

The Influence of Foundational Bases of Internet-Only Banks on Consumer Attitudes and Usage Intentions: Focused on the Moderating Effect of Involvement, Usage Purpose, and Construal Level

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Abstract

This study investigates how the foundational bases of internet-only banks shape consumer attitudes and intentions to use these services. Specifically, it examines how consumer attitudes and usage intentions toward internet-only banks are moderated by factors such as involvement, purpose of use, and construal level. This research contrasts consumer attitudes based on the foundational bases of internet-only banks (ICT-driven vs. bank-driven) and analyzes whether involvement (high vs. low) and usage purpose (deposit vs. loan) have moderating effects on these attitudes. Furthermore, it explores whether construal level (low vs. high) moderates usage intentions depending on the bank's foundational base (ICT-driven vs. bank-driven). For empirical analysis, two types of surveys representing ICT-driven and bank-driven internet-only banks were administered to a sample of 360 participants, including university students, graduate students, and the general public in Daegu and Gyeongbuk. Key Findings: 1) Consumer attitudes were significantly more favorable toward ICT-driven internet-only banks compared to bank-driven counterparts. 2) High involvement correlated with more positive attitudes toward ICT-driven internet-only banks, whereas low involvement correlated with more favorable attitudes toward bank-driven banks. 3) For usage purpose, consumers with a loan-oriented purpose demonstrated a stronger positive attitude toward ICT-driven internet-only banks, while, counter to the hypothesis, deposit-oriented consumers also showed a preference for ICT-driven banks. 4) Regarding construal level, lower construal levels were associated with stronger usage intentions for ICT-driven internet-only banks. Unexpectedly, high construal levels also displayed elevated usage intentions for ICT-driven models. In conclusion, initial consumer responses to internet-only banks, which incorporate ICT as an enabling technology within essential financial services, appear to prioritize convenience and procedural efficiency. This study thus offers theoretical insights suggesting that both internet-only and traditional banks should address these consumer demands by enhancing service speed and simplicity.

Keywords: *Internet-only bank, Involvement, Construal Level, Consumer Attitude, Usage Intention.*

Introduction

In 2017, South Korea witnessed a significant innovation in the financial industry with the official launch of internet-only banks. Notable examples include K-Bank and KakaoBank, which have rapidly popularized remote, non-face-to-face banking among consumers. This shift has had a profound impact on consumer perceptions of the traditional financial sector, raising questions about how attitudes and usage intentions differ between conventional banking services and these new internet-only alternatives.

This study aims to analyze how the foundational bases of internet-only banks (ICT-driven vs. bank-driven models) influence consumer attitudes and usage intentions. Furthermore, it investigates whether involvement, usage purpose, and construal level play moderating roles in this relationship. Based on these insights, the study seeks to offer strategic recommendations for the future development of internet-only banks.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Internet-Only Banks

Internet-only banks refer to banks that operate exclusively through electronic financial transactions, in accordance with the "Electronic Financial Transactions Act." These banks deliver financial services via electronic devices such as PCs and mobile phones without in-person interactions, making non-face-to-face transactions a central feature. Internet-only banks, lacking physical branches, benefit from reduced

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operational costs, enabling them to offer a wider range of financial products and services compared to traditional banks (Davis, 1989; Kim, 2017). Initially referred to as "Internet-only Banks" or "Pure-play Internet Banks," these banks are increasingly recognized as "Digital Banks" or "Mobile Banks," reflecting their adoption of data analytics and mobile networking technologies, as well as their structural evolution toward leveraging big data and digital technology (Goo, 2017).

The growth of internet-only banks traces back to the mid-1990s, following the proliferation of the internet and personal computers. In recent years, high-speed internet and smartphones have further driven their development. Since 2010, the advancement of FinTech has created an environment where financial services are accessible without the need for bank branches or tellers (McAuley, 2014). Internet-only banks emerged as an innovative digital financial model in the early 2010s, gaining prominence around 2015. Their development has been propelled by digital finance innovation and FinTech, establishing a non-face-to-face financial service model without traditional physical branches (Frost, 2017; PwC, 2016; Accenture, 2015). Notable international examples include the UK's Atom Bank and Germany's Fidor Bank, which enhance competitiveness by offering cloud-based loan services and various financial products (Park, 2015).

Internet-only banks can be classified into four types: bank-driven, non-bank financial institution-driven, industrial capital-driven, and independent capital-driven, with each type employing distinct strategies to provide various financial services (Financial Services Commission, 2016).

