



## The Influence of Learning Experience, Student Satisfaction and Loyalty on Word of Mouth and The Decision of Choosing a Private College

Muthia Fadila Puteri<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Management, Faculty of Business and Economics, Universitas Islam Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author, E-mail: [20311177@students.uii.ac.id](mailto:20311177@students.uii.ac.id)

| ARTICLE INFORMATION                                                                                                   | ABSTRACT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Section<br>Research Articles                                                                                          | This research aims to test and analyze the influence of course experience, satisfaction and loyalty student on word of mouth and the college decision. The research approach used in this research is quantitative. This collection technique in this research was by distributing questionnaires online via google form to 135 respondents. The method used in this research is PLS-SEM using SmartPLS software. The results of this research are that student course experiences have a positive and significant effect on word of mouth, student satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on word of mouth, student loyalty does not have a positive and significant effect on word of mouth and word of mouth has a positive effect on college decisions. |
| Article History                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Article Submitted:                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Accepted:                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Available online:                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Keywords<br>student course experience<br>student satisfaction<br>student loyalty<br>word of mouth<br>college decision |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

©2024 PT Solusi Edukasi Berdikari: Publishers. All rights Reserved

### INTRODUCTION

Social media is one of the strategic tools used to market a product. Social media itself is side by side with humans and cannot be separated from everyday life. On social media we get extensive information about what we need. Social media can be widely accessed by the public and is an influential source of information in improving relations between universities, recruiting students and managing public relations more broadly. According to Guilbault (2016), marketing for higher education is characterized by increased marketing efforts and expenditures to recruit prospective students who want to continue their education in higher education (Wong *et al.*, 2022). Competition is a key word that must be faced by every country in the world today and in the future. The coming globalization will increase competition. To win the competition, every country must have quality human resources.



Education plays a very central and strategic role, especially in efforts to improve the quality of human resources (HR). Because with quality human resources we can truly increase human dignity (Krisnandi, Efendi and Sugiono, 2019). A prospective student's decision when deciding to continue their education to college is something that plays a very important role in their success in the future (Harahap *et al.*, 2018). The decision to choose a college is influenced by various factors such as the student's personality, characteristics of the college or sources of information which can influence prospective students when making decisions.

The learning experience felt by students plays a role in deciding on a university (Le, Robinson and Dobeles, 2020). Student satisfaction has become an important subject for universities due to increasing competition (Osman and Saputra, 2019). Student loyalty has a good influence on the development of higher education, this can help universities achieve long-term success for the higher education itself. The loyalty that arises within students will influence students' trust in higher education (Lim, Jee and Run, 2020).

There are several previous studies that discuss students' decisions in choosing a university. However, some of this research is based on the influence of university marketing activities and promotions (Erinawati and Syafarudin, 2021; Ir, Prihartini and Abdullah, 2023). Based on research by (Rehman *et al.*, 2022) which examined student learning experiences, satisfaction and loyalty which have a positive influence on word of mouth in college decisions. This research study aims to analyze the relationship between the variables of learning experience, student satisfaction and loyalty to word of mouth in college decisions. The motivation for this research is to find out how influential students' learning experiences, satisfaction and loyalty are to word of mouth in making a decision to choose a private university.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESIS**

### **Theory of Planned Behavior**

This research uses Ajzen's theory of intention and behavior, namely The Theory of Planned Behavior (hereinafter abbreviated as TPB). TPB has been successfully used to explain and predict behavior in various areas of behavior. TPB reveals that an intention to carry out a behavior is determined by three factors, namely attitude towards the behavior, subjective norms about the behavior and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Ajzen (2020) assumes that most behavior of interest to social behavior researchers tends to be under strong volitional control and perceptual control.

### **Student Course Experience**

Experience is part of the interactions that consumers have with product and service providers. For consumers, products and services are not just about meeting their needs but must also provide an interesting experience to consumers (Godovykh and Tasci, 2020). The student experience in higher education is one of the important factors in determining the success of a university, therefore universities must strive to retain students and attract new students (Mateus, Rincón and Acosta, 2023).

### **Student Satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction is an important element in business that can influence the success of a business. Therefore, universities really pay attention to the satisfaction felt by their students (Rehman *et al.*, 2022). The satisfaction felt by students will make them recommend their

university to other people who have the desire to continue their education at university (Osman and Saputra, 2019).

