
FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS' SELECTION OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

The study intended to identify factors affecting student's selection of senior high school. The study combines qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative approach was used to identify variables and quantitative approach was used to group the variables into factors. Forty-one variables were derived from interview was converted into a 41 items questionnaire. Using exploratory factor analysis with principal factor extraction, six factors are extracted with 22 remain significant variables. The six factors that contributed to the preference in selecting senior high school were variety of school programs, discipline, school environment, academic quality, focus on spiritual, sport facilities. The highest preference in selecting senior high school was variety of school programs while the least variance was sport facilities. No significant difference was found between male and female students in selecting senior high school.

Keywords: Students' selection, variety of school programs, discipline, school environment, academic quality.

1. Introduction

Education is absolutely necessary as a means of developing knowledge and skills for students. Altrichter, Bacher, Beham, Nagy & Wetzelhütter (2011), said that education is an important asset in an individual's life. Education is having significant role in the life of children as they grow and develop; it prepares young people to make decision meaningful transition to an independent adult life. A study by Napompech (2011), found that commonly, parents think to have good education for their children for having stable job and good salary in the future.

Various reasons why a Senior High School was chosen as a place of study. Bossetti (2004); Denessen, Driessena & Slegers (2005); Weiher & Tedin (2002); Bradley & Taylor (2007); Coldron, Tanner, Finch, Shipton, Wolstenholme, Willis, Demack & Stiell (2008), found that academic reason as a central reason in selecting school, believing that children will be having good and better education. A study by Chen (2007), found that school's efficient use of facilities, campus security, status of the school's surrounding and effective management were important in selecting school. To provide students with a good learning environment, safe with healthy environment make parents feel that their children is safe in the school. A research by Wu (2004), said that convenient space will help students to learn, and teaching activities should cater to students needs and progress. Teachers-students interaction should be emphasized and it is important that every student feels that they are respected. Educational environment and philosophy have received much attention, as the research by Lin (2009), and Wu (2003), found

that existing facilities, manpower, and community resources must be developed in affective way so that is would impress parents and students. Moreover, it is discovered that educational environment of the school could help the school and community create a close bond. In addition to that, are discipline (Goldring & Hausman, 1999) and morals (Bussell, 1998).

The competition among senior high schools requires each school to compete and stand against the competition. The number of schools competing for students causes tight competition between schools in North Sulawesi as according to Central Bureau of Statistics the number of schools compare to students is 197 to 48,140.(Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS], 2016). Consequently, tight competition causes decision makers who involve in managing schools need to identify and choose proper and better design strategies and policies in meeting the various needs of the students and satisfaction their students. Student's satisfaction with teachers, academic content, the learning environment, and overall experience affecting students trust to the schools (Grossman, 1999).

Good quality of education is a commonly researched topic today, but few studies had been done to measuring and analyzing factors affecting students' selection of senior high school especially in North Sulawesi Region, thus leaving a gap of knowledge what important factors affecting students' selection of senior high school. It is the intention of this study to look for the factors affecting students' selection of senior high school. Specifically, to answer the following questions: What factors affecting students' selection of senior high school? Which of those factors account for the most variance? Does the selection of senior high school differ as perceived by gender?

The results of the study may be used by the school management and key decision maker of the school not only to gain better understanding of factors considered in selecting senior high school from the students' perspective, but also to better design effective strategies and policies and to ensure the sustainability of the school.

2. Method

An exploratory factor analysis was done in order to identify factors contributing to the selection of senior high school. Survey research design was used where the data were taken using self-developed questionnaire. For the content validity of the questionnaire were based on theory from literatures and from in-depth interviewed to eleven respondents that were selected from current senior high school students at Universitas Klabat. Each interview lasting between 30 – 60 minutes was based on the saturation of the information. The interview was ceased when there is no more new information on the eleventh and twelfth respondent. 52 items were constructed from in-depth interview and literature reviews. For the construct validity and reliability, the items were tested to 60 respondents. Item that has Item-Reminder Coefficient less than .30 were removed (Spector, 1992). Of the 52 items, 11 items were removed so that left 41 valid items left. The valid questionnaire was distributed to the respondents.

The senior high school students were the respondents, selected conveniently based on some criteria. The criteria used in selecting sample were, male and female students at Universitas Klabat senior high school. There were two hundred respondents participated in this study. But based on the respondent consistency coefficient (Kountur, 2011), because they were not consistent in answering the questionnaire, the 29 respondents were removed from the data. The remaining 171 respondents were analyzed in this study.

Exploratory factor analysis with principal factor extraction was used in answering the first and second research questions; what factors students considered when selecting senior high school and which of those factors account for the most variance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's test of sampling adequacy is used with .05 level of significant. While in answering the third research question; does the selection of senior high school differ as perceived by gender? Independent – sample t-test was used.

