



# Tax Literacy Among Non-Accounting TVET Students in Klang Valley: A Survey Based Study

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**Abstract.** This study explores a significant yet under researched issue: the low level of tax literacy among non-accounting Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) students in Malaysia. These students often graduate directly into self-employment or the gig economy but receive little to no formal tax education, leaving them unprepared to meet tax obligations. To address this gap, our research goes beyond measuring knowledge alone; it applies the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to understand how tax literacy shapes the intention to comply with tax regulations. By examining the psychological pathways of attitudes, perceived control, and social norms, the study offers a deeper theoretical contribution, extending our understanding of tax compliance from a purely cognitive domain to include motivational and behavioural dimensions. The study employs a quantitative survey design, with data collected from 200 non-accounting TVET students across various institutions in Klang Valley. It has three main aims: first, to assess students' current tax knowledge; second, to understand their views on the importance of tax education; and third, to investigate how their knowledge influences their intention to comply, guided by the TPB framework. Findings are anticipated to show that students have only moderate to low tax literacy, especially in practical areas like filing and deductions, while also expressing strong support for including tax topics in their curriculum. Ultimately, this research offers practical insights for educators and policymakers, advocating for the integration of targeted tax education into TVET programs to empower future entrepreneurs with the confidence and competence to participate fully in a compliant and financially literate economy.

**Keywords:** Tax literacy, TVET, TVET non-accounting students, entrepreneurship, financial literacy.

## 1 Introduction

In today's interconnected and rapidly evolving global economy, taxation has grown beyond its traditional function of revenue generation. It now serves as a critical instrument for sustainable development and nation-building. Governments worldwide rely on well-structured tax systems to finance essential public services such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and transportation (Yusof, Safeei, & Lee, 2022; Herawati,

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Wijayanti, & Puspita, 2022). This dual fiscal and developmental role underscores the centrality of taxation in promoting inclusive economic growth and societal well-being. Despite this importance, tax education remains largely concentrated in specialized academic fields such as accounting, law, and finance. Moučková and Vitek (2018) noted that tax-related content is typically offered through vocational or professional training, with limited inclusion in general or interdisciplinary curricula. De Clercq (2021) emphasized the need for broader and earlier integration of tax education, starting from school levels—to encourage voluntary compliance and financial accountability. In some countries, such as Greece, legislation has made tax literacy a mandatory part of public education (Law 4172/2013).

Tax literacy, defined as an individual's understanding of tax systems, responsibilities, and rights, is a critical aspect of financial decision-making. It enables individuals to plan effectively, understand entitlements, and meet legal obligations. A lack of tax knowledge may lead to unintentional non-compliance, lost benefits, or suboptimal financial choices. Nevertheless, tax literacy is often treated as a subset of general financial literacy and is rarely prioritized as a standalone competency. Moreover, there is no widely accepted standard for measuring tax literacy, particularly among non-financial or vocational learners.

This issue is particularly salient in Malaysia's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector, which aims to equip students with practical skills for direct entry into the workforce. Institutions such as Politeknik, Kolej Komuniti, Institut Kemahiran Belia Negara (IKBN), and GiatMARA play a key role in preparing graduates for employment and entrepreneurship. The Ministry of Higher Education reported a 94.5% employability rate among TVET graduates in 2023/2024 (MoHE & National TVET Council), reflecting the sector's strong workforce contribution. However, most non-accounting TVET students receive minimal exposure to taxation or financial compliance topics, despite many entering freelance, gig, or self-employed roles immediately after graduation (Aziz, Fahim, & Joney, 2023).

The lack of structured tax education becomes even more critical with the Malaysian government's upcoming implementation of a formal tax framework for gig workers by 2025. While self-employment and digital entrepreneurship are actively promoted, awareness of tax obligations within these segments remains low. Wassermann and Bornman (2020) reported that up to 80% of Malaysian gig workers express little concern about tax compliance, often due to the absence of third-party income reporting and misconceptions that informal income is non-taxable. These gaps in knowledge and enforcement hinder the development of a tax-compliant and financially literate workforce. Empirical evidence confirms this educational shortfall. Studies by Yusof et al. (2022) and Abu Bakar et al. (2023) found that only 10% of non-accounting students in technical programs demonstrated strong tax literacy, despite broad support for integrating tax education into vocational curricula. Renganathan and Jaidi (2023) further showed that tax knowledge, trust in tax institutions, and perceptions of fairness are significant predictors of tax compliance behaviour.

