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Twelfth-grade students' interest in pursuing higher education in the biology education study program

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Abstract

The decision of senior high school students in continuing their studies in specific higher education study programs, such as Biology Education, plays an essential role in preparing qualified future teachers and improving the quality of education in the region. However, this decision is closely related to students' interests, which strongly influence their study program choices. This research aims to determine the level of interest among twelfth-grade students at State Senior High School 1 of Teluk Pakedai in continuing their studies in the Biology Education study program. This research is classified as descriptive quantitative. The sample in this research consisted of 49 twelfth-grade students at State Senior High School 1 of Teluk Pakedai, taken through total sampling. Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire covering seven aspects: "Happiness," "Desire," "Attention," "Necessity," "Expectation," "Encouragement," and "Willingness." The data that has been collected is analyzed in the form of percentages and categorized into seven categories, including none to all of the sample. From the research conducted, it is known that 72.4% (most of the sample) of twelfth-grade students at State Senior High School 1 of Teluk Pakedai are interested in continuing their studies in the Biology Education study program. These findings suggest that increasing students' awareness and motivation toward the Biology Education study program is essential. This can be achieved through academic counseling, alumni involvement, and activities introducing teaching career prospects.

Abstrak. *Keputusan peserta didik sekolah menengah atas (SMA) untuk melanjutkan studi mereka di program studi pendidikan tinggi tertentu, seperti Pendidikan Biologi, memainkan peran penting dalam mempersiapkan calon guru berkualitas dan meningkatkan mutu pendidikan di daerah. Namun, keputusan tersebut sangat berkaitan dengan minat peserta didik, yang secara signifikan memengaruhi pilihan program studi yang diambil. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan tingkat minat peserta didik kelas XII di SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Pakedai untuk melanjutkan studi di program studi Pendidikan Biologi. Penelitian ini tergolong kuantitatif deskriptif. Sampel pada penelitian ini adalah peserta didik kelas XII di SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Pakedai yang berjumlah 49 orang, diambil dengan teknik pengambilan sampel jenuh. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan angket tertutup yang mencakup tujuh aspek: "Perasaan Senang", "Keinginan", "Perhatian", "Kebutuhan", "Harapan", "Dorongan", dan "Kemauan". Data yang telah dikumpulkan dianalisis dalam bentuk persentase dan dikategorikan menjadi tujuh kategori yang mencakup tak seorang pun sehingga seluruh sampel. Berdasarkan penelitian yang telah dilakukan, diketahui bahwa 72,4% (sebagian besar sampel) peserta didik kelas XII di SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Pakedai berminat melanjutkan studi ke program studi Pendidikan Biologi. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa peningkatan kesadaran dan motivasi peserta didik terhadap program studi Pendidikan Biologi sangat diperlukan. Hal ini dapat dilakukan melalui kegiatan bimbingan akademik, keterlibatan alumni, dan aktivitas yang memperkenalkan prospek karier sebagai pendidik.*

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A. Introduction

In general, education can be defined as a planned effort to grow and develop the talents and potential of humans under the values contained in society and culture (Aryanthi et al., 2018; Pristiwanti et al., 2022). Education plays an important role in building and improving the quality of the nation's character (Intania et al., 2023). Through the education process, an individual will gain knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and positive behaviors that will support them to contribute positively to themselves and society (Dewi et al., 2024; Lathifah & Ndona, 2024; Yuni et al., 2024). The education system is divided into four levels: early childhood, primary, secondary, and higher education.

Higher education, provided by state and private universities, represents the next stage of formal learning that students may choose to pursue after completing secondary education as part of their academic and professional development. The Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (*Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia* [hereinafter referred to as Kemendikbudristek RI], 2023) Number 53 of 2023 concerning the Quality Assurance of Higher Education stipulates that higher education includes diploma, bachelor's, applied bachelor's, professional, master's, applied master's, specialist, doctoral, applied doctoral, and subspecialist programs. Fields of knowledge at the higher education level become more specialized and are commonly referred to as study programs. A study program can be defined as a learning plan that underlies academic education by a predetermined curriculum (Syihab et al., 2021). One of the study programs found in various universities in Indonesia is the Biology Education study program.

