

The Dark Side of FinTech Loyalty: Why Over-promising Brands Face Intense Consumer Hate

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between FinTech over-promising and brand hate through the mediating role of perceived betrayal. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected from 280 FinTech users in Pakistan through a structured questionnaire. The results demonstrate that both brand over-promising ($\beta=0.28$, $p<0.001$) and promise-performance discrepancy ($\beta=0.48$, $p<0.001$) significantly predict perceived betrayal, which in turn strongly influences brand hate ($\beta=0.68$, $p<0.001$). Mediation analysis confirmed that perceived betrayal partially mediates both relationships, with indirect effects of 0.19 and 0.33 respectively. The model explains 47% of variance in perceived betrayal and 46% in brand hate, revealing how marketing strategies aimed at building loyalty can paradoxically trigger intense consumer aversion when promises remain unfulfilled. The findings provide valuable insights for FinTech managers regarding the importance of aligning marketing claims with service delivery capabilities and implementing effective trust-preservation strategies in digital financial services.

Keywords: FinTech, Brand Hate, Perceived Betrayal, Over-Promising, Promise-Performance Discrepancy

Introduction

The dawn of the financial technology era has been characterized by a powerful and seductive narrative; one that has fundamentally reshaped global expectations of what finance can and should be (Barefoot, 2020). It is narrative, woven from threads of democratization, disruption, and unwavering consumer advocacy, has positioned FinTech not merely as a new set of tools, but as a profound ideological movement. Emerging from the shadow of the 2008 financial crisis and leveraging the pervasive connectivity of the digital age, these agile platforms presented themselves as the long-awaited antidote to the opaque, bureaucratic, and often exclusionary practices of traditional banking (Wunker et al., 2024). Their value proposition was compellingly simple: to place power, control, and transparency

directly into the hands of the user. This was not to be a passive client relationship but an active partnership, a collaborative journey towards financial empowerment and freedom (Sheidaee & Mühlow, 2021). The sector's meteoric rise, therefore, was built on a foundation far more potent than technological innovation alone; it was constructed on bedrock of profound emotional appeal and the cultivation of deep, almost fervent, consumer loyalty. This loyalty, however, possesses a dangerous and often overlooked duality. It is forged in the crucible of exceptionally high, and often explicitly stated, expectations, creating a psychological contract of unparalleled intensity (Kruhovi, 2023). The very strategies that successfully build this intense loyalty the grand promises of flawless technology, radical transparency, and ethical superiority simultaneously construct a precarious pedestal from which a fall is not only inevitable but catastrophic, transforming once-ardent advocates into the most virulent of detractors (Alnsour, 2022).

The architecture of FinTech loyalty is distinct from that of traditional financial institutions. Legacy banks historically cultivated trust through tangible, if impersonal, pillars: imposing physical branches symbolizing permanence, government-backed deposit insurance guaranteeing security, and decades, if not centuries, of operational history implying stability. Trust was incremental, institutional, and often taken for granted (Kini et al., 2024). In stark contrast, FinTechs engineered trust through a digital-first, emotionally resonant dialogue. User experience (UX) became the new facade; intuitive interfaces, satisfying haptic feedback, and instant notifications replaced marble and vaults. Their marketing campaigns consistently framed them as champions of the "little guy," fighting against the entrenched interests of a bloated and self-serving system. This narrative was not just a marketing strategy; it was a core tenet of their brand identity, creating a powerful "us versus them" dynamic that fostered a profound sense of community and shared purpose among early adopters (Łapies, 2024). This sense of belonging is a potent loyalty driver, but it also raises the stakes of the relationship immeasurably. The consumer is no longer a mere account holder; they are a believer in a cause, a member of a movement. The psychological contract formed under these conditions is exceptionally fragile. It is an implicit agreement that the brand will not only provide a service but will uphold a set of values fairness, transparency, and empowerment (FINTECH, BRANDS, & BLOMSTROM). This contract is signed not with a signature, but with the consumer's data, their capital, and, most significantly, their belief.

