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*FINANCIAL EDUCATION AS A DEVICE FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF
SMALL BUSINESSES: A LOOK AT BLACK ENTREPRENEURS FROM BAHIA¹*

**EDUCAÇÃO FINANCEIRA COMO DISPOSITIVO PARA A
SUSTENTABILIDADE DE PEQUENOS NEGÓCIOS: UM OLHAR SOBRE
EMPREENDEDORAS/ES NEGRAS/OS BAIANAS/OS**

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on investigating the access to financial education by black entrepreneurs from Bahia and aims to identify the relationship between financial education and the sustainability of small businesses. The study used an empirical approach with both qualitative and quantitative methods based on the Minayo et al (2000) framework. The research involved field research, literature review, and the use of a questionnaire as a data collection instrument. The main results include insights from black entrepreneurs on their financial education and its impact on the sustainability of their businesses, as well as recommendations for improving access to financial education for black entrepreneurs. The study also provides a historical overview of financial education strategies adopted by the federal government and reflects on the realities faced by black entrepreneurs. The significance of this work lies in the connection between financial education and the sustainability of black entrepreneurs' businesses. Additionally, the research data sheds light on the challenges and opportunities related to financial education, offering valuable recommendations for the target audience.

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Keywords: financial education, black entrepreneurship, sustainability, small business.

RESUMO

O objetivo desse estudo é compreender o acesso à educação financeira por empreendedoras/es negras/os baianas/os, buscando identificar a relação entre educação financeira e a sustentabilidade desses pequenos negócios. Para isso, o enfoque metodológico do estudo realizado organizou-se na modalidade empírica com base na abordagem quali-quantitativa Minayo et al (2000), de maneira que a metodologia da pesquisa de campo e de revisão de literatura foram articuladas com o instrumento de coleta de dados, questionário. Os principais resultados consistem no compartilhamento da percepção de empreendedoras/es negras/os a respeito da sua educação financeira e da relação desta com os desafios de sustentabilidade do seu negócio e um conjunto de recomendações direcionadas a ampliar o acesso à educação financeira por empreendedoras/es negras/os. Como contribuições teóricas apresentamos uma síntese histórica das estratégias de educação financeira eleitas pelo governo federal e uma reflexão sobre a realidade da empreendedora/or negra/o. A relevância desse trabalho está na relação apresentada entre a educação financeira e a sustentabilidade dos negócios de empreendedoras/os negras/os. Adicionalmente, os dados da pesquisa revelam os desafios e as oportunidades relacionadas à educação financeira, que são apresentadas como recomendações e consistem em contribuições sociais para o público investigado.

Palavras-chaves: educação financeira, afroempreendedorismo, sustentabilidade, pequenos negócios.



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INTRODUCTION

According to the discussion “Empreendedorismo por raça-cor/gênero no Brasil” promoted by Sebrae (SEBRAE, 2021), the Brazilian population of entrepreneurs (28.6 million) is composed of: 9.8 million Black men, 8.7 million White men, 5.0 million White women, and 4.7 million Black women. In total, including both men and women and considering the data collected in the study conducted by Sebrae, using PNADC data (1st quarter 2012 to 2nd quarter 2021), 14.5 million entrepreneurs are Black, representing more than 50% of the population. In the study, these entrepreneurs, most of whom live in northeastern states, when compared to Whites, have lower levels of education and monthly income; are generally newer to business activity; contribute less to social security; are younger; face greater difficulty accessing credit; and often engage in self-employment.

As pointed out in the Coisa de Preto research, carried out by Box1824 and Google (2022), the high number of Black entrepreneurs in Brazil is mainly due to the difficulties faced by Black people in accessing conventional opportunities in the labor market, which are, in most cases, directly or indirectly related to issues that characterize structural racism. Social discrimination and lack of professional recognition are among the barriers commonly observed in daily life, helping to explain, for instance, the low number of Black people occupying leadership positions in medium and large organizations. Even when they manage to secure jobs in such environments, they may still receive lower pay, including when compared to White colleagues performing the same tasks.

In this scenario, there has been a growing interest in entrepreneurship among this population, as it comes to be seen as an opportunity to enter the labor market; to create a business that preserves their culture and identity; to achieve economic empowerment; among other factors. However, when starting a business, these entrepreneurs face several challenges. Among these, one of the



main ones is related to financial management, which requires financial education. The absence of such education can lead to a lack of investment, which, in turn, makes it difficult to maintain and grow the business and, in some cases, jeopardizes its sustainability.

Given persistent racial disparities, equitable access to quality financial education is hindered due to the lack of adequate resources and the experience of prejudice and discrimination. Concerned with this situation, academic and scientific research has been carried out with the aim of analyzing and finding alternatives capable of reducing these differences and fostering a more equitable ecosystem. In this regard, Purificação (2022) presented a master's dissertation entitled "Financial education from an anti-racist perspective: challenging hegemonic power projects through Black financial self-organization movements", aiming to "develop a financial education that could provide a possible set of solutions to contribute to the discussion of economic inequality" (p.23).

In that work, the author investigates "the financial organization movements carried out by residents of the Nordeste de Amaralina neighborhood, Salvador - Bahia" (p.23), and demonstrates that, based on the studies conducted, financial education proposals "can and should be challenged and enriched by the knowledge that these peripheral communities already possess, often acquired in contexts of resistance" (p.145). A year later, Fogós (2023) presented a master's dissertation on "The potential effects of fintechs in promoting the financial citizenship of Black people in Brazil", with the goal of identifying "whether fintechs are capable of promoting the financial citizenship of Black people in Brazil" (p.7). The author highlights that financial citizenship occurs through consumer protection in financial services; participation in dialogue about the financial system; inclusion; and financial education. Fogós also argues that fintechs, due to their more dynamic and collaborative structure, have great potential to promote courses and share financial content with the Black population.