FinTech

FinTech, a blend of "finance" and "technology," encompasses various technological innovations in financial services. It includes services such as mobile transfers, payments, crowdfunding, and personal asset management, contributing to the digitization and automation of financial processes. FinTech integrates cutting-edge technologies like big data, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence into finance, playing a pivotal role in developing new types of financial services and products (Davis, 1989). FinTech has evolved with a focus on reducing costs, enhancing service efficiency, and improving accessibility in traditional finance. The British Scientific Office describes FinTech as "technology-driven financial service innovation," emphasizing the role of technology in driving financial service innovation (McAuley, 2014). Initially, FinTech sought to increase the efficiency of existing financial services, but it has now become a disruptive technology that is transforming the financial industry's structure (Park, 2015).

Unlike conventional financial institutions, FinTech-based internet-only banks are driven by technology startups or ICT companies that directly deliver financial services. Leveraging mobile platforms, these banks bypass or replace traditional financial infrastructure, offering more efficient and innovative services (Davis, 1989). They provide a broader range of digital-based financial services, including loans, deposits, and payments, thereby enhancing their reach to a wider consumer base (McAuley, 2014). The primary characteristic of FinTech internet-only banks is their digital transformation of financial services, minimizing intermediaries between financial institutions and consumers, reducing costs, and improving the user experience (Park, 2015).

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Davis in 1986 and formalized in 1989, explains the process by which users accept new technology. TAM is based on two main beliefs: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). Perceived usefulness refers to the extent to which users believe that a system will enhance their performance, while perceived ease of use indicates users' belief that using the system will require minimal effort (Davis, 1989). These beliefs influence users' attitudes toward technology and their behavioral intentions, which in turn affect actual technology usage. TAM is recognized as a powerful tool for understanding how users adopt and utilize new technology. In the context of financial technology such as internet-only banks, TAM effectively predicts acceptance by examining consumers' perceptions of utility and ease of use (Son, 2016). This model plays a significant role in anticipating user behavior as financial technology evolves, serving as a valuable framework for evaluating the effectiveness of new financial services like internet-only banks (Davis, 1989).

Construal Level Theory (CLT)

Construal Level Theory (CLT) explains how individuals interpret events based on psychological distance. Events perceived as psychologically distant are interpreted abstractly and essentially, a process known as high-level construal. Conversely, events perceived as close are interpreted concretely and practically, known as low-level construal (Trope & Liberman, 2003). Psychological distance includes temporal, spatial, social, and hypothetical dimensions, which affect how people evaluate and make decisions. For example, distant future events are interpreted abstractly, whereas near-future events are interpreted concretely (Trope & Liberman, 2003). CLT plays a critical role in decision-making and evaluation processes, particularly influencing consumer evaluations of financial services or products (Son, 2016).

Foundational Bases of Internet-Only Banks and Consumer Attitudes

The foundational bases of internet-only banks can be broadly categorized into bank-driven and ICT-driven types. Bank-driven internet-only banks, established by traditional financial institutions, emphasize trustworthiness and stability in their operations. In contrast, ICT-driven internet-only banks are characterized by rapid and innovative services enabled by information technology (Kim, 2016). These differences in foundational bases may influence how consumers perceive each type of bank and shape their attitudes accordingly.

Previous research suggests that ICT-driven internet-only banks, by providing innovative and convenient financial services, are likely to elicit more positive attitudes from consumers. Conversely, bank-driven internet-only banks may appeal more to conservative consumers who prioritize stability (McAuley, 2014; Park, 2015). According to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), consumers develop more positive attitudes toward technologies they perceive as innovative and user-friendly (Davis, 1989). Consequently, the innovative digital financial services offered by ICT-driven internet-only banks may generate a stronger positive attitude among consumers compared to bank-driven internet-only banks.

Hypothesis 1: Consumers will have a more favorable attitude toward ICT-driven internet-only banks than bank-driven internet-only banks.

Moderating Effect of Involvement

Involvement reflects the degree of interest a consumer has in a particular product or service, significantly influencing their information search and evaluation processes. High involvement leads to more thorough information processing, while low involvement results in a more superficial evaluation. In the relationship between the foundational bases of internet-only banks and consumer attitudes, involvement may act as an essential moderating variable (Krugman, 1965; Antil, 1984). High-involvement consumers tend to value the innovative services of ICT-driven internet-only banks and may therefore display more favorable attitudes toward them. Conversely, low-involvement consumers, who prioritize stability, may exhibit more favorable attitudes toward bank-driven internet-only banks.

Hypothesis 2: Consumer attitudes toward internet-only banks, based on their foundational bases, will be moderated by involvement.

