% at the entry-level, whereas senior managers and executives/directors represented 4% each, indicating that a large portion of the sample occupied junior to mid-level roles within their organizations. Lastly, the participants' years of experience reveal that 49% had between 2 to 5 years of professional experience, and 47% had less than 2 years of experience. Only 4% had 6 to 10 years of experience, reflecting that the majority of the sample consisted of early-career professionals with limited industry exposure. This demographic overview provides a clear understanding of the study population, which is predominantly young, male, moderately experienced, and educationally qualified at the bachelor's level.

Table 1. Characteristics of Study Participants (n=267)

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	199	75%
	Female	68	25%
Age	Below 25	91	34%
	25–34	100	37%
	35–44	70	26%
	45–54	6	2%
Highest Education Level	High school diploma or less	80	30%
	Bachelor's degree	177	66%
	Master's degree	10	4%
Current Job Position	Entry level	117	44%
	Mid-level manager	129	48%
	Senior manager	11	4%
	Executive/Director	10	4%
Years of Experience	Less than 2 years	125	47%
	2–5 years	130	49%
	6–10 years	12	4%

Table 2 presents the measurement model for various constructs related to the use of FinTech services, focusing on government support, social influence, performance management, trust in FinTech services, and the use of FinTech for financial inclusion. Government support construct measures the perceived role of government in promoting FinTech services. The factor loadings for the three items (GS1, GS2, and GS3) range from 0.715 to 0.88, indicating strong correlations between the items and the construct. The "Cronbach's alpha" value of 0.712 suggests acceptable internal consistency, while the "composite reliability" of 0.829 and AVE of 0.631 demonstrate good "reliability and convergent validity". These results indicate that the items effectively capture the construct of government support for FinTech services. Social influence construct evaluates the impact of social factors on the adoption of FinTech services. The factor loadings for the three items (SI1, SI2, and SI3) range from 0.801 to 0.864, showing strong relationships between the items and the construct. The "Cronbach's alpha" value of 0.777 indicates good internal consistency, while the "composite reliability" of 0.724 and AVE of 0.501 suggest moderate "reliability and convergent validity". Although the AVE is slightly below the ideal threshold of 0.5, the overall results still support the validity of the construct. Performance management construct assesses the perceived benefits of FinTech services in enhancing performance and productivity. The factor loadings for the six items (PE1 to PE6) range from 0.71 to 0.881, indicating strong correlations with the construct. The "Cronbach's alpha" value of 0.824, "composite reliability" of 0.741, and AVE of 0.731 demonstrate excellent "internal consistency, reliability, and convergent validity". These results confirm that the items effectively measure the performance management benefits of FinTech services. Trust in FinTech services construct measures the level of trust individuals have in FinTech services. The factor loadings for the three items (TFT1, TFT2, and TFT3) range from 0.765 to 0.866, indicating strong relationships with the construct. The "Cronbach's alpha" value of 0.84, "composite reliability" of 0.803, and AVE of 0.657 suggest high "internal consistency, reliability, and convergent validity". These results highlight the robustness of the trust construct in the context of FinTech services. Use of FinTech for financial inclusion construct evaluates the potential of FinTech services to promote financial inclusion. The factor loadings for the three items (UFT1, UFT2, and UFT3) range from 0.739 to 0.842, indicating strong correlations with the construct. The "Cronbach's alpha" value of 0.825, "composite reliability" of 0.753, and AVE of 0.67 demonstrate excellent "internal consistency, reliability, and convergent validity". These results confirm that the items effectively measure the role of FinTech in achieving financial inclusion.

Table 3 demonstrates "discriminant validity" using the "Fornell-Larcker criterion". For each construct, the square root of the AVE (diagonal values) is greater than its correlations with other constructs, confirming that the constructs are distinct.

