Financial Literacy and Investment Decisions of Public University Students in Bayelsa State: The Role of Debt Management and Savings Literacy

Festus Emeke OGWU[1] and Confidence Joel IHENYEN (PhD)[2]
[1&2]Department of Accounting, Faculty of Management Sciences, Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State.

Corresponding Author: Confidence Joel IHENYEN (PhD)
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Abstract
The study investigated the relationship between financial literacy and investment decisions of students in Bayelsa State, focusing on trainee accountants from three universities: Niger Delta University (NDU), Federal University Otuoke (FUO), and University of Africa (UAT). Specifically, it examined the relationship between debt management, savings literacy, and investment decisions. A cross-sectional survey design was employed, with a population of 1,473 trainee accountants. A sample of 315 students was determined using Taro Yamane's formula, and Bowley's statistics was used to determine the proportional representation of each institution. A simple random sampling technique was employed to select respondents. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed with the aid of SPSS version 23. Descriptive statistics and Spearman's rank correlation coefficient explored the relationships between financial literacy dimensions and investment decisions. The findings revealed positive and significant relationships between financial literacy dimensions: debt management and savings literacy, and investment decisions. The study concludes that there is a positive and significant relationship between financial literacy and investment decisions of student in Bayelsa State. Based on the findings, the study recommends that educational institutions organize workshops and courses on debt management, covering topics like interest rates and repayment strategies, and incorporate savings literacy into the curriculum through practical lessons on building emergency funds, understanding saving techniques, and financial planning to enhance students' investment decision-making skills.

Keywords: *Financial Literacy, Debt Management, Savings Literacy, Investment Decisions, Trainee Accountants.*

1. Introduction

In contemporary times, the term literacy has expanded beyond its traditional meaning. It no longer refers solely to the ability to read and write but also includes proficiency in a particular subject, art, or discipline. Financial literacy, therefore, goes beyond academic qualifications or professional status. It reflects one's capacity to manage and utilize money effectively (Janor et al., 2016; Edeh, 2023). Financial literacy has become a subject of growing interest among researchers, practitioners, and public institutions. The World Economic Forum (2015) emphasized the importance of developing market-relevant skills, identifying financial literacy as a fundamental necessity. Similarly, the European Commission (2020) stressed the value of financial literacy in helping individuals navigate financial markets and make sound personal finance decisions.

Lusardi and Mitchell (2014) made the observation that individuals in both developed and developing countries often have inadequate financial knowledge. They do not possess the fundamental understanding that is necessary for efficient financial management. In response to this pervasive deficiency, a worldwide campaign has been launched to enhance financial education and awareness initiatives in a variety of countries (Hamza & Arif, 2019; Hira & Mugenda, 2019). Appiah (2019) compared this endeavour to a "global crusade" that is devoted to providing individuals with essential financial knowledge and enabling them to make informed financial decisions. According to Totanan et al.'s research in 2020, financial literacy is a concept that encompasses not just academic comprehension but also the practical ability to analyse, manage, and make well-informed choices about one's own personal financial concerns. According to Abdeldayem (2016), individuals who have comprehensive financial education are in a better position to make good use of the resources that are available to them, which ultimately results in an improvement in their financial well-being.

