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The Suitability of Vocational High School Students' Preferences in Field Work Placement

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ABSTRACT

Internship is an activity where students are directly involved in professional activities at an institution, company, or organization for a certain period according to the curriculum. The success of this internship greatly depends on the alignment between students' preferences and the provided internship placements. This suitability is important so that students can optimally utilize the internship experience, enhance their learning motivation, and prepare well for their future careers. This study aims to analyze the alignment between student preferences and the Internship determined by the school. This research is motivated by the mismatch between students' preferences and the school's decisions in determining the internship locations, which often results in complaints from students and parents regarding the distance and accessibility of the locations. The research method used is descriptive quantitative with data collection through questionnaires distributed to students at vocational high school Public Works of Bandung State. The research results show that the majority of students prefer internship locations that are close to their homes and easily accessible. However, the placement of internships conducted by the school is still dominated by institutional interests, without considering the students' preferences. This research recommends that schools involve students in the process of selecting internship locations, establish better cooperation with the industry, and conduct regular evaluations of the internship program. It is hoped that by considering students' preferences, the internship experience can be more optimal and beneficial for the development of students' skills and knowledge.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The term preference is derived from the English word "preference," which can be defined as the tendency to choose or favor one option over others. Furthermore, preferences are considered as an individual's attitude towards a set of objects that influence a person's behavior in the decision-making process (Ronauli & Farida, 2020). Student preferences can be influenced by several factors, including interests, talents, and career aspirations. Understanding student preferences can help in designing effective practical learning programs such as internships.

Vocational High Schools are educational institutions tasked with training human resources and developing individuals with the skills, competencies, and expertise necessary to ensure the success of graduates in their careers (Tauhid et al., 2022). Vocational education has the primary goal of preparing students to master competencies in specific fields through a series of structured learning activities, so they are ready to pursue professional careers in their areas of expertise (Suyitno, 2020). After graduation, students are expected to possess sufficient skills and knowledge to enter the workforce, including in the industrial sector or as independent entrepreneurs (Nugraha et al., 2022).

Internship is an activity where students are directly involved in professional work at an institution, company, or organization for a certain period according to the curriculum. Providing recommendations for internship locations is an activity that requires meticulous assessment of prospective internship participants, considering various aspects and using appropriate methods (Rahmadani et al., 2022). The criteria for internship locations according to the school can encompass various aspects aimed at providing meaningful and relevant internship experiences for students, such as distance and accessibility, company classification, and facilities provided by the company (Tri Hartanti & Irawan, 2023).

The distance between the internship location and the students' residences has a significant impact on their motivation and performance during the internship (Syahputra et al., 2020). Students tend to choose internship locations that can be easily accessed using public or private transportation at an affordable cost (Nugroho, 2019). Students prefer internship locations with shorter travel times to avoid fatigue and maximize their learning time (Widodo, 2021).

Vocational high school students tend to choose companies that align with their major or expertise to gain relevant work experience (Sari & Sukardi, 2018). Companies with an international scale often become the primary choice for vocational high school students who have global career aspirations; they also see this opportunity as a stepping stone for an international career in the future (Pratama, 2021). However, despite the high demand for international-scale companies, some students are concerned about the high level of competition and work standards that may be difficult for vocational school students who are just starting their work experience to achieve (Wibowo, 2020).

Students are more interested in national-scale companies because they offer a good combination of prestige, career development opportunities, and a higher level of comfort compared to international companies (Suharto, 2019). Regional-scale companies also have their own appeal for vocational school students. Students who choose regional-scale companies are often attracted to the opportunity to explore other regions within the country while remaining in a relatively familiar cultural context (Nugroho, 2022). Additionally, students consider regional-scale companies to be an ideal choice because they offer broader experiences than local companies, but with a lower level of competition compared to national or international companies (Rahmawati, 2018).

Regional-scale companies also hold a place in the preferences of vocational high school students. Students who choose regional-scale companies are often motivated by factors such as proximity to their residence, the desire to contribute to regional development, and a greater likelihood of securing permanent employment after graduation. Some students feel more comfortable starting their work experience at regional-scale companies because they can more easily adapt to the work environment and local culture (Astuti, 2021).

