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ISLAMIC SCHOOL IMAGE AND SERVICE QUALITY ON ISLAMIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: THE ROLE OF WORD OF MOUTH AS MEDIATION

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Abstract: In the current era, schools founded by private parties are increasing. Of course, it increases the competition between these private and public schools. Schools with international concepts, for example, have also become many choices for prospective students. Besides that, religion-based schools such as Christian, Buddhist, or Islamic schools are also an option now. For this reason, this study aimed to analyze the role of school Islamic image, service quality, and word of mouth on parents' decisions to choose private Islamic schools in Pekanbaru. This type of research is quantitative research. This study used 200 parents of grade 1 students at a private Islamic elementary school in Pekanbaru as samples, and the sampling technique used was simple random sampling. A structural equation model (SEM) with PLS is the data analysis technique. The results of this study indicate that Islamic school image has no significant influence on word of mouth, Islamic school image has no significant influence on parents' interest, Service quality has an impact on word of mouth, Service quality has an influence on parents' interest, Word of mouth can't mediate the relationship of Islamic school image on parent's interest, and Word of mouth can mediate the relationship service quality on parent's interest. Therefore, the Islamic idea does not motivate parents to choose their children's schools. Still, the service quality is the key to increasing their competitiveness against other private schools.

Keywords: Islamic School Image, Service Quality, Word of Mouth, Parent's Interest

INTRODUCTION

The Integrated Islamic School is a model of educational institution that seeks to combine general science and religion in one integrated curriculum package. Public schools are in demand by the general public, both Muslims and non-Muslims, who prioritize their children mastering modern sciences, both Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and Humanities. The existence of schools founded by private parties is increasing nowadays. Schools with international concepts, for example, have also become many choices for prospective students. Besides that, religion-based schools such as Christian, Buddhist, or Islamic schools are also an option now.

The Integrated Islamic School also helps to raise the spirit of Islam more openly and proudly, which affects the movement of da'wah in Muslim communities in various socio-economic layers. Islamic schools were chosen as objects in this study due to the recent significant development and interest in private Islamic schools. Pekanbaru is one of the cities in the province of Riau, with most of the population embracing Islam. The great influence of Islam causes people to attach great importance to religious facilities, both formal and non-formal. In the field of education, currently, there are 36 Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools established by private parties. Of course, the development of Integrated Islamic Schools in Pekanbaru is very fast to compete with other public schools and private schools.

Interest is a psychological factor related to a person's spirituality. Including emotions, talents, and intelligence will encourage enthusiasm to achieve the expected goals (Ayuningsih et al., 2020). If a person's interest is very high for an object, the heart tends to try to get it (Kango et al., 2021). Interest is influenced by several factors, both from within the individual and from outside the individual. Interest is an individual's tendency to focus on an object or activity related to himself, expressed in the form of behavior (Abadi and Hidayatulloh, 2022). School image is a person's assessment or impression of a school because of one's understanding and experience (Kalkan et al., 2020). Oral communication in the community or parents and students discussing services and brands is important for schools and promoting their services. It explains that the formation of a good image shows the influence of image on interest through the experience of parents in communicating a brand, meaning that if both parents and students are satisfied with the product or service provided by the school, there will be a desire to recommend it to other people (Siddiqui et al., 2021). Likewise, Islamic schools, the reputation/image owned by Islamic schools can give confidence to parents of Muslim students to place their children to continue their education at the school. The image is key to making an organization more valuable than others (Kalkan et al., 2020). The Islamic image owned by the Islamic Elementary School in the Pekanbaru certainly shows an Islamic culture in the management and learning activities in schools, so this can foster the trust and interest of Muslim parents as a choice for their children to continue their education. The service quality is the entire component carried out by a company, both services and infrastructure provided to its customers or consumers (Li and Shang, 2020). If the service received or enjoyed is far below what is expected or expected, the consumer will lose interest in providing the service/service. On the other hand, if the service received or enjoyed meets or exceeds expectations, consumers tend to use the service product/service again (Ishmael and Dei, 2018; Pham et al., 2019). Service quality in the education industry is referred to as the overall evaluation of services received by students as part of the experience during the teaching and learning process, which includes activities outside and inside the classroom, teaching and learning activities in the classroom, interaction between teachers and students, availability facilities that support learning and everything related to the services provided (Prayogo and Kusumawardhani, 2016).

