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## THE EFFECT OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AND FINANCIAL LITERACY ON FINANCIAL SATISFACTION OF THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION WITH FINANCIAL STRESS MEDIATION

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### Abstract

This study analyzes the influence of consumer behavior and financial literacy on financial satisfaction with financial stress as a mediating variable in the millennial generation in Surabaya. The research used a quantitative approach with an explanatory survey through an online questionnaire aimed at millennials aged 29-40 years who are active users of digital financial services. Data analysis was performed using *Partial Least Squares- Structural Equation Modeling* (PLS-SEM). The results of the study show that consumer behavior has a negative effect on financial satisfaction, while financial literacy has a positive and significant effect. Financial stress acts as a mediator, indicating that impulsive consumption tendencies and low financial capacity can increase psychological stress and decrease an individual's financial well-being. These findings underscore the importance of improving financial literacy and controlling consumer behavior to strengthen millennials' financial satisfaction in the digital era. This research provides practical implications for policy makers and financial institutions in designing more targeted financial education programs.

**Keywords:** Financial Literacy, Consumer Behavior, Financial Stress, Financial Satisfaction

## INTRODUCTION

The increasingly rapid development of digital financial services has brought significant changes in individual financial management patterns. (Akmal & Marliani, 2025) , especially among the millennial generation as a productive age group. Easy access to various financial products , such as digital wallets, online loans, and *buy now pay later facilities* (Kamil et al., 2024) , encouraging an increase in fast and practical consumption activities. This age group dominates the active use of online loans (*pinjol*) with more than 60% of active users (OJK, 2024) . However, this increase in access has not been fully balanced by adequate financial management skills (Prihandini, 2025) . Indonesian people's finances are still categorized as low, reaching only 49.68% of the OJK (2023). 45% of millennial respondents admitted to experiencing financial stress stemming from debt installments and living costs that are not commensurate with income OJK (2024). Based on the 2024 National Survey of Financial Literacy and Inclusion of the Financial Services Authority (OJK) (OJK, 2024) , Indonesia's financial inclusion index has reached 75.02%, while the financial literacy index remains at 65.43%. This gap indicates that high access to financial services has not been in line with the public's understanding of how to manage finances optimally.

Individual financial management behavior can be explained through Utility Theory , which states that individuals act rationally to maximize satisfaction (*utility*) from their available resources. In the context of personal finance , individuals are expected to allocate income between consumption, savings, and investment in a balanced manner to achieve long-term financial satisfaction. However, in practice, limited financial literacy and the drive for consumer behavior often lead individuals to focus more on short-term gratification. As a result, financial decisions are less than optimal and have the potential to reduce overall financial utility (Maftuhah et al., 2025) .

Financial literacy is a crucial factor in helping individuals make rational and informed financial decisions. Research (Maftuhah et al., 2022) shows that financial literacy, particularly Islamic financial literacy and financial inclusion, significantly influences individual financial behavior, with sociodemographic characteristics acting as moderating variables. These findings confirm that sound financial literacy can encourage more responsible financial behavior. However, this research focuses on general financial behavior and has not yet fully examined its implications for financial satisfaction and the psychological stress that may arise during financial management (Yulfiswandi et al., 2022) .

Behavior has become an increasingly prominent phenomenon with the development of the digital economy and modern lifestyles. Previous studies have shown that high levels of consumptive behavior can increase unplanned spending, reduce savings, and increase dependence on consumer debt (Efrianto et al., 2023; Laurinda et al., 2024). From the perspective of Utility Theory, excessive consumer behavior reflects an individual's efforts to obtain immediate satisfaction, but often at the expense of long-term financial well-being. This condition has the potential to cause an imbalance between income and expenditure.

Financial imbalance can trigger financial stress , which is psychological pressure that arises due to an individual's inability to meet financial needs or facing uncertainty about financial conditions. (Oktavini et al., 2024) . Several studies have shown that financial stress plays a significant role in explaining the relationship between financial literacy, consumer behavior, and financial satisfaction (Rahman et al., 2022; Susanti et al., 2024). Financial

stress is not only a consequence of suboptimal financial management but also influences how individuals subjectively evaluate their financial condition, which ultimately impacts their level of financial satisfaction (Mamani-Benito et al., 2025) .

