Assessing the effect of high school quality factors in selecting a high school

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Abstract
This study aims to analyze the effect of education quality, price, promotion strategy, quality of human resources, and physical facilities mediated by reputation on students’ decision to select a high school. The research technique used to obtain data from 170 prospective students is purposive sampling, a non-probability method. The results showed that the education quality, promotion strategies, and physical facilities mediated by reputation positively affect students’ decisions, as opposed to the price and quality of human resources. The originality value of this research is to choose high school mediation by reputation. In conclusion, the limitations of this research were clarified by adding a process variable which is very important in services marketing, due to its ability to handle consumers in marketing activities and in making final decisions.

Keywords: customer decision; education quality; human resource quality; promotion strategy; reputation.

JEL Classification: M41, M42

INTRODUCTION

Education is a basic human requirement that need not be abandoned for survival. This is because it plays a relevant role in instilling knowledge, skills, and added values to execute daily activities. Education is also an important tool in developing and advancing a country. Most universities in Indonesia depend on tuition fees and government subsidies. The reduction of subsidies encouraged these higher institutions to adopt new marketing strategies that turned out to be successful (Mandagie, 2017). Through education, humans are expected to use materials obtained from business proceeds to create values to fulfil daily needs. Knowledge, skills, and values are acquired from both formal and non-formal educational institutions. The central government directly coordinates the implementation of formal education in diverse regions in stages through the ministry of education (Triyono, 2019). On the other hand, the implementation process of non-formal education is carried out in stages, and it is a flexible structure that lasts a lifetime. The level of a student’s competence can be equated with those in formal education (Sudjana, 2004).

In 2020, the Human Development Index (HDI), officially issued by the United Nations Development Program regarding human resources development realized through education, stated that Indonesia is currently ranked 107th (UNDP, 2020). However, other southeast Asian countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore ranked 79th, 62nd, 47th, and 11th. The data
obtained in the past 5 years from UNDP reported that Indonesia’s HDI is always experiencing an increase, indicating that the educational system is running well. This is also supported by the government’s regulation of compulsory education programs.

Technological advances and rapid information dissemination are supported by the increasing number of formal education schools, thereby leading to competitive academic activities among these institutions. Therefore, there is a need for good planning and marketing strategies to attract prospective students. Several important elements needed to be considered are quality education, costs, location, promotion of human resources, the learning process, facilities, and infrastructure (P. Kotler & Keller, 2016). Some of these attributes are also referred to as the marketing mix (P. Kotler & Keller, 2016; Zeithaml et al., 2006).

Quality education indirectly has an impact on the reputation of an academic institution. A good reputation also shapes the perception of potential consumers as well as triggers their interest in the available services rendered. It is described as an award given to a company based on certain advantages and benefits. These are also capabilities possessed for the continuous development of the firm to enable it to compete and create new products (Chaudhary et al., 2021).

A decision-making process usually takes place before selecting and determining a product, whether goods or services. P. Kotler & Keller (2016) stated that the purchase decision is an aspect of this procedure performed before the post-purchase behavior is exhibited. The decision-making process consists of 5 stages, starting with the needs phase, information search, evaluation, purchase decisions, and post-purchase behavior. The first stage begins with identifying the need for a product or service. In the academic context, the problem that arises is the need for consumers to be educated. In the circumstances where this is identified, they try to obtain several related information that meets the set criteria. Immediately after the acquired information is deemed sufficient, consumers are expected to begin the evaluation process. The next stage involves the decision to purchase the services offered. Furthermore, the final stage is the consumer’s behavior after making these purchases.

When purchasing decisions, consumers need to consider several elements, such as available products, prices, promotions, human resources, and physical facilities (P. Kotler & Keller, 2016). In the academic context, products are related to the quality of learning. This attracts prospective students to select the educational institution to be addressed (Abdillah & Herawati, 2018). In addition, quality education improves the school’s reputation.