Given this context, the study presented in this article aimed to understand access to financial education among Black entrepreneurs in Bahia, seeking to identify the relationship between financial education and the sustainability of these small businesses.

NATIONAL FINANCIAL EDUCATION POLICY IN BRAZIL

In 2004, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) recognized that financial education has always been important for consumers, as it helps them with budgeting, account management, investment, and also provides essential information to prevent them from becoming victims of fraud. Over the years, the relevance of the subject has increased due to the development of financial markets, demographic, economic, and political changes, and, in particular, the global economic crisis of 2008.

In Brazil, the publication of Decree No. 7,397 of December 22, 2010, formalized the National Strategy for Financial Education (Enef) as a permanent State policy, with one of its objectives being to encourage actions related to the topic to be shared among public institutions, different sectors of society, and government bodies at the municipal, state, and federal levels in a comprehensive and integrated way. As stated on the Central Bank of Brazil's website, Enef aims to promote financial and social security education; to increase citizens' ability to consciously choose how to manage their financial resources; and to contribute "to the efficiency and soundness of the financial, capital, insurance, pension, and capitalization markets". In summary, Enef brings together a set of free initiatives, to be carried out by public or private institutions, without commercial purposes and strictly without ties to financial products or services, consolidated in its Master Plan, formalized through Resolution No. 2 of May 5, 2011.

To coordinate the implementation of Enef, the National Committee for Financial Education (CONEF) was established, responsible for defining action



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plans, programs to be developed, and initiatives to be offered. At the time of its creation, the committee's structure included: regulatory bodies of the financial market, the Ministry of Education (MEC), the Ministry of Justice (MJ), the Ministry of Social Security (MPS), the Ministry of Finance (MF), and representatives of civil society, renewed every three years. The Pedagogical Support Group (GAP), permanently chaired by MEC, was created to provide advisory support to CONEF and was tasked with "reviewing, revising, and validating pedagogical content and methodologies related to financial education," as reported in a news release published on MEC's website on February 25, 2016.

With the objective of evaluating the impact of adopting the teaching materials developed under Enef, a pilot project was carried out between 2011 and 2012, involving 900 public high schools from the state networks of Ceará, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Tocantins, and the Federal District. The project was continued in 2015, involving public elementary schools from the municipal networks of Joinville (SC) and Manaus. In both periods, the results achieved were considered positive. In addition to offering financial education training to students, one of the project's highlights was the training of teachers (Figure 1) by the Brazilian Financial Education Association (AEF).

Teacher training is part of the Financial Education in Schools Program, resulting from a Technical Cooperation Agreement (TCA) between the Securities and Exchange Commission of Brazil (CVM) and the Ministry of Education (MEC). It is worth noting that among the expected outcomes of this program are the training of 500,000 teachers within three years (although, based on the information disclosed, the exact deadline for this target is not clear) and the training of 25 million basic education students (from both public and private schools).



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Figure 1: Number of Teachers trained in Financial Education by AEF - Brazil



Source: Financial Education at School (<https://www.edufinanceiranaescola.gov.br/o-que-e-o-programa-educacao-financeira-nas-escolas-2/>)

Still on the subject of basic education, on March 13, 2012, Bill No. 3421/2012 was introduced in the Chamber of Deputies, requesting the "amendment of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education to include financial education as a mandatory subject in the high school curriculum". In addition to this bill, others have been or are being processed nationwide on the same topic. However, it is worth noting that Financial Education was finally incorporated into the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) in the version approved on December 15, 2017. In this text, the term appears as a subject to be contemplated in the skills of the "curricular components, with the responsibility of education systems and schools, according to their specificities, to address them in a contextualized manner." Specifically, the text states:

Another aspect to be considered in this thematic unit is the study of basic economic and financial concepts, aiming at students' financial education. Thus, topics such as interest rates, inflation, financial investments (investment profitability and liquidity), and taxes can be discussed. This thematic unit favors an interdisciplinary study involving the cultural, social, political, and psychological dimensions, in addition to the economic, of issues of consumption, work, and money. It is possible, for example, to develop a project using History, aiming to study money and its role in society, the relationship between money and time, taxes in different societies, consumption at different historical moments, and current marketing strategies [BRASIL, 2017, p.267].

In relation to mathematics, some skills related to financial education are highlighted within the student's basic training cycle, as indicated in Chart 1:



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Chart 1: Financial Education Skills to be Developed by Year of Basic Education

YEAR	SKILLS
5th Year of Elementary School	Associate the representations 10%, 25%, 50%, 75% and 100% respectively to the tenth part, quarter part, half, three quarters and a whole, to calculate percentages, using personal strategies, mental calculation and calculator, in financial education contexts, among others.
6th Grade of Elementary School	Solve and develop problems involving percentages, based on the idea of proportionality, without using the “rule of three”, using personal strategies, mental calculation and calculator, in financial education contexts, among others.
7th Grade of Elementary School	Solve and develop problems involving percentages, such as those dealing with simple increases and decreases, using personal strategies, mental calculation and calculator, in the context of financial education , among others.
9th Grade of Elementary School	Solve and develop problems involving percentages, with the idea of applying successive percentages and determining percentage rates, preferably using digital technologies, in the context of financial education.

