**ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** The aim of this publication is to present the importance of financial education as it relates to influencing the level of banking inclusion during the COVID-19 pandemic. The individual sections of the article will characterize financial education as a driving force for improving financial literacy and highlight the link between financial literacy and the level and extent of use of financial products. The paper will consider the current situation on the financial markets, which is characterized by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Methodology:** The first part of this paper is based on the systematic literature review, including scientific papers related to financial education, derived from the Web of Science databases, mapping analysis and bibliographic coupling using the Voswiever. The second part presents the results collected through an interview designed and disseminated to a sample of banking advisors.

**Findings:** The majority of interviewees encountered the concept of banking exclusion/inclusion, and in terms of characteristics that predispose one to remain excluded, advisors emphasized economic considerations. In various extracts from the interviews, banking advisors emphasized the importance of addressing the ability to afford banking services, their innovativeness, as well as understanding how banking products work, the benefits of entering into a relationship with a bank, and the prudent use of banking products on the basis of financial literacy.

**Value Added:** The value added is a multi-approach that combines the theoretical aspects of financial exclusion and financial literacy with the actual opinions of banking advisors.

**Recommendations:** Increased financial education is needed due to the complexity of financial products and their dynamic changes. The increased frequency and scope of use of financial products has increased the risk of cyber-attacks, against which financial literacy and risk awareness are needed. The development of modern technology in banking has increased the risk of banking exclusion for the digitally excluded. Financially well-educated consumers are more likely to be included in the banking system, as they are better able to understand and use financial information to make financial decisions, and to choose products and services that are more appropriate to their needs and risk profile.

**Key words:** financial inclusion, financial education, pandemia Covid-19

**JEL codes:** G21, G53