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ORIGINAL PAPER

Numeracy Literacy Ability of High School Students in Solving Statistics Questions

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Abstract

Numeracy literacy skills refer to an individual's ability to understand, interpret, and apply mathematical concepts, numbers, and data in everyday life to make appropriate decisions and solve practical problems. This study aims to describe the numeracy literacy abilities of Class XII students in senior high schools in Ambon City in solving statistical problems, using a qualitative descriptive research design. The data sources include the mathematics teacher and the students. The subjects, selected based on test results, consisted of 22 students. Data were collected through written tests containing three questions related to statistical material and interview results. The data were analysed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing stages. The results show that high-performing students were able to meet all numeracy and literacy skill indicators; students with moderate ability were unable to use various mathematical numbers or symbols to solve real-life problems and were unable to analyse information in various forms (graphs, tables, charts, diagrams, etc.). In contrast, low-performing students fail to meet all numeracy and literacy skill indicators. Therefore, the numeracy literacy ability of the high school students was categorised as low, at 22.58%.

Keywords:

Numeracy Literacy Skills Statistics

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INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is an era of rapidly developing digitalisation, encouraging technology to be widely used in various fields, including education. The increasing accessibility of information and communication sources makes the learning process more effective. Murnane (2012) stated that having numeracy literacy skills is one of the prerequisites for students to succeed in the 21st century. Numeracy literacy skills are potential within a person who is systematically developed to understand and apply the concepts of numbers and arithmetic operations, and make informed decisions based on mathematical data in the form of numbers, symbols, or other relevant information in everyday life (Arahmah et al., 2021). Numeracy literacy skills can also be understood as critical thinking skills in understanding, interpreting, and applying mathematical concepts or numbers to solve everyday problems using symbols, language, or mathematical models conveyed through oral or written communication (Ekowati et al., 2019). Thus, numeracy literacy skills refer to a person's capacity to understand, interpret, and apply mathematical concepts, numbers, and data in everyday life, enabling them to make informed decisions and solve practical problems. Numeracy literacy skills are crucial to develop regularly and sustainably, as this ability provides benefits in the learning process, at work, and in interactions throughout life (Silitonga et al., 2023). Thus, in the 21st century, numeracy literacy skills play an

important role. Having an understanding of numbers, symbols, and data will enable students to make informed decisions, solve everyday problems, and adapt to the challenges of the modern world.

The results of the 2022 PISA, which were announced on December 5, 2023, showed that Indonesia was ranked 68th out of 81 countries, with scores in mathematics (379), science (398), and reading (371). The PISA results indicate that the numeracy literacy skills of students in Indonesia remain low. This finding aligns with the results of research conducted by Jazilah et al. (2023), which indicate that students' numeracy literacy skills remain low. This is indicated by the percentage of numeracy literacy skills, categorized into the high group (28.1%), the medium group (34.4%), and the low group (37.5%). The low numeracy literacy skills of Indonesian students can be observed based on field facts when participating in PPL I of Teacher Professional Education. Students have mostly mastered the basic concepts of mathematical arithmetic. However, the application of these concepts in solving non-routine problems is often overlooked. Students tend to focus on getting the final result without reading and listening to the information obtained in the questions. These facts in the field are in line with the opinion (Ambarwati & Kurniasih, 2021) that in mathematics learning in Indonesia, students have not been able to connect material with real-world situations, which causes students to have difficulty in translating texts or narratives into mathematical models and in processing the information obtained into accurate mathematical representations.

Numeracy literacy skills learned through mathematics are subjects that contribute to everyday life practices (Wulandari, 2021). Statistics is a mathematical subject area. Statistics is a field that focuses on methods for collecting, processing, and analyzing data to support informed decision-making (Yuliani et al., 2017). The ability to present data, tables, and graphs is a crucial aspect of numeracy literacy, enabling individuals to communicate information clearly and effectively (OECD, 2023). Researchers chose statistical material to analyze students' numeracy literacy skills in everyday life because it facilitates data analysis and informed decision-making in various fields, such as economics, health, education, and business. Therefore, this study aims to describe the numeracy literacy skills of grade XII high school students at one of the State High Schools in Ambon City in solving statistical problems.

