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# *Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Career Interest Determinants among Automotive Vocational Students at Universitas Lancang Kuning*

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***Abstract***

*This study examines the factors influencing students' interest in pursuing industrial careers within the Vocational Education and Automotive Technology Program at Universitas Lancang Kuning Pekanbaru. Using a quantitative approach and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), data were collected from 74 students across three academic levels. The analysis identified two dominant dimensions: external factors (job opportunities, parental support, industry collaboration) and internal factors (personal interest, technological proficiency, practical experience), which together explained 77.135% of the variance. Variables such as industrial prestige and work environment were excluded due to low significance. The findings emphasize that industrial career interest is shaped by both institutional support and individual readiness. These results provide valuable insights for enhancing vocational education strategies through better stakeholder collaboration and targeted curriculum development.*

***Keywords***
*Career Interest, Vocational Education, Industrial Readiness, Factor Analysis, Automotive Training*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Vocational Education and Automotive Technology Program at Universitas Lancang Kuning Pekanbaru plays a central role in preparing qualified graduates for the automotive industry. As the sector rapidly evolves, the demand for skilled professionals with advanced technical knowledge continues to grow [1]. In response, the program equips students with competencies in automotive maintenance, repair, and development, aligned with industry needs [2]. Its mission is to produce competitive, adaptive graduates capable of contributing to industrial environments.

Despite this, field observations indicate a lack of awareness among students regarding industrial careers, including salary expectations, work conditions, and career prospects. Students expressed the need for structured career guidance to help them plan their future pathways more effectively. Although some collaboration with industry exists, it remains insufficient. Most instructional resources still rely on outdated technologies such as carburetor-based engines, which limits students' exposure to innovations like fuel injection and electric vehicles [2]. This mismatch between educational preparation and industry demands highlights a significant gap. Although vocational education aims to produce industry-ready graduates, few actually pursue careers in the sector [3]. Career decisions are not shaped solely by technical skills but also by psychological and contextual factors that influence student interest [4]. Key concerns include limited visibility of industrial careers among students, insufficient

information on influencing factors, and a lack of institutional support to foster career interest [5].

The significance of career interest is crucial in the context of work readiness. Students exhibiting a strong interest in their careers are more inclined to cultivate motivation, pursue job-related information, participate in supplementary training, and actively enhance their competencies [6]. Vocational institutions are thus required to provide not only theoretical classroom instruction but also practical industry engagement [7][8]. The program at Universitas Lancang Kuning exemplifies this vision through the integration of an industry-responsive curriculum [9] and the promotion of project-based learning to enhance student engagement [10]. Ultimately, the achievement in connecting educational pathways with employment opportunities signifies the overall efficacy of vocational education in generating graduates who are prepared for the workforce [11].

**Factors Influencing Students' Industrial Career Interest**

The influence of personal interest is essential in determining a student's choice to engage in a career within the automotive industry. An intense interest in automotive systems—encompassing aspects such as vehicle repair, technological advancements, or the broader industry—can markedly improve students' motivation to cultivate their skills and investigate potential career paths. This interest is typically manifested in indicators including enthusiasm, attention, and sustained focus [12]. Furthermore, the influence of parental support on students' career choices is substantial. The support provided by family, including emotional reinforcement, career guidance, and validation of students' career aspirations, has the potential to enhance their confidence and motivation to engage in the future within the automotive sector [13].

Employment opportunities, indicative of labor market demand, serve as a significant motivator. The swift expansion of the automotive industry, coupled with the presence of a wide array of employment opportunities, frequently acts as a significant motivator for students to explore career paths within this field, particularly when they recognize the relevance and potential impact of their developed skills [14]. Furthermore, financial remuneration, encompassing salary, bonuses, and performance-related incentives, constitutes a significant factor in the process of career decision-making [15]. In the contemporary landscape of digitized industries, it is imperative that technical proficiency is complemented by an understanding of advanced technologies and equipment [16], alongside the capability to access and adapt to ongoing technological advancements [17]. Students possessing robust technological skills typically exhibit greater confidence, adaptability, and an increased likelihood of fulfilling industry expectations. Another factor is the workplace environment, which significantly influences career interests. The perception of industrial careers among students is influenced by various factors, including physical conditions, interpersonal relationships, and organizational culture. An environment that is safe, supportive, and well-equipped enhances comfort and simultaneously fosters professional development [18].

