



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38035/sjam.v4i2>
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The Relationship of Parental Income to Student Career Selection of Culinary Skills Program

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Abstract: Career selection is a strategic process for Vocational High School students because it relates to the direction of work, entrepreneurship, or continuing their studies after graduation. This study aims to (1) describe parental income, (2) analyze student career selection based on three main pathways, and (3) examine the relationship between parental income and student career selection of Culinary Skills Program. The research uses a quantitative approach with a correlational design. The population amounted to 202 students and a sample of 135 students was selected through proportional stratified random sampling. Parents' income is measured from the categories of basic income and additional income of fathers and mothers. Career selection was measured with 40 seven-level Likert scale statements. The trial on 30 respondents retained 40 valid points out of the initial 48 points and resulted in a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.947. The results showed that 76.3% of fathers and 87.4% of mothers were in the category of non-income or income below Rp2,500,000 per month; As many as 65.9% of fathers and 74.8% of mothers have no additional income. Overall career selection is most in the high category (44.4%). The entrepreneurial aspect obtained the highest respondent achievement rate of 69.35%, followed by 67.85% working and continuing studies 64.40%. The Spearman correlation yields $r_s = 0.110$ and $p = 0.202$, so the relationship between the two variables is positive, very weak, and insignificant. The square of the correlation coefficient of 1.22% indicates a very small joint association. The findings confirm that career services need to

strengthen self-efficacy, information, practical experience, and non-financial support, not just consider family economic backgrounds.

Keywords: Parental Income, Career Selection, Vocational Students, Culinary Education

INTRODUCTION

Vocational education has a strategic position in preparing graduates who are able to enter the world of work, develop independent businesses, and continue education according to their competencies. These demands require vocational high schools (SMK) not only to build technical skills, but also to help students recognize their potential, evaluate opportunities, and make realistic and responsible career decisions. The challenges of the school-to-work transition are still relevant because the national Open Unemployment Rate in August 2025 reached 4.85%, while data according to education shows that vocational school graduates remain a group that needs attention in work transition policies (Central Statistics Agency, 2025, 2026).

Career selection is a multidimensional process that includes clarity of goals, suitability of choices with competencies and interests, confidence in abilities, exploration of alternatives, and action planning. The social-cognitive framework views career decisions as the result of interactions between self-efficacy, outcome expectations, goals, support, barriers, and learning experiences (Wang et al., 2023). In vocational education, self-efficacy has been proven to play a role in career decision-making because students need to translate the competencies acquired at school into work, business, or further study options (Sutiman et al., 2022; Hanifah & Dasalinda, 2023).

Environmental factors also determine the quality of the process. Family support can be in the form of financing, information, communication, acceptance, and psychological reinforcement. Parental social support is associated with self-efficacy and stability of career decisions, while peers and school climate are sources of information and social comparisons for students (Christian & Kustanti, 2022; Febriana & Masykur, 2022; Putra et al., 2023; Kadiyono & Utami, 2023). Thus, the condition of the family cannot be reduced to financial ability alone.

Parents' income is still important to study because it relates to access to further education, training, certifications, learning tools, job search transportation, and start-up capital. However, financial resources do not work deterministically. Students from low-income families can have a clear career plan if they have information, practical experience, non-financial support, and access to scholarships; On the other hand, higher income does not automatically result in mature decisions if students do not have goals and self-confidence.

The context of SMK Negeri 9 Padang shows the diversity of the direction of graduates. Data traced from the 2020/2021 to 2022/2023 school years recorded 1,154 graduates, consisting of 646 people (55.98%) working, 197 people (17.07%) continuing their studies, and 311 people (26.95%) who have not yet worked (SMK Negeri 9 Padang, 2025). This diversity emphasizes that students of the Culinary Expertise Program face several equally relevant paths, namely working in the food service industry, building a culinary business, or continuing education.

Previous research has discussed self-efficacy, family support, peer support, school climate, and common factors for career selection of vocational students (Kurnia & Hakim, 2023; Utami, 2024; Hariyanto et al., 2024). The study has not specifically separated the basic income and additional income of fathers and mothers as financial resources, then linked it to career selection scores that include career paths, entrepreneurship, and continuing studies in grade XII Culinary students. This operational and contextual gap is the position of the research.

This study aims to (1) describe the income of parents of students of the Culinary Skills Program, (2) analyze the career selection of students on the path of work, entrepreneurship,

and continuing their studies, and (3) examine the relationship between parental income and career selection of grade XII Culinary students at SMK Negeri 9 Padang. The results of the research are expected to be the basis for career services that are inclusive, based on student needs, and not solely built on assumptions about the economic condition of the family.

