



Should Personal Finance Be a Required High School Course?

Ian Johnston
Palo Alto High School



Introduction

Many Americans struggle with financial responsibilities such as budgeting, credit, and loans. 78% live paycheck to paycheck (HEC Paris, 2019), and 74% of workers are concerned about their financial well-being (EBRI, 2023). This research explores whether high school financial literacy courses could help address this issue by equipping students with essential money management skills.

Literature Review Highlights

- Mental Health Link: Financial stress is closely tied to mental health struggles like anxiety and depression (TIAA Institute, 2024).
- Long-Term Benefits: Some studies show students with financial education have improved credit scores and are more likely to save and invest (Urban, 2023; NFEC, 2023).
- Generational Gaps: Gen Z has significantly lower financial literacy than Baby Boomers (GFLEC, 2021), showing the need for modern education.

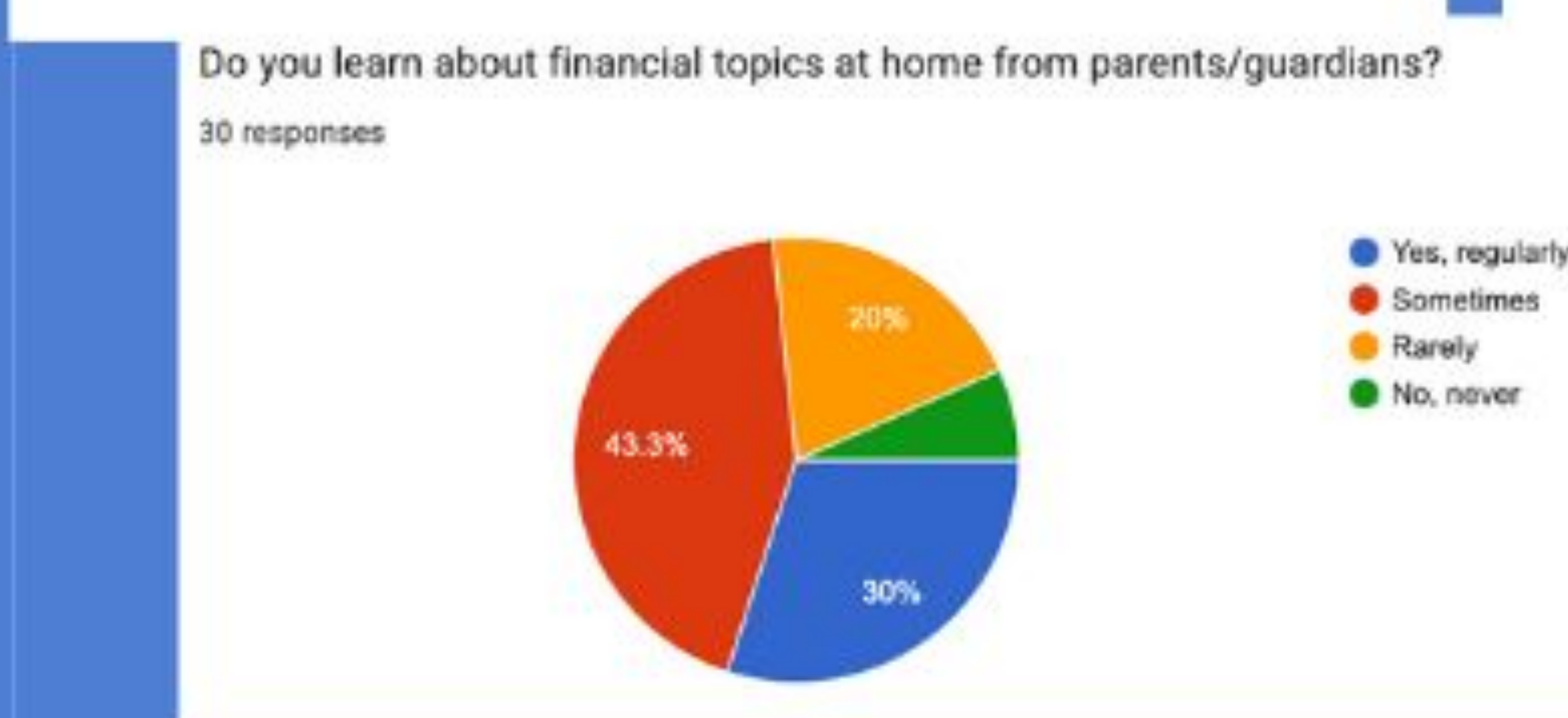
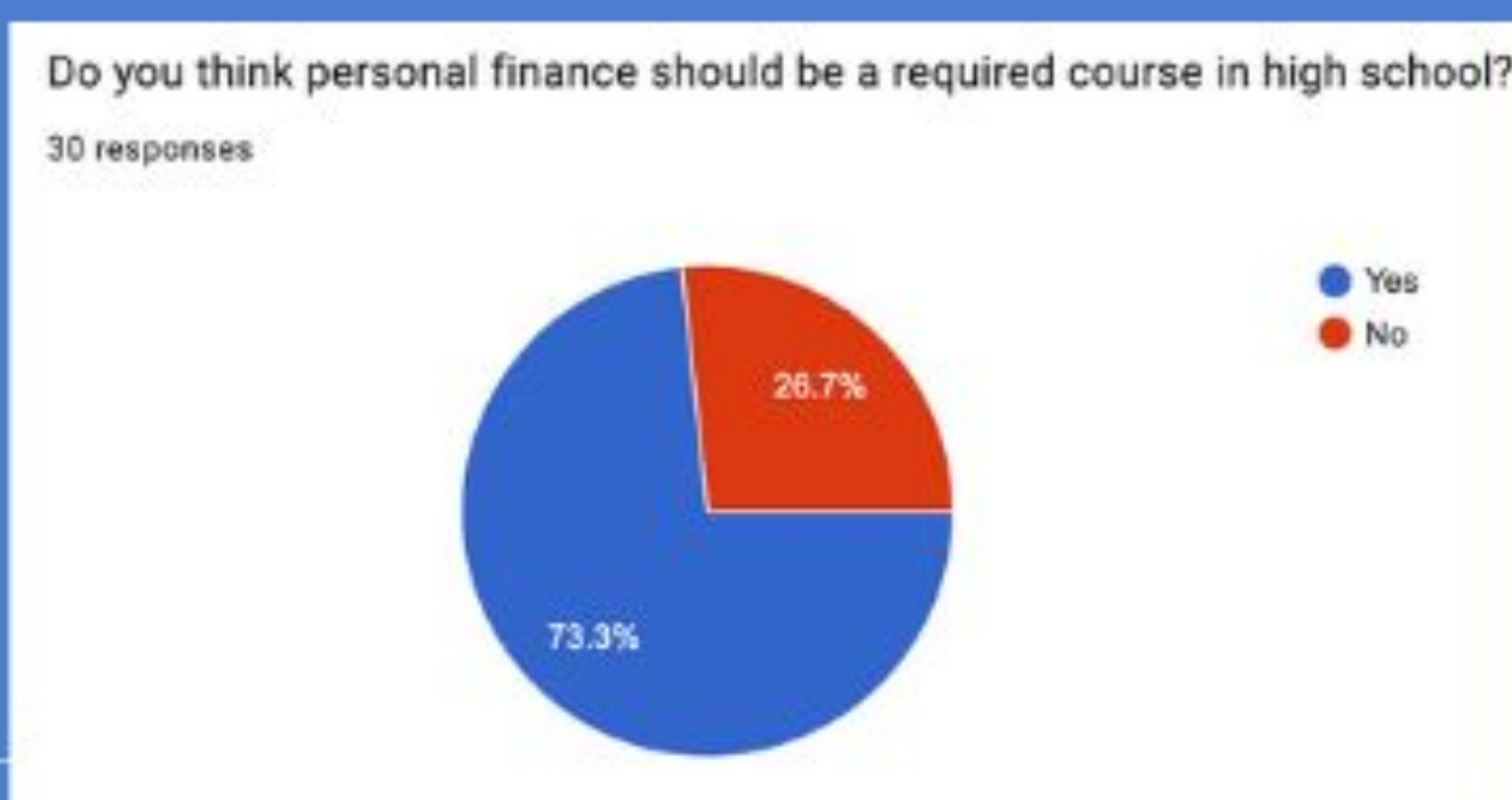
Research Methodologies

Approach:

- Quantitative research via Google Forms survey
- Participants: High school students
- Data Collected: Multiple choice, scale responses, and select-all-that-apply questions
- Tools: Google Forms and basic statistical tools

Findings

- Should It Be Required? 73.3% of students believe personal finance should be a required course.
- Learning at Home: Only 30% regularly learn financial topics at home.
- Banking Experience: 70% of students have a bank account.
- Confidence: Only 10% rated themselves highly confident in managing money.
- Budgeting: 30% rarely create a budget.
- Biggest Struggles: Taxes (73.3%), loans (66.7%), and credit (56.7%).
- Spending Habits: 60% save most of their money; only 26.7% track spending.



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Conclusions and Analysis

The findings suggest many students feel underprepared for financial life and see school as a place for financial learning. While most are interested in learning, low confidence and budgeting habits indicate room for growth. These results reflect a need to consider how financial education is delivered and how effective it really is in preparing students for long-term success.