

Analysis of Prospective Student Decision Making in Choosing a Study Program

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Abstract

High school students certainly have different considerations and reasons for choosing and deciding to enter the PGPAUD department as a place to continue their education. This study aims to determine the knowledge, interest and reasons for high school students choosing or not choosing the PGPAUD Study Program. This research used descriptive approach with quantitative research type. SMAN 1 Talun was used as a research site, with a sample of 12th grade students totaling 168 students. In this study, the sampling procedure and technique used proportional random sampling technique. The data used was primary data by distributing questionnaires to respondents. The results showed that the knowledge of equivalent high school students related to PGPAUD study programs was still classified as moderate to low. The level of interest of equivalent high school students to continue their studies to PGPAUD is still classified as moderate to low. And the level of interest and reasons for students who choose the PGPAUD UM study program is still relatively low. The reasons for high school students who will choose the PGPAUD UM Study Program are mostly due to the desire to gain insight into early childhood education. The reasons for high school students who will not choose the UM PGPAUD Study Program are mostly due to the desire to choose studies in alternative fields and lack of interest in teaching early childhood.

Keywords: Decision-Making; Prospective Students; Teacher Education For Early Childhood Education

1. Introduction

Education is a deliberate effort to equip human resources for their future roles by guiding, teaching and training. In accordance with Article 3 of the 2013 Law which reads that developing abilities and shaping the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to educate the nation's life, has the aim of developing the potential of students to become individuals who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens (Nuryanto, et al, 2020). It is hoped that education can give birth to the next generation of the nation who have smart and quality personalities who are able to make the best use of progress (Fitri, 2021). The progress of a nation can be measured by the quality and the existing education system (Kadi & Awwaliyah, 2017).

High school students are the last level of secondary education that students must take before going to college, which is in the age group of 15-18 years. After high school, students go through a transitional phase before college, where they can pursue their career dreams. High school students in this age group are faced with various problems. Making the choice to continue their education to college is one of the problems that high school students face. Every year, high school students who choose to pursue further education at the college level must choose a major or study program to fulfill their dreams. At this time children can begin to

determine their goals. Making decisions from various options to achieve the best results is the decision-making process. Siagian defines decision-making as the process of choosing options from various possibilities in (Nugrohi, 2011). All individuals have the right to make choices in their lives, and children in high school are no different. High school students make decisions about their future, about who to choose as friends, about going to college after school or getting a job, and other things.

When choosing a study program, many prospective students are often confused about their interests and talents (Theodora, 2022). Basically, according to rational choice theory, there are a number of factors that influence a person in their career development including in choosing a major. Internal factors or those that come from within individuals and motivate them to act are one of the elements that may affect interest. On the other hand, external factors come from outside the individual. James S. Coleman's rational choice theory states that rationality is a fundamental idea originally used by Weber to categorize various forms of social action (Latifah, Nurhadi, and Liestyasari, 2019). According to Weber, rational action refers to the conscious consideration of the choices a person makes. Decision-making theory also assumes knowledge of the outcomes of the options chosen and the decisions made. The assumption is that there is a ranking of alternative solutions (Pasolong, 2023). In the context of decision making, rational choice theory can be interpreted in the analysis of benefits and costs where prospective students are considered to analyze the benefits and costs of each alternative study program under consideration. Benefits may include career potential, personal satisfaction, and intrinsic values, while costs involve factors such as education costs, time, and effort required.