In addition, those who have a sufficient level of financial literacy are aware of the basic concepts that pertain to saving and borrowing, and they are also conversant with popular financial products such as credit facilities and insurance policies. According to Cameron et al. (2014), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2013) emphasises that financial literacy encompasses fundamental ideas linked to investment planning and asset management. Cameron et al. (2014) found that financial literacy extends to include these concepts. For the purpose of developing educational programs that are both targeted and successful, it is especially important to have a comprehensive grasp of the levels of financial literacy existing among young people. Because students are the future workforce, it is imperative that they acquire the knowledge and abilities necessary to effectively manage their own money, comprehend a variety of financial products, and make choices that are both smart and well-informed. In their study, Balagobei and Prashanthan (2021) argue that the level of financial knowledge that students possess has a substantial impact on their ability to make decisions and their self-assurance in their ability to take timely and suitable financial measures. In addition, they emphasise the significance of financial literacy as a means of facilitating the making of rational and efficient investment choices at both the individual and organisational levels, which ultimately contributes to the maintenance of economic development and stability over the long run.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in understanding the investment decisions of students, particularly as they begin to take charge of their finances and strive for wealth accumulation (Sekarwangi, 2024). Many students struggle to meet their financial needs and lack the knowledge to create wealth, save, invest, or manage risks effectively. Dabira (2018) notes that for many students, college represents their first experience of managing money independently, yet many do so without the necessary financial skills. Cases have emerged of students investing in high-risk ventures such as cryptocurrency and foreign exchange platforms, often resulting in financial loss when markets decline (Ibanga, 2021). The lack of a structured financial education system increases their vulnerability to fraudulent schemes that promise unrealistic returns. One such case is that of Ademola Mutiu, a former student at the University of Port Harcourt, who lost his tuition to a Ponzi scheme and was forced to abandon his academic pursuit (Vanguard, March 18, 2023). Given these realities, this study examined the relationship between financial literacy and investment decisions of students in Bayelsa State to determine whether improved financial literacy can help students make better informed investment decisions with the following aim and objectives of the study and research hypotheses.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine the relationship between financial literacy and investment decisions of public university students in Bayelsa State. Specifically, the study sub-objectives are to:

1. Examine the relationship between debt management literacy and investment decisions of students in Bayelsa State; and
2. Determine the association between savings literacy and investment decisions of students in Bayelsa State.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were postulated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant association between debt management literacy and investment decisions of students in Bayelsa State.
2. Savings literacy has no significant correlation with investment decisions of students in Bayelsa State.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Financial Literacy

According to Muneeb and Atal (2019), the term "financial literacy" refers to an individual's level of comprehension of fundamental financial concepts, such as budgeting, saving, investing, and risk management, as well as the competence and self-assurance required to handle personal resources in a responsible manner. This definition encompasses the act of making appropriate decisions in the present moment, such as preparing a budget for daily expenses or selecting appropriate financial products, as well as engaging in prudent long-term financial planning, such as preparing for retirement, while taking into consideration the various occurrences that occur in life, such as changes in employment or unexpected expenses, as well as the volatile nature of economic conditions.

For Swiecka et al. (2020), "financial literacy" is being aware of and able to explain a range of financial ideas and concepts, including but not limited to: interest rates, inflation, portfolio diversification, and the risks connected with these ideas and concepts. They further point out that it encompasses the capacity, drive, and self-assurance to apply this knowledge in a variety of financial settings, from basic budgeting to intricate investment decisions, all with the goal of enhancing societal and individual financial well-being, which permits involvement in the national economy. When people are financially literate, they are able to use their resources effectively and efficiently by making well-informed choices about how to spend their money (Rai et al., 2019). Kozina and Ponikvar (2015) say that knowledge, skills, and attitudes are the human capital components that make up financial literacy. In financial activities, these components are used to enhance an individual's financial well-being and resistance to economic shocks. In the context of this article, the phrase "financial literacy" pertains to "the understanding of financial concepts, the ability to make informed decisions with confidence, and the application of that knowledge to promote personal and financial well-being over time, taking into consideration changing life circumstances and economic environments."

