

Why Financial Behavior Differs: The Roles of Fintech Literacy, Social Comparison, and Anxiety

Yuli Rahmini Suci^{1*}, Roswiyanti², Andi Widiawati³, Lilik Handayani¹, and Johannes Baptista Halik⁴

¹Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Balikpapan, Balikpapan, 76115, Indonesia

²Universitas Cokroaminoto, Makassar, 90245, Indonesia

³Institut Teknologi dan Bisnis Nobel Indonesia, Makassar, 90221, Indonesia

⁴Universitas Kristen Indonesia Paulus, Makassar, 90245, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study examines the effects of perceived fintech literacy and social comparison orientation on financial behavior among productive-age adults in Indonesia, with financial anxiety as a mediating mechanism.

Design/Methodology/Approach – A quantitative explanatory study was conducted using a cross-sectional survey of 210 productive-age fintech users in Indonesia. Respondents were selected through purposive sampling, and the data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS).

Findings – Perceived fintech literacy positively affects both financial behavior and financial anxiety. Social comparison orientation significantly increases financial anxiety but has no direct effect on financial behavior. Financial anxiety positively influences financial behavior, partially mediating the relationship between fintech literacy and financial behavior, and fully mediating the relationship between social comparison orientation and financial behavior.

Originality/Value – This study extends the behavioral finance literature by identifying financial anxiety as a key mechanism linking fintech literacy and social comparison orientation to financial behavior. The findings emphasize the importance of integrating cognitive, social, and psychological factors in financial education and policy to promote responsible financial decision-making.

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Perceived Fintech Literacy, Social Comparison Orientation, Financial Anxiety, Financial Behaviour

Article Information:

Received: 30/04/2026

Revise: 19/06/2026

Accepted: 16/07/2026

ISSN:

2985-3168 (Online)

2985-3222 (Print)

*Corresponding Author at:

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Balikpapan, Jl. Syarifuddin Yoes No. 11, Sepinggan Baru, Balikpapan, 76115, Indonesia.

E-mail address: author@email.com (author#1)

The work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International \(CC BY-SA 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)



1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the way individuals manage their finances, particularly through the growing adoption of financial technology (fintech) services. Digital payment systems, online investment platforms, peer-to-peer lending applications, and mobile-based financial planning tools have become increasingly accessible to the public. In Indonesia, the expansion of fintech has accelerated alongside the widespread diffusion of internet connectivity and smartphone usage. While this development has created substantial opportunities to enhance financial inclusion, it has also introduced new challenges associated with individuals' ability to understand and effectively utilise digital financial products and services, commonly referred to as fintech literacy (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2023). In the present study, fintech literacy is conceptualized as perceived fintech literacy, referring to individuals' self-assessed understanding, confidence, and perceived ability to use digital financial services rather than objectively tested financial knowledge. This distinction is important because the measurement instrument captures respondents' subjective evaluations of their fintech competence through self-reported perceptions. Accordingly, the findings should be interpreted as reflecting perceived rather than objectively verified fintech literacy.

Among all demographic groups, the productive-age population, comprising individuals aged between 15 and 64 years, represents the most active segment of digital financial service users. This group plays a pivotal role in economic development as it contributes significantly to consumption, investment activities, and overall national productivity (Demirgüç-Kunt et al., 2022; Widyastuti et al., 2024)). Nevertheless, greater access to fintech services does not necessarily translate into a sufficient level of financial understanding. Inadequate fintech literacy may lead individuals to make suboptimal financial decisions, including excessive reliance on digital credit facilities, impulsive consumption patterns, and insufficient long-term financial planning (Kass-Hanna et al., 2022).

Beyond literacy-related factors, the evolving digital social environment has introduced additional influences on financial decision-making. Social media platforms continuously expose individuals to information regarding others' lifestyles, financial achievements, and consumption behaviours, creating fertile ground for social comparison processes. This phenomenon is conceptualised as social comparison orientation (SCO), which refers to an individual's tendency to evaluate personal circumstances and achievements by comparing them with those of others (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999). In the contemporary digital landscape, frequent exposure to displays of wealth, luxury consumption, and financial success may encourage individuals to engage in financially irrational behaviour in an effort to maintain social status and favourable self-presentation (Vogel et al., 2015).

Table 1. Financial Literacy, Financial Inclusion, and Digital Adoption in Indonesia

Indicator	Year	Percentage (%)
National Financial Literacy	2022	49,68
National Financial Inclusion	2022	85,10
National Financial Literacy	2024	65,43
National Financial Inclusion	2024	75,02
Indonesian Internet Users	2024	79,5
Active Digital Wallet Users	2024	>70

Indicator	Year	Percentage (%)
Social Media Users	2024	>60

Source: (Otoritas Jasa Keuangan (OJK), 2022; We Are Social, 2024).

The rapid expansion of digital financial services in Indonesia has been accompanied by notable changes in financial literacy and inclusion levels. As presented in Table 1, the national financial literacy rate increased substantially from 49.68% in 2022 to 65.43% in 2024. However, despite this improvement, the gap between financial literacy and the utilisation of digital financial services remains evident. At the same time, Indonesia has experienced widespread digital adoption, with internet penetration reaching 79.5% of the population in 2024, while active digital wallet users and social media users accounted for more than 70% and 60% of the population, respectively (Otoritas Jasa Keuangan (OJK), 2022; We Are Social, 2024).

These table illustrate that digital financial access has expanded rapidly, creating unprecedented opportunities for individuals to engage with various fintech services. Nevertheless, increased access does not automatically translate into informed financial decision-making. Many individuals continue to interact with increasingly sophisticated financial products without possessing sufficient knowledge to evaluate risks, compare alternatives, or manage financial commitments effectively. This situation highlights the growing importance of fintech literacy as a critical capability for navigating the digital financial ecosystem and avoiding potentially harmful financial behaviours.

Although financial literacy is often associated with improved financial confidence, the rapidly evolving fintech environment introduces new forms of uncertainty, including cyber fraud, digital privacy threats, investment volatility, and algorithmic lending risks. Consequently, individuals with higher perceived fintech literacy may become more aware of these risks, leading to elevated financial anxiety despite possessing greater confidence in using digital financial services.

Recent evidence suggests that social comparison orientation is closely associated with various aspects of financial decision-making. Individuals with a stronger tendency towards social comparison are more likely to experience psychological pressure regarding their financial circumstances, particularly when they perceive themselves as lagging behind their peers or reference groups (Ahamed & Limbu, 2024; Renanita & Rembulan, 2025). Such pressure may gradually develop into financial anxiety, characterised by persistent feelings of worry, fear, and stress concerning one's current financial condition and future financial security.

Financial anxiety has emerged as an increasingly important issue in recent years. Global economic uncertainty, rising inflation, escalating living costs, and shifts in employment patterns following the COVID-19 pandemic have intensified concerns about personal financial stability across many societies (Sorgente et al., 2023). The consequences of financial anxiety extend beyond psychological well-being. It can significantly influence an individual's capacity to save, manage debt, invest effectively, and make rational financial decisions, thereby shaping overall financial behaviour (Xin et al., 2023).

From a behavioural finance perspective, financial behaviour reflects how individuals manage their financial resources through activities such as budgeting, planning, debt management, investment decisions, and consumption control (Jing Jian Xiao, 2008; Shefrin & Statman, 2000). Sound financial behaviour is widely recognised as a critical prerequisite for achieving financial well-being and household economic resilience. Consequently, understanding the factors that shape financial behaviour remains an important scholarly and practical concern. These

determinants may arise from cognitive dimensions, such as fintech literacy, as well as psychological factors, including financial anxiety.

Prior studies have consistently reported a positive relationship between financial literacy and financial behaviour (Stolper & Walter, 2017; Xiao & Porto, 2017). However, findings concerning digital financial literacy and its influence on financial behaviour remain inconclusive. While some studies report a strong direct effect, others suggest that psychological factors may strengthen, weaken, or even alter the relationship between financial knowledge and financial decision-making (Ahamed & Limbu, 2024). Such inconsistencies indicate the presence of underlying mechanisms that have not yet been adequately explained within the existing literature.

Similarly, research examining social comparison orientation within the context of financial behaviour remains relatively limited, particularly among productive-age populations in developing economies. Existing studies have predominantly focused on the consequences of social comparison for psychological well-being, life satisfaction, and consumer behaviour, while paying comparatively little attention to its influence on financial behaviour through psychological pathways such as financial anxiety (Ahamed & Limbu, 2024; Renanita & Rembulan, 2025).

Existing studies have generally examined fintech literacy, social comparison orientation, and financial anxiety as independent determinants of financial behaviour. However, limited attention has been given to understanding the psychological mechanism through which social comparison translates into financial behaviour within digital financial environments. Specifically, whether financial anxiety functions as the underlying pathway linking social comparison orientation to financial behaviour remains underexplored.

Accordingly, the present study proposes that financial anxiety serves as the key psychological mechanism explaining why social comparison affects financial behaviour.

The study draws upon Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954), which posits that individuals evaluate themselves through comparisons with others, and Behavioural Finance Theory, which argues that financial decisions are shaped not only by rational considerations but also by emotional and psychological influences (Shefrin & Statman, 2000). Within this framework, fintech literacy represents the cognitive dimension of financial decision-making, social comparison orientation captures the social dimension, and financial anxiety reflects the psychological dimension that may ultimately shape individual financial behaviour.

By integrating these perspectives, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how cognitive, social, and psychological factors interact to influence financial behaviour in an increasingly digital financial environment. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing literature on behavioural finance and fintech adoption, while also offering practical insights for policymakers, educators, and fintech providers seeking to promote healthier financial behaviour among productive-age populations.

2. Literature Review & Hypothesis Development

2.1 Behavioural Finance Theory

This study is primarily grounded in Behavioural Finance Theory, which argues that financial decisions are not solely the product of rational analysis but are also shaped by psychological, emotional, and social influences (Shefrin & Statman, 2000). Emerging as a response to the assumptions of perfect rationality embedded in traditional finance theory, behavioural finance recognises that individuals frequently deviate from optimal decision-making due to cognitive

biases, emotional reactions, social pressures, and subjective perceptions of financial circumstances.

Within the context of this study, fintech literacy represents the cognitive dimension that enables individuals to understand and utilise digital financial services effectively. In contrast, social comparison orientation reflects the social dimension that influences how individuals assess their financial standing relative to others. These cognitive and social factors may trigger psychological responses, particularly financial anxiety, which subsequently shapes financial behaviour. Recent studies suggest that digital financial literacy and financial anxiety have become increasingly important determinants of financial behaviour in the digital economy.

2.2 Social Comparison Theory

In addition to Behavioural Finance Theory, this study draws upon Social Comparison Theory proposed by Festinger (1954). The theory posits that individuals have an inherent tendency to evaluate their abilities, achievements, and circumstances by comparing themselves with others. Such comparisons provide a reference point through which individuals interpret their own success and social standing.