A more rational decision-making process concentrates on actors and resources. In this case, the resource is seen as something that attracts attention and is under the actor's power, while the actor is regarded as a person with goals and objectives that must be achieved by reasoned effort or action. The reason for the actor's interest in this case is because he views himself as someone with certain preferences or goals that encourage him to make decisions that will enable the achievement of goals (Ahmad, 2022). Decision making in the context of study program selection decisions of prospective students is influenced by various factors and reasons, including personal interests, information received, and personal experiences. Quality knowledge helps to provide good opportunities in taking the opportunities that exist. The biggest approach to ensuring that the inspiration gained has significance is to equip yourself with a lot of knowledge and experience (Zulhafizh, Hermandra, and Asnawi, 2022). Students will look for more study programs because of the many choices. Before choosing a study program, prospective students will usually find out about the program's accreditation status, tuition fees, career prospects, scholarships or even the location of the college. The reputation and branding of universities is usually the main attraction for prospective students (Pambudi and Hariandi, 2021). Interest is a strong tendency or interest in a particular subject, activity or other thing consisting of feelings of pleasure, attention, seriousness oriented towards achieving a goal (Almaqassary, 2022). Strong interest will be a source of intrinsic motivation that encourages individuals to learn and develop. This is in accordance with previous research which states that student interest in learning is influenced by two factors, namely individual factors and interconnected situational factors. Situational factors create learning experiences for students and if the surrounding environment is not supportive, students' interest in learning may decrease (Palupi & Cahjono, 2022). In the context of career choice, interest can influence individuals to achieve success and satisfaction in the chosen career. Reasoning is a

mental or thought process that a person uses to understand, evaluate, and justify a belief, action, or decision. By using reasoning, one can achieve a deeper understanding of an issue and make better decisions in complex situations.

Some of the reasons prospective students decide to choose a study program are based on interest, encouragement, tuition fees, facilities for learning, and university reputation. In line with previous research, the image or image of the institution is one way to attract attention and capture the interest of prospective students (Budiyatmo and Iriani, 2022). The image of the institution is a consideration for prospective students to make their choice. Institutions that have a good image tend to be the choice. Conversely, institutions that have a negative image will be less attractive, resulting in a decrease in the number of students. An in-depth analysis of these variables will provide a comprehensive picture of the reasons behind prospective students' decisions, so that efforts can be identified that need to be made to increase the attractiveness of the PGPAUD Study Program at the State University of Malang. Every prospective student is always faced with various choices of majors available. Prospective students must make a choice decision from various alternative choices available. The decisions that prospective students must make are certainly considered carefully and thoroughly, because the decisions they make will determine the path they face in the future.

A study program is a unit of study plan designed as a guideline for organizing academic or professional education that provides an in-depth understanding of a particular subject (Ardi, 2022). Early Childhood Education Teacher Education (PGPAUD) has a crucial role in shaping the basis of child development. Early childhood education is an effort to support children from birth to six years of age, early childhood education offers educational stimulation that encourages physical growth and development and prepares them to enter further education (Fadhilah, 2021). The purpose of early childhood education (ECED) is to improve the quality of human resources. Therefore, improving the organization of PAUD is very important for future educational growth. Preschool education covers the period from birth to six years of age, which is a critical period in child development. A very crucial period is early childhood where growth and development take place so rapidly (Maningtyas, 2015). The quality of early childhood education is determined by the quality of educators. Therefore, PAUD teachers who have quality, care, and are strongly committed to early childhood learning are needed.

The choice to take the PGPAUD Study Program is a strategic decision taken by prospective students, because this decision will determine their career path and contribution to the world of preschool education in the future. The PGPAUD Study Program at State University of Malang is in a very strategic place, because the study program prepares prospective preschool education teachers who will educate early childhood. The PGPAUD Study Program is a study program offered by the State University of Malang with a focus on preparing teachers to work at the preschool education level. This study program is aimed specifically at improving the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to educate and guide early childhood, which covers the age range from birth to around six years old. The results of their upbringing will be one part of Indonesia's golden demographic bonus in 2045, when Indonesia is 100 years old (Samawi, Wulandari, and Aisyah, 2016). The PGPAUD study program itself aims to create educators who are qualified and competent in designing, managing, and evaluating learning in accordance with the needs and characteristics of early childhood.