-Hypothesis 2-1: When involvement is high, consumers will have a more favorable attitude toward ICT-driven internet-only banks than bank-driven internet-only banks.

- Hypothesis 2-2: When involvement is low, consumers will have a more favorable attitude toward bank-driven internet-only banks than ICT-driven internet-only banks.

Moderating Effect of Usage Purpose

Consumers' evaluation criteria for internet-only banks may differ depending on their purpose of use. Consumers with a deposit purpose generally prioritize stability and trustworthiness, making bank-driven

internet-only banks appear more suitable. On the other hand, consumers with a loan purpose may favor fast and innovative services, aligning more with ICT-driven internet-only banks (Son, 2016). Perceived risk also plays a critical role, with consumers showing a preference for bank-driven banks when asset protection is a priority. In contrast, loan-seeking consumers place higher value on the quick, innovative loan services of ICT-driven banks, which may reduce perceived risk and yield a more favorable evaluation.

Hypothesis 3: Consumer attitudes toward internet-only banks, based on their foundational bases, will be moderated by usage purpose.

Hypothesis 3-1: When the usage purpose is for deposits, consumers will have a more favorable attitude toward bank-driven internet-only banks than ICT-driven internet-only banks.

Hypothesis 3-2: When the usage purpose is for loans, consumers will have a more favorable attitude toward ICT-driven internet-only banks than bank-driven internet-only banks.

Moderating Effect of Construal Level

The foundational base of internet-only banks may also significantly impact consumers' usage intentions. ICT-driven internet-only banks provide rapid service processing and innovative financial services through digital platforms, potentially increasing consumers' intention to use these services. Bank-driven internet-only banks, on the other hand, emphasize traditional trust and stability, which may enhance usage intention (Davis, 1989).

According to Construal Level Theory (CLT), consumers interpret events differently based on psychological distance, either abstractly (high-level construal) or concretely (low-level construal) (Trope & Liberman, 2003). At a low construal level, concrete and immediate characteristics, such as speed and innovation, may be prioritized, whereas at a high construal level, inherent values like stability and trustworthiness become more significant (Trope & Liberman, 2003; Kim, 2011).

Synthesizing prior studies, consumers' construal level of the foundational bases of internet-only banks (bank-driven vs. ICT-driven) may vary based on these characteristics. Consumers are expected to perceive bank-driven banks as embodying essential qualities and ICT-driven banks as representing abstract qualities.

Hypothesis 4: Usage intention toward internet-only banks, based on their foundational bases, will be moderated by construal level.

Hypothesis 4-1: At a low construal level, consumers will have a stronger usage intention toward ICT-driven internet-only banks than bank-driven internet-only banks.

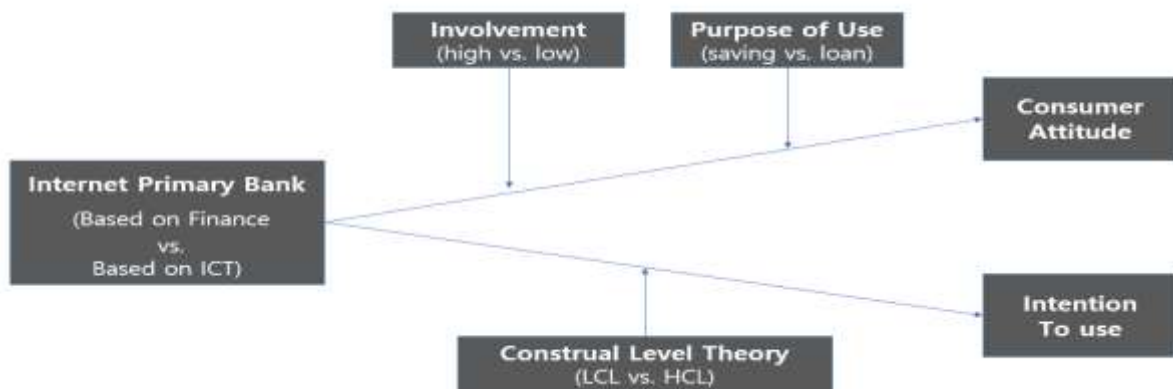
Hypothesis 4-2: At a high construal level, consumers will have a stronger usage intention toward bank-driven internet-only banks than ICT-driven internet-only banks.

Research Methodology

Research Model

Based on the theoretical background and prior research, this study categorizes types of internet-only banks into bank-driven and ICT-driven models according to their foundational bases. The research model is designed to examine consumer attitudes and usage intentions based on these foundational bases of internet-only banks. Specifically, it explores the moderating effects of involvement (high vs. low) and usage purpose (deposit vs. loan) on consumer attitudes, as well as the moderating effect of construal level (low vs. high) on usage intentions. The following research model has been developed to address these objectives.