Source: adapted from BRAZIL, 2017.

In 2018, as part of the series “Transversal Contemporary Themes – National Common Curricular Base (BNCC)”, the Economics Workbook was published, focusing on Financial Education, Tax Education, and Work. In 2020, the President of the Republic issued Decree No. 10,393, establishing the new National Strategy for Financial Education (Enef) and the Brazilian Forum for Financial Education (FBEF), composed of representatives from the Central Bank of Brazil; the Securities and Exchange Commission of Brazil (CVM); the Superintendence of Private Insurance (Susep); government secretariats (Finance, Social Security and Labor, Consumer Affairs); and the Ministry of Education. This new structure, which in its attributions replaces CONEF, became responsible for implementing and establishing the principles of Enef, among other duties.

In 2022, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Brazil (CVM), recognized as the regulator of the Brazilian capital market, published Ordinance CVM/PTE/No. 91 of July 6, 2022, which presented its Financial Education Policy. This policy outlined principles and guidelines for educational initiatives in the



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country, with the goal of supporting the development of an investor public capable of making conscious and well-founded financial decisions.

Despite the changes introduced by the 2020 decree, financial education initiatives continued to be carried out nationwide, linked to Enef. Among these initiatives is the National Financial Education Week (Semana ENEF), held annually since 2014, which in 2024 marked its 11th edition, with the central theme of Financial Protection. The continuity of Enef, even under new guidelines resulting from government changes, demonstrates the recognition of the topic's importance by policymakers and their concern with issues such as investor protection practices, financial awareness, financial resilience, and other related matters.

On the other hand, even considering these initiatives, when comparing Brazil to other countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, financial education in the country can still be described as being in an uneven stage of development. In 2007, Savoia pointed out that:

In the first, the topic is mandatory in the curriculum of some states, 72% of banks offer financial education programs, and several organizations are engaged in this process. In the United Kingdom, although optional, there is strong involvement by stakeholders, including the creation of a fund to encourage a savings culture. The explanation for these differences between Brazil and the aforementioned countries lies in the understanding of historical and cultural factors, as well as the responsibility of institutions in the financial education process (p. 1137).

In 2021, the G1 Portal (2019) reported that in the Global Financial Education Survey conducted by Standard & Poor's, Brazil ranked 74th out of 140 countries in the financial education index, even behind countries considered poor. One of the reasons for the country's position is the lack of financial education initiatives that engage with the realities of the country's most working classes and are also designed from an anti-racist perspective. There are structural societal reasons, as already mentioned in this paper, for the emergence of Black entrepreneurship, as well as greater difficulties in accessing the resources



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necessary to maintain the enterprise, limitations regarding networking, as well as the structural problem of racial discrimination (Nunes, 2023). Given this problem, the growth potential of these enterprises remains hampered, especially due to their racial group and small business profile.

REALITY OF BLACK ENTREPRENEURS IN BRAZIL

Starting a business is already a challenging decision for many people, but for Black entrepreneurs, this journey becomes even more arduous. The study “Coisa de Preto: A study on the real journey of Afro-Brazilian entrepreneurs” conducted by Box1824 and Google (2022) found that “there are structural barriers along the journey that hinder - or even prevent - the growth of Black-owned businesses” (p.10). The lack of stable career opportunities in the labor market, together with the pressure of sustaining their families through the success of their businesses, creates a complex scenario. Before embarking on entrepreneurship, Black individuals were predominantly relegated to less prominent positions in the labor market. Surprisingly, none of them held executive positions, and only 4% occupied managerial roles. In this context, experiences of racism or discrimination in the workplace influenced part of the interviewees in their decision to start a business, with 51% stating that such experiences “were completely decisive” and 41% that “they were important, but not decisive.”

Furthermore, although entrepreneurship offers a form of autonomy, Black entrepreneurs remain subject to racism and systemic discrimination, which add an extra weight to their struggles. The study “Social, Racial and Gender Profile of the 500 Largest Companies in Brazil and Their Affirmative Actions” conducted by Instituto Ethos (2016) highlights that racial and gender inequalities are fundamental components of the structure of social inequality in Brazil, as observed over time by several Black intellectuals and researchers. These inequalities are rooted in the reproduction of poverty and social exclusion,



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affecting especially the Black population with regard to the development and strengthening of small businesses and initiatives.

In contrast to this reality, Santos (2019) introduces the relevance of Afro-entrepreneurship as a political stance and argues that when a Black person decides to become an entrepreneur, this represents an action against colonialism; what the author calls a movement of decoloniality of entrepreneurship:

(...) subverting old dynamics and breaking with old structures, because Black people, marked by subjection, objectification, and invisibility, begin, with their own hands, to weave a new socioeconomic and cultural fabric. Black people cease to be masters and become self-masters; they cease to be employees and become employers. Colonial logic is subverted. Entrepreneurship is subverted, demonstrating that Black people can and should also be entrepreneurs and that this movement cannot arise solely from master/slave agreements, as would occur in the colonial period. [SANTOS, 2019, p.55]

But for this movement to truly take place, the author believes that it is “necessary to have an internal, almost psychic, revolution of the Black being, who frees themselves from the ideological weight imposed by racial discrimination” (p.56).

