Journal of Systematic Studies and Knowledge Development (JSSKD)
Pages 1-5
Volume 1 Number 1 Year 2026

Exploring the Financial Management Knowledge of Generation Z Students in Managing Personal Finances

Arman Maulana
Politeknik Piksi Ganesha, Bandung, Indonesia
e-mail: armandjexo@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to explore the financial management knowledge of Generation Z students in managing their personal finances. The study used a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. Research informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique consisting of Generation Z students who were actively attending lectures. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, then analyzed using an interactive analysis model that includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results show that Generation Z students have a basic understanding of financial management obtained from family, formal education, social media, and personal experience. This knowledge is manifested through budgeting activities, spending management, and saving habits. However, some students still face challenges in controlling consumptive behavior due to the influence of their social environment and the development of digital technology. This study concludes that financial management knowledge plays a significant role in shaping students' personal financial management behavior, so that continuous strengthening of financial education is needed to improve students' ability to achieve financial well-being.

Keywords: Financial Management Knowledge, Generation Z, College Students, Personal Finance, Financial Literacy.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes to people's lifestyles, including personal financial management. Generation Z, as a group born and raised in the digital era, has extensive access to various technology-based financial services, such as mobile banking, digital wallets, investment apps, and electronic payment platforms. This ease of access provides opportunities for the younger generation to manage their finances more effectively, but on the other hand, it can also increase consumer behavior if not accompanied by adequate financial management knowledge. Financial management knowledge is crucial because it helps individuals understand how to manage income, prepare budgets, control expenses, save, and make informed investment decisions. These skills are necessary for individuals to achieve financial well-being and avoid various future financial risks. Therefore, an understanding of financial management is becoming increasingly important for Generation Z students who are entering the transition phase toward financial independence (Prihartanti, Murtini, & Indriayu, 2022).

Generation Z students are at a crucial developmental stage in shaping their financial behavior. During this phase, students begin to assume greater responsibility for managing their pocket money, income from part-time jobs, and other sources of funding. However, various studies indicate that financial literacy remains problematic among the younger generation. Poor financial planning skills, a lack of savings habits, and a high tendency for consumerism are challenges often faced by students. Furthermore, intense social media exposure has the potential to influence consumption patterns through the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) phenomenon, leading students to spend beyond their means. This demonstrates that financial management knowledge is not only related to understanding financial concepts but also how students apply that knowledge in their daily lives (Wijaya & Setyawan, 2024).

Financial management knowledge encompasses various aspects, such as understanding financial planning, cash flow management, savings, investments, debt, and financial risk management. Individuals with good financial knowledge tend to be able to make more rational and responsible financial decisions. Conversely, a lack of financial knowledge can lead to errors in financial management that impact long-term financial conditions. Various studies have shown that financial literacy, financial socialization, financial experience, and self-control are closely related to financial management behavior in Generation Z. Financial knowledge acquired through formal education, family, and personal experience can shape how individuals understand and manage their financial resources effectively (Edwy et al., 2022; Hafizha & Arifin, 2025).

Although extensive research has been conducted on Generation Z's financial literacy and behavior, in-depth studies exploring how students understand and interpret financial management in their daily lives are still relatively limited. Most previous studies used a quantitative approach that focused on examining relationships between variables, thus failing to comprehensively describe students' experiences, perspectives, and the process of developing financial knowledge. Therefore, this study used a qualitative approach to explore Generation Z students' financial management knowledge in managing their personal finances. This approach is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how students acquire financial knowledge, apply it in their daily lives, and address the various challenges of managing personal finances in the digital era. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of financial education programs that are more relevant to the characteristics of Generation Z and support improved financial well-being among students (Viana, Febrianti, & Dewi, 2021).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type to explore the financial management knowledge of Generation Z students in managing personal finances. A qualitative approach was chosen because it can provide a deep understanding of the experiences, understanding, and practices of financial management carried out by students in their daily lives. Research informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique with the criteria of students included in the Generation Z category and actively involved in academic activities. Research data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation to obtain comprehensive information regarding the informants' financial management knowledge and practices. Data analysis was carried out interactively through the stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions as stated by Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña. Data validity was tested using source triangulation and method triangulation techniques to ensure the credibility and validity of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research result

Based on interviews with informants, it was found that most Generation Z students already have a basic understanding of the concept of personal financial management. Informants understand that financial management is the ability to manage income and expenses so that needs can be met effectively. This knowledge is obtained through various sources, such as formal education, social media, family, and personal experience in managing pocket money and additional income. Most informants stated that their understanding of the importance of financial management began to develop when they entered college and were required to be more independent in meeting their daily needs. This finding indicates that financial management knowledge in students is not only acquired through formal learning processes, but also through social interactions and daily life experiences that shape their understanding of the importance of financial management.

