The Role of Parents in Helping Children Choose a College Major

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Abstract

The phenomenon of children choosing the wrong major in high school students who want to continue to the university level has become a common thing. This will have an impact on the quality of learning during college so that it will affect their future. This study aims to identify the role of parents in decision-making related to the selection of study programs and universities. Grade 12 students were the subjects of this study with a sample of 35 people. This study uses a quantitative method, data collection is used using the survey method. The aspects identified include parental support and involvement in helping children choose courses and colleges. This study results in 80% of parents are involved in choosing the study program and college that their child wants. In the final decision, 54% of children choose study programs and colleges of their own choice and 46% are the choice of parents. This research is the basis for the school's information to further develop the potential of students to find out early on students' interests and talents and also the school can involve parents in providing information about study programs, colleges, and future careers that can be pursued by their children.

Key words:
children's rights; choice of major; role of parents; future

1. Introduction

Human Rights (HAM) are basic rights that every individual has since birth. Human rights have a universal nature, which means that they should not be created by anyone and should not be taken by anyone. This right is needed by humans to protect themselves and maintain their human dignity, as well as to be the moral basis in interacting with fellow humans. (Triwahyuningih, 2018). Human rights affirm the position and protection and respect for human rights, including children's rights. Including their rights to life, growth and development, education, and personality as well as protection against various forms of violence. In the field of education, this means a form of character education and a fortress of mental health in children.

Therefore, individuals will be more likely to help each other, work together, and comfortably participate in a better life together (Billah et al., 2023). In recognizing and implementing human rights, young people are given their rights by guaranteeing their right to full access to a safe, healthy and sustainable life, especially when their right to sit and speak is fulfilled in their lives affected by any decision. Moreover, they are starting to enter adolescence.
Adolescents begin to base themselves on certain moral and philosophical theories, suggesting that beliefs formed during periods of uncertainty in early adolescence will lead to increased self-confidence and independence (Pickhardt, 2017). This is reflected in the improvement of decision-making skills in adolescents, where they begin to make decisions related to future planning, for example in choosing friends, achieving goals after graduating from high school, or even stepping into the world of work (Noor, 2018). This decision-making can be transformed to think and behave in different aspects of life.

In creating a successful future for children, factors such as expectations, goals, standards, plans, and strategies designed to achieve future goals have a huge influence. In the context of education, the role of parents is crucial in educating their children, both through physical and emotional support, as well as through active participation in the educational process. The existence of universities is expected to produce individuals who have superior quality of human resources. (Rohmah dan Azzahrah, 2021). Therefore, cooperation between parents and educators is essential to understand and nurture each child's unique characteristics and learning styles (Desmariani et al., 2021). This will help improve the efficiency of the learning process and allow children to develop their potential optimally.

In the period towards the end of secondary education, high school students must face an important decision in choosing a major to continue their education in college. This process can be complex and stressful because the decision can affect their career path and personal development. One aspect that is often a major concern is the role of parents in making this decision. While parental opinions can provide valuable guidance, the child's right to determine his or her own interests must be respected and defended (Merewether & Fleet, 2013).

In the process of choosing study programs and colleges, parents have an important role to be involved in making decisions about their children's education. As part of the family, parents have strategic control and require active involvement in the process of choosing an education major that will determine the child's future (Rini, 2014). In choosing a major at university, the role of parents in supporting their children is very significant (Dietrich et al., 2011). Parents should provide adequate information about the various major options and assist the child in exploring their interests, talents, and abilities in order to make an informed decision (Gill et al., 2015).

Recent studies highlight the role of parents in the process of choosing a child's major in college. The results show that parental views often influence students' final decisions, although they do not fully reflect the child's personal interests and talents (Wiswall & Zafar, 2014). This raises questions about how far parents should be involved in this decision-making process and how we can ensure that children's right to determine their own interests is protected.

