

FROM PERCEPTION TO ENROLLMENT: FACTORS SHAPING VOCATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE IN KEDIRI

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Abstract—This study seeks to analyze the factors affecting students' interest in choosing private vocational high schools in Kediri City, where intense competition in student admissions persists, posing a risk of a shortage of qualified human resources and hindering sustainable regional economic development. The aim of this study is to examine how quality, parental role, cost, choice of major, and promotion influence students' intention to enroll in an institution through cognitive and affective attitudes. Both the antecedents and consequences of intention are examined through the application of its components, thereby integrating two dimensions of attitude—cognitive and affective—to establish a distinctive research novelty that applies the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework within the context of private vocational education at the regional level, an area that has rarely been studied empirically.

A survey was conducted among 127 ninth-grade junior high school students using a quantitative approach. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) to validate the proposed structural relationships among the variables. The results showed that choice of major and promotion had the strongest influence on students' cognitive and affective attitudes. Cost during the enrollment phase also significantly affected students' attitudes. The findings indicate that aligning study programs with students' interests, offering competitive tuition fees, and leveraging effective persuasive communication strategies for promotion are critical for increasing enrollment in vocational schools.

Keywords: *Private Vocational School; Student Enrolment Intentions; Quantitative; Educational Quality; Parent Role*

1. INTRODUCTION

Vocational high schools serve as a primary source of the skilled labor pool required in today's global workforce. This situation raises concerns about the future supply of skilled workers and its potential impact on regional economic development. This research seeks to explore the factors influencing students' intention to enroll in private vocational high schools in Kediri City. Specifically, it examines the influence of quality, parental role, cost, choice of major, and promotional strategies on students' cognitive and affective attitudes, and how these attitudes, in turn, affect their intention to enroll. In educating students, schools, like other

institutions in society, must consider not only institutional characteristics but also psychological, social, and economic factors. The overarching aim of this study, therefore, is to examine how these factors operate within the school system, encompassing both vocational education institutions and local communities. This study aims to contribute by presenting these complex ideas in language accessible to a broad readership.

1.1 Research Background and theoretical Framework

In the era of globalization, industries require skilled labor, and vocational high schools play a key role in preparing this skilled workforce. However, in the case of Kediri City, interest among students in enrolling at private vocational high schools has declined significantly. This trend raises concerns about the sustainability of the skilled workforce supply and its implications for regional economic development. In fact, students' educational decisions are influenced by both institutional factors and the level of parental support they receive (Boneva et al., 2022; Nagoya & Wanasida, 2021). Students' enrollment intentions can be theoretically explained using the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). The SOR model describes how external stimuli influence internal psychological states prior to shaping behavioral responses.

In this study, quality, parental role, cost, choice of major, and promotion are classified as stimuli. These stimuli shape students' cognitive and affective attitudes (organism), which in turn influence their intention to enroll (response). This construct encompasses the relevance of the curriculum, teacher competence, and the adequacy of practical facilities supporting industry-related learning (Madzík & Chocholáková, 2016; Mahmudah & Putra, 2021). Parental role represents a form of socialization that shapes educational values and expectations (Maccoby, 1992; Macfie et al., 2015). Given that education is regarded as an investment in the future, it is also necessary to evaluate schools rationally with respect to their financial aspects (Jannah & Kardoyo, 2020). Despite this growing body of evidence, three critical gaps remain in the extant literature. First, a contextual gap exists: research on enrollment intention has been directed almost exclusively toward the higher education context (Boneva et al., 2022; Nagoya & Wanasida, 2021), leaving the decision-making processes of prospective students at the secondary vocational level empirically underexplored, despite private vocational schools facing a markedly different competitive and institutional landscape.

Second, a theoretical gap persists: although the SOR framework has previously been applied to explain enrollment behavior, prior studies have rarely disaggregated the organism component into its cognitive and affective dimensions simultaneously, thereby overlooking how rational evaluation and emotional response may operate through distinct pathways toward enrollment intention. Third, a methodological gap remains, as prior studies on vocational school choice have relied predominantly on simple regression or descriptive techniques (Fadjrin & Muhsin, 2017; Gusdiandika & Sinduwiatmo, 2016), with very few employing Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) to simultaneously test multiple structural relationships among institutional, financial, and psychological antecedents.