Generally, education quality influences prospective students’ choice of schools (Rosmaniar, 2019; Samat et al., 2017; Tangkilisan et al., 2014; Ujang, 2015). The price level offered reflects the reputation of these institutions (Rosmaniar, 2019). Promotion activities also positively affect these students’ choices (Rosmaniar, 2019; Samat et al., 2017). This indicates that a good promotional strategy improves the school’s reputation. Human resources also influence the interest of prospective students in choosing academic institutions (Tangkilisan et al., 2014). This is manifested by competent teachers and these aid in boosting the school’s reputation. The physical facilities in this context, such as available infrastructure, also affect the interest of prospective students (Abdillah & Herawati, 2018; Rosmaniar, 2019; Supriyani & Susilo, 2017; Ujang, 2015). Schools with adequate facilities and infrastructure support the learning process, improving their reputation.

Based on the background, this study aims to examine education quality, price, promotion strategy, quality of human resources, and physical facilities mediated by reputation on prospective students’ interest in choosing between private and public schools.

**HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT**

Marketing mix refers to the combination of controllable variables that a company uses to pursue its targeted level of sales (Wichmann et al., 2021). Meanwhile, this tool generates the desired
response in a predetermined market (P. Kotler & Keller, 2016). It is also interpreted as a marketing tool that needs to be considered to ensure the successful implementation of marketing strategies.

In general, the marketing mix for goods is different from that of services, and this is mainly dependent on the addition of elements. The goods marketing mix consists of 4Ps (product, price, promotion, and place), while services comprise 7Ps (product, price, promotion, place, people, process, and physical evidence). This is due to the dissimilarities in the characteristics of these items (P. Kotler & Keller, 2016).

A product is any item sold in a market for possession and consumption to satisfy consumer wants and needs. It includes physical objects and services, places, people, ideas, and organizations. This item is a set of attributes, both tangible and intangible, including colour, prestige, price, product reputation, and that of the store that sells it (retailer), factory and retailer services rendered to buyers to satisfy their needs and wants (Cavallone et al., 2020; Varadarajan et al., 2021). Education quality is a service that benefits consumers, both in the long and short term.

Based on previous research, Appuhamilage & Torii (2019) stated the indirect impact of the image, services, and perceived value on loyalty. In addition, all the goodness of fit indices is at acceptable levels. The satisfied students reflect the earlier mentioned constructs, namely image, services, financial support, and perceived values. Hassan et al. (2019) stated that corporate image and students' satisfaction have a direct and significant impact on the relationship between service quality and their 'loyalty to technical vocational education and training (TVET) of higher learning institutes (HLIs). The mediating test statistically proved a partial mediation of students' satisfaction and corporate image on the relationship between service quality and loyalty.

H1: Education quality affects the students’ decisions mediated by reputation.

Price is the amount spent on a product that provides value and benefits to consumers. It plays an important role and is a determining factor in purchasing a product. Price levels, discounts, and payment terms are strategies that need to be considered to attract consumers. It is one of the determining factors of large market demand (Winoto Tj, 2020). Price is also a major attribute in determining market segments and the desired profit level (Sefnedi, 2013). In the academic sector, this element is in line with the quality of education. Besides, the better the education quality, the higher the price set.

Avlonitis & Indounas (2007) stated that the pricing policies tend to be influenced by several different services, including organizational and environmental characteristics. Meanwhile, different patterns of pricing behavior were identified across various service industries. A review of some literature revealed several services, organizational and environmental characteristics that influence pricing decisions. Price is described as a fundamental factor that affects consumers' purchase decisions, and it often determines the value and quality of a product or service. Various studies reported that consumers are willing to pay higher prices for organic foods (Ali et al., 2021).

H2: Price affects the students’ decisions mediated by reputation.

Promotion is a method or way of communicating information and the benefits of a product to potential consumers. A marketing communication activity includes disseminating information, increasing market segments, as well as influencing and persuading consumers to buy the products offered (Zeithaml et al., 2006).