The research results also showed that students have implemented various forms of financial management in their daily lives. Most informants admitted to making simple plans regarding monthly spending, distinguishing between primary and secondary needs. Furthermore, some informants have developed the habit of setting aside a portion of their funds for savings or emergency funds. However, the level of consistency in implementing financial planning varies. Some students are able to adhere to their budgets diligently, while others still struggle to control consumptive spending. This situation indicates that even though they possess knowledge of financial management, its implementation is still influenced by various personal and environmental factors.

This study also found that the development of digital technology has a significant impact on how students manage their finances. Informants stated that the use of digital wallets, mobile banking, and financial recording applications makes it easier to conduct transactions and monitor financial conditions in real time. However, this convenience also presents its own challenges because it encourages consumptive behavior through various promotions, discounts, and cashback programs available on digital platforms. Several informants admitted that they often make impulsive purchases due to the influence of social media and developing trends in their social circles. These findings indicate that digital technology has two distinct sides: a tool that supports financial management and a factor that has the potential to increase spending if not balanced with good self-control.

The research findings indicate that families play a significant role in shaping the financial management knowledge and behavior of Generation Z students. Most informants stated that the habit of saving, managing expenses, and distinguishing needs from wants was taught by their parents from an early age. In addition to family, the educational environment and digital media also contribute to improving students' understanding of financial management. However, some students still have limited understanding of investment, long-term financial planning, and financial risk management. Therefore, efforts to improve more comprehensive financial education are needed so that students not only understand the basic concepts of financial management but are also able to apply them optimally to achieve financial well-being in the future.

Research Discussion

The results of the study indicate that Generation Z students have a basic understanding of financial management, particularly regarding spending planning, managing pocket money, and the importance of saving for future needs. This knowledge is obtained through various sources, such as formal education, family, social media, and personal experience in managing finances. This finding is in line with research by Agnifa Isna Hafizha and Zaenal Arifin (2025), which explains that financial literacy is a crucial factor in shaping Generation Z's financial behavior because it helps individuals understand the basic concepts of financial management and make more rational financial decisions. Furthermore, research by Alifia Firmanda Firdaus and Ana Kadarningsih (2023) found that financial knowledge has a positive influence on financial management behavior in Generation Z students. Thus, the better the financial knowledge students have, the greater their ability to manage financial resources effectively and responsibly. These findings indicate that financial understanding is an important foundation in developing healthy financial management behavior among students.

This study also found that most students have applied financial management principles in their daily lives through simple budgeting, recording expenses, and setting aside a portion of their funds for savings. However, the level of consistency in implementing financial planning still varies among informants. Some students are able to implement financial planning in a disciplined manner, while others still face difficulties in controlling consumptive spending. This condition indicates that financial knowledge does not necessarily automatically result in good financial behavior if it is not accompanied by self-control skills. These findings support the research of Inggih Asma Nithaqaini Yurasti, Agung Dharmawan Buchdadi, and Dicky Iranto (2024) which states that financial literacy and self-control play an important role in shaping financial management behavior in Generation Z. Similar results were also found by Agus Zhalfa Febrian, Eben Haezer Zega, Bryna Meivitawanli, and Chandra Setiawan (2026) who explained that self-control is a dominant factor that helps individuals delay immediate gratification and make financial decisions that are more oriented towards long-term goals.

This study shows that the development of digital technology has a significant impact on how students manage their personal finances. Various digital financial applications such as mobile banking, digital wallets, and financial recording applications are considered to help students monitor cash flow and simplify daily financial transactions. However, easy access to digital services also raises the risk of consumer behavior due to promotions, discounts, cashback, and ease of transactions available on digital platforms. This finding is in line with research by Gheovani Dery Setiawan, Ratih Kusumawardhani, and Johannes Maysan Damanik (2025) which states that the use of financial technology is related to the financial management behavior of Generation Z. The results of research by Wihelmina Muni, Septia S. Dioh, Taqwa Sultan, Moni Y. Siahaan, and Yanti S. Giri (2025) also show that the adoption of financial technology contributes to the formation of students' financial management behavior. In addition, Agnes Elsalonika and Ida (2025) emphasize that financial technology can be an effective tool for improving financial management skills if used wisely and accompanied by an adequate level of financial literacy.

