

Understanding the investment behaviour and awareness of women in professional sectors

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Abstract

This study explores the awareness and preferences of women professionals regarding various investment avenues, reflecting their financial literacy and decision-making patterns. With the growing participation of women in the workforce and their increased financial independence, understanding their investment behavior has become crucial for financial planners and policymakers. The research investigates the level of awareness women professionals have about traditional and modern investment options, including fixed deposits, mutual funds, stocks, real estate, insurance, and emerging digital platforms like cryptocurrencies. The study utilizes a survey-based methodology, collecting data from women across different professional fields and age groups. The findings indicate that while traditional investment avenues remain popular, there is a gradual shift toward market-linked and technology-driven options among younger professionals. However, gaps in financial literacy and access to investment knowledge persist, particularly concerning complex and high-risk products. This study investigates the awareness of women professionals toward various investment avenues, analyzing factors such as marital status, age, education, and profession. These findings indicate that demographic and professional factors do not significantly influence the level of investment awareness among women professionals. The results highlight a need for targeted financial literacy programs to enhance understanding of diverse investment options across various groups.

Keywords: investment avenues, financial decisions, economic growth and personal financial security.

Introduction

In the modern financial landscape, the role of women as active economic participants has undergone significant transformation. With increasing financial independence and a growing presence in the professional world, women today play a crucial role in household and individual financial decision-making. This evolution necessitates an understanding of their awareness and preferences concerning various investment avenues. Women professionals, given their unique financial goals and challenges, represent a key demographic for financial planning and advisory services. However, their investment behavior is often influenced by factors such as risk perception, income levels, financial literacy, and socio-cultural norms. Investment avenues range from traditional options such as fixed deposits (FDs), National Savings Certificates (NSCs), and gold to market-linked instruments like stocks, bonds, and mutual funds. Additionally, emerging digital assets, such as cryptocurrencies and robo-advisory platforms, are gaining prominence. Each investment option offers distinct risk-return profiles, liquidity levels, and tax benefits,

requiring informed decision-making. Awareness of these options is critical to achieving financial security and long-term wealth creation.

Despite women's growing financial empowerment, research suggests disparities in investment awareness compared to their male counterparts. Traditional investment choices like gold and real estate often dominate their portfolios, while modern, high-yield instruments remain underutilized. Moreover, the interplay of demographic factors such as marital status, age, education, and profession further shapes investment preferences and awareness levels. For instance, married women might prioritize investments with stability and security, while younger, unmarried women may explore high-risk, high-reward avenues. Similarly, professional background and education levels can influence exposure to financial concepts and products. This study aims to bridge the gap in understanding the investment awareness levels among women professionals, identifying patterns, preferences, and areas for improvement. By examining demographic and professional factors, the research seeks to uncover whether these characteristics significantly impact women's knowledge of diverse investment options. It also explores the extent to which traditional socio-economic factors continue to influence financial decision-making among this group.

The findings from this study are expected to provide valuable insights for financial institutions, policymakers, and educators. Understanding the awareness levels and preferences of women professionals can guide the development of tailored financial literacy programs, targeted marketing strategies, and inclusive financial products. Ultimately, empowering women with the knowledge to make informed investment decisions can contribute to their financial independence and broader economic stability. In this context, this study endeavors to answer key questions: How aware are women professionals of the available investment avenues? Do factors such as marital status, age, education, and profession influence their level of awareness? By addressing these questions, the research aims to contribute to the growing discourse on gender and financial empowerment, fostering an inclusive and equitable financial ecosystem.

Rationale of the Study

In recent years, the role of women in the workforce has undergone a significant transformation, with an increasing number of women attaining financial independence and actively participating in economic decision-making. However, despite this progress, there remains a gap in the financial literacy and investment awareness of women professionals, which can impact their ability to make informed decisions about wealth creation and financial security. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the awareness levels of women professionals toward various investment avenues, including traditional options like fixed deposits and bonds, as well as modern alternatives such as mutual funds, real estate, and digital investments. By identifying the factors that influence their investment preferences and the barriers they face, this research seeks to provide insights that can guide policymakers, financial institutions, and educators in designing targeted initiatives to improve financial literacy and empower women to take control of their financial futures. The findings are particularly relevant in fostering economic growth and ensuring gender equity in financial decision-making.