These findings highlight a pressing problem: non-accounting students in TVET programs are insufficiently prepared to navigate tax responsibilities, especially as they move into informal or entrepreneurial economic sectors. Without structured education

in this area, these students face risks of non-compliance, misinformation, and financial mismanagement.

While prior research has established the general absence of tax education in non-accounting streams, little attention has been given to how tax literacy specifically influences compliance intention among TVET students in Malaysia. Existing studies have predominantly focused on university-level business students or working adults, leaving vocational learners, particularly those entering the gig economy or self-employment, largely overlooked. Furthermore, the psychological and behavioural pathways linking tax knowledge to compliance intention remain underexplored in this context, with limited application of behavioural theories such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB).

To address this gap, the present study explores the level of tax literacy among non-accounting TVET students in Klang Valley and investigates their perceptions of tax education and compliance. Guided by the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), the research examines how tax literacy, attitudes, and perceived behavioural control shape students' intention to comply with tax obligations.

Accordingly, the objectives of this study are:

- i. To assess the current level of tax literacy among non-accounting TVET students;
- ii. To examine students' perceptions and attitudes toward the importance of tax education;
- iii. To investigate how tax education influences students' perceived behavioural control and their intention toward tax compliance; and
- iv. To recommend evidence-based strategies for integrating tax education into TVET curricula.

By addressing these objectives, the study aims to provide timely insights for policymakers, educators, and curriculum developers seeking to strengthen tax education within vocational pathways. Given the increasing prominence of TVET graduates in Malaysia's gig and entrepreneurial economy, understanding the link between tax education and compliance behaviour is essential. The following section reviews the literature on how tax education shapes tax literacy, compliance attitudes, and behavioural outcomes across non-accounting and vocational learner populations.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Tax Education in Non-Accounting Curriculum**

The importance of tax education extending beyond traditional accounting and business disciplines has been recognized for nearly two decades. Bahari and Ling (2007) reported that 64% of non-business students expressed interest in learning various tax topics, including fundamental principles, personal taxation, tax planning, and small busi-

ness taxation. They advocated for integrating tax education into non-accounting programs to enhance financial literacy and improve decision-making across diverse academic backgrounds.

Building on this, Lai et al. (2013) highlighted a significant disparity in tax knowledge between accounting and non-accounting students, underscoring the risk of excluding the latter from essential financial competencies. Their study urged the cross-disciplinary inclusion of tax education to cultivate civic awareness and financial readiness. More recently, Yusof, Safeei, and Lee (2022) examined Malaysian academicians' perspectives on integrating tax education into non-accounting university curricula. While over half supported this integration, structural limitations, such as curriculum constraints, a shortage of qualified instructors, and institutional inertia, were identified as key barriers.

This demand for tax education among non-accounting students is also reflected in the findings of Barieyah, Abdul Rahman, and Mohd Noor (2021), who conducted a study on non-accounting undergraduates at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). Their research revealed that approximately 41% of the respondents demonstrated low levels of tax knowledge, yet the majority perceived taxation as an important subject and expressed a strong interest in learning about it. This suggests that despite limited exposure, there is a clear willingness among students outside the accounting discipline to engage with tax-related content, highlighting a gap in curriculum design and the potential benefits of expanding tax education across academic programs.

International studies corroborate these concerns. Moučková and Vitek (2018) observed that tax education remains largely confined to business or economics fields, and a standardized approach to measuring tax literacy is still lacking. Similarly, Borrego et al. (2015) found that Portuguese students from non-economics backgrounds exhibited lower tax knowledge, which negatively impacted their compliance intent. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2021) proposed a global framework for inclusive tax education built on three pillars: teaching tax in schools and institutions, communicating tax through public engagement, and supporting compliance via practical resources and tools. OECD (2019) earlier emphasized embedding tax education into national financial literacy strategies, particularly for youth and vocational learners involved in informal and gig economies.

