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FINANCIAL EDUCATION AND ITS ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS IN YOUTH AND ADULT EDUCATION - EJA

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ABSTRACT

Adherence to the line of research: this study followed the Strategy, Innovation and Competitiveness that addressed the context of Youth and Adult Education (EJA) and the way a public school works to Teach Financial Education to young people and adults. It was questioned what was the evaluation of the content on financial education explored in the EJA of a school belonging to the state public network of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, from the perspective of teachers and students. Objective: to analyze the criteria explored in the didactic activities of a public school in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, in relation to Financial Education in EJA, from the perspective of teachers and students of the Três Poderes State School on the development of students in financial knowledge and management of their finances. Theories: the theoretical assumptions about financial education and literacy were presented; financial education; financial inclusion; and training, risk management, innovation and performance in people's daily lives, in addition to the culture of financial education in the context of EJA, in line with the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC). Methods: the methodology of bibliographic review and field research was adopted, which included the application of structured questionnaires to understand the proposal of activities related to Financial Education taught to EJA students from a state school taken as a case study. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with four teachers, to find out their perception of what is explored in classes involving financial education and the receptivity of students. By combining the analysis of quantitative data from the students' structured questionnaires with the qualitative analysis of the teachers' semi-structured interviews, it was possible to obtain a more comprehensive view of the importance of the Financial Education discipline. Results: most students find Financial Education classes useful, but many feel that the content covered is still insufficient for them to effectively apply what they learn in their financial lives. Teachers believe that the content explored in the classroom covers the essential aspects of financial education, but recognize that the challenges faced by students outside of school limit the effectiveness of this teaching. The importance of continuing education of teachers was also highlighted so that they can

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update and diversify their pedagogical approaches, adapting them to the specific needs of EJA students.

Keywords: Financial Education, EJA, Public School.

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INTRODUCTION

Activities such as managing money, saving, spending, and prioritizing tasks are essential in everyday life. Klapler and Lusardi (2020) emphasize that, in the acquisition of products, quality and characteristics are decisive factors. These actions can be related to the concepts of "Management" and "Administration", which, although different, have a connection with people's routines. The article reinforces that Financial Education has a positive and significant influence on the financial inclusion of individuals, promoting their autonomy and ability to manage resources, make conscious decisions and deal with economic challenges.

The focus of this article is to understand the level of acceptance and application of knowledge related to Financial Education for students in EJA classes in the reality of a public school taken as a reference, the Três Poderes State School, belonging to the Regional Superintendence of Education – Metropolitan C, in the municipality of Belo Horizonte.

According to Kaiser and Menkhoff (2020), when analyzing the effects of the implementation of Financial Education programs in the school object of the case study, it seeks to know in which situation the development of students is in three fundamental dimensions, such as: financial knowledge, economic behavior and financial management skills.

This article is the result of a research funded by the Minas Gerais State Department of Education (SEE-MG), demonstrating SEE-MG's commitment to promoting quality education adapted to the needs of students, especially in the EJA modality. The implementation of Financial Education programs at the Três Poderes State School, in partnership with SEE-MG, highlights the importance attributed by the aforementioned Secretariat to the development of students' financial skills as an integral part of their educational training, as highlighted by Melo (2019). The results of this study have the potential to guide future educational policies of the SEE-MG, contributing to the strengthening of school curricula and improvement of pedagogical practices throughout the state, as seen in Luz, Ayres and Melo (2019).

It is also worth noting that the relationship between Financial Education in EJA and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a significant connection that seeks to promote inclusion, the reduction of inequalities, and economic sustainability. Financial

Education for EJA students can contribute to several UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), helping to achieve them.

LITERATURE REVIEW

ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF FINANCIAL EDUCATION

Financial Education in Latin America has a history as old as the countries themselves. His early years, however, were entirely informal. Also, according to what Accorsi et al. (2018) report, schools did not offer personal finance classes and there were no professions that today provide financial literacy for people in general.

During this time, tips on money management may have come from parents, friends, or professional mentors. One of the first records of this type of personal finance education occurred in the year 1737 in the United States, USA, with Benjamin Franklin when he was 31 years old and had recently made a name for himself by writing and publishing an annual almanac. In that year's edition, he wrote a column entitled "Tips for those who want to be rich". In it, he signed off with a financial advice: "One penny saved is two cents off" (Flores, 2023, p. 18).

