



Stepping into the Future: Career Planning for Class XII Students Majoring in Hospitality at Vocational High Schools

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Article Info

Article history:

Received Sept 9, 2022

Revised Oct 15, 2022

Accepted Nov 12, 2022

Online First Nov 30, 2022

Keywords:

Career Planning

Hospitality

Vocational schools

Vocational Education

Quantitative descriptive

ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: to describe the career planning of class XII students majoring in Hospitality at SMK Negeri 1 Merangin.

Methodology: The research method used in this study is quantitative descriptive. The sample in this study was 30 students of XII Hospitality Department at SMK Negeri 1 Merangin. The data collection instrument used in this research was a questionnaire. Research data analysis will be carried out using descriptive statistical methods.

Main Findings: The results from the descriptive statistics of career planning for twelfth-grade Hospitality students on the understanding of career choices indicator were obtained with an average in the good category at a percentage of 60%, on the readiness to enter the workforce indicator with an average in the good category at a percentage of 66.7%, and on the knowledge about career opportunities in the hospitality industry indicator with an average in the good category at a percentage of 60%.

Novelty/Originality of this study: The novelty of this research lies in the special focus on career planning for class XII students majoring in Hospitality at SMK Negeri 1 Merangin. This research makes a significant contribution in broadening our understanding of how students at vocational education level, particularly in the hospitality sector, plan and prepare for their careers after graduating from school.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Vocational education in the world has become an important pillar in developing human resources who are ready to compete in the global job market [1]–[3]. In contrast to formal education which focuses more on theory, vocational education offers a practical approach that prepares students with skills that are directly relevant in the world of work. [4]–[6]. One vocational field that is now increasingly in demand is hospitality [7]–[9].

The hospitality sector is an attractive choice because it combines elements of hospitality, management and customer service that are much needed in the ever-growing tourism industry [10]–[12]. Vocational schools in the hospitality sector are important [13]–[15]. This is because they not only teach technical skills such as room

management, front office, or catering, but also hone soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and leadership which are crucial in this industry.

Grade 12 vocational school students majoring in hospitality at SMK Negeri 1 Merangin are certainly thinking about the career direction they will take after graduating. The importance of career planning for hospitality vocational graduates is enormous [16]–[18]. With careful career planning, they can clearly know what steps they need to take after graduating, whether to continue their education to a higher level, take special training, or immediately look for work in the hotel industry [19]–[21].

Gap Analysis also shows how important career planning is. Many vocational graduates face a gap between their skills and the demands of the ever-growing job market [22]. With good career planning, students can minimize this gap and prepare more effectively to enter the world of work [23].

Previous research conducted by Amissah et al., 2020[16] on students' perceptions of careers in the Ghanaian hospitality and tourism industry. Where the research states that the opportunity to care for others, build one's own work, acquire transferable skills, training and further education are important factors that students consider in choosing a career. The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on career planning for class XII students majoring in hospitality at SMK Negeri 1 Merangin. This research has very relevant implications for increasing the effectiveness of vocational education in preparing graduates who are ready for a career in the hotel industry.

The aim of this research is to describe the career planning of class XII students majoring in Hospitality at SMK Negeri 1 Merangin. The importance of this research is also reflected in its aim to describe the career planning of class XII students majoring in hospitality at SMK Negeri 1 Merangin. Through an in-depth understanding of the student career planning process, it is hoped that strategies and steps can be found that can increase graduates' success in achieving their desired career in the hospitality industry.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 Types of research

The research method used in this study is descriptive quantitative. This type of research aims to describe observed phenomena systematically [24]–[26], especially in terms of career planning for Class XII students majoring in Hospitality at SMK Negeri 1 Merangin.

2.2 Research Population and Sample

The population that is the focus of this research is all Class XII students majoring in Hospitality at SMK Negeri 1 Merangin. The research sample will be randomly selected to represent the population, with a sufficient sample size to obtain representative results. The sample in this study was 30 students of XII Hospitality Department at SMK Negeri 1 Merangin.

2.3 Data Collection Instrument

The data collection instrument used in this research was a questionnaire specifically designed to measure career planning indicators for Class XII students majoring in Hospitality at SMK Negeri 1 Merangin. These indicators include aspects of understanding career options, readiness to enter the world of work, and knowledge about career opportunities in the hotel industry. The grid of this research instrument, namely career planning for Class XII students majoring in Hospitality, can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Career planning questionnaire instrument grid for Class XII students majoring in Hospitality

Variable	Indicator	Statement item number
career planning for Class XII students majoring in Hospitality	Understanding of career options	1,2,3,4,5,6
	Readiness to enter the world of work	7,8,9,10, 11
	Knowledge of career opportunities in the hospitality industry	12,13,14,15,16
Number of statements		16

