

The Role of Digital Service Quality and Perceived Ease of Use in The Adoption of Digital Wealth Management Among Millennial Farmers.

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Abstract. This study examines the roles of digital service quality and perceived ease of use in shaping adoption intention toward digital wealth management among millennial farmers. Drawing on a service marketing perspective and technology acceptance logic, the study also positions trust as a key mechanism that links service perceptions to adoption intention. A structured questionnaire was administered to 236 millennial farmers (aged 20–39), and the proposed model was analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with bootstrapping. The descriptive results indicate that perceived ease of use is generally high, reflecting respondents' familiarity with smartphones, while perceptions of service quality and trust vary more substantially. The structural model shows that digital service quality strongly predicts trust ($\beta = 0.991$, $p < 0.001$) and that trust strongly predicts adoption intention ($\beta = 0.810$, $p < 0.001$). Digital service quality also has a small but significant direct effect on intention ($\beta = 0.183$, $p = 0.012$), indicating partial mediation. The indirect effect of digital service quality on intention through trust is large and significant ($\beta = 0.803$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that trust transmits most of the impact of service quality. Perceived ease of use shows statistically significant but small effects on trust and intention, suggesting usability functions primarily as a baseline enabler for digitally capable millennials. The model explains substantial variance in trust ($R^2 = 0.979$) and intention ($R^2 = 0.981$). Discriminant validity diagnostics indicate strong overlap among service quality, trust, and intention, suggesting that respondents may form a holistic evaluation of the platform; this limitation should be addressed through construct refinement in future research. Practically, the findings imply that increasing digital wealth management adoption in agricultural communities should prioritize trust-building service quality cues, including reliability, transparency, security assurance, and responsive support.

Keywords: adoption intention; digital wealth management; digital service quality; millennial farmers; PLS-SEM

INTRODUCTION

Agricultural households face a financial environment shaped by seasonal cash flows, exposure to output and input price volatility, and production risks. These features make household financial resilience essential, not only for short term liquidity to purchase inputs and manage operating expenses, but also for long term goals such as education, farm upgrading, and retirement preparedness. In this setting, digital finance is often framed as a mechanism for reducing transaction costs and widening access to formal financial services in rural areas. Recent empirical evidence supports this view, showing that digital financial inclusion can promote

farmers' income growth and generate spatial spillover effects across regions (Li et al., 2025).

Even so, much of the agricultural digital finance literature remains concentrated on transactional and credit oriented services, such as payments, transfers, and lending. Less attention is given to digital wealth management, which in this study refers to platform enabled services that support goal based saving and asset building, including micro investing, retail mutual funds, and similar products delivered through mobile applications with or without human assistance. This distinction is consequential because wealth management tools address consumption smoothing, buffer building, and long run

asset accumulation, which are highly relevant for farmers whose incomes are cyclical and shock prone. The limited focus on wealth management in farmer settings implies that current evidence may not fully explain the drivers of deeper financial engagement beyond basic usage.

Understanding adoption of digital wealth management also requires moving beyond access and infrastructure explanations toward a service marketing and technology acceptance perspective. Digital financial services are experienced as services, where perceived service delivery quality influences behavioral intentions. Evidence from mobile banking indicates that interface design, system quality, security assurance, and overall service quality are closely linked to loyalty intention, highlighting the centrality of perceived digital service quality in shaping sustained use (Zhou *et al.*, 2021). From a technology acceptance viewpoint, perceived ease of use reduces cognitive burden and learning costs, which is especially relevant when products are complex and require users to understand processes, risks, and basic investment concepts. These considerations are particularly important for wealth management, where product complexity and perceived uncertainty are typically higher than in payment applications.

A complementary mechanism that bridges service marketing and technology acceptance is trust. Digital financial products require users to rely on institutions, platforms, and security safeguards that are not directly observable. Recent cross country evidence shows that perceived risk can inhibit fintech adoption, and that trust can dampen the negative effect of perceived risk on adoption intentions (Appiah & Agblewornu, 2025). This suggests that for digital wealth management, where perceived risk and privacy concerns tend to be salient, trust is likely to be a critical condition that enables

service quality and usability perceptions to translate into adoption.