In the United States, a reference country in the literature when it comes to Financial Education, reference is made to the Smith-Lever Act, which established the concept of formal Financial Education when the Cooperative Extension Service was created to offer extension programs to educate rural Americans on a series of topics – including personal finance (Cherobim, 2020).

Brazil, on the other hand, has a poor record in establishing Financial Education standards, although the concept and its importance as a life skill have been understood since the dawn of civilization (Teixeira, 2015).

In the nineteenth century, financial literacy still lacked a place for formal instruction. However, money management was just as important as in recent years, and records show the first attempts at Financial Education (Negri, 2020).

An example of the time comes from abroad, with James Gilbert, manager of the London & County Bank. Gilbert worked as a personal finance author, and in 1849 he published an article entitled "Ten-Minute Advice on How to Keep a Banker." In it, he detailed the advantages of opening a bank account and explained the process to those who may feel intimidated by it. Gilbert published extensively, writing to his fellow bankers as well as the general public. He believed that everyone – not just the wealthy – should have a bank

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account, and he strove to educate the public about the banking system and its benefits (Buss & Amorim, 2020).

Ramon and Trevisan (2019) mention that, in 2003, the Commission on Financial Literacy and Education in the USA was established and later launched a national strategy for Financial Education. Americans celebrate National Financial Literacy Awareness Month in April. In addition, President George W. Bush signed an order in 2008 that created an advisory council on financial literacy.

FINANCIAL EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

Financial Education in Brazil has evolved over the years, reflecting changes in society, the economy, and the educational system. The country is in 3rd place in research on financial inclusion in developing countries, for what was needed, considering the percentages on the country's commitment to financial inclusion, mobile capacity, regulatory environment and adoption of financial services; it is also necessary to explore the history and concept of Financial Education in Brazil to understand how the current scenario was arrived at (Schotten et al., 2020).

Kistemann Jr. and Xisto (2024) report that Financial Education in Brazil began to gain prominence in the 2000s, when economic growth and expanded access to credit made financial issues more relevant to the population. Previously, there was little emphasis on teaching financial skills in schools or other educational spaces.

In that decade, with the increase in access to credit and consumption, concerns began to arise about the excessive indebtedness of Brazilians. This has led to the emergence of initiatives to promote Financial Education, both by the government and by private institutions and non-governmental organizations.

In 2008, the Central Bank of Brazil launched the National Financial Education Program (Pronef), with the objective of disseminating financial knowledge and promoting a culture of financial planning and organization among Brazilians. This program marked an important milestone in the institutionalization of Financial Education in the country (Hurtado & Freitas, 2020).

In 2010, the National Committee for Financial Education (CONEF) was created, a partnership between government agencies and private institutions to develop a national strategy for Financial Education. CONEF coordinates and guides actions for the implementation of Financial Education throughout Brazil, and in 2013 ENEF was launched, a comprehensive initiative to promote Financial Education in Brazil, including actions in schools, the financial system and other areas of society. ENEF proposes the inclusion of Financial Education in the school curriculum, as well as the promotion of events and awareness activities for the general public (Santos, 2018).

IMPORTANCE OF FINANCIAL EDUCATION FOR THE POPULATION

Financial Education should be a continuous process from childhood to adulthood. Unfortunately, not even educational institutions seem to acknowledge this fact, where many assume that people will somehow learn about money on their own. There needs to be a paradigm shift when it comes to Financial Education (Accorsi et al., 2018).

According to Flores (2023), the importance of Financial Education for young people cannot be underestimated. There is nothing as dangerous as a young person who is financially illiterate. Someone who has no idea how to manage their finances can easily fall into various financial traps without knowing it.

It's often difficult to correct bad decisions regarding finances – it can take several years to do so. Teaching young people about money at an early age will impart vital knowledge and skills to them that will help them make informed decisions when it comes to financial matters. Similarly, money education should have the same priority as other subjects. Young people and adults need to be trained about money and how it works (Buss & Amorim, 2020).

Campos (2021) points out that statistics indicate that young people who have never received adequate education about finances end up becoming irresponsible adults, especially in financial matters. They don't know how to invest, can't save enough money to buy a home, and often have a very low credit score. These behaviors are contrary to those of adults who learned about money management when they were young. These people are able to make informed financial decisions in adulthood simply because they had a solid financial foundation in their youth.

Negri (2020) states that, for a financially literate young person, it becomes a little easier to maneuver and get out of the situation compared to someone who is financially illiterate. There are many benefits obtained by being financially literate, and Flores (2023) emphasizes the help in understanding the value of money. When you understand the value of money, you have a greater ability to deal better with finances. You can know the importance of budgeting, saving, and avoiding unnecessary expenses.

