

## THE QUALITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICE IN INDONESIA

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**Abstract** – Education is the most important thing as education is a strategic tool to improve the standard of human life. Parents play a very important role in choosing their children's school. This research aims to find out the effect of quality of educational service and school reputation to parents' satisfaction towards parents' decision in choosing the school. Research is done in Indonesia, taking 400 random samples from Indonesia's big cities. The result shows that parents' decision in choosing a school is highly affected by the service quality of educational service and school reputation. As a result, the improvement of service quality for every school is required in order to make parents more satisfied and to gain a good reputation.

**Keywords:** *Educations, Parents' Decision, School*

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### Introduction

Education is a strategic tool to improve the standard of human life. Education is an investment that the private and social benefits that make a dignified nation and the individual human being has a degree (Engkoswara dan Komariah, 2010: 1). According to UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in an effort to improve the quality of a nation, there is no other way except through the improvement of the quality of education. The United Nations (UN) through UNESCO launched the four pillars of education both for the present and for the future, namely: (1) learning to know (mastery of the deep and wide in different disciplines), (2) learning to do (learn to apply knowledge, work together in teams, learn to solve problems in different situations, learn to work or apply the knowledge acquired by the students), (3) learning to be (learning to be independent, to be the one responsible for realizing the common goal), (4) learning to live together (learning to understand and respect other people, their history and values of religion). The four pillars of education that incorporates the goals intelligence quotient (IQ), emotional quotient (EQ) and spiritual quotient (SQ).

In addition to improving the quality of the ministry of education, the school also must establish and maintain a positive image and reputation as well as building a good relationship with the media and harmonious relationships with customers (students and the wider community) so that these schools can gain public confidence. School reputation is important for attracting and retaining students (Bush et al., 1998). Competition will result in school effectiveness, productivity and service, leading to higher quality education (Levin, 2002). Rational choice theory informs most school choice plans. This theory suggests that parents are utility maximizers who make decisions from clear value preferences based on calculations of the costs, benefits, and probabilities of success of various options (Henning et al., 2001)

Customer satisfaction is becoming one of the most essential objectives which any firm seeking for long term relationship with customer considers as the top priority (Helm et al., 2009). One of the main elements determining customer satisfaction in the customer's perception of service quality (Pereda, 2007). Customer satisfaction is described as the result of a comparison of customers' expectation and his or her subsequent perceived performance of service quality (Herington and Weaven, 2009). According to this conceptualization, perceived service quality is one of the antecedents to overall customer satisfaction

Parental choice is part of a social process influenced by salient properties of social class and networks of social relationship (Bosetti, 2000; Ball, 2003). To make decisions regarding their children's education, parents will rely on their personal values and subjective desired goals of education, as well as others within their social and professional networks to collect information.

This study will discuss how the role of quality of educational service and school reputation affect the parents' satisfaction and the impact for decision of parents in choosing the school. Several studies have examined the relationship between parental satisfaction and school reputation. Some studies have noted that school reputation influences stakeholder satisfaction (Andreassen and Lindestad, 1998; Reay and Luvey, 2000; Li and Hung, 2009). Other studies provided evidence that satisfaction with the school influences its reputation (Bond and King, 2003; Helm et al., 2009). However, Skallerud (2011) applied the balance theory (Helm et al., 2009) and the theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), based on the assumption that an individual with positive experience of a firm's services perceives satisfaction. Research by Helgesen and Nettet (2007) also found that student satisfaction is an important antecedent to the reputation of higher education institutions. In general, there seems to be a strong indication that parents are likely to attribute a good reputation to a school that fulfills or surpasses their expectation. But until now, there are still no researches about parental decision in choosing a school for early childhood education in Indonesia. So this research will contribute both in theory and early childhood education industry.

