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Analysis of Parents' Intention to Enrolment in Secondary Schools through Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) Theory Approach

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Abstract

The study aimed to examine the relationship between stimulus factors, cognitive and affective elements toward parents' intention to enrol their children in secondary schools using Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory. There were 373 respondents participating and Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) were used. Result show that the school image and school quality both positively and significantly influence enrolment decisions. Therefore, stakeholders should improve reputation, quality and attractiveness of their institutions.

Keywords: Parents' intention to enrolment; perceived school quality; perceived school images; perceived school convenience

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1.0 Introduction

In today's competitive educational landscape, understanding the factors influencing individuals' intentions to enrol in educational programs has become paramount. With increasing array of choices available to prospective students, institutions constantly seek insights into the underlying motivations guiding enrolment decisions. The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory offers a robust framework for examining these factors, providing insights into how external stimuli (stimuli) affect internal states (organisms) and drive behavior (responses). Previous research on intention to enrolment states that attitude and subjective norms are the most critical factors influencing parents' intention (Hamilton et al., 2020). On the other hand, Hamida (2022) states that school prestige and student academic performance influence when choosing a school. Different research reveals that the main factors for parents in performing it for their children include rankings, school academics and teaching innovation (Hamida, 2022). Parents with middle and upper economic levels tend to select schools with high academic rankings (Alauddin, 2023). Meanwhile, according to Kottler et al. (2022), cultural, social, personal and psychological factors influence consumers toward the services. Thus, recognizing and studying the indicators they consider when choosing schools for their children is a step that can be taken to overcome decreasing student intake, especially in private schools. Research conducted by Nagoya and Wanasida (2021) concludes that school quality positively and significantly influences cognitive attitude. Referring to previous research and considering the results of observations, this research will test 3 variables: Perceived School Quality, Perceived School Image and Perceived School Convenience.

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In this study, the findings show that people's perception of school quality, school images, and school comfort strongly affects their thinking and feelings. It also influences parents' decisions of enrolling their children to study at certain schools. Previous research examined the indicators of parent and student considerations in choosing the universities using the SOR theory approach and stimuli in school quality and images. Nonetheless, concerning the factors of parental considerations in selecting the schools based on interviews, this research applied such an approach in the forms of perceived school quality, perceived school images and perceived school convenience. To address the limitations of previous models, researchers applied the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory to fill the theoretical gaps in understanding parents' intentions to enroll their children in schools. Previous studies, however, primarily used a different framework, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to examine the factors influencing parents' decisions when choosing secondary schools

This paper seeks to delve deeper into applying the Stimulus Organism Response theory in the context of understanding the intention to enrol. Drawing upon empirical research and theoretical insights, researchers aim to elucidate the critical stimuli influencing enrolment intentions and the underlying psychological mechanisms and propose practical implications for educational institutions seeking to enhance their enrolment strategies. In subsequent sections, it is required to explore relevant literature on enrolment decision-making, discuss the theoretical foundations of the SOR framework and present empirical evidence supporting its applicability in the educational context. Through a comprehensive analysis, the endeavor is to contribute to the existing knowledge on enrolment behavior and provide valuable insights for educational policymakers, administrators and marketers. In summary, by adopting a SOR perspective, this paper aims to shed light on the intricate dynamics shaping individuals' intentions to enrol in educational programs, thereby offering practical implications for fostering student engagement and retention in academic institutions.

2.0 Literature Review

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory is a theory in the field of psychology that has been transformed into that of communication. This is normal since objects studied in these two fields are closely related and discuss the components of attitude, opinions, cognition, affection and conation (Abidin et al., 2021). In this model, there are several elements as follows: A message (a stimulus) refers to news in the form of signs or symbols conveyed by communicators (message deliverers) to the communicants or message recipients (Kexin, 2023). A communicant (an organism) is the condition when receiving news in the form of information. All forwarded messages delivered by the communicators are in the form of signs or symbols interpreted by the communicators (Kexin, 2023). An effect (a response) is an affective attitude arising after communication. It can be in the form of changes in cognitive and conative attitude. For communicants, cognitive effects become knowledge material from the information conveyed. They are visible after the communication (Abidin et al., 2021). The depiction of the SOR theory can be seen in Fig. 1:

