



## Dare to be Different: Life Experience Narrative of BTEC Best Graduate

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### Abstract

The aims of this research explained how the past, present, and future thoughts help to form the decision of an alumnus is still nineteen years old in explored a hobby and dreamed of becoming an entrepreneur. From interviews and analyses made, information gathered shows that the interviewee's past has generated confidence, independence and a sense of responsibility that contribute to the decision. The current situation experienced by the interviewee which is full support from parents and the ability to think rationality about her plan, enables her to make this decision. The interviewee also viewed her future with an acceptable plan supported by her family business as the last resort if her plan cannot be fruitful. This research opens an opportunity for stakeholders in the education field to understand and interpret this unorthodox life story wisely.

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## INTRODUCTION

British Technology and Education Council (BTEC) The British Technology and Education Council (BTEC) is a curriculum from the United Kingdom created as a vocational program for students. This curriculum presents a real life-based education where students are faced with tasks that resemble work-life (BTEC, 2019). In its home country, a graduate from BTEC can immediately work with a diploma certificate since it is recognized by various companies. There are seven BTEC levels consisting of BTEC level 1 to 7 where level 1-2 is equivalent to the IGCSE curriculum; level 3 is equivalent to A level; level 4-6 is equivalent to the first year to the last university, and level 7 is equivalent to postgraduate.

The BTEC curriculum can also be experienced by students outside the United Kingdom, including Indonesia (BTEC, 2019). BTEC in Indonesia offers a curriculum choice where students can complete BTEC level 4 and 5 education (first and second-year universities) in Indonesia and then can complete their undergraduate education in the United Kingdom or other countries that recognize the BTEC curriculum. Students who continue their education to undergraduate level can choose hundreds of undergraduate degree options in the United Kingdom and more than 260 universities in other countries (BTEC, 2015). Hence, it must be carried out appropriately, ideally, and proportionally (Septianingrum, 2019).

Research on the experience of BTEC Business students in Indonesia has been previously researched by Jang et al. (2020). The results of their research explain the difficulties and successes of BTEC in educating students in Indonesia. The most prominent difficulty is the adaptation process at the beginning since the overseas vocational curriculum is uncommon in Indonesia; especially for students from IGCSE curriculum or Indonesia's national curriculum. On the other hand, the success of these students was recorded from a sense of confidence, courage, and communication skills created by the graduates. Moreover, the

confidence of the graduates to be successful at their next level of education was also recorded in this study. In conclusion, BTEC in Indonesia is able to achieve a variety of positive outcomes for students, including in the continuing education of alumni.

In conclusion, BTEC in Indonesia is able to achieve a variety of positive outcomes for students and can continue to apply in the future. However, the results of this study have not shown how the alumni then decided to continue their education at various universities abroad. The latest research result indicates desires to continue education by the alumni, but only limited to statements and not concrete actions taken. This conclusion indicates the incompleteness of the story from the initial process of joining the program to the final result. Therefore, it clearly represents a gap in understanding of the phenomena and results of previous studies.

The interesting part is that one of the alumni of BTEC in their research, namely SW (pseudonym), decided not to continue her education abroad. This is surprising because SW is the best BTEC graduate in 2020 with an average value of distinction, more specifically with a value of 13 distinctions (highest value) and 2 merits (intermediate value) from 15 courses. Usually, a person with high educational output in the form of high grades, even the best graduates, will decide to continue their education, let alone be supported by a wide variety of campus choices, and the possibility to obtain a scholarship. This condition then creates a gap in the prediction of SW's life experience going forward.

This decision from the SW then made further research on BTEC graduates in the future become important and interesting to do. The exploration and interpretation of the SW experience will focus on the various motivators behind this critical decision. In other words, from SW's experience, the research will describe the past, present, and future thinking and the influence of the social environment leading to her decision.

As a basis for this research, the concept

of vocational education is used. Moreover, McClelland's human motivation theory and self-determination theory complete the basis for analyzing SW motivation. The concept of risk perception is also critical to see how SW assesses the risks of the decision she made. Vocational education is an education that stresses skills and works readiness by emphasizing the individual maturing cycle. Adaptive processes are part of the learning concept in vocational education and use as a preparation for facing the industrial revolution 4.0 (Setiawan, A., Nurlaela, L., & Yundra, E. 2019).