### Research Methodology

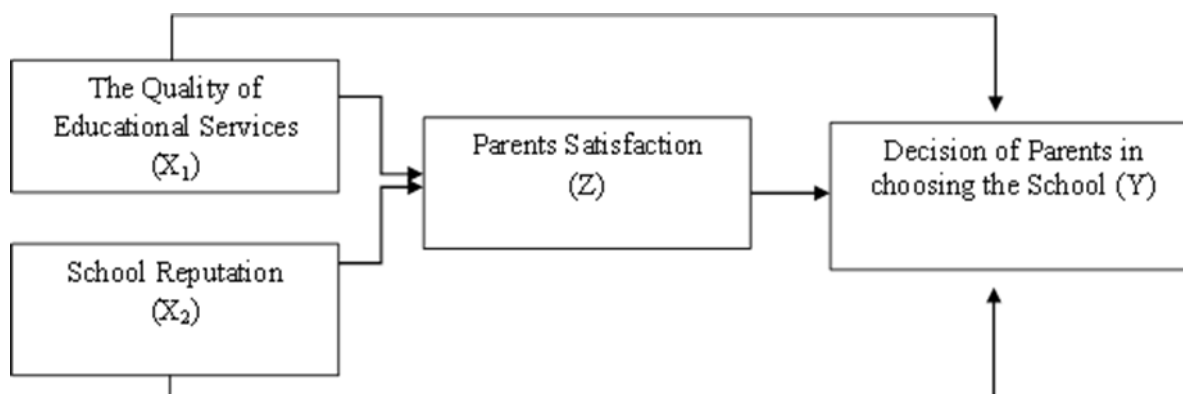
For this study, the measurement scale and the indicator are adopted from previous studies and theories. This type of research is associative by using path analysis as a technique analysis. The sampling technique using a non-probability sampling using incidental sampling. Questionnaires were hand-delivered to 520 parents in big cities in Indonesia such as Bandung, Jakarta, Surabaya, Bali, and Makasar. The researcher obtained 400 completed questionnaires. The scale of measurement using a Likert scale with the operationalization of the following variables:

**Table 1. Operational Variable**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
Decision of Parents in choosing the School (Y)	Recognition of the problem	1. Needs of the product
	Information search and assessment resources	2. Private sources
		3. Public sources
	Assessment and selection of the alternate purchase	4. Closed to residence
	Decision to do the purchase	5. Quality of service is superior
The behaviour after purchase	Decision to do the purchase	6. Accuracy in decision-making
		7. Other people influence
	The behaviour after purchase	8. Satisfaction of the chosen product
Parents Satisfaction (Z)	Comformity hope	9. Recoment to other people
		1. Education services
		2. Classroom
		3. Location
	Ease of obtaining	4. Curriculum
		5. Easy to get the information

Variable	Dimension	Indicator
		6. Easy to get suggestion 7. Easy to consult 8. Easy to get the facilities
	Willingness of Recommendation	9. Willing to send the other children in this school 10. Recoment to other family member
The Quality of Educational Services ( $X_1$ )	Standard teachers and education personnel	1. Good manner 2. Have a college degree 3. Communication ability 4. Follow training
	Content standards, processes, and assessment	5. Curriculum 6. Planning 7. Scoring / Appraisal
	Standard facilities and infrastructure, management, and financing	8. Security 9. Facilitation 10. Having vision and mision
	Image	1. Services 2. Study program 3. Organizing the exams 4. Parents participation
School Reputation ( $X_2$ )	Identity	5. Administration services 6. Places of learning 7. Learning tools 8. Teachers ability

In order to provide guidance and direction so that the research proposed can match that has been presented in the background of the formulation of the problem, it is necessary to develop the framework. The framework of this study can be described as follows:



## Result and Discussion

Step testing path analysis is divided into two, namely as a whole and individually. Here's a framework relationship between lines (between the variable X to Y, variable X to Z, and the variable Z to Y).

