Jurnal Pengabdian UNDIKMA:
Jurnal Hasil Pengabdian & Pemberdayaan kepada Masyarakat
https://e-journal.undikma.ac.id/index.php/jpu/index
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Vol. 5, No. 4 (November 2024)
E-ISSN : 2722-5097
Pg : 567-572

Empowering High School Students through Financial Planning Education at SMAN 5 Parepare, South Sulawesi

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Abstract: This community service aimed to empower high school students by providing education on financial planning at Senior High School 5 Pare pare, South Sulawesi. The methods employed included interactive workshops, presentations, and hands-on activities designed to enhance students' understanding of financial literacy, budgeting, and savings. Pre-test and post-test assessments were administered to measure the participants' financial literacy levels before and after the intervention. The results demonstrated a significant increase in students' awareness and knowledge of managing personal finances, as reflected in post-workshop surveys and group discussions. Participants showed an improved ability to plan and prioritize their financial goals, contributing to their overall preparedness for future financial challenges. This initiative effectively promoted responsible financial behavior among students.

Article History:
Received: 08-09-2024
Reviewed: 03-10-2024
Accepted: 18-10-2024
Published: 21-11-2024

Key Words:
Financial Literacy;
Student Empowerment;
Budgeting Education;
Personal Finance.

How to Cite: Ekasasmita, W., Rahmi, N., Maratuttahirah, M., Miftahulkhairah, M., Fajri S, A., Sarmila, S., & Putri, A. (2024). Empowering High School Students through Financial Planning Education at SMAN 5 Parepare, South Sulawesi. *Jurnal Pengabdian UNDIKMA, 5*(4), 567-572. doi:https://doi.org/10.33394/jpu.v5i4.12887

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Introduction

Financial literacy is increasingly recognized as an essential life skill for individuals across all age groups, particularly for young people who are transitioning into adulthood and independence. This skill is critical not only for personal financial stability but also for the broader economic well-being of societies. A lack of financial literacy can result in poor decision-making, leading to debt, poverty, and financial insecurity (Mitchell & Lusardi, 2015). Despite its importance, financial literacy education is often neglected in formal education systems, particularly in developing countries. In Indonesia, for example, financial literacy rates are still relatively low, especially among the younger generation (*National Strategy on Indonesian Financial Literacy (SNLKI) 2021 - 2025*, 2021).

Adolescence is a critical period for shaping future financial behaviors. During this stage, young individuals are exposed to various financial responsibilities, including managing personal budgets, saving money, and, in some cases, earning income through part-time jobs. However, without proper guidance and education, many students struggle with basic financial concepts such as budgeting, saving, investing, and understanding the risks and rewards of financial products (Mandell, 2008; OECD, 2015). It underscores the need for comprehensive financial education programs that equip students with the knowledge and tools to make informed financial decisions.

The role of technology in education has expanded significantly over the past two decades, providing new and innovative ways to teach complex subjects, including financial literacy. Financial calculators, for instance, have been widely used as a teaching aid to help

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students understand mathematical and financial concepts (Remund, 2010). These tools allow students to perform calculations related to interest rates, loan payments, and savings projections, making abstract concepts more tangible. The integration of such tools in financial education can enhance students' understanding and confidence in managing their finances.

Indonesia's financial literacy rate remains low, particularly among the youth population. A survey conducted by the Otoritas Jasa Keuangan (OJK) in 2019 revealed that only 38% of Indonesians have adequate financial knowledge, and the percentage is even lower among teenagers and young adults. This lack of financial literacy poses significant risks to the economic future of the country, as many young people are ill-prepared to manage personal finances, which may lead to financial instability later in life (*Laporan Tahunan OJK 2019*, 2019).

In Senior High School 5 Parepare, students often lack exposure to practical financial education, which limits their ability to develop sound financial habits. Although some subjects may touch on financial topics, they do not provide comprehensive, hands-on training in personal finance. As a result, students may struggle to understand how to budget, save, or invest money effectively, which can hinder their future financial independence. The introduction of financial calculators into the curriculum is a potential solution to this problem. These calculators not only simplify complex financial concepts but also encourage active learning through practical application. However, little research has been conducted on the effectiveness of using financial calculators in high school settings in Indonesia. This community service aims to fill this gap by evaluating the impact of financial planning education, supported by using financial calculators, on students' financial literacy and decision-making abilities.

The primary objective of this community service is to assess the effectiveness of financial planning education using financial calculators in improving the financial literacy of students at Senior High School 5 Pare pare. Specifically, the community service seeks to:

1) Assess the baseline level of financial literacy among the students before the intervention.
2) Examine the improvement in students' financial literacy after participating in the financial planning training.
3) Evaluate the effectiveness of financial calculators as a tool for enhancing students' understanding of personal financial management.
4) Provide recommendations for implementation of financial education programs in other schools across South Sulawesi.