HC Indonesia (2014) in Permana (2018) states that there are three features in vocational education including a more practical approach in learning, more choices of universities and variety of study programs including tourism and hospitality, retail management, software development, interior design, engineering automotive, hairdresser and culinary. Specifically, the British Technology and Education Council (BTEC) is one curriculum based on vocational education which equips students with many transferable skills related to learning at university. Students are prepared to be able to do time management, report writing, practical, able to do laboratory and independent work (Hurrell, E. R., Shawcross, E., & Keeling, E., 2019).

McClelland (1987) identifies three human motivations: the need for achievement, affiliation, and power. These three needs are the results of individual's learning process. According to him, the three motivational needs occur regardless of gender, culture, or age. Moreover, one of these three needs is a dominant motivator that drives human actions and behavior. The purpose of this theory in this research is to analyze the drivers that motivate SW to decide not to continue her education to the undergraduate level. What kind of motivation is more dominant in SW and how it manifests in her will be analyzed further.

Self-determination aims to presents how human's basic needs are being expressed. Self-determination states that an action is carried

out by an individual because it is strengthened by his/her desires based on previous experience (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Self-desire or motivation that comes from the internal experience and understanding is predicted to have a stronger influence than external motivation. In the context of education; students who only rely on motivation from outside such as encouragement from parents, teachers, or regulations will have a weak resilience compared to students who have encouragement from within (Guay, Ratelle & Chanal, 2008).

The theory of self-determination proposed by Ryan & Deci (2017) has the hypothesis that students who can regulate themselves based on their inner motivation (intrinsic) will have a positive output at school. These positive things can be seen in three forms, which are their actions, cognitive thinking, and behaviors showing their emotions. Positive actions that can be seen from students whose intrinsic motivation is a persistent attitude and not giving up easily. Several previous studies found a strong correlation between self-motivation and student persistence (Vansteenkiste et a., 2005). Furthermore, students who can build their own motivation also have a low probability of dropping out (Hardre & Reeve, 2003).

The theory of self-determination also show how students do actions based on external motivation. In this case, students are also showing more persistent behavior in approaching challenges but these actions then resulted in negative effects on students' psychology and well-being. Good academic achievement of students is also a strong indicator that these students are internally motivated. In this research, SW is thought to have a strong internal motivation that enables her to think and act out of the generally accepted social standard. In addition, there is a possibility that SW has strong feelings that her decision is the best one for his future. Moreover, exploration of the influence of her social environment that shapes SW's thoughts and actions is in place.

Perception about risk refers to a construct in the mind of someone that measures the level of uncertainty of action due to

potential negative consequences that could be experienced from the action (Thakur and Srivastava, 2015; in Maziriri and Chuchu, 2017). Risk perception can also be interpreted as an individual's subjective expectations regarding the failure rate of an action. The perception about risk in one's mind is dependent on various factors, including how importance of the target and likelihood of occurrence of negative consequences which could lead to failure (in Lee, 2009). According to Wu et al. (2015), there are several types of risk perceptions including performance risk, social risk, time risk, financial risk, privacy risk, physical risk, and psychological risk.

The purpose of this study is to provide an in-depth description of SW's past, present, and future thoughts. The story of SW's life experience was raised to analyze the cause-effect relationship caused by the chains of thought of a student who experienced vocational-based education such as BTEC. Furthermore, this research will provide a wider understanding of the result of the higher education curriculum which will be useful for educators, parents, and other stakeholders. It will also tap into the thinking process of generation Z which in this case, can be concluded as uncommon in approaching formal education.

## METHODS

This research uses a narrative qualitative approach, which is a narrative or story about a phenomenon; which could be about a method, story, and other instances (Creswell, 2015). This research begins by listening to how an individual experiences a phenomenon, then recorded, understood, and further analyzed by researchers. Narrative research attempts to explore the complexities that exist so that understanding can be generated (George, & Selimos, 2018). This research can also be the beginning of the formation of consensus, contestation, change, and dialogue in various further studies.

The data source is using a purposive sampling, which is a way of collecting data

by determining the source in accordance with the parameters determined by the researcher, generally referring to the questions and objectives of the study (Tracy, 2020). Referring to the research background, the selection of SW is based on the fact that he is an alumnus with the title of best graduate, but chooses not to continue his education to a higher level. Data collection techniques are done by using interviews due to the ability of this technique that is able to provide a clear picture of the life of the sources from their perspectives, or known as *verstehen* (Tracy, 2020).