Previous research by (Isnurhadi and Widiyanti, 2021; Kango and Ma'arif, 2021) stated that School Image had a significant effect on students' interest in entering school. In comparison, the study's results (Siddiqui et al., 2021) stated that the image had no significant effect on people's interest in choosing a product/service. The study's results (Kango and Ma'arif, 2021; Melastri and Giantari, 2019) suggest that the quality of the school services significantly affects interest in choosing a high school. Meanwhile, the research results (Santos et al., 2020) indicated that the quality of service has no significant effect on students' interest in choosing a school.

From the inconsistency of the previous research results (research gap), the word-of-mouth variable is used to fill the existing gaps and simultaneously become this research novelty. Word of Mouth (WoM) is an informal communication or connection in which there is non-commercial spokesperson with the recipient of information about a product or service. Information from the public will be more reliable than information obtained from an advertisement (Heriyati and Siek, 2011; Hidayat et al., 2021; Wijaya, 2021). Word of mouth makes someone believe in a product/service (Isnurhadi and Widiyanti, 2021). Word of mouth will be accepted more quickly by friends, family, and other closest. The school or organization does not require large costs to promote its product/services. According to research results conducted by (Hidayat et al., 2021), WoM significantly influences a person's interest in making choices. For this reason, this study aimed to analyze the role of school Islamic image and service quality on parents' decisions to choose private Islamic schools in Pekanbaru and using word of mouth as a mediating variable.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Consumer Interest

Interest is one of the psychological aspects that has a considerable influence on attitudes and behavior (Ishmael and Dei, 2018). Buying interest is a happy attitude toward an object that makes someone try to get it by paying or other sacrifices. In addition, buying interest is also interpreted as a plan to buy a product within a certain time. Ishmael and Dei (2018) state that buying interest is someone's plan to buy a needed product. Then Heriyati and Siek (2011) concluded that buying interest is planning a purchase by someone for product by considering several things, including the number of products, brands, and attitudes toward consuming the product. In education, buying interest can be seen from the desire to use these educational services and make education a place to go to school. Several factors determine someone's interest in education, including quality of service, education and learning, cost, location, facilities, etc.

School Image

The school's brand image is the community's understanding of the school, community trust, and community views about the school (Siddiqui et al., 2021). According to Melastri and Giantari (2019), the factors forming a brand image are quality, reliability or reliability, usability or benefits, service, risk, price, and the brand's image. To develop or improve the school's brand image, the function of public relations (PR) is considered very important to use as a medium in rebuilding a positive image. Besides that, the function of PR is also to market educational services, a media for socializing schools to the community and increasing public knowledge about schools (Siddiqui et al., 2021).

Service Quality

Service quality must start with customer needs and end with customer satisfaction and positive perceptions of service quality. As a party that buys and consumes products or services, it is the customer (and not the producer or service provider) who evaluates the level of service quality of a company (Hidayat et al., 2021). The challenge is that consumers' assessment of the performance of the services they receive is subjective because it depends on each individual's perception.

Word of Mouth

Word of mouth is a communication method in which information or recommendations about a product, service, or experience are sent from person to person through conversation (Isnurhadi and Widiyanti, 2021). The term "word of mouth" refers to the process by which people share their experiences or opinions with the other people, who can then share them further with other people. Word of mouth is often considered one of the most powerful forms of marketing because it is based on trust between individuals (Heriyati and Siek, 2011). People tend to accept and trust recommendations from people they know or trust more than traditional advertising or marketing materials. In the digital era, word of mouth can also occur online through social media platforms, online reviews, or discussion forums. In this case, information or recommendations shared orally can spread quickly and reach a wider audience. Word of mouth is a term from the English language which means the power of the mouth. The word word in Indonesian means word, while mouth means mouth. So, this

strategy is one of the marketing strategies to market a business by word of mouth (Isnurhadi and Widiyanti, 2021).