The Biology Education study program aims to produce educators who possess comprehensive mastery of pedagogical and biological knowledge, skills, and professional attitudes (Daningsih & Mardiyyaningsih, 2021; Maulidina et al., 2023). Therefore, students of the Biology Education study program, as prospective biology teachers, must be prepared and capable of conducting analysis, reasoning, and critical thinking, as well as providing creative solutions to create an optimal learning experience in the classroom (Rahmi et al., 2025). The Biology Education study program in West Kalimantan can be found in five universities, namely Universitas Tanjungpura, Universitas Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia (hereinafter referred to as PGRI) Pontianak, Universitas Muhammadiyah Pontianak, Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Persada Khatulistiwa Sintang, and Universitas Kapuas.

The Biology Education study program addresses the demand for qualified biology teachers and can be chosen by twelfth-grade students who wish to pursue higher education. Bachelor's degree programs in education are responsible for producing competent graduates who can meet regional demands for teachers. The PGRI of West Kalimantan highlights a serious problem related to education in the province that has not yet been resolved: the shortage of teachers at the senior high school level, which amounts to more than 5,000 people (Akbary, 2025). This situation not only opens job opportunities for students in West Kalimantan to become teachers, including biology teachers, but also highlights teaching as a noble vocation that contributes to improving the quality of education in the province. Therefore, students are encouraged to consider the Biology Education study program as a meaningful way to address the educational challenges in West Kalimantan. However, several research, including those by Nugroho et al. (2023), Yogaswara et al. (2023), and Achmad et al. (2024), have shown that the choice of study program is significantly influenced by students' interest.

Interest is defined as a person's tendency toward certain objects or activities that arises voluntarily, without coercion, reflecting a positive connection between the individual and external activities (Fadhil et al., 2017; Marleni, 2016; Soraya, 2015). Many psychologists conclude that interest is a key component of motivation, making it an essential factor in biology education (Rowland et al., 2019). Several factors can influence students' interest in pursuing higher education, including willingness, academic achievement, parental socio-economic background, and environmental support (Setiawan, 2018). In this context, it is important to emphasize continuing studies in higher education, as secondary education mainly focuses on theoretical knowledge that forms the basis for further learning. For students in areas such as Teluk Pakedai, this transition is particularly meaningful as it broadens their academic horizons and prepares them for future careers. This is in line with the statement of Abdillah (2024), who explained that higher education helps develop academic potential and professionalism, as well as with Payung (2015), who stated that it provides degrees generally required for specific professions. Therefore, students' interest plays a crucial role in motivating them to pursue higher education and in shaping how they perceive the relevance of a study program to their personal aspirations and future goals.

However, uncertainty about pursuing higher education is also experienced by twelfth-grade students at State Senior High School 1 of Teluk Pakedai, Telok Pakedai District, Kubu Raya Regency. As the only state senior high school in the district, pursuing higher education has become the primary goal instilled in the students of State Senior High School 1 of Teluk Pakedai. Previous research have

analyzed students' interest in pursuing higher education in West Kalimantan, such as Wahid et al. (2014), who analyzed the interest of students in Pontianak City to enroll in the Sports Science department. However, no previous research has specifically investigated the students' interest in pursuing the Biology Education study program, particularly in rural areas such as State Senior High School 1 of Teluk Pakedai. The findings of this research contribute to understanding the factors influencing students' interest in Biology Education study program, which can serve as a reference for developing strategies to promote teacher education programs and strengthen the availability of qualified biology teachers in West Kalimantan.