It is within this context that the act of over-promising emerges as a critical, yet perilous, strategic choice. In a saturated and hyper-competitive market, the pressure to acquire users and secure venture capital funding drives many FinTechs to make bold, sweeping claims about their capabilities and their ethical stance (Ibegbulem & Andersson, 2017). The rhetoric of "revolutionising" finance, creating "frictionless" experiences, and operating with "radical transparency" sets a benchmark that is almost impossible to maintain in the complex, regulated, and technologically imperfect reality of financial services. This over-promising operates on multiple fronts. Technologically, brands pledge infallible, 24/7 system availability and security, creating an expectation of a perfectly seamless digital nirvana (Mogaji & Nguyen, 2024). Functionally, they promise customer service that is not only efficient but empathetic and instantly accessible, a stark contrast to the automated call centres of traditional banks. Most significantly, ethically, they position themselves as paragons of virtue, committed to data privacy, financial inclusion, and algorithmic fairness. This triad of promises technological perfection, functional excellence, and ethical purity creates a halo effect that attracts loyal users. However, this halo is notoriously susceptible to dimming (Schreiber, 2021). The gap between the marketed ideal and the lived experience of the user is the fertile ground in which disillusionment takes root.

When the reality of the service inevitably falls short of the grandiloquent promises, the emotional and psychological impact on the consumer is disproportionately severe (Chishti & Barberis, 2016). The transition from loyalty to active aversion is rarely a linear process of declining satisfaction. Instead, it is often a rapid, visceral, and deeply personal reaction, better understood as a profound sense of betrayal (Abbas et al., 2023). A simple service failure, such as a delayed transaction or a login issue, is not interpreted in isolation. Through the lens of the brand's own hyperbolic promises, it becomes a fundamental character flaw evidence of hypocrisy and a violation of the core partnership. This

cognitive appraisal, which can be termed ‘promise-performance discrepancy,’ is the critical trigger (Jabeen, 2024). The consumer does not simply think, “The app is not working”; they feel, “They lied to me. They are not who they claimed to be.” This perception of betrayal is a uniquely powerful negative emotion because it attacks the very foundation of the relationship: trust. It transforms a transactional disappointment into a relational transgression (Upadhyaya, 2023).

This sense of betrayal then acts as a catalyst, igniting a cascade of intense negative emotions. Frustration and anger are directed not just at the inconvenience, but at the perceived deception. Anxiety flourishes as the user’s financial security, something they entrusted to a supposedly superior platform, feels suddenly precarious (Bansal & Thakur, 2024). In cases of ethical failures, such as a data breach or evidence of algorithmic bias, the emotional response can escalate to disgust a moral judgement that the brand’s actions are not just incompetent, but reprehensible. This emotional cocktail is far more potent and enduring than the transient annoyance typically associated with service failures in less ideologically charged industries. The consumer’s reaction is amplified by the very depth of their previous commitment. The more they believed in the brand’s mission, the more profound their sense of betrayal (Jones & Maynard Jr, 2023). The behavioural manifestations of this emotional cascade are what define the transition from dissatisfied customer to active brand hater. These individuals are not passively disengaging; they are motivated to engage in vindictive and public forms of retaliation. They become digital vigilantes, launching crusades on social media, app stores, and review platforms to share their narrative of betrayal and warn others. They file detailed complaints with financial ombudsmen and regulatory bodies, seeking not just restitution but retribution. This is the anatomy of brand hate in the FinTech sector: a passionate, active aversion born from the ashes of a broken promise. Consequently, this article posits that the strategies which most effectively build intense loyalty in the FinTech sector are precisely those that create the conditions for its most catastrophic failures. The market is witnessing a critical paradox: the brands that shout the loudest about their disruptive, consumer-centric virtues are often the ones that face the most intense and vitriolic backlash when they stumble. This is not a coincidence, but a direct outcome of the psychological dynamics inherent in their loyalty-building model. By over-promising and cultivating a community of believers, FinTechs elevate consumer expectations to an unsustainable zenith (Sieber & Guibaud, 2022). The subsequent failure to meet these expectations is not seen as a minor setback but as a fundamental betrayal of identity and values. The ensuing hate is therefore not merely a reaction to a poor service experience; it is the dark side of loyalty itself the inevitable backlash when a brand’s reality fails to live up to the glorious future it so fervently promised. The following analysis will delve deeper into the mechanisms of this paradox, examining how the architecture of over-promising escalates consumer expectations and how the subsequent, inevitable promise-performance discrepancy triggers a powerful emotional and behavioural backlash that can irrevocably damage, or even destroy, brand equity.

Literature Review

Fintech Brand Over-Promising

Brand over-promising represents a strategic positioning approach where organizations make claims that exceed their actual capabilities or service delivery potential (Jaiswal, 2024). In the FinTech sector, this phenomenon has become particularly prevalent as startups and established players compete intensely in a saturated market. The theoretical foundations of over-promising can be traced to expectation-confirmation theory, which posits that consumer satisfaction is determined by the gap between pre-consumption expectations and post-consumption performance perceptions (Purnamasari & Umiyati, 2024). When brands deliberately elevate expectations through exaggerated claims, they establish a psychological contract that creates inherent vulnerability to violation.