The availability of facilities is also one of the important factors for students in choosing an internship location. Students prefer companies that provide accommodation or dormitories to reduce costs and increase comfort during the internship period (Widiastuti, 2021). Students also tend to choose companies that provide shuttle transportation or transportation allowances to reduce travel expenses (Sulistyowati, 2019). Pocket money or allowances provided by the company during the internship period become an attraction for students. Students prefer companies that offer adequate pocket money or allowances to meet their daily needs during the internship (Purnomo, 2020). In addition, students tend to choose companies that provide complete and modern work equipment to support their learning and skill development processes (Astuti, 2021).

However, in reality, the selection of industrial locations is still based on the school's interests, considering the ease of placement management. Students are not given the opportunity to choose the location and type of industry for their internship. The understanding of students' needs and desires is not accommodated by the school. This results in the internship placements not aligning with the students' preferences, leading to suboptimal acquisition of knowledge and skills in this internship program.

From the data on internship location placements in 2023, it was found that the placements were still predominantly determined by the school. Meanwhile, students are not involved in determining the location. Thus, many complaints have been found from students and even parents, especially regarding the distance to the internship location. To minimize the gap between the desires of students and the school in determining the internship location, it is necessary to gather data on students' preferences.

2. METHOD

This research applies a quantitative approach with a descriptive research design conducted on the 11th-grade students of Building Modeling and Information Design at Vocational High School public works Bandung state as the research population, which consists of 103 individuals as detailed in **Table 1**.

Table. Research Population

No	Class	Amount
1	11 Building Modeling and Information Design 1	36
2	11 Building Modeling and Information Design 2	32
3	11 Building Modeling and Information Design 3	35
	Total	**103**

The Slovin formula is used to calculate the minimum sample size in data analysis (Sugiyono, 2021). From the calculation results, a minimum sample size of 82 people was obtained, with the determination of sample subjects using the random sampling technique.

Questionnaires and document studies were used as data collection techniques for the research. Validity and reliability testing were conducted on the research questionnaire using Excel software. The results of the tests are presented in **Table 2** and **Table 3**.

Tabel 2. Results of the Instrument Validity Test

No	Variable	Indicator	Item Number	New Item Number
1	Preferences of Vocational High School Students	a. Distance and Accessibility	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16
		b. Company Classification	17, 18, 19, 20, 21*, 22*, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32	17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30
		c. Facilities	33, 34, 35, 36, 37*, 38, 39*, 40*	31, 32, 33, 34, 35

Note: *) item that has fallen

Tabel 3. Results of Instrument Reliability Test

No.	Variabel	Alpha Coefficient	Decision
1.	Preferences of Vocational High School Students	0,80	Reliabel

Next, a quantitative descriptive analysis was conducted to explain the data as it is and provide an overview of the assessed variables. The level of data tendency is grouped into five categories, namely:

M + 1,5 SD upwards = Very High
M + 0,5 SD up to < M + 1,5 SD = High
M - 0,5 SD up < M + 0,5 SD = Quite tall

M - 1,5 SD up to < M - 0,5 SD = Low
M - 1,5 SD downwards = Very Low

This classification is based on the normal curve. The method to calculate the expected mean and the expected standard deviation is as follows:

Average expected value (ideal) : ½ (highest score + lowest score)
Expected standard deviation (ideal) : 1/6 (highest score + lowest score)

After that, a hypothesis analysis was conducted using Gap Analysis. The formula used to calculate the level of conformity is

$$Tki = \frac{\sum Xi}{\sum Yi} \times 100\%$$

Explanation:
Tki = The level of suitability for internship placement
ΣXi = Student preference score
ΣYi = Internship placement score

In terms of suitability, it can be explained with the following criteria:
0 - 50% = The internship placement carried out does not align with the students' preferences.
51 - 100% = The placement of internships is done according to the students' preferences.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After conducting a quantitative descriptive analysis and hypothesis testing on each variable, the following results were obtained.

3.1 Analysis of Frequency Distribution and Student Preference Trends

The scores obtained from the data collection regarding student preference variables in fieldwork placement can be seen in the frequency distribution table presented in **Table 4**.

