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Analysis of Service Quality and Facilities on Parents Interest in Enrolling Their Children at Sumbakeling Public Elementary School Kuningan Regency With Word of Mouth as an Intervening Variable

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Abstract

Introduction/Main Objectives: Education plays a crucial role in improving human resources quality by developing individuals' knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. The government is currently focusing on enhancing quality, ensuring equity, digitalizing learning and revitalizing school facilities.

Background Problems: Sumbakeling Public Elementary School in Kuningan Regency is a focal point of both central and regional educational policies. A phenomenon has emerged in which parents' interest in enrolling their children has declined due to perceptions of inadequate school services and facilities. Aspects such as teacher services, administration, classroom facilities, library and the overall environment are still considered suboptimal.

Research Methods: The research data were analyzed using SEM-PLS with Smart PLS 4.0 software. The population in this study consists of all parents of students at Sumbakeling Public Elementary School in Kuningan Regency whose children are registered as active students until October 2025, totaling 86 parents. The sampling technique used in this study was Purposive Sampling where the sample was selected based on specific considerations from the researcher that were most relevant or met the criteria namely 42 parents out of the 86 students.

Finding/Results: Results indicate that service quality and facilities each have a positive and significant effect on word of mouth and parents' interest. Word of mouth also positively and significantly influences parents' interest. Furthermore, both service quality and facilities significantly affect parents' interest through the mediating role of word of mouth..

Conclusion: All variables in the research model have a positive and significant influence on each other. Efforts to improve services, facilities and the positive experiences of parents should be carried out continuously to increase parents' interest in enrolling their children in school.

Keywords: Choose 3 to 5 words or phrases that are most relevant and accurately reflect the topic, methodology, and key findings of the research. In determining keywords, consider technical terms, key concepts, and variables that are an important part of the research. Separate every keyword with semicolons. [Abstracts]

Introduction

Education plays a vital role and serves as a process that enables individuals to acquire knowledge, perspectives, attitudes and skills that will prepare them to face future challenges. According to Sujana (2019), 'Education is an effort to assist the development of students both physically and mentally from their natural traits towards a better human civilization.' The education sector during the current administration under President Prabowo Subianto has received considerable attention, particularly in terms of educational policies including programs aimed at improving academic services and school facilities. The current government has actively promoted the digitization of learning such as the use of google classroom and zoom for teaching, as cited on the indonesiabusinesspost.com website (2025). Additionally, the government has launched a program to revitalize educational facilities, targeting the renovation of thousands of schools as part of a priority agenda to improve educational infrastructure through central-regional synergy, ensuring that learning facilities are suitable and safe for students, as cited on the kemendikdasmen.go.id website (2025).

The quality of services and facilities in schools, including at Sumbakeling Public Elementary School in Kuningan Regency, faces several implementation challenges that affect public perceptions, particularly among parents, which ultimately influence their decision to enroll their children in the school. According to Amin (2018), the quality of service and facilities can be assessed by comparing customer perceptions with the actual service experience. In this context, word of mouth as an intervening variable can influence parents' interest in sending their children to Sumbakeling Public Elementary School. Kotler & Swaminathan (2020) explain the influence of word of mouth as personal recommendations and opinions from family members or friends regarding goods or services. Recommendations from friends and family have a much stronger impact on consumers worldwide.

Various previous studies have shown that service quality and facilities significantly affect competitive advantage, meaning that the better the infrastructure and facilities, the more it will influence parents' interest in sending their children to school. However, some studies indicate a different finding, where service quality mediated by word of mouth does not influence the decision to enter school. Based on prior research results, there is a research gap, including the lack of consistent conclusions, particularly in the context of public primary education. Few studies have examined the influence of service quality and facilities on school interest with word of mouth as an intervening variable. Many previous studies have focused on general consumer behavior theories, while this study examines consumer behavior in the context of education. The results of this research are expected to serve as an evaluation tool for school management in enhancing the growth of new student enrollments in the future. Based on this background, the researcher is interested in conducting this study through a thesis entitled “Analysis of Service Quality and Facilities on Parental Interest in Enrolling Their Children in Sumbakeling Public Elementary School in Kuningan Regency with Word of Mouth as an Intervening Variable”.

