

THE EFFECT OF SERVICE QUALITY, BRAND IMAGE AND SOCIAL MEDIA ON CHOOSING DECISIONS WITH E-WOM AND ATTITUDE AS INTERVENING VARIABLES ON STUDENTS OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN LLDIKTI REGION VI CENTRAL JAVA

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate and analyze the impact of service quality, brand image, social media, e-wom, and attitudes on students' decisions to attend private institutions in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java. The population of this study consisted of all active students of the Faculty of Economics at Strata 1 (S1) in a Private Higher Education that is coordinated by the DIKTI Service Institute (LLDIKTI) Region VI Central Java, where the Institution is accredited to AIPT "A or Superior" and the study program is currently only taking two semesters (new students in the 2021/2022 Academic Year). The quota sampling method was used to choose a sample size of 100. The AMOS 26 program was used to test the hypothesis using a structural equation model (SEM). The results showed (1) service quality, brand image and social media had a positive and significant effect on student e-wom, (2) service quality, brand image and social media had a positive and significant effect on student attitudes, (3) service quality, brand image and social media had a positive and significant effect on student decisions, E- Wom has a positive and significant effect on the decision to choose, (4) Attitude has a positive and significant effect on the decision to choose.

Keywords: Service Quality, Brand Image, Social Media, E-Wom, Attitude, Purchase Decision

INTRODUCTION

The globalization notion is far from being clear and well defined, and higher education is more subjected to developments that are complicated, diversified, and often even conflicting. However, the idea of globalization suggests that the many developments are connected in some way and leading to new kinds of interdependencies among individuals, institutions, and nations. Globalization is thought to promise significant and fruitful change to higher education systems in societies with relatively stable political, social, and institutional structures, while potentially endangering the very stability required to create effective higher education systems in other societies. Worldwide, it appears that higher education is undergoing significant transformation, and the early 21st century represents the "perfect storm" of pressure from the outside world and internal reactions. Currently, global networking and exchange are altering social, economic, and cultural life in emerging nations, and higher education is at the center of these developments. In some ways, the old internationalization in higher education is being replaced or even challenged by the new globalization. However, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

As the twenty-first century approaches, the higher education sector is becoming more globally oriented, and every university will face an increasingly challenging level of competition. This condition compels each university to continuously pay attention to and better satisfy the interests and wants of its prospective students and/or their parents than other universities (competitors). Universities, which are institutions offering services in higher education, might be compared to the service industry. Another indicator of success is how satisfied its stakeholders are (managers, staff, lecturers, and students). Academic quality must still be prioritized as a "service product," just like other corporate institutions, in higher education management, while also being professionally managed.

With the conversion of various state universities (PTN) from institutes to universities, changes to the legal status of several PTNs, or preparations to become state-owned legal entities (BHMN), the competition is becoming more intense. Since fewer potential students are registering for PTS, these developments have a negative effect on the continued survival of private institutions (PTS). This is because PTN is offering more places for potential students. For the purpose of obtaining financing sources for the delivery of education for PTNs that must function independently, the addition of these seats under the guise of regular, non-regular classes, extensions, and so on is absolutely important. Therefore, it is evident that PTN are vying to attract more students. Of course, there are numerous faculties and study programs in institutionally approved private higher education (AIPT) "A or superior" in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java, one of which is the faculty of economics and business. High school graduates who intend to enroll in undergraduate accounting, management, or development economics study programs have shown a lot of interest in the Faculty of Economics and Business up until this point. In the meantime, the number of new students admitted to the Faculty of Economics S1 from the five private institutions accredited by institution A or superior at LLDIKTI Region VI, Central Java, whose study program is accredited by AIPT "A or Superior."

The demands placed on universities and each faculty are not only limited to the ability to produce good graduates as measured by academic achievement alone, but also include the need for the entire educational program of higher education institutions to be able to prove high quality. Examples of this include accountability, proof of achievement, assessments, quality certificates, alumni success in getting a job in accordance with their field of science, as well as positive recognition from users. As a result, administrators of educational institutions and faculties must adopt a more professional approach while offering students' services that are related to education (Loyola, 2013).

This article develops the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) model, which is used in private universities (PTS) that have received accreditation from organizations (AIPT) with the predicate "A or Superior," and more particularly for students who will be forecasted about the intensity of their process to choose private universities (PTS) as the appropriate place to study at the undergraduate level. In order to address this issue from this dissertation, this study applies the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), whose implementation involves modifying the variables or constructs.

Aspects that are both theoretical and empirical make up the study's main issues. There are still opportunities for researchers to develop Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) with variable justification in the field of service marketing management at Universities, especially Private Universities (PTS), because there are still a lot of studies that do so in different places with different variables and results (inconsistencies). The problem from the empirical aspect, based on observations and studies of information or empirical data, is that there are still many Private Universities (PTS) which are not the main choice for prospective students, so that it seems that Private Universities (PTS) are the number two universities even though they are higher education institutions. The institution has an institutional accreditation level (AIPT) with the title "A or Superior".

In order to construct a Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) model for tackling empirical problems in private colleges, this study modifies the current factors (PTS). The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) has been modified, and among the changes are the substitution of the variable quality of service and social media for the variable subjective norm and the variable brand image (perception of the name and goodwill of Private Universities (PTS)) for the variable attitude toward behavior (attitude). These three factors can vary independently or freely. When choosing a private university (PTS), where students are now taking knowledge courses, the intensity to behave is replaced with e-word of mouth (e-wom), attitude is positioned as an intervening variable or mediator, and the dependent variable (bound) is a student decision process variable. Of course, there is a procedure involved in choosing an item or service to purchase. A person's decisions are influenced by both internal and external interests as well as impulses. According to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), this drive is a stimulus or a stimulation that an individual experiences. Based on the stimulus, a person will act logically and choose what to buy based on that behavior.

