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Students' Understanding of Self-Potential: A Quantitative Descriptive Study at MTs Syekh Yusuf

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Abstract: Understanding self-potential is important for students to recognize and develop their abilities. This study aimed to describe students' understanding of self-potential at MTs Syekh Yusuf, Gowa Regency. The study employed a quantitative descriptive design. The population consisted of 134 students, and 101 students (75.4%) participated as respondents. Data were collected using a 20-item closed-ended questionnaire with a four-point Likert scale covering five indicators: recognition of personal abilities, interests and talents, strengths and weaknesses, self-acceptance, and self-development. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with SPSS. The scores ranged from 24 to 79, with a mean of 52.97, a standard deviation of 15.292, and a variance of 233.849. These results indicate variation in students' self-potential understanding scores. Further analysis by indicator and score category is needed to provide a more detailed description. The findings may inform guidance and counseling services that support students in recognizing and developing their potential.

Keywords: self-potential; student understanding; descriptive statistics; guidance and counseling; Islamic junior high school

Abstrak: Pemahaman terhadap potensi diri penting bagi peserta didik untuk mengenali dan mengembangkan kemampuan yang dimilikinya. Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan pemahaman peserta didik terhadap potensi diri di MTs Syekh Yusuf, Kabupaten Gowa. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif deskriptif. Populasi penelitian berjumlah 134 peserta didik, dengan 101 peserta didik (75,4%) sebagai responden. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan angket tertutup yang terdiri atas 20 butir dengan skala Likert empat pilihan dan mencakup lima indikator, yaitu pengenalan kemampuan diri, pengenalan minat dan bakat, pemahaman kelebihan dan kekurangan diri, penerimaan diri, serta pengembangan potensi diri. Data dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif dengan bantuan SPSS. Hasil analisis menunjukkan skor minimum 24, skor maksimum 79, rata-rata 52,97, standar deviasi 15,292, dan varians 233,849. Hasil tersebut menunjukkan adanya variasi skor pemahaman potensi diri antarpeserta didik. Analisis lebih lanjut berdasarkan indikator dan kategori skor diperlukan untuk memperoleh gambaran yang lebih terperinci. Hasil penelitian diharapkan dapat menjadi bahan pertimbangan dalam pengembangan layanan bimbingan dan konseling yang mendukung pengenalan serta pengembangan potensi diri peserta didik.

Kata kunci: potensi diri; pemahaman peserta didik; statistik deskriptif; bimbingan dan konseling; madrasah tsanawiyah

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Introduction

Developing students' self-potential is at the core of educational efforts. Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System affirms that education is a conscious and planned effort so that students actively develop their potential, including spiritual-religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed by themselves, society, the nation, and the state (Republik Indonesia, 2003). Developing students' potential needs to begin with an understanding of their own abilities and potential. Students who are not yet able to recognize their potential optimally need appropriate guidance and support. In this regard, education plays an important role in helping students develop their abilities while equipping them with the skills to manage and use information effectively and efficiently (Gilang, 2024).

Self-potential is understood as a power or capacity that can be developed, and each individual develops it in a different way. Sri Habsari (Khasanah et al., 2023) defines potential as a person's ability or strength, whether physical or mental, that can develop through training and the support of good facilities. Among students, potential encompasses everything that enables them to grow cognitively, emotionally, and socially. Interest, that is, an inner drive that generates selective attraction to an object or activity, as well as talent, also differs from one individual to another. Therefore, educators need to identify and develop students' potential and talents optimally, among other ways by giving students room to explore their talents (Yani et al., 2025).

Understanding self-potential is also related to important decisions that students face. Puteri et al. (2026) found a very strong positive relationship between self-potential and interest in pursuing higher education among vocational high school (SMK) students (r = 0.806). However, students' understanding of their own potential is not always evenly distributed. At SMP Negeri Satu Atap Parigi, a needs assessment showed that 19 of 27 seventh-grade students did not yet understand their own strengths and weaknesses (Nurohmah et al., 2024). Schools therefore need to map students' potential, yet at the elementary level (SD/MI) teachers are still constrained by time, training, and communication with parents (Wahyudi, 2024). Based on preliminary observations at the research site, some students were already able to recognize their self-potential, while others still showed varied understanding of the potential they possess. However, these preliminary observations were not supported by measurable data and therefore could not serve as an adequate basis for designing programs to develop students' potential.

Based on the above description, this study aims to describe the level of students' understanding of self-potential at MTs Syekh Yusuf, an Islamic junior high school (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) in Gowa Regency. The results are expected to provide an empirical picture that can serve as a reference for schools and guidance and counseling teachers in designing educational programs and services that support the development of students' potential, in line with the national education goal of developing students' potential (Republik Indonesia, 2003).

Method

Research Design and Setting

This study used a quantitative approach with a descriptive method. The method aims to provide a description of the variable under study based on data obtained from respondents. The single variable in this study is students' understanding of self-potential. The study was conducted in September 2026 at MTs Syekh Yusuf, Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi Province.

Participants and Data Sources

The subjects of this study comprised all students of MTs Syekh Yusuf, Gowa Regency, with a population of 134. The sample consisted of 101 students (75.4% of the population), determined using *simple random sampling*. The sample size was calculated using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error: $n = 134 / (1 + 134 \times 0.05^2) \approx 100.4$, so a sample of 101 respondents met the requirement. Data were collected directly using a questionnaire, and the respondents were students who were willing to complete the research questionnaire. The data obtained were then analyzed to describe students' understanding of self-potential at MTs Syekh Yusuf, Gowa Regency.

Instruments and Measurement

The instrument used in this study was a closed-ended questionnaire developed to obtain data on students' level of understanding of self-potential at MTs Syekh Yusuf. The questionnaire used a Likert scale with four response options: Very Suitable (VS), Suitable (S), Unsuitable (U), and Very Unsuitable (VU).