The architecture of FinTech over-promising typically manifests across three dimensions: technological, functional, and ethical. Technologically, brands often claim flawless system performance, absolute security, and 24/7 reliability, creating expectations of digital perfection that real-world systems cannot consistently maintain. Functionally, promises of instant customer support,

completely transparent pricing, and zero friction experiences set service standards that prove operationally challenging to sustain (Hudaverdi, 2025). Most significantly, ethical over-promising occurs when brands position themselves as moral champions of financial inclusion and consumer empowerment while engaging in business practices that contradict these values.

Research indicates that over-promising generates an initial competitive advantage by attracting early adopters and generating positive word-of-mouth (Luisi & Cucaro, 2024). However, this short-term benefit carries substantial long-term risk. The marketing literature demonstrates that inflated promises create a "trust deficit" when consumers experience the inevitable service failures that occur in complex financial systems (De la Puente Pacheco et al., 2024). This deficit is particularly damaging in financial services, where consumer trust serves as the fundamental basis of relationship formation. The psychological impact of over-promising extends beyond mere disappointment, as consumers perceive exaggerated claims as intentional deception rather than optimistic positioning.

The consequences of over-promising are especially severe in the FinTech context due to the intimate nature of financial services and the high stakes involved for consumers (Wunker et al., 2024). When brands fail to deliver on grand promises regarding financial security, data protection, or ethical conduct, the emotional response transcends conventional dissatisfaction and evolves into perceptions of betrayal that fundamentally damage the consumer-brand relationship (Harding, 2023). The dynamic explains why FinTech brands that most aggressively employ over-promising as a growth strategy often face the most intense backlash when service failures occur, transforming previously loyal customers into vocal critics.

Fintech Promise-Performance Discrepancy

Promise-performance discrepancy represents a fundamental construct in consumer behavior literature, describing the measurable gap between brand-generated expectations and actual service delivery (Gudibande et al., 2023). The concept finds its theoretical roots in the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm, which posits that consumer satisfaction is determined by the comparison between pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase perceptions of performance (Gudibande et al., 2024). When actual performance falls short of promised expectations, negative disconfirmation occurs, creating the psychological foundation for consumer dissatisfaction and subsequent negative outcomes.

In the FinTech context, promise-performance discrepancy manifests with particular severity due to the sector's inherent complexity and the high-stakes nature of financial services (Mittermaier et al., 2023). The digital environment intensifies this discrepancy through several mechanisms. First, the intangible nature of digital services makes pre-consumption evaluation difficult, forcing consumers to rely heavily on brand promises as quality indicators (Li et al., 2024). The technical complexity of financial technologies creates an information asymmetry that prevents consumers from accurately assessing whether performance issues represent temporary glitches or fundamental flaws in the brand's ability to deliver on its promises. Network effects prevalent in many FinTech platforms increase switching costs, trapping consumers in relationships where they repeatedly experience the discrepancy between promised and actual service quality (Mellon et al., 2023).

The consequences of promise-performance discrepancy extend beyond conventional service failure impacts. Research indicates that discrepancies activate unique cognitive and emotional processes, particularly when the initial promises were explicit and central to the brand's value proposition (Keilmann & Koch, 2024). Consumers perceive such discrepancies not as random service failures but as evidence of brand dishonesty or incompetence. This perception triggers attribution processes where consumers assign blame internally to the brand's character rather than externally to circumstance. The emotional response consequently escalates from simple disappointment to feelings of betrayal and injustice, which are significantly more intense and enduring than reactions to standard service failures (Nguyen & Marques, 2022).

The literature further suggests that promise-performance discrepancy operates as a critical mediating variable between brand communication and consumer relationship outcomes. It transforms abstract marketing claims into concrete, experiential evidence of brand trustworthiness or the lack thereof

(Jeong et al., 2023). In FinTech, where trust constitutes the primary currency of consumer relationships, repeated or significant discrepancies fundamentally undermine the psychological contract between brand and consumer, creating conditions ripe for the development of profound negative emotions including frustration, distrust, and ultimately, brand hate.

