

THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF THE INTERCONNECTIVITY OF FINANCIAL SERVICES AND FINANCIAL SECURITY

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Abstract

Purpose – to disclose the theoretical aspects of the interconnectivity of financial services and financial security and to explore an assurance of financial security options in choosing financial services.

Design/methodology/approach – analytic, systematic, generalization and comparative methods are used in this article.

Finding – the abundance and diversity of financial services contributes to economic development. But it is also an environment which is influenced by a variety of risks, right and wrong financial decisions and other factors. The influence of these factors highlights the need to discuss the theoretical aspects of the interconnectivity of financial security and financial services. It is also necessary to consider what factors influences financial decision-making process and what management, regulatory, financial education and other measures contribute to financial security and sustainable economic development.

Research limitations / implications – only few researches have been done to reveal the relationship between financial security and financial services. There are also very few researches on the impact of financial security decisions and how financial security can be provided in the provision of financial services. This article aims to present the main theoretical aspects of the interconnectivity of financial security and financial services and problem areas related to purchasing of financial services and financial decision making.

Practical implications – more and more financial products and services appears in the market. New financial tools provide many benefits and opportunities, but they also cause new sources of risk and instability. In the context of the globalization and integration, the financial system is changing rapidly and becoming vulnerable to any negative developments. These reasons lead to the need to disclose the theoretical dimension of the interconnectivity of financial services and financial security. There are many uncertainties in the provision of financial services when consumers must make a financial choice. Depending on whether a right or wrong decision is made, financial security may increase or decrease. Consumers' financial behaviour, financial literacy, information available, and other factors can influence decision-making process. Therefore, the article examines what influences decisions in choosing financial services. Aspects of decision making in the purchasing of financial services explored in the article can help to find the best measures to ensure financial security and the well-being of society or to ensure the quality of life.

Originality /Value – researches often emphasizes the need for financial security, but in this context, there is a lack of valid generalizations about interconnectivity of financial security and financial services. The article reveals the interconnectivity of financial security and financial services and the necessity to evaluate financial security aspects and other factors that influence financial decision making when purchasing financial services. The aspects of financial security revealed in the article provide opportunities for further, more detailed research on financial security as a separate economic phenomenon.

Keywords: financial security, financial services, financial decision, financial behaviour.

Research type: viewpoint.

Introduction

Discussions and researches aimed at understanding of financial security or discovering the best measures of maintaining financial security have always been relevant (Athanasoulis et al (1999), Hayes and Finney (2013), Delas et al (2015)). The global financial crisis of 2007-2008 and the growing uncertainty in the international political - economic context of impending or even ongoing "trade wars", the forthcoming economic downturn in the world due to the coronavirus pandemic, as well as other circumstances, make financial security research important currently (Hryhoruk et al (2019), Khrushch et al (2019), Brown et al (2020)). Financial security research tends to highlight some aspect of financial security. Much attention is given to examining trends in household savings rates, wealth accumulation and retirement savings, e. g. Gustman et al (2010) examined the impact of the decline in stock markets on the financial security of individuals approaching retirement age, Lyons et al (2018) examined the impact of aging on financial security. Lange et al (2012) did the research on financial security in the case of an insured person's illness. The authors also address aspects of financial planning, savings, and lack of financial knowledge, financial inclusion and education, and research on financial behaviour (Chandra (2008), Piotrowska (2017)).

Part of the research deals with determination of the level of financial security. For example, Guryanova et al (2017), Alifanova et al (2017) formulated groups of financial security indicators related to household transactions in the financial market. Meanwhile, Alifanova and Evlakhova (2017) analyzed the country's financial security rating indicators. A study by Ahmad and Sabri (2015) was concerned with determining the level of financial security in households headed by women. Ahmad et al (2018) explored how single women deal with the challenges of housekeeping and provide financial security.

Researchers are also exploring the relationship between financial security and other economic phenomena. For example, Blakyta and Ganushchak (2018) addressed the financial security of companies in the context of fight against various types of economic fraud. Han (2018) examined the interrelationship between financial internationalization and financial security. Burkaltseva et al (2017) dealt with the financial and economic security of business from an institutional point of view, while Solodovnic (2015) dealt with the theoretical aspect of public-private partnerships. The interconnectedness of the modern financial system has been explored by Glasserman and Young (2014). These authors argue that, due to the complex web of links between institutions, the stresses to one part of the system can spread to others, leading to a system-wide threat to financial stability. Bea and Yi (2019) examines variation in young adults' transitions to financial independence and the relationship between these transitions and financial security.

