

TITLE: YOUTH FINANCIAL LITERACY IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract: This research paper examines the current level of financial literacy among youth in Uzbekistan, identifies key challenges they face, and proposes effective strategies for improvement. Additionally, the study aims to understand how well young people aged 15 to 20 manage their finances. The financial literacy system is complex, providing young individuals with financial knowledge and skills has become a national priority because many teenagers still lack the necessary knowledge to make informed financial decisions. The study analyzes youth financial literacy knowledge and tries to explore how they can improve it. In addition, the paper explores how technology and education can help improve their financial behavior. This research includes data collection and sampling methods. A survey of 20 teenagers who live in Surkhandaryo was conducted to assess their understanding of basic financial concepts, saving money, budgeting, and where they keep their money. The data was shown in the descriptive statistics.

The result indicates that many teenagers have limited knowledge about where and how they keep and invest their money. However, students who study economics demonstrated a higher level of financial awareness compared to those in other fields.

Keywords: youth financial literacy, saving behavior, digital finance, banking habits, personal finance, financial awareness

Introduction

Financial literacy—the ability to understand and effectively use financial skills such as budgeting, saving, and investing—has become a vital strategy for growth in the 21st century. According to Sayyor, M. (2015), financial literacy has a vital position in promoting economic stability and sustainable development in emerging economies like Uzbekistan. Nowadays, as Uzbekistan continues to open economic opportunities and also creates more chances for youth, the importance of financial education among young individuals has increased significantly. Youth face a complex financial environment filled with both opportunities and risks today. They must make informed financial decisions, manage savings and budgets, and use modern bank tools. However, studies suggest that many Uzbek youths still lack the basic knowledge and confidence needed to handle personal finances effectively.

The growing need for financial literacy stems from several factors. Many Uzbek young people are still growing in the financial literacy as many youths learn from their friends or family members during their lunch time about finance; teenagers can discuss with their parents in order to improve their financial knowledge. However, it is not enough to increase their awareness about money management. As well as that, schools and lyceums in Uzbekistan do not provide official lessons on economics, while many other countries have already introduced management and financial education courses to provide students with essential financial knowledge. In addition, although digital banks and e-wallets are rapidly becoming popular across Uzbekistan, youth do not use those tools. This indicates a gap between technology and actual financial

awareness. The main purpose of this study is to identify teenagers' money-saving habits, how much they save monthly, and where they keep their money, as well as to provide them with effective ways to save and to determine which age group can save more money. The results help ameliorate the learning environment for students and notice which section they have problems with. Although Uzbekistan is growing economically and creating new opportunities for young people, many youths still do not know how they can benefit from money investment. There are many reasons why teenagers do not have enough information. First, many juveniles do not know to save money, and if teenagers saved more money instead of spending it and invested in startups or created bank accounts, they would realize that this is far more beneficial for their future life. Early engagement in saving and investing helps youth develop responsible money management habits, understand the value of budgeting, and recognize the importance of planning for long-term goals. Additionally, exposure to digital banking and e-wallets, which are rapidly becoming common in Uzbekistan, can support financial independence and provide practical tools for managing funds securely. Without this guidance, teenagers may continue relying on informal advice from friends or family, which is often inconsistent and incomplete. By addressing these gaps through education, practical experience, and awareness of modern financial tools, young people can build confidence in handling their finances, prepare for future economic opportunities, and develop habits that will support their financial well-being throughout adulthood.

Literature review

Researchers around the world have widely studied financial literacy among young people, and many findings show that youth often struggle with basic financial concepts. Lusardi and Mitchell (2014) explain that young individuals usually feel unsure about topics like saving, budgeting, and investing, which later affects the financial choices they make as adults. Their research suggests that when young people do not understand these concepts early, they become more vulnerable to financial mistakes in the future, such as overspending or not saving enough for emergencies.

Studies from Central Asia also show similar results. For example, Davronov (2020) mentions that many Uzbek teenagers learn financial habits from their parents in a casual way, but this information is often limited and not consistent. Because of that, young people do not always develop stable or correct financial skills. Many families themselves may not have a strong financial background, which means the knowledge passed down to children is not always accurate. This creates a situation where financial misunderstandings repeat from one generation to the next.