Figure 1. Research model



Experimental Design and Survey Participants

To address the research questions, this study introduces two hypothetical internet-only banks—one ICT-driven and the other bank-driven—based on their founding entities. The aim is to examine consumer attitudes and usage intentions, while also evaluating the moderating effects of involvement, usage purpose, and construal level. Anticipating low familiarity with internet-only banks among respondents, an introductory description of internet-only banks is provided as shown in [Table 1]. Subsequently, respondents were directly asked about their awareness of internet-only banks, as outlined in [Table 2], and the types of internet-only banks categorized by founding entities were presented as in [Table 3]. This approach ensures that the survey reflects the responses from participants who have prior knowledge of internet-only banks. Therefore, no separate manipulation check was conducted in this study.

Table 1. Explanation of Internet-Only Banks



<p>❖ What is an Internet-Only Bank?</p> <p>An internet-only bank is a bank that operates without physical branches, providing services such as deposits and loans through the internet (PC/mobile) and call centers.</p>

Table 2. Question Regarding Awareness of Internet-Only Banks

Q. How familiar are you with the above-mentioned internet-only banks?

I am not familiar at all	①---②---③---④---⑤---⑥---⑦	I am very familiar
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Table 3. Examples of Internet-Only Banks Based on Founding Entity

ICT Company-Led Internet-Only Bank		Bank-Led Internet-Only Bank	
	K-BANK (KT Corporation)		WIBEE BANK (Woori Financial Group)

To conduct this study, a survey was distributed to college students, graduate students, and the general public residing in the Daegu and Gyeongbuk regions. A total of 400 questionnaires were created and distributed over approximately six weeks, from September 24 to November 4, 2017. The survey was administered using a self-report method, in which respondents directly completed the questionnaire. After excluding 11 cases

of insincere responses and 6 cases with missing items, a total of 360 responses were used for the final analysis.

An analysis of the demographic characteristics and distribution of survey participants by gender and age showed a 90% response rate. The gender distribution consisted of 47.8% females (172 respondents) and 52.2% males (188 respondents). The age distribution was as follows: 2.8% were under 20 years old (10 respondents), 37.5% were aged 21–30 (135 respondents), 28.1% were aged 31–40 (101 respondents), 21.9% were aged 41–50 (79 respondents), and 9.7% were 51 years or older (35 respondents).

In terms of occupation, 25.6% were students (92 respondents), 61.7% were company employees (222 respondents), 4.4% were self-employed (16 respondents), 1.9% were housewives (7 respondents), and 6.4% were in other occupations (23 respondents). The majority of participants were in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, with a balanced gender distribution, and the occupation distribution was predominantly composed of company employees. Considering internet usage patterns, the sample is deemed appropriate for the purpose of this study.

For hypothesis testing, the study measured variables related to respondents' familiarity with internet-only banks, involvement, usage purpose, consumer attitudes, and usage intentions. Demographic variables such as gender, age, and occupation were also measured. The analysis results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Demographic Characteristics

Division		N	%
Gender	Male	172	47.8%
	Female	188	52.5%
	Total	360	100.0%
Age	Under the 20 years	10	2.8%
	21~30 years old	135	37.5%
	31~40 years old	101	28.1%
	41~50 years old	79	21.9%
	Overs the 50s	35	9.7%
	Total	360	100.0%
Job	Student	92	51.5%
	Office worker	222	27.0%
	Self-employed	16	9.7%
	Housewife	7	5.8%
	Other	23	4.7%
	Total	360	100.0%

The survey items were adapted from prior research to align with the variables of this study. A 7-point Likert scale was employed for items measuring familiarity with internet-only banks, involvement, construal level, consumer attitude, and usage intention, while nominal scales were used for questions related to bank usage purpose and demographic information.

To test the hypotheses, this study utilized SPSS. First, frequency analysis was conducted to assess the distribution of respondents' demographic information. Second, factor analysis was performed to examine the validity of the variables, and reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to confirm internal consistency. Third, ANOVA and t-tests were used to test the hypotheses.

Measurement

The types of internet-only banks were measured by assessing respondents' familiarity with internet-only banks based on their foundational type (bank-driven vs. ICT-driven). This was measured using a direct question with a 7-point Likert scale.

Consumer attitude toward internet-only banks, categorized by type (bank-driven vs. ICT-driven), was measured using three items adapted from the Handbook of Marketing Scales and modified to fit this study. Responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale.