Debt Management Literacy

Debt management literacy encompasses a multifaceted understanding of various aspects related to managing debt effectively. It involves comprehending borrowing terms, interest rates, and repayment schedules (Lusardi, 2019). Additionally, it includes skills in assessing one's financial situation accurately and prioritizing debt payments based on financial goals (Albarrán & Attanasio, 2020). In the words of Shim et al. (2019), debt management literacy involves not only the ability to communicate effectively with creditors but also the ability to avoid predatory lending schemes and to decrease the long-term implications of debt, such as harm to credit ratings and general financial health. In addition to this, it involves having a grasp of the psychological and behavioural aspects of debt, as well as being aware of the ways in which financial responsibilities may result in emotional stress and have a negative impact on mental well-being (Ahmed & Fayyaz, 2021). In addition to this, it requires having an awareness of the many tools and methods that are available for the purpose of lowering and managing debt, such as the alternatives of debt consolidation and refinancing (Lim & Pyun, 2020). Individuals who are financially literate are better able to make responsible borrowing choices, limit their vulnerability to financial hazards, and contribute to economic stability in the long run. "Debt management literacy" is defined for the purpose of this study as the ability to understand and effectively manage one's debt, including borrowing money, calculating interest rates, creating a repayment plan, and putting that plan into action.

Savings Literacy

Savings literacy can be delineated through various lenses, each emphasizing distinct facets of financial knowledge and skills pertinent to saving money. One definition underscores the comprehension of fundamental financial concepts like budgeting, goal-setting, and prioritizing expenses (Fernandes et al., 2014). Another perspective accentuates the significance of assessing one's financial standing and recognizing opportunities for saving (Hastings & Mitchell, 2011). Additionally, savings literacy encompasses an understanding of the advantages of saving, such as fostering financial security and achieving independence (Fernandes et al., 2014). Certain definitions underscore the aptitude to select suitable savings mechanisms and grasp their features and associated risks (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014). Moreover, savings literacy involves the ability to execute saving strategies adeptly, considering factors like interest rates, inflation, and investment yields (Fernandes et al., 2014).

Furthermore, savings literacy embodies the comprehension and practical application of financial knowledge related to saving and prudent financial management. It represents a foundational aspect of financial literacy, encapsulating the understanding of why and how to save money effectively. At its core, savings literacy emphasizes the significance of setting aside a portion of income for future needs, emergencies, and achieving financial goals (Khusaini et al., 2022).

Factors that influence Financial Literacy of Students

Financial literacy among students is shaped by a myriad of factors, encompassing educational, personal, societal, and cultural elements. The following are some of the influencing factors among others.

Educational Curriculum: The inclusion of financial education in school curricula equips students with foundational knowledge and skills (Cole, 2018). Integrated lessons in subjects like math and economics expose students to core financial concepts early (Council for Economic Education, 2020). Practical examples and case studies enhance understanding (Fernandes et al., 2014). Quality curriculum promotes financial inclusion across diverse backgrounds (Totanan et al., 2020). Its success depends on teacher training, curriculum design, and resource availability (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014).

Socio-economic Background: Students from wealthier families often access better financial education and resources (Bayer et al., 2020). Affluent households provide early exposure to budgeting and financial discussions (Hilgert et al., 2003). In contrast, students from lower-income families may lack such opportunities (Borgloh & Dannenberg, 2021). This disparity affects confidence and financial decision-making (Fernandes et al., 2014). Addressing these gaps is essential to promote equity in financial literacy (Remund, 2015).

Family Influence: Parents serve as primary role models in shaping financial behavior and attitudes (Hilgert et al., 2003). Children often learn financial habits through observation and family discussions (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014). Family income level affects access to financial experiences and education (Fernandes et al., 2014). Open communication about money builds confidence and understanding (Rai et al., 2019). Parental behaviors have long-term effects on students' financial choices (Swiecka et al., 2020).

Peer Influence: Peers influence students' financial habits through shared experiences and social norms (Bayer et al., 2020). Positive peer behavior can encourage budgeting and saving (Fernandes et al., 2014). Negative peer pressure may lead to overspending or debt (Rai et al., 2019). Social comparisons often affect students' financial decisions (Swiecka et al., 2020). Peer-based learning programs can harness influence for positive change (Totanan et al., 2020).