However, reputable education also shows that parental support has a positive impact on student academic success, satisfaction, and well-being. Parents can guide their children to understand their strengths and interests, help them explore a variety of suitable major options, and provide emotional support and motivation to achieve their educational goals (Saraswati, 2018).

In addition to providing information and support, parents can also help children understand the demands and expectations of each study program of interest. They can help children explore the campus environment, available facilities, and find resources and academic support. Discussions about available career opportunities with children can help them make
more informed and rational decisions about their choice of major. Thus, parents can help children make better decisions about their future (Nordin & Seng, 2021).

It is important to note that the choice of a major that suits a student's personal interests and talents is not just a preference, but a fundamental need for a student's academic and career development. If not suitable, it can cause stress, anxiety, and academic difficulties (Smith, 2004). Therefore, parents must understand their role in helping their children without neglecting the unique desires and potential of each student in order to be able to choose the right major and allow for optimal development.

This study aims to understand the role of parents in the process of choosing a major for high school students for further study. This study will study how much influence parents have on students' decisions in determining their future. This is very important because it shows a major challenge in the current education system that requires serious attention. By understanding the role of parents, we can find the best solution to maintain a balance between the guidance provided by parents and the child's right to explore his or her own interests and potential. This step will have a positive impact on students' academic development, career, and well-being in the future. The research question asked was "How much role do parents play in supporting the process of choosing a major for high school students for further study?"

In this study, it is hoped that there will be an increase in understanding of the interaction between students, parents, and the process of choosing a major at the high school level. This research has the potential to provide valuable insights for educators, counselors, and policymakers in designing more effective strategies and interventions to support students in choosing majors that match their interests and talents. Therefore, this research is expected to make a significant contribution in efforts to protect students' rights in determining their own preferred interests.

2. Literature Review

The Impact of Parent Support on Student Success

In their research, Moneva et al. (2020) showed that financial support provided by parents has a significant influence on students' motivation to learn. In addition, research conducted by Ernawati et al. (2022) also states that when students feel supported by their parents, they tend to have higher levels of confidence and stronger confidence in their academic abilities. This can ultimately contribute to improving student learning outcomes.

The importance of the role of parents in students' academic success can be reflected through the provision of direction and motivation. Parents who are actively involved in their children's academic development can help them face various challenges along the educational journey, including in choosing a college major. Through her research, Choe (2020) concluded that the social and emotional support provided by parents can help students adapt to college life, such as embracing new friends and facing higher academic demands. In this case, such social and emotional support is able to increase students' sense of belonging and confidence, which is crucial in the process of their integration into a successful college environment.

In addition, the role of parents in helping students overcome obstacles and setbacks is also very important. When students face academic challenges or are undecided about their
choice of major, the presence of supportive parents can make a significant difference. According to research conducted by Boonk et al. (2018), parental involvement such as reading with children, communicating with teachers, and having high expectations for children's academic achievement, has a positive impact on better student learning outcomes.

In conclusion, the role of parents in supporting student success is very important. According to Ramadhan et al. (2021), high expectations and parental involvement have been proven to have a positive impact on academic performance, motivation, and overall student well-being. Zhang (2022) also emphasized the same thing. By providing guidance, encouragement, emotional support, and practical help, parents can help students overcome obstacles, stay focused on their goals, and ultimately achieve academic success. Therefore, it is essential for parents to be actively involved in supporting their children's academic development and empowering them to make decisions that will shape a successful future.

### The Role of Parents in Guiding Big Decisions

According to Taub's research (2008), the role of parents is very important in guiding their children in making big decisions, especially in choosing a major at university. In addition, the support provided by parents also has a positive influence on the psychosocial development of students as they adapt to college life. To support their children in choosing a university major, parents can use one of the main ways to engage in open and honest conversations about their academic interests and career goals. According to Seligman and Darling (2017), effective communication between parents and children is very important in providing support and guidance without being judgmental or too domineering.