Several previous studies have found that financial literacy positively impacts financial satisfaction (Adiputra, 2021; Nabila et al., 2023; Maftuhah et al., 2025). However, other findings show mixed results, with increased financial literacy not always being followed by increased financial satisfaction, particularly when individuals face economic pressures and high lifestyle demands. Similarly , consumptive behavior in some contexts can provide short-term emotional satisfaction but negatively impact long-term financial stability. These differing findings indicate that the relationship between these variables is complex and not entirely consistent (Gemiartha et al., 2024) .

Based on these conditions, there is a research gap that requires further study, particularly regarding the mechanism of the relationship between financial literacy and consumer behavior on financial satisfaction. This differs from previous research, which generally emphasized the direct relationship between This study uses financial stress as a mediating variable to explain how financial literacy and consumer behavior influence financial satisfaction. Furthermore, this study integrates Utility Theory as a conceptual foundation for a more comprehensive understanding of individual financial decision-making processes.

Study aims to analyze the influence of consumer behavior and financial literacy on financial satisfaction, with financial stress as a mediating variable. The results are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of personal finance studies and provide practical implications for individuals, financial institutions, and policymakers in designing strategies to improve literacy and more rational financial management to improve public financial well-being and satisfaction.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Financial Satisfaction**

Financial satisfaction is defined as an individual's subjective evaluation of their overall financial condition , including income adequacy, ability to meet needs, debt management, savings, and future financial preparedness (Maftuhah et al., 2022) . Financial satisfaction is not solely determined by income level, but also by how an individual manages and assesses their financial condition .

From the perspective of Utility Theory, financial satisfaction reflects the level of satisfaction obtained by individuals from financial management decisions that are considered capable of maximizing benefits (*utility*). Therefore, financial satisfaction is greatly influenced by an individual's behavior and ability to make financial decisions .

Several studies have shown that consumer behavior and financial literacy are closely linked to financial satisfaction, both directly and through psychological factors such as financial stress (Mamani-Benito et al., 2025) . Individuals with suboptimal financial management tend to experience financial stress, which ultimately affects their perception of financial satisfaction. Thus, financial satisfaction in this study is positioned as a dependent variable influenced by behavioral, cognitive, and psychological factors.

## **Consumer Behavior**

Consumptive behavior refers to an individual's tendency to make purchases that are not entirely based on rational needs, but rather influenced by emotional impulses, social environment, and lifestyle (Efrianto et al., 2023). The development of the digital economy, social media, and easy access to consumer credit reinforce this behavioral tendency.

Within the framework of utility theory, consumer behavior can be understood as an individual's pursuit of short-term satisfaction. However, excessive consumption has the potential to create an imbalance between income and expenditure, increase dependence on debt, and trigger financial stress (Susanti et al., 2024). (Takidah & Susanti, 2024)

Several studies have shown that consumer behavior can provide temporary emotional satisfaction that influences individuals' perceptions of financial satisfaction, although these effects tend to be short-term and unsustainable (Gemiartha et al., 2024). Therefore, consumer behavior is thought to have a direct influence on financial satisfaction, as well as an indirect influence through increased financial stress.

## **Financial Literacy**

Financial literacy is an individual's ability to understand financial concepts, manage financial resources, and make appropriate financial decisions (Nabila et al., 2023). Financial literacy encompasses the dimensions of knowledge, attitudes, and skills in financial management.

Theoretically, individuals with better financial literacy are expected to be able to make rational financial decisions, thereby improving financial well-being and satisfaction (Septiansa et al., 2025). However, empirical findings show that the relationship between financial literacy and financial satisfaction is not always linear. A high level of literacy can increase an individual's awareness of financial risks and less-than-ideal financial conditions, which in certain situations can actually increase financial stress (Yulfiswandi et al., 2022).

Thus, financial literacy not only has a direct influence on financial satisfaction, but also has the potential to influence financial satisfaction indirectly through financial stress as a psychological mechanism.

## **Financial Stress**

Financial stress is defined as psychological pressure that arises from an individual's inability to meet financial obligations, high debt burdens, or economic uncertainty (Mawadah & Sumiati, 2025). Financial stress often arises as a consequence of excessive consumer behavior or limited financial literacy.

Several studies have shown that financial stress has a significant relationship with financial satisfaction, as financial pressure influences how individuals evaluate their financial situation (Rahman et al., 2022). However, in certain contexts, financial stress can also encourage individuals to adjust and improve their financial behavior, so its role is not always negative.

