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Research

UMPSA’s FinTech Tycoon innovation empowers financial and fintech literacy for future generations

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PEKAN, 5 June 2026 – In line with the rapid development of financial technology (FinTech) and the need to enhance financial literacy among the public, a lecturer from Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA) has introduced a more creative and interactive learning approach through the development of an educational game based on real-world simulations known as FinTech Tycoon.

The innovation, developed by a lecturer from the Faculty of Industrial Management (FPI), Dr. Norwazli Abdul Wahab, is the outcome of research that combines game-based learning with modern financial concepts and financial technology to help students understand the world of finance more practically and enjoyably.

According to her, FinTech Tycoon was developed as a learning platform that simulates real-world challenges and opportunities in the financial industry and the rapidly evolving financial technology ecosystem.

“This game is designed to provide students with a more meaningful learning experience through direct involvement in financial decision-making, risk management, startup development, and exploration of various financial technology innovations such as e-wallets, artificial intelligence (AI), and blockchain.

“Through this approach, students not only understand the theories learned in the classroom but can also see how these concepts are applied in real-world situations.

“The idea to develop FinTech Tycoon emerged around 2023 from the need to make the teaching and learning process in FinTech more interactive and capable of increasing student engagement,” she said.

She said the game concept was also inspired by well-known financial games such as Cashflow and Monopoly but was enhanced by incorporating financial technology elements that are more relevant to current industry needs.

“Students today understand concepts more easily when they are actively involved in the learning process.

“Therefore, I see educational games as an effective medium for bridging the gap between academic theory and industry reality,” she said.

The FinTech Tycoon prototype was completed in 2024 before undergoing several rounds of classroom testing and continuous improvement to ensure that its content and game mechanisms met the established learning objectives.

In the game, players begin their journey as individuals or FinTech entrepreneurs who must build a business empire through various financial and investment strategies.

Throughout the game, players accumulate assets through investment opportunities and startup development, manage their finances using special in-game currencies such as FinCoins and Trust Coins, and face various market challenges through Investment Cards, Challenge Cards, and Market Change Cards.

At the same time, players must also make strategic decisions involving modern technologies such as blockchain, AI, and e-wallets, which can influence their financial performance.

The main objective of the game is to achieve financial freedom and build a successful FinTech empire through effective planning and strategies.

According to Dr. Norwazli, the development of FinTech Tycoon goes beyond simply creating an educational game, as it also aims to enhance financial and digital literacy among students and the general public.

“This product provides a more applied and high-impact learning experience, in line with the needs of 21st-century education, which emphasises experiential learning.

“At the same time, it helps address the lack of practical exposure in financial education and reduces the gap between theoretical learning and the realities of the industry,” she said.

The potential of FinTech Tycoon has also attracted the attention of various parties, including the Securities Commission Malaysia, with the product having the opportunity to be presented in a special pitching session.

According to her, representatives from the Securities Commission Malaysia also tried the game themselves and provided very positive feedback, particularly regarding its potential as an interactive educational tool capable of enhancing public understanding of finance and investment.

In addition, she has received several invitations from schools and industry to introduce the product to various target groups that could potentially benefit from the innovation.

In an effort to expand the impact of the research, she also plans to develop a digital version and mobile application of FinTech Tycoon in the future, as well as integrate simulations using real financial market data to enhance the user experience.

Special modules on Islamic finance, environmental, social and governance (ESG), cryptocurrency, and various current topics are also planned to ensure that the game's content remains relevant to industry developments.

She also sees opportunities for strategic collaboration with financial technology industry players such as Payments Network Malaysia (PayNet), Touch 'n Go, and Amanah Saham Nasional Berhad (ASNB) to strengthen the real-world elements of the game.

"My hope is that FinTech Tycoon can become a standard learning tool in finance and FinTech and be widely used in schools, universities, and industry organisations.

"I also hope that this product can be commercialised as a locally developed educational product capable of making an impact not only in Malaysia but also internationally," she said.

At the same time, she plans to expand the research to include the measurement of learning impact and academic publications, while also creating opportunities for FinTech Tycoon to be used by entrepreneurs and the general public.

The current prototype is estimated to cost between RM170 and RM200 to produce, depending on the quality of the materials used, including the game board, cards, and special tokens.

The cost is expected to be optimised through mass production once the product enters the commercialisation phase.

The excellence of this innovation has also been recognised with a Gold Medal at the International Invention, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Idea Competition 2025 (i3EC'25) and a gold medal at CITREX 2026.

In addition, FinTech Tycoon was successfully registered with the Intellectual Property Corporation of Malaysia (MyIPO) in 2025 as a step towards protecting its intellectual property and strengthening its future commercialisation potential.

The achievement demonstrates that educational innovations developed at UMPSA can not only enhance students' learning experiences but also contribute to the development of a more financially literate society that is better prepared to face the challenges of the future digital economy.

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