Part of the financially insecure circumstances that consumers face when making financial services decisions, therefore this article seeks to disclose the theoretical aspects of the interconnectivity of financial services and financial security and to explore financial security options when choosing financial services. In order to achieve this goal, the concept of financial services will be discussed first, the interconnectivity of financial services and financial security will be revealed later. Thereafter, we look at how financial decisions are made and what influences financial services decision-making. Finally, financial security measures in the provision of financial services are examined.

The concept of financial services

Financial services transactions in one form or another are so ubiquitous in our lives (Hatzakis et al, 2010). This means that financial services are encountered when creating, holding and servicing assets, raising funds, transferring property, concluding insurance contracts, dealing in securities and other operations. According to Sūdžius (2007), financial services can be described as professional services that are the least tangible, but they depend to a great extent on the professionalism, reliability and performance stability of their provider. The uniqueness of financial services is that financial services are used to acquire other services and goods. In the absence of financial services, it is impossible to obtain other services and goods.

The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) is the first set of multilateral rules governing international trade in services (Kono et al, 1997), which defines, among other things, financial services. Financial services are defined as any service of a financial nature offered by a financial service supplier of a Member. Financial services include all insurance and insurance-related services, and all banking and other financial services (excluding insurance) (GATS, 1994). Directive 2002/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 concerning the distance marketing of consumer financial services defines a financial service as any service of a banking, credit, insurance, personal pension, investment or payment nature. There are many and varied financial services. In the GATS are many as 16 different financial services (see Table 1).

Table 1. Financial services

Insurance and related services
life and non-life insurance services; reinsurance and retrocession; insurance intermediation, such as broking and agency services; services auxiliary to insurance
Banking and other financial services
acceptance of deposits; lending of all types including consumer credit, mortgage credit, factoring and financing of commercial transactions; financial leasing; all payment and money transmission services; guarantees and commitments; trading in money market instruments, foreign exchange, derivatives, exchange rate and interest rate instruments such as swaps and forward rate agreements, securities, other negotiable instruments and other assets such as gold; participation in issues of new securities; money broking; asset management such as portfolio management or pension fund management; settlement and clearing services for financial assets; provision and transfer of financial information and financial data processing; advisory and other auxiliary financial services.

Source: Composed by the researcher and based on General Agreement in Trade in Services

In their article Jurgilevičiūtė and Sūdžius (2010) presented the opinion of Ivaškevičius and Sakalas (1997) that the specificity of financial services is determined by the following features of these services: 1) financial services are quite abstract; 2) unlike other services, where the product is most frequently presented, financial services organizations provide money in various forms; 3) each form of service has an element of transaction; 4) each form of service involves shorter or longer periods of time. Hatzakis et al (2010) also presented some unique performance characteristics specific to the financial services industry: fungible products with extensive use of technology, high volumes and heterogeneity of clients, repeated service encounters, long-term contractual relationships between customers and firms, customers' sense of well-being is closely intertwined with services, use of intermediaries, convergence of operations, finance, and marketing.

Sūdžius (2007) divides financial services according to the frequency of the need formation or the periodicity of satisfying the needs, the value of the service created, and the benefits received. Sūdžius distinguishes between low value (relatively low resource) and frequent or continuous services; average value and less frequent or higher service intervals; high value (requiring relatively large resources) and infrequent services whose quality and benefits are difficult to predict immediately.

The specificity of financial services also requires that certain financial services require a specific authorization (license)¹. The purpose of the license is to ensure the safety, reliability and quality of financial services. Licensing is subject to various requirements, e.g. on governance and organizational structure, managers, risk management and internal control systems, minimum capital, readiness to provide safe and reliable financial services, etc.

In conclusion, financial services are any service of a banking, credit, insurance, pension, investment or other paid character services, which have specific features and involves a transaction between the service provider and the buyer. There are certain qualification, management, control and other requirements for financial service providers.