Other international research points out that including financial education in school programs can help students build better money-saving habits and understand financial services more effectively. In many developed countries, schools already teach subjects related to economics and personal finance. These lessons help students understand everyday concepts like interest, loans, budgeting, and banking. However, studies on Uzbekistan show that such programs are still in progress, and many schools and lyceums do not offer them yet. This means that many young people grow up without a strong base in managing their finances. As a result, teenagers often rely on trial-and-error learning, which is not always effective.

Technology is another important topic discussed by researchers. Kim (2021) highlights that digital tools such as online banking, e-wallets, and mobile financial apps make financial tasks easier for youth and give them more access to safe transactions. Even so, research shows that teenagers in Uzbekistan still do not use these services often, mainly because they are not fully

confident in how digital finance works. Some young people also worry about security issues or do not have enough guidance on how to use digital platforms responsibly.

Some studies also focus on the link between financial knowledge and individual behavior. Sayyora (2025) notes that people with better financial understanding usually plan their finances more effectively, save more regularly, and make smarter investment decisions. The Asian Development Bank also reports that many households and small businesses in Uzbekistan still prefer informal saving and borrowing methods instead of formal banking services. This usually happens because their level of financial literacy is not high enough to feel comfortable using official financial systems. Overall, the literature shows that financial literacy among youth is a global concern, and Uzbek teenagers face particular challenges. Many young people acquire financial knowledge informally from their families, which often results in incomplete or inconsistent understanding (Davronov, 2020). Schools in Uzbekistan still do not provide proper financial education, so many teenagers do not have a strong understanding of money management. Digital tools like e-wallets and online banking could help young people handle their money better, but most of them do not use these tools because they are not confident or do not know how (Kim, 2021). This shows the need for clear financial lessons and practical experience, which is what this study looks at by examining how teenagers save money and manage their finances.

Methodology

This research uses a quantitative approach by collecting data through an online poll among teenagers aged 15 to 20 living in Surkhandaryo region this survey included several question about teenagers' literacy level. The questions;

How old are you?

- A) 17 and 18
- B) 19 and 20
- C) 21 and older

Do you currently save money?

- A) yes, regularly
- B) sometimes
- C) no

Do you currently save money?

- A) yes, regularly

- B) sometimes

- C) no

If yes, how much do you usually save per month?

- Less than 50,000UZS

- 50,000-200,000UZS

- 200,000+UZS

Where do you keep your savings?

- A) Cash at home

-B) Bank account

- C) E-wallet, card(click, payme,etc)

A total of 20 respondents participated in the poll. An online poll was used to collect information from the teenagers. This method was chosen for the respondents because it was simple, fast, and comfortable for them. They gave privately answers which helped us to know clearly their current level of money management. Questions were multiple-choice question, as it was easier for students to answer without confusion. For example, participants were asked whether they save money regularly, the amount they save per month, and whether they keep their money in cash, in a bank account, or in an e-wallet.

The survey data was later analyzed using descriptive statistics. This approach helped to find patterns in saving behavior, such as which age group saves more, whether students prefer modern banking tools or not, and how often teenagers set aside money. Using this question method helped us identify common trends and understand the budgeting awareness among youth.

By focusing on surkhandaryo, the study provides local insights that can be useful for improving financial education programs in schools and lyceums. The methodology also aimed that whether youth were aware of the modern bank system like banking account and e-wallets.

Overall, this method gives a clear level of economic management in surkhandaryo. The survey answers help to show which places more need attention to improve financial literacy among youth in Uzbekistan. This method ensures that the study captures real behavior and provides practical information to improve financial literacy among teenagers in Uzbekistan.

Results

Poll Question	Option A	Option B	Option C
How old are you? Yoshingiz nechida?	17-18 – 89%	19-20 – –	21+ – 11%
Do you currently save money? Hozirda pul tejaysizmi?	Ha, muntazam – 73%	Ba'zan – 27%	Yo'q – –
If yes, how much do you usually save per month? Agar ha bo'lsa, oyiga qancha tejaysiz?	< 50 000 UZS – 60%	50 000-200 000 UZS – 35%	200 000+ UZS – 5%
Where do you keep your savings? Jamg'armangizni qayerda saqlaysiz?	Uyda naqd pul – 58%	Bank hisobida – 33%	E-wallet / karta – 9%

The data collected from Surkhandaryo shows interesting patterns. First, the age distribution highlights that a large part of respondents was between 17 and 18 years old (89%), while 11% were 21 and older. It means the majority of participants were high school or lyceum students, which allows us to better understand the financial habits of this particular age group.