### **Student Loyalty**

Student loyalty leads to a long-lasting relationship between universities as service providers and students as service recipients. Student loyalty depends on the relationship between students and universities that provide educational services. And also student loyalty is influenced by the experience and satisfaction felt by students towards higher education. In the field of education, student loyalty in service is based on strong relationships with universities. Successful higher education institutions are able to provide students with a competitive advantage, ensure student satisfaction and guarantee a positive image of higher education (Alves and Raposo, 2007; Gallegos and Vasquez, 2019)

### **Word of Mouth**

Word of Mouth Promotion is considered as one of the elements of marketing tools to build good relationships with customers and gain a competitive advantage over competitors. Personal interactions that occur between students and prospective new students provide easy access to share information related to the quality and services provided by the university. This exchange of information will influence the decision of prospective new students in choosing a university (Ambarwati and Sari, 2024). Student trust, satisfaction, loyalty, perceived quality and perceived value are also drivers of Word of Mouth (Sun, Foscht and Eisingerich, 2021).

### **College Decisions**

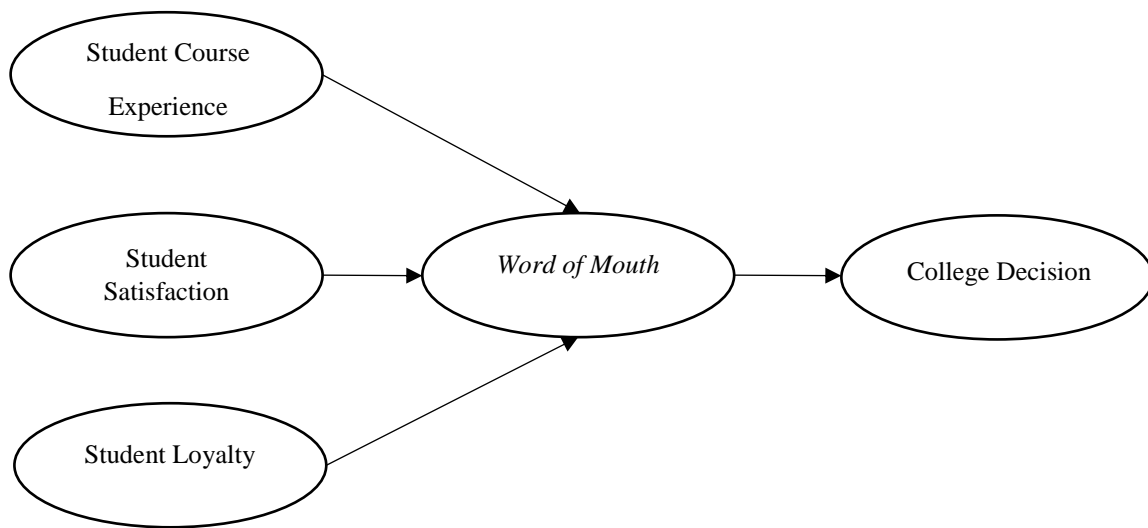
The change from student status to student is something that is very interesting for them. They will experience many changes and begin to adapt to their new life in the world of college. Students usually realize how important choosing their college is as one of the most important decisions in their lives. Because choosing a university is a decision that can predict their path in the future (Eldegwy, Elsharnouby and Kortam, 2023).

***H<sub>1</sub>: Student Learning Experiences Have a Positive Influence on Word of Mouth.***

***H<sub>2</sub>: Student Satisfaction Has a Positive Effect on Word of Mouth.***

***H<sub>3</sub>: Student Loyalty Has a Positive Effect on Word of Mouth.***

***H<sub>4</sub>: Word of Mouth Has a Positive Influence on College Decisions***



**Figure 1.** Framework

Source: (Rehman *et al.*, 2022; Ambarwati and Sari, 2024)

## RESEARCH METHODS

The data used in this research is primary data. Primary data was obtained from original sources or respondents in this study. The data collection technique in this research uses a quantitative approach by distributing online questionnaires via google form. The convenience sampling method is used as a sampling technique where the author can distribute selected questionnaires to people who meet the respondent criteria via social media such as Whatsapp, Line and E-mail. The purpose of using this method is to make it easier for the author to obtain research samples. The location of the research is in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. This is because the subjects in this research are new students from the class of 2023 at the Islamic University of Indonesia.

