



The Importance of Student Development in Selecting College Majors According to Their Interests and Talents at Man 5 Tasikmalaya

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Abstract

Choosing a college major is one of the important stages that students at the upper secondary level must go through. The decision to choose the right college major will greatly determine the future and success of students after graduation and they will not face difficulties during the study process. MAN 5 Tasikmalaya is one of the leading madrasah aliyah in Tasikmalaya which has experience in developing and guiding its students. As a school that has quite good quality, MAN 5 Tasikmalaya is required to provide maximum guidance to students in choosing college majors according to their interests and talents. It is hoped that MAN 5 Tasikmalaya students can discover their academic interests and talents from an early age so that they can make a decision on the right college major. appropriate. Good coaching will certainly be very beneficial for the future of students. This research aims to analyze the guidance for selecting college majors carried out at MAN 5 Tasikmalaya in helping students determine study programs that suit their interests and talents. The research results show that the coaching carried out by MAN 5 Tasikmalaya is quite effective in helping students determine their college major according to their interests and talents. However, the quality and quantity of coaching needs to continue to be improved by involving various internal and external parties at the school. The more optimal the coaching is, the more MAN 5 Tasikmalaya graduates will choose the right college major based on their interests and talents, so that they can achieve success in the future.

Keywords: Coaching, choosing a major, interests, talents, MAN 5 Tasikmalaya

1. Introduction

Choosing a college major is one of the important stages that students at the upper secondary level must go through. The decision to choose the right college major will greatly determine the future and success of students after graduating from high school/MA. Therefore, the guidance provided by the school to students in terms of choosing a college major is very important. This coaching aims to help students discover their interests, potential and academic talents so that they are able to choose appropriate study programs in higher education. In reality, there are still many SMA/MA students who do not properly understand their academic interests and talents. They tend to choose college majors based on momentary considerations or trends in majors that are currently popular. This can certainly have an adverse impact on students' future if the major chosen does not match their interests and talents (Aryani and Umar 2020; Hertinjung and Sulandari 2020).

MAN 5 Tasikmalaya is one of the leading madrasah aliyah in Tasikmalaya which has experience in developing and guiding its students. As a school that has quite good quality, MAN 5 Tasikmalaya is required to provide guidance to students in choosing college majors according to their interests and talents (Gustiana, 2022; Munandar, 2023). This training is necessary considering that competition to continue to university is getting tougher from year to year. Therefore, students are required to be able to choose the right college major that suits their individual potential in order to be able to compete and be accepted at the university of their interest. Through coaching in choosing a college major, it is hoped that MAN 5 Tasikmalaya students can discover their academic interests and talents from an early

age so they can make the right college major decision. This coaching will certainly be very beneficial for the future of students.

Guidance on selecting college majors carried out by MAN 5 Tasikmalaya can involve various related parties, both internal and external. Internal school parties such as the principal, deputy principal for curriculum, Guidance Counseling (BK) teachers, homeroom teachers and subject teachers can play an active role in providing guidance to students. Meanwhile, external parties such as universities, psychologists and practitioners in various professional fields can also be invited to provide comprehensive understanding and information to students about various major choices and future work prospects. By involving many competent parties, it is hoped that the guidance program for choosing college majors at MAN 5 Tasikmalaya can be implemented optimally.

Some forms of coaching activities that can be carried out include assistance in taking interest and aptitude tests, individual counseling regarding choosing a major that suits the student's interests, major selection seminars that present alumni and related sources, introduction to various college majors and their job prospects, visits to campus to get to know each other. existing study program choices, and so on. Through these various coaching activities, MAN 5 Tasikmalaya students are expected to be able to identify their academic interests and talents, understand the various study program options at universities and their job prospects, so that in the end they are able to decide on the right and ideal college major for their future. In this way, MAN 5 Tasikmalaya can contribute to preparing the nation's young generation who are superior and ready to compete in the era of globalization by guiding the choice of targeted and appropriate college majors for their students.

2. Literature Review

- a). Gati and Tal (2008) through the journal decision-making model and career guide stated the results of their research that the process of choosing a college major involves the ability of introspection and self-assessment by high school students to identify their academic interests and abilities. Unfortunately, most high school students still have difficulty carrying out self-assessments accurately. Therefore, Gati and Tal emphasized the need for career guidance and counseling from the school to help students carry out proper self-assessments so that the college major they choose is in line with their academic interests and abilities. Gati and Tal recommend personal and ongoing career counseling so that students can truly understand themselves before deciding on a college major.
- b). Selleri (2019) through the journal *European Journal of Psychology of Education* presented the results of their study in several secondary schools in Spain. They found that the academic counseling provided to high school students was very useful in helping students to choose college study programs that suited their interests and academic abilities. Through academic counseling, high school students' self-understanding regarding their academic interests and competencies becomes better. Thus, they are more mature in determining their choice of college major. These researchers recommend that academic counseling be an important part of counseling services in high schools.
- c). Howard et al (2021) through the journal *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance* reported a comparative study between high school students who received career counseling and students who did not receive career counseling. They found that students who participated in career counseling showed a much more mature self-understanding and choice of college major compared to students who did not participate in career counseling. Therefore, these researchers recommend the importance of career counseling for high school/equivalent students so that they understand their interests and abilities well so that the college major they choose is appropriate and appropriate.
- d). Heppner and Wagner (2011) in the journal *Reflections on three decades as editors of the Journal of Career Development* highlighted the importance of long-term career guidance programs provided by school counselors and career guidance teachers to high school/equivalent students. This program is important to help students gradually understand their interests and talents so that they are ultimately able to choose the right college major when they graduate from high school. Gysbers recommends good cooperation between counselors and guidance and counseling teachers in long-term career development for high school students.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Definition of Interest and Talent

