

Youth Voices: Perspectives of SMAN 64 East Jakarta Students on Choosing College Majors

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Abstract. This study looks at how twelfth-grade students at SMAN 64 East Jakarta think about choosing their college majors. The research wants to find out what internal and external things affect how students decide, like what they are interested in, if their parents support them, what their friends think, what jobs they want, and what they see on the internet. A qualitative descriptive method was used, which included talking in detail with some students and school counselors, as well as watching and reading some documents. The study found that what students like and how well they know themselves are very important in deciding what to choose, but these things are often affected by outside pressures like what their family expects and what their friends talk about. Also, online places like social media and university websites give a lot of information that makes students feel stronger about what they want or even changes their minds. The study says that picking a major is hard and involves feelings, social stuff, and information. So, schools and families should work together to give good advice and easy-to-find resources to help students make smart and independent choices about what to study.

Keywords: student perspectives, major selection, parental influence, peer support, career readiness, digital information

Introduction

Choosing a college major is a very important choice for high school students, especially seniors. This choice affects their education and career, and it shows how well they know their own interests, skills, and possibilities. Zakiyatul Masriah et al. (2020) said that when students understand themselves well, they make better academic decisions.

Besides what motivates them personally, outside influences are also important. Eccles and Wigfield (2021) pointed out that motivation and feeling capable are key to choosing a major that fits students' goals. But students often struggle to balance what they want with what their parents or society expect. responsiveness, but few have directly linked internal communication strategies to service quality, especially in the media and information transportation sector.

Family support, friends, and school counselors are major outside influences on students' decisions. Rahmawati and Kurniawan (2022) discovered that parents' opinions often matter more than students' own interests when choosing a major. González Amador et al. (2022) added that friends and counselors affect students through everyday talks and casual advice. Also, the increase in online information, especially on the internet and social media, has greatly changed how students find information about

academics and careers. Febriana and Yuliana (2023) said that 72% of students look for information about possible majors online before deciding.

Therefore, this study will look closely at how students at SMAN 64 East Jakarta view the process of choosing a college major, and what internal and external factors affect their choices. By understanding what they say, this research hopes to help create better career guidance that focuses on students and includes everyone.

Methods

Type of Research Approach

In the study called “Youth Voices: Perspectives of SMAN 64 East Jakarta Students on Choosing College Majors”, the researchers used a qualitative descriptive method with a case study design. They chose this method to deeply understand how students view and go through the process of picking college majors. The qualitative design let the researcher find out not just what choices students make, but also how and why they make them within their school and family settings.

By focusing on a specific group – 12th-grade students at SMAN 64 East Jakarta – the study wanted to find unique trends, reasons, and problems in how they make academic decisions. This method also helped gather detailed stories through interviews and watching, giving useful insights into both individual views and wider social influences that affect students' choices for college.

Tabel 1: Profile of Research Informants

For this study, the people we talked to were 12th-grade students from SMAN 64 East Jakarta. These students were choosing which college major they wanted to study. We picked these students carefully using purposive sampling. This was to make sure we got different viewpoints based on their academic tracks (science and social studies), their family's financial situation, how motivated they were, and if they took part in school counseling. We wanted to hear from many different students to understand how complicated it is for high schoolers to make these decisions.

In the end, we interviewed 6 students and 1 school counselor. Each student wanted to study something different, like Medicine, Pharmacy, Psychology, Management, Communication Science, and Information Technology. The counselor gave us information about what she generally sees students do and how they act when getting ready for college.

The table below shows some details about the students we interviewed:

Code	Initials	Academic Track	Gender	Chosen Major	Primary Motivation
R1	A.L.	Science (IPA)	Female	Medicine	Interest & parental support
R2	B.N.	Science (IPA)	Male	Information Technology	Talent & digital trend
R3	C.D.	Science (IPA)	Female	Pharmacy	Childhood aspiration
R4	D.S.	Social (IPS)	Female	Psychology	Desire to help others
R5	E.M.	Social (IPS)	Male	Management	Broad career prospects
R6	F.T	Social (IPS)	Male	Communication Science	Passion for media

G1	Ms. N.	-	-	Guidance Counselor	Overview of student decision trends.
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Having many different kinds of people share their experiences allowed the study to look at the personal, school-related, and social things that affect how young people choose what to study in college.