However, in the current context, entrepreneurship does not free Black people from situations of racism and discrimination, as pointed out by Rosa et al. (2022). The authors describe that even with the growth of Afro-entrepreneurship - which currently goes beyond subsistence through the pursuit of improving skills and competencies related to entrepreneurial attitude - Afro-descendants face prejudice in different settings when they choose to create, open, and manage their own businesses. When assessing whether the adoption of entrepreneurial behavior characteristics is related to the income of non-White entrepreneurs, the authors found that such practices do not fully mitigate the effect of ethnic prejudice:

Nevertheless, none of these behaviors, nor even experience, are capable of resolving or mitigating the harmful effects of ethnic and racial prejudice, deeply



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rooted in society, and capable of condemning the entrepreneur - even before starting their activities - to earn less income than White entrepreneurs. Therefore, this study reveals the extent to which racial prejudice permeates Brazilian society, in what Almeida (2020) characterizes as structural racism, especially affecting women of African descent, who seek in necessity-based entrepreneurship an alternative path to socially structured hardships (p.11).

Aguiar (2022) conducted a survey of the main barriers faced by Black women entrepreneurs. From an economic/financial perspective, the study reveals that these women have fewer financial options and greater difficulty in obtaining necessary resources compared to White women entrepreneurs, facing challenges in accessing credit in the market and often being forced to use personal resources to fund their businesses.

In parallel with the racial dimension, the Coisa de Preto study also highlights a challenge faced by Black entrepreneurs, suggesting that the lack of specific technical knowledge (or business management knowledge) can lead to emotional decisions that harm the financial health of their businesses:

After taking the plunge and moving forward with your own business plan, the bills keep coming. Furthermore, the uncertainty of navigating completely uncharted waters prevails: will it sell? And if it does, will it be possible to make a profit and pay the bills in a healthy way? After all, do I know how to be a business manager? [GOOGLE and BOX1824, 2022, p.16].

This observation highlights the importance of knowledge, repertoire, and training for business success. The text suggests that investing in education and professional development can be crucial to improving the prospects and performance of Black entrepreneurs. Since one of the main challenges faced by this group is that they "learn the hard way" to be entrepreneurs, knowledge, especially about business financial management, remains largely unknown, as evidenced by the statement of one of the survey respondents:

You start to confuse your money with your business money, which is where we lose a lot if we don't have control over what profits came in,



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what we can invest... And then you have to use the business money for your personal life. If, for example, you want to have a higher production volume, you end up losing because you had to spend on personal debt. [Black man, 44 years old, brewer, São Paulo (SP); apud. GOOGLE e BOX1824, 2022, p.18].

Dealing with financial challenges and finding the resources and tools necessary to overcome them is an extremely difficult task for these entrepreneurs. To initiate transformation, from the perspective of this study, it is essential to provide content and educational programs that are aligned with the reality of Black entrepreneurs. This includes offering information and specific resources aimed at optimizing the assets already present in their daily routines. In addition, it is important to design financial education programs with an approach that reflects the reality and daily challenges faced by Afro-entrepreneurs. Such proximity in communication can help make financial concepts more accessible and relevant to them, contributing to the strengthening of their businesses' financial foundations and, consequently, to their long-term success.

Purificação (2022) argues that financial education for this group must take into account all the social (and racial) barriers they face throughout their life journeys, not only in entrepreneurship, as a "proposal that goes against those which individualize economic responsibilities" (p.45). For the author, what is currently offered in the market suggests neoliberal perspectives on financial education, which can be understood as "hegemonic power projects that reinforce racial inequalities directly related to income distribution disparities" (p.45).

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The methodological focus of the study was organized in an empirical modality, based on the quali-quantitative approach of Minayo et al. (2000), in such a way that the field research methodology and the literature review were articulated with the data collection instrument, a questionnaire. The research was



conducted between 2023 and 2024, with the main objective of understanding access to financial education among Black entrepreneurs in Bahia, seeking to identify the relationship between financial education and the sustainability of these small businesses. The central research question was: Can the absence of financial education impact the sustainability of Black-owned businesses?

To answer this question and achieve the main objective of the study, we pursued the following specific goals: (i) to identify the financial education strategies implemented by the federal government; (ii) to investigate the perception of Black entrepreneurs regarding their financial education, in order to highlight possible reasons why they face difficulties in making financial investments. Thus, throughout the research, we defended the hypothesis that Financial Education can impact the sustainability of Black-owned businesses, given that many of these entrepreneurs enter the field out of necessity and face significant gaps, barriers, and challenges in maintaining their businesses.

It is important to explain that the choice of Bahia as the study site is justified by the fact that it is the largest Black territory (IBGE, 2022) outside the African continent. Furthermore, the research project is the result of partnerships with two higher education, research, and extension institutions in Bahia: the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA) and the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Bahia (IFBA). In the case of IFBA, the project involved campuses in various cities of the state, in addition to the capital, Salvador.

We chose to work with the financial education strategies developed by the federal government, as we understand that this is the level of government responsible for establishing policies that should be implemented by the states - except in optional cases involving local autonomy. However, financial education is part of the public policies that must be carried out and materialized within institutional spaces nationwide.



The entire study was grounded in ethical principles and was reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Bahia (IFBA), receiving approval under the Certificate of Ethical Review Presentation (CAAE): 69719523.0.0000.503.

The first stage of the research consisted of a literature review, during which texts were selected to provide the theoretical foundation for the study and the construction of this work. Subsequently, the field research was conducted with the purpose of enabling data collection necessary to achieve the stated objectives.

Data collection

Questionnaires were administered to participants from various regions of Bahia's geopolitical territories, covering 24 municipalities, including the state capital, Salvador. The questionnaire was administered in a hybrid format, but in-person delivery was predominant, considering participant availability. Figure 2 provides a better overview of the cities and their territories that served as the research sites.



