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Research Article

Financial Literacy and Economic Empowerment of PCG Personnel: Basis for a Financial Autonomy Training Course

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the levels of financial literacy and economic empowerment among Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) personnel to inform the development of a tailored Financial Autonomy Training Course. A mixed-methods research design using concurrent triangulation was employed. Quantitative data were collected through a structured survey administered to 400 PCG personnel, including officers, non-officers, and non-uniformed personnel. Qualitative data were gathered through key informant interviews with selected PCG leaders and personnel.

Results showed that respondents generally demonstrated high to extremely high levels of financial literacy and economic empowerment. Among the financial literacy dimensions, debt management obtained the highest rating, whereas investing received the lowest rating, indicating limited practical knowledge and participation in investment activities. In terms of economic empowerment, job security and job satisfaction received very high ratings, while work–life balance and purchasing power, although rated high, reflected existing financial and occupational pressures. Qualitative findings indicated that financial literacy initiatives within the PCG were limited, fragmented, and primarily focused on retirement preparation rather than continuous financial capability development. Participants also identified financial stress, limited discretionary income, operational demands, and the absence of a structured financial education program as key challenges.

In conclusion, while personnel demonstrated generally positive levels of financial literacy and economic empowerment, gaps remained in investment literacy, long-term financial planning, financial stress management, and institutional support. The findings supported the institutionalization of a tailored Financial Autonomy Training Course to strengthen the financial capability and well-being of PCG personnel.

Keywords: *Economic Empowerment, Financial Autonomy, Financial Literacy, Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Personnel*

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Background

Financial literacy emerged as a global priority in the face of rising economic instability, personal debt, and widening gaps in financial access. Nations with higher financial literacy among their populations tended to experience stronger economies, lower poverty rates, and greater fiscal stability (Tradeshala, 2023). However, only 33% of adults globally were found to be financially literate, with wealthy countries like Australia, Canada, and Northern European nations surpassing 65% literacy, while South Asian countries ranked below 25% (S&P Global Finlit Survey, 2015). In the United States, Lusardi and Streeter (2023) found that many citizens struggled to comprehend inflation and make sound financial decisions, emphasizing that low financial literacy remained a prevalent issue even in wealthy economies.

Financial literacy in the Philippines similarly remained critically low. A 2022 global study ranked the Philippines among the bottom 30 nations for financial literacy, with just 25% of adults showing sufficient knowledge (Martinez, 2024). The 2021 Financial Inclusion Survey of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas added that only 2% of Filipinos correctly answered six basic financial literacy questions. These gaps stemmed from a lack of formal financial education, prevailing cultural taboos around discussions about money, and traditions expecting children to support their aging parents—factors that reinforced economic reliance and hindered autonomy (Bolt, 2024; Financial Literacy for Filipinos, 2019).

For uniformed personnel, financial literacy was highly critical, as a lack of it posed significant risks. A recent Philippine Air Force study showed very low actual financial knowledge (70.2%) and low perceived knowledge (73.8%), despite respondents having strong financial attitudes and behaviors; notably, actual financial knowledge strongly led to better financial behavior (Alingalan & Manalo, 2025).

Moreover, numerous studies explored financial literacy across civilian populations or within organizations like the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, 2019; Nepomuceno, 2019) and the Philippine National Police (Ligson, 2023), but a noticeable research gap remained when it came to the

Philippine Coast Guard (PCG). Most existing research on the PCG focused on maritime law enforcement (Abanilla, 2024; R.A. No. 9993, n.d.), marine environmental protection (Marine Environmental Protection, n.d.), and operational readiness (Berbie, 2024; Cucharo, 2023). Very little attention was paid to the financial literacy and empowerment of its personnel, a gap that this study sought to address.

Lusardi (2019) described financial literacy as a form of human capital that enables individuals to make sound financial decisions in any life situation. It went beyond technical financial knowledge because it included a wider range of skills—including budgeting, saving, investing, and debt management—that helped individuals handle complex financial conditions and improve both their personal and professional outcomes. On the other hand, financial empowerment, also called economic empowerment, equipped individuals with the skills and confidence to manage their finances effectively and independently (Financial Empowerment, 2018). These competencies were vital for PCG personnel, given their regular exposure to work-related economic pressures that could affect both their personal lives and organizational performance.

In this light, this study aimed to assess the financial literacy and economic empowerment levels of PCG personnel, which served as the foundation for a tailored Financial Autonomy Training Course. The outcome contributed toward the institutionalization of financial education within the PCG, cultivating a culture of financial independence and improved economic well-being among its members.

Methods

Research Design

This study utilized a mixed-methods research design, specifically adopting a concurrent triangulation approach, to comprehensively evaluate the financial literacy and economic empowerment of Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) personnel. This design was selected as the most appropriate methodology because it allowed for the simultaneous gathering of complementary quantitative and qualitative data during a single phase of research, maximizing efficiency while overcoming the inherent

limitations of relying on a single data type. Quantitative data captured broad, statistically generalizable trends regarding the baseline financial and economic status of the personnel, while qualitative data, gathered through thematic interviews and strategic institutional document reviews, provided the contextual depth, nuance, and structural explanations behind those numbers. By validating and cross-referencing these distinct datasets through triangulation, the design ensured a more robust, valid, and holistic analysis of the population's needs than either approach could achieve in isolation. Ultimately, this comprehensive mixed-methods framework provided the rigorous empirical foundation necessary to accurately inform and design an institutional training course.

Respondents

The respondents involved in the study consisted of active Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) personnel drawn from three categories: Officers, Non-Officers, and Non-Uniformed Personnel (NUP). A total of 400 respondents participated in the quantitative phase, a sample size determined using Slovin's formula based on the active PCG population. To ensure a representative distribution, stratified sampling was applied based on the actual proportions of the population. The final sample distribution was computed as follows: Officers comprised 44 respondents (approximately 11% of the sample), Non-Officers comprised 352 respondents (representing 88% of the sample), and NUPs comprised 4 respondents (constituting approximately 1% of the sample). This sampling approach ensured that the perspectives of each category regarding financial literacy and economic empowerment were accurately captured, thereby providing a solid baseline for developing the proposed tailored Financial Autonomy Training Course.

To ensure thorough data collection throughout the qualitative phase of the study, key informants were purposively selected. These participants included the Assistant Deputy Chief of Coast Guard Staff for Human Resource Management (CG-1) and two senior officers from the Coast Guard Finance Service (CGFS), specifically the current and former

Commanders, alongside a purposive sample of personnel drawn from each designated uniform and civilian category. These key informants provided critical insights into institutional practices, historical initiatives, organizational challenges, and individual lived experiences related to financial literacy and economic empowerment within the PCG.