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The integration of Financial Education into EJA's pedagogical proposal, according to Viana, Silva, and Rufino (2023), offers a multitude of benefits for both students and institutions. It provides students with the practical tools they need to manage their finances effectively. When students are financially savvy, they can make informed decisions about loans, leading to lower default rates, knowledge about banking services, the market, possibilities for personal and family financial management, among others. It also reduces debt-related stress and anxiety, creating a better environment for decision-making in everyday life.

THE TEACHING OF FINANCIAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

The teaching of Financial Education in schools in Brazil is an initiative that has gained prominence in recent years, especially due to the recognition of the importance of preparing young people for the financial challenges of adult life. It is necessary to analyze the evolution of the teaching of Financial Education in Brazilian schools and how this initiative is being implemented (Goyal & Kumar, 2021).

Despite the BNCC, as of 2017, with its approval, Financial Education began to be integrated into school curricula as part of the teaching of Mathematics and other areas of knowledge. The BNCC establishes the essential competencies and skills that all students must acquire throughout their school career, and the inclusion of Financial Education reflects the need to prepare students to deal with financial issues in their daily lives (Santos, 2018).

Teacher training is an aspect of paramount importance for the successful implementation of Financial Education in schools. Investments in teacher education, capacity building and training programs have been developed to help teachers understand the key concepts of Financial Education and incorporate them into their classes (Santos, Santarosa & Ferrão, 2021).

According to Araújo, Silva and Gomes (2023), the development of specific teaching materials for Financial Education has been an important part of the implementation of this teaching routine of the discipline in schools. Government and private organizations, as well as the school system, have produced books, handouts, and other resources to assist teachers in teaching Financial Education in the form of partnerships.

FINANCIAL EDUCATION AS A TRANSFORMATIVE ELEMENT

The economic and social environments in which individuals make decisions according to finances change faster and faster. And at this threshold, Ramon and Trevisan (2019) defend the responsibility for financial decisions and security in the future to be transmitted by the family and the school. Throughout life, Financial Education shows the extent of information that individuals have to receive and evaluate as an ever-increasing element.

There is greater mastery of Financial Education than just knowing how to make wise financial decisions. It's more about being able to use that knowledge and apply it to everyday scenarios. Financial literacy affects every aspect of life: from budgeting to saving, taking out a loan, and investing. However, many students do not know or have less exposure to financial literacy (Martins, 2019).

There are other reasons why financial illiteracy is on the rise. This context comes from the absence of exposure to Financial Education at the beginning of life, which then spreads to the next generations. Children who have not been exposed to Financial Education topics in school become adults who do not have a strong grasp on financial knowledge. They then become parents, bosses, or teachers for the next generation of children, continuing the cycle (Bavaresco, 2021).

Financial Education empowers individuals to make informed decisions about their money, allowing them to gain more autonomy in their lives. When people understand concepts such as budgeting, saving, investing, and financial planning, they become better able to achieve their goals, reduce financial stress, and build a stable future (Hurtado & Freitas, 2020)

EJA IN BRAZIL

EJA is a teaching modality in Brazil designed to serve people who, for various reasons, did not complete basic education in the conventional time. The goal of EJA is to provide a new opportunity for these individuals to complete their studies, develop skills, and advance their careers or personal goals (Hurtado & Freitas, 2020). The ages of students can vary greatly, from teenagers who have interrupted schooling to older adults who have never had the chance to study. EJA usually has a reduced duration compared to regular education, allowing students to complete each stage more quickly.

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One of the central aspects of EJA is flexibility in class schedules. Classes typically take place in the evenings, allowing students to work or take care of their responsibilities during the day. EJA is aimed at people of varying ages, usually from 15 years old for Elementary School and 18 years old for EJA. It is common to find people of all ages in the same class (Cherobim, 2020).

EJA students come from different backgrounds, such as workers, housewives, the elderly, or people who have interrupted their studies to work or care for family members. The purposes of EJA students are different: from getting the diploma to improve their job opportunities; enter higher education or fulfill the dream of completing basic education; and, in any of the objectives, Financial Education needs to be taught within an Educational and Methodological approach.