Table 2. Measurement Model

Items with Constructs	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Government Supports		0.712	0.829	0.631
GS1: "The government supports and improves the use of FinTech services"	0.715			
GS2: "The government has introduced favorable legislation and regulations for FinTech services"	0.88			
GS3: "The government is active in setting up all kinds of infrastructure, such as a telecom network, which has a positive role in promoting FinTech services"	0.724			
Social Influence		0.777	0.724	0.501
SI1: "People expected that I should use FinTech based financial inclusion services"	0.864			
SI2: "My friends who influence my behaviour suggested me to use FinTech based financial inclusion services"	0.801			
SI3: "People whose views I respect are more likely think that I use FinTech based financial inclusion services"	0.841			
Performance Management		0.824	0.741	0.731
PE1: "Using FinTech services will enable me to accomplish tasks more quickly"	0.881			
PE2: "FinTech services will help me avoid existing bureaucracy"	0.807			
PE3: "I will be able to use FinTech services during non-working hours (24/7)"	0.71			
PE4: "FinTech services integrate various government agencies' systems and provide better citizen satisfaction"	0.792			
PE5: "I find it easy to use FinTech services to find what I want"	0.724			
PE6: "Using FinTech services will increase my productivity"	0.88			
Trust in FinTech Services		0.84	0.803	0.657
TFT1: "I believe that FinTech services will not act in a way that will harm my personal interests or violate my rights"	0.765			
TFT2: "In my opinion, FinTech services are trustworthy"	0.866			
TFT3: "In general, I think I can trust FinTech"	0.779			
Use of FinTech for financial Inclusion		0.825	0.753	0.67
UFT1: "It is possible to employ fintech to expand access to banking services"	0.818			
UFT2: "Financial inclusion can be achieved through the usage of fintech by increasing household income"	0.739			
UFT3: "Financial inclusion can be achieved through the usage of Fintech by increasing savings rates"	0.842			

Table 3. Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)”

	Government Support	Performance Management	Social Influence	Trust in FinTech Services	Use of FinTech for Financial Inclusion
Government Support	0.794				
Performance Management	0.619	0.855			
Social Influence	0.533	0.631	0.895		
Trust in FinTech Services	0.594	0.58	0.647	0.87	
Use of FinTech for Financial Inclusion	0.613	0.554	0.781	0.675	0.833

Table 4 presents the path coefficients of the structural model, which evaluate the strength and significance of the relationships between various constructs. All hypothesized paths are statistically significant, as indicated by p-values < 0.05 and high T-statistics (all above 1.96, the threshold for significance). The path coefficient for the relationship between government support and trust in FinTech services is 0.518, indicating a strong positive influence. This means that when individuals perceive strong government support for FinTech services, their trust in these services increases significantly. The T-statistic of 8.421 and p-value of 0.00 confirm that this relationship is statistically significant, supporting H1. The path coefficient for social influence on trust in FinTech services is 0.431, showing a moderate positive effect. This suggests that social factors, such as recommendations from friends or respected individuals, play a meaningful role in building trust in FinTech services. The T-statistic of 7.264 and p-value of 0.00 confirm the significance of this relationship, supporting H2. The path coefficient for performance management on trust in FinTech services is 0.792, indicating a very strong positive influence. This implies that when individuals perceive FinTech services as enhancing their performance and productivity, their trust in these services increases substantially. The T-statistic of 4.368 and p-value of 0.00 confirm the significance of this relationship, supporting H3. The path coefficient for the relationship between trust in FinTech services and the use of FinTech for financial inclusion is 0.85, showing a very strong positive effect. This means that higher levels of trust in FinTech services significantly increase the likelihood of using these services to achieve financial inclusion. The T-statistic of 17.135 and p-value of 0.00 confirm the significance of this relationship, supporting H4. Table 4 also highlights the indirect effects of government support, social influence, and performance management on the use of FinTech for financial inclusion, mediated by trust. The indirect effect of government support on the use of FinTech for financial inclusion (mediated by trust) has a path coefficient of 0.453, with a T-statistic of 9.459 and p-value of 0.00, supporting H5. Similarly, the indirect effects of social influence (Beta = 0.396, T-statistic = 7.263, p-value = 0.00) and performance management (Beta = 0.673, T-statistic = 4.107, p-value = 0.00) are also significant, supporting H6 and H7, respectively.