The interview is using a semi-structured interview, in which researchers conduct interviews with more flexible questions accompanied by a variety of follow-up questions / probing in order to stimulate discussions. The data analysis technique used is restorying or reordering of the story given by the interviewees (Creswell, 2015). The rearrangement of the story is done by analyzing various elements that can influence the story such as time, place, plot, and atmosphere; then retold chronologically. The existence of unique traits in a story is retold structurally to make it easier for reader to capture the essence of the story (Riessman, 2008 in Creswell, 2015).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### SW Life Experience Before BTEC

Since elementary school to secondary school (equivalent to class X high school), SW had no difficulty following her classes. This is due to her ability to adapt with Cambridge curriculum she experienced since elementary to secondary school. Quizzes and tests before exams seen by SW as great support systems. However, SW actually did not like this curriculum because she felt that it only made her have the ability to memorize lessons in order to ace exams. After exams, SW will immediately forget the memorized materials. Yet, feelings of dislike for this curriculum did not make her obtain poor academic achievement.

SW is a student who always gets a good score, ranked top five in her classes. Because

she often gets good grades since childhood, SW's parents occasionally asking her scores and then compare these scores with her friends. The behavior of her parents then made her want to always get good scores in all subjects. She tried to maintain her grade because she will feel sad when she is not getting the maximum score for any assignments and subjects.

When she reaching the end of secondary school though, the desire to continue to get the maximum score eroded. Near the end of secondary school, SW began to think that the most important thing in her education is to understand the purpose of each assignment she was doing, without the need to think about getting the best grades. Grade for her is no longer a priority yet the desire to at least be above the average still exists.

After SW graduates from secondary school, she made a big decision by not continuing to the higher Cambridge curriculum education level, which is A level, or the equivalent of 11th and 12th grade Indonesian national high school curriculum. The reason behind this decision was the fatigue and boredom she experienced with the Cambridge curriculum that she believes to be too focused on memorization. The awareness that memorization is not a way to understand educational material arises because she saw how people around her living work on a daily basis, which requires less memorization.

SW decided to take a different path, namely to the foundation program and BTEC diploma in Indonesia. However, the SW's decision to take part in these programs was not entirely based on her intention to continue education outside Indonesia. The reluctance to continue the Cambridge curriculum and taking 'Paket C' for the Indonesia's state examination made SW made this decision. The consideration of not taking 'Paket C' is because SW does not want to study in Indonesia due to her belief that four years of university is too long for formal education. In addition, from the story of SW's brother's to her; he provided information that studying in Indone-

sia will make students have to take too many courses which many are not useful in the practical world. On the other hand, BTEC offers to study in Indonesia for two years, and then to continue only one year abroad was felt by her as a more attractive choice.

SW then chose a foundation program business major (equivalent to 12th grade high school) for 8 months before continuing to the BTEC diploma. This choice was based because SW was not interested in science even though her grades in science in her previous school was great. She also dreamed of having her own business in the future. When joining the foundation program, SW did not feel any difficulty. Consequently, all the grades obtained by SW were as expected by her.

### **SW Life Experience During BTEC**

After successfully completing the foundation program, SW then continued her education to the BTEC diploma program. When choosing this curriculum, SW had an understanding that the BTEC curriculum was very much against Cambridge especially in terms of the type of assignments. With this understanding, initially, SW felt that she would be more relaxed in her education because the assignment had a longer deadline than exams based assessment. Yet at the beginning of BTEC, SW experienced a shock because she then realized that BTEC curriculum was difficult for her.

The emergence of this difficulty is due to assignments that require in-depth research before students can build their argumentations. Students also have to read a lot and search for primary and secondary data in order to complete these assignments. In the end, SW was able to adapt after one term or after going through four courses.

"I was shocked because I realized that the program is hard. All of the assignments are based on research and all of the statements or any data must have sources. It was hard because I have to read a lot and because my peers are those

that do not like exam, it also means that do not like learning and reading. But in BTEC, you just have to read a lot.”