Involvement, defined as the level of interest and importance placed on internet-only banks, was measured using five items adapted from Zaichkowsky's (1985) Personal Involvement Inventory (PII) and adjusted for this study. A 7-point Likert scale was used for these items.

Usage intention, reflecting respondents' willingness to use internet-only banks, was measured using three items adapted from prior studies by Kalkota & Whinston (1997) and Yoon (2004) to fit this study's context. Responses were collected on a 7-point Likert scale.

Construal level was measured by assessing respondents' intention to use internet-only banks in the immediate future (e.g., tomorrow) and in the distant future (e.g., one year later). This measure repeated the items from Section 4.2.4 on usage intention with a temporal variation, resulting in six items measured on a 7-point Likert scale.

Usage purpose, referring to the primary type of banking services respondents use, was measured through a direct question with a nominal scale.

*Empirical Analysis**Factor Analysis and Reliability*

Prior to hypothesis testing, factor analysis was conducted to assess the validity of the variables used in this study. The analysis results indicated that the Eigenvalues for each factor exceeded the threshold of 1, meeting the criterion, and the explanatory power for all factors was generally high, above 87%. To verify the internal consistency of the validated factors, reliability analysis was performed. The results showed that all Cronbach's Alpha values were above 0.842, surpassing the recommended threshold of 0.7. These findings confirm the suitability of the study model for hypothesis testing.

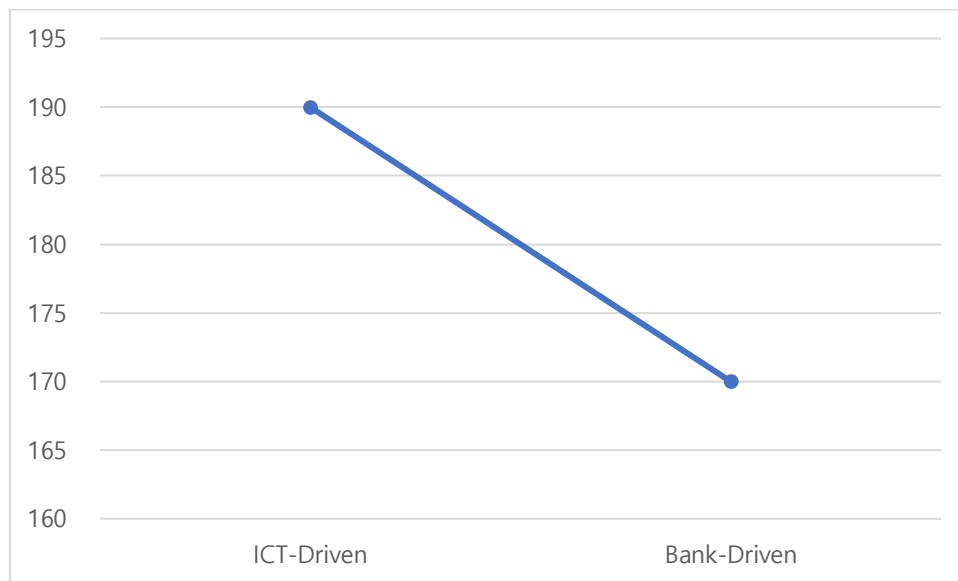
*Hypothesis Test**Consumer Attitudes Based on Types of Internet-Only Banks*

The first research hypothesis aims to examine differences in consumer attitudes based on the type of internet-only bank. A t-test was conducted to test the mean difference between the two groups. The foundational base of the internet-only bank (bank-driven vs. ICT-driven) was used as the independent variable, while consumer attitude was designated as the dependent variable. The analysis results indicated that consumer attitudes were more favorable toward ICT-driven internet-only banks than bank-driven ones. Specifically, consumer attitudes by type showed a statistically significant difference, with $M_{ICT} = 4.31$, $M_{bank} = 4.09$, $t = 2.96$, $p < .05$.

Table 5. Consumer Attitudes Based on Types of Internet-Only Banks

Type of Internet-Only Bank	N	M	S.D	t	p
ICT-Driven	190	4.31	1.59	2.96	.00*
Bank-Driven	170	4.09	1.50		

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Figure 2. Consumer Attitudes Based on Types of Internet-Only Banks*Consumer Attitudes Based on Involvement Level*