Based on the above, this study will explore how the knowledge of high school students is equal, the interest of high school students is equal and the reasons high school students decide to choose or not choose the PAUD Teacher Education Study Program. With the aim of knowing the level of knowledge and interest of high school students in the study program and the reasons they express for later choosing or not choosing the study program. The benefits of this research are of course the main thing for the university is expected to help and provide explanations and descriptions related to the knowledge, interests, and reasons of prospective students. The introduction should contain (in order) general background, review of previous literature (state of the art) as the basis for the statement of scientific novelty of the article, statement of scientific novelty, and research problems or hypotheses. At the end of the introduction, the purpose of the article should be stated. In the format of a scientific article, a literature review is not allowed as in a research report, but is realized in the form of a review of previous literature (state of the art) to demonstrate the scientific novelty of the article.

2. Method

This research is a quantitative descriptive study using the survey method. Quantitative research is research using statistical data processing with tools so that the data obtained and the findings are in the form of numbers (Sahir, 2022). The population in this study were students and female students of class XII of State Senior High School 1 Talun. From the data obtained by researchers, the population in this study was 289 students. Class XII Language and Culture 22 students, class XII Social Studies 89 students and class XII Mathematics and Natural Sciences 178 students. The sample represents part of the population studied (Sahir, 2022). The proportional random sampling method is a sampling technique from each sub-population whose number is adjusted to the number of members of each sub-population randomly or haphazardly (Novitasari, 2015). From the results of these calculations, 167.77 were obtained, rounded up to 168 respondents.

The data collection technique used in this study was a questionnaire. Data collection in this study used open and closed questionnaires. The questionnaire is a data collection method in which respondents are given a series of questions or written statements to answer (Sugiyono, 2017). The questionnaire in this measurement uses a scale called Guttman. To determine the reliability and ability of the research instrument to measure what is being measured, items and variables must go through the validity and reliability test stages. The data analysis technique used in this research is descriptive statistical analysis. Scoring answers based on alternative answers provided. Scoring objective criteria with categories, namely sufficient and low, so that it is sufficient if the score is $\geq 50\%$ and low if the score is $< 50\%$. Determining the percentage to state the condition of each sub-variable using SPSS software. Analyzing the results to conclude the percentage level of knowledge, interest, and reasons for senior high school students to choose the PAUD Teacher Education study program.

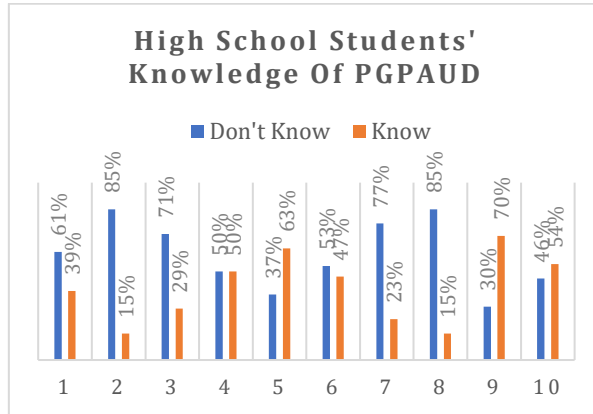
3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Result

The results of respondents' answers taken from the data collection instrument in the form of a questionnaire show the decision making of prospective students in choosing the PGPAUD study program at the State University of Malang. The analysis taken consists of

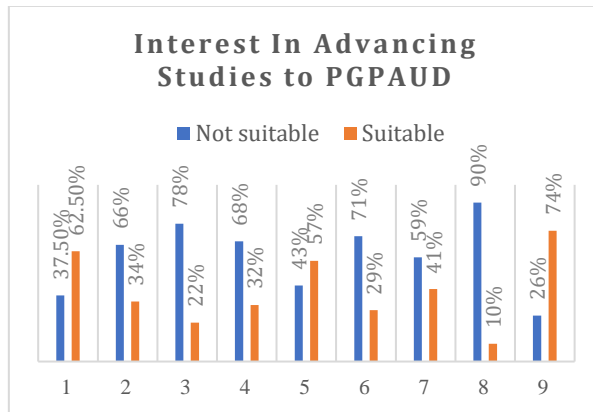
knowledge, interest, and reasons for high school students to choose or not choose the PGPAUD study program. The data is analyzed to obtain valid results.