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Figure 2: Mapping of the cities where the participating entrepreneurs' companies operate



Source: Authors

The field research was conducted in two phases: the first involved 54 entrepreneurs and the second, 59. This phase separated individual microentrepreneurs (22) and small business owners (37).

In both phases, online questionnaires were administered, addressing topics related to the Financial Education of the participants and their respective businesses. The questionnaires were created in Google Docs (<https://forms.gle/ZP5sBi36ofEiiMN27>) and contained 40 questions of various styles (multiple choice, checkbox, short answer, drop-down list, among others). The questions were grouped by topic as follows: 1. Personal Information; 2. Business Information; 3. Finance and Innovation; and 4. Financial Education, with some questions using a Likert scale. Due to its scope, this article does not present the results of the data analysis from the Finance and Innovation section, which will be explored in a later article. It is also worth noting that, despite the questionnaires being available online, they were also administered in person, particularly because some entrepreneurs had difficulty accessing the Internet or lacked a connection or device.



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ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

At first, the data collected reveal that the group studied operates in a wide variety of sectors and business areas (Figure 3). Wholesale and retail trade appears with 18.6%, demonstrating the relevance of this sector in the research sample and reflecting the vitality of commerce as a significant driver of the economy. Since many of these entrepreneurs did not have the opportunity to attend school and/or complete their studies, this line of work seems to be more attractive, as becoming a merchant does not require the completion of basic or higher education in Brazil.

Companies operating in the Information and Communication sector stand out with 5.1%, while those in the IT sector account for 3.4% of respondents. Together, these ventures represent 8.5%, already indicating the beginning of an increase in activities driven by the Internet, especially as contemporary society increasingly demands digital products and services aimed at the dissemination of information and communication.

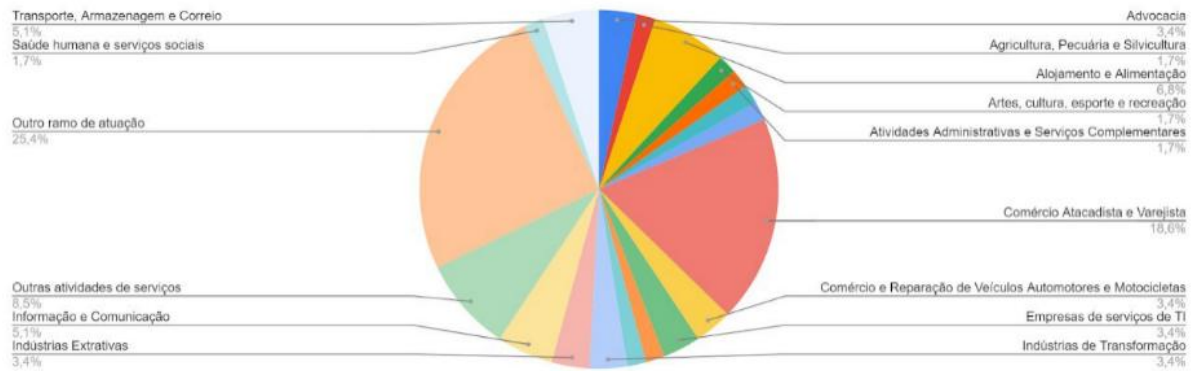
What is most noteworthy is that the majority (33.9%) of businesses, as shown in Figure 3, are not located in the most conventional sectors and areas of operation. We believe this is due to Black entrepreneurs' pursuit of creating innovative businesses that allow them to preserve their culture and identity and thereby become more competitive. These conclusions are reinforced by the finding that 31.9% of Black entrepreneurs operate in the informal sector, and it is worth noting that many of these informal businesses function as small offices.



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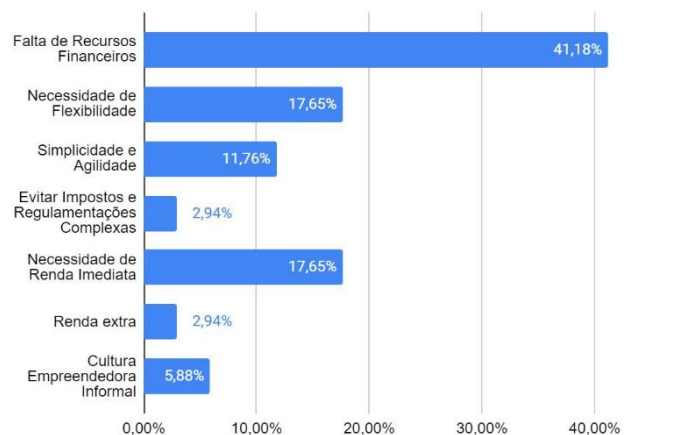
Figura 3: What is your company's line of business?



Source: Authors

Informality is not necessarily a choice, but it is often the only way for them to have a business and generate income (Figure 4). Several factors influence this choice, such as a lack of financial resources, the search for simplicity and agility, a lack of understanding of legal and regulatory obligations, informal competition, the need to avoid taxes and complex regulations, the presence of an informal entrepreneurial culture, and the search for flexibility and immediate income. Some of these factors were even highlighted in the Coisas de Preto survey [Box1824 and Google, 2022].

Figure 4: Why do you operate in the informal market?



