

Access and Usage as Pathways to Sustainable Financial Inclusion among Women: The Mediation Role of Fintech Applications

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Abstract

Financial inclusion among women is a significant contributor to the evolution of sustainable businesses and societal transformation. Achievement of financial inclusion permeates into seven out of the seventeen UN SDGs (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals). While access to and usage of financial services are essential components of financial inclusion, the emergence and widespread development of fintech applications has created new opportunities to transform financial access into meaningful and sustained financial participation. Against this backdrop, the present study examines the role of fintech applications in advancing sustainable financial inclusion among women. Specifically, the study investigates whether fintech applications mediate the relationships between access to financial services, usage of financial services and financial inclusion. A quantitative, cross-sectional research design is adopted, using primary data collected from women. Mediation analysis is employed to examine the direct and indirect relationships among access, usage, fintech applications and financial inclusion, with bootstrapping used to assess the significance of the indirect effects. The study conceptualises fintech applications as a mechanism through which improved access and effective usage of financial services can contribute to greater financial inclusion among women. By examining these mediating pathways, the study moves beyond the traditional emphasis on financial access and highlights the importance of technology-enabled usage in achieving more inclusive and sustainable financial participation. The findings are expected to provide insights for financial institutions and policymakers in developing technology-driven financial strategies that can strengthen women's participation in the formal financial system. The study contributes to the broader dialogue on sustainable business and societal transformation by demonstrating how digital financial strategies can support inclusive economic participation and promote more equitable financial outcomes for women.

Keywords

Fintech, Financial Inclusion. SDGs, Women Financial Inclusion.