SW decided to major in accounting and finance. This decision was made because of a request from parents to SW. She also obeyed this request because She herself could not decide on the direction she wanted to take. The request of her parents is due to their desire for SW to manage the financial department in their family business. SW also noted that in the BTEC, there were not many differences in subjects for each major. This is because the form of assignments given and tasks required to finish these assignments are generally the same regardless of major. However, there is a difference in the topic for the assignment depends on students' majors.

Boredom in undergoing this curriculum was felt by SW because of the monotonous nature of the task. This condition is also supported because SW uses too much time to find data and making assignments. Eventhough she feels bored, the forms of assignment including paper or presentations and research are still considered useful. This conclusion by SW is due to her belief that the forms of assignments she experienced are common in the practical world. SW also felt that her friends were quite supportive of each other. Their supports can be seen from the act of helping other friends find the information necessary for making assignments.

During processing in BTEC, SW's parents also knew her struggle. They realized that SW often went back home at night time because she needs to make assignments. SW admitted that she often did work in a café to find a new atmosphere. Yet, SW parents do not give negative responses. They also did not pay excessive attention because SW was already considered an adult who could be given trust. When SW informs about BTEC grades at the end of each term, no overreaction is given because they have been accustomed to SW's achievements since elementary school.

Of all the experiences in BTEC, the last

term was considered the most difficult one by her. SW even once almost wanted to give up on a subject because the workload was very heavy in each subject. The experience that SW cannot forget was when she cried because of a very heavy workload she had to do. This experience happened when finishing assignments in research project and business strategy subjects.

“Because I was overwhelmed. I have to collect the assignments on the next day but I have not finished My brain is too stressed out so even when I pushed myself, I just could not do it. So I feel overwhelmed and ended up crying.

At the end of her processing in BTEC, SW underwent a positive change in the development of skills for conducting research. Being accustomed to working in front of a laptop to find the information needed, this skill has also developed.

### **SW Decision After BTEC**

After she successfully completed the BTEC curriculum, SW felt happy because all of her struggles had produced satisfying results. This is also because SW managed to get the best graduate. She also felt proud because she managed to survive through the education process at BTEC.

“Feeling proud, because I can overcome my own struggle and emotions and fight through it. Even when I feel really tired and almost without motivation”.

Recognition of the success of SW obtained through the opportunity to give a speech during graduation. SW feels proud because her achievement is known by various parties, including her parents. SW did not communicate this success to her parents until graduation day. It had caused miscommunication because then SW's mother did not come during the event. SW only gave this information to her father and brother while on her way

to the graduation location. The reaction given by them did not show positive emotions directed to SW.

After graduating from BTEC, SW decided not to continue her education to the undergraduate level. This decision was made with various considerations which are explained in detail by SW. The first reason is that SW feels that his accounting and finance majors are not in accordance with the future she wants. This conclusion was obtained from the initiative taken by SW by asking her friends who worked as interns in accounting and also by observing her family's business. SW considers that the type of work in this field is very monotonous and will make her bored.

“...I cannot picture myself doing that kind of job. I can do it, but I don't think I will be a convenient job for me. I think it will be boring”.

Looking at the past at BTEC, SW considers that the forms of assessment in the curriculum she experienced were less helpful in understanding how the working world works. Although there is some understanding created in her mind, it is limited to research based on secondary data via the internet or research articles. Moreover, understanding occurs only in a few subjects such as taxation and financial reporting. As a result, she tried to find out about this working in finance and accounting by herself. Furthermore, SW has not felt the need to continue studying because she thinks that she is still 19 years old. By her calculation, if she continues to study for one year overseas, she will graduate at the age of 20. In comparison, a student in Indonesia will generally graduate at the age of 22. Thus, she feels like she still has time, and graduating from undergraduate program faster in comparison to her peers is not a priority.

The next reason is that SW discovered a new hobby related to the beauty industry, specifically about eyebrow embroidery. She felt this field was more interesting than just looking at numbers and data on a computer.

SW also explored by trying to smooth out her friends' eyebrows and feedbacks she received are very positive. SW then thinks that she needs to improve her abilities in this field by learning to do eyebrow stitching. When exploring this field, SW concluded that working in this particular field does not require an academic degree and only required certificates from non-formal institutions to be able to practice it for clients.