METHOD

The type of research carried out is descriptive qualitative research. The research was conducted at Ambon City State High School, with 22 class XII students serving as the research subjects. Research data was collected through tests and interviews, which were used to analyse students' numeracy literacy skills in solving statistics questions. The following indicators of numeracy literacy skills (Han et al., 2017) and the scoring rubric used in this research are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Numeracy Literacy Ability Indicators and Score Rubric

Code	Indicators of	Information	Score
	Numeracy Literacy Ability		
N1	The ability to use various numbers or	Unable to use numbers or basic mathematical symbols in solving problems.	0
	basic mathematical symbols to solve problems in everyday	It can use numbers or basic mathematical symbols, but there are still many errors in its application. The results do not match the context of the problem.	1
	life.	You can use numbers or basic mathematical symbols correctly, but some minor errors or applications are not entirely appropriate to the context of the problem.	2
		Using basic mathematical numbers or symbols is generally correct in most situations, but there are still minor application errors that can impact the results.	3

Code	Indicators of Numeracy Literacy Ability	Information	Score
	·	Using numbers and basic mathematical symbols precisely and effectively to solve daily life problems. All calculations and symbols are used in accordance with the context of the problem.	4
N2	Ability to analyse information in various forms (graphs, tables, charts, diagrams, etc.).	Unable to analyse or understand information from graphs, tables, charts, or diagrams.	0
		It can recognise basic information from graphs, tables, charts, or diagrams, but cannot draw accurate conclusions or still makes many errors.	1
		Analyzes information fairly accurately from graphs, tables, charts, or diagrams correctly, but some parts are less accurate or cannot draw in-depth conclusions.	2
		Analyses information with reasonable accuracy from graphs, tables, charts, or diagrams and can draw relevant conclusions, even if there are some minor errors.	3
		Analyse information very precisely and deeply from various forms (graphs, tables, charts, diagrams, etc.) and can draw very relevant conclusions, as well as provide accurate interpretations.	4
N3	The ability to interpret the results of problem analysis to predict possible outcomes and make appropriate decisions.	Unable to interpret analysis results or make predictions and decisions.	0
		It can provide a basic interpretation of analysis results, but the predictions or decisions made are not entirely relevant or accurate.	1
		The analysis results can be interpreted correctly, but the predictions or decisions taken are still not relevant or contain several errors.	2
		Can interpret analysis results fairly well, predict results fairly accurately, and make relevant decisions even if there are some minor errors.	3
		Can interpret analysis results very precisely, predict possible outcomes accurately, and make highly relevant and effective decisions.	4

In this study, the researcher adjusted the test questions to align with the indicators of numeracy literacy skills, specifically question number 1 to measure N1, question number 2 to measure N2, and question number 3 to measure N3. The following references are used to determine the students' level of numeracy literacy skills.

Table 2. Categories of Student Abilities

Value Range	Category
$80 \le x \le 100$	Tall
$50 \le x < 80$	Currently
0 < x < 50	Low

Source: Katherina and Rini (2022)

Numeracy literacy skills are categorized into three levels: high, medium, and low. For research purposes, students representing the high, medium, and low categories were selected to describe the test and interview results. The data analysis techniques include data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. At the data reduction stage, researchers filter out information that is not relevant to the research focus. At the data presentation stage, relevant data is then arranged in a narrative form that describes the main findings. At the conclusion of the drawing stage, researchers draw conclusions based

on the analysis of test and interview results, which align with the previously formulated research questions.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Results

The results of the analysis of grade XII students at SMA Negeri Kota Ambon show that the average score of the numeracy literacy ability test of 22 students is 58, with a moderate category. The number of students in each category is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 3. Student Scores Based on Numeracy and Literacy Ability

Category	Value Range	Number of Students	Average Score
Tall	$80 \le x \le 100$	4	94
Currently	$50 \le x < 80$	13	62
Low	0 < x < 50	5	20

Table 4 presents the achievement of numeracy literacy skills among class XII students at SMA Negeri Kota Ambon; the majority of students fall into the medium category, with an average score of 62. However, there are still students who can reach the high category with an average score of 94, while others fall into the low category with an average score of 20. Suppose the number of students in each category is presented as a percentage of the total number of students. In that case, 18.18% of students are in the high category, 59.09% of students are in the medium category, and 22.73% of students are in the low category.