In addition to discussing academic interests and career goals, parents can also support their children in exploring various majors by conducting research on potential fields of study, visiting university campuses, and attending information sessions. According to John Gottman, Ph.D. (2024), it is important for parents to set clear boundaries and expectations for their children, while giving them the freedom to explore and make their own choices. In conclusion, the role of parents in directing important decision-making, such as choosing a university major, has great significance in supporting their children's academic and career development. By actively engaging in open and honest dialogue, providing necessary resources and support, and giving their children the confidence to take responsibility for their own decisions, parents can help their children make informed decisions regarding their future academic and career paths.

### Creating a Safe Space for Exploration

Providing a safe space to explore is very important for parents to support their children in making decisions regarding their university major. Parents must realize that choosing a major is a crucial decision because it will shape the child's career path in the future. By providing a safe and supportive environment, parents can assist their children in exploring their interests and talents so that they can make informed decisions about their academic and professional goals.

One strategy that can be used to create a safe environment for children to explore is to encourage open and honest communication. According to Mcnaughton & Vostal (2010) research, it is important to actively listen to children's thoughts and concerns, as well as validate the feelings and experiences they are experiencing. By building trust and
understanding, parents can help children feel comfortable expressing their interests and aspirations without fear of being judged or criticized.

Additionally, it is important to provide your child with the resources and support they need to explore a variety of academic and career options. Saha, N, (2012) stated that encouraging them to research various majors, talk to professors and professionals in their fields, and participate in internship opportunities or job shadowing. By empowering your child to take an active role in the decision-making process, parents can help them gain valuable insights and experiences that will influence their choice of major.

In order to support your child in choosing a university major, it is important to create a safe space for them to explore. According to Boonk et al. (2018), this can be achieved through open communication, the provision of resources and support, and helping children overcome fear and uncertainty. As a parent, your role is to guide and support your child in his or her academic journey. As such, they will be able to make decisions that align with their interests and goals, thus achieving their full potential and success in their chosen field of study.

Building Trust and Mutual Respect

Building a strong relationship between parents and children is very important in supporting them in making important decisions, such as choosing a major in college. According to a study entitled *Why Relationships Really Matter in our Earliest Years* (2023), trust is considered the foundation of any healthy relationship, so parents need to trust their children's ability to make the best decisions for themselves. Mutual respect is also a major factor in the relationship between parents and children, especially when it comes to making important decisions such as choosing a college major. Parents need to value the individuality and unique interests that their children have, and encourage them to pursue their interests and dreams. By respecting children's choices and opinions, parents can establish open communication and create a supportive environment for them to explore their options and make informed decisions.

It is important for us to set boundaries and expect certain things when interacting with others. As stated by John Gottman, Ph.D. (2024), parents must set clear guidelines for their children and provide space for them to explore and make their own decisions. By setting realistic expectations and demonstrating understanding and flexibility, parents can create a positive environment and give their children confidence and independence in facing the challenges faced in the university world.

In conclusion, establishing trust and mutual respect between parents and children is very important in supporting them in making big decisions, such as choosing a university major. By trusting children's abilities, valuing their individuality, engaging in effective communication, and setting boundaries and expectations, parents can empower their children to make informed decisions and pursue their interests with confidence (Seligman & Darling, 2017). Ultimately, building a strong and supportive parent-child relationship is key to helping children succeed academically and in their careers.

3. Methodology of Research

Based on its objectives, this research is descriptive where the research is designed to collect data that describes the characteristics of an object such as people, organizations, products or brands, events or situations. The paradigm of this research is positivism which is based
on the assumption that there is an objective reality that can be observed, measured, and qualified. The results of this study are also expected to be generalized to a larger population. This study uses a quantitative method with a data collection strategy using a survey. The use of this quantitative method is based on several considerations. Using a representative sample, the results of the study can be used in a larger population which is in line with the research paradigm (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

This research was carried out in several stages. First, exploring the phenomenon of existing problems related to children’s rights in choosing a study program at the university. Second, trace the previous literature related to the chosen phenomenon. Third, compile quantitative research measuring tools in the form of short survey questions. Fourth, distributing a survey in the form of a google form directly in high schools in the city of Bandung. The sample was selected purposively by the school. The students who fill out the survey are all students who are present in the selected class. The number of students who attended was 35 people. All student respondents filled out a questionnaire while in class and were waited for by the research team.