In this study, the author used a questionnaire with a Likert scale. The Likert scale used in this research is a 4-point Likert scale, consisting of 16 statements regarding the career planning of twelfth-grade students in the Hospitality Department. Additionally, the table of career planning categories for twelfth-grade students in the Hospitality Department along with its Likert scale can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. Category of career planning for class XII students majoring in Hospitality

Category	Indicator intervals		
	understanding of career options	readiness to enter the world of work	knowledge of career opportunities in the hospitality industry
Very not good	6.0-10.5	5.00-8.75	5.00-8.75
Not good	10.6-15.0	8.76-12.50	8.76-12.50
Good	15.1-19.5	12.51-16.25	12.51-16.25
Very good	19.6-24.0	16.26-20.00	16.26-20.00

2.4 Data analysis technique

Research data analysis will be carried out using descriptive statistical methods, with the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. This analysis will provide a clear picture of the condition of students' career planning based on data collected from the questionnaire.

2.5 Research procedure

The research procedure will begin by preparing a research instrument consisting of a questionnaire with the indicators mentioned previously. Next, the necessary permits will be processed from the relevant agencies to carry out research at SMK Negeri 1 Merangin. After that, the questionnaire will be distributed to the selected samples, and the data collected will be analyzed using SPSS software. Finally, the results of the analysis will be used to draw conclusions which can be the basis for recommendations and improvements in career planning for Class XII students majoring in Hospitality at SMK Negeri 1 Merangin.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the conducted research, the results of descriptive statistics on the career planning of twelfth-grade students majoring in Hospitality are obtained. The indicators of students' career planning consist of understanding career choices, readiness to enter the workforce, and knowledge about career opportunities in the hospitality industry. The descriptive statistical results are derived from the data analysis of questionnaires distributed to twelfth-grade students majoring in Hospitality at SMK Negeri 1 Merangin. The descriptive statistical results of career planning for twelfth-grade students majoring in Hospitality on the indicator of understanding career choices can be seen in the following table:

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of career planning for class XII students majoring in Hospitality on indicators of understanding of career choices

Interval	Category	F	Percentage (%)	Mean	Median	Min	Max
6.0-10.5	Very not good	1	3.3				
10.6-15.0	Not good	3	10	19	18	6	24
15.1-19.5	Good	18	60				
19.6-24.0	Very good	8	26.7				

Based on table 3, the career planning of class This shows that the majority of students have an adequate understanding of career options in the hospitality sector after participating in the educational program at SMK Negeri 1 Merangin. The importance of this understanding cannot be underestimated, because a good understanding will help students make the right decisions regarding their future career steps [27]–[29]. With good understanding, students can more easily identify interests, potential and career goals that match the skills they have after graduating from vocational school [30]–[32].

However, even though the results show good understanding in general, there is still a need for regular evaluation and updates in hospitality vocational education programs. This aims to ensure that students continue to receive relevant and up-to-date information about career options in the ever-changing and developing hospitality industry. In this way, students can stay connected with the latest developments in the industry and can make more informed and effective career decisions in the future. Furthermore, descriptive statistics on career planning for class XII students majoring in Hospitality on indicators of readiness to enter the world of work can be seen in the following table:

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of career planning for class XII students majoring in Hospitality on indicators of readiness to enter the world of work

Interval	Category	F	Percentage (%)	Mean	Median	Min	Max
5.00-8.75	Very not good	2	6.7				
8.76-12.50	Not good	4	13.3	16	16	5	20
12.51-16.25	Good	20	66.7				
16.26-20.00	Very good	4	13.3				

Based on table 4, the career planning of class This means that the career planning of class XII students majoring in Hospitality shows a good level of readiness to enter the world of work. The percentage obtained indicates that the majority of students have prepared themselves well to face the challenges and demands of the world of work after completing their education program at SMK Negeri 1 Merangin.

Students' readiness to enter the world of work is an important factor that determines their success in finding work and adapting to the real work environment [33]–[35]. With good preparation, students have a greater opportunity to succeed in their careers and can contribute positively to the development of the hospitality industry [36]–[38]. However, despite the results indicating good readiness categories, it is important to continue focusing on aspects that need improvement in preparing students for the workforce. This may involve deeper development of technical skills, enhanced understanding of current job market demands, and training in communication and interpersonal skills necessary in dynamic work environments. Therefore, there is a need for continuous efforts to strengthen students' readiness to enter the workforce, both through improving vocational education curricula, training and internship programs, and cooperation with industries to ensure the relevance and timeliness of skills taught to students. Thus, it is hoped that students will be more prepared and successful in facing the challenges and opportunities in the competitive job market. Next, the descriptive statistics of career planning for twelfth-grade students majoring in Hospitality on the indicator of knowledge about career opportunities in the hospitality industry can be seen in the following table:

