

# Decision Making for Professions in Secondary Education Level Students (Survey of SMA, MA, and SMK in Masamba)

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## Abstract

This research was conducted driven by concerns over the high number of unemployed, especially educated unemployment, and the high social problems that occur in students / students of secondary education age and level in the country. The assumption is, students who have a decision to pursue a particular profession in the future, will not do negative things that damage their ideals. This study questions the abilities and insights of high school, Madrasah Aliyah, and vocational high school students in making decisions about professions and jobs. The research was conducted in Masamba City from January to March 2019. The research sample was obtained opportunistically as many as 400 students. Data collection was carried out using interview and questionnaire techniques. The results showed that the majority of high school (SMA), Madrasah Aliyah (MA), and Vocational High School (SMK) students did not have a clear decision about the profession to be involved in.

**Keywords:** *decision making, self discovery, profession, students, Vocational High School*

## Introduction

According to the Law on the National Education System (SISDIKNAS) Number 20 of 2003; Article 1, paragraph 1, defines education as "a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills they need, society, nation and state". This understanding is an expression of the teleological meaning of education, namely creating pious, moral and skilled citizens. To achieve this goal, a series of formal, non-formal and informal learning activities are organized with various levels ranging from early childhood education to higher education.

Senior High School (SMA), Vocational High School (SMK) and Madrasah Aliyah (MA) are one of the educational levels taken by Indonesian children in participating in formal learning activities. This level is a strategic and critical stage for the development and future of Indonesian children. At this level, Indonesian children are at the gate to enter the world of higher education which is a vehicle for establishing the professional integrity they desire. At this stage too, Indonesian children are prepared to enter the world of work which is full of challenges and competition.

Psychologically, this period is a period of maturity. At this stage the child begins to identify his profession and identity as a whole. Education experts such as Montessori and Charles Buhler (in Sugeng Santosa; 2000), state that at that age a person is in a period of 'self-discovery'. Specifically, Montessori mentions the age of 12-18 years, while Charles Buhler mentions the

age of 13-19 years. One of the most important aspects of 'self-discovery' in children at this stage is work and profession. Psychologically they begin to identify the type of work and profession that suits their talents, interests, intelligence and potential. On the other hand, empirically we see the fact that these students face various serious problems such as: brawls, and abuse of psychotropic drugs. In addition, students are often reported by the media to commit acts of violence, irregular relationships, and wasting a lot of time.

This condition gave birth to various direct implications for students as well as indirect implications for the social and cultural environment of the nation. The impact on students as an implication of the behavior mentioned above is low academic achievement. Meanwhile, the impact on the nation's social and cultural environment from the behavior of the students mentioned above is the high number of student unemployment and the low competitiveness of the nation in the midst of other nations in the world.

The low level of competitiveness (as has been understood by the public) is influenced by the low quality of Indonesia's human resources. One indicator of the low quality of Indonesia's human resources is through the Human Development Index (HDI) number issued by UNDP, one of the United Nations development organizations. The rating list issued always places Indonesia on the order of 105, 104, and 103. This rating is below the ratings of other Asean countries.

Based on statistical data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS-RI; 2002) the number of open unemployment in the country is 9,132,104 people. Of this number, 41.2% (3,763,971 people) are high school graduates (secondary education level), Diploma, Academy and University or 'educated unemployed'. Among the number of open unemployed, 2,651,809 people are classified as Hopeless of Job (feeling unsure of getting a job); 436,164 of them are high school graduates, diplomas, academies, and universities.

The data and context described above show that there are various problems with students at the secondary education level, namely Senior High School (SMA), Vocational High School (SMK) and Madrasah Aliyah (MA) in the country. These problems (if studied further) relate to the learning system such as: curriculum, media, learning resources, and teaching staff; or the environment in which they learn such as the culture and climate of the school and the macro environment in which the children are located.

In general, the purpose of this study is to determine the ability of students at the secondary education level, namely: Senior High School (SMA), Vocational High School (SMK) and Madrasah Aliyah (MA) in making decisions about professions. In particular, this study wants to know the choices (preferences) of students after graduating at the secondary education level. Will they go straight to work or continue on to the Higher Education Level. Do they already have choices related to professions, occupations, colleges and course institutions in accordance with their choice of profession.

#### a. Decision-making

In simple terms, decision making is an event that always occurs in every aspect of human life. This is a logical consequence of the dynamics of the development of life which is always changing and very complex. In this context, the decision-making process is a form of human response to the environment. The decisions taken by humans will be the beginning for the determination of the next life. And so on, it is interwoven dialectically between the decision-making process and the vast and complex environment of human life.

