

Saving Enthusiasm Education to Improve Financial Literacy for Elementary School Students

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Financial Literacy,
Enjoy Saving, Financial
Education

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This study aims to examine the role of promoting a habit of saving through Saving Habit Socialization activities in improving financial literacy among elementary school students in Prapat Janji Village. The study uses a descriptive-participatory approach with 30 fourth- and fifth-grade elementary school students as subjects. Data collection was carried out through observations, interviews with teachers, parents, and students, as well as documentation during the program implementation. The results of the study indicate that before the program was implemented, only about 50% of students saved regularly, while the majority of students spent their pocket money on snacks. The low habit of saving is influenced by students' limited understanding of the importance of saving, the lack of continuous habituation at school, and minimal guidance from parents. The implementation of Saving Habit Socialization is considered relevant as an educational strategy capable of enhancing students' financial literacy holistically, covering aspects of knowledge, attitude, and financial behavior. This study emphasizes the importance of contextual, practical, and sustainable savings education by involving the roles of schools and families to shape positive financial habits from an early age.

Please cite this article in APA style as:

Anantha, A., Siregar, M., Sirait, N. I., Dabariba, V. A., & Syam, N. F. (2025). Saving Enthusiasm Education to Improve Financial Literacy for Elementary School Students. *Communautaire: Journal of Community Service*, 4(3), 278-285. <https://doi.org/10.61987/communautaire.v4i3.1470>

INTRODUCTION

Financial literacy is one of the essential competencies individuals need to acquire from an early age to develop healthy, sustainable financial behaviors (Andreas & Prabowo, 2023). Understanding basic financial concepts, such as money management, simple planning, and saving habits, provides an important foundation for addressing future economic challenges (Perkasa et al.,

2024). At the elementary school level, financial literacy education plays a strategic role because childhood is a phase for shaping character, habits, and fundamental values that will influence an individual's behavior into adulthood.

The low financial literacy among elementary school children remains a problem across regions, especially in rural areas. Children tend to lack a sufficient understanding of the function of money, of prioritizing needs, and of the importance of saving as a form of simple financial management (Laturette et al., 2021). This condition is inseparable from the lack of integration of financial literacy materials in formal learning, the limited availability of contextual learning resources, and the lack of habitual money management practices in daily life, both in school and family environments (Muthia et al., 2023).

Prapat Janji Village, like other rural areas, faces similar challenges in efforts to improve elementary school students' financial literacy. Most students are not accustomed to managing their pocket money wisely and see saving only as an occasional activity, rather than as a consistent habit. In fact, the habit of saving from an early age can be an effective way to instill values of discipline, responsibility, and future planning in a simple, age-appropriate way. Saving education is an educational approach that is relevant and applicable to improving financial literacy among elementary school students (Ataman & Safitri, 2024; Riyanto et al., 2024; Saharani & Diana, 2024). Through participatory, context-based educational activities, students are not only introduced to the concept of saving in theory but also trained to practice it in their daily lives. This approach is expected to build financial awareness from an early age while encouraging the Development of sustainable, positive financial behaviors.

Financial literacy education among elementary school students by integrating financial material into formal learning and using interactive learning media (Mulyati et al., 2025). Nonetheless, Bidasari et al. (2023) emphasizes improving knowledge (cognitive) without being accompanied by habitual financial behavior sustainably. In fact, adequate financial literacy is not only measured by an understanding of concepts but also by the ability to apply positive financial behaviors in daily life, such as saving consistently (Rahmanov et al., 2024; Sungkawaningrum et al., 2022).

In addition, the research area's context is still dominated by urban environments or schools with relatively good economic and educational access. Research specifically examining financial literacy among elementary school students in rural areas remains limited, even though the social and economic characteristics of rural areas pose unique challenges in shaping children's financial behavior. This condition indicates a research gap between the financial literacy studies conducted and the actual needs in the field, particularly in rural areas such as Prapat Janji Village.

The novelty of this study or program lies in the implementation of savings education that is contextual and practical for elementary school students in Prapat Janji Village. The approach used not only emphasizes conceptual

understanding of saving but also integrates hands-on practice, routine habituation, and guidance involving the school and family environment. Thus, financial literacy is understood holistically as a combination of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. The findings of this study also have the potential to produce a savings education model that can be replicated in elementary schools in other rural areas with similar socioeconomic characteristics.

METHOD

This community service activity uses a descriptive-participatory approach, which emphasizes the active involvement of target participants in the entire series of educational activities. This approach is considered relevant in community service programs because it allows a two-way learning process between facilitators and participants, so that the material presented can be understood and directly applied in daily life (Keahey, 2021). The program implemented is the Saving Habit Socialization Program, which aims to improve the understanding and financial literacy skills of elementary school students in Prapat Janji Village.

