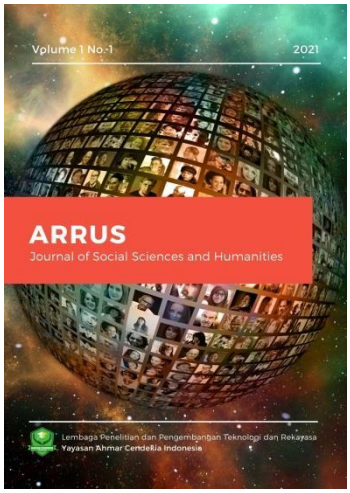
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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Analysis of Determinants of Interest in Continuing Higher Education among Female Students at SMKN 2 Pangkep Regency, South Sulawesi

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Abstract: Vocational high school education plays an important role in equipping female students with vocational skills. This study is a quantitative study with an inferential approach that aims to analyze the determinants that influence the interest in continuing higher education among female students at SMKN 2 Pangkep Regency, South Sulawesi, by taking a random sample with a population of 100 female students majoring in Fashion Design and a sample of 42 female vocational school students. Data collection methods included observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Data analysis used multiple linear regression statistics to test the significance of the influence of each variable. The results of the study show that the interest of SMKN 2 Pangkep Regency students in continuing higher education is simultaneously influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors contributed 71.8%, which included learning motivation, self-efficacy, academic interest, desire to achieve, and future orientation, indicating a fairly strong internal drive but not yet fully stable because it was still influenced by individual psychological conditions. Meanwhile, extrinsic factors have a more dominant influence with a contribution of 74.2%, which includes family support (78%), the role of teachers (75%), the school environment (73%), the influence of peers (72%), and access to educational information (73%). These findings indicate that students' interest in pursuing higher education is not only determined by personal awareness but is also greatly influenced by social and educational support. Thus, increasing interest in higher education among vocational high school students requires a collaborative strategy through strengthening internal motivation and external support from families, schools, and adequate access to educational information.

Keywords: Interest, Higher Education, Vocational High School Students

1. Introduction

Higher education is increasingly considered an important prerequisite for improving the quality of human resources in Indonesia, especially amid global competition and rapid technological developments. Quality education encompasses not only technical skills, but also character building and adaptive competencies so that individuals can face the challenges of the times. Muhammad Uyun 2023 The transformation of vocational education in

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Indonesia is aimed at strengthening the relevance of the curriculum, developing the technical skills needed in the world of work, and strengthening partnerships between schools and industry. Vocational high schools (SMK) have a strategic position in that, in addition to preparing graduates for immediate employment, they also have the potential to open up opportunities for students to continue on to higher education. Bambang Sugiyart0. 2023 As part of vocational education, SMK prioritizes ensuring that students not only have the technical competencies required for their type of work but also a professional attitude. Given the fierce competition in the world of work, especially the standards required for hiring employees with diplomas or bachelor's degrees, a secondary education alone is not enough to compete in this modern era. Sudarman 2024.

In this context, vocational programs are at the forefront of implementing link-and-match policies between vocational schools and the world of work (DUDI). Although vocational school graduates are prepared to be immediately absorbed into the workforce, in reality not all graduates choose or are able to work immediately after graduation; most consider continuing their higher education to improve their career opportunities and social status. After completing their studies at vocational high school (SMK), each student will be faced with various choices, such as working, entrepreneurship, continuing their education to a higher level, or becoming unemployed. For students who choose to continue their education to a higher level, they certainly need to consider the choice of study program they want to take and which university they are interested in. Amalia Alfat Anugra Putri 2025.

Interests play a significant and important role in a person's life, because interests are a fundamental psychological aspect that influences how a person lives their life. Mercylia Ningrum 2025. Learning with interest will motivate a person to learn more effectively than learning without interest. A person's interests can be the basis for carrying out activities and achieving desired goals. Interest can also motivate someone to perform activities better than if they were done without interest. Usually, someone decides to pursue higher education at a university because of their interests, such as wanting to increase their knowledge or pursue aspirations.

These interests can motivate someone to act and engage in these activities. However, a person's interests can vary and may change over time. This also applies to interest in pursuing higher education at university, which is generally driven by a desire to enrich one's knowledge or achieve aspirations, Bambang Sugiyarto 2023. Interest plays an important role in a person's life and has a major impact on their attitudes and behavior. If a person is truly interested in something, it will influence all their attitudes and behaviors. Syarafina Fadhila 2024. Continuing studies at a university begins with an interest and a need to develop knowledge. An individual's interest will encourage them to take action and participate. Similarly, when continuing studies at a university, students' interest in continuing their studies will encourage them to try to enter university because they want to develop their knowledge and skills.

