
Factors Affecting University Selection During Pandemic : a Study on Indonesian High School Students

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to find an important factor for high school students in selecting university. It is vital for university to have a significant amount of new students enrolled to ensure a strong financial capability for them. This research focuses on quality, reputation, spirituality value, economic and emotional value factors in relation with intention to enroll in university. The respondents are year 11 and 12 high school students from DKI and Banten Province. The sampling technique is convenience sampling due to a pandemic situation. Smart PLS is used to analyze the data. This study found that quality, spirituality value, reputation and emotional value has positive correlation on intention to enroll, whereas quality and economic have no positive correlation toward intention to enroll

Keywords: University selection, quality, reputation, intention to enroll

I. INTRODUCTION

In a normal state, the marketer of a university is most likely to emphasize on quality in order to attract new students. However, the covid-19 pandemic has a negative impact toward Indonesia's economy. When the President of Republic Indonesia said "Indonesia has the worst economic crisis in history due to the Covid-19 pandemic", it illustrated the seriousness of the current economic situation in Indonesia [1]. The Chairperson of the Association of Indonesian Private Higher Education (APTSI), Budi Djatmiko, complained that the number of new student applicants at Private Higher Education (PTS) has decreased this year due to the coronavirus (covid-19) pandemic [2]. Although, no available data yet for the number of new student applicants at public university, it can be assumed that the covid-19 has a negative impact toward it. Thus, the importance of quality variables toward intention to enroll will be verified in this research. Other variables, such as spirituality value, reputation, economic value and emotional value will be examined, in relation toward intention to enroll. In the current covid-19 situation, none or only a few papers discussed determinant factors for year 11 and 12 students in relation with intention to enroll in university. This research gap will be discussed further. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to find out : Does the quality influence reputation ? Does the quality influence intention to enroll ? Does spirituality value influence intention to enroll ? Does the reputation influence intention to enroll? Does the economic value influence intention to enroll ? Does the emotional value influence intention to enroll?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

Intention to enroll

The center of marketers is how to increase consumers' enthusiasm to purchase a product or a service [3]. Thus it is essential for marketers in knowing any variables that have influence toward intention to purchase. Intention itself refers to the possibility that an individual will purchase the product or service [4]. Moreover, intention to enroll can be defined as not only whether prospective students intend to enroll, but also whether they prepare themselves to investigate the chance of enrolling and question others about enrolling [5].

Quality

Quality can be defined as the consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority [6]. Sweeney and Soutar [7] emphasized that quality is expected performance of the product. The study of Ngan and Khoi [8] was conducted to find the relationship between the service quality and university reputation. The result showed the service quality had a

relationship with university reputation. Furthermore, research by Caruana and Ewing [9] on online loyalty found the correlation between customer service quality toward reputation. On the FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) market, it was revealed that corporate reputation had a relationship with service quality too [10].

H1 : There is a positive correlation between Quality (QUA) and Reputation (REP)

Bujisic, Hutchinson and Parsa [11] found significant influence between quality and behavioral intention. Research on mobile banking adoption by Thye Goh, Mohd Suki and Fam [12] suggested quality influence positively toward behavioral intention. In the context of online shopping, offline perceived product quality has a positive impact on behavioral intentions [13]. Jung and Seock [14] found the positive correlation between quality and purchase intention. Quality has positive impact toward continuance of intention for mobile banking users of BCA Bank ([15].

H2: There is a positive correlation between Quality (QUA) and Intention to enroll (ITE)

Spirituality Value

The spirituality can be defined as the personal and subjective side of religious experience [16]. Furthermore, King and Crowther [17] wrote that spirituality is the individual quest for understanding answers to ultimate questions about life, about meaning, and about relationship to the sacred or transcendent, which may (or may not) lead to or arise from the development of religious rituals and the formation of community. Chairy [18] found that spirituality is a significant predictor among college students for green purchase intention. In another research, spirituality at the workplace has positive influence toward intention to stay for the employees [19]. In Aboobaker, Edward and K.A [20] spirituality also has an effect on employee intention to stay. Survey on around 3300 registered nurses in three public hospitals by Anvari, Barzaki, Amiri, Irum and Shapourabadi [21] found a negative relationship between spirituality value and intention to leave. Finally, the result on determinant factors of university choice found a positive relation , between spirituality value toward intention to enroll [22] .