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT
The Effect of School Image on Parents' Interest and Word of Mouth

As educational institutions, schools are very important in educating, managing, and producing quality human resources. It is hoped that graduates will be useful and accepted by the community and be well absorbed by employment opportunities. However, an effort and the right strategy are needed to realize this, considering that all universities have the same goals (Melastri and Giantari, 2019). Like manufacturing companies that produce goods, universities as providers of service products must also make various efforts to face increasingly fierce competition in the education industry. Every university must be observant in seeing the opportunities that exist in society (Siddiqui et al., 2021). The public tends to choose tertiary institutions that are well accredited and have a good brand image in the eyes of the public.

H1: Islamic School Image has a significant positive effect on parents' interest.

H2: Islamic School Image has a significant positive effect on word-of-mouth.

The Effect of Service Quality on Parents' Interest and Word of Mouth

A service company must maintain the quality of the services offered and be above competitors and more powerful than consumers imagine. If the service quality received by the consumer is better or the same as what he imagined, he tends to try it again (Wijaya, 2021). However, if the perceived service is lower than expected, the consumer will be disappointed and end his relationship with the service company in question. Customer expectations are the same as what kind of service a company should provide to customers. These customer expectations are based on word of mouth, personal needs, past experiences, and external communications (advertising and other forms of company promotion). From some of the definitions above, it can be concluded that service quality is the activity of helping and serving customers in an organization as well as possible, starting from meeting customer needs so that they meet expectations so that customers are satisfied with the services provided by the institution and ending with customer loyalty (Hidayat et al., 2021).

H3: Service quality has a significant positive effect on parents' interest.

H4: Service quality has a significant positive effect on word-of-mouth.

The Mediating Effect of Word of Mouth on the Influence of Islamic School Image and Service Quality on Parent's Interest

In educational institutions, this organization is a service. It tends to give users more impressions because they use these educational services directly and feel what services are provided by an educational institution in a short period. Automatically, when the educational services received are good, consumers will then provide positive things related to what they receive so that it has an impact on the desire of other people to continue their education at the same school. The image of a good Islamic educational institution can influence parents' perceptions of the quality of education provided and conformity with Islamic values (Isnurhadi and Widiyanti, 2021). If an educational institution has a good reputation for providing Islamic education, parents may be more interested in considering the institution. Good service quality, such as effective teaching, attention to the individual needs, a conducive learning environment, clear communication, and good management, can give parents a positive experience and increase their trust in educational institutions. Information and recommendations received by parents from those closest to them, such as friends, family, or the community, through word of mouth can play an important role in shaping parents' perceptions of Islamic school image and service quality (Hidayat et al., 2021). Suppose parents hear positive experiences or recommendations from others about educational institutions and their services. In that case, they tend to have a more positive perception and increase their interest in choosing their child's education.

H5: Word of mouth has a significant positive effect on parents' interest.

H6: Word of mouth mediates the influence of the school's Islamic image on parents' interest.