3. Results

What factors affecting students' selection of senior high school? Which of those factors account for the most variance? Exploratory factor analysis with principal factor extraction and varimax rotation method was performed on 41 variables that were converted into items of self-developed questionnaire for a sample of 171 respondents. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) overall measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) is .836 which is acceptable. KMO overall MSA greater than .60 is considered acceptable (Tabachnic & Fidel, 2013).

Six factors were extracted. As indicated by Cronbach's alpha, all of these six factors were internally consistent and well defined by the variables; the lowest Cronbach's alpha for factors from variables was .723 as shown in Table 1. Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 and above indicate that the variables in the factor are internally consistent or measuring the same thing (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). Six factors contributed to the selection of senior high school were (1) Variety of school programs, (2) Discipline, (3) School Environment, (4) Academic quality, (5) Focus on spiritual, (6) Sport facilities.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Measure of Internal Consistency

	Cronbach's Alpha
Factor 1: Variety of school programs	0.833
Factor 2: Discipline	0.842
Factor 3: School environment	0.821
Factor 4: Academic quality	0.769
Factor 5: Focus on spiritual	0.723

Factor 6: Sport Facilities

0.757

The six factors explained 52.98 percent of the variance that make students select the Universitas Klabat senior high school. As shown in Table 2 factor that accounts the highest variance is factor 1 which is preparation of students' future (25.32 %) while factor that account the least variance is factor 6 (3.70 %) that is focus on spiritual

Table 2 : Percentage of Variance after Varimax Rotation

Eigen Value	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6
Variable %	25.32	9.14	6.18	4.43	4.21	3.70
Cumulative %	25.32	34.46	40.64	45.07	49.28	52.98

Loading of variables on factors are shown in Table 3. Variables are ordered and grouped by size of loading to facilitate interpretation. Since substantial loading is above .45 (Tabachnic & Fidel, 2013) any factor loading less than .45 will be removed. Four variables were removed due to lower factor loading than .45 which left 16 items. As shown in Table 3, Vocal group program ($r=0.789$) and pathfinder program (0.787) as variety of school programs is the highest loading for factor 1. These two variables indicate the need of variety of school programs. Discipline ($r = 0.814$) is the highest loading factor for factor 2. Save school environment ($r = 0.790$) and having neat and an orderly school environment ($r = 0.778$) as school environment is the highest loading for factor 3. Though School is able to meet students need ($r = 0.764$) is the highest loading for factor 4, the next highest loading for factor 4 seems more appropriate to indicate the name of factor 4 is academic quality ($r= 0.746$). Lead students to be faithful to God ($r = 0.703$) and God is the priority in the school are the highest loading for factor 5. These considered as focus on spiritual. Basketball court ($r = 0.879$) and volleyball court ($r = 0.868$) are the highest loading for factor 6. These two variables indicated sport facilities.

Table 3 : Factor Pattern after Varimax Rotation

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6
Vocal group program	0.789	0.110	0.137	-0.012	0.090	0.030
Pathfinder program	0.787	0.085	-0.082	0.182	0.058	0.048
Extra curricula program	0.655	0.183	0.221	0.219	0.094	0.128
School accreditation	0.579	0.030	0.195	0.143	0.088	-0.029
School vision and mission based on the bible	0.506	-0.075	0.083	0.360	0.090	0.080
Choir program	0.497	0.112	-0.094	-0.009	0.322	-0.146
Bible camp program	0.495	0.020	0.045	0.034	0.197	-0.058
Discipline	0.085	0.814	-0.111	0.113	-0.018	0.087
Teachers discipline in teaching	0.101	0.745	0.214	-0.019	0.069	0.214
Internet availability	0.010	0.544	0.266	-0.038	0.135	0.077
Save school environment	0.124	0.029	0.790	0.122	0.207	-0.012
School environment is neat and an orderly	0.032	0.024	0.778	0.166	0.155	0.137
Comfortable school environment	0.094	0.012	0.768	0.219	0.147	0.142
School is able to meet students need	0.180	0.006	0.123	0.764	0.216	-0.012
Academic quality	0.206	0.075	0.197	0.746	-0.078	0.002
Good quality of English	0.181	0.145	0.227	0.553	0.065	-0.042
Teachers teach according to their competency	0.006	0.172	0.395	0.509	0.209	-0.078
Lead students to be faithful to God	0.177	0.078	0.118	-0.037	0.703	0.073
God is the priority in the school	0.030	0.114	0.151	0.261	0.687	0.036
School prepares students future	0.200	0.183	0.265	0.048	0.675	0.090
Basketball court	0.020	0.273	0.083	-0.008	0.017	0.879
Volleyball court	-0.015	0.272	0.051	-0.077	0.073	0.868