In today's highly connected digital environment, social media platforms have intensified opportunities for social comparison. Individuals are constantly exposed to curated displays of financial success, luxury lifestyles, and economic achievements, making comparisons more frequent and often unavoidable. When individuals perceive themselves as financially inferior to their peers or reference groups, these comparisons may generate psychological pressure and emotional discomfort (Ahamed & Limbu, 2024).

Persistent social comparison can ultimately give rise to financial anxiety, particularly among younger generations who spend substantial amounts of time engaging with social media content. Supporting this view, Natalie and Subroto (2026) found that a stronger tendency towards social comparison is associated with higher levels of financial stress and financial anxiety among active social media users.

2.3 Fintech Literacy

Fintech literacy extends the traditional concept of financial literacy by focusing specifically on an individual's ability to understand, evaluate, and utilise technology-enabled financial services effectively and responsibly. It encompasses knowledge related to digital payments, mobile banking, electronic wallets, online investment platforms, digital lending services, transaction security, and risk management within the digital financial ecosystem.

According to Khan et al. (2023), fintech literacy involves more than technical proficiency in using financial applications. It also requires a comprehensive understanding of the benefits, costs, risks, and financial consequences associated with digital financial services. As financial activities increasingly migrate to digital platforms, fintech literacy has become a critical competency for informed financial decision-making.

Recent evidence indicates that individuals with higher levels of digital financial literacy are more capable of managing financial resources effectively and making sound financial decisions. They are more likely to demonstrate responsible financial behaviour and experience lower levels of financial anxiety than individuals with limited fintech knowledge (Kumar, 2026).

Drawing upon the digital financial literacy literature, fintech literacy is reflected through knowledge of fintech products and services, understanding of fintech-related risks, capability in conducting digital transactions, ability to maintain transaction security, and competence in

evaluating the benefits and costs of fintech services (Chhillar et al., 2025; Choung et al., 2023; Kumar, 2026).

While objective fintech literacy is commonly measured through knowledge-based assessments, the present study adopts a perceived fintech literacy perspective because financial behaviour is often influenced by individuals' subjective confidence and perceived understanding of digital financial services.

2.4 Social Comparison Orientation

Social Comparison Orientation (SCO) refers to the extent to which individuals habitually compare their abilities, achievements, economic conditions, and life circumstances with those of others. Individuals with high levels of SCO are more likely to evaluate themselves based on information obtained from their social environment, particularly through social media interactions (Ahamed & Limbu, 2024).

The prevalence of social media has strengthened social comparison processes by providing constant exposure to information about others' financial accomplishments and consumption patterns. While such exposure may serve as motivation for some individuals, it may also foster dissatisfaction with one's own financial condition and create psychological strain.

Renanita and Rembulan (2025) reported that social comparison contributes to greater financial pressure and less rational consumption behaviour. Likewise, individuals who frequently engage in upward social comparison tend to experience higher levels of financial anxiety than those with lower comparison tendencies. Following the Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (INCOM), SCO can be assessed through comparison frequency, interest in others' achievements, sensitivity to social status, self-evaluation based on others' success, and attention to the economic conditions of reference groups (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999).

Social comparison orientation encompasses multiple forms of comparison, including upward, downward, financial, lifestyle-based, and social-media-driven comparisons. The present study focuses primarily on financial and lifestyle-related comparison tendencies within digital environments, where individuals evaluate their financial circumstances relative to those of others. Therefore, the construct should be interpreted within this specific context rather than as a general measure of all forms of social comparison.

2.5 Financial Anxiety

Financial anxiety refers to a psychological condition characterised by persistent feelings of worry, fear, stress, or unease concerning current financial circumstances and future financial security. Such anxiety may arise from economic uncertainty, debt burdens, inadequate income, rising living expenses, or social pressures associated with economic status (Lee et al., 2023).

Recent studies identify financial anxiety as one of the most influential psychological factors affecting financial decision-making quality. Individuals experiencing high levels of financial anxiety often struggle to make rational financial choices, formulate effective financial plans, and manage investment risks appropriately (Xin et al., 2023).

Furthermore, financial anxiety has been recognised as an important psychological mechanism linking various antecedent factors to financial outcomes (Xin et al., 2023) argue that financial anxiety serves as a key explanatory pathway through which personal, social, and economic influences shape financial decision-making. Based on the Financial Anxiety Scale (FAS), the construct encompasses concerns regarding current financial conditions, future financial needs, emergency financial situations, financial decision-making stress, and personal economic stability (Lee et al., 2023; Xin et al., 2023).

Recent behavioral research suggests that financial anxiety should not be viewed as a uniformly detrimental psychological state. A moderate level of financial concern may function as an adaptive emotional response that motivates individuals to budget more carefully, increase precautionary savings, monitor expenditures, and prepare for future financial uncertainty. However, excessive or chronic financial anxiety may become dysfunctional by impairing cognitive processing, increasing avoidance behavior, and reducing decision quality. Therefore, the impact of financial anxiety on financial behavior depends on its intensity and psychological function.

2.6 Financial Behaviour

Financial behaviour refers to the actual actions undertaken by individuals in managing their financial resources. These actions include financial planning, budgeting, saving, debt management, investment activities, and expenditure control. Effective financial behaviour reflects an individual's ability to allocate resources efficiently in pursuit of both short-term and long-term financial objectives (Kumar, 2026).

From a behavioural finance perspective, financial behaviour is shaped by a combination of cognitive, social, and psychological factors (Shefrin & Statman, 2000). Contemporary research consistently demonstrates that digital financial literacy contributes positively to financial behaviour, whereas financial anxiety and other forms of psychological distress often undermine financial decision quality (Chhillar et al., 2025; Kumar, 2026)Chhill.

Financial behaviour is commonly reflected through financial planning practices, budgeting discipline, saving habits, debt management, investment decisions, and expenditure control.

2.7 Perceived Fintech Literacy and Financial Behaviour

Perceived Fintech literacy equips individuals with the knowledge necessary to understand the benefits and risks associated with digital financial services, thereby enabling more informed financial decisions (Choung et al., 2023). Individuals with greater fintech literacy are generally better positioned to manage their finances, engage in financial planning, and utilise digital financial technologies productively (Khan et al., 2023).

H1: Fintech literacy positively influences financial behaviour.

2.8 Perceived Fintech Literacy and Financial Anxiety

Although conventional financial literacy is generally associated with improved financial confidence, perceived fintech literacy operates within a fundamentally different digital environment characterized by rapidly evolving technologies and emerging financial risks. Individuals with higher perceived fintech literacy tend to possess greater awareness of cybersecurity threats, digital fraud, online lending risks, investment volatility, and data privacy concerns. Rather than simply increasing confidence, this heightened awareness may strengthen perceptions of financial uncertainty and vulnerability, resulting in greater financial anxiety. From a behavioural perspective, greater knowledge of digital financial systems may foster psychological vigilance by making individuals more attentive to potential financial losses and technological risks. Consequently, perceived fintech literacy may increase financial anxiety through a risk-awareness mechanism, whereby greater understanding of digital finance simultaneously enhances financial capability while intensifying awareness of potential threats in increasingly complex financial ecosystems.

H2: Perceived Fintech literacy positively influences financial anxiety.

2.9 Social Comparison Orientation and Financial Behaviour

Individuals with a strong tendency towards social comparison often feel compelled to align their consumption patterns with those of their reference groups. Such behaviour may

encourage irrational spending and weaken personal financial management practices (Ahamed & Limbu, 2024; Renanita & Rembulan, 2025).

H3: Social comparison orientation negatively influences financial behaviour.

2.10 Social Comparison Orientation and Financial Anxiety

According to Social Comparison Theory, frequent comparisons with others may generate psychological pressure when individuals perceive themselves as financially disadvantaged. As a result, financial anxiety is likely to increase (Ahamed & Limbu, 2024; Festinger, 1954).

H4: Social comparison orientation positively influences financial anxiety.

2.11 Financial Anxiety and Financial Behaviour

Excessive financial anxiety may impair an individual's ability to make rational and well-planned financial decisions. Individuals experiencing financial anxiety are more likely to engage in impulsive spending, avoid investment opportunities, and encounter difficulties in managing their finances effectively (Xin et al., 2023). Moderate levels of financial anxiety may encourage individuals to become more cautious in managing their finances by strengthening budgeting discipline, saving behavior, and expenditure control.

H5: Financial anxiety positively influences financial behaviour.

2.12 The Mediating Role of Financial Anxiety

Behavioural Finance Theory suggests that cognitive and social factors may influence financial behaviour through individuals' psychological responses (Shefrin & Statman, 2000). Higher fintech literacy is expected to reduce financial anxiety, thereby promoting more favourable financial behaviour (Kumar, 2026). Conversely, stronger social comparison orientation may intensify financial anxiety, ultimately leading to poorer financial behaviour (Ahamed & Limbu, 2024; Natalie & Subroto, 2026).

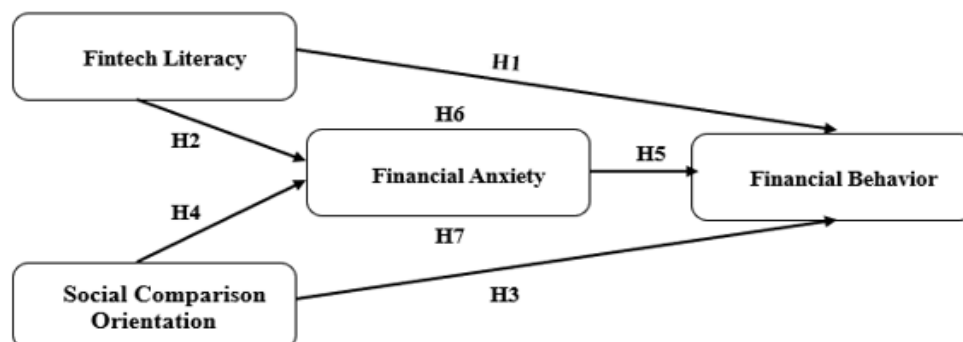
H6: Financial anxiety mediates the relationship between fintech literacy and financial behaviour.

H7: Financial anxiety mediates the relationship between social comparison orientation and financial behaviour.

Unlike previous studies that primarily examined direct relationships among fintech literacy, social comparison orientation, and financial behaviour, the present study proposes that financial anxiety represents the underlying psychological mechanism explaining how social comparison is translated into financial behaviour. This study therefore extends Behavioural Finance Theory by demonstrating that social influences affect financial behaviour primarily through psychological processes rather than direct behavioural pathways..