Instruments

The study utilized a multi-component framework consisting of document reviews, semi-structured interview guides, and a four-point Likert scale survey questionnaire. The quantitative survey captured data across key dimensions of financial literacy (budgeting, saving, investing, debt management, and financial planning) and economic empowerment (job security, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and purchasing power) using a four-point Likert scale. Concurrently, the qualitative interview guides were used during Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with institutional leaders in human resources (CG-1) and finance (CGFS), alongside representatives from various personnel cadres, to explore organizational initiatives and systemic challenges. A document review of existing financial courses from accredited institutions and the Philippine Navy supplemented these tools to identify adaptable instructional models.

To guarantee content validity and contextual suitability, the quantitative and qualitative instruments underwent rigorous evaluation by a panel of three independent validators. This panel comprised an academic expert holding a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) specializing in instrument development, a joint human resource practitioner and corporate finance officer, and a retired PCG Senior Officer with extensive experience in institutional training and finance. These experts assessed the tools for alignment with study objectives, technical accuracy, and structural coherence. All recommendations regarding clarity, terminology, and tone were systematically incorporated to refine the instruments before formal deployment.

Following expert modifications, the survey questionnaire was pilot-tested with a small group of PCG personnel excluded from the final sample to assess clarity and completion time.

Internal consistency was statistically verified using Cronbach's alpha, yielding excellent reliability coefficients that far exceeded the acceptable 0.70 threshold across all dimensions. For financial literacy, the alpha coefficients were 0.920 for budgeting, 0.949 for saving, 0.927 for investing and debt management, and 0.928 for financial planning. Similarly, economic empowerment dimensions demonstrated robust consistency, with values of 0.930 for job security, 0.956 for job satisfaction, 0.938 for work-life balance, and 0.940 for purchasing power, confirming the instrument was highly reliable for the study.

Procedure

The data collection process adhered to a systematic, ethical framework using a mixed-methods approach. During the quantitative phase, a structured survey questionnaire was administered via Google Forms to a stratified sample of 400 Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) personnel across three categories: Officers, Non-Officers, and Non-Uniformed Personnel (NUP). Explicit informed consent was required from all respondents prior to participation. Following data collection, raw digital responses were extracted into a spreadsheet and subjected to a rigorous cleaning process to ensure integrity. This procedure involved screening for missing data, identifying incomplete submissions, and eliminating duplicate or straight-lined entries. Only datasets satisfying these strict quality criteria were finalized for subsequent statistical processing.

Concurrently, the qualitative phase involved semi-structured interviews with the Assistant Deputy Chief of Coast Guard Staff for Human Resource Management (CG-1) and the former and current Commanders of the Coast Guard Finance Service (CGFS). These interviews captured organizational insights regarding institutional initiatives and challenges related to financial literacy and economic empowerment. Audio recordings were utilized with the participants' explicit consent; in instances where recording was declined, detailed written notes were taken instead. While only audio-recorded sessions were transcribed ver-

batim, both transcriptions and written interview notes were subjected to comprehensive thematic analysis.

Additionally, a document review was executed to examine existing financial literacy and autonomy training materials from PCG-accredited financial institutions, government agencies, and military organizations. Collected artifacts included training modules, policy frameworks, and course outlines obtained through formal institutional requests. To maintain data integrity, only authorized and publicly available documents were included in the final analysis.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to measure the personnel's baseline financial literacy and economic empowerment levels across their respective dimensions.

Concurrently, the qualitative data were systematically coded using Braun and Clarke's framework for thematic analysis to isolate recurring themes regarding institutional initiatives and personal financial challenges.

Finally, the quantitative datasets and qualitative thematic summaries were integrated and triangulated. This mixed-methods synthesis provided a holistic diagnostic understanding of the personnel's financial welfare, directly guiding the strategic formulation of the proposed tailored Financial Autonomy Training Course.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the research process, this study strictly adhered to the institutional ethical standards set forth by the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy (PMMA) Graduate School, emphasizing voluntary participation, informed consent, data confidentiality, and academic integrity. All participants were provided with a comprehensive informed consent form detailing the study's purpose, methodologies, potential benefits, and risks. Respondents were explicitly informed of their right to ask questions and to withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative repercussions.

To ensure strict anonymity and confidentiality, no personally identifiable information was collected during the quantitative surveys or qualitative interviews. All gathered data were stored securely, with access restricted exclusively to the researcher. Furthermore, interview transcripts and survey responses were coded, and the final findings were presented solely in aggregated format to prevent individual identification. The data management protocols strictly complied with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173), ensuring that all participant information was protected and legally handled.

Finally, to uphold academic integrity, rigorous anti-plagiarism and original writing measures were implemented. The study strictly followed the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th edition citation guidelines for all referenced material. The final

manuscript was also subjected to institutional similarity and generative artificial intelligence (AI) detection analysis using the Turnitin system to verify authenticity, with all flagged content thoroughly reviewed and revised to ensure compliance with institutional thresholds prior to submission.

Result and Discussion

Profile of Respondents

The socio-demographic characteristics of the 400 PCG personnel were determined to provide context for interpreting the findings of the study. This included information on their sex, age, rank, educational attainment, monthly net take-home pay, year in service, and marital status. These variables offered insight into the respondents' background and qualifications relevant to the study.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Profile Variable	Category	n	%
Sex	Male	271	67.8
	Female	128	32
	Others	1	0.2
	Total	400	100
Age	21-25	30	7.5
	26-30	203	50.8
	31-35	86	21.5
	36-40	34	8.5
	41-45	38	9.5
	46-50	9	2.3
	Total	400	100
Rank	Officer	44	11
	Non-Officer	352	88
	Non-Uniformed Personnel	4	1
	Total	400	100
Educational Attainment	College Graduate	331	82.8
	Post Graduate	22	5.5
	Technical/ Vocational	39	9.8
	High School Graduate	6	1.5
	Others (Combined categories)	2	0.6
	Total	400	100
Monthly Net Take Home Pay	Below Php9,500.00	23	5.8
	Php9,501.00 - Php20,000.00	124	31
	Php20,001.00 - Php30,000.00	138	34.5
	Php30,000.01 - Php40,000.00	86	21.5
	Above Php40,000.00	28	7
	Total (Valid)	399	99.8

Profile Variable	Category	n	%
Years in Service	Below 5 years	197	49.3
	5-10 years	120	30
	11-15 years	37	9.3
	16-20 years	36	9
	21-25 years	8	2
	31 years and above	2	0.5
	Total	400	100
Marital Status	Single	240	60
	Married	155	38.8
	Others (Separated/ Widowed)	5	1.2
	Total	400	100

As shown in Table 1, the demographic profile of the 400 Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) respondents revealed a male-dominated sample, with 67.8% male and 32.0% female personnel. In terms of rank and position, the vast majority were Non-Officers (88.0%), followed by Officers (11.0%) and Non-Uniformed Personnel (1.0%), indicating that the findings primarily reflect the financial and economic conditions of the rank-and-file workforce. The sample was characterized by a strong baseline educational background, as most respondents were college graduates (82.8%), followed by those with technical or vocational training (9.8%) and postgraduate degrees (5.5%). Additionally, the marital status profile indicated that 60.0% of the respondents were single and 38.8% were married, presenting a cohort with diverse familial and financial responsibilities.