Conversely, the collaboration between universities and industry plays a crucial role in fostering student engagement. Internships, industry visits, and guest lectures provide practical insights, whereas the alignment of the curriculum with industrial requirements improves students' preparedness. Training and workshops that involve industry participation offer significant exposure and networking opportunities, thereby enhancing both technical skills and attitudinal competencies [19]. Finally, the prestige associated with various industries may significantly influence students' motivation regarding their career aspirations. Industries recognized for their commitment to innovation, quality, and social responsibility are frequently viewed as attractive employment options that provide long-term stability and opportunities for

career advancement. This perception cultivates confidence and a favorable disposition toward engaging in the field [20].

**Theoretical Framework: Factor Analysis**

Factor analysis represents a multivariate technique employed to investigate the interrelationships among a collection of observed variables, facilitating their organization into fewer, more coherent components. This analysis aims to elucidate the fundamental structure of data by identifying latent factors that account for the correlations observed among the measured items [21]. As a technique of interdependence, it posits that variables are not independent; instead, their interrelations signify shared dimensions within the dataset.

The process begins with correlation testing to determine the strength of associations between variables. Once a valid correlation structure is confirmed, the factoring process reduces the original dataset into a smaller number of representative factors. This method supports data reduction and pattern detection while facilitating further multivariate analysis [22]. Its goals include: (1) identifying underlying dimensions explaining correlations, (2) substituting non-correlated variables with meaningful constructs, and (3) isolating variables that do not meaningfully contribute to shared variance [23].

The identification of the number of factors constitutes a pivotal phase in the overall process. The initial approach involves a priori determination, wherein the number of factors is established according to theoretical expectations or prior research [23]. The second approach entails the assessment of eigenvalues, whereby factors exhibiting values exceeding 1.0 are preserved, whereas those falling below this threshold are omitted from the model. Third, a scree plot serves to illustrate the inflection point distinguishing significant factors from trivial ones, by plotting eigenvalues on the Y-axis in relation to the number of factors on the X-axis.

A fourth approach involves interpreting the cumulative variance explained, where each factor's contribution must exceed a threshold (commonly >0.5). Factors with low factor loadings (<0.5) are excluded, as they lack significant explanatory power. In this study, confirmatory factor analysis is employed to examine nine hypothesized factors influencing students' industrial career interest. This approach helps validate the structural model underlying student motivation and career orientation within the automotive vocational context.

## METHOD

This research utilized a confirmatory quantitative design with the objective of validating a theoretical model that identifies the factors affecting students' interest in pursuing careers within the automotive industry. The study was carried out at Universitas Lancang Kuning, concentrating on students participating in the Vocational Education and Automotive Technology Program. A total of 74 respondents were chosen from the second, fourth, and sixth semesters to reflect various academic stages and levels of exposure to industrial knowledge and training.

The research employed a systematic methodology to evaluate students' perceptions regarding nine predetermined factors that are thought to impact their interest in industrial careers. The factors considered in this analysis comprised personal interest (X1), practical experience acquired during education (X2), parental support (X3), availability of job opportunities (X4), financial rewards (X5), technological proficiency (X6), work environment (X7), collaboration between universities and industry (X8), and the prestige associated with the industry (X9). The variables were extracted from existing literature and modified to align with the context of vocational education within the automotive sector.

The data collection process was conducted utilizing a structured instrument, and the subsequent analysis of the results was performed employing Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). This approach enabled the researchers to assess the internal composition of the measured variables and identify the factors that were most influential in influencing students' motivation to engage in industrial careers. The analytical process concentrated on evaluating the consistency of these variables and their role in contributing to a latent factor structure, in accordance with the conceptual model outlined in the theoretical framework.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The analysis started with an evaluation of the Respondent Achievement Level (RAL), which refers to the achievement levels of respondents, across each of the nine observed variables pertinent to students' interest in pursuing careers in the industrial sector. Table 1 displays the percentages of RAL alongside their respective categorical classifications, denoting whether each factor was regarded as "Low," "Moderate," or "High" concerning its influence.