Based on the theoretical foundations and hypotheses developed above, the conceptual framework of this study is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research Conceptual Framework



3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Sample

This study employed a quantitative approach using an explanatory research design to examine the causal relationships among fintech literacy, social comparison orientation, financial anxiety, and financial behaviour (Hair et al., 2022; Sugiyono, 2021). A cross-sectional survey was conducted to collect data from productive-age individuals in Indonesia.

The target population comprised individuals aged 17–64 years, consistent with the productive-age classification established by Badan Pusat Statistik (2024). To ensure relevance to the research objectives, the unit of analysis was limited to individuals who had experience using or were familiar with fintech services, including mobile banking, digital wallets, online payments, digital investments, and online lending platforms.

Respondents consisted of productive-age fintech users in Indonesia aged 17 years and above who had prior experience using digital financial services. The lower age limit of 17 years was adopted because individuals within this age group commonly possess personal identification, bank accounts, and independent access to digital financial services in Indonesia.

A purposive sampling technique was adopted because not all members of the population possessed the characteristics required for the study (Memon et al., 2025). Respondents were required to meet the following criteria: (1) at least 17 years old, (2) classified within the productive-age group, (3) users of at least one fintech service during the previous six months, and (4) active social media users. The use of purposive sampling was considered appropriate because the study specifically targeted productive-age individuals with prior experience using fintech services. Consequently, the sample represents digitally active productive-age fintech users rather than the broader productive-age population in Indonesia. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted within the context of respondents who are familiar with and actively engaged in digital financial services.

Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via social media platforms and fintech user communities between November 2025 and April 2026. A total of 210 valid responses were obtained. This sample size satisfies the minimum recommendation proposed by Hair et al. (2019), which suggests a sample of at least ten times the number of indicators included in the research model. Given the 21 measurement indicators employed in this study, the sample was considered adequate for PLS-SEM analysis.

Only respondents who agreed to the informed consent statement were allowed to proceed with the questionnaire.

3.2 Measures

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). All measurement items were adapted from previously validated instruments reported in the literature.

Fintech literacy was measured through five indicators reflecting knowledge of fintech products and services, understanding of fintech-related risks, digital transaction capability, transaction security awareness, and the ability to evaluate fintech benefits and costs (Chhillar et al., 2025; Choung et al., 2023; Kumar, 2026). In this study, fintech literacy is conceptualised as perceived fintech literacy, referring to respondents' self-assessed understanding and confidence in using digital financial services rather than their objectively tested financial knowledge. Accordingly, the measurement reflects individuals' perceived capability in recognising and utilising fintech services within everyday financial activities. Perceived

Fintech Literacy was measured using respondents' self-assessments of their understanding, confidence, and perceived capability in using digital financial services. The construct reflects subjective evaluations of fintech knowledge rather than objective financial knowledge assessed through standardized tests. Therefore, the measurement captures perceived fintech literacy rather than actual fintech literacy.

Social comparison orientation was measured using dimensions adapted from the Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (INCOM), including comparison frequency, interest in others' achievements, sensitivity to social status, self-evaluation based on others' success, and attention to the economic conditions of reference groups ((Gibbons & Buunk, 1999; Renanita & Rembulan, 2025; Vogel et al., 2015).

Financial anxiety was assessed using indicators derived from the Financial Anxiety Scale (FAS), including concerns about current financial conditions, future financial needs, financial emergencies, stress related to financial decision-making, and personal financial stability (Lee et al., 2023; Xin et al., 2023).

3.3 Data Analysis

The data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with Smart-PLS 4. PLS-SEM was selected because of its suitability for examining complex relationships involving both direct and indirect effects among latent constructs (Hair et al., 2021).

The analysis proceeded in two stages. First, the measurement model was evaluated through assessments of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability. Convergent validity was examined using outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criterion (Henseler et al., 2015). Reliability was evaluated through Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (Hair et al., 2019).

Because all variables were collected using a single self-administered questionnaire at one point in time, common method bias (CMB) was assessed using the full collinearity test proposed by Kock (2015). All full collinearity VIF values were below the recommended threshold of 3.3, indicating that common method bias is unlikely to threaten the validity of the findings.

Second, the structural model was assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), effect size (f^2), and hypothesis testing. The significance of the structural relationships was evaluated through a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples. The mediating role of financial anxiety was examined through indirect effect analysis following the recommendations of Hair et al. (2019).

Mediation was assessed using the bootstrapping procedure in Smart-PLS. The significance of the indirect effects was evaluated based on bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals, while the classification of mediation as partial or full followed the significance of the direct and indirect effects.

3.4 Data Screening Procedure

Prior to analysis, the dataset was examined for completeness and response quality. Responses containing missing values were excluded from the dataset. The data were also screened for straight-lining patterns, excessively short completion times, and other indicators of careless responding. Only valid responses satisfying the screening criteria were retained for subsequent SEM-PLS analysis.

3.5 Ethical Consideration

Participation in this study was entirely voluntary. Before completing the online questionnaire, respondents were informed about the purpose of the research, the anonymous nature of the survey, and the confidentiality of their responses. Respondents provided informed consent electronically before proceeding to the questionnaire and were informed that they could discontinue their participation at any time without any consequences. No personally identifiable information was collected, and all responses were analysed in aggregate form solely for academic purposes.

Table 2. Measurement Items

Construct	Code	Measurement Item	References
Perceived Fintech Literacy (FL)	FL1	I understand the various types of fintech services currently available.	(Chhillar et al., 2025; Choung et al., 2023; Kass-Hanna et al., 2022; Kumar, 2026)
	FL2	I understand the benefits of using fintech services in daily financial activities.	
	FL3	I understand the risks associated with using fintech services.	
	FL4	I am able to distinguish between legal and illegal fintech services.	
	FL5	I understand how to maintain the security of digital financial transactions.	
Social Comparison Orientation (SCO)	SCO1	I frequently compare my financial condition with that of others.	(Gibbons & Buunk, 1999; Renanita & Rembulan, 2025; Vogel et al., 2015)
	SCO2	I am interested in learning about other people's financial achievements.	
	SCO3	I often evaluate myself based on the financial success of others.	
	SCO4	I pay attention to other people's lifestyles as a basis for comparison.	
	SCO5	The economic condition of others influences my assessment of my own financial situation.	
Financial Anxiety (FA)	FA1	I feel anxious about my current financial condition.	(Lee et al., 2023; Xin et al., 2023)
	FA2	I worry about my ability to meet future financial needs.	
	FA3	I feel stressed when thinking about my financial situation.	
	FA4	I feel uneasy when facing unexpected expenses.	

Construct	Code	Measurement Item	References
Financial Behaviour (FB)	FA5	I worry about my personal financial stability.	(Kumar, 2026; Xiao & Porto, 2017)
	FB1	I regularly engage in financial planning.	
	FB2	I prepare a budget to manage my expenses.	
	FB3	I set aside part of my income for savings or investment.	
	FB4	I fulfil my financial obligations on time.	
	FB5	I consider my financial condition before making purchases.	
	FB6	I control my spending to ensure it does not exceed my financial capacity.	

Source: Adapted from previous studies (2026)

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Respondent Characteristics

Respondent characteristics were analysed based on gender, age, educational attainment, occupation, monthly income, and the fintech services most frequently used. These characteristics provide contextual insight into the profile of productive-age individuals participating in the study.

Table 3. Respondent Characteristics (n = 210)

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	98	46.7
	Female	112	53.3
	Total	210	100.0
Age	17–25 Years	82	39.0
	26–35 Years	68	32.4
	36–45 Years	35	16.7
	46–55 Years	18	8.6
	>55 Years	7	3.3
	Total	210	100.0
Educational Attainment	Senior High School/Vocational High School	54	25.7
	Diploma	28	13.3
	Bachelor's Degree	98	46.7
	Master's Degree	25	11.9

Characteristics			Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Occupation			Doctoral Degree	5	2.4
			Total	210	100.0
			Student	49	23.3
			Private-Sector Employee	87	41.4
			Civil Servant/Military/Police Officer	21	10.0
			Entrepreneur	34	16.2
			Others	19	9.1
			Total	210	100.0
Monthly Income			< IDR 3,000,000	48	22.9
			IDR 3,000,000–5,000,000	72	34.3
			IDR 5,000,001–8,000,000	51	24.3
			IDR 8,000,001–10,000,000	24	11.4
			> IDR 10,000,000	15	7.1
			Total	210	100.0
	Most Frequently Used Fintech Service			E-Wallet	95
			Mobile Banking	58	27.6
			Buy Now, Pay Later (PayLater)	26	12.4
			Digital Investment Platform	18	8.6
			Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Lending	13	6.2
			Total	210	100.0

Source: Processed primary data (2026).

Table 3 presents the demographic profile of the 210 respondents. Female respondents accounted for 53.3% of the sample, while males represented 46.7%, indicating a relatively balanced gender distribution. This finding reflects the increasing participation of women in the utilisation of digital financial services and the broader expansion of financial inclusion in Indonesia.

In terms of age, the majority of respondents were between 17 and 25 years old (39.0%), followed by those aged 26–35 years (32.4%). Collectively, these groups accounted for more than 70% of the sample, highlighting the dominance of young productive-age individuals. As the most active users of fintech services and social media platforms, this demographic is particularly relevant for examining financial behaviour, social comparison tendencies, and financial anxiety in the digital era.

Regarding educational attainment, most respondents held a bachelor's degree (46.7%), followed by senior secondary school qualifications (25.7%). This distribution suggests that respondents generally possessed sufficient educational backgrounds to engage with digital financial services and evaluate financial information. However, educational attainment alone may not guarantee sound financial behaviour, as financial decisions are often shaped by psychological and social influences.

With respect to occupation, private-sector employees constituted the largest group (41.4%), followed by students (23.3%) and entrepreneurs (16.2%). These occupational groups are actively involved in economic activities and regularly encounter financial decisions related to consumption, savings, investment, and fintech usage.

In terms of income, the largest proportion of respondents reported monthly earnings between IDR 3 million and IDR 5 million (34.3%), followed by those earning between IDR 5 million and IDR 8 million (24.3%). This indicates that most respondents belonged to the middle-income segment, which represents a key market for fintech products and services in Indonesia.

Finally, e-wallets emerged as the most frequently used fintech service (45.2%), followed by mobile banking applications (27.6%). This finding confirms the dominance of digital payment services within Indonesia's fintech ecosystem and reflects the growing integration of digital technology into everyday financial activities.