The focus on millennial farmers is both practical and theoretically motivated. Younger farmer cohorts are generally more exposed to smartphones and digital ecosystems, making them plausible early adopters of advanced digital financial services. Yet digital familiarity alone does not guarantee adoption of wealth management products, which involve higher information demands and stronger trust requirements. Evidence from an agrarian economy context using an extended UTAUT model shows that farmer fintech adoption is shaped by interrelated drivers such as social influence, performance expectancy, convenience, and behavioral intention, reinforcing that farmer adoption is multi causal and embedded in daily realities rather than purely technological (A. Sharma *et al.*, 2024). This motivates a focused examination of which factors are most decisive when the target service is wealth management rather than basic financial transactions.

Adjacent evidence from digital investment platforms further clarifies what may matter for wealth management adoption. A study on robo advisory acceptance finds that perceived usefulness and perceived privacy are among the most important drivers of intention to use digital investment solutions (Seiler & Fanenbruck, 2021). This indicates that adoption decisions in digital investing are sensitive to both benefit expectations and privacy related concerns, which strengthens the rationale for integrating service quality, ease of use, and trust mechanisms when studying farmer adoption of digital wealth management.

Based on these considerations, the present study positions digital wealth management adoption among millennial farmers as a joint technology and service phenomenon. The study examines how perceived digital service quality and

perceived ease of use shape adoption intention, while acknowledging trust as a theoretically grounded complementary mechanism supported by recent fintech adoption evidence (Durak *et al.*, 2024). The empirical focus in Indonesia is expected to provide context specific insights for providers and rural development stakeholders seeking to design farmer relevant digital wealth management services that are both usable and trustworthy.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design and conceptual model

This study employed a quantitative explanatory design using a questionnaire based survey to test the effects of digital service quality and perceived ease of use on the adoption of digital wealth management among millennial farmers. The analytical approach followed recent best practice guidance for variance based structural equation modeling, emphasizing transparent reporting, predictive orientation, and rigorous assessment of both measurement and structural models (Hair & Alamer, 2022; Sarstedt *et al.*, 2022).

Study area, population, and eligibility criteria

The target population comprised millennial farmers in Indonesia, operationalized as individuals aged 20 to 39 years who (1) were actively involved in farming activities or farm based agribusiness decision making, (2) owned or routinely used a smartphone, and (3) had experience using mobile internet services. Respondents were required to have at least minimal exposure to digital financial services (for example mobile banking or e wallet) to ensure meaningful evaluation of digital wealth management features and service attributes.

Sampling strategy and sample size

A multi stage sampling strategy was proposed. First, farmer groups and

extension networks in the selected districts were used as the sampling frame. Second, eligible millennial farmers were recruited through a combination of purposive selection (to ensure age and farming activity fit the criteria) and systematic recruitment within farmer groups.

Minimum sample size was determined a priori based on contemporary guidance for PLS SEM studies, considering model complexity, anticipated effect sizes, and the need for stable bootstrapped inference. The final target was set to exceed the minimum required for reliable estimation and predictive assessment in PLS SEM applications, consistent with recent methodological reviews and recommendations (Hair & Alamer, 2022; Vaithilingam *et al.*, 2024).

Instrument development and measurement

A structured questionnaire was developed by adapting previously validated measurement items to the context of digital wealth management for farmers. All constructs used reflective indicators and were measured using a 5 point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Digital service quality was specified to capture the user perceived quality of the digital wealth management service interface and support, with item wording adapted from recent digital financial service quality studies that integrate service quality with technology adoption perspectives (V. Sharma *et al.*, 2024). Perceived ease of use was measured using items aligned with technology acceptance research in fintech settings, drawing on a recent validated fintech adoption scale that explicitly includes perceived ease of use as a dimension.

Adoption of digital wealth management was operationalized as intention to use and self reported usage tendency in the near term (for example within the next three months), aligned with

the behavioral adoption framing commonly applied in digital financial services research. Where needed, wording was contextualized to farmers' financial goals (such as saving for inputs, managing income seasonality, and planning investments). To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by subject experts in service marketing, digital finance, and agricultural extension, then refined for clarity and contextual fit. A pilot test with a small group of millennial farmers was conducted to check comprehension, completion time, and item ambiguity, followed by minor wording revisions.

Data collection procedures ethics and Data analysis

Data were collected through enumerator assisted field distribution and online distribution via farmer group communication channels. Participation was voluntary, and respondents received a brief explanation of the study purpose, anonymity safeguards, and data confidentiality before providing informed consent. No personally identifying information was reported in the analysis outputs.

The analysis used PLS SEM due to its suitability for prediction-oriented models with latent constructs and for handling complex relationships in applied behavioral research. Procedures followed recent guidance emphasizing robust evaluation and transparent reporting.

