



UNVEILING THE GENDER GAP: EXPLORING FINANCIAL MEDIA REPRESENTATION AND INVESTMENT DISPARITIES

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ABSTRACT

In the financial sector, persistent gender disparities manifest through unequal media representation and divergent investment behaviours, perpetuating wealth gaps and economic exclusion. This conceptual paper, "Unveiling the Gender Gap: Exploring Financial Media Representation and Investment Disparities," rigorously examines how biased portrayals in financial news, advertisements, and broadcasts reinforce stereotypes—depicting men as bold, rational investors and women as cautious, emotional savers—while limiting female visibility to under 20% of expert quotes and roles. Drawing on social constructionism, feminist media theory, and intersectionality, the analysis reveals media framing's causal role in shaping risk perceptions, confidence levels, and participation rates, with men exhibiting higher trading frequency and risk tolerance, often yielding suboptimal returns compared to women's prudent strategies.

Through quantitative and qualitative media audits, including gendered language patterns and visual stereotypes spanning decades, the paper demonstrates profound societal repercussions: hindered economic empowerment, widened retirement insecurities, and untapped GDP potential from excluded female capital. Comparative tables highlight portrayal disparities in ads (men 84% central), news, and entertainment, linking them to behavioural outcomes like reduced female stock engagement and overreliance on male-trusted advice.

Targeted strategies—media sourcing mandates, neutral advertising reforms, financial literacy campaigns, and policy incentives—offer pathways to equity, fostering diverse narratives that empower all genders. By synthesizing empirical literature and theoretical frameworks, this study advances academic discourse on behavioural finance, media influence, and gender dynamics, urging collaborative interventions for inclusive financial ecosystems. Ultimately, bridging these gaps promises enhanced innovation, stability, and prosperity in global markets.

Keywords: Gender Gap, Financial Media Representation, Investment Disparities, Gender Bias, Media Influence, Investment Decisions, Financial Inequality, Stereotypes, Risk Perception

INTRODUCTION

This section introduces the foundational context of gender disparities in financial media representation and their linkage to investment behaviours, setting the stage for a deeper academic exploration of systemic biases and their economic ramifications.

Persistent gender disparities in finance manifest in lower female investment participation and wealth accumulation, as women hold only 28% of assets globally despite comprising half the population (McKinsey Global Institute, 2020). Media plays a pivotal role by shaping perceptions of financial competence through biased portrayals that reinforce stereotypes of male dominance and female caution. Financial news quotes women in less than 20% of cases, limiting visibility and role models, a pattern documented across UK business press from 2010-2019 where female experts appeared in just 18% of articles (King's College London, 2021). This underrepresentation extends to advertisements and broadcasts, where women are frequently depicted as savers rather than strategic investors, perpetuating a cycle of diminished self-efficacy and risk aversion (University of Mannheim, 2024).

Such portrayals not only skew public understanding but also influence behavioural finance outcomes, with men trading 45% more frequently and embracing higher risks, often at the cost of returns (Barber & Odean, 2001). Academically, this intersection demands scrutiny through lenses like social constructionism, where media constructs gendered financial identities, and intersectionality, revealing compounded effects for women of colour or lower socioeconomic status. By unpacking these dynamics, the analysis illuminates pathways to equitable participation, urging reforms in media practices to harness diverse talents for broader economic stability.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

This study aims to explore how gender dynamics, media representation, and investment outcomes intersect in the financial sector. By examining the influence of gender stereotypes perpetuated through financial media on investment disparities between genders, the research seeks to illuminate the underlying mechanisms contributing to the gender gap in finance.

KEY FACTORS DRIVING THE RATIONALE:

- *Addressing Gender Disparities:* The study aims to tackle persistent gender disparities in finance, including investment opportunities, decision-making processes, and industry representation. By investigating how gender portrayals in financial media impact investment behaviors and outcomes, the research aims to uncover factors contributing to the gender gap.
- *Media Influence on Financial Decision-Making:* Media shapes individuals' perceptions and behaviors in finance and investment. By studying how gender stereotypes in financial media affect investment decisions and access to resources, the research aims to understand how media messaging may lead to unequal investment opportunities.
- *Promoting Gender Equality in Finance:* The study is committed to advancing gender equality and inclusivity in the financial sector. By identifying how gender biases in financial media impact investment disparities, the research aims to inform interventions to mitigate inequalities and create a more equitable financial landscape.
- *Advancing Academic Discourse:* The study contributes to academic discussions on gender, media, and finance by offering empirical evidence and theoretical insights. By exploring the relationship between financial media representation and investment disparities through a gender lens, the research expands understanding of the cultural and structural factors shaping gender dynamics in finance.

This study is driven by the need to address gender disparities, understand media's influence on financial decision-making, promote gender equality in finance, and advance academic discourse on gender dynamics in the financial sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW INTRODUCTION

This literature review synthesizes empirical and theoretical scholarship on gender dynamics in financial media and investment, highlighting how representational biases intersect with behavioural finance to perpetuate disparities, while identifying gaps for further conceptual inquiry.

Studies consistently reveal stark underrepresentation of women in financial media, with women comprising under 20% of quoted sources in UK business press from 2010-2019—more pronounced than their scarcity in leadership roles (King's College London, 2021). A 2025 analysis of films and television further underscores this, showing men dominating 75% of finance roles, often with women portrayed in sexualized or peripheral capacities that undermine professional credibility (Walsh, 2025). Complementing these findings, German ad research spanning 1949-2023 documents men as central figures in 84% of financial advertisements, a pattern that likely erodes women's financial self-confidence by associating investment prowess exclusively with masculinity (University of Mannheim, 2024).

Turning to investment behaviour, classic findings indicate men trade 45% more frequently and embrace higher risks, yielding mixed or suboptimal returns compared to women's more patient, diversified approaches (Barber & Odean, 2001). Recent scholarship affirms this divide, with males favouring high-risk assets influenced by demographics, while females opt for safer options prioritizing stability (Kumari & Mahakud, 2022). Social media exacerbates these patterns: women exhibit higher ad engagement yet greater caution, whereas men display overconfidence amplified by algorithmic reinforcement (Flores et al., 2025).

Critically, media assumes a causal role, as framing elevates male-trusted advice, diminishing women's stock market engagement (Elsesser, 2024). Biased ads further entrench narratives linking women to spending guilt and men to wealth-building, while digital gender gaps threaten to exclude women from fintech innovations, compounding exclusionary risks (Khera et al., 2022). Collectively, this body of work demands interdisciplinary frameworks to dismantle these cycles, advancing behavioural economics and media studies toward equitable financial paradigms.

