



Mediation of Student Loyalty on the Influence of Service Quality and Institutional Image on Student Word of Mouth in Indonesia

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Abstract: Vocational High School competition is very tight, all institutions offer their own advantages to attract students. This study begins with the concept of Student Loyalty which is used to describe the mediator that links Service Quality and Institutional Image to WOM. Using the theory SERVQUAL by Parasuraman et al. (1991), the researchers used the Path Analysis model with SPSS 18. The number of respondents was 190 identified from 17 Vocational High Schools in East Java Province, Indonesia. The results show that Student Loyalty was unable to play a mediating role in the effects of Service Quality and Institutional Image on Word of Mouth, and Institutional Image has a greater influence than service quality. Implications are discussed, and study limitations are noted for guidance in future research.

Keywords: Word of Mouth, Student Loyalty, Service Quality, Institutional Image

INTRODUCTION

Competition in educational institutions for Vocational High Schools (SMK) is increasingly competitive and dynamic and the competition and challenges will be increasingly stringent (Elliot & Shin, 2002). Educational institutions are very important investments that have continuous benefits in many ways (Elahinia & Karami, 2019). Vocational High School is secondary education that prepares students especially to work in certain fields (Law No. 20 of 2013, article 15).

Choosing a school as a place of formal education is mostly done through Word of Mouth (WOM). Lo Chung, (2012) states that WOM is an activity of transferring information that is carried out through oral communication from one person to another. The concept of WOM has become important to the marketing activities of various organizations, both in consumer decision-making, and has been observed to have an important and effective effect on social change in the communication channel environment, (Ennew et al, 2000). Hennig et al. (2004) defined Word of Mouth as the experience of a product or company. He also stated

that there are two kinds of word of mouth: positive WOM and negative WOM, about. Positive WOM can be obtained from information or opinions on a product that is collected from previous people's experiences (Attia et al, 2012). Recommendations or Positive WOM is an angle related to loyalty (Hallowell, 1996). A study of WOM based on loyalty was conducted by Mohsan et al. (2011) who revealed that loyalty makes customers recommend service providers to others.

McIlroy & Barnett, (2000) defined loyalty as a commitment from customers to carry out business activities in a particular organization, to purchase goods or services repeatedly, and then recommend them to colleagues. Helgesen and Nasset, (2007) mentioned that student loyalty is not only when students study at institutions but also after graduating from school. Salam (2015); Elahinia & Karami, (2019) stated that consumer loyalty has a positive effect on WOM. One's loyalty can come from several influencing variables, from the quality of service and the image of the institution.

Ahmed et al. (2010) stated that service quality is the main advantage in the field of education which is a performance measure and a strategic variable for universities to create perceptions in consumers. Service quality according to Parasuraman (1985) is an assessment of how well the service meets expectations. Parasuraman et al. (1991) mentioned five factors that influence satisfaction, namely reliability, tangible, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. A conducted study by Hanaysha et al, (2011) shows that the quality of services which consists of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy and also provided by higher education institutions, in general, makes students feel satisfied.

Fitriani and Wahyuni (2018), stated that the image of an institution is a person's perception of an institution. Image requires maintenance that is innovative in nature so that it can take place consistently, as a result, a person's behavior will strengthen decisions made in the past (Subrahmanyam, 2017). Harsono (2014) studied the relationship between the influence of institutional image on WOM directly. He found that the better the institutional image is, the more influential it is on WOM because it increases positive WOM and can attract prospective students to register. Sallam (2015) examined the relationship between corporate image and customer loyalty which has an impact on WOM, and customer loyalty as a mediating variable. The results show that corporate image has a positive effect on customer loyalty and loyalty has a positive effect on WOM. Research by Aydin & Ozer, (2005) reports that corporate image has no statistically significant effect on loyalty, so this finding becomes a loophole for re-testing image on loyalty. The paradigm study of image disconfirmation of WOM was carried out by Melastri & Giantari (2019). They stated different results. They found that image has no direct effect on WOM, and even this finding became a loophole for re-testing the influence of institutional image on WOM.

Theoretically, this study seeks to develop a new model that integrates Service Quality and Institutional Image as Word of Mouth constructs as the outcome variable of Student Loyalty. The following is a literature review of these four constructs and outlines for the expected model relationships in the study. The study was conducted on Vocational High School students to test the hypothesized relationship. The characteristics of the respondents and the implications of developing the theory were also discussed.

