

## The Interest of High School Students in Study Programs in College

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the interest of students in high school in the study program at the university. This study uses a survey research approach. The research was conducted in Buton Regency. There were 292 participants taken from high school. Primary data was collected through questionnaires, and secondary data was taken from the literature review. The data analysis technique used is the percentage technique and cross-tabulation. The results of the study found several majors that high school students were interested in if they wanted to continue their education in college. The majors are Information Technology, Accounting, Civil Engineering, Computers, Marine and Fisheries, Management, Development Economics, Forestry and Environment, Fisheries and Marine Affairs. The choice of majors reflects the choice of students according to the resources and needs of Buton Regency. Students know about job opportunities that have great opportunities to absorb labour. The results of the study also have implications for the understanding that universities wishing to develop and establish new study programs must be based on regional development needs

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

For most high school graduates, the prospect of entering college is seen as a new and exciting experience. However, for some students, the process can be very stressful and tiring. There are so many things to consider because for most, it will likely be one of the most important life decisions they make. They often choose majors according to their level and job prospects. The choice of college major also plays an important role in determining the future income of a college graduate. Students make their major college decisions in part because of the future income streams associated with different majors (Arcidiacono, Hotz, & Kang, 2012). However, some students choose majors because they are interested and do not pay attention to financial income if they have graduated (Beffy, Fougère, & Maurel, 2012).

In addition, the existence of universities is also a consideration for students. Therefore, universities often develop study programs, either opening new study programs or improving the quality of existing majors. This is done to face various competitions with other universities and also to attract students' interest.

For students, choosing a college major is the same as choosing a path at a crossroads. The major chosen, often a one-time decision, decides several aspects of a student's career, leading them to specialize in their area of professional interest. This means that the choice of majors has an impact on educational and post-education goals, academic success, limited job opportunities, determining financial returns and appropriate social status (Al-Rfou, 2013). In addition, the choice of majors can also be influenced by the people around students (Gallacher, Skuba, & Al-Bahri, 2010). Students also often determine their choice of study in college according to their personality characteristics (Balsamo et al., 2012; Wen et al., 2021). In addition, when supporting students on their journey toward majoring, it is important to ask them about what factors influenced them to choose a particular field (Vu, Harshbarger, Crow, & Henderson, 2019). Ultimately, a student makes a major decision to define a college experience to be more successful academically, personally, and professionally (Freedman, 2013).

Many influencing factors influence the choice of majors by students. These factors include interest in the department, peer pressure, family pressure, academic ability, the reputation of the department, job availability, job salary, prestige of the department, work in the public or private sector, and others (Aldosary & Assaf, 1996; Irmaya et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the school should provide constructive motivation to students to continue their education to a higher level, and the school must provide complete information about their students (Khadijah, 2017; Harackiewicz et al., 2016). Thus, from previous research, it can be seen that the selection of majors made by high school students is influenced by various factors, both from themselves and external factors, such as the potential of a region.

Buton Regency has the potential for fisheries and marine resources as well as large but also faces the problem of agricultural development, which is very complex in its management in all branches of life with an increasing trend. Therefore, the presence of universities in the regions as partners of local governments in realizing the ideals of regional development and national development is very important. Existing universities certainly read the opportunity to start new study programs or majors and improve the quality of existing studies. However, to answer these challenges, it is necessary to study students' interest in majors in higher education. Things that can be achieved from these fields so that majors in this field can not only meet the needs but can also be the main capital for graduates in facing reliable human resources in all things in the era of globalization. Because in the era of globalization foreigners can fill job vacancies in Indonesia. Universities as study institutions that prepare graduates to become experts in fields that are by the potential of natural resources, especially in Buton Regency, are needed. These conditions are the basis for this research.

Thus, from previous research with all the problems that have been identified, this research gap focuses on studying the level of interest of high school students in the study program they want to take if they continue their education. So, this research produces the knowledge that students need through their views regarding the desire for future jobs and also the needs of the workforce in Buton Regency. So, this research can find out the appropriate knowledge at the level of student needs in Buton Regency, it can also be in accordance with the potential of the region.

