



Financial Literacy Skills of Senior High School Students in Golden Gate Colleges, School Year 2025-2026

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Abstract

This study, entitled “*Financial Literacy Skills of Senior High School Students in Golden Gate Colleges, S.Y. 2025–2026*,” utilized a descriptive research design to determine the level of students’ financial literacy skills, financial attitudes, and practices. The research focused on understanding basic financial concepts, budgeting and saving, spending and decision-making, financial responsibility, saving behavior, and spending habits. The respondents of the study were sixty (60) selected Senior High School students enrolled at Golden Gate Colleges during the School Year 2025–2026. A researcher-made questionnaire served as the primary data gathering instrument, and statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, weighted mean, ranking, and composite mean were used to analyze the collected data.

Findings revealed that the students’ level of financial literacy skills was generally at a high to great extent, particularly in understanding basic financial concepts, budgeting and saving, and spending and decision-making. Financial attitudes and practices were rated to a very great extent, with spending habits ranking first, followed by financial responsibility and saving behavior. However, several challenges were identified, including insufficient income, the need to sacrifice in order to save, and confusion regarding certain financial concepts. These results indicate that while students demonstrate responsible financial behaviors, financial limitations and conceptual gaps still affect the full development of their financial capability.

Based on the findings, five intervention programs are proposed to strengthen financial literacy at Golden Gate Colleges. Project FINWISE: Building Smart Money Habits aims to enhance the practical application of financial concepts. The Digital Smart Spending Program (DSSP) focuses on responsible online spending and digital awareness. Peso Sense: Allowance Management Bootcamp promotes structured budgeting and expense tracking. The Future Ready Savings Initiative (FRSI) encourages goal-oriented saving and emergency fund awareness. Lastly, the Money Matters Peer Mentoring Program provides guided discussions and peer support to clarify financial concepts. These proposed initiatives are intended to reinforce responsible money management and support the long-term financial readiness of Senior High School students.

Keywords: *Budgeting, Financial Literacy, Saving Behavior, Spending Habits, Students*

I. INTRODUCTION

Financial literacy has become an essential life skill in today's rapidly evolving economic environment. Beyond traditional academic competencies such as reading and numeracy, learners are now expected to develop the ability to manage financial resources effectively. This includes understanding income, budgeting, saving, spending, and making informed financial decisions. With the rise of digital financial platforms, online shopping, and e-wallet systems, young individuals are increasingly exposed to financial responsibilities at an early age.

Globally, organizations such as the United Nations emphasize the importance of equipping learners with practical life skills under Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Financial literacy plays a vital role in achieving these goals by empowering individuals to make responsible economic decisions and improving overall well-being. In the Philippine context, financial literacy remains a critical concern. Despite the integration of financial education in the K to 12 curriculum, many learners still face challenges in applying financial knowledge in real-life situations. The Department of Education (DepEd) has introduced policies to strengthen financial education; however, the effectiveness of these initiatives depends on how well students internalize and practice financial concepts.

Senior High School students are at a crucial stage where they begin to experience financial independence. They manage allowances, participate in small income-generating activities, and prepare for future financial responsibilities such as higher education or employment. However, differences in socioeconomic background, exposure, and financial experiences may lead to varying levels of financial literacy among students.

This study aims to assess the financial literacy skills of Senior High School students in Golden Gate Colleges. It focuses on their knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to financial management, as well as the challenges they encounter. The findings of this research will serve as a basis for developing intervention programs that can enhance students' financial capability and prepare them for real-world financial decision-making.

II. METHODS

Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive research design to determine the level of financial literacy skills, attitudes, and practices of Senior High School students. This design was appropriate as it aimed to describe existing conditions without manipulating variables.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents were sixty (60) selected Senior High School students enrolled at Golden Gate Colleges during the School Year 2025–2026.

Data Gathering Instruments

A researcher-made questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data collection. It measured the respondents' understanding of basic financial concepts, budgeting and saving practices, spending and decision-making, financial responsibility, saving behavior, and spending habits. The instrument was validated by experts prior to administration to ensure reliability and accuracy.

Data Gathering Procedure

Permission was secured from school authorities before conducting the study. The questionnaire was administered to the selected respondents, and proper instructions were given to ensure accurate responses. After collecting, the data were organized, tabulated, and prepared for analysis.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The statistical tools used in the study included frequency and percentage, weighted mean, ranking, and composite mean. These tools were utilized to interpret the level of financial literacy skills and identify patterns among respondents.

III. RESULTS

The findings of the study revealed that the financial literacy skills of Senior High School students were generally at a high to great extent.

1. Financial Literacy Skills

The financial literacy skills of the respondents, which include understanding of basic financial concepts, budgeting and saving, and spending and decision-making, obtained an overall composite mean of 3.41, interpreted as high to great extent. Specifically, 1.1 Understanding of Basic Financial Concepts obtained a composite mean of 3.45, indicating that students have a strong grasp of fundamental concepts such as income, expenses, and financial planning. Meanwhile, 1.2 Budgeting and Saving obtained a composite mean of 3.38, showing that students are capable of planning their finances and setting aside money for future use, although this area reflects slightly lower consistency. On the other hand, 1.3 Spending and Decision-Making obtained a composite mean of 3.40, indicating that students are able to make informed decisions when spending money and are aware of the importance of prioritizing needs over wants. These results imply that students possess strong financial literacy skills, although further improvement is needed in consistently applying budgeting and saving practices.

