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Determining Goals and Aspirations Through Self-Potential Recognition to Plan the Future of Students at SMA Santo Arnoldus Janssen Kupang

Yustina Bunga[1]; Rosa Mustika Bulor[2]

1 Department of Guidance and Counseling, Widya Mandira Catholic University, Kupang, Indonesia
2 Department of Guidance and Counseling , Widya Mandira Catholic University, Kupang, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: yustinabunga69@gmail.com | ORCID: 0000-0000-0000-0000

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Abstract: *This activity aimed to improve students' understanding of their personal potential and help them connect their abilities and interests with their aspirations and future planning. The activity was conducted at SMA Santo Arnoldus Janssen Kupang on August 10, 2026, involving 33 students from class XD. The method employed was descriptive with a participatory approach, consisting of three stages: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. The activities were carried out through interactive material presentations, discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and self-reflection. Data were collected through observations and student evaluation sheets comprising 10 indicators, then analyzed descriptively using percentages. The results showed that 93.94% of students stated that the activity helped them plan their future, 90.91% had developed an idea of their aspirations, 87.88% were aware of their personal interests, 84.85% understood their abilities, and 81.82% recognized their strengths. Meanwhile, students' ability to identify the steps needed to achieve their goals reached 69.70%. These findings indicate that the self-potential recognition activity provided a positive contribution to students' understanding of their interests, abilities, aspirations, and future planning. Nevertheless, continuous guidance is still necessary to help students develop their personal potential and formulate more concrete steps toward achieving their future goals.*

Keywords: *Self-potential; aspirations; goals; future planning; senior high school students*

Abstrak: *Kegiatan ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan pemahaman siswa mengenai potensi diri serta membantu siswa menghubungkan potensi yang dimiliki dengan cita-cita dan perencanaan masa depan. Kegiatan dilaksanakan di SMA Santo Arnoldus Janssen Kupang pada 10 Agustus 2026 dengan melibatkan 33 siswa kelas XD. Metode yang digunakan adalah deskriptif dengan pendekatan partisipatif melalui tahapan persiapan, pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi. Kegiatan dilakukan melalui penyampaian materi secara interaktif, diskusi, tanya jawab, dan refleksi diri. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi dan lembar evaluasi siswa yang terdiri atas 10 indikator, kemudian dianalisis secara deskriptif menggunakan persentase. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan bahwa 93,94% siswa menyatakan kegiatan membantu dalam merencanakan masa depan, 90,91% siswa telah memiliki gambaran mengenai cita-cita, 87,88% mengetahui minat diri, 84,85% mengetahui kemampuan diri, dan 81,82% mengetahui kelebihan diri. Sementara itu, kemampuan siswa dalam mengetahui langkah-langkah untuk mencapai tujuan berada pada persentase 69,70%. Hasil tersebut menunjukkan bahwa kegiatan pengenalan potensi diri memberikan gambaran positif terhadap pemahaman siswa mengenai minat, kemampuan, cita-cita, dan perencanaan masa depan. Pendampingan secara berkelanjutan tetap diperlukan agar siswa mampu mengembangkan potensi diri dan menyusun langkah yang lebih konkret dalam mencapai tujuan masa depan.*

Kata kunci: *potensi diri; cita-cita;tujuan perencanaan masa depan; siswa SMA*

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Introduction

The senior high school period is an important stage in students' development because, during this period, students begin to face various choices related to education, employment, and their future lives. Students are not only expected to achieve academic success but also need to develop an understanding of themselves, including their interests, talents, abilities, strengths, and limitations. Such understanding serves as one of the foundations for students to establish life goals and plan their future in a more structured and purposeful manner.

Every student possesses different personal potential. This potential may include academic abilities, skills, creativity, communication skills, leadership, teamwork, and various other interests and talents. However, not all students are able to recognize and understand their potential. A lack of self-awareness may cause students to experience difficulties in determining their aspirations, choosing further education pathways, or making career decisions that align with their abilities and interests. Therefore, the process of recognizing personal potential needs to be introduced from the senior high school level.

According to Wicklein & Rojewski (1995), career aspirations refer to an individual's desired career goals or occupational preferences. Individuals who have established career aspirations tend to develop expectations that motivate them to make efforts toward achieving their desired outcomes. Furthermore**,** Gampur et al. (2023) stated that career aspirations represent an individual's desires or ambitions to choose and obtain employment in a field of interest. Individuals with career aspirations tend to increase their efforts to achieve their career goals by focusing on the achievement process and engaging in more consistent activities (Hidayat et al., 2019).

In line with this perspective, Ginzberg (as cited in Anjarwati, 2014) explained that an individual's career aspirations actually begin to develop at an early age. However, between the ages of 11 and 17, these aspirations are still largely characterized by fantasy. At approximately 17 years of age, when adolescents are generally attending senior high school, their career aspirations begin to become more realistic as they start adjusting their choices to their actual circumstances and abilities. Aryani & Rais (2017) stated that career aspirations are part of the career development process, in which adolescents are required to make decisions about the careers they wish to pursue and plan the career paths they intend to follow.