Interconnectivity of financial security and financial services

The specificity of financial services can lead to a variety of risks, and failure to manage them creates financially insecure circumstances. The emergence of risks is influenced by various causes. For example, subjects operating in the financial field may abuse their knowledge and power, financial service users may not understand the content of these services, and so on. According to Zagorodnis (2007) and Varnaliy (2009), financial security is the protection of financial stakeholders (Davydenko, 2015). This means that financial security is aimed at protecting against, reducing the chances of re-emerging risks, or restoring the former position which emerged from the negative consequences. A variety of financial infrastructure measures, tools and rules are being implemented to ensure the financial security of financial service users.

Hryhoruk et al (2019) also associate financial security with the protection of financial interests. Franchuk et al (2020) argues that the main task of a financial security system is not only to maintain financial resources but also to create a secure environment for continuous business development. Langvinienė and Vengrienė (2005), meanwhile, consider that the reliability of a service provider is related to ensuring financial security. This means that one of the reasons why consumers use financial services is that the consumer seeks to ensure financial security along with the financial service. I. e. the consumer expects to derive maximum benefit from financial services, including financial security.

This approach is in line with the concept of a basic service and an additional service model presented by Bagdonienė and Hopenienė (2009). In the opinion of these authors, this and other additional services create the value of the main service and give the supplier a competitive advantage. It can be assumed that service providers, who can offer an additional service besides the main service - financial security - have a better chance of looking attractive and at the same time attract new customers.

However, not all financial services involve financial security. According to Jurgilevičiūtė and Sūdžius (2010), the benefits of a financial service are mostly security related and more psychological in nature. Therefore, it is possible that a consumer will purchase a financial

¹ For example, the Law on Banks of the Republic of Lithuania provides that licensed financial services include the acceptance of deposits or other repayable funds from non-professional market participants, payment services under the Law on Payments, issuance of electronic money.

service simply because they consider it to be part of financial security. This motive may encourage you to apply to a financial service provider for the purchase of one or another financial service for the purpose of financial security.

Financial service delivery processes include circumstances such as the development of financial infrastructure, risk, appropriate and inappropriate financial decisions. These circumstances allow the links between financial services and financial security to be represented schematically (see Figure 1).

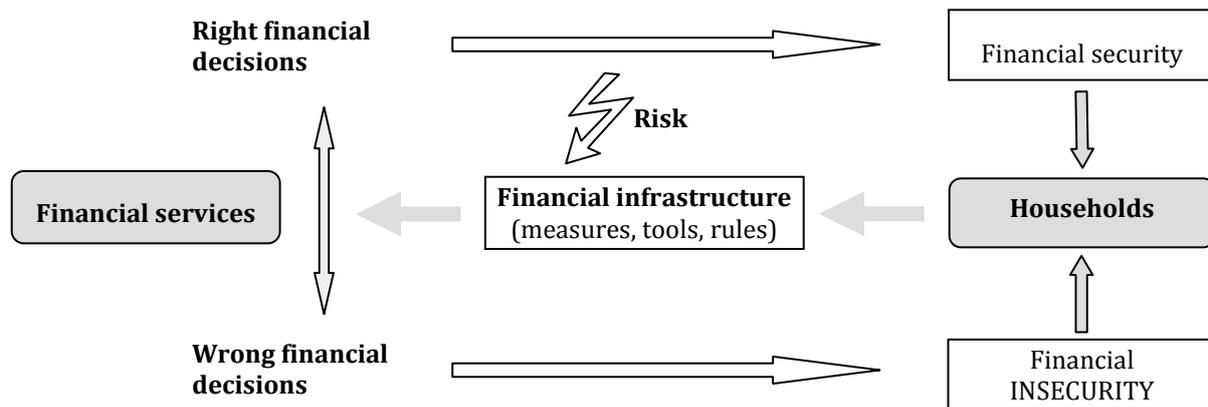


Figure 1. Links between financial services and financial security

As illustrated in the graph in Figure 1, consumers' financial security in the provision of financial services is influenced by a variety of risks, appropriate and inappropriate financial decisions, and is a continuous process of financial security and financial services provision. Depending on whether right and wrong financial decisions are being made, the financial security of households and other entities may increase or decrease. These reasons affects a need to analyse what influences decision-making in choosing financial services.

