

The Relationship between Knowledge and Attitudes with Financial Literacy Program Among Secondary School

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the relationship between students' reaction towards the financial literacy education program with the knowledge and attitudes acquired after the program. This study is also to determine differences in knowledge and attitudes and skills of students before and after the program. Quantitative research design involved the respondents' secondary school. Questionnaires were distributed among secondary school students and analyzed using the descriptive statistic, paired t-test and correlation. The findings show that student reaction towards the financial literacy program was good and there is a significant difference between knowledge and attitude before and after the program undertaken.

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of a school outreach program has sparked various reactions from society regarding its effectiveness and factors of change in nurturing participants toward better and outstanding outcomes (Bunting, 2006). Various assumptions and perceptions arise regarding the effects and benefits obtained from education programs. Negative perceptions commonly expressed by society towards education programs are activities provided solely for entertainment without providing benefits and, on the contrary, may pose high risks to participants (Kamsi, 2008).

Education program is a broad educational medium involving humans and the natural environment. The implementation of Education programs is through carefully planned activities, with objectives towards those goals, and should be conducted in natural settings (Neill, 2004). The education program has had a significant impact in producing responsible and highly skilled individuals, fostering versatility (Neill, 2004). Education program also expects individuals to engage in activities by responding to their maximum physical and psychological abilities to enhance their capacity to organize and plan daily activities (Priest, 2004). Education program activities can be summarized as having elements that encourage participants to think, control emotions, and utilize energy to face challenges, aiming to build self-identity.

Education is important for every mankind as the key to achieving success in life individuals need to have knowledge that can be achieved through education. Financial education is part of the education area. Based on the life cycle, throughout the lifetime, individuals today are more responsible for their finances than ever before. Financial literacy means having the wisdom, confidence, and skills needed to make financial decisions that promote financial self-sufficiency, stability, and well-being. Financial literacy can be further developed through financial literacy programs (Sharkey, nd).

In accordance with the National Strategy 2020 emphasizes the importance of the need for education to elevate financial literacy. Financial Literacy program is one of the education programs organized as one of the crucial platforms for human skill and knowledge development and management to acquire knowledge, skills, and shape attitudes (Yasman, 2024). Past research confirms that the content of activities, learning methods, facilitators, and the benefits of activities are among the main factors determining the effectiveness of education programs (Priest & Gass, 1997). Effective financial literacy programs are carefully designed efforts aimed at enhancing individuals' understanding of financial principles and improving their overall financial health. These programs include various essential elements and features such as real-life examples to ensure the program's success and enhance the learning experience for participants. Fostering facilitators in the program addressing participants' needs and ensuring that the educational experience is both enriching and meaningful (Murad, Hasan, Islam, & Alam, 2014).

According to the financial literacy statistics in Malaysia year 2020, show that Malaysians have low confidence regarding their knowledge as 1 in 3 people rate themselves to have a low financial knowledge. Therefore, National Strategy 2020 issued by Former Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Muhamad in forming stronger communities emphasizes importance to elevate financial literacy and especially in the younger generation to navigate the complexities of modern life. This is supported by surveys conducted by Ringgit Plus Malaysian Financial Literacy Survey 2023 and the Youth Capital Market Survey by Securities Commission that about 60% to 75% of young people income are allocated to utilities and daily expenses leaving only about 5% to 10% for savings and investment which reflecting lack of financial planning and confidence (Financial Education Network, 2020). The National Strategy 2020 consists of five Action Plans, Strategic Priority 1 which focusing on nurturing values from young are aligned with the financial literacy program conducted in outreach the school student. Which is the primary objective of this program to equip youngsters with the necessary knowledge, skills and confidence to make informed financial decisions. This study aims to evaluate the Youth Finance Expert program organized. The specific objectives of this study are as follows: a) To identify students' reactions to the conducted Financial Literacy Education program. b) To determine the level of knowledge, attitudes, and skills of students before and after the Financial Literacy Education program. c) To identify differences in the knowledge, attitudes, and skills of students before and after the Financial Literacy Education program. d) To establish the relationship between students' reactions to the Financial Literacy Education program and their knowledge, attitudes, and skills.