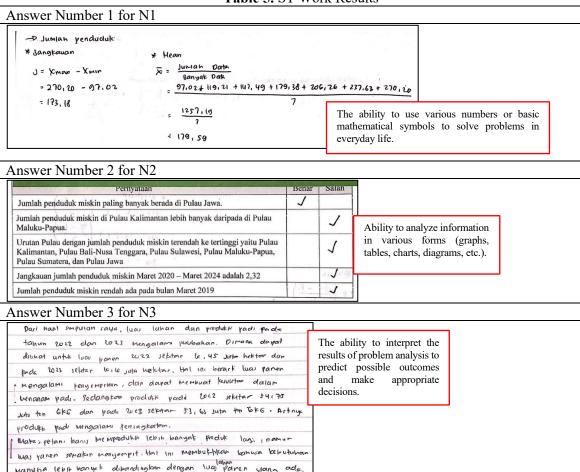
The following table shows the percentage of students who answered each indicator correctly.

Table 4. Percentage of the Number of Students Who Answered Correctly for Each Indicator

Code	Indicators of Numeracy Literacy Ability	Question Number Description	Percentage
N1	The ability to use various numbers or basic mathematical symbols to solve problems in everyday life.	1	22.73%
N2	Ability to analyse information in various forms (graphs, tables, charts, diagrams, etc.).	2	27.27%
N3	The ability to interpret the results of problem analysis to predict possible outcomes and make appropriate decisions.	3	22.75%
	Average		22.58%

Table 4 shows that not all students can meet the three indicators of numeracy literacy skills in solving statistics problems. N1 and N3 have the same percentage and differ by 4.54% from N2. The following presents the results of research on students' numeracy literacy skills, based on work results and interview excerpts, for questions 1, 2, and 3. The code ST represents a high-ability subject, SS represents a medium-ability subject, and SR represents a low-ability subject. First, the results of ST's work will be presented in Table 5, and interview excerpts will continue to emphasise the results of ST's work.

Table 5. ST Work Results



The results of ST's work for question number 1, presented in Table 5, indicate that ST can comprehend questions that utilize mathematical symbols within the context of the problem, specifically to calculate the range and mean. ST can use and understand mathematical symbols, namely J as range and \bar{x} as average, ST's work results also show the use of correct formulas, as well as the correct calculation process and results. Excerpts from the interview with ST are presented below.

Researcher: Good. So, how do you determine the range and mean of the data presented in the infographic?

ST : Okay, bro. First, let us focus on the problem of determining the range. To determine the range,

we need to know the formula first, where the formula for the range is range = $x_{ax} - x_{min}$. Based on the data presented, we know that the data with the highest value is in the last data with the symbol x_{max} 270.20, and the data with the lowest value is in the first data with the symbol x_{min} which is 97.02. After that, from the known values in the data, you substitute it

into the range equation = $x_{max} - x_{min} = 270, 20 - 97,02 = 173,18$.

Researcher: What does it mean, little brother?

ST : Oh yes, if the mean is the same, first we have to know the formula, where, the formula to

determine the average value or mean is $\bar{x} = \frac{Jumlah \, Data}{Banyak \, Data}$. After that, based on the data presented,

you know that the number of data points is seven. Then, from all the data available, you add it up and divide the result by the number of data points. So, what you get is \bar{x} equals 1257.19 over 7, which equals 179.59. As you can see, the mean value is 179.59.

Answer number 2 shows that ST can analyze the information obtained from the diagram and provide the correct check mark on each statement contained in the table. To verify the validity of the check mark, the following is an excerpt from an interview with ST regarding the second statement.

Researcher : Okay, then, for the second statement, why did you choose that statement as wrong?

ST : The younger sibling chose the statement incorrectly because, based on the data presented in

the infographic, Maluku-Papua Island should have more poor people, with a total of 1.51, compared to Kalimantan Island, which has a total of 0.94. In contrast, the second statement states that the number of poor people on Kalimantan Island is greater than on Maluku-Papua Island. However, the statement is automatically incorrect because it contradicts the data

presented.

Answer number 3 demonstrates that ST can provide a correct conclusion based on the results of the diagram analysis in question number 3. An excerpt from the interview with ST is presented as follows.