Source: Authors

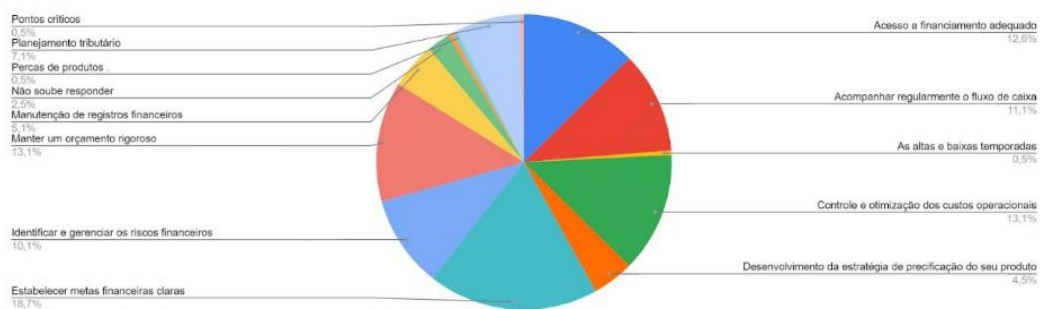


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Comparable to this data, approximately 68.1% of the Black entrepreneurs surveyed operate in the formal market, which stands out in terms of participation in the sector. This scenario highlights the resilience and ability of these entrepreneurs to overcome challenges and seek opportunities in the formal sector, despite the aforementioned obstacles.

Figure 5: When planning your business finances, what do you consider most critical?



Source: Authors

In the second phase of the research, we asked participants which aspect they considered to be the most critical when planning their business finances (Figure 5). The analysis of the results highlights some important aspects of business financial management, combined with the respondents' concerns. Among these, we emphasize those directly related to the entrepreneurs' financial education. Thus, 25.7% pointed to financial planning as an area that requires attention, showing a need for effective strategies to be applied. For 34.3% of respondents, the establishment of financial methods was identified as a critical issue, indicating a demand for more solid approaches regarding the structuring and organization of business finances.

Additionally, 34.3% also mentioned the importance of regularly monitoring cash flow, emphasizing the need for active management of revenues and expenses. It is also noteworthy that 37.1% of participants stressed the importance of maintaining a rigorous relationship with their finances. This points to the need for disciplined practices in financial administration, suggesting stricter controls and more informed decision-making processes.



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Risk management was also seen as an area of concern, with 17.1% of respondents highlighting the importance of proactively dealing with uncertainties. This indicates the need for solid strategies to identify, assess, and mitigate operational and financial risks. Furthermore, 31.4% of participants considered the development of strategies important, while 20% emphasized the relevance of tax planning. Based on this data, we can see the need for a holistic approach that integrates strategic vision with tax considerations in order to optimize financial performance. The maintenance of financial records (2.9%) and the management of product losses, unexpected returns, and seasonal fluctuations (also 2.9%) were mentioned as well. From this perspective, the survey results outline several areas for improvement in business financial management, offering opportunities to develop more robust strategies and more effective approaches to address the specific challenges identified by respondents.

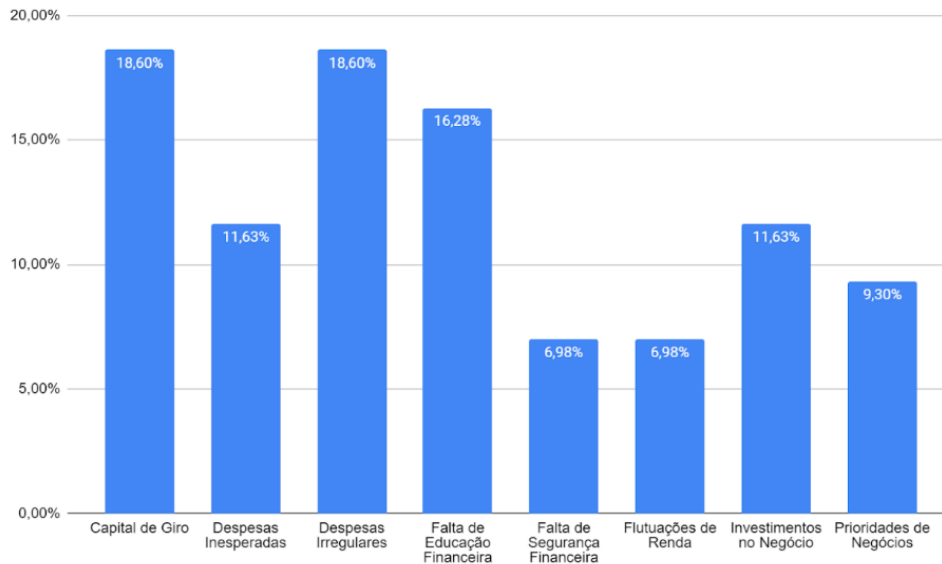
Still considering the financial sustainability of businesses, we asked participants to rate (on a scale of 1 to 5, ranging from very easy to very difficult) the difficulties related to saving money in a financially responsible way. The difficulties listed were: income fluctuation; irregular expenses; working capital; business investment; business priorities; lack of financial security; unexpected expenses; and lack of financial education. In this classification, respondents highlighted working capital and irregular expenses as the main difficulties, followed by financial education (Figure 6).



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Figure 6: What are the difficulties in saving money in a disciplined way?