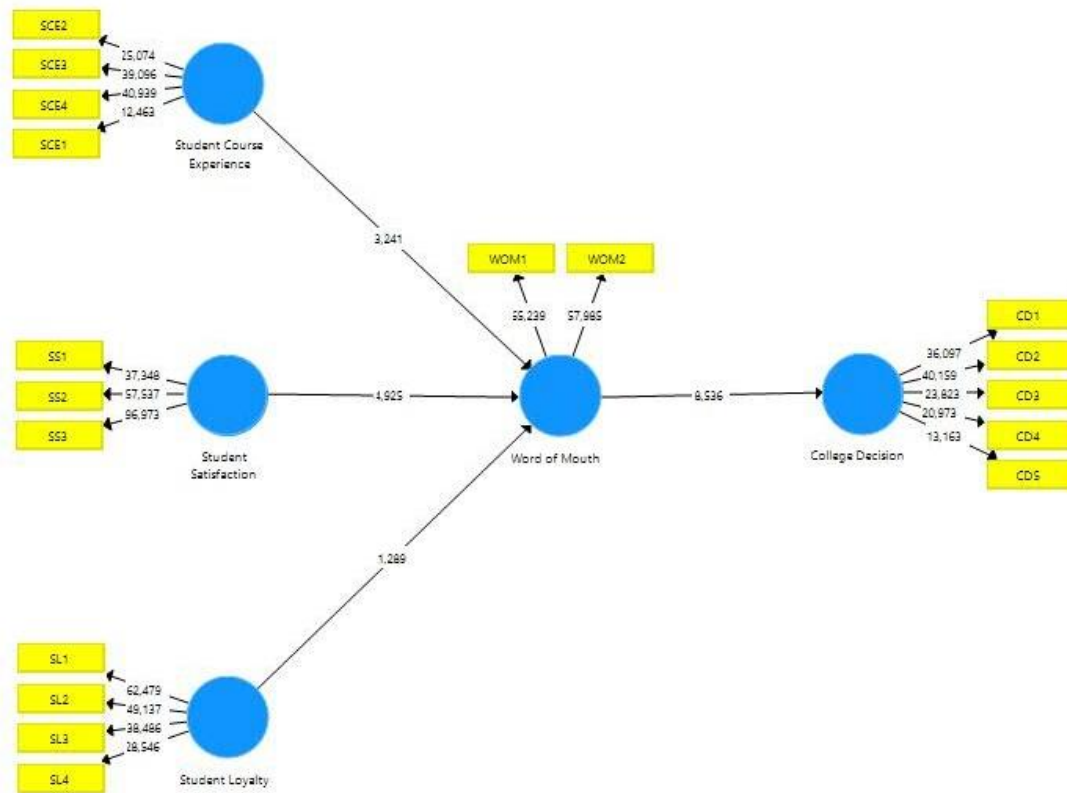
The variables that will be examined in this research include three independent variables, namely student learning experience, student satisfaction, student loyalty and word of mouth and one dependent variable, namely College Decision. This variable is measured using six likert scale values. This psychometric scale is usually used to collect respondents' responses at a certain level of agreement (Kandasamy *et al.*, 2020). This research will later be analyzed using the Structural Equation Model (SEM). To achieve the target, the minimum sample is calculated from the number of indicator questions asked plus the latent variable then multiplied by five. Meanwhile, to achieve the target, the maximum sample is calculated from the number of indicator questions asked plus the number of variables then multiplied by ten (Hair Jr. *et al.*, 2021). This research uses 18 question indicators and 5 latent variables. The number of respondents obtained ranged from  $5a \leq x \leq 10a$  where  $a$  is the sum of the proposed indicators and the number of latent variables and  $x$  is the number of respondents. Based on the results of these calculations, this research must have a minimum target of 90 respondents and a maximum target of 180 respondents or new students from the class of 2023 at the Islamic University of Indonesia.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Analysis of Demographic Variables

