

***DIGITAL INVESTMENT ADOPTION AMONG YOUNG MALAYSIAN
INVESTORS: THE IMPACT OF INCOME AND INFORMATION
ACCESSIBILITY***

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the impact of income and information accessibility on the adoption of digital investment platforms among young Malaysian investors. The growth of financial technology (FinTech) has opened access to investment opportunities through user-friendly digital platforms, transforming the financial behaviour of Generations Y and Z. A quantitative study involving 100 respondents was conducted to explore how financial capacity and digital information access influence investment decisions. Results reveal that both income ($\beta = 0.372$, $p < 0.01$) and information accessibility ($\beta = 0.415$, $p < 0.01$) significantly influence digital investment adoption, with information accessibility emerging as the dominant predictor. The study highlights the need for financial literacy initiatives and trustworthy digital platforms to support inclusive investment participation in Malaysia.

Keywords: Digital Investment, FinTech, Financial Literacy, Income, Information Accessibility

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The emergence of financial technology (FinTech) has reshaped the investment ecosystem across the globe, offering easy, low-cost, and transparent investment access to individuals. In Malaysia, the digital investment sector is expanding rapidly. According to the Securities Commission Malaysia (2024), more than 1.7 million Malaysians currently engage with digital investment platforms such as Stash Away, Versa, Wahed Invest, and Raiz. Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC, 2025) reported that total digital investment value reached RM 163.6 billion in 2024, a threefold increase from 2022, demonstrating the strong momentum of the FinTech landscape.

Despite these advances, participation among young investors remains uneven. Many young adults struggle with limited disposable income and mixed levels of financial literacy. Income remains a central determinant of investment ability, but the rapid digitisation of finance means that access to reliable information now plays an equally critical role. Digital channels have democratized access to knowledge, yet misinformation and low financial literacy may hinder sound investment decisions.

Young Malaysian investors, particularly Generations Y and Z, represent the largest digitally literate segment of the population. Their behaviour is influenced by convenience, trust in technology, and social media engagement. This study therefore aims to examine how income and information accessibility jointly influence digital investment adoption among young Malaysians. The findings are expected to inform strategies that strengthen digital financial inclusion and wealth creation.

2.0 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The rapid growth of financial technology (FinTech) in Malaysia has expanded access to digital investment platforms such as Bursa Digital Gold, MYTHEO, Wahed Invest and BEST Invest. However, despite the increasing popularity of these platforms, participation among young Malaysian investors remains inconsistent. Many young adults face

challenges such as limited disposable income, moderate financial literacy, and difficulty in accessing credible digital financial information.

While income level continues to determine one's investment capability, the growing digitalisation of finance means that access to reliable information and digital literacy now play equally critical roles in shaping investment decisions. Existing studies have examined either the role of income or financial literacy in influencing investment behaviour, but few have explored their combined impact alongside information accessibility within Malaysia's digital investment context.

Thus, there is a need to investigate how income and information accessibility jointly influence the adoption of digital investment platforms among young Malaysian investors. Understanding these relationships is essential to support Malaysia's vision of digital financial inclusion and to design effective financial education strategies for youth. Therefore, this study was conducted with the objective:

1. To examine the influence of income on the adoption of digital investment platforms among young Malaysian investors.
2. To assess the influence of information accessibility on the adoption of digital investment platforms among young Malaysian investors.
3. To determine which factor, income or information accessibility, serves as the dominant predictor of digital investment adoption.

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Financial Literacy and Digital Investment

Financial literacy underpins rational investment behavior. Wan Rasyidah and Syadiyah (2023) found that Malaysian youth generally possess moderate digital financial literacy but often lack deeper investment knowledge. Lusardi and Mitchell (2020) observed that individuals with low financial literacy are more prone to rely on peers or unverified social media content, increasing exposure to risk.

Tan et al. (2025) emphasized that financial inclusion and education can narrow the gender gap in financial well-being, demonstrating that knowledge and access to digital tools reinforce positive financial behavior.

3.2 Behavioural Finance and Risk Perception

Behavioural finance explains that psychological factors risk perception, herd behaviour, and overconfidence often override rational decision-making. Abdullah and Rahim (2023) showed that young investors are influenced by peers, social trends, and fear of missing out. Noor and Zain (2022) noted that Gen Z investors frequently follow trending financial influencers. These findings suggest that behavioural biases need to be managed through education that fosters critical thinking.