The integration of innovative pedagogical tools is increasingly recognized as essential in enhancing tax literacy among non-accounting populations. In a recent study, Sapari and Abu Bakar (2025) examined the role of emerging technologies in improving tax knowledge among small and medium enterprise (SME) owners in Malaysia, many of whom lack formal tax education. Their findings demonstrated that digital tools such as interactive e-learning platforms, mobile applications, and gamified tax modules significantly improved participants' understanding of taxation and encouraged greater compliance behaviour. Although the study focused on SME owners, the implications are equally relevant for non-accounting students in vocational and higher education settings. The accessibility and user-friendly nature of technology-based tax education make it especially suitable for learners without an accounting background, including those in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs. These

findings underscore the potential of technology-enhanced learning to bridge tax literacy gaps and support the integration of tax education into non-traditional academic streams. Cross-national research reinforces this approach. Martínez-Vázquez and Torgler (2009) linked improved tax morale to education on the public functions of taxation. Braithwaite (2005) similarly argued that early engagement with tax systems fosters trust and voluntary compliance. Regionally, Hastuti (2014) and Hanapi (2022) found that structured tax instruction improved understanding and compliance among business students and educators in Southeast Asia. A comparative study by Mohd Yusof, Safeei, Lee, and Novita (2022) examined the perspectives of academicians from Malaysia and Indonesia on incorporating tax education into non-accounting curricula. The findings revealed a strong consensus among respondents from both countries, who emphasized the importance of offering tax-related subjects as elective courses beyond traditional accounting programs. Despite having similar baseline levels of tax knowledge, the majority of academicians advocated for curriculum reform to include basic taxation principles for students in other fields. This study underscores the growing recognition, both regionally and internationally, of the need to broaden tax education to promote fiscal responsibility among future graduates from non-financial backgrounds.

Despite these developments, students in Malaysia's TVET institutions continue to lack structured exposure to tax education. Given their direct transition into the workforce, often in self-employment or informal roles, this omission presents a critical knowledge gap. Addressing this gap is central to this study, which aims to assess tax literacy among non-accounting TVET students and recommend appropriate curriculum enhancements.

The existing body of research clearly points to a significant need and a genuine desire for tax education to be included in programs outside of accounting, both in Malaysia and around the world. While students and teachers alike show strong interest, real-world obstacles such as rigid curriculum structures and teaching challenges continue to stand in the way. This context provides a compelling reason for our study to concentrate on evaluating the current level of tax understanding among a specific group of non-accounting learners, namely TVET students. These students are especially at risk due to this educational gap, as they often move directly into starting their own businesses or working for themselves after graduation.

## **2.2 Tax Literacy and Tax Compliance**

Tax literacy plays a well-established role in fostering voluntary compliance. Individuals with higher tax knowledge are more likely to understand their legal and procedural obligations, leading to improved compliance behaviour (Mohani, 2001; Saad, 2014). Conversely, low tax knowledge may result in either deliberate evasion or unintentional non-compliance, thereby undermining public revenue systems.

Kasipillai, Aripin, and Amran (2003) were among the first in Malaysia to confirm a positive relationship between tax education and compliance, particularly among non-accounting students. Fatt and Ling (2011) reinforced this, finding that tax instruction improved understanding of income reporting and deductions, with female students showing substantial gains in compliance behaviour. Damajanti and Karim (2017), and

Loo et al. (2009), identified tax knowledge as the most influential factor affecting compliance attitudes in Malaysia, suggesting that well-informed taxpayers are more likely to fulfil their obligations voluntarily. Aondo (2020) added that emphasizing the social responsibility of taxation through education enhances public willingness to comply. Nor Azlina and Abdul Latif (2021) demonstrated that young working adults in Selangor who had received tax education, through formal or workplace channels, exhibited greater compliance. Hanapi (2022) similarly noted that practical education, especially regarding e-filing tools, increased both compliance intention and actual behaviour among Malaysian teachers.