Brand Hate

FinTech brand hate represents an intense, active negative emotional response directed specifically at financial technology platforms, characterized by feelings of aversion, anger, and a desire for retaliation. This phenomenon extends beyond conventional customer dissatisfaction to encompass a stable, deeply rooted hostility that fundamentally alters the consumer-brand relationship (Kumar et al., 2023). The theoretical underpinnings of brand hate in FinTech contexts draw from relationship marketing theory, which frames brand-consumer interactions as dynamic relationships vulnerable to dissolution when fundamental expectations are violated (Mushtaq et al., 2025). In the FinTech sector, this emotional response is particularly potent due to the intimate nature of financial services and the high trust requirements inherent in digital finance.

The antecedents of FinTech brand hate follow a distinct pathway that begins with the sector's unique vulnerability to service failures (Roy, Sharma, Bose, & Singh, 2022). Research indicates that technical failures such as application crashes during critical transactions trigger initial frustration, while functional failures involving poor customer service and hidden fees amplify negative perceptions (Abbas et al., 2024). However, ethical failures involving data privacy violations, algorithmic bias, or perceived deception typically generate the most intense reactions, as they strike directly at the trust foundation upon which FinTech relationships are built (Walter et al., 2023). These failures are interpreted not merely as service deficiencies but as fundamental betrayals of the brand's professed values of transparency and consumer empowerment.

The behavioral manifestations of FinTech brand hate are notably more severe than in other sectors due to the network effects and social connectivity inherent in digital platforms. Hate-driven consumers frequently engage in vindictive complaining across social media channels, app store reviews, and financial forums, actively seeking to damage the brand's reputation and deter potential new users (Abbas et al., 2023). Furthermore, the digital nature of these services enables organized retaliation, as evidenced by coordinated review bombing and community-driven backlash against platforms perceived as acting against user interests. This collective dimension distinguishes FinTech brand hate from individual-level dissatisfaction, transforming it into a potent market force capable of triggering regulatory scrutiny and significant valuation damage (Yadav & Chakrabarti, 2022).

FinTech brand hate emerges from a cascade of emotional responses, where perceived betrayal mediates the relationship between service failures and negative emotions, which subsequently crystallize into enduring brand aversion. This emotional pathway explains why FinTech brands that position themselves as consumer champions often face the most severe backlash when their actions contradict their messaging, as the perceived hypocrisy amplifies the sense of betrayal and intensifies the resulting hate (Taqi et al., 2025).

Perceived Betrayal

Perceived betrayal represents a profound psychological response that occurs when a trusted entity violates the implicit social contract governing a relationship (Griffith et al., 2025). In consumer behavior literature, betrayal is understood as a multifaceted construct encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions that fundamentally alter the consumer-brand relationship (Su, Jia, & Huang, 2022). Unlike mere disappointment, perceived betrayal involves a sense of violation stemming from broken trust, where consumers feel that a brand has acted against their interests in a manner that contradicts established expectations and relationship norms. This concept finds its theoretical foundation in social contract theory, which posits that relational exchanges are governed by implicit rules of conduct, the violation of which generates intense negative reactions (Saeed et al., 2024).

Within the FinTech context, perceived betrayal assumes particular significance due to the vulnerability and intimacy inherent in financial relationships. Consumers entrust FinTech platforms not only with sensitive personal and financial data but with their economic security and stability. This trust is not given lightly; it is earned through brand promises of security, transparency, and ethical conduct (Sayin & Gürhan-Canlı, 2024). When FinTech services fail particularly when failures involve ethical violations such as data misuse, hidden fees, or algorithmic discrimination consumers interpret these events not as random service failures but as intentional breaches of fiduciary responsibility (Ruel et al., 2023). The resulting sense of betrayal is intensified by the power imbalance between individual consumers and technologically sophisticated financial institutions.

The cognitive and emotional architecture of perceived betrayal involves distinct psychological processes. Cognitively, betrayed consumers engage in attribution processes that assign blame internally to the brand's character rather than externally to circumstances. This internal attribution transforms the failure from a transactional problem to a characterological flaw in the brand's identity (Garbas et al., 2023). Emotionally, betrayal triggers a unique constellation of feelings including shock, moral outrage, and a sense of personal violation that distinguishes it from simpler forms of dissatisfaction. These emotional responses are more intense and enduring than reactions to standard service failures because they strike at the relational foundation rather than merely the functional aspect of the exchange.