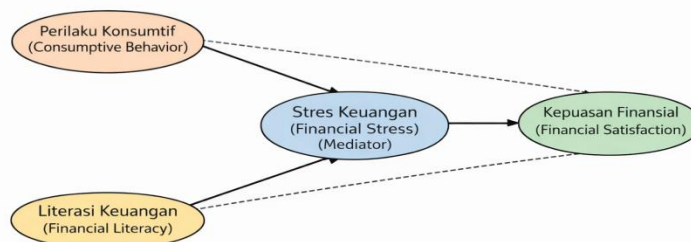
Based on this, financial stress in this study is positioned as a mediating variable that explains the mechanism of influence on consumer behavior and financial literacy.

## **Previous Research and Conceptual Framework**

Various previous studies have shown that financial literacy and consumer behavior play an important role in shaping an individual's financial condition and subjective well-being, although the relationship between these variables still shows mixed results. (Maftuhah et al., 2025) found that financial literacy influences financial satisfaction through the

mechanism of financial behavior as a mediating variable, which confirms that financial knowledge does not necessarily have a direct impact without being supported by appropriate behavior. Other studies highlight the increase in *consumptive behavior* and *impulsive buying* due to easy access to digital financial services, such as *paylater* and *buy now pay later*, which has the potential to worsen individual financial stability (Oktaviana & Aji, 2025; Septiansa et al., 2025). Setiawati et al. (2024) showed that financial literacy and financial technology influence the financial behavior of the younger generation, but a hedonistic lifestyle and social pressure also strengthen consumptive tendencies (Setiawati et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Rayhan's (2024) study emphasizes the importance of a contextual approach and community behavior in understanding the effectiveness of a system, which is conceptually relevant to explaining individual financial decision-making (Rayhan, 2024). However, most of this research still focuses on the direct relationship between variables and has not *explicitly* included financial stress as a psychological mechanism that bridges the influence of financial literacy and consumer behavior on financial satisfaction. Therefore, this study presents a novelty by integrating financial stress as a mediating variable and combining Utility Theory and *behavioral finance approaches* to explain the complexity of the relationship between financial literacy, consumer behavior, and financial satisfaction in the millennial generation of digital financial service users.

**Figure 1.**  
Conceptual Model of the Research



**Source:** (Researcher, 2025)

Based on previous research findings which still show mixed results, the conceptual framework of this research integrates Utility Theory and the *behavioral finance approach*. to explain the relationship between consumer behavior, financial literacy, financial stress, and financial satisfaction. This framework positions financial stress as a mediating variable that explains the mechanism by which independent variables influence individual financial satisfaction.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory design that aims to test the causal relationship between variables in the research model (Hair et al., 2017). Data were collected through a survey using a structured questionnaire distributed to 200 respondents selected based on certain criteria in accordance with the research objectives. The research

instrument used was a closed-ended questionnaire designed based on indicators for each research variable. All indicators were measured using a 1-5 Likert scale to capture respondents' perceptions of the variables studied (Septiansa et al., 2025).

The variables in this study include consumer behavior and financial literacy as exogenous variables, financial stress as a mediating variable, and financial satisfaction as an exogenous variable. The research instrument was designed to represent each construct, where consumer behavior is measured through purchasing tendencies based on desires, the influence of promotions, and the ability to control oneself in shopping (Sulistyo, 2025). Financial literacy is measured through respondents' understanding of personal financial management, financial planning, and knowledge of financial products and risks (Zaimovic et al., 2023). Financial stress is measured through respondents' levels of pressure, anxiety, and difficulty in meeting daily financial needs, while financial satisfaction is measured through the level of satisfaction with current financial conditions, ability to meet needs, and a sense of security regarding future financial conditions.

Data analysis was conducted using the *Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling* (PLS-SEM) approach with the assistance of SmartPLS software. The analysis stages included evaluation of the measurement model (*outer model*) to ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, as well as evaluation of the structural model (*inner model*) to test the relationships between *latent variables*. (Claria & Aryani, 2025). The inner model testing included multicollinearity testing through *the Variance Inflation Factor* (VIF) value, *coefficient of determination* (R-square), *effect size* (f-square), and the significance of the influence between variables through *the bootstrapping procedure* (Claria & Aryani, 2025). In addition, the overall model feasibility was also evaluated using *the Goodness of Fit* (GoF) value to assess the suitability between the conceptual model and empirical data. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions in the development of financial behavior studies, particularly in explaining the role of financial stress as a mediating variable, as well as providing practical implications for individuals, educational institutions, and policymakers in designing strategies to improve financial literacy and personal financial management (Zaimovic et al., 2023) to increase the financial satisfaction of the millennial generation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Respondent Characteristics

Respondent characteristics in this study are presented to provide an overview of the demographic profile of the respondents involved in the study. Information related to respondent characteristics is important because it can help understand the respondents' backgrounds and provide context for interpreting subsequent analysis results (Wibowo, 2024). The characteristics analyzed include age, gender, monthly income, and employment status. The data summary is presented in tabular form to facilitate reading and clarify the distribution of respondents by category. The characteristics of the respondents in this study are presented in the following table.