Making decisions can be viewed as the outcome or product of mental or cognitive processes that result in the choice of a course of action from a range of accessible options. The process of integrating knowledge to assess multiple alternative behaviors and select one is at the heart of consumer decision-making (Fahmi, 2016: 57). This integration process yields a decision that is cognitively represented as a desire to act.

The buying decision, according to Tjiptono and Diana (2020: 72), is the point at which customers truly decide whether to buy a product. Three factors influence consumers' purchasing decisions: the consistency of a product while making a purchase, their shopping habits, and how quickly they purchase a product (Indrawati, 2017: 268). Making decisions differs from reasoning, which is characterized by a progression of knowledge from what one already knows to new information. Making choices is the process of decision-making.

A decision is an action to do or not to do anything; it is binary; as a result, what matters in a decision is not whether someone chooses or does not select because both are decisions, but rather the process by which a person comes to that decision. Therefore, a decision is made at the end of every decision-making process. There are factors that contribute to people actively becoming or doing e-WOM for certain Private Universities (PTS), including service quality, brand perception, and social media from the Private Universities (PTS).

The uniqueness of this study is that it bases its use of additional metrics for gauging service quality on Afshan Azam's research (2018). These metrics include the administration's registration and payment processes for associated services. The tangibles (physical evidence) related to facilities and infrastructure are among the indicators used in this study to gauge service quality. Other indicators include assurance, registration process, responsiveness, empathy, reliability and payment process.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Fishbein first presented the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) in 1967. Fishbein and Ajzen later examined, evaluated, and developed the TRA (1975). Model Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is a theory that describes some elements of human behavior. A person's purpose to do a particular action, such as making a choice, typically determines whether that action will be taken or not (Ajzen and Fishbein (1975) in (Indrawati 2017: 18). According to The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), a person's beliefs can affect their attitudes and social standards, which will ultimately alter how they want to act either consciously or unconsciously. This theory places a strong emphasis on how a person's "intention" to act (decision-making) relates to the type of conduct they exhibit once the decision has been made.

According to Lupiyoadi (2013: 67), there are favorable findings of service quality aspects (which include Reliability, Assurance, Tangible, Empathy, and Responsiveness) to the degree of client satisfaction which can effect the development of electronic word-of-mouth. The results of the study support a substantial relationship between service quality and student e-wom, according to research by Rachbini (2021), Patrada & Andjani (2020), Abdullah Uslu (2020), Chia-Lin Shu et al., (2020), Sidra Shehzadi et al., (2020), and Kamaruddin et al., (2021). While attitude is the propensity of people to understand, feel, react, and behave towards a certain phenomenon which is the result of the interaction of cognitive, affective, and conative processes, service quality is a measure of how consumers evaluate the level of service received (perceived service) in comparison to the level of service expected (Kothler and Armstrong) (2016). Every student wants a service that meets their needs so that it influences their conduct (Solekhul, 2017). Research conducted by Prebntice, Brady, & Mc Laughl (2018); Ghobehei (2019); Ahmed Demir et al., (2020); Sartaj & Ajoy (2020); and Intalar & Yodpram (2021) the results showed that service quality had a significant effect on student attitudes.

The intense competition in the market urges companies to continuously improve their service quality (Bolton et al., 2004). It is known that enhancement on service quality improves customer satisfaction that guarantees better long-term benefits in the form of market share and higher profitability (Anderson et al., 1994). Higher education institutions should immediately make effective plans to compete and survive in the market. According to Landrum, Turrisi, and Harless (1998), university image is a precious aspect that helps a university win over the tight market competition. Moreover, Philip (1995) emphasized that the stronger effects of university image and reputation of a university in winning the market competition compared to the quality for perceived image have stronger influences on students in choosing universities to attend. University image also affects student satisfaction (Alves and Raposo, 2010) and student loyalty

(Alves and Raposo, 2010; Brunner et al., 2008).

The most significant factor felt and taken into account by customers is the quality of services offered by institutions. The level of service provided can affect students' college selection preferences. According to Taylan et al., (2018), the success of a higher education institution in preserving the continuity of its institution is heavily influenced by the service quality provided by the institution. Research conducted by Harahap and Amanah (2018); Afshan Azam (2018); Mc Laughlin et al., (2018); Hanif Othman (2019); Regina Fortunata (2020); and Assakhir & Permana (2021); and Buchori & Harwani (2021) research results show that service quality has a significant effect on students' decisions to choose private universities.

Based on the description above, the following hypothesis is proposed

- Hypothesis 1: Service quality has a significant effect on e-wom students in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java.
- Hypothesis 2: Service quality has a significant effect on student attitudes in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java.
- Hypothesis 3: Service quality has a significant effect on student decisions in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java.

Branding is now an essential part of the marketing strategy for any university, especially if that institution isn't particularly well-known or well-established. Creating a solid identity is the best way to appeal to students as it helps reinforce any advertising messages and promotes a distinctiveness which separates an institution from others. Consider the most successful companies; they all have a unique persona for which they are known.

