



Distribution of Students Specialization Interests in the Sports Science Study Program

Sebaran Peminatan Bidang Keahlian Mahasiswa Program Studi Ilmu Keolahragaan

Original Article

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Abstract.

- Background** The selection of a field of specialisation is closely related to the development of competence, interest, and student readiness to enter the world of work.
- Objectives** This study aims to describe the distribution of student interest in the fields of specialisation within the Sports Science Study Programme, and to identify the factors that influence the selection of those fields of specialisation.
- Methods** This study used a descriptive quantitative approach with a survey method. The research respondents comprised 70 students of the Sports Science Study Programme, who were selected using a total sampling technique. Data collection was carried out through a Google Forms-based questionnaire, and the data were then analysed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages.
- Results** The results show that Sports Massage was the most preferred field of specialisation (51.4%), followed by Sports Management (30.0%), Sports Fitness (14.3%), and Adaptive Sports (4.3%). Most students were aware of the available choices of specialisation and obtained information mainly from the university and lecturers. The majority of respondents stated that they selected their field of specialisation on the basis of personal interest, which shows that intrinsic motivation was more influential than external factors.
- Conclusion** The results show that Sports Massage was the most preferred field of specialisation (51.4%), followed by Sports Management (30.0%), Sports Fitness (14.3%), and Adaptive Sports (4.3%). Most students were aware of the available choices of specialisation and obtained information mainly from the university and lecturers. The majority of respondents stated that they selected their field of specialisation on the basis of personal interest, which shows that intrinsic motivation was more influential than external factors.

Keywords: Field of Specialisation, Specialisation Interest, Students, Sports Science, Survey

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions play an important role in producing graduates who are competent and able to compete in the world of work. This effort is made through the provision of various fields of specialisation, which students select in accordance with their interests, abilities, and career objectives. The Sports Science Study Programme of Yogyakarta State University provides several fields of specialisation, namely Sports Massage, Sports Management, Sports Fitness, and Adaptive Sports. Each field has different competence characteristics, so that its selection needs to be adjusted to the potential and interests of students. The selection of a field of specialisation also constitutes an important part of the process of developing professional competence and career readiness among students, because it determines the knowledge and skills that will be pursued during the period of study [6].

Interest is a person's tendency to give attention to, and to feel attracted to, a particular field. Interest influences learning motivation, involvement in the learning process, and students' success in developing academic and professional competence. Students who select a field of specialisation in

accordance with their interests tend to have higher learning motivation and to be better prepared to face the world of work. This is consistent with the concept of *Self-Determination Theory*, which explains that intrinsic motivation and autonomy in decision-making will increase learning involvement and academic achievement [3]. In addition, Social Cognitive Career Theory explains that interest, belief in one's own ability (*self-efficacy*), and expectations regarding the outcomes to be obtained are important factors that influence a person's choice of career or field of study [6].

In addition to being influenced by personal interest, the selection of a field of specialisation is also influenced by external factors such as the information provided by the study programme, guidance from lecturers, learning experience, the peer environment, and family support. Complete information regarding the curriculum, graduate competences, and career prospects will help students to determine their choice more appropriately. According to Raza et al. [2], the quality of academic information exerts an influence on student decision-making in determining educational and career choices. Other research also shows that support from the academic environment, access to information, and learning experience make a significant contribution to shaping students' academic decisions [5].

Based on preliminary observation, each field of specialisation within the Sports Science Study Programme has a different level of interest. However, no data are yet available that describe the distribution of student interest and the factors that influence that decision. Previous research has more commonly discussed learning motivation, academic achievement, or student career choices in general, whereas research that specifically maps the distribution of specialisation interest among students of the Sports Science Study Programme is still limited. This information is important as a basis for curriculum evaluation, the formulation of academic service strategies, and the development of fields of specialisation that are consistent with the needs of students and of the world of work [9] [7]. This study was conducted in order to determine the distribution of specialisation interest among students of the Sports Science Study Programme, and at the same time to identify the factors that influence the selection of those fields of specialisation. The research results may serve as material for evaluation for the study programme in improving the quality of academic services, the provision of information, and the development of a curriculum that is consistent with student needs.