Researcher : In question number 3, what can you conclude?

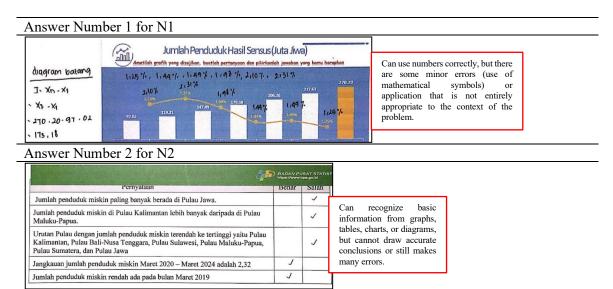
ST : To my brother, the conclusion of the data presented in this infographic has been conveyed in

my answer, but I want to add that even though it has been checked. However, if I may add, the conclusion is that, apart from that, based on the existing data, we can see that in 2023, there was a decline in both harvested area and rice production compared to 2022. This decline indicates that agricultural conditions are facing challenges, possibly due to weather factors, climate change, or other issues, such as a lack of available land for rice planting. In my opinion, this decline could affect the price of rice and the welfare of farmers if the rice price becomes

unstable.

Second, the results of SS's work are presented in Table 6, and interview excerpts are used to confirm the results of SS's work.

Table 6. SS Answers



Answer Number 3 for N3

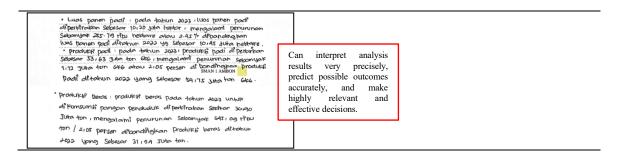


Table 6 shows that in question number 1, SS can understand the given question by knowing how to get the range result. However, the mathematical symbol used is not correct. Namely, x n is used by SS to express x max, and x $_1$ is used by SS to express x $_{min}$. Based on the interview excerpt presented below, SS incorrectly mentions the lowest value, namely 97.02, but SS states that the lowest value is actually 97.2. SS shows inconsistent results in the work process; of course, it will produce different final results. Additionally, SS attempts to explain the use of the range formula, which states that x n can be assumed to be x max. In mathematical symbols, of course, it will have a different meaning. This has a truth value if x $_n$ is replaced with x $_7$, as the seventh data sequence that has the maximum value in the data. The question is asked to determine the mean, but SS does not show the results of the work to determine the mean.

Researcher : So, what alternatives do you use to solve this problem?

ST : According to your answer, there is a bar chart where we use the range formula, which is range =

x sub n minus x sub 1. The highest value here is 270.20. The lowest value is 97.2, where x sub n, the highest value, is subtracted from the lowest value, which is 270.20 - 97.2, producing 173.18.

Researcher: Okay, bro, but is not that range $x_{max} - x_{min}$? Why do you use x_n and x_1 ? Can you explain?

ST : Oh yes, thank you, brother, why do I use x_n and x_1 , because I see from the bar chart that there are

 x_n many terms where the bar chart also has seven brothers, so you use $x_n - x_1$ brothers, that is what you think. Because the range is the same as $x_{max} - x_{min}$ so just assume the highest value is subtracted from the lowest value. So there is indeed a possibility of error, but the range can also have many terms. Here you use many, eh, which formula do you use $x_{max} - x_{min}$, because from the results, the term with the most is 7, then subtracted from *one*, so from the bar chart there are

7 bar charts.

Answer number 2 shows that SS still has many errors in analyzing information in the diagram. For example, in the second statement, SS checked incorrectly, but provided a reason that was still incorrect in the process of calculating the number of poor people in Maluku-Papua, which should be 1.51. SS conveyed that the poor population in rural areas was the primary focus, as indicated in the following excerpt from the interview.

Researcher: Okay, little brother. In the second statement, why did you choose the wrong answer?

ST: The second answer, provided by the younger sibling, is that the population in poverty in

Kalimantan Island is recorded at 0.94 million, while in Maluku-Papua Island, it reaches only 1.35

million. Therefore, the population in Maluku and Papua is poorer.

Answer number 3 demonstrates that SS has drawn a correct conclusion based on the information obtained from the diagram presented in the question. In the following interview excerpt, SS made a mistake in stating 2.45% as 2.45 million hectares, which is actually a decrease in harvest area from 2022 to 2023.