To the best of the authors' knowledge, no prior study has empirically examined quality, parental role, cost, choice of major, and promotion as SOR stimuli shaping both cognitive and affective attitudes toward private vocational school enrollment at the regional level using SEM-PLS. By addressing these gaps, this study offers a more granular, context-specific account of enrollment intention formation, with direct implications for vocational schools' recruitment strategies and regional workforce policy.

1.2 Problem Formulation and Research Objectives

The primary issue addressed in this study is the declining interest in enrollment at private vocational high schools in Kediri City. This matters because reduced enrollment could affect the future supply of skilled labor and the ability of regions to withstand economic shocks. This study investigates the influence of quality, parental role, cost, choice of major, and promotion on students' enrollment intentions through cognitive and affective attitudes. This issue is complex, as educational decision-making is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by emotional reactions, cognitive judgments, parental role, peer influence, and perceptions of school reputation (Eccles, 2005; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Building on the contextual, theoretical, and methodological gaps identified in Section 1, the novelty of this research lies in jointly testing the cognitive and affective pathways of the SOR framework within the context of private vocational secondary education using SEM-PLS—a combination that has not, to date, been empirically examined at the regional level (cf. Nagoya & Wanasida, 2021, who addressed only the higher education context).

Hence, the aim of this study is to test the structural relationships among quality, parental role, cost, choice of major, promotion, cognitive attitude, affective attitude, and enrollment intention within an Indonesian regional context using quantitative methods.

1.3 Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

According to the literature, educational quality affects students' cognitive and affective evaluations of institutions (Nagoya & Wanasida, 2021). In addition to academic outcomes, curriculum relevance and alignment with industry needs are important aspects of vocational education quality (Mahmudah & Putra, 2021). However, existing research has focused considerably more on the higher education context than on vocational secondary education, leaving the quality–attitude relationship in the vocational setting comparatively underexamined. As has been well documented, parents play a significant role in educational decision-making (Maccoby, 1992; Macfie et al., 2015). However, evidence regarding their direct effect on students' psychological attitudinal dispositions remains mixed (Boneva et al., 2022). Enrollment decisions are also influenced by cost perceptions, as educational investments must be rationally evaluated from a financial standpoint (Jannah & Kardoyo, 2020). Moreover, aligning students' interests with their choice of major helps facilitate learning motivation and reinforces their intention to enroll (Ndolu, 2021). Promotional efforts, particularly through digital channels, help build institutional image and influence students' perceptions (Mudin et al., 2023; Ong, 2022).

Conceptual Framework

Building on the SOR framework outlined above, Figure 1 synthesizes the hypothesized relationships among the study's constructs prior to empirical testing. Quality, parental role, cost, choice of major, and promotion are positioned as stimuli; cognitive attitude and affective attitude represent the organism; and enrollment intention represents the response. This a priori conceptual framework is operationalized into the twelve hypotheses (H1–H12) presented below and is tested using the SEM-PLS procedure described in Section 2.