Overall, the respondent profile indicates that the sample was predominantly composed of young productive-age individuals with relatively high educational attainment, moderate income levels, and active engagement with fintech services. These characteristics are consistent with the objectives of the study and provide an appropriate context for examining the relationships among fintech literacy, social comparison orientation, financial anxiety, and financial behaviour.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were conducted to provide an overview of respondents' perceptions of the study variables prior to the assessment of the measurement and structural models. The analysis included all 21 indicators representing four latent constructs: Fintech Literacy (FL), Social Comparison Orientation (SCO), Financial Anxiety (FA), and Financial Behaviour (FB). The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of the Research Variables

Code	Indicator	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Perceived Fintech Literacy (FL)				
FL1	I understand the various types of fintech services currently available.	3.976	4.000	1.012
FL2	I understand the benefits of using fintech services in daily financial activities.	3.890	4.000	1.096
FL3	I understand the risks associated with using fintech services.	3.781	4.000	1.023
FL4	I am able to distinguish between legal and illegal fintech service providers.	3.557	4.000	0.920
FL5	I understand how to maintain the security of digital financial transactions.	3.762	4.000	0.926
Average of FL Construct		3.793		0.995
Social Comparison Orientation (SCO)				
SCO1	I frequently compare my financial condition with that of others.	3.867	4.000	1.122

Code Indicator	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
SCO2 I am interested in learning about other people's financial achievements.	3.905	4.000	1.155
SCO3 I often evaluate myself based on the financial success of others.	3.629	4.000	1.044
SCO4 I pay attention to other people's lifestyles as a basis for comparison.	3.424	3.000	0.944
SCO5 The economic condition of others influences my assessment of my own financial situation.	3.619	4.000	1.027
Average of SCO Construct	3.689		1.058
Financial Anxiety (FA)			
FA1 I feel anxious about my current financial condition.	3.971	4.000	1.082
FA2 I worry about my ability to meet future financial needs.	3.919	4.000	1.059
FA3 I feel stressed when thinking about my financial situation.	3.576	4.000	0.984
FA4 I feel uneasy when facing unexpected expenses.	3.862	4.000	0.969
FA5 I worry about my personal financial stability.	3.652	4.000	1.013
Average of FA Construct	3.796		1.021
Financial Behaviour (FB)			
FB1 I regularly engage in financial planning.	3.405	3.000	0.927
FB2 I prepare a budget to manage my expenses.	3.710	4.000	1.141
FB3 I set aside part of my income for savings or investment.	3.305	3.000	0.972
FB4 I fulfil my financial obligations on time.	3.343	3.000	0.924
FB5 I consider my financial condition before making purchases.	3.300	3.000	0.951
FB6 I control my spending to ensure it does not exceed my financial capacity.	3.510	3.000	1.015
Average of FB Construct	3.429		0.988

Overall, all constructs recorded mean scores above the midpoint of the five-point Likert scale, indicating generally positive respondent perceptions. Among the four constructs, Financial Anxiety exhibited the highest average score (Mean = 3.796), followed closely by Perceived Fintech Literacy (Mean = 3.793), Social Comparison Orientation (Mean = 3.689), and Financial Behaviour (Mean = 3.429).

Within the Perceived Fintech Literacy construct, the highest-rated item was respondents' understanding of the various types of fintech services available (FL1; Mean = 3.976), whereas the ability to distinguish between legal and illegal fintech providers (FL4; Mean = 3.557) received the lowest score. This finding suggests that while respondents are generally familiar with digital financial services, their understanding of regulatory and security-related aspects remains relatively limited.

For Social Comparison Orientation, interest in other people's financial achievements (SCO2; Mean = 3.905) emerged as the strongest indicator, indicating a relatively high tendency among respondents to monitor the financial success of others. This pattern reflects the growing influence of social comparison processes within digitally connected environments.

Financial Anxiety recorded consistently high scores across its indicators. Concerns regarding current financial conditions (FA1; Mean = 3.971) and future financial needs (FA2; Mean = 3.919) were particularly prominent, suggesting that financial uncertainty remains a significant concern among productive-age individuals despite their familiarity with digital financial services.

Regarding Financial Behaviour, preparing budgets to manage expenses (FB2; Mean = 3.710) received the highest score, while considering financial conditions before making purchases (FB5; Mean = 3.300) recorded the lowest. These results indicate that although respondents demonstrate moderate financial management practices, aspects related to consumption control and financial discipline may still require improvement.

The standard deviation values ranged from 0.920 to 1.155, indicating a relatively moderate level of variability in respondents' answers. Since all values remained below the commonly accepted threshold of 1.20, the responses may be considered reasonably homogeneous, suggesting a satisfactory degree of consistency across the sample.

An important preliminary finding is that the mean score for Financial Anxiety (3.796) was almost identical to that of Fintech Literacy (3.793). This pattern suggests that greater familiarity with fintech services does not necessarily translate into stronger financial confidence or lower financial concerns. Such evidence provides an initial indication that Financial Anxiety may play an important mediating role in explaining how Fintech Literacy and Social Comparison Orientation influence Financial Behaviour, thereby supporting the conceptual framework proposed in this study.

4.3 Measurement Model Assessment (Outer Model)

The measurement model was evaluated to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs included in the study. Following the recommendations of Hair et al. (2019) and Henseler et al. (2015), the assessment comprised convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability. The criteria applied included outer loadings greater than 0.70, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) above 0.50, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) exceeding 0.70, and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) values below 0.90.

Table 5. Measurement Model Assessment Results (Outer Model Evaluation)

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Perceived Fintech Literacy	FL1	0.889	0.917	0.924	0.750
	FL2	0.882			
	FL3	0.894			
	FL4	0.827			
	FL5	0.837			
Social Comparison Orientation	SCO1	0.893	0.918	0.922	0.753
	SCO2	0.908			
	SCO3	0.867			
	SCO4	0.827			

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Financial Anxiety	SCO5	0.843	0.868	0.878	0.657
	FA1	0.885			
	FA2	0.860			
	FA3	0.701			
	FA4	0.831			
	FA5	0.762			
Financial Behaviour	FB1	0.833	0.904	0.913	0.677
	FB2	0.891			
	FB3	0.812			
	FB4	0.835			
	FB5	0.794			
	FB6	0.767			

Source: Authors' calculations using Smart-PLS 4.0 (2026).

As reported in Table 5, all indicators exhibited outer loading values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming satisfactory indicator reliability. The highest loading was observed for SCO2 (0.908), while the lowest loading was recorded for FA3 (0.701). Although FA3 displayed the smallest loading, its value remained above the acceptable threshold, indicating that all indicators adequately represented their respective latent constructs and were therefore retained for further analysis.

Convergent validity was subsequently assessed using the AVE criterion. All constructs exceeded the recommended minimum value of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019), with AVE values ranging from 0.657 to 0.753. Social Comparison Orientation demonstrated the highest AVE (0.753), followed closely by Fintech Literacy (0.750), Financial Behaviour (0.677), and Financial Anxiety (0.657). These findings indicate that each construct explained more than 50% of the variance of its indicators, thereby establishing adequate convergent validity.

The reliability assessment further confirmed the robustness of the measurement model. Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.868 to 0.918, while Composite Reliability values ranged from 0.878 to 0.924. All values substantially exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019), demonstrating strong internal consistency and reliability across all constructs.

Table 6. Discriminant Validity Assessment Using the HTMT Ratio

Constructs	Financial Anxiety	Financial Behavior	Perceived Fintech Literacy	Social Comparison Orientation
Financial Anxiety	–			
Financial Behavior	0.703	–		
Perceived Fintech Literacy	0.426	0.413	–	
Social Comparison Orientation	0.641	0.501	0.276	–

Source: Authors' calculations using Smart-PLS 4.0 (2026)

Discriminant validity was further assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criterion. According to Henseler et al. (2015), HTMT values below 0.90 indicate adequate discriminant validity, while values below 0.85 provide even stronger evidence of discriminant validity for conceptually distinct constructs.

As presented in Table 6, all HTMT values ranged from 0.276 to 0.703, which are well below the recommended threshold of 0.90. The highest HTMT value (0.703) was observed between Financial Anxiety and Financial Behavior, whereas the lowest value (0.276) was found between Perceived Fintech Literacy and Social Comparison Orientation. These results indicate that each construct is empirically distinct from the others and captures a unique conceptual domain. Therefore, the measurement model demonstrates satisfactory discriminant validity, confirming that the latent constructs are sufficiently differentiated and suitable for subsequent structural model analysis.

Overall, the results provide strong evidence that the measurement model satisfies all recommended criteria for convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability. Consequently, all indicators and constructs were retained for subsequent structural model evaluation. The findings confirm that the measurement instruments used to assess Fintech Literacy, Social Comparison Orientation, Financial Anxiety, and Financial Behaviour possess satisfactory psychometric properties, ensuring the reliability and validity of the subsequent hypothesis-testing procedures.

Having established the adequacy of the measurement model, the analysis proceeded to the evaluation of the structural model, including the assessment of the coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), effect size (f^2), and the testing of both direct and indirect relationships among the study constructs.

4.4 Structural Model Assessment (Inner Model)

Following the confirmation of the measurement model's reliability and validity, the next stage involved evaluating the structural model. This assessment aimed to examine the predictive capability of the proposed framework and test the hypothesised relationships among Fintech Literacy, Social Comparison Orientation, Financial Anxiety, and Financial Behaviour. Following the guidelines proposed by Hair et al. (2019), the structural model evaluation included assessments of collinearity, the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and hypothesis testing through the bootstrapping procedure.

Collinearity Assessment (VIF). Before evaluating the structural relationships, collinearity among the predictor constructs was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). Excessive collinearity may distort path coefficient estimates and compromise the interpretation of structural relationships. According to Hair et al. (2019), VIF values below 5.0 indicate the absence of critical multicollinearity issues.

Table 7. Collinearity Assessment Results (VIF)

Structural Relationship	VIF
Financial Anxiety → Financial Behaviour	1.650
Perceived Fintech Literacy → Financial Anxiety	1.073
Perceived Fintech Literacy → Financial Behaviour	1.170
Social Comparison Orientation → Financial Anxiety	1.073
Social Comparison Orientation → Financial Behaviour	1.517

Source: Authors' calculations using Smart-PLS 4.0 (2026).

As shown in Table 7, the VIF values ranged from 1.073 to 1.650. The highest value was observed in the relationship between Financial Anxiety and Financial Behaviour (VIF = 1.650), whereas the lowest values were found for the paths from Perceived Fintech Literacy to Financial Anxiety and from Social Comparison Orientation to Financial Anxiety (both VIF = 1.073).

Importantly, all VIF values were well below the recommended threshold of 5.0. They also remained below the more conservative benchmark of 3.3, providing further evidence that multicollinearity is not a concern in the proposed model (Kock & Hadaya, 2018). This suggests that the exogenous constructs contribute distinct explanatory power and do not exhibit excessive overlap in predicting the endogenous variables.

These findings further indicate that Perceived Fintech Literacy and Social Comparison Orientation represent conceptually and empirically distinct constructs in explaining both Financial Anxiety and Financial Behaviour. Likewise, the inclusion of Financial Anxiety as a mediating variable does not introduce collinearity issues within the structural model.