The branding and slogans for most universities are remarkably similar. They tend to feature references to the institution being "unique" or "different" or "right for the student", without any specific reference as to why that is. University marketing needs to specifically state what exactly it is that makes that place the perfect destination for students, and to do this they need a solid brand identity.

College or University brand image is a belief in the form of a general picture and impression of a university established over time by processing information from numerous sources. University indicators, according to (Ariska, 2016). With a good image, students will automatically do positive electronic word of mouth. Research conducted by Sumatias et al., (2017); Lee & Svetlana (2019) Kim Leng (2020); Norbani Che-Ha et al., (2020); and Hongfei Liu (2020) research results show that the brand image of universities has a significant effect on e-wom students in choosing universities.

Brand Image is how customers think of a brand. It can be defined as the perception of the brand in the minds of the customers. This image develops over time. Customers form an image based on their interactions and experience with the brand. These interactions take place in many forms and do not necessarily involve the purchase or use of products and services. By examining many features and digesting information from various sources throughout time, brand image may be understood as a belief in the form of a general image and impression of a company.

According to Nugroho Setiadi (2013: 110), brand image is related to the following: The brand's image is correlated with attitudes, such as beliefs and preferences, towards the brand. The fundamental purpose of advertising is to create a positive brand image because consumers who have a favorable opinion of a product are more likely to buy it. This will alter the consumer's perspective or attitude (potential students) towards a college. According to research by Viraiyan Teeroovengadum et al. (2019), Afzaal Ali et al. (2020), Lawal et al. (2020), Al Douriet al. (2021), and Erkan, Unal & Acikgoz (2021), university brand image has a positive impact on students' attitudes.

The entire perception that people have of an organization is referred to as brand image (Kotler and Keller, 2016). When choosing whether or not to continue their studies in college, prospective students must make careful evaluation of a university's reputation before making their decision. Research on the influence of brand image on election decisions has been carried out by several previous studies, namely, Agusty leo, et al., (2017); Bui Hyong Khoi (2019); Hong Thi Que (2019); Merli Tamtik (2019); Lei Zhu (2019); Esther and Fate (2020); and Christophorus et al., (2020) which examines the influence of university brand image on student decisions in choosing colleges.

Based on the description above, the following hypothesis is proposed

Hypothesis 4: Brand image has a significant effect on e-wom students in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java.

Hypothesis 5: Brand image has a significant effect on student attitudes in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java.

Hypothesis 6: Brand image has a significant effect on students' decisions in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java.

According to Gunelius (2011:10), the social media marketing model is a type of marketing that uses social media platforms to offer promotions. Social media can be utilized to generate interest and widen the reach of information, particularly if the business has a solid network, uses it frequently, and has enough information. Regardless of whether they are for-profit (profit oriented) or nonprofit (non-profit oriented) businesses, all organizations in the contemporary digitalization era rely heavily on social media. One of the noteworthy aspects is how universities have recently significantly changed how they employ information technology to support long-term institutional success. Research on the influence of social media on electronic word of mouth was conducted by Purga, Bertosik (2018); Double & Robinson (2019); Potura & Softic (2019); Anita Whiting et al., (2019); and Sagynbekova (2020) who stated that social media had a significant effect on students' electronic word of mouth.

Online programs, resources, and media that promote communication, teamwork, and the exchange of information are collectively referred to as social media (Santosa, 2012). Kotler and Keller (2016) define consumer behavior as the study of how people, groups, and organizations select, acquire, employ, and make use of products, services, concepts, or experiences to satiate their needs and aspirations. When social media is used effectively, it can

reveal student opinions and influence decision-making. The impact of social media on student views is supported by studies by Duffet, Rodney (2017), Laoli et al., (2018), Alshetti, Ahmed (2019), Rebeca and Eva (2020), and Ramo Palalic et al., (2020).

According to Swasta and Handoko (2014), consumer behavior includes preparation-related decision-making as well as actions taken by people who are directly involved in getting and using goods and services. Social media gives rise to social media marketing, which uses social media to persuade customers by a corporation or business person to introduce and sell a good or service that can affect a person's purchasing decision. Research on the influence of social media on the decision to choose a university has been carried out by Poturak & Turkyilmaz (2018); Mohd Aeshah et al., (2019); Vikas Gupta (2019); Gabriel Simiyu et al., (2020); and Ishak Fikri et al., (2021) where the results of their research conclude that there is a significant influence between social media on students' decisions to choose universities.

Based on the description above, the following hypothesis is proposed

Hypothesis 7: Social media has a significant effect on e-wom students in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java.

Hypothesis 8: Social media has a significant effect on student attitudes in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java.

Hypothesis 9: Social media has a significant effect on students' decisions in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java.

eWOM can be generally defined as consumers' information sharing and exchange about a product or company via the Internet, social media, and mobile communication. eWOM has been recognized to lead to high retransmission intentions because it is easy for consumers to generate conversations online. Today's new form of online WOM communication is known as electronic word-of-mouth or eWOM (Yang, 2017). This form of communication has taken on special importance with the emergence of online platforms, which have made it one of the most influential information sources on the Web (Abubakar and Ilkan, 2016), for instance, in the tourism industry (Sotiriadis and Van Zyl, 2013). As a result of technological advances, these new means of communication have led to changes in consumer behavior (Cantallops and Salvi, 2014; Gómez-Suárez et al., 2017), because of the influence they enable consumers to exert on each other (Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012) by allowing them to obtain or share information about companies, products, or brands (Gómez-Suárez et al., 2017).