The distribution across career and financial indicators highlighted a predominantly young, early-to-mid-career workforce. Temporally, half of the respondents had served for less than 5 years (50.0%), while 30.0% had 5 to 10 years of experience, aligning with the age data where the largest bracket belonged to personnel aged

26–30 (50.8%), followed by those aged 31–35 (21.5%). Financially, the largest proportion earned a Monthly Net Take-Home Pay of Php 20,001–Php 30,000 (34.5%), closely followed by the Php 9,501–Php 20,000 bracket (31.0%), while only 7.0% earned above Php 40,000. Collectively, this profile underscores a junior, highly educated, yet economically constrained population, emphasizing the critical timing for early institutional financial literacy and structured economic empowerment interventions.

Quantitative Phase

Level of Financial Literacy of the Respondents

To provide a comprehensive assessment of the cohort's financial capability, the respondents' baseline knowledge and behaviors were evaluated across five core financial literacy sub-dimensions: budgeting, saving, investing, debt management, and long-term financial planning. The quantitative statistical findings for each dimension are accompanied by qualitative insights gathered from key informant interviews to highlight the practical financial realities within the service.

Table 2.1 Level of Financial Literacy of the Respondents in terms of Budgeting

Indicators	M	SD	Descriptive Remarks
1. I regularly create a monthly budget plan.	3.2	0.808	High
2. I track and review my expenses consistently.	3.11	0.788	High
3. I effectively manage my daily spending.	3.02	0.796	High
4. I prioritize essential expenses before non-essential ones.	3.33	0.765	Very High
5. I adjust my budget based on changing financial conditions.	3.3	0.766	Very High
Composite Mean	3.19	0.78	High

Legend:
 3.26–4.00 = Strongly Agree (Very High);
 2.51–3.25 = Agree (High);
 1.76–2.50 = Disagree (Low);
 1.00–1.75 = Strongly Disagree (Very Low)

In terms of **budgeting**, Table 2.1 shows that the respondents exhibited a high level of financial literacy, as evidenced by a composite mean of 3.19 (SD = 0.78, High). The highest-rated indicator, "I prioritize essential expenses before non-essential ones," received a mean score of 3.33 (SD = 0.765, Very High), closely followed by the ability to adjust budgets based on changing conditions (M = 3.3, SD = 0.766, Very High). This highlights the respondents' strong discipline in resource allocation and practical adaptability when facing fluctuating economic demands.

Conversely, the indicator "I effectively manage my daily spending" received the lowest rating with a mean score of 3.02 (SD = 0.796, High). This marginal dip suggests that while PCG personnel excel at macro-level prioritization and adaptive planning, maintaining rigid, day-to-day granular control over operational expenses presents a slight challenge. This trend indicates that the budgeting habits of personnel are predominantly behavioral and intuitive rather than systematically documented, allowing micro-expenditures to occasionally fluctuate.

This result was supported by Fernando (2024), who posited that individuals with stable incomes naturally prioritize necessities and dynamically alter spending behavior in response to economic shifts, a trait further reinforced by the structured discipline inherent in uniform services (Salas-Velasco, 2025). However, the discrepancy between high prioritization and lower daily tracking aligns with Kumar et al. (2024), who observed that employed professionals often succumb to time constraints, relying heavily on informal "mental budgeting" instead of rigorous digital or written tracking. From a theoretical standpoint, Behavioral Finance Theory explains that even when individuals possess adequate financial knowledge, they frequently revert to habitual spending patterns over active, continuous monitoring (Duxbury et al., 2025). This clear gap between cognitive awareness and habitual practice underscores the necessity of transitioning from intuitive budgeting to systematic documentation.

Table 2.2 Level of Financial Literacy of the Respondents in terms of Saving

Indicators	M	SD	Descriptive Remarks
1. I consistently set aside a part of my monthly income for savings.	3.16	0.801	High
2. I have clearly defined savings goals.	3.11	0.805	High
3. I regularly monitor my savings progress.	3.03	0.828	High
4. I feel confident in my ability to save money regularly.	2.99	0.818	High
5. I maintain emergency savings for unexpected expenses.	3.09	0.832	High
Composite Mean	3.07	0.82	High

Legend:
 3.26–4.00 = Strongly Agree (Very High);
 2.51–3.25 = Agree (High);
 1.76–2.50 = Disagree (Low);
 1.00–1.75 = Strongly Disagree (Very Low)

In terms of **savings**, Table 2.2 displays that the respondents demonstrated a high level of financial literacy, as indicated by a composite mean of 3.07 (SD = 0.82, High). Notably, all individual indicators were uniformly evaluated

as "High," with mean scores ranging from 2.99 to 3.16. The highest-rated indicator was the practice of consistently setting aside a portion of monthly income for savings (M = 3.16, SD = 0.801, High), followed closely by having clearly

defined savings goals ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 0.805$, High) and maintaining emergency savings for unexpected expenses ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.832$, High). This collective trend indicates that PCG personnel possess a commendable foundation in goal-oriented saving habits and precautionary asset accumulation. Conversely, the lowest-rated indicator was the respondents' confidence in their ability to save money regularly ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 0.818$, High), alongside a relatively lower score for regularly monitoring savings progress ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 0.828$, High). This marginal divergence suggests that while personnel actively engage in saving maneuvers, their subjective sense of financial self-efficacy and systematic oversight remains slightly tentative, indicating that their savings habits may be vulnerable to perceived economic pressures.

This high baseline of saving behavior was aligned with Lusardi (2019), who asserted that

financially literate individuals are significantly more prone to engaging in precautionary savings and goal-driven financial behaviors. However, the observable dip in regular saving confidence suggests that these habits may be heavily strained by systemic economic pressures rather than a lack of personal intent. This tension is directly validated by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Financial Inclusion Survey (2022), which emphasizes how inflationary pressures and elevated living costs routinely erode the disposable income of Filipino earners, thereby undermining their long-term confidence to save consistently. Behaviorally, Yeo et al. (2024) clarified that sustainable saving patterns are dictated not just by raw knowledge but by psychological components such as financial self-efficacy and perceived behavioral control.

Table 2.3 Level of Financial Literacy of the Respondents in terms of Investing

Indicators	M	SD	Descriptive Remarks
1. I understand basic investment principles and opportunities.	3.08	0.776	High
2. I actively seek information to improve my investment knowledge.	3.1	0.809	High
3. I regularly contribute to investment products or accounts.	2.85	0.822	High
4. I can comfortably explain the differences between types of investments.	2.81	0.803	High
5. I evaluate risks carefully before making any investment decisions.	3.05	0.809	High
Composite Mean	2.98	0.8	High

Legend: 3.26–4.00 = Strongly Agree (Very High);
2.51–3.25 = Agree (High);
1.76–2.50 = Disagree (Low);
1.00–1.75 = Strongly Disagree (Very Low)

In terms of **investing**, Table 2.3 exhibits that the respondents demonstrated a high level of financial literacy, as indicated by a composite mean of 2.98 ($SD = 0.80$, High). All individual indicators fell within the "High" category, with mean scores ranging from 2.81 to 3.10. The highest-rated indicators were actively seeking information to improve investment knowledge ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.809$, High) and understanding basic investment principles and opportunities ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.776$, High). This suggests that

PCG personnel possess strong cognitive interest and foundational awareness regarding investment mechanisms. Conversely, the lowest scores were observed in the respondents' regular contribution to investment products ($M = 2.85$, $SD = 0.822$, High) and their ability to comfortably explain the differences between various investment types ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 0.803$, High). This divergence reveals a distinct baseline trend: while the personnel are theoretically receptive and actively evaluate risks, their

functional capacity to confidently distinguish complex financial vehicles and maintain structured, long-term capital placement remains noticeably lower.

