

Assessing Financial Literacy among Graduate Students in Jaipur, India

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ABSTRACT

Financial literacy has emerged as a critical determinant of economic stability, personal well-being, and long-term financial security, particularly among young adults transitioning from academic life to financial independence. Graduate students represent a pivotal group whose financial decisions influence future workforce productivity and societal economic resilience. This study aimed to assess the knowledge, attitude, and financial practices (KAP) related to financial literacy among graduate students in the Jaipur region, India, and to analyse differences across academic streams and gender. A cross-sectional questionnaire-based study was conducted among graduate students from arts, science, commerce, and professional programs between June and Oct 2025. A validated self-administered questionnaire assessing financial knowledge, financial attitude, and financial practices was distributed electronically. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests. Students from commerce and professional programs demonstrated significantly higher financial knowledge and financial practice scores ($p < 0.001$). Financial attitude showed no independent statistically significant association with overall financial literacy. Female students scored significantly higher than males across all three domains ($p < 0.001$). The findings reveal substantial gaps in financial literacy among non-commerce graduate students. Integrating structured financial education into undergraduate curricula is essential to enhance responsible financial behaviour and preparedness for economic independence.

KEY WORDS: FINANCIAL LITERACY, KNOWLEDGE-ATTITUDE-PRACTICE, GRADUATE STUDENTS, JAIPUR, INDIA, CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY.

INTRODUCTION

Financial literacy has increasingly been recognised as a core life competency that enables individuals to make informed decisions regarding income management,

savings, credit utilisation, investments, and long-term financial planning [1,2]. In the contemporary economic environment—characterised by digital banking, easy access to consumer credit, rising education costs, and increasingly complex financial products—young adults are required to assume financial responsibility at an early stage of life [3]. Graduate students, in particular, represent a critical transitional group as they move from financial dependence to financial autonomy, often confronting decisions related to student loans, consumption patterns, and early career financial planning. Inadequate financial literacy during

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this phase may have long-term implications for individual financial stability and overall well-being.

Empirical evidence from different regions consistently demonstrates low to moderate levels of financial literacy among young adults. Studies from the United States and Europe indicate that many college graduates lack basic understanding of interest rates, inflation, and risk diversification despite higher educational attainment [4,5]. Similar trends have been observed in Asian economies, where financial knowledge gaps persist among university students [6]. In the Indian context, several studies report significant variation in financial literacy among graduate students across academic disciplines, with students from commerce and management backgrounds generally outperforming those from arts and science streams [7,8]. These findings suggest that formal education alone does not necessarily ensure adequate financial preparedness.

The consequences of financial illiteracy extend beyond individual outcomes and pose broader societal and economic challenges. Poor financial knowledge and practices among young adults have been associated with excessive indebtedness, insufficient savings, vulnerability to financial fraud, and inadequate retirement preparedness [9]. At the societal level, widespread financial illiteracy may contribute to economic instability, increased dependence on social welfare systems, and widening income inequalities [10]. Conversely, financially literate individuals are more likely to demonstrate responsible financial behavior, support household financial stability, and contribute to sustainable economic growth [11]. As a result, financial literacy has emerged as an important public policy and educational priority worldwide.

Despite growing scholarly attention, notable gaps remain in the existing literature. Many studies focus primarily on financial knowledge while giving limited consideration to financial attitudes and actual financial practices, thereby failing to capture the behavioral dimension of financial literacy [2,12]. Furthermore, the application of a comprehensive Knowledge–Attitude–Practice (KAP) framework among graduate students remains limited, particularly in the Indian context. Most Indian studies are concentrated in metropolitan areas or restricted to commerce and management students, leaving non-commerce graduate populations underexplored [7]. There is also a scarcity of region-specific evidence from tier-2 educational hubs such as Jaipur, which limits the development of targeted financial literacy interventions.

In light of these gaps, the present study aims to assess financial knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to financial literacy among graduate students in the Jaipur region using a structured KAP framework. The specific objectives are to evaluate levels of financial knowledge, examine attitudes toward money management and financial planning, and analyse financial practices such as budgeting, saving, and credit use. The study further seeks to compare financial literacy across academic streams and gender. By generating empirical evidence from an underrepresented population, this research contributes to the existing literature

and provides insights for educators, policymakers, and curriculum designers. The study tests the hypotheses that financial knowledge and financial practices are significantly associated with overall financial literacy, whereas financial attitude alone may not independently predict financially responsible behaviour.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross-sectional, questionnaire-based study was conducted between June 2025 and October 2025 to assess financial literacy among graduate students in the Jaipur region of Rajasthan, India. The study included students enrolled in diverse academic disciplines, namely arts, science, commerce, and professional programs such as management, engineering, and computer applications. The primary objective was to evaluate differences in financial knowledge, attitudes toward money management, and financial practices across student groups stratified by gender and academic stream.