Personal Experiences and Financial Responsibilities: Managing personal finances offers practical learning opportunities for students (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014). Activities like budgeting, working part-time, or paying bills build financial skills (Fernandes et al., 2014). These real-life experiences deepen understanding of financial concepts (Rai et al., 2019). Financial responsibilities encourage independent decision-making and goal setting (Swiecka et al., 2020). Learning from real situations strengthens overall financial literacy (Cole, 2018).

Investment Decisions

Investment decisions involve allocating financial resources into assets or projects to achieve financial goals (Ross et al., 2016). In corporate finance, it includes capital budgeting to enhance firm value (Gitman & Zutter, 2019). Among Nigerian students, economic instability and limited investment education constrain informed decision-making (Balagobei & Prashanthan, 2021). Poor financial literacy often leads to suboptimal or avoided investments (Brigham & Ehrhardt, 2017). Comprehensive financial education can improve their investment knowledge and confidence (Madura & Fox, 2011). Cultural norms also influence students' attitudes toward risk and investment choices (Popescu, 2018). Moreover, fintech and online platforms are increasingly reshaping how students approach investment decisions. These tools offer accessible entry into markets, promoting informed participation.

Determinants of Investment Decisions

Investment decisions among students are shaped by several factors that influence their ability and readiness to invest. Key determinants include the availability of financial information, investment analysis tools, cost of the fund, and financial literacy.

Availability of Financial Information: Access to accurate and timely financial data enables students to assess opportunities and manage investment risks. Limited access or unreliable information can lead to poor decision-making and financial vulnerability (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014).

Availability of Investment Analysis Tools: Tools such as financial calculators, stock screeners, and portfolio trackers help students make data-driven investment decisions. However, without proper guidance, misinterpretation of these tools may result in flawed investment outcomes.

Cost of the Fund: High transaction fees, fund management charges, and taxes reduce net investment returns, discouraging student participation. Awareness of cost-effective options like ETFs or index funds enhances decision efficiency (Anand et al., 2020).

Financial Literacy: Students with financial knowledge are more confident in evaluating risk, understanding markets, and managing investments. Low literacy levels often correlate with poor financial behaviors and reduced investment participation (Van Rooij et al., 2011).

Theoretical Framework

Financial Socialization Theory

Financial Socialization Theory (FST), proposed by Shim et al. (2010), explains how individuals acquire financial knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors through social interactions. Within families, parents are primary agents, shaping children's financial habits through modeling and open discussions (Ameliawati & Setiyani, 2018). Peer influence also plays a role, as adolescents often adopt the financial behaviors of their social circles (Shim et al., 2010). Schools further contribute through structured financial education, complementing familial and peer inputs. Media and societal norms also shape financial perceptions, influencing attitudes toward consumption, saving, and investment (Ammerman & Stueve, 2019). FST highlights how these diverse influences impact trainee accountants' financial literacy and decision-making. It underscores the role of parental behavior, peer norms, and educational exposure in forming money management skills. In Bayelsa State, where family structure, peer influence, and media exposure vary, FST provides a useful lens to explore how students develop savings and debt management skills. Anchoring this paper on FST enables a deeper understanding of social factors shaping students' investment decisions, guiding educational interventions to improve financial literacy and behavior.

Empirical Review

The purpose of the research that Chepngetich (2016) carried out in Uasin Gishu County was to investigate the significance of financial literacy in relation to the performance of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). The study focused on 1,053 proprietors of legally registered small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) located within the county. We used a mix of cluster and random selection methods to choose 290 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to serve as a representative sample. A series of standardised questions were used in order to collect the necessary data. The test-retest procedure was used in order to evaluate the dependability of the instruments that were utilised for the purpose of data collecting. When doing the analysis of the data, descriptive statistics were used, and the results were presented via the utilisation of frequencies, tables, percentages, averages, and standard deviations. Inferential statistics, also known as Pearson correlation, were used for the purpose of doing further analysis. According to the findings of the research, both budgeting financial literacy and borrowing financial literacy make substantial contributions to the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), indicating that there is a strong connection between financial literacy and the outcomes of businesses.