B. Material and method

Research method

This research is descriptive quantitative. Descriptive quantitative research focuses on presenting statistical summaries that reveal the typical characteristics of the studied sample (Kotronoulas et al., 2023). By describing data as they are without manipulating variables, the descriptive quantitative method in this research was used to determine the level of interest of twelfth-grade students at State Senior High School 1 of Teluk Pakedai in continuing their studies in the Biology Education study program, based on measurable aspects obtained from questionnaire responses.

Population and sample

The population in this research consisted of 49 twelfth-grade students at State Senior High School 1 of Teluk Pakedai. The sampling technique in this research was total sampling, in which all twelfth-grade students at the senior high school participated. Total sampling is used because the population is less than 100 (Jaya et al., 2022).

Data collection technique

The data collection technique used in this research was the questionnaire technique. The instrument employed was a closed-ended questionnaire modified from Lilis (2021), which originally referred to the theoretical framework proposed by Slameto (as cited in Lilis, 2021) on indicators of students' interest in pursuing higher education. The modified questionnaire was then validated by three experts consisting of Biology Education lecturers from Universitas Tanjungpura to ensure its content validity and relevance to the Biology Education context.

The questionnaire used a four-point Likert scale with response options ranging from 1 ("Strongly disagree"), 2 ("Disagree"), 3 ("Agree"), to 4 ("Strongly agree"). It consisted of 7 aspects divided into 25 statements: "Happiness" (4 statements), "Desire" (4 statements), "Attention" (3 statements), "Necessity" (3 statements), "Expectation" (4 statements), "Encouragement" (4 statements), and "Willingness" (3 statements). An example of the questionnaire items is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Questionnaire example

No.	Statements	Answer options			
		4	3	2	1
	"Happiness" aspect				
1	I am happy when biology lessons take place				
2	I am happy when alumni/university students motivate us to continue our studies at state universities				
3	I follow biology subjects happily				
4	I am happy to choose the Biology Education study program at a state university after graduating from senior high school				

Procedure

This research began with obtaining permission from State Senior High School 1 of Teluk Pakedai to conduct the research. After receiving approval, a closed-ended questionnaire was developed by modifying the instrument from Lilis (2021), which includes seven aspects. The research data were collected by distributing the developed questionnaire to twelfth-grade students at State Senior High School 1 of Teluk Pakedai, consisting of one class from the Mathematics and Natural Sciences department and two classes from the Social Sciences department. The collected data were analyzed using percentages and interpreted according to the categories proposed by Lestari & Yudhanegara (2017).

Data analysis

The data in this research were analyzed using percentage. The percentage for each statement is calculated with Formula 1.

$$\text{SP} = \frac{x}{y} \times 100\% \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \text{Formula 1}$$

Description:
V = Statement's percentage
x = Total score obtained
y = Maximum score

The average percentage for each aspect is calculated using Formula 2 and categorized according to the percentage interpretation by Lestari & Yudhanegara (2017), as presented in Table 2.

$$AAP = \frac{x}{y} \times 100\% \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \text{Formula 2}$$

Description:
AAP = Aspect's average percentage
x = Total percentage of statements in an aspect
y = Number of statements

Table 2 Categories used to interpret the percentage results of questionnaire responses

Percentage	Interpretation
P = 0%	None of the sample
0 < P < 25%	A small portion of the sample
25% ≤ P < 50%	Almost half of the sample
P = 50%	Half of the sample
50% < P < 75%	Most of the sample
75% ≤ P < 100%	Almost all of the sample
P = 100%	All of the sample

(Source: Lestari & Yudhanegara, 2017)

C. Results and discussion

The results of this research provide an overview of students' interest in continuing their studies in the Biology Education study program, analyzed through seven aspects: "Happiness," "Desire," "Attention," "Necessity," "Expectation," "Encouragement," and "Willingness." Each aspect represents different dimensions of students' interest in pursuing higher education, offering a comprehensive picture of their overall tendency. Through these aspects, this research identifies the level of students' interest in pursuing higher education—particularly in the Biology Education study program—and highlights which aspects exhibit stronger or weaker tendencies within the sample.