Based on institutional enrollment records, the average annual intake across the selected colleges ranged from 70 to 80 students per discipline. The total eligible population comprised 520 graduate students, of whom 468 responded to the questionnaire. After exclusion of incomplete responses, 442 fully completed questionnaires were included in the final analysis, yielding an overall response rate of approximately 85%.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. The inclusion criteria consisted of undergraduate students enrolled in the final or pre-final year of graduate programs who provided informed consent. Exclusion criteria included postgraduate students, students possessing formal professional financial certifications, and respondents who either declined consent or submitted incomplete questionnaires. At the time of the study, none of the participating institutions had a mandatory or structured financial literacy course integrated into the undergraduate curriculum for non-commerce disciplines.

All eligible students across the selected disciplines were approached, as they were expected to enter the workforce or pursue higher education in the near future and would therefore be required to make independent financial decisions. Assessing financial literacy at this transitional stage was considered appropriate for evaluating preparedness for financial independence. The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Ethics/Research Review Committee, and confidentiality and anonymity of participant responses were strictly maintained.

The study employed a validated, self-administered questionnaire adapted from previously published financial literacy and Knowledge–Attitude–Practice (KAP)-based instruments [1–4]. The questionnaire comprised four sections: demographic characteristics, financial knowledge, financial attitude, and financial practices. Demographic variables included age, gender, academic stream, prior exposure to finance-related subjects, and family income category.

The instrument consisted of a total of 34 items, systematically organized into four sections. Items 1–8 captured the general

demographic characteristics of the respondents, including age, gender, academic stream, and prior exposure to finance-related subjects.

Table 1. Questionnaire assessing knowledge, attitude, and financial practices related to financial literacy

Financial Knowledge

- Have you heard of the term “financial literacy”?
- Do you understand the concept of budgeting and expense tracking?
- Do you know how simple and compound interest work?
- Are you aware of the impact of inflation on purchasing power?
- Do you understand the difference between saving and investment?
- Are you aware of basic investment options such as fixed deposits, mutual funds, or equities?
- Do you understand credit scores and their importance?
- Do you know the consequences of excessive debt and late repayments?

Financial Attitude

- Do you believe financial planning is important at a young age?
- Do you agree that saving regularly is essential for financial security?
- Do you believe borrowing should be avoided unless absolutely necessary?
- Do you feel confident in making financial decisions independently?
- Do you consider long-term financial goals while spending money?
- Do you believe financial literacy should be a compulsory part of higher education?
- Do you feel that financial risks should be carefully evaluated before investing?
- Do you believe financial discipline contributes to a better quality of life?

Financial Practices

- Do you prepare a monthly budget for your expenses?
- Do you regularly save a portion of your income or allowance?
- Do you track your spending habits?
- Do you use digital payment platforms responsibly?
- Have you ever invested or planned to invest in financial instruments?
- Do you avoid unnecessary borrowing or credit card use?
- Do you discuss financial decisions with family members?
- Do you plan financially for future goals such as higher education or career development?

Questions 9 to 18 were designed to assess financial knowledge, focusing on core concepts such as budgeting, interest rates, inflation, savings, investments, credit, and debt management. Questions 19 to 26 evaluated financial attitudes, examining respondents’ perceptions and beliefs regarding money management, saving behaviour, financial planning, risk-taking, and the perceived importance of financial literacy. Finally, Questions 27 to 34 assessed financial practices, capturing self-reported behaviours related to budgeting, saving, spending discipline, use of digital financial services, borrowing habits, and future financial planning.

The financial knowledge items were of a nominal nature with response options including Yes, No, and Don’t Know. The financial attitude and financial practice items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Higher scores indicated better financial knowledge, a more positive financial attitude, and healthier financial practices. Scores

equal to or above 50% of the maximum attainable score were categorised as high, while scores below 50% were categorised as low.