METHOD

This study used a quantitative approach with a descriptive survey research design. The quantitative approach was selected because it aims to obtain an objective picture of the distribution of student specialisation interest based on numerical data, which are analysed using descriptive statistics. According to Creswell and Creswell [10], quantitative research is an approach that is used to test or describe a phenomenon through the collection of numerical data, which are analysed using statistical procedures. Meanwhile, the survey method is used to obtain information regarding the characteristics, perceptions, or tendencies of respondents towards a phenomenon within a particular population [11].

The population in this study consisted of all students of the Sports Science Study Programme of Yogyakarta State University who had obtained information regarding the choices of specialisation. The sampling technique used was total sampling, that is, all members of the population who met the criteria were taken as research respondents. This technique is used when the population is relatively limited in number, so that all members of the population can be taken as the research sample [11]. Based on this technique, 70 students were obtained as respondents.

The research instrument was a questionnaire that was compiled using Google Forms. The questionnaire contained questions regarding respondent characteristics, the choice of specialisation, the level of knowledge of the fields of specialisation, sources of information regarding the fields of specialisation, the level of confidence in the choice, and the factors that influence the selection of a field of specialisation. Most question items used a four-point Likert scale, namely strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. The Likert scale is used to measure the attitudes, perceptions, and opinions of respondents towards a research object or phenomenon [10] [11].

Data collection was carried out in June 2026 through the online distribution of the questionnaire to respondents. All data obtained were then checked for completeness, coded, and tabulated before being analysed.

Data analysis used descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages, in order to describe the distribution of specialisation interest and the characteristics of respondents' answers. The results of the analysis are presented in the form of tables and descriptive explanations, so that the interpretation of the tendencies in students' selection of a field of specialisation is facilitated. Descriptive statistics are used to describe data as they are, without making generalisations to a wider population [11].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study involved 70 students of the Sports Science Study Programme of Yogyakarta State University as respondents. Data were obtained through the online distribution of a questionnaire using Google Forms and were analysed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages. The research results are presented on the basis of respondent characteristics, the distribution of specialisation interest, students' knowledge of the fields of specialisation, sources of information, and the factors that influence the selection of a field of specialisation.

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Class	A	18	25,7
	B	23	32,9
	C	29	41,4
Cohort	2024	50	71,4
	2025	20	28,6
Gender	Male	48	68,6
	Female	22	31,4
Total		70	100

Based on Table 1, the research respondents numbered 70 students. The majority of respondents came from class C, numbering 29 students (41.4%), followed by class B, numbering 23 students (32.9%), and class A, numbering 18 students (25.7%). By cohort, most respondents came from the 2024 cohort, numbering 50 students (71.4%), whereas the 2025 cohort numbered 20 students (28.6%). By gender, the respondents were dominated by male students, numbering 48 people (68.6%), whereas female students numbered 22 people (31.4%). These characteristics show that the research data were dominated by students of the 2024 cohort, who had entered the stage of determining a field of specialisation.

Distribution of Specialisation Interest

Table 2. Distribution of Specialisation Interest

Field of Specialisation	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Sports Massage	36	51,4
Sports Management	21	30,0
Sports Fitness	10	14,3
Adaptive Sports	3	4,3
Total	70	100

Based on Table 2, the field of specialisation that was most preferred by students was Sports Massage, with a total of 36 students (51.4%). Subsequently, Sports Management was selected by 21 students (30.0%) and Sports Fitness was selected by 10 students (14.3%), whereas Adaptive Sports was the field with the smallest number of interested students, namely 3 students (4.3%). These results show

that more than half of the respondents selected Sports Massage as the field of specialisation to be pursued during their period of study.

Students' Knowledge of the Fields of Specialisation

Table 3. Students' Knowledge and Perception of Information on the Fields of Specialisation

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Aware of the choices of specialisation	Strongly Agree	53	75,7
	Agree	14	20,0
	Disagree	3	4,3
	Strongly Disagree	0	0,0
Information from the Study Programme is adequate	Strongly Agree	38	54,3
	Agree	28	40,0
	Disagree	4	5,7
	Strongly Disagree	0	0,0

Based on Table 3, 53 respondents (75.7%) stated that they were very much aware of the available choices of specialisation, whereas 14 respondents (20.0%) stated that they agreed. Only three respondents (4.3%) stated that they were not adequately aware. In addition, 38 respondents (54.3%) strongly agreed and 28 respondents (40.0%) agreed that the Study Programme had provided adequate information regarding all of the choices of specialisation. Overall, these results show that the majority of students already had a good understanding of the available choices of specialisation.