Literature review

Sharma and Kapoor (2024) examine the impact of demographic factors on investment awareness among women in the workforce. Using a sample of working women across diverse industries, the study explores how variables such as age, education, marital status, and income influence their knowledge of various investment avenues. The findings reveal significant correlations between higher education levels, income brackets, and increased awareness, while younger age groups demonstrate a preference for modern investment options. The study underscores the need for targeted financial literacy programs tailored to specific demographic profiles, aiming to bridge gaps in investment knowledge and foster informed financial decision-making among women professionals.

Banerjee, S., & Iyer, P. (2023) explore the awareness and adoption of sustainable investment options among women professionals in their study published in *Sustainable Business Review*. The research examines how women in various professional sectors perceive and engage with sustainable investment avenues such as green bonds, ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) funds, and socially responsible investments (SRI). Through a survey of 300 women professionals, the study identifies key factors influencing adoption, including environmental consciousness, risk tolerance, and the influence of financial advisors. Findings suggest that while awareness of sustainable investments is growing, adoption remains limited, primarily due to a lack of sufficient knowledge and understanding of these options.

Mishra, & Patel (2022) examine the investment choices of women professionals, focusing on the influence of education and income. The study explores how these factors shape their financial decisions, preferences, and risk tolerance in various investment avenues. By analyzing survey data from women professionals across different income brackets and educational backgrounds, the research identifies key trends and disparities in investment behavior. The findings suggest that higher income levels and advanced education significantly correlate with greater awareness of investment options and more diverse investment portfolios. The study emphasizes the need for targeted financial education programs to empower women and bridge existing gaps in investment knowledge.

Agarwal and Bansal (2021) examine investment awareness and preferences among working women in India, shedding light on their financial literacy and decision-making patterns. The study utilizes survey data to explore the factors influencing investment choices, including age, income, and education. Findings reveal that while traditional investment options like fixed deposits and gold dominate preferences, awareness of market-linked instruments such as mutual funds and stocks remains limited. The study highlights the need for targeted financial education programs to bridge the knowledge gap and empower women to make informed investment decisions. This research contributes to understanding gender-specific financial behavior in India.

This study by **Patel and Gupta (2020)** examines the influence of financial literacy on investment decision-making among women professionals in Madhya Pradesh. The research aims to understand how financial literacy levels among women professionals affect their investment

choices and decision-making processes. The study utilizes a quantitative approach, collecting data through surveys and analyzing it using statistical methods. The findings highlight the importance of financial literacy in empowering women professionals to make informed investment decisions. The results contribute to the existing literature on financial literacy and offer insights for policymakers and organizations seeking to promote financial inclusion and women's economic empowerment.

This study conducted in Madhya Pradesh, India, examines the relationship between financial literacy and investment preferences among women professionals. **Patel and Mishra (2020)** investigate how the level of financial literacy impacts the investment decisions of women professionals in this region. The study provides insights into the investment patterns and preferences of women professionals and emphasizes the importance of financial literacy in shaping their investment behavior. The findings contribute to the existing literature on gender differences in investment decisions and highlight the need for targeted financial education programs to empower women professionals in making informed investment choices.

Singh and Dubey (2019) focus on understanding the factors that influence investment decision-making among women professionals in Madhya Pradesh, India. The researchers conducted a comparative analysis to identify the key determinants that affect investment choices among women in different professional fields. The findings shed light on the significant factors that influence investment decisions, such as financial knowledge, risk perception, income level, and social support. This research contributes to the existing literature on women's investment behavior and provides insights for policymakers, financial institutions, and individuals aiming to enhance women's participation in investment decision-making.