Self-potential recognition is closely related to the process of determining aspirations. Aspirations are not merely associated with the desire to pursue a particular occupation or profession but also represent part of the goals that individuals wish to achieve in their lives. To turn these aspirations into reality, students need to understand their personal circumstances and identify the steps required to achieve their goals. By recognizing their personal potential, students can consider educational options and skill development opportunities that correspond to their individual characteristics. Future planning also requires students to establish realistic goals and formulate strategies to achieve them. Such planning may include decisions regarding educational pathways after graduating from senior high school, the development of abilities and skills, and preparation for entering the workforce or pursuing higher education. Throughout this process, students need information, guidance, and opportunities to reflect on their abilities and personal potential.

SMA Santo Arnoldus Janssen Kupang, as an educational institution, plays an important role in helping students prepare themselves to face various choices after completing their secondary education. Schools are not only responsible for providing academic knowledge but can also support students in developing self-understanding and planning their future. One approach that can be implemented is through self-potential recognition activities directed toward helping students determine their aspirations and plan their future. Such activities are essential because students need opportunities to understand their strengths, interests, talents, and abilities. Through these activities, students are expected to gain a better understanding of themselves, connect their personal potential with the aspirations they wish to achieve, and develop an overview of the steps they can take to accomplish their goals. Thus, self-potential recognition is not solely focused on self-understanding but also constitutes an important part of preparing students to face their future. Based on the aforementioned discussion, this study was conducted to provide students at SMA Santo Arnoldus Janssen Kupang with an understanding of the importance of recognizing personal potential as a foundation for determining aspirations and planning their future. This activity is expected to help students increase their awareness of their individual potential, establish goals that align with their interests and abilities, and develop more structured plans to achieve their aspirations.

Method

Research Design and Setting

This activity employed a descriptive method with a participatory approach aimed at providing students with an understanding of the importance of recognizing personal potential as a foundation for determining aspirations and planning their future. The activity was conducted at SMA Santo Arnoldus Janssen Kupang on August 10, 2026. The participatory approach was implemented by actively involving students in material presentations,

discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and self-reflection. Through these activities, students were not merely recipients of information but were also given opportunities to recognize their individual potential.

Participants, Sample, or Data Sources

The participants consisted of 33 students from class XD at SMA Santo Arnoldus Janssen Kupang. All students in the class were involved in the activity. The selection of participants was based on the needs of senior high school students to develop an understanding of their personal potential, interests, talents, abilities, aspirations, and future planning. The involvement of class XD students was expected to provide an overview of their understanding of personal potential as one of the foundations for establishing future goals.

Instruments and Measures

The data collection instruments consisted of an observation sheet and a student evaluation sheet. The observation sheet was used to monitor students' engagement, attention, and participation throughout the activity. Meanwhile, the evaluation sheet was used to identify students' responses and understanding after participating in the activity. The evaluation covered 10 indicators related to students' understanding of self-potential recognition, personal interests, abilities, strengths, aspirations, and future planning. The evaluation results were used to describe the extent to which the activity helped students understand their personal potential and relate it to the goals they wished to achieve.

Procedure and Research Ethics

The activity was conducted through three stages: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. During the preparation stage, students' needs were identified in relation to their understanding of personal potential, interests, talents, abilities, aspirations, and future planning. Relevant materials were subsequently prepared, covering self-potential recognition, identifying personal strengths and interests, the relationship between personal potential and aspirations, and the steps involved in developing future plans.

During the implementation stage, the materials were delivered interactively through discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and self-reflection. Students were given opportunities to identify their interests, abilities, strengths, and areas they wished to develop. They were then guided to connect their personal potential with their aspirations and the goals they intended to achieve in the future.

The evaluation stage was conducted after the material presentation by collecting students' responses through evaluation sheets. In addition, observations were carried out to assess students' engagement and participation throughout the activity. Ethical considerations were maintained during the implementation, including respecting students' opinions, providing equal opportunities for participation, and maintaining the confidentiality of their responses.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive techniques by examining the observation results and students' responses to the activity. Data obtained from the evaluation sheets were analyzed based on the 10 predetermined indicators and subsequently presented as percentages to describe students' levels of understanding and responses. The analytical results were then interpreted to describe students' understanding of personal potential, interests, abilities, aspirations, and future planning after participating in the activity.

Results and Discussion

Results

The self-potential recognition activity was conducted with 33 students from class XD at SMA Santo Arnoldus Janssen Kupang. An evaluation was carried out to assess students' understanding of personal potential, interests, abilities, aspirations, goals, and future planning. The evaluation was based on students' responses after participating in the activity.

