# Financial Literacy and its Impact on Investment Decision in Nepalese Share Market

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### Abstract

Financial literacy and investment decision are interrelated terms which have a great significance in the field of finance. This study aims at examining the impact of financial literacy on investment decision with respect to the individual investors of Nepalese share market. Financial literacy has been expressed in four dimensions- personal savings, risk tolerance behavior, investment option and financial knowledge. Two hundred and twenty- one respondents were selected by using convenience sampling method from the Koshi province of Nepal. Quantitative method of data analysis has been employed on primary data collected through structured questionnaires. Pearson correlation coefficient and ordinary least square regression model has been applied for examining the association between financial literacy and investment decision. The result of the analysis showed the positive and significant impact of personal saving, risk tolerance behavior, investment options and financial knowledge on investment decision. This study suggests to increase the level of literacy on financial matters of the individual investor to improve their potentiality in managing and investing funds in complex and everchanging financial environment in order to perform optimum investment decision.

*Keywords:* financial knowledge, financial literacy, investment, risk, share market

#### Introduction

Financial literacy is a key term, which is gaining much more values and importance from the researchers, policy makers, investors and financial institutions (Lusardi, 2019; Kumari, 2020). Financial literacy is concerned with the theories and principles, and skill of utilizing them in finance and economic functions. Investment decision is one of the important finance functions related to the long-term planning of the investor funds for future benefit, which is irreversible in nature.

Every human being intends to have standards of living and maintain it throughout his/her life. The state of fulfilment of desired standard of living is the financial wellbeing (Bruggen et. al. 2017). Investor should decide to invest his/her saving in financial assets wisely because, Suitable investment decision makes the life of investors prosperous (Raut, 2020). Grohmann (2018) found that the people in Thailand were financially illiterate and had to depend on their children in their retired life as they could not decide to invest. Thus, financial knowledge helps to analyze complex financial assets and make a good investment decision (Thomas and Spataro, 2018).

In this era of globalization and digitalization, the task of investing for future has become more complex which demands specific knowledge and skills. Adams and Rau (2022) suggested that the investor should have financial literacy for developing knowledge and skills in finance which enhance the capability of making informed investment decision. Coscum et.al. (2016) stated that there is central role of financial literacy in making investment decision. Financial literacy supports in understanding the complex financial situation while deciding the investment plan, so that the financially literate people can utilize their knowledge and skills to judge the financial conditions and perform financial decision (Gachango, 2014).

The absence of financial knowledge in an investor ultimately leads to irrational investment decision, so that the decision is significantly influenced by the behavioral factor of the investor. In this situation, Investment decisions are mostly guided by over confidence or optimistic and pessimistic behavior of the investor (Breuer, 2014). Financial knowledge and information are the pre requisite for the informed and rational investment decision making. This implies that the financial literacy is the part of investment decision that supports selecting the most appropriate investment proposals.

Michale and Lusardi (2007) claimed the strong bonding between financial literacy and investment of saving for the retirement.

The history of Nepal stock exchange goes 31 years back to January 13, 1994. In the recent years every day trading in Nepal stock exchange has been grown up by both the transaction number and transaction volume. Capital market and financial intermediaries have been increased in their number and type in the recent two decades. Individual investors of Nepalese share market cover the majority share of the total every day traded volume. However, individual traders cover a few percent of the total Nepalese people and large part is still unaware about it. Knowledge of Personal saving, risk tolerance, investment option and financial matter plays important role for the individual investment in share market. Improvement in the effectiveness of financial literacy programs can boost up investors' saving and financial decision behaviors (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2017). This study attempts to examine the impact of financial literacy on investment decision of individual investors of Nepalese share market.