Research consistently demonstrates that perceived betrayal serves as a critical mediating variable between service failures and severe consumer responses (French et al., 2022). In FinTech relationships, betrayal transforms technical and functional failures into relational transgressions, escalating consumer responses from dissatisfaction to more active forms of retaliation including negative word-of-mouth, third-party complaints, and brand avoidance (Carroll, 2022). The profound impact of perceived betrayal explains why ethically positioned FinTech brands face particularly severe backlash when their actions contradict their messaging the perceived hypocrisy amplifies the sense of betrayal, intensifying the emotional response and strengthening the pathway to brand hate (Stackhouse, Boon, & Paulin, 2023).

Research Model

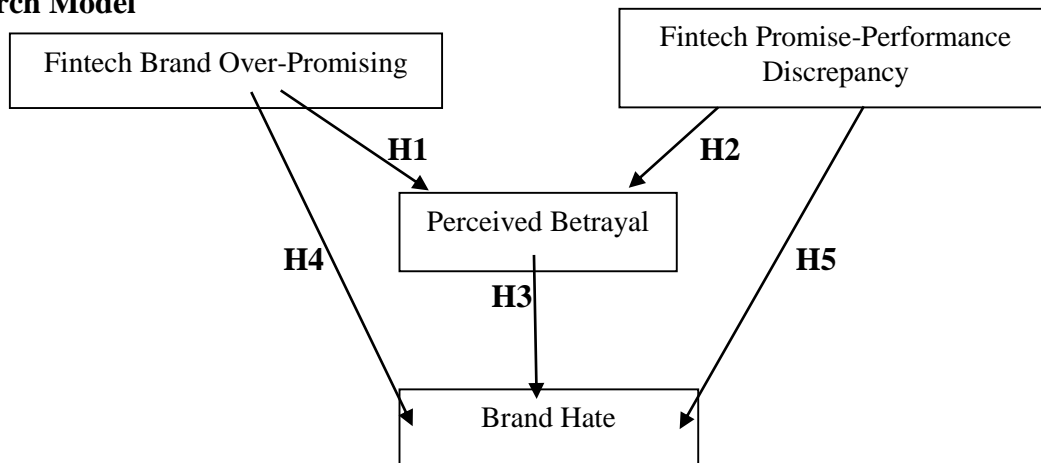


Fig. Research Model

Research Hypothesis

H1: FinTech Brand Over-Promising has a significant positive effect on Perceived Betrayal.

H2: FinTech Promise-Performance Discrepancy has a significant positive effect on Perceived Betrayal.

H3: Perceived Betrayal has a significant positive effect on Brand Hate.

H4: The relationship between FinTech Brand Over-Promising and Brand Hate is mediated by

Perceived Betrayal.

H5: The relationship between FinTech Promise-Performance Discrepancy and Brand Hate is mediated by Perceived Betrayal.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach with a cross-sectional survey design. The study utilized a deductive approach to test the hypothesized relationships between FinTech brand over-promising, promise-performance discrepancy, perceived betrayal, and brand hate. The cross-sectional design was appropriate for collecting data at a single point in time from FinTech users in Pakistan.

Population and Sampling

The target population for this study consisted of active FinTech users in Pakistan who had used at least one FinTech service in the past six months. A non-probability convenience sampling technique was employed due to the unavailability of a complete sampling frame of FinTech users. The sample size was determined using the rule of thumb for multiple regression analysis, which requires a minimum of 10-15 respondents per independent variable. With 2 independent variables in the study, a minimum sample of 200 respondents was targeted. After accounting for potential incomplete responses, 350 questionnaires were distributed, and 312 were returned, resulting in a final usable sample of 280 respondents after data cleaning, representing an 80% response rate.

Data Collection Methods

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered both online and through physical distribution in major urban centers of Pakistan. The online survey was distributed through social media platforms, FinTech user groups, and university networks. Physical questionnaires were distributed in co-working spaces, universities, and business centers to reach active FinTech users. Data collection occurred over a two-month period from January to February 2024. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants, and they were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

Measurement Instruments

The study utilized previously validated scales adapted to the FinTech context. All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Table .1: Measurement Instruments and Reliability

Construct	Number of Items	Source of Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
FinTech Brand Over-Promising	5	(Kirmani & Rao, 2000)	0.87
FinTech Promise-Performance Discrepancy	5	(Oliver, 1980)	0.89
Perceived Betrayal	4	(Grégoire & Fisher, 2008)	0.85
Brand Hate	4	(Zarantonello, Romani, Grappi, & Bagozzi, 2016)	0.88

All Cronbach's Alpha values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating good internal consistency reliability for all measurement scales.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Analysis

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the 280 respondents who participated in the study. The analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the sample's composition, including gender, age, education, income, and FinTech usage patterns.