Promotional discourse in the educational sector is mostly interesting, and numerous studies have been carried out in this context (Xu et al., 2021). Previous studies focused on various semiotic modalities, such as texts, images, videos, and written texts, in the form of traditional print or virtual genres, which remain a prominent modality under scrutiny. However, the focus is mainly on generic structures, lexicogrammatically resources, and discursive representations of different social domains.
Decoding of schematic structure in institutional genres, including student brochures and advertisements for academic positions, has revealed clear promotional elements across different types. For example, rhetorical moves such as credentials of the educational institution, offering incentives or benefits to stakeholders in student prospectuses, and university advertisements contribute to the communicative purposes of promotion.

In the competitive condition, promotion strategies are important to attract parents’ attention in selecting schools for their children (Wahyoedi et al., 2021). Besides, in this digital era, it is performed with search engine optimization, which has been proven effective in the education world (Jiao & Li, 2022).

H3: Promotion strategy affects the students’ decisions mediated by reputation.

Generally, people, or in this case, human resources, are perceived as market participants who are tasked with providing services to influence consumers. Human resources are perceived as elements directly involved in the distribution of goods and services (P. Kotler & Keller, 2016). Meanwhile, people are regarded as an important element of in-service education, considering that their function as service providers greatly affects its quality (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 2011).

Prior research indicates the reputation of an educational institution varies with stakeholders, depending on the fulfillment of their different expectations (Rashid & Mustafa, 2021). They include the students, alumni, faculty, employers, etc. The most important stakeholders in a university setting are the faculties and current and prospective students. These members are considered necessary for building the educational reputations of these institutions. However, employees are considered the most important stakeholders as they hold more positive views of their organization’s reputation than the consumers.

H4: Human resources quality affects the students’ decisions mediated by reputation.

Physical evidence is a tangible element whose benefits are felt. Meanwhile, it reduces the risk perception of consumers who cannot assess these benefits before using the service (Nauffal & Skulte-Ouaiss, 2018). On the other hand, physical facilities are an element that contributes to their decisions to use a product (Zeithaml et al., 2006). The educational context includes the physical environment, buildings, logo, and equipment.

Reputation is the hallmark of a particular brand that differentiates itself from competitors. A good or bad reputation is influenced based on a person’s experience when consuming an item or service; it can also be formed through the recommendations of others. The hands-on experience strongly influences a brand’s reputation because it affects the strong and consistent image or identity of a particular product or service. In public relations, this concept is difficult to define unequivocally. A good reputation can strengthen the company’s position when dealing with its competitors. Reputation and the firm’s image have dissimilar meanings, although some studies reported similarities (Liu et al., 2022). It is defined as the outcome of meeting the rational and emotional expectations of each stakeholder during every interaction (Fan et al., 2021). Meanwhile, there are 4 aspects of a company’s reputation, namely credibility, trustworthiness, reliability, and responsibility (Zhang et al., 2021).

The core aspect of consumer decision-making is an integration process that combines knowledge to apply two or more alternative behaviors before selecting the best (M. Kotler et al., 2020). The outcome of this process is a choice cognitively presented as the behavioral desire of consumers. Before deciding to buy goods or pay for certain services, a consumer is influenced by several aspects that encourage them to make the purchase, including exploration, preferential, and referential interests. This creates a sense of desire, thereby providing an overview of consumer preferences and tendencies to buy these products.

Customer decision is a process where a product or service is selected by often considering various factors that suit customers’ needs. The selected item is perceived as the consumers’ choice
necessary to meet their needs (Dou et al., 2021). The purchasing decision is when consumers recognize a problem, seek information about a particular product or brand, and properly evaluate each alternative to solve the issue (M. Kotler et al., 2020).

**H5:** Facilities affect the students’ decisions mediated by reputation.

## METHOD

This study employed purposive sampling techniques, with questionnaires directly distributed through an online survey platform to the respondents, the main parents of prospective students in the Bekasi area. The samples were obtained by multiplying the number of indicators by 5 (Hair Jr. et al., 2019), which amounted to 175 respondents. However, after examining the acquired data, the total sample used is 170 respondents. Data analysis was carried out using the Smart-PLS as a Structural Equation Modelling tool. The analytical steps and procedures applied in this research are the goodness of fit, including convergent and discriminant validity and reliability tests (Hair Jr. et al., 2017). Immediately, it was confirmed that the data met the measurement model criteria, followed by hypothesis testing.