*Table 1. Respondent Achievement Level (RAL) for Each Factor*

| No. | Factor | TCR (%) | Category |
|---|---|---|---|
| X1 | Personal Interest | 83.1 | High |
| X2 | Practical Experience During Education | 76.3 | Moderate |
| X3 | Parental Support | 64.3 | Low |
| X4 | Job Opportunities | 74.2 | Moderate |
| X5 | Financial Rewards | 75.5 | Moderate |
| X6 | Technological Proficiency | 81.0 | High |
| X7 | Work Environment | 79.9 | Moderate |
| X8 | University–Industry Collaboration | 63.1 | Low |
| X9 | Industrial Prestige | 71.0 | Moderate |

The results indicate that personal interest (X1) and technological proficiency (X6) achieved the highest RAL scores, reflecting a significant level of internal motivation and confidence among students regarding their abilities. In contrast, parental support (X3) and university–industry collaboration (X8) received the lowest scores, indicating a lack of external reinforcement and institutional support.

To assess the suitability of the data for factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were conducted. Table 2 summarizes the results.

*Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sampling Adequacy*

| Test | Value |
|---|---|
| KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy | 0.734 |
| Bartlett's Test Approx. Chi-Square | 456.182 |
| Degrees of Freedom (df) | 36 |
| Significance (Sig.) | 0.000 |

The KMO value of 0.734 surpasses the minimum threshold of 0.500, signifying adequate sampling for the purposes of factor analysis. The results of Bartlett's Test ($p < 0.05$) indicate that the correlations among the variables are sufficient, thereby supporting the decision to proceed with factor extraction.

The Anti-Image Matrices test was employed to evaluate the adequacy of individual variables. The Measures of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) indicated that Industrial Prestige (X9) exhibited an MSA value of 0.289, which is below the established threshold of 0.500. As a result, it was omitted from subsequent analysis. A subsequent community analysis revealed that the Work Environment (X7) variable exhibited the lowest extraction value at 0.072, which is also below the threshold of 0.500, leading to its exclusion from further consideration. Consequently, seven variables remained for additional factor extraction: X1, X2, X3, X4, X5, X6, and X8.

The Total Variance Explained revealed the emergence of two factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0. The initial factor contributed 45.653% to the total variance, while the subsequent factor accounted for 31.482%, resulting in a cumulative explained variance of 77.135%. The model successfully encapsulates the fundamental structure of the seven retained variables. The findings from the Rotated Component Matrix indicated a distinct loading pattern. The initial factor comprised job opportunities (X4), financial rewards (X5), parental support (X3), and university–industry collaboration (X8), collectively indicating a dimension of external or environmental support. The second factor encompasses personal interest (X1), technological proficiency (X6), and practical experience (X2), thereby illustrating a dimension of internal or individual capability.

Collectively, these two elements account for a significant portion of the variance in students' career interests in the industrial sector, thereby underscoring the combined influence of external support and internal preparedness in the formation of vocational aspirations.

**Discussion**

The findings of this study indicate a varied pattern in respondents' perceptions of the factors influencing their interest in industrial careers, as reflected in the differing levels of Respondent Achievement Level (RAL) across variables. The highest-rated factor was personal interest, with a TCR of 83.1%, categorized as "High." This suggests that, internally, students exhibit strong motivation and genuine enthusiasm for entering the industrial workforce. This result aligns with Sugiyanto and Harnanik's work, which underscores personal interest as a key determinant of job readiness among vocational students. Technological proficiency also received a high RAL score (81.0%), indicating that students generally feel confident in their ability to operate within modern industrial settings. This confidence is especially crucial as the automotive industry continues to adopt advanced digital systems. The result supports prior findings emphasizing the role of technical competency and field training in enhancing employability and soft skills [23].