Mat Jusoh, Mansor, Abd Razak, and Wan Mohamad Noor (2021) conducted a comprehensive study investigating tax compliance behavior among salaried workers in Malaysia. They found that higher levels of tax knowledge and stronger tax morale significantly increase compliance behavior, suggesting that both understanding tax regulations and a positive moral stance toward taxation are critical for voluntary compliance. However, the study also revealed that tax complexity acts as a substantial barrier, discouraging even knowledgeable taxpayers from fulfilling their obligations due to confusion and perceived difficulty in understanding tax laws. This highlights the necessity for tax authorities and educators to simplify tax information and enhance taxpayer support mechanisms.

Ishak, Azemi, Mohd Yunus, and Abdul Talib (2024) demonstrated that among tertiary students, spanning various academic disciplines, greater tax awareness and knowledge correlated with lower intentions to engage in non-compliance, emphasizing the value of formal tax education across all fields. Conversely, Salawati, Sritharan, Sheung, and Mohamed (2023) observed that tax knowledge alone did not significantly motivate compliance, suggesting that other factors such as perceived fairness of the tax system and enforcement intensity may moderate the knowledge-compliance relationship. Supporting the role of socio-cultural factors, Rosa Intansari and Supramono (2022) found that in Central Java, the positive impact of tax literacy on compliance intentions was strengthened by patriotic feelings, while Zuhairatun, Radzi, and Zaimah (2025) reported a similar moderating effect of religiosity among Malaysian SME owners. Collectively, these studies suggest that effective tax compliance interventions require not only educational efforts to boost literacy but also strategies that address psychological, cultural, and systemic influences to maximize taxpayer adherence.

Perceptions of fairness and trust also significantly shape taxpayer behaviour. Saad (2011) highlighted that perceived equity and transparency within the tax system influence compliance decisions. Thus, tax education serves as more than a technical tool; it is also a platform for building tax morale and institutional trust (OECD, 2021).

Tax education has been widely recognized as a key determinant of tax compliance behaviour. In a study involving Malaysian taxpayers, Abu Hassan et al. (2022) found that enhanced tax knowledge significantly improves individuals' intentions to comply with tax regulations. The study also highlighted the effectiveness of digital media and interactive content in delivering tax education, particularly in reaching wider audiences and increasing engagement among non-specialist learners. These findings reinforce the notion that accessible and well-designed tax education initiatives can promote voluntary compliance and reduce unintentional non-compliance due to lack of awareness.

Internationally, Holmes, Marriott, and Randal (2012) found that structured tax instruction at the tertiary level in New Zealand significantly increased compliance awareness and intent. Their study also noted that deeper educational engagement led to stronger compliance outcomes, underscoring the value of sustained exposure. In the context of TVET, this urgency is heightened, as many students enter the labour market or entrepreneurial ventures soon after graduation. Without adequate tax knowledge, they are vulnerable to non-compliance. Improving tax literacy at this stage is not only educationally prudent but also vital for expanding Malaysia's tax base and lowering enforcement costs.

In sum, tax literacy has a direct and measurable impact on compliance intentions and behaviour, highlighting the need for early and accessible tax education across all academic streams. Empirical evidence strongly supports a positive relationship between tax literacy and compliance intention, though this relationship can be moderated by factors like system fairness and complexity. The literature confirms that tax education is a crucial driver of compliant behaviour. This directly informs the core hypothesis of the current study: that enhancing tax literacy among non-accounting TVET students will positively influence their intention to comply with tax obligations upon entering the workforce.

### **2.3 Tax Literacy among Technical and Vocational (TVET) Students**

Tax literacy among Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) students remains significantly low, despite their early involvement in economic activities that require a sound understanding of tax obligations. This concern is heightened as many TVET graduates transition directly into self-employment, gig work, or informal sectors where taxation responsibilities are often self-managed. Without structured tax education, these graduates are at risk of non-compliance, whether intentional or accidental. Mohd Faizal et al. (2021) assessed tax literacy among Malaysian secondary school students and found that while general awareness of taxation existed, procedural knowledge, such as how to calculate tax or file returns, was largely inadequate. They advocated for earlier tax education to build foundational understanding before students enter higher education or the workforce. Their findings are particularly relevant to TVET students, many of whom may not continue to university-level studies where tax topics are more commonly introduced.