The research indicators were formulated based on a review of theory and previous studies on self-potential and students' self-awareness (Salsabila et al., 2022). The instrument consisted of five indicators, each with four statements, giving a total of 20 items. The instrument blueprint is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Blueprint of the self-potential understanding instrument

No.	Indicator	Item numbers
1	Recognition of personal abilities	1, 2, 3, 4
2	Recognition of interests and talents	5, 6, 7, 8
3	Understanding of strengths and weaknesses	9, 10, 11, 12
4	Self-acceptance	13, 14, 15, 16
5	Self-development	17, 18, 19, 20
Total		**20 items**

Procedure and Research Ethics

The study began with obtaining permission from MTs Syekh Yusuf, Gowa Regency. After approval was obtained, the researcher explained the purpose and the procedure for completing the instrument to the respondents. The instrument was then distributed to students to obtain data on their understanding of self-potential. Data collection was carried out in September 2026. During the study, the researcher observed the principles of voluntary participation, consent from respondents and parents/guardians in accordance with applicable regulations, and confidentiality of respondents' identities and the information they provided. All data were used solely for research purposes.

Data Analysis

Data were processed using descriptive statistics with SPSS, with the aim of describing students' level of understanding of self-potential. The data collected through the questionnaire were first checked to ensure that the responses were complete, and were then scored according to the instrument's scoring rules. The scores obtained from each respondent were then analyzed to determine the mean, percentages, and frequency distributions. The results of the data processing served as the basis for describing students' overall level of understanding of self-potential. The results of the analysis were then presented in tables and descriptive explanations so that they could be read and understood more clearly.

Results and Discussion

Results

Descriptive statistics were used to describe students' level of understanding of self-potential at MTs Syekh Yusuf. A total of 101 students took part in the study. The data were collected by distributing the questionnaire and were then processed with SPSS to obtain the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation.

The analysis showed that the lowest score obtained by a respondent was 24, while the highest score reached 79. The mean score was 52.97 with a standard deviation of 15.292. The details of these descriptive statistics are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of descriptive statistical analysis of students' understanding of self-potential

Statistic	Value
N (number of respondents)	101
Minimum score	24
Maximum score	79
Mean	52.97
Standard deviation	15.292
Variance	233.849

Note. Data were processed using SPSS (N = 101).

Based on Table 2, the mean score of students' understanding of self-potential was 52.97. This value reflects the general level of understanding among all respondents in the study. The standard deviation of 15.292 indicates variation in the scores obtained by the students. Thus, respondents' levels of understanding differed and were not all at the same score.

This variation in scores reflects differences in students' levels of understanding in recognizing their own potential. Some students obtained relatively low scores, while others showed higher scores. This suggests the importance of attention to the understanding of self-potential, particularly in helping students recognize their abilities, interests, talents, strengths, and weaknesses.

Overall, the results of the descriptive statistical analysis provide an initial picture of students' understanding of self-potential at MTs Syekh Yusuf. To obtain a more detailed picture of this level of understanding, further analysis is needed by grouping respondents' scores into low, medium, and high categories.

Discussion

The descriptive statistical analysis shows that the study on students' understanding of self-potential at MTs Syekh Yusuf, Gowa Regency, involved 101 respondents. Based on data processing with SPSS, the minimum score was 24 and the maximum score was 79. The mean was 52.97, the standard deviation was 15.292, and the variance was 233.849.

The mean describes students' general score of understanding of self-potential. Meanwhile, the standard deviation indicates variation in scores among respondents. This indicates that students differ in their understanding in recognizing their own potential. These differences may be related to students' ability to recognize their interests, talents, strengths, weaknesses, and capabilities.

This study is consistent with the study by Merdiasi and Kasandra (2023), which discussed students' self-

awareness in career planning through exploring interests and talents. That study showed that understanding one's interests, talents, and personal characteristics is an important part of helping students recognize their potential and make choices about their future. Thus, recognizing self-potential needs to receive attention in the educational process.

In addition, Amallia et al. (2024) explained that guidance and counseling teachers play an important role in shaping students' self-concept through preventive, personal, empathetic, and reflective approaches. These findings reinforce the importance of support in the school environment so that students can understand themselves better. In line with this, Diyah Azzahra et al. (2025) showed that classical guidance services can help students understand themselves, recognize their potential, and prepare for the future.

In the context of MTs Syekh Yusuf, the results of this study can serve as a consideration for the madrasah, particularly guidance and counseling teachers, in providing services that support students' recognition and development of self-potential. Such services can be delivered through classical guidance, information services, and interest and talent development activities. These efforts are expected to help students recognize their abilities and develop them more optimally.

Overall, the results show that scores of students' understanding of self-potential vary. However, the descriptive statistics obtained are not sufficient to classify students' level of understanding into low, medium, or high categories. Therefore, scores need to be grouped based on certain criteria if the study is to present categories of the level of understanding in more detail.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study of 101 students at MTs Syekh Yusuf, Gowa Regency, the minimum score was 24, the maximum 79, the mean 52.97, and the standard deviation 15.292. These results show that students' understanding of self-potential varies in level. This means that each student has a different ability to recognize their potential, interests, talents, strengths, and weaknesses.

The results of this study indicate the need for attention and support from the madrasah, particularly guidance and counseling teachers, to help students recognize and develop their potential. Future studies are expected to group students' levels of understanding into low, medium, and high categories to obtain a clearer picture.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Generative AI Disclosure

The authors used Claude (Anthropic), a generative AI assistant, to help organize the manuscript structure, draft text based on data and materials provided by the authors, and edit the language. The authors reviewed and edited all of the output and take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, integrity, and final content of the article.