Decision making in choosing financial services

Deciding to use one or another financial service because of their abundance and diversity is not an easy process. This is because financial decisions are influenced by a variety of external and internal factors. The decision-making process is complicated by the fact that some financial decisions can have long-term consequences and determine the decision-makers future life. However, not only personal life can be influenced, but according to Klimavičienė and Jurevičienė (2007), the development of personal finances and the economy of the whole country depend on how personal finances are managed.

If financial decisions were to be based solely on the behavioural model of Homo economicus, all decisions and financial behaviour would be based only on a rational appraisal of the possible solutions and on the choice of the most useful one. Tversky and Kahneman (1992) argue that the idealized rationality assumption in economic theory is generally justified on two grounds: the belief that only rational behaviour can survive in a competitive environment, and the fear that any behaviour that abandons rationality will be chaotic and inevitable. However, Varanauskienė (2009) expressed the view that it is not always necessary to seek economic benefits in personal relationships, but even when making purely financial decisions, we often behave recklessly, irrationally due to lack of knowledge and information, and the lack of time to search and analyze it.

Decision-making involves a process that begins with a set of information by which is defined situation, assesses the expected benefits, anticipates possible choices, and ultimately predicts potential outcomes (Šarkutė, 2009). There is internal conflict in making important decisions, according to Tversky and Shafir (1992), conflict is the price a person pays for freedom of choice. The conflict arises because a person does not always know how to reimburse costs compared to benefits, risk on value, and immediately satisfy future discomfort. There is also the dilemma of making a profit or loss when making decisions from a risk perspective.

According to Sūdžius (2007), not all people make decisions with the same intensity, depending on the human condition, the nature of the demand for the service, the expected benefit-risk ratio and other factors. When people face risks, they react differently to them, what positively or negatively influences unprofitable or profitable financial decisions. According to Kahneman and Tversky (1984), people often take risks to achieve incredible profits and avoid taking risks in low probable loss. Consumer factors may even be influenced by factors such as cultural attitudes towards financial services (Stephenson et al, 2013). Financial decisions can also be fate by the relationship between consumers and the service provider, i. e. whether they are based on trust, collaboration, power sharing, communication, commitment, dependency and other characteristics².

Towards financial insecurity are driven by speculative decisions, which are often influenced 'crowd effect'. This means that some consumers, when they see someone's financial success, despite the risks involved, are looking for a benefit no less than what they have seen. The 'crowd effect' effect can be dangerous for the economy as a whole, and if false or misleading information is disseminated. A sudden exit from the market by investors or other participants may encourage others to do likewise, leading to a domino effect and a crisis. Often, consumers tend to interpret positively certain circumstances that actually exist or are about to occur, and often, as Jurevičienė and Gausienė (2010) argue, overestimate events that they find more in the press and those that are more easily perceived by themselves.

There are several important factors that influence financial decision making. Significant factors include internal factors related to overconfidence or, according to Kartashova and Levišauskaitė (2011), when risks are not evaluated or underestimated as well as overestimating existing skills or knowledge. According to Statman (2014), greed, fear, or the manifestation of emotional states of excitement lead to unreasonable financial decisions or over-investment decisions. Piotrowska (2017) believes that status-oriented consumption, i. e. the need to purchase goods and services not within the financial capabilities of the households also pushes towards financial insecurity.

When examining decision making, choosing factors that influence financial services it is the possibility to identify the greatest negative influencing factors. This information is important in shaping an assurance of financial security model of the financial services provided and in foresee some measures to enhance financial security (e. g. through educational measures form saving and safe investment skills). Therefore, **further article** will also examine the assurance of financial security measures in the provision of financial services.

² For example, The European Commission in its 2015 December 10 Communication no. COM (2015) 630 final. has identified retail financial services as one of the areas where consumers are most dissatisfied.

Financial security measures in the provision of financial services

A well-developed financial infrastructure that enables consumers to access financial services and their diversity is important for economic development. However, a well-developed financial infrastructure is not enough to achieve financial security. This is because financial services delivery processes involve a variety of actors, financial instruments, regulatory aspects, behavioural patterns and so on. Similarly, financial services are often confronted by service providers and consumers with different levels of power, knowledge and information. For these reasons, various financial infrastructure measures, tools and rules must be in place to ensure financial security. The analysis of financial services in terms of financial security highlights the need to apply not only economic, management or legal measures, but also educational and other measures to ensure financial security.

