

A Study of Factors Influencing Financial Independence of Working Women

B. Monica Mercy¹, Mrs. S. Deepa²

¹MBA Student, Department of Management Studies, Sri Manakula Vinayagar Engineering College (Autonomous), Puducherry

²Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, Sri Manakula Vinayagar Engineering College (Autonomous), Puducherry

ABSTRACT

Factors Influencing Financial Independence of Working Women delves into the various elements shaping the economic autonomy of women in the workforce. It highlights the critical role of financial independence in empowering women, allowing them to take control of their lives and make autonomous decisions. This study aimed to investigate the multifaceted factors influencing the financial independence of working women. Research objectives included assessing their current financial status and challenges, identifying key influencing factors, exploring the impact of financial independence on their quality of life, and developing strategies for empowering their financial well-being.

Structural barriers such as wage gaps, workplace discrimination, and the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work hinder their professional growth and financial stability. Societal norms and cultural expectations further limit career choices and economic participation, while inadequate access to education, skill development, and financial literacy perpetuates dependency. The research underscores the significance of supportive workplace policies, including equal pay, maternity benefits, and flexible work arrangements, in fostering economic independence. Personal attributes like confidence and risk-taking ability play a pivotal role in financial decision-making. This study emphasizes the need for targeted interventions, policy reforms, and societal support to address these barriers. Achieving financial independence for working women is not only a step toward gender equity but also a cornerstone for inclusive and sustainable socio-economic progress. research is necessary to explore the specific factors contributing to financial security and the effectiveness of flexible work arrangements in improving women's financial independence.

1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, financial independence is not merely a personal aspiration but a fundamental pillar of women's empowerment. It signifies the ability to make autonomous financial decisions, control one's economic destiny, and live a life free from financial constraints. This study delves into the multifaceted factors that influence the financial independence of working women, examining the interplay of individual attributes, societal structures, and economic realities.

Background

Women have faced significant barriers to achieving financial independence. Societal norms often relegated them to domestic roles, limiting their access to education, employment opportunities, and financial resources. While progress has been made in recent decades, persistent inequalities and challenges continue to hinder women's economic empowerment.

Problem Statement

Despite increasing female labor force participation, many working women still struggle to achieve financial independence. This study seeks to understand the complex factors that contribute to this disparity, including:

- Gender pay gaps, workplace discrimination, and the unequal burden of unpaid care work.
- Traditional gender roles, limited career choices, and societal pressures.
- Education, skills, financial literacy, risk tolerance, and confidence.
- Financial resources, credit, and support systems.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will contribute to a better understanding of the factors that hinder or facilitate women's financial independence. This knowledge can inform policy interventions, workplace practices, and educational programs aimed at empowering women and promoting gender equity. By addressing the challenges faced by working women, we can create a more just and equitable society where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

1. OBJECTIVES

- To assess the current financial status and challenges faced by working women.
- To identify factors influencing the financial independence of working women.
- To explore the impact of financial independence on women's overall quality of life.
- To develop strategies and recommendations for empowering working women to achieve financial independence.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Daga et. al., (2021) “Money to Call Her Own: An Empirical Study of the Relative Influence of Factors on Indian Women’s Financial Independence”

In this study there is a relative factor of the financial independence of Indian women and also attempted to find the solution to the related issues faced by them to achieve financial independence. They found that too much importance of marriage in the Indian society possesses significant negative impact on the financial status of the unmarried women in India.

Singh et.al., (2020) in their research titled “Unfolding unpaid domestic work in India: women’s constraints, choices, and career”

This study explored the contribution given by the Indian women in the economy by pursuing domestic work which is largely unpaid. They found that majority of the women engaged only in the domestic work are uneducated and financially weak. Further, 'Social and religious constraints', 'choices' and 'low carrier opportunities' are the most significant factors persuading women to indulge in unpaid domestic work in the Indian society.

Meler. (2020) in their case study titled “Money, power, and inequality within marriage among Palestinian families in Israel”

In this study qualitatively explored the gender relationship in the patriarchal society of Israel. They found that most of the Palestinian women were either unemployed or were working in low paid jobs and in majority of the cases, allowance from the husband defines the financial autonomy of women under study. The study also highlighted the poor saving habits and quantum of the Palestinian women of Israel.

Parker (2018) in their dissertation titled “Factors Impacting the Financial Independence of Women Who Were Teenage Mothers”

This study explored the factors which impact the financial independence of the women of US who were teenage mothers; by using phenomenological approach to analyze their lived experience. They found that experience respondents were mixed, which included disappointments such as inconsistency of support from the father of their children and positive experience such as support system from their parents which facilitated them to achieve financial independence.