Othman et al. (2020) conducted a nationwide survey in Malaysia that revealed strong public support, over 90% of respondents, for introducing tax education at the secondary level. The study suggested that early tax exposure could foster more responsible financial behaviour and stronger civic values. These findings are directly applicable to TVET institutions, where students may benefit from early practical education aligned with their career pathways.

Internationally, Akkurt and Sönmez (2024) found that Turkish middle school students demonstrated low levels of tax understanding, with only marginal improvement across grade levels. They recommended integrating age-appropriate tax modules to pre-

pare students for real-world fiscal responsibilities. Similarly, Geyik et al. (2024) observed that targeted tax education interventions significantly improved awareness among Turkish students aged 11 to 14, particularly among female participants.

In Malaysia, Jaaffar and Adnan (2024) highlighted key pedagogical challenges in tax education delivery, particularly within vocational contexts. They found that abstract or overly technical teaching styles limited student engagement, and called for more interactive, relatable instruction such as real life simulations or gamified modules to meet the learning needs of TVET students.

Beyond formal classroom education, informal exposure and socialisation can also enhance tax literacy. Oktaviani et al. (2020) found that both knowledge and socialisation initiatives improved tax compliance among informal workers in Indonesia. This underscores the importance of both institutional and community-level efforts in shaping tax understanding, especially among individuals who may not receive formal instruction.

The Australian Taxation Office (2024) reviewed over 50 global studies and concluded that integrating tax education into broader financial literacy programs received strong support from educators, parents, and policymakers alike. The review particularly stressed the need for compulsory tax modules during upper primary and lower secondary schooling, especially for students likely to engage in non-salaried, informal, or gig economy roles, paralleling the employment patterns of many Malaysian TVET graduates.

Despite the growing body of empirical support, tax education remains largely absent from Malaysia's TVET curriculum. This omission is concerning, as TVET graduates often begin earning income at an earlier stage than their university-educated counterparts. Without adequate tax knowledge, these individuals may fail to register as taxpayers, misreport earnings, or overlook allowable deductions, thereby increasing their risk of non-compliance under Malaysia's upcoming gig-worker tax framework.

In response, this study focuses on assessing tax literacy among non-accounting TVET students in Klang Valley, with the aim of informing targeted curriculum reform. By addressing the knowledge gaps and exploring students' perceptions of taxation, the findings will support efforts to incorporate tax education into TVET programs. This is essential not only for improving financial capability and compliance rates but also for strengthening Malaysia's tax system and preparing a more responsible, economically empowered workforce.

Research specific to TVET contexts, both in Malaysia and abroad, confirms that tax literacy is generally low among this group, despite their early entry into income-generating roles. Studies call for earlier, more practical, and engaging tax education tailored to vocational learners. This subsection solidifies the relevance and urgency of the present study, which directly addresses this identified gap by measuring tax literacy and related perceptions among non-accounting TVET students in Klang Valley, a key step towards designing effective, context-specific educational interventions.

## 2.4 Theoretical Framework

Understanding taxpayer behaviour is critical for designing effective educational and policy interventions that foster voluntary tax compliance. This study adopts an integrated theoretical approach to examine the relationship between tax literacy and compliance intention among non-accounting students in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions.

The primary theoretical lens for this study is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), developed by Ajzen (1991). TPB posits that individual behaviour is driven by behavioural intentions, which are themselves shaped by three key components: attitudes toward the behaviour, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norms. For the purpose of this study, emphasis is placed on two constructs, attitude and perceived behavioural control, as most relevant to non-accounting TVET students' tax compliance intentions.