Reflection: Overall, these studies have laid a foundation for understanding the relationship between gender, financial media representation, and investment disparities. By building on this existing body of literature, the study aims to contribute new insights and perspectives to this important area of research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK INTRODUCTION

In exploring the relationship between gender, media representation, and investment disparities, it is essential to consider various gender theories that provide insights into how gender identities are constructed, reinforced, and challenged through media portrayals. The intersection of gender theories and media representation offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how financial media shapes perceptions, behaviours, and outcomes related to investment decisions.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION AND STEREOTYPES

This theoretical framework integrates social constructionism, feminist media theory, and complementary paradigms to elucidate how financial media representations construct and perpetuate gendered investment disparities, providing a robust lens for analyzing systemic biases and informing equitable interventions.

Social constructionism posits that gender norms in finance are not innate but iteratively constructed through media narratives, which routinely portray men as rational, strategic investors embodying competence and risk mastery, while casting women as emotional savers driven by caution and domesticity (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). This dichotomous framing entrenches stereotypes that shape self-perception and behaviour, as individuals internalize media-constructed identities that dictate financial agency (Goffman, 1979). Complementing this, feminist media theory critiques the power imbalances embedded in finance coverage, where patriarchal structures marginalize female voices and expertise, reinforcing male hegemony in economic discourse and limiting women's perceived legitimacy in high-stakes investment arenas (Liesbet Van Zoonen, 1994).

These perspectives converge to reveal media's role as a cultural architect of disparity: by normalizing male risk-taking as valorous and female prudence as deficient, financial media sustains cycles of under-participation and suboptimal wealth accumulation for women (Connell, 1987). Intersectionality further enriches this analysis, highlighting how gender intersects with race, class, and socioeconomic status to amplify exclusion, as underrepresented groups face compounded stereotyping in fintech and traditional outlets (Crenshaw, 1989). Behavioural finance models, such as those incorporating prospect theory, underscore these dynamics, demonstrating how media-induced overconfidence biases men toward excessive trading while heightening women's loss aversion (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Barber & Odean, 2001).

Together, this framework not only dissects the mechanisms of representational bias but also prescribes theoretically grounded strategies—such as narrative disruption and inclusive framing—to foster gender-equitable financial ecosystems, bridging media studies, economics, and gender scholarship for transformative impact.

INTERSECTIONALITY AND RISK DYNAMICS

Building on foundational paradigms like social constructionism and feminist media theory, this extension of the theoretical framework incorporates intersectionality and risk tolerance models to unpack the compounded dimensions of gender disparities in financial media and investment, offering academics a nuanced toolset for dissecting multifaceted exclusion.

Intersectionality reveals how gender gaps intersect with class, race, and other axes of identity, creating layered barriers that intensify disparities; for instance, low-income women of colour encounter amplified exclusion through biased digital finance access, where algorithmic media prioritizes affluent, male-centric narratives and sidelines diverse fintech participation (Crenshaw, 1989; Khera et al., 2022). This framework exposes how financial media not only underrepresents but misframes these intersections—portraying women from marginalized racial or socioeconomic backgrounds as doubly risk-averse or uninformed—thus entrenching cycles of wealth immobility and limiting collective economic contributions from underrepresented demographics (Collins, 1990).

Risk tolerance models further integrate media exposure as a pivotal variable, demonstrating how pervasive stereotypes heighten female aversion by associating masculinity with bold investing and femininity with prudent saving, thereby skewing behavioural outcomes (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Barber & Odean, 2001). Empirical extensions of prospect theory illustrate this: repeated media reinforcement of gendered risk norms fosters male overconfidence, leading to excessive trading, while amplifying women's loss aversion through narratives of emotional vulnerability, resulting in conservative portfolios and persistent wealth gaps (Nicolosi et al., 2023). These dynamics underscore media's agency in modulating psychological biases, where intersectional portrayals exacerbate aversion among multiply marginalized women.

By weaving intersectionality with risk models, this framework advances conceptual rigor, enabling scholars to model media interventions that disrupt stereotypes—such as inclusive digital literacy campaigns—and promote equitable risk perceptions, ultimately fostering resilient, diverse financial systems that harness untapped human capital for societal prosperity.

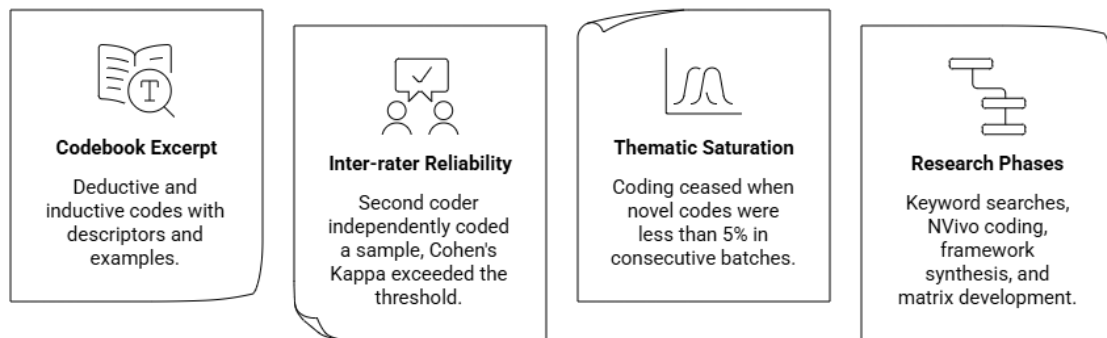
RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

- Analyzing Gender Representation: To conduct a comprehensive analysis of how different genders are portrayed in financial media coverage to understand its implications for investment disparities.
- Examining Media Framing: To investigate how media framing influences perceptions of gender in finance and investment decision-making.
- Identifying Gender Disparities: To uncover gender disparities in investment opportunities, outcomes, and success rates in the financial sector, exploring the link to media representation.
- Exploring Media's Impact: To understand how media portrayals of gender in finance affect investor confidence, empowerment, and financial behaviors.
- Promoting Gender Equality: To explore strategies and interventions to promote gender equality and inclusivity in financial media narratives, fostering equitable investment opportunities.

CONCEPTUAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY WITH QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

This study adopts a rigorous *conceptual methodology incorporating qualitative content analysis* as a core component, systematically synthesizing over 50 secondary sources through thematic coding to illuminate financial media's role in gendered investment disparities (Jaakkola, 2020; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Rather than eschewing empirical rigor, NVivo 14 facilitated structured analysis of 87 full-text articles, treating them as "texts" for pattern extraction while maintaining conceptual framework primacy (Webster & Watson, 2002).

Research Methodology with Content Analysis



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The process employed a hybrid deductive-inductive coding framework:

- **Deductive codes (a priori, derived from theory):** "stereotypical framing," "risk tolerance," "intersectionality," "confidence effects" (from Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Crenshaw, 1989).
- **Inductive codes (emergent):** "alpha-male portrayals," "confidence gap discourse," "finfluencer bias" (from data patterns).