When asked about why she did not continue her study but not in accounting and finance, SW mentioned that she did not want to repeat her studies from the beginning because it would take too long. In addition, her current interest also does not have a major at the university. Surely it would be different if SW wanted to be a beauty doctor or dermatologist, yet this is not the case. SW has also mentioned that not having an undergraduate in Indonesia is not a problem for her. This belief is because the work of embroidering eyebrows does not require a degree and she considers that this job requires more portfolio and good customer service to get customers. There will almost be no instances for a customer to ask about her degree and she also believes that everyone knows that this industry does not need a bachelor's degree.

For this decision, SW's parents also gave support. They did not demand SW to get a bachelor's degree. According to SW, this is because her father is only a high school graduate, but able to be a successful entrepreneur. According to her, the success of her parents ultimately proved that a bachelor's degree did not guarantee one's success. Furthermore, her brother who already has a bachelor's degree also mentions to SW that a degree is not very useful when doing work in a company. According to him, what is learned in a university will be very different from the practical world.

“Maybe because my father is only a high school graduate but he is now a successful contractor and has a running family business. So your title is not a guarantee to be a successful person”.

SW also has the confidence not to proceed to undergraduate study because she feels that BTEC has provided skills that it feels will help build her own business. The main skill that is built is conducting valid research. By studying BTEC, SW did in-depth research by analyzing the potential of the beauty industry, the trends, and also competitors. SW also believes that if she fails to explore this hobby, she still has the opportunity to make another business or in the end can decide to continue to the undergraduate study. But if successful, then she will focus on the field of eyebrow embroidery.

SW has planned to give herself two years to explore this field and become an entrepreneur. If she finally returns to college, she will continue with accounting and finance as a major that will be undertaken because she feels that this field can still be explored and she can also help the family business in the financial department. For her, the family-owned business is her the last resort. SW's consideration not to proceed to the undergraduate level had already begun before graduating from BTEC, precisely in 2019.

Although the campus communicated with SW by asking questions about the continuation of the study of students, no in-depth consultation was conducted. In addition to the campus, the lecturer also asked SW about the desire to continue to the undergraduate level and the students' plans for the future. SW also shared several times with various parties regarding his consideration for not continuing college. The result obtained by her was that these various parties generally rejected this decision. Most argue that having a bachelor's degree is a must, especially since this degree itself is an obligation for someone who wants to have a professional career.

According to her confession, there were also lecturers who argued that if SW plans to open her own business, then a bachelor's degree is not considered to be an important credential to have because 'business is all about experience'. In the end, SW still decided to follow her perspective. When asked about

what she would decide if parents refused this decision, SW replied that she would follow his parents. According to her, she will first continue with the undergraduate study. After getting a bachelor's degree, then SW will do things that are in accordance with her needs.

Even with status as the best graduate which can allow her to obtain scholarships more easily, she still has no intention of continuing her study. She believes a path to a career as a professional is not in line with her future plan. She also states that having a university degree is only useful if the person wants to have a professional career in corporation. SW will strive to have an undergraduate degree in the future if her life goal then change to being a professional in companies.

For the next five years, SW sees that she already has and runs an eyebrow embroidery business with considerable success indicators. This indicator consists of having a place to practice the job for her clients and also having assistants. Furthermore, if later on, she has a family, SW has no problem if her kids know that their mother does not have a university degree. However, she will direct her kids to have a bachelor's degree, but will not force if they have field of interest that does not require an academic degree.

By seeing, studying, and interpreting SW's life journey, various elements can be used as discussion topics. The first one is looking at the motivators driving the SW's decision not to continue their education to the undergraduate level. The second topic looks at the role of the environment around SW in her decision making. The next one is to see the persistence of SW to want to think critically which makes her committed to her decision. The last is to understand how SW views the risk of her decision. The purpose of this discussion is not to show approval or rejection of SW's decision, but rather to understand the SW's perspectives about her life.

The first discussion topic is the motivation behind SW's decision. From her life experience, it can be concluded that the influence of the family environment is the main driver. Her

decision not to continue her education started because of the exploration of the eyebrow embroidery business. Positive feedbacks she receives from her friends create the emergence of contestation in her thinking about the possibility of pursuing this hobby. Then, the idea for wanting to try to pursue this hobby then supported by permission from SW's parents, both explicitly or implicitly.