According to the non-governmental organization Futura (2022):

> "With the pandemic and the worsening of social inequality, there was an increase in school dropout. EJA enrollment fell by 7.7% in 2020. There were about 579 thousand fewer enrollments than in 2019. In 2021, the number of students enrolled continued to fall: 1.3% less compared to 2020, reaching 3 million enrollments in 2021. The data are from the School Census of Basic Education, released by Inep. This drop in the last year occurred in a similar way in the enrollments of elementary and secondary level EJA, which showed a reduction of 1.4% and 1.2%, respectively (p. 11)."

The EJA methodology is usually adapted to meet the needs of adult learners, focusing on practical activities and knowledge that can be applied in everyday life. EJA follows the premise of respect for the students' experience; values the life experiences of students and seeks to integrate them into the learning process. Teachers are trained to work with a diverse population and respect students' prior knowledge (Silva, 2022).

EJA in Brazil plays a crucial role in offering the possibility to those who could not complete their education in the conventional time. By offering flexibility, adapted methodology, and respect for the student experience, EJA continues to serve a diverse population and contributes to a fairer and more inclusive society. However, for EJA to reach its full potential, it is necessary to overcome challenges such as school dropout, lack of resources, and social recognition of the importance of this type of education (Silva & Barbosa, 2022).

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EJA AND FINANCIAL EDUCATION

The action of EJA is significant and carries a transformative potential, in which the discipline of Financial Education is shown to be a fundamental tool for the training of individuals at any stage of life. However, it takes on even greater importance in the context of EJA, in which students may be resuming their studies after a long period away from the school environment and often find themselves facing financial challenges in everyday life (Cherobim, 2020).

Xisto (2020) points out that real-life training involves the fact that many EJA students have more expressive financial responsibilities, such as work, family, and bills to pay. Financial Education offers practical skills to manage budgeting, save money, and plan for the future. These skills are directly applicable to the lives of EJA students.

When it comes to reducing debt and financial stress, it is talking about Financial Education to help EJA students avoid over-indebtedness and give in to investments without prior studies, predatory financial practices and compulsive purchases. Thus, there are some examples of what contributes to a healthier financial life and reduces stress related to economic problems (Cherobim, 2020).

Financial Education can empower students to make more informed decisions about their finances by promoting autonomy and the ability to set personal financial goals. Thus, there is a measure that can help those who are returning to study to improve their economic and income situation. Financial Education can be integrated into the EJA curriculum as part of the subjects or as a separate subject. To this end, it is based on the teaching of Mathematics, Social Sciences, or as a transversal component, applying financial concepts to various areas of study (Schotten et al., 2020).

EJA requires teaching methods adapted to the needs of adult learners, who may have less time available and different learning styles. Financial Education should be taught in a practical and engaging way, with real examples and interactive activities (Cherobim, 2020).

Financial Education can be a pathway to social and economic inclusion, giving EJA students the confidence and skills expected to participate more fully in the economy and society. Many students seek this type of education to enhance their job prospects. Financial Education can complement this search, teaching valuable skills for the job market, such as financial planning, entrepreneurship, and resource management. Challenges to the high dropout rate in EJA can be a difficulty for the implementation of Financial Education.

Strategies to keep students engaged and show the relevance of Financial Education to their lives are essential (Schotten et al., 2020).

Several EJA schools are faced with limited resources, which can affect the ability to offer quality Financial Education. Finding creative solutions and partnerships to overcome this obstacle is important. The relationship between Financial Education and EJA is an expressive combination that can trigger several benefits for students and society as a whole. By empowering adult students with financial skills, autonomy is promoted, the chances of financial stress are reduced/minimized, the quality of life is improved, and social and economic inclusion is increased. For this relationship to reach its potential, it is necessary to invest in teacher training, curricular integration and adequate resources for EJA (Vasconcelos, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

TYPE, APPROACH AND METHOD OF RESEARCH

In the choice of methods and techniques to be used in the research, it is considered that they are directly related to the problem defined in the study, with the objective and interest of its organization (Gil, 2019).

According to Vergara (2006), understanding the bases of specific research, there are two basic research criteria: as for the ends and the means, it is descriptive research, since this study is aligned with the definition given by Gil (2019), that is, the one appropriate to the theoretical and expository detailing of the themes of choice, subsidizing the achievement of the objectives outlined for the study. At this stage, the theoretical assumptions on the subject were reviewed, such as the importance of Financial Education in school, taken as a case study.

Therefore, the research, being descriptive, enabled the observation, recording, analysis and correlation of variable facts or phenomena, without the interference of the researcher. It should be noted that the researcher assumes an impartial posture and does not interfere in the research object.

