Socioeconomic Predictors of Retail Fintech Readiness: Evaluating Generational and Regional Disparities in Poland

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Abstract

Financial technology (FinTech) innovations including robo-advisors, neo-brokerages, and automated wealth management platforms promise to optimize capital market efficiency and democratize retail investing by lowering transaction fees and mitigating information asymmetries. However, this macroeconomic narrative assumes a frictionless baseline of digital literacy among retail consumers. This study evaluates the behavioral and demographic bottlenecks to financial innovation in Poland, an economic growth engine in Central and Eastern Europe that experienced rapid financial digitization alongside deep demographic stratifications between 2015 and 2025.

Integrating Davis's Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) with Van Dijk's Digital Divide Theory, this paper positions individual internet usage frequency as a behavioral proxy for "Perceived Ease of Use" (PEOU); the essential cognitive prerequisite for determining retail FinTech readiness. Using cross-sectional micro-data from the European Social Survey (ESS) Round 11 (2023/2024), an ordinary least squares (OLS) linear regression model is developed to isolate key socioeconomic predictors of this readiness within the Polish population, analyzing generational cohorts and NUTS regional variables while controlling for education levels and household income deciles.

The empirical findings reveal a highly statistically significant generational divide; increasing age exhibits a severe negative relationship ($p < 0.01$) with digital capability. Furthermore, categorical modeling of regional variables confirms a persistent geographic disparity, highlighting stark differences in retail FinTech readiness between urbanized western voivodeships and rural eastern regions (Poland B).This mismatch presents a profound economic paradox: the primary holders of private household wealth in Poland (older cohorts) face the highest behavioral barriers to entering modern digital investment channels. As a result, retail capital remains misallocated in low-yield traditional bank deposits rather than active capital market assets, dampening retail liquidity. This paper establishes the vital micro-level behavioral baselines necessary for regulators and platform architecture designers aiming to resolve structural inefficiencies in transitioning capital markets.

Keywords

FinTech Readiness, Socioeconomic Predictors, Technology Acceptance Model, Digital Divide, Regional Disparities, Capital Market Inclusivity, Poland.