The Importance of the Study

Program assessment is crucial as it provides a comprehensive overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of a program, and guiding actions needed to improve it

(Jamil, 2002). Findings from this study, which consist of changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes before and after students complete the Financial Literacy Education program, are essential information for developing marketing strategies to promote this program. Additionally, it validates previous research findings regarding the effectiveness of an education program (Neill, 2002).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Financial education encompasses any program designed to influence individuals' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors concerning their finances (Fox, Bartholomae, & Lee, 2005). Typically conducted in schools, communities, and workplaces, these programs cater to diverse demographic groups (Walstad et al., 2017). The objectives of financial education courses vary widely, generally aiming to enhance personal financial management and budgeting skills, and improve retirement planning and savings habits (Fox et al., 2005). Financial literacy plays a crucial role in shaping financial behavior by influencing consumer spending, savings habits, and financial decision-making (Chu, Wang, Xiao & Zhang, 2017). According to Ripain, Amirul, & Mail (2017), financial literacy is defined as the amalgamation of awareness, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to make sound financial decisions and ultimately achieve individual well-being. Understanding financial information is essential for various daily activities, including financial planning, investment, wealth accumulation, debt management, and pension planning (Husna & Desiyanti, 2016). Effective financial and economic decision-making requires financial skills (Agustina, 2016), enabling individuals to manage their finances effectively when equipped with sound financial knowledge. Henager-Greene & Cude (2016) and Agustina (2016) have demonstrated that financial literacy significantly enhances financial behavior, as individuals with financial literacy are competent and confident in applying their financial knowledge to make informed and advantageous financial decisions.

METHODOLOGY

This study is assessment research utilizing a correlational design. The questionnaire is the main instrument used to assess students' reactions to the Financial Literacy program and to evaluate the learning acquired from the program. The assessment conducted aims to evaluate the relationship between students' reactions to the program and the learning achievement obtained in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Determining this relationship is important to understand to what extent students' acceptance of the overall program can enhance or hinder student learning. Additionally, the study can identify program weaknesses and strengths by assessing students' reactions to the program as they undergo it. Assessment is carried out to gauge the effectiveness of the program in terms of program content, learning methods, facilitator effectiveness, and the benefits obtained from activities. Past studies have shown that Education programs can meet student satisfaction, and student learning, and achieve set objectives (Neill, 2004). Furthermore, this study also employs pre-test and post-test research methods to determine these changes. The pre-test and post-test methods are highly suitable for evaluating a program, especially a new program that has not been previously experienced by students (Davis, 2003).

Population and Sampling of the Study

The population of the study comprises 70 students from Jementah Secondary School (SMK Jementah). Sampling size refers to the number of elements to be included in the research. According to Roscoe (1975), the number of respondents more than 30 and less than 500 are

appropriate. Questionnaires were distributed to all students participating in the Financial Literacy Education program.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire used as the instrument for this study consists of seven sections: Section A: Respondent Background; B: Program Content; C: Learning Methods; D: Facilitator Effectiveness; E: Benefits of Financial Literacy Education Activities; F: Knowledge; G: Attitudes; and H: Skills. Sections B, C, D, and E assess students' reactions to the Outdoor Education program and are distributed to respondents after they complete the program. Meanwhile, sections F, and G assess the learning that takes place in the Financial Literacy Education program and are distributed to respondents before and after the program.

For sections B, C, D, and E, feedback on items is collected using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1-very low, 2-low, 3-moderate, 4-high, to 5-very high. Meanwhile, sections F and G also use a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neither agree nor disagree, 4- agree, to 5- strongly agree.

FINDINGS

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents according to their gender, ethnicity, religion, and region. According to the research findings, among the respondents, 43 students (61.4%) are female, while 27 students (38.6%) are male, indicating that female students constitute the majority. The largest ethnic and religious group among the respondents are those of Chinese ethnicity and Buddhist faith, totalling 50 students (71.4%). In terms of the region, most of the respondents live in rural areas were represented by 54 students (77.1%).

Table 1: Respondent Demographic

	Total	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	27	38.6
Female	43	61.4
Ethnicity		
Malay	16	22.9
Chinese	50	71.4
Indian	4	5.7
Other	16	22.9
Religion		
Islam	16	22.9
Buddhist	40	57.1
Hinduist	4	5.7
Other	10	14.3
Region		
Urban	4	5.7
Rural	54	77.1
Other	12	17.1

Table 2 shows the good mean values for the overall respondents' reactions towards the Financial Literacy Education program, with a mean value of 4.55 and a standard deviation of

0.73. The mean values for each variable, suitability objective program show the highest mean value, which is 4.63 (SD:0.62), followed by facilitator efficiency with a mean value of 4.61 (SD:0.79), speaker expertise with a mean value of 4.56 (SD: 0.67), program content with mean value 4.53 (SD: 0.67), activity effectiveness with mean value of 4.51 (SD: 0.79) and lastly, overall program evaluation with a mean value of 4.47 (SD:0.94). All variables are at a good level, with respondents' reactions being positive.

