

MOBILE PAYMENT APPLICATION USE AND SPENDING BEHAVIOR AMONG NATIONAL ECONOMICS UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

NGUYỄN ĐỖ HƯƠNG GIANG

National Economics University

Đại học Kinh tế quốc dân

Email: giangnd@neu.edu.vn

Received date: July 14, 2026

Revised date: August 02, 2026

Accepted date for publication: August 18, 2026

Abstract:

The rapid development of digital technology has made mobile payment applications an increasingly common means of conducting everyday financial transactions. This study examines their influence on the spending behavior of students at National Economics University. Using a descriptive quantitative design, data were collected through a questionnaire administered to students who use mobile payment applications. The analysis considers usage patterns, spending behavior, and students' perceptions of how these applications affect their purchases. The findings suggest that mobile payment applications make daily transactions more convenient, faster, and more accessible. At the same time, their ease of use and promotional features, including discounts and cashback, may encourage more frequent and unplanned purchases. These findings highlight both the practical benefits of mobile payments and their potential to influence students' spending habits, underscoring the importance of responsible financial practices.

Keywords: mobile payment applications, spending behavior, university students, digital payment

Ảnh hưởng của ứng dụng thanh toán di động đến hành vi chi tiêu của sinh viên Đại học Kinh tế Quốc dân

Tóm tắt:

Sự phát triển nhanh chóng của công nghệ số đã khiến các ứng dụng thanh toán di động ngày càng được sử dụng phổ biến trong các giao dịch tài chính hằng ngày. Nghiên cứu này xem xét ảnh hưởng của các ứng dụng thanh toán di động đến hành vi chi tiêu của sinh viên Đại học Kinh tế Quốc dân. Theo phương pháp nghiên cứu định lượng mang tính mô tả, dữ liệu được thu thập bằng bảng hỏi đối với những sinh viên có sử dụng ứng dụng thanh toán di động. Nội dung phân tích tập trung vào thói quen sử dụng ứng dụng, hành vi chi tiêu và nhận thức của sinh viên về tác động của các ứng dụng này đối với quyết định mua sắm. Kết quả cho thấy ứng dụng thanh toán di động giúp các giao dịch hằng ngày trở nên thuận tiện, nhanh chóng và dễ tiếp cận hơn. Tuy nhiên, tính dễ sử dụng cùng các chương trình khuyến mại như giảm giá và hoàn tiền cũng có thể thúc đẩy việc mua sắm thường xuyên hơn và phát sinh những khoản chi ngoài kế hoạch. Những phát hiện này cho thấy lợi ích thiết thực của thanh toán di động, đồng thời chỉ ra khả năng các ứng dụng này tác động đến thói quen chi tiêu của sinh viên, qua đó nhấn mạnh tầm quan trọng của việc quản lý tài chính có trách nhiệm.

Từ khóa: các ứng dụng thanh toán di động, hành vi chi tiêu, sinh viên đại học, thanh toán số

1. Introduction

In recent years, the rapid development of digital technology has transformed the way people manage their everyday financial transactions. Among these developments, mobile payment applications have become increasingly popular because they provide convenient, fast, and flexible payment methods. Digital wallets and mobile banking applications allow users to make payments, transfer money, pay bills, and purchase goods without relying heavily on cash. The widespread use of smartphones and internet-based financial services has further encouraged the adoption of mobile payments, particularly among young people and university students. University students are an important group of mobile payment users because they frequently use smartphones and digital platforms for both online and offline transactions. Mobile payment applications offer several benefits, including convenience, quick transactions, promotional discounts, cashback, and easy access to transaction records. However, the convenience of cashless payments may also influence students' spending behavior. Compared with cash transactions, digital payments may make spending less tangible and reduce awareness of the amount of money spent. Features such as one-click payment, discounts, and cashback may also encourage more frequent or unplanned purchases. This issue is particularly relevant to university students, who often have limited financial resources and need to manage various educational and personal expenses. At National Economics University (NEU), students use mobile payment applications for a wide range of purposes, including food, transportation, entertainment, and online shopping. However, there is limited understanding of their usage patterns and perceptions of the influence of mobile payments on spending behavior. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of mobile payment applications on spending behavior among NEU students. Specifically, it examines students' mobile payment usage patterns, common spending behaviors, and perceptions of how mobile payments affect their spending. The findings are expected to provide insights into students' financial habits and promote greater awareness of responsible spending in an increasingly cashless environment.