A common theme in recent research is self-efficacy, or confidence in one's academic abilities and educational decision-making. Self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in their ability to manage and take the necessary actions to handle the situations they face. Adhis Tessa 2024. High self-confidence or self-belief causes a person to increase their efforts and hone their existing skills to achieve what they want. On the other hand, low self-confidence will affect a person's efforts and ability to achieve what they are interested in. So, if a person has high self-confidence and wants to continue their education to college, this will increase their interest in continuing their education. Sukma Dwi Indah Wardan 2023.

Although the Link and Match policy has been widely implemented in various vocational education institutions, the gap between graduates and the needs of the world of work is still quite significant. Mercylia Ningrum 2025. When determining a student's interest in continuing their education to higher education, there are several factors that influence each other, including a lack of adequate information about higher education pathways, uncertainty

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about the perceived benefits of higher education, and a lack of confidence in academic abilities. Nurul Trihasana 2025

A survey conducted at SMK Negeri 2 Pangkep found that students prefer to look for work, choose to work immediately, get married, or even start a business rather than continue their studies to a higher level. This situation is a serious problem because higher education is an important instrument in improving the quality of human resources (HR) and the nation's competitiveness in the era of globalization. This low interest did not arise suddenly but was influenced by various factors. From an individual perspective, low interest can be caused by a lack of motivation to learn, low self-confidence in facing academic challenges, negative perceptions of continuing education as difficult and expensive, low parental support, limited family economic conditions, and low educational backgrounds of parents who do not understand the importance of higher education. On the other hand, the tendency of peers to choose not to continue their education can lower aspirations to continue education. and the lack of career and educational information received makes students less knowledgeable about study programs. Based on this, it is important to analyze the determinants that influence the interest in continuing higher education among students at SMKN 2 Pangkep Regency, South Sulawesi.

2. Research Method and Materials

This study is a quantitative study with an inferential approach. Sugiyono 2023. This approach is used to analyze the magnitude of the influence of independent variables (determinants) on dependent variables, namely the interest in continuing higher education among female students at SMKN 2 Pangkep Regency. The population in this study consisted of all 100 female students in grades XI and XII at SMKN 2 Pangkep Regency. The sampling technique used was probability sampling with the simple random sampling method, which is random sampling without distinguishing population characteristics, with the sample size determined using the Slovin formula (Ahamd Adil, 2023). The sample in this study consisted of 42 students majoring in Fashion Design at SMK Negeri 2 Pangkep. The research variables were the dependent variable (Y) Interest in continuing higher education and the independent variables (X) Intrinsic determinants (X1) and Extrinsic determinants (X2). Data collection techniques included observation, documentation, and questionnaires. Data analysis was conducted using Multiple Linear Regression.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

Based on the results of the research conducted, the analysis of the determinants influencing the interest in continuing higher education among female students at SMKN 2 Pangkep Regency, South Sulawesi, was influenced by two factors, namely:

(a). Intrinsic factors are those that originate from within the individual and arise without external coercion in performing an action. These factors include learning motivation, self-efficacy, desire to achieve, academic interest, and future orientation. Descriptive analysis shows that, in general, students' responses to intrinsic factors are in the moderate to high category, with an average percentage of 71.8%. This indicates that the internal motivation of female students is strong enough to consider continuing their studies to the university level.

First, learning motivation emerged as the most dominant intrinsic factor. As many as 78.3% of female students stated that they had high learning motivation because of their desire to improve their future through higher education. This shows that most students have a strong internal drive to continue their education as an effort to improve themselves and their future. Sukma Dwi Indah Wardan 2023 states that internal motivation is the main predictor of interest in continuing education because it encourages individuals to consistently achieve academic goals. Second, self-efficacy or belief in one's own abilities contributes significantly