Tax literacy directly contributes to these constructs. First, greater knowledge and understanding of tax laws and procedures enhance students' perceived behavioural control, making individuals feel more capable of fulfilling tax obligations. Second, increased literacy also shapes positive attitudes toward taxation by clarifying its societal role and dispelling misconceptions, which can reduce resistance and foster compliance. These cognitive and affective dimensions of tax literacy serve as key determinants of tax-related behaviours.

To contextualize this theoretical foundation, the study also draws from Loo, Evans, and McKerchar (2010), who found that tax knowledge significantly influenced compliance behaviour among Malaysian taxpayers, particularly the self-employed—a group analogous to many TVET graduates who enter the workforce early or pursue entrepreneurship. The framework thus acknowledges the specific risks faced by TVET students due to their limited exposure to tax education within their formal curriculum.

Furthermore, the model incorporates tax education exposure, defined as the extent to which students have received formal instruction on taxation—as a moderating factor. This variable is expected to strengthen the positive relationship between tax literacy and compliance intention, as structured educational experiences reinforce students' understanding and confidence in handling tax responsibilities.

This theoretical framework underpins the study's research design by guiding the development of hypotheses, variable measurement, and data interpretation. Ultimately, it supports the investigation of how tax knowledge, shaped by educational experiences, influences TVET students' readiness and intention to comply with tax obligations, and provides a basis for recommending curriculum improvements that promote lifelong financial and civic responsibility.

This study is constructed based on the integration of empirical findings on tax literacy and behavioural theories of tax compliance, particularly the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) proposed by Ajzen (1991). This framework reflects how tax literacy—comprising both cognitive elements (knowledge of tax laws, reporting procedures, and obligations) and affective elements (attitudes toward taxation, trust in tax authorities, and perceptions of fairness)—influences voluntary tax compliance intentions among non-accounting students in TVET institutions.

IDV

DV

Tax Literacy

Tax Compliance

This framework positions tax literacy as the central independent variable (IDV) that exerts a direct and positive influence on tax compliance intention, the dependent variable (DV) of the study. Tax literacy embodies both the knowledge and understanding of taxation principles, procedures, and obligations that empower individuals to make informed fiscal decisions. When individuals possess comprehensive tax knowledge, they are more aware of their rights and responsibilities as taxpayers, understand the consequences of non-compliance, and recognize the broader societal role of taxation in national development. Such understanding fosters a sense of accountability, trust, and voluntary cooperation with tax authorities.

Empirical studies have consistently shown that tax literacy functions as a cognitive and motivational driver of compliance. Kasipillai, Aripin, and Amran (2003) found that individuals with higher levels of tax knowledge are less likely to evade taxes because they comprehend the processes and benefits associated with compliance. Similarly, Fatt and Ling (2011) observed that students who received structured tax instruction demonstrated improved compliance attitudes, while Damajanti and Karim (2017) revealed that increased understanding of tax procedures enhanced both compliance intention and accuracy in reporting. These findings suggest that literacy does not merely improve knowledge—it cultivates confidence, shapes moral values, and reinforces the belief that tax compliance is both manageable and socially responsible.

In the context of this study, tax literacy is theorized to influence compliance intention through two key mechanisms. First, cognitively, it enhances individuals' capability to understand tax rules, calculate liabilities, and interpret legal requirements correctly. This competence reduces uncertainty and perceived complexity, which are often cited as major barriers to compliance (Saad, 2014). Second, affectively, literacy shapes positive attitudes toward taxation by increasing awareness of its importance for economic development and public welfare (OECD, 2021). Informed individuals are more likely to internalize the value of paying taxes, perceive it as a civic duty, and feel a moral obligation to comply voluntarily.

Within the Malaysian TVET context, this relationship holds particular significance. Many non-accounting TVET students transition directly into self-employment or informal income-generating activities after graduation, where institutional tax guidance is limited. Abu Bakar, Abdul Rahman, and Hussin (2023) highlighted that technical students often lack awareness of registration and filing requirements, resulting in unintentional non-compliance. Thus, strengthening tax literacy among this group can directly enhance compliance intention by equipping them with the necessary knowledge and confidence to engage with the tax system effectively. This is consistent with findings by Ishak et al. (2024), who demonstrated that increased tax awareness among tertiary students significantly improved their readiness to fulfil tax obligations.

