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## FACTORS INFLUENCING DECISION MAKING TO CONDUCT PAID PROJECTS OF GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION STUDENTS, UNIVERSITY OF JEMBER

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### ABSTRAK

There are various factors that influence decision making in undertaking paid projects for students. One of them is the influence of consumerism, this article aims to analyze the factors influencing consumerism on students. Students' decisions in taking paid projects as an effort to meet financial and lifestyle needs. This study uses a quantitative approach by collecting data through a survey of Geography Education students, University of Jember. From the results of the data obtained, it shows that non-paid projects are highly anticipated, because they do not need to spend a penny and get almost equivalent benefits. The minimum weekly money is the main factor for students in whether or not to participate in a paid project. In addition, to meet the needs of life is often a conflict for students to get involved in paid projects. This study provides insight into the importance of time management and wise decision making so that students can balance financial needs and academic responsibilities.



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## PRELIMINARY

In the era of globalization and rapid technological development, students are faced with various choices that can affect their educational and career paths. One increasingly popular option is involvement in paid projects. These projects not only provide practical experience but also offer financial compensation that can ease the burden of educational costs. [Sutrisno and Pratama \(2020\)](#) added that the influence of peers and the social environment are also major factors in students' decisions to participate in activities that involve additional costs, such as paid projects. However, the decision to participate in paid projects is not simple; there are various factors that influence this decision-making. One of them is the influence of consumerism.

[Widiastuti and Kurniawan \(2022\)](#), social media has an important role in shaping student consumption patterns in the digital era, especially through exposure to certain lifestyles that are considered ideal. This further strengthens the dominant consumerism phenomenon among students. Consumerism has become a phenomenon that dominates the daily life of every individual, especially in fulfilling the desire to buy certain goods or services, especially among students today. In the context of education, especially at the University of Jember, Geography Education students are often faced with various choices of paid projects that can influence their decisions. Geography Education students at the University of Jember often face various paid projects related to fieldwork, research, or projects. In this context, consumerism can influence their decisions through various factors, such as preferences for better facilities, access to resources, or even social pressure to participate in certain activities in order to maintain self-image.

With the increasing access to information and the influence of social media, students tend to be exposed to various products and services that promise financial benefits. This creates pressure to participate in paid projects, which not only impacts the economic aspect but also the quality of their education and learning experience. Therefore, it is important to understand the dynamics of this consumerism and reinforce it towards students' decision-making in academic and professional contexts. This phenomenon is important to study because students' decisions to take paid projects are not only influenced by academic needs, but also by external factors such as lifestyle and consumer values. In addition, the demand for access to adequate technology and resources in educational projects further strengthens the role of consumerism in the decision-making process. This article aims to analyze the factors influencing

consumerism on students. Students' decisions to take paid projects as an effort to meet financial and lifestyle needs

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method to examine the influence of consumerism in decision-making on paid projects by Geography Education students, University of Jember. A sample of 30 students was selected using purposive sampling, with the criteria of being active students for at least one semester. Data were collected through an online questionnaire. Questionnaires related to students' financial literacy issues play an important role in their decision-making regarding fund allocation, including participating in paid projects. Therefore, this survey includes questions related to students' understanding of financial management in Geography Education study program students, University of Jember ([Hidayati & Nurjanah, 2023](#)). Data collection through a questionnaire covering the respondents' background, food expenses, paid project experience, and external factors that influence their decisions. The questionnaire was distributed through the Google Forms platform in the WhatsApp group of the Geography Education study program, University of Jember. The data were analyzed descriptively using frequency and percentage to see the extent to which consumerism influences students' project decision-making.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the results of the researcher's research with data obtained through Google Forms using a sample of Geography Education Students at the University of Jember. The data obtained by the researcher on how consumerism behavior influences students' decisions in taking paid projects or workshops received various responses. [Anggraini and Fitriyah \(2021\)](#) explained that students' preferences for a consumptive lifestyle can influence their decision to take part in paid projects, especially if the project supports their self-image or professional portfolio. Different weekly meal allowances, and the intention to improve themselves are important in making decisions about whether or not to take part in paid projects. From the data obtained by the researcher, it shows that non-paid projects are highly anticipated, because they do not require spending a penny and get almost equivalent benefits. According to [Iskandar and Setiawan \(2019\)](#), students tend to consider external factors such as costs, facilities, and long-term benefits when choosing available academic projects, thus providing benefits not only in terms of academics but also financially. This finding is consistent with the results of a survey showing that non-paid projects are more in demand if they provide similar benefits without the

burden of costs. The minimum weekly allowance is the main factor for students in whether or not to take part in a paid project.