Research Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach, which involves numerical measurement based on the events being investigated with a research focus on observing the impact of service quality and facilities on interest through word of mouth. The aim is to determine the effect of service quality and facilities on interest through word of mouth at Sumbakeling Public Elementary School in Kuningan Regency. According to Sugiyono (2018:15), quantitative research is a method based on positivism, intended to describe and test the hypotheses formulated by the researcher. In quantitative research, numerical data is prevalent, from data collection and processing to the results, which are dominated by numbers.

Population and sample

According to Sugiyono (2018:80), a population is a generalization area consisting of objects and subjects that have specific qualities and characteristics determined by the researcher to be studied and then draw conclusions from. The population in this study consists of the parents of students at Sumbakeling Public Elementary School in Kuningan Regency, totaling 86 parents.

Sugiyono (2018:81) defines a sample as a subset of the population's total number and characteristics. Thus, a sample is a portion of the population that can represent the entire population. The sampling technique used in this study is Purposive Sampling, where the sample is selected based on specific considerations by the researcher that are most relevant or meet certain criteria. In this case, 42 parents from the 86 students were selected (with data from 42 parents, each parent corresponds to one student; no parent has more than one child enrolled in the school). According to Sugiyono (2018:138), Purposive Sampling is the sampling technique where samples are selected based on certain considerations in accordance with the desired criteria to determine the number of samples to be studied.

Research Instrument

Data collection was carried out using a structured questionnaire containing closed-ended statements to measure four main variables: service quality, facilities, word of mouth and interest. Each statement item was measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), in accordance with the behavior measurement recommendations by Hair Jr. et al. (2021). The measurement indicators for each variable were adapted from various relevant theoretical sources and previous studies.

The service quality variable was constructed based on the organizational behavior dimensions proposed by Moenir (1988) in his book (Hardiyansyah, 2018:70-71), which includes the indicators of reliability, assurance, empathy, responsiveness and tangibles. The facilities variable was based on the theory by Munawir (2018), with indicators including spatial considerations, room planning, equipment, lighting and color arrangements, graphic messages and supporting elements. The interest variable was developed based on the indicators according to Fauziyah (2021), which include feelings of pleasure, attraction, attention and involvement. The word of mouth variable includes indicators developed by Ratnasari (2016), namely recommendations, stories, and invitations. All indicators were adapted to fit the context of this research in the field of education, specifically at Sumbakeling Public Elementary School in Kuningan Regency.

Data Analysis Method

The data were analyzed using the Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach through SmartPLS 4.0 software, as this method is capable of testing complex models with small sample sizes, non-normally distributed data, and models involving mediating variables (Hair et al., 2021). The analysis was conducted in two stages: the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model).

In the first stage, convergent validity was assessed using factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) with the criteria of ≥ 0.70 and ≥ 0.50, respectively. Discriminant validity was evaluated using Cross Loadings and the Fornell–Larcker criterion, where the square root of the AVE must be greater than the correlations between constructs (Henseler et al., 2015). Construct reliability was tested using Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (α), with a minimum threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2021).

In the second stage, the structural model (inner model) was examined to assess whether the relationships among the variables were significant, strong, and had good predictive ability. The R-Square value was evaluated using Chin's (1988) classification: ≥ 0.67 (strong), 0.33– 0.67 (moderate), and 0.19–0.33 (weak). Predictive relevance (Q^2) was calculated through blindfolding and considered adequate if > 0. The significance of the relationships was tested using bootstrapping (5,000 resamples), with the criteria of t-statistic > 1.96 at $\alpha = 0.05$ (Hair et al., 2021).

Mediation effects were examined using bootstrapping of indirect effects, categorized as full mediation if the indirect effect was significant while the direct effect was not, and partial mediation if both were significant. The results of the outer and inner model analyses were subsequently interpreted to assess the direct and indirect effects among variables and their contributions to interest.

Result

Respondent Characteristics Based on Gender

Of the total 42 respondents studied, 38 (90,5%) were female, while 4 (9,5%) were male. This proportion shows that female respondents participated more than male respondents with a difference of 81%. This indicates that the individuals who are more active or involved in school related activities such as filling out questionnaires, communicating with the school or making decisions related to their children are generally female parents who in a social context often play a larger role in overseeing and participating in their children's education.