This outcome illustrated a clear "knowledge-to-practice" gap often exacerbated by career-specific preferences. Lusardi (2019) notes that general financial literacy enhances basic risk evaluation, yet Yeo et al. (2024) explain that individuals frequently stall or avoid actual capital deployment due to a lack of deep execution confidence and perceived risk barriers. For uniform services and government cohorts, this hesitation is heavily reinforced by a

strong behavioral preference for immediate liquidity and reliance on institutional job security over active wealth management (Alingalan & Manalo, 2025). Behaviorally, this pattern manifests as a status quo bias, where personnel prefer known financial arrangements over unfamiliar market ventures, opting to prioritize capital safety over asset growth (Fernando, 2024). Moving beyond purely theoretical instruction is therefore crucial; providing structured financial training that incorporates interactive simulations and exposure to low-risk investment paths will directly bridge this execution gap.

Table 2.4 Level of Financial Literacy of the Respondents in terms of Debt Management

Indicators	M	SD	Descriptive Remarks
1. I consistently pay my debts on or before their due dates.	3.35	0.796	Very High
2. I avoid incurring debt beyond my ability to repay.	3.32	0.784	Very High
3. I manage credit card use responsibly.	3.13	0.91	High
4. I clearly understand my debt obligations.	3.4	0.769	Very High
5. I proactively take steps to minimize or avoid debt.	3.33	0.747	Very High
Composite Mean	3.31	0.8	Very High

Legend: 3.26–4.00 = Strongly Agree (Very High);
2.51–3.25 = Agree (High);
1.76–2.50 = Disagree (Low);
1.00–1.75 = Strongly Disagree (Very Low)

In terms of **debt management**, Table 2.4 reveals that the respondents demonstrated an exceptionally robust profile, yielding a composite mean of 3.31 (SD = 0.80, Very High), which marks this as the strongest financial literacy dimension assessed in the study. Four out of the five indicators achieved "Very High" ratings, led by a clear understanding of debt obligations (M = 3.40, SD = 0.769, Very High) and followed by consistent on-time debt repayment (M = 3.35, SD = 0.796, Very High). The respondents also demonstrated high scores in proactively minimizing debt (M = 3.33, SD = 0.747, Very High) and avoiding liabilities beyond their repayment capacity (M = 3.32, SD = 0.784, Very High). Conversely, the only indicator to score lower was managing credit card use responsibly (M = 3.13, SD = 0.91, High). This isolated variation implies that while PCG personnel maintain exemplary macro-level debt restraint and institutional compliance, the fluid and revolving nature of commercial consumer credit

presents a slight comparative vulnerability within an otherwise highly disciplined financial framework.

This elevated level of debt management competence was aligned with foundational credit literacy concepts and career-specific realities. Lusardi and Tufano (2015) emphasize that strong debt literacy is the primary defense against over-indebtedness and financial distress. Within the local context, this rigorous compliance is heavily reinforced by institutional structures; as Alingalan and Manalo (2025) note, uniformed personnel in the Philippines heavily prioritize prompt debt settlement due to direct administrative accountability, automated salary deductions, and strict loan default penalties. This systemic caution is further supported by general military financial readiness models linked to risk-averse repayment behaviors (Nawi et al., 2025). However, the minor lag in credit card management is explained by Fernando (2024), who observed

that revolving credit lines carry a high risk of tracking friction due to their delayed payment structures and immediate accessibility, creating distinct hurdles even for disciplined professionals. Also, these findings indicate that the

uniformed service environment successfully builds high debt self-control, yet targeted education on interest compounding and credit card optimization is necessary.

Table 2.5 Level of Financial Literacy of the Respondents in terms of Financial Planning

Indicators	M	SD	Descriptive Remarks
1. I have a clear and written financial plan.	2.95	0.815	High
2. I regularly review and update my financial goals.	3.01	0.798	High
3. I consider future financial needs (retirement, education, healthcare) in my plans.	3.32	0.76	Very High
4. I feel confident about achieving my long-term financial goals.	3.17	0.799	High
5. I seek professional advice on financial planning when needed.	3.02	0.843	High
Composite Mean	3.09	0.8	High

Legend: 3.26–4.00 = Strongly Agree (Very High);
2.51–3.25 = Agree (High);
1.76–2.50 = Disagree (Low);
1.00–1.75 = Strongly Disagree (Very Low)

In terms of **financial planning**, Table 2.5 proves that the respondents exhibited a high level of financial literacy, as demonstrated by a composite mean of 3.09 (SD = 0.80, High), indicating a generally proactive, forward-looking financial orientation. Among the indicators, considering future financial needs such as retirement, education, and healthcare earned the highest mean score of 3.32 (SD = 0.76, Very High). This was followed closely by their confidence in achieving long-term financial goals (M = 3.17, SD = 0.799, High) and their willingness to seek professional financial planning advice when needed (M = 3.02, SD = 0.843, High). Conversely, the lowest-rated indicator was having a clear and written financial plan (M = 2.95, SD = 0.815, High). This structural pattern suggests that while PCG personnel possess excellent cognitive awareness regarding macro-level long-term safety nets, their actual practice of drafting formal, documented blueprints is less prevalent. They rely instead on mental planning models, which can leave their long-term financial objectives highly vulnerable to tracking errors and uncoordinated adjustments.

This positive long-term orientation supports Lusardi (2019), who emphasized that

future-oriented planning is a hallmark of strong financial literacy and a vital driver of overall lifelong well-being. The exceptional focus on future obligations like retirement and healthcare aligns with Yeo et al. (2024), who observed that securely employed professionals are highly prone to engaging in anticipatory financial thinking, even if those concepts remain unwritten. However, the visible drop in maintaining a formalized, written plan exposes a widespread gap between theoretical intent and structured action. This specific friction matches the findings of Mahapatra et al. (as cited in Yeo et al., 2024), who warned that relying on informal mental budgeting frequently degrades an individual's capacity to monitor goals and adjust for volatility. Furthermore, Salas-Velasco (2025) noted that even financially literate cohorts rarely adopt structured planning documentation unless exposed to explicit, practical training. Fortunately, the respondents' openness to seeking expert counsel, validated by Fernando (2024) as a major accelerator for complex asset allocation, indicates strong institutional readiness.