Anand et.al., (2020) in their study titled “Understanding Frailty, Functional Health and Disability among Older Persons in India: A Decomposition Analysis of Gender and Place of Resident”

In this study explored the gender differences in factors such as frailty, functional limitation and disability in rural and urban dwellers using ‘Oaxaca decomposition method’. They found that education, working-status, physical activity and migration explained the gap of both frailty as well as functional limitations. Further, poor functional health of old age women largely explains the gender differentiation in socio-economic status and their empowerment.

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3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Quantitative data was gathered through surveys administered to a representative sample of working women, allowing for the collection of statistically analyzable data on their financial status, challenges, and experiences. Qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews and questionnaire with selected participants, providing valuable insights into their personal experiences, perspectives, and the contextual factors influencing their financial independence. This mixed-methods approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted factors influencing women's financial independence by combining the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

CHI SQUARE

Hypothesis:

- **NULL HYPOTHESIS:** There is no association between engagement in employment status and initiative.
- **ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS:** There is an association between engagement in challenges in balancing in household expenses and initiative.

Test Statistics		
	Employment status	Challenges in balancing household expenses
Chi-Square	83.956 ^a	47.889 ^b
Def.	3	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000

INFERENCE:

The Chi-Square test shows a significant association between employment status and challenges in balancing household expenses (0.000). The null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a strong relationship between these variables. All expected cell frequencies meet the test's requirements.

ONE WAY ANOVA HYPOTHESIS:

- **NULL HYOTHESIS:** If the significant value is greater than 0.05, then null hypothesis is accepted.
- **ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS:** If the significant value is less than 0.05, then null hypothesis is rejected.

Anova					
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	Sum Of Squares	Def.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.701	4	1.675	1.189	.322
Within Groups	119.788	85	1.409		
Total	126.489	89			

INFERENCE:

The p-value (0.322) is greater than 0.05, so there is no significant difference in financial security perception across the groups.

REGRESSION HYPOTHESIS:

- **NULL HYPOTHESIS:** There is no association between the independent and dependent variable. **HO<0.05 Thus, Null hypothesis is accepted**
- **ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS:** There is an association between the independent and dependent variable. **H1>0.05 Thus, Alternative hypothesis is rejected.**

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	25.805	2.706		9.536	.000
	Flexible working hours and remote work option contribution	-.061	.111	-.058	-.548	.585

INFERENCE:

The regression shows that flexible working hours and remote work options have a negative but statistically insignificant impact on the dependent variable (Sig = 0.585 > 0.05). The significant constant (Sig = 0.000) indicates the model's baseline prediction.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The Chi-Square test indicates a significant association between employment status and challenges in balancing household expenses, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests a strong relationship between these two variables. Additionally, all expected cell frequencies meet the test's requirements, confirming the validity of the results. On the other hand, the p-value of 0.322, which is greater than 0.05, shows no significant difference in financial security perception across the groups, meaning the null hypothesis for this test cannot be rejected. Regarding the regression analysis, flexible working hours and remote work options have a negative but statistically insignificant impact on the dependent variable, as the significance level (0.585) exceeds 0.05. This suggests that these factors do not significantly contribute to the model's prediction. However, the constant term is significant (Sig = 0.000), indicating that the model's baseline prediction is reliable. These findings imply that employment status is a more crucial factor in determining challenges in balancing household expenses, whereas financial security perception and the impact of flexible working hours or remote work options appear to be less significant in this context.

CONCLUSION:

The Study emphasizes the complex interplay of factors influencing the financial independence of working women. While employment is crucial, it also presents significant challenges, balancing work and household responsibilities.

The study found that factors beyond employment status, such as access to financial resources, education, and support systems, significantly impact women's financial well-being.

The findings suggest that the effectiveness of flexible work arrangements in promoting women's financial independence may be more nuanced than initially anticipated. Based on these findings, the conclusion recommends several key actions like Policy interventions, Workplace support, Financial literacy programs

Strengthening social support systems, Addressing the gender pay gap, providing affordable childcare, and promoting equal access to education and skill development for women. Encouraging inclusive workplace policies, such as flexible work arrangements, parental leave, and equal opportunities for career advancement. Developing and implementing targeted financial literacy programs to empower women to make informed financial decisions. Assisting women in managing household responsibilities and achieving financial independence through family and community networks.

The need for further research to delve deeper into the specific factors contributing to women's financial security and to assess the effectiveness of different interventions in promoting their economic empowerment.

<https://www.ijrar.org/papers/IJRAR19J1512.pdf> QUALITY OF WORK LIFE OF MARRIED WOMEN DURING EMPLOYMENT **IJRAR19J1512 International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews (IJRAR) E-ISSN 2348-1269, P- ISSN 2349-5138**