The purpose of the study by Appiah (2019) was to compare the financial literacy and saving behaviours of Swedru School of Business's teaching and non-teaching staff members. There were a total of 129 staff members selected for the study: 125 educators and 69 support staff members. A grand total of 194 employees were counted. The required data was gathered via the use of a questionnaire. According to the results, faculty members had more understanding about insurance and personal finance than members of the support staff. Contrarily, members of the staff who were not instructors had a deeper comprehension of financial matters, including retirement preparation, savings and borrowing, and the likelihood of encountering financial and monetary challenges. Males showed more knowledge than females in the following areas: insurance, retirement planning, savings and borrowing, and basic personal finance information.

Further evidence suggests that demographic variables like age, marital status, gender, and degree of education have a role in determining financial literacy.

Research conducted by Abakah-Yawson (2018) in the Tarkwa Nsuaem Municipality of Ghana examined the financial literacy, record-keeping, and performance of small company owners. To gauge the economic success of such enterprises, an assessment was carried out to ascertain their level of financial literacy and operational effectiveness. Furthermore, the study looked at the books kept by sole owners of small businesses. This study was an explanation-based examination that employed a quantitative methodology and a survey approach. The results were based on responses from 120 small company owners, including 60 store owners, 30 artisans, and 30 artisanal food producers. A number of statistical methods were used to examine the data. These were index pools, chi-square tests for independence, independent sample T-tests, linear regression, and descriptive statistics. The research found that financial literacy was slightly but positively correlated with small-business profitability.

The relationship between the financial literacy and success of medium-sized firms in Hawassa City was thoroughly examined by Jemal (2019). The researcher used an exploratory research design and a descriptive survey methodology to examine the impact of four distinct financial literacy criteria on company success. Specifically, these factors included financial literacy in the areas of budgeting, debt management, accounting, and savings. In Hawassa City, there are 2,139 registered medium firms; 276 were chosen using stratified random selection. The goal was to ensure that a wide variety of sectors were well-represented. Financial performance was evaluated using return on assets (ROA), a measure that correctly depicts profitability in proportion to assets. The data collection method included the acquisition of both primary and secondary sources. Business owners and managers were surveyed using standardised questionnaires to collect primary data. The firms' financial records were used to derive secondary data. Mean scores, frequencies, and standard deviations were created as descriptive statistics for the purpose of data analysis. In order to test hypotheses and establish correlations, inferential statistics, particularly regression analysis, were performed using STATA version 12 software. To be more specific, businesses that demonstrated a greater level of skill in key literacy areas were better able to manage resources and make effective financial choices, which ultimately led to increased profitability. According to the results of the research, the financial performance of medium-sized businesses in Hawassa City was significantly impacted in a good way by the competencies of budgeting literacy, debt management literacy, accounting literacy, and saving literacy together. Based on these findings, it seems that strengthening these components of financial literacy among company owners and managers might potentially lead to greater profitability as well as overall financial health.

A research was conducted by Saptiana et al. (2023) to investigate the ways in which millennials living in the Seberang Ulu II District, which is situated right beside Ulu II in Palembang City, make investment decisions. The study aimed to determine how financial literacy and financial behaviour impact investment decisions. In this particular district, the demographic that was targeted comprised of those who lived there. A total of one hundred individuals were chosen to participate in the research. The data collecting process was carried out by means of the distribution of questionnaires to the predefined sample using the use of Google Forms application. In order to conduct the study, multiple linear regression and hypothesis testing were used. The results of the study showed that both financial knowledge and financial behaviour had a substantial and beneficial influence on investing choices. This was the conclusion reached by the researchers. In addition, the R Squared value demonstrated that both financial behaviour and overall financial literacy jointly contribute to the formation of investment decisions made by millennials. This highlights the significance of strong financial knowledge and behaviour in the context of comprehensive financial planning.