Legal measures to ensure financial security

Only appropriate legal regulation that clearly separates financial market participants, regulates their rights and duties, and protects consumers as the weaker side of market participants, can reduce the emergence of potential risks and the emergence of financially insecure circumstances. Lehmann (2017) expressed the view that a systemic approach to legal regulation is needed to ensure global financial stability. The state, as a representative of society and government, has an important role in creating legal mechanisms to ensure the satisfaction of society's needs and the implementation of state power and functions. The possibility and obligation of the legislator to establish legal regulation, which would help to ensure the security, stability and reliability of the functioning financial system, has been repeatedly noted by the highest judicial institutions of the State of Lithuania³. The regulation and supervision of financial services have received considerable attention from all states and international organizations⁴. Common cross-border rules that set equivalent requirements for financial services are important in this context. This ensures transparency of financial service providers, consumer protection measures and conditions of fair competition between similar suppliers.

Absolute legal regulation, however, is impossible, and perhaps inexpedient. According to Vaišvila (2001), the social rule of law, helping the economically disabled to implement their rights, goes so far as to discourage the cultural activity of citizens, and supports the attitude of many citizens not to create culture but to participate in it. Moshirian (2004) also takes a similar view and argues that consolidation of financial institutions and deregulation of financial services could be expected to lead to more competition, increased innovation in financial products and growing product differentiation in financial services.

Despite some authors' critical views on legal regulation, the benefits of legal regulation are undeniable. Legal regulation contributes to the protection of consumers' financial security

³ For example Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania in 2013 May 24 Regarding the compliance of certain provisions of the financial assurance agreements of the Republic of Lithuania, restructuring of enterprises of the Republic of Lithuania, laws on bankruptcy of enterprises of the Republic of Lithuania with the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania in 2013 July 5 Regarding the Law on Banks of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Bankruptcy of Enterprises of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Financial Sustainability of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Administrative Proceedings of the Republic of Lithuania, certain provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure compliance with the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania.

⁴ For example, several directives regulating the provision of services have been adopted in the EU (Directive 2006/48/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 June 2006 relating to the taking up and pursuit of the business of credit institutions, Directive 2002/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 concerning the distance marketing of consumer financial services, etc.).

and the implementation of safeguard measures for financial services. However, when regulating consumer protection, it is important to maintain the right balance between a high level of consumer protection and the interests of businesses. This has been pointed out by Bublienė (2011), who analysed the issues of consumer protection regulation.

Financial literacy measures

Low levels of financial literacy are prerequisites for violations of individual consumers' economic interests. This has also been pointed out by Ahmad and Sabri (2014), that there is a lack of knowledge and skills regarding consumer financial protection, which affects consumer satisfaction with life and consumer well-being. According to Kviesskienė (2016), financial literacy skills are extremely important because they enable you to make personal money decisions based on all the information you have.

However, there are authors who take a different approach to financial literacy. Here is Hastings et al (2013) examined financial literacy research critically and argued that there is a lack of evidence on the effectiveness of financial education, but at the same time the authors argue that increasing the financial capacity of the population is a desirable and socially beneficial goal. Nevertheless, Hastings et al (2013) recognize that well-designed and well-implemented financial education initiatives can have influence.

Implementation of educational and financial literacy initiatives is expected to help consumers acquire the skills needed to properly understand and interpret financial information. Therefore, it can be argued that only a financially literate person is able to find better solutions when purchasing financial services (knows how to save on housing, studies, retirement, etc.).

Management measures to ensure financial security

International regulators agree that one of the factors behind the financial crisis was corporate governance failures in many financial institutions, including the lack of an effective brake-counterbalance system⁵. Wu et al (2017) believes that stakeholder management is crucial in the context of sustainability, as companies need to respect and satisfy all stakeholder groups equally and for a long time in order to achieve sustainable development. For these and other reasons, great attention must be paid to management measures that will contribute to ensuring financial security in the provision of financial services to consumers. Vaitkus and Vasiliauskaitė (2017) distinguish the following financial security management tools: eligibility requirements for decision-makers; ensuring transparency of business processes; provision of information; risk process management.