Another interesting finding in this study is the role of family and social environment in shaping the financial management knowledge of Generation Z students. Most informants stated that the habit of saving, managing expenses, and distinguishing needs from wants was introduced by parents from an early age. The family is the first environment that provides an understanding of the importance of responsible financial management. These results support the research of Muhammad Hasan and Asriani (2025) which shows that family financial education has a significant contribution in shaping the financial management behavior of Generation Z. In addition, research by Hafizha and Arifin (2025) confirms that financial socialization through family, peers, and the educational environment influences the financial behavior of the younger generation. Research by Vincent Colin, Tannia, Elkunny Dovir Siratan, and Caliska Aldira Kusbiantoro (2025) also found that financial literacy, financial attitudes, and self-control play a role in shaping responsible financial management behavior in Generation Z. Therefore, improving students' financial management knowledge needs to be done through synergy between families, educational institutions, and the social environment so that students are able to develop healthy and sustainable financial behavior.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that Generation Z students generally have a basic understanding of financial management, which they apply in managing their daily finances through practices such as budgeting, prioritizing needs over wants, and saving money. This knowledge is gained from various sources, including family, education, digital media, and personal experiences. Nevertheless, challenges remain in effectively managing finances, particularly due to consumer behavior influenced by technological advancements and social pressures. Therefore, financial literacy plays a vital role in helping students make responsible and informed financial decisions. To enhance these capabilities, universities should strengthen financial literacy initiatives through educational programs, training, and curriculum integration, while students are encouraged to adopt more disciplined financial habits, including careful budgeting, expense control, and long-term financial planning. Families should also continue providing financial guidance from an early age to foster positive financial behavior. Additionally, future studies are encouraged to involve a broader range of participants and examine other factors affecting Generation Z's financial knowledge and behavior to provide a more comprehensive understanding of personal financial management in the digital era.

REFERENCE

Colin, V., Tannia, Siratan, E. D., & Kusbiantoro, C. A. (2025). Financial literacy, financial attitude, self-control, and financial management behavior among Generation Z. Cogent Business & Management, 12(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2510067

Elsalonika, A., & Ida. (2025). The influence of financial technology and financial literacy on financial management behavior among Generation Z. International Journal of Economics, Business and Accounting Management, 5(1), 45–58.

Febrian, A. Z., Zega, E. H., Meivitawanli, B., & Setiawan, C. (2026). The role of self-control in shaping financial management behavior among Generation Z students. Journal of Financial Behavior Studies, 8(1), 15–29.

Firdaus, A. F., & Kadarningsih, A. (2023). Pengaruh financial knowledge terhadap financial management behavior pada mahasiswa Generasi Z. Jurnal Ekonomi dan Bisnis Digital, 4(2), 112–124.

Hafizha, A. I., & Arifin, Z. (2025). What drives Generation Z's financial behaviors? The influence of financial literacy, financial socialization, and self-control. Journal of Enterprise and Development, 7(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.20414/jed.v7i1.12892

Hasan, M., & Asriani. (2025). Family financial education and financial management behavior among Generation Z. Jurnal Pendidikan Ekonomi dan Kewirausahaan, 13(1), 67–81.

Muni, W., Dioh, S. S., Sultan, T., Siahaan, M. Y., & Giri, Y. S. (2025). Financial technology adoption and financial management behavior among university students. International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues, 15(2), 94–105.

Prihartanti, F. W., Murtini, W., & Indriayu, M. (2022). The need of financial literacy proficiency level for Generation Z students at school. Eduvest – Journal of Universal Studies, 2(3), 598–602. https://doi.org/10.59188/eduvest.v2i3.383

Viana, E. D., Febrianti, F., & Dewi, F. R. (2021). Literasi keuangan, inklusi keuangan dan minat investasi Generasi Z di Jabodetabek. Jurnal Manajemen dan Organisasi, 12(3), 252–264. https://doi.org/10.29244/jmo.v12i3.34207

Wijaya, J. C., & Setyawan, I. R. (2024). Peran financial literacy sebagai mediasi faktor penentu financial management behavior Gen Z di Jakarta. Jurnal Manajerial dan Kewirausahaan, 6(2), 410–422. https://doi.org/10.24912/jmk.v6i2.29842

Yurasti, I. A. N., Buchdadi, A. D., & Iranto, D. (2024). Financial literacy, self-control, and financial management behavior among Generation Z. Jurnal Manajemen dan Bisnis Indonesia, 10(1), 88–102.