Furthermore, the relationship between tax literacy and compliance intention extends beyond technical knowledge to include psychological readiness and perceived behavioural control. When students understand how taxation operates and believe they are capable of complying, they are more inclined to take action. This mirrors the essence of Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which posits that behavioural intention is influenced by one's confidence and perceived ability to perform the behaviour. In this sense, tax literacy acts as a fundamental enabler of perceived behavioural control—by reducing fear, confusion, and uncertainty associated with tax processes. In essence, this framework conceptualizes that as tax literacy increases, compliance intention strengthens proportionally. Knowledgeable individuals are not only better equipped to handle procedural tasks but also more motivated to comply due to a stronger sense of civic responsibility and trust in the fairness of the tax system (Saad, 2011; Renganathan & Jaidi, 2023). Enhanced literacy promotes both cognitive understanding and affective engagement, bridging the gap between awareness and action. Therefore, the relationship between the two variables is both causal and reinforcing: improved tax literacy cultivates a deeper understanding of obligations, nurtures positive attitudes toward taxation, and builds confidence in one's ability to comply—all of which collectively increase the likelihood of voluntary compliance. By establishing this linkage, the framework provides a theoretical foundation for the study's hypotheses and underscores the vital role of tax education in fostering a generation of knowledgeable, responsible, and tax-compliant TVET graduates in Malaysia.

In sum, this framework captures the relationships between key constructs drawn from the literature and theoretical grounding, forming the basis for hypothesis development and empirical testing. It also provides a structured pathway for identifying actionable interventions aimed at strengthening tax literacy and promoting early-stage tax compliance behaviour among the target population.

### **3 Methodology**

This section outlines the systematic approach taken to investigate the research problem. The methodology is structured to provide a clear, step-by-step explanation of the research design, the selection of participants, the development and validation of the measurement instrument, and the planned techniques for data analysis.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study employs a quantitative survey-based design to investigate the level of tax literacy and its relationship with compliance intention among non-accounting TVET students. Grounded in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), this approach is well-suited for collecting measurable data from a large sample and statistically examining the relationships between key variables such as knowledge, attitudes, perceived control, and behavioural intention.

### 3.2 Population and Sampling

The target population for this study comprises non-accounting students enrolled in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions across the Klang Valley in Malaysia. This includes students from institutions such as Politeknik, Kolej Komuniti, Institut Kemahiran Belia Negara (IKBN), and GiatMARA centres.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who fit the specific criteria of being in non-accounting, skills-based programs. The aim was to gather responses from approximately 300 students to ensure the data is robust enough for meaningful statistical analysis. This sample size is considered adequate for the planned correlation and regression analyses, providing a representative snapshot of the target group's knowledge and perceptions.

### 3.3 Instrument and Validation

The primary tool for data collection was a structured, self-administered questionnaire. To ensure accessibility and comfort for all participants, the questionnaire was prepared in a bilingual format, using both English and Bahasa Malaysia.

The questionnaire was carefully developed with four main sections:

- Section A: Demographic Profile. This part collects basic background information from respondents, such as their age, gender, field of study, family business background, and any prior exposure to tax-related topics.
- Section B: Tax Literacy Measurement. This section assesses the dependent variable using a 15-item multiple-choice quiz. The questions cover fundamental tax concepts relevant to future entrepreneurs and gig workers, including the definition of taxable income, basic personal tax rates, filing deadlines and procedures (like e-Filing), awareness of deductible expenses, and the consequences of non-compliance. A total tax literacy score is calculated based on the number of correct answers.
- Section C: Perceptions and Attitudes. This section measures key constructs from the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and gauges perceptions of tax education. Respondents indicate their level of agreement with various statements using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The constructs measured include:
  - i. *Attitude towards Tax Education* (e.g., "Learning about taxes is important for my future career.")
  - ii. *Perceived Behavioural Control* (e.g., "I feel confident that I can file a tax return correctly.")
  - iii. *Subjective Norms* (e.g., "People who are important to me believe I should pay taxes.")

iv. *Intention to Comply* (e.g., "When I start earning an income, I intend to declare it to the tax authorities.")