Management measures may include monitoring the performance of financial institutions to monitor compliance with financial institution requirements, the condition of the financial institution, its performance indicators and analyzing information about potential changes in the condition and how it would affect the ability to provide specific services in a qualified and safe manner. Existing controls protect consumers and prevent unsafe financial services and products from entering the market or to operate companies that are not ready to provide financial services. Allen et al (2006) believes that many aspects of infrastructure design and operation aspects play an important role in effective systemic risk management - including general risk management (in particular credit, operational, liquidity and legal risks), participation criteria (defining which institutions can join the infrastructure) and system management.

⁵ This opinion was delivered on Directive 2014/65/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014.

Consumer behaviour modelling tools

One of the tools for ensuring consumer financial security is modelling consumer behaviour and implementing appropriate measures when providing financial services. According to Mowen (1987), consumer behaviour can be treated as a model (Stankevičienė, 2005). This means that consumer behaviour is not determined by individual factors, but by forces that need to be addressed systematically, i.e. as related to each other. Knowing the determinants of consumer behaviour and behavioural characteristics it is possible, in certain cases, redirect consumer behaviour to seek safety and to avoid misunderstandings and risks. I. e. encourage consumers, when choosing financial services, to pursue financial security objectives alongside the financial services they purchase. Alternatively, promote greater responsibility and responsible financial management of both service providers and consumers. An example is the strategies of single women in financial security identified by Ahmad et al (2018): 1) trying to increase income by taking on a second job, working longer hours, trying to increase salary, or 2) reducing costs by planning to buy things in advance, i.e. finding the best prices, and wisely using items to reduce frequent purchases.

The findings of the study by Montmarquette and Viennot-Briot (2016) are also important for modelling consumer behaviour. Montmarquette and Viennot-Briot (2016) reconfirms in their study the positive value of having financial advice. It was found that key factors that positively affect the probability of having a financial advisor are: income, savings capacity, age, education level and financial literacy. Lyons et al (2018) believe that public financial inclusion and the use of technology have a significant and positive impact on financial security, and suggestions that promote financial inclusion and technology use could play an important role. Financial inclusion refers to the process of promoting affordable, timely and adequate access to regulated financial products and services and broadening their use by all segments of society through the implementation of tailored existing and innovative approaches, including financial awareness and education, with a view to promote financial wellbeing as well as economic and social inclusion (OECD, 2018).

In this section, only a part of the available financial security measures was investigated. Some of the most important financial security measures can be implemented through legal measures regulating certain aspects of the activities of market participants or through educational measures that inform consumers not only about the possibilities offered by financial services but also be alert about possible risks and dangers. It is also important to analyse, model and predict consumer behaviour and apply appropriate management tools. A broad spectrum of financial security measures and an integrated approach to assurance of financial security measures and their application can help to ensure financial security when purchasing of financial services and prevent potential negative economic consequences.

Conclusions

Trends in the integration and development of the financial sector and global development in the political, economic, technological and social fields have led to the need to analyse various aspects of financial security, including the link between financial security and the acquisition of financial services. The theoretical analysis of the interconnectivity of financial security and financial services and the examined factors defining and influencing financial services allow to confirm the connections between financial services and financial security. It has been established that financial security arises from the need to ensure financial security through the acquisition of financial services and other circumstances

affecting financial services - development of financial infrastructure, risks, appropriate and inappropriate financial solutions.

Elements of behaviour such as attitudes towards the surrounding environment, ethics, morals, attitudes, education, character, fear, egoism, greed, insecurity, etc. can influence financial decisions. Depending on whether right or wrong financial decisions are made, this may not only determine the future of financial perspective but also the desired outcome of financial security.

Taking these factors into account, it becomes possible to develop and implement a model of financial services that supports financial security. Measures in this model should include management, legal regulatory, financial education and other measures to enhance financial security disclosed in the article.

The results of the theoretical analysis of the interconnectivity of financial services and financial security confirm the multiplicity and problematic nature of financial security, which revealed the need for further and more detailed research on financial security as a separate economic phenomenon. Therefore, in further studies, it is appropriate to analyse the strength of the impact of financial security measures, models for determining the level of financial security and to assess the potential impact of financial security on financial infrastructure.

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