3.1.1. Interest

Interest can generally be defined as a high inclination towards something. Interest is a feeling of preference and interest in a thing or activity without anyone telling you to. Interest is basically the acceptance of a relationship between oneself and something outside oneself. The stronger or closer the relationship, the greater the interest. More. Slameto (2003) states that interest is a feeling of preference and attachment to a thing or activity, without anyone

telling you to. Interest is basically the acceptance of a relationship between oneself and something outside oneself. The stronger or closer the relationship, the greater the interest.

Interest is not inborn, but acquired later. Interests are not always related to pleasant things, but also unpleasant things. For example, interest in medical science is not always based on pleasant things such as blood, disease, etc. From several expert opinions, it can be concluded that interest is an impulse within a person to be interested in an object or activity without coercion. Interest arises because of one's own awareness and will without any element of external coercion. Interests are also personal and develop in line with a person's experience and maturity. Thus, interest has an important role in a person's inclination towards a particular field of knowledge or activity.

3.1.2. Talent

Talent can be defined as the potential ability that a person has to achieve success in the future. Talent is a person's mental and physical capacities and qualities that are innate from birth and acquired through generations, which enable a person to complete certain tasks without relying much on educational and training efforts. Meanwhile, according to Suryabrata (2003), talent is the potential ability that a person has to achieve achievement to a certain level, if given the opportunity to develop this talent in education and training. In line with that, Howard Gardner (2003) also states that talent is a biopsychological potential for processing information that can be activated in culture to produce knowledge.

Another expert, Astiani (2019) defines talent as innate ability as potential that still needs to be developed and trained so that it can be realized. According to him, everyone must have talents in certain fields. However, to find out someone's talent certainly requires observation and assessment through an aptitude test by an expert. So it can be concluded that talent is a potential or basic ability that every individual has from birth. This talent still needs to be trained and developed so that it can function optimally. Everyone has different talents in certain fields. Therefore, talents need to be explored and developed through appropriate education and training so that they can benefit the individual's life in the future.

3.2. Activities that can help in choosing a major

a). Assistance in taking interest and aptitude tests

Accompanying students in taking interest and aptitude tests is very important to help them recognize their academic potential. Interest and aptitude tests usually contain a series of questions and activities that reveal students' interests and academic tendencies in certain areas such as mathematics, languages, science, arts, and others. By taking this test seriously and accompanied by a guidance and counseling teacher, students can get an objective picture of what fields of science are most in demand and according to their abilities. The results of the talent interest test can then be an important consideration for students in determining which college major to choose.

b). Individual counseling regarding major selection

Individual counseling is a counseling activity carried out by the guidance and counseling teacher personally for each student to discuss choosing a college major. Through individual counseling, students can express their interests, hopes and doubts regarding the major they want to choose. The guidance and counseling teacher can then provide appropriate input and suggestions based on a deep understanding of the interests, talents and academic abilities of the students concerned. Individual counseling allows students to receive personal assistance in determining their college major.

c). Major selection seminar

Major selection seminar activities that present alumni and related sources are very useful for students to gain broad insight from various points of view. Through this seminar, students can ask questions and answers directly to alumni about the challenges and opportunities of various college major choices. Apart from that, students can also discuss with expert sources such as psychologists, academics and practitioners about the criteria for choosing the ideal major. In this way, students' insights will be increasingly opened.

d). Introduction to various college majors

The activity of introducing various college majors and their job prospects aims to provide students with comprehensive information about study program options in higher education. Starting from popular majors such as medicine and engineering, to new majors such as informatics, criminology, and visual communication design. The more information students get about various major choices and job opportunities, the more mature they will be in making decisions.

e). Campus visit

Campus visits aim to enable students to get to know and experience the academic atmosphere at the university firsthand. Through this visit, students can observe laboratories, libraries and other campus facilities according to their major of interest. They can also interact directly with students and lecturers to get information related to the procedures for studying in higher education directly. That way, students have a more realistic picture in determining their choice of college major.

3.3. roles that must be carried out by school staff at Man 5 Tasikmalaya

3.3.1. The role of the Guidance Counseling teacher

Counseling Guidance (BK) teachers have a very important role in coaching students in choosing college majors according to their interests and talents. As experts in the field of counseling, guidance and counseling teachers are responsible for helping students recognize their potential, interests and talents through various tests, interviews and observation activities. Counseling teachers also act as facilitators to guide students in career exploration and obtain relevant information about various college majors.