Several other factors—such as practical experience (76.3%), job opportunities (74.2%), financial rewards (75.5%), work environment (79.9%), and industrial prestige (71.0%)—were categorized as "Moderate." These external factors appear to provide a reasonably supportive context but lack consistency and optimization. As highlighted by Romdloniyati et al. [24], practical experience is a strong contributor to workforce readiness, yet this study suggests that its quality, structure, and integration with career development systems may require enhancement. Improving transparency in job prospects, refining reward systems, and ensuring conducive work environments are necessary to attract and retain young talent. Of particular concern were two factors categorized as "Low": parental support (64.3%) and university–industry collaboration (63.1%). The limited influence of parental encouragement suggests a lack of family involvement in career decision-making, which is a missed opportunity given evidence from Wahyuningsih [25] showing that parental support plays a pivotal role in shaping students' confidence and career readiness. This disconnects points to a need for targeted engagement strategies involving families in vocational career planning. Likewise, the insufficient collaboration between educational institutions and the industry presents a critical

barrier to aligning training with real-world demands. This finding reinforces earlier studies emphasizing the underutilization of partnerships in Indonesia's vocational system, including curriculum co-development, structured internships, and career guidance programs. Bridging this gap will require a more intentional and strategic effort from universities, policymakers, and industry stakeholders.

Taken together, the results illustrate a meaningful distinction between individual motivation and environmental support. While students exhibit strong intrinsic interest and readiness, these attributes may not translate into successful career outcomes unless external systems—such as family engagement and institutional collaboration—are strengthened. This is consistent with the findings of Suprayono [26], who argues that external factors, including family and school influence, are often the primary drivers of students' post-graduation employment decisions. In this study as well, the first factor to emerge in the CFA model was external, reinforcing its dominant role in shaping students' career trajectories, followed by internal attributes.

Further, internal factors such as academic ability, skills, intelligence, and soft competencies have long been identified as critical components of career readiness [27]. This supports the second dominant factor in this study—internal readiness, comprising personal interest, technological proficiency, and educational experience—highlighting the dual importance of nurturing both individual capacity and institutional support to foster sustainable student engagement with the industrial workforce.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATION

### Conclusion

This study concludes that students' desire in pursuing industrial jobs within the Vocational Education and Automotive Technology Program at Universitas Lancang Kuning is influenced by two primary dimensions: external variables and internal factors. The external component, encompassing employment prospects, financial incentives, parental assistance, and university-industry partnerships, emerged as the most significant factor, representing 45.653% of the variance. This underscores the crucial influence of environmental factors and institutional backing in encouraging students to pursue employment in the industrial sector. The internal dimension—encompassing personal interest, technological expertise, and practical experience—accounted for 31.482% of the total variance. These characteristics underscore the significance of individual preparedness, intrinsic drive, and technical proficiency in influencing vocational career aspirations. The two measures collectively account for 77.135% of the total variance, signifying that both internal and external factors are essential in shaping students' career interests. Industrial prestige and work environment were notably eliminated from the final factor model due to inadequate loading, indicating that they are less significant in influencing career interest in this context. The findings emphasize the necessity of balancing institutional support systems with the cultivation of student competences and motivation in vocational environments.

### Recommendation

Based on the findings, it is recommended that the university—particularly the Vocational Education and Automotive Technology Program—strengthen its partnerships with industry stakeholders. This can be achieved through structured internship programs, industry visits, and the active involvement of industry professionals as guest lecturers. These initiatives are vital given the proven influence of external factors, such as employment prospects and environmental support, in shaping student interest in industrial careers. Simultaneously, greater emphasis should be placed on enhancing internal factors through a practice-oriented

curriculum, skills training, and experiential learning methods. The university should also consider engaging parents in career-related events or briefings to cultivate a more supportive social environment that reinforces students' career decisions. Furthermore, ongoing curriculum evaluation is necessary to ensure alignment with current industry developments, enabling students to graduate with relevant and competitive skills. Finally, future research should revisit the potential influence of industrial prestige and workplace conditions by using broader samples or alternative analytical frameworks to determine whether their exclusion in this study reflects contextual limitations or deeper shifts in student perception.

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