| Demographic Variables                              | N   | %    |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----|------|
| <i>Gender</i>                                      |     |      |
| Male                                               | 61  | 45,2 |
| Female                                             | 74  | 54,8 |
| <i>Umur</i>                                        |     |      |
| 15-20 Age                                          | 132 | 97,8 |
| 21-25 Age                                          | 3   | 2,2  |
| More 25 Tahun                                      | 0   | 0    |
| <i>School</i>                                      | 58  | 43%  |
| Private                                            | 77  | 57%  |
| <i>Country</i>                                     |     |      |
| <i>Pocket Money Month</i>                          |     |      |
| Rp500.000-<Rp1.000.000                             | 3   | 2,2  |
| Rp1.000.000 -<Rp2.000.000                          | 27  | 20   |
| Rp2.000.000-<Rp3.000.000                           | 54  | 54,1 |
| Rp3.000.000-<Rp4.000.000                           | 32  | 23,7 |
| <i>Faculty</i>                                     |     |      |
| Faculty of Business and Economic                   | 41  | 30,4 |
| Faculty of Law                                     | 12  | 8,9  |
| Faculty of Islamic Religious Scienes               | 1   | 0,7  |
| Faculty of Medical                                 | 2   | 1,5  |
| Faculty Mathematics and Natural Sciene             | 11  | 8,1  |
| Faculty of Psychology and Cultural Sciences        | 35  | 25,9 |
| Faculty of Civil Engineering and Planning          | 24  | 17,8 |
| Faculty of Technology and Industry                 | 9   | 6,7  |
| <i>The Person Who Most Influences The Decision</i> |     |      |
| Self                                               | 102 | 75,6 |
| Parents                                            | 24  | 17,8 |
| Relation                                           | 9   | 6,7  |
| <i>Entrance Options</i>                            |     |      |
| First Choice                                       | 42  | 31,1 |
| Second Choice After Failing to Tenter PTN          | 93  | 68,9 |
| <i>Registration Scheme</i>                         |     |      |
| CBT (Computer-Based Test)                          | 29  | 21,5 |
| PBT (Paper-Based-Test)                             | 9   | 6,7  |
| PSB (Achievement Student Search)                   | 27  | 20   |
| SIBER (Report-Based Selection)                     | 70  | 51,9 |

Source: Primary Data Processed (2024)

## ANALYSIS RESULTS



**Figure 2.** Path Analysis Test Results  
Source: Primary Data Processed (2024)

**Table 2.** Hypothesis Test Results

|     |      |     | Sample Mean | STDEV | T     | P     | Label    |
|-----|------|-----|-------------|-------|-------|-------|----------|
| SCE | <--- | WOM | 0,245       | 0,076 | 3,241 | 0,001 | Accepted |
| SS  | <--- | WOM | 0,354       | 0,073 | 4,925 | 0,000 | Accepted |
| SL  | <--- | WOM | 0,111       | 0,080 | 1,289 | 0,198 | Rejected |
| WOM | <--- | CD  | 0,575       | 0,067 | 8,536 | 0,000 | Accepted |

Source: Primary Data Processed (2024)

Based on the hypothesis table, it shows that H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>, and H<sub>4</sub> are supported while H<sub>3</sub> is not supported. This is because it is in line with the principles of Hair *et al.* (2016), which says that the T-statistics value must be more than 1,96; and the P-value must be less than 0,05. Therefore, H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>, and H<sub>4</sub> are supported.

## Discussion

Student learning experiences play a role in word of mouth in college decisions. The results of this study are supported by research by Özmen and Ögel (2020) which states that student learning experiences have a positive influence on word of mouth. The results of previous research also have a positive influence between student satisfaction variables and word of