Research Location and Subjects

This research took place at SMAN 64 East Jakarta, a government-run high school in the Cipayung area of East Jakarta. The school has both Science (IPA) and Social Studies (IPS) programs and is known for its helpful guidance and counseling services. SMAN 64 was chosen for this study because its students come from various academic backgrounds and have different financial situations and goals. These qualities made it a good place to study how students think and what they experience when choosing their college majors.

The people in the study were 6 students from the 12th grade, from both the IPA and IPS programs. These students were specifically chosen because they were prepared for their careers, involved in the school's career programs, willing to share their thoughts, and currently deciding on their higher education plans. Also, 1 school guidance counselor was included to give information about student patterns, counseling services, and outside influences.

The study happened between August and October 2025. This is an important time because most 12th-grade students start seriously thinking about their college choices. This timing allowed the researcher to record real thoughts, doubts, and hopes related to choosing a college major.

Operational Definition

In this study, some important ideas are explained to make sure everything is clear. When we talk about "youth voices," we mean what 12th-grade students at SMAN 64 East Jakarta think, feel, and hope for when they decide what to study in college. It's about how they actively share what they like and what's important to them. "College major selection" is how students choose what they want to study, based on what they enjoy, what they're good at, what their parents say, what their friends think, and what jobs they want in the future. "Internal factors" are things inside students that affect what they want to study, like their own drive, understanding of themselves, skills, and belief in themselves. On the other hand, "external factors" are things outside of students, like advice from parents, talks with friends, help from school counselors, and information from the internet or university events. Finally, "career readiness" means how prepared students feel to make choices about their education and jobs, including knowing what they want to do and what study options are available. These explanations will help us understand and look at the information we gather in this research.

Types and Sources of Data

In the study called "Suara Remaja: Perspektif Siswa SMAN 64 Jakarta Timur terhadap Pemilihan Jurusan di Perguruan Tinggi", the researchers used two main kinds of information: primary and secondary. The primary information came from detailed talks with 12th-grade students and a guidance counselor at SMAN 64 Jakarta Timur. These talks recorded the students' real views, emotions, and reasons for picking their college majors. The secondary information included different supporting materials, such as school papers about academic help, counseling notes, and online sources like university websites, social media posts, and educational online talks. Students often looked at these resources when deciding what to study. Together, both kinds of information gave a complete picture of the inner reasons and outside factors that affect students' choices of major when they go on to higher education.

Data Collection Techniques

In the study called “Youth Voices: Perspectives of SMAN 64 Jakarta Timur Students on Choosing College Majors”, data were gathered using three main methods: detailed interviews, watching students, and looking at documents. The main method was doing interviews with 12th-grade students and a school advisor, using a flexible question format. This helped the researcher to look into what the students thought, how they felt, and how they made decisions in a way that was both adaptable and specific.

The interviews focused on main topics like what they liked, what their families expected, how their friends influenced them, and how they found out about college. Students were told to talk freely, which let the researcher record their real thoughts and unique school experiences.

Besides interviews, the researcher also watched some career advice meetings at school. This gave background information on how students used the advice programs and how career information was given and understood.

Finally, the researcher looked at documents to back up what they found, including school records, advice materials, and online content like university websites and social media posts. These documents showed the bigger picture of the information that students used when thinking about their college majors. This mix of methods made sure the data was detailed, reliable, and showed both personal and school views.

Data Analysis Technique

The information in the study called “Youth Voices: Perspectives of SMAN 64 Jakarta Timur Students on Choosing College Majors” was analyzed using Miles and Huberman’s interactive model (2018). This model has three main parts: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

Data reduction was done by picking out, arranging, and making simpler the original data that was gathered through interviews, observations, and documents. Only information that related to what the research was trying to find out—like what motivated students, what affected them from the outside, and how they made decisions—was kept for further study.

Next, the data display part involved showing the simplified data as a story, along with quotes from people who gave information, summaries of themes, and tables when needed. This step helped the researcher see how internal and external things were connected in affecting the students’ choices.