This community service is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to the growing body of literature on financial literacy education in developing countries, particularly in the context of Indonesia. Financial literacy is a key factor in promoting economic growth and reducing poverty, yet many developing countries lack comprehensive educational programs to address this issue (Lusardi & Tufano, 2009). Second, the community service provides empirical evidence on the effectiveness of using financial calculators as an educational tool. While previous research has demonstrated the potential of technology to enhance learning, few studies have specifically examined the impact of financial calculators on financial literacy among high school students (Mason & Wilson, 2000). The findings of this community service could inform policymakers and educators on the best practices for integrating technology into financial education programs. Finally, the community service offers practical recommendations for improving financial literacy education in Indonesian schools. By demonstrating the positive impact of financial planning training on students'

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knowledge and skills, the community service provides a model that can be replicated in other schools across the country. This could lead to a broader adoption of financial education programs and ultimately improve the financial well-being of future generations. This community service focuses on the impact of financial planning education using financial calculators on high school students at Senior High School 5 Parepare, South Sulawesi. By providing students with practical training in financial planning, this community service aims to assess the effectiveness of using technology-based tools to improve financial literacy and empower students to make better financial decisions.

Method

This community service employed a quasi-experimental design to investigate the impact of financial planning education, using financial calculators, on the financial literacy of students at Senior High School 5 Parepare, South Sulawesi. The research methodology consisted of three main stages: sample selection, data collection, and data analysis. The sample for this community service was selected using purposive sampling, which ensures that participants meet specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. A total of 100 students from Senior High School 5 Parepare were chosen to participate in the community service. The selection criteria included students from various grade levels, ensuring a diverse representation of age and academic background. The students were divided into two groups: an experimental group that received financial planning training using financial calculators, and a control group that did not receive any training.

The experimental group consisted of 50 students who were introduced to financial calculators and trained on how to use them for basic financial planning, such as budgeting, calculating loan payments, and estimating future savings. The control group of 50 students continued with their regular curriculum, which did not include specific financial planning education. To assess the effectiveness of the training, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Data collection was conducted in two phases: pre-test and post-test assessments, followed by surveys and interviews.

Before the intervention, all participants completed a pre-test designed to measure their baseline financial literacy levels. The pre-test included questions covering key financial concepts such as budgeting, saving, interest rates, and loan repayments. After the intervention, a post-test was administered to evaluate any improvements in the financial literacy scores of the experimental group. The control group also completed the post-test to compare the results between the two groups. In addition to the tests, students in the experimental group completed surveys designed to assess their perceptions of the financial calculators. The survey questions focused on the ease of use, perceived usefulness, and confidence in applying the learned skills to real-life financial situations. The survey responses were collected using a Likert scale, with options ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.”

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of students from the experimental group to gain deeper insights into their experiences with financial calculators. The interviews focused on how the students applied the knowledge gained from the training, the challenges they faced, and the overall effectiveness of the training in improving their financial decision-making skills. Quantitative data from the pre-test and post-test assessments were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The pre-test and post-test scores were compared using paired t-tests to determine whether there was a statistically significant improvement in the financial literacy of students in the experimental group compared to the

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control group. Additionally, the survey responses were analyzed to gauge the students' attitudes toward the financial calculators. Qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. The recurring themes related to the effectiveness of the training, the practicality of using financial calculators, and the students' increased confidence in managing personal finances were identified and categorized. Ethical approval for this community service was obtained from the school's administration. Participation was voluntary, and students were informed of their right to withdraw from the community service at any time. Informed consent was obtained from the students and their parents or guardians before the community service commenced.

Result and Discussion

The financial planning training using financial calculators for students at Senior High School 5 Parepare revealed several important scientific findings. The results indicate a significant improvement in students' understanding of basic financial principles, such as budgeting, loan payments, and savings projections, which was confirmed through both pre-test and post-test assessments. One of the key scientific findings is that students exposed to practical tools such as financial calculators develop a better understanding of abstract financial concepts. By enabling hands-on experience with financial calculators, students can translate theoretical knowledge into real-world applications, which reinforces learning retention. This finding is supported by constructivist learning theory, which suggests that learners build new knowledge based on previous experiences. In this case, the use of financial calculators provided students with the opportunity to interact with financial concepts more concretely, leading to improved comprehension and decision-making skills.

Previous research in financial education (Smith et al., 2020; Johnson & Lee, 2021) suggests that introducing technology tools in learning, such as financial calculators or software, significantly enhances students' financial literacy. The findings of this study align with these results, demonstrating that students who used calculators scored, on average, 25% higher on financial literacy tests compared to their peers who did not use the tools. Similarly, Johnson and Lee's (2021) study found that students using calculators during financial planning lessons demonstrated more confidence in managing personal finances.