The purpose of this study was to determine the interest of high school students in study programs at universities in the Buton Regency. The results of this study are also expected to be used and useful for universities as a consideration in developing majors in Buton Regency

## 2. METHODS

This study uses survey research as an approach to researching so that readers can critically evaluate the suitability of conclusions from studies using survey research. Survey research can use a variety of data collection methods with the most common being questionnaires and interviews (Brant, Haas-Haseman, Wei, Wickham, & Ponto, 2015). So, this study conducted a survey related to the interest of students in high school in the choice of study program at a college or university. The research was conducted in Buton Regency. Participants were taken from Senior High School, Vocational High School or Madrasah Aliyah students at Buton Regency. Following are the student data that has been surveyed;

Table 1. Participants of Study

| Criteria       | Total | %      |
|----------------|-------|--------|
| Continuing     | 292   | 74,87  |
| Not Continuing | 98    | 25,13  |
| Total          | 390   | 100,00 |

Participants in this study amounted to 292 (74.87%) students who have an interest in continuing their studies in college. Primary data were collected through questionnaires distributed to students. The questionnaire used is open so that the research is expected to provide complete information. To further ensure the integrity of the information obtained, primary data collection was also carried out through interviews with school principals to find out the map of students in schools who would continue their education. While the secondary data is taken from the literature review. The data analysis technique used is the percentage technique and cross-tabulation. Percentage analysis is a method used to see how much the frequency of respondents' answers and phenomena in the field are. Cross tabulation is the easiest way to see associations across multiple data by calculating percentages (Creswell, 2012).

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

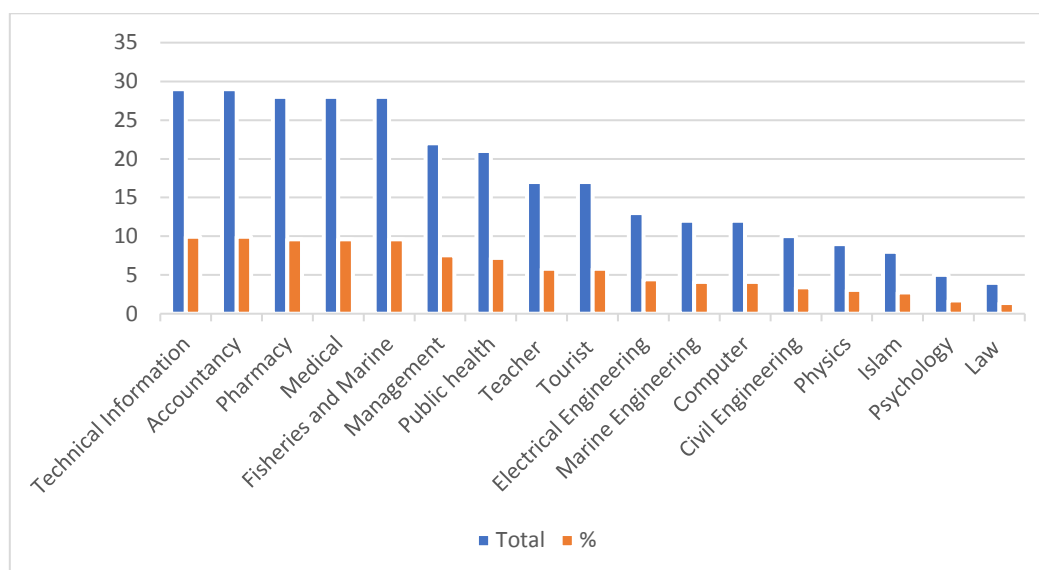
The results of the questionnaire data analysis are presented in the following tables;

Table 2. Reasons for Respondents' Continuing Education in College

| Statement                   | Respondent | %      |
|-----------------------------|------------|--------|
| Students get decent jobs    | 206        | 70,55  |
| Adding knowledge and skills | 78         | 26,71  |
| Follow friend's invitation  | 8          | 2,74   |
| Total                       | 292        | 100,00 |

Table 1 shows that of the 292 respondents who stated that they would continue their education at tertiary institutions, the majority gave the reason that they continued their education at college in the hope of getting a decent job after completing their education at the university. Another reason is that students can increase their knowledge and skills as the main capital in finding work. The two things are not different. It can be understood that higher education is still the foundation of hope for the community to obtain a decent life. People still think that college graduates are the main capital in finding and creating jobs. Therefore, universities to be established in Buton Regency must be universities that can truly answer the expectations of the community.

