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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

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# Interests and Learning Achievements of Health Students in the Early Semester

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## ABSTRACT

The relationship between student interest and learning achievement, until now has not been widely studied. This study aims to explain the relationship between interest and learning achievement of first semester students, Surabaya Ministry of Health Polytechnic, with a cross sectional design. The research subjects were 400 Semester I students of the *Poltekkes Kemenkes Surabaya*, 2016/2017 Academic Year, which were selected by simple random sampling technique. Data about student interest is obtained from the results of psychological tests at the time of the selection of new students, while data on student achievement is obtained from the Academic Information system. The collected data were analyzed using the Spearman correlation test. Students who have high interest tend to have a better semester achievement index.

**Keywords:** Interest, Learning achievement

## INTRODUCTION

The strategic plan of the *Poltekkes Kemenkes Surabaya* (Health Polytechnic of Surabaya) in 2016 is a minimum of 80% of graduates getting a GPA of  $\geq 3.25$ . Efforts have been made to achieve this, such as: improving the quality of lecturers, educational staff and students. Lecturers and educational staff are given the opportunity to attend training, seminars and continuing education. The director issued a policy that every new student of the 2016/2017 academic year must follow the psychology test, so that the interests and potential of new students can be known, thus facilitating further assistance<sup>(1)</sup>.

In the non-health field it has been reported that the interest in learning is related to the mathematics learning achievement of elementary school students in elementary school in the Wonokerto cluster<sup>(2)</sup>. Meanwhile, the learning interest of 14 Madiun Middle School students towards social studies subjects correlates strongly with student learning outcomes<sup>(3)</sup>. Most of the new students of Sutopo Nursing Study Program in 2016 were interested in choosing nursing courses. Only 0.8% of students from Magetan Environmental Health Study Program are interested in learning about environmental health, while 52% of them are interested in studying in nursing study programs, and the rest (47.2%) are interested in studying other fields.

The success of students in achieving achievement is influenced by several factors. The factors that influence learning achievement are divided into 2 groups, namely, internal factors and external factors. Internal factors are factors that come from within the individual itself, namely physical, psychological and interests. While external factors include the family environment, school environment and community environment. Students will achieve high learning achievement if the factors that influence learning can be optimized, whereas student learning achievement will be low if the factors that influence it are not well optimized<sup>(4)</sup>.

One of the internal factors that greatly influences learning achievement is interest. Interest is a fixed tendency to pay attention and remember some activities, in this case activities that are in demand by someone will be pursued continuously accompanied by pleasure. Interest can be the cause of an activity and as a result of participating in an activity. The lack of interest can result in students not liking the existing courses, so he has difficulty concentrating and it is difficult to understand the contents of the course and eventually will get poor learning achievement.

Efforts made to improve the quality of students and graduates of the *Poltekkes Kemenkes Surabaya* are to look at and examine student interests. Psychological tests conducted in 2016 for new students of the 2016/2017 academic year are expected to provide an overview of one side that influences student achievement<sup>(1)</sup>.

This study aims to explain the relationship between interest and learning achievement of Semester I students, *Poltekkes Kemenkes Surabaya* in 2016/2017 Academic Year.

## METHODS

The population of this cross sectional study was first semester students of the *Poltekkes Kemenkes Surabaya*, 2016/2017 Academic Year, with a population size of 982 people. The sample size was 400 people, chosen by simple random sampling technique. Data about student interest was obtained from the results of psychological tests at the time of the selection of new students, while data on student achievement was obtained from the Academic Information system. The collected data were categorical so that they are presented in the form of frequency and percentage<sup>(5)</sup>, then analyzed using the Spearman correlation test.

## RESULTS

The description of the results of the data analysis and the Spearman correlation test are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The correlation between student interest and learning achievement

Interest	Learning achievement						Total	
	Medium		Good		Very good			
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
High	30	9.2	198	58.9	98	31.9	326	100
Low	19	25.3	39	52	17	22.7	75	100
p-value = 0.005								

Table 1 shows that more groups of students with high interest gain learning achievement in the good and very good category than the group of students with lower interest. The p-value of the Spearman correlation test was 0.005 so that it is interpreted that significantly, student interest correlates with the learning achievement of the first semester student of *Poltekkes Kemenkes Surabaya*.

## DISCUSSION

Guidelines for admission of new students issued by the Ministry of Health, Republic of Indonesia in 2016<sup>(6)</sup> as well as Technical Guidelines for New Student Selection of the *Poltekkes Kemenkes Surabaya* in 2016<sup>(7)</sup> does not provide a quota limit on gender. All participants are selected naturally based on the results of the report card grades and written test scores. This allows prospective new students who pass the selection to be students who have high academic abilities and are able to compete with other applicants.

The factors that influence learning achievement are factors that originate in students in the form of interests, motivations, and physical conditions<sup>(8)</sup>. The factors that influence learning outcomes are: (1) Internal factors, namely physiology such as physical and sensory conditions as well as psychological concerns regarding interest, level of intelligence, talent, motivation, and cognitive abilities, (2) External factors namely curriculum, instructors, facilities and management that apply in the place of study concerned<sup>(9)</sup>.

Students with good Semester Achievement Index are caused by high interest in the field they are engaged in and high cognitive abilities. While students with a lower achievement index are caused by low interest in the field of science. The results of interviews with students in the Nursing Department and the Dental Nursing Department, showed that nursing was not their main choice. Lack of motivation and interest in becoming a nurse can cause internal conflicts within themselves, so the learning process becomes not optimal which in turn will hamper achievement of learning achievement. Students need enough time to adapt to the environment. The first semester is a burden for students to accept new conditions and to carry out their academic tasks. Internal conflicts that occur in students greatly influence the motivation of students to undergo their study activities and become a separate task for academic supervisors to provide encouragement or encouragement to students.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it was concluded that the achievement of the learning achievement of *Surabaya Health Polytechnic* students was related to their interest in studying in the department concerned. Thus it is suggested: 1) Psychological testing needs to be done on new students to identify student interest in study and used as a reference for student development, 2) Academic counselors need to provide encouragement and motivation to students with low interest in study to help increase motivation and enthusiasm for learning

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