Tabel 4. Distribution of Student Preference Frequency

No	Intervals			Middle Value	Cumulative Frequency	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)	Cumulative (%)
1	24,00	-	29,00	27	1	1	1,22	1,22%
2	29,01	-	34,01	32	4	3	3,66	4,88%
3	34,02	-	39,02	37	15	11	13,41	18,29%
4	39,03	-	44,03	42	38	23	28,05	46,34%
5	44,04	-	49,04	47	72	34	41,46	87,80%
6	49,05	-	54,05	52	77	5	6,10	93,90%
7	54,06	-	59,06	57	82	5	6,10	100,00%
						82	100,00	

The cumulative frequency indicates that 63 respondents (76.83%) scored at or below the median value. This indicates that 19 students (23.17%) have a strong desire to intern at places that align with their preferences.

The tendency of the variable in the data distribution towards its midpoint can be seen from the calculation of the tendency percentage by comparing the standard criteria of the ideal mean score and the ideal standard deviation. An overview of the tendency percentage can be seen in **Table 5**.

Tabel 5. Student Preference Trends

Score			Frequency	Percentage	Category
119,00	Upwards		6,00	7,32	Very High
109,00	-	119,00	8,00	9,76	High
99,00	-	109,00	35,00	42,68	Quite Tall
89,00	-	99,00	27,00	32,93	Low
89,00	Downwards		6,00	7,32	Very Low
	Amount		82,00	100,00	

In accordance with the data analysis plan to be implemented, student preferences are viewed from three (3) indicators, namely distance and accessibility, company classification, and facilities.

3.1.1 Distance and accessibility

The results of the frequency distribution analysis on the distance and accessibility indicators can be seen in **Table 6.**

Table 6. Distribution of Student Preference Frequency on Distance and Accessibility Indicators

No	Intervals			Middle Value	Cumulative Frequency	Absolute Frequency	Realtive Frequency (%)	Cumulative(%)
1	24,00	-	29,29	27	1	1	1,22	1,22%
2	29,30	-	34,58	32	1	0	0,00	1,22%
3	34,59	-	39,88	37	10	9	10,98	12,20%
4	39,89	-	45,17	43	28	18	21,95	34,15%
5	45,18	-	50,47	48	50	22	26,83	60,98%
6	50,48	-	55,76	53	72	22	26,83	87,80%
7	55,77	-	61,06	58	82	10	12,20	100,00%
						82	100,00	

The cumulative frequency shows that 34.15% of students obtained distance and accessibility scores that are at or below the median value. This means that more than half (65.85%) of the students obtained high scores for the distance and accessibility indicators, indicating a strong desire among students to be placed at a close distance. Meanwhile, the results of the trend calculations are presented in **Table 7.**

Table 7. Students' Preference Trends on Distance and Accessibility Indicators

Score			Frequency	Percentage	Category
51,75	Upwards		26,00	31,71	Very High
45,58	-	51,75	27,00	32,93	High
39,42	-	45,58	18,00	21,95	Quite Tall
33,25	-	39,42	9,00	10,98	Low
33,25	Downwards		2,00	2,44	Very Low
	Amount		82,00	100,00	

From the results of the trend calculations, it can be seen that the majority of students fall into the "very high" and "high" preference categories for being placed at a close distance.

3.1.2 Company Classification

The second indicator in student preferences is the classification of companies. The results of the frequency distribution analysis can be seen in **Table 8.**

Table 8. Distribution of Student Preference Frequency on Company Classification Indicators

No	Intervalo			Middle Value	Cumulative Frequency	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)	Cumulative (%)
1	24,00	-	29,00	27	1	1	1,22	1,22%
2	29,01	-	34,01	32	4	3	3,66	4,88%
3	34,02	-	39,02	37	15	11	13,41	18,29%
4	39,03	-	44,03	42	38	23	28,05	46,34%
5	44,04	-	49,04	47	72	34	41,46	87,80%
6	49,05	-	54,05	52	77	5	6,10	93,90%
7	54,06	-	59,06	57	82	5	6,10	100,00%
						82	100,00	

The cumulative frequency shows that 46.34% of respondents scored at or below the median value. This means that more than half (53.66%) of the students have a strong desire to be placed for internships at companies that align with the DPIB expertise program, specifically national-level consulting firms with the job type as a drafter.