mouth variables (Pandey and Deshwal, 2018). Based on the results of the analysis, this happened because students felt a good learning experience during the learning process resulting in positive word of mouth. Student satisfaction plays a role in word of mouth in college decisions. The results of this study are supported by research Mesra B *et al.* (2021) which states that student satisfaction has a positive influence on word of mouth. The results of previous research also have a positive influence between student satisfaction variables and word of mouth variables (Katukurunda, Khatibi and Azam, 2018; Rehman *et al.*, 2022). Student loyalty does not play a role in word of mouth in college decisions. The results of this study contradict research Kaushal and Ali (2020) which states that student loyalty has a positive influence on word of mouth. The results of this study do not have a significant and positive influence because students who are loyal to higher education prefer to keep the positive experiences they feel rather than sharing them with others. Word of mouth plays a role in college decisions. The results of this study are supported by research Carvalho, Brandão and Pinto (2021) which states that word of mouth has a positive influence on college decisions. The results of previous research also have a positive influence between word of mouth variables on higher education decisions (Harahap *et al.*, 2018; Le, Robinson and Dobebe, 2020). Based on the analysis, this occurs because students feel that the influence of word of mouth promotion is a trusted source for obtaining information about higher education, therefore word of mouth can have a good influence when considering university decisions.

## CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that in this research there are three accepted hypotheses and one unacceptable hypothesis. The results of this research provide managerial implications for private university managers. The higher education community needs to improve facilities and infrastructure services to improve the learning experience, satisfaction and loyalty felt by students. Having a good learning experience, student satisfaction and loyalty will produce positive word of mouth which can have a good reputational impact on universities in accepting new students. It is important for university administrators to pay attention to student loyalty to the university.

Student loyalty will have a good impact on higher education. The author realizes that the results of this research have limitations. Limitations in this research lie in the research object. The objects of this research only come from one private university, namely students of the Islamic University of Indonesia class of 2023. So the objects of this research are only limited to students of the Islamic University of Indonesia class of 2023. Due to the limitations of the research discussed previously, the author has suggestions for improvements that can be made for further research. The author provides suggestions for involving many respondents from other private universities.

## REFERENCE

- Ajzen, I. (1991) "The Theory of Planend Behavior," in *Organizational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes*. 2nd ed. Massachusetts: Academic Prees, Inc., pp. 179–211. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.47985/dcidj.475>.
- Ajzen, I. (2020) "The theory of planned behavior: Frequently asked questions," *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, 2(4), pp. 314–324. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.195>.
- Alves, H. and Raposo, M. (2007) "Conceptual Model of Student Satisfaction in Higher Education," *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 18(5), pp. 571–588.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14783360601074315>.

- Ambarwati, R. and Sari, D.K. (2024) "Experiential marketing and Islamic branding: a new perspective on college decision in Islamic higher education," *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 15(3), pp. 745–776. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-08-2022-0207>.
- Carvalho, L., Brandão, A. and Pinto, L.H. (2021) "Understanding the importance of eWOM on Higher Education Institutions' brand equity," *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 31(2), pp. 261–279. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08841241.2020.1788196>.
- Eldegwy, A., Elsharnouby, T.H. and Kortam, W. (2023) "Blue blood students of occupational dynasties and their university choice: the moderating role of parent–child occupational following," *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, pp. 1–24. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08841241.2022.2163334>.
- Erinawati, F. and Syafarudin, A. (2021) "PENGARUH KUALITAS PELAYANAN, HARGA, PROMOSI TERHADAP KEPUTUSAN," *Jurnal Valuasi: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Manajemen dan Kewirausahaan*, 1(1), pp. 130–146. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.46306/vls.v1i1.10>.
- Gallegos, J.A. and Vasquez, A. (2019) "Explaining university student loyalty: theory, method, and empirical research in Chile," *Academia Revista Latinoamericana de Administración*, 32(4), pp. 525–540. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/ARLA-02-2019-0049>.
- Godovykh, M. and Tasci, A.D.A. (2020) "Customer experience in tourism: A review of definitions, components, and measurements," *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 35, p. 100694. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100694>.
- Guilbault, M. (2016) "Students as customers in higher education: reframing the debate," *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 26(2), pp. 132–142. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08841241.2016.1245234>.
- Hair, J.F. et al. (2016) *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Hair Jr., J.F. et al. (2021) *Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) Using R: A Workbook*. Edited by I. Cham: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-80519-7>. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-80519-7>.
- Harahap, D.A. et al. (2018) "The impact of word of mouth and university reputation on student decision to study at university," *Management Science Letters*, 8(6), pp. 649–658. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2018.4.027>.
- Ir, M., Prihartini, E. and Abdullah, D. (2023) "Analisis Faktor-Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Keputusan Kuliah Di Perguruan Tinggi Swasta," *Entrepreneur: Jurnal Bisnis Manajemen dan Kewirausahaan*, 4(1), pp. 205–219. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.31949/entrepreneur.v4i1.3682>.
- Kandasamy, I. et al. (2020) "Indeterminate Likert scale: feedback based on neutrosophy, its distance measures and clustering algorithm," *Soft Computing*, 24, pp. 7459–7468. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00500-019-04372-x>.
- Katukurunda, K.G.W.K., Khatibi, A. and Azam, S.M.F. (2018) "WHAT FACTORS MOST? IMPACT OF PROGRAMME QUALITY DIMENSIONS ON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH BIOSYSTEMS TECHNOLOGY