- 1) What is the effect of service quality on student loyalty?
- 2) How does the image of the institution affect student loyalty?
- 3) What is the effect of service quality on word of mouth?
- 4) How does the image of the institution affect word of mouth?
- 5) How does student loyalty influence word of mouth?
- 6) What is the effect of service quality on word of mouth through student loyalty?
- 7) How does the image of the institution affect word of mouth through student loyalty?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Service Quality & Institutional Image

1. Service quality

In the current educational service industry, service quality is a measure that is no less important than other variables. According to Ahmed et al., (2010), service quality is the main performance measure in educational excellence and is the main strategic variable for tertiary institutions to create strong perceptions in the minds of consumers. Theories about service quality have been developed by many researchers. One of these theories which is often used and inspired is the theory of service quality (SERVQUAL) by Parasuraman et al, (1985). In the same study, Parasuraman et al, (1985) state that service quality is conceptualized as a comparison between expectations and perceptions of actual service performance. While Zeithaml (1990) describes service quality as the overall characteristics of a product or service that originates from its ability to express needs. Measurement of service quality from theory of Parasuraman et al, (1991) states that there are five factors that influence satisfaction, namely reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Furthermore, (Bolton et al., 2004) emphasized intense competition in the market to urge companies to always improve service quality. Gronroos, (1984), uses a technical quality and functional quality approach in measuring service quality. Technical quality describes an objective picture, while functional quality is purely subjective. According to Robinson, (1999), it is generally said that service quality is a global attitude or assessment of service excellence although it is also said that the scope of this attitude does not have uniformity of opinion.

2. Institution Image

Giovanis et al, (2014) stated that corporate image has been identified as an important factor in the overall assessment of service providers, as a mental picture of that image appears when mentioning the name of the company. Image is a valuable aspect of winning in a tight market competition (Landrum et al. 1998). Kotler and Armstrong (2012), describe the corporate image as the overall impression created in people's minds about an organization.

Several studies on the image of an educational institution were carried out by Landrum, et al. (1998), university image is a valuable aspect that helps universities win in a tight market. Aydin and Ozer (2005) say university image is an experience that arises from net consumption from customers. Similar to the opinion of Brown and Dacin (1997), university image is formed from customers' perceptions of social capability and responsibility. University image is a representation of student perceptions (Yang et al., 2008). Likewise, Arpan et al., (2003) define the image of the university as the sum of all individual beliefs in choosing a university. Institution image is a personal experience of the university which has a greater influence than media exposure associated with the university (Kazoleas, et al. 2001). An attitude and action of the public towards a particular object will be influenced by the image that is formed from that object (Karyose, et al. 2018).

Meanwhile (Nguyen & Leblanc, 2002) pays more attention to indicators that provide a picture of the company's image, namely related to the physical and attributes associated with the company such as business names, building architecture, product/service variations, traditions, ideology, and the impression of quality that is communicated by each company employees who interact with the organization's clients. In 1977, Kennedy developed a dimension of a corporate image consisting of functional and emotional. The functional component relates to tangible attributes that can be measured easily. On the other hand, the emotional component is associated with the psychological dimension

which is manifested by feelings and attitudes towards an organization. These feelings stem from the individual's experience with the organization and from processing information on the attributes that are functional indicators of the image.

Student Loyalty

Torres-Moraga (2009) views customer loyalty as a result of relationship marketing. Loyalty is making customers recommend service providers to others (Mohsan et al., 2011) although the initial dimension of loyalty focuses on behavior, as stated (Tucker, 1964) (Sheth, 1968), Loyalty is defined as a form of customer behavior (repeat purchase) directed to certain brands from time to time. The same thing was stated by (Newman & Werbel, 1973), loyal customers are ones who will repurchase an item with the same brand they previously purchased and not buy another brand. Over time, customer loyalty has two dimensions: behavior and attitude (Dick & Basu, 1994). Until (Gremler & Brown, 1996) stated that a loyal customer 1) regularly uses a service provider, 2) really likes the organization and thinks highly of it, and 3) has never considered using another service provider for this service. Conversely, people who are highly "disloyal" 1) will never use a provider again, 2) have negative feelings toward the organization, and 3) are receptive to suggestions about other providers and are willing to try other providers. Foster & Cadogan, (2000) measures customer loyalty by 1) the Willingness of customers to make the company the first choice; 2) the Willingness of customers to buy the products offered; 3). The willingness of customers to invite other customers/other people to make purchases; 4). The willingness of customers to tell good things about the company to others.