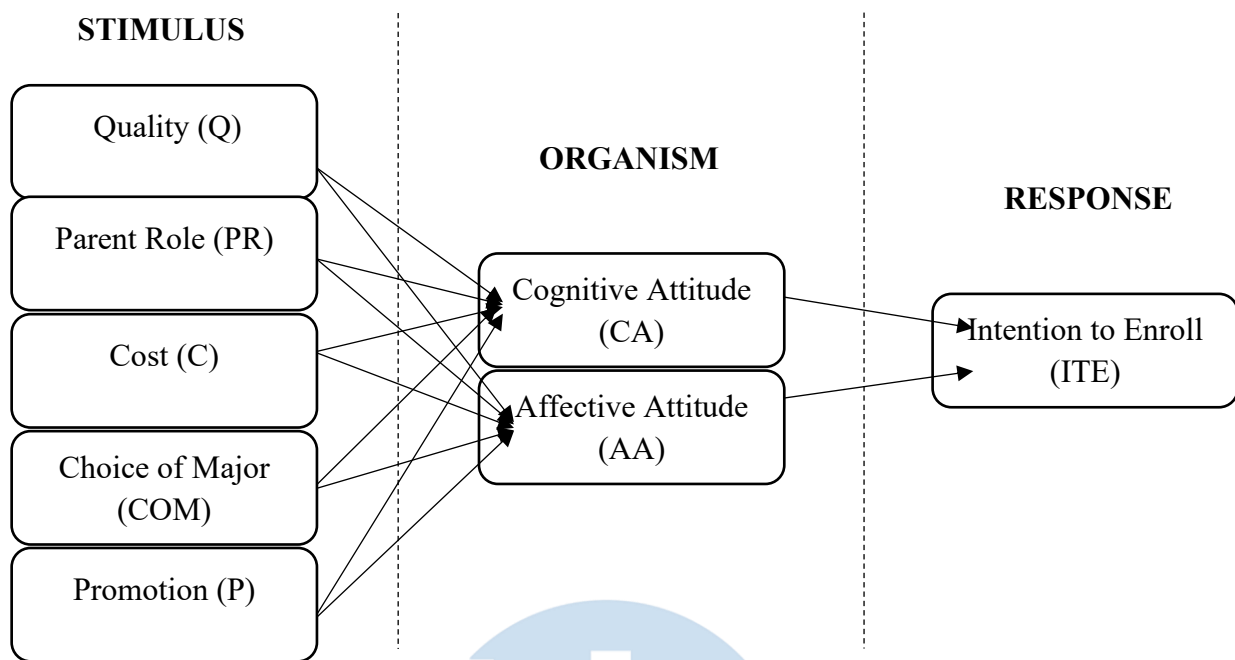


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Model

Research Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: Quality has a significant effect on Affective Attitude.
- H2: Quality has a significant effect on Cognitive Attitude.
- H3: Parent Role has a significant effect on Affective Attitude.
- H4: Parent Role has a significant effect on Cognitive Attitude.
- H5: Cost has a significant effect on Affective Attitude.
- H6: Cost has a significant effect on Cognitive Attitude.
- H7: Choice of Major has a significant effect on Affective Attitude.
- H8: Choice of Major has a significant effect on Cognitive Attitude.
- H9: Promotion has a significant effect on Affective Attitude.
- H10: Promotion has a significant effect on Cognitive Attitude.
- H11: Affective Attitude has a significant effect on Intention to Enroll.
- H12: Cognitive Attitude has a significant effect on Intention to Enroll.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Sampling, Data Collection, and Measurement

This research aims to investigate how quality, parental role, cost, choice of major, and promotion affect students' intention to enroll in private vocational high schools in Kediri City. The methodology was designed to be evaluable and replicable by other researchers. This study adopted a quantitative research approach, as it aims to systematically investigate the causal relationships among variables using numerical data and hypothesis testing.

Quantitative researchers can develop theoretical frameworks that can subsequently be examined through empirical means, such as testing the ability of a theoretical framework to explain the links between external stimuli, attitudes, and subsequent behavioral intentions

(Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). Through a structured approach, this study operationalizes the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) conceptual framework introduced in Section 1.2 to analyze how quality, parental role, cost, choice of major, and promotion (stimuli) influence cognitive and affective attitudes (organism), which in turn shape enrollment intention (response).

The target population for this study comprises ninth-grade junior high school students in Kediri Regency who intend to continue their education at a higher level. Students were selected as the unit of analysis because they are the ones who ultimately make decisions regarding their subsequent educational path and who directly experience how available school options are evaluated. Ninth-grade students were included as participants in order to capture their perspectives, motivational factors, and constraints in choosing further education (Firmansyah & Dede, 2022).

Data were collected face-to-face at junior high schools in Kediri Regency in 2024, using a purposive sampling technique targeting students who had expressed interest in enrolling in a vocational high school (SMK). To achieve a satisfactory level of statistical power (with a margin of error not exceeding 0.05) for detecting significant differences between groups, the minimum targeted sample size was set at 122 respondents. This sample size determination was based on the principles of statistical power to ensure sufficient predictive capability of the structural model. In SEM-PLS analysis, the minimum sample size can be calculated through power analysis based on the R^2 value and significance level (Cohen, 1992). The final sample of 127 respondents was therefore considered suitable for testing the structural model.