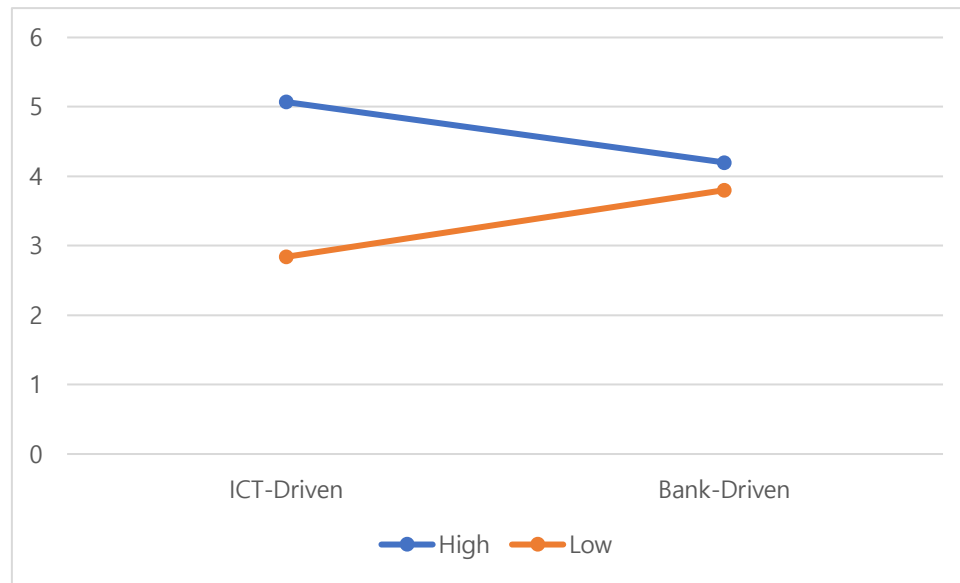
The second research hypothesis aims to determine whether consumer attitudes toward internet-only banks are moderated by involvement level. The type of internet-only bank (ICT-driven vs. bank-driven) and involvement level (high vs. low) were set as independent variables, with consumer attitude as the dependent variable.

The analysis results for Hypothesis 2-1 indicate that, when involvement is high, consumer attitudes differ significantly based on the type of internet-only bank, with $M_{ICT} = 5.07$, $M_{bank} = 4.20$, $t = 5.48$, $p < .05$. For Hypothesis 2-2, when involvement is low, consumer attitudes also show a statistically significant difference based on the type of internet-only bank, with $M_{ICT} = 2.84$, $M_{bank} = 3.80$, $t = 2.26$, $p < .05$.

Table 6. Consumer Attitudes Based on Involvement Level

Involvement Level	Type of Internet-Only Bank	N	M	S.D	t	p
High	ICT-Driven	82	5.07	1.10	5.48	.00*
	Bank-Driven	99	4.20	1.67		
Low	ICT-Driven	81	2.84	1.08	2.26	.02*
	Bank-Driven	98	3.80	1.70		

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Figure 3. Moderating Effect of Involvement Level

Consumer Attitudes Based on Usage Purpose

The third research hypothesis aims to determine whether consumer attitudes toward internet-only banks, based on their type, are moderated by usage purpose. The type of internet-only bank (ICT-driven vs. bank-driven) and usage purpose (deposit vs. loan) were set as independent variables, with consumer attitude as the dependent variable.

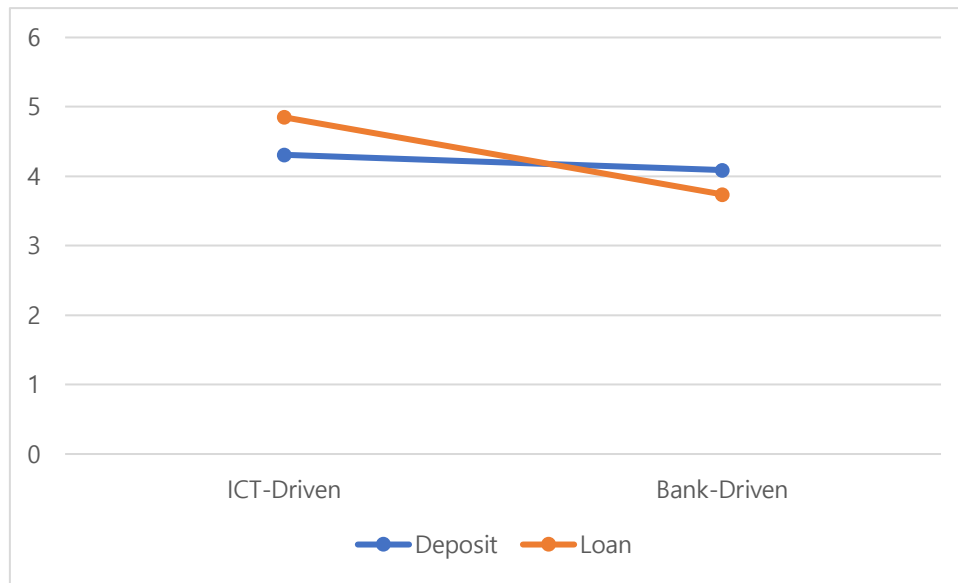
The analysis results for Hypothesis 3-1, which posited that consumer attitudes would be more favorable toward bank-driven internet-only banks than ICT-driven ones when the purpose is for deposits, showed that attitudes were actually higher for ICT-driven banks ($M_{ICT} = 4.31$, $M_{bank} = 4.09$, $t = 0.87$, $p < .05$). While a statistically significant difference was observed, the actual effect size was found to be relatively small.