Factor 1 = variety of school programs; Factor 2 = Discipline; Factor 3 = school environment; Factor 4 = academic quality; Factor 5 = focus on spiritual; Factor 6 = sport facilities

Variety of school programs can be described in terms of; (1) vocal group program; (2) Pathfinder program; (3) Extra curricula program; (4) School accreditation; (5) School vision and mission based on the bible; (6) Choir program; (7) Bible camp program. Discipline can be describe in terms of; (1) Discipline; (2) Teachers discipline in teaching; (3)Internet Availability. School environment can be described in terms of; (1) Save school environment (2) School environment is neat and an orderly; (3) Comfortable school environment. Academic quality can be described in terms of; (1) School is able to meet student's needs; (2) Academic quality; (3) Good quality of English; (4) Teachers teach according to their competency. Focus on spiritual can be described in terms of; (1) Lead students to be faithful to God; (2) God is the priority in the school; (3) School prepares students future. Sport facilities can be described in terms of; (1) Basketball court; (2) Volleyball court.

To answer the third research question; does the selection of senior high school differ as perceived by gender? Independent – sample t-test was calculated comparing the mean scores of factors contributing to student's preference in selecting senior high school. No significant difference was found between male and female students ($t(169) = 0.269$, $p = 0.312$). The mean of male students ($M = 3.9814$, $SD = 0.38611$) was not significantly different from the mean of female students ($M = 4.0474$, $SD = 0.42408$).

4. Discussions

The present study provides useful information for understanding the students' preference in selecting senior high school. There are six factors that contribute to the selection of senior high school; variety of school programs, discipline, school environment, academic quality, focuses on spiritual, sport facilities. Variety of school programs are the strongest factor among the other five factors that contribute to the attractiveness of senior high schools. This is consistent with the study of Ibrahim, Osman & Bachok (2014); Lundh, House, Means & Harris (2013), which found that various program and after – school program determined the choice of a school. This finding is consistent with the study of Zainurin & Sabri (2011), both agree that relevant criteria in choosing a school is because of the extra co-curricular activities offered by the school. As the study of Lawhorn (2008), showed that most students enjoy the participation in co-curricular activities

The second important factor contributes to students' preference in selecting senior high school is discipline. Discipline is also including teachers discipline in teaching. This finding is consistent with the study of Goldring & Hausman (1999); and Hsu & Fang (2013), which found the important of discipline. It is believed that if the teacher is discipline than it can motivate students to learn. As according to Sundeberg & Ottander (2013), the role of teachers is to create interest, provide knowledge, and build motivation to the students. The study of Fahmy, Bachtiar, Rahim

& Malik (2015), found that offering discipline has affected to students' academic achievement although they were not significant.

School environment is another important factor. This is consistent with the study of Jaacob, Osman & Bachok (2014); Roy & Chakrabarti (2010); Zainurin & Sabri (2011), which found that school environment is the factor that motivated the parents in choosing school. As other studies also showed that school environment factors play a significant role such as comfortable and convenient of the school (Napompech & Kuawiriyapan, 2010); safe and effective environment (Hsu & Fang, 2013).

The fourth factor that contributes to the students' preference in selecting senior high school is academic quality. This finding is consistent with other similar studies which found that academic quality and school academic performance as important factors for both parents and students in selecting school (Bossetti, 2004; Elacqua, Gobierno & Ibanez, 2005; Denessen, Denessen, Driessena & Slegers, 2005; Anyan, Gyebil, Inkoom & Yeboah, 2013; Jaacob, Osman & Bachok 2014). In addition to the study, Shahmohammadi (2014) and Napompech (2011), found that teachers understand students' specific need such as to be friendly and approachable create best environment of learning. The finding is supported by Levin and Richard (2011), that teacher must uncover the different students need because students think that teachers' teaching methods is important (Napompech & Kuawiriyapan, 2011), and using a variety of teaching methods to meet students' need (Randler, Hummel, Zikuda, Vollmer, Bogner & Mayring, 2011).

The fifth factor is focus on spiritual aspect. There were not many research found on the effect of spiritual in the selection of high school. Albert (2010), on the academic study of religious and integrative religious education in Europe found that a religious atmosphere may influence the children's growth. It is supported by Wekke & Sahlan (2014), those religious values is important in the school development. In addition, Fahmy, Bachtiar, Rahim & Malik (2011), found that religious aspect have affect to the student's academic achievement although they were not significant.

Sport facilities is the last factor, as studies showed that the availability of the school facilities influence the selection of school (Roy & Chakrabarti, 2010; Zainurin & Sabri, 2011).

The study was limited to students as respondents that made the choice in selecting the school. Similar further study need to be done to parents that used to make decision for their children.

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