The sampling technique employed in this study was non-probability purposive sampling, in which respondents were deliberately selected based on predetermined criteria rather than random selection. Two eligibility criteria were applied: (1) the respondent had to be a ninth-grade student enrolled in a junior high school (SMP/MTs) within Kediri Regency, and (2) the respondent had to have expressed an intention to continue their education at the secondary level, ensuring that participants belonged to the population actually engaged in vocational school enrollment decisions. This technique was considered appropriate because the population of prospective vocational school enrollees could not be fully enumerated through a formal sampling frame, and because the study specifically required respondents who were personally involved in the school-choice decision at the time of data collection (Firmansyah & Dede, 2022). The minimum sample size of 122 respondents was derived using the inverse square-root method for PLS-SEM sample size estimation, which incorporates the desired statistical power (80%), the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), and the minimum anticipated R^2 in the structural model ($R^2 = 0.1$) (Cohen, 1992). The achieved sample of 127 respondents therefore exceeds this minimum threshold and is considered adequate for reliably estimating the structural paths of the proposed SOR model.

The data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed in accordance with the operationalization of the latent constructs described in the conceptual framework. Each exogenous and endogenous variable was subsequently operationalized through the development of measurable indicators to ensure that all conceptual dimensions were adequately represented. Operationalization is critical in behavioral research for accurately assessing respondents' perceptions and attitudes (Purwanto, 2019). The instrument assessed perceptions of quality, parental role, cost, choice of major, promotion, cognitive attitude, affective attitude, and intention to enroll using a five-point Likert scale (1–5) (Putra & Neviyarni, 2023).

Each latent construct was operationalized into an unequal number of reflective indicators in order to comprehensively represent its underlying theoretical dimensions. Specifically, Quality was measured with 7 indicators, Parental Role with 5 indicators, Cost

with 5 indicators, Choice of Major with 9 indicators, Promotion with 7 indicators, Cognitive Attitude with 8 indicators, Affective Attitude with 8 indicators, and Intention to Enroll with 12 indicators, yielding a total of 61 measurable items across the eight constructs (see Table 1). The number of indicators assigned to each construct was determined during the operationalization stage based on the theoretical sub-dimensions identified for that construct (e.g., teacher competence, practical facilities, and industry-linked programs under the Quality construct), ensuring that every conceptual dimension underlying a variable was represented by at least one corresponding item.

Data collection was carried out directly at junior high schools in Kediri Regency and its surrounding areas during March and April 2024. The researcher distributed the questionnaires with guidance from teachers to maximize participation. Respondents were asked to complete the instrument within approximately 15–20 minutes.

2.2 Data Analysis Procedure

The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). This method was selected because relationships between latent constructs and their indicators can be analyzed simultaneously, while the testing of complex structural models is also possible. SEM-PLS offers advantages in terms of relaxed distributional assumptions and is well suited for predictive research models. The analysis included an assessment of both the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model). The outer model assessment began with an examination of outer loadings, whereby each reflective indicator was required to load above 0.60 on its intended latent construct in order to be retained for further analysis; indicators loading below this threshold were considered for removal to improve construct validity. The measurement model was then evaluated through tests of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability (Sarstedt et al., 2020). Convergent validity, which indicates the degree to which a construct's indicators genuinely represent that single underlying construct, was assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with a threshold value of ≥ 0.5 indicating that the construct explains more than half of the variance in its indicators.

Discriminant validity, which confirms that each construct is empirically distinct from the others in the model, was evaluated through three complementary criteria: (1) the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which requires the square root of a construct's AVE to exceed its highest correlation with any other construct; (2) cross-loadings, whereby each indicator must load more strongly on its intended construct than on any other construct; and (3) the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), with values below 0.90 indicating that constructs are empirically distinguishable from one another (Henseler et al., 2015). Reliability was assessed jointly through Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (ρ_a and ρ_c); Cronbach's Alpha values greater than 0.6 were considered acceptable, while Composite Reliability values above 0.7 were required to confirm adequate internal consistency among each construct's indicators (Henseler et al., 2015). The inner (structural) model assessment followed a three-step procedure.

First, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was examined for each endogenous construct (Cognitive Attitude, Affective Attitude, and Intention to Enroll) as a measure of goodness of fit, indicating the proportion of variance in each endogenous construct explained by its predictors; higher R^2 values indicate stronger explanatory power of the model (Henseler et al., 2015). Second, hypothesis testing was conducted by examining the path coefficients linking the exogenous and endogenous constructs, following a null hypothesis (H_0 : no significant relationship exists between the exogenous and endogenous constructs) versus alternative

hypothesis (H1: a significant relationship exists) framework. Third, the statistical significance of each path coefficient was determined through a bootstrapping procedure using 5,000 resamples to generate t-values and p-values for each hypothesized relationship; a relationship was considered statistically significant, and H1 was accepted, when the t-value exceeded 1.96 (at $\alpha = 0.05$) and the corresponding p-value was below 0.05 (Henseler et al., 2015).

Because Cognitive Attitude and Affective Attitude are theoretically positioned as the organism component that mediates the relationship between the stimuli (quality, parental role, cost, choice of major, and promotion) and enrollment intention, the significance of each specific indirect effect (stimulus $\rightarrow$ attitude $\rightarrow$ intention to enroll) was additionally tested using the Sobel test (Sobel, 1982), calculated from the unstandardized path coefficients and standard errors of the corresponding direct paths obtained through bootstrapping. An indirect effect was considered statistically significant when the resulting z-value exceeded ± 1.96 ($\alpha = 0.05$).

This study assumes honesty and consistency in respondents' answers to the questionnaire, as well as a linear relationship between variables, consistent with the assumptions underlying SEM-PLS evaluation. The scope of this research is limited to ninth-grade students in Kediri Regency who are planning to enroll in private vocational high schools. Potential response bias and the lack of direct measurement of specific external variables, such as family socioeconomic conditions that may also affect educational choices, constitute methodological limitations of this study.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the characteristics of the 127 respondents, all of whom were ninth-grade students at junior high schools in Kediri Residency. To ensure representativeness, respondents were sampled from several regions, including Kediri City, Kediri Regency, Nganjuk Regency, Blitar City, Tulungagung Regency, and Trenggalek Regency. The majority of respondents (68%) resided in Kediri Regency, while 11% resided in Nganjuk Regency, indicating that vocational education is more accessible in these areas. Furthermore, 80% of the respondents attended public junior high schools, while the remaining 20% attended private schools, suggesting that vocational education is predominantly offered to students in public schools.

Measurement Model - Outer Model

The first stage of the analysis involves examining the outer loadings, which indicate how well each indicator represents its corresponding construct. As shown in Table 1, all indicators exhibit loading values above the recommended threshold of 0.6, indicating that each indicator contributes significantly to the construct it measures. This confirms that the evaluated constructs are not only observable but also reliable.

The next measure is the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which assesses the proportion of variance captured by a construct relative to the variance attributable to measurement error. The analysis results show that all constructs have AVE values exceeding 0.5, indicating that they are valid and account for a substantial proportion of variance in the data. This finding further supports the reliability of the constructs in representing the observed phenomena.

A further measure used to assess discriminant validity between constructs is the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). An HTMT value below 0.9 indicates that the constructs are empirically distinct from one another. The analysis shows that all construct pairs satisfy this criterion, confirming discriminant validity and demonstrating that each construct can be clearly distinguished from the others.