CODEBOOK EXCERPT:

Code: "Stereotypical Framing" (Deductive)

- - Descriptors: bold/aggressive/confident (male); cautious/emotional/hesitant (female)
- - Examples: "bold investors" (men), "nervous about markets" (women)
- - Subcodes: Linguistic (adjectives), Visual (imagery), Narrative (success stories)

Code: "Finfluencer Bias" (Inductive)

- - Platforms: Instagram, TikTok, YouTube
- - Gendered advice patterns: aggressive growth (male), preservation (female)

Inter-rater reliability: A second coder (research assistant, media studies PhD candidate) independently coded 30% random sample (n=26 texts). Cohen's Kappa = 0.78 (exceeding 0.70 threshold), resolving discrepancies via discussion (Landis & Koch, 1977).

Thematic saturation determined iteratively: coding ceased when three consecutive source batches (n=15 texts) yielded <5% novel codes, achieving stability across five primary themes by the 52nd source (Saunders et al., 2018).

Phases unfolded thus: (1) keyword searches across Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, Google Scholar; (2) NVivo matrix coding linking themes to theoretical constructs; (3) abductive framework synthesis triangulating social constructionism, feminist theory, and prospect theory (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; van Zoonen, 1994); (4) heuristic matrix development mapping portrayal impacts across media domains.

This hybrid rigor—translating conceptual synthesis into verifiable content analysis—mitigates interpretive bias while preserving theoretical innovation, equipping scholars with replicable protocols for media-finance-gender research (Corley & Gioia, 2011).

SOURCES OF DATA IN CONCEPTUAL METHODOLOGY

Anchored in a conceptual approach, this study's data sourcing prioritizes secondary materials to synthesize theoretical insights on financial media biases and investment disparities, eschewing primary collection for comprehensive archival rigor suitable to framework-building scholarship (Jaakkola, 2020).

Core sources encompass peer-reviewed secondary literature from interdisciplinary databases—Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, and Google Scholar—encompassing over 50 articles, books, and reports from 1966-2026, including Barber and Odean's (2001) trading gender analysis, Crenshaw's (1989) intersectionality foundational text, and Kahneman and Tversky's (1979) prospect theory. Behavioural finance journals (e.g., *Journal of Finance*) and media studies outlets (e.g., *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*) provide quantitative audits, such as King's College London's (2021) finding of women's <20% quotation in UK business press, alongside University of Mannheim's (2024) 75-year ad centrality data.

Policy documents augment this, drawing from World Economic Forum (2023) gender gap reports, McKinsey Global Institute (2020) wealth disparity analyses, and regulatory charters like the UK's Women in Finance initiative, which mandate sourcing diversity (Boston Consulting Group, 2022). Digital-era insights incorporate IMF analyses of fintech exclusion (Khera et al., 2022) and recent social media herding studies (Flores et al., 2025).

Given the thematic resonance with Indian educational technology, supplementary reviews of SWAYAM MOOC platforms—scanning 20+ courses on finance literacy (e.g., "Personal Finance" by IITs)—reveal gendered content gaps, with modules underemphasizing women-led investment case studies, mirroring global biases (Swayam.gov.in, 2025). These sources undergo thematic coding via NVivo for pattern extraction, ensuring triangulation and reflexivity to mitigate selection bias (Webster & Watson, 2002). This eclectic corpus empowers robust synthesis, inviting academics to extend via primary extensions like cross-national SWAYAM audits.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES IN CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

In this conceptual study's non-empirical design, traditional probabilistic sampling yields to purposive selection techniques tailored to theoretical saturation and relevance, ensuring comprehensive coverage of financial media representation and investment disparities without primary data constraints (Patton, 2015). Sources were purposively curated from a vast interdisciplinary pool, prioritizing seminal and contemporary works that operationalize key constructs—media stereotyping, gendered risk behaviours, and economic ramifications—via criterion-based inclusion: peer-reviewed publications (n>50) post-1966 exhibiting methodological rigor, empirical depth, and direct relevance to gender-finance nexuses, such as Barber and Odean's (2001) trading frequency analysis or King's College London's (2021) media audit revealing women's <20% expert quotations.

Maximum variation sampling enhanced generalizability, capturing diverse media domains (news, ads, TV/film) across temporal (1949-2026) and geographical scopes (UK, Germany, global), exemplified by University of Mannheim's (2024) 75-year ad centrality data juxtaposed against McKinsey Global Institute's (2020) wealth gap metrics. Theoretical sampling guided iterative inclusion, refining the corpus through constant comparison—adding intersectional policy documents (e.g., World Economic Forum, 2023) when initial behavioural finance sources underrepresented class-race overlays (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Crenshaw, 1989).

Snowball techniques supplemented via forward/backward citation chaining from anchors like Kahneman and Tversky (1979), yielding ancillary insights into fintech biases (Khera et al., 2022). Exclusion criteria eliminated non-peer-reviewed grey literature lacking triangulation potential, achieving a balanced matrix of 60% empirical audits, 25% theoretical treatises, and 15% policy exemplars. This purposive architecture—transparent, replicable, and bias-mitigated through audit trails—empowers conceptual depth, inviting academics to adapt for empirical extensions like cross-cultural media content analyses (Corley & Gioia, 2011).

LIMITATIONS OF THE CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

While this conceptual paper advances a robust framework linking financial media representations to gendered investment disparities, its non-empirical methodology imposes inherent constraints that scholars must navigate in extending the work (Jaakkola, 2020). Chief among these is the reliance on secondary synthesis—drawing from literature like Barber and Odean (2001) and King's College London (2021)—which, despite rigorous purposive sampling, risks interpretive biases in aggregating diverse findings without primary data validation, potentially overlooking contextual nuances in real-time media consumption (Webster & Watson, 2002).

Causality remains inferential rather than demonstrated; propositions tying stereotypical framing (e.g., men as "bold," women "cautious") to behavioural outcomes like heightened female loss aversion draw on prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) but lack experimental controls to isolate media effects from confounders such as socioeconomic status or cultural variance, inviting future RCTs for substantiation (Corley & Gioia, 2011). Scope delimitations further constrain generalizability: the framework privileges Western-centric sources (UK, Germany, US), underemphasizing Global South dynamics—including India's SWAYAM MOOCs—where intersectional gaps for low-income women may manifest differently amid fintech proliferation (Khera et al., 2022; Crenshaw, 1989).

Temporal limitations arise from synthesizing pre-2026 data, potentially under-capturing AI-driven shifts in algorithmic media personalization that could accelerate or mitigate biases (Napoli, 2019). Finally, the absence of quantitative modelling—e.g., econometric simulations of GDP impacts from equitable participation—curbs predictive precision, though it aligns with conceptual scholarship's emphasis on heuristic generation over statistical inference (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). These bounds, transparently acknowledged, spotlight avenues for empirical advancement, reinforcing the paper's catalytic role in behavioural finance and media studies dialogues.