Level of Economic Empowerment of the Respondents

The level of economic empowerment across five sub-dimensions, such as job

security, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and purchasing power, was also identified among the respondents.

Table 3.1 Level of Economic Empowerment of the respondents in terms of Job Security

Indicators	M	SD	Descriptive Remarks
1. I feel secure about my current job position.	3.36	0.817	Very High
2. I am confident that my employment with PCG is stable.	3.47	0.804	Very High
3. I believe there is minimal risk of losing my job unexpectedly.	3.04	0.855	High
4. I feel protected by PCG policies regarding employment security.	3.37	0.806	Very High
5. My position within PCG provides sufficient job security.	3.36	0.778	Very High
Composite Mean	3.32	0.81	Very High

Legend: 3.26–4.00 = Strongly Agree (Very High);
2.51–3.25 = Agree (High);
1.76–2.50 = Disagree (Low);
1.00–1.75 = Strongly Disagree (Very Low)

In terms of **job security**, Table 3.1 manifests that the respondents demonstrated an exceptionally high level of economic empowerment, yielding a composite mean of 3.32 (SD = 0.81, Very High). This indicated that PCG personnel experience a profound sense of employment stability within the organization. Four out of the five individual indicators achieved "Very High" ratings, spearheaded by the respondents' robust confidence that their employment with the PCG is entirely stable (M = 3.47, SD = 0.804, Very High). This was closely supported by a strong sense of protection under institutional policies (M = 3.37, SD = 0.806, Very High) and a belief that their specific positions provide sufficient overall security (M = 3.36, SD = 0.778, Very High). Conversely, the only indicator to register a lower score was the belief that there is minimal risk of losing their job unexpectedly (M = 3.04, SD = 0.855, High). While still highly positive, this minor statistical drop implies that beneath a solid baseline of tenure satisfaction, personnel retain a realistic awareness of institutional vulnerabilities, such as stringent performance standards, disciplinary protocols, or organizational reforms, that regulate uniform service careers.

This structural stability was a direct reflection of public sector protections and institutional tenure design. Miles (2022) posited that high job security serves as a vital determinant of psychological well-being and organizational commitment, particularly within public sector roles. This sense of protection is further amplified in the uniformed services by robust civil service regulations and highly structured promotion tracks, which Smith (2025) identified as primary drivers of long-term policy-driven confidence. However, the slight apprehension regarding unexpected job separation matches the observations of Baxo and Atre (2024), who noted that professionals in rigid, high-accountability environments often experience localized pockets of vulnerability due to strict regulatory compliance and performance mandates. From an economic empowerment perspective, Martinez (2022) underscores that guaranteed job security forms the absolute foundation for financial autonomy, providing the predictable baseline necessary for strategic debt management, regular savings, and future financial planning. This foundational strength explains why PCG personnel performed well in the preceding financial literacy categories.

Table 3.2 Level of Economic Empowerment of the Respondents in terms of Job Satisfaction

Indicators	M	SD	Descriptive Remarks
1. I am satisfied with my current role within the PCG.	3.4	0.766	Very High
2. My job responsibilities match my professional skills and interests.	3.22	0.789	High
3. I receive sufficient recognition and appreciation from my superiors.	3.27	0.766	Very High
4. I find my work with PCG meaningful and fulfilling.	3.39	0.757	Very High
5. I am satisfied with opportunities for professional growth within PCG.	3.36	0.797	Very High
Composite Mean	3.33	0.78	Very High

Legend: 3.26–4.00 = Strongly Agree (Very High);
2.51–3.25 = Agree (High);
1.76–2.50 = Disagree (Low);
1.00–1.75 = Strongly Disagree (Very Low)

In terms of **job satisfaction**, Table 3.2 discloses that the respondents demonstrated a very high level of economic empowerment, as indicated by a composite mean of 3.33 (SD = 0.78, Very High). This strong index shows that PCG personnel experience a profound sense of fulfillment and purpose within the organization. Four out of the five individual indicators achieved "Very High" ratings, led by satisfaction with their current organizational role (M = 3.40, SD = 0.766, Very High) and followed closely by finding their day-to-day duties deeply meaningful and fulfilling (M = 3.39, SD = 0.757, Very High). The respondents also expressed high contentment with their professional growth tracks (M = 3.36, SD = 0.797, Very High) and the recognition they receive from superiors (M = 3.27, SD = 0.766, Very High). Conversely, the lowest-rated indicator was the alignment between job responsibilities and personal professional skills (M = 3.22, SD = 0.789, High). While still highly positive, this minor statistical dip indicates that despite high overall institutional pride and career morale, a localized subset of personnel navigates minor task-mismatches or rigid rotation protocols that slightly dilute the operational utilization of their specialized skill sets.

Baxi and Atre (2024) stated that deep career contentment is heavily driven by meaningful tasks, robust leadership recognition, and visible advancement pathways. Because uniform service environments are inherently mission-driven, the high purposeful fulfillment noted among the personnel matches the assertions of Smith (2025), who found that service-oriented professionals exhibit superior motivation and retention when tied to clear institutional impact. This morale is further fortified by administrative recognition, which functions as a high-value non-monetary reward structure within government frameworks (Salas-Velasco, 2025). However, the comparative lag in explicit skill-to-task alignment echoes the warnings of Miles (2022), who observed that while tenure security anchors initial employee satisfaction, prolonged structural misalignment can cap an individual's long-term operational efficiency. From an economic empowerment perspective, Martinez (2022) stresses that high vocational satisfaction directly fosters the cognitive confidence required to invest in long-term personal growth and financial strategy.

Table 3.3 Level of Economic Empowerment of the Respondents in terms of Work-Life Balance

Indicators	M	SD	Descriptive Remarks
1. I effectively balance work responsibilities and personal life.	3.22	0.779	High

Indicators	M	SD	Descriptive Remarks
2. PCG provides adequate support to maintain a healthy work-life balance.	3.18	0.81	High
3. My job responsibilities allow enough time for family and personal activities.	3.12	0.821	High
4. I rarely experience stress due to conflicting work and personal demands.	2.94	0.814	High
5. I have flexibility in my work schedule that supports my personal needs.	3.13	0.767	High
Composite Mean	3.12	0.8	High

Legend: 3.26–4.00 = Strongly Agree (Very High);
2.51–3.25 = Agree (High);
1.76–2.50 = Disagree (Low);
1.00–1.75 = Strongly Disagree (Very Low)

In terms of **work-life balance**, Table 3.3 presents that the respondents reported a high level of economic empowerment, as demonstrated by a composite mean of 3.12 (SD = 0.80, High). This index shows that PCG personnel generally manage to maintain a sustainable equilibrium between their institutional duties and personal obligations. All five individual indicators fell uniformly within the "High" category, led by the respondents' capacity to effectively balance work and personal life (M = 3.22, SD = 0.779, High), followed by their perception that the organization provides adequate structural support to maintain that balance (M = 3.18, SD = 0.81, High). Conversely, the lowest-rated metric was the rare experience of stress due to conflicting work and personal demands (M = 2.94, SD = 0.814, High). While this baseline remains positive, this noticeable statistical gap reveals a clear operational trend: although personnel successfully deploy individual coping mechanisms and leverage organizational policies, the underlying stress generated by competing vocational and personal friction points persists as a primary systemic challenge.