"Happiness" aspect

The "Happiness" aspect consists of four statements. The results of the questionnaire analysis on this aspect are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Analysis results on the "Happiness" aspect

No.	Statements	Percentage	Interpretation
1	I am happy when biology lessons take place	84.2%	Almost all of the sample
2	I am happy when alumni/university students motivate us to continue our studies at state universities	87.8%	Almost all of the sample
3	I follow biology subjects happily	86.7%	Almost all of the sample
4	I am happy to choose the Biology Education study program at a state university after graduating from senior high school	76.0%	Almost all of the sample
	Average percentage	**83.7%**	**Almost all of the sample**

The first statement, "I am happy when biology lessons take place," shows a percentage of 84.2% in the "Almost all of the sample" category. Biology is a field of science that includes various concepts and skills related to organisms for students to master (Faturrahman & Ningsih, 2023). If students have positive experiences in a subject, they are more likely to enjoy learning it (Sucia, 2016). The second statement, "I am happy when alumni/university students motivate us to continue our studies at state universities," shows a percentage of 87.8% in the "Almost all of the sample" category. The research conducted by Khairunnisa et al. (2024) shows that alumni activities in providing education and motivation were able to increase students' knowledge and enthusiasm for continuing their studies in higher education, especially students from rural or remote areas. Alumni must provide a positive picture of higher education for students who continue their studies (Khadijah et al., 2017).

The third statement, "I follow biology subjects happily," shows a percentage of 86.7% in the "Almost all of the sample" category. Adlini et al. (2023) concluded that interest and pleasure in biology subjects are influenced by interest and attention to biology subjects, interest in teachers during learning activities, feelings of pleasure in how teachers carry out the learning process, the involvement of students in learning activities, and the tenacity of students when studying biology subjects. The fourth statement, "I am happy to choose the Biology Education study program at a state university after graduating from senior high school," shows a percentage of 76.0% in the "Almost all of the sample" category. The results of research by Dzuhriawan et al. (2022) indicate that individuals who feel pleasure in choosing a study program are influenced by their interest and compatibility with the particular program, leading to the expectation that the learning process will be easier and more enjoyable for them. The average percentage in this aspect is 83.7%, so it can be concluded that almost all of the twelfth-grade students at State Senior High School 1 of Teluk Pakedai feel happy to continue their studies in the Biology Education study program.

"Desire" aspect

The "Desire" aspect consists of four statements. The results of the questionnaire analysis on this aspect are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Analysis results on the "Desire" aspect

No.	Statements	Percentage	Interpretation
1	After graduating from senior high school, I want to continue my studies at university in the Biology Education study program	67.9%	Most of the sample
2	I want to continue my studies in higher education in the Biology Education study program because graduates have a greater chance of getting a job	71.4%	Most of the sample
3	My academic ability in biology is good, so I am motivated to continue my education at a higher level	64.8%	Most of the sample
4	I want to continue my studies in higher education in the Biology Education study program because of the ease of obtaining scholarships	69.4%	Most of the sample
	Average percentage	**68.4%**	**Most of the sample**

The first statement, "After graduating from senior high school, I want to continue my studies at university in the Biology Education study program," shows a percentage of 67.9% in the "Most of the sample" category. This indicates a strong desire to continue studying in the Biology Education study program, which is undoubtedly influenced by various internal and external factors. The second statement, "I want to continue my studies in higher education in the Biology Education study program because graduates have a greater chance of getting a job," shows a percentage of 71.4% in the "Most of the sample" category. In connection with this statement, the PGRI of West Kalimantan highlighted problems related to the shortage of teachers at the senior high school level (Akbary, 2025). The number of teachers who are not proportional to the needs of teachers is a big problem for the continuity of learning in schools (Suharsa & Sasongko, 2020). This creates employment opportunities due to the need for teachers, including biology teachers, in West Kalimantan.