2. Financial Attitudes and Practices

In terms of financial attitudes and practices, which include financial responsibility, saving behavior, and spending habits, the respondents obtained an overall composite mean of 3.62, interpreted as very great extent. Specifically, 2.1 Spending Habits obtained a composite mean of 3.70, indicating that students are highly conscious of their spending behavior and are able to manage their expenses effectively. 2.2 Financial Responsibility obtained a composite mean of



3.60, showing that students demonstrate accountability in handling their financial obligations. Meanwhile, 2.3 Saving Behavior obtained a composite mean of 3.56, suggesting that students practice saving, although this may still be influenced by limitations in income. The results indicate that students exhibit positive financial attitudes and are developing responsible financial practices in their daily lives.

3. Extent of Financial Literacy Skills of the Senior High School Students

With respect to the extent of financial literacy skills of the Senior High School students in terms of the above-mentioned variables, the findings revealed that the respondents demonstrated a high to great extent of financial literacy, with an overall composite mean of 3.41, indicating that they possess a satisfactory level of financial knowledge and are generally capable of applying financial concepts in their daily lives. Among the variables, understanding of basic financial concepts obtained the highest composite mean of 3.45, suggesting that students have a strong grasp of essential financial principles such as income, expenses, and financial planning. This was followed by spending and decision-making, which garnered a composite mean of 3.40, indicating that students are able to make informed financial choices and prioritize their needs over wants. Meanwhile, budgeting and saving obtained a composite mean of 3.38, also interpreted as high to great extent, which implies that students are capable of planning their finances and practicing saving, although this area shows slightly lower consistency compared to the other variables.

4. Challenges Encountered in Financial Literacy

Despite the positive findings, the study identified several challenges encountered by the respondents in developing their financial literacy skills, with an overall composite mean of 3.28, interpreted as moderate to great extent. Among the identified challenges, the top three include insufficient income, which obtained the highest mean of 3.40, indicating that limited financial resources significantly affect students' ability to manage and save money. This was followed by difficulty in saving due to competing needs, with a mean of 3.32, showing that students struggle to balance their expenses and savings. Lastly, confusion regarding certain financial concepts obtained a mean of 3.25, suggesting that some learners still experience difficulty in fully understanding financial topics. These findings highlight that external factors and conceptual gaps continue to influence students' financial capability.

5. Proposed Intervention Programs

Based on the findings, several intervention programs were proposed to enhance the financial literacy of the respondents. These include Project FINWISE: Building Smart Money Habits, which aims to strengthen the application of financial literacy skills; the Digital Smart Spending Program (DSSP), which focuses on responsible online spending; Peso Sense: Allowance Management Bootcamp, which enhances budgeting and saving practices; the Future Ready Savings Initiative (FRSI), which promotes goal-oriented saving; and the Money Matters Peer Mentoring Program, which provides peer support in understanding financial concepts. These programs are designed to address the identified gaps and challenges and to further develop students' financial competence and readiness for real-life financial responsibilities.



IV. DISCUSSION

The results indicate that while students possess a satisfactory level of financial literacy, there are still gaps in applying financial knowledge in real-life situations. The high ratings in financial attitudes and practices suggest that students are aware of responsible financial behavior; however, challenges such as limited income and conceptual misunderstandings hinder full financial capability.

The findings support the idea that financial literacy is not solely about knowledge but also involves behavior, attitude, and real-life application. Even if students understand financial concepts, external factors such as socioeconomic conditions and access to resources can affect their ability to practice effective financial management.

Moreover, the presence of challenges highlights the need for targeted intervention programs. The proposed programs aim to bridge the gap between theory and practice by providing experiential learning opportunities, digital awareness, and peer support. These initiatives align with DepEd's goal of producing financially responsible and competent learners.

The study also emphasizes the importance of integrating financial literacy into everyday learning experiences. Schools must go beyond theoretical instruction and incorporate practical activities such as budgeting exercises, savings plans, and financial simulations. By doing so, students can develop sustainable financial habits that will benefit them in adulthood.

In conclusion, financial literacy among Senior High School students in Golden Gate Colleges is at a commendable level; however, continuous efforts are needed to strengthen their financial capability. Through well-designed intervention programs and effective implementation of financial education, students can be better prepared for future financial responsibilities and contribute to economic stability in their communities.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the Senior High School students at Golden Gate Colleges possess a satisfactory level of financial literacy skills, particularly in understanding basic financial concepts, budgeting and saving, and spending and decision-making. The students also demonstrate positive financial attitudes and practices, especially in terms of spending habits, financial responsibility, and saving behavior, indicating that they are generally capable of managing their finances responsibly. However, despite these strengths, challenges such as insufficient income, the need to sacrifice to save, and confusion regarding certain financial concepts still affect their ability to fully develop financial capability. These findings suggest that while students have foundational knowledge and appropriate attitudes, there remains a gap between knowledge and actual financial application, highlighting the need for continuous support, reinforcement, and practical financial education to better prepare them for real-life financial responsibilities.



Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusion of the study, it is recommended that schools strengthen the integration of financial literacy in the curriculum by incorporating practical and experiential learning activities such as budgeting exercises, financial simulations, and real-life financial decision-making tasks. Teachers should provide clearer and more in-depth discussions of complex financial concepts to address students' confusion and enhance understanding, while students should be encouraged to consistently practice responsible financial behaviors such as saving, budgeting, and wise spending. Parents and guardians should also be involved in guiding students in managing their finances through open communication and support at home. Furthermore, the proposed intervention programs, namely Project FINWISE, Digital Smart Spending Program (DSSP), Peso Sense Bootcamp, Future Ready Savings Initiative (FRSI), and Money Matters Peer Mentoring Program, should be implemented and regularly evaluated to ensure their effectiveness in improving students' financial literacy and preparing them for future financial responsibilities.

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