This study conducted by **Verma and Mishra (2019)** focuses on examining the relationship between financial literacy and investment choices among women professionals in Madhya Pradesh. The authors conducted an empirical analysis to explore the impact of financial literacy on investment decisions made by women professionals. The study utilized survey data collected from a sample of women professionals in Madhya Pradesh and employed statistical techniques to analyze the data. The findings of the study provide insights into the importance of financial literacy in influencing investment choices among women professionals and contribute to the existing literature on financial literacy and investment behavior.

Research Gap

This gap presents an opportunity for further investigation into the development of gender-sensitive financial education initiatives that address the specific needs and challenges faced by women in the workforce. Ultimately, these gaps point to a need for more targeted, region-specific, and intersectional research that explores not only the demographic and economic factors but also the evolving digital landscape and its impact on investment awareness and adoption among women professionals.

Research Methodology

Objective: To study the awareness of women professionals towards various investment avenues. The research design of this study is descriptive, aimed at study the awareness level of women professionals in Indore city towards various investment avenues. A convenience sampling technique was used to select 525 women professionals from diverse backgrounds, ensuring a comprehensive representation of the population. Data were gathered using a self-constructed questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale, allowing respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on various aspects of awareness level for investment choices. The data were then analyzed with SPSS 26.0, employing t-test and One Way ANOVA to test the hypotheses and assess the strength and direction of relationships between the variables.

Results

Table 1: Reliability Statistics on Awareness of women professionals towards various investment avenues

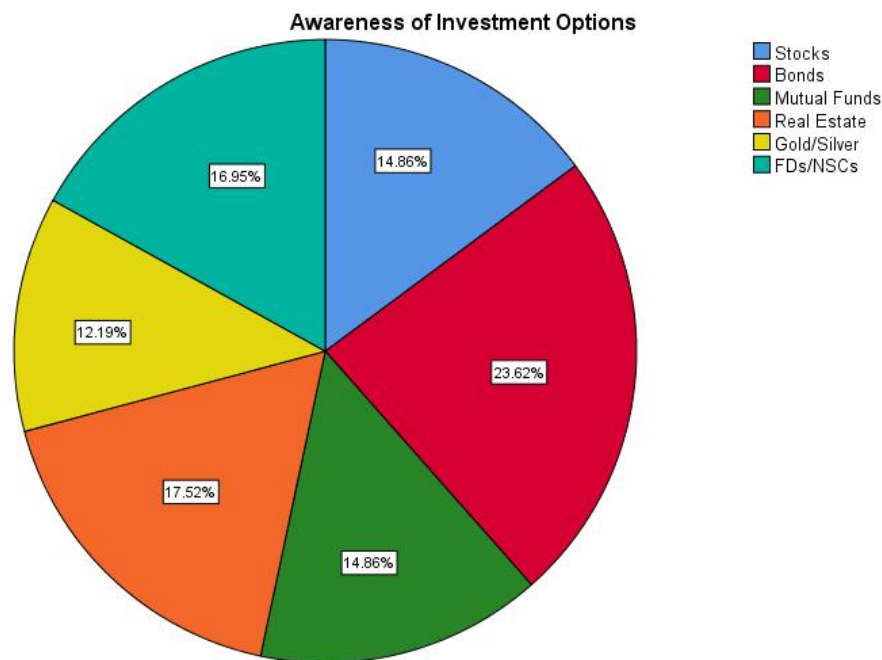
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.945	12

The reliability statistics indicate a high level of internal consistency in the responses related to the awareness of women professionals towards various investment avenues. With a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.945 for 12 items, the data suggests that the survey items are strongly correlated and measure the same underlying construct.