Given that all collinearity criteria were satisfied, the structural model can be considered statistically sound and suitable for further evaluation, including the assessment of explanatory power, predictive relevance, effect sizes, and hypothesis testing.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2). Once the structural model was confirmed to be free from collinearity issues, the next step involved assessing the coefficient of determination (R^2). This measure evaluates the extent to which exogenous constructs explain the variance of endogenous constructs within the model. According to Hair et al. (2019) and , R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 indicate substantial, moderate, and weak explanatory power, respectively. Higher R^2 values reflect a greater ability of the model to explain the endogenous variables under investigation.

Table 8. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Interpretation
Financial Anxiety	0.394	Moderate
Financial Behaviour	0.431	Moderate

Source: Authors' calculations using Smart-PLS 4.0 (2026).

As shown in Table 8, Financial Anxiety achieved an R^2 value of 0.394, indicating that 39.4% of the variance in Financial Anxiety is explained by Perceived Fintech Literacy and Social Comparison Orientation. The remaining 60.6% is attributable to factors outside the scope of the present model. Based on the criteria proposed by Hair et al. (2019), this level of explanatory power can be classified as moderate, suggesting that the two exogenous constructs provide a meaningful explanation of variations in respondents' financial anxiety.

Financial Behaviour recorded a slightly higher R^2 value of 0.431. This indicates that 43.1% of the variance in Financial Behaviour is explained by Perceived Fintech Literacy, Social Comparison Orientation, and Financial Anxiety, while the remaining 56.9% is influenced by other factors not included in the model. Accordingly, the predictive capability of the model in explaining financial behaviour can also be considered moderate.

A comparison of the two endogenous constructs reveals that the model explains Financial Behaviour more effectively than Financial Anxiety. This finding suggests that the combined influence of cognitive factors (Fintech Literacy), social factors (Social Comparison Orientation),

and psychological factors (Financial Anxiety) contributes more strongly to explaining financial behaviour than to explaining financial anxiety itself.

These results provide preliminary support for the theoretical framework underpinning the study. Consistent with Behavioural Finance Theory and Social Comparison Theory, the findings indicate that financial behaviour is shaped not only by financial knowledge but also by social pressures and psychological conditions. The moderate R^2 values further suggest that the proposed model possesses satisfactory explanatory power for understanding financial behaviour among productive-age individuals.

At the same time, the results imply that additional determinants may contribute to Financial Anxiety and Financial Behaviour. Variables such as financial self-efficacy, financial well-being, locus of control, impulsive buying tendency, financial experience, income level, and digital financial inclusion may offer valuable avenues for future research aimed at enhancing the predictive capability of the model.

Overall, the R^2 results indicate that the structural model demonstrates adequate explanatory power and is suitable for further evaluation through effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and hypothesis testing.

Effect Size (f^2). In addition to assessing explanatory power through R^2 , PLS-SEM recommends examining effect size (f^2) to determine the relative contribution of each exogenous construct to the endogenous variables. According to Hair et al. (2019), f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effects, respectively. This assessment is particularly important because statistically significant relationships do not necessarily imply substantial practical influence.

Table 9. Effect Size Assessment (f^2)

Structural Relationship	f^2	Effect Size
Perceived Fintech Literacy → Financial Anxiety	0.091	Small
Perceived Fintech Literacy → Financial Behaviour	0.039	Small
Social Comparison Orientation → Financial Anxiety	0.415	Large
Social Comparison Orientation → Financial Behaviour	0.021	Small
Financial Anxiety → Financial Behaviour	0.255	Medium

Source: Authors' calculations using Smart-PLS 4.0 (2026).

The relationship between Perceived Fintech Literacy and Financial Anxiety produced an f^2 value of 0.091, indicating a small effect. Although perceived fintech literacy contributes to explaining financial anxiety, its relative influence remains limited. This suggests that a stronger understanding of digital financial services may help alleviate financial concerns, but it is unlikely to be the primary factor shaping financial anxiety among productive-age individuals.

Similarly, the effect of Perceived Fintech Literacy on Financial Behaviour was small ($f^2 = 0.039$). This finding implies that knowledge of fintech services alone is insufficient to drive substantial improvements in financial behaviour. Other factors, particularly psychological and social influences, may play a more prominent role in shaping financial decision-making.

The strongest effect in the model emerged from the relationship between Social Comparison Orientation and Financial Anxiety ($f^2 = 0.415$). This large effect highlights social comparison orientation as a powerful predictor of financial anxiety. Individuals who frequently compare their financial circumstances and lifestyles with those of others appear substantially more

vulnerable to financial concerns and psychological pressure. This finding offers strong empirical support for Social Comparison Theory, which argues that comparisons with reference groups can generate psychological distress when individuals perceive themselves as disadvantaged.

By contrast, the direct effect of Social Comparison Orientation on Financial Behaviour was relatively weak ($f^2 = 0.021$). Although social comparison contributes to financial behaviour, its direct influence appears limited. This pattern suggests that the impact of social comparison is likely transmitted through psychological mechanisms, particularly financial anxiety, rather than operating directly.

Financial Anxiety demonstrated a medium effect on Financial Behaviour ($f^2 = 0.255$), indicating that financial concerns play a meaningful role in shaping financial decision-making. Individuals experiencing higher levels of financial anxiety are more likely to adjust their financial planning, spending control, saving behaviour, and day-to-day economic decisions. Taken together, the effect size results identify Social Comparison Orientation as the strongest predictor of Financial Anxiety, while Financial Anxiety emerges as an important determinant of Financial Behaviour. In contrast, the direct effects of Fintech Literacy and Social Comparison Orientation on Financial Behaviour remain relatively modest. These findings provide an early indication that Financial Anxiety may serve as an important mediating mechanism within the proposed model, reinforcing the theoretical arguments advanced by Behavioural Finance Theory and Social Comparison Theory.

Predictive Relevance (Q^2). Beyond explanatory power, the predictive capability of the model was assessed using the predictive relevance statistic (Q^2), obtained through the blindfolding procedure. Q^2 evaluates the extent to which the model can accurately reconstruct observed values for endogenous constructs. According to Hair et al. (2019), Q^2 values greater than zero indicate that the model possesses predictive relevance.

Table 10. Predictive Relevance Assessment (Q^2)

Endogenous Construct	Q^2	Interpretation
Financial Anxiety	0.259	Moderate
Financial Behaviour	0.284	Moderate

Source: Authors' calculations using Smart-PLS 4.0 (2026)

As presented in Table 10, Financial Anxiety achieved a Q^2 value of 0.259, while Financial Behaviour recorded a Q^2 value of 0.284. Both values exceed zero, confirming that the model possesses satisfactory predictive relevance for the endogenous constructs examined in this study.

The results indicate that Fintech Literacy and Social Comparison Orientation jointly provide meaningful predictive capability for Financial Anxiety. Likewise, the combination of Fintech Literacy, Social Comparison Orientation, and Financial Anxiety demonstrates an adequate ability to predict Financial Behaviour among productive-age individuals.

Overall, the Q^2 findings reinforce the conclusions drawn from the R^2 and f^2 analyses. The proposed model not only demonstrates moderate explanatory power but also exhibits satisfactory predictive capability. This suggests that the model is both theoretically meaningful and practically useful in explaining financial behaviour within the context of digital financial services.

Following the recommendations of Hair et al. (2021), overall model fit was primarily assessed using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), supplemented by d_ULS , d_G ,

Chi-square, and the Normed Fit Index (NFI) to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the model's goodness of fit.

Table 11. Model Fit Indices

Model Fit Index	Saturated Model	Estimated Model	Recommended Threshold	Result
SRMR	0.068	0.068	< 0.08	Acceptable
d_ULS	1.073	1.073	Lower values indicate better fit*	Acceptable
d_G	0.483	0.483	Lower values indicate better fit*	Acceptable
Chi-square	545.919	545.919	Descriptive statistic	–
NFI	0.838	0.838	> 0.80**	Acceptable

Source: Authors' calculations using Smart-PLS 4.0 (2026)

Model fit was assessed using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), d_ULS, d_G, Chi-square, and the Normed Fit Index (NFI). As presented in Table 11, the SRMR value was 0.068 for both the saturated and estimated models, which is below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating a satisfactory overall model fit (Hair et al., 2021).

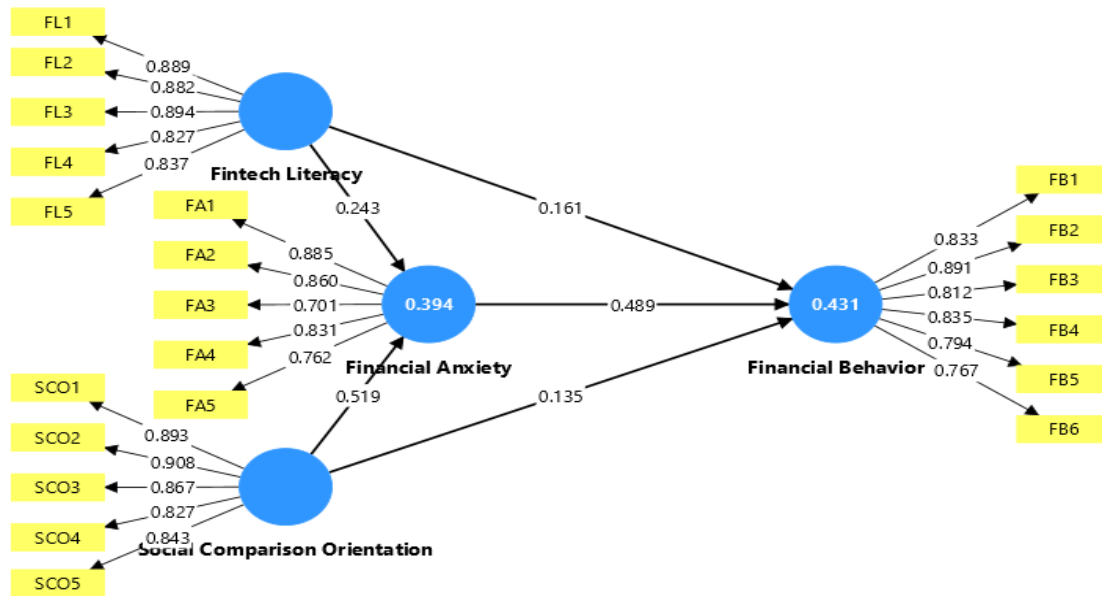
The d_ULS (1.073) and d_G (0.483) values provide additional measures of model discrepancy. Although these indices do not have universally accepted cutoff values, lower values indicate better model fit. Their final assessment is typically based on comparison with the bootstrapped HI95 or HI99 confidence intervals.