**Table 1 : Respondent Characteristics**

Category	Subcategory	Amount	Presentation
<b>Age</b>	29–33 Years	77 People	38.5%
	33–37 Years	67 People	33.5%
	37–41 Years	41 People	20.5%
	41–44 Years	15 People	7.5%
<b>Gender</b>	Woman	105 People	52.5%
	Man	95 People	47.5%
<b>Monthly Income</b>	> 3 Million	77 People	38.5%
	3–7 Million	93 People	46.5%
	7–10 Million	20 People	10%
	> 10 Million	10 people	5%
<b>Work</b>	Work	169 People	84.5 %
	Doesn't work	31 People	15.5 %

**Source:** (Researcher, 2025)

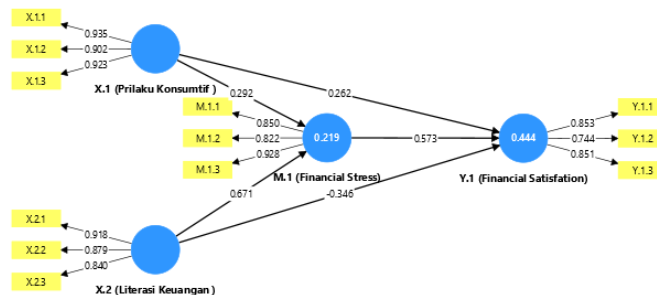
Based on the table presented above, it shows that all data from 200 respondents has been summarized into one table for easy understanding. The first diagram shows the age distribution of respondents consisting of four age ranges, namely 29–33 years (38.5 % ), 33–37 years (33.5%), 37–41 years (20.5%), and 41–44 years (7.5%). Another diagram displays the gender composition, with female respondents at 52.5 % and male respondents at 47.5%. Furthermore, in the monthly income category, respondents with incomes below 3 million rupiah amounted to 38.5%, while those with incomes of 3–7 million rupiah reached 46.5%. The percentages for the income groups of 7–10 million rupiah and above 10 million rupiah are visual estimates because they are not explicitly stated in the diagram. In addition, the majority of respondents are known to be employed, namely 84.5 % , while the other 15.5% are unemployed. Overall, this summary brings together all the information from the age , gender, income, and occupation charts to provide a comprehensive picture of the respondent profile.

### **OUTER MODEL ANALYSIS**

Outer model analysis is conducted to evaluate the quality of the measurement model , namely the relationship between the latent construct and its constituent indicators. This stage aims to ensure that each indicator used is able to represent the construct validly and reliably before testing the structural model (*inner model*). The evaluation of the outer model in this study includes convergent validity testing. through the *outer loading value* and *Average Variance Extracted (AVE)*, discriminant validity using the *Fornell–Larcker criteria*, and construct reliability measured through *Cronbach's Alpha* and *Composite Reliability* . The measurement model is declared feasible if all indicators meet the required threshold value, so that the results of the analysis of the relationship between variables in the next stage can be interpreted accurately and reliably (Septiansa et al., 2025) .

1. Convergent Validity

**Figure 2.**  
Outer model



**Source:** PLS data processing, 2025

On the structural path, it can be seen that Consumptive Behavior (X1) and Financial Literacy (X2) have a direct influence on Financial Stress (M1), each with path coefficients of 0.292 and 0.671. The Consumptive Behavior variable (X1) also shows a direct influence on Financial Satisfaction (Y1) of 0.262, while Financial Literacy (X2) has a negative influence on Financial Stress through the path of -0.346. In addition, the mediating variable Financial Stress (M1) has a significant influence on Financial Satisfaction (Y1) with a path coefficient of 0.573. The R-square value for M1 of 0.219 and for Y1 of 0.444 indicates that the model is able to explain 21.9% of the variation in financial stress and 44.4% of the variation in financial satisfaction.

model illustrates how consumer behavior and financial literacy contribute to the level of financial stress, which ultimately affects an individual's level of financial satisfaction.