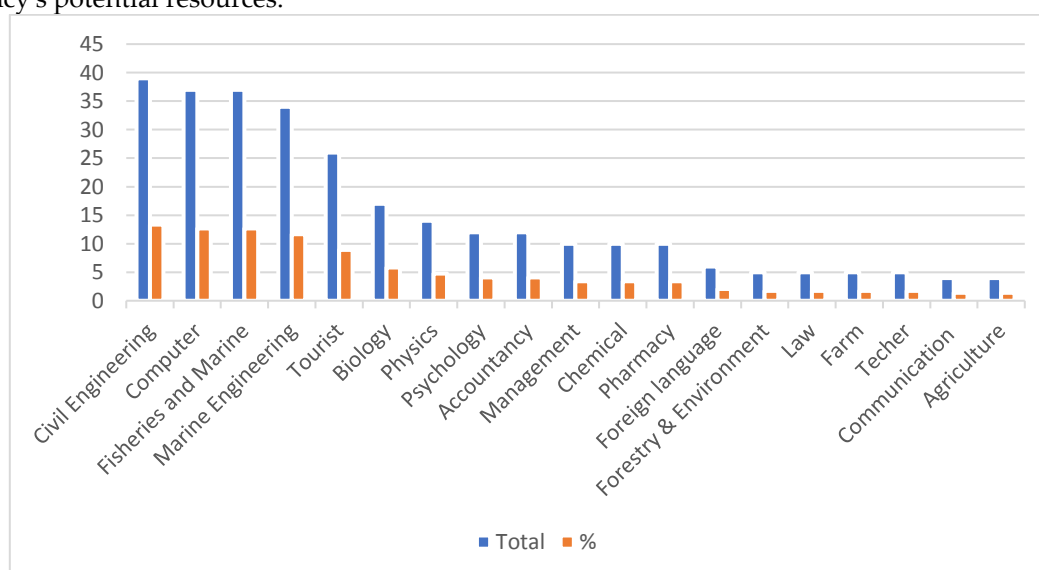
While students are interested in study programs at larger colleges in Informatics Engineering, Accounting, Pharmacy, Medicine, Fisheries and Marine study programs.



Graph 1. The First Choice Major for Entrance to College in Buton Regency

Graph 1. shows the respondents' first choice of majors or study programs. From the results of interviews with 292 respondents, there are 17 majors/study programs. The majors/study programs that are most in-demand by respondents in Choice I are the Department of Information Technology and Accounting, each of which is requested by 29 respondents or 9.93 %, in the second rank, there are three majors, namely Pharmacy, Medicine, Fisheries and Marine each as many as 28 student respondents or 9.59 %. Furthermore, in the third rank is the Department or Management study program, which is attended by 22 student respondents or 7.53 %. In the fourth place, the Department of Public Health was occupied by 21 student respondents or 7.19 %. Then on the fifth rank, there are two majors or study programs, namely Teacher Training and Tourism, each of which is of interest to as many as 17 student respondents or 5.82 %. Thus there are nine majors or study programs as excellent.

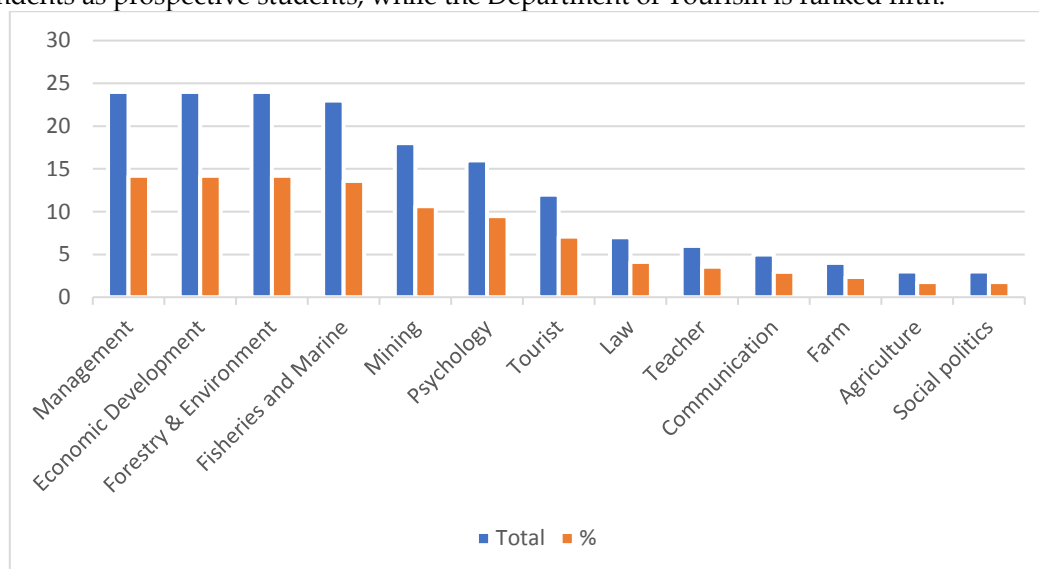
Of the nine majors or superior study programs, two majors are by the potential of Buton Regency's resources, namely the Department of Fisheries and Marine Affairs, which is ranked second, and the Department of Tourism which is ranked fifth. Based on the main choice, it is known that respondents have concerns and are prospective in seeing the future based on the condition of Buton Regency's potential resources.