Finally, the researcher moved on to drawing conclusions and checking them, where patterns that kept showing up were understood and confirmed. Triangulation was used by comparing ideas from different sources of data (interviews, observations, and documents) to make sure the results were consistent and believable. The whole process was done repeatedly, going on until the data was saturated, which means no new ideas were coming up.

This organized way let the researcher really explore how students' voices show their experiences and how complex it is to pick a college major when social, personal, and digital things affect them.

Research Instruments

In the study called “Youth Voices: Perspectives of SMAN 64 East Jakarta Students on Choosing College Majors”, the main tool used for research was a guide for semi-structured interviews. This guide was made to look into important parts of how students make decisions, like what they are interested in, what their families expect, how their friends affect them, what they learn from the internet, and how the school guidance services help them. The interview guide had open questions that let students share their experiences and thoughts fully, while also letting the researcher ask more questions based on their answers. Some example questions were: “What makes you want to choose your major? ”, “How do

your parents affect your decision? ", and "What information do you look for when thinking about university options? " Along with the interviews, the researcher also used a form to write down important actions and talks during counseling at school. This helped give background information and more understanding of the guidance the students received. Together, these tools helped gather detailed and useful data that matched the study's goals.

Data Validity

To make sure the information in the study "Youth Voices: Perspectives of SMAN 64 East Jakarta Students on Choosing College Majors" was correct, several methods were used. The main method was triangulation, which meant comparing data from interviews, observations, and documents. Information was gathered from different places—students, a school counselor, and school documents—to find similar patterns and ideas. Also, interview summaries were shared with the students to make sure their statements and the researcher's understanding of them were accurate. This helped to show that the results truly represented the students' opinions and experiences. Spending a lot of time collecting data also made the study more trustworthy, because the researcher built a good relationship with the students, which led to more honest answers. Lastly, the researcher kept notes to record their thoughts and observations, which helped to reduce bias when analyzing the data. These methods together made the study's results more reliable and trustworthy.

Result and Discussion

Overview of Informants

The students in this study were in 12th grade at SMAN 64 East Jakarta and were picking their college majors. Six students were chosen using purposive sampling to make sure there was a mix of academic tracks, genders, socioeconomic backgrounds, and major interests. The students were from both the Science (IPA) and Social Studies (IPS) programs. Their chosen majors included Medicine, Pharmacy, Psychology, Communication Science, Management, and Information Technology. Each student had their own reasons for their choices, like personal interest, advice from parents, or ideas from social media and friends. Besides the students, a school guidance counselor was interviewed to give the school's point of view on career guidance and to see general trends in student actions. Having different kinds of students and a counselor helped in getting a complete picture of what affects students' choices about their education.

Data Collection and Processing

In the study called "Youth Voices: Perspectives of SMAN 64 East Jakarta Students on Choosing College Majors", data was gathered through interviews, watching students, and looking at documents. The researcher interviewed six 12th-grade students and one guidance counselor separately. This helped the researcher understand what the students went through, why they made certain choices, and what problems they faced when deciding on a college major. The researcher also watched counseling sessions at school. They took notes on how students interacted, how interested they seemed, and what career help was available. Documents like counseling materials, brochures, and social media posts were also collected as extra information to back up the study's results.

After gathering the data, all interview recordings were written down word for word. Then, the written data was coded and sorted into themes using the Miles and Huberman model. This meant making the data smaller by finding the main ideas, showing the data in stories and tables, and making conclusions by finding repeating patterns and checking them through triangulation. The data was processed constantly and repeatedly to make sure it was accurate, consistent, and showed the students' views in detail.

Research Findings

This study found that students chose their college majors based on a mix of what they wanted and what others expected of them. Most students said they were very interested in a specific subject, like medicine, psychology, or technology. They felt it was important to study something they were good at

and enjoyed. But what they wanted was often affected by outside forces, especially what their parents and friends thought. Some students said they felt torn between what they liked and what their parents thought was a "safe" or "impressive" choice.

The study also found that getting information was very important in making decisions. Students often used social media, YouTube, and university websites to learn about different majors, watch videos of people talking about their careers, and think about job opportunities. But not all students were equally skilled at using technology or had the same access to it. This meant some students got better information than others. School counselors were helpful, but students said these services were often too broad or not offered often enough to meet their specific needs.