H7: Word of mouth mediates the effect of service quality on parents' interest.
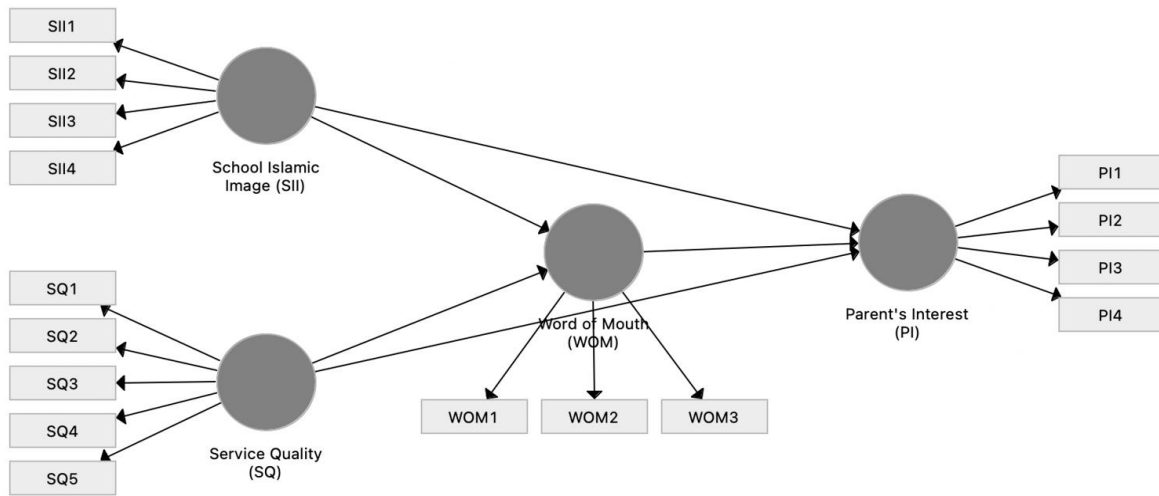
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHOD

The variable used in this study consisted of Parent's Interest = Interest is one of the psychological aspects that considerably influences the attitudes and behavior (Ishmael and Dei, 2018). Islamic School Image: The school's brand image is the community's understanding of the school, community trust, and community views about the school (Siddiqui et al., 2021). Word of Mouth: Word of mouth is a communication method in which information or recommendations about a product, service, or experience are sent from person to person through conversation (Isnurhadi and Widiyanti, 2021).

Table 1. Variable Operational Definition

Variable	Indicator	Scale	Sources
School Islamic Image (SII)	Personality (SII1) Reputation (SII2) Accreditation Rank (SII3) Identity (SII4)	Likert	(Melastri and Giantari, 2019)
Service Quality (SQ)	Physical Evidence (SQ1) Reliability (SQ2) Responsiveness (SQ3) Guarantees and Assurance (SQ4) Individualized attention (SQ5)	Likert	(Santos et al., 2020)
Word Of Mouth (WOM)	Positive stories (WOM1) Recommendation (WOM2) Invitation (WOM3)	Likert	(Hidayat et al., 2021)
Parent's Interest (PI)	Transactional interest (PI1) Referential interest (PI2) Preferential interest (PI3) Exploratory interest (PI4)	Likert	(Abadi and Hidayatulloh, 2022; Kango and Ma'arif, 2021)

Sources: Previous Research Analysis (2022)

In the initial process, the data in this study will be analyzed through descriptive statistics (frequency test and respondent response test) with the help of SPSS. Then, in the following process, this study uses data analysis methods using Smart PLS 3.0 Software. PLS is a variant-based SEM statistical method designed to solve multiple regression when specific problems occur in the data. The following are the criteria for assessing the model in the PLS-SEM analysis.

RESULTS
The Characteristics of Respondents

The table 2 shows the demographics of parents as respondents in this study, with a total of 200 respondents. In this study, most parents who filled out the statement responses were female, 71 %, while the rest were male, as much as 29%. The average age of parents is below 30 years, with a total of 54%, and not much different from those aged 30-40 years, with a total of 41%. It shows that the parents who enroll their children are, on average, still young for these elementary school students. Furthermore, parents work; most male/ female parents of these students work as private workers, as much as 50.5%.

Measurement Model Analysis (Outer Model)

Based on the convergent validity test results, if a factor loading value <0.5, it had to be excluded from the model, and a re-estimation of the factor loading value was applied. By issuing some loading factors <0.5, the estimated lading factor values, all indicators used to continue the analysis to the next stage, met convergent validity because all loading factors were <0.5. Hence, the convergent validity of all endogenous construct groups was valid. The model had good discriminant validity if each loading indicator value of a latent variable was greater than other correlated variables. The cross-loading value in this study for each indicator was greater than any other latent variable. It indicated each variable held good discriminant validity.