This complex balance highlighted the unique interplay between formal institutional frameworks and the rigid operational realities of maritime security. Baxi and Atre (2024) observe that proactive organizational features—such as clear leave structures and supervisory consideration—are absolutely vital to sustaining long-term productivity in highly demanding fields. However, the explicit escalation of stress under conflicting demands is heavily validated by Slapakova et al. (2023), who established that uniform and defense service personnel face intense, non-negotiable structural stressors, including emergency operational deployments, unpredictable shift rotations, and extreme accountability frameworks, that routinely complicate seamless home-life integration. From an economic empowerment perspective, Martinez (2022) stresses that a well-balanced lifestyle serves as a critical cognitive foundation, enabling individuals to make rational, long-term financial choices and preserve health assets. Unmanaged workplace fatigue can significantly compromise financial self-control and erode general welfare.

Table 3.4 Level of Economic Empowerment of the Respondents in terms of Purchasing Power

Indicators	M	SD	Descriptive Remarks
1. My income allows me to comfortably meet basic household expenses.	3.23	0.772	High
2. I can afford discretionary spending beyond necessities.	2.99	0.806	High
3. I feel financially capable of managing unforeseen expenses.	2.99	0.798	High
4. I can provide adequately for my family's financial needs.	3.14	0.783	High

Indicators	M	SD	Descriptive Remarks
5. My compensation from PCG sufficiently supports my current standard of living.	3.2	0.772	High
Composite Mean	3.11	0.786	High
<i>Legend:</i>			
	<i>3.26–4.00 = Strongly Agree (Very High);</i>		
	<i>2.51–3.25 = Agree (High);</i>		
	<i>1.76–2.50 = Disagree (Low);</i>		
	<i>1.00–1.75 = Strongly Disagree (Very Low)</i>		

In terms of **purchasing power**, Table 3.4 exposes that the respondents demonstrated a high level of economic empowerment, as indicated by a composite mean of 3.11 (SD = 0.786, High). This index shows that PCG personnel generally perceive their income and compensation packages as sufficient to sustain their daily living requirements. All five individual indicators fell within the "High" category, led by the respondents' capacity to comfortably meet basic household expenses (M = 3.23, SD = 0.772, High) and their agreement that their compensation sufficiently supports their current standard of living (M = 3.20, SD = 0.772, High). Conversely, the lowest-rated metrics were clustered around the ability to afford discretionary spending beyond necessities (M = 2.99, SD = 0.806, High) and feeling financially capable of managing unforeseen expenses (\$M = 2.99, \$SD = 0.798, High). This statistical distribution revealed that while the baseline salary structure successfully covers essential macro-level commitments and family needs (\$M = 3.14\$, \$SD = 0.783\$, High), financial flexibility remains restricted, leaving personnel with thin margins to absorb unexpected financial shocks or engage in luxury expenditures.

This structural ceiling reflects the delicate interplay between fixed public sector wages and real-world macroeconomic fluctuations. Hayes (2024) notes that true purchasing power is strictly governed by the tension between nominal income and fluctuating price levels. Because uniformed personnel operate on highly regulated, incremental pay scales, their real-income value is intensely vulnerable to external cost-of-living shocks. This exact pressure is validated by localized economic data (BusinessWorld, 2024), which demonstrates that despite regular income streams, Filipino

households experience significant purchasing constraints due to stubborn inflationary trends across food, utilities, and domestic services. Consequently, as Smith (2025) observes, a compression in discretionary and emergency cushions directly compromises broader consumer well-being, even when job security and institutional satisfaction remain exceptionally high. From an economic empowerment lens, Martinez (2022) stresses that sufficient purchasing power is fundamental to preserving household dignity and pursuing long-term milestones. Because salary adjustments are systemic rather than instantaneous, long-term empowerment depends heavily on individual tactical efficiency.

Qualitative Phase

The qualitative phase provided contextual, organizational, and individual depth to the empirical data through semi-structured interviews with key informants holding strategic leadership and financial management positions within the PCG. Participants were purposefully selected for their decision-making authority, policy oversight, and direct involvement in personnel administration: P1 (former Commander of the Coast Guard Finance Service, >31 years of service), P2 (current Commander of the Coast Guard Finance Service, 16–20 years of service), and P3 (Assistant Deputy Chief of Coast Guard Staff for Human Resources, CG-1, 16–20 years of service). To capture individual-level implementation constraints, interviews were extended to active personnel designated as Personnel 1 through 11. Transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis, and verbatim excerpts were utilized to preserve institutional and lived perspectives.

Thematic Analysis of Organizational and Individual Challenges

Theme 1: Current Initiatives of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) on Financial Literacy and Economic Empowerment

Absence of a Formal and Institutionalized Financial Literacy Program

Key informants unanimously confirmed that there is no formal, ongoing, organization-wide financial literacy program for active PCG personnel. P1 noted that there are "no concrete and sustained programs," while P3 confirmed this administrative vacuum, stating, "*Parang wala akong maalalang meron tayong any program*" ("I cannot recall us having any program"). This lack of structured support forces personnel to rely on informal, often inadequate knowledge frameworks (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2020), which can worsen organizational issues like employee debt and decreased economic resilience (World Bank, 2019).

Dependence on Externally Driven and Product-Oriented Financial Activities

Existing efforts are primarily initiated by external private entities (e.g., SunTrust, City Savings), conducting information drives. As P1 observed, these activities are led by commercial institutions whose primary focus is "promoting insurance products and loan services." This product-centered focus expands market access and commercial borrowing rather than developing neutral, skill-based financial competence or decision-making skills (Asian Development Bank [ADB], 2023; OECD, 2020).

Financial Initiatives Are Limited to Retiring Personnel

Internal financial literacy-related activities are handled exclusively by the Retirement and Benefits Administration Service (RBAS) and restricted to personnel nearing retirement. P3 corroborated that the only running program is for "retiring personnel or for those inactive." This reactive approach prevents early-career and mid-career personnel from building long-term saving, debt management, and wealth-building habits when they are most impactful

(International Labour Organization [ILO], 2022; Lusardi et al., 2021).

Theme 2: Challenges Encountered in the Promotion of Financial Literacy and Economic Empowerment among PCG Personnel

Absence of an Institutionalized Framework and Dedicated Implementing Unit

The PCG completely lacks a formalized internal framework, dedicated office, or trained instructors to manage financial programming. P1 stated that "there is no dedicated Unit or even personnel that handles financial literacy training," which prevents programs from establishing clear organizational ownership or sustaining long-term behavioral impacts (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2020; World Bank, 2019).