Source: Authors

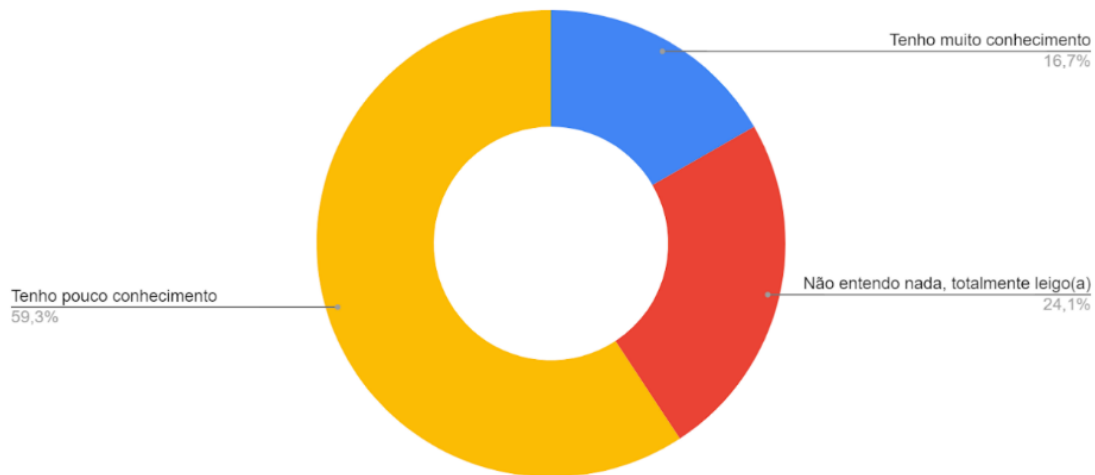
To understand how these entrepreneurs identify with themselves, we asked about their understanding of the term Afro-entrepreneurship (Figure 7). 59.3% and 24.1%, respectively, reported having little or no knowledge of the concept. Only 16.7% stated that they had a lot of knowledge. Of these, 85.7% believe that Afro-entrepreneurship primarily aims to promote the social and economic inclusion of Black individuals. 68.6% indicated that Afro-entrepreneurship is an effective means of strengthening the Black community, and 5.7% emphasized that this entrepreneurial approach can be applied to any industry.



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Figure 7: What is your understanding of Afro-entrepreneurship?



Source: Authors

The entrepreneurs were then asked about their level of experience in financial education. The data collected revealed limited knowledge on this topic, with 66.67% considering their level to be beginner, 31.48% intermediate, and only 1.85% advanced. This result can be explained by the fact that 75.9% of participants reported never having taken a financial education course. Of those who reported having taken one, 5.7% reported having completed three courses, while 11.4% reported having attended five courses in this area.

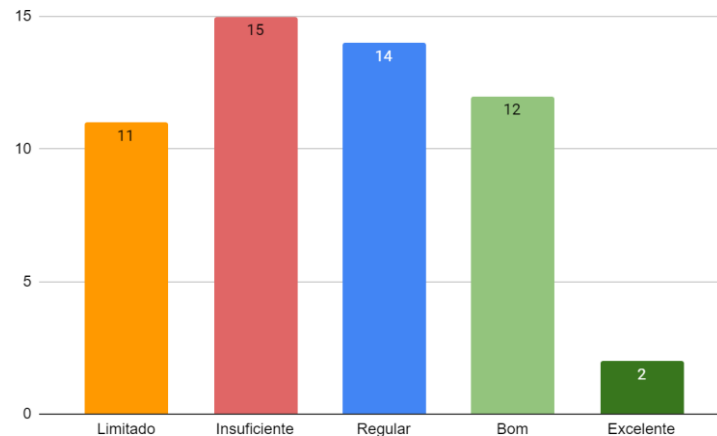
The low number of participants who had already completed financial education training explains why only 18 participants reported being confident with their business's financial planning; only 14 of those interviewed in the first phase reported already having a business plan; and only 2 participants (Figure 8) considered themselves to have excellent knowledge of financial indicators, such as Return on Investment (ROI) and profit margin. Despite this scenario, 70.37% of respondents reported not having an accountant or financial advisor to assist them with financial matters.



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Figure 8: How do you rate your understanding of financial indicators, such as ROI (Return on Investment) and profit margin?



Source: Authors

Despite their limited knowledge, 83.3% of the surveyed owners of small offices fully agree that financial education is fundamental to the success of an entrepreneur, 9.3% partially agree, and 7.4% did not state their position on this issue.

When asked how financial institutions could encourage/facilitate saving money in their businesses, other important data for the research were revealed. Since this was an open-ended question, several suggestions were given, but here we are particularly interested in those related to financial education. Among the proposals, 18 directly mentioned financial education, through the provision of courses, events, and training programs; financial incentives for those who participate in training initiatives; access to educational resources such as games or financial guidance tools; and the promotion of financial education in basic schools, including the development of specific public policies for this purpose.

Based on these suggestions, it is possible to observe the entrepreneurs' lack of awareness regarding existing government actions, as well as the limited dissemination - by both the government and private companies - of the courses and materials already available online, and the probable non-implementation of



financial education in basic education schools, as previously recommended by the Ministry of Education (MEC).

Propositions after data analysis

Based on the data collected, we observe that the state of Bahia, in addition to needing to invest more in free financial education initiatives, requires the development of a specialized set of actions to address the needs of Afro-entrepreneurs, in order to ensure equitable training for these individuals and contribute to the sustainability of their businesses. To achieve this, it is important to maintain a dialogue with communities, considering the knowledge that people in peripheral areas already possess, often acquired in contexts of resistance, as argued by Purificação (2022).