The results of the calculation of students' preference tendencies for the company classification indicator can be seen in the following **Table 9**.

Table 9. Student Preference Trends on Company Classification Indicators

Score			Frequency	Percentage	Category
48,00	Upwards		5,00	6,10	Very High
42,67	-	48,00	22,00	26,83	High
37,33	-	42,67	39,00	47,56	Quite Tall
32,00	-	37,33	11,00	13,41	Low
32,00	Downwards		5,00	6,10	Very Low
	Total		82,00	100,00	

Most students fall into the "fairly high" preference category for being placed in nationally scaled consulting firms with the job type as a drafter.

3.1.3 Facilities

The last indicator is the facility whose frequency distribution of preferences can be seen in **Table 10.**

Table 10. Distribution of Student Preference Frequency on Facility Indicators

No	Intervals			Middle Value	Cumulative Frequency	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)	Cumulative (%)
1	5,00	-	8,00	7	4	4	4,88	4,88%
2	8,01	-	11,01	10	7	3	3,66	8,54%
3	11,02	-	14,02	13	23	16	19,51	28,05%
4	14,03	-	17,03	16	70	47	57,32	85,37%
5	17,04	-	20,04	19	78	8	9,76	95,12%
6	20,05	-	23,05	22	82	4	4,88	100,00%
7	23,06	-	26,06	25	82	0	0,00	100,00%
						82	100,00	

The cumulative frequency shows that 28.05% of respondents scored at or below the median value. This means that 71.95% of students have a desire to be placed in companies to carry out internships.

The results of the calculation of student preference tendencies on the facility indicator can be seen in **Table 11**.

Table 11. Kecenderungan Preferensi Siswa pda Indikator Fasilitas

Score			Frequency	Percentage	Category
16,25	Upwards		7,00	8,54	Very High
13,75	-	16,25	43,00	52,44	High
11,25	-	13,75	16,00	19,51	Quite Tall
8,75	-	11,25	10,00	12,20	Low
8,75	Downwards		6,00	7,32	Very Low
	Jumlah		82,00	100,00	

From the table, it is known that most students fall into the "high" preference category for being placed in internships at companies that provide supportive facilities.

3.2 Analysis of Internship Placement Distribution Paraphrase

The Analysis of internship Placement Distribution aims to understand how the spread and allocation of students from the Vocational High School of Modeling and Building Information Design are in various internship locations. This analysis includes the evaluation of student placement data based on several main criteria, namely distance and accessibility, company classification, and facilities.

3.2.1 Distance and Accessibility

The placement of internship when viewed from the criteria of distance and accessibility is grouped into four categories based on the calculation of distance from the residence to the internship location. The distribution of internship placement based on distance and accessibility is presented in **Table 12.**

Table 12. Distribution of internship Placement Based on Distance and Accessibility Criteria

No	Distance			Number of Students	Quality	*Scoring*
1	0,00	-	5,00	33	4	132
2	6,00	-	10,00	28	3	84
3	11,00	-	25,00	16	2	32
4	26,00	-	50,00	5	1	5
	Total			82		3,09

The majority of students are placed in companies that are close to their residences.

3.2.2 Company Classification

In the category of company classification, it consists of the type of work obtained by the internship participants, the type of company, the scale of the company, and the work culture within the company.

i. Type of Work

In the job type criteria, there are four types of jobs obtained by the internship participants. These job types are as a drafter, estimator, supervisor, and surveyor. For a clearer distribution of internship placements based on job types, please refer to **Table 13.**

Table 13. Distribusi Penempatan PKL Berdasarkan Jenis Pekerjaan

No	Type of Work	Number of Students	Quality	Scoring
1	Drafter	72	4	288
2	Estimator	6	3	18
3	Supervisor	2	2	4
4	Surveyor	2	1	2
	Total	**82**		**3,80**

ii. Type Of Company

In the criteria for company types, there are four types of companies that usually accept internship participants from the DPIB skill program. These four types of companies are consultants, contractors, property development companies, and government (departments). The distribution of PKL placements based on the type of company can be seen in **Table 14.**