Measurement model evaluation included:

1. Indicator reliability via outer loadings
2. Internal consistency reliability via composite reliability and related reliability indices
3. Convergent validity via average variance extracted
4. Discriminant validity using HTMT based criteria, with consideration of updated HTMT variants where appropriate

Best practice recommendations for reliability and validity reporting were followed to avoid over reliance on single cutoffs and to consider sampling error through bootstrapping where relevant (Cheung *et al.*, 2024; Roemer *et al.*, 2021).

Structural model evaluation included assessment of collinearity among predictors, estimation of path coefficients using bootstrapping (for example 5000 resamples), and reporting of explained variance and predictive relevance metrics. Robustness checks were incorporated in line with recent methodological reviews that highlight the importance of diagnostics beyond basic path significance testing. Common method bias risk was mitigated through procedural remedies (anonymity assurance, careful item wording, and reduced evaluation apprehension) and evaluated using recommended detection and control logic from recent work on common method bias in survey based behavioral studies (Kock *et al.*, 2021; Merkle, 2025).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study analysed 236 millennial farmers aged 20 to 39 years, with a mean age of 29.94 years. The sample was predominantly male (184 respondents, 77.97 percent) with 52 female respondents (22.03 percent). The construct means indicate relatively high perceived ease of use, while perceptions of digital service quality, trust, and adoption intention were moderately high: digital service quality (mean 3.88, SD 1.07), perceived ease of use (mean 4.17, SD 0.89), trust (mean 3.77, SD 1.19), and adoption intention (mean 3.78, SD 1.28). These descriptive patterns are consistent with the targeted profile of millennial farmers who are generally comfortable with smartphones yet remain selective about service credibility and perceived value.

Respondent profile

To contextualize the findings and describe the millennial farmer segment, Table 1 reports the distribution of respondents by gender and age group.

Table 1 indicates the sample is predominantly male, while age groups are relatively balanced. The mean of the age data is 29.945 years (SD 5.215), supporting coverage of both early and late millennial cohorts.

Table 1. Respondent demographics (N = 236)

Characteristic	Category	n	Percent
Gender	Male	184	77.97
Gender	Female	52	22.03
Age group	20–24	44	18.64
Age group	25–29	69	29.24
Age group	30–34	66	27.97
Age group	35–39	57	24.15

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and latent variable correlations

Construct	Mean	SD	DSQ	PEOU	TR	INT
DSQ	3.882	1.073	1	-0.072	0.989	0.983
PEOU	4.175	0.885	-0.072	1	-0.044	-0.028
TR	3.769	1.186	0.989	-0.044	1	0.99
INT	3.783	1.285	0.983	-0.028	0.99	1

Table 2 shows high PEOU on average, consistent with millennial familiarity with smartphones. DSQ, TR, and INT display wider dispersion. The correlations reveal very strong overlap among DSQ, TR, and INT, which is important for interpreting discriminant validity and multicollinearity diagnostics later.

Measurement model

To establish indicator quality and ensure each construct is measured reliably, Table 3 reports outer loadings for reflective indicators.

Table 3 indicates very strong loadings across all indicators, supporting high indicator reliability. At the same time, such uniformly high loadings can coincide with conceptual redundancy when latent correlations are also extremely high, so

Descriptive statistics and latent correlations

Before assessing the measurement and structural model, Table 2 presents construct means and standard deviations (item averages on a 1–5 scale) and correlations among latent variable scores produced by the PLS algorithm.

discriminant validity must be assessed carefully.

Next, Table 4 evaluates internal consistency and convergent validity using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and AVE.

Table 4 confirms excellent internal consistency and convergent validity (AVE values well above 0.50). These results show that each block is measured consistently, but reliability alone does not guarantee that constructs are empirically distinct.

Discriminant validity

Because DSQ, TR, and INT are highly correlated, discriminant validity was assessed using both Fornell–Larcker and HTMT. Table 5 reports the Fornell–Larcker matrix, with $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ on the diagonal.

Table 5 shows the criterion is not satisfied for DSQ, TR, and INT because the

correlations between these constructs exceed the $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ values. This indicates respondents may not clearly differentiate service quality perceptions, trust judgments, and intention in the current context.

To corroborate this result, Table 6 reports HTMT ratios.

