**Why do junior high school students choose vocational schools? (Case study in Jakarta)**

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**Abstract.** This study aims to determine the factors that influence junior high school students (SMP) in choosing further research at a vocational high school (SMK). This type of research is ex-post facto with a population of grade IX junior high school students in DKI Jakarta. The number of respondents in this study was 462 junior high school students, 51.9% women, and 48.1 men in 4 municipalities. Sampling with cluster random sampling technique, data collection using a questionnaire. The data analysis technique in this research is descriptive statistics, which has used to describe each indicator's data. The data collection method used was a questionnaire method. The results of this study indicate that : (1) 74.63% of students stated that interest was the dominant factor for determining further research in SMK; (2) 65.57% of students noted that the self-understanding factor was the next in deciding a new study at SMK; (3) 62.99% of students stated that the environment/community also influenced to establish further research at SMK; and (4) 58.69% of students indicated that family factors were also a factor for determining new study in vocational schools. As many as 74.6% of junior high school students who were respondents in this study will continue to a vocational school*.*

1. **Introduction**

Quality education is the hope of all Indonesian people, with a quality education that can produce human resources capable of competing locally, regionally, and globally, especially in the face of the era of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). AEC as a form of implementation of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) agreement. Efforts to realize quality education require strategies, concrete steps, and operations carried out sustainably, starting with primary school. Necessary education graduates should have adequate and adequate knowledge, attitudes, and skills, including the ability to adapt and adapt to changing work situations that are continually evolving dynamically. For this reason, education must be oriented towards employment, especially the introduction of practical subjects in the world of work or vocational or vocational education and training activities.

The result of empirical observation by the Directorate of PSMK in 2008, the problem faced in preparing vocational students as middle-level workers are that there is still a gap between professional graduates' competencies and the real needs of the business/industry world. The difference is that SMK graduates are still weak in the aspect of soft skills (1).

The Government's policy on the Revitalization of Vocational High Schools (SMK) to improve the quality and competitiveness of Indonesian human resources at the secondary level has pursued since some time ago by increasing the number of SMK. It has intended to accommodate even more students who attend vocational Education to anticipate the development of various industrial sectors. Skills education for the journey of life that will have carried out as a pioneer in the junior high school level must be an integral part of the overall effort to implement "Life Skills Education" as a new policy in the direction of education.

Middle school students (SMP) are generally aged between 13 and 15 years and come from various socioeconomic conditions of their parents. Many students come from economically disadvantaged families who most likely will not be able to continue their studies to a higher level. To help parents meet their financial needs to maintain their survival, most of them, after completing their education in junior high school, go directly into the world of work or into the community to make their living.

This fact is indeed alarming, but behind it, in the junior high school students, there is a potential work ethic that can have positively developed further. In this case, junior high school can also be fertile ground for the work ethic nursery. Therefore the selection of further studies for junior high school students needs to be well directed so that the potential possessed by students can continue to grow by their desires or interests, including in choosing to proceed to Vocational Education Vocational High School (SMK).

Vocational secondary education is education at the secondary education level, prioritizing the development of students' abilities to carry out certain types of work. Vocational secondary education prioritizes preparing students to enter the workforce as well as developing professional attitudes. By its form, vocational high schools organize educational programs that have tailored to the types of employment (2).

Vocational High School (SMK) is a form of formal education unit that organizes vocational education at secondary education level, following on from junior high schools, Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), or other equivalent structures. Schools in education and professional level can be called Vocational High School (SMK) or Vocational Aliyah Madrasah (MAK), or other comparable forms ((3).

This research is to identify the factors that influence Middle School (SMP) students in choosing further studies to Vocational High Schools (SMK) in Jakarta. Dharmayanti and Munadi (2014) stated that interest is one of the factors influencing junior high school students to enter SMK (4). Someone in choosing a school has a factor that has considered in influencing his choice. Ability is one of the factors that influence a person in choosing a study or study. The selection of education, according to one's abilities, will usually be carried out with enthusiasm and pleasure. These factors can be obtained from the outside or from within a person.

1. **Method**

The research method used in this study is a survey method. Survey research is one of the studies used to collect significant and large amounts of data. Survey research is research that gathers information from samples submitted through questionnaires or interviews that discuss various contributions. Data collection has done by collecting polls in the form of instruments. The data collection instrument used in this study was a questionnaire instrument, a set of questions arranged to submitted to respondents, and observational indicators collected directly by researchers of respondents.

The data collection instrument used in this study was an instrument compiled to identify the factors influencing junior high school students in choosing further research at SMK. These factors consist of self-understanding, student interests, family, and the environment/community. The validity test conducted in this study is to test the validity of the instrument content (content validity) based on the results of expert judgment. Content validity is a validity test to ascertain whether an instrument item measures exactly the variable to be measured.

The population was 462 students with cluster random sampling techniques. Data analysis techniques in this study used descriptive statistics.