#### Literature review

# **Financial Literacy**

The ability to efficiently create, manage, and use funds for anticipated future income is known as financial literacy. Financial literacy is the capacity to comprehend how money functions in this day and age, as well as how a person invests and manages their money (Addeldayem, 2016). Assessing and managing long-term financial resources for investors' financial well-being is the primary goal of financial literacy (Arora, 2016). Financial literacy helps in analyzing and understanding the ever-changing financial environment and risk factors associated with the financial products. Understanding commonplace circumstances like insurance, credit, borrowing, and savings is a component of financial literacy (Roy and Jane, 2018; Singh and Kumar, 2017). Financial literacy, according to Atkinson et al. (2007), is the capacity to comprehend financial concepts and products as well as the ability to assess financial risks and opportunities in a changing environment. Financial literacy is the knowledge that enables a person to calculate simple and compound interest, handle risk diversification, and calculate the inflation rate (Rooji et al., 2011). An investor should be wise, alert and informed regarding the financial products, opportunities and risk before making rational

investment decision. Lack of financial knowledge and skill either make the investor leave the profitable investment opportunity or depend on his/her speculation leading to a great loss. The basics of money and assets are understood by those who are financially literate; they are educated, knowledgeable, and conscious of issues pertaining to assets, taxes, insurance, banking, investments, and money management (Semercioglu & Akcay, 2016). Financial literacy facilitates the development of financial product concepts, knowledge, and skills as well as the capacity to assess financial risks and opportunities (OECD, 2011). Bongomin et.al. (2016) described the following indicator for measuring the financial literacy: a) Actions that are connected to one's endeavors and budgetary goals known as behavior (b) Skill, which describes the capacity to comprehend the benefit and carry out basic financial calculations. (c) Knowledge, which describes one's degree of comprehension of financial instruments and products. (d)Attitude, which demonstrates the capacity to decide and act effectively.

#### **Investment Decision**

Investing is the practice of allocating a specific sum of money now with the hope of receiving returns later. There exists a chance of not realizing the expected return in future which, creates risk that the investment is always exposed to. Putri and Homidi (2019) stated the following indicators to measure the investment decision (a) Expected income to be realized in future as return (b)Uncertainty of future expected income, risk. (c)Value of money with reference to the length of investment period and d) time value of money.

Financial literacy aids rational decision makers in making investment decisions since rational decision making is predicated on pertinent financial knowledge and abilities. Irrational investors base their decisions on their positive experiences, particularly on a string of profitable prior investments that ultimately instill a sense of overconfidence in them (Utami & Sitanggana, 2021).

## **Financial Literacy and Investment Decision**

Sabri (2016) investigated the connection between Malasian millennials' investment decision-making and their degree of financial literacy. This study discovered a strong and favorable correlation between investing decision-making and financial literacy. Malasian millennials were found financially literate but were unable to

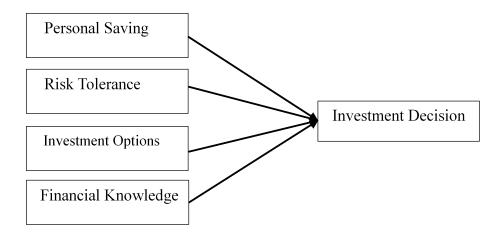
differentiate between stocks and mutual funds. They were also found to be unaware about inflation. DAT (2020), in a similar study of undergraduate in Sri Lanka, claimed the positive and significant impact of financial literacy on investment decision. N. Utami and M. L. Sittangana investigated how financial literacy affected investment choices in relation to Jakarta's Z generation. They discovered that financial literacy had a favorable and noteworthy influence on the Z generation's investment choices in Jakarta. Subedi (2023) looked at "financial literacy and investment decisions in Nepalese share market." He determined that inadequate financial literacy and information impede saving and prudent financial decision-making. Lack of understanding fundamental financial principles leads to detrimental saving and investment choices. He established a significant correlation between financial literacy and investment choices in the Nepalese stock market. Agha and Khan (2023) demonstrated a favorable correlation between financial literacy and investment intention. Mugo (2016) established a substantial positive effect of financial literacy on investment decision-making. Senda et al. (2020) found that financial literacy and demographic factors do not affect investment decisions. The preceding discourse illustrates the discrepancies and variances among research concerning financial literacy levels and their influence on investment choices. This paper examines the financial literacy levels of the Nepalese stock market investors and the correlation between their financial literacy and investment decisions.