Sales and brand development are significantly impacted by the marketing communication strategy known as "E-Word of Mouth" (E-Wom) (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Information that can change the intensity to make a decision, such as e-wom, has a significant impact on how people behave. If many individuals deliberately adopt this behavior by utilizing information technology (social media), they will be better able to persuade or induce others to adopt this behavior. Research on the influence of e-wom on students' decisions to choose universities has been carried out by several previous researchers, namely: Mersid Poturak, Merve Turkyilmaz (2018); Huiyuan Yang (2019); Balro & Hamid (2019); Dobelea & Linda J. Robinson (2019);

Adrian & Christopher (2020); and Roya Sadat Alavi et al., (2020) where the results of their research show that e-wom has a significant effect on student decisions to choose universities.

Based on the description above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 10: E-Wom has significant effect on students' decisions in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java.

The degree to which educational institutions' efforts foster a favorable view regarding the institution itself has a significant impact on the consumer's decision to attend college. Robbins defines attitudes as evaluations or conclusions about things, people, or events. As a result, attitudes can affect a student's choice of major. Research conducted by Moses et al., (2018); Aleksieva et al., (2018); Iqbal Imaria (2020); Shahla Ali Ahmed (2020); and Fevzi Okumus (2021) the results of the study show that attitudes have a significant effect on students' decisions to choose higher education.

Based on the description above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 11: Student attitudes have a significant effect on student decisions in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a quantitative study whose participants are all current members of the Faculty of Economics at Strata 1 (S1) in a Private Higher Education (PTS) setting coordinated by the DIKTI Service Institute (LLDIKTI) in Region VI Central Java. Both the institution and the study program are accredited by AIPT with grades of "A or Superior," and the program is only taking three semesters at the moment (new students will begin in 2021/2022). Although the study method employed is a survey method, respondents were given questionnaires via a google form. The Slovin formula was used to pick a sample from the population, yielding a sample of 100 respondents. The AMOS 26 program was used to evaluate hypotheses using the Structural Equation Model (SEM).

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Validity testing was carried out using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The validity test according to Sekaran (2006) aims to determine the accuracy and fidelity of a measuring instrument in carrying out its measuring function. Validity testing was carried out using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). According to Ghozali (2015), factor loading 0.50 is considered significant. The results of data processing show that all question items are declared valid, because each question item which is an indicator of each variable has been extracted perfectly and has a loading factor of 0.50.

To measure the reliability of this research instrument, it is done by using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. Each Cronbach Alpha value shows that the variables of service quality, brand image, social media, e-wom, attitudes and students' decisions have a Cronbach alpha coefficient > 0.6 which means the reliability is said to be good (Ghozali, 2015).

The results of the SEM test with standardized coefficient values for each variable are as follows:

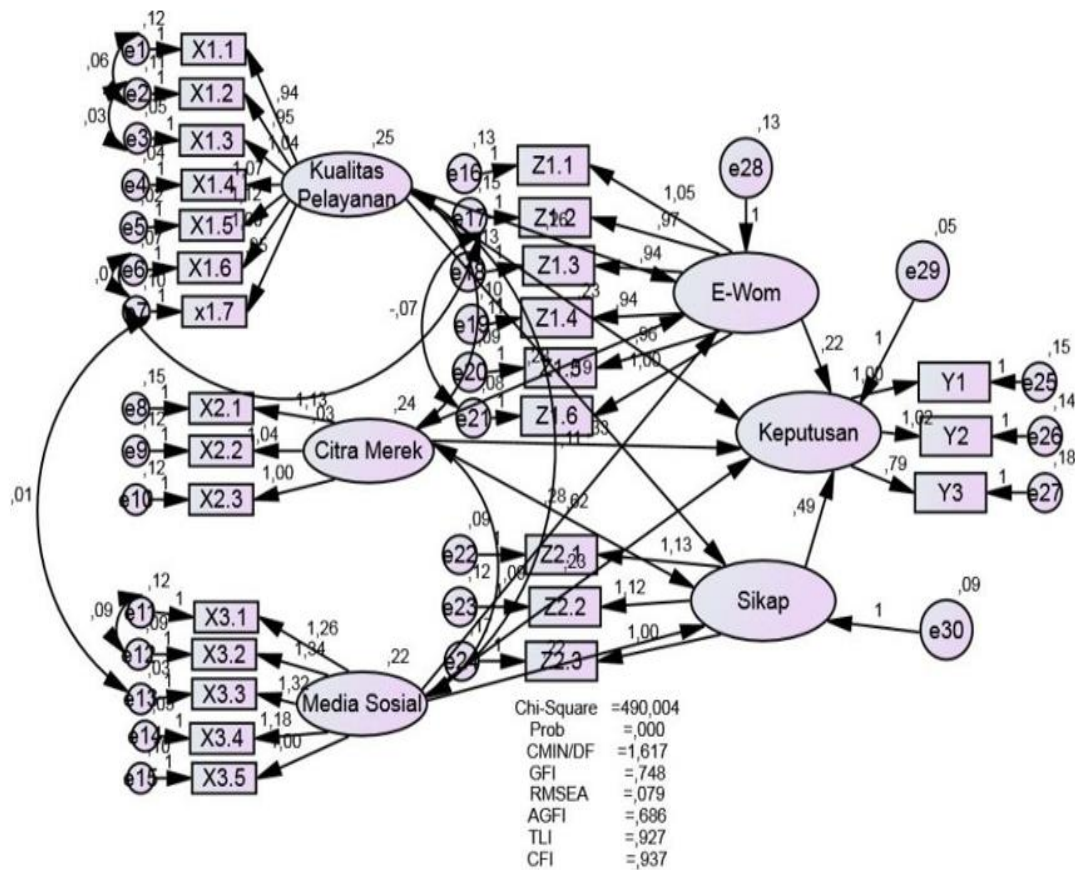


Figure 1: Structural Equation Model (SEM) After Modification

Hypothesis testing was conducted to determine the relationship between variables directly. In this study, it is expected that with causality testing can determine the effect of service quality (X1), brand image (X2), and social media (X3) on students' decisions to choose Private Universities (Y) with e-wom (Z1) and attitude (Z2) as an intervening variable.