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of career planning for class XII students majoring in Hospitality on knowledge indicators about career opportunities in the hotel industry

Interval	Category	F	Percentage (%)	Mean	Median	Min	Max
5.00-8.75	Very not good	1	3.3				
8.76-12.50	Not good	5	16.7	16	15	6	19
12.51-16.25	Good	18	60				
16.26-20.00	Very good	6	20				

Based on Table 5, the career planning of twelfth-grade students majoring in Hospitality on the indicator of knowledge about career opportunities in the hospitality industry is obtained with an average category of good at a percentage of 60%. The career planning of twelfth-grade students majoring in Hospitality indicates a good level of knowledge about career opportunities in the hospitality industry. This indicates that the majority of students have adequate understanding of various career opportunities available in the hospitality industry after completing their education program at SMK Negeri 1 Merangin.

Having good knowledge about career opportunities in the hospitality industry is crucial for students in making informed decisions regarding their career steps in the future [39]–[41]. With adequate knowledge, students can more easily explore various career options that align with their interests, skills, and goals after graduating from vocational school. However, despite the results indicating a good knowledge category, efforts should still be made to continuously improve students' knowledge about career opportunities in the hospitality industry. This can be achieved through providing more comprehensive and up-to-date information about trends and developments in the hospitality industry, as well as equipping students with additional skills and knowledge relevant to various positions and fields in the industry.

Therefore, collaboration between schools, industries, and relevant institutions is necessary to ensure that students acquire the necessary knowledge to succeed in entering the hospitality industry workforce. Through these collective efforts, it is hoped that students can maximize their potential and achieve success in their careers in this promising industry.

The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on career planning for twelfth-grade students majoring in Hospitality at SMK Negeri 1 Merangin. This research contributes significantly to expanding our understanding of how students in vocational education, particularly in the hospitality field, plan and prepare for their careers after graduation. In this context, the research explores important aspects such as students' understanding of career choices, their readiness to enter the workforce, and their knowledge about career opportunities in the hospitality industry. Through a deeper understanding of students' career planning, this research provides valuable insights for education policymakers, educational institutions, and the hospitality industry to enhance the effectiveness of vocational education in preparing graduates who are ready to compete

and thrive in a dynamic job market. Furthermore, this research can serve as a basis for the development of more effective career training and guidance programs in the future, as well as inspire further research in the fields of vocational education and career development.

The implications of this research are highly relevant in the context of vocational education development and career planning for students in the hospitality department. The research findings, which indicate good understanding, readiness to enter the workforce, and knowledge about career opportunities in the hospitality industry, have several important implications. Firstly, vocational education institutions can use these findings to improve curricula and educational programs that are more relevant and effective in preparing students for careers in the hospitality industry. Furthermore, the research results can also serve as a guide for career guidance service providers in providing better support to students in planning and taking appropriate career steps after graduation. Additionally, the hospitality industry can leverage these findings to identify workforce needs and provide better input in developing the skills and competencies required by vocational graduates. The implications of this research not only impact education and students but also make a positive contribution to the overall development of the hospitality industry by producing higher quality workforce ready to compete in an increasingly complex and dynamic job market.

Limitations of this research include limited sample coverage and the use of questionnaires as the primary data collection instrument, which may have limitations in obtaining in-depth understanding or qualitative context related to students' career planning. Additionally, this research is also limited in exploring external factors that influence students' career planning, such as economic, social, or political conditions in their surrounding communities. For future research, it is recommended to expand the sample, use diverse data collection methods, and integrate analysis of external factors influencing students' career planning. Also, exploring career guidance and training programs can provide better insights into preparing students for the workforce.

4. CONCLUSION

This research highlights the importance of career planning in vocational education, especially in the hospitality industry. The research results indicate that twelfth-grade students majoring in Hospitality at SMK Negeri 1 Merangin have a good understanding of career choices, readiness to enter the workforce, and knowledge about career opportunities in the hospitality industry. This is evidenced by the percentage values of each career planning indicator, with a percentage of 60% for the understanding of career choices indicator, 66.7% for the readiness to enter the workforce indicator, and 60% for the knowledge about career opportunities in the hospitality industry indicator. Recommendations for future research include considering external factors that influence students' career planning. Integration of career guidance and training programs also needs to be further explored to better prepare students for entering the workforce in the hospitality industry. Thus, this research provides a strong foundation for the development of vocational education and career planning for students in the future, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between educational institutions, industries, and other stakeholders to create an environment that supports the future career success of students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our thanks to all parties involved in this research. Thank you to the school, namely SMK Negeri 1 Merangin, which has given permission and full support in carrying out this research. Thank you also to all Class The support from all of these is very meaningful in completing the research well. Thank you for your valuable cooperation and contribution.

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