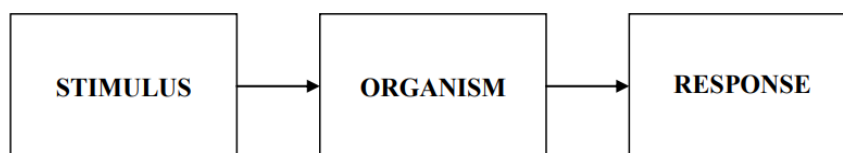


Fig. 1: The SOR Theory

Examining the factors of parents' considerations in selecting the schools for their children, the application of the SOR theory is described as follows: S (Stimuli): Perceived school quality, perceived school images and perceived school convenience; O (Organisms): Parents' cognitive attitude and affective attitude, R (Response): Parents' intention to enrolment. According to Benyamin Bloom, there are three facets describing human behavior: cognition, attitude and behavior. Cognition is measured through knowledge acquired through the functioning of the body's senses to find out something. Meanwhile, attitude is an affective aspect reflected by readiness and willingness to act. Even though it is unnecessarily realized, it excludes them and only extends to behavioral predispositions through personal reactions. Ultimately, behavior is an element measured through direct practice. It can be assumed that behavioral control is the strength of parents' control beliefs when choosing a particular secondary school as a place for their children to study. Parents' views on factors strongly influence and can inhibit their behavior when performing this. Beliefs or perceptions can be influenced by past experiences (Manstead, 2021). Behavior can also be formed from indirect information obtained or stories told by relatives and friends. Behavior formation also occurs when facing difficulties (Hoang et al., 2022). School quality is an essential factor in influencing someone to enrol. Prospective students and parents tend to consider institutional rankings, which aid them in deciding school selection (Ace. Et.al, 2025). Images of brands play essential roles in the purchase or selection of services and acceleration of facilitating customers' choices (Chenggang, 2023). In the context of this research, images refer to people's perceptions of schools. Parents and prospective students seeing the positive ones will shape their attitude and interest in school enrolment in the future. They also assess school images based on values and students' capabilities. Perceived convenience is anything that can add to the feeling of comfort. It can be categorized into five dimensions: time, place, acquisition, use and execution (Bansah & Agyei, 2022). Based on the definitions given, interpretively, perceived convenience in education is possessed by someone using the products.

3.0 Methodology

A positive approach and a quantitative method were applied. In this study, it was found that teacher quality and school images are the main factors that influence parents' intention to enrol. Data were collected from parents living in Indonesia, especially in Pontianak. Primary ones were obtained by distributing the questionnaires containing 28 close-ended questions and measurement ranges using Likert scales (1-5). The respondents of this study were 373 parents whose sons and daughters were studying at elementary schools (grades 5 and 6) and secondary schools (grades 1-3). Questionnaires were distributed from August to October 2023 by digital form. A non-probability convenience sampling strategy was applied to include respondents based on their geographical proximity. Data were processed using Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to evaluate the validity and reliability of constructs to test all the hypotheses. There are two phases in the analysis: (1) The evaluation model in the form of convergent validity (loading factors and AVE), internal consistency and reliability (Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability) and discriminant validity in the form of HTMT were tested. (2) The structural model was evaluated by testing the coefficients of determination (R^2), size and significance and path coefficients. The PLS-SEM was used because it can analyze a complex model evaluation (Utomo & Kurniasari, 2023).

4.0 Findings

4.1 Respondents' characteristics

373 completed questionnaires were obtained. The respondents were primarily women. Their age profiles were 36-40 years old (26.56%), 41-45 years old (34.3%), more than or equal to 46 years old (23.59%), and under 36 years old (15.55%). Regarding educational background, the respondents mostly received a bachelor's degree (42.90%). In addition, incomes earned were in the range of less than five million to ten million rupiahs (78.82%).