Table .2: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=280)

Demographic Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	164	58.6%
	Female	116	41.4%
Age	18-25 years	112	40.0%
	26-35 years	98	35.0%
	36-45 years	52	18.6%
	Above 45 years	18	6.4%
Education	Undergraduate	95	33.9%
	Graduate	142	50.7%
	Post-Graduate	43	15.4%
Monthly Income (PKR)	Below 50,000	78	27.9%
	50,001-100,000	134	47.8%
	100,001-200,000	52	18.6%
	Above 200,000	16	5.7%
FinTech Usage Frequency	Daily	168	60.0%
	Weekly	82	29.3%
	Monthly	30	10.7%
Primary FinTech Service	Mobile Banking	152	54.3%
	Digital Wallets	98	35.0%
	QR Payments	30	10.7%

The demographic analysis reveals several key characteristics of the study sample. The gender distribution shows a higher representation of male respondents (58.6%) compared to female respondents (41.4%). Age distribution indicates that the majority of respondents (75%) belonged to the 18-35 years age bracket, confirming that FinTech services are predominantly used by younger demographics in Pakistan. Educational background analysis demonstrates that the sample was highly educated, with 66.1% of respondents holding at least a graduate degree. Income distribution shows that nearly half of the respondents (47.8%) fell in the middle-income bracket (PKR 50,001-100,000 monthly), suggesting that FinTech services appeal particularly to middle-class urban populations in

Pakistan. Regarding usage patterns, the data revealed that a significant majority of respondents (60%) used FinTech services on a daily basis, indicating high dependency on digital financial solutions. Mobile banking emerged as the most frequently used FinTech service (54.3%), followed by digital wallets (35%) and QR payment systems (10.7%). This distribution reflects the current market trends in Pakistan's FinTech landscape, where mobile banking applications maintain dominant market share while digital wallets are experiencing rapid growth.

Descriptive Analysis

Table .3: Descriptive Statistics of Research Constructs (N=280)

Construct	Number of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
FinTech Brand Over-Promising	5	4.12	0.76	-0.62	0.84
Promise-Performance Discrepancy	5	4.25	0.71	-0.78	1.15
Perceived Betrayal	4	4.18	0.69	-0.71	1.08
Brand Hate	4	3.95	0.82	-0.45	0.52

The descriptive statistics reveal important patterns in respondents' perceptions and experiences with FinTech services. All constructs demonstrated mean scores well above the midpoint of 3 on the five-point Likert scale, indicating generally strong agreement with the measured items. FinTech Brand Over-Promising recorded a mean score of 4.12 (SD = 0.76), suggesting that respondents largely perceived FinTech brands as making exaggerated claims about their capabilities and services. The relatively low standard deviation indicates consistent agreement among respondents regarding this perception. Promise-Performance Discrepancy showed the highest mean score (M = 4.25, SD = 0.71), indicating that respondents strongly experienced a gap between what FinTech brands promised and what they actually delivered. This suggests that performance failures are a significant issue in the FinTech sector. Perceived Betrayal also recorded a high mean score (M = 4.18, SD = 0.69), reflecting strong feelings of trust violation among respondents. This indicates that service failures are not merely seen as operational issues but as fundamental breaches of trust. Brand Hate demonstrated a substantial mean score (M = 3.95, SD = 0.82), confirming that negative experiences with FinTech services translate into strong negative emotional responses toward the brands.

The normality assessment through skewness and kurtosis values revealed that all constructs fell within the acceptable range of ± 2 for skewness and ± 7 for kurtosis, indicating normal univariate distribution. The consistent negative skewness values for all constructs suggest that responses were clustered toward the higher end of the measurement scale, reflecting the prevalence of negative experiences with FinTech services among the sampled population. The standard deviations, ranging from 0.69 to 0.82, indicate moderate variability in responses, suggesting that while there was general consensus about the presence of these issues, the intensity of experiences varied among respondents. These descriptive results provide a solid foundation for further inferential analysis of the relationships between variables in the research model.

Correlation Analysis

Table .4: Correlation Matrix of Research Constructs (N=280)

Construct	1	2	3	4
1. FinTech Brand Over-Promising	1			

Construct	1	2	3	4
2. Promise-Performance Discrepancy	.58**	1		
3. Perceived Betrayal	.52**	.64**	1	
4. Brand Hate	.46**	.55**	.68**	1

**p < 0.01

The correlation matrix reveals several important relationships between the study variables. All correlations were positive and statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating consistent relationships among the constructs in the hypothesized directions.