The questionnaire was distributed electronically using an online survey platform. Participants were instructed to complete the questionnaire independently without discussion. Collected data were entered into Microsoft Excel and analysed using SPSS version 26.0 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA). Categorical variables were analysed using descriptive statistics, and associations between variables were tested using the Chi-square test. A p-value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

Out of the 520 graduate students who were approached to participate in the study, 468 students responded to the questionnaire. After excluding incomplete responses, 442 questionnaires were found to be complete and suitable for

analysis, resulting in a response rate of 85% . The study population consisted of 234 male students (52.9%) and

208 female students (47.1%). The baseline demographic characteristics of the respondents are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of graduate students participating in the financial literacy study (n = 442)	
Category	n (%)
Age (years)	
< 20	96 (21.7%)
20–22	214 (48.4%)
23–25	132 (29.9%)
>25	0 (0%)
Gender	
Male	234 (52.9%)
Female	208 (47.1%)
Academic Stream	
Arts	106 (24.0%)
Science	93 (21.0%)
Commerce	115 (26.0%)
Professional Courses (Management, Engineering, MCA, etc.)	128 (29.0%)
Marital Status	
Single	397 (89.8%)
Married	45 (10.2%)
Number of Dependent Family Members	
≤2	142 (32.1%)
3–4	176 (39.8%)
5–6	92 (20.8%)
>6	32 (7.3%)
Prior Exposure to Finance-related Subjects	
Yes	171 (38.7%)
No	271 (61.3%)

Table 3. Stream-wise comparison of knowledge, attitude, and financial practice scores among graduate students in Jaipur (n = 442)			
Financial Knowledge	Low Score(<50% of maximum score) n (%)	High Score (≥50% of maximum score) n (%)	p value
Arts	74 (69.8%)	32 (30.2%)	0.001**
Science	59 (63.4%)	34 (36.6%)	
Commerce	29 (25.2%)	86 (74.8%)	
Professional Courses	34 (26.6%)	94 (73.4%)	
Financial Attitude			
Arts	66 (62.3%)	40 (37.7%)	0.001**
Science	58 (62.4%)	35 (37.6%)	
Commerce	42 (36.5%)	73 (63.5%)	
Professional Courses	41 (32.0%)	87 (68.0%)	
Financial Practices			
Arts	79 (74.5%)	27 (25.5%)	0.001**
Science	66 (71.0%)	27 (29.0%)	
Commerce	31 (27.0%)	84 (73.0%)	
Professional Courses	38 (29.7%)	90 (70.3%)	

The demographic profile indicates that the majority of participants were young adults aged between 20 and 25 years, reflecting the typical age distribution of graduate students in the Jaipur region. A nearly balanced gender distribution was observed. With respect to the academic stream, students from commerce and professional courses together constituted more than half of the study population, while arts and science students formed a substantial proportion.

Preliminary analysis revealed that financial knowledge and financial practice scores were significantly higher among commerce and professional-course students compared to arts and science students ($p < 0.001$). Female students demonstrated comparatively higher scores across the domains of financial knowledge, attitude, and practices than their male counterparts ($p < 0.001$). These variations

underscore the influence of academic exposure and demographic factors on financial literacy levels among graduate students.

The analysis revealed that financial knowledge scores were significantly higher among commerce and professional-course students, whereas students from arts and science streams demonstrated uniformly lower knowledge levels ($p = 0.001$). A similar trend was observed for financial practices, where commerce and professional students exhibited significantly better budgeting, saving, and spending behaviours compared to their counterparts ($p = 0.001$). Although financial attitude scores were relatively positive across all streams, they were still significantly higher among commerce and professional students, indicating that academic exposure to finance positively influences financial outlook and behaviour.

Table 4. Gender-wise comparison of knowledge, attitude, and financial practice scores among graduate students (n = 442)			
Financial Knowledge	Low Score(<50% of maximum score) n (%)	High Score (≥50% of maximum score) n (%)	p value
Male (n = 234)	146 (62.4%)	88 (37.6%)	
Female (n = 208)	50 (24.0%)	158 (76.0%)	0.001*
Financial Attitude			
Male (n = 234)	142 (60.7%)	92 (39.3%)	
Female (n = 208)	65 (31.3%)	143 (68.7%)	0.001*
Financial Practices			
Male(n =234)	159 (67.9%)	75 (32.1%)	
Female(n=208)	54 (26.0%)	154 (74.0%)	0.001*

On evaluating financial literacy across gender, it was observed that female graduate students scored significantly higher than males across all three domains—financial knowledge, financial attitude, and financial practices. These differences were found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.001$)(Table 4). The higher scores among female students may reflect greater financial caution, disciplined spending behaviour, and stronger orientation toward saving and long-term financial planning.