**Table 2 : Outer Loading**

	M.1 (Financial Stress)	X.1 (Consumer Behavior)	X.2 (Financial Literacy)	Y.1 (Financial Satisfaction)
M.1.1	0.850			
M.1.2	0.822			
M.1.3	0.928			
X.1.1		0.935		
X.1.2		0.902		
X.1.3		0.923		
X.2.1			0.918	
X.2.2			0.879	
X.2.3			0.840	
Y.1.1				0.853
Y.1.2				0.744
Y.1.3				0.851

**Source:** PLS data processing, 2025

The *outer loading* results indicate that all indicators in each construct are valid, as they have *loading factor values* > 0.70. Thus, the measurement model has met the *convergent validity criteria*, making it suitable for further analysis on the structural model.

2. *Discriminant Validity*

**Table 3 : Fornell-larckel**

	<b>M.1 (Financial Stress)</b>	<b>X.1 (Consumer Behavior)</b>	<b>X.2 (Financial Literacy)</b>	<b>Y.1 (Financial Satisfaction)</b>
<b>M.1 (Financial Stress)</b>	0.868			
<b>X.1 (Consumer Behavior)</b>	0.377	0.920		
<b>X.2 (Financial Literacy)</b>	0.376	0.295	0.879	
<b>Y.1 (Financial Satisfaction)</b>	0.615	0.434	0.143	0.818

Source: PLS data processing, 2025

The *Fornell–Larcker* results indicate that all constructs have met the criteria for discriminant validity , because the AVE root value on the diagonal is higher than the correlation between constructs. Thus, each variable in the model has conceptual clarity and there is no *overlap* between constructs, so the measurement model is declared adequate and valid for use in subsequent structural analysis.

3. *Average Variance Extracted (AVE)*

**Table 4 : Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**

	<b>Average variance extracted (AVE)</b>
<b>M.1 (Financial Stress)</b>	0.753
<b>X.1 (Consumer Behavior)</b>	0.846
<b>X.2 (Financial Literacy)</b>	0.773
<b>Y.1 (Financial Satisfaction)</b>	0.669

Source: PLS data processing, 2025

Based on the test results, all constructs in the model have AVE values that exceed the threshold of 0.50, so that the measurement model is declared to have met convergent validity . Thus, the indicators used in this study can be said to be able to explain the latent variables adequately and can be continued to structural analysis.

4. *Cronbach's alpha*

**Table 5 : Cronbach's alpha**

	<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>
<b>M.1 (Financial Stress)</b>	0.837
<b>X.1 (Consumer Behavior)</b>	0.909
<b>X.2 (Financial Literacy)</b>	0.853

<b>Y.1</b>	<b>(Financial Satisfaction)</b>	<b>0.753</b>
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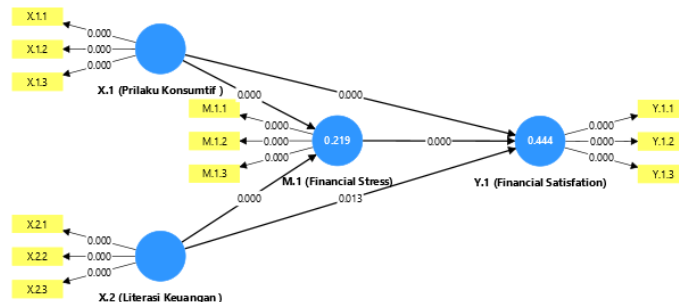
Source: PLS data processing, 2025

All constructs in this study have a *Cronbach's Alpha* value greater than 0.70, so it can be concluded that all variables meet internal reliability criteria . Thus, each construct in the measurement model is assessed as consistent and suitable for use in further structural analysis.