Summary of Evaluation Results

The evaluation results obtained from the 33 students are presented in the following table.

No.	Indicators	Number of Students	Percentage
1	Recognizing personal strengths	27	81,82%
2	Recognizing personal abilities	28	84,85%
3	Identifying personal interests	29	87,88%
4	Identifying areas for personal development	25	75,76%
5	Having an idea of personal aspirations	30	90,91%
6	Being able to connect personal potential with aspirations	26	78,79%
7	Having goals after graduating from senior high school	27	81,82%
8	Identifying the education required to achieve future goals	24	72,73%
9	Knowing the steps needed to achieve goals	23	69,70%
10	Recognizing that the activity helps with future planning	31	93,94%

The percentage was calculated using the following formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} X\ 100\%$$

Where:
P = Percentage;
f = Number of students meeting the indicator;
N = Total number of students (33).

Discussion

Students' Self-Potential Recognition

The self-potential recognition activity was conducted with 33 students from class XD at SMA Santo Arnoldus Janssen Kupang. The activity aimed to help students identify their strengths, abilities, interests, and areas for personal development as a foundation for determining their aspirations and planning their future. Based on the evaluation results, students demonstrated positive responses to the self-potential recognition activity. As presented in Table 1, 29 students (87.88%) were able to identify their personal interests, while 28 students (84.85%) indicated that they understood their abilities. Furthermore, 27 students (81.82%) were able to identify their personal strengths.

These findings indicate that reflection and discussion activities provided students with opportunities to develop a better understanding of themselves. Self-potential recognition is important because an understanding of personal interests, talents, abilities, and characteristics can serve as a foundation for making educational and career choices. This finding is consistent with Merdiasi & Kasandra (2024), who demonstrated that self-understanding through the exploration of interests and talents can help students connect their personal potential with career choices. Thus, self-potential recognition can serve as an initial stage in students' future planning process.

Students' Ability to Determine Their Aspirations

Based on the evaluation results, 30 students (90.91%) had developed an idea of the aspirations they wished to achieve. However, the number of students who were able to connect their personal potential with their aspirations was lower, namely 26 students (78.79%). This difference indicates that having aspirations is not necessarily accompanied by an understanding of the relationship between personal potential and those aspirations. Students may already know the occupations they wish to pursue but still require guidance to understand which abilities they need to develop and what educational pathways they should undertake.

Nisa & Budiningsih (2020) found a positive relationship between self-concept and career planning among senior high school students. Self-concept is related to how students understand and evaluate themselves; therefore, self-understanding is an important aspect of making career choices.

Consequently, self-potential recognition activities should not be limited to the questions, "What are my aspirations?" but should also encourage students to consider, "What potential do I have?" and "What should I do to achieve my aspirations?"

Future Planning

The evaluation results showed that 27 students (81.82%) had established goals they wished to achieve after completing senior high school. However, only 23 students (69.70%) were able to identify the steps required to achieve those goals. These findings indicate that students generally find it easier to determine their goals than to formulate the steps necessary to accomplish them. Therefore, student guidance needs to focus on developing more concrete plans, such as selecting universities, choosing study programs, identifying skills that need to be developed, establishing learning targets, and engaging in various activities that support their aspirations.

Career planning during adolescence is a process that requires self-exploration and information regarding educational and occupational opportunities. Self-awareness and an understanding of personal potential can help students consider their future choices in a more structured and purposeful manner.

Students' Responses to the Activity

The highest evaluation result was found in the indicator concerning whether the activity helped students plan their future, with 31 students (93.94%) responding positively. This finding indicates that activities involving material presentations, discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and self-reflection provided students with opportunities to reconsider their personal potential and the goals they wished to achieve. These responses demonstrate that self-potential recognition activities not only provide knowledge but also encourage students to engage in self-reflection. Such reflection is important in helping students understand the relationship between their personal characteristics, aspirations, and the steps required to achieve their goals.

Conclusion

The evaluation results showed that 93.94% of students stated that the activity helped them plan their future, while 90.91% had already developed an idea of their aspirations. Furthermore, 87.88% of students were aware of their personal interests, 84.85% understood their abilities, and 81.82% recognized their personal strengths. However, students' understanding of the concrete steps

required to achieve their goals remained relatively lower, at 69.70%. In addition, 72.73% of students had identified the educational pathways necessary to achieve their desired goals.

These findings indicate that students generally already have aspirations but still require guidance in connecting their personal potential with educational choices and formulating concrete steps to achieve their goals. Therefore, self-potential recognition can serve as an important component in helping students determine their goals and aspirations, as well as prepare for a more structured and purposeful future.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions (Optional)

All authors contributed to the conceptualization, methodology, implementation of the activity, data collection, data analysis, and preparation of the manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Generative AI Disclosure

The authors acknowledge the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to assist with language translation and manuscript preparation. The authors remain fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, integrity, and final content of the manuscript.

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