Furthermore, the NFI value of 0.838 indicates an acceptable level of model fit for an explanatory PLS-SEM model. While values closer to 1.0 represent a better fit, NFI values above 0.80 are generally regarded as acceptable in variance-based structural equation modeling, particularly for exploratory and theory-building research (Hair et al., 2022).

Overall, these results suggest that the proposed structural model demonstrates an acceptable level of overall model fit, supporting the adequacy of the measurement and structural models for hypothesis testing.

Having satisfied all evaluation criteria for both the measurement and structural models, the next step is to present the Structural Equation Model (SEM) diagram. The model visualisation provides a clear representation of the causal relationships among Fintech Literacy, Social Comparison Orientation, Financial Anxiety, and Financial Behaviour, including the path coefficients linking each construct. It also illustrates the direct and indirect effects that will be examined in the subsequent hypothesis-testing stage.

The structural model diagram is particularly valuable because it offers a comprehensive overview of the proposed relationships grounded in Behavioural Finance Theory and Social Comparison Theory. It therefore enables readers to understand the underlying causal mechanism before interpreting the results of the path coefficient and mediation analyses (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Structure Equation Model

Source: Source: Authors' calculations using Smart-PLS 4.0 (2026)

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

After establishing the validity, reliability, and overall adequacy of the measurement and structural models, the next stage involved testing the proposed hypotheses. Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure in Smart-PLS to evaluate the significance of the relationships among the constructs. Following Hair et al. (2019), a hypothesis was considered supported when the *t*-value exceeded 1.96 and the *p*-value was below 0.05 at the 5% significance level. The results of the hypothesis testing are presented in Table 10.

Table 11. Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Structural Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Perceived Fintech Literacy → Financial Behaviour	0.161	2.454	0.014	Supported
H2	Perceived Fintech Literacy → Financial Anxiety	0.243	3.752	0.000	Supported
H3	Social Comparison Orientation → Financial Behaviour	0.135	1.800	0.072	Not Supported
H4	Social Comparison Orientation → Financial Anxiety	0.519	8.594	0.000	Supported
H5	Financial Anxiety → Financial Behaviour	0.489	6.278	0.000	Supported
H6	Perceived Fintech Literacy → Financial Anxiety → Financial Behaviour	0.119	2.964	0.003	Partial Mediation (Supported)

Hypothesis	Structural Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Decision
H7	Social Comparison Orientation → Financial Anxiety → Financial Behaviour	0.254	4.888	0.000	Full Mediation (Supported)

Source: Authors' calculations using Smart-PLS 4.0 (2026).

The results presented in Table 11 indicate that Perceived Fintech Literacy has a positive and significant effect on Financial Behaviour ($\beta = 0.161$, $p = 0.014$), thereby **supporting H1**. This finding suggests that individuals with higher levels of fintech literacy are more likely to demonstrate sound financial behaviour. Greater knowledge and understanding of digital financial services appear to facilitate more informed and responsible financial decision-making.

Perceived Fintech Literacy was also found to have a positive and significant effect on Financial Anxiety ($\beta = 0.243$, $p < 0.001$), **supporting H2**. This result indicates that higher levels of perceived fintech literacy are associated with higher levels of financial anxiety among respondents. The positive coefficient suggests that respondents who perceive themselves as having greater understanding and confidence in using digital financial services also report higher levels of financial anxiety.

In contrast, the direct effect of Social Comparison Orientation on Financial Behaviour was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.135$, $p = 0.072$). Since the p -value exceeds the 0.05 threshold, **H3 is not supported**. This result indicates that a tendency to compare oneself with others does not directly translate into changes in financial behaviour.

However, Social Comparison Orientation exhibited a strong positive effect on Financial Anxiety ($\beta = 0.519$, $p < 0.001$), providing **support for H4**. Among all direct relationships in the model, this path produced the largest coefficient, suggesting that individuals who frequently compare their financial circumstances with those of others are more likely to experience elevated levels of financial anxiety.

The results further show that Financial Anxiety has a positive and significant effect on Financial Behaviour ($\beta = 0.489$, $p < 0.001$), **supporting H5**. This finding highlights the importance of psychological factors in shaping financial decision-making among productive-age individuals. Financial concerns appear to play a substantial role in influencing how individuals manage, allocate, and control their financial resources.

The mediation analysis revealed that Financial Anxiety significantly mediates the relationship between Perceived Fintech Literacy and Financial Behaviour ($\beta = 0.119$, $p = 0.003$). Because both the direct and indirect effects are significant, **H6 is supported**, indicating a partial mediation effect. This finding suggests that fintech literacy influences financial behaviour both directly and indirectly through its impact on financial anxiety.

Similarly, Financial Anxiety was found to mediate the relationship between Social Comparison Orientation and Financial Behaviour ($\beta = 0.254$, $p < 0.001$). Given that the direct effect of Social Comparison Orientation on Financial Behaviour was not significant, while the indirect effect was significant, **H7 is supported** as a case of full mediation. This result implies that social comparison affects financial behaviour primarily through the psychological mechanism of financial anxiety rather than through a direct pathway.

Overall, the hypothesis-testing results underscore the central role of Financial Anxiety within the proposed framework. The findings suggest that financial anxiety functions as a key psychological mechanism through which both Perceived Fintech Literacy and Social Comparison Orientation Shape Financial Behaviour among productive-age individuals. These results provide empirical support for the integration of Behavioural Finance Theory and Social Comparison Theory and offer a foundation for the subsequent discussion of the study's theoretical and practical implications.

4.6 Discussion

4.6.1 Perceived Fintech Literacy and Financial Behaviour

The findings reveal that Perceived Fintech Literacy has a positive and significant effect on Financial Behaviour, supporting H1. This result suggests that individuals who perceive themselves as having a stronger understanding and greater confidence in using digital financial services are more likely to demonstrate prudent financial behaviour.

From a Behavioural Finance perspective, financial knowledge serves as an important cognitive foundation for rational decision-making (Shefrin & Statman, 2000). Individuals who understand the benefits, risks, and operational mechanisms of fintech services are generally better equipped to utilise these tools effectively in managing their finances. In the context of Indonesia's rapidly expanding digital financial ecosystem, perceived fintech literacy appears to enhance individuals' ability to navigate financial choices and optimise the use of digital financial services.

This finding is consistent with previous studies that have reported a positive relationship between financial literacy and financial behaviour (Stolper & Walter, 2017; Xiao & Porto, 2017). It also extends recent fintech-related research by demonstrating that digital financial knowledge remains a critical determinant of financial behaviour among productive-age individuals. The result reinforces the argument that improving fintech literacy should remain a priority for policymakers, financial institutions, and educational providers seeking to promote responsible financial behaviour in the digital era.

4.6.2. Perceived Fintech Literacy and Financial Anxiety

The results further indicate that Perceived Fintech Literacy significantly influences Financial Anxiety, supporting H2. Interestingly, the relationship is positive, suggesting that individuals with greater fintech knowledge may also exhibit higher levels of financial concern.

A possible psychological explanation for this finding is the concept of risk salience. Individuals who perceive themselves as more knowledgeable and confident in using fintech services may also report higher levels of financial anxiety. Consequently, rather than reducing financial anxiety, greater knowledge increases awareness of potential financial threats. This heightened financial vigilance may represent an adaptive psychological response that encourages individuals to become more attentive to financial risks within increasingly complex digital financial environments.

Taken together, the findings consistently support the risk-awareness perspective, suggesting that greater perceived fintech literacy does not necessarily provide psychological comfort. Instead, it increases awareness of potential digital financial threats, thereby heightening financial anxiety. Within the context of contemporary digital finance, greater knowledge appears to promote vigilance rather than reassurance (Chhillar et al., 2025). Individuals with higher fintech literacy may therefore become more conscious of the challenges associated with financial decision-making, leading to heightened financial concern (Choung et al., 2023).

This interpretation aligns with behavioural finance literature, which argues that greater information does not always reduce psychological pressure. In some cases, increased awareness of financial risks can amplify perceptions of uncertainty and vulnerability. Consequently, fintech literacy may simultaneously empower individuals while also making them more attentive to potential financial threats.

The finding suggests that financial education programmes should not focus solely on knowledge acquisition but should also help individuals develop confidence and resilience in managing financial uncertainty.

This finding reflects the "awareness paradox" in digital finance. Greater fintech literacy equips individuals with more comprehensive knowledge about digital financial products, but simultaneously exposes them to information regarding cyber fraud, identity theft, algorithmic lending risks, investment scams, and financial volatility. Consequently, individuals become more vigilant and risk-sensitive. Rather than indicating poor financial capability, higher financial anxiety may represent an adaptive psychological response resulting from greater awareness of potential digital financial threats.

4.6.3 Social Comparison Orientation and Financial Behaviour

Contrary to the proposed hypothesis, Social Comparison Orientation did not exert a significant direct effect on Financial Behaviour, and the estimated path coefficient was positive rather than negative. This finding suggests that comparing oneself with others does not automatically translate into financial actions. While social comparison may increase awareness of others' financial achievements or lifestyles, such comparisons alone appear insufficient to influence financial behaviour directly. Individuals may experience social comparison cognitively without immediately changing how they budget, save, or manage their finances. Although Social Comparison Orientation is frequently expressed through digital platforms and social media environments, the present study did not directly measure respondents' social media use, platform characteristics, or exposure to financial content. Consequently, the observed relationships should be interpreted as reflecting individuals' general tendency to engage in social comparison rather than the specific influence of social media activities. Future research should incorporate variables such as social media use intensity, upward and downward social comparison, lifestyle comparison, and exposure to financial content to better understand how digital environments shape financial anxiety and financial behaviour.

A more plausible explanation is that the influence of Social Comparison Orientation operates indirectly through psychological processes rather than through a direct behavioural pathway. In the present study, Financial Anxiety was found to fully mediate the relationship between Social Comparison Orientation and Financial Behaviour. This finding indicates that social comparison primarily shapes individuals' emotional responses, particularly financial concern and anxiety, which subsequently influence financial behaviour. Therefore, the absence of a significant direct effect is theoretically consistent with the observed full mediation model.

This finding indicates that social comparison pressure operates primarily through psychological mechanisms rather than direct behavioural pathways. Financial comparisons increase feelings of inadequacy, financial concern, and perceived economic vulnerability, which subsequently motivate individuals to adopt more cautious financial behaviours. Therefore, Financial Anxiety functions as the emotional bridge linking social comparison with financial behaviour.

One possible explanation is that social comparison functions primarily as a psychological trigger rather than a direct behavioural determinant. While individuals may observe and

evaluate the financial achievements or lifestyles of others, these comparisons do not automatically translate into changes in saving, budgeting, investment, or spending practices. This finding highlights the complexity of financial decision-making. Financial behaviour is influenced by multiple factors, including cognitive evaluations, emotional responses, financial capabilities, and personal circumstances (Kumar, 2026). Consequently, social comparison alone may be insufficient to drive behavioural change unless it generates a psychological reaction that motivates action (Festinger, 1954).