Table 4. Path Coefficients

Paths	Beta	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values	Results
Government Support -> Trust in FinTech Services	0.518	0.127	8.421	0.00	H1 supported
Social Influence -> Trust in FinTech Services	0.431	0.162	7.264	0.00	H2 supported
Performance Management -> Trust in FinTech Services	0.792	0.181	4.368	0.00	H3 supported
Trust in FinTech Services -> Use of FinTech for Financial Inclusion	0.85	0.05	17.135	0.00	H4 supported
Government Support -> Trust in FinTech Services -> Use of FinTech for Financial Inclusion	0.453	0.105	9.459	0.00	H5 supported
Social Influence -> Trust in FinTech Services -> Use of FinTech for Financial Inclusion	0.396	0.138	7.263	0.00	H6 supported
Performance Management -> Trust in FinTech Services -> Use of FinTech for Financial Inclusion	0.673	0.164	4.107	0.00	H7 supported

The R-square values indicate that the model has strong predictive power (Figure 2). 79% of the variance in trust in FinTech services is explained by government support, social influence, and performance management, while 72.2% of the variance in the use of FinTech for financial inclusion is explained by trust in FinTech services. These results underscore the critical role of trust as both an outcome and a mediator in driving the adoption of FinTech services for financial inclusion.

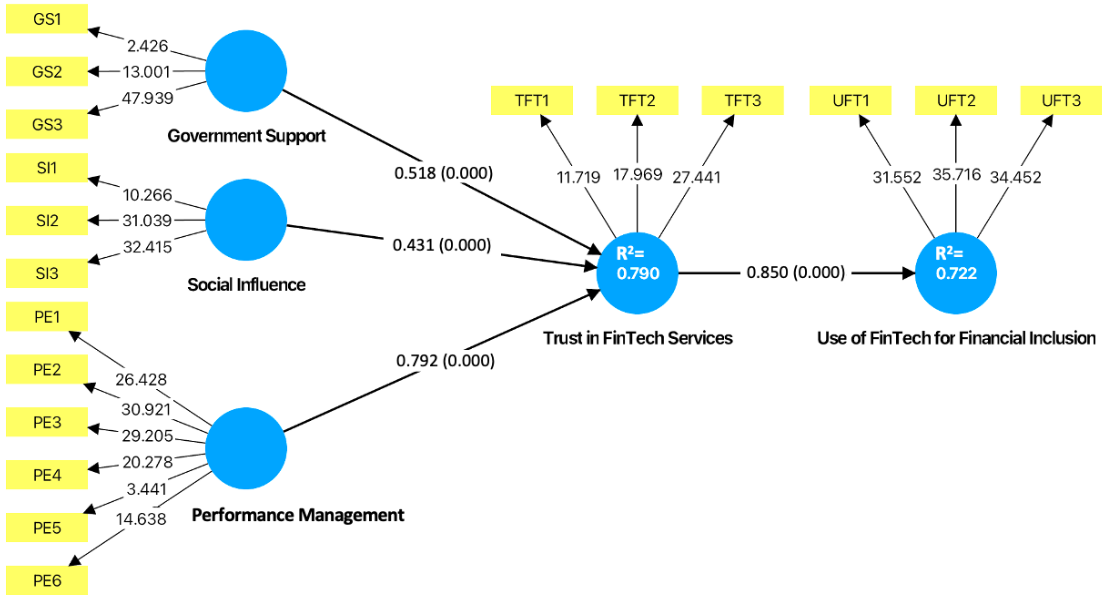

Figure 2. Structural Model

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the factors influencing trust in FinTech services and their role in promoting the use of FinTech for financial inclusion. The strong positive relationship between government support and trust in FinTech services (Beta = 0.518, $p < 0.00$) suggests that government initiatives, such as favorable regulations, infrastructure development, and promotional efforts, play a critical role in building trust. The importance of regulatory frameworks and government backing in fostering confidence in emerging technologies like FinTech (Sampat et al., 2024). Governments that actively support FinTech innovation are likely to enhance public trust, thereby encouraging adoption. The moderate positive effect of social influence on trust (Beta = 0.431, $p < 0.00$) highlights the role of peer recommendations and societal expectations in shaping individuals' perceptions of FinTech services. People are often influenced by the opinions and behaviors of those around them. In the context of FinTech, social influence can act as a catalyst for building trust, especially among individuals who are hesitant to adopt new technologies (Oladapo et al., 2022). The very strong positive relationship between performance management and trust (Beta = 0.792, $p < 0.00$) indicates that individuals are more likely to trust FinTech services when they perceive these services as enhancing their productivity, efficiency, and convenience. This finding underscores the importance of designing FinTech solutions that deliver tangible benefits to users, such as faster transactions, reduced bureaucracy, and 24/7 accessibility (Giglio, 2021).