Explicitly, SW parents expressly gave the green light to her, and not requiring SW to have a university degree. Apart from parents, her older brother also gave an argument that a bachelor's degree is not useful when working. Implicitly, SW made observations to her father, even only with a high school diploma, was able to become a successful entrepreneur. Seeing this, it is not wrong for SW to want to emulate the success of his parents.

The absence of intense communication made by SW's parents to her can also be a trigger for this decision. The rarity of communication has been happening since SW was in secondary school until graduating from BTEC. There was no show of emotion that was shown to SW, even when SW receives the best graduates and gave a speech in front of invited guests during the graduation procession. A response that is not full of praise suggests that there is a gap in open communication from parents to SW.

Although the green light is given for SW decision, it is also possible that her parents might have feelings and hopes for SW that are in contrast with SW's decision not to continue her education. Yet it also does not rule out the possibility that this SW decision is fully valued and supported by SW parents. This support from parents is an epiphany in relation to the decision made by SW not to continue her education. Looking from the past of SW during elementary to secondary school, SW parents are not the type of parents who force the child to have to be the best at his school. There is no compelling indication that SW must get the highest score.

Besides family, there is an influence from the BTEC curriculum. According to SW,

BTEC taught her to think more rationally. This rationality is mainly in terms of doing more in-depth research to find the validity of an argument. The forms of assignments that require research in order to produce logical and valid arguments are carried out by SW while processing at BTEC. Furthermore, because of the ample amount of presentations she did during BTEC, the ability to convey arguments and two ways communication become stronger in SW, especially with its status as the best graduate.

The success of BTEC was also seen from how SW with her determination do research about the hobby that she wanted to pursue, including in terms of its business potential and competitors. In addition, BTEC also creates persistency which is present in SW. Proof of this can be seen from how SW remained persistent in defending her decision even though most people rejected the decision she wanted to take. Her experience when she cried when trying to finish assignments became a catalyst that resulted in her perseverance.

Referring to McClelland theory of motivation (1987), the decision by SW is based on the need for achievement, building affiliation and showing power to make a decision as an individual. In terms of achievement, SW shows a strong desire to achieve the desired target, which is owning a business in the eyebrow embroidery business. She also gets inputs and supports that make it easier for her to move forward with this decision, especially support from her parents. In terms of the need to build affiliation, there is a tendency that SW wants to be included in her family circle of entrepreneurs. For the motivation to show individual power in making a decision, SW shows this by following through with her decision even though people around her do not support this decision.

In terms of the role of the surrounding environment that helped SW in making this decision, it can be concluded that the environment in this context consists of the roles of lecturers and campus. SW, who were still uncertain about the decision she wants to make,

asked for consultations to the lecturers and the campus personnel. From the answers given by the both parties, almost all of them suggested that SW needs to continue her education to the undergraduate level. There was only one lecturer who agreed to the SW's decision.

Even though almost all of them asked SW to continue her education, the final decision of SW is still not to continue her education. This decision cannot be separated from the concept of self-determination (Ryan and Deci, 2017) which states that action will be carried out by someone with reference to his life experience. Seeing this case in SW, it can be concluded that her life experiences, especially her life around her family have greater power to drive SW thinking compared to the wider environment. Once again, family support is proven as the turning point of this decision.

From the campus management itself, it did not show active steps to provide career consultation to SW. Although SW gets questions from the campus about the decision to continue studying to the next level, there is no further process in terms of two-way communication to find out the anxiety of the students. The campus is more focused on administrative issues if students decide to continue their education at a particular university. Thus, self-determination to continue her decision become stronger and not intervened by her campus.

The next discussion is about the persistence of SW in thinking critically which makes her committed to her decision to not continue her education. SW has thoughts that are not in accordance with the status quo not without careful consideration. Before this decision was made, SW had considered factors such as parental support, the possibility of failure, as well as future plans if the business failed. Parental support as discussed previously is that her parents have given the green light. Subconsciously, SW can have a belief that if she fails in her business, her parents still will not fully blame her and will even be ready to be relied upon and be supportive of SW. She also thinks about the possibility of failure that might occur and what to do with it.