The implementation of community service is carried out through several stages, namely planning, preparation, implementation, and evaluation of activities. The planning stage begins with the distribution of tasks among the students of the Prapat Janji Village Community Service Program (KKN) and the determination of the educational material to be delivered. The material is focused on promoting the habit of saving as one of the indicators of children's financial literacy. The habit of saving from an early age is an important element in building sustainable financial literacy. Therefore, the material prepared includes the definition of saving, the importance of saving, simple ways to save, and the benefits of saving from an early age. All the material is tailored to the developmental characteristics of elementary school students to make it easy to understand and engaging (Espinosa & Verney, 2021).

In the preparation stage, KKN students prepare all supporting tools for the activities, including scheduling, learning media, and practice savings tools. The media used include an educational pamphlet entitled "Financial Literacy Education for Elementary School Students Through the Saving Habit Movement in Prapat Janji Village," PowerPoint presentation media, educational videos on children's financial literacy, and piggy banks as a means to practice saving. The use of visual media and teaching aids is considered effective in enhancing elementary school children's understanding because it can make abstract concepts tangible into real learning experiences.

The activity implementation stage is carried out through an interactive socialization method that combines brief lectures, discussions, educational games (brainstorming), and Q&A sessions. This method is chosen because participatory learning has been proven to increase children's engagement and learning motivation. The activity began with an introduction of the KKN student

team, followed by the presentation of a material titled “Be Cool & Trendy by Saving.” The material was delivered in simple, communicative, and contextual language to match the comprehension level of elementary school students in Prapat Janji Village.

The evaluation stage is carried out to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the community service program, both in terms of process and achievement of activity goals (Fine et al., 2021). Evaluation is conducted through direct observation of student participation, involvement in discussions, and participants' responses during the activity. Evaluation in community service activities is important to measure the achievement of goals and the benefits of the program for the target community. As a form of motivation reinforcement, the team gives awards to students who actively participate. This awarding is expected to foster students' intrinsic motivation in practicing the habit of saving and to encourage the sustainability of positive financial behavior in daily life.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Financial Literacy Behaviors

The identification conducted during the initial planning stage of the Community Service Program (KKN) revealed a significant gap in the financial literacy behavior of elementary school children in Prapat Janji Village. In this study, 30 upper elementary school students from grades IV and V were observed during the tutoring activities at the KKN post. The students' cognitive development stage made them capable of understanding basic financial concepts, and they were thus selected as the target group for the study. Observations revealed that while each student was given a savings container, the implementation of saving habits was far from optimal.

Of the 30 students, only 15 were consistently engaged in saving money every day. This translates to roughly 50% of the participants displaying the habit of saving. The remaining students were observed to spend their pocket money, often given by their parents, on purchasing snacks at school. This trend indicates a lack of financial discipline and awareness among the students. While it is expected that all students would save a portion of their pocket money, the habit is not consistently practiced, and this reflects a deeper issue regarding the financial literacy of the students.

The reasons behind this low savings behavior are multi-faceted. One of the most prominent issues identified was that most students were not accustomed to saving, either due to the absence of structured savings activities at school or a lack of guidance from their parents. Additionally, students did not fully understand the importance of saving money regularly. As a result, the habit of saving has not yet been embedded in the students' daily routines. Despite being introduced to saving through the provision of piggy banks, the practice has not taken root among a large portion of the students.

Insights from Key Stakeholders

The EKOTHE program,

The Saving Habit Socialization activity was conducted face-to-face on August 22, 2025, at the KKN Post of the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UINSU), Prapat Janji Village, Buntu Pane District. The activity lasted for three hours, from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM WIB, and was attended by all students who had been previously invited. The activity implementation team consisted of students who were part of the UINSU KKN group serving as facilitators and activity assistants. The main focus of this activity was to instill the habit of saving from an early age as an effort to improve financial literacy among elementary school students, in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and financial behavior in daily life.

To strengthen the observations regarding the low saving habits among elementary school students in Prapat Janji Village, in-depth interviews were conducted with three different sources: elementary school teachers, students' parents, and the students themselves. These interviews aimed to obtain a comprehensive picture of the factors influencing students' saving behavior from various perspectives.