Graphic 1. High school students' knowledge of PGPAUD



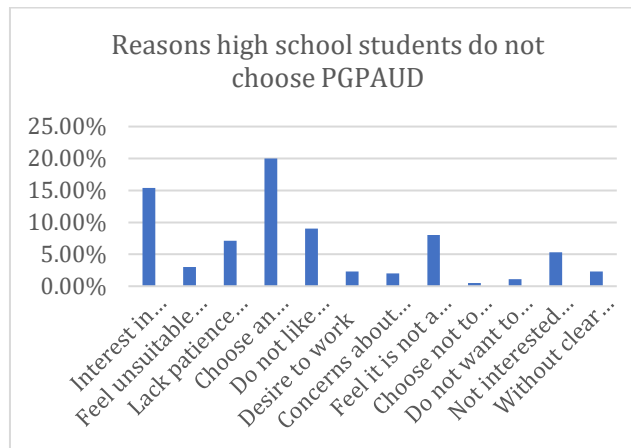
Based on the graph above, it shows that the knowledge of equivalent high school students related to PGPAUD study programs is still classified as moderate to low. Starting from knowledge about understanding the curriculum and learning materials in the study program contained in question items number 1-2. Knowledge of complete learning facilities is found in question items number 3-4. Knowledge of the capacity of the study program is contained in question items number 5-6. The ability of students to study programs is found in question items number 7-8. Knowledge about career opportunities from the study program is contained in question items number 9-10.

Graphic 2. Interest in advancing studies to PGPAUD



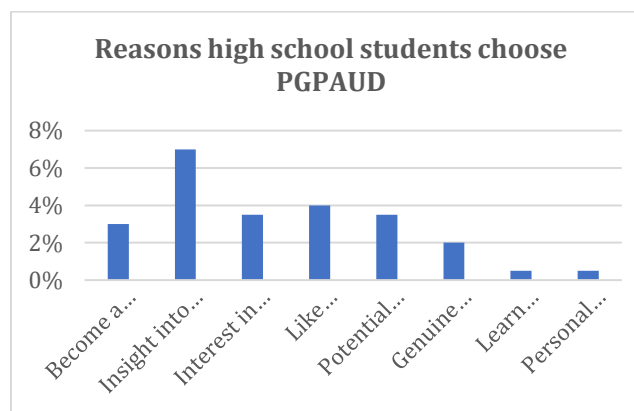
Based on this graph, it shows that the level of interest of equivalent high school students to continue their studies to PGPAUD is still classified as moderate to low. Starting from the level of interest in the world of early childhood education contained in statement items number 11-12. Interest in activities related to early childhood education is found in question numbers 13-14. The desire to contribute to child development is found in question item number 15. The interest in deepening knowledge about early childhood education is found in question items number 16-17. The desire to become a teacher at the early childhood education level is found in items number 18-19.

Graphic 3. Reasons high school students do not choose PGPAUD



The survey results show that students who do not choose the PGPAUD study program tend to be many, around 76%. The reasons expressed by students varied. Interest in teaching early childhood is lacking (15.4%), feel unsuitable for the role (3%), lack patience with early childhood (7.1%), choose an alternative field of study (20%), do not like interacting with young children (9%), desire to work (2.3%), concerns about salary (2%), feel it is not a passion (8%), choose not to study (0.5%), do not want to become a teacher (1.1%), not interested in the program (5.3%) and without clear reasons (2.3%).