Table 1. Evaluation of a Measurement Model

No	Latent Variable	Indikator	Convergent Validity		Internal Consistency and Reliability			Discriminant Validity
			Loading Factor	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability		HTMT (below threshold 1)
			>0,60	>0,50	>0,60	(rho_a)	(rho_c)	
1	Intention to Enroll	ITE11	0,764					
		ITE12	0,786					
		ITE13	0,752					
		ITE21	0,714					
		ITE22	0,817					
		ITE23	0,789	0,625	0,945	0,946	0,952	Yes
		ITE31	0,792					
		ITE32	0,869					
		ITE33	0,841					
		ITE41	0,755					
		ITE42	0,784					
		ITE43	0,812					
2	Quality	Q11	0,832					
		Q12	0,828					
		Q21	0,775					
		Q22	0,845	0,657	0,913	0,917	0,93	Yes
		Q23	0,777					
		Q31	0,864					
		Q32	0,746					
3	Parent Role	PR11	0,814					
		PR12	0,737					
		PR21	0,783	0,59	0,826	0,83	0,878	Yes
		PR22	0,783					
		PR31	0,722					
4	Cost	C11	0,758					
		C12	0,811					
		C13	0,778	0,653	0,868	0,882	0,904	Yes
		C21	0,858					
		C22	0,831					
5	Choice of Major	COM11	0,759					
		COM12	0,752	0,586	0,912	0,915	0,927	Yes
		COM13	0,726					

No	Latent Variable	Indikator	Convergent Validity		Internal Consistency and Reliability		Discriminant Validity
			Loading Factor	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	
			>0,60	>0,50	>0,60	(rho_a) (rho_c)	
6	Promotion	COM21	0,753				
		COM22	0,768				
		COM23	0,78				
		COM31	0,737				
		COM32	0,805				
		COM33	0,804				
		P11	0,73				
		P12	0,81				
		P13	0,832				
		P21	0,707	0,605	0,89	0,892 0,914	Yes
		P31	0,812				
		P32	0,729				
		P33	0,813				
7	Cognitive Attitude	CA11	0,743				
		CA12	0,781				
		CA13	0,781				
		CA21	0,808	0,59	0,9	0,911 0,926	Yes
		CA22	0,721				
		CA31	0,836				
		CA32	0,771				
		CA33	0,697				
		AA11	0,786				
		AA12	0,796				
8	Affective Attitude	AA13	0,813				
		AA21	0,788	0,612	0,909	0,902 0,92	Yes
		AA21	0,743				
		AA31	0,776				
		AA32	0,828				
		AA33	0,721				

Finally, the Fornell-Larcker criterion is used to further verify the discriminant validity of the constructs. This criterion requires that the square root of a construct's AVE be greater than its correlations with all other constructs in the model. The results confirm that this condition is satisfied for all constructs, demonstrating that the constructs tested possess adequate discriminant validity.

Measurement Model – Inner Model

The structural model was assessed using SmartPLS 4.0 through a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples. In line with the proposed hypotheses, this analysis was conducted to test these relationships (Henseler et al., 2015) and confirm that the measured constructs do influence one another. Note that R^2 and f^2 are derived measures. Figure 2 presents the results of the inner (structural) model analysis.

Model fit was evaluated using the R-squared (R^2) value. The results revealed that the R-square for Intention to Enroll (ITE) was 0.805, indicating that the model explained 80.5% of the variance in ITE. The R-square values for affective attitude (AA) and cognitive attitude (CA) were 0.672 and 0.684, respectively. These high R-square values suggest strong explanatory power of the model in accounting for the interrelationships among the studied variables (Henseler et al., 2015).