A qualitative-quantitative approach was given because it used descriptive and content data from semi-structured interviews, with statistical data (in the form of percentage indexes) as the center of the process of analysis of the problem raised. Both the questionnaire applied to the students and the interviews conducted with the teachers were

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built based on the thematic axes addressed by the authors cited in the Theoretical Framework.

Thus, in relation to the means of investigation, a field research was carried out, in which the phenomenon to be studied occurs (the school of the public network taken as a case study), which included the application of structured questionnaires applied to EJA students and interviews with teachers of the Financial Education discipline.

UNIT OF ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH SUBJECT

The unit of analysis of this study is the financial self-management behavior developed by EJA students, based on the culture of Financial Education promoted by the Três Poderes State School. The subjects of the research are the students enrolled in the EJA of the school and the teachers responsible for the disciplines that incorporate elements of Financial Education in their pedagogical practices.

The sample of this research was non-probabilistic, because it was surveyed by accessibility and typicality, according to the specifications and recommendations of Vergara (2006), consisting of the selection of elements that the researcher considered representative of the target population. For the sample, questionnaires were distributed to the 87 EJA students, in which 73 questionnaires were answered by students. The interviews were applied and answered by four EJA teachers, who teach Financial Education classes.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE

The collected opinions, data and other forms of information were quantified in order to obtain a solution to the phenomenon/problem with a quantitative and qualitative approach. As Bertucci (2008) explains, the quantitative approach is widely used in the development of investigations of the causal relationship between phenomena, that is, in situations of cause and effect, which in the case of this study allowed the opinions of the interviewees to be quantified and, from there, measured according to the defined objectives.

Quantitative data were obtained from the tabulation of questionnaires applied to students, by physical means, in the classroom. The qualitative approach was given to the data collected from the interviews answered by the teachers. The difficulties that arise when trying to integrate Financial Education into the EJA context were considered. This diversity makes it more difficult to create a one-size-fits-all approach to Financial Education and different age groups, grade levels, and cultural contexts, as this requires teaching methods tailored to individual needs.

Respecting the difficulty found by some EJA students in the usability of electronic forms such as Google Forms, the questionnaire was distributed in the classrooms in its physical form, aiming to obtain relevant information about the students' knowledge, attitudes and financial behaviors, due to its wide use by EJA students, so that a higher response rate can be achieved, as Vergara (2006) points out.

The questionnaire contained multiple-choice questions (Likert scales) suggested by Leitão (2021), addressing topics such as basic knowledge of finance, financial planning practices, savings, investments, and consumption habits. The answers were collected through the script answered and returned by the participants, consolidating the data in an electronic spreadsheet (Excel).

The spreadsheet has been revised to remove duplicate responses and incomplete responses. In addition, verification has been done to ensure that all mandatory questions are answered. The statistical analysis was descriptive, and the measures of central trends (mean, median, mode) and dispersion (standard deviation) were calculated for the quantitative variables. The absolute and relative frequencies of the responses were determined for all multiple-choice questions (Mineiro & Mazzer, 2020).

In the semi-structured interview script sent to the teachers, also by physical means, the same distribution dynamics and the reminder of the period for the answers were considered. As these are free responses, the qualitative approach was coded into thematic categories. Qualitative responses were analyzed to identify recurring patterns and themes (Gil, 2019).

By combining the analysis of quantitative data from the students' structured questionnaires with the qualitative analysis of the teachers' semi-structured interviews, that is, through the mixed methods strategy suggested by Vergara (2006), it is possible to achieve a more comprehensive view of the importance of the Financial Education discipline. Quantitative analysis provides the objective measure of students' perceptions, while qualitative analysis allows for deeper understanding of teachers' experiences and opinions. Together, these analyses provide valuable reflections for the improvement of the curriculum and pedagogical practices of Financial Education.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the semi-structured interviews conducted with the four EJA teachers at the Três Poderes State School interviewed reveals a scenario that reflects the recent transformations and constant challenges in the implementation of Financial Education, in line with the literature on the subject.

It can be said that the short period of experience of teachers in teaching Financial Education, which began in 2020 due to the inclusion of this topic in the BNCC, resulted in pedagogical approaches, even in the adaptation phase, as cited by Gonçalves (2019). This reality is addressed in the literature as a reflection of recent educational guidelines, which require teachers to effectively integrate financial concepts in disciplines such as Mathematics.

As Lima (2022) postulates, this continuous adaptation is crucial to ensure that the contents are relevant and accessible to EJA students, as evidenced by studies that debate the inclusion of new content in the curriculum.