Respondent Characteristics Based on Age

Of the total 42 respondents, 20 individuals or 48% fall into the more dominant age group of 38–42 years. Meanwhile, 12 individuals or 29% belong to another age group namely 33–37 years. This distribution indicates that most parents whose children have not yet entered school are in a productive and mature age range which generally reflects better readiness in managing early childhood education. In addition, the relatively diverse age composition shows that interest and attention toward basic education emerge across various parental age groups.

Respondent Characteristics Based on Educational Background

Of the total 42 respondents, 20 individuals or 48% are high school graduates, making this the largest education group. There are 13 respondents with a junior high school education, followed by 4 respondents who hold a bachelor's degree, 1 respondent with a diploma, 3 respondents who graduated from elementary school and 1 respondent who has never attended school.

Respondent Characteristics Based on Occupation

The majority of respondents are housewives, totaling 29 out of 42 respondents. This group indicates that the role of mothers as the primary caregivers in child-rearing greatly influences their interest in enrolling their children in school. As individuals who interact with their children more frequently on a daily basis, housewives tend to have greater awareness of their children's readiness and educational needs, which contributes to their relatively high level of interest in choosing a school. Inferential Statistics Analysis a. Outer model result

Tabel 1. Outer Loading Convergent Validity result

	Service Quality	Facility	Word Of Mouth	Interest
KP1	0.838			
KP2	0.702			
KP3	0.917			
KP4	0.867			
KP5	0.918			
KP6	0.857			
KP7	0.866			
KP8	0.849			
KP9	0.912			
KP10	0.857			
F1		0.732		
F2		0.762		
F3		0.821		
F4		0.805		
F5		0.776		
F6		0.802		
F7		0.799		
F8		0.773		
F9		0.759		
F10		0.754		
F11		0.785		
F12		0.767		
WOM1			0.917	
WOM2			0.744	
WOM3			0.915	
WOM4			0.894	
WOM5			0.851	
WOM6			0.751	
M1				0.789
M2				0.774
M3				0.724
M4				0.795
M5				0.740
M6				0.781
M7				0.776
M8				0.815

Table 1 above, the outer loading values for each item range from the lowest, KP2 at 0.702, to the highest, KP5 at 0.918. The model also shows that the outer loading values of all items in the constructs are greater than 0.70, indicating that all items are valid.

b. Convergent Validity Test

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that all indicators tested in this study have an outer loading value > 0.7. Therefore, it can be concluded that all indicators in this study are valid and suitable for use. The second stage of an indicator is considered valid if the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value is > 0.50.

Tabel 2. Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Convergent Validity

	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Requirement	Remark
Facilities	0.606	> 0,5	Valid
Service Quality	0.743	> 0,5	Valid
Interest	0.601	> 0,5	Valid
Word Of Mouth	0.72	> 0,5	Valid

Source : SMART PLS 4, 2025

Based on Table 2, all variables tested in this study have an AVE value > 0.5. Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables in this study are valid and suitable for use.

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c. Discriminant Validity Result

Tabel 3. Cross Loading Uji Dicriminant Validity

	Service Quality	Facility	Word Of Mouth	Interest
KP1	0.838	0.665	0.408	0.67
KP2	0.702	0.821	0.766	0.816
KP3	0.917	0.735	0.431	0.738
KP4	0.867	0.729	0.458	0.739
KP5	0.918	0.749	0.452	0.76
KP6	0.857	0.748	0.55	0.761
KP7	0.866	0.763	0.474	0.78
KP8	0.849	0.751	0.541	0.752
KP9	0.912	0.698	0.416	0.708
KP10	0.875	0.722	0.447	0.697
F1	0.857	0.732	0.438	0.746
F2	0.582	0.762	0.731	0.754
F3	0.89	0.821	0.54	0.815
F4	0.872	0.805	0.496	0.762
F5	0.434	0.776	0.902	0.763
F6	0.468	0.802	0.914	0.764
F7	0.852	0.799	0.501	0.783
F8	0.855	0.773	0.473	0.752
F9	0.898	0.759	0.472	0.779
F10	0.804	0.754	0.467	0.71
F11	0.463	0.785	0.896	0.757
F12	0.408	0.767	0.887	0.722
WOM1	0.478	0.799	0.917	0.781
WOM2	0.706	0.734	0.744	0.775
WOM3	0.489	0.802	0.915	0.785
WOM4	0.526	0.764	0.894	0.773
WOM5	0.362	0.645	0.851	0.632
WOM6	0.441	0.588	0.751	0.57
M1	0.92	0.78	0.438	0.789
M2	0.454	0.789	0.901	0.774
M3	0.754	0.66	0.4	0.724
M4	0.878	0.761	0.497	0.795
M5	0.814	0.694	0.436	0.74
M6	0.473	0.795	0.914	0.781
M7	0.463	0.778	0.905	0.776
M8	0.675	0.771	0.752	0.815