**INNER MODEL ANALYSIS**

Inner model analysis was conducted to test the structural relationship between latent variables after the measurement model was declared valid and reliable (Hair et al., 2017) . In this study, inner model analysis was used to assess the influence of consumptive behavior and financial literacy on financial satisfaction, both directly and indirectly through financial stress as a mediating variable, using the *Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling* (PLS-SEM) approach (Septiansa et al., 2025) . Evaluation of the structural model includes a multicollinearity test through *the Variance Inflation Factor* (VIF) value, the coefficient of determination (*R-square*) to assess the ability of exogenous variables to explain endogenous variables, *the effect size* (*f-square*) to measure the contribution of each construct, and testing the significance of the relationship path between variables through the bootstrapping procedure with the criteria of *t-statistics* > 1.96 and *p-values* < 0.05 . In addition, the overall feasibility of the model is also evaluated using *the Goodness of Fit* (GoF) value to ensure the suitability between the conceptual model and empirical data, so that the results of the analysis can be used as a basis for drawing conclusions regarding the mechanisms of influence between variables in this study. (Whelan & Carcary, 2011) .

Figure 3: Graphical output.



Source: PLS data processing, 2025

In the structural section, the figure shows the direction of the relationship between latent variables. Consumptive Behavior (X1) And Financial Literacy (X2) has a direct path to Financial Stress (M1) , while Financial Stress has a path to Financial Satisfaction (Y1) . In addition, there is a direct path from X1 and X2 to Y1, which illustrates the possible direct influence of consumer behavior and financial literacy on financial satisfaction. The *R-square* value is shown as 0.219 for the Financial Stress variable and 0.444 for Financial Satisfaction, which shows the proportion of variance that can be explained by the model for each of these variables.

1. *Iner Model (Collinearity Statistics)*

Table 6 : *Iner Model (Collinearity Statistics)*

	M.1 (Financial Stress)	X.1 (Consumer Behavior)	X.2 (Financial Literacy)	Y.1 (Financial Satisfaction)
M.1 (Financial Stress)				1,000
X.1 (Consumer Behavior)	1,000			1,000
X.2 (Financial Literacy)	1,000			1,000
Y.1 (Financial Satisfaction)				

Source: PLS data processing, 2025

A VIF of 1.000 for all predictor variables indicates no multicollinearity in the structural model. Therefore, the variables used can be considered independent of each other and worthy of inclusion in the *inner model analysis*.

2. *R-square*

Table 7 : *R square*

	R-square	R-square adjusted
M.1 (Financial Stress)	0.219	0.211
Y.1 (Financial Satisfaction)	0.444	0.436

Source: processing,

PLS data 2025

Based on the test results, it shows that the model has varying explanatory capabilities, where the Financial Stress construct has an *R-square value*. of 0.219 , which is considered weak but relevant, as it is below the threshold of 0.25. Meanwhile , the Financial Satisfaction construct is moderately explained by the independent variables. This finding indicates that the constructed structural model has adequate predictive power in explaining the relationships between the variables in the study.

3. *F square*

Table 8 : *F square*

	M.1 (Financial Stress)	X.1 (Consumer Behavior)	X.2 (Financial Literacy)	Y.1 (Financial Satisfaction)
M.1 (Financial Stress)				0.461
X.1 (Consumer Behavior)	0.099			0.102
X.2 (Financial Literacy)	0.099			0.033
Y.1 (Financial Satisfaction)				

**Source:** PLS data processing, 2025

Overall, the variable with the greatest influence in the model is Financial Stress on *Financial Satisfaction* ( $f^2 = 0.461$ ). Meanwhile, the influence of the other variables ranges from small to moderate.

4. *Hypothesis*

**Table 9 : Hypothesis**

Variables	Original sample (O)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
M.1 -> Y.1	0.573	10,589	0.000
X.1 -> M.1	0.292	4,234	0.000
X.1 -> Y.1	0.262	4,351	0.000
X.2 -> M.1	0.671	4,244	0.000
X.2 -> Y.1	-0.346	2,479	0.013
X. 1 -> M. 1 -> Y. 1	0.167	4,178	0.000
X. 2 -> M. 1 -> Y. 1	0.384	3,768	0.000

**Source:** PLS data processing, 2025

Overall, all hypotheses in this study were accepted, and the variable that had the strongest influence was financial literacy on Financial Stress, as indicated by the largest coefficient value of 0.671. This indicates that an individual's level of understanding of financial management plays a very dominant role in reducing financial stress levels, as individuals with good financial literacy tend to be able to manage income, expenses, and financial obligations in a more planned and controlled manner. In addition, the finding of a negative relationship in one of the financial literacy pathways on financial satisfaction reflects the dynamics of perception in financial management , where individuals who better understand their financial condition can have more realistic standards and evaluations of financial satisfaction , so this finding is an interesting aspect to be explored further in the discussion section.