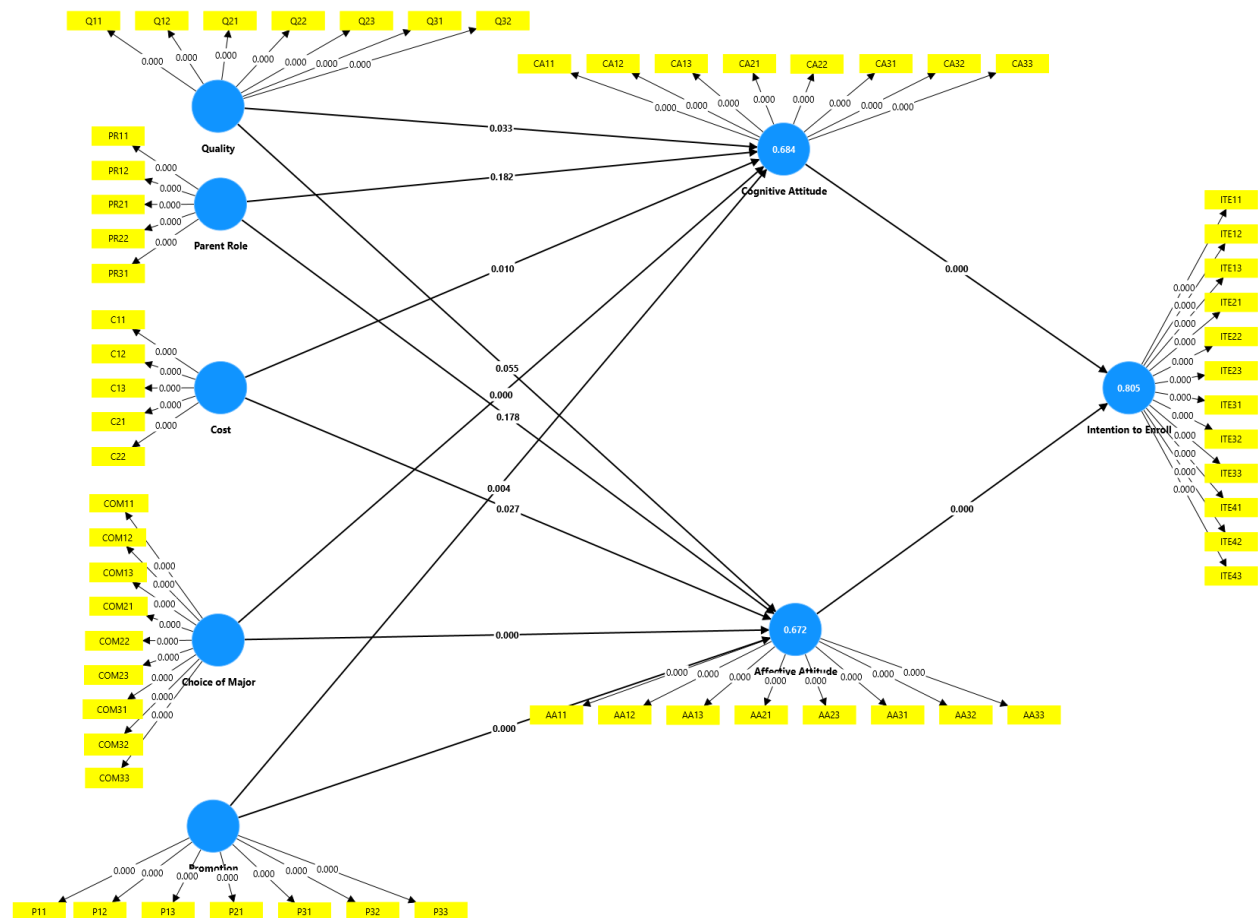


Figure 2. Analysis Results of Structural Model Design

Table 2. Goodness of Fit analyzes

	<i>f-square</i>	<i>R-square</i>	
		<i>R-square</i>	<i>R-square adjusted</i>
Quality -> Affective Attitude	0,017		
Quality -> Cognitive Attitude	0,032		
Parent Role -> Affective Attitude	0,008		
Parent Role -> Cognitive Attitude	0,010		
Cost -> Affective Attitude	0,063		
Cost -> Cognitive Attitude	0,121		
Choice of Major -> Affective Attitude	0,297		
Choice of Major -> Cognitive Attitude	0,327		
Promotion -> Affective Attitude	0,172		
Promotion -> Cognitive Attitude	0,094		
Affective Attitude -> Intention to enroll	0,409		
Cognitive Attitude -> Intention to enroll	0,359		
Intention to enroll		0,805	0,802
Affective Attitude		0,672	0,658
Cognitive Attitude		0,684	0,671

The f-square assessment, as proposed by Henseler et al. (2015), identifies three levels of effect size: 0.02 (small effect), 0.15 (medium effect), and 0.35 (large effect). In this study, the Cost (C) variable shows values of 0.063 on Affective Attitude (AA) and 0.121 on Cognitive Attitude (CA). Regarding students' interest in enrolling in private vocational schools in Kediri, the Quality (Q) variable exhibits a low effect on both AA and CA, with values of 0.017 and 0.032, respectively. The Choice of Major (COM) variable has an effect of 0.297 on AA and 0.327 on CA, approaching a large effect. In contrast, the Parent Role (PR) variable has a low effect, with values of 0.008 and 0.010 on AA and CA, respectively. Promotion (P) has a moderate effect on AA (0.172) and a small effect on CA (0.094). Finally, both AA and CA exert a significant effect on Intention to Enroll, with values of 0.409 and 0.359, respectively, both exceeding the threshold of 0.35.