Source : Smart PLS 4, 2025

Based on Table 3, it can be seen that each indicator tested in this study has a greater loading factor value than the cross loading value on other variables. Thus, it can be concluded that all indicators in this study are valid and meet the criteria for discriminant validity.

Tabel 4. Fornell Lacker Criterio

	Service Quality	Facilities	Word Of Mouth	Interest
Service Quality	0.862			
Facilities	0.867	0.788		
Word Of Mouth	0.589	0.858	0.849	
Interest	0.871	0.974	0.849	0.854

Source : SMART PLS 4, 2025

The Fornell-Larcker criterion assesses discriminant validity at the construct (latent variable) level. For this measurement, the AVE of each construct must be higher than the R^2 values of all other constructs.

Tabel 5. Mean, STDEV, T-Values, P-Values

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
KP1 <- KP	0.838	0.831	0.071	11.868	0.000
KP2 <- KP	0.702	0.702	0.081	8.632	0.000
KP3 <- KP	0.917	0.913	0.049	18.757	0.000
KP4 <- KP	0.867	0.861	0.066	13.231	0.000
KP5 <- KP	0.918	0.916	0.048	19.310	0.000
KP6 <- KP	0.857	0.857	0.058	14.762	0.000
KP7 <- KP	0.866	0.86	0.069	12.475	0.000
KP8 <- KP	0.849	0.847	0.067	12.687	0.000
KP9 <- KP	0.912	0.905	0.057	16.118	0.000
KP10 <- KP	0.875	0.87	0.064	13.732	0.000
F1 <- F	0.732	0.726	0.084	8.739	0.000
F2 <- F	0.762	0.752	0.073	10.513	0.000
F3 <- F	0.821	0.807	0.076	10.849	0.000
F4 <- F	0.805	0.788	0.086	9.402	0.000
F5 <- F	0.776	0.769	0.089	8.681	0.000

Source : SMART PLS 4, 2025

From the table above (Table 5), it can be seen that the results of the testing for all outer loadings show T-statistics above 1.96, indicating that all items of the indicators are valid at a 5% significance level. The higher the T-value, the higher the validity of the respective indicator. The five highest values, in order, are WOM3, WOM1, WOM4, KP5, and KP3

d. Reliability Test

An instrument is considered reliable if Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values are > 0.7. Table 4 shows that each variable tested in this study has Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values > 0.7. Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables in this study are reliable.

Table 6. Reliability Test

	Cronbach' s alpha	Requirement	Remark
Facilities	0.942	> 0.7	Reliable
Service Quality	0.961	> 0.7	Reliable
Interest	0.905	> 0.7	Reliable
Word Of Mouth	0.921	> 0.7	Reliable

Source : SMART PLS 4, 2025 Inner Model Result

a. R-Square

Tabel 7. R-Square test result

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Interest	0.960	0.957
Word Of Mouth	0.831	0.822

Source : SMART PLS 4, 2025

From the table above, it can be seen that the R^2 value for the Interest variable is 0.960 and for the WOM variable is 0.831, indicating a strong explanatory capability.

b. F-Square and Q-Square

Tabel 8. F-Square and Q-Square test result

	f-square	Q-Square
Facilities -> Interest	0.563	0.217
Facilities -> Word Of Mouth	2.869	0.226
Service Quality -> Interest	0.219	0.524
Service Quality -> Word Of Mouth	0.567	0.553
Word Of Mouth -> Interest	0.179	0.582