## **Conceptual Frame Work and Hypothesis**

Financial literacy is the independent variable and investment decisions is the dependent variable in this study. Both of these variables for an individual are related to individual attributes that are not directly measurable. Financial literacy, in this study, is represented by four variables- personal saving, risk tolerance, investment option and financial knowledge. Each of the independent variables is measured through five constructs and the dependent variable is measured through eight constructs using fivepoint Likert scale. Demographic variables of respondents encompass age, sex, education, monthly income and investment experience. The conceptual framework of this study is illustrated in the subsequent diagram.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



# **Personal Savings and Investment Decision**

Personal saving refers to the surplus fund that an individual accumulates after meeting his all expenditures. Personal saving contributes to the equity fund and provide the initial fund for the investment. Availability of the initial investment fund allows the individual to think over the investing activities and motivate to choose the investment option. Personal savings encourages individuals to bear the risk and make investment decision (Gachango, 2014). Arianti (2022) stated that the availability of personal savings motivates the individuals to invest in any kind of assets. Personal savings supports in investing activities by providing the earnest money (Kapoor et. al, 2011). Subedi (2023) showed that the personal saving has significant positive relation with the investment decision. Based on these evidences following hypothesis was formulated H.: There is significant relationship between personal saving and investment decision.

#### **Risk Tolerance label and Investment Decisions**

Risk tolerance label is the personal attribute of the individual to deal with the risk or uncertainty associated with the investment options. Types of assets that an individual prefers to invest is influenced by his risk tolerance behavior (Pak and Mohammad, 2015, Awais et.al, 2016)). Thus, risk tolerance level shapes the investment activities of an individual. Individual experiences, personal traits, investment horizon, financial information and knowledge and other external environment collectively contribute to the risk tolerance behavior of an individual. Subedi (2023) investigated the positive and significant relationship between risk tolerance level of individual and

investment decision. Individual with high risk tolerance level prefers the highly risky assets to invest whereas, the choice is just opposite if the individual has low risk tolerance level (Pompain, 2012, Nguyen, 2016). These evidences support the formation of the following hypothesis.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is significant positive impact of risk tolerance label on investment decision.

# **Investment Option and Investment Decision**

Investment options refer to the opportunities like stocks, bonds, securities, and other market instruments available for the investment. An individual has his/her own understanding about the risk-return pattern and price trend of different assets which makes them familiar to some sort of assets depending upon their experiences. It leads to a condition that the investors have their own preferences for selecting only certain investment options and motivate him for the repeated transactions (Pak and Mahmood, 2015, Snelbecker et. al, 1990). Regular investment activities of an individual make him believe that he possesses good financial knowledge and skills as he feels more secured and ease for selecting the investment options. Frequent participation in the investing activities enhances the level of financial literacy of the investors (Vam Rooji et. al, 2011, Bucher Koener and Lusardi, 2011). Subedi (2023) found the significant positive impact of knowledge of investment option on investment decision. These evidences support the formation of following hypothesis

H<sub>3</sub>: There is significant positive impact of investment option on investment decision.

## Financial Knowledge and Investment Decision

Financial knowledge refers to the understanding of finance related matters that includes financial theories and practices, risk and return, time value of money, profit and loss, types of financial assets, risk diversification etc. It is the part of financial literacy that helps an individual in making wise and rational investment decision (Musundi, 2014, Neupane, 2021). An individual with financial knowledge can analyze risk and return of the investment options and make a good decision to diversify the risk of the portfolio. Mugo (2016) revealed the significant positive impact of financial knowledge on investment decision. Subedi (2023) stated that the better level of financial knowledge leads to the better level of investment decision in an individual. These evidences support the formation of following hypothesis.