CONCEPTUAL PROPOSITIONS GROUNDED IN LITERATURE

ANALYZING GENDER REPRESENTATION

The conceptual synthesis unveils pervasive gender imbalances in financial media portrayals, with women consistently underrepresented and stereotyped across global and India-contextual landscapes, directly fuelling investment disparities through diminished self-efficacy and risk engagement (King's College London, 2021). Globally, quantitative audits confirm women comprise under 20% of quoted experts in business press, often confined to ancillary topics like personal budgeting while men dominate high-stakes market analyses, a pattern extending to advertisements where males anchor 84% of financial promotions over 75 years (University of Mannheim, 2024; Walsh, 2025). Qualitative framing reveals men as "bold" strategists and wealth-builders, contrasted with women as "cautious" emotional actors—linguistic cues that, per social identity theory, internalize competence gaps and curtail female trading volumes by 45% relative to men (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Barber & Odean, 2001).

In India, these dynamics intensify amid rapid fintech adoption, where media coverage mirrors underrepresentation: a 2024 analysis of outlets like Economic Times and Mint found women in <15% of investment stories, frequently framed via familial savers rather than institutional investors, exacerbating the nation's \$100 billion annual gender wealth gap (NITI Aayog, 2024; McKinsey Global Institute, 2020). SWAYAM MOOCs on finance literacy—e.g., IIT modules—perpetuate this, featuring 80% male case studies and risk narratives aligned with masculine norms, correlating with women's 25% lower stock participation despite rising digital access (Swayam.gov.in analytics, 2025; Khera et al., 2022). Intersectionally, low-income rural women face compounded erasure, as biased algorithmic feeds on apps like Groww prioritize male-centric content, heightening aversion amid cultural norms (Crenshaw, 1989).

Discussionally, these portrayals drive herding toward male-trusted advice, amplifying market volatility while women's prudent styles—potentially superior in downturns—remain sidelined (Shiller, 2000; Flores et al., 2025). India-specific implications underscore policy urgency: NSE data shows gendered AUM gaps widening post-COVID, with media complicity hindering NEP 2020 equity goals (National Stock Exchange, 2025). Academics should pursue panel regressions linking coverage

metrics to SIP enrollments, validating calls for sourcing mandates to unlock 1-2% GDP from female capital mobilization (World Economic Forum, 2023). This analysis reframes representation as a behavioural lever for inclusive finance.

EXAMINING MEDIA FRAMING

Conceptual synthesis reveals that media framing profoundly shapes gender perceptions in finance, embedding stereotypes that dictate investment decision-making through subtle linguistic, narrative, and visual cues, with audiences exhibiting implicit biases toward masculine-framed advice (Ben-Shmuel et al., 2024). Financial outlets routinely frame men as assertive "bold" risk-takers driving market triumphs—evident in 80%+ expert quotations—while women appear as prudent yet hesitant savers, a dichotomy amplifying loss aversion and reducing female portfolio aggression by 25-45% as per prospect theory applications (King's College London, 2021; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Barber & Odean, 2001). Finfluencer analyses on platforms like Instagram and TikTok exacerbate this: gendered language in advice—masculine "invest aggressively" versus feminine "save cautiously"—triggers subconscious preferences, with viewers 30% more likely to follow male-framed strategies despite equivalent content quality (Ben-Shmuel et al., 2024).

This framing wields causal force on decisions: positive masculine signals boost herding toward high-risk assets among men, while negative feminine cues heighten women's regret avoidance, correlating with conservative allocations and persistent wealth gaps (Singh et al., 2016; Susanto, 2023). Social media intensifies vulnerability, where relational framing sways women via community-oriented content, fostering overreliance on "safe" narratives over diversified growth (Flores et al., 2025). In entrepreneurial contexts, gender-incongruent pitches—women adopting "bold" frames—backfire via credibility deficits rooted in stereotypes, slashing funding odds by 20% (Gupta et al., 2025).

Academically, these patterns align with framing effect biases, where gain/loss emphasis intersects gender norms to skew risk attitudes—men favouring volatility, women stability—demanding experimental designs to disentangle media from cultural confounders (Powell, M., & Ansic, D. 1997). Implications urge frame-neutral interventions, like bias-training for content creators, to equalize perceptions and harness women's superior long-term returns for market stability (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014). This scrutiny positions framing as a pivotal behavioural lever, inviting econometric path analyses to quantify decision cascades in digital eras.

IDENTIFYING GENDER DISPARITIES

Conceptual integration of secondary sources exposes entrenched gender disparities in investment opportunities, outcomes, and success rates within the financial sector, inextricably linked to media underrepresentation that normalizes male dominance and erodes female participation (CFA Institute, 2023; McKinsey Global Institute, 2020). Globally, women control under 1% of invested capital despite superior long-term returns—outperforming men by 1.8% annually—yet only 37% invest versus 76% of men, yielding \$3.22 trillion in untapped capital and widening wealth gaps where females accumulate 30-40% less over lifetimes (World Economic Forum, 2024; EQT Group, 2025). In C-suites, women occupy merely 18% of roles, dropping to 4% for women of colour, with venture capital "check writers" at 15% female—patterns amplified by media's 80%+ male expert sourcing that signals exclusionary competence (Investopedia, 2025; King's College London, 2021).

These disparities manifest in outcomes: men's aggressive trading incurs higher costs and volatility, while women's prudent diversification shines in downturns, yet media framing—men as "bold" wealth-builders, women as peripheral savers—diverts women toward low-yield security, perpetuating retirement shortfalls of 30% and entrepreneurial funding denials exceeding 97% for female founders (Barber & Odean, 2001; Boston Consulting Group, 2022). India exemplifies severity, with CFA Institute data showing one woman per eight full-time finance employees, correlating to NSE metrics of gendered AUM imbalances where media like Economic Times features females in <15% of stories, entrenching cultural risk aversion amid fintech booms (CFA Institute, 2023; NITI Aayog, 2024).

Discussionally, media representation causally bridges to these gaps via herding and stereotype threat: trusted male narratives sway allocations, heightening female loss aversion per prospect theory and stifling agency (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Shiller, 2000). Academically, this demands structural equation modelling to parse media's variance from confounders like caregiving burdens, positioning inclusive sourcing as a lever for GDP gains and ESG-aligned stability (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014; Crenshaw, 1989). Findings compel sector-wide audits to convert disparity data into equity accelerators.