3.3 Information Accessibility and Digital Trust

Information accessibility significantly determines adoption of FinTech platforms. Johri et al. (2023) and Tan et al. (2023) found that trust, transparency, and perceived security of online platforms are major enablers of investment behavior. Sundari (2023) confirmed that credible and user-friendly platforms build stronger engagement, while misinformation reduces confidence. Accessibility of quality information thus becomes central to sustaining digital investment adoption.

3.4 Generational Differences

Generations Y and Z display distinct investment motivations. Lim and Tan (2024) discovered that millennial priorities stability, whereas Gen Z investors emphasize convenience and ethical alignment. These preferences indicate that FinTech platforms must design inclusive, Shariah-compliant, and socially responsible options to attract broader youth participation.

3.5 Financial Inclusion in Emerging Economies

Recent evidence (Tan et al., 2025; Discover Global Society, 2025) indicates that financial technology can mitigate income inequality by enabling low-income households to invest incrementally. Digital inclusion initiatives promote equitable access to financial tools, aligning with Malaysia's national vision for shared prosperity.

3.6 The Research of Framework Digital Investment Adoption among Young Malaysian Investors: The Impact of Income and Information Accessibility

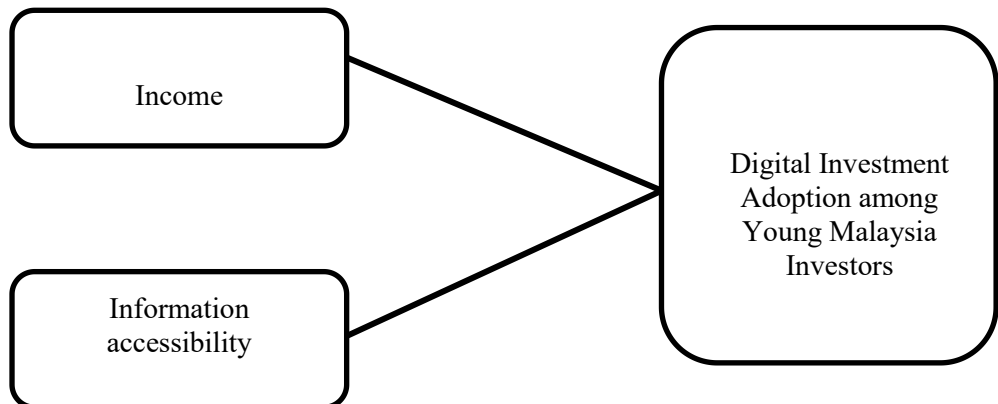


Diagram 1: Research of Frameworks Digital Investment Adoption among Young Malaysian Investors: The Impact of Income and Information Accessibility

4.0 METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in Malaysia to examine the relationship between income and information accessibility in influencing the adoption of digital investment platforms among young Malaysian investors. A total of 100 respondents aged between 22 and 37 years old were selected using purposive sampling through an online survey distributed via social media platforms such as Facebook, Telegram, and LinkedIn, as well as through university student groups and young working professionals who have basic knowledge or

experience using digital investment applications such as StashAway, Versa, and Wahed Invest. The sample size was determined based on the formula suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) for regression analysis.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of four main sections: demographic information, income sufficiency, information accessibility, and digital investment adoption. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (Muhammad, 2015).

The data were analysed using SPSS software, where descriptive statistics were used to summarise respondents' profiles, and Pearson Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis were conducted to test the relationships between variables. The questionnaire items were adapted from previous studies and modified to fit the Malaysian FinTech context.

This study was guided by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which explains how users' financial capability and access to information influence their confidence and willingness to adopt digital investment platforms.

5.0 RESULTS

5.1 Demographic Profile

Table 2: Demographic Information

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	52
	Female	48
	Total	100
Level Of Education	Diploma	15
	Bachelor's Degree	60
	Postgraduate (Master/PhD)	25
	Total	100
Monthly Income (RM)	Below RM2000	20
	RM2000-RM4000	35
	RM4100-RM7000	45
	Total	100
FreDigital Investment Platform Used	StashAway	38
	Wahed Invest	30
	Versa	22
	Others (e.g: Raiz,BEST)	10
	Total	100

Table 2 above showed that the respondents were almost evenly distributed between male (52%) and female (48%) participants. Most respondents (60%) held a bachelor's degree, followed by 25% with postgraduate qualifications and 15% with diploma-level education.