METHODS

The study used a quantitative approach with a correlational design to test the direction and strength of the relationship between parental income as a variable X and students' career choice as a variable Y without giving treatment to respondents (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The research will be carried out at SMK Negeri 9 Padang in 2026. The population consisted of 202 students in grade XII of the Culinary Skills Program, while 135 respondents were selected through proportional stratified random sampling so that each class was proportionally represented.

Variable X was measured through the basic income category of fathers and mothers with a score of 1-3 and additional income of fathers and mothers with a score of 0-3. The four components are summed up into a parental income score with a theoretical range of 2-12. Variable Y was measured using 40 seven-level Likert scale statements consisting of 12 items of work aspects, 12 items of entrepreneurship, and 16 items of continuing studies. The instrument test was carried out on 30 respondents. Of the initial 48 items, 40 items met a minimum item-total correlation of 0.361 and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the final instrument reached 0.947, indicating a very high internal consistency (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021).

The analysis was conducted with IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics are used to answer the first and second objectives through frequency, percentage, average, median, standard deviation, tendency category, and Respondent Achievement Rate (TCR). Variable relationships are tested using Spearman Rank correlation because the X variable is ordinal-scale; Therefore, the normality test is not used as a prerequisite. Scatterplots are used to check for monotonic tendencies, while hypothetical decisions are set at $\alpha = 0.05$. The square of the correlation coefficient is presented as a descriptive measure of the common association and is not interpreted as a causal influence (Ghozali, 2021; Scott, 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

a. Parental Income

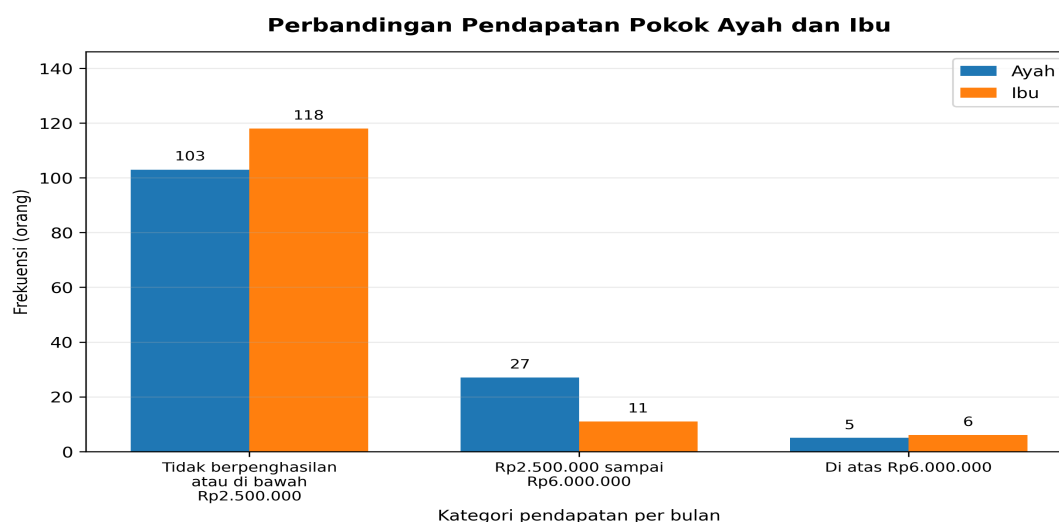
Parental income is described through the basic income of the father and mother, additional income, and the combined score of the X variable.

Table 1. Distribution of Basic Income of Fathers and Mothers

Monthly revenue categories	Father (f)	Father (%)	Mother (f)	Mother (%)
No income or below IDR 2,500,000	103	76,3	118	87,4
IDR2,500,000-IDR 6,000,000	27	20,0	11	8,1
Above IDR 6,000,000	5	3,7	6	4,4
Total	135	100,0	135	100,0

Source: Results of research data processing (2026)

The first category dominated the basic income of fathers (76.3%) and mothers (87.4%). In addition, 89 fathers (65.9%) and 101 mothers (74.8%) had no additional income. These findings show that the financial resources of respondent families tend to be concentrated in the lower category of instruments.



Sumber: Hasil olahan output SPSS, 2026.