Dependence on Externally Driven and Product-Oriented Financial Activities

Because financial information drives are conducted by commercial banks or insurance companies rather than the PCG itself, they function as marketing-driven sessions designed around product placement. As P3 noted, these sessions function as "information drives, not actual training," which fails to build deep or impartial financial decision-making skills among public sector employees (ADB, 2023; OECD, 2020).

Operational and Time Constraints Due to the Nature of PCG Duties

The operational requirements of the Coast Guard create major time barriers. P1 explained that "our personnel are always deployed, so it is difficult to gather them for training," while P3 warned that "any program that takes too much time will affect the PCG operations." This highlights the necessity for flexible, modular training designs that do not compromise institutional operational readiness (ILO, 2022).

Lack of Clear Policies on Economic Empowerment and Income Diversification

Regulatory ambiguity acts as a major barrier to wealth generation. P2 pointed out that it is "difficult to promote economic empowerment because there are no clear policies on

sideline activities," and P3 noted that personnel cannot "easily encourage business or investments because it might conflict with duty." This policy uncertainty discourages personnel from exploring legal, alternative income tracks (ADB, 2023; OECD, 2020).

Low Organizational Prioritization of Financial Literacy and Economic Empowerment

Strategic initiatives prioritize mandates and mission outcomes over financial wellness. P3 stated directly that "financial literacy is not really a priority compared to operations." Overlooking employee financial stability in performance-driven organizations can ultimately worsen long-term personnel anxiety, productivity losses, and absenteeism (Lusardi et al., 2021; World Bank, 2019).

Theme 3: In Terms of Practice of Financial Literacy and Economic Empowerment by the PCG Personnel

Limited Income and Rising Cost of Living Constrain Financial Practices

On an individual level, personnel are severely constrained by structural income ceilings and the "fast inflation of basic needs or commodities" (Personnel 5). Personnel 3 emphasized that "salary itself is not enough because of inflation and daily expenses," showing that macroeconomic pressures frequently prevent salaried workers from translating basic budgeting knowledge into consistent savings or investments (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2020; OECD, 2020).

Family Responsibilities and Cultural Obligations Affect Financial Decision-Making

Deeply rooted societal norms heavily interfere with personal financial goals. Respondents highlighted the intense strain of "family financial responsibility" (Personnel 2) and "being a breadwinner" (Personnel 3), which Personnel 7 linked to "cultural and family expectations like... utang (debt) culture." In collectivist cultures, these extended family obligations consistently force short-term survival decisions over long-term financial security (Lusardi et al., 2021).

Difficulty in Building Savings and Emergency Funds

Personnel experience extreme vulnerability to sudden financial crises. Personnel 3 shared that "it is really hard to save and prepare for emergencies," and Personnel 7 admitted, "I have no savings to support any unexpected expenses." This structural lack of cash buffers leaves government employees highly dependent on short-term high-interest loans during emergencies (ADB, 2023; World Bank, 2019).

Debt Dependence as a Coping Mechanism

Borrowing is heavily utilized as a reactive mechanism to bridge income shortfalls. Personnel 2 stated that "salary loans can help but they also increase financial pressure," and Personnel 8 admitted that "high and excessive debt affects my financial well-being." This normalization of credit lines underscores the danger of expanding credit access without an underlying skill-based financial cushion (ILO, 2022; OECD, 2020).

Limited Opportunities and Confidence in Investment and Income Diversification

Moving past basic savings is stymied by execution friction. Personnel 5 stated that "there are few investment opportunities that I understand," and Personnel 10 added that "side businesses or side jobs affect time management and work performance." A lack of targeted training and clear policy guidelines leaves personnel fearful of financial losses and role performance conflicts (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2020; ILO, 2020).

Financial Stress Affects Well-Being and Job Performance

Financial struggles create distinct ripple effects within the institutional environment. Personnel 11 explained that "financial stress affects the morale and focus at work," and Personnel 6 stated that "financial problems, it really affects my overall well-being." Chronic financial anxiety among personnel directly drives severe operational productivity losses, lower workplace morale, and high absenteeism (Lusardi et al., 2021; World Bank, 2019).

Documentary Analysis of Existing Financial Autonomy and Management Courses

A systematic documentary analysis was performed across financial management and training programs from the Philippine Coast Guard, Philippine Navy, Armed Forces of the Philippines, and PCG-accredited financial institutions to identify components adaptable to the PCG framework. The analysis revealed that no single existing course can fully address personal financial autonomy, as most programs emphasize institutional finance or financial product promotion.

The **Financial Management Courses (FMC)**—encompassing the AFP FMC, PCG FMC Framework, PN Disbursing Clerk Courses, and BBFFOC—primarily focus on budgeting principles, financial planning frameworks, risk awareness, and fiscal discipline and accountability. While these programs target officer and clerk-focused institutional finance functions and government fund management, key elements like structured financial planning concepts, budget allocation and prioritization logic, and a disciplined approach to financial risk assessment may be adapted for personal financial autonomy training. However, because they do not address household budgeting, personal savings, or debt management, they are not directly adaptable as full programs but provide planning and discipline frameworks that are modifiable for personal training.

In contrast, the **Coast Guard Credit Cooperative (CGCC) Financial Briefings** cover practical topics such as budgeting, saving, loan management, investment awareness, and retirement planning, making them highly relevant to the financial realities of PCG personnel. These briefings offer practical techniques related to budgeting, debt management, and the development of savings and emergency funds. However, the analysis shows that these briefings are largely product-focused, one-off events that lack formal integration into the PCG's formal training, formal assessment mechanisms, and certification. To effectively support financial autonomy, these briefings need restructuring into a neutral, competency-based training course.

The **Bank-Led Financial Literacy Sessions**, such as those conducted by City Savings

and similar financial institutions, primarily focus on loan and saving products, insurance, and basic financial awareness. These sessions provide introductory exposure to financial concepts and consumer financial awareness but are largely marketing-driven and oriented toward product promotion rather than deep skill-building. As a result, they often encourage borrowing rather than financial autonomy and do not support sustained behavioral change, meaning they work best as supplemental resources but cannot be adopted as a standalone financial autonomy course.

Finally, the **AFP MBAI (Welfare and Assistance Programs)** mainly provides financial assistance and welfare support to personnel rather than financial literacy training and economic empowerment tools. While these programs highlight available financial safety nets, they do not include structured financial education or curricula; however, they underscore the value of proactive financial education to reduce reliance on welfare and assistance mechanisms.

Across all the reviewed documents, several course features were identified as adaptable to a PCG Financial Autonomy Training Course, including structured budgeting and financial planning frameworks from financial management courses, practical saving and debt management strategies from CGCC initiatives, basic investment awareness and risk management concepts from cooperative and bank briefings, and retirement preparedness from pre-retirement sessions. Despite their relevance, these features remain fragmented across multiple programs, lacking integration into one unified course.