In the year 2024, Handini conducted research at Dr. Soetomo University in Surabaya to study the connection between investment decisions made by management students and their level of financial literacy, knowledge, and motivation. In order to ensure that the population of the study was representative of the student body as a whole, the researchers used purposive selection procedures to choose a total of 308 students from this academic program for the study. The approach that was used in the research included the distribution of precisely created questionnaires for the purpose of data gathering; these questions were sent using Google Forms. Several distinct statistical methods were used to examine the collected data in the study. Things that fell under this category included F and t-tests, evaluations of correlation coefficients, analyses of multiple linear regression, testing of classical assumptions, and reliability and validity assessments. Students' financial literacy, investing knowledge, motivation, and investment judgements were all shown to have insightful correlations, according to the findings of the research. In contrast to what was anticipated, the research revealed that there was no statistically significant influence of financial literacy on investors' choices. In spite of this, the findings of the research brought to light the significance of the respondents' individual investing knowledge and motivation in shaping the decisions they make about their investments. Every aspect of the students' investment choices was highly influenced by their degree of financial literacy, investment knowledge, and investment motivation.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research employed a cross-sectional survey research design, whereby data for all variables were collected at a single point in time. The population consisted of 1,473 trainee accountants enrolled at Niger Delta University, Federal University Otuoke, and the University of Africa Toru-Orua. By using the method developed by Taro Yamane, a sample size of 315 trainee accountants were determined. When choosing participants from the three institutions, Bowley's proportional allocation approach was used to make sure each university mirrored its percentage of the population. Primary data were collected via the use of a structured, closed-ended questionnaire that was prepared in accordance with the objectives of the research. Each question was assessed by respondents on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "strongly agree." For the purpose of establishing the instrument's reliability, a pilot research was carried out with five participants. Subsequent analysis carried out in SPSS version 23 revealed that all of the constructs met the Cronbach's alpha level of 0.70, which was suggested by Nunnally (1978). With coefficients of 0.782, 0.833, and 0.841 for debt management literacy, savings literacy, and investment decision-making, respectively, these metrics demonstrated good internal consistency. Following the completion of the data collecting procedure, the responses were coded and analysed with the aid of SPSS version 23. The data were summarised using descriptive statistics, encompassing frequencies, mean scores, and standard deviation. For the purpose of inferential analysis, the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was employed.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Univariate Analyses

In the univariate analysis, the mean cut-off point of 3.00 served as a benchmark for interpreting the results. This threshold enabled a straightforward assessment of responses, where mean values equal to or above 3.00 indicated a generally positive or favorable perception, while values below 3.00 suggested otherwise.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Trainee Accountants' Response on Debt Management Literacy

	N	Min.	Max.	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
I am familiar with various strategies to manage debt efficiently.	280	1.00	5.00	1021.00	3.6464	.90001	Agreed
I actively seek information about debt management to improve my investment decisions.	280	2.00	5.00	1118.00	3.9929	.99097	Agreed
I prioritize repaying debts over making new investments.	280	1.00	5.00	991.00	3.5393	1.32466	Agreed
My knowledge of debt management significantly influences my investment decisions	280	1.00	5.00	1092.00	3.9000	.96386	Agreed
I understand the concept of interest rates and how they affect debt repayment.	280	1.00	5.00	1120.00	4.0000	1.07763	Agreed
I have a plan in place to repay any student loans or other debts I may have.	280	1.00	5.00	1109.00	3.9607	1.03793	Agreed
Grand Mean					3.8399		Agreed
Valid N (listwise)	280						

Table 1 provides a descriptive statistical summary of trainee accountants' responses concerning their debt management literacy. Each statement was evaluated on a 5-point scale, with the results indicating a high level of agreement across all statements. The grand mean of 3.8399, which is above the mean cut-off point of 3.00, indicates that, on average, respondents agreed with the statements related to debt management literacy. This suggests a generally high level of debt management literacy among the trainee accountants surveyed.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Trainee Accountants' Response on Savings Literacy