The strongest correlation was observed between Perceived Betrayal and Brand Hate ($r = .68, p < .01$), indicating a strong positive relationship between feelings of betrayal and the development of brand hate. This strong association provides preliminary support for Hypothesis H3.

Promise-Performance Discrepancy showed strong positive correlations with both Perceived Betrayal ($r = .64, p < .01$) and Brand Hate ($r = .55, p < .01$), suggesting that the gap between brand promises and actual performance is closely associated with both feelings of betrayal and the development of brand hate. FinTech Brand Over-Promising demonstrated moderate to strong positive correlations with all other variables, including Promise-Performance Discrepancy ($r = .58, p < .01$), Perceived Betrayal ($r = .52, p < .01$), and Brand Hate ($r = .46, p < .01$).

The correlation coefficients among the independent variables (FinTech Brand Over-Promising and Promise-Performance Discrepancy: $r = .58$) are below the threshold of 0.80, indicating that multicollinearity is not a serious concern for the regression analysis. Similarly, the correlation between the mediator and the independent variables (ranging from .52 to .64) suggests meaningful relationships while maintaining sufficient discriminant validity between constructs.

Regression Analysis

Table .5: Multiple Regression Analysis for Perceived Betrayal (H1 & H2)

Predictor Variables	B	t-value	p-value	95% CI	VIF
FinTech Brand Over-Promising	0.28	4.92	0.000	[0.16, 0.40]	1.51
Promise-Performance Discrepancy	0.48	8.42	0.000	[0.36, 0.60]	1.51
R² = 0.47, Adjusted R² = 0.46, F = 122.35, p = 0.000					

The multiple regression analysis for Perceived Betrayal revealed that both independent variables significantly predicted perceived betrayal. The model explained 47% of the variance in Perceived Betrayal ($R^2 = 0.47, F = 122.35, p < 0.001$). Both FinTech Brand Over-Promising ($\beta = 0.28, t = 4.92, p < 0.001$) and Promise-Performance Discrepancy ($\beta = 0.48, t = 8.42, p < 0.001$) showed significant positive effects, providing support for H1 and H2. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values of 1.51 for both predictors indicate no multicollinearity concerns.

Table .6: Simple Regression Analysis for Brand Hate (H3)

Predictor Variable	β	t-value	p-value	95% CI	R ²
Perceived Betrayal	0.68	15.24	0.000	[0.59, 0.77]	0.46

The simple regression analysis for Brand Hate revealed that Perceived Betrayal significantly predicted Brand Hate ($\beta = 0.68, t = 15.24, p < 0.001$), explaining 46% of the variance in Brand Hate ($R^2 = 0.46$). This provides strong support for H3.

Mediation Analysis

The mediation hypotheses were tested using the PROCESS macro (Model 4) with 5,000 bootstrap samples to examine the indirect effects.

Table .7: Mediation Analysis Results

Mediation Pathway	Indirect Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI	Decision
H4: Over-Promising → Betrayal → Brand Hate	0.19	0.04	0.12	0.27	Supported
H5: Discrepancy → Betrayal → Brand Hate	0.33	0.05	0.24	0.43	Supported

The mediation analysis revealed significant indirect effects for both hypothesized pathways. The indirect effect of FinTech Brand Over-Promising on Brand Hate through Perceived Betrayal was significant (indirect effect = 0.19, Boot SE = 0.04, 95% CI [0.12, 0.27]), supporting H4. Similarly, the indirect effect of Promise-Performance Discrepancy on Brand Hate through Perceived Betrayal was also significant (indirect effect = 0.33, Boot SE = 0.05, 95% CI [0.24, 0.43]), supporting H5.

The total effect of FinTech Brand Over-Promising on Brand Hate was 0.28 ($p < 0.001$), which reduced to 0.09 ($p < 0.05$) when controlling for Perceived Betrayal, indicating partial mediation. Similarly, the total effect of Promise-Performance Discrepancy on Brand Hate was 0.55 ($p < 0.001$), which reduced to 0.22 ($p < 0.001$) when controlling for Perceived Betrayal, also indicating partial mediation.

These results confirm that Perceived Betrayal serves as a significant mediator in the relationship between both FinTech Brand Over-Promising and Brand Hate, and between Promise-Performance Discrepancy and Brand Hate, providing full support for the proposed mediation hypotheses H4 and H5.