Table 14. Distribution of PKL Placement Based on Company Type

No	Type of Company	Number of Students	Quality	*Scoring*
1	Consultant	60	4	240
2	Contractor	13	3	39
3	Property	9	2	18
4	Dinas	0	1	0
Total		**82**		**3,62**

iii. Company Scale

The criteria for internship placement are also based on the scale of the company. The scale of the company is divided into four categories: international scale companies, national scale companies, regional scale companies, and local scale companies. The distribution of internship placement based on the scale of the company can be seen in **Table 15.**

Table 15. Distribution of PKL Placement Based on Company Scale

No	Type of Work	Number of Students	Quality	*Scoring*
1	International	3	4	12
2	National	71	3	213
3	Regional	6	2	12
4	Region	2	1	2
Total		**82**		**2,91**

iv. Work Culture

The last placement criterion in the classification of companies is related to the company's work culture. The company's work culture is divided into four categories: companies with flexible, formal, mentoring, and free work cultures. The distribution of internship placements based on the company's work culture is presented in **Table 16.**

Table 16. Distribution of Internship Placement Based on Company Work Culture

No	Company Work Culture	Number of Students	Quality	*Scoring*
1	Flexible	44	4	176
2	Formal	30	3	90
3	Mentoring	8	2	16
4	Free	0	1	0
Total		**82**		**3,44**

3.2.3 Facilities

The last criterion for the placement of vocational high school for building modeling and information designstudents' internships is based on the facilities provided by the company to the internship participants. These facilities include dormitories, transportation, allowances, and work equipment.

However, it should be noted that not all internship participants receive these facilities at their internship locations. The distribution of internship placements based on the facilities provided by the company is presented in **Table 17.**

Table 17. Distribution of PKL Placement Based on Company Facility Criteria

No	Facilities	Number of Students	Quality	*Scoring*
1	Desastre	10	1	10
2	Transportation	5	2	10
3	Pocket Money	6	3	18
4	Work Equipment	29	4	116
5	Without Facilities	32	0	0
Total		**82**		**1,88**

3.3 Hypothesis Testing

Before performing calculations using the gap analysis formula, weighting is done first. After weighting, scoring is then carried out by multiplying the number of students by the weight value for each predetermined indicator. Then, the average scoring value for each indicator is obtained. Hypothesis testing was conducted on each indicator. The indicators consist of distance and accessibility indicators, company classification, and facilities.

3.3.1 Distance and Accesibility

The weighting and scoring results for the distance and accessibility indicators can be seen in **Table 18.**

Table 18. Weight and Scoring on Distance and Accessibility Indicators

No	Distance	Number of Students	Quality	*Scoring*
1	0 - 5	33	4	132
2	6 - 10	28	3	84
3	11 - 25	16	2	32
4	26 - 50	5	1	5
Total		**82**	**Average Score**	**3,09**

$$Tki = \frac{\sum Xi}{\sum Yi} \times 100\% = \frac{2,99}{3,09} \times 100\% = 97\%$$

From the results of the gap analysis calculation, a value of 97% was obtained. Based on the criteria in the hypothesis analysis, which is > 50%, it can be said that there is a match in student preferences for the placement of internships based on the indicators of distance and accessibility.

3.3.2 Company Classification

In the company classification indicator, there are several sub-indicators.

i. Type of Business

The weighting and scoring results for the job type sub-indicator can be seen in **Table 19.**

Table 19. Weight and Scoring on the Sub Indicator of Job Type

No	Type of Work	Number of Students	Quality	Scoring
1	Drafter	72	4	288
2	Estimator	6	3	18
3	Supervisor	2	2	4
4	Surveyor	2	1	2
Total		**82**	**Average Score**	**3,8**

$$Tki = \frac{\sum Xi}{\sum Yi} \times 100\% = \frac{2,91}{3,80} \times 100\% = 77\%$$

From the results of the gap analysis calculation, a value of 77% was obtained. If viewed from the criteria in the hypothesis analysis, which is > 50%, it can be said that there is alignment in student preferences for internship placements based on the sub-indicator of job type.