The oscillation in the training of teachers, from internal courses to personal specializations, emphasizes the search for continuous training, even though there are challenges regarding the quality and availability of this training. Cherobim (2020) highlights the importance of consistent training for the teaching of Financial Education, a point that aligns with the perceptions of the teachers interviewed.

The gap in specialized training suggests the need for educational policies that ensure more uniform and accessible training, so that teachers can develop adequate skills to teach finance, as cited by Vasconcelos (2018), Melo (2019) and Santos (2020).

According to Gonçalves (2019), Financial Education in EJA, as also reported by the teachers interviewed, is predominantly integrated into Mathematics classes, focusing on financial health and money management. Such an approach is in line with the principles suggested by Campos (2021), who defends the importance of equipping students with practical skills for financial self-management.

The centralization of content in Mathematics classes may indicate a methodology that seeks to make learning relevant and applicable to the daily lives of students, although this may also limit interdisciplinarity and the exploration of broader Financial Education contents.

The teachers interviewed observe that, even with the interest of students in learning about finance, especially with regard to practical topics, such as mathematics and economic

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challenges, there are notable difficulties in areas such as financial calculations and legal aspects. At this threshold, Lima (2022) suggests that these difficulties can be mitigated by more accessible and practical didactic methodologies, pointing to the need for pedagogical innovation and support materials that make the content more understandable for EJA students.

Other aspects to be analyzed are the standardization of the curriculum and the need for consistent training in Financial Education, challenges mentioned by the teachers. This curricular alignment is essential to ensure effective and equitable training, as discussed by several evidences in the literature, such as Santos (2020) and Lima (2022), who point to Financial Education as a tool of utmost importance for the formation of conscious and financially responsible citizens.

The emphasis on preparing students for responsible financial management, through the teaching of basic concepts such as budgeting and saving, is seen as essential by teachers. This approach is corroborated by Martins (2019) and Bavaresco (2021), who highlight the importance of teaching finance in a way that students can apply this knowledge in their daily lives, improving their future economic prospects.

Nevertheless, the teachers mentioned successful projects in Financial Education, such as gamified simulations and partnerships with financial institutions. These projects are seen as exemplary practices that complement theoretical teaching, providing students with valuable practical experiences. The reference literature reinforces the effectiveness of these initiatives in making learning more engaging and applicable, as seen in Kaiser et al. (2022).

It is important to note that the teachers' suggestions to improve the teaching of Financial Education in EJA, such as continuous training, development of specific teaching materials and partnerships with financial institutions, reflect the needs pointed out by academic sources. The aforementioned actions are perceived as determinants to prepare EJA students for autonomous and conscious financial management, ensuring that Financial Education fulfills its transformative role in the lives of students, as analyzed by Martins (2019) and Santos (2020).

In addition, the correlation between the teachers' answers and the literature reveals a convergence in the perception of challenges and in the search for solutions, indicating a path of continuous improvement in the teaching of Financial Education in EJA.

Regarding the results presented by the answers of the 73 EJA students, in general, it can be said that they reveal important reflections with regard to the students' perception of

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Financial Education. The following analysis correlates the data with the profile of the respondents, giving a detailed view of the demands and effectiveness of Financial Education classes.

It is important to note that most students are in the 3rd period (41%), followed by the 2nd (33.3%) and the 1st (15.4%), suggesting greater permanence and progress of students as they advance through the periods, which indicates an increase in commitment to completing basic education, as reinforced by Gonçalves (2019) and Kaiser et al. (2022).

The predominance of women among the responding students, with 58.9%, may mean greater participation of women in EJA, which may be related to the resumption of studies after previous interruptions to dedicate to the family. Most students are in the 31 to 50 age group (37.2%), followed by the 51 and over age group (34.6%). The expressive presence of mature adults reinforces the premise that EJA attracts, in particular, individuals who were unable to complete their studies in their youth, as cited by Campos (2020).

Most students (59.0%) have a family income of 1 to 3 minimum wages, which is consistent with the typical socioeconomic characteristics of EJA students. As Santos (2021) points out, low income is generally associated with the need for qualification to improve living conditions.

Most students live in small families, with up to four members (51.3%), representing a family context that ends up stimulating the return to education. Thus, there is still a significant portion (23.1%) living alone and facing additional challenges related to reconciling work, study and personal responsibilities.

It is noteworthy that a high number of students (65) indicated a neutral or negative position in relation to knowledge about Financial Education, showing that most do not have a solid understanding of Financial Education. Only eight students showed confidence in the knowledge acquired, which suggests an abyss in the curriculum.