Table 2: The distribution of mean on student reactions towards the Financial Literacy Education program

Variable	Mean	Mean Level	Standard deviation (SD)
Objective Program Suitability	4.6286	High	0.61788
Program Content	4.5286	High	0.67505
Speaker Expertise	4.5571	High	0.67321
Facilitator Efficiency	4.6143	High	0.72817
Activity Effectiveness	4.5143	High	0.79387
Overall Program Evaluation	4.4714	High	0.94365
Average Student Reaction	4.5524	High	0.7386

Table 3 shows the mean analysis for respondents' knowledge and attitudes before and after participating in the Financial Literacy Education program. The mean value for knowledge before participating in the program is 3.27 (SD: 0.88) and has increased to 4.68 (SD:0.93) after participating in the program. Similarly, the mean value for attitudes before participating in the program is 1.00 (SD: 1.65) and has increased to 3.40 (SD: 0.46) after the program.

Table 3: The mean analysis for respondents' knowledge and attitudes before and after participating in the Financial Literacy Education program

Variables	Before		After	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Knowledge	3.27	0.88	4.68	0.93
Attitude	1.00	1.65	3.40	0.46

Table 4, on the other hand, shows a significant difference in knowledge scores before participating in the program (M: 3.27, SD: 0.88) compared to after participating in the program (M: 4.68, SD: 0.93), $t(69) = -9.211$, $p = 0.00$. Similarly, for the student attitude variable, there is also an improvement in their attitude after participating in the Financial Literacy Education program. The data indicates a significant difference before and after the program with scores before participating in the program (M: 1.00, SD: 1.65) compared to after (M: 3.40, SD: 0.46), $t(69) = -5.365$, $p = 0.00$.

Table 4: The changes in knowledge, attitudes, and skills before and after participating in the Financial Literacy Education program

Variables	Before		After		t	df	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Knowledge	3.27	0.88	4.68	0.93	-9.211	69	0.000
Attitude	1.00	1.65	3.40	0.46	-5.365	69	0.000

Table 5 shows the relationship between overall levels of student reactions towards the Financial Literacy Education Program according to the variables of knowledge and attitudes. There is a significant relationship at the 0.00 level between student reactions to changes in knowledge ($r: 0.011^{**}$, $p: 0.01$) and attitudes ($r: 0.173^{**}$, $p: 0.00$).

Table 5: The relationship between overall levels of student reactions towards the Financial Literacy Education Program

Variables	Correlation	P-Value (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Knowledge	-0.011	0.000	Negative Relationship
Attitude	.173	0.000	Positive Relationship

DISCUSSION

The analysis shows that students have good reactions toward the Financial Literacy Education program and meet the student's needs. The combination of various activities with the assistance of teaching aids and facilitator guidance in the financial Literacy Program can engage students, enrich their learning experiences, and develop their holistic potential (Md. Amin, 2011). According to research conducted by Ozdemir and Uyanik (2021) introducing financial literacy programs in high schools has shown to positively influence students' financial attitudes and behaviors, enhancing their skills in making sound financial decisions. Incorporating financial literacy education could equip students with vital financial management skills for their future. The findings show that students' reactions to the financial literacy program are at a good level and meet the students' needs. The activities conducted with the assistance of teaching aids and facilitator guidance in Financial Literacy can engage students.

Kirkpatrick (1994) and Naugle (2000) stated that positive reactions to a program will enhance the acceptance of the learning process, as evidenced by increased knowledge, attitudes, and skills in an educational program. In this study, knowledge and attitudes were found to have a significant positive relationship with students' reactions to the Financial Literacy Education program conducted. Skill enhancement also has a significant relationship with students' reactions to the Financial Literacy program. Skills imparted to students through the activities conducted, methods used, and facilitator assistance during the program. This illustrates that students are more inclined to change for the better after the program, which can be detected through the result of the analysis done from the response from the community. As there is an improvement for the variable studied before and after the program. A study by Cole and Shastry (2018) found that financial education programs improved individuals' ability to make informed decisions about credit and debt. Financial literacy programs can also improve individuals' financial attitudes by increasing their confidence and motivation to manage their finances effectively (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings from this research can add to the literature review that leverage the impacts of the Financial Literacy program towards the younger generation. Future research might identify the relationship between the knowledge acquisition, self attitude and skill gained in other categories of respondent depending on their various types of organization and age. Furthermore, there is a need for research that examines the role and impact of financial literacy programs in the context of broader economic and social policies and initiatives, such as microfinance and entrepreneurship development.

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