The study highlights the critical mediating role of trust in FinTech services. Trust not only has a direct and strong positive effect on the use of FinTech for financial inclusion (Beta = 0.85, $p < 0.00$) but also mediates the indirect effects of government support, social influence, and performance management. This suggests that trust acts as a bridge, translating the positive influences of these factors into actual adoption and use of FinTech services. Building trust is therefore essential for achieving broader financial inclusion through FinTech. This finding is particularly significant in the context of financial inclusion, as it suggests that efforts to expand access to financial services through FinTech must prioritize building trust among potential users. Trust can be fostered through transparent practices, user-friendly designs, and reliable performance, all of which contribute to positive user experiences (Al-Matari et al., 2022).

The findings of this study hold significant implications for Saudi Arabia, particularly in light of its Vision 2030 goals, which emphasize digital transformation and financial inclusion. As the Kingdom continues to diversify its economy and promote FinTech innovation, building trust in FinTech services is crucial for achieving these objectives. The strong positive relationship between government support and trust highlights the importance of Saudi Arabia's ongoing efforts to create a conducive regulatory environment for FinTech. Initiatives like the Saudi Central Bank's (SAMA) FinTech regulatory sandbox and the National FinTech Strategy are critical in fostering innovation and building public trust. Policymakers should continue to enhance these frameworks, ensuring transparency, security, and consumer protection to further boost confidence in FinTech services (Rizvi et al., 2024). In a society where social networks and word-of-mouth recommendations play a significant role, leveraging social influence can accelerate FinTech adoption. Public awareness campaigns, endorsements from influential figures, and community engagement can help build trust, especially among segments of the population that are hesitant to adopt digital financial services (Alateeg & Al-Ayed, 2024). Collaborations with local influencers and community leaders can help demystify FinTech and encourage its use among underserved populations, such as women and small business owners.

FinTech providers in Saudi Arabia should focus on delivering high-performance solutions that align with user needs, such as seamless transactions, 24/7 accessibility, and integration with government services. Enhancing user experience and demonstrating tangible benefits will strengthen trust and encourage adoption, particularly among the unbanked and underbanked populations. FinTech platforms that simplify access to credit, savings, and insurance products can empower individuals and small businesses, contributing to broader economic participation (Pandey et al., 2024). Trust-building is essential for expanding financial inclusion in Saudi Arabia, where a significant portion of the population remains underserved by traditional banking systems. By promoting FinTech solutions that are transparent, secure, and user-friendly, the Kingdom can bridge the financial access gap and empower individuals and small businesses to participate in the digital economy (Choudhary & Thenmozhi, 2024). This aligns with Vision 2030's goal of increasing the share of digital transactions and reducing reliance on cash, fostering a more inclusive and sustainable financial ecosystem.

While this study provides valuable insights, it has certain limitations. The data is cross-sectional, limiting the ability to establish causal relationships. Future research could adopt longitudinal designs to explore how trust and adoption evolve over time. Additionally, the study focuses on specific factors influencing trust; future research could explore other variables, such as cultural differences or technological literacy, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of FinTech adoption.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the critical role of trust in FinTech services as a driving force behind the adoption and use of FinTech for financial inclusion. The findings demonstrate that government support, social influence, and performance management significantly influence trust, which in turn strongly predicts the use of FinTech services. Trust acts as a key mediator, translating the positive effects of government initiatives, social recommendations, and performance benefits into actual adoption. This emphasizes the need for stakeholders—policymakers, FinTech providers, and financial inclusion advocates—to prioritize trust-building strategies. Governments should create supportive regulatory environments, FinTech companies should focus on delivering reliable and user-friendly solutions, and financial inclusion initiatives should ensure transparency and security to gain user confidence. Thus, fostering trust in FinTech services is essential for achieving broader financial inclusion goals. By addressing the factors that influence trust and leveraging its mediating role, stakeholders can create an enabling ecosystem that encourages the widespread adoption of FinTech, particularly among underserved populations. This not only bridges the gap in financial access but also contributes to sustainable economic growth and development.

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