DISCUSSION

The present study provides a comprehensive assessment of financial literacy among graduate students in Jaipur using a Knowledge–Attitude–Practice (KAP) framework. The findings indicate that financial literacy is significantly influenced by academic stream and gender, with students enrolled in commerce and professional courses demonstrating higher financial knowledge, more positive financial attitudes, and healthier financial practices than their counterparts from arts and science streams. Female students consistently outperformed male students across all three domains. These results suggest that financial literacy among graduate students is heterogeneous and shaped by both educational exposure and demographic factors.

The significantly higher financial knowledge scores observed among commerce and professional-course students are consistent with findings from previous international and Indian studies, which demonstrate that formal exposure to finance-related subjects enhances understanding of core financial concepts such as interest rates, inflation, and investment diversification [1–3].

Similar patterns have been reported among university students in the United States and Europe, where those enrolled in business or economics programs consistently exhibit superior financial knowledge compared with non-commerce peers [4]. The lower knowledge levels among arts and science students observed in the present study likely reflect the absence of structured financial education within their curricula.

In parallel with financial knowledge, financial practices such as budgeting, saving, and controlled spending were significantly better among commerce and professional students. This finding supports earlier evidence indicating that financial knowledge is more likely to translate into responsible financial behaviour when reinforced through education and practical exposure [5,6]. However, studies from developing economies have reported weaker

associations between financial knowledge and practice due to contextual constraints such as low income levels or limited access to financial instruments [7].

The stronger association observed in the present study may be attributed to increasing digital financial inclusion and greater exposure to banking and digital payment platforms among urban graduate students in Jaipur. Although financial attitude scores were generally positive across all academic streams, commerce and professional students demonstrated significantly higher scores. This observation aligns partially with prior studies suggesting that attitudes toward saving and financial planning are shaped not only by education but also by family environment, peer influence, and socio-cultural norms [8,9].

Importantly, the findings support earlier evidence that positive financial attitudes alone do not necessarily translate into sound financial practices, underscoring the critical role of applied financial knowledge [10,5]. A notable finding of this study is the consistently higher financial literacy scores among female students across all domains. This result is consistent with several Indian and international studies reporting greater financial caution, saving orientation, and long-term planning tendencies among women [2,11]. In contrast, some global studies have reported higher financial knowledge levels among men [1], highlighting contextual variability. The higher performance of female students in the present study may reflect evolving socio-economic roles, increasing financial awareness, and greater risk aversion among young women in urban Indian settings.

The findings have important implications at both individual and societal levels. Inadequate financial literacy among arts and science graduates may predispose them to poor financial decision-making, excessive debt, and long-term financial vulnerability, cumulatively affecting household stability and economic resilience [12]. Given that graduate students constitute the future workforce, integrating financial literacy education across all academic disciplines could enhance personal financial well-being and promote informed engagement with the formal financial system. These results reinforce the growing consensus that financial literacy should be regarded as a core life skill rather than a discipline-specific competency.

Despite its strengths, the study has certain limitations. The cross-sectional design restricts causal inference, and reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias. Additionally, the study's focus on a single urban region limits generalizability to rural or socio-economically diverse populations. Future studies should adopt longitudinal designs to examine changes in financial literacy over time and evaluate the impact of targeted financial education interventions. Expanding research across multiple regions and incorporating qualitative methods could provide deeper insights into behavioural and contextual determinants of financial literacy among young adults.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that financial literacy among graduate students in the Jaipur region varies significantly by academic stream and gender, with commerce and professional-course students exhibiting higher financial knowledge, more positive attitudes, and healthier financial practices than arts and science students. While attitudes toward financial planning were generally favourable, they did not consistently translate into sound financial behaviour in the absence of structured financial education. Female students outperformed males across all domains, highlighting the influence of demographic factors on financial decision-making. Overall, the findings underscore the need to integrate financial literacy as a core component of undergraduate education across disciplines to enhance financial preparedness, promote responsible financial behaviour, and support long-term economic well-being.

Data Availability: The data used to support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon request.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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