This status aligns with global research emphasizing that financial autonomy programs work best when they are institutionalized, learner-centered, and behavior-oriented rather than product-driven. According to Lusardi and Mitchell (2020), financial literacy programs embedded within organizations lead to stronger financial behaviors compared to externally delivered sessions. Likewise, the OECD (2020) stresses that financial education initiatives should prioritize decision-making skills, long-term planning, and financial resilience rather than access to financial products alone.

Furthermore, the Asian Development Bank (2023) stresses that public-sector financial training programs must fit the employees' income structures, work demands, and policy environments to be effective. For the PCG, the predominance of organizational finance courses and product-driven briefings reveals the absence of a comprehensive financial autonomy program, justifying the need for adaptation rather than the direct adoption of existing courses.

Proposed Institutional Intervention: The PCG-FAEEP

The convergence of structural, operational, and policy-related challenges, alongside individual constraints, highlights the urgent need for a structured, internally managed, and operationally compatible PCG-tailored Financial Autonomy Training Course.

To systematically address these target areas, this study proposed the Philippine Coast Guard Financial Autonomy and Economic Empowerment Program (PCG-FAEEP). This program is engineered as a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training course that works contextually within the constraints of active deployment schedules, rank structures, fixed income limits, and localized family dynamics.

Managed by the PCG in coordination with the Human Resources Staff (CG-1) and the Coast Guard Finance Service, the program is designed as a flexible, non-degree 24–30 hour curriculum.

To prevent mission degradation and fit around active deployment duties, the instructional design utilizes a blended, two-pronged approach: video teleconferencing for remote asynchronous lectures and digital modules, alongside traditional place-based workshops for physical group presentations, capstone defenses, and panel evaluations.

The instructional curriculum is divided into six progressive, competency-based modules:

- **Module 1: Financial Self-Awareness and Money Mindset (4 Hours):** Focuses on examining spending behaviors, baseline attitudes, and unique economic risks faced by uniformed personnel. The required

milestone output is a finalized *Personal Financial Self-Assessment Profile*.

- **Module 2: Budgeting and Personal Financial Planning (5 Hours):** Replaces intuitive or behavioral mental budgeting with hands-on training in zero-based and 50–30–20 frameworks, income allocations, and career-stage adjustments. The required milestone output is a comprehensive *Personal or Household Budget Plan*.
- **Module 3: Debt Management and Responsible Borrowing (5 Hours):** Demystifies interest compounding formulas, minimum payment traps, and credit lines, while teaching practical debt reduction and consolidation strategies. The required milestone output is a formalized *Debt Management Action Plan*.
- **Module 4: Savings, Emergency Funds, and Risk Protection (4 Hours):** Focuses on building psychological financial self-efficacy and confidence through automated savings workflows and risk-pooling designs to survive external shocks. The required milestone output is an *Emergency Fund and Savings Plan*.
- **Module 5: Introduction to Investments and Wealth Building (4 Hours):** Introduces calculations for the time value of money, risk-return trade-offs, public retail treasury instruments, and aggressive strategies to spot and avoid predatory financial scams. The required milestone output is a *Personal Wealth-Building Roadmap*.
- **Module 6: Financial Ethics, Discipline, and Economic Empowerment (4 Hours):** Analyzes the legal boundaries of public service entrepreneurship, time management under deployment demands, and models matching personal financial wellness to field focus. The final milestone output is a completed *Financial Autonomy Commitment Plan*.

Moreover, to maintain strict academic and professional validation standards, the course incorporates a dual-layer assessment framework consisting of paired pre-test and post-test instruments to measure quantitative shifts in financial literacy, combined with a mandatory portfolio evaluation of all six modular action

plans. Completion certificates are issued only when a participant satisfies both the literacy thresholds and the portfolio requirements.

On the other hand, to ensure long-term institutional sustainability, the PCG-FAEEP is engineered to integrate directly into the existing human resource management architecture of the Philippine Coast Guard through three distinct deployment vectors:

- A mandatory entry-level financial literacy program
- A refresher course for mid-career personnel
- A prerequisite training for personnel with external engagements

Ultimately, this curriculum provides a structured, data-driven, and context-specific solution to protect the financial capabilities of PCG personnel. By converting empirical vulnerabilities into tactical financial management skills, the program mitigates personal debt-induced stress, safeguards household purchasing power against inflation, and actively protects institutional focus, morale, and overall operational readiness.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. PCG personnel have a high level of financial literacy, but this does not consistently translate into effective financial practices, as evidenced by their reliance on unmonitored mental budgeting and failure to maintain written long-term financial plans or strictly keep track of their daily expenses.
2. Debt management appears to be the strongest area for PCG personnel, but qualitative data shows that this discipline is only driven by automatic salary deductions and loan-default penalties rather than internal capability. Additionally, personnel still struggle with credit card management and avoiding interest traps.
3. Despite a strong desire for long-term wealth generation and risk mitigation information, personnel suffer from a persistent “status quo bias” and severe risk aversion. Because of a lack of conceptual clarity,

most of them avoid putting money into actual investment accounts, leaving wealth accumulation heavily restricted.

4. PCG Personnel enjoy great job security and satisfaction in their work, but their economic empowerment is actively degraded by economic pressures - high inflation, operational deployments stress, and extended family obligations that diminish their capacity to handle sudden financial emergencies.
5. Current financial management training focuses on organizational compliance, resulting in limited impact on personal financial autonomy.
6. A structured, practical, and context-specific financial autonomy training program is essential to address the personal, household, and ethical dimensions of financial management.
7. A tailored-fit Financial Autonomy and Economic Empowerment Program could strengthen financial discipline, reduce financial vulnerability, and enhance PCG personnel’s overall well-being and professional effectiveness.

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **For the Philippine Coast Guard.** The PCG may consider the adoption and institutionalization of the proposed Financial Autonomy and Economic Empowerment Program (PCG-FAEEP) as a standard training for Officers, Non-Officers and Non-Uniformed Personnel.
2. **For PCG Training and Policy Units.** Integrate financial autonomy and personal management modules into career development, entry-level, and mid-career training programs to ensure early and continuous financial education.
3. **For the Coast Guard Finance Service and CG-1.** Strengthened collaboration on the development of policies and support mechanisms that promote responsible borrowing, savings culture, and ethical financial behavior among personnel to directly mitigate financial distress and enhance organizational readiness.

4. **For PCG Personnel.** Engage actively in financial literacy and autonomy programs and apply learned financial planning strategies to enhance personal and household financial well-being.
5. **For Policy and Program Development.** The proposed training course may serve as a blueprint for other uniformed services and agencies aiming to enhance financial literacy and economic empowerment among their personnel.

To eliminate career vulnerabilities linked to unauthorized sideline work, the PCG must draft policy directives or clear guidelines for external work (legal entrepreneurship and moonlighting).

6. **For Future Research.** Future research could broaden the scope by incorporating longitudinal designs to assess the long-term impact of financial autonomy training on the financial behavior, economic resilience, and job performance among uniformed personnel.

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