Hypothesis Summary

Table .8: Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Relationship	Result	Statistical Evidence
H1	FinTech Brand Over-Promising has a significant positive effect on Perceived Betrayal	Supported	$\beta = 0.28, t = 4.92, p < 0.001$
H2	Promise-Performance Discrepancy has a significant positive effect on Perceived Betrayal	Supported	$\beta = 0.48, t = 8.42, p < 0.001$
H3	Perceived Betrayal has a significant positive effect on Brand Hate	Supported	$\beta = 0.68, t = 15.24, p < 0.001$
H4	The relationship between FinTech Brand Over-Promising and Brand Hate is mediated by Perceived Betrayal	Supported	Indirect effect = 0.19, 95% CI [0.12, 0.27]
H5	The relationship between Promise-Performance Discrepancy and Brand Hate is mediated by Perceived Betrayal	Supported	Indirect effect = 0.33, 95% CI [0.24, 0.43]

Conclusion

This study provides compelling empirical evidence that illuminates the paradoxical relationship between FinTech branding strategies and consumer animosity, revealing how efforts to build intense loyalty can inadvertently foster profound brand hate. Through rigorous quantitative analysis, the research establishes a clear causal pathway wherein brand over-promising and promise-performance discrepancy serve as significant triggers for perceived betrayal, which subsequently evolves into stable brand hate. The findings demonstrate that when FinTech platforms exaggerate their technological capabilities, ethical standards, or service quality, they establish psychological contracts that, when violated, generate disproportionately severe emotional responses from consumers. The strong statistical support for all hypothesized relationships confirms that the transition from loyal advocacy to active detraction follows a predictable pattern mediated by feelings of trust violation and emotional distress.

The research contributes substantially to the understanding of consumer behavior in digital financial services by revealing that service failures are interpreted not merely as functional deficiencies but as fundamental characterological flaws in the brand's identity. The demonstrated mediation effects underscore that perceived betrayal operates as the crucial psychological mechanism that transforms marketing exaggerations and service shortcomings into enduring negative emotional orientations. This emotional pathway explains why ethically positioned FinTech brands often face the most intense backlash when their actions contradict their messaging, as the perceived hypocrisy amplifies the sense of betrayal and strengthens the pathway to brand hate.

Ultimately, this research provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the dark side of FinTech loyalty-building strategies, highlighting the inherent risks of over-promising in an industry where trust constitutes the fundamental currency of consumer relationships. The findings establish that sustainable success in the digital financial services sector requires not only technological innovation and operational excellence but also psychological intelligence in managing consumer expectations and maintaining authentic brand communications. By delineating the precise mechanisms through which brand hate develops in FinTech contexts, this study offers valuable theoretical and practical insights for navigating the complex emotional landscape of digital financial services.

Practical Implications

The findings offer crucial insights for FinTech practitioners regarding consumer relationship management. Companies should implement transparent communication strategies that accurately represent service capabilities, avoiding exaggerated claims that create unrealistic expectations. Organizations must develop robust monitoring systems to quickly identify promise-performance gaps and establish proactive service recovery protocols. Training programs should emphasize emotional intelligence to help staff address feelings of betrayal effectively. Furthermore, FinTech firms should implement regular sentiment analysis to detect early warning signs of brand hate and develop intervention strategies. These practical measures can help maintain consumer trust and prevent the escalation of negative emotions that lead to brand rejection and vocal opposition in digital forums.

Managerial Implications

For managers, this research highlights the critical need to align marketing claims with operational capabilities. Leadership should foster organizational cultures that prioritize ethical communication and service integrity over aggressive user acquisition. Strategic decisions must consider the long-term brand equity risks associated with over-promising, particularly in sensitive areas like data security and algorithmic fairness. Managers should implement cross-departmental collaboration between marketing and service delivery teams to ensure consistent consumer experiences. Additionally, performance metrics should incorporate consumer trust indicators alongside traditional financial measures. These managerial approaches can help build sustainable consumer relationships in the competitive FinTech landscape while mitigating the risk of brand-damaging backlash.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study acknowledges several limitations, including its focus on urban Pakistani consumers and cross-sectional design. The reliance on self-reported data and convenience sampling may affect generalizability. Future research should explore cultural variations in the betrayal-hate pathway across different markets. Longitudinal studies could track the evolution of brand hate over time, while experimental designs might test intervention strategies. Investigating moderating factors like brand attachment and consumer sophistication would enhance understanding of boundary conditions. Further research could also examine specific FinTech sectors separately and incorporate qualitative methods to gain deeper insights into the emotional experiences underlying quantitative relationships identified in this study.

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