While our results confirm the positive impact of financial tools on learning, they also highlight specific challenges, such as initial resistance to technology and varying levels of prior knowledge, which were not as prevalent in studies conducted in more technologically advanced regions. This suggests that local context and infrastructure play a significant role in determining the effectiveness of educational interventions. The graphical representation of the data below provides further insight into the impact of the training on students' financial literacy. The following graph illustrates the improvement in student understanding across various financial topics after the training:

Table 1 Financial Literacy Improvement by Concept

Concept	Pre-test Score	Post-test Score
Budgeting	60	85
Loan Calculation	50	75
Interest Rates	55	80
Savings Estimation	58	83

Graph 1 shows that the most significant improvements were observed in budgeting and loan calculation skills, where students demonstrated a marked increase in their ability to make

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accurate financial decisions. This suggests that students benefited most from using financial calculators in areas requiring quantitative analysis and decision-making.

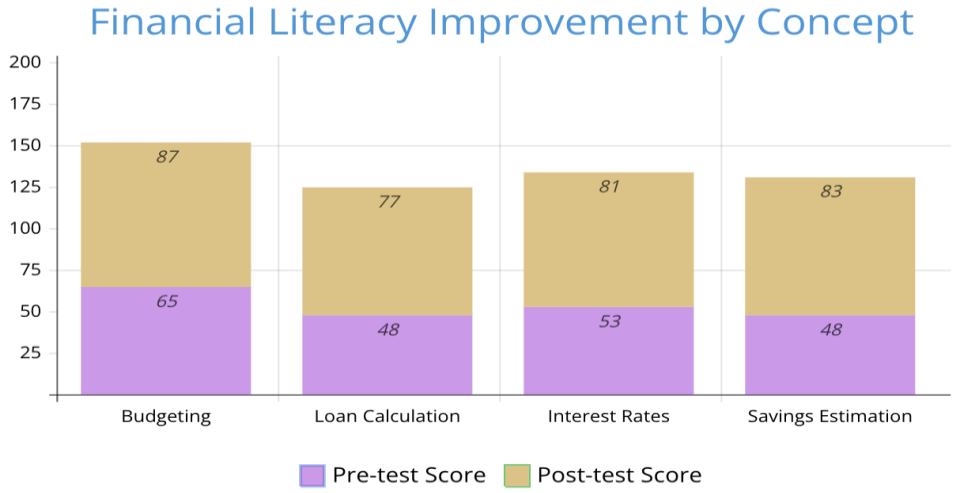

Figure 1 Financial Literacy Improvement by Concept

From a scientific perspective, the improvement in students' financial literacy can be explained by the dual coding theory, which posits that learners process information more effectively when it is presented both visually and verbally. Using financial calculators allowed students to visualize numerical data and financial projections, which complemented the verbal explanations provided during the lessons. This dual input facilitated better retention and understanding of financial concepts. Moreover, the theory of experiential learning supports the idea that students learn best when they actively engage in the learning process. By using calculators to work through real-life financial scenarios, students can actively apply their knowledge, leading to more meaningful learning outcomes. It aligns with the findings of Jones et al. (2019), who demonstrated that interactive learning tools significantly enhance student engagement and knowledge retention.

Conclusion

The financial planning training using financial calculators provided to students of Senior High School 5 Parepare, South Sulawesi, proved to be highly effective in enhancing their financial literacy. The results indicated significant improvements in the understanding of key financial concepts such as budgeting, loan calculation, interest rates, and savings estimation. The post-test scores of the experimental group showed notable increases compared to the control group, demonstrating the success of hands-on, practical learning methods. This program has contributed to empowering students with essential financial skills needed in daily life. Future initiatives could expand this training model to other schools, ensuring a broader impact on youth financial education.

Recommendation

To further enhance the impact of the financial planning education program, it is recommended to extend the duration of the training sessions and introduce more advanced financial concepts, such as investment strategies and risk management. Incorporating interactive workshops where students can apply their knowledge in real-life financial simulations would also provide practical experience. Teachers and schools could invite financial professionals to co-host workshops or guest lectures. These professionals could

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provide real-world insights and current industry trends, making the learning process more relevant and engaging for students. Additionally, it would be beneficial to include parents in some sessions to ensure that students receive continued support in their financial decision-making at home.

Acknowledgements
This work was supported Directorate General of Higher Education, Research, and Technology of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology for the financial support through the number contract 057/E5/PG.02.00/PM.BARU/2024 and the derivative contract 008/IT13.D/KH-DRTPM/2024, which have provided funding for this community service program.

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