In general, the study shows that students know it's important to make their own informed decisions. However, they still have to deal with complicated emotions, social pressures, and information that all affect what they finally decide to study in college.

Interpretation of Findings

This study shows that students at SMAN 64 Jakarta Timur have different views on how to pick a college major. These views are formed by a mix of personal interests, family hopes, school performance, and how much they know about different careers. What the students say shows not just what they think as individuals, but also how society and culture affect their choices.

First, personal interest was a big reason for their decisions. Many students said they really wanted to study subjects they loved, like art, technology, or medicine. They said that when they could think about what they liked and were good at, they felt more sure and excited about their future studies. But some students also said they were confused because they didn't really know what each major involved.

Second, outside influences like parents and teachers played a clear role. Some students liked getting advice and help from their families, but others felt pressured to do what their families wanted, even if it wasn't what they were interested in. This often caused them to struggle, as they tried to do what they wanted while also respecting their parents, which is a cultural norm. Teachers were usually seen as helpful, but how much they influenced students depended on how close they were to them.

Lastly, it turned out that not everyone had the same access to information about college majors and careers. A few students had done their own research or gone to career counseling, but many still didn't have enough information, which made them unsure and hesitant. This shows that schools need better and easier-to-find programs to help students make good choices.

In conclusion, what the students think shows that both personal feelings and outside factors are important when they decide on a college major. What they say highlights the need for a more helpful setting that respects what they want to do and also gives them correct, up-to-date, and useful information.

Discussion of Findings

This research shows that students at SMAN 64 Jakarta Timur consider many things when deciding what to study in college. This section connects the research results with what others have written and thought about this topic, to better understand what the students think.

One main thing we found is that students think about what they like when choosing a major. This fits with the idea that people do better when their interests and skills match what they study or do (Holland, 1997). Students who knew what they were good at and enjoyed seemed more sure of their choices. But some students were confused, which means they need more help exploring career options.

This supports what Super (1990) found: teenagers need guidance as they figure out what they want to do.

Family and friends also had a big impact on the students' choices. Parents could be helpful or limiting, depending on whether their hopes for their children matched what the students wanted. This agrees with earlier studies (like Dietrich & Kracke, 2009) that say parents can greatly affect what their kids choose to do, even if it goes against what the kids want. In this study, students often felt torn between making their parents happy and doing what they really wanted, showing a conflict between valuing family wishes and wanting to be independent.

Also, the research showed that students didn't have enough easy-to-find information about college majors and future jobs. This made it harder for them to decide, which is similar to what other studies have found: it's important to teach students about careers early and thoroughly in schools (Gati & Asher, 2001). Some students tried hard to find information, but most used unofficial sources that weren't complete or were one-sided. This means we need better career counseling, especially in public high schools that may not have many resources.

In general, the research suggests that students want to be independent and happy when picking a major, but they also have to deal with what their culture expects and a lack of information. These results support the idea that schools, families, and the community should work together to help teenagers make good choices about their future.

Conclusion

This study looked at what students at SMAN 64 Jakarta Timur think about choosing a college major. The results show that students' choices are affected by their own interests, what others expect of them, and how much information they can find. Each of these things affects how students understand and deal with this important academic decision.

The research shows that personal interest is the factor mentioned most often. Students who know what they love and what they are good at usually seem more sure and confident when they make choices. But we can't forget how important parents and teachers are. Some students get good advice, but others feel stressed by pressure or when people expect different things from them. This stress often causes them to feel conflicted, which shows why it's so important for students and adults around them to talk openly.

Also, the study found that it's still hard to find good, complete information about college majors. Many students depend on friends or social media, which might not always give them correct or fair information. This means we really need better career guidance programs in schools, especially programs that are active, focus on students, and are made to fit each student's needs.

In short, choosing a college major is not easy for high school students. It means dealing with complicated personal and social issues. So, it's important to create a supportive setting where students can explore what they like, learn about their options, and share their goals without feeling afraid of being judged. By listening to what students say, teachers and leaders can create better ways to help young people make smart and meaningful choices about their future.

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