4. Results and Discussion

The first aspect identified was the last education of the student's parents. The survey results are shown in the pie chart in Figure 1.

![Parent's Last Education Circle Diagram](image)

**Figure 1**

Parent’s Last Education Circle Diagram

In Figure 1, it can be seen that 34% of the parents of the respondents are diploma or bachelor graduates, 26% of parents are graduates from high school, 23% of parents are graduates from elementary school, and 17% of parents are graduates from junior high school. If categorized again based on the school level, then 34% of parents have received a higher education level, 43% have received a secondary education level, and 23% have received a basic education level.

The statement shows that only a small percentage of parents have sufficient experience and knowledge about higher education, so they can provide more targeted guidance and positively impact their children's final decisions. Thus, few parents can give a clear picture of higher education at the university. Parents who have an adequate educational background tend to better understand the importance of higher education and better career prospects, so they will play an active role in their children's academic decision-making process. However, as many as 66% of parents still do not understand in-depth knowledge about
higher education at university along with their future career prospects. The lack of involvement and knowledge about higher education among parents can hinder their ability to guide and negatively impact their child's final decision in choosing further education. The role of parents in students' decision to proceed to college is very important, as their guidance and knowledge greatly influence the final decision (Ticuşan, 2015; Husin et al., 2019).

Other aspects identified are about the extent of the role of parents in supporting the choice of major at university. The questions asked are coded with A, B, C, and D. Part A asked "Do you think high school students are obliged to get the right to choose a college?" Part B asks about "Are your parents involved in making your choice of Study Program and College?" Part C asks about "Is there any compulsion from your parents to decide on the choice of Study Program and College they want" Part D asks about "Do you have the right to choose a College without parental intervention?" The results of the answers to each question can be seen in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10</td>
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Source: processed from primary data

Based on the results of part A, most respondents agreed that high school students who are on the verge of adulthood should be given the freedom to determine their own educational direction. Thus, they can choose courses and colleges that match their interests, talents, and career goals. This is considered to increase their motivation to learn and their commitment to higher education. In addition, granting these rights is considered important to respect and support the independence and personal responsibility of children in making important decisions about their future (Duncan & Sawyer, 2010; Nthontho, 2017).

Based on the results of part B, most respondents agreed that although high school students have the right to choose courses and colleges, parental involvement is still important. Parents have a broader experience and insight into education and careers, so they can provide valuable guidance in the decision-making process. In addition, parental involvement also ensures that the choices made are in accordance with the family's financial condition and long-term plans. Thus, collaboration between children and parents in making higher education choices can result in more informed and informed decisions. Research shows that parental involvement in children's education can provide significant benefits, including improving children's academic achievement and learning outcomes (Riskiyah, 2021).

Based on the results of part C, most respondents chose "no" and argued that parents did not force them to choose a study program and college. They feel that parents are more supportive and give them freedom in choosing an educational path that suits their interests and talents. Parents act as guides who provide advice and consideration without imposing their will. This shows parents' trust in their children's ability to make important decisions related to the future of education and career. This support helps create a positive environment and encourages children's independence and personal responsibility in determining the direction of their lives. Thus, collaboration between children and parents in making higher education choices can result in wiser and more informed decisions (Shuraini, 2020; Widaningtyas, 2022). This is in line with the results of research that shows that
parental involvement in the learning process of children is very important for their optimal growth and development (Auliya & Fauziah, 2020).