Table 2: Awareness of Investment Options

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Stocks	78	14.9	14.9	14.9
	Bonds	124	23.6	23.6	38.5
	Mutual Funds	78	14.9	14.9	53.3
	Real Estate	92	17.5	17.5	70.9
	Gold/Silver	64	12.2	12.2	83.0
	FDs/NSCs	89	17.0	17.0	100.0
	Total	525	100.0	100.0	

The data reveals a distribution of investment awareness among 525 women professionals. The most familiar investment option is bonds, with 23.6% of women indicating awareness, followed by real estate (17.5%) and fixed deposits (FDs) or National Savings Certificates (NSCs) at 17.0%. Mutual funds and stocks each garner 14.9% awareness, while gold or silver as an investment is known to 12.2% of the women surveyed. This shows that while a variety of investment options are recognized, bonds are the most prevalent, and precious metals like gold or silver are the least recognized among the options presented.



H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the awareness of married and unmarried women professionals towards various investment avenues.

Table 3: Group Statistics on Marital Status of Women Professionals

	Marital Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
awareness	Married	348	42.4253	12.94870	.253	.800
	Unmarried	177	42.1186	13.18628		

The group statistics show that the mean awareness score for married women is 42.43 with a standard deviation of 12.95, while for unmarried women, the mean is 42.12 with a standard deviation of 13.19. The t-value of 0.253 and p-value of 0.800 suggest that there is no statistically significant difference in the awareness levels between the two groups, as the p-value is well above the conventional threshold of 0.05. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis (H₀₁), indicating that marital status does not significantly impact the level of awareness of investment avenues among women professionals.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference among the age group of women professionals towards various investment avenues.

Table 4: ANOVA on Age group and the awareness of women professionals towards various investment avenues

						95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
N			Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	F-value	p-value
Below Years	30	71	44.5211	12.84174	1.52403	41.4815	47.5607	1.433	.211
30-35 Years		158	41.1456	12.60261	1.00261	39.1652	43.1259		
35-40 Years		126	43.3889	12.55641	1.11861	41.1750	45.6028		
40-45 Years		82	42.7561	13.65769	1.50824	39.7552	45.7570		
45-50 Years		43	38.9535	13.79951	2.10440	34.7066	43.2003		
above Years	50	45	42.4222	13.72703	2.04630	38.2982	46.5463		
Total		525	42.3219	13.01750	.56813	41.2058	43.4380		

The ANOVA test examines whether there is a significant difference in the awareness of various investment avenues among women professionals across different age groups. The mean awareness scores range from 38.95 (for women aged 45-50 years) to 44.52 (for those below 30 years). The standard deviations for all groups are similar, indicating comparable levels of variability in awareness within each group. The F-value of 1.433 and the p-value of 0.211 suggest that there is no statistically significant difference in investment awareness among the different age groups, as the p-value is greater than the 0.05 threshold for significance. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is retained, meaning there is no significant difference in awareness of investment avenues among women professionals based on their age group.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference among the education group of women professionals towards various investment avenues.

Table 5: ANOVA on Education group and the awareness of women professionals towards various investment avenues

N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		F-value	p-value
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		

12th Passed	60	42.3500	13.47417	1.73951	38.8693	45.8307	1.704	.165
Bachelor's Degree	169	42.4675	12.20121	.93855	40.6146	44.3203		
Master's Degree	189	43.5132	12.97076	.94348	41.6521	45.3744		
Doctorate/Professional Degree	107	39.9720	13.93412	1.34706	37.3013	42.6426		
Total	525	42.3219	13.01750	.56813	41.2058	43.4380		

The ANOVA analysis explores whether there is a significant difference among education groups of women professionals in terms of their awareness of various investment avenues. The table presents the mean awareness scores for each education group, with the total sample size (N = 525) showing a mean awareness score of 42.32 and a standard deviation of 13.02.

The group with a Master's degree has the highest mean awareness score (43.51), followed by those with a Bachelor's degree (42.47), 12th-passed professionals (42.35), and those with Doctorate/Professional degrees having the lowest mean score (39.97). However, the F-value of 1.704 and p-value of 0.165 indicate that the differences among these educational groups are not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis (H_{03}). This suggests that education level does not significantly influence the awareness of investment avenues among women professionals.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference among the education group of women professionals towards various investment avenues.