2. Research methodology

2.1. Research design

This study adopts a quantitative descriptive research approach to investigate the influence of mobile payment applications on the spending behavior of students at NEU. A survey design is employed to collect numerical data from NEU students regarding their use of mobile payment applications and their spending behavior. The study focuses on describing students' patterns of mobile payment application usage and identifying common changes or tendencies in their spending behavior when using these applications. The collected data are presented and analyzed mainly through tables and charts, allowing the researcher to identify patterns and trends in the responses.

2.2. Research participants and sampling

The participants of this study are students at NEU who use or have experience using mobile payment applications. University students are selected as the target population because they are frequent users of smartphones and digital payment services and often use mobile payment applications for daily transactions. Due to limitations in time and access to the entire student population, the study employs convenience sampling. The questionnaire is distributed online to NEU students who are willing to participate in the study. The study aims to collect approximately 150-200 valid responses. Before completing the questionnaire, participants are informed about the purpose of the study and the voluntary and confidential nature of their participation.

2.3. Research instrument

A structured questionnaire is used as the main instrument for data collection. The questionnaire is developed based on the research objectives and relevant literature concerning mobile payment applications and consumer spending behavior. The questionnaire consists of three sections.

Section 1 (Demographic information): This section collects participants' basic information, including age; gender; year of study; monthly allowance or income

Section 2 (Mobile payment application usage): This section examines students' patterns of using mobile payment applications. It includes questions about: Types of mobile payment applications used; Frequency of usage; Purposes of using mobile payment applications; Frequency of mobile payment transactions; Use of discounts, cashback, and promotional offers

Section 3 (Spending Behavior): This section investigates students' spending behavior when using mobile payment applications. The questions focus on: Frequency of purchases; Unplanned purchases; Impulsive buying; Unnecessary spending; Tendency to spend more than planned; Changes in spending habits after using mobile payment applications

Most questions in Sections 2 and 3 use a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Multiple-choice questions are also used where appropriate.

2.4. Data collection procedure

The questionnaire is distributed to NEU students through online platforms. Participants are given a brief introduction explaining the purpose of the study and the estimated time required to complete the questionnaire. After the data collection period, the researcher checks the responses and removes incomplete or invalid questionnaires. The valid responses are then organized and categorized according to the variables and questions in the questionnaire.

2.5. Data analysis

The collected data are analyzed using descriptive statistics and graphical presentation. The researcher uses frequency and percentage to summarize the responses to each questionnaire item. The results are presented mainly through bar charts, pie charts, and tables, depending on the type of data. For example, pie charts can be used to present the proportion of students using different mobile payment applications, while bar charts can be used to compare the frequency of mobile payment usage or different spending behaviors. For Likert-scale questions, the responses can be summarized by calculating the percentage of students selecting each response category. The researcher then compares the proportions across different response categories to identify common patterns. Higher proportions of "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" responses, for example, may indicate that a particular spending behavior is commonly reported by the participants. The findings are interpreted by comparing the patterns observed in the charts with the research questions and objectives. However, because the study does not employ inferential statistical tests, the findings are used to describe reported patterns and tendencies rather than establish statistically significant causal relationships between mobile payment application usage and spending behavior.

Table 1.1. Descriptive statistics for Likert-scale responses

Spending behavior related to mobile payment use	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I tend to spend more when using mobile payment applications.	5%	10%	20%	40%	25%

Mobile payment applications make it easier for me to make unplanned purchases.	5%	15%	20%	35%	25%
Promotional offers on mobile payment applications encourage me to spend more.	5%	10%	25%	35%	25%
I find it easier to track my spending when using mobile payment applications.	5%	10%	20%	40%	25%