4.2 Data analysis

The two steps involved in the analysis are measuring Model Analysis and Structural Model Analysis. The Measurement Model Analysis results are shown in Table 1, while the Structural Model Analysis is provided in Table 2. Convergent validity, discriminant validity and reliability were further tested to analyze relationships between indicators and their variables. Respectively, outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were calculated, Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) was used and Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability were tested. The measurement revealed strong reliability and validity of the constructions in this research model. Loading factors exceeded the recommended threshold (0.7), indicating satisfactory convergent validity. Additionally, the composite reliability values of each construct surpassed 0.7, ensuring internal consistency reliability. Moreover, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was above 0.5, demonstrating that constructs explained more than half of the variance of their indicators, confirming convergent validity. Discriminant validity was also established through the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, with the square root of the AVE of each construct exceeding its correlation with other constructs. Strengthening discriminant validity, Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) values were below 0.9. The redundancy analysis revealed no issues of multicollinearity, where all Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) were less than 5. Cross-loadings analysis showed no cross-loadings above 0.7, indicating each indicator loaded on its intended construct. Overall, the model exhibited a good fit with a GoF value exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.1, affirming the robustness of this measurement model in capturing the underlying constructs and relationships in this research. Moreover, variables are reliable if the composite reliability coefficients and Cronbach's Alpha are more significant than 0.6. The latter measures the lower limit of reliability coefficients, whereas the former measures actual values of reliability. Hence, composite reliability is considered more suitable for estimating the internal consistency of a variable (Kulas et al., 2021).

Table 1. Evaluation of a Measurement Model

No	Latent Variable	Indicator	Convergent Validity		Internal Consistency and Reliability		Discriminant Validity	
			Loading Factor	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	HTMT	confidence interval does not include 1
1	Perceived School Quality (PSQ)	PSQ1	0.730	0.577	0.634	0.803		Yes
		PSQ2	0.819					
		PSQ3	0.727					
2	Perceived School Images (SCI)	PSI1	0.896	0.681	0.545	0.809		Yes
		PSI2	0.747					
3	Perceived School Convenience (PSC)	PSC1	0.879	0.598	0.348	0.745		Yes
		PSC2	0.651					
4	Cognitive Attitude (CA)	CA1	0.716	0.631	0.425	0.772		Yes
		CA2	0.865					
5	Affective Attitude (AA)	AA1	0.588	0.602	0.653	0.815		Yes
		AA2	0.864					
		AA3	0.844					

No	Latent Variable	Indicator	Convergent Validity		Internal Consistency and Reliability		Discriminant Validity
			Loading Factor	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	
			>0.72	>0.50	0.60-0.90	0.60-0.90	
6	Intention to Enrolment (ITE)	ITE1	0.688	0.518	0.530	0.760	Yes
		ITE2	0.836				
		ITE3	0.616				

Based on the findings, the six variables had composite reliability coefficients greater than 0.6 even though several Cronbach's Alphas were less than it. Hair et al (2021) stated that they are generally used to estimate the level of reliability, although they are not as accurate as composite reliability. When the quantitative analysis was performed ($\alpha = 2.524$) and composite reliability coefficients from the empirical reduction were sought, inconsistency appeared. In other words, the tendency of Cronbach's Alpha to measure reliability varied. Therefore, additional examination was required to calculate the measurement's consistency through composite reliability tests. All the variables in this study were still used as they were reliable. Their composite reliability exceeded 0.7. An inner model was designed to analyze the relationships between variables and hypotheses. The analysis was conducted by testing the coefficients of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2) and path coefficients. Examining path coefficients was implemented through bootstrapping to measure the influences of exogenous variables on endogenous variables and test formulated hypotheses (Hair et al., 2021). In this study, critical t-values were more than 1.96, the 5 percent level of significance and p-values less than 0.05 were used. Based on Table 2, all t-values were more significant than 1.96 and p-values were less than 0.05. Comprehensively, all variables were significant. Besides, all path coefficients were positive. Accordingly, exogenous variables possessed positive influences on endogenous variables. In addition, all the variables had substantial relationships as their t-values exceeded 1.96 and p-values were less than 0.05. PSQ, PSI and PSC could explain AA (23.2%). Also, CA (24.3%) influenced these exogenous variables. On the other hand, ITE had a moderate R^2 value (0.258), meaning that PSQ, PSI, PSC, AA and CA could explain ITE (25.8%).