The results of the calculations are presented in the table as follows:

The summary of the test results will be described in the following table:

Table of Evaluation of Causality Test Regression Weight

No	Variable		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Interpretation	
1	Service quality	→	E-Wom	0,255	0,100	2,560	0,010	Significant
2	Service quality	→	Attitude	0,193	0,097	1,993	0,046	Significant
3	Service quality	→	Choosing decision	0,226	0,098	2,302	0,021	Significant
4	Brand image	→	E-Wom	0,278	0,104	2,669	0,008	Significant
5	Brand image	→	Attitude	0,624	0,119	5,244	0,000	Significant
6	Brand image	→	Choosing decision	0,334	0,147	2,269	0,023	Significant
7	Social media	→	E-Wom	0,284	0,101	2,802	0,005	Significant
8	Social media	→	Attitude	0,219	0,098	2,232	0,026	Significant
9	Social media	→	Choosing decision	0,234	0,102	2,287	0,022	Significant
10	E-Wom	→	Choosing decision	0,218	0,105	2,071	0,038	Significant
11	Attitude	→	Choosing decision	0,494	0,153	3,223	0,001	Significant

Source: Results of Processed Data, 2022.

DISCUSSION

1. The Effect of Service Quality on E-Wom

The results showed that service quality had a positive and significant effect on e-wom students in choosing private universities. These results are known from the results of the P value below 0.05, so that the first hypothesis which states that service quality affects e-wom students in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java is accepted. A positive influence explains empirically that the better the service quality, the stronger the student e-wom, and vice versa if the service quality decreases, it also weakens the student e-wom.

The results of this study directly support the research conducted by Rachbini (2021); Patrada & Andjani (2020); Abdullah Uslu (2020); Chia-Lin Shu et al., (2020) Sidra Shehzadi et al., (2020); and Kamaruddin et al., (2021) which states that there is a significant influence between service quality on student e-wom.

Private colleges must improve service quality and please students in order to generate word-of-mouth advertising that is efficient and relatively inexpensive due to the fierce rivalry that is unavoidably brought about by the expansion of the number of private universities. As a reliable source of information and communication, word-of-mouth can increase the number of new students by earning the trust of potential students. In order to enhance public trust in higher education, service quality is crucial. Private institutions that are geared toward becoming service businesses will always work to be able to offer their students high-quality services. To achieve and maintain student happiness, private institutions must work to maintain higher service quality compared to other private universities. Word-of-mouth marketing is one tactic institutions use to attract the public's attention. Because students typically find it challenging to evaluate services that they have not personally used, this word-of-mouth recommendation will typically be accepted more swiftly as a reference.

Electronic word of mouth is more influential than traditional WOM for several reasons. First, with the development of the Internet and various electronic media, messages can be quickly spread to reach a potentially large audience. Second, recipients of the messages actively seek a broader range of comments online and therefore do not rely only on the opinions of acquaintances. Third, eWOM can be accessed immediately or after a period of time; its digital footprint can remain online permanently. Fourth, secrecy encourages people to publish reviews online knowing they cannot be identified. Finally, eWOM communication enables an individual to build up personal and social networks. As opinions reach friends as well as strangers via the Internet, it is essential for brands to understand what motivates customers to produce eWOM in order to promote their products better and prevent negative publicity.

2. The Effect of Service Quality on Attitude

The results showed that service quality had a positive and significant effect on student attitudes in choosing private universities. These results prove that the second hypothesis which states that service quality has a significant effect on students' attitudes in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java is accepted. A positive influence explains empirically that the better the quality of service, the better the positive attitude that will be given by students, and vice versa if the quality of service decreases it will also reduce student attitudes.

The results of this study support research conducted by Prebntice, Brady, & Mc Laughl (2018); Ghobehei (2019); Ahmed Demir et al., (2020); Sartaj & Ajoy (2020); and Intalar & Yodpram (2021) which states that service quality has a significant effect on student attitudes.

While attitude is the propensity of people to understand, feel, react, and behave towards a certain phenomenon which is the result of the interaction of cognitive, affective, and conative processes, service quality is a method of consumer assessment of the level of service received (perceived service) with the level of service expected. Every kid desires a service that meets their demands in order to improve their attitude and behavior. A thorough evaluation of a university's superiority is provided by student perceptions of service quality. Quality must begin with the needs of the students and finish with their perspectives. This indicates that good service quality is determined by the student's perception, not the service providers. The most crucial idea in the analysis of customer behavior is attitude.

3. The Effect of Service Quality on Students' Decisions in Choosing Private Universities

The results showed that the quality of service had a positive and significant effect on the student's decision in choosing a private university. These results showed that the third hypothesis which states that service quality affects students' decisions in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java is accepted. This major influence explains empirically that if the quality of service is improved further, the desire of students to select the college increases, and vice versa, if the quality of service declines, the desire of students to choose the college reduces.