Source: Author's calculation

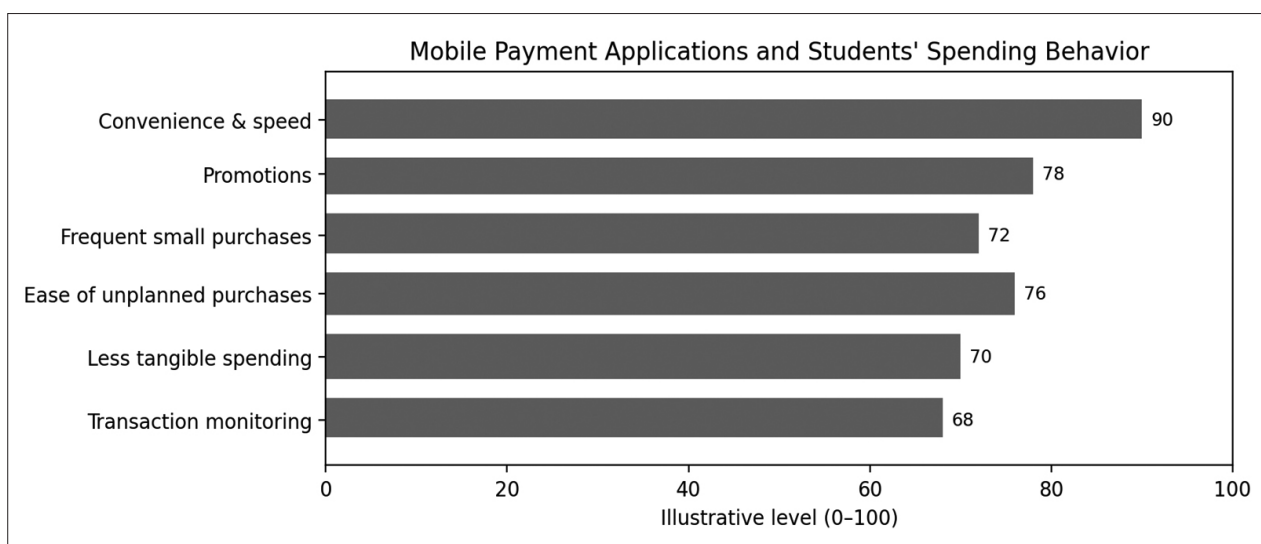
3. Analysis and discussion

3.1. Mobile payment application usage among NEU students

The findings indicate that mobile payment applications have become a familiar part of students' daily financial activities. Students tend to use these applications for various purposes, including purchasing food and beverages, paying for transportation, shopping online, paying bills, and transferring money. This widespread use can be explained by the convenience and speed provided by mobile payment applications. Students can complete transactions quickly without carrying cash or spending time handling physical money. Another factor contributing to the popularity of mobile payment applications is the availability of promotional features. Discounts, cashback, vouchers, and other promotional offers can make digital payments more attractive to students. As university students may have relatively limited financial resources, they may be particularly interested in opportunities to reduce the cost of their purchases. Therefore, promotional programs can encourage students to choose mobile payment applications more frequently.

The findings also suggest that mobile payment applications are increasingly integrated into students' everyday routines. Rather than being used only for online shopping or occasional transactions, they can be used for many small and frequent purchases. This convenience may gradually change the way students approach their daily spending.

Figure 1. Illustrative levels of factors associated with mobile payment application use and students' spending behavior



Source: Author's calculation

3.2. Spending behavior among students

The analysis of the questionnaire responses suggests that mobile payment applications may be associated with several changes in students' spending behavior. One noticeable tendency is that the convenience of digital payments may encourage students to make purchases more easily and frequently. Since transactions can be completed within a few seconds, students may spend less time considering whether a purchase is necessary. Mobile payments may also be associated with unplanned or impulsive purchases. When students do not need to physically hand over cash, spending may feel less tangible. As a result, they may be less aware of the amount of money spent during individual transactions. This can be particularly relevant when students make several small purchases throughout the day, as these individual expenses may appear insignificant but can accumulate over time.

Promotional features may further contribute to this tendency. Discounts and cashback offer can create a sense of financial benefit and encourage students to make purchases that they might not otherwise consider. Although such promotions can help students save money when used appropriately, they may also encourage unnecessary purchases if students focus more on the discount than on whether the product is actually needed.

3.3. Perceived influence on spending behavior

Overall, the findings suggest that students perceive mobile payment applications as having both positive and negative influences on their spending behavior. On the positive side, mobile payments provide convenience, save time, and allow students to monitor their transactions through digital records. These features may help students manage everyday purchases more efficiently. On the other hand, the easy and convenient nature of mobile payments may make spending less noticeable and encourage more frequent or spontaneous purchases. The availability of promotional offers may strengthen this tendency. Therefore, mobile payment applications themselves should not necessarily be considered the direct cause of excessive spending. Students' spending behavior may also depend on other factors, such as their financial awareness, income, personal preferences, and self-control.