The relationship between service quality and institutional image with student loyalty results show that service quality and institutional image affect student loyalty, the results of this study are presented by (Usman, 2016). The influence of service quality and institutional image on WOM is presented by (Melastrri and Giantari, 2019). While, the effect of institutional image on WOM through student loyalty was studied by (Sallam, 2015).

Word Of Mouth

WOM is a powerful method in marketing. People talk to each other as a form of promotion without realizing it (Sernovitz & Kawasaki, 2006). There are two statements in WOM, namely positive and negative from the customer's experience of a product or company (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Sernovitz (2009) mentioned that there are three basic reasons that encourage people to disseminate WOM information. First, people like the products they consume. Second, people feel happy when they talk to each other. Third, WOM communication makes people feel connected in a group.

Another reason is that WOM has a persuasive and influential efficiency role and has a substantial effect on student choices (Richins, 1983). Another WOM review was carried out by Babin et al., (2005). They measured some indicators as follows 1) the willingness of consumers to talk about positive things about the company's service quality to others. 2) Recommendation of company services to others. 3) Encouragement of friends or relations to make purchases of company services.

WOM is a good promotional tool and can be a major factor in product success. A friend or relative is more likely to influence consumer choices than other information (Assael, 2006). However, in positive WOM communication, a number of things that a marketer must pay attention to. Assael (2006) explains the things that a marketer needs to understand if he wants to encourage positive WOM about his product, as follows: First, The type of communication used. Second, the process of WOM occurrence 3) Conditions of communication from WOM 4) Motives from consumers to carry out WOM communication

In past research, Elahinia and Karami (2019) provided significant results regarding the discussion of service quality, institutional image, student satisfaction, and Word of Mouth. Melastri and Giantari (2019) state that service quality and institutional image affect WOM, whereas image does not affect WOM directly. By accommodating the theory of service quality, Parasuraman et al., (1985) argue that service quality results from the quality expected with the results of their experiences, while Kotler and Armstrong (2012) describe it as the overall impression that is created in people's minds about an organization. In the process, providing good service quality creates loyalty which shows significant results (Anamdevula and Bellamkonda, 2016); Usman et al., 2016).

RESEARCH METHOD

This type of explanatory descriptive research hypothesized the relationship between variables, using a quantitative approach with Path Analysis. Respondents in the study were grade 12 students, using the Google form. Questionnaires were taken from 17 Vocational High Schools in East Java. These Questionnaires were self-administered from 190 respondents proportionally, using a stratified random sampling technique. Primary data was collected with a Likert scale of 5, starting from Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

The questionnaire included age, semester, and gender. Table 1 recorded age <16 years as much as 1.05%, 16 – 18 years 61.58%, > 18 years consisting of 37.37%, and gender consisting of 61.05% male and 38.95% female, and most respondents came from the sixth semester which amounted to 76.32%.

Hypothesis:

H1: Service quality has a positive and significant effect on student loyalty at private vocational schools in East Java.

H2: Institutional image has a positive and significant impact on student loyalty at private vocational schools in East Java.

H3: Service quality has a positive and significant effect on Word of Mouth at private vocational schools in East Java.

H4: Institutional image has a positive and significant effect on Word of Mouth at private vocational schools in East Java.

H5: Loyalty has a positive and significant effect on Word of Mouth at private vocational schools in East Java.

H6: Service quality has a positive and significant effect on Word of Mouth through student loyalty at private vocational schools in East Java.

H7: Institutional image has a positive and significant effect on Word of Mouth through student loyalty at private vocational schools in East Java.

4. Finding

Validity and Reliability Measurements.

Pearson Product Moment between item scores and scale scores is used to measure validity. The results are all declared valid, cronbach alpha > 0.6 (Malhotra, 2004). The standard loading factor for validity meets the standard with a reliability value of Service

Quality 0.938, Institutional Image 0.926, Student Loyalty 0.890 and Word of Mouth 0.913 shown in table 1.