The results of this study directly support the research conducted by Harahap and Amanah (2018); Afshan Azam (2018); Mc Laughlin et al., (2018); Hanif Othman (2019); Regina

Fortunata (2020); and Assakhir & Permana (2021); and Buchori & Harwani (2021) which show that service quality has a significant effect on student decisions to choose higher education.

The most significant element perceived and considered by consumers is the quality of service given by private universities. The quality of service can impact a student's decision to attend college. Service quality is vital in higher education institutions and is a component that substantially impacts an educational institution's success in preserving the institution's continuation.

Private Universities compete by enticing students to attend one of these private higher education institutions. As in marketing theory, private universities must understand the quality or dynamic circumstances in order to have the required degree of excellence and control over the level of excellence to match customer wishes, where consumers in this case are private university students.

4. The Effect of Brand Image on E-Wom

The results showed that the brand image had a positive and significant effect on the e-wom of students in choosing private university. These results indicate that the fourth hypothesis which states that brand image affects the e-wom of students in choosing private university in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java is accepted. A positive influence explains that experimentally, the better the university's image, the higher the e-wom of students towards the university, and vice versa, if the institution's image diminishes, the lower the e-wom of students.

The results of this study support the research conducted by Sumatias et al., (2017); Lee & Svetlana (2019) Kim Leng (2020); Norbani Che-Ha et al., (2020); and Hongfei Liu (2020) which shows that the brand image of universities has a significant effect on e-wom students in choosing universities.

College or University brand image is a belief in the form of a general picture and impression of a university established over time by processing information from numerous sources. Students that have a positive image will instantly spread positive electronic word of mouth. Brand image is one of the characteristics that impact purchasing decisions, with the ability to inspire public desire for private colleges. In this situation, a brand that can enhance the wearer's appearance will compel customers to purchase its goods. When a college brand effectively builds an emotional bond with its customers, consumers will see the products as being of high quality and having a positive reputation. Brand image is an essential part of the branding process for marketing and advertising. It is also vital to build a brand identity and ensure that its message spreads by Ambler, T. C. (2016). With a consistent and clear style guide and branding approach, brands will quickly create their voice and have a specific place in the viewer's eyes. Brand image has become popular in brand management. These issues have been of interest to Indonesian scientists recently. Today, universities see that competing to attract learners and finding partners is inevitable for the university to thrive. According to Aaker, J. M. (2018), the competition in higher education, both domestically and internationally, causes universities to find ways to attract students, students to study at the university, find more partners.

5. The Effect of Brand Image on Attitude

The results showed that brand image had a positive and significant effect on student attitudes in choosing private universities. These results indicate that the fifth hypothesis which states that brand image has a significant effect on student attitudes in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java is accepted. A positive influence argues that empirically, a university's positive reputation will improve students' positive attitudes, and vice versa, a university's negative reputation will lower students' views.

The results of this study support the research conducted by Viraiyan Teeroovengadum et al., (2019); Afzaal Ali et al., (2020); Lawal et al., (2020); Al Douri et al., (2021); and Erkan, Unal & Acikgoz (2021) research results support the influence of university brand image on student attitudes.

By examining numerous characteristics and how they are produced over time by combining information from multiple sources, brand image may be seen as a belief in the form of a general image and impression of a company. Following is the relationship between brand images: Brand attitudes, such as views and preferences, are correlated with brand image (image) (brand). The primary purpose of advertising is to create a good brand image since consumers are more likely to make purchases when they have a positive perception of a company. This will alter the consumer's perspective or attitude (potential students) toward a private institution.

Brand image (the image of brand) is a depiction of how people feel about a brand overall, as well as how they have heard about it and used it in the past. The perception of a brand is influenced by attitudes, such as beliefs and brand preferences. Customers who think favorably of a brand are more likely to buy something (Setiadi, 2003: 180). Brand image is a result of advertising, marketing, and use rather than being a part of the characteristics, technology, or product type itself.

Through brand image, consumers can identify items, assess quality, lower the risk of making a purchase, and acquire specific sensations and enjoyment from a product (Kotler, 1993: 3 in Lin) (2007: 2).

Brand image represents the overall perception of the brand and is built through knowledge and previous brand encounters. Image is linked to sentiments about a brand in the form of beliefs and preferences. Consumers who have a favourable picture of a brand are more likely to buy. As opposed to being a part of the characteristics, technology, or product type itself, brand image is an association or consumer perception based on their memories of a product. Instead, brand image develops as a result of advertising, promotion, or use.

The most crucial idea in the study of consumer behavior is attitude. Every marketing manager invests a lot of money in market research to better understand consumer perceptions of products and brands. Marketers hope to change consumer sentiments in order to change consumer purchasing behavior. Since attitudes and sentiments are closely intertwined, they may influence a person's decision to purchase a specific good or service. This idea is consistent with the idea of student attitudes, according to which there is a learned propensity to act in a pleasant or

unpleasant manner toward a certain item. Through brand image, students' opinions toward higher education can be easily shaped. Students will typically be quicker at recognizing products, evaluating quality, lowering purchasing risks, acquiring specific experiences, and achieving fulfillment with their expectations of a college when they comprehend that they are aware of and proud of the university's brand image.