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Construct	Indicator	Loading
DSQ	DSQ1	0.965
DSQ	DSQ2	0.955
DSQ	DSQ3	0.927
DSQ	DSQ4	0.97
PEOU	PEOU1	0.971
PEOU	PEOU2	0.931
PEOU	PEOU3	0.926
PEOU	PEOU4	0.968
TR	TR1	0.977
TR	TR2	0.941
TR	TR3	0.968
TR	TR4	0.978
INT	INT1	0.991
INT	INT2	0.955
INT	INT3	0.977
INT	INT4	0.989

Table 4. Reliability and convergent validity

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
DSQ	0.966	0.976	0.911
PEOU	0.963	0.973	0.902
TR	0.976	0.982	0.933
INT	0.985	0.989	0.957

Table 5. Fornell–Larcker criterion

Construct	DSQ	PEOU	TR	INT
DSQ	0.955	-0.072	0.989	0.983
PEOU	-0.072	0.949	-0.044	-0.028
TR	0.989	-0.044	0.966	0.99
INT	0.983	-0.028	0.99	0.978

Table 6. HTMT ratios

Construct	DSQ	PEOU	TR	INT
DSQ	1	0.081	1.018	1.007
PEOU	0.081	1	0.062	0.052
TR	1.018	0.062	1	1.01
INT	1.007	0.052	1.01	1

Table 6 confirms severe discriminant validity concerns among DSQ, TR, and INT, with HTMT values slightly above 1.00. Substantively, this can happen when respondents treat service experience and

trust as a single global evaluation that translates directly into intention, especially in early-stage or low-experience adoption settings. Methodologically, it implies

multicollinearity and potentially inflated explained variance in the structural model.

Structural model results

To test the hypothesized relationships, Table 7 reports standardized path coefficients, bootstrap standard errors, *t* statistics, *p* values, percentile confidence intervals, multicollinearity diagnostics (VIF), and effect sizes (f^2).

Table 7 supports the core theoretical mechanism: DSQ strongly predicts Trust, and Trust strongly predicts Intention. DSQ also retains a statistically significant but small direct association with Intention, suggesting partial mediation rather than full mediation. PEOU has statistically significant effects on Trust and Intention, but the magnitudes are small, consistent with the idea that ease of use is a baseline enabling condition for digitally familiar millennials.

At the same time, VIF values for DSQ and TR in the Intention equation are extremely high, consistent with the discriminant validity problems. This indicates severe multicollinearity, which can distort coefficient stability and inflate apparent explanatory performance.

To summarize model performance, Table 8 reports explained variance (R^2), adjusted R^2 , and a prediction-oriented indicator using 10-fold cross-validated predictive R^2 (reported transparently as CV predictive R^2 rather than blindfolding-based Q^2).

Table 8 indicates very strong in-sample explanatory power for Trust and Intention. Predictive performance remains high, though the cross-validated predictive R^2 for

Intention is lower than the in-sample R^2 , which is expected. Given the overlap among DSQ, TR, and INT, these values should be interpreted cautiously as they may reflect measurement redundancy as well as substantive predictability.

Mediation analysis: the role of Trust

To test whether Trust transmits the effects of DSQ and PEOU onto Intention, Table 9 reports indirect effects, total effects, and variance accounted for (VAF).

Table 9 shows that Trust is the principal transmission mechanism. The DSQ indirect effect through Trust is large and highly significant, and VAF indicates that most of DSQ's relationship with Intention occurs through Trust. For PEOU, the indirect and total effects are statistically significant but small, with partial mediation. This pattern matches the behavioral logic you described: high trust is strongly aligned with high adoption intention.

Robustness check: alternative full-mediation specification

Because DSQ and Trust are almost indistinguishable empirically in this dataset, a parsimonious robustness check is to estimate a full-mediation model in which Intention is driven only by Trust (while DSQ and PEOU still predict Trust). Table 10 compares the baseline and full-mediation specifications.

Table 10 shows that removing the direct effects from DSQ and PEOU to Intention changes R^2 only slightly, reinforcing the interpretation that Trust captures the dominant adoption mechanism in this dataset.