ii. Type of Company

The second weighting and scoring were conducted on the sub-indicator of company type, the results of which can be seen in **Table 20.**

Table 20. Weight and Scoring on the Sub Indicator of Company Type

No	Type of Company	Number of Students	Quality	*Scoring*
1	Consultant	60	4	240
2	Contractor	13	3	39
3	Property	9	2	18
4	Dinas	0	1	0
Total		**82**	**Average Score**	**3,62**

$$Tki = \frac{\sum Xi}{\sum Yi} \times 100\% = \frac{2,89}{3,62} \times 100\% = 79\%$$

From the results of the gap analysis calculation, a value of 79% was obtained. Based on the criteria in the hypothesis analysis, which is > 50%, it can be said that there is alignment in student preferences for the placement of internships based on the sub-indicator of company type.

iii. Company Scale

The weighting and scoring are subsequently carried out on the sub-indicator of the company scale. The results of the weighting and scoring can be seen in **Table 21.**

Table 21. Weight and Scoring on the Company Scale Sub-Indicator

No	Company Scale	Number of Students	Quality	Scoring
1	International	3	4	12
2	National	71	3	213
3	Regional	6	2	12
4	Region	2	1	2
Total		82	**Average Score**	**2,91**

$$Tki = \frac{\sum Xi}{\sum Yi} \times 100\% = \frac{2,82}{2,91} \times 100\% = 96\%$$

From the results of the gap analysis calculation, a value of 96% was obtained. Based on the criteria in the hypothesis analysis, which is > 50%, it can be said that there is alignment in student preferences for internship placements based on the sub-indicator of company scale.

iv. Company Work Culture

The weighting and scoring were last conducted on the sub-indicator of the company's work culture, the results of which can be seen in **Table 22.**

Table 22. Weight and Scoring on the Sub Indicator of Company Work Culture

No	Company Work Culture	Number of Student	Quality	Scoring
1	Flexible	44	4	176
2	Formal	30	3	90
3	Mentoring	8	2	16
4	Free	0	1	0
Total		**82**	**Average Score**	**3,44**

$$Tki = \frac{\sum Xi}{\sum Yi} \times 100\% = \frac{3,05}{3,44} \times 100\% = 88\%$$

From the results of the gap analysis calculation, a value of 88% was obtained. If viewed from the criteria in the hypothesis analysis, which is with the criterion > 50%, it can be said that there is alignment in student preferences for internship placements based on the sub-indicator of the company's work culture.

3.3.3 Facilities

The final hypothesis analysis was conducted on the facility indicator. Like other indicators, before the gap analysis calculation, weighting and scoring were carried out first. The results of the weighting and scoring for the facility indicator can be seen in **Table 23**.

Table 23. Weight and Scoring on Facility Indicators

No	Facilities	Number of Student	Quality	*Scoring*
1	Mess	10	1	10
2	Transportation	5	2	10
3	Allowance	6	3	18
4	Work Device	29	4	116
5	Without Facilities	32	0	0
Total		**82**	**Average Score**	**1,88**

$$Tki = \frac{\sum Xi}{\sum Yi} \times 100\% = \frac{2,69}{1,88} \times 100\% = 143\%$$

From the results of the gap analysis calculation, a value of 143% was obtained. When viewed from the criteria in the hypothesis analysis, the calculation result is categorized as not suitable because it exceeds the predetermined criteria. The recap of the gap analysis calculation results can be seen in **Table 24.**

Table 24. Recapitulation of Gap Analysis Results

No	Indicator/ Sub Indicator	Reference Score	Placement Score	Gap Analysis Results	Information
1	Distance and Accessibility	2,99	3,09	97%	Apptopriate
2	Type of Work	2,91	3,8	77%	Apptopriate
3	Type of Company	2,89	3,62	79%	Apptopriate
4	Company Scale	2,82	2,91	96%	Apptopriate
5	Company Work Culture	3,05	3,44	88%	Apptopriate
6	Facilities	2,69	1,88	143%	Not Apptopriate

Based on the research conducted on the XI DPIB class students of SMK PU Negeri Bandung, a comprehensive understanding was obtained regarding the degree of alignment between student preferences and the Field Work Practice (PKL) placements determined by the school. The findings reveal that most students demonstrate strong preferences for several crucial criteria in selecting internship placements, including the distance and accessibility of the location, the type or classification of the company, and the availability of adequate facilities at the internship site.