Before classes, 76.1% of students stated that they did not have personal finance management skills, which reflects the importance of a structured educational program that trains students, who, as also highlighted by Kaiser et al. (2022), mostly entered the course with little or no financial management skills.

Most students (63.4%) perceived an improvement in their knowledge of Financial Education after classes, meaning positive and significant impacts in class. However, 28.2% of students did not perceive considerable improvement, pointing to the need to revisit teaching methodologies to consolidate a more effective understanding. According to Xisto

(2020), formal Financial Education is essential to improve the understanding and management of financial resources, especially in vulnerable groups such as EJA students.

Subjects such as credit, investments and retirement were seen as the most important by the students, which can be explained by the need for planning and financial security identified among EJA students. The aforementioned valorization of practical topics directly applicable to everyday life is reinforced by Schotten et al. (2020), who emphasize the importance of teaching content that students can use immediately in their lives.

Most students (62%) believe that the content learned is applicable and relevant to their lives, indicating a positive perception of the usefulness of the content taught. However, 23% of students do not see the application of the content as relevant, which may reflect a disconnect between the content learned and practical life.

According to Xisto (2020), the effective application of financial knowledge requires not only an understanding of the concepts, but also the ability to implement them in the context of real life, something that can be hampered by factors such as low income or lack of support.

The data that indicate that a significant portion of students did not perceive a substantial improvement in financial knowledge suggest the need to improve teaching methodologies. The literature suggests that interactive and contextualized methods, which take into account the reality of students, are more effective in promoting Financial Education (OECD, 2021).

The items "Credit", "Investments" and "Retirement" were considered of high importance, indicating that students value active financial management and long-term planning. In contrast, topics such as "Long-term care insurance" and "Education loans" were perceived as less relevant, which may indicate the need to reassess the approach to these topics in class, as also argued by Garg and Singh (2018) and Carvalho and Scholz (2019).

It was possible to extract that, although most students have perceived improvement in their knowledge of Financial Education, there are still significant spaces that need to be addressed. The predominance of neutral or negative answers in relation to previous knowledge and the practical application of the contents learned indicates the need to reinforce and adapt pedagogical strategies to ensure that all students can fully enjoy Financial Education classes.

The analysis also suggests the relevance of topics such as credit and investments, while others, such as long-term care insurance, require a more contextualized approach to increase their perceived value. These notes are crucial for the construction of a curriculum that better meets the needs of EJA students, providing them with decisive tools for financial management and improvement of their quality of life.

The results achieved in the 73 questionnaires applied to EJA students on Financial Education can be supported by several discussions present in the academic literature, which deal with the specificities of this teaching modality, as well as the challenges and importance of Financial Education.

Most students indicated a lack of knowledge or superficial understanding of Financial Education. This data is consistent with the literature that discusses financial literacy in low-income and low-schooling populations. Studies such as that by Lusardi (2019) and Martins (2019) highlight that lack of knowledge regarding basic financial concepts is common in disadvantaged populations, which directly reflects the ability of these individuals to make informed and effective financial decisions.

Therefore, the results of the questionnaires are supported by some of the authors cited throughout this article, which highlights the importance of adapting Financial Education to the specific profile of EJA students, addressing both their practical needs and the barriers they may face in the application of knowledge. The implementation of well-structured and context-sensitive Financial Education programs can contribute significantly to improving their ability to manage financial resources and, consequently, their quality of life.

Both teachers and students recognized the importance of Financial Education in academic and personal training, which is a point of agreement. That is, both groups may have agreed that knowledge in personal finance is essential for the daily life and financial future of students, which suggests convergence in the perception of the quality and applicability of the material.

Only the teachers interviewed defend the improvement in the financial behavior of students after Financial Education classes, but the students, for the most part, did not report a significant positive change in the financial practices of their lives. In addition, the teachers believe that the students understood the content well, although they indicate that they still have difficulties in certain topics, and this represents divergence and suggests that the teaching methods need to be adequate to better meet the needs of the students.

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The teachers, however, are not satisfied with the teaching method used, as well as the students who find the classes boring or difficult to follow. The professors show that they believe that the method can be improved, and the students seem to prefer more interactive or practical approaches.