The third statement, "My academic ability in biology is good, so I am motivated to continue my education at a higher level," shows a percentage of 64.8% in the "Most of the sample" category. Students' desire to continue their studies based on their interests, talents, and abilities encourages them to choose study programs that align with their aspirations, making higher education a more enjoyable experience (Hasanah, 2023). Moreover, choosing a study program that matches students' abilities enables them to pursue their desired career paths more easily (Muthia & Zulkarnain, 2021). The fourth statement, "I want to continue my studies in higher education in the Biology Education study program because of the ease of obtaining scholarships," shows a percentage of 69.4% in the "Most of the sample" category. Scholarships are financial assistance to continue education in an institution (Ilham et al., 2018). The provision of scholarships has been shown to have a significant effect on learning motivation when pursuing higher education (Ma & Lebe, 2024; Mastur et al., 2023; Wea & Adiwidjaja, 2018). The average percentage in this aspect is 68.4%, so it can be concluded that most of the twelfth-grade students at State Senior High School 1 of Teluk Pakedai desire to continue their studies in the Biology Education study program.

"Attention" aspect

The "Attention" aspect consists of three statements. The results of the questionnaire analysis on this aspect are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Analysis results on the "Attention" aspect

No.	Statements	Percentage	Interpretation
1	I pay close attention when teachers/alumni/university students convey information about state universities	82.1%	Almost all of the sample
2	Paying attention to the explanation of higher education information is very important to me	81.6%	Almost all of the sample
3	I am actively participating in learning biology subjects in class	81.1%	Almost all of the sample
	Average percentage	**81.6%**	**Almost all of the sample**

The first statement, "I pay close attention when teachers/alumni/university students convey information about state universities," shows a percentage of 82.1% in the "Almost all of the sample" category. Teachers, especially counseling teachers, play an important role in helping students choose study programs by guiding them to identify their interests and talents and by providing information about higher education environments and career prospects related to their chosen study programs (Efani & Zuhra, 2022). Alumni influence students' interest in entering higher education because alumni can provide real examples and experiences of what they should do after graduating (Rahayu et al., 2022). University students can provide an overview of the learning process in higher education and the various decision options that can be taken when carrying out studies (Maerani et al., 2021).

The second statement, "Paying attention to the explanation of higher education information is very

important to me," shows a percentage of 81.6% in the "Almost all of the sample" category. Information or initial knowledge related to higher education plays a critical role in students' continuing their studies because this information can be a consideration in making the desired decision (Febrianti et al., 2020). The third statement, "I am actively participating in learning biology subjects in class," shows a percentage of 81.1% in the "Almost all of the sample" category. Students' involvement and tenacity in biology learning activities affect their interest and pleasure in biology subjects (Adlini et al., 2023). The average percentage in this aspect is 81.6%, so it can be concluded that almost all of the twelfth-grade students at State Senior High School 1 of Teluk Pakedai are attentively couraged in continuing their studies in the Biology Education study program.

"Necessity" aspect

The "Necessity" aspect consists of three statements. The results of the questionnaire analysis on this aspect are presented in Table 6.

Table 6 Analysis results on the "Necessity" aspect

No.	Statements	Percentage	Interpretation
1	I want to enter the Biology Education study program so that after graduating, I can get a job as expected	65.3%	Most of the sample
2	The development of the professional world in the future requires more state university graduates from the Biology Education study program, so I am interested in becoming a bachelor's degree graduate	66.8%	Most of the sample
3	I need skills and knowledge to get a job, so I need to continue my studies at a state university	74.5%	Most of the sample
	Average percentage	**68.9%**	**Most of the sample**