Table 7. Structural model results (bootstrapping = 1,000)

Path	β	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	CI 2.5%	CI 97.5%	VIF	f^2
DSQ - TR	0.991	0.002	443.922	<0.001	0.987	0.996	1.005	46.785
PEOU - TR	0.028	0.013	2.206	0.027	0.004	0.053	1.005	0.037
DSQ - INT	0.183	0.073	2.506	0.012	0.035	0.323	48.036	0.037
PEOU - INT	0.021	0.009	2.325	0.02	0.004	0.04	1.042	0.023
TR - INT	0.81	0.072	11.24	<0.001	0.671	0.957	47.877	0.734

Table 8. Explanatory and predictive performance

Endogenous construct	R ²	Adjusted R ²	10-fold CV predictive R ²
Trust (TR)	0.979	0.979	0.979
Intention (INT)	0.981	0.981	0.967

Table 9. Mediation effects via Trust (bootstrapping = 1,000)

Effect	β	SE	t	p	CI 2.5%	CI 97.5%	VAF
DSQ - TR - INT (indirect)	0.803	0.071	11.24	<0.001	0.667	0.948	-
PEOU - TR - INT (indirect)	0.022	0.011	2.032	0.042	0.003	0.046	-
DSQ total effect - INT	0.986	0.004	274.995	<0.001	0.979	0.993	0.815
PEOU total effect - INT	0.043	0.016	2.642	0.008	0.013	0.077	0.518

Table 10. Robustness check (baseline vs full mediation model)

Model	INT predictors	TR - INT (β)	R ² (INT)
Baseline	DSQ, PEOU, TR	0.81	0.981
Full mediation alternative	TR only	0.99	0.98

Integrated discussion

Overall, the results indicate that adoption intention for digital wealth management among millennial farmers is primarily trust-driven, and trust is largely shaped by perceived digital service quality. This is consistent with the nature of wealth management as a high-involvement financial service in which users require confidence in service reliability, transparency, and safeguards. In such contexts, strong service evaluations can translate almost directly into trust, and trust becomes the most proximal determinant of adoption intention.

Perceived ease of use is high on average and statistically significant, but its effects are small. A plausible explanation is that for millennials, usability is a necessary baseline rather than a differentiator. Once minimum usability is met, incremental gains in intention are more strongly linked to whether the service is perceived as dependable and trustworthy.

A major methodological and substantive feature of the dataset is the severe overlap among DSQ, Trust, and Intention, evidenced by Fornell-Larcker failures, HTMT values above 1.00, and

extremely large VIF values in the Intention equation. One practical contributor is the presence of uniform response patterns: 51 respondents provided the same rating across all 16 items (mostly all 5s, plus smaller groups of all 3s and all 4s), which can strengthen common variance and reduce construct separability. Substantively, however, the overlap can also reflect a realistic psychological process in early adoption settings where users compress multiple evaluations into one overall judgment.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the determinants of digital wealth management adoption intention among millennial farmers using a PLS-SEM framework that integrates digital service quality and perceived ease of use with trust as a key mechanism. Based on 236 valid responses, the findings indicate that adoption intention is primarily explained through a trust-driven process. Digital service quality emerged as the strongest antecedent of trust, and trust in turn was the most influential predictor of intention. The mediation results further confirm that most of the effect of digital service quality on intention operates

indirectly through trust, supporting the view that trust is the main transmission pathway in this financial service context.

Perceived ease of use showed statistically significant but small effects compared to the trust pathway. This pattern suggests that among millennials, usability tends to function as a baseline requirement rather than a decisive differentiator. Once minimum usability expectations are met, the intention to adopt a wealth management service is more strongly determined by whether the platform is perceived as credible, secure, reliable, and supportive, which is reflected in trust.

From a practical perspective, the results imply that strategies to increase adoption of digital wealth management among millennial farmers should prioritize trust-building service elements anchored in service quality signals. These include stable platform performance, clear and transparent information about fees and risks, strong privacy and security assurance, and responsive support or recovery mechanisms. In agricultural communities, pairing digital channels with credible intermediaries such as cooperatives, farmer groups, or extension-linked assistance may further strengthen trust and reduce hesitation toward investment-type products.

At the same time, the study identifies an important measurement limitation. Discriminant validity tests indicate very strong overlap among service quality, trust, and intention in the present dataset, which is consistent with the extremely high collinearity observed in the structural model. This suggests that respondents may be forming a single global evaluation that merges service experience, trust judgments, and intention, and it also implies that some estimates and performance indicators may be inflated by construct redundancy. Future research should refine construct operationalization by sharpening service quality items toward operational service performance, sharpening trust items toward

integrity and competence, and adding complementary constructs such as perceived risk or structural assurance. Replication with a broader geographic scope and the inclusion of behavioral adoption measures would further strengthen external validity and improve inference beyond intention.

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