Researcher: Now, try to explain the answer you wrote.

ST

Based on the available information, the harvest area in 2022 was 10.45 million hectares, while in 2023, it was 10.20 million hectares. There is also a decrease, brother. The decrease is 0.26 million hectares or 2.45 million hectares, which is where rice production is concentrated. Rice production in 2022 was 54.75 million tons, and in 2023, it decreased to 53.63 million tons, resulting in a decrease of 1.12 million tons, or 2.05%.

Third, the results of the SR work are presented in Table 7, and interview excerpts are used to confirm the results.

Table 7. SR Answers Answer Number 1 for N1 numbers diagram balang mathematical symbols correctly, but -1 there are some minor errors (mathematical symbols) that are not kn - X1 = 270, 20 - 97.07 completely appropriate in the context of the problem. Answer Number 2 for N2 Pernyataan Salah Jumlah penduduk miskin paling hanyak herada di Pulau Jawa Can recognize basic information Jumlah penduduk miskin di Pulau Kalimantan lebih banyak daripada di Pulau Maluku-Papua. from graphs, tables, charts, or Urutan Pulau dengan jumlah penduduk miskin terendah ke tertinggi yaitu Pulau Kalimantan, Pulau Bali-Nusa Tenggara, Pulau Sulawesi, Pulau Maluku-Papua, Pulau Sumatera, dan Pulau Jawa diagrams, but cannot draw accurate conclusions or still makes many errors. Jangkauan jumlah penduduk miskin Maret 2020 Maret 2024 adalah 2,32 Jumlah penduduk miskin rendah ada pada bulan Maret 2019

Table 7 shows that in question number 1, SR was not yet correct in using mathematical symbols, despite the students having understood the questions given. The students also did not show the results of the work to determine the mean. Based on the following interview excerpt, SR explained the process of obtaining the range value in the data presented, even though the writing of the mathematical symbols used was not yet correct.

Researcher: What do you know from the population data presented? ST: From the data, I know that the highest value is 270.20, bro.

Researcher: What is the smallest value, little brother?

ST : 97.02 brother.

Researcher: How did you achieve a result of 173.18?

ST : From your formula, the largest value is minus the smallest value.

Researcher: Then what about the mean?

ST : Sorry, I did not do the math because I had difficulty understanding the formula. I am confused.

Question number 2 indicates that SR has not been able to recognize the information from the diagram presented in the question, resulting in errors in the analysis. The following interview excerpt shows that SR had difficulty conveying arguments regarding the results of his work on question number 2.

Researcher: In the first statement, do you think that statement is wrong?

ST; Sorry, bro, I also had difficulty analyzing data in the form of graphs, bro, so I was confused when

reading your data. Bro, so in answer number 2, I just ticked whatever I wanted, bro.

In question number 3, SR did not provide an answer related to the question presented. During the interview, the researcher attempted to ask SR about the conclusion in question number 3; however,

SR had difficulty reading the data presented in the infographics. The following is an excerpt from the interview with SR.

Researcher: Why didn't you answer question number 3?

ST : Eh .. That is it, bro, I apologize, bro. I have difficulty reading the data presented in your diagram

or infographic. This is what prevents me from concluding the data you presented.

Discussion

Maulidina & Hartatik (2019) found that high-ability students can correctly use various numbers and symbols in mathematics. This finding was discovered by researchers analyzing the work results of high-ability subjects, who can correctly state and solve problems in everyday life using numbers or mathematical symbols. They can interpret each mathematical symbol used by re-explaining the work process. High-ability subjects are also able to interpret diagrams through the analysis process, providing appropriate reasons to justify a check mark for statements that are true or false, based on the data presented in the diagram. This aligns with the opinion of Amelia & Lestari (2021), who stated that high-ability students tend to be more accurate in analyzing questions.

In the process of analyzing data presented in diagram form, highly skilled individuals can accurately interpret the analysis results of a diagram and draw relevant conclusions. Apart from providing conclusions on the results of data analysis in the form of infographics, highly skilled subjects were able to relate the data obtained to real-life contexts that occur in the Indonesian agricultural sector. This is in line with the results of Mahmud & Pratiwi's (2019) analysis, which shows that students who can demonstrate high numeracy literacy abilities.