The first statement, "I want to enter the Biology Education study program so that after graduating, I can get a job as expected," shows a percentage of 65.3% in the "Most of the sample" category. Research conducted by Hasanah (2023) concluded that there is a match between career interests and study program selection decisions. The second statement, "The development of the professional world in the future requires more state university graduates from the Biology Education study program, so I am interested in becoming a bachelor's degree graduate," shows a percentage of 66.8% in the "Most of the sample" category. Choosing study programs and universities should be guided by awareness of market demands and individual abilities to ensure the achievement of desired goals (Adam & Hariyanto, 2023). Under Akbary's (2025) statement, the PGRI of West Kalimantan highlights the shortage of teachers at the senior high school level. Graduates from study programs in the field of education, including the Biology Education study program, are very relevant and needed to meet the needs of teachers.

The third statement, "I need skills and knowledge to get a job, so I need to continue my studies at a state university," shows a percentage of 74.5% in the "Most of the sample" category. Today, various professions require individuals to pursue higher education because the learning process in higher education can develop skills and knowledge that are appropriate and needed by the available jobs (Rabani, 2023). The average percentage in this aspect is 68.9%, so it can be concluded that most of the twelfth-grade students at State Senior High School 1 of Teluk Pakedai feel the need to continue their studies in the Biology Education study program.

"Expectation" aspect

The "Expectation" aspect consists of four statements. The results of the questionnaire analysis on this aspect are presented in Table 7.

Table 7 Analysis results on the "Expectation" aspect

No.	Statements	Percentage	Interpretation
1	I am interested in continuing my education at a state university in the Biology Education study program because it has been my ideal since childhood	68.9%	Most of the sample
2	I want to continue my studies in higher education in the Biology Education study program because I want to develop my knowledge in natural sciences	69.4%	Most of the sample
3	I choose the Biology Education study program to implement biological science in everyday life	70.4%	Most of the sample
4	I choose the Biology Education study program with the hope that after graduating, I can teach biology at school	65.8%	Most of the sample
	Average percentage	**68.6%**	**Most of the sample**

The first statement, "I am interested in continuing my education at a state university in the Biology Education study program because it has been my ideal since childhood," shows a percentage of

68.9% in the "Most of the sample" category. Ideals will generate students' interest in continuing their studies to higher education because ideals manifest individual interests in future life prospects (Khadijah et al., 2017). Moreover, higher education has several internship programs that are certainly relevant to the ideals of students. This is proven by the results of research by Nufus & Fathurrohman (2023), where there are students who state that the *Kampus Mengajar* program by Kemendikbudristek RI as an internship program in a school environment is relevant to their study program and aspirations as a professional teacher. The second statement, "I want to continue my studies in higher education in the Biology Education study program because I want to develop my knowledge in natural sciences," shows a percentage of 69.4% in the "Most of the sample" category. Pursuing higher education is expected to significantly expand an individual's knowledge, enhance and refine their existing skills, and foster greater personal and professional maturity (Burson et al., 2022).

The third statement, "I choose the Biology Education study program to implement biological science in everyday life," shows a percentage of 70.4% in the "Most of the sample" category. Biology subjects help students understand various concepts about organisms, relate them to real-world phenomena, and apply their learning through practical activities at school (Faturrahman et al., 2023). The fourth statement, "I choose the Biology Education study program with the hope that after graduating, I can teach biology at school," shows a percentage of 65.8% in the "Most of the sample" category. The desire to become a teacher can be influenced by a supportive social environment, effort and desire to become a teacher, and qualified knowledge about the teaching profession (Amalia et al., 2024). The average percentage in this aspect is 68.6%, so it can be concluded that most of the twelfth-grade students at State Senior High School 1 of Teluk Pakedai expect to continue their studies in the Biology Education study program.

"Encouragement" aspect

The "Encouragement" aspect consists of four statements. The results of the questionnaire analysis on this aspect are presented in Table 8.