The result also helps explain inconsistencies in previous studies examining the relationship between social comparison and financial outcomes. It suggests that the influence of social comparison may operate indirectly through psychological mechanisms rather than through a direct behavioural pathway.

4.6.4 Social Comparison Orientation and Financial Anxiety

The strongest direct relationship observed in the study was between Social Comparison Orientation and Financial Anxiety, providing strong support for H4. Individuals who frequently compare their financial situations with those of others reported substantially higher levels of financial anxiety.

This finding offers compelling empirical support for Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954), which posits that individuals evaluate themselves by comparing their abilities, achievements, and circumstances with those of others. In contemporary digital environments, social media continuously exposes individuals to curated displays of wealth, success, and consumption, thereby intensifying opportunities for upward social comparison.

When individuals perceive themselves as financially disadvantaged relative to their peers, feelings of inadequacy, insecurity, and financial concern may emerge. Such perceptions can increase worries about financial stability, future financial needs, and overall economic well-being.

The large effect size observed for this relationship further suggests that social comparison is a major psychological antecedent of financial anxiety among productive-age individuals. This finding is particularly relevant in developing economies, where rapid digitalisation has increased exposure to financial lifestyles that may not accurately reflect individuals' economic realities.

4.6.5 Financial Anxiety and Financial Behaviour

The results demonstrate that Financial Anxiety has a positive and significant effect on Financial Behaviour, supporting H5. This finding indicates that financial concerns play an important role in shaping how individuals manage their financial resources.

The positive relationship identified in this study should not be interpreted as suggesting that financial anxiety is universally beneficial.

The positive relationship observed in this study should be interpreted with caution. Rather than suggesting that financial anxiety is inherently beneficial, the findings indicate that respondents who reported greater financial concern also tended to demonstrate more cautious financial behaviour. This association may reflect increased attention to budgeting, saving, expenditure control, and financial planning. However, the present study did not examine different levels or intensities of financial anxiety. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that financial anxiety is universally adaptive or beneficial. Excessive or prolonged financial anxiety may still produce adverse psychological and behavioural consequences, and future research should investigate potential non-linear relationships between financial anxiety and financial behaviour.

From a behavioural perspective, moderate levels of anxiety may function as a motivating force that encourages individuals to engage in more careful financial planning, budgeting, saving, and expenditure control. Concerns about future financial security may prompt individuals to become more disciplined in managing their finances.

This finding is consistent with behavioural finance arguments suggesting that emotions are integral components of financial decision-making (Khan et al., 2023; Shefrin & Statman, 2000). Financial choices are not determined solely by rational analysis but are also influenced by psychological states and emotional responses.

The result further highlights the importance of incorporating psychological dimensions into financial behaviour research. While financial knowledge remains important, emotional factors such as anxiety can significantly shape financial actions and outcomes.

4.6.6. The Mediating Role of Financial Anxiety

One of the most important findings of this study concerns the mediating role of Financial Anxiety. The results reveal that Financial Anxiety partially mediates the relationship between Perceived Fintech Literacy and Financial Behaviour and fully mediates the relationship between Social Comparison Orientation and Financial Behaviour.

The classification of the mediation effects was based on the significance of both the direct and indirect effects obtained from the bootstrapping procedure. Financial Anxiety was considered a partial mediator in the relationship between Perceived Fintech Literacy and Financial Behaviour because both the direct effect and the indirect effect were statistically significant. This indicates that perceived fintech literacy influences financial behaviour both directly and indirectly through financial anxiety.

In contrast, Financial Anxiety was classified as a full mediator in the relationship between Social Comparison Orientation and Financial Behaviour because the direct effect was not statistically significant, whereas the indirect effect through Financial Anxiety was significant. This finding suggests that Social Comparison Orientation affects Financial Behaviour only through the psychological mechanism represented by Financial Anxiety.

The partial mediation effect indicates that perceived fintech literacy influences financial behaviour through two pathways. First, it directly enhances financial behaviour by improving individuals' financial knowledge and decision-making capabilities. Second, it indirectly affects behaviour through financial anxiety, suggesting that greater awareness of financial opportunities and risks shapes behavioural responses via psychological processes.

More notably, Financial Anxiety fully mediates the relationship between Social Comparison Orientation and Financial Behaviour. The non-significant direct effect of Social Comparison Orientation, combined with the significant indirect effect through Financial Anxiety, indicates that financial anxiety serves as the primary psychological mechanism linking social comparison to financial behaviour.

The mediating role of Financial Anxiety further reinforces the proposed risk-awareness mechanism. Rather than directly reducing financial concerns, higher perceived fintech literacy appears to increase awareness of digital financial risks, which subsequently influences financial behaviour. This finding suggests that psychological vigilance constitutes an important pathway through which perceived fintech literacy shapes financial decision-making in increasingly complex digital financial environments.

The mediating role identified in this study reflects adaptive psychological responses rather than pathological anxiety. Financial anxiety functions as a motivational mechanism encouraging more prudent financial management when experienced at moderate levels

This finding provides strong support for the integration of Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) and Behavioural Finance Theory (Shefrin & Statman, 2000). Social comparison represents a social stimulus, financial anxiety represents the psychological response, and financial behaviour represents the behavioural outcome. Together, these constructs form a coherent explanatory mechanism that clarifies how social influences are translated into financial actions.

The mediation results reveal that emotional responses represent the critical mechanism through which social influences affect financial behaviour. Rather than responding directly to social comparison, individuals first experience financial concern, which subsequently motivates behavioural adjustments. This finding reinforces the importance of incorporating psychological mechanisms into behavioural finance models and suggests that emotions serve as the transmission channel connecting social stimuli with financial actions.

The principal contribution of this finding lies in demonstrating that social comparison orientation does not directly influence financial behaviour. Instead, its influence is transmitted entirely through financial anxiety. This finding provides empirical evidence that financial anxiety functions as the psychological mechanism connecting social comparison with financial behaviour, thereby extending existing behavioural finance literature beyond conventional direct-effect models.

Given the demographic profile of the respondents, the findings primarily reflect the behavioural characteristics of digitally active productive-age individuals who regularly use fintech services. Caution should therefore be exercised when extending these findings to productive-age adults with limited digital financial experience.

4.7 Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the principal contribution of this study lies not merely in integrating cognitive, social, and psychological variables within a single framework. Rather, the findings demonstrate that Financial Anxiety functions as the key psychological mechanism through which Social Comparison Orientation influences Financial Behaviour. The full mediation effect identified in this study extends Behavioural Finance Theory by explaining how social comparison is translated into financial actions through psychological responses instead of direct behavioural pathways. Furthermore, the positive association between Fintech Literacy and Financial Anxiety suggests that greater digital financial knowledge may increase awareness of financial risks, offering additional insights into behavioural responses within digital financial environments.

These findings also extend Behavioural Finance Theory by demonstrating that psychological mechanisms are essential for explaining how knowledge and social comparison are translated into financial behaviour. The results suggest that cognitive and social factors influence behaviour indirectly through emotional processes such as financial vigilance and financial anxiety.

Practically, the results suggest that initiatives aimed at improving financial behaviour should extend beyond traditional financial literacy programmes. Policymakers, fintech providers, and educational institutions should also address psychological well-being and the social pressures associated with digital environments. Financial education programmes should therefore incorporate components related to emotional regulation, financial confidence, responsible social media use, and healthy financial comparisons.

Taken together, the findings underscore that financial behaviour in the digital era is shaped not only by knowledge and access to technology but also by the psychological consequences of living in an increasingly connected and comparison-driven society.

5 Conclusion and Suggestion

This study examined the relationships among Fintech Literacy, Social Comparison Orientation, Financial Anxiety, and Financial Behaviour among productive-age individuals in Indonesia. The findings demonstrate that Fintech Literacy plays an important role in shaping Financial Behaviour, both directly and indirectly through Financial Anxiety. Importantly, the findings should be interpreted as reflecting the influence of perceived fintech literacy, as the construct was measured using respondents' self-assessments rather than objective knowledge tests.

The findings should also be interpreted within the context of the study sample, which consisted of digitally active productive-age fintech users selected through purposive sampling. As the respondents were predominantly younger, well-educated, and active users of digital financial services, the results primarily reflect this population segment and should not be generalized to the entire productive-age population in Indonesia.

The study demonstrates that financial behaviour in digital financial environments is shaped not only by knowledge and social comparison but also by the psychological processes through which these factors become behaviourally meaningful. The results further reveal that Social Comparison Orientation is the strongest predictor of Financial Anxiety, highlighting the substantial psychological consequences of financial comparisons in an increasingly digital and socially connected environment.

Social Comparison Orientation did not directly influence financial behaviour. Instead, its influence was transmitted entirely through Financial Anxiety, highlighting the importance of psychological mechanisms in explaining how social comparison shapes financial decision-making.

The most significant contribution of this study lies in identifying Financial Anxiety as a central psychological mechanism linking cognitive and social factors to financial behaviour.

The findings should not be interpreted as indicating that financial anxiety is always desirable. Although financial anxiety was positively associated with financial behaviour, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that financial anxiety is inherently beneficial. Instead, the results indicate that greater financial concern is associated with more cautious financial behaviour within the context of this study. Rather, moderate financial concern appears to encourage more responsible financial management, whereas excessive financial stress may produce adverse financial outcomes. While perceived fintech literacy equips individuals with the knowledge required to navigate digital financial services, social comparison creates psychological pressures that influence how financial decisions are ultimately made. The findings suggest that perceived fintech literacy is associated with better financial behaviour, while also being linked to higher financial anxiety through increased awareness of digital financial risks.

Another important finding is that Social Comparison Orientation does not directly affect Financial Behaviour. Instead, its influence operates entirely through Financial Anxiety. The findings indicate that social comparison appears to influence financial behaviour indirectly through financial anxiety. Consequently, efforts aimed solely at improving financial literacy

may be insufficient to promote sustainable financial behaviour if psychological dimensions are neglected.

An important finding of this study is that perceived fintech literacy does not necessarily reduce financial anxiety. Instead, greater knowledge of digital finance may increase awareness of financial risks, suggesting that financial education should balance technical competence with psychological preparedness. The findings consistently support the risk-awareness explanation, indicating that greater perceived fintech literacy increases awareness of digital financial risks, which subsequently heightens financial anxiety and influences financial behaviour.