Variable	Indicator	Item	Loading factor	r kritis	Probabilitas Cronbach's Alpha	Result
Service Quality Parasuraman, et al. (1991;2005)	Tangibility	X111	0,563	0,1197	0,938	Valid
		X112	0,682	0,1197		Valid
		X113	0,662	0,1197		Valid
		X114	0,609	0,1197		Valid
		X115	0,521	0,1197		Valid
	Reliability	X121	0,582	0,1197		Valid
		X122	0,653	0,1197		Valid
		X123	0,609	0,1197		Valid
	Responsiveness	X131	0,631	0,1197		Valid
		X132	0,466	0,1197		Valid
		X133	0,447	0,1197		Valid
		X134	0,550	0,1197		Valid
		X135	0,550	0,1197		Valid
	Assurance	X141	0,552	0,1197		Valid
		X142	0,712	0,1197		Valid
		X143	0,710	0,1197		Valid
		X144	0,584	0,1197		Valid
	Empathy	X151	0,662	0,1197		Valid
		X152	0,682	0,1197		Valid
Institution Image Kotler dan Armstrong (2012) Assael (2006) Harrison (2000:80)	Personality	X211	0,756	0,1197	0,926	Valid
		X212	0,736	0,1197		Valid
	Reputation	X221	0,617	0,1197		Valid
		X222	0,723	0,1197		Valid
		X223	0,613	0,1197		Valid
		X224	0,669	0,1197		Valid
	Value	X231	0,568	0,1197		Valid
		X232	0,701	0,1197		Valid
		X233	0,598	0,1197		Valid
	Corporate Indentity	X241	0,603	0,1197		Valid
		X242	0,662	0,1197		Valid
		X243	0,760	0,1197		Valid
Student Loyalty Oliver (1999;2005)	Cognitive	Y211	0,706	0,1197	0,888	Valid
		Y212	0,706	0,1197		Valid
	Affective	Y221	0,682	0,1197		Valid
		Y222	0,776	0,1197		Valid
	Conative	Y231	0,594	0,1197		Valid
		Y232	0,448	0,1197		Valid
		Y233	0,561	0,1197		Valid
	Action	Y241	0,433	0,1197		Valid
		Y242	0,547	0,1197		Valid

Variable	Indicator	Item	Loading factor	r kritis	Probabilitas Cronbach's Alpha	Result
Word Of Mouth Babin et al. (2005)	Positive speaking skills	Y243	0,614	0,1197	0,894	Valid
		Y311	0,637	0,1197		Valid
		Y312	0,648	0,1197		Valid
		Y313	0,622	0,1197		Valid
		Y314	0,588	0,1197		Valid
	Willingness to recommend to others	Y321	0,750	0,1197		Valid
		Y322	0,768	0,1197		Valid
	Willingness to push others to make a purchase	Y331	0,608	0,1197		Valid
		Y332	0,608	0,1197		Valid

Latent Variable Relationships

Data processing using Path Analysis with multiple linear regression, SPSS 18 is presented in Figure 1. The results of several regression coefficients for each path analysis are carried out. The results of the classical assumption test showed that the data were normally distributed with Asymp.sig.(2-tailed) values > 0.05 , multicollinearity did not occur with tolerance values > 0.1 and VIF < 10 , and heteroscedasticity using the Glejser test obtained a significance value > 0.05 , so there are no symptoms of heteroscedasticity. The results of path analysis with SPSS 18 for structure 1 obtained for a direct effect of service quality on student loyalty with a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05) and Beta 0.362. The direct effect of institutional image on student loyalty with a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05) and a Beta value of 0.466. R Square value of 0.590 with e1 obtained a value of 0.640. The results of structure 2 show (1) the direct effect of service quality on word of mouth, (2) the influence of institutional image on word of mouth, and (3) student loyalty towards word of mouth. The effect of service quality on word of mouth produces a beta value of 0.216 and a sig value of 0.000 (< 0.05), the influence of institutional image on word of mouth, it has a beta value of 0.375 sig 0.000 (< 0.05), and the effect of student loyalty on word of mouth has a beta value of 0.358 with a sig of 0.000 (< 0.05). The R Square value is 0.733 and the e2 value is 0.517. Thus the variables of service quality, institutional image and student loyalty to Word of Mouth contribute 73.30%. For the indirect effect of service quality on Word of Mouth through student loyalty, the result is 0.129, and the indirect effect of institutional image on Word of Mouth is 0.167. The SPSS results are in Figure 1 and Table 2. From these results, it can be seen that the hypothetical model is supported by empirical data.