H3 : There is a positive correlation between Spirituality Value (SV) and Intention to enroll (ITE)

Reputation

According to Ngan and Khoi [8] , reputation has unclear explanations and is subjective. However, reputation is an important matter for customers in choosing one company over the other [23]. Furthermore, it is seen as a substantial part of one organization and competitive advantage. It is important for university to develop a positive reputation [24]. Polat, Guncavdi and Arslan [25] found the reputation influence positively toward intention to enroll in the

university program. Research by Tsou, Liu and Hsu [26] at Watsons in Taiwan found that reputation positively affects buyer purchase intention. Reputation is one of the important determinants for online repurchase intentions [27].

H4 : There is a positive correlation between Reputation (REP) and Intention to enroll (ITE)

Economic Value

Economic value can be defined as the utility derived from the product due to the reduction of its perceived short term and longer term costs [7]. Lin [28] found that economic value has a positive impact on purchase intention. In addition, based on Lee, Cheng and Shih [29] price has positive impacts on purchase intention willingness . Furthermore, in e-commerce sales promotion, price value has influence on purchase intention [30].

H5 : There is a positive correlation between Economic Value (EV) and Intention to enroll (ITE)

Emotional Value

According to Kato and Tsuda [31] , emotional value can be defined as the value which customer himself or herself finds additional meaning in the product outside the original specification. Based on Topaloğlu [32] , emotional value has positive influence on intention for online shopping in Turkey. Moreover, Thye Goh, Mohd Suki and Fam [12] states emotional value positively influences intention in Islamic mobile banking adoption. Additionally, in the context of online games, emotional value has positive impact toward intention [33]. Additionally, emotional value also influences the purchase intention for shoppers at shopping centers [34]. Finally, the emotional value is positively associated with customer repurchase intention [35].

H6 : There is a positive correlation between Emotional Value (EMV) and Intention to enroll (ITE)

Thus, the model for this research is shown in figure 1.

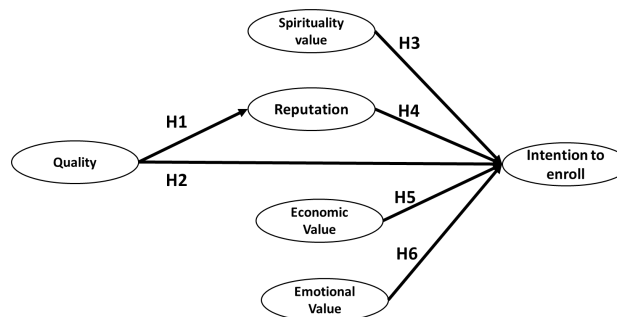


Figure 1 Research Model

III. METHODOLOGY

Survey method is used in this research. Data is collected via questionnaire instrument. The targeted population are year 11 and year 12 students in DKI Jakarta and Banten Province, Indonesia. Non-probability sampling is applied due to Covid-19 restriction. Moreover, convenience sampling technique is chosen because as mentioned by Hermawan [36] it can be used in specific situations , such as in pandemic situations, to retrieve the sample. The number of respondents are 137 students. Partial least square-structural equation model (PLS-SEM) is used to manage the statistical analysis. The 5-point Likert scale is applied, there are 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree and 5=strongly disagree. This research uses measurement based on previous studies, with some modification to suit the current research.

IV. RESULT

Profile of Respondents

The number of respondents is 137 high school students. They are consisting of 42 male (30%) and 95 female (70%) respondents. Furthermore, 124 or 91 % of respondents are from year 12. The majority of respondents come from public high school (55%) followed by private school (45%). The parent's occupation is mainly as an employee from a private company (42%) and entrepreneur (31%).