From a theoretical perspective, this study extends the literature by integrating Social Comparison Theory and Behavioural Finance Theory within a unified framework. The findings provide empirical evidence that financial behaviour emerges from the interaction of cognitive, social, and psychological processes. Financial Anxiety serves as the mechanism through which these forces converge and influence financial decision-making in the digital era.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that financial education initiatives should move beyond improving technical knowledge of fintech products. Educational programmes should also incorporate digital fraud prevention, cybersecurity awareness, emotional regulation in financial decision-making, responsible social media use, healthy financial comparison, and financial anxiety management. Such a comprehensive approach may better equip individuals to navigate increasingly complex digital financial environments while maintaining healthy financial behaviour. Interventions designed to improve financial behaviour should also address psychological well-being, emotional resilience, and the social pressures generated by digital platforms and social media. Strengthening these dimensions may help individuals make healthier financial decisions while adapting to an increasingly digital financial landscape.

The principal novelty of this study lies not merely in integrating fintech literacy, social comparison orientation, financial anxiety, and financial behaviour within a single framework. Rather, this study demonstrates that financial anxiety constitutes the psychological mechanism through which social comparison influences financial behaviour. These findings advance behavioural finance literature by explaining how social influences are translated into financial actions through psychological processes within digital financial environments.

Given the cross-sectional nature of the study and the reliance on self-reported data, the findings should be interpreted as associative rather than causal relationships. Moreover, because the study employed purposive sampling and focused on digitally active fintech users, caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings beyond respondents with similar demographic and digital engagement characteristics. Future longitudinal and experimental studies employing more representative sampling techniques are needed to further examine the causal mechanisms underlying financial behaviour in digital financial environments.

6 Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of this study. First, fintech literacy was measured as perceived fintech literacy based on respondents' self-assessments rather than objective knowledge tests. Consequently, the construct may reflect respondents' confidence in using digital financial services instead of their actual level of

fintech competence. Future studies are encouraged to employ objective knowledge-based assessments to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of fintech literacy.

Second, the measurement of social comparison orientation primarily captures respondents' general tendency to compare their financial situations with those of others. It does not explicitly distinguish between upward, downward, financial, lifestyle-based, or social-media-driven comparisons, each of which may generate different psychological and behavioural consequences. Future research may investigate these dimensions separately to provide a more nuanced understanding of social comparison processes within digital financial contexts.

Third, the use of a cross-sectional design captures relationships at a single point in time and therefore does not allow causal dynamics or behavioural changes to be observed over longer periods. Because the study employed a cross-sectional design and self-reported measures, causal inferences cannot be established. Future studies may employ longitudinal approaches to better understand how financial anxiety and financial behaviour evolve over time.

Fourth, the sample was limited to productive-age fintech users in Indonesia. Differences in cultural contexts, economic environments, and levels of digital financial development may produce different patterns of relationships across populations. As a result, caution should be exercised when generalising the findings beyond the context of this study.

Fifth, the proposed model explained 43.1% of the variance in Financial Behaviour and 39.4% of the variance in Financial Anxiety. While these values indicate moderate explanatory power, they also suggest that other relevant determinants remain unexplored. Future research could incorporate variables such as financial self-efficacy, financial well-being, financial resilience, financial socialisation, digital financial inclusion, locus of control, or impulsive buying tendency to enhance the predictive capability of the model.

Another limitation concerns the interpretation of financial anxiety. The present study examined only linear relationships and did not distinguish between low, moderate, and high levels of financial anxiety. Future studies should investigate potential curvilinear or threshold effects to determine whether excessive financial anxiety produces different behavioural outcomes.

Another limitation concerns the operationalization of Social Comparison Orientation. Although the construct is highly relevant in digital and social media contexts, this study did not measure respondents' social media use intensity, preferred platforms, exposure to financial content, or the direction of social comparison (e.g., upward or downward comparison). Consequently, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence of the effects of specific social media behaviours. Future studies are encouraged to incorporate these variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of digital social comparison processes.

Yet, this study employed purposive sampling and an online survey, resulting in a sample dominated by younger, well-educated, and digitally active fintech users. Consequently, the findings may not fully represent the broader productive-age population in Indonesia, particularly individuals with limited access to or experience with digital financial services. Future research is encouraged to employ probability sampling techniques or include more demographically diverse respondents to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Future studies may also examine additional mediating and moderating mechanisms to provide a deeper understanding of financial behaviour in digital environments. Comparative studies across generations, regions, or countries would further enrich the literature by

identifying contextual differences in how financial knowledge, social comparison, and psychological factors interact to shape financial outcomes.

Future studies may also investigate whether different social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, or LinkedIn) generate different patterns of financial comparison and financial anxiety.

Digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped how individuals' access, manage, and utilise financial services. However, the findings of this study suggest that healthy financial behaviour depends not only on the ability to understand financial technology but also on the capacity to manage the social pressures and financial anxieties that accompany it. Building a financially capable society therefore requires a balanced approach that combines technological competence with psychological resilience, ensuring that digital financial advancement contributes not merely to greater access, but ultimately to sustainable financial well-being.

For last, because respondents voluntarily participated through online distribution channels, the possibility of self-selection bias cannot be completely ruled out. Individuals who were more interested in digital financial services may have been more likely to participate in the survey. Consequently, caution should be exercised when generalising the findings.

Declaration of AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used ChatGPT in order to review and proofreading this script. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

Reference

- Ahamed, A. F. M. J., & Limbu, Y. B. (2024). Role of social comparison orientation on financial management behavior in a developing nation: examining the mediating role of financial self-efficacy and the moderating effect of financial socialization. *The Bottom Line*, 38(3), 349–368. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BL-06-2024-0080>
- Badan Pusat Statistik. (2024). *Survei Angkatan Kerja Nasional (SAKERNAS) 2024*. Webpage. <https://www.bps.go.id>
- Chhillar, N., Sharma, K., & Arora, S. (2025). Exploring the role of digital financial literacy and personal financial behavior in shaping financial stress and well-being in the digital age. *Acta Psychologica*, 259, 105308. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105308>
- Choung, Y., Chatterjee, S., & Pak, T.-Y. (2023). Digital financial literacy and financial well-being. *Finance Research Letters*, 58, 104438. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.frl.2023.104438>
- Demirgüç-Kunt, A., Klapper, L., Singer, D., Ansar, S., & Hess, J. (2022). The Global Findex Database 2021: Financial Inclusion, Digital Payments, and Resilience in the Age of COVID-19. In *World Bank*. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1897-4>
- Festinger, Leon. (1954). A Theory of Social Comparison Processes. *Human Relations*, 7(2), 117–140. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872675400700202>
- Gibbons, F. X., & Buunk, B. P. (1999). Individual differences in social comparison: Development of a scale of social comparison orientation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76(1), 129–142. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.76.1.129>
- Hair, J. F., Howard, M. C., & Nitzl, C. (2021). Review of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation

- Modeling (PLS-SEM) Using R: A Workbook. In *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal* (Vol. 30, Issue 1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705511.2022.2108813>
- Hair, J. F., Page, M., & Brunsveld, N. (2022). *Essentials of Business Research Methods* (14th ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367330743>
- Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review*, 31(1), 2–24. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203>
- Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 43(1), 115–135. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8>
- Jing Jian Xiao. (2008). *Handbook of Consumer Finance Research*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-75734-6>
- Kass-Hanna, J., Lyons, A. C., & Liu, F. (2022). Building financial resilience through financial and digital literacy in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. *Emerging Markets Review*, 51, 100846. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ememar.2021.100846>
- Khan, M. T. I., Liew, T. W., & Lee, X. Y. (2023). Fintech literacy among millennials: The roles of financial literacy and education. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 9(2), 2281046. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2281046>
- Kock, N., & Hadaya, P. (2018). Minimum sample size estimation in PLS-SEM: The inverse square root and gamma-exponential methods. *Information Systems Journal*, 28(1), 227–261. <https://doi.org/10.1111/isj.12131>
- Kumar, V. (2026). Modelling Financial Behaviour in the Digital Era: An SEM Approach to Knowledge, Anxiety and Digital Literacy. *Vision: The Journal of Business Perspective*, May(26). <https://doi.org/10.1177/09722629261450731>
- Lee, J. M., Rabbani, A., & Heo, W. (2023). Examining Financial Anxiety Focusing on Interactions between Financial Knowledge and Financial Self-efficacy. *Journal of Financial Therapy*, 14(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.4148/1944-9771.1279>
- Lusardi, A., & Mitchell, O. S. (2023). The Importance of Financial Literacy: Opening a New Field. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 37(4), 137–154. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.37.4.137>
- Natalie, N., & Subroto, U. (2026). Hubungan Perbandingan Sosial Upward dengan Kecemasan Finansial pada Gen Z Pengguna TikTok. *YASIN*, 6(1), 116–133. <https://doi.org/10.58578/yasin.v6i1.8713>
- Otoritas Jasa Keuangan (OJK). (2022). *Siaran Pers: Survei Nasional Literasi dan Inklusi Keuangan Tahun 2022*. Siaran Pers. <https://ojk.go.id/id/berita-dan-kegiatan/siaran-pers/Pages/Survei-Nasional-Literasi-dan-Inklusi-Kuangan-Tahun-2022.aspx>
- Renanita, T., & Rembulan, C. L. (2025). The Effects of Social Comparison and Subjective Financial Well-Being on Subjective Well-Being. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 21(3 SE-Research Reports). <https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.14791>
- Shefrin, H., & Statman, M. (2000). Behavioral Portfolio Theory Source. *The Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis*, 35(2), 127–151. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2676187>
- Sorgente, A., Zambelli, M., & Lanz, M. (2023). Are Financial Well-Being and Financial Stress the Same Construct? Insights from an Intensive Longitudinal Study. *Social Indicators Research*, 169(1), 553–573. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-023-03171-0>

- Stolper, O. A., & Walter, A. (2017). Financial literacy, financial advice, and financial behavior. *Journal of Business Economics*, 87(5), 581–643. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11573-017-0853-9>
- Sugiyono. (2021). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan(Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Kombinasi, R&D dan Penelitian Pendidikan)*. Cv. Alfabeta.
- Vogel, E. A., Rose, J. P., Okdie, B. M., Eckles, K., & Franz, B. (2015). Who compares and despairs? The effect of social comparison orientation on social media use and its outcomes. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 86, 249–256. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.06.026>
- We Are Social. (2024). *Laporan Khusus Tahun 2024*. Webpage. <https://wearesocial.com/id/blog/2024/01/digital-2024/>
- Widyastuti, U., Respati, D. K., Dewi, V. I., & Soma, A. M. (2024). The nexus of digital financial inclusion, digital financial literacy and demographic factors: lesson from Indonesia. *Cogent Business & Management*, 11(1), 2322778. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2322778>
- Xiao, J. J., & Porto, N. (2017). Financial education and financial satisfaction: Financial literacy, behavior, and capability as mediators. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 35(5), 805–817. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJBM-01-2016-0009>
- Xin, Z., Xiao, H., & Lin, G. (2023). Math Anxiety and Financial Anxiety Predicting Individuals' Financial Management Behavior. *Depression and Anxiety*, 2023(1), 3131631. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2023/3131631>