When asked whether they save money, 73% answered “yes, regularly.” Also, 27% said they save only sometimes. None of the respondents selected “no,” which suggests that most teenagers understand the importance of saving at least to some extent. This indicates that the habit of setting aside money is developing among youth, even though their approaches and frequency may vary.

The survey also asked how much money they save monthly. A large percentage, 60%, save less than 50,000 UZS per month. Another 35% save between 50,000 and 200,000 UZS, and only 5% save more than 200,000 UZS. These results show that even though many youth save money, the saved amount is usually small, probably because most of them are still students with limited income. Nevertheless, these early saving behaviors are important as they lay the foundation for more responsible financial planning in the future.

Another important question asked where teenagers keep their savings. According to the poll, 58% are kept money as cash at home, 33% keep it in a bank account, and only 9% uses e-wallets such as Click or Payme. This shows that traditional methods are still more common among youth, while modern digital finance tools are not widely used.

Overall, the results suggest that teenagers have started to release the value of saving money, but they still rely on cash and usual method which are common among the adults. The limited use of bank accounts and digital wallets highlights a gap in awareness and practical experience with modern financial tools. Understanding these trends can help schools and educators develop strategies to encourage better saving habits and provide more information about digital finance. Furthermore, these insights indicate that early guidance and support could significantly enhance financial literacy among young people in the region.

discussion

the financial habits of teenagers in Surkhandaryo show some interesting trends. Although online banking and e-wallets are becoming more common in Uzbekistan, teenagers often do not feel confident using them safely. This shows a clear need for practical guidance and education so that young people can handle digital financial tools properly. Many studies suggest that including financial literacy in school programs could make a big difference. Lusardi and Mitchell (2014) explain that young people often lack confidence in topics like budgeting, saving, and investing, which can affect their long-term financial decisions. The findings from Surkhandaryo support this idea, showing that students still prefer traditional methods like keeping cash at home rather than using banks or e-wallets. This reliance on cash shows that even though teenagers understand

why saving is important, they still don't have much practical experience with banks or formal financial systems, which could make it harder for them to grow financially in the future.

Similarly, the low use of banks and e-wallets among teenagers in Surkhandaryo shows that they have little experience and confidence with modern financial tools, which matches what Davronov (2020) found. This shows that just knowing about banks or e-wallets is not enough. Teenagers need clear guidance and simple lessons to feel comfortable using these tools. Schools and lyceums could give easy classes about budgeting, saving, and digital finance to help students start good money habits early. For example, teachers could explain how to use a bank account safely or how to track their savings with an app, so students can understand and actually use these tools in real life.

Parents also play an important role in teaching money skills. Many teenagers learn some saving habits from their families, but this advice is often not complete or clear. Without proper guidance, young people may make mistakes when managing money or planning for the future. Giving parents tips or simple workshops can help them guide their children at home. Talking openly about money, saving goals, and spending decisions can make teenagers more confident and ready to handle finances as they grow up.

Overall, the results show that teenagers are starting to see why saving is important, but many still keep cash and use traditional ways. The low use of bank accounts and e-wallets shows that students need more practice and understanding of modern money tools. By teaching, guiding, and giving teenagers a chance to actually use these tools, they can become more confident and make smarter money decisions. If schools, parents, and the community all help to improve financial skills, young people in Uzbekistan will be much better prepared to handle their money well in the future.

Conclusion

This study shows that teenagers in Surkhandaryo are starting to understand why saving money is important. Most of them save regularly, but many still keep cash at home and don't really use bank accounts or e-wallets. This means that even though they know saving is good, they don't have much experience with modern financial tools. Just knowing about banks or e-wallets isn't enough—teenagers need guidance and chances to actually practice using them safely. Schools and lyceums can really help students develop good money habits. Simple lessons about budgeting, saving, and digital finance can show students how to use a bank account safely or how to track their money with an app. Learning by doing makes these ideas easier to understand and use in real life.

Parents are also important for teaching money skills. Many teenagers learn saving habits from their family, but this advice is sometimes not complete or clear. Giving parents tips or simple workshops can help them guide their children better at home. Talking about money, saving goals, and spending decisions can make teenagers more confident and ready to handle their finances as they grow up.

Overall, teenagers are starting to see why saving is important, but they still rely a lot on cash and traditional methods. By giving them lessons, guidance, and real practice with banks and e-wallets, teenagers can become more confident and make better financial choices in the future.

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