Sources of Information on the Fields of Specialisation

Table 4. Sources of Information on the Fields of Specialisation

Source of Information	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Campus	47	67,1
Lecturers	46	65,7
Friends	43	61,4
Social Media	28	40,0
Siblings	10	14,3
Teachers	5	7,1
Parents	4	5,7

Based on Table 4, the sources of information most widely used by students regarding the fields of specialisation came from the campus (67.1%), followed by lecturers (65.7%) and friends (61.4%). Social media was also one of the sources of information, with a percentage of 40.0%, whereas siblings, teachers, and parents made a relatively smaller contribution of information. These data show that the academic environment was the main source of information for students in determining a field of specialisation.

Confidence, Voluntariness, and Family Influence in the Selection of a Field of Specialisation

Table 5. Confidence, Voluntariness, and Family Influence in the Selection of a Field of Specialisation

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Confident in the chosen field of specialisation	Strongly Agree	32	45,7
	Agree	30	42,9
	Disagree	8	11,4

Selected of one's own volition	Strongly Disagree	0	0,0
	Strongly Agree	43	61,4
	Agree	25	35,7
	Disagree	2	2,9
Influenced by family	Strongly Disagree	0	0,0
	Strongly Agree	12	17,1
	Agree	24	34,3
	Disagree	19	27,1
	Strongly Disagree	15	21,4

Based on Table 5, 62 respondents (88.6%) stated that they were confident in the field of specialisation that they had selected, whereas only 8 respondents (11.4%) stated that they were not confident. In addition, 68 respondents (97.1%) reported that they had selected their field of specialisation of their own volition. Meanwhile, the influence of family on the selection of a field of specialisation showed a relatively balanced result, namely that 36 respondents (51.4%) stated that they were influenced by family and 34 respondents (48.5%) stated that they were not influenced by family. These results show that students' decisions in selecting a field of specialisation were based more on personal consideration than on external influence.

Discussion

Distribution of Students' Specialisation Interest

The research results show that Sports Massage was the field of specialisation most preferred by students, with a percentage of 51.4%, followed by Sports Management (30.0%), Sports Fitness (14.3%), and Adaptive Sports (4.3%). These findings show that most students were more interested in fields of specialisation that are applied in nature and that offer broad employment opportunities. The field of Sports Massage provides an opportunity for students to develop practical skills that can be applied in various sectors, such as sports clinics, fitness centres, hospitals, sports clubs, and independent practice. In addition, the practical experience obtained during their studies is presumed to have contributed to increasing student interest in that field.

The results of this study are consistent with the research of Graha et al. (2022), which stated that students have a high level of interest in sports massage therapy, because that field provides applied competence and offers promising employment prospects in both the sports and health sectors. This competence is one of the factors that encourages students to select a field of specialisation that is able to provide broader career opportunities after graduation.

Conversely, Adaptive Sports was the field of specialisation with the smallest number of interested students. The low level of interest in this field is presumed to be caused by students' still-limited knowledge of the scope of adaptive sports, a lack of practical experience, and limited information regarding employment prospects in that field. In fact, the need for professional personnel in adaptive sports continues to increase in line with the development of inclusive education and of competitive sports for people with disabilities. Therefore, the Study Programme needs to increase the socialisation of the competences and career opportunities in the field of Adaptive Sports, so that students obtain a more comprehensive understanding before determining their choice of a field of specialisation.

Students' Knowledge of the Fields of Specialisation

Based on the research results, 95.7% of students stated that they were already aware of the available choices of specialisation, and 94.3% of respondents assessed the information provided by the Study Programme as adequate. These findings show that the process of socialising the fields of specialisation had proceeded well, so that it was able to provide students with a picture of the competences that would be studied and of the employment prospects of each field of specialisation.

The availability of academic information is an important factor in helping students to make appropriate decisions. Complete information regarding the curriculum, learning outcomes, and career opportunities will increase students' confidence in determining a field of specialisation that is consistent with their interests and abilities. These findings are supported by Raza, Qazi, and Yousufi [2], who explain that the quality of academic information influences the process of student decision-making in determining educational and career choices.