Table 1. Questionnaire Results for Geography Education Students at Jember University

| No | Question                                                                                                                                                                    | Sample Frequency | Average Results Answers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | To what extent do you feel influenced by friends or social media in choosing paid projects?                                                                                 | 32 People        | The results of the questions showed that 20 students were influenced to participate in paid projects through social media or from friends, while 12 students were not influenced at all regarding paid projects.                                                     |
| 2  | What are the main factors you consider when choosing to join a paid project? (Choose up to 3 factors)                                                                       | 32 People        | The main factors that influence students in decision making are the experience and skills gained, alignment with the field of study, and the earning potential offered.                                                                                              |
| 3  | Do you feel that paid projects provide more value in building your professional portfolio compared to unpaid projects?                                                      | 32 People        | The results of a survey via Google Forms showed that 17 students agreed that a portfolio of paid projects had more value than unpaid projects.                                                                                                                       |
| 4  | Do you have any hopes or suggestions regarding how universities can organize or introduce paid projects that are more beneficial to students?                               | 32 People        | It can be concluded that almost all students in the sample have expectations related to projects or workshops held by the university. Internal parties (universities) need to consider the price so that all students get good benefits without spending more money. |
| 5  | If you are faced with two similar projects, but one is paid and one is not, (note: both projects provide different facilities) which project are you more likely to choose? | 32 People        | In this question, the sample experienced neutral answers, namely 16 students answered paid projects and 16 other students chose unpaid projects.                                                                                                                     |

Source: Research Data (2024)

The questionnaire results obtained many diverse answers, so that researchers gained many perspectives on how Geography Education Students' patterns of participating in paid projects. According to [Izza \(2024\)](#), financial literacy is very important in understanding students' decisions regarding consumption, including their involvement in paid projects. There are certainly a lot of workshops or paid projects that often take place at the University of Jember, but sometimes the brochures are not widely distributed, the topics discussed are not very interesting, and the costs seem expensive, making students think twice about making decisions to participate in paid projects. Research by [Zahra and Hasan \(2020\)](#) shows that peer influence is one of the dominant factors in student consumption behavior. Students are one element that cannot be separated from consumerism patterns, besides that consumptive behavior is also something that must be done by students, thus illustrating how this consumptive behavior provides a clear picture of the findings ([Ramadhani, 2022](#)).

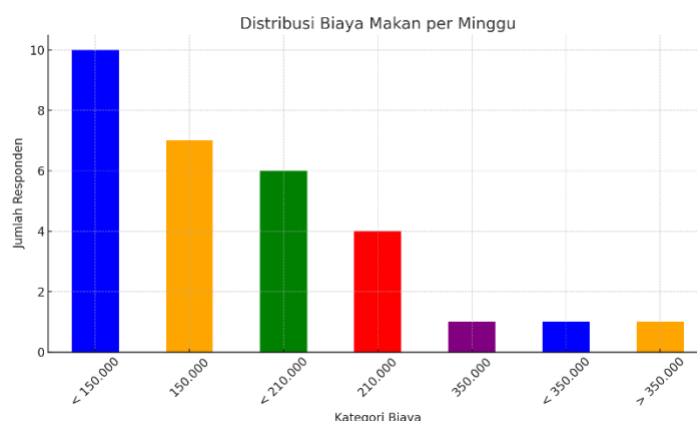
Table 2 Weekly Meal Costs of Geography Education Students, University of Jember

| No | Weekly Meal Costs | Number of Students |
|----|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1  | <Rp. 150,000.00   | 12                 |
| 2  | <Rp. 210,000.00   | 13                 |
| 3  | <Rp. 350,000.00   | 6                  |
| 4  | >Rp. 350,000.00   | 1                  |

Source: Research Data (2024)

The table can provide an overview of how Geography Education Students manage money. In the questionnaire that the researcher distributed, many of the students did not agree that the expenses in conducting workshops were almost or greater than their weekly pocket money so they chose what was in accordance with their financial situation.