Graph 2. The Second Choice Major for Entrance to College in Buton Regency

Graph 2 shows that in choice II the majors of interest by student respondents were 19 majors. Of the 19 majors, the first rank was occupied by the Civil Engineering major with as many as 39 student

respondents or 13.36 %, the two Computer majors and the Fisheries and marine department each were in demand by 37 student respondents or 12.67 %, the third rank was occupied by the Department of Naval Architecture and Shipbuilding Engineering as many as 34 student respondents or 11.64 %, and the fifth rank of the Department of Tourism attracted 26 student respondents or 8.90 %, then the fifth rank was the Biology major of interest as many as 17 student respondents or 7.82 %. In option II, it appears that the Department of Fisheries and Marine Affairs is in the second rank of interest by respondents as prospective students, while the Department of Tourism is ranked fifth.



Graph 3. The Third Choice Major for Entrance to College in Buton Regency

Graph 3 shows that there are only 169 student respondents as prospective new students who have a choice of majors up to option III. Of the 169 student respondents, 13 majors or study programs are included in option III. Furthermore, of the 13 majors or study programs, three majors are in demand as the first rank, namely the Department of Management, the Department of Development Economics, and the Department of Forestry & Environment, each of which is of interest to 24 student respondents or 14.20 %. In the second rank, there are 23 student respondents or 13.61 % of fishery and marine study programs/programs of interest. Furthermore, in the third rank, the Mining Department was in demand by 18 student respondents or 10.65 %. Then in the fourth place in the Psychology department, with 16 student respondents or 9.47 %, and in the fifth place, the Tourism department is interested 12 student respondents or 7.10 %. Thus, in choice III, it shows that the Department of Fisheries and Marine Affairs, and the Department of Tourism are included in the majors or superior study programs.

When viewed from the aspect of natural resource potential, the Department of Fisheries and Marine Affairs, and the Department of Tourism are majors that are relevant to the development of the natural resource potential of Buton Regency. The Department of Fisheries and Marine Affairs is very important because it is related to fisheries and marine management both from the aspect of resource management, fishing technology and product processing, fisheries cultivation, including tourism development, especially marine tourism, as well as marine environmental management to preserve the marine environment.

This finding shows that the most popular majors from options one to three are Information Technology, Civil Engineering, and Management. Information Technology is certainly the first choice that is most in-demand because today's life cannot be separated from technological advances. Meanwhile, civil engineering and management are still the most popular choices because of the needs and job opportunities in Buton Regency. These findings illustrate that their choice of interest in majors at college is based on students' knowledge and understanding of job prospects in the industry or business world today. So, the data findings illustrate that the job market has become a major factor for students choosing majors. However, the study of the results of this research data needs to be reviewed

from the aspect of the curriculum concept and the industry perspective on the needs of university graduates. Previous research has also explained this condition (Odia & Ogiedu, 2013). Rababah (2016) has described the influence of family and peers on students' choice of major. So, advisors who can come from parents, peers, or teachers can be advisors to students in making decisions and majoring choices (Young Jones, Burt, Dixon, & Hawthorne, 2013). Parental consent is also the most important determining factor in the choice of major for students. However, male and female students have different orientations in determining the choice of majors (Zafar, 2013).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The results of the data analysis concluded that students want to continue their education in college to get a decent job. The graphic data shows that the first choice of majors that are of interest to students in the Department of Information Technology and Accounting. The second option is majoring in Civil, Computer, Marine and Fisheries Engineering. The third option is Management, Development Economics, Forestry and Environment, Fisheries and Marine Affairs. The choices that are in great demand by students have been on the needs of the region in Buton Regency and the resources needed. Students know about job opportunities that have great opportunities to absorb labour. So, it can be seen that universities established in an area must pay attention to the level of needs of the business world and also the development of the region because students also know the level of regional development needs. The results of the study also have implications for the understanding that universities wishing to develop and establish new study programs must be based on regional development needs. In addition, universities can also develop study programs according to the needs of globalization. However, this research is still limited to analyzing the level of student interest in majors in college when they want to continue their studies. So, this research can still be developed by further researchers and related to the goals of students continuing their studies, the need for labour in the field or educational issues related to the needs of the business world.

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