This indicates that students possess a clear awareness and well-formed expectations about the kind of work environment and experience they wish to obtain during their internships. Such preferences reflect the students' readiness to engage in meaningful learning experiences that closely simulate real workplace conditions. Furthermore, this awareness also emphasizes the importance of aligning internship placements with students' aspirations and competencies to ensure the effectiveness of the internship program as a bridge between school learning and professional practice. As highlighted by Septiani & Faisal (2024), the development of students' insight and motivation through relevant and well-matched internship experiences plays a crucial role in preparing them to transition successfully into the real world of work.

On the distance and accessibility indicator, it was found that most students showed a high preference for being placed in internship locations that are close to their residences and easily accessible. This preference is understandable because a nearby location will reduce travel time and transportation costs, as well as decrease student fatigue. This is in line with the literature that states that an internship location that is too far can reduce students' motivation and productivity (Firmansyah et al., 2019).

The results of the gap analysis between preferences and placement reality show a compatibility value of 97%, which means the school has been quite successful in accommodating students' desires in this aspect. Placement in strategic and easily accessible locations is a positive step that can be maintained and even improved in the future.

Meanwhile, in the company classification indicators, which consist of sub-indicators such as job type, company type, company scale, and work culture, a fairly good level of suitability was also found. Most students showed a preference for being placed in consulting firms, with positions as drafters—jobs that are relevant to their field of expertise. Additionally, students also tend to choose companies on a national scale, which are considered to offer more opportunities for growth while still being within their capabilities and comfort zones. A flexible work culture is also a significant attraction for students, as they feel more at ease adapting and learning in that environment.

The suitability scores on this indicator range from 77% to 96%, indicating that the internship placements have taken into account the important aspects that meet students' expectations. This reflects the school's efforts to match the internship locations with the students' fields of expertise and characteristics.

However, different results were found in the facilities indicator. On this indicator, the majority of students want companies that provide supporting facilities such as dormitories, transportation, allowances, and work equipment. These facilities are considered important to support the comfort and effectiveness of students during their internship, especially for those placed far from home or from families with economic limitations. Unfortunately, the reality on the ground shows that most students do not receive those facilities. The gap analysis on this indicator resulted in a figure of 143%, indicating a significant discrepancy between expectations and reality. This condition can affect the enthusiasm and concentration of students in participating in the internship activities, and potentially reduce the quality of their learning experience in the workplace.

The above findings indicate that although the school has been quite successful in adjusting the placement of internships according to students' preferences in terms of distance and company classification, there are still shortcomings in the provision of facilities by the companies. Therefore, the school needs to evaluate the industrial partners that have been the internship sites, particularly in terms of meeting the basic needs of students (Nurcahyono et al., 2020).

Efforts such as establishing partnerships with companies committed to providing supporting facilities, offering incentives to companies, or drafting minimum facility standard guidelines for industrial partners could be viable solutions worth considering.

In addition, the process of determining the internship location should also directly involve students so that they feel a greater sense of responsibility and motivation in participating in the program. Involving students in the process of selecting the location not only considers their needs but also serves as a form of appreciation for their aspirations and active roles in the vocational education process.

This research shows that when the placement of internships is done by considering students' preferences, the internship experience will become more meaningful, relevant, and capable of optimally encouraging the development of skills and job readiness among students.

4. CONCLUSION

From the findings and discussion, it is concluded that vocational school students prefer internship locations that are close to their residences, in consulting companies, and have adequate facilities. The placement of internships is based on three indicators: distance and accessibility, company classification, and facilities. Most students are placed in locations close to home, working as drafters at national-scale consulting firms with a flexible work culture.

However, not all companies provide additional facilities. The overall alignment of student preferences is considered appropriate, with two out of three indicators showing alignment, namely distance and accessibility, as well as company classification. Meanwhile, the facility indicator still does not meet student expectations. Further research is recommended to include more vocational schools and skill programs, as well as to use qualitative methods to delve deeper into the reasons behind students' preferences for certain factors.

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