Outer Model

Composite reliability is measured for the reliability test purpose. The composite reliability must exceed 0.7 to be considered as reliable. Furthermore, the validity test has been done by calculating the value of average variance extracted (AVR), factor loading and discriminant validity. The value of AVE > 0.5 and factor loading > 0.7 to be considered as a valid instrument. Moreover, discriminant validity is fulfilled when the square root of AVE > the correlation value between variables. When the value of factor loading within 0.5 and 0.6 is still acceptable, as long as the value of AVE >0.5 [37]. Table 1 shows the result of the reliability and validity test.

Table 1. Reliability and Validity Test

VARIABLE AND ITEMS		Factor Loading
Quality (QUA) AVE=0.705; CR=0.905		
QUA 1	I am happy with a quality university	0.834
QUA 2	I am happy with a university that is well prepared	0.91
QUA 3	I like universities that have good quality standards	0.821
QUA 4	I like universities that have consistent performance	0.789
Spirituality (SV) AVE=0.527; CR= 0.816		
SPV2	I feel connected to all kind of life	0.707
SPV3	I felt a deep inner peace and harmony	0.757
SPV4	Universities must have a vision of spirituality	0.701
SPV5	Universities must have a spiritual mission	0.736
Reputation (REP) AVE=0.621; CR=0.907		
REP1	I love the university that everyone is known for	0.833
REP2	I am happy with a famous university	0.734
REP3	I am happy with a reputable university	0.813
REP4	I will check whether the academic program run by the university is reputable	0.725
REP5	I like it when university graduates find it easy to find jobs	0.781
REP6	Universities with strong prospects for future growth are important	0.834
Economic Value (EV) AVE=0.622; CR=0.868		
EV1	I like it when universities offer reasonable tuition fees	0.826
EV2	I am happy if the university has value for money tuition fees	0.746
EV3	I am happy if the university provides tuition fees in accordance with the services provided	0.823
EV4	I am happy with the economical tuition fees	0.755
Emotional value (EMV) AVE=0.666; CR=0.888		
EV1	It is important for me to be able to enjoy the university that I will enter	0.852
EV2	It is important for me to be able to feel comfortable in the university I will be attending	0.828

EV3	It is important for me to be able to feel worthy of the university I will enter	0.876
EV4	I intend to go to a university that makes me happy *	0.696
Intention to enroll (ITE) AVE=0.599; CR=0.881		
EMV1	I intend to enroll in a university that I am interested in	0.794
EMV2	I would like to get more information about the university I am interested in	0.765
EMV3	I am very likely to apply to a university that I am interested in	0.759
EMV4	I firmly believe in applying to the university that I am interested in	0.848
EMV5	I have a good chance of applying to the university I am interested in	0.694
Information : AVE=Average variance constructed ; CR=composite reliability		
Source : Result from data analysis		

The value of AVE is within 0.527 to 0.705. Moreover, the value of CR is between 0.881 to 0.907. Furthermore, the value of factor loading is in the range from 0.694 to 0.91. Thus the requirements of validity and reliability tests have been fulfilled. According to Joseph E Hair, Hult, Ringle and Sarstedt [37], the requirement for discriminant validity is the value of the square root of each variable more than the value of the correlation between variables. Table 2 shows the requirement is fulfilled. Thus, the instrument is valid.

Table 2. Evaluation of Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Economic value	Emotional value	Intention to enroll	Quality	Reputation	Spiritual value
Economic value	0.788					
Emotional value	0.552	0.816				
Intention to enroll	0.424	0.639	0.774			
Quality	0.46	0.681	0.513	0.839		
Reputation	0.506	0.721	0.599	0.609	0.788	
Spirituality value	0.38	0.395	0.422	0.374	0.344	0.726
Source : Data Processing Result						

Inner Model

Hypothesis tested by significant value of $\alpha=5\%$ (one-tailed proof) and is tested by comparing the p-value with a level of significance. If p-value < α -value, the hypothesis is supported. The value of R² of the reputation variable is 0,371, which means it is 37.1 % explained by the quality variable. Thus 62.9% is explained by other variables which are not outside the focus of this research. Furthermore, the value of R² of intention to enroll is 0,478 (47,8%), it means the variable intention to enroll is explained as much as 47,8 % by quality, spirituality value, reputation, economic value and emotional value variables. It means 62,2 % is explained by variables not included in this research.