Students who have a good understanding of the fields of specialisation tend to be more confident in following the learning process, because they already know the competences that will be developed during their period of study. Accordingly, the provision of academic information on a continuous basis needs to be further improved, so that students are able to determine their choice rationally on the basis of accurate information.

The Role of the Academic Environment in the Selection of a Field of Specialisation

The research results show that the campus (67.1%), lecturers (65.7%), and friends (61.4%) were the main sources of information regarding the fields of specialisation. This condition shows that the academic environment plays an important role in shaping students' perceptions of the choices of specialisation.

Lecturers act not only as teachers, but also as academic advisors who provide guidance regarding graduate competences, developments in the world of work, and opportunities for career development. Peers become a source of information through discussion, the sharing of experience during their studies, and the exchange of information regarding fields of specialisation of interest. The results of this study are supported by Mukhoiyaroh [1], who stated that a conducive learning environment is able to increase academic motivation and to help students make more appropriate decisions.

These findings show that the Study Programme needs to maintain, and indeed to improve, the quality of academic services through socialisation activities, seminars, public lectures, and academic guidance, so that students obtain more comprehensive information regarding all fields of specialisation.

Factors Influencing the Selection of a Field of Specialisation

The research results show that 88.6% of respondents were confident in the field of specialisation that they had selected, and that 97.1% of respondents stated that the selection of a field of specialisation had been made of their own volition. This shows that students' decisions were influenced more by internal factors, in the form of interest, motivation, and career objectives, than by external factors.

According to Ryan and Deci [3] in *Self-Determination Theory*, individuals who have freedom in determining their choice will show higher intrinsic motivation, which has a positive impact on learning involvement, academic satisfaction, and the achievement of learning outcomes. Students who select a field of specialisation in accordance with their interests tend to have a higher level of commitment in following the learning process and to be better prepared to develop professional competence.

The influence of family on the selection of a field of specialisation showed a relatively balanced result. A total of 51.4% of respondents obtained influence from family, whereas the other 48.5% stated that the decision was not influenced by family. These findings indicate that, although family still provides support and consideration, the final decision remains determined more by the students themselves. This condition shows the developing independence of students in making academic decisions in accordance with the interests and career objectives that they wish to achieve. These findings are consistent with the research of Tóth-Király et al. [4], who stated that intrinsic motivation and autonomy in determining academic choices have a positive relationship with learning involvement and student success.

The research results show that the selection of a field of specialisation among students of the Sports Science Study Programme was influenced more by internal factors, in the form of interest, confidence, and personal motivation, whereas the most dominant external factor originated from the academic environment, particularly the campus, lecturers, and peers. Therefore, the Study Programme needs to continue improving academic information services and specialisation guidance, so that

students are able to select a field of specialisation that is consistent with their potential, interests, and the needs of the world of work.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to describe the distribution of specialisation interest among students of the Sports Science Study Programme of Yogyakarta State University, and to identify the factors that influence their selection. The research results show that the field of Sports Massage was the field most preferred by students, with a percentage of 51.4%, followed by Sports Management (30.0%), Sports Fitness (14.3%), and Adaptive Sports (4.3%). These findings show that differences exist in the level of student interest in each of the available fields of specialisation.

This study also shows that most students were already aware of the available choices of specialisation and assessed the information provided by the study programme as adequate. The campus, lecturers, and peers were the main sources of information that played a role in helping students to understand the characteristics of each field of specialisation. In addition, the majority of students stated that they were confident in the field of specialisation that they had taken and that they had selected it on the basis of their own volition, which shows that internal factors, in the form of interest, motivation, and career objectives, exerted a more dominant influence than external factors such as family.

The research results imply that the Sports Science Study Programme needs to continue improving the quality of academic services through the socialisation of the fields of specialisation, academic guidance, and the provision of information regarding the competences and career prospects of each field of specialisation in a more comprehensive manner. These efforts are expected to help students determine a field of specialisation that is consistent with their interests, potential, and the needs of the world of work, and at the same time to encourage a more even distribution of interest across each of the available fields of specialisation.

This study still has limitations, because it was conducted in only one study programme and used a descriptive approach, so that the research results cannot yet be generalised widely. Therefore, it is recommended that future research involve respondents from various higher education institutions, use a larger sample size, and combine quantitative and qualitative approaches, so that a deeper understanding of the factors that influence students' selection of a field of specialisation is obtained.

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