H<sub>4</sub>: Financial knowledge significantly effects the investment decision.

Mwathi et al. (2017), Bongomin et al. (2016), Mugo (2016), and Fachrudin and Fachrudin (2016) observed the correlation between financial literacy and investment choices. Abdedayam (2016) and Awais (2016) established a beneficial correlation between financial literacy and investment choices. Conversely, Senda et al. (2020) asserted a lack of correlation between them.

#### Methodology

This study is based on quantitative method, and causal comparative research design has been employed to examine the relationship between financial literacy and investment decision. Individual Investors with experience of investing in Nepalese share market constitutes the population of this study. Primary data were collected administering the structured online questionnaires through mail and social network to the selected respondents of koshi province, Nepal. The set of questionnaires were obtained by modifying from the study of Uttami and Sitanggana (2021), Bongomin et. al. (2016) and Putri and Hamadi (2019). Each of the independent variables were measured through five different constructs and eight constructs were used to measure the investment decision. Five-point Likert scale was used to measure the agreement and disagreement of the respondents.

Table 1 Reliability Test Statistics

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items		
PS	0.705	5		
RTL	0.710	5		
IO	0.711	5		
FK	0.725	5		
ID	0.804	8		

Respondents were selected by using convenience sampling method for the purpose of accessibility, economy and time saving. Reliability of the collected data were tested using statistical tools (Cronbach's alpha). Table 1 shows that all the variable PS,

RTB, IO, FK and ID have Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.7 and they are reliable. Pearson Correlation coefficient was used to examine the relation between the variables and multiple regression analysis was utilized for testing the hypothesis. The model specification is as follows.

$$ID = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PS + \beta_2 RTL + \beta_3 IO_+ \beta_4 FK + ei$$
 .....(1)

Where, ID= Investment Decision, PS = personal saving, RT = risk tolerance, IO = investment option, FK = financial knowledge, ei = error term.

#### **Results**

In this study, 221 respondents of the Koshi province were selected randomly consisting 123 males and 98 females. Table 2 shows that 73.3% respondents are aged between 18 and 27, 5% of the respondents are below 18 and remaining are above 27. Majority of the respondents (86.9%) are having bachelor degree and 62.9% have income below 25000. Investment experience varies from below 1 year to above 5 years.

Table 2 Respondents Profile

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	123	55.7
	Female	98	44.3
Age	Below 18	11	5.0
	18-27	162	73.3
	Above 27	48	21.7
Education	Secondary level	13	5.9
	Bachelor's level	192	86.9
	above	16	7.2
Monthly Income	Below 25000	139	62.9
	25000-40000	39	17.6
	40000-65000	37	16.7
	Above 65000	6	2.7
Investment Experience	less than 1 yr	81	36.6
	1 to 3 yrs	58	26.2
	3 to 5 yrs	46	20.8
	more than 5 yrs	36	16.4

# N= 221, Sources Survey 2024

Table 3 shows the correlation coefficient between the variables. The correlation coefficient between investment option and financial knowledge is maximum (0.603). There exist moderate correlations of investment decision with independent variables-PS, RTB, IO and FK with the coefficients 0.549, 0.364, 0.360 and 0.411 respectively. The correlation between IO and PS is the minimum (0.222). All the correlation coefficients between the variables are significant at 1%.

Table 3 Correlation

	Mean	Std devi.	PS	RTL	IO	FK	ID
PS	3.93	0.67	1				
RTL	3.7	0.53	0.389**	1			
IO	5.83	0.59	0.222**	0.453**	1		
FK	3.7	0.628	0.319**	$0.407^{**}$	0.603**	1	
ID	3.644	0.657	0.549**	0.364**	0.360**	0.411**	1

<sup>\*\*.</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 shows that the value of  $R^2$  is 68.1 percent, F value =33.304 and p value =0.00, which indicates the overall fitness of this regression model. This model explains the 68.1 percent of variability in the dependent variable. Thus, 68.1 percent of the variation in investment decision is explained by the variables included in this model whereas, 31.9 percent of the variation is explained by the factors which are not included in this model. The regression coefficient of PS is 0.442 which is significant at 1% level of significance (p-value 0.00).