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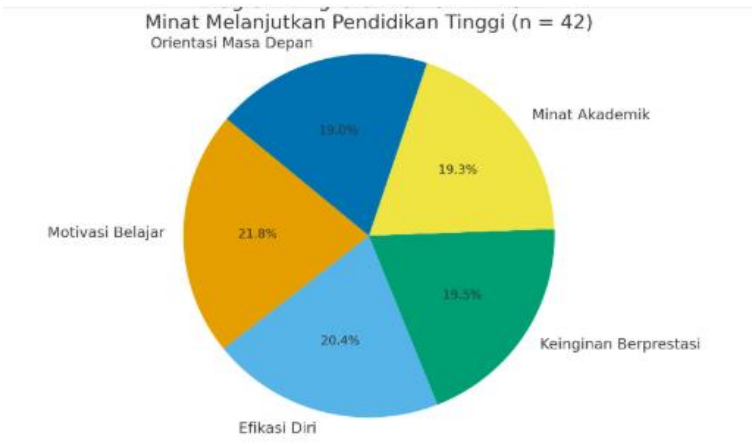
with a percentage of 73.1%. Female students with high self-efficacy tend to be more confident in their ability to face academic competition in college, build self-confidence, and have a strong belief in their ability to compete in college and complete more challenging academic tasks. In line with Bandura's theory cited by Sari (2021), self-efficacy can shape perseverance and the courage to make educational decisions.

Third, the desire to achieve is also quite high at 70.2%. Students who have the drive to achieve stated that continuing their education to college is seen as a form of self-development as well as proof of their abilities, that most students have a strong drive to achieve academic and social success through higher education. Research by Abdul Aziz Sebayang in 2023 confirms that individuals with a high need for achievement tend to have a clear future orientation in education. Fourth, academic interest contributed 69.5%, indicating that the majority of female students enjoy the learning process and have an interest in certain fields of study they wish to pursue in college, and that many students have an interest in certain fields of study as a reason for continuing their education in college. This is in line with the opinion of Aulia Fatin Mufidah 2025, who explains that academic interest is directly correlated with further education choices, especially among vocational students

Fifth, future orientation scored 68.1%, which means that most students already have an idea of their future plans, although they are still influenced by limited career information. Future orientation reflects a cognitive representation of medium- to long-term goals that guide motivation and behavior. There is aspirational awareness, but it has not yet been fully internalized into structured plans.

This condition may be caused by limited access to comprehensive career information such as study paths, job prospects, scholarships, lack of formal career guidance in schools, and low exposure to field experiences such as internships/industrial visits) that can accommodate the career choices of vocational school students so that even though they want to continue their studies, their decisions are susceptible to situational factors (family economic capacity, availability of nearby study programs, social pressure), so that their intentions do not always translate into concrete actions. Muhamad Rizki Fadllilah 2023 explains that future orientation plays a role as a motivational direction in educational decision-making.

Overall, multiple linear regression analysis shows that intrinsic determinants have a significant effect on interest in continuing higher education with a sig. value of $0.001 < 0.05$ and R^2 of 0.524, which means that 52.4% of the variation in student interest is explained by intrinsic factors. Thus, increasing internal motivation and strengthening self-confidence are important strategies to encourage interest in higher education among vocational high school students. The higher the internal drive to achieve and improve the future through education, the greater the contribution to the formation of interest in continuing higher education. This is consistent with the findings of Aulia Fatin Mufidah 2025, which states that students with strong academic motivation tend to have clearer higher education aspirations.



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Figure 1. Diagram of Interest in Pursuing Higher Education

(b). Extrinsic factors are those that originate from outside an individual and influence attitudes, behavior, motivation, learning outcomes, or work performance, and are not inherent to the individual. These factors include family support, school environment, peer influence, the role of the school, and access to educational information. The results of the descriptive analysis show that extrinsic determinants contribute significantly to the formation of interest among female students at SMKN 2 Pangkep Regency in continuing their higher education. There are five extrinsic factors, namely: The results of the descriptive analysis show that extrinsic factors contribute significantly to vocational school students' interest in continuing their education to college, with an average contribution in the moderate to high category at 74.2%.

First, family support is the dominant aspect with a percentage of 79.6%. This shows that the family plays a role as the first social environment that shapes educational values, career aspirations, and students' beliefs about their academic future. This support is not only material in nature, such as educational costs, provision of learning facilities, or family economic readiness, but also includes emotional and motivational support in the form of encouragement, attention, moral reinforcement, and trust in the child's abilities. Ni Made Wahahyuni 2015 explains that parental motivation and encouragement are the main reasons for considering continuing education, which are influenced by family background and emotional and financial support.

Secondly, the school environment is categorized as good with a percentage of 75.4%. Schools play a significant role in shaping students' educational orientation. A conducive school environment is characterized by a good academic culture, a positive learning climate, supportive teacher-student relationships, and the provision of adequate facilities and infrastructure. Effective schools not only carry out instructional functions but also act as agents of educational socialization that encourage students to develop study aspirations and career plans. In addition, the implementation of counseling programs, academic extracurricular activities, and the cultivation of discipline and a learning ethic help increase students' motivation to achieve higher grades and continue their education. Thus, the high influence of the school environment reflects that schools are not merely places for the transfer of knowledge, but also centers for the formation of academic character and the strengthening of students' future orientation. Guidance counselors, counseling services, and a positive learning culture have been proven to encourage interest in continuing higher education. The results of Aulia Fatin Mufidah's 2025 study show that schools with a strong academic orientation tend to produce graduates who are motivated to continue their studies.