In contrast, for Hypothesis 3-2, which proposed that consumer attitudes would differ based on the type of internet-only bank when the purpose is for loans, the results indicated a statistically significant difference. Consumer attitudes were more favorable toward ICT-driven banks, with $M_{ICT} = 4.85$, $M_{bank} = 3.74$, $t = 3.23$, $p < .05$.

Table 7. Consumer Attitudes Based on Usage Purpose

Usage Purpose	Type of Internet-Only Bank	N	M	S.D	t	p
Deposit	ICT-Driven	91	4.31	1.10	0.87	.03*
	Bank-Driven	83	4.09	1.67		
Loan	ICT-Driven	91	4.85	1.08	3.23	.00*
	Bank-Driven	95	3.74	1.73		

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Figure 4. Moderating Effect of Usage Purpose

Usage Intention Based on Construal Level

The fourth research hypothesis aims to determine whether usage intention toward internet-only banks, based on their foundational base, is moderated by construal level. The type of internet-only bank (ICT-driven vs. bank-driven) and construal level (Low-Level Construal (LCL) vs. High-Level Construal (HCL)) were set as independent variables, with usage intention as the dependent variable.

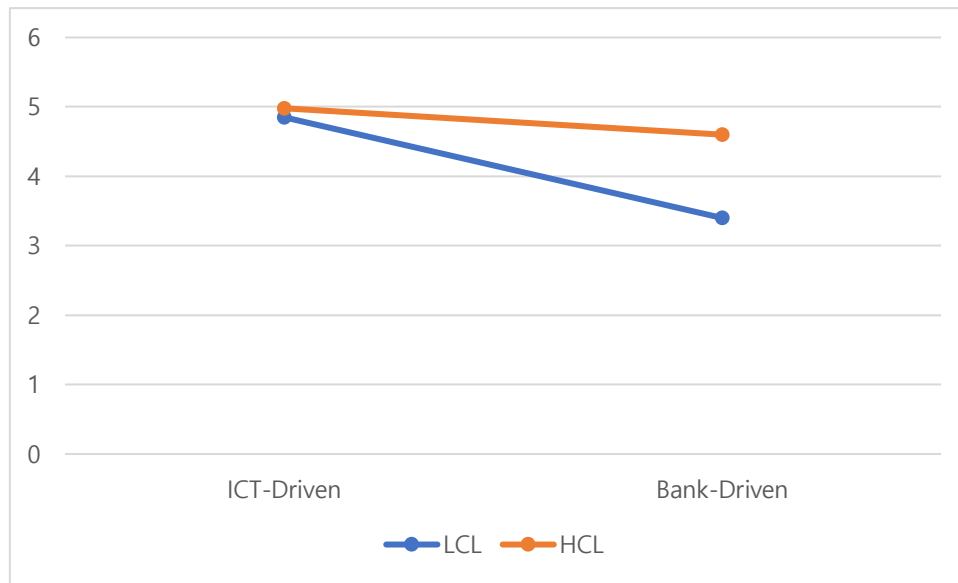
The analysis results for Hypothesis 4-1, which posited that usage intention would differ based on the type of internet-only bank when construal level is low (LCL), showed a statistically significant difference, with $M_{ICT} = 4.85$, $M_{bank} = 3.40$, $t = 2.12$, $p < .05$.

In contrast, for Hypothesis 4-2, which proposed that usage intention would be higher for bank-driven internet-only banks than ICT-driven ones when construal level is high (HCL), the results indicated the opposite. Usage intention was higher for ICT-driven banks, with $M_{ICT} = 4.98$, $M_{bank} = 4.60$, $t = 1.84$, $p < .05$, though the actual effect size was found to be relatively small.