Fred Luthans and Keith Davis (1996) suggest that 'Decision making is almost universally defined as choosing between alternatives. This means that in general the understanding of decision making is choosing between various alternatives. This understanding is reinforced by the opinion of Garry Deslerr (2001) that 'Decision is a choice made between available alternatives'. From another point of view, it is also stated that 'Decision making is the process of developing and analyzing alternatives and choosing from among them' (Garry Desler, 2001).

Way K. Hay and Cecil G. Miskel (1982) stated that decision making is a cycle of activities that involve rational thinking both individually and in groups at all levels and forms of organization. This opinion mentions rational thinking as important. Rational thinking is the basis for making decisions, because the choice of various available alternatives is based on plus-minus considerations, or the benefits and consequences that accompany each choice. Every choice has consequences. And rationality plays a major role in finding these consequences before the decision is implemented.

From some of the definitions mentioned above, there is one key word that is important to understand the meaning of decision making, namely choosing. To choose means to determine one thing from several things that exist or are available. Something chosen is determined by consideration of individual tastes and rationality (Herbert A. Simon, 1997). Usually, taste and rationality refer to things that please or benefit individuals and society.

#### b. Profession

In simple terms, a profession can be defined as a job based on certain skills and expertise. Carter V. Good (1973), explains that the type of work with professional qualifications has certain characteristics, namely: requiring special preparation or education for the prospective perpetrator, professional skills based on standard standards set by professional organizations or other authorized organizations, the profession get recognition from society and the state with all its civil effects (Carter V. Good, 1973).

Professional experts in Indonesia as quoted by Nyoman Dentes compile the main characteristics of the profession, namely as follows: (1). Has a crucial social function or significance; (2). The demand for mastery of skills to a certain level; (3). The process of possessing these skills is based on the use of scientific methods; (4). Have a clear, explicit and systematic body of disciplines; and (5). Mastery of the profession requires education at the tertiary level (Journal of Education and Culture, 2002). Based on some of the opinions mentioned above, the most important meaning of the profession is the existence of skills as the basis of life obtained through education, and aims to help the community. This understanding implies that not all jobs can be categorized as professions. But every profession is always in the form of work.

#### c. The Urgency of Professional Decision Making

Based on the previous description of the profession, it can be understood that the profession is one of the most important and primary matters for the survival, dignity and worth of individuals. This is because the profession is related to work, livelihood, and income and welfare. A person's life can have a meaningful meaning only with the profession that is involved. Without a profession, one's life has no value.

Before a profession is undertaken, first a personal decision-making process occurs, namely the activity of thinking, studying and weighing several types of professions. This is a professional decision-making process. In the individual's life span, there is a stage in which the individual's

developmental stages consciously encourage him to choose a profession, and/or a job. This stage according to Anne W. Gormly and David M. Brodzisky (1993) is called the decision years stage; the decision-making period. Biologically, this is in the age range of 18-40 years. This period is also known as the early-childhood phase. In this phase, a person begins to enter the world of work, profession, and career.

Furthermore, Gormly and Brodzisky (1993) examine human life based on a 'lifespan perspective'; namely a view that believes that the development that occurs throughout human life is the result of the interaction of factors: physical, biological, social, historical, cultural and psychological. They divide the stages of human life into: beginning years, exploring years, learning years, transition years, decision years, reassessment years, golden years, and final years. Each stage is a continuity and sequence from the previous stage.

Based on the lifespan perspective, jobs, livelihoods and professions exist and begin to develop at the stages of learning years, transition years, and decision years and so on. In the learning years stage, individuals begin to realize the importance of roles and work. This is at the age of 6-12 years. Therefore, this stage from a psychological perspective is called middle-childhood. Furthermore, after learning years is the transition stage (transition years) at the age of 12-18 years. It is also known as the Adolescence period. At this stage people begin to develop job skills, work part time, and begin to explore and plan careers. After this stage is completed, then a person enters the decision year stage.

Based on the description above, it can be seen that the level of Secondary Education or the period at High School (SMA), Madrasah Aliyah (MA), and Vocational High School (SMK) which are in the age range of 16-18 years is the end of the transition period (transition years). and the beginning of the decision year (decision years). Therefore, professional decision making at this time is important.

#### d. Relevant Study Results

Dari berbagai referensi, salah satu hasil studi yang relevan dengan penelitian ini adalah seperti dilakukan oleh Badeni (Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2002). Studi tersebut meneliti tentang Relevansi Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK) dengan kebutuhan pasar kerja di Indonesia. Penelitian dilakukan pada enam provinsi di Indonesia dengan jumlah sampel sebesar 720 orang alumni SMK. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa kesesuaian antara jurusan yang diambil ketika bersekolah di SMK dengan bidang pekerjaan setelah tamat, sangat bervariasi.