Third, the influence of peers also plays a significant role with a percentage of 71.8%. Female students who have friends with a high academic orientation are more motivated to continue their education. Peers act as the closest social environment that can influence a person's way of thinking, academic aspirations, and educational decisions. Students who are in friendship groups with an educational orientation, such as friends who actively discuss college, attend tutoring, seek information about universities, or have plans to continue their education, tend to have stronger academic motivation. This positive interaction creates an effect of peer modeling and healthy competitive motivation, encouraging female students to have higher academic expectations and aspirations. Conversely, students who are in less supportive friendship environments tend to lack direction for continuing their education. Bambang Sugiyarto 2024 explains that peer groups serve as social references in educational decision-making.

Fourth is the role of schools as providers of educational information and guidance support, which also makes a significant contribution of 73.3%. This reflects that schools function not only as centers of learning, but also as facilitators of students' educational orientation development. This support can take the form of guidance and counseling services, providing

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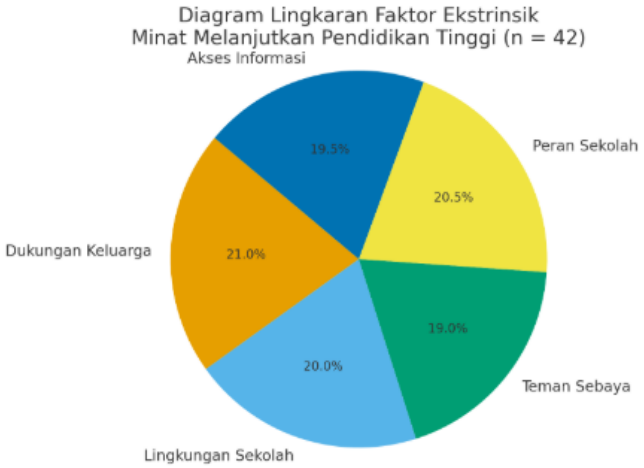
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information about universities, organizing career seminars, education fairs, and even assisting with college registration administration. This facilitation helps students gain clarity about their future direction and improves their readiness to plan for further study. Thus, the role of schools not only has an impact on academic aspects but also influences the formation of educational motivation, career information literacy, and students' confidence in making strategic academic decisions. This is in line with the research by Sukma Dwi Indah Wardani. 2023, which found that career guidance and campus socialization programs are considered to increase students' readiness for higher education.

Fifth, access to educational information has an influence of 71.2%, mainly through social media, campus brochures, and educational seminars. The educational information received by students comes from various sources such as social media (Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Facebook), campus brochures, official university websites, as well as educational seminars and campus expos. This access to information helps female students gain an understanding of the pathways to higher education (SNBP, SNBT, and independent), available study programs, scholarship opportunities, tuition fees, and future job prospects, thereby strengthening their confidence and decision to continue their studies. Social media has become the most dominant channel of information because campus educational content and scholarship promotions are now more easily accessible, fast, and interactive. Meanwhile, educational seminars and university socialization events held at schools provide more targeted information and motivate female students in planning their academic future. Adhis Tessa 2024 explains that access to information is a determining factor in higher education literacy among vocational high school students.

Overall, the regression results show that extrinsic determinants have a significant effect on interest in continuing higher education with a sig. value of 0.003 < 0.05 and a coefficient of determination (R^2) = 0.487, which means that 48.7% of the variation in female students' interest is influenced by external factors. This is in line with the 2015 research by Ni Made Wahahyuni, which states that interest in education is the result of an interaction between psychological and social aspects.



Figuer 2. Diagram of Extrinsic Factors Influencing the Decision to Pursue Higher Education

3.2. Discussion

Based on the results of research conducted to determine the interest in continuing higher education among female students at SMKN 2 Pangkep Regency, South Sulawesi, the intrinsic factors of the research results show that there is an influence on the interest of SMKN 2 Pangkep students to continue higher education, with an average percentage in the diagram circle of 71.8%, which is in the moderate to high category. These findings indicate that internal drives such as learning motivation (78.3%), self-efficacy (73.1%), desire to achieve

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(70.2%), academic interest (69.5%), and future orientation (68.1%) are important determinants in shaping interest in higher education.