This analysis aims to determine the reliability of the relationship between the construct and the indicators, and it was carried out using the outer model test (convergent and discriminant validity).

### Table 1

**Construct Validity (Convergent) & Reliability**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>Composite Reliability</th>
<th>AVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education Quality</td>
<td>0.729</td>
<td>0.750</td>
<td>0.675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>0.678</td>
<td>0.604</td>
<td>0.611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Strategy</td>
<td>0.634</td>
<td>0.776</td>
<td>0.621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Quality</td>
<td>0.807</td>
<td>0.867</td>
<td>0.659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility</td>
<td>0.722</td>
<td>0.660</td>
<td>0.611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>0.728</td>
<td>0.774</td>
<td>0.668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Decision</td>
<td>0.773</td>
<td>0.789</td>
<td>0.699</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data processed (2021)

Table 1 shows that virtually all constructs in the model have Cronbach alpha values exceeding 0.70. Meanwhile, the price and promotion strategy is less than 0.70. Based on the AVE results, all constructs had values and composite reliability greater than 0.50 and 0.60, respectively. Therefore, it was concluded that they met the requirements of the outer model test (Hair Jr. et al., 2019).

### Table 2

**Discriminant Validity Result**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Education Quality</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Promotion Strategy</th>
<th>HR Quality</th>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Reputation</th>
<th>Student Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EQ1</td>
<td><strong>0.846</strong></td>
<td>0.592</td>
<td>0.656</td>
<td>0.680</td>
<td>0.423</td>
<td>0.526</td>
<td>0.457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ2</td>
<td><strong>0.811</strong></td>
<td>0.533</td>
<td>0.668</td>
<td>0.664</td>
<td>0.582</td>
<td>0.414</td>
<td>0.602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ3</td>
<td><strong>0.783</strong></td>
<td>0.522</td>
<td>0.612</td>
<td>0.605</td>
<td>0.523</td>
<td>0.567</td>
<td>0.543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ4</td>
<td><strong>0.779</strong></td>
<td>0.547</td>
<td>0.614</td>
<td>0.625</td>
<td>0.516</td>
<td>0.393</td>
<td>0.569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>0.462</td>
<td><strong>0.748</strong></td>
<td>0.408</td>
<td>0.399</td>
<td>0.573</td>
<td>0.394</td>
<td>0.648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>0.516</td>
<td><strong>0.752</strong></td>
<td>0.475</td>
<td>0.498</td>
<td>0.601</td>
<td>0.390</td>
<td>0.611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>0.528</td>
<td><strong>0.723</strong></td>
<td>0.466</td>
<td>0.576</td>
<td>0.562</td>
<td>0.477</td>
<td>0.373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>0.529</td>
<td><strong>0.759</strong></td>
<td>0.566</td>
<td>0.617</td>
<td>0.602</td>
<td>0.528</td>
<td>0.623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS1</td>
<td>0.465</td>
<td>0.591</td>
<td><strong>0.769</strong></td>
<td>0.562</td>
<td>0.529</td>
<td>0.562</td>
<td>0.570</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows the discriminant validity test results of each construct measuring indicator. This proves that all indicators used in this study are valid. Additionally, this is also indicated by the high loading factor value of each construct, such as the education quality variable, which is measured using 4 indicators, namely EQ1, EQ2, EQ3, and EQ4. It is higher when compared to the factor loading indicator values of other constructs. A similar conclusion was also deduced from the value of the loading factor indicator in other constructs. However, this proves that the discriminant validity requirements have been fulfilled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Education Quality</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Promotion Strategy</th>
<th>HR Quality</th>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Reputation</th>
<th>Student Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PS2</td>
<td>0.633</td>
<td>0.658</td>
<td>0.784</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.638</td>
<td>0.685</td>
<td>0.576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS3</td>
<td>0.400</td>
<td>0.448</td>
<td>0.752</td>
<td>0.546</td>