5. *Goodness of Fit (GOF)*

**Table 10. Goodness of Fit (GOF)**

	Average variance extracted (AVE)	R-square
M.1 (Financial Stress)	0.753	0.219
X.1 (Consumer Behavior)	0.846	
X.2 (Financial Literacy)	0.773	
Y.1 (Financial Satisfaction)	0.669	0.444
Average	0.76	0.332

**Source: PLS data processing, 2025**

$$GOF \text{ value} = \sqrt{\frac{Rata - Rata AVE \times Rata - Rata R Square}{Rata - Rata AVE}}$$

$$GOF \text{ value} = \sqrt{0.760 \times 0.332}$$

$$GOF \text{ value} = 0.502$$

*GOF* value of 0.502 is included in the large category because it exceeds the limit of 0.36. This shows that the research model has a strong level of *goodness of fit and is suitable for use in explaining the relationship between the variables studied*. Thus, the model has good predictive ability and adequate construct quality.

**The Effect of Financial Stress (M1) on Financial Satisfaction (Y1)**

Financial stress has also been shown to have a positive effect on financial satisfaction with a *coefficient value* of 0.573 and a *p-value* of 0.000. This result may sound contradictory to the general theory that financial stress reduces financial satisfaction. However, in this context, financial stress can actually be a trigger for someone to be more careful and improve their financial management. After passing through a stressful phase and being able to control their finances, a person can feel more satisfied with their financial condition than before. This phenomenon is often referred to as *adaptive stress*, which is stress that encourages positive change and increases the sense of control over finances.

This finding supports research by Maftuhah et al. (2025), but this study confirms that among millennials, financial stress is the primary factor influencing financial satisfaction (Maftuhah et al., 2025). This is because millennials are still in the stage of building economic stability, making them more sensitive to financial stress.

**The Influence of Consumptive Behavior (X1) on Financial Stress (M1)**

The results of the study show that consumer behavior has a significant and positive influence on financial stress with a coefficient of 0.292 and a *p-value* of 0.000. This means that the higher a person's level of consumption, for example, frequent impulsive shopping, following trends, or using *paylater services*, the greater the likelihood that they will experience financial stress.

Spending more on non-urgent needs can lead to less stable financial conditions. This situation has the potential to cause psychological stress as individuals face various financial obligations, such as bills and installments, as well as uncertainty in financial management. These findings suggest that the consumerist lifestyle common among millennials is a contributing factor to increased levels of financial stress in daily life.

This finding is also in line with research by Oktaviana and Aji (2025) and Septiansa et al. (2025), which states that consumer behavior and impulsive buying can trigger financial problems (Oktaviana & Aji, 2025; Septiansa et al., 2025). However, the novelty of this study lies in the assertion that in the millennial generation, financial pressure is not only caused by limited income, but also by the demands of a digital lifestyle and the desire to follow trends, thus triggering stress even though income is relatively sufficient.

**The Influence of Consumptive Behavior (X1) on Financial Satisfaction (Y1)**

Based on the research results, consumer behavior has a positive effect on financial satisfaction with a *coefficient* of 0.262 and a *p-value* of 0.000. This is a bit different from some previous research, but makes sense in the context of the millennial generation. For many millennials, consumption is not just about fulfilling needs, but also providing emotional

satisfaction. For example, through new experiences, *self-rewards*, or following trends. These purchases often provide instant gratification, making them feel quite satisfied with their financial situation, even though it may not be stable. These findings suggest that financial satisfaction is not always measured by objective financial conditions, but rather by how a person assesses satisfaction through consumption activities.

This finding supports the research of Oktaviana and Aji (2025) and Septiansa et al. (2025), but this research adds to the understanding that in the millennial generation, financial satisfaction is not only measured by the ability to buy goods, but also by a sense of security and stability regarding financial conditions. (Oktaviana & Aji, 2025; Septiansa et al., 2025). Excessive consumption actually makes individuals feel worried about their financial future

#### **The Influence of Financial Literacy (X2) on Financial Stress (M1)**

This study found that financial literacy actually has a positive effect on financial stress, with a *coefficient of* 0.671 and a *p-value of* 0.000. This finding is quite interesting because in general financial literacy is considered to be able to help someone reduce financial stress, but the research results show a different direction. Individuals with higher levels of financial literacy are found to tend to experience greater financial stress. One possible reason is that the greater a person's financial understanding, the greater their awareness of the various financial risks they are currently or may face. This awareness raises concerns about less-than-ideal financial conditions and ultimately increases stress levels.