Another relevant issue is recognizing that, to expand the reach of financial education initiatives in the state, the government needs to establish partnerships with private entities, as is already done in other countries. In this regard, as Fogós (2023) argues, fintechs can be valuable allies, given that they are organizations with more dynamic and collaborative structures. It is also important to note that financial education requires interdisciplinary knowledge, as it involves the study of economic and financial concepts as well as reflections on cultural, social, political, and psychological dimensions related to consumption, work, and money (BRASIL, 2007).

Furthermore, after the field research and literature review, we can affirm that, given that a significant number of these entrepreneurs have low levels of education, it is important that educational initiatives reach both children and adults across different educational levels. Therefore, we believe that financial education initiatives should at a minimum ensure comprehensive and multidimensional human development (Ramos, 2008), with the expectation of outcomes that primarily promote equity in social and labor relations, as well as



the promotion of businesses that ensure the continued and qualified development of these entrepreneurs, enabling them to enjoy inclusive and supportive living conditions, grounded in human dignity, while addressing the production and reproduction of inequalities.

In this sense, we propose the following actions:

Distribution of educational content using diverse languages and presentation formats suitable for both children and adults, such as printed and digital booklets, podcasts, video lessons, manuals, e-books, and others;

Creation of a federal government financial education portal, following the example of the Financial Education in Schools program mentioned earlier, to gather content, educational technologies, and initiatives developed by partners;

Maintenance of a virtual forum to promote listening and dialogue with peripheral communities, in order to update the actions offered to this audience in a participatory manner;

Provision of incentives to public schools that implement financial education in their curricula, alongside monitoring and oversight by the Ministry of Education (MEC);

Expansion of training courses for basic education teachers;

Publication of calls for proposals by research and technological innovation agencies to encourage the development of educational technologies (such as financial guidance games and apps) by educational institutions and startups;

Incentive programs for fintechs to develop free financial education initiatives;

Development and promotion of actions based on anti-racist and emancipatory entrepreneurship, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through training, qualifications, and institutional and personnel



investments, addressing not only the consequences of racism but also its structural origins, various forms of manifestation, and daily challenges. This approach to racial literacy - which consists of understanding the origins and causes of racism, its intersections with other social markers, and mobilizing actions to confront these and other forms of discrimination and violence - aims at inclusion and diversity in the business environment. The focus extends beyond simply opening a business, emphasizing commitment to social transformation and justice, with opportunities for Black entrepreneurs to achieve social and environmental sustainability, generate positive impacts, and build ecosystems that enhance the effectiveness of innovative and anti-racist enterprises. These goals align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs, 2015), particularly Goals 8, 10, and 16.

CONCLUSIONS

Upon concluding this study, which had as its main objective the understanding of access to financial education among Black entrepreneurs in Bahia and aimed to identify the relationship between financial education and the sustainability of small businesses, we can infer, based on the data collected and analyses performed, that the diversity of business sectors in which the participating entrepreneurs operate aligns with what was observed in our theoretical review on the topic of financial education. We found that entrepreneurs are in constant pursuit of professional growth, often following career paths without supervisors, having to manage their own businesses, frequently as solo entrepreneurs. Moreover, they face numerous barriers and difficulties to achieve development, among which racial prejudice and discrimination are prominent obstacles.

On the other hand, this diversity of successful business models highlights the complexity of the Black entrepreneurial landscape and underscores the



importance of conducting a comprehensive analysis to understand the breadth and intricacies of business success within this population, despite the barriers and adversities it encounters. In this context, the study conducted with a focus on small businesses - such as small offices and micro-entrepreneurs (MEI) - in the state of Bahia, with a racial perspective regarding the Black population, provides a significant sample to understand the impacts of inequalities. While these structural inequalities historically compel this population to enter entrepreneurship out of necessity, particularly in small businesses, the research also allows us to understand the potential and reality of the entrepreneurial activity and business production of this group.

Regarding financial education and these small businesses, participants' perceptions reveal a small portion of the population that recognizes the importance of financial education for entrepreneurial success and actively seeks training and information. Conversely, a larger portion is still in the process of understanding or does not explicitly indicate their position or comprehension. In this context, the hypothesis defended throughout this research - that financial education can impact the sustainability of Black entrepreneurs' businesses, considering the necessity-driven nature of their entrepreneurship and the gaps, barriers, and challenges they face in maintaining their ventures - was confirmed by the data and theoretical contributions, highlighting the importance of financial education for the sustainability of these businesses.

Furthermore, based on the data and the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological framework, it was possible to propose a set of recommendations aimed at expanding and promoting access to financial education for Black entrepreneurs. In addition, this study presents a synthesis of the financial education strategies developed by the federal government, along with a critical reflection on the reality of Black entrepreneurs in general, and specifically in the state of Bahia.



This study also constitutes a relevant social contribution, given the discussion regarding the sustainability of Black entrepreneurs' businesses and the challenges and opportunities related to financial education for the population investigated. It seeks to advocate for the expansion and strengthening of affirmative public policies, as sustainable entrepreneurship with social and economic justice remains an issue that must be addressed comprehensively, in an integrated, transdisciplinary, and interdisciplinary manner. Even under more favorable class conditions, Black individuals - here, specifically entrepreneurs - face racist barriers, as in Brazil, Black identity is marked both by positive racial affirmation and racial belonging, as well as by manifestations of racism, which function as social markers (Nogueira, 2026) rather than indicators of racial, ethnic, or class origin.

Therefore, we recognize possibilities for further research that could encompass the entire national territory. In such studies, it is important to consider intersectional issues involving race/color, ethnicity, class, gender, and other social markers in the business context, particularly in relation to financial education, investments, social profiles, and the sectors and forms of entrepreneurial engagement.



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