With a holistic approach, guidance and counseling teachers help students understand their strengths and weaknesses, and explore various suitable career options. Through intensive discussions, guidance and counseling teachers can provide information about job market trends, career opportunities, and college entrance requirements for each major. Additionally, they can provide practical guidance on the steps you need to take to achieve specific career goals.

More than that, guidance and counseling teachers also have a role as mediators between students, parents and the school. They can provide parents with valuable insight into their child's interests and talents, so that choosing a college major can involve input from all relevant parties. In this way, guidance and counseling teachers not only help students make the right decision in choosing a major, but also create healthy collaboration between schools, students and parents in supporting students' career development (Amin, 2021).

3.3.2. The Role of the Homeroom Teacher

The role of the homeroom teacher in developing students is very crucial, including in the context of choosing a college major according to their interests and talents. Homeroom teachers have a unique closeness to each student in their class, allowing them to better understand each student's character, interests, and potential. In terms of choosing a major, here are some of the roles of homeroom teachers who can support students:

- a). The homeroom teacher can make direct observations of students' abilities, interests and talents during the teaching and learning process. This can include an in-depth understanding of students' tendencies in specific subjects and extracurricular activities.
- b). As someone close to students, the homeroom teacher can provide initial counseling regarding the choice of major. They can help students realize their potential and interests and provide initial information about various career paths.
- c). The homeroom teacher continuously monitors students' academic achievements and personal development. With a good understanding of student achievement, homeroom teachers can provide valuable input regarding areas of study that suit students' abilities and interests.
- d). The homeroom teacher plays an important role in involving parents in choosing a major. They can convey information about their child's interests and development to parents, and vice versa, listen to parents' aspirations regarding their child's educational choices.
- e). Homeroom teachers can provide support for the development of skills necessary for the selection of a particular major. They can provide suggestions regarding additional subjects or extracurricular activities that can strengthen students' abilities.
- f). The homeroom teacher can be a motivator who encourages students to explain their vision and goals regarding careers. By helping students formulate long-term goals, homeroom teachers can guide them in choosing a major that suits their goals and aspirations.

3.3.3. The role of the school principal

The principal plays a central role in developing students, including in the important process of selecting college majors according to their interests and talents. As the main leader in the school, the Principal provides educational direction and vision that forms a conducive learning environment. They encourage a positive learning culture that embraces students' diversity of interests and talents, creating a spirit of exploration. Collaboration led by the Principal between teachers, homeroom teachers and Guidance Counseling teachers is the basis for sharing information and understanding about students' abilities.

The Principal's full support for the career guidance program and the provision of adequate educational resources creates an environment that supports students in choosing a major. Through involving parents, organizing meetings, career seminars, and providing adequate educational resources, Principals also play a role in ensuring parents' active participation in their children's educational development. By facilitating students' self-development in various aspects, the Principal plays an integral role in guiding students towards selecting majors and careers that suit their potential and aspirations.

3.3.4. The role of subject teachers

The role of subject teachers is very significant in guiding students, including in the process of selecting college majors according to their interests and talents. Subject teachers have a direct impact on students' understanding of various subject areas, so their role in helping students discover specific interests and talents is vital. The following are some of the roles of subject teachers in this context:

- a). Subject teachers provide in-depth information about academic content, curriculum, and career opportunities in the areas of study they teach. By providing rich insights, teachers can help students better understand what is involved in each major.
- b). In daily interactions in the classroom, subject teachers can identify students' potential and tendencies towards certain subject matter. They can provide constructive feedback about students' abilities and help them explore appropriate areas of study.
- c). Subject teachers have the opportunity to provide practical experience through projects, experiments or activities related to their subject. This helps students experience firsthand what is involved in a particular field of study and can help them identify their interests and talents.
- d). Passionate and committed subject teachers can be a source of inspiration for students. By sharing personal and professional experiences, teachers can motivate students to explore different fields of study and careers.
- e). Subject teachers can provide academic guidance to students regarding subject choices, study programs and career paths. They can help formulate a study plan that fits a student's individual career goals.
- f). Subject teachers can provide emotional support to students in facing academic and personal challenges. This helps create an environment that supports students in exploring their interests and talents without excessive burden.

4. Conclusion

The success of this coaching cannot be separated from the role of various parties at MAN 5 Tasikmalaya, such as the school principal who prepares the coaching program, guidance and counseling teachers who provide individual and group counseling services, homeroom teachers who guide students, and subject teachers who observe students' interests and talents in the subject. the lesson. However, coaching efforts still need to continue to be improved, both in terms of quality and quantity. Madrasahs need to involve more sources from outside the school such as universities and psychologists. With maximum and continuous guidance, it is hoped that more MAN 5 Tasikmalaya students will be able to choose the right college major based on their interests and talents, so that they can achieve success in the future.

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