Graphic 4. Reasons high school students choose PGPAUD



A total of 24% of students will choose the PGPAUD study program. The reasons that highlight students choosing the program include the desire to become a teacher in the field of early childhood (3%), the desire to gain insight into early childhood education (7%), interest in the program (3.5%), like interacting with early childhood (4%), see potential career prospects (3.5%), genuine interest in working with young children (2%), personal reasons (0.5%), and the desire to learn parenting science (0.5%). The decision to choose or not to choose a PGPAUD study program is influenced by individual interests, career goals, and individual characteristics.

3.2 Discussion

The decision to choose the UM PGPAUD Study Program certainly requires a lot of consideration and is not easy. Various factors need to be considered to be considered carefully. One important factor to consider is the interest and knowledge of prospective students about the study program to be chosen.

Knowledge of High School Students Equivalent About PGPAUD

The results of data analysis show that few prospective students know about the curriculum and learning materials of PGPAUD. High school students generally do not know in detail what curriculum and courses will be studied in the PGPAUD Study Program. They only have a general perception that this study program learns about how to educate and teach early childhood. This is not in accordance with the findings of previous research which states that early childhood education is a coaching effort for children from birth to six years of age which is carried out by providing stimulation in education to help physical growth and development so that children have readiness to enter further education (Fadhilah, 2021).

Most high school students do not know the facilities and supporting facilities provided by the UM PGPAUD Study Program to support the learning process of its students. The learning facilities used consist of lecture rooms equipped with modern learning devices in the form of LCD projectors. Each department or study program also has learning facilities according to the characteristics of each department which are managed in the laboratory of the department or study program. With adequate facilities and infrastructure, it can support student learning activities to be maximized. In accordance with previous research that adequate facilities and infrastructure in educational units will produce good outcomes for students (Masri et al., 2023). In previous research, if students are satisfied with academic services, lecture facilities and an impressive campus atmosphere, then students get satisfaction which in turn will recommend it to prospective students who will study (Pambudi & Hariandi, 2021). In knowledge related to the capacity of study programs, the level of student knowledge tends to be sufficient. This is in accordance with the rational choice theory which reveals that prospective students have access to information about the PGPAUD Study Program. Knowledge regarding career opportunities for the PGPAUD Study Program, the level of student knowledge tends to be sufficient. This is in accordance with the findings in previous research which states that PAUD teachers play an important role in the growth and development of children, being a PAUD teacher should have good skills in providing stimulation to children, guiding, and mobilizing children as well as possible (Husain and Kaharu, 2020).

This finding highlights the low level of knowledge of equivalent high school students about the PGPAUD Study Program at UM. In several indicators, the level of student knowledge tends to be low. One of the main factors is the lack of official information provided to students by schools and universities. Students tend to only know general information that they are looking for, such as capacity and tightness to enter the study program. In addition, the lack of interest and supervising teachers who do not pay special attention to students, so students tend not to have in-depth knowledge about the PGPAUD Study Program. Students may not have sufficient access to information about PGPAUD, leading to a lack of knowledge. This can have an impact on the lack of student interest in choosing this study program in college. Another implication is the lack of information provided to students regarding the curriculum and learning materials, learning facilities, as well as the abilities possessed by students of the study program.

Overall, from the results of data analysis, the knowledge of high school students about PGPAUD State University of Malang is still limited and not in-depth. This is due to the lack of information obtained by students from both the school and the university. Therefore, further efforts are needed to provide comprehensive information to high school students about the PGPAUD UM Study Program, so that they can have better knowledge and understanding before deciding to choose the study program.