Teachers argue that Financial Education classes will have a solid impact and students are also convinced that they will apply this knowledge in the future, which indicates divergence in long-term expectations.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the general objective was to demonstrate how the culture of Financial Education, in the context of EJA, contributes to the development of a financial self-management behavior among students based on the perceptions of teachers and students of the Três Poderes State School. It can be said that the research was based on three specific objectives, which involved describing the students' perception of the content covered in the Financial Education classes; describe the teachers' perception of what is explored in class; and, finally, to compare these perceptions for a critical analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching of Financial Education in EJA.

From the results, it was possible to verify that both teachers and students recognize the importance of Financial Education in the development of financial self-management. Students demonstrated basic understanding of personal finance, but had difficulties applying these concepts effectively in everyday life. Many reported that while they understand the importance of controlling spending and saving, economic limitations and a lack of structured financial planning remain significant challenges.

The teachers, however, show that, although the fundamental concepts are addressed in the classroom, there is a gap between the theoretical content and the students' daily practice. In addition, the students cited the need for teaching materials that are more contextualized to the reality of EJA students, who often deal with multiple responsibilities, such as work, family and studies. The teachers' perception is that, even though the content is pertinent, there is a demand for more practical and applicable methodologies, which can be directly transposed to the students' daily lives.

Regarding the specific objective that was once again described the students' perception regarding the content given in Financial Education classes, most students understand Financial Education classes as useful, but many feel that the contents covered

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are still insufficient for them to be able to effectively apply what they learn in their financial lives. They expressed the desire for more practical examples and representations that can be implemented immediately, such as affordable savings strategies and methods for debt repayment. This feedback makes clear the need for a more practical pedagogical approach focused on the financial reality of students.

However, teachers argue that the content explored in the classroom covers the essential aspects of Financial Education, but recognize that the challenges faced by students outside of school limit the effectiveness of this teaching. In addition, some teachers pointed out that the time allocated to the topic is insufficient to deepen the knowledge necessary for a real transformation of financial behavior. The importance of continuing education of teachers was also highlighted so that they can update and diversify their pedagogical approaches, adjusting to the specific needs of EJA students.

In the comparison of the perceptions of students and teachers, referring to the third specific objective, both convergences and divergences are noted. Both groups recognize the relevance of Financial Education, but differ on the adequacy of the content and the effectiveness of the classes in promoting significant behavioral adjustments. While teachers maintain that the content is adequate, students feel that they need more practical tools to apply what they learn.

The aforementioned divergence indicates the need for a curricular revision that includes greater integration between theory and practice, as well as constant dialogue between educators and students to adapt teaching methodologies to the real demands of students. The creation of practical workshops and the use of technology and visual resources, in addition to more time dedicated to the theme, are suggested strategies to reinforce the teaching of Financial Education in EJA.

In the field of organizational contributions, it is worth mentioning that it is essential that public policies are developed to ensure the expansion of the time and resources dedicated to the teaching of Financial Education in EJA, enabling students to acquire not only the knowledge, but also the necessary confidence to exercise effective financial management in their lives. This article contributes to the understanding of the role of Financial Education in EJA and suggests ways for this education to be more impactful and transformative in the lives of students.

It is also noteworthy that this study was based on questionnaires applied to students and teachers, which, although efficient for data collection, may not capture deeper perceptions of the participants' perceptions and feelings. The subjectivity of the answers, influenced by factors such as the personal and emotional context at the time of application, may have impacted the results.

Another point to be considered is the focus on the content covered in class and on the perceptions of the participants, not bringing a more detailed analysis of specific pedagogical practices or the Financial Education curriculum. This finding ends up limiting the understanding of how specific teaching methods reflect the absorption of the content and the practical application by the students. External variables that can influence the financial behavior of students, such as the country's economic situation, access to financial resources, and family support, were also not considered.

Due to the limitations of this study, it is suggested that future research broaden the scope of the investigation to include multiple schools from different regions and socioeconomic contexts. This suggestion will allow a broader comparative analysis and will contribute to the understanding of how Financial Education in EJA oscillates in different educational and cultural environments.

It is believed that it would be positive to carry out complementary qualitative studies, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, which could provide a richer and more detailed understanding of the experiences and perceptions of students and teachers. The methods in question can reveal insights that are not captured by questionnaires, such as the emotional and social challenges faced by students when trying to apply what they learn in the classroom.

Finally, future research could also explore the integration of new technologies and teaching methodologies in Financial Education, evaluating the impact of digital tools, educational games, e-learning and financial simulations on the learning and practical application of the knowledge acquired by students. This line of investigation can identify innovative approaches that enhance the effectiveness of the teaching of Financial Education to the Public of Youth and Adult Education.

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