Source : SMART PLS 4, 2025

From the table above, facilities have a large or significant effect on word of mouth, with a value of 2.869. In addition, facilities on interest and service quality on word of mouth also have large effects, with values of 0.563 and 0.567, respectively. Meanwhile, service quality on interest and word of mouth on interest have medium effects, with values of 0.219 and 0.179. Q^2 is used to measure the predictive relevance of the model using the blindfolding technique, as shown in the table above (Table 8). If $Q^2 > 0$, the model has predictive relevance.

c. Path Analysis

Tabel 9. Path Coefficients, T Statistics dan P Value

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Facilities > Interest	0.593	0.605	0.139	4.27	0.000
Facilities -> WOM	1.395	1.404	0.129	10.822	0.000

Service Quality - > Interest	0.235	0.237	0.105	2.237	0.025
Service Quality - > WOM	0.620	0.63	0.162	3.838	0.000
WOM -> Interest	0.207	0.191	0.081	2.553	0.011
Service Quality > WOM -> Interest	0.128	0.118	0.057	2.264	0.024
Facilities - > WOM -> Interest	0.288	0.267	0.115	2.515	0.012

Source : SMART PLS 4, 2025

From the table above, it can be seen that all paths between variables in the model show a strong positive effect. These relationships are also statistically significant, as all P-values are < 0.05. The highest effect is observed in the relationship between facilities and interest, with a coefficient of 1.395. This relationship is highly significant and positive, with a T-statistic of 10.822, well above 1.96, and a P-value of 0.000, indicating significance at both the 95% confidence level and 5% significance level. Meanwhile, the lowest effect is observed in the influence of service quality on interest through word of mouth, with a value of 0.128; however, it still has a positive effect at the 95% confidence level.

Hypothesis Test

All hypotheses were accepted. Service quality and facilities were found to have a positive and significant effect on word of mouth. Service quality, facilities, and word of mouth have a positive and significant effect on interest. Service quality and facilities have a positive and significant indirect effect on interest through word of mouth. All tested relationships demonstrated strong and significant direct and indirect effects between the variables.

Discussion

Service quality and facilities have been shown to have a positive and significant effect on word of mouth. Service quality, facilities and word of mouth all have a positive and significant impact on interest. Service quality and facilities also have a positive and significant indirect effect on interest through word of mouth. This phenomenon indicates that good service quality and facilities influence parents' perceptions and interest in enrolling their children in school.

The Ministry of Education’s government programs and the Kuningan District Government, which have been implemented at Sumbakeling Public Elementary School such as the “Sekolahku Keren” program, the “Sekolah Penggerak” program, the “Pembiasaan Gerakan Anak Indonesia Hebat” program, the religious habituation program and the physical education program should be further optimized with tangible results and positive evaluations. The local community and the parents of Sumbakeling Public Elementary School expect teachers to actively communicate about student progress, provide learning support, create a safe and comfortable classroom environment and ensure adequate facilities such as clean classrooms, a well-organized library, a safe playground and a well-maintained school environment to support the learning process.

Experiences from these aspects are then shared with neighbors or other parents, generating strong word of mouth. Recommendations among parents have a significant impact in the elementary school environment and such positive information increases parents' interest in enrolling their children at Sumbakeling Public Elementary School. Good service and adequate facilities not only have a direct impact on parents' interest in sending their children to school, but also strengthen the indirect effect through the spread of positive information in the community.

Several schools near Sumbakeling Public Elementary School which are often compared or compete for parents' interest in enrolling their children have a strong influence on student intake causing student enrollment numbers to fluctuate each year. Continuous efforts to improve service quality and facilities can make the school stand out from others in the area. Additionally, the positive experiences of parents must always be considered to increase their interest in sending their children to Sumbakeling Public Elementary School.

Conclusion

The results of the study indicate that both service quality and school facilities have a positive and significant effect on word of mouth and parents' interest in enrolling their children in school. Good service and adequate facilities enhance parents' positive perceptions which encourage them to share their experiences through stories, recommendations and invitations, thereby strengthening their interest in sending their children to school. Word of mouth acts as a mediator that strengthens the influence of service quality and facilities on parents' interest in enrolling their children in school.

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