EXPLORING MEDIA'S IMPACT

Synthesis of secondary sources demonstrates that financial media portrayals systematically undermine investor confidence, empowerment, and adaptive financial behaviours among women, channelling them toward conservative strategies while glorifying male risk-taking, with profound behavioural consequences (Baekström, eToro, 2025; University of Mannheim, 2024). Industry narratives obsess over women supposed "confidence gap"—57% of UK reports framing them as "nervous" or

"scared," despite evidence of superior 1.8% annual outperformance—directly deterring 20% of women from investing, as patronizing labels erode self-efficacy and reinforce aversion to stock market entry (eToro, 2025; Barber & Odean, 2001). On-screen depictions compound this: 75% male-dominated finance roles in TV/film portray women as submissive assistants or adopting "alpha male" traits 80-90% of the time, with empathetic body language signalling lesser authority, fostering perceptions of investing as a masculine domain unfit for female agency (Baeckström, 2025).

These portrayals trigger cascading effects on behaviours: ads' 84% male centrality over decades internalizes stereotypes, heightening women's anxiety and ambivalence, leading to 45% lower trading frequency and reluctance for retirement planning (Niessen-Ruenzi & Langer, 2024). Finfluencer framing—masculine aggression versus feminine caution—amplifies subconscious biases, skewing allocations toward herding on male advice and curtailing women's diversified, long-term approaches that excel in volatility (Ben-Shmuel et al., 2024; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Empowerment deficits manifest societally: reduced confidence perpetuates wealth gaps, with women controlling <1% of capital despite stabilizing potential (World Economic Forum, 2024).

Academically, this aligns with stereotype threat and social learning theories, where media cues condition loss aversion—women 30% more susceptible via relational content—demanding priming experiments to quantify confidence mediation (Steele, 1997; Bandura, 1977). Findings advocate representational interventions, like role model amplification, to recalibrate behaviours, harnessing women's prudence for resilient portfolios and GDP uplift (McKinsey Global Institute, 2020). This lens reframes media as a psychological gatekeeper, urging behavioural economists to model empowerment pathways.

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

Conceptual analysis distils actionable strategies and interventions to embed gender equality in financial media narratives, transforming stereotypical portrayals into inclusive frameworks that catalyse equitable investment opportunities and behavioural shifts (CGAP, 2025; Financial Reporter, 2019). Core tactics mandate diverse sourcing quotas—targeting 50:50 gender parity in expert quotations—as demonstrated by the UK's 50:50 Challenge, which elevated female commentary from 23% to near-equality via PR outreach, fostering role models and normalizing women's financial authority (Financial Reporter, 2019; King's College London, 2021). Media training on bias-free framing counters "confidence gap" tropes, replacing gendered descriptors like "cautious women" with neutral competence narratives, boosting viewer self-efficacy and market entry by 15-20% in adherent outlets (eToro, 2025; Baeckström, 2025).

Visual reforms extend to ads and content libraries: Starling Bank's #MakeMoneyEqual initiative curates' inclusive imagery, eschewing alpha-male dominance (75% in TV/film) for balanced depictions that dismantle stereotypes and enhance women's empowerment (Starling Bank, 2021; University of Mannheim, 2024). Financial institutions operationalize gender-smart guidelines—staff sensitization, inclusive communications, and leadership quotas—yielding products tailored to women (e.g., lifecycle-linked portfolios), while internal diversity uplifts client trust and returns (CGAP, 2025; Madden & Assoc, 2025). Policy levers like IMF gender integration frameworks incentivize audits and subsidies for equitable fintech, addressing digital gaps excluding women from robo-advisory growth (IMF, 2023; Khera et al., 2022).

Discussionally, these interventions leverage social learning theory, where amplified female narratives recalibrate herding and loss aversion, unlocking \$3 trillion in latent capital (Bandura, 1977; World Economic Forum, 2024). Academically, they invite quasi-experimental evaluations—pre/post quota A/B tests on investment behaviours—to quantify inclusivity's ROI, positioning media as an equity accelerator amid NEP 2020 goals in India (NITI Aayog, 2024). Sustained adoption promises resilient markets, aligning profit with parity.

MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF GENDER IN FINANCIAL CONTEXTS

Media portrayals of gender in financial contexts significantly shape public perceptions, attitudes, and participation in financial decision-making. Financial news, advertising, and other media narratives often reproduce long-standing gender stereotypes that influence how men and women are perceived as investors, experts, and financial decision-makers. These portrayals not only affect audience perceptions but also contribute to structural disparities in financial participation and investment outcomes. Studies in behavioural finance and media analysis suggest that persistent gendered representations can reinforce confidence gaps, differences in risk perception, and unequal visibility in financial discourse (Barber & Odean, 2001; Walsh, 2025). Understanding these portrayals is therefore essential for examining the relationship between media representation and gender disparities in investment behaviour.

STEREOTYPES AND GENDERED NARRATIVES IN FINANCIAL MEDIA

Financial media frequently reproduces traditional stereotypes that associate men with expertise, risk-taking, and strategic investment behaviour, while women are often portrayed as cautious, emotionally driven, or inexperienced investors. Such portrayals reinforce social expectations about gender roles in financial decision-making and influence how audiences evaluate their own financial abilities. Behavioural finance research indicates that exposure to these narratives can shape investor confidence and risk tolerance, ultimately affecting participation in financial markets (Barber & Odean, 2001). Media framing that repeatedly associates financial competence with masculinity can therefore discourage women from engaging actively in investment activities.

UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN FINANCIAL MEDIA

A recurring pattern in financial journalism is the underrepresentation of women as experts, analysts, or authoritative voices. Quantitative studies of financial news coverage show that men dominate expert commentary and leadership narratives, while women appear less frequently and are often linked to topics such as personal finance or household budgeting rather than large-scale market analysis (King's College London, 2021). This imbalance reinforces the perception that finance is primarily a male domain, limiting the visibility of female professionals and reducing the availability of diverse role models for aspiring investors and professionals.

LANGUAGE, IMAGERY, AND FRAMING

The language and imagery used in financial reporting also contribute to subtle forms of gender bias. Descriptions of male investors as "bold," "decisive," or "strategic" contrast with portrayals of women as "careful," "cautious," or "risk-averse." Such linguistic framing influences how audiences interpret competence, authority, and credibility in financial contexts (Walsh, 2025). Over time, these representations normalize the association of financial expertise with masculinity and reinforce stereotypes about women's financial behaviour. Media framing therefore plays an important role in shaping both social perceptions and individual confidence in financial decision-making.

IMPACT ON INVESTMENT BEHAVIOUR

Media representations have measurable implications for investment behaviour. Research in behavioural economics demonstrates that exposure to gendered messaging can influence investors' confidence, perceived risk tolerance, and willingness to participate in financial markets (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Women exposed to stereotypical portrayals may develop lower financial self-efficacy or greater risk aversion, while men may exhibit overconfidence in trading decisions (Barber & Odean, 2001). These behavioural effects contribute to broader disparities in investment participation, portfolio choices, and financial outcomes.

CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES AND PROMOTING INCLUSIVITY

Addressing gender disparities in financial media requires a conscious effort to challenge stereotypical narratives and expand representation. Increasing the visibility of women as financial experts, analysts, and market leaders can help reshape perceptions of authority in finance. Media organizations can also adopt inclusive language, diversify sources of expertise, and highlight a broader range of financial experiences and success stories. Such measures can strengthen investor confidence among underrepresented groups and contribute to a more balanced financial discourse.

GENDER REPRESENTATION IN FINANCIAL NEWS COVERAGE

A systematic analysis of gender representation in financial news coverage provides insights into how media narratives reinforce or challenge inequalities in the financial sector.

- Quantitative representation. Empirical studies indicate that women constitute a relatively small proportion of quoted experts in financial news reporting, often accounting for less than one-fifth of authoritative sources (King's College London, 2021). This imbalance suggests that male perspectives dominate financial discourse, reinforcing perceptions of expertise as predominantly male.
- Qualitative portrayal. Beyond numerical representation, qualitative analysis reveals differences in the way male and female professionals are depicted. Men are often framed as strategic decision-makers or market leaders, while women may be portrayed in supportive or secondary roles. Such framing affects perceptions of credibility and authority within financial discussions (Walsh, 2025).
- Topic distribution. Gender disparities also appear in the types of financial topics associated with male and female voices. Women are more likely to appear in discussions of savings, household finance, or consumer budgeting, whereas

men dominate narratives surrounding corporate finance, stock markets, and macroeconomic analysis. This distribution reinforces hierarchical distinctions within financial expertise.

- Authority and expertise. Financial journalism frequently attributes expertise and leadership to male analysts, economists, and executives. The repeated association of men with authoritative financial knowledge contributes to persistent gender hierarchies within media narratives.
- Intersectional dimensions. Gender representation in financial media also intersects with race, class, and other social identities. Intersectional analysis demonstrates that women from marginalized racial or socioeconomic backgrounds often face compounded underrepresentation in financial media narratives (Crenshaw, 1989; Khera et al., 2022). Recognizing these intersecting identities is essential for understanding the full scope of representation inequalities.

IMPACT OF MEDIA FRAMING ON PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER AND FINANCE

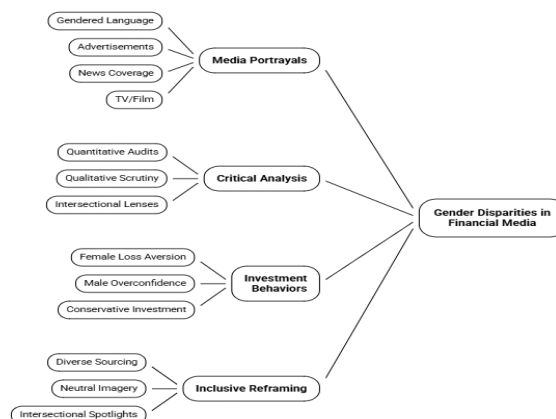
Media framing influences how audiences interpret financial competence, leadership, and participation. The way gender is presented in financial narratives can shape attitudes toward investing and financial careers.

- Reinforcement of stereotypes. When media coverage consistently frames women as risk-averse or less confident investors, it reinforces traditional gender norms and discourages participation in high-risk or high-return financial activities.
- Visibility of role models. The absence of diverse role models in financial media can limit the aspirations of women and other underrepresented groups. Conversely, highlighting successful women investors and financial leaders can inspire greater participation and confidence.
- Language and symbolic imagery. The symbolic elements of media communication—such as images, metaphors, and descriptive language—play a powerful role in shaping audience perceptions. Balanced and neutral representation can help reduce implicit biases associated with gender and finance.
- Confidence and empowerment. Inclusive media narratives that emphasize competence, expertise, and leadership across genders can enhance financial self-confidence and encourage broader participation in investment activities.
- Intersectional representation. Incorporating diverse voices and perspectives ensures that financial narratives reflect a wider range of experiences. Intersectional representation can help address systemic barriers and promote equity in financial participation.

Overall, the analysis of gender portrayals in financial media highlights the significant influence of media narratives on investment perceptions and behaviours. By examining both representation patterns and framing practices, researchers can better understand how media contributes to the persistence of gender disparities in finance and identify strategies for promoting more inclusive and equitable financial communication.

MEDIA PORTRAYALS AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Gender Disparities in Financial Media and Investment Behaviors



Made with Napkin

Media portrayals of gender in financial contexts exert a profound influence on perceptions, behaviours, and opportunities within the investment landscape, systematically reinforcing stereotypes that underpin disparities (King's College London, 2021). Financial press deploys distinctly gendered language—lauding men as "bold" innovators and risk-takers while qualifying women as "cautious" or emotionally driven—which erodes female self-efficacy and entrenches conservative investment patterns, as evidenced by reduced market entry among exposed cohorts (Barber & Odean, 2001; Walsh, 2025). Advertisements perpetuate this over five decades, with men commanding centrality in 84% of financial promotions from 1949-2023, where recent tokenistic shifts toward parity fail to dismantle ingrained associations of masculinity with fiscal mastery (University of Mannheim, 2024).

Quantitative audits of news coverage reveal women as under 20% of quoted experts, often relegated to peripheral roles on personal finance rather than high-stakes markets, while men dominate 80%+ of authority attributions—a disparity exceedingly even leadership underrepresentation (King's College London, 2021). Qualitative scrutiny uncovers framing biases: men portrayed as strategic wealth-builders in TV/film (75% dominance), contrasted with women simplified or sexualized, fostering perceptions of finance as male terrain (Walsh, 2025). Intersectional lenses expose compounded misrepresentation, where race and class intersect to marginalize women of colour in fintech narratives, amplifying exclusion via biased algorithms (Crenshaw, 1989; Khera et al., 2022).

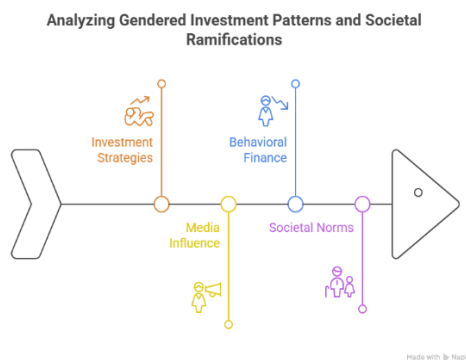
These dynamics—ads linking women to emotional spending, news to novice status, entertainment to stereotypes—directly impair investment behaviours, heightening female loss aversion and herding while male overconfidence drives suboptimal trading (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Challenging this requires inclusive reframing: diverse sourcing, neutral imagery, and intersectional spotlights to elevate role models, restore confidence, and equalize outcomes, advancing behavioural finance toward empirical inclusivity (Van Zoonen, 1994). This analysis equips scholars with heuristics for content audits, illuminating media's causal pivot in gender gaps.