Table 8. Moderating Effect of Construal Level

Construal Level	Type of Internet-Only Bank	N	M	S.D	t	p
LCL	ICT-Driven	97	4.85	1.22	2.12	.03*
	Bank-Driven	87	3.40	1.37		
HCL	ICT-Driven	97	4.98	1.13	1.84	.04*
	Bank-Driven	87	4.60	1.43		

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Figure 5. Moderating Effect of Construal Level

Conclusion

This study recognized the need to examine consumer responses to internet-only banks, which represent a convergence of financial services and ICT. The research investigated consumer attitudes based on the foundational base of internet-only banks (ICT-driven vs. bank-driven) and examined how consumer attitudes and usage intentions are moderated by involvement, usage purpose, and construal level. The findings are as follows:

1. Consumer attitudes were more favorable toward ICT-driven internet-only banks than bank-driven ones, supporting Hypothesis 1.
2. The moderating effect of involvement was observed, supporting Hypothesis 2. Specifically, when involvement was high, consumer attitudes were more favorable toward ICT-driven internet-only banks compared to bank-driven ones. Conversely, when involvement was low, consumer attitudes were more favorable toward bank-driven internet-only banks than ICT-driven ones, supporting both Hypotheses 2-1 and 2-2.
3. The moderating effect of usage purpose was confirmed, supporting Hypothesis 3. While it was expected that consumer attitudes would be more favorable toward bank-driven internet-only banks when the purpose was deposit, the results were contrary to the hypothesis. However, when the purpose was loan, the results aligned with the hypothesis, showing a more favorable attitude toward ICT-driven banks. Thus, Hypothesis 3-1 was rejected, while Hypothesis 3-2 was supported.
4. The moderating effect of construal level was confirmed, supporting Hypothesis 4. When the construal level was low, usage intentions were more favorable toward ICT-driven internet-only banks compared to bank-driven ones. Conversely, it was hypothesized that when the construal level was high, usage intentions would be more favorable toward bank-driven internet-only banks; however, the results contradicted the hypothesis, showing a more favorable usage intention toward ICT-driven banks. Therefore, Hypothesis 4-1 was supported, but Hypothesis 4-2 was rejected.

The findings of this study offer the following implications.

First, consumer attitudes toward internet-only banks differ based on the founding base (ICT-driven vs. bank-driven), with consumers showing a more favorable attitude toward ICT-driven internet-only banks

than bank-driven ones. This suggests a theoretical basis for the strategic direction of future financial services, emphasizing the integration of professional banking services with innovative ICT as part of the broader digitalization strategy.

Second, this study identifies variations in consumer attitudes toward internet-only banks based on involvement level and usage purpose. Consumers who are highly involved and familiar with mobile services demonstrate a heightened perceived risk of personal data breaches, leading to a more favorable attitude toward ICT-driven internet-only banks, which are grounded in strong technological capabilities. Additionally, regardless of usage purpose (deposit or loan), consumers favor ICT-driven internet-only banks due to perceived advantages such as ease of use and streamlined processes. This finding provides practical insights for commercial banks, highlighting the need to integrate robust ICT solutions to enhance security and streamline banking procedures, thereby improving service convenience.

Third, this study reveals differences in usage intentions for internet-only banks based on construal level. The psychological distance consumers feel toward the timing of using internet-only banks (immediate vs. one year later) significantly impacts their usage intentions. Notably, the results emphasize an immediate preference for ICT-driven internet-only banks. Consumers currently demonstrate a higher usage intention toward ICT-driven internet-only banks, and projections for one year from now also indicate a somewhat higher intention compared to bank-driven alternatives. However, as the gap between ICT- and bank-driven internet-only banks is narrowing, it is foreseeable that bank-driven internet-only banks may quickly close this gap over time.

Ultimately, these findings suggest that as ICT becomes an essential, rather than a primary, means of delivering financial services, both ICT-driven and bank-driven internet-only banks will offer high levels of technological expertise. This provides a practical rationale for maintaining a strategic focus on the core professional services of traditional banking, ensuring that the fundamental expertise of financial services is not overlooked.

This study empirically analyzed the impact of the foundational base of internet-only banks on consumer attitudes and usage intentions. However, a limitation of this research is its focus on younger demographics, specifically individuals in their 20s and 30s. This concentration reflects the characteristics of a digitally savvy youth population, which may pose constraints on generalizing the findings to middle-aged and older age groups. Future research should consider these age differences to provide more comprehensive insights.

Additionally, the rapidly evolving financial environment, characterized by accelerated digitalization, necessitates an understanding of changing consumer expectations and modes of bank service usage. Future studies should analyze the interaction between digital and traditional channels, the acceptance of non-face-to-face services, and the issue of the digital divide. Such research could guide internet-only banks toward providing inclusive financial accessibility and personalized services.

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