	N	Min.	Max.	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
I am knowledgeable about different savings tools and accounts available to me.	280	1.00	5.00	1120.00	4.0000	1.07763	Agreed
I regularly set financial goals that include both savings and investments.	280	1.00	5.00	1064.00	3.8000	1.09545	Agreed
Regular savings habits have opened more investment opportunities for me.	280	1.00	5.00	1100.00	3.9286	1.13997	Agreed
My savings behavior influences my decisions about investments.	280	3.00	5.00	1220.00	4.3571	.74364	Agreed
I actively seek information on ways to increase my savings.	280	1.00	5.00	1129.00	4.0321	.96667	Agreed
I allocate a portion of my income towards savings each month to build a financial safety net.	280	1.00	5.00	991.00	3.5393	1.32466	Agreed
Grand Mean					3.9429		Agreed
Valid N (listwise)	280						

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of trainee accountants' responses regarding their savings literacy. The grand mean of 3.9429, which is above the mean cut-off point of 3.00, indicates that, on average, respondents agreed with the statements related to savings literacy. This demonstrates a high level of savings literacy among the trainee accountants surveyed.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Trainee Accountants' Response on Investment Decisions

	N	Min.	Max.	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
Financial news and trends significantly influence my investment decisions.	280	1.00	5.00	1000.00	3.5714	1.13997	Agreed
My investment decisions are often influenced by the advice of peers and family.	280	1.00	5.00	739.00	2.6393	1.36070	Disagreed
I consult with financial advisors or experts before making significant investment decisions	280	1.00	5.00	937.00	3.3464	1.21431	Agreed
I have experience dealing with loss in my investments and have learned from it	280	1.00	5.00	1081.00	3.8607	.95709	Agreed
I research thoroughly before investing in any financial instrument.	280	1.00	5.00	1135.00	4.0536	.96571	Agreed
I prioritize long-term financial goals over short-term gains when making investment decisions.	280	1.00	5.00	987.00	3.5250	1.24984	Agreed
Grand Mean					3.4994		Agreed
Valid N (listwise)	280						

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of trainee accountants' responses regarding their investment decisions. The grand mean of 3.4994, which is above the mean cut-off point of 3.00, indicates that, on average, respondents agreed with the statements related to investment decisions. This demonstrates a moderate level of investment decision literacy among the trainee accountants surveyed.

Bivariate Analyses and Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant association between debt management literacy and investment decisions of students in Bayelsa State.

Table 4: Correlation Result on the Relationship between Debt Management Literacy and Investment Decisions of Students in Bayelsa State

			Debt Management Literacy	Investment Decisions
Spearman's rho	Debt Management Literacy	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.733**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	280	280
	Investment Decisions	Correlation Coefficient	.733**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	280	280

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 4 presents the Spearman's correlation result between debt management literacy and investment decisions among students in Bayelsa State. The correlation coefficient of 0.733** indicates a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship ($p = 0.000$).

Decision: Since $p < 0.01$, the null hypothesis is rejected. Debt management literacy is significantly associated with students' investment decisions of students in Bayelsa State.

Hypothesis Two: Savings literacy has no significant correlation with investment decisions of students in Bayelsa State.

Table 5: Correlation Result on the Relationship between Savings Literacy and Investment Decisions of Students in Bayelsa State

			Savings Literacy	Investment Decisions
Spearman's rho	Savings Literacy	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.886**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	280	280
	Investment Decisions	Correlation Coefficient	.886**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	280	280

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5 shows the Spearman's correlation result between savings literacy and investment decisions. The correlation coefficient is 0.886**, indicating a very strong and statistically significant positive relationship ($p = 0.000$).

Decision: Since $p < 0.01$, the null hypothesis is rejected. Savings literacy has a significant positive correlation with students' investment decisions in Bayelsa State.