<td>0.501</td>
<td>0.602</td>
<td>0.563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS4</td>
<td>0.695</td>
<td>0.435</td>
<td>0.891</td>
<td>0.725</td>
<td>0.470</td>
<td>0.505</td>
<td>0.529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HQ1</td>
<td>0.686</td>
<td>0.597</td>
<td>0.729</td>
<td>0.834</td>
<td>0.602</td>
<td>0.413</td>
<td>0.601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HQ2</td>
<td>0.634</td>
<td>0.584</td>
<td>0.693</td>
<td>0.819</td>
<td>0.569</td>
<td>0.493</td>
<td>0.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HQ3</td>
<td>0.641</td>
<td>0.550</td>
<td>0.729</td>
<td>0.808</td>
<td>0.443</td>
<td>0.567</td>
<td>0.508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HQ4</td>
<td>0.635</td>
<td>0.697</td>
<td>0.670</td>
<td>0.797</td>
<td>0.455</td>
<td>0.532</td>
<td>0.537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>0.591</td>
<td>0.533</td>
<td>0.583</td>
<td>0.448</td>
<td>0.755</td>
<td>0.508</td>
<td>0.544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>0.662</td>
<td>0.550</td>
<td>0.662</td>
<td>0.587</td>
<td>0.814</td>
<td>0.553</td>
<td>0.496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>0.676</td>
<td>0.648</td>
<td>0.728</td>
<td>0.696</td>
<td>0.834</td>
<td>0.656</td>
<td>0.524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4</td>
<td>0.544</td>
<td>0.533</td>
<td>0.702</td>
<td>0.658</td>
<td>0.786</td>
<td>0.576</td>
<td>0.623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>0.470</td>
<td>0.505</td>
<td>0.501</td>
<td>0.423</td>
<td>0.686</td>
<td>0.763</td>
<td>0.576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>0.623</td>
<td>0.685</td>
<td>0.702</td>
<td>0.378</td>
<td>0.405</td>
<td>0.840</td>
<td>0.432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>0.521</td>
<td>0.576</td>
<td>0.458</td>
<td>0.546</td>
<td>0.313</td>
<td>0.783</td>
<td>0.569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4</td>
<td>0.589</td>
<td>0.575</td>
<td>0.405</td>
<td>0.433</td>
<td>0.421</td>
<td>0.789</td>
<td>0.623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD1</td>
<td>0.634</td>
<td>0.562</td>
<td>0.570</td>
<td>0.523</td>
<td>0.516</td>
<td>0.582</td>
<td>0.880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD2</td>
<td>0.523</td>
<td>0.483</td>
<td>0.409</td>
<td>0.601</td>
<td>0.399</td>
<td>0.413</td>
<td>0.849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD3</td>
<td>0.405</td>
<td>0.544</td>
<td>0.394</td>
<td>0.528</td>
<td>0.567</td>
<td>0.502</td>
<td>0.807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD4</td>
<td>0.576</td>
<td>0.524</td>
<td>0.620</td>
<td>0.478</td>
<td>0.543</td>
<td>0.569</td>
<td>0.796</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data processed (2021)

The R² test aims to determine the impact of the independent variables on the dependent one—this value measures the predictive ability of the research model. The results showed that the quality of education, price, promotion strategy, quality of human resources, facilities, and reputation aided in explaining the decisions of prospective students by 52.1%. Based on this, the predictive power in this research is quite strong.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The respondents in this study were prospective students intending to enroll in the high school located in the Bekasi area. The questionnaires were distributed to a total of 170 participants, and it was discovered that 55% were females. Subsequently, 62% were aged between 36 to 45 years. Based
on occupational background, 52% of the respondents who filled out the survey were employees, and 71% had an income ranging from IDR10,000,000 to IDR15,000,000.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis Testing Result</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1: Education quality affects the students’ decisions mediated by reputation.</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td>0.031*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2: Price affects the students’ decisions mediated by reputation.</td>
<td>-0.058</td>
<td>0.193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3: Promotion strategy affects the students’ decisions mediated by reputation.</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4: Human resources quality affects the students’ decisions mediated by reputation.</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5: Facilities affect the students’ decisions mediated by reputation.</td>
<td>0.257</td>
<td>0.023*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data processed (2021)