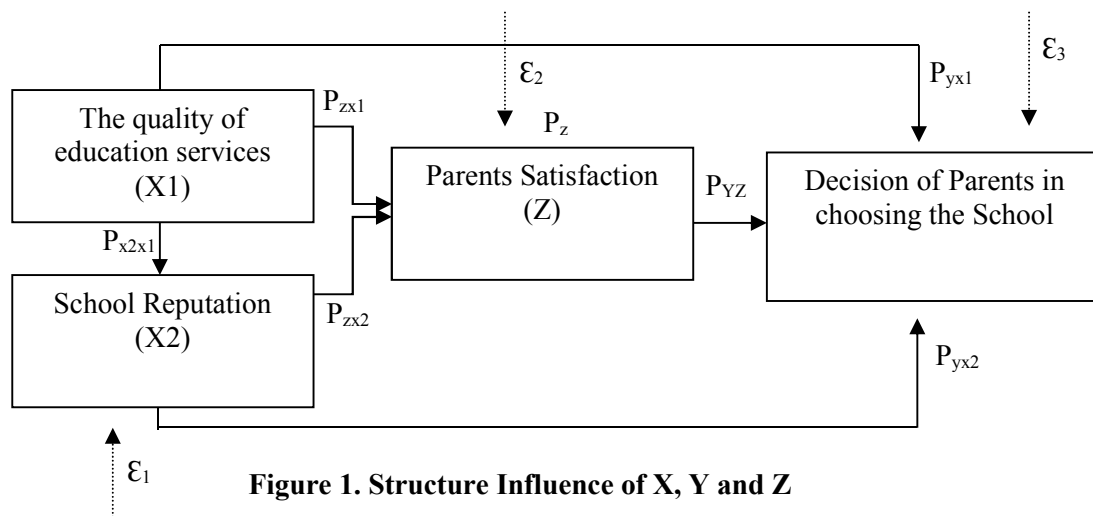


Figure 1. Structure Influence of X, Y and Z

## Summary

Effect of variable	Causal Effect		
	Direct	Indirect Through variable Z	Total
X <sub>1</sub> to X <sub>2</sub>	0,688	-	0,688
X <sub>1</sub> to Z	0,281	-	0,281
X <sub>2</sub> to Z	0,503	-	0,503
X <sub>1</sub> to Y	0,268	0,281 x 0,388 = 0,109	0,377
X <sub>2</sub> to Y	0,329	0,503 x 0,388 = 0,195	0,524
Z to Y	0,388	-	0,388
$\epsilon_1$	0,725	-	0,725
$\epsilon_2$	0,688	-	0,688
$\epsilon_3$	0,497	-	0,497

From the description above results is done by calculating the path analysis, it can be obtained the result that the effect of the quality of educational services (X1) to the school's reputation (X2) of (0.688) 2 or equal to 47.3%. The rest (52.7%) variable school's reputation is influenced by other variables outside the research. Satisfaction of parents (Z) are directly affected by the quality of educational services (X1) of (0.281) 2 or equal to 7.9% and the remaining 92.1% is influenced by other variables outside of this study. Satisfaction of parents (Z) is influenced directly by the school's reputation (X2) of (0.203) 2 or equal to 25.3% and the remaining 74.7% is influenced by other variables outside of this study. The decision of parents in choosing a school (Y) be indirectly affected by the quality of educational services (X1) of (0.377) 2 or equal to 14.2% and the remaining 85.8% is influenced by other variables outside the research while the effect directly observed at 7.18%. The decision of parents in choosing school (Y) is affected indirectly by the school's reputation (X2) of (0.524) 2 or equal to 27.46% and the remaining 72.54% influenced by other variables outside the research while effect directly observed by 10.8%. The decision of parents in choosing a school (Y) is influenced directly by the satisfaction of the parents (Z) of (0,388) 2 or equal to 15.05% and the remaining 84.95% influenced by other variables outside research.

## Conclusion

The quality of education services have a strong relationship with the school's reputation and satisfaction school election, so the good reputation of the school will better the satisfaction of the parents. Thus the improvement of product factors, namely by developing existing courses to improve material unit show the appropriate teaching and employment as well as training and improving science teaching staff also all leaders, staff and employees should be required to provide educational services better and professional.

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