- PROGRAMME IN SRI LANKA,” *European Journal of Education Studies*, 5(2), pp. 100–117. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.46827/ejes.v0i0.1940>.
- Kaushal, V. and Ali, N. (2020) “University Reputation, Brand Attachment and Brand Personality as Antecedents of Student Loyalty: A Study in Higher Education Context,” *Corporate Reputation Review*, 23, pp. 254–266. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41299-019-00084-y>.
- Krisnandi, H., Efendi, S. and Sugiono, E. (2019) *Pengantar Manajemen: Panduan Menguasai Ilmu Manajemen*. Edited by Melati. Jakarta: LPU-UNAS.
- Le, T.D., Robinson, L.J. and Dobeles, A.R. (2020) “Understanding high school students use of choice factors and word-of-mouth information sources in university selection,” *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(4), pp. 808–818. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2018.1564259>.
- Lim, W.M., Jee, T.W. and Run, E.C. De (2020) “Strategic brand management for higher education institutions with graduate degree programs: empirical insights from the higher education marketing mix,” *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 28(3), pp. 225–245. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2018.1496131>.
- Mateus, M.A., Rincón, A.G. and Acosta, Y.A.C. (2023) “Student experience scale: Factor analysis in higher education institutions,” *Frontiers in Education*, 7, p. 1057651. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2022.1057651>.
- Mesra B *et al.* (2021) “The Satisfaction as Mediation to Increase Electronic Word of Mouth at Private Higher Education,” *International Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 25(4), pp. 1–11. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/358869389\\_THE\\_SATISFACTION\\_AS\\_MEDIATION\\_TO\\_INCREASE\\_ELECTRONIC\\_WORD\\_OF\\_MOUTH\\_AT\\_PRIVATE\\_HIGHER\\_EDUCATION](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/358869389_THE_SATISFACTION_AS_MEDIATION_TO_INCREASE_ELECTRONIC_WORD_OF_MOUTH_AT_PRIVATE_HIGHER_EDUCATION).
- Osman, A.R. and Saputra, R.S. (2019) “A pragmatic model of student satisfaction: a viewpoint of private higher education,” *Quality Assurance in Education*, 27(2), pp. 142–165. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/QAE-05-2017-0019>.
- Özmen, A. and Ögel, İ.Y. (2020) “The Interaction Between Customer Experience, Satisfaction and Positive Word of Mouth: A Study on City Marketing in Afyonkarahisar,” in S. Grima, E. Özen, and H. Boz (eds.) *Contemporary Issues in Business Economics and Finance (Contemporary Studies in Economic and Financial Analysis, Vol. 104)*. Emerald Publishing Limited, pp. 105–121. Available at: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/S1569-375920200000104007/full/html>.
- Pandey, S. and Deshwal, P. (2018) “The Influence of Medical Course Experience on Satisfaction, Loyalty, and Word-Of-Mouth in Indian Medical Colleges,” *Procedia Computer Science*, 132, pp. 84–91.
- Rehman, M.A. *et al.* (2022) “The influence of course experience, satisfaction, and loyalty on students’ word-of-mouth and re-enrolment intentions,” *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 32(2), pp. 259–277. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08841241.2020.1852469>.
- Sun, X., Foscht, T. and Eisingerich, A.B. (2021) “Does educating customers create positive word of mouth?,” *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 62, p. 102638. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102638>.

Wong, L.-W. *et al.* (2022) “Mobile social media marketing: a new marketing channel among digital natives in higher education?,” *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 32(1), pp. 113–137. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08841241.2020.1834486>.