The next stage was testing the consistency of the measurement (reliability). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR Composite Reliability (CR) were considered in good condition if they had a value > 0.70. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was good if it had a value> 0.5. According to the Constructive Reliability test of the measurement model, all variables were valid. The latent variables and the reliability of the measurement model were fine, too. It showed the indicator was reliable in constructing exogenous constructs. The multicollinearity test worked to ensure there was no correlation between one exogenous variable and another exogenous variable. From the study's results, the VIF of each variable produced ≤10, so there was no multicollinearity.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

Demography	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	58	29%
	Female	142	71%
	Total	200	100%
Age	<30 years	81	54%
	31-40 years	78	41%
	> 40 years	41	20,5%
	Total	200	100%
Parent's Occupation (mom/dad)	State official	35	17,5%
	Private Workers	101	50,5%
	Entrepreneur	64	12%
	Total	200	100%

Table 3. Square test

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Parent's Interest (PI)	0,710	0,704
Word of Mouth (WOM)	0,253	0,243

Source: Processed data (2020)

The Parent's Interest (PI) is 0,704 based on the R-square Adjusted value table. The percentage of the influence of the variables Islamic School Image, Service Quality, and Word of Mouth (WoM) on Parent's Interest is 70.4%, while the remaining (29.6%) is influenced by other factors. R-Square Adjusted Value for the Word of Mouth (WoM) variable is 0.243. It designates the percentage of variables Islamic School Image and Service Quality on Word of Mouth (WoM) as 24.3%, while the remaining 75.7% is from other factors.
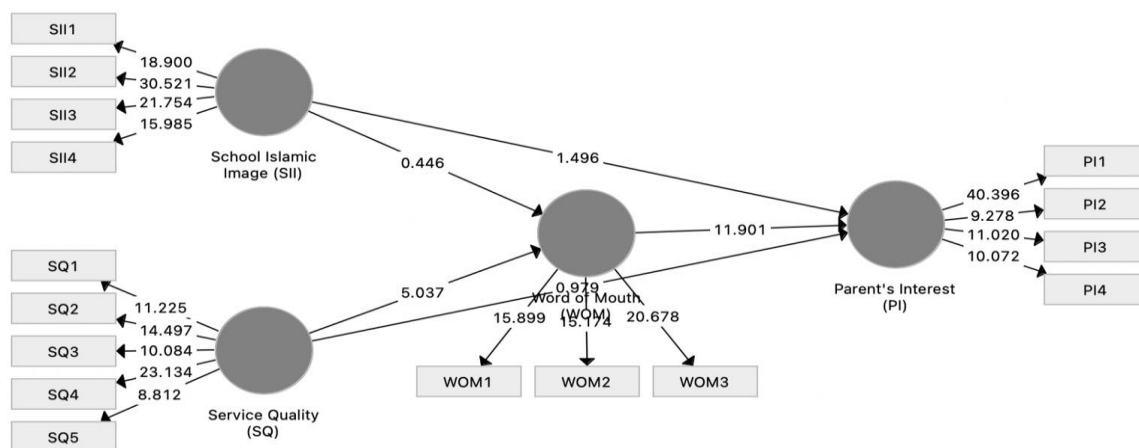
$Q2 = 1-(1-R12)(1-R22)...(1-Rn2)$
$Q2 = 1-(1-0,7042)(1-0,2432)$
$Q2 = 1-(0,504)(0,940)$
$Q2 = 1-0,473$
$Q2 = 0,526$

The Q2 value from the calculation above is 0.526 indicated the salinity of the research data explained by the structural model developed in this study, and 0.474 was caused by other factors not included.