Related to the indicators of numeracy literacy skills, it was found that high-ability subjects were able to use various numbers or basic mathematical symbols in solving problems in everyday life, analyze information in various forms (graphs, tables, charts, diagrams, etc.), and interpret the results of problem analysis to predict possible outcomes and make the right decisions. This is in line with the results of research (Maulidina & Hartatik, 2019) which showed that high-ability subjects were able to meet all indicators of mathematical communication skills and were correct in solving problems, namely high-ability subjects were able to use various numbers or symbols related to basic mathematics to solve problems in the context of everyday life, were able to analyze information presented in various forms (graphs, diagrams, tables, charts, etc.), and were able to interpret the results of the analysis to predict and make the right decisions.

Furthermore, subjects with moderate abilities are not fully able to state and solve problems in everyday life using numbers or mathematical symbols, as shown by several errors in solving the problems. In line with the opinion of Sidik & Wakih (2020) that students struggle to interpret the information in the questions, they are also less able to translate the meaning of the questions into the correct mathematical symbols.

Additionally, subjects with moderate abilities are not yet fully capable of analyzing diagrams. The ability to analyze diagrams to determine the truth of a statement remains an obstacle for subjects with moderate abilities, often due to a lack of literacy. However, subjects with moderate abilities are already able to interpret the results of problem analysis to predict possible outcomes and make informed decisions. This aligns with the opinion of Fauzi et al. (2021) that low reading ability, reflected in a lack of understanding and analysis of the information contained in the questions, is one of the factors contributing to the suboptimal development of numeracy literacy skills.

In general, subjects with moderate abilities are not yet able to use various numbers or basic mathematical symbols in solving problems in everyday life, are not yet able to analyze information in various forms (graphs, tables, charts, diagrams, etc.), and can interpret the results of problem analysis in order to predict possible outcomes and make the right decisions. This finding aligns with the results of Jazilah's (2024) study. Examining the results of the numeracy literacy ability test reveals that most

students tend to make mistakes when performing calculations and are not careful when reading the information presented in the questions.

In low-ability subjects, they are not fully able to use numbers or mathematical symbols to solve problems in everyday life. This finding aligns with Muslimah & Pujiastuti (2020), who reported that the higher the numeracy literacy ability, the more accurate the problem-solving; conversely, the lower the numeracy ability, the lower the accuracy in answering questions.

In analyzing information, low-ability subjects are not yet fully able to analyze information in various forms (graphs, tables, charts, diagrams, etc.). Additionally, low-ability subjects are not yet able to interpret the results of problem analysis to predict possible outcomes and make informed decisions. This aligns with the opinion of Hermalindawati & Marlina (2021), who stated that students encounter difficulties in understanding and processing data related to diagrams.

Regarding the indicators of numeracy literacy skills, it was found that low-ability subjects were not yet able to use various numbers or basic mathematical symbols in solving problems in everyday life, were not yet able to analyze information in various forms (graphs, tables, charts, diagrams, etc.), and were not yet able to interpret the results of problem analysis in order to predict possible outcomes and make the right decisions. This finding aligns with the results of Rezky et al.'s (2022) research, which showed that low-ability students had not fully met the indicators of numeracy literacy skills.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion described regarding the numeracy literacy skills of Class XII students at SMA Negeri Kota Ambon in solving statistics problems, it is evident that not all indicators of numeracy literacy skills have been met optimally. It can be said that the numeracy literacy skills of students are still relatively low. Of the 22 students in the research sample, the average value on the numeracy literacy test was 58. In addition, the percentage of accuracy in each indicator is also relatively low, namely the ability to use various numbers or basic mathematical symbols in solving problems in everyday life, obtained a percentage of 22.73%; the ability to analyze information in various forms (graphs, tables, charts, diagrams, etc.), obtained a percentage of 27.27%; and the ability to interpret the results of problem analysis in order to predict possible outcomes and make the right decisions, obtained a percentage of 22.75%. Based on the results of this study, the researcher recommends that mathematics teachers in schools focus more on developing students' numeracy literacy skills by introducing various types of questions that can diversely train these abilities, thereby improving students' overall understanding and abilities.

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