Table 8 Analysis results on the "Encouragement" aspect

No.	Statements	Percentage	Interpretation
1	Most of the people in my neighborhood are university graduates, so I am motivated to continue my studies in higher education after graduating from school	70.9%	Most of the sample
2	I am motivated to continue my studies in higher education in the Biology Education study program because of the guidance of the biology subject teacher	68.4%	Most of the sample
3	I choose the Biology Education study program because my close friends choose the same study program	65.3%	Most of the sample
4	I choose the Biology Education study program because of my parents' wishes	58.2%	Most of the sample
	Average percentage	**65.7%**	**Most of the sample**

The first statement, "Most of the people in my neighborhood are university graduates, so I am motivated to continue my studies in higher education after graduating from school," shows a percentage of 70.9% in the "Most of the sample" category. People are motivated to pursue higher education due to social interactions with college graduates, which fosters positive perceptions of how education can shape mindset and lifestyle (Ramidi, 2021). The second statement, "I am motivated to continue my studies in higher education in the Biology Education study program because of the guidance of the biology subject teacher," shows a percentage of 68.4% in the "Most of the sample" category. Dzuhriawan et al. (2022) have proven that some individuals are motivated to choose a study program due to teacher influence, as teachers can affect students through two-way interactions—shaped by the teacher's mindset, teaching methods, and the knowledge they provide.

The third statement, "I choose the Biology Education study program because my close friends choose the same study program," shows a percentage of 65.3% in the "Most of the sample" category, while the fourth statement, "I choose the Biology Education study program because of my parents' wishes," shows a percentage of 58.2% in the "Most of the sample" category. Syihab et al. (2021) state that individuals follow friends out of habit, while parental expectations may pressure them to choose a certain study program. The average percentage in this aspect is 65.7%, so it can be concluded that most of the twelfth-grade students at State Senior High School 1 of Teluk Pakedai are encouraged to continue their studies in the Biology Education study program.

"Willingness" aspect

The "Willingness" aspect consists of three statements. The results of the questionnaire analysis on this aspect are presented in Table 9.

Table 9 Analysis results on the "Willingness" aspect

No.	Statements	Percentage	Interpretation
1	I try to study hard so that I can continue my studies in the Biology Education study program	70.9%	Most of the sample
2	I look for information from alumni who have continued their studies in the Biology Education study program	69.4%	Most of the sample
3	I try to find and gather information from social media about the Biology Education study program	70.4%	Most of the sample
	Average percentage	**70.2%**	**Most of the sample**

The first statement, "I try to study hard so that I can continue my studies in the Biology Education study program," shows a percentage of 70.9% in the "Most of the sample" category. Students' high interest in pursuing higher education encourages them to study harder and prepare for admission procedures, which serve as essential mechanisms to assess students' academic readiness and suitability for higher education (Seyfried et al., 2024). Moreover, students who select majors aligned with their interests are more likely to achieve higher academic performance (Nugraha, 2024). The second statement, "I look for information from alumni who have continued their studies in the Biology Education study program," shows a percentage of 69.4% in the "Most of the sample" category, while the third statement, "I try to find and gather information from social media about the Biology Education study program," shows a percentage of 70.4% in the "Most of the sample" category. Information about higher education is important for students who will continue their studies (Febrianti et al., 2020). In this regard, students have different information-seeking behaviors related to higher education because they adjust to their habits and needs, where alumni become informal secondary sources, while study program pages and social media become formal primary sources (Farasabila & Rachman, 2019). The average percentage in this aspect is 70.2%, so it can be concluded that most of the twelfth-grade students at State Senior High School 1 of Teluk Pakedai are willing to continue their studies in the Biology Education study program.