Personal saving has positive and significant impact on investment decision and for each unit increase in personal saving, Investment decision will increase by 0.442 unit. Coefficient of Investment option (0.134) is significant at 5% level therefore; it has positive and significant impact on investment decision. For each unit increase in IO, there will be 0.134-unit increase in investment decision. Similarly, financial knowledge has positive and significant impact on investment decision with the regression

Table 4 Regression Analysis

Model	Intercept	PS	RTL	Ю	FK	Adj R²	VIF	F
1	3.742 (0.122)	0.442 (0.000)	0.065 (0.315)	0.134 (0.048)	0.163 (0.02)	0.67	1.000	33.304
2	15.840 (0.000)		0.364 (0.000)			0.28	1.000	33.415

 $R^2 = 68.1F \text{ value} = 33.304F = \text{sig}(0.00)$ Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.67$ 

0.163. For one-unit increase in financial knowledge, there will be 0.163-unit increase in investment decision. In the model, the coefficient of RTB is 0.065 It has positive impact on investment decision but, insignificant. If other variables are not considered in the model RTB alone has also significant impact on investment decision with regression coefficient 0.364 which, reveals that each unit increase in risk tolerance behavior, increases 0.364 unit in investment decision. Thus, all the components of financial literacy have positive and significant relation with the investment decision. This finding is consistent with Fachrudin and Fachrudin (2016), Mugo (2016), Mwathi et al. (2017) and Bongomin et al. (2016).

#### Discussion

Financial literacy is essential for rational investment decisions. Identifying suitable investments amidst complex financial assets is challenging without financial knowledge in this digital age. Financial literacy enhances investors' decisions through relevant knowledge and skills. This study aims to analyze the influence of financial literacy on the investment decisions of Nepalese stock market investors. The financial literacy of individual investors was assessed using four variables; personal saving, risk tolerance behavior, investment options and financial knowledge. Each of these four variables were measured through different five constructs and investment decisions

were measured through eight constructs. The result of the regression analysis led to the acceptance of the hypothesis H1, H2, H3 and H4 indicating a substantial positive correlation between financial literacy and investment decisions among the investors of Nepalese share market. This suggests that enhanced financial literacy correlates with improved investment decision-making. This finding aligns with prior findings of Subedi (2023), Alaaraj and Bakari (2020), Putri and Hamadi (2019), Hamja and Arif (2019), Awais (2016) and Abdedayam (2016).

#### Conclusion

This study examined the impact of financial literacy on Investment decision of the investors of Nepalese share market. Financial literacy was measured in terms of personal saving, investment option, risk tolerance behavior and financial knowledge. Data obtained from two hundred and twenty-one respondents was analyzed to assess the impact of four components of financial literacy on investment decision. Results and discussion of this study have led to some important conclusions. All the four components of financial literacy are reliable and there is positive and significant correlation between each of the component of financial literacy and investment decision. All the hypothesis H1, H2, H3 and H4 are accepted proving that personal saving, risk tolerance behavior, investment option and financial knowledge significantly and positively affect investment decision. Therefore, financial literacy has positive and significant impact on investment decision of the Nepalese share market. Investment decision of the investors can be optimized by boosting the level of financial literacy of the individual investors. Nepalese investors should increase the level of their literacy in financial matters to protect themselves from risk of loss and maximize their wealth. Present investors of Nepalese share market are highly exposed to the internet and social network but, the level of financial literacy is not satisfactory. NEPSE, security board of Nepal, brokerage firms and educational institutions should make plan for and execute Intensive financial literacy program to attract the investors in Nepalese share market and shave them from severe loss. Capital market and financial institutions should highly focus on imparting the adequate information about alternative sources of financing and the financial products so that the investors can easily fulfill their financial needs for investing in appropriate financial assets.

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