Good financial knowledge does not always translate into the ability to consistently apply financial strategies in real life. Many millennials understand the theories of *budgeting*, *investing*, or debt management, but aren't yet able to implement them with discipline. This mismatch between what they know and what they actually do can lead to psychological stress in the form of guilt, dissatisfaction, or a sense of failure in managing their finances effectively. Therefore, financial literacy is important, but without healthy financial behaviors, this knowledge can become a source of additional stress. This demonstrates that financial understanding needs to be balanced with self-regulation skills and appropriate financial habits to avoid triggering greater stress.

These results extend the findings of Setiawati et al. (2025) and Maftuhah et al. (2025), which stated that financial literacy plays a role in shaping financial behavior (Maftuhah et al., 2025; Setiawati et al., 2024). The novelty of this research shows that financial literacy does not always directly reduce financial problems, but can increase stress because individuals become more aware of their financial risks and limitations, especially in the early stages of the millennial generation's careers.

#### **The Influence of Financial Literacy (X2) on Financial Satisfaction (Y1)**

The results of the study show that financial literacy has a negative effect on financial satisfaction with a *coefficient of* - 0.346 and a *p-value* 0.013. In other words, the higher a person's financial literacy, the lower their perceived financial satisfaction. This may be because the more a person understands financial concepts, the more critically they assess their own financial situation. As a result, even though their financial situation isn't particularly bad, they feel dissatisfied because they realize it's still far from ideal.

This phenomenon often occurs among millennials, who face numerous financial pressures such as high living costs, lifestyle demands, and the challenges of the digital economy. This demonstrates that financial literacy alone is insufficient to improve financial well-being without the ability to effectively manage finances.

These findings differ from those of Maftuhah et al. (2025), who found a positive effect of financial literacy on financial satisfaction (Maftuhah et al., 2025) . This difference is a distinctive feature of this study, as it shows that, in the context of the millennial generation, financial literacy can increase awareness of financial deficiencies, rather than directly increasing satisfaction.

#### **Mediation of Financial Stress (M.1) on the Influence of Consumptive Behavior (X.1) on Financial Satisfaction (Y.1)**

The results of the study show that financial stress mediates the relationship between consumer behavior and financial satisfaction. Consumptive behavior increases financial stress, and this stress then affects levels of financial satisfaction. In other words, excessive consumption not only directly impacts satisfaction but also indirectly through the stress that results from these consumption patterns. In some cases, the resulting stress actually leads a person to improve their financial habits , ultimately leading to increased financial satisfaction.

The novelty of this research is that it clearly explains that the negative impact of consumer behavior on millennials occurs through psychological financial stress . Previous research has focused more on direct influences, while this study demonstrates the processes that occur between the two variables.

#### **Mediation of Financial Stress (M.1) on the Influence of Financial Literacy (X.2) on Financial Satisfaction (Y.2)**

Financial stress also mediates the relationship between financial literacy and financial satisfaction. High financial literacy increases financial stress, which in turn influences financial satisfaction. This suggests that financial knowledge doesn't always have a positive impact if it's not accompanied by consistent financial management skills. In fact, high levels of financial literacy can trigger stress, but ultimately, that stress can motivate individuals to improve their financial habits, thereby increasing their satisfaction. These findings demonstrate that the relationship between financial literacy, stress, and satisfaction is complex, and behavioral changes play a significant role in determining the direction of these influences .

This finding represents a major novelty in this study, differing from previous research that generally places financial behavior or self-control as a mediator (Septiansa et al., 2025) . This study shows that financial stress is a significant factor explaining the relationship between financial literacy and financial satisfaction, particularly among millennials in the digital era.

### **CONCLUSION**

The research results show that the relationship between consumer behavior, financial literacy, financial stress, and financial satisfaction among millennials is not simple. Consumer behavior has been shown to increase financial stress, but at the same time, it can provide temporary satisfaction due to its relationship to lifestyle and emotional needs. Financial literacy, which is usually thought to reduce financial problems, actually shows a different pattern: the greater a person's financial knowledge , the greater the stress and dissatisfaction experienced due to increased awareness of risks and less-than-ideal financial conditions.

Financial stress in this study plays an important role as a bridge connecting these two main variables with financial satisfaction. Financial stress isn't always negative; for some millennials, it actually triggers more cautious and purposeful behavioral changes, ultimately leading to increased satisfaction with their financial situation .

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