Overall results

The average of the seven aspects is 72.4%, so most twelfth-grade students at State Senior High School 1 of Teluk Pakedai are interested in continuing their studies in the Biology Education study program. However, students' interests can certainly change over time with the existence of internal factors and external factors that influence their decisions in determining the choice of study program to be addressed. When comparing the different aspects, "Happiness" had the highest percentage (83.7%), followed closely by "Attention" at 81.6%, indicating that emotional engagement and attentiveness are key factors influencing students' intention to pursue the Biology Education study program. In contrast, "Encouragement" had the lowest percentage (65.7%), suggesting that many students may perceive a lack of external support or motivation from teachers, peers, or the learning environment. This aligns with the findings of Lasaiba & Lasaiba (2023), where several respondents reported that social factors were the main reason high school graduates chose not to continue their studies in higher education. While emotional engagement and attentiveness are already strong, enhancing encouragement—through personalized feedback, collaborative activities, and recognition of student efforts—could further boost students' engagement and strengthen their long-term academic aspirations.

The aspects of "Desire" (68.4%), "Necessity" (68.9%), and "Expectation" (68.6%) show relatively similar percentages, indicating that students' internal motivation, perceived need, and future expectations toward continuing their studies in the Biology Education study program are balanced but moderate. Interestingly, the aspect of "Willingness" is slightly higher at 70.2%, suggesting that despite moderate desire, necessity, and expectations, students are generally ready and open to taking action toward pursuing the study program. This indicates a potential readiness to engage in higher education if adequate support, guidance, and information are provided. The similar values of desire, necessity, and expectation imply that students recognize the importance of the program but may not yet view it as a strong personal goal.

The number of considerations in determining the choice of study programs and universities for students tends to be complicated because it will significantly impact the future of these students (Raharja & Fujiawati, 2022). Heathcote et al. (2020) identify several factors that influence students' enrollment decisions, including personal interest in the field of study, tuition fees, the appeal of the city or region and of the institution itself, the institution's reputation and perceived quality, available resources and facilities, as well as retention and outcome rates. Prasetyo (in Pertiwi et al., 2021) suggests several factors that cause students to hesitate to continue their studies to higher education, namely a minimal understanding of higher education and the type of work that is suitable for themselves, the study program to be pursued is not their own choice,

confusion about the study program that suits their interests and academic abilities, and pessimism about their ability to get the desired job after graduation. Furthermore, research conducted by Haikal et al. (2020) proves that the cost of education, socio-economic background, reputation, and prospects for study programs positively and significantly affect the selection of study programs.

This research provides evidence of students' interest and offers a new perspective that can help promote Biology Education programs in rural areas. In light of the results, schools and higher education institutions should collaborate to organize career guidance sessions, interactive workshops, and alumni sharing programs. Considering the present results alongside previous research—which identified factors such as personal interest, program reputation, tuition fees, and career prospects—these initiatives can help bridge the gap between students' awareness of higher education opportunities and their capacity to make informed choices. Through structured guidance and exposure to real-world experiences, students can better recognize the relevance and benefits of enrolling in Biology Education study program. These efforts not only boost motivation but also reduce doubts and hesitation in selecting a study program. Ultimately, they help students make confident and informed decisions about their academic and professional futures.

D. Conclusion

Based on the results, it can be concluded that most twelfth-grade students at State Senior High School 1 of Teluk Pakedai have an interest in pursuing further education in the Biology Education study program, with the average percentage across all aspects reaching 72.4%. The result reflects a generally positive attitude toward the program, suggesting that students perceive Biology Education as relevant to their abilities, aspirations, and future career prospects. Based on these findings, schools and higher education institutions should work together to offer career guidance sessions, interactive workshops, and alumni sharing programs. These initiatives can help strengthen students' motivation to pursue the Biology Education study program. They can also assist students in understanding how the Biology Education study program relates to real-world situations and teaching jobs. This, in turn, can boost their confidence and readiness to choose this study program. Future research could further explore the psychological, social, and environmental factors that influence students' choices. Such research could provide valuable inputs for improving educational planning and aligning school guidance programs with the current university admission pathways.

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