

Hierarchical Analysis of Educational Strategies for Youth Financial Literacy Using the Analytic Hierarchy Process

Financial literacy is essential for the well-being and social inclusion of individuals of all ages, but its absence is particularly detrimental to young people. Portuguese students exhibit significant shortcomings in this area, largely due to the lack of structured instruction during compulsory education. This study applies the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) to rank pedagogical strategies aimed at improving financial literacy among Portuguese youth.

Four evaluation criteria were established - knowledge acquisition, motivation and engagement, accessibility and flexibility, and behavioral impact - alongside five pedagogical alternatives: in-person courses, online courses, digital content, books, and educational games/apps.

Criterion weights were obtained via pairwise comparisons carried out with students using a survey, whereas the alternatives were assessed by a subject-matter expert.

Findings indicate that behavioral impact is the most highly valued criterion, followed by knowledge acquisition. Among the alternatives, in-person courses were identified as the most effective, with online courses ranked second. Although digital tools scored highly on flexibility, their perceived effectiveness was lower. The study concludes that innovation in financial education should emphasize not only delivery format, but more critically, pedagogical quality and the capacity to drive behavioral change.

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