*Significance level at 5%

Table 4 shows the hypothesis testing results that focus on the reputation variable mediating analysis. The first, third, fourth, and fifth hypotheses are significant because they have a p-value < 0.05. Facilities have the largest mediating effect on the students’ decisions mediated by reputation; it clearly shows that from their perspective, including that of their parents, this variable is the main assessment with an indirect coefficient of (0.257). The second factor to be considered is the quality of the educational institution. The promotion strategy and teacher factors (human resources quality), although perceived to be small in terms of the coefficient of the indirect effect, were not considered the main preferences in choosing a school. Even the price does not matter as long as the physical facilities and the quality of the educational institutions are top-notch.

Discussion

The first hypothesis showed that education quality positively affects the students’ decisions mediated by reputation. It indicates that this variable attracts prospective students. According to Samat et al. (2017), academic institutions with good reputations tend to have quality education. This result reflects the high infrastructural intensity in these schools, such as curriculum and syllabus, department or study program status, laboratories, libraries, technology, learning media, teaching staff, and facility design. The elite or middle-class perspective of such institutions affects the students’ decisions in choosing a college. Education quality is the main attraction for selecting a school, especially a private one (Rosmaniar, 2019). This is also supported by previous research (Ujang, 2015) that the accreditation of the study program offered directly influences the students’ decision to gain admission into a university of their choice. The effect of the accredited study program is in line with the decision-making process. Therefore, the stronger the student’s decision to enroll in the institution, the greater the increase in the product. Tangkilisan et al. (2014) stated that education quality significantly influences the decision to selecting a high school in Manado. Its benefits and values positively impact the students’ decisions mediated by reputation.

The second hypothesis showed that price doesn't affect the students' decisions mediated by reputation. It simply implies that expensive schools do not necessarily have a good reputation and vice versa. This also means that the reputation variable is proven not to mediate the relationship between price and prospective students’ decisions in determining schools. These results are supported by Samat et al. (2017), where it was reported that price directly affects the decisions of prospective students. Similarly, Ujang (2015) stated that appropriate tuition fees, ease, and relief in payment offered, have no significant effect on students’ decisions. Another research also reported similar results (Abdillah & Herawati, 2018), indicating that a high price leads to a decline in the students’
decision-making process to select an entrepreneur-based school. It is further supported by Tangkilisan’s et al., (2014) research. Price is one of the strong factors that attract prospective students, especially when the school is affordable. However, the results obtained in this study show that it has an insignificant effect. This implies that price is no longer a strong consideration in selecting a school because many others offer cheaper rates; in fact, the students prefer such institutions. Supriyani and Susilo (2017) stated that this variable does not affect students’ choice of Islamic education. Parents who want their children to get the best education don’t care about the tuition fees because they understand that quality education requires a lot of money. Generally, at the high school level, the students are still the responsibility of their parents, and price does not affect their decisions to select schools.

The third hypothesis showed that promotion strategy affects the students’ decisions mediated by reputation. This finding is consistent with Gusdiandika & Sinduwiatmo’s research (2012) that educational institutions’ ability to employ this construct, such as disseminating information through brochures, banners, and the internet, can improve their reputation and decisions of prospective students in selecting these schools. According to Samat et al. (2017), it directly boosts the institutions’ reputation and attracts prospective students. This was also supported by Samat et al. (2017), that the adoption of effective promotion strategies such as distributing brochures, roadshows to high school carried out by the promotion team, lecturers, and students, as well as obtaining information from the alumni aims to increase the number of prospective candidates as well as influence their decisions in choosing a private university. Rosmaniar (2019) stated that promotion has a significant and positive influence on students’ choice of a vocational high school. This indicates that the better the promotional activities adopted, such as distribution of brochures, banner installations, the internet, and the acquisition of information from the alumni, the more influential it is in boosting the number of students’ interests and decisions to choose vocational high schools.