To discover how much influence from each factor in the selection of further studies to the Vocational High School, a percentage measurement will have been carried out using the following formula:

P= F/n x 100%

P: Percentage  
F: Frequency of each questionnaire answer  
n: The total number of questionnaire answers

1. **Results and Discussion**

To discover how much influence from each factor in the selection of further studies to the Vocational High School, a percentage measurement will have been carried out using the following formula in Table 1:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 1.** Level of respondent approval | | |
| Agree on | Agree  (>49,3) | Disagree (<49,3) |
| Overall Respondents | 348 | 112 |
| % | 75,3 | 24,2 |

Distribution of 462 respondents by gender, male respondents totaling 222 people and female respondents totaling 240 people. Regional Distribution of Respondent Schools in the DKI Jakarta area, based on the division of administrative regions can see in Figure 1:

Figure 1. Distribution of respondent school areas

After calculating the percentage of each statement from each indicator, the following results are Table 2:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Table 2. Percentage calculation result each indicator datan | |
| Indicators | (%) |
| Self-understanding | 65,57 |
| Interest | 74,63 |
| Family | 58,69 |
| Environment / Society | 62,99 |
| Continue to SMK | 74,6 |

The first factor influencing the selection of junior high school students to continue to vocational school is the interest factor. As much as 74.63% of the respondents agreed that interest could influence the selection of further studies. The data obtained is by the theory of interest, namely the existence of interest or desire in someone to do something. Several factors can influence one's attention, namely the will, investment, family environment, school environment, and school conditions (4)

The intended interest here is an interest in something that makes someone want to study it further so that it influences in choosing a study program. People who have an interest in something will carry out the activities wholeheartedly which will produce excellent and maximum results. Bardach et al. (2019) state that there is a positive relationship between self-efficacy and mastery of goal structures in the fields of accounting and mathematics. In this research, interest is the most significant factor in the selection of studies. Students who have a high interest in continuing to vocational school will facilitate students in participating in learning (5). In the study of various objectives, adoption of a mastery-approach goal, either singular (6), (7) or about the purposes of a performance approach is associated with higher student confidence in their abilities (i.e., how competent people feel concerning certain school subjects) (8)

The second factor influencing the selection of advanced study studies to Vocational School is self-understanding. 65.57% of respondents agreed that self-understanding changed respondents in choosing further studies. Internal factors and external factors influence Self-understanding. Internal factors that also influence self-understanding have determined by the personality of the open and closed self. A free character contributes positively to self-understanding, while a closed figure is an inhibiting factor in self-understanding. External factors that affect self-understanding include, among others, family environment, peers, and school.

The third factor that influences the selection of further studies to SMK is the environment/community. 62.99% of the respondents agreed that the environment/community influenced the respondents in choosing a new study at SMK. Suwardi's research (2012) concluded that community environmental factors influence student learning outcomes (9). Social support refers to the comfort, care, self-esteem, or assistance available to people from other people and groups (10). Support can come from various sources, can come from family, spouse, friends, or community. According to Albrecht and Alderman in Mattson (2011) defines that social support is verbal and nonverbal communication between the recipient and the giver that can reduce uncertainty about the situation, the condition of oneself, others, or relationships, and its function to increase the perception of control personal in one's life experience. It can be has interpreted that social support is an act of one person for others in providing a subsidy (11).

The fourth factor affecting junior high school students choosing to continue to vocational school is the family factor. 58.69% of respondents said that the family influences in choosing further study at SMK. This opinion is by the theory which states that parental support will have an impact on learning activities and outcomes (12). Parental support is essential for fluency and success in learning. Parental support has meant to get the blessing to choose the desired study program, and the facilities provided by parents. Lestari and Siswanto (2015) stated that the contribution of family social support to vocational students' work readiness was 24% (13). Spradley and Allender in Jhonson R (2010) argue that the family is one or more individuals who live together to have emotional ties and develop social relations, roles, and tasks (14).

The percentage level of the statement of agreeing and disagree on the factors that influence junior high school students to choose further study to vocational school can see in Figure 3:

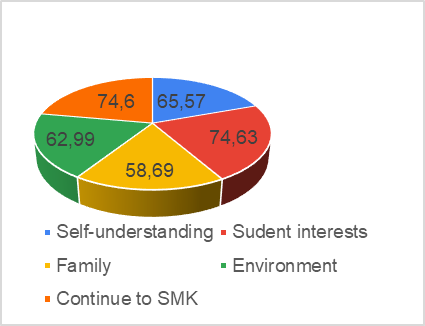


Figure 3. The Percentage level of factors influencing junior high school students in choosing further study at SMK

1. **Conclusion**

Vocational education prepares students for various professions. Therefore, students choose to study vocational school with different expectations further. The factors that influence junior high school students in selecting further studies to vocational school sequentially consist of interests, self-understanding, community environment, and family. This sequence can use as a reference assessment for junior high school students who will continue to a vocational school. This reference is essential for selecting professional student admissions to obtain input that is in line with the vocational school's objectives.

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