Figure 1. Comparison of Basic Income of Parents and Parents

Source: Results of research data processing (2026)

Table 2. Distribution of Combined Scores of Parental Income (X)

X Score	Frequency	Percentage (%)
2	49	36,3
3	41	30,4
4	30	22,2
5	9	6,7
6	6	4,4
Total	135	100,0

Source: Results of research data processing (2026)

A total of 90 respondents (66.7%) were at an X score of 2 or 3, while only 15 respondents (11.1%) were at a score of 5 or 6. The distribution shows a variation in income scores that are limited to the upper group.

b. Student Career Selection

The total score of the career selection was in the range of 54-268, with an average of 187.38, a median of 187.00, and a standard deviation of 31.91. Based on the ideal score, the tendency of students' career selection is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Students' Career Selection Trends

Categories	Score criteria	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very low	AND < 100	1	0,7
Low	$100 \leq \text{AND} < 140$	5	3,7
Medium	$140 \leq \text{AND} < 180$	48	35,6
Height	$180 \leq \text{AND} < 220$	60	44,4
Very high	AND ≥ 220	21	15,6
Total	-	135	100,0

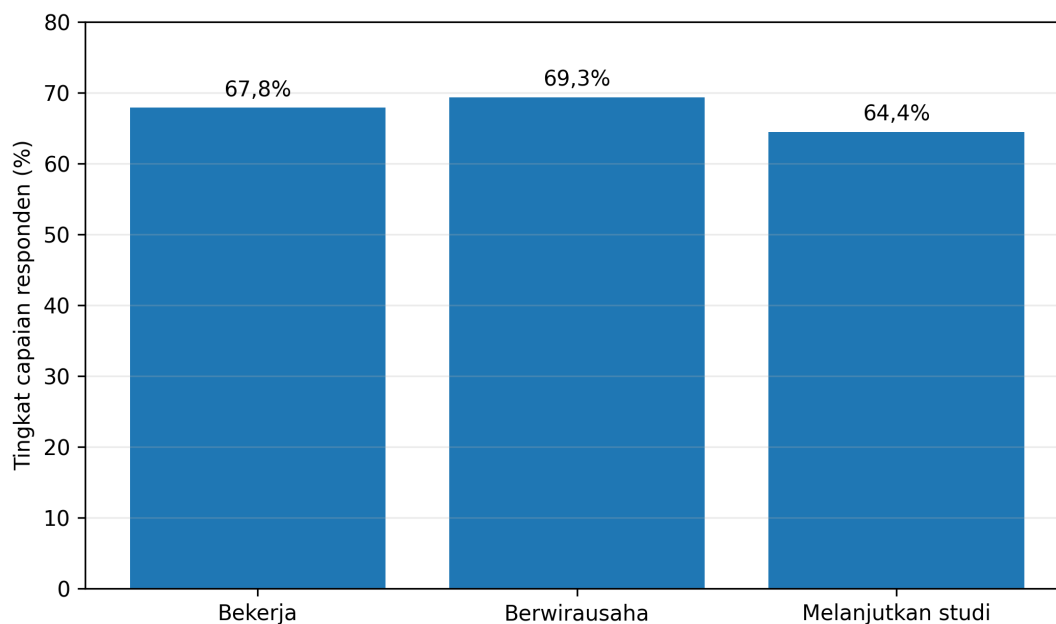
Source: Results of research data processing (2026)

The high category is the largest group, namely 60 students (44.4%), followed by the medium category as many as 48 students (35.6%) and very high category as many as 21 students (15.6%). Analysis by aspect is necessary because the number of items in each path is not the same.

Table 4. Comparison of the Three Aspects of Career Selection

Aspects	Number of Points	Average per item	TCR (%)	Ratings
Work	12	4,75	67,85	2
Entrepreneurship	12	4,85	69,35	1
Continuing studies	16	4,51	64,40	3

Source: Results of research data processing (2026)


Figure 2. Achievement Rate of Three Aspects of Career Selection

Source: Results of research data processing (2026)

The entrepreneurial aspect obtained the highest TCR of 69.35%, followed by work at 67.85% and continuing studies at 64.40%. Thus, the strongest career tendency in students is entrepreneurship in the culinary field.

c. The Relationship between Parents' Income and Career Selection of Culinary Class XII Students at SMK Negeri 9 Padang

The third objective test was performed using Spearman Rank correlation. The test results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Spearman Rank Correlation Test Results

Variable pairs	RS	Sig. (2-tailed)	N	Verdict
Parental income (X) with student career selection (Y)	0,110	0,202	135	H0 is not subtracted

Source: IBM SPSS Statistics (2026)

The coefficient $r_s = 0.110$ indicates the direction of a positive relationship with very weak strength. The value $p = 0.202$ is greater than 0.05, so H_0 is not subtracted and H_a is not supported. The square of the correlation coefficient of 1.22% shows a very small co-association and cannot be interpreted as a causal influence.