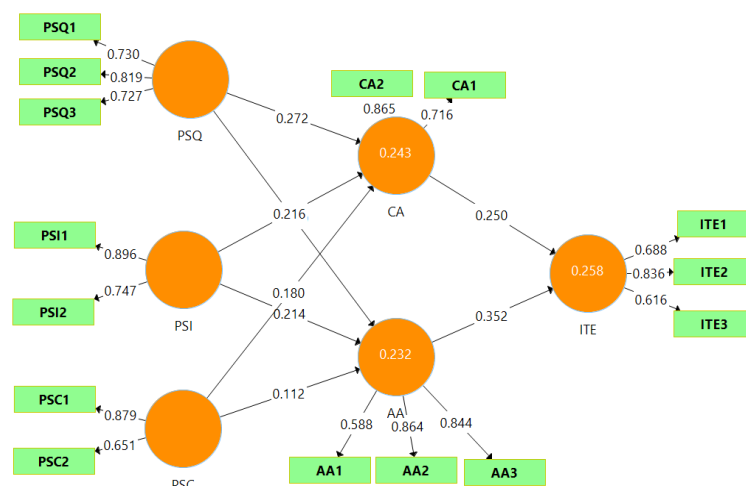


Fig. 2: Analysis Results of Structural Model Design

Results of R^2 showed that PSQ, PSI and PSC influenced AA (23.2%) and CA (24.3%). CA and AA influenced Contrarily, ITE (25.8%). The effect size is depicted in Table 3:

Hyp	Path Coefficients	T-Values > 1.96	P-Values < 0.05	Significant (p < 0.05)
AA -> ITE	0.352	5.755	0.000	Yes
CA -> ITE	0.250	4.120	0.000	Yes
PSC -> AA	0.112	2.176	0.015	Yes
PSC -> CA	0.180	3.289	0.001	Yes
PSI -> AA	0.214	2.952	0.002	Yes
PSI -> CA	0.216	3.690	0.000	Yes
PSQ -> AA	0.299	3.451	0.000	Yes
PSQ -> CA	0.272	3.895	0.000	Yes

Table 3. Coefficients of Determination (R^2 Values)

Variables	R-Squared	Adjusted R-Squared
Affective Attitude (AA)	0.232	0.226
Cognitive Attitude (CA)	0.243	0.236
Intention to Enrolment (ITE)	0.258	0.254

Based on the data provided in Table 3, PSQ, PSI and PSC weakly influenced CA and AA. AA and CA also weakly influenced ITE. The low R-squared does not negate the importance of any significant variables. Even with a low R-squared, statistically significant P-values continue to identify relationships and coefficients with the same interpretation. (Jim Frost, 2024) Test results emphasized that all hypotheses were accepted because their t-values exceeded 1.96 and p-values did not reach 0.05.

5.0 Discussion

This research was conducted to determine relationships among the quality, images, convenience and parents' intention to enrol in secondary schools to overcome the decreasing student intake in Indonesia, especially in Pontianak. Results indicated that teacher quality greatly influenced the school's quality. Meanwhile, the most significant factors affecting school images, remarkably regarded by parents, were school reputation and convenience, determined by the proximity of houses to schools. An additional finding was that an indicator with the most powerful influence was the school's reputation due to its highest outer loading. This research was in line with the one conducted by Hoang et al (2022), concluding that parental satisfaction was influenced mainly by school reputation, positively increasing parental trust. Eldegwy et al. (2022) further concluded that parental decisions were determined by school reputation, which is extremely important in determining school images. To strengthen quantitative findings, interviews with several parents were conducted. It was found that the school's reputation was fine when there were few or no student delinquencies and complications occurring at schools. In other words, a school with a good image should incorporate character education in learning so that students have noble characters. The evidence suggested that they influenced parents' cognitive attitudes, further determining their intention to enrol their children. The second influencing factor was teacher teaching quality considered by parents when selecting a school for their sons and daughters. The indication was its high outer loading. Canan et al. (2022) claimed that the indicator positively affected institutions. Besides, accreditation scores and types of extracurricular activities were contemplated by parents. Consequently, it was requisite for schools to enhance teacher training, enhance professionalism and capabilities in computerization, maintain scores and quality of diversified aspects and organize various extracurricular activities based on current development. Parents' favorable perceptions and beliefs in selecting certain schools reflected real quality. Following this, the most influential indicators of convenience were ease and comfort in terms of access to a particular school at a close distance from home to school and ease of access to means of transportation. These allowed parents to deliver and fetch their children. Online forms of public transportation, such as online motorbike taxis, were also advantageous to parents. Previous research outcomes summarized that the factor of parental decision-making in choosing a school was location determining the distance and further student academic success (Thoyyibah et al., 2022).