Discussion

The analysis revealed a strong, positive correlation between debt management literacy and investment decisions of students in Bayelsa State. As students' understanding of debt increases, their ability to make informed investment choices also improves. This finding underscores the need for educational institutions to integrate debt management modules into financial literacy programs, enabling students to avoid excessive borrowing and plan investments strategically. Theoretically, it supports models like the Theory of Planned Behavior, where knowledge shapes financial attitudes and behaviors. Practically, finance educators and planners should emphasize debt management skills to foster responsible financial behavior and reduce students' vulnerability to poor financial outcomes. Studies by Jemal (2019) and Abakah-Yawson (2018) similarly highlight that stronger debt literacy enhances decision-making in both individual and business contexts, reinforcing the importance of debt management education.

The results also showed a strong, positive association between savings literacy and investment decisions students in Bayelsa State. Students with better savings knowledge tend to allocate resources more wisely, balancing immediate needs against long-term investments. This suggests that embedding savings-focused content into financial education can cultivate a culture of saving, thereby improving investment outcomes. From a theoretical perspective, the finding aligns with the Life-Cycle Hypothesis, which links savings behavior to long-term financial planning. In practice, collaborations between financial institutions and educators to deliver savings literacy workshops can instill disciplined saving habits. Research by Appiah (2019) and Saptiana et al. (2023) confirms that savings knowledge significantly influences investment decisions, highlighting its critical role in financial planning for students.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

By focusing on two aspects of financial literacy, namely, savings literacy and debt management; this study investigated the relationship between financial literacy and the investment decisions made by students attending public universities in the state of Bayelsa. 315 trainee accountants from Niger Delta University (NDU), Federal University Otuoke (FUO), and University of Africa (UAT) participated in a structured survey. The survey was administered to the trainee accountants. According to the findings, there was a significant and positive link between the two aspects of financial literacy and the investment decisions made by the students. It was shown that students who had a better grasp of debt and savings strategies tended to make better investing decisions. The outcomes of this study lead the researchers to the conclusion that students' investment decisions in public universities in Bayelsa State are positively and significantly linked with their level of financial literacy.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, this paper recommends the following:

1. Educational institutions should organize seminars and workshops on debt management, such as understanding interest rates, repayment plans, and the long-term impact of borrowing. These programs should be designed to enhance students' ability to manage debt effectively, thereby improving their investment decisions.
2. Educational institutions should incorporate courses on savings literacy into their curricula by offering dedicated classes and seminars led by financial experts. These initiatives could include workshops on practical saving strategies, lessons on building emergency funds, and courses on personal finance management, such as 'Money Management 101' or 'Financial Planning for Young Adults.' Such programs should provide students with practical approaches to saving, emphasize the importance of

setting financial goals, and promote long-term financial planning to positively influence their investment decisions.

Limitations of the Study

There are a number of caveats to note, despite the fact that the research did shed light on the correlation between students' financial literacy and their investment decisions in public universities in Bayelsa State:

1. **Geographical Scope**: The study was conducted exclusively in Bayelsa State. The findings may not be representative of other regions in Nigeria or globally. Trainee accountants in other geographical areas may have varying levels of financial literacy and differing investment behaviours.
2. **Institutional Scope**: The study focused on trainee accountants from only three universities in Bayelsa State: Niger Delta University (NDU), Federal University Otuoke (FUO), and University of Africa (UAT). This limited institutional scope might not capture the diverse experiences and financial literacy levels of trainee accountants or students in other departments or other higher education institutions, such as polytechnics, college of educations, or private universities. Thus, the results may not be generalizable to the broader student population.
3. **Financial Literacy Dimensions**: The study focused on two specific dimensions of financial literacy: debt management, and savings literacy. Other important aspects, such as bookkeeping, and budgeting, and investment literacy, or understanding of financial products and markets, were not included.

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