Discussion

a. Income of Parents of Culinary Skills Program Students

The dominance of basic income in the category of non-income or below Rp2,500,000, accompanied by a high proportion of parents without additional income, shows that most

families have limited financial space according to the operational category of the instrument. These findings should not be directly equated with poverty status because the study does not measure the number of household members, assets, expenditures, or income per capita.

Income can affect access to further education, training, certifications, learning tools, transportation, and business capital. However, income does not represent all family support. Christian and Kustanti (2022), Febriana and Masykur (2022), and Cusnia et al. (2024) show that communication, acceptance, information, and psychological reinforcement also shape students' confidence in making career decisions.

The concentration of 66.7% of respondents on an X score of 2-3 also has statistical implications. Limited variation in income ratings, especially in the small upper group, reduces the correlation ability to capture strong patterns of difference. Therefore, the results of the relationship need to be read together with the distribution of data, not just based on significance values.

b. Culinary Skills Program Student Career Selection

Most students were in the high and very high categories, which suggests that clarity of purpose, belief, suitability of choice, and career planning had improved in many respondents. However, the medium category still covers 35.6% of students, so exploration and career planning services are still needed.

The entrepreneurial aspect occupies the highest TCR. This condition can be explained by the characteristics of culinary education that provide experience in production, food processing, service, cost calculation, and business practices. These competencies make independent businesses a choice that is close to the student learning experience. The work aspect is also high, in line with the orientation of vocational schools to prepare graduates to enter the hotel, restaurant, catering, and food service industries.

The aspect of continuing studies obtained the lowest TCR, but remained at an achievement rate of 64.40%. Such results do not mean that students reject higher education; Lower trends may relate to program information, entry pathways, financing, scholarships, and perceptions of continuing education benefits. Vocational students' career choices are indeed shaped by a combination of competence, experience, self-efficacy, family, and environmental information (Kurnia & Hakim, 2023; Utami, 2024; Hariyanto et al., 2024).

c. The Relationship between Parents' Income and Career Selection of Culinary Class XII Students at SMK Negeri 9 Padang

The correlation results showed that parental income had a positive relationship direction, but it was very weak and insignificant with the career selection of Culinary grade XII students at SMK Negeri 9 Padang. This means that an increase in income ranking is not followed by a consistent increase in career selection scores. These results confirm that financial conditions have not been the main differentiator of the quality of career decisions in the study sample.

These findings can be understood through the multidimensional nature of career selection. The social-cognitive framework places self-efficacy, outcome expectations, goals, support, barriers, and experiences as elements that interact with each other (Wang et al., 2023). Hanifah and Dasalinda (2023) and Sutiman et al. (2022) show that self-efficacy is a factor closer to career decision action, while Putra et al. (2023) affirm the role of peer support.

The characteristics of the data also help explain the small coefficients. The income score is concentrated in the 2-3 category, while the 5-6 score group is relatively few. In addition, the Y score combines three career paths that can have different patterns of relationships with income. Income may be more relevant to further study or venture capital

requirements than job readiness, but differences between pathways are not tested as separate hypotheses.

Implicitly, career services should not be built on the assumption that students from high-income families are always better prepared or that students from low-income families always have limited options. Schools need to strengthen interest assessments, self-efficacy, information on the world of work, business training, access to scholarships, and industry experience equally. Parental support also needs to be expanded from financing to communication and appreciation of children's choices.

CONCLUSION

1. The income of parents of students of the Culinary Skills Program is concentrated in the lower category of instruments. As many as 76.3% of fathers and 87.4% of mothers are in the category of non-income or below Rp2,500,000 per month; 65.9% of fathers and 74.8% of mothers have no additional income. As many as 66.7% of respondents were at a combined income score of 2-3.
2. The overall choice of student careers is most in the high category (44.4%). The entrepreneurial aspect has the highest tendency with a TCR of 69.35%, followed by working 67.85% and continuing studies at 64.40%. Thus, the most powerful career path is entrepreneurship in the culinary field.
3. There was no significant relationship between parental income and career selection of Culinary grade XII students at SMK Negeri 9 Padang. Spearman's correlation yielded $r_s=0.110$ and $p=0.202$, which indicates a positive relationship with very weak strength. The square of the correlation coefficient of 1.22% shows a very small co-association and is not interpreted as a causal influence.

The findings of the research support the strengthening of career services which include work readiness, culinary business assistance, further study information and scholarships, and the development of self-efficacy. Further research is recommended to measure income nominally or per capita, examine each career path separately, and involve psychological and environmental factors in a more comprehensive model.

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