In general, the findings indicate that mobile payment applications have become an important part of students' financial lives and may influence how they make purchasing decisions. The convenience of these applications can improve the payment experience, but it may also create challenges in controlling spending. Therefore, students should develop responsible spending habits by setting personal budgets, regularly checking transaction histories, and considering whether a purchase is necessary before completing a digital payment. This can help them enjoy the convenience of mobile payment applications while maintaining greater control over their spending behavior.

4. Conclusion and future directions

This study explored the influence of mobile payment applications on the spending behavior of students at National Economics University. The findings suggest that mobile payment applications have become an important part of students' daily financial activities because of their convenience, speed, and accessibility. Students commonly use these applications for purchasing food and beverages, online shopping, transportation payments, and money transfers. Promotional features such as discounts, cashback, and vouchers also contribute to their popularity. Mobile payment applications may influence students' spending behavior in both positive and negative ways. On the positive side, they make transactions more convenient and allow students to monitor their expenses through digital transaction records. However, the ease and speed of digital payments may also encourage more frequent, spontaneous, or unplanned purchases. Promotional offers can further increase students' willingness to buy products they did not originally intend to purchase. Therefore, students should be aware of these potential influences and develop responsible spending habits.

However, this study has several limitations. First, it focuses only on students at National Economics University, so the findings may not be generalizable to students at other universities or in different regions. Second, the study relies on self-reported questionnaire responses and descriptive analysis, which reflect students' perceptions and experiences rather than establishing statistically significant causal relationships.

For future research, studies could include students from different universities and geographical areas to provide broader and more representative findings. Researchers could also examine additional factors, such as financial literacy, income, social influence, promotional exposure, and impulse buying tendencies. Furthermore, statistical methods such as correlation and regression analysis could be applied to examine the relationship between mobile payment usage and spending behavior more deeply. Longitudinal studies could also investigate how students' spending habits change as their use of mobile payment applications increases ■

REFERENCES:

- Dahlberg, T., Guo, J., & Ondrus, J. (2015). A critical review of mobile payment research. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 14(5), 265–284. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.elerap.2015.07.006>
- de Kerviler, G., Demoulin, N. T. M., & Zidda, P. (2016). Adoption of in-store mobile payment: Are perceived risk and convenience the only drivers? *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 31, 334–344. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2016.04.011>
- Johnson, V. L., Kiser, A., Washington, R., & Torres, R. (2018). Limitations to the rapid adoption of M-payment services: Understanding the impact of privacy risk on M-Payment services. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 79, 12–22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.10.035>
- Karsen, H., Chandra, S., & Jariyapan, P. (2019). Factors affecting consumer adoption of mobile payment: A systematic review. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 14(2), 1–13.
- Liébana-Cabanillas, F., Molinillo, S., & Japutra, A. (2021). Exploring the determinants of intention to use P2P mobile payment systems. *Information Systems Management*, 38(2), 165–180. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10580530.2020.1812310>
- Mallat, N. (2007). Exploring consumer adoption of mobile payments – A qualitative study. *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 16(4), 413–432. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsis.2007.08.001>
- Mishra, V., Walsh, I., & Srivastava, A. (2022). Merchants' adoption of mobile payment in emerging economies: The role of trust and social influence. *Information Systems Frontiers*, 24, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10796-020-10049-2>
- Oliveira, T., Thomas, M., Baptista, G., & Campos, F. (2016). Mobile payment: Understanding the determinants of customer adoption and intention to recommend the technology. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 61, 404–414. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.03.030>
- Slade, E. L., Dwivedi, Y. K., Piercy, N. C., & Williams, M. D. (2015). Modeling consumers' adoption intentions of remote mobile payments in the United Kingdom: Extending UTAUT with innovativeness, risk, and trust. *Psychology & Marketing*, 32(8), 860–873. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20804>
- Taylor, E. (2016). Mobile payment technologies in retail: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 44(5), 525–544. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJRDM-06-2015-0095>
- Yang, S., Lu, Y., Gupta, S., Cao, Y., & Zhang, R. (2012). Mobile payment services adoption across time: An empirical study of the effects of behavioral beliefs, social influences, and personal traits. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28(1), 129–142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2011.08.019>