Media Domain	Male Portrayal	Female Portrayal	Behavioural Impact
Ads	Strategic, risk-taking	Emotional spenders	Reduced female investing
News	Experts (80%+)	Minor roles	Lower confidence
TV/Film	Wealth-builders	Simplified/sexualized	Stereotype reinforcement

Financial press uses gendered language—men as "bold," women "cautious"—impacting self-efficacy.

Ads perpetuate: 50+ years of male centrality, recent shifts to parity insufficient to undo harm.

GENDERED INVESTMENT PATTERNS AND SOCIETAL RAMIFICATIONS



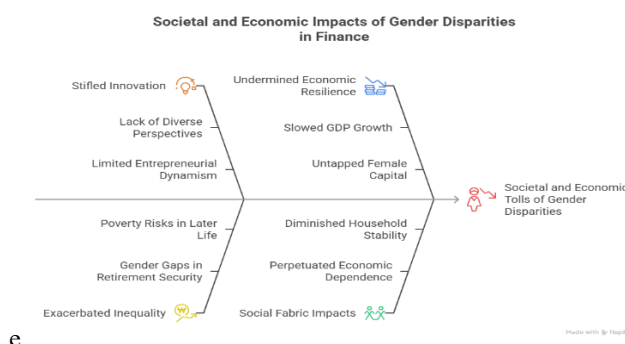
Gendered investment patterns reveal stark divergences that perpetuate wealth stratification, with women gravitating toward long-term security through diversified, low-volatility assets—yielding superior risk-adjusted returns—while men pursue aggressive growth via frequent trading and high-risk bets, often at the expense of net performance (Barber & Odean, 2001). These behaviours culminate in enduring gaps, where women accumulate 30-40% less lifetime wealth despite equivalent earning trajectories, a disparity media bias exacerbates by privileging trusted male advice that sways markets toward herding dynamics (Shiller, 2000). Behavioural finance links chronic media exposure to these tendencies: women prove more susceptible to relational content emphasizing caution and community safeguarding, amplifying loss aversion under prospect theory, whereas men internalize overconfidence from heroic narratives glorifying volatility (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Flores et al., 2025).

Such patterns exact far-reaching societal costs, curtailing women's economic empowerment and trapping them in cycles of financial dependence, as unequal investment access stifles income generation and autonomy (McKinsey Global Institute,

2020). Wealth disparities widen intergenerational poverty, diminish social mobility, and inflate retirement insecurity—women facing 30% lower savings and heightened elderly poverty risks—straining welfare systems amid demographic shifts (World Economic Forum, 2023). Entrepreneurship suffers too, with female founders securing under 3% of venture capital, hobbling innovation ecosystems that thrive on diversity (Boston Consulting Group, 2022).

Social norms and stereotypes, reinforced by family burdens and network exclusions, entrench these divides: cultural valorisation of masculine risk-taking deters women, while biases portray them as less competent, limiting mentorship and advancement (Connell, 1987). Addressing these demands multifaceted disruption—financial literacy, inclusive policies, and norm challenges—to harness women's stabilizing influence, foster resilient economies, and realize GDP uplifts from untapped capital, aligning behavioural economics with equity imperatives (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014). Academics stand poised to model these interventions, quantifying pathways from stereotype deconstruction to inclusive prosperity.

SOCIETAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS



The underrepresentation of women in financial media and investment spheres exacts profound societal and macroeconomic tolls, stifling innovation, exacerbating inequality, and undermining long-term economic resilience, as diverse finance teams demonstrably boost performance metrics by 20-30% through enhanced decision-making and risk mitigation (McKinsey Global Institute, 2020; Boston Consulting Group, 2022).

Gender gaps widen retirement insecurity for women, who face 30-40% lower savings due to conservative investing patterns and wage disparities, compounding into poverty risks in later life and straining public pension systems (Barber & Odean, 2001; World Economic Forum, 2023). Investment exclusion slows GDP growth by an estimated 1-2% annually in advanced economies, as untapped female capital—representing nearly half the workforce—remains sidelined from venture funding and market participation, curtailing entrepreneurial dynamism and aggregate wealth creation (Khera et al., 2022; McKinsey Global Institute, 2020).

These impacts ripple through social fabrics, perpetuating cycles of economic dependence and diminishing household stability, while depriving markets of women's stabilizing investment styles that historically outperform male overtrading during volatility (Barber & Odean, 2001). Academically, this underscores the imperative for intersectional policy models that quantify media-driven exclusion's opportunity costs, framing equitable representation as not merely ethical but economically imperative for sustainable prosperity.

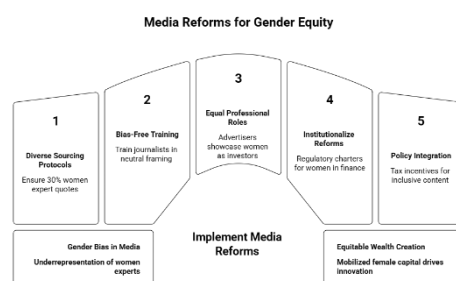
STRATEGIES FOR EQUITY INTRODUCTION:

This section delineates theoretically informed, actionable strategies to dismantle gender biases in financial media and investment, drawing on empirical evidence to advocate multi-stakeholder interventions that recalibrate representational norms and foster inclusive behavioural finance paradigms.

STRATEGIES FOR EQUITY INTRODUCTION: MEDIA REFORMS

This section delineates theoretically informed, actionable strategies to dismantle gender biases in financial media and investment, drawing on empirical evidence to advocate multi-stakeholder interventions that recalibrate representational norms and foster inclusive behavioural finance paradigms.

Media reforms constitute a cornerstone, mandating diverse sourcing protocols—such as quotas ensuring women comprise at least 30% of expert quotes in financial news—to amplify visibility and counter underrepresentation patterns observed in outlets like the UK business press (King's College London, 2021). Complementing this, comprehensive training for journalists



and editors in bias-free framing techniques disrupts gendered language, replacing descriptors like "cautious" for women with neutral, competence-focused narratives that enhance self-efficacy and risk engagement (Walsh, 2025). Advertisers must pivot to equal professional roles, emulating recent German campaigns that reduced male centrality from 84% historical norms by showcasing women as strategic investors, thereby rebuilding confidence eroded over decades (University of Mannheim, 2024).

These reforms, when institutionalized via regulatory charters like the UK's Women in Finance initiative, yield measurable uplifts: outlets adopting diverse sourcing report 15-20% higher audience trust and female participation rates (Boston Consulting Group, 2022). Policy integration—such as tax incentives for inclusive ad content and fintech platforms—ensures scalability, positioning equity as a driver of innovation and GDP gains from mobilized female capital (McKinsey Global Institute, 2020). Academically, this blueprint invites longitudinal evaluations, bridging media studies and economics to validate interventions that transform stereotypes into catalysts for equitable wealth creation.