## Method

The research was conducted by survey and aims to determine the ability of students at the secondary education level in making decisions about the profession to be involved. This research was conducted in several senior high schools (SMA), Vocational High Schools (SMK) and Madrasah Aliyah (MA) third grade in Masamba. The study was conducted from January to March 2019. The sample was selected opportunistically as many as 400 students. The number consists of 96 Madrasah Aliyah (MA) students, 79 Vocational High School (SMK) students, and the rest are High School (SMA) students. Meanwhile, the parents of students (as respondents) who were reached were 52 people. Data collection was carried out using interview and questionnaire techniques. Triangulation is carried out to obtain mature data and information. Triangulation in this study was carried out in the form of checking the data obtained through

questionnaires with information through interviews, both from and to students as well as to parents and educators and education staff at schools. The data analysis technique used descriptive-analytical.

The opportunistic sampling technique used in this study refers to the opinion of Michael Quinn Patton who stated 'Opportunistic sampling is following new leads during field work, taking advantage of the unexpected flexibility' (1990). That is, opportunistic sampling is following new directions while in the field, taking advantage of unexpected flexibility. In this study, students and those who become samples and respondents are those who can be reached by researchers and are in accordance with the characteristics of the sample and research objectives.

With qualitative methods as mentioned above, this research has several limitations and weaknesses. The limitations that are felt by the researcher are the questionnaire instrument and the sampling technique used.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Decision Making Ability**

The main indicator used to determine the ability to make decisions is the preference of work and profession after graduating from secondary education. Based on the questionnaire data, it can be seen that: 35.75% of the third grade students of SMA/MA/SMK already have a choice of jobs and professions; while the other 64.25% do not have a choice of profession and work. Students who have not made a decision for the profession consist of those who have good academic achievements and some who have moderate academic achievements.

They plan to continue their studies to college, take skills courses, and some others immediately look for work. As many as 54% of students surveyed plan to continue their studies to college; 8.9% plan to take a skills course; and another 37.1% are planning to apply / find work. However, not all students who plan to continue their studies to higher education have made a decision about which college and department or faculty to choose. As many as 52.3% of students (who returned the questionnaire) did not have a choice of college. The rest already have a choice.

The data above shows that the majority of school children at the secondary education level studied do not have a choice of jobs and professions to be involved in. The inability to choose a job and profession is caused by several things, including: (1). Lack of insight and knowledge of children about the world of professions and work; (2). Low parental attention to the child's choice of profession, and (3). Weak attention from schools where children learn about the world of work and professions and careers.

### **Preferences of third graders of SMA/MA**

Information on the respondents' low insight and knowledge about professions and occupations, apart from being seen in the table above, can also be identified through the incoherence between the choice of work and the choice of disciplines to be chosen in higher education. The selected occupations (as shown in Table 1, number 5), show the majority of Civil Servants (PNS). Meanwhile, the selected disciplines are not in accordance with the characteristics of civil servants' work.

From the data (Table 2), it can be seen that the disciplines: Economics, Journalism, Information Technology, Medicine, and Management, were chosen by the majority of respondents. If the percentage is calculated, then more than 50% of the majors chosen are suitable for non-PNS jobs. This analysis shows that there is an incoherence between the choice of discipline and the choice of work.

Some parents met at the research location stated that they did not know what profession, occupation and career their children wanted to pursue. Most parents who are respondents, namely 71% of 52 parents do not know their children's aspirations. They are parents who have low knowledge and insight about the world of work and profession. In addition, heavy economic pressure, and busy making a living make them not have time to talk about their children's work and professions. Some parents who have been educated already know what profession their child will be in.

Schools where children study do not provide sufficient insight into work and professions. Most teachers and school leaders are very busy with teaching tasks. Meanwhile, the Guidance and Extension or Counseling (BP/K) service delivery system is not yet fully available. The function of the Guidance and Extension or Counseling (BP/K) teacher has not run optimally. They have not directed their students systematically to make decisions about professions, occupations and careers.

## Conclusion

From this description it can be concluded that:

1. In general, students at the secondary education level (SMA, MA, SMK) which is 64.25%, have not been able to make decisions for the profession, job and career they will be involved in.
2. In general, students at the secondary education level (SMA, MA, SMK) have not obtained sufficient insight, knowledge and information to make decisions about professions, occupations, and careers.
3. In general, parents, educators and education staff at the secondary education level have not provided students with relevant insights, knowledge and information about the world of work and professions.

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