Based on the results of part D, most respondents voted "yes" and argued that they have the right to choose a college without parental intervention. Their reason is the belief that as individuals on the brink of adulthood, they can make their own decisions about the future of their education. They argue that this freedom is essential for ensuring choices that align with their personal interests, talents, and aspirations without being influenced by external pressures. By doing so, students can feel more responsible and committed to their education, which can increase motivation and academic success. In addition, the trust of parents in granting this right is also important. However, the active role of parents is still needed to help children choose the appropriate course of study, although the final decision remains in the hands of the child (Mansour & Martin, 2009).

At the end of the survey, it was identified about "the final decision in the selection of study programs and colleges is chosen by parents or children". The final decision diagram can be seen on the Figure 2.

As many as 54% of respondents choose higher education options based on their personal desires, while the other 46% are influenced by the wishes of their parents. This suggests that parents have certain preferences, but the final decision is made through open discussion and extensive consideration. Although children must decide for themselves, parental advice and support can ensure appropriate and planned decisions (Nisfah et al., 2023; Imanto & Kustanti, 2021). Parents have an important role to play in providing valuable insights and assisting children in making more informed decisions. Parental involvement can also increase children's motivation and commitment in achieving educational goals. Thus, collaboration between children and parents in making higher education choices can result in wiser decisions and better implemented (Sunarti, 2020; Syuraini, 2020; Wardani et al., 2019).

Parents usually want to give advice based on their experience and insights, but they also understand the importance of letting children make their own decisions. In the process of discussion, parents and children can achieve a suitable end result through an inclusive approach. In the context of higher education, collaboration between parents and children can provide similar benefits. Parents have a broader long-term perspective on their child's future, so they can provide thoughtful advice and help children consider factors such as tuition fees, job opportunities, and the suitability of study programs to the child's interests (Imanto & Kustanti, 2021).
In the process of choosing a college, a student's final decision is usually the result of a variety of considerations, including academic interests, college reputation, courses of study, facilities, location, cost, and career potential. Therefore, the final decision reflects not only the student's personal wishes, but also the result of careful discussion and planning between the student and the parent. Parental involvement in children's education is very important because they have broader experience and insight into education and careers (Hidayati et al., 2023). In addition, parental involvement can ensure that the choices made are in accordance with the family's financial condition and long-term plans (Kogoya, 2022).

5. Conclusion

This study shows that in the selection process of Study Programs and Colleges, high school students often face dilemmas regarding the extent of their parents' role in their decision-making. The results of the responses showed that although many students emphasized the importance of personal choice, they also appreciated the advice and support of parents. This decision-making process tends to involve an open dialogue between students and parents, where various factors such as personal interests, parental advice, college reputation, cost, and career potential are considered. Specifically, this study revealed that students feel heard and valued when their parents give advice without imposing opinions. The advice provided by parents is often based on their life experience and knowledge of the world of work as well as family values, which can be invaluable to students. However, students also want to have the freedom to explore their own interests and aspirations.

These findings emphasize the importance of effective and respectful communication between students and parents in the educational decision-making process. Open dialogue allows both parties to understand each other's perspectives and reach a decision that best suits the needs and desires of the students. In this context, the final decision is often made after careful consideration of various factors, suggesting that the selection of an educational path is a complex and multidimensional process. Thus, this study concludes that cooperation and respect for each party's perspective are very important in facing crucial educational choices. Building open communication and valuing input from both sides can help students feel more confident and supported in making important decisions regarding their future education and careers. The study also suggests that educational institutions and school counselors can play a key role in facilitating this dialogue, providing relevant information and helping to direct discussions between students and parents. This can create a more supportive environment for students in this critical decision-making process.

6. Recommendations

Some recommendations that can be made for further research are to analyze other factors that have the potential to affect the choice of students' majors in addition to the role of parents, such as academic achievement, personal interests, economic factors, and social environment. The analysis of these factors can be carried out qualitatively as well as quantitatively; conducting qualitative research with in-depth interviews with students, parents, and school counselors to understand the process and dynamics of major selection from various perspectives; Analyze the impact of parental support on students' learning achievement after entering college as a continuation of this study. This research can be carried out qualitatively or quantitatively.
REFERENCES