Source: Processed data (2020)

Figure 2. Path Model

Table 4. Path coefficient

Hypothesis		Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Conclusion
H1	SII -> PI	0,100	1,496	0,135	Rejected
H2	SII -> WOM	0,041	0,446	0,656	Rejected
H3	SQ -> PI	0,078	0,979	0,328	Rejected
H4	SQ -> WOM)	0,474	5,037	0,000	Accepted
H5	WOM -> PI	0,754	11,901	0,000	Accepted
H6	SII -> WOM -> PI	0,030	0,442	0,659	Rejected
H7	SQ -> WOM -> PI	0,358	5,128	0,000	Accepted

*: Sig < 0,05
Source: Processed data (2020)

Hypothesis Testing

Table 4 shows the results of hypothesis testing, where in Hypothesis 1, the T Statistics value is 1.496 <1.96, and the P-Value is 0.135 > 0.05, which means that Hypothesis 1 is rejected, meaning that there is no significant influence between the Islamic School Image on Parent's Interest. Hypothesis 2, T Statistics value 0.446 <1.96 and P-Value 0.656 > 0.05 means that hypothesis 2 is rejected, meaning there is no significant effect between the Islamic School Image and Word of Mouth. Hypothesis 3, T Statistics value 0.078 <1.96 and P-Value 0.979 > 0.05 means that hypothesis 3 is rejected, meaning there is no significant effect between service Quality and Parent's Interest. Hypothesis 4, T Statistics 5.03>1.96, and P-Value 0.000 <0.05 means that hypothesis 4 is accepted, meaning that there is no significant positive effect between Service Quality and Word of Mouth. Hypothesis 5, T Statistics value 11.901 > 1.96 and P-Value 0.000 <0.05 means hypothesis 5 is accepted, meaning there is a significant positive influence between Word of Mouth and Parent's Interest. Whereas for testing mediating variables used indirect analysis, where it can be seen hypothesis 6 T Statistics Value 0.442 < 1.96 and P-Value 0.659 > 0.05 means hypothesis 6 is Rejected, which means Word of Mouth does not mediate the influence of Islamic School Image against Parent's Interest. In hypothesis 7, the T Statistics value is 5.128 > 1.96, and the P-Value is 0.000 > 0.05, which means that hypothesis 6 is Rejected, which means Word of Mouth does not mediate the effect of Service Quality on Parent's Interest.

DISCUSSION
Islamic School Image on Word of Mouth and Parent's Interest

Based on the results of hypothesis testing in Table 4, hypothesis 1 is obtained that Islamic School Image does not significantly affect Word of Mouth. Also, hypothesis 2 does not significantly affect Islamic School Image and Parent's Interest. (Hidayat et al., 2021) Argues that the institution's identity is how it shows itself to the public, in the form of a company logo, vision, and mission, or physical evidence of the institution that distinguishes it from other institutions. Abadi and Hidayatulloh (2022) describe the image as a belief, a person's impression of a certain object that is formed based on the experience experienced by the person. Image is a person's perception in his mind of an object. Santos et al. (2020) suggest that the perception of an organization is shaped by four factors: reputation, values, institutional identity, and personality as interpreted by the public from the institution's characteristics. The values contained in the institution are included in the organizational culture. Hidayat et al. (2021) explain that culture can reflect the behavior of consumer buying decisions. However, the results of this study are not in line with previous researchers where Islamic school image has a significant influence. The school's Islamic image does not significantly affect WoM and parents' interest in this study because the object of this study is an Islamic school in Pekanbaru City, Riau. Pekanbaru, Riau itself, is a city district with a majority Muslim population. So, the image of Islam formed by schools is not the main factor in determining parents in deciding their children's schools due to the large competition between Muslim schools in Pekanbaru. Furthermore, this study also found no mediating role of word of mouth in the relationship between the school's Islamic image and the parents' interest.