The purpose of collinearity test is to examine whether independent variables are strongly related. The value of VIF should be below 5 to illustrate no collinearity has occurred [37]. Table 3 below shows that all the VIF are below 5, so there is no collinearity within independent variables.

Table 3. Collinearity Evaluation

	VIF
Economic value	1.559
Emotional value	2.779
Quality	2.022
Reputation	2.261
Spirituality value	1.263
Source : Data Processing Result	

The results of all hypothesis testing are shown in table 4 below. The result of the statistical testing shows 4 hypotheses are supported and 2 hypotheses are not supported. which is represented by the p-value < α -value (=5%). All standardized coefficient values have a positive value. The most influencing variable toward intention to enroll is the emotion value (0.344). Whereas the spirituality value is the least influencing variable toward the intention to enroll (0.174).

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Standardized Coefficient	p-Value	Decision
H1 : There is a positive correlation between Quality (QUA) and Reputation (REP)	0.609	0.000	Supported
H2: There is a positive correlation between Quality (QUA) and Intention to enroll (ITE)	0.053	0.326	Not Supported
H3 : There is a positive correlation between Spirituality Value (SV) and Intention to enroll (ITE)	0.174	0.039	Supported
H4 : There is a positive correlation between Reputation (REP) and Intention to enroll (ITE)	0.251	0.008	Supported
H5 : There is a positive correlation between Economic Value (EV) and Intention to enroll (ITE)	0.017	0.437	Not Supported
H6 : There is a positive correlation between Emotional Value (EMV) and Intention to enroll (ITE)	0.344	0.008	Supported

V. DISCUSSION

A positive correlation between quality and reputation is supported because the p-value ($=0.000$) $<$ α -value ($=5\%$). This result is supporting the previous research by [9], [10] and [8]. Therefore, university must have good quality, well prepared, good standards and perform consistently. A positive correlation between quality and intention to enroll is not supported because the p-value ($=0.326$) $>$ α -value ($=5\%$). Thus this finding is different from previous research by [11], [14], [13], [15] and [12].

A positive correlation between spirituality value and intention to enroll is supported because the p-value ($=0.039$) $<$ α -value ($=5\%$). This finding is aligned with prior research by [20],[21],[18],[19] and [22]. According to this, university should provide an environment to support the spirituality ambience. Moreover, the university mission and vision must accommodate spirituality value too.

A positive correlation between reputation and intention to enroll is supported because the p-value ($=0.008$) $<$ α -value ($=5\%$). This result is according to earlier research by [27],[26] and

[25]. As a result of this, university must have a recognizable reputation and provide a proper network for the alumni to seek employment.

A positive correlation between economic value and intention to enroll is not supported because the p-value ($=0.437$) $>$ α -value ($=5\%$). Thus this finding is different from previous research by [28],[38] and [30]

A positive correlation between emotional value and intention to enroll is supported because the p-value ($=0.008$) $<$ α -value ($=5\%$). Hence this finding is aligned with prior research by [32], [35],[12],[34] and [33] .The feeling of emotion such as enjoyment , comfort, worthiness and happiness should be offered for the high school student to appeal them for enrolling into the university.

VI. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In this pandemic time, any affecting factors in university selection for high year students should be an important insight for university institutions. The first implication, despite the economic crisis, it seems university must not focus heavily on how affordable the tuition fees are in attracting the high school students. The second implication, university marketers should have a proper strategy to introduce the quality, spirituality value, reputation and emotional value that university possesses. If the marketer team is able to create awareness of those values, it will positively affect the intention to enroll high school students. Third implication, if the university does not have a strength in any of those important factors, then they must provide a solution to improve it.

This research has some limitations. First, this research has samples from two provinces in Indonesia whereas there are 34 provinces in total. Second, the sample size should be larger for the next research.

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