“Some students have been introduced to saving activities, but they have not done it regularly. Many prefer to spend money on snacks because they do not yet understand the importance of saving from an early age.” (Teacher, 22/8/2025)

“We usually give pocket money without specific instructions, so the child tends to spend it on snacks and is not yet used to saving.” (Student, 22/8/2025)

“I sometimes don't save money because it gets spent on snacks. I don't really understand why I should save.” (ES-Student, 22/8/2025)

Based on the results of observations and interviews, the habit of saving among elementary school students in Desa Prapat Janji is still considered low. Although students have been provided with piggy banks, only about 50% save regularly, while the majority spend their pocket money on snacks. This situation is influenced by the students' limited understanding of the importance of saving, a lack of habit formation at school, and minimal guidance from parents. Therefore, the Saving Habit Socialization activity is considered relevant and important as an effort to instill the habit of saving from an early age to improve students' financial literacy in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and behavior.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the saving habits of elementary school students in Desa Prapat Janji are still relatively low, even though the students have been provided with facilities in the form of piggy banks. These findings are in line with the results of research by the Financial Services Authority, which states that

financial literacy among children in Indonesia is still at a basic level, particularly in terms of money management and the cultivation of positive financial behaviors (Nurjanah et al., 2022; Goyal et al., 2023; Pandey, 2024). The low consistency in saving among students indicates that simply providing facilities is not enough to develop sustainable financial behavior without systematic education and guidance.

The observation results showing that only about 50% of students save regularly strengthen the findings Dewi et al. (2021) which states that financial literacy is not only related to knowledge, but also includes financial attitudes and behaviors. In this context, students in Prapat Janji Village tend to be unable to control their consumptive behavior, as indicated by the tendency to spend their pocket money on snacks. This shows a gap between conceptual understanding and practical implementation in basic financial management among elementary school-aged children.

The results of interviews with elementary school teachers showed that although saving activities have been introduced, their implementation has not been consistent due to time constraints and has not been integrated sustainably into learning activities (Islamiah et al., 2024; Purwanto & Wafa, 2023). These findings are in line with the research Iman and Iskandar (2025) which states that children's financial literacy will be more effective if systematically integrated into the school environment and supported by regular habits. Without continuous reinforcement, students tend to view saving as an additional activity, rather than as a daily habit.

Interviews with students' parents revealed that the lack of guidance in managing pocket money also contributes to the low savings habits of children. This finding is in line with research results Anggarini et al. (2022) which emphasizes that the role of the family is very influential in shaping children's financial behavior, especially through example and habits from an early age. When parents do not provide guidance or supervision regarding the use of pocket money, children tend to develop consumptive behavior without considering financial priorities.

Meanwhile, the results of interviews with students indicate that most students do not yet understand the purpose and benefits of long-term saving. This condition supports the findings Putri et al. (2023) which states that elementary school children need a concrete and enjoyable educational approach in order to understand abstract concepts such as financial planning. Therefore, the educational approach of encouraging saving habits through Saving Habit Socialization activities becomes relevant because it combines conceptual explanations with hands-on practice that aligns with the students' cognitive development stage.

The implementation of the Saving Habit Socialization activities in this community service program is in line with the recommendations Octavina and Rita (2021) which emphasizes the importance of financial literacy education from

an early age through a contextual and participatory approach. This activity not only provides an understanding of the importance of saving but also instills economic character values such as frugality, responsibility, and future orientation, as stated by Prihatini et al. (2022). Thus, both field findings and literature review indicate that savings education is an effective strategy to holistically improve elementary school students' financial literacy.

This study contributes valuable insights into the current state of financial literacy among elementary school students in Prapat Janji Village. The findings underline the importance of integrating financial education into the curriculum and supporting parents in their role as financial educators. To improve the financial literacy of students, it is recommended that schools adopt a more systematic approach to teaching financial concepts, incorporating practical activities that encourage saving. Workshops and training sessions for parents could help them better guide their children in developing good financial habits. Lastly, future research could explore the long-term effects of such interventions on the financial behavior of students as they transition into adolescence.

CONCLUSION

The habit of saving among elementary school students in Prapat Janji Village is still relatively low, even though the students have been provided with saving facilities, as only about 50% of the students do it regularly. This low saving habit is influenced by the limited understanding of students about the importance of saving, the lack of consistent habituation in the school environment, as well as minimal guidance and direction from parents in managing their children's pocket money. These findings imply that education on the habit of saving through Saving Habit Socialization activities plays a strategic role in improving students' financial literacy holistically, not only in terms of knowledge but also in financial attitudes and behaviors. However, this activity has some limitations, including a relatively short duration and the absence of long-term monitoring to assess the sustainability of students' savings behavior changes. Therefore, it is recommended that financial literacy programs in elementary schools be implemented continuously through integration into regular school activities, accompanied by active parental involvement so that the habit of saving can be consistently practiced both at school and at home.

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