Figure 2. Tabel Model Summary Struktur 1

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
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Figure 3. Tabel Coefficients Struktur 1

1	.768 ^a	.590	.586	3.02187
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a. Predictors: (Constant), Institution Image, Service Quality

b. Dependent Variable: Student Loyalty

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	14.642	1.929		7.591	.000
Service Quality	.178	.033	.362	5.417	.000
Institution Image	.310	.044	.466	6.968	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Student Loyalty

Figure 4. Tabel Model Summary Struktur 2.

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.856 ^a	.733	.729	2.55788

a. Predictors: (Constant), Student Loyalty, Service Quality, Institution Image

b. Dependent Variable: Word of Mouth

Figure 5. Tabel Coefficients Struktur 2.

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
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		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.006	1.867		-.003	.998
	Service Quality	.111	.030	.216	3.701	.000
	Institution Image	.261	.042	.375	6.172	.000
	Student Loyalty	.374	.062	.358	6.048	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Word of Mouth

5. Discussion

In this study, it can be concluded that the direct effect of service quality (SERVQUAL) on student loyalty, institutional image on student loyalty, service quality on Word of Mouth, institutional image on Word of Mouth, and student loyalty on Word of mouth results are positive and significant. Student loyalty mediators were found to be insignificant for the effect of service quality on Word of Mouth, as well as for the influence of institutional image on word of mouth. Based on the research problem, the results of the service quality and image of the institution offered to have a positive impact on Word of Mouth directly rather than indirectly through student loyalty to drive positive WOM by recommending Vocational High Schools to be the first and foremost choice of schools. It was also found in this study that institutional image has a greater influence on WOM. Further discussion, researchers identify theoretical implications, managerial implications, limitations, and future research.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

Theoretical Implications

The theory of service quality on student loyalty and Word of mouth is rarely studied at the Vocational High School level. But several studies studied the effect of image on Word of Mouth. The current research refers to the research of Chandra et al, (2018) who examine the effect of service quality and institutional image on student loyalty through student satisfaction. Melastri and Giantari, (2019) studied service quality and corporate image that affect word of mouth through customer satisfaction. They found that corporate image has no effect on word of mouth. Whereas a study conducted by Chandra et al (2018) showed inconsistent results about the effect of service quality on student loyalty. So this study combines the research of Chandra et al (2018) & Melastri and Giantari (2019) as it is very important to conduct research with a new model, service quality, and institutional image variables on WOM through student loyalty mediating variables. The results of this study are related to previous research, which supports the research of Naser and Karami (2019); Melastri and Giantari (2019), namely service quality has a positive and significant effect on student WOM. Research Usman et al, (2016); Anamdevula and Bellamkonda, (2016), which shows the results of service quality affect student loyalty. Meanwhile, Melastri and Giantari's (2019) study on the effect of image on WOM suggests different results, namely image has no effect on WOM, whereas in this study it shows that image has a significant positive effect on WOM. The practical implications of this study show in improving service quality and the image of institutions offered by 17 Vocational High Schools and other secondary schools. The student loyalty variable is able to mediate the effect of service quality and institutional

image on positive WOM. Service quality and institutional image have an influence on student loyalty and ultimately create WOM positively by providing recommendations for Vocational High Schools as schools that are the first and foremost choice to enter school. For other institutions, it is necessary to build student loyalty to become a consideration for the influence of service quality and institutional image so as to be able to drive positive WOM.

Managerial Implications

The practical implication of this study is to improve the quality of service and image of the institution conducted by 17 Vocational High Schools in East Java and other Vocational High Schools. Negative WOM can occur due to a lack of service quality and weak institutional image so it can cause a lack of positive WOM. Positive WOM is formed from the quality received exceeding expectations, and the image of the institution is well formed so that loyal students are achieved. Student loyalty drives positive WOM by informing the wider community. For other institutions, it can be used as a consideration to build student loyalty and positive WOM.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, this study was conducted in Vocational High Schools with over 2000 students in East Java Province, so it is not easy to generalize because there are many Vocational High Schools with <2000 students. Second, researchers in this study examined service quality using SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, 1991). In other studies, researchers may use SERVPERV to obtain different results, although research using SERVQUAL is widely recognized by some academics, but it has limitations (Ronin and Taylor, 1992). Future researchers can add or use trust variables and other variables that are rarely studied in the Vocational High School sector.

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