



Index funds play a more important role

To reduce MPF fees and improve management efficiency, the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority (MPFA) began encouraging trustees to use index funds (referred to by the MPFA as Approved Index-Tracking Collective Investment Schemes, ITCIS) as part of their investment portfolio management some years ago. As of September 2024, index funds accounted for over 16% of the total MPF assets, amounting to more than HKD 220 billion.

Passive investment approach

As the name suggests, index funds aim to replicate the securities and weightings of a specific index to achieve returns and risk performance similar to that index. This approach is known as passive investing, in contrast to actively managed funds, where fund managers frequently buy and sell securities to generate additional returns. Index funds only trade when there are changes in the index components. For example, the Tracker Fund of Hong Kong is an index fund that tracks the Hang Seng Index. In fact, a wide variety of index funds are listed in Hong Kong, tracking indices such as the FTSE China A50 Index, the Hang Seng Tech Index, and the Hang Seng China Enterprises Index, as well as international indices like the MSCI Japan and MSCI India indices.



Significantly lower fees

Index funds have gained popularity worldwide in recent years, largely due to their significantly lower fees compared to the more traditional actively managed funds. Since index funds merely track a specific index's performance, they eliminate the need for investment managers to conduct extensive research and analysis, resulting in lower costs. According to recent data from the MPFA, for equity funds investing in the Hong Kong market, the average fund expense ratio for passively managed index funds is 0.84%, whereas actively managed funds have an average fund expense ratio of 1.43%. For members who simply want their investment portfolio to perform in line with the market, index funds are an attractive option. However, for those aiming to outperform the market, actively managed funds may be a better choice.

Convenience of exchange-traded transactions

Another key feature of index funds is that they are traded on stock exchanges, just like stocks. Investors can buy and sell them at any time during market hours, with prices fluctuating in real time. Funds traded on exchanges are called Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs), but not all ETFs are index funds. Due to their trading convenience, ETFs offer a simpler buying and selling process compared to traditional mutual funds, which has also attracted some non-index funds to be traded on exchanges.

ETFs challenge traditional mutual funds

For traditional mutual funds, the emergence of both index and non-index ETFs undoubtedly presents challenges. However, we believe that outstanding-performing traditional mutual funds will continue to attract investors' attention.

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指數基金扮演更重要角色

為了降低強積金收費並提升管理效益，積金局多年前開始鼓勵受託人使用指數基金(積金局稱為核准緊貼指數集體投資計劃，ITCIS)作為投資組合管理的一部份。截至2024年9月，指數基金已佔強積金整體資產超過16%，金額超過2,200億港元。

被動方式投資

指數基金顧名思義，透過複製特定指數所持有的證券及比重，盡可能取得與指數相若的回報及風險表現。這方式被稱為被動式投資方式，相對於主動式投資經理積極進行買賣以獲取額外增值回報，指數基金只會於指數成份出現變動時，被動地進行買賣。例如盈富基金是追蹤恆生指數的指數基金。事實上，於香港上市的指數基金可謂五花八門，包括追蹤富時中國A50指數、恆生科技指數、恆生國企指數等不同指數，甚至也包括MSCI日本及印度市場指數。



收費明顯較低

指數基金近年於全球各地大行其道，其中一個原因便是收費明顯低於傳統互惠基金。由於指數基金只會追蹤特定指數的表現，省卻了投資經理進行研究分析的過程，成本自然較低。根據積金局的最近資料顯示，以投資香港市場的股票基金為例，指數基金(被動方式投資)的平均基金開支比率為0.84%，而主動式投資基金的平均基金開支比率則為1.43%。對於只追求投資組合表現與市場大致同步的成員而言，指數基金的確是具吸引力的選擇，但如果成員希望投資組合存在跑贏市場的可能性，則主動式投資基金將較為合適。

交易所買賣帶來便利性

指數基金另一個特點，便是於交易所進行買賣，過程就如買賣股票一樣，於交易時段可以隨時進行買賣，價格也會實時出現變化。於交易所進行買賣的基金，被稱為交易所買賣基金(Exchange-Traded Funds, ETF)，但並非所有ETF也屬於指數基金。由於ETF具備交易所買賣的便利性，買賣過程較傳統基金簡便，因此也吸引了一些非指數基金於交易所進行買賣。

ETF對傳統基金帶來挑戰

對於傳統互惠基金而言，無論指數與非指數ETF的出現，的確會帶來一些挑戰，但我們認為，那些表現優異的傳統互惠基金，仍會繼續得到成員的選擇。

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