Service Quality on Word of Mouth and Parent's Interest

The results of the subsequent hypothesis testing in the Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4 indicate that service quality has a significant role in parental interest and Word of Mouth. (Li and Shang, 2020), defines service quality as a comprehensive assessment, namely the overall customer evaluation of a service. Consumers create service expectations from past experiences, word-of-mouth communication, and advertising (Prayogo and Kusumawardhani, 2016). Consumers compare perceived and expected services. Ishmael and Dei (2018) and Pham et al., 2019) states that services closer to educational services are categorized as organizations or companies that provide something to the public or do something for the government, for example, prison, civil, diplomatic, fire, secret, security, and others. The results of this study are supported by previous research conducted by (Ishmael and Dei, 2018; Li and Shang, 2020; and Prayogo and Kusumawardhani, 2016), where the quality of service has a positive effect on Word of Mouth. The perceived quality of service is getting better.

It will encourage an increase in one's level of trust to use a product/service, and also, people will disseminate the existence of the product/service to others.

The Mediation Effect of Word of Mouth

The results of hypothesis testing five show that word of mouth significantly influences parents' interest in sending their children to Islamic schools. This study's results align with research (Heriyati and Siek, 2011; Hidayat et al., 2021), where word of mouth is essential for someone to decide to buy a product/service. (Kango et al., 2021) suggests that Word of Mouth (WOM) is disseminating information from one person to another through verbal communication, including face-to-face, by telephone, and the Internet. Abadi and Hidayatulloh (2022) suggest that word-of-mouth (wom) communication is personal communication between two or more individuals, for example, between customers or members of a group. Word of Mouth (WOM) in disseminating information about schools can be obtained through trusted people such as experts, friends, and family and tends to be accepted more quickly. In addition, word-of-mouth schools can also be used as references because parents/service students usually struggle to evaluate the quality of a school because they have not experienced it themselves. Word of mouth (WoM) is essential in shaping customer attitudes and behavior. The 7th hypothesis test results also found that the word of mouth could mediate the relationship between service quality and parents' interest in choosing their child's school. It is closely related to the function of the Word of Mouth, which brings belief in positive things that spread about Islamic schools. It can certainly encourage other aspects, such as service quality, so that it becomes important.

IMPLICATIONS

This study found that the role of Islamic image in an Islamic school is unimportant for parents in deciding their child's school. It is contrary to the previous theory, which stated that a good reputation or image built by an organization/company will improve its customer relationship. However, as a school based on Islam, Islamic schools in Pekanbaru still have to maintain their Islam to grow a reputation tucked in the name of the institution built.

In addition, the service quality aspect aligns with the theory that service quality is important in educational organizations. In this case, Islamic schools that private parties own should be able to improve their services because they have greater responsibilities to consumers. In addition, the quality of service is also a key aspect in creating a superior private Islamic school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As for suggestions from this research, Islamic schools in Pekanbaru must maintain and improve the quality of existing services. This Islamic private school prioritizes the best service to students, parents, and the community. Furthermore, further researchers are expected to be able to conduct further research related to important aspects that Islamic private schools must improve to be able to compete with other public and private schools, such as aspects of learner quality, accreditation, and technology.

This study has limited samples and only selected a few schools at random technique. For that further, it is still necessary to develop research on Islamic schools in Pekanbaru as a whole so that the number of samples can be representative. In addition, this study found that the image of Islam did not have a significant role in the interests of parents. It contradicted the researcher's basic assumptions by placing Pekanbaru, Riau as object of research because the majority of population of Pekanbaru itself are Muslims, and the image of Islam should have an important role. Extending the sample to a later study may provide a definitive answer.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study indicate that Is the lamic school image does not significantly influence word of mouth and parental interest. Also, the results of this study do not find any mediating role of word of mouth in the relationship between Islamic school image and parental interest. However, service quality is important in achieving word of mouth and parents' interest. Word of mouth also significantly impacts parents' interest in sending their children to the Islamic schools in Pekanbaru. This study also found the mediating role of word of mouth in the relationship between school service quality and parental interest.

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