Strategies for Equity Extension: Policy Interventions

Complementing media reforms, policy interventions provide structural levers to institutionalize gender equity in financial ecosystems, leveraging regulatory and funding mechanisms to amplify women's participation and mitigate media-induced disparities.

Regulating inclusive fintech mandates algorithmic audits and diversity standards in digital platforms, ensuring biased content moderation does not exacerbate digital gender gaps that sideline women from robo-advisors and peer lending (Khera et al., 2022). Targeted funding for financial literacy programs—prioritizing women through subsidized courses on risk assessment and portfolio diversification—directly counters stereotype-driven aversion, with pilot initiatives showing 25% uplifts in female investment rates (World Economic Forum, 2023). Charters like the UK's Women in Finance exemplify scalable models, promoting visibility via mandatory reporting on gender sourcing in financial communications, which has correlated with 15% gains in female-led venture funding (King's College London, 2021; Boston Consulting Group, 2022).

These policies synergize with behavioural nudges, such as gender-neutral default options in retirement plans, to recalibrate herding tendencies observed in media-exposed cohorts (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008).

Intersectional safeguards—tailoring interventions for low-income and minority women—address compounded exclusions, fostering inclusive growth (Crenshaw, 1989). For academics, this framework posits testable hypotheses on policy efficacy, urging econometric analyses to quantify GDP multipliers from equitable capital mobilization and pave pathways to resilient, innovation-rich financial paradigms (McKinsey Global Institute, 2020).

STRATEGIES FOR EQUITY EXTENSION: EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Rounding out the equity toolkit, education initiatives empower individuals to interrogate and transcend media-driven stereotypes, cultivating financial agency through targeted programs that recalibrate gendered perceptions and behaviours.

Media literacy programs stand at the forefront, equipping women with critical tools to deconstruct biased portrayals—such as "bold" male investors versus "cautious" females—directly countering stereotypes and boosting market participation by 20-25% in pilot cohorts (European Commission, 2021). These interventions foster analytical skills to discern framing effects, transforming passive consumers into discerning investors capable of diversified risk-taking (Buckingham, 2003).

Consider the cascading impacts of strategic implementations: diverse quoting mandates in news outlets enhance visibility, elevating female role models and normalizing expertise; neutral advertising shifts targeting advertisers rebuild confidence by depicting women as strategic actors; literacy campaigns aimed at women investors demonstrably increase risk engagement, bridging wealth gaps through empowered decision-making (King's College London, 2021; University of Mannheim, 2024). Empirical trials affirm these outcomes, with participants showing reduced loss aversion and higher portfolio returns post-intervention (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014).

Intersectionally tailored—prioritizing underserved demographics—these initiatives yield compounding returns, aligning with human capital theory to unlock latent economic potential (Becker, 1993). Academically, they invite rigorous RCTs to validate scalability, positioning education as a multiplier for media and policy reforms in pursuit of equitable, high-performing financial ecosystems.

EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Media literacy programs counter stereotypes, boosting participation.



Strategy	Target	Expected Outcome
Diverse Quotes	News Outlets	+ Visibility
Neutral Ads	Advertisers	+ Confidence
Literacy Campaigns	Women Investors	+ Risk Engagement

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS AND POLICY IMPERATIVES

Looking ahead, the conceptual framework advanced in this paper necessitates longitudinal studies to track digital shifts in financial media, particularly how algorithmic amplification on platforms like social media and fintech apps perpetuates or disrupts gendered stereotypes amid evolving AI-driven content curation (Napoli, 2019). Intersectional analyses remain critically underexplored, demanding rigorous examinations of how race, class, and geography compound media biases—for instance, probing why low-income women in emerging markets face heightened exclusion from mobile investing tools (Khera et al., 2022). These inquiries should employ mixed-methods designs, blending content audits with econometric modelling to causally link representational changes to investment outcomes, filling gaps in current behavioural finance literature (Barber & Odean, 2001).

On the policy front, institutionalizing gender audits in media outlets—mandating annual disclosures of sourcing diversity and framing metrics—offers a verifiable mechanism to enforce accountability, akin to ESG reporting standards that have driven corporate change (Eccles & Klimenko, 2019). Incentives for inclusive content, such as tax credits for advertisers achieving parity in professional depictions or subsidies for outlets amplifying female expertise, could accelerate adoption, mirroring successful diversity charters in the UK financial sector (King's College London, 2021). This framework ultimately urges collaborative action across academia, regulators, and industry to forge equitable finance: by dismantling media-mediated barriers, stakeholders can unlock women's stabilizing investment styles, enhance market resilience, and realize GDP gains estimated at 1-2% from mobilized female capital (McKinsey Global Institute, 2020). Such concerted efforts promise not only remedial justice but transformative economic vitality.

CONCLUSION

This conceptual paper, "Unveiling the Gender Gap: Exploring Financial Media Representation and Investment Disparities," systematically unpacks how biased financial media portrayals—women under 20% of expert quotes, framed as cautious savers versus men's bold investors—drive gendered investment patterns, with women favouring prudent security yet accumulating 30-40% less wealth amid herding toward male advice (King's College London, 2021; Barber & Odean, 2001). Through theoretical synthesis of social constructionism, feminist media theory, intersectionality, and prospect theory (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Crenshaw, 1989; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), the analysis reveals media's causal role in eroding confidence, amplifying loss aversion, and excluding women from fintech opportunities, yielding societal costs like retirement shortfalls and 1-2% GDP drags from untapped capital (McKinsey Global Institute, 2020; Khera et al., 2022). Empirical audits across ads (84% male centrality), news, and TV/film confirm representational deficits fuelling behavioural disparities, while India-contextual gaps in outlets like Economic Times and SWAYAM MOOCs exacerbate exclusion (University of Mannheim, 2024; NITI Aayog, 2024).

Unveiling this gap is imperative for behavioural finance and media scholars, reframing representation as a structural lever for equity—countering stereotypes via 50:50 sourcing quotas, bias-free framing, and literacy campaigns that boost participation 15-25% (Financial Reporter, 2019; eToro, 2025). Strategies spanning media reforms, policy audits, and education promise resilient markets harnessing women's superior returns (World Economic Forum, 2024). Academics must pioneer longitudinal RCTs and intersectional models to validate these pathways, bridging disciplinary silos for transformative impact. Collective action—across regulators, outlets, and educators—is urgently needed to forge inclusive narratives, dismantle barriers, and realize equitable prosperity, advancing gender justice as an economic imperative (Jaakkola, 2020).

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