6. The Effect of Brand Image on Students' Decisions in Choosing Private Universities (PTS)

The results showed that brand image had a significant effect on students' decisions in choosing private universities. These results indicate that the sixth hypothesis which states that brand image has a significant effect on student decisions in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java is accepted. A substantial influence explains experimentally if the college's brand image improves, the desire of students to pick the college increases, and vice versa, if the brand image deteriorates, the desire of students to choose the college diminishes.

The results of this study support research conducted by Agusty leo, et al., (2017); Bui Hyong Khoi (2019); Hong Thi Que (2019); Merli Tamtik (2019); Lei Zhu (2019); Esther and Fate (2020); and Christophorus et al., (2020) where according to them there is a significant influence between brand image and the decision to choose students.

The overall perception that the public has of a company or product is known as its brand image. The university's brand image becomes crucial in the marketing management of higher education services as a factor for potential students in choosing the appropriate attitude to continue their studies in higher education in accordance with their needs and aspirations. Prospective students consider the image of the institution when deciding whether to continue their education in higher education.

The image of the institution or brand in a university is an important link between universities and students in which students influence their decision making and make an appraisal of what they will buy, in this case the selection of colleges, through this brand image.

A university's brand image has a significant impact on the increase in public interest in the college. Colleges attempting to project a different image in order to preserve market competitiveness. The key in marketing is brand image, which is utilized as information to anticipate the quality of the college's products, generate predictions, and store them in students' memory as an impression. The link between colleges and students known as "brand" has a big impact on the choices and judgments that students make. Brand image, which refers to the goods or services given by universities that can fulfill needs such as physical amenities, environmental resources, and curriculum programs offered, is functionally employed to address the external demands of students.

7. The Effect of Social Media on E-Wom

The results showed that social media had a positive and significant effect on e-wom students in choosing private universities. These results indicate that the seventh hypothesis which states that social media has a significant effect on student e-wom in choosing private universities in

LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java is accepted. The positive influence scientifically explains that the stronger college social media, the stronger student e-wom, and vice versa, the weaker college social media, the weaker student e-wom.

The results of this study support the research conducted by Purga, Bertosik (2018); Double & Robinson (2019); Potura & Softic (2019); Anita Whiting et al., (2019); and Sagynbekova (2020) who stated that social media had a significant effect on students' electronic word of mouth.

As the use of social media trends upward, marketers are perfecting strategies to capture the significant competitive advantage that engagement with this key audience can deliver even more rapidly and more effectively than traditional marketing. Using technologies from the social web, the marketing strategy with social media marketing is a type of marketing that offers promotions. In particular, if the institution has a strong network, communicates often with the community, and has access to enough information, social media can be utilized to draw attention and broaden the breadth of information. Private universities are heavily reliant on social media in the current digital era. The way universities are currently undergoing a significant revamp with the aid of information technology for the benefit of a sustainable institutional life is one of the interesting aspects. Social media is increasingly widely used in all technology-based activities, including marketing media.

A collection of Web 2.0-based apps known as social media facilitate the production and exchange of user-generated content. They are Internet-based applications. Collaborative projects, blogs, microblogs, content, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds are a few forms of social media that are frequently employed in collegemarketing. The oldest type of advertising is word-of-mouth, in which consumers notify others about a company, a good or service, and offer their honest opinions. In college marketing, "influencers" are individuals who have successfully used the college's goods and services and are so naturally motivated to speak favorably both online and offline. When colleges run initiatives to influence and speed up organic word-of-mouth marketing, word-of-mouth occurs. College social media must be professionally, appropriately, and correctly managed because it will impact student engagement in promoting the institution. The university must take published content into consideration as it is also highly crucial. Social media posts should be educational in character, with a focus on both producing engaging, high-quality material and pursuing student goals. The proper and necessary material is what will provide social media consumers a favorable impression of goods and services.

8. The Effect of Social Media on Attitude

The results showed that social media had a positive and significant effect on student attitudes in choosing private universities. These results indicate that the eighth hypothesis which states that social media has a significant effect on student attitudes in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java is accepted. The positive influence explains empirically that the stronger the college's social media, the better the students' positive attitude about the college, and vice versa, the weaker the college's social media, the worse the students' positive

attitude toward the college. The results of this study support research conducted by Duffet, Rodney (2017); Laoli et al., (2018); Alshetti, Ahmed (2019); Rebeca and Eva (2020); and Ramo Palalic et al., (2020) support the influence of social media on student attitudes.

Social media are defined as online programs, resources, and media that promote communication, teamwork, and the exchange of information. The study of consumer behavior focuses on how people, communities, and organizations choose, acquire, use, and make use of products, services, concepts, or experiences to fulfill their needs and desires. When social media is used effectively, it can reveal student sentiments and influence how decisions are made. Students' perceptions of the university will alter as a result of what they see, hear, and follow on social media, which will also change how they feel about the college. Students' enthusiasm in participating in social media marketing will increase with a shift in mindset. Universities must seize the opportunity presented by social media's pivotal role in influencing student attitudes in order to promote their offerings. Students today belong to a generation that is tech savvy and uses social media as a communication tool in cyberspace to assist all of their everyday activities. Students' positive opinions toward higher education will rise with the correct social media selection.

9. The Effect of Social Media on Students' Decisions in Choosing Private Universities

The results showed that social media had a significant effect on student decisions in choosing private universities. These results indicate that the ninth hypothesis which states that social media has a significant effect on student decisions in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java is accepted. This considerable influence explains empirically that the stronger the college's social media, the stronger the student's want to select the college, and vice versa, the weaker the college's social media, the weaker the student's desire to choose the college.