According to her, the type of business venture she will embark on will be hard to fail because her research has shown indicators of increasingly positive industrial development. SW's ability to conduct in-depth research contributed to this conclusion. Furthermore, SW has already thought about her future plans if the business fails. From the explanation she gave, SW has given himself a deadline of 2 years to become an entrepreneur. She will try as hard as possible during this period of time but will return to continuing her study if, in the end, the business fails financially. It can also be seen that the persistence in her thinking leading to this decision has not received any resistance from those whom she considers important.

In terms of risk, SW has considered that the risks that can occur are not too crucial for her. In terms of age, SW is still 19 years old and is still able to study in the future, although with older age. Moreover, with her family's financial condition, SW does not feel that there is a great demand from the family in pushing her to contribute to the family's finances. In this case, consciously or unconsciously, there is a privilege that is owned by SW so that she can also explore her hobbies.

Even if the plans she had thought are unable to bring financial success, SW family still owned a family business that could become her 'last resort'. This family business is the key to determine SW's next step in life. If this family business grows, it is not impossible that SW will continue to make businesses that she likes. The awareness of this family business could also be the turning point that makes her brave enough to choose this path in her life.

Although the decision and arguments made by SW can seem to be too focused on the short term; on the contrary, it has a fairly good quality of thinking process and is based on planning. SW's reasoning ability enables her to make plans that are quite logical. Putting ourselves in SW's shoes, it is not impossible that other people will make a similar decision. At a young age, and with the full support

of parents, both emotionally and financially, opportunities for exploration into the non-academic world are wide open. Furthermore, there is still a plan to get a bachelor's degree if changes in SW's life do happen. Her characteristics as a courageous, responsible, and a persistent person can become keys that lead to her success in life.

## CONCLUSION

Referring to the research objectives, SW is an alumnus from BTEC in 2020 who is at a crossroads in her life. She had made a decision that was different from the status quo of the Indonesian people. SW's past before undergoing BTEC made her have confidence in her decision. This confidence arises because of the track records of good academic grades since primary school education to secondary school. Also, SW parents are not the type of dictatorial parents that force their kids to must achieve the highest grades academically. SW then grows into a more independent and responsible person for herself. A good grade as an indicator of academic success is only a consequence of a collection of experiences and supporting factors when SW proceeds to secondary school.

At this time, SW has made a decision by considering various supporting and inhibiting factors. The decision not to continue education to the undergraduate level was supported by her family. Although the wider environment such as her lecturers disagrees with this decision, family support is able to defeat the arguments of other parties. In addition, SW also thinks logically as a result of her experience in BTEC. When she decided that she wanted to make her own business, there was already in-depth research done by her.

Obviously the sharpness of the research she conducted, as well as the conclusion are worth considering because SW is the best graduate from BTEC in her batch. SW also considers starting business at her young age by also thinking about her family's financial condition, and the future plans she is making

if this business fails. In the end, not continuing education to the undergraduate level is a logical, not emotional decision, made with careful consideration and logical planning.

SW's thoughts about his future were mature enough. SW has thought about the potential failure of her dream and prepare the next steps if that happens. She has been preparing for the next 2 years to explore a hobby that will be her own business. If it fails in these two years, then the next steps have been prepared, including returning to academia to continue their undergraduate education, or even work in the family business. Having a business owned by the SW family can be a key decision made by SW for the future. If this family business continues to grow and be able to support itself in the future, then it is possible SW will continue to explore and make other business.

The story of SW's life experience is an anomaly in Indonesia's education landscape. The decision not to continue education to the undergraduate level by the best graduate can be easily addressed as a systemic failure. However, recommendations that can be given to stakeholders in the world of higher education are to take a wiser approach in addressing this condition. Being sense in this context is in the sense of not directly giving a negative assessment to students who decide to take this action. Instead, as stakeholders in education, having an understanding of the individual's perspective is needed. A major decision made by individual like SW certainly derived from various considerations.

If in the future other individuals with similar cases also exist and are covered through various research in Indonesia, it is possible that their lives can still turn out to contribute positively to the country. Another recommendation is given to researchers to collect and interpret similar stories in various curricula and locations in Indonesia. The stories will be a collection of life experiences of people who feel the formal education pathway is not for them. Without discrediting formal education, education can be experienced and be meaningful even outside the formal systems of school

and campus. The implications of the decision not to continue education from students in this generation are certainly interesting and important to be captured in Indonesia's formal education system.

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