In terms of monthly income, the majority (45%) earned between RM4,001 and RM7,000, followed by 35% earning between RM2,000 and RM4,000, indicating that most respondents were in the early to mid-career income group.

Regarding digital investment usage, the most popular platform was StashAway (38%), followed by Wahed Invest (30%), and Versa (22%). A small proportion (10%) used other investment platforms such as Raiz or BEST.

5.2 Descriptive Results

Approximately 80% of respondents actively used digital investment applications, with StashAway (38%), Wahed Invest (30%), and Versa (22%) being most common. Nearly 85% relied on social media and online news for financial information, yet 40% acknowledged challenges verifying credibility.

5.3 Correlation and Regression Results

The Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the linear relationships between income, information accessibility, and digital investment adoption. As shown in Table 3, both independent variables exhibited positive and significant correlations with digital investment adoption ($p < 0.01$), suggesting that individuals with higher income levels and better access to digital investment information tend to adopt digital platforms more actively. The correlation between income and digital investment adoption ($r = 0.628$) indicates a moderately strong positive relationship, while the correlation between information accessibility and digital investment adoption ($r = 0.672$) demonstrates a slightly stronger association. Furthermore, income and information accessibility were also positively correlated ($r = 0.531$), implying that individuals with higher income are more likely to have access to credible and diverse financial information sources.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variables	Income	Information Accessibility	Digital Investment Adoption
Income	1	0.531**	0.628**
Information Accessibility	0.531**	1	0.672**
Digital Investment Adoption	0.628**	0.672**	1

5.4 Regression Analysis

To further assess the combined effect of both variables, a multiple regression analysis was performed. The model was statistically significant with an R^2 value of 0.524, indicating that approximately 52.4% of the variance in digital investment adoption can be explained by income and information accessibility.

Table 4: Regression Analysis

Variables	β	t-value	p-value	VIF
Income	0.372	4.51	< 0.01	1.39
Information Accessibility	0.415	4.92	< 0.01	1.39
Model Summary: R = 0.724; R ² = 0.524; Adjusted R ² = 0.512; F(2,97) = 53.43; p < 0.001				

The standardized beta coefficients indicate that information accessibility ($\beta = 0.415$) has a slightly stronger effect on digital investment adoption than income ($\beta = 0.372$). This suggests that even though income provides financial capacity, the ease and credibility of accessing digital financial information play a more dominant role in shaping adoption behaviour among young Malaysian investors. The low variance inflation factor (VIF < 2.0) indicates minimal intercorrelation among the predictors, confirming that the regression model is stable and reliable.

Overall, the results highlight that digital investment adoption is influenced not only by financial means but also by cognitive and informational factors. Access to trustworthy digital content, educational materials, and transparent investment platforms enhances user confidence, thereby promoting broader participation in digital investment activities.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This study concludes that both income and information accessibility play significant roles in influencing the adoption of digital investment platforms among young Malaysian investors. The findings reveal that while income provides the financial means to participate in investment activities, the accessibility, credibility, and quality of digital information exert a stronger influence on users' confidence and decision-making. This reflects the growing importance of digital literacy and information trustworthiness in Malaysia's evolving financial landscape, where young investors increasingly rely on online platforms and social media for investment-related knowledge. The results also affirm that digital investment behaviour is shaped by both economic capacity and cognitive readiness, aligning with the principles of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).

In broader terms, this research emphasizes the need for comprehensive financial literacy programs and enhanced digital financial inclusion initiatives. Policymakers, educational institutions, and FinTech providers should collaborate to develop trustworthy, transparent, and user-friendly platforms that empower youth to make informed investment decisions. By improving access to reliable financial information and reducing informational asymmetry, Malaysia can foster a generation of responsible, digitally savvy investors who contribute to sustainable economic growth and equitable financial participation.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Afiqah A.R. led the conceptualization, data collection and initial manuscript drafting. Ronizam I. contributed to the research design, data analysis and supervision of the study. Roslinawati assisted in literature review and data organization. Nurul Aini M.R. contributed to data interpretation and editing of the manuscript. Noor Fariza M.H. provided critical review, feedback and final proofreading. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The manuscript has not been published elsewhere and is not under consideration by other journals. All authors have approved the review, agree with its submission and declare no conflict of interest on the manuscript.

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