Apart from that, an ideal number of students in a class (Zainuddin., 2023) Influence a peaceful, effective and well-controlled learning atmosphere that parents highlighted. Schools were, hence, required to prioritize available classrooms and compare them with this number to create a balance (Ramedlon et al., 2023). Supervision, coaching and class control should be well conducted. Prompt actions to be taken by schools ensured that each student received significant attention, improving a proportional pupil-teacher ratio in every class and implementing a co-teaching class model. These independent factors that influence affective attitude and cognitive attitude should be considered. Therefore, parents were enthusiastic and trusted the schools. Emotions were represented by assessing and determining object quality, the so-called affective component. A conative component describes individuals' behavior toward an object, e.g., consumers' purchase intention for products (Wang et al., 2023). Ultimately, students' public speaking and socializing skills, the length of school establishment time, security, safety, health, quality of graduates, availability of advanced levels and complete and accessible information were other facets of concern by parents. Understandably, schools should improve the quality, images and convenience to captivate them to have the intention to enrol their children. When parents' trust was built, they could indirectly promote schools by conveying the positive aspects to others.

6.0 Conclusion & Recommendations

Student intake is a primary factor determining the sustainability of an educational institution. Results show that affective attitude has the most decisive influence on intention to enrolment, respectively followed by the ones of perceived school quality on affective attitude, perceived school on cognitive attitude, cognitive attitude on intention to enrolment, perceived school images on mental attitude, perceived school images on affective attitude, perceived school convenience on cognitive attitude and perceived school convenience on affective attitude. Additionally, stakeholders should sustainably enhance teacher teaching quality through professional training and, as such, the implementation of research regarding education and teaching. They should also adopt policies that make each student aware of the complexity by instilling virtuous character values in every learning opportunity. This builds the school's image in the community. Besides, convenience should be actualized by providing facilities, e.g., buses for students whose homes are far from schools and smartphones allowing them to contact their parents. Hence, research results represent local conditions. This research is expected to bring diversified advantages to several related parties based on the discussion focus so that subsequent studies with more

respondents in various locations can be conducted. More specifically, there can be an investigation into parents whose sons and daughters are studying at state schools and on another variable, for instance, the local culture. Engaging a more diverse audience is a limitation of this research. Also, variables are limited. Future research can incorporate current findings on the factor of intention to enrol by using sampling strategies other than non-probability convenience and multi-group analysis. Such analysis includes even classification of respondents in each category tested so that reliability and validity obtained can be compared. In the following study, a variable related to parents' mastery of technology should be elaborated. Lastly, since the managerial capacity of schools plays a fundamental role in improvement, future research can be in the realm of school management.

Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

The study contributes to stakeholders such as education management, policymakers and educational marketers especially in understanding factors influencing parents' decisions in secondary school enrolment. Understanding these dynamics enables stakeholders to formulate policies that align with parental expectations and concern, develop more targeted communication strategies, and improve school offerings. It enriches and fills a critical gap in the existing literature by providing a comprehensive framework that integrates cognitive, affective and behavioral components through Stimulus-Organism and Response (SOR) theory, which will offer a deeper understanding of parents' decision-making process.

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