The fourth hypothesis showed that human resource quality doesn’t affect the students’ decisions mediated by reputation. This is an important element that needs to be considered when choosing a school because the better the quality of human resources, such as the teachers, the more attractive the school. Reputable educational institutions have quality human resources. Furthermore, the antecedents are different from those in the corporate world because universities are primarily established to advance knowledge and develop human capital (Rashid & Mustafa, 2021). The quality, appearance, and educational background of the lecturers and employees, including the presence of security staff, did not significantly influence the student’s decision to choose certain universities (Ujang, 2015). Another research showed that community members do not affect the students’ decisions in choosing private universities in Palembang (Samat et al., 2017). In service marketing, individuals directly responsible for handling consumers affect the quality of the service itself. Therefore, every service organization needs to define each employee’s expectations in interacting with customers. Unfortunately, teachers’ ability to teach and their level of educational background do not affect the students’ decisions in choosing entrepreneur-based schools (Abdillah & Herawati, 2018). Rosmaniar (2019) also reported similar results that the role of human resources in Vocational High Schools, especially on teachers’ performance, such as their ability to educate and teach, level of academic background, principal’s competence, friendly administrative officers, and the presence of security and cleaning officers does not attract prospective students.

The fifth hypothesis showed that facilities affect the student decision mediated by reputation. This finding is consistent with Ujang’s (2015) research that educational institutions with good facilities and infrastructure support learning activities. Moreover, adequate facilities tend to boost the learning process. The condition of the building or its physical appearance, that of the lecture halls, the availability of supporting facilities, the completeness, and the availability of teaching and learning media have a significant influence on students’ decisions to choose certain institutions. Additionally,
the university environment also has a direct effect on students' decisions. The influence of physical evidence or teaching and learning activities and other supporting tasks is in line with the decision-making process. These have a significant and positive influence on students' decisions related to choosing entrepreneur-based schools (Abdillah & Herawati, 2018). It simply indicates that the better the physical environment, such as the completeness of the facilities and infrastructure owned, the various achievements made, the comfort of the classrooms, and the cleanliness and maintenance of the institution, influences prospective students' decisions to choose an entrepreneur-based school. The physical evidence variable has a significant and positive influence on the students' decisions to choose a vocational high school in Surabaya (Rosmaniar, 2019). This variable affects the students' decisions in choosing schools in Tuban (Supriyani & Susilo, 2017). These institutions implemented a three-step strategy. First, an attention-creating medium, namely the outer part of the school building, looks neat with lots of properly arranged shady trees, thereby making it easier for the students to carry out certain activities. Second, as a message-creating medium, the vision and mission are written in front of the school. The third is an effect relating-medium, an attractive school uniform with different motifs and designs from other higher institutions.

CONCLUSION

The results showed that three hypotheses were accepted while the remaining two were rejected. The education quality, promotion strategy, and facilities positively affect the students' decisions mediated by reputation. This shows that they tend to enroll in high schools based on education quality and a good reputation. A well-planned promotional strategy boosts the school's reputation. This tends to directly affect prospective students' decisions in determining the ideal school; hence, the better the institution's reputation, the greater the quality of human resources to attract prospective students. Schools with a good reputation provide adequate facilities and infrastructure, thereby improving the prospective students' decisions. Meanwhile, the price and human resources quality does not affect students' decisions mediated by reputation. This depicts that prospective candidates consider the price offered more than the school's reputation; in addition, the quality of teachers has no significant impact.

This study focuses on a particular area with a limited number of samples and variables. It is suggested that future research needs to increase the number of samples and coverage area to provide more comprehensive results (Samat et al., 2017). Additionally, it was also recommended that there is a need to add a process variable that supports students' decisions to choose schools (Abdillah & Herawati, 2018; Ujang, 2015).

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Assessing the effect of high school quality factors in selecting a high school