Table 6: ANOVA on Profession group and the awareness of women professionals towards various investment avenues

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		F-value	p-value
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Academicians	47	39.8723	14.65490	2.13764	35.5695	44.1752	1.240	.279
Corporates	119	43.0336	12.29505	1.12709	40.8017	45.2656		
Banks	107	43.8785	12.41401	1.20011	41.4992	46.2578		
Beautician	41	40.6585	13.63930	2.13010	36.3534	44.9636		
Self-employed	93	43.3226	12.99930	1.34796	40.6454	45.9998		

Consultants	47	43.2766	12.07351	1.7611 0	39.7317	46.8215		
Healthcare Professionals	36	39.9167	12.72203	2.1203 4	35.6122	44.2212		
Lawyers	35	38.9143	15.26120	2.5796 1	33.6719	44.1567		
Total	525	42.3219	13.01750	.56813	41.2058	43.4380		

The ANOVA results explore whether there is a significant difference in the awareness of investment avenues among women professionals from different educational backgrounds. The null hypothesis (H_{04}) assumes no significant difference in investment awareness across these groups.

The mean scores for awareness vary across professions, with bankers (43.88) and corporate professionals (43.03) showing slightly higher awareness compared to academicians (39.87) and healthcare professionals (39.92). However, the F-value of 1.240 and p-value of 0.279 indicate that the differences in mean awareness scores across these groups are not statistically significant. Since the p-value is greater than the typical significance threshold of 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This suggests that, in this sample, the education group of women professionals does not significantly influence their awareness of various investment avenues.

Conclusion

This study highlights that women professionals exhibit varying levels of awareness towards different investment avenues, with bonds, real estate, and fixed deposits being the most recognized options. Despite differences in professional backgrounds, age, marital status, and education, no significant demographic or professional factors were found to influence their investment awareness. The results suggest that women, across various groups, share a similar understanding of available investment options, but there is a noticeable gap in the recognition of more complex or modern investment avenues such as gold/silver and market-linked products. To address these gaps, it is crucial to implement targeted financial education initiatives that can equip women professionals with the knowledge to make informed and confident investment decisions. Such efforts could foster financial empowerment and greater participation in the investment landscape, ultimately contributing to their financial security and independence.

Suggestions

1. There is a need for tailored financial education programs aimed specifically at women professionals. These programs should focus on increasing awareness of diverse investment avenues such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds, real estate, and emerging options like cryptocurrencies.
2. Employers can organize workshops or seminars on financial planning and investment strategies within the workplace. Since women professionals often have limited time for

independent research, integrating such educational opportunities into their work environment would increase accessibility and participation.

3. Financial advisors should consider offering services that cater specifically to women, acknowledging their unique financial goals and challenges.

4. Women professionals often exhibit lower levels of risk tolerance in investment decisions. Financial education campaigns should focus on building confidence and empowering women to explore higher-return but riskier investment options, such as stocks and mutual funds, while highlighting the importance of balanced portfolios.

5. Financial institutions and banks should collaborate with organizations to provide women-centric investment products, as well as discounted advisory services. They can also provide user-friendly platforms and tools for women professionals to track and manage their investments with ease.

6. The low awareness of digital investment avenues, such as cryptocurrency and peer-to-peer lending, calls for educational campaigns aimed at these newer platforms. Highlighting their potential benefits and risks will allow women to diversify their investment portfolios effectively.

7. Women professionals could benefit from group-based learning models where they can share experiences and insights about investment avenues. Such community-driven initiatives can foster confidence and collective learning, creating a support system for women as they navigate their investment journeys.

By addressing these suggestions, the financial industry can ensure that women professionals have the knowledge and tools necessary to make well-informed investment decisions, thereby promoting their financial independence and security.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research on the awareness of women professionals towards various investment avenues could explore the role of digital financial tools and platforms in enhancing financial literacy. Investigating the impact of financial education programs tailored to women's needs and preferences could provide insights into effective strategies for improving investment knowledge. Additionally, examining regional and cultural differences in investment awareness could shed light on how societal factors influence women's investment decisions.

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