Learning motivation emerged as the most dominant factor because it is the psychological energy that drives the desire to achieve academic goals (Syarafina Fadlia 2024), while self-efficacy provides personal confidence to be able to compete at the university level. The desire to achieve strengthens students' future orientation related to academic achievement and interest, which becomes the basis for choosing a major that suits their talents and learning preferences (Rohdeli Damanik, 2023). Additionally, future orientation indicates students' ability to plan for the future through education as a tool for social mobility. Thus, intrinsic factors are proven to be important psychological aspects in increasing the readiness and educational aspirations of vocational high school students toward higher education.

For extrinsic factors, the research results show that they contribute significantly to interest in continuing higher education, with a total average contribution of 61.5% based on circle diagram analysis. These extrinsic factors consist of family support, school environment, peer influence, the role of teachers/schools, and access to educational information, all of which are in the category of being quite strong in influencing students' decisions. These findings confirm that educational interest is not only influenced by internal motivation but is also greatly influenced by environmental dynamics. First, family support emerged as the highest factor in the extrinsic group with a value of 75.6%, indicating that the role of parents in providing motivation, guidance, and financial support greatly influences their children's educational plans. This reinforces Aulia Nur Agnes's 2024 research, which states that the family is the main actor in shaping educational aspirations, especially at the vocational level, such as vocational high schools.

Second, the school environment contributes 71.2% to influencing female students' interest in continuing their studies. A conducive school environment through learning facilities, academic culture, career counseling, and motivation from teachers has been proven to increase awareness of further education. This is in line with the findings of Muhammad Rezki Fadlillah 2023 that schools that provide systematic academic support are able to increase students' readiness to face higher education. Third, the influence of peers contributed 68.4%. A friendship environment that has a positive orientation towards education encourages female students to follow in the footsteps of friends who continue their studies. Fazli Abdillah 2020 explains that peer influence shapes academic attitudes, including the decision to continue education, because adolescents are in a phase of social conformity. Fourth, access to educational information at 66.7% and the role of teachers/schools at 65.1% were also found to be influential. The availability of information about scholarships, college selection processes, and career prospects strengthens female students' desire to plan for their future education (Aulia Fatin Mufidah, 2025). The role of teachers as facilitators of information, academic advisors, and educational guides is also an important factor in the overall career decisions of vocational high school students. These results reinforce Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of education, which states that the social environment plays a strategic role in individuals' educational decision-making.

The results of the study indicate that extrinsic factors have a significant contribution to the interest of female students at SMKN 2 Pangkep Regency in continuing their higher education, as shown by the pie chart depicting an average external influence of 69.4% in the moderately strong category. The most dominant factor is family support (75.6%), which is the main driver because parents play a role in providing emotional motivation, financial support, and educational guidance, in line with Rohdeli Damanik's 2023 findings that family is the main determinant of students' educational aspirations.

The second factor is the school environment (71.2%), where learning facilities, a positive academic culture, and career guidance services from schools encourage students to continue their studies, and a conducive school climate reinforces higher education orientation. In addition, the influence of peers (68.4%) also plays a significant role because social interaction

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and group conformity build competitive drive and collective motivation to learn (Ni Made Wahyuni, 2015). Furthermore, access to educational information (66.7%) also influences female students' decisions through the availability of information about scholarships, college majors, selection pathways, and career opportunities, as emphasized by Sagita (2014) that access to information improves the educational literacy of vocational high school students. Finally, the role of teachers and schools (65.1%) strengthens female students' interest through academic guidance, career motivation, and study choice guidance Ningrum 2025 Thus, the results of this study confirm that extrinsic factors work synergistically in influencing interest in higher education, in accordance with Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, which states that individual educational decisions are shaped by the support of interacting social environments Sari. 2021.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the interest of female students at SMKN 2 Pangkep Regency in continuing their higher education is simultaneously influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic factors that interact with each other. Intrinsic factors, which include learning motivation, self-efficacy, desire to achieve, academic interest, and future orientation, show a fairly strong contribution with an average percentage of 71.8%, reflecting a positive internal drive to plan for further education. Meanwhile, extrinsic factors such as family support, school environment, peer influence, teacher role, and access to educational information also play a significant role with an average contribution of 74.2%, indicating that social environment support also determines students' educational decisions. Thus, interest in continuing higher education is not only influenced by individual psychological readiness, but also shaped by family support, school, and adequate access to information. Therefore, collaboration between families, schools, and education policy makers is needed to create an educational ecosystem that is conducive to increasing students' educational aspirations in vocational high schools.

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