Graph 1. Distribution of Meal Costs per Week for Geography Education Students



Source: Research Data (2024)

This graph depicts respondents' spending on food in one week, with the following categories:

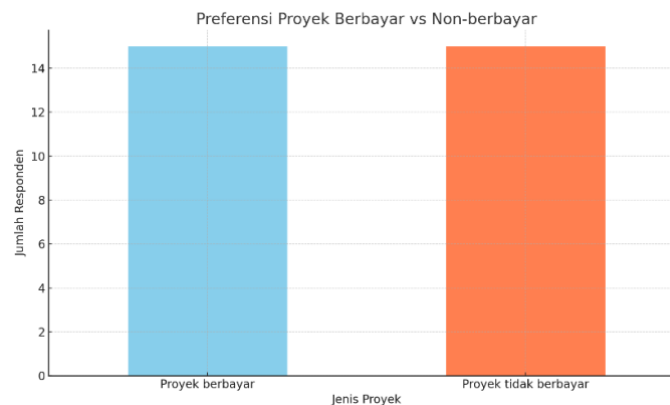
- **< Rp150,000:** The majority of respondents are in this category, indicating that most students have frugal food expenses, possibly due to their simple lifestyle or limited financial resources.
- **Rp150,000 - Rp210,000:** This category also has a significant number of respondents, indicating a spending pattern that is still under control, but slightly higher, perhaps due to additional needs such as food variety.
- **> Rp210,000 to Rp350,000:** Only a small portion of respondents fall into this category. This reflects that there are students with higher food expenditures, which may be due to geographic location, food preferences, or better financial ability.

This distribution highlights the importance of efficient financial management for students. Most respondents allocate food funds sparingly, under IDR 150,000 per week, reflecting a simple lifestyle that is adjusted to the financial limitations of the students themselves in choosing projects that suit their financial situation and the benefits they get. [Yuliana and Fauzan \(2021\)](#) noted that limited allocation of funds for basic needs is often the main barrier for students in participating in paid activities, even though these activities offer additional benefits such as improving skills.

According to [Kurniasih and Wijayanti \(2022\)](#), students' socio-economic status influences their consumption preferences, including in choosing academic activities that

require additional costs. This is relevant in understanding students' decision-making patterns regarding paid projects. This condition is an important consideration for universities or project organizers, so that the paid projects offered do not burden students financially. For example, by setting low fees, offering subsidies, or providing commensurate benefits, so that students can still participate without sacrificing their daily basic needs.

Chart 2. Paid vs. Non-Paid Project Preferences



Source: Research Data (2024)

This graph shows respondents' choice between paid and unpaid projects:

- **Paid Projects:** Respondents who preferred these projects gave reasons such as better experience, earning potential, and better facilities. Paid projects were seen as offering additional benefits to a professional's portfolio and skills.
- **Non-Paid Projects:** This option appealed to some respondents, as it focused on the benefits of skill development without the pressure of cost. Subject suitability and personal satisfaction were also factors to consider.

Respondents showed a balanced preference, but paid projects were slightly more preferred. This suggests that students value opportunities with financial rewards, but are open to unpaid projects that provide skills or professional networking benefits. This choice suggests that universities need to consider a balanced approach, such as providing paid projects at affordable costs or unpaid projects with adequate facilities. According to [Solomon \(2018\)](#), consumerism is often influenced by social drives and psychological needs. In addition, [Hamzah and Nurhayati \(2023\)](#) emphasized that social media plays an important role in shaping students' lifestyle preferences. Of course, this consumer behavior also greatly influences students' considerations in choosing and carrying out paid and unpaid projects.

Based on graph 2 on the findings for paid project preferences, most students manage their expenses wisely, especially for basic needs such as food. This reflects that paid projects need

to be adjusted to the financial conditions of the majority of students to follow them. The preference for paid projects shows that students tend to value the facilities and financial opportunities they get, but there is still interest in non-paid projects for reasons of skill development and experience ([Iskandar & Setiawan, 2019](#)). Therefore, Developing paid projects that not only provide financial compensation but also support the development of student skills but also as provisions from the results of the project when they enter the world of work. [Hidayati & Nurjanah \(2023\)](#) said providing broad access to non-paid projects with equivalent facilities to attract more students. And can increase transparency and communication related to projects to ensure students understand the benefits of each choice of projects that provide financial benefits to them.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that consumerism has influenced the decision-making of Geography Education students at Jember University in participating in paid projects. Using a survey method on 32 students, it was found that financial constraints, especially weekly pocket money, were the main factors influencing participation in projects. Students tend to choose non-paid projects because they do not require costs, but still offer almost equivalent benefits. However, paid projects are still in demand if they offer financial compensation and skill development. Therefore, paid projects should be adjusted to the economic conditions of students and still provide added value in the form of experience and facilities, to be more inclusive and attract more students.

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