Interest of High School Students Equivalent to Continue Their Studies at PGPAUD

According to Kahu & Nelson in (Fitria & Arifudin, 2020) that interest can be the cause of activities and participation in activities and interests are closely related to impulses, motives, and emotional reactions in the world of education. The results of the analysis show that the level of interest of high school students in early childhood education shows sufficient numbers. However, their interest in becoming educators is not in the realm of early childhood education. This is in line with previous research that the role of teachers has a strong influence on student perceptions, where when teachers play their role in teaching, theoretically as effective teachers always provide guidance and direction to their students, teachers' behavior as supervisors has a very strong influence on student perception (Zahara, 2021). Students' interest in deepening knowledge related to PAUD shows low interest. The level of desire to become a teacher at the early childhood education level shows a low number. However, they believe that the PGPAUD Study Program provides good career opportunities in the future. Students' perception of the guarantee of PGPAUD Study Program graduates is still not good enough. In accordance with previous research which stated that the average wage condition of PAUD teachers is much lower than the provincial minimum wage (UMP) in a number of regions which touches two million rupiah, this assumption makes students' interest in the PGPAUD Study Program tend to be low (Haristi et al., 2015).

Parents and teachers have influence and play an important role in determining students' interest in a study program. If parents or teachers do not support or promote the PGPAUD Study Program, then the possibility of student interest will be low. If the student's parents do not have a background in the field of teaching, then it is also likely that the student's interest will be low. This is in line with previous research which stated that parents are the reason for students to choose the PGPAUD Study Program. In accordance with previous research on the side of parents of students who encourage their children to go to college, one of the decision-making factors and recommendations comes from the advice of parents of prospective students (Pambudi & Hariandi, 2021).

The lack of information related to PGPAUD received by high school students is also a factor that affects students' interest in study programs. In line with previous research, the lack of maximum promotional activities, brand image, and lack of sustainable socialization have not been in line with the overall wishes and interests of students (Pambudi & Hariandi, 2021). Some students think that being a teacher is a big challenge. In terms of assignments and salaries given, it is not balanced to be a consideration for students when choosing PGPAUD. The welfare of the teaching profession in Indonesia is relatively low. The relatively low welfare of teachers affects the perception of students in determining the choice of study to become a teacher. The lack of knowledge about in-depth career prospects in this field may be the reason for the low interest in students' desire to become teachers at the Early Childhood Education (EC) level.

Simple Reasons for High School Students to Choose or Not Choose PGPAUD

Prospective students certainly have different considerations and reasons in choosing and deciding to continue their studies at the PGPAUD Study Program. The data collected is in the form of survey results related to the reasons why students choose or do not choose the PGPAUD Study Program. Out of a total of 168 respondents, 41 students expressed interest in choosing the PGPAUD Study Program as their study choice. The most common reason is the desire to gain insight into early childhood education. A total of 127 students stated that they had no interest in choosing the PGPAUD Study Program with the most reason being because they chose alternative field studies. This is likely influenced by the perception and environment around the student. Subroto in (Haristi, Setiasih, and Listiana, 2015) reveals that the good or bad perception of an educational institution in the eyes of the public will strongly determine personal pleasure in individuals. This is likely influenced by the way students see the environment around them. Subroto Dalam (Haristi, Setiasih, and Listiana, 2015) reveals that the public's perception of an educational institution is greatly influenced by personal pleasure, which motivates individuals to explore, follow developments, and continue to follow them.

The welfare of a teacher is still minimal, this makes high school students less interested in choosing to become teachers. Previous research stated that job prospects and earning high income are one of the considerations for prospective students to choose a major in a certain university (Tirta et al., 2021). The decision to choose or not to choose the PGPAUD Study Program is ultimately influenced by individual interests, career goals, and individual characteristics. In this finding, promotions and counseling related to the PGPAUD Study Program still need to be improved to attract and increase student interest. It is important to provide clear and thorough information about the benefits, career prospects, achievement tracks of alumni to PGPAUD students to increase knowledge and open student awareness.

4. Conclusion

The findings stated that the knowledge of high school students as a whole is said to be still in-depth related to the PGPAUD Study Program. Overall, the interest of high school students to continue their studies in the PGPAUD Study Program is still relatively low. The reason for high school students who will choose the UM PGPAUD Study Program is mostly because of the desire to gain insight into early childhood education. The reason for high school students who will not choose the UM PGPAUD Study Program is mostly due to the desire to choose studies in alternative fields and lack of interest in teaching early childhood.

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