- Section D: Curriculum Integration. This final section uses a combination of multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions to understand students' interest in specific tax topics and their preferred methods for learning about them, such as through workshops, online modules, or integration into existing subjects.

### 3.4 Instrument Validation

To ensure the quality and accuracy of the measurements, the questionnaire items were primarily adapted from established and previously validated scales used in similar studies on tax literacy and compliance behaviour. Specifically, several items measuring core tax knowledge and awareness were adapted from the instrument developed by Lai, Zalilawati, Mahat, and Choong (2013) in their comparative study of tax literacy among accounting and non-accounting university students. This provided a validated foundation for assessing fundamental tax concepts relevant to a student population. Additional items related to behavioural intention and perceptions were drawn from other validated studies within the Malaysian and Southeast Asian context (e.g., Kasipillai et al., 2003; Loo et al., 2010). The tax knowledge questions were further reviewed in consultation with tax education experts to ensure content validity and relevance for the TVET context. Prior to full distribution, a pilot test was conducted with a small group of 30 TVET students to check for clarity, comprehension, and reliability. Feedback from this pilot was used to refine the wording and structure of the questionnaire.

### 3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected from the questionnaires will be analysed using SPSS software (Version 28). The analysis will proceed in two main stages:

1. **Descriptive Statistics:** Initially, frequencies, means, and standard deviations will be calculated to summarise the demographic profile of the respondents and their overall tax literacy scores. This will provide a clear picture of the sample's characteristics and the general level of tax knowledge.
2. **Inferential Statistics:** Subsequently, more advanced techniques will be employed to test the study's hypotheses and explore relationships between variables. Pearson correlation analysis will be used to examine the initial relationships between tax literacy (the independent variable) and the TPB constructs (attitudes, perceived control) with tax compliance intention (the dependent variable). Following this, multiple regression analysis will be conducted to determine the extent to which tax literacy and the mediating TPB factors predict students' intention to comply with tax obligations. This step-by-step analytical

approach will allow for a thorough investigation of the direct and indirect pathways through which tax education might influence future compliance behaviour.

## 4 Expected Findings and Discussion

This study has not yet commenced data collection. However, based on a comprehensive review of existing literature and similar studies conducted in Malaysia and internationally (e.g., Mohd Faizal et al., 2021; Akkurt & Sönmez, 2024; Yusof et al., 2022), the following outcomes are anticipated upon completion of data collection and analysis:

1. **Level of Tax Literacy:** It is expected that non-accounting TVET students will demonstrate low to moderate levels of tax literacy, particularly in areas of procedural knowledge such as tax filing and calculating liabilities.
2. **Perceptions on Curriculum Integration:** Students are anticipated to show strong support for the inclusion of tax education within the TVET curriculum, primarily due to its perceived relevance for self-employment, financial management, and legal compliance.
3. **Theoretical Alignment:** The data is expected to confirm that tax literacy is a positive predictor of tax compliance intention. Furthermore, exposure to basic tax education is anticipated to strengthen this relationship by enhancing students' perceived behavioural control, as postulated by the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991).

These projected findings align with prior evidence indicating that tax literacy positively influences compliance behaviour, especially when supported by structured educational initiatives (Loo et al., 2010; OECD, 2021). These projections will be empirically tested and validated upon the completion of the study's data collection phase.

## 5 Key Finding

While empirical data is yet to be collected, the established theoretical framework and comprehensive literature review strongly indicate that enhancing tax literacy among non-accounting TVET students is both necessary and timely. Given Malaysia's policy emphasis on TVET and youth entrepreneurship, integrating tax education into TVET curricula could play a critical role in shaping a generation of tax-compliant, financially literate young adults.

Upon completion of the data collection and analysis phases, this study will provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, educators, and curriculum developers. Future research could further explore the long-term impact of such educational reforms on actual tax compliance behaviour post-graduation, as well as investigate other psychological and socio-economic factors influencing tax compliance among this demographic.

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