The results of this study support the results of research conducted by Poturak & Turkyilmaz (2018); Mohd Aeshah et al., (2019); Vikas Gupta (2019); Gabriel Simiyu et al., (2020); and Ishak Fikri et al., (2021) where the results of their research conclude that there is a significant influence between social media on students' decisions to choose higher education institutions.

Consumer behavior refers to the actions taken by people who are directly involved in procuring and using goods and services, including the preparation-related decision-making process. Social media gives rise to social media marketing, which uses social media to persuade customers by a corporation or business person to introduce and sell a good or service that can affect a person's purchasing decision.

Students take action to select a college by making the decision to do so. Every college must implement a variety of techniques to influence students' college selection decisions. When selecting a college, students will think about whether the school meets their expectations or not. Students will find it simpler to learn about the college's offerings thanks to the social media channels the college owns.

10. The Effect of E-Wom on Students' Decisions in Choosing Private Universities

The results showed that e-wom had a positive and significant effect on student decisions in choosing private universities. These results indicate that the tenth hypothesis which states that e-wom has a significant effect on student decisions in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java is accepted. The positive influence scientifically explains why the stronger the student's e-wom, the stronger the student's decision to choose a college, and vice versa, the weaker the e-wom, the weaker the student's decision to choose the college. The results of this study support previous researchers, namely: Mersid Poturak, Merve Turkyilmaz (2018); Huiyuan Yang (2019); Balro & Hamid (2019); Dobelea & Linda J. Robinson (2019); Adrian & Christopher (2020); and Roya Sadat Alavi et al., (2020) where the results of their research show that e-WOM has a significant effect on student decisions to choose universities.

One of the most comprehensive conceptions of eWOM was proposed by Litvin et al. (2008), who described it as all informal communication via the Internet addressed to consumers and related to the use or characteristics of goods or services or the sellers thereof. The advantage of this tool is that it is available to all consumers, who can use online platforms to share their opinions and reviews with other users. Where once consumers trusted WOM from friends and family, today they look to online comments (eWOM) for information about a product or service (Nieto et al., 2014). The marketing communication technique known as "e-Word of Mouth" (or "E-WOM") plays a significant part in influencing students' decisions over which college to attend. When many people consciously become WOM by using information technology, they are effectively able to influence or invite other people to do the same with those who became e-WOM. This information can move the intensity to make a decision, which strongly influences a person's behavior to come to a decision. Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), which is like two sides of a knife, can actually harm the reputation of a person or company that markets goods and services using social media if it is not managed properly and appropriately in accordance with applicable ethics and norms. However, e-WOM can improve students' decisions to choose a university where it is becoming more competitive.

11. The Effect of Attitudes on Students' Decisions in Choosing Private Universities

The results showed that attitude had a positive and significant effect on student decisions in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java. These results indicate that the eleventh hypothesis which states that student attitudes have a significant effect on student decisions in choosing private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java is accepted. The positive influence empirically indicates that the greater the student's attitude, the stronger the student's decision to pick the college, and vice versa, if the student's good attitude at the college declines, the student's desire to choose the college lowers.

This study supports the research conducted by Moses et al (2018); Aleksieva et al., (2018); Iqbal Imaria (2020); Shahla Ali Ahmed (2020); and Fevzi Okumus (2021) where the results of the study show that attitudes have a significant effect on students' decisions to choose universities. The student's decision to continue their studies is heavily influenced by how educational institutions' efforts generate a positive attitude toward the institution itself. Positive

student attitudes are college-related evaluative remarks or judgements. As a result, perceptions can have an impact on students' decisions to attend private universities. The decision to choose a college is stronger the better the student attitudes are formed. A student's attitude toward his college is determined by a number of indicators, including: Cognitive (belief to accept), Affective (response rate), Conative, and others. Attitude is defined in this study as a pattern of behavior, anticipatory tendencies or readiness, and predisposition to adapt in social situations (willingness to appreciate). These three variables are excellent at influencing students' opinions.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study advance economics, particularly in the area of university service marketing management, by providing insight into factors including service quality, brand perception, social media, e-women, attitudes, and decision-making. Based on the findings of this study, private universities in LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java can use these factors as a tool to improve service marketing management. Based on the study's findings, it is also clear that the model used to examine the connection between the variables of service quality, brand image, social media use by women, attitudes, and decision-making supports the validity of the model. The findings of this research add to the body of knowledge in the field of economics, particularly in regards to the marketing of private higher education services.

In addition, the results of this study contribute to the development of economics related to renewability that is raised in this study which is based on the service quality variable (X1) by using additional indicators to measure service quality based on Afshan Azam's research (2018), which includes: Registration process and Payment process related to administrative services. The indicators used to measure service quality in this study include: tangibles (physical evidence) related to facilities and infrastructure, while reliability, responsiveness, empathy, Assurance, Registration process and Payment process. The study's findings indicate that service quality significantly affects student views, e-WOM, and decisions to choose Private Universities (PTS). The findings of this study also contribute to the literature in the subject of economics, particularly in terms of the marketing administration of private higher education services.

RESEARCH LIMITATION

This study was unable to present a large number of research samples in proportion to the population presented in this study because during the data collection process in the field, students who were respondents in this study were still conducting online lectures, so researchers when distributing research questionnaires could only do so through Google Forms and could not take data directly from respondents but through the administrative staff of each Study Program. The respondents taken in this study is also limited to 100 participants.

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