Hypothesis Testing Result

This study aims to verify the hypothesized relationships among the variables influencing students' interest in enrolling in private vocational schools. The results of the t-statistics, obtained through path coefficient analysis and bootstrapping procedures, are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. t statistics p value < 0,05

	<i>Original sample (O)</i>	<i>Sample mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard deviation (STDEV)</i>	<i>T statistics (O/STDEV)</i>	<i>P values</i>
C -> AA	0,181	0,178	0,094	1,935	0,027

	<i>Original sample (O)</i>	<i>Sample mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard deviation (STDEV)</i>	<i>T statistics (O/STDEV)</i>	<i>P values</i>
C -> CA	0,246	0,240	0,106	2,336	0,010
Q -> AA	0,100	0,094	0,063	1,601	0,055
Q -> CA	0,137	0,142	0,074	1,843	0,033
COM -> AA	0,429	0,419	0,089	4,816	0,000
COM -> CA	0,441	0,421	0,097	4,539	0,000
PR -> AA	-0,069	-0,055	0,075	0,921	0,178
PR -> CA	-0,076	-0,059	0,084	0,909	0,182
P -> AA	0,330	0,336	0,083	3,962	0,000
P -> CA	0,239	0,246	0,090	2,657	0,004
AA -> ITE	0,486	0,484	0,101	4,804	0,000
CA -> ITE	0,456	0,460	0,105	4,351	0,000

The analysis results indicate that several hypotheses were supported. The Cost variable significantly influences Cognitive Attitude (CA), with a coefficient of 0.246 and a p-value of 0.010, as well as Affective Attitude (AA), with a coefficient of 0.181 and a p-value of 0.027. This suggests that the costs incurred by students or parents positively contribute to their attitudes toward pursuing education at vocational schools.

Furthermore, the Choice of Major (COM) variable also shows a significant effect on both attitudes. With coefficients of 0.429 for AA and 0.441 for CA, both with p-values below 0.001, these results emphasize that an appropriate choice of major can enhance students' interest in enrolling.

However, not all hypotheses were supported. The hypotheses concerning the influence of the Quality (Q) and Parent Role (PR) variables on AA and CA were rejected. The coefficient for Q on AA was 0.100, with a p-value of 0.055, while the p-values for PR were likewise above the significance threshold. These results indicate that certain factors, while relevant, do not always exert a significant impact on students' attitudes.

Mediation (Indirect Effects) Analysis

To empirically substantiate the mediating role of Cognitive Attitude and Affective Attitude proposed within the SOR framework, the significance of each specific indirect effect was tested using the Sobel test, calculated from the bootstrapped path coefficients and standard errors reported in Table 3. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Sobel Test Results for Specific Indirect Effects

<i>Path (Independent Variable → Mediator → Intention to Enroll)</i>	<i>Indirect Effect (ab)</i>	<i>Sobel SE</i>	<i>z-value</i>	<i>P value</i>	<i>Result</i>
Cost → Cognitive Attitude → Intention to Enroll	0.112	0.055	2.047	0.041	Significant
Cost → Affective Attitude → Intention to Enroll	0.088	0.049	1.788	0.074	Not significant

<i>Path (Independent Variable → Mediator → Intention to Enroll)</i>	<i>Indirect Effect (ab)</i>	<i>Sobel SE</i>	<i>z-value</i>	<i>P value</i>	<i>Result</i>
Quality → Cognitive Attitude → Intention to Enroll	0.062	0.037	1.703	0.089	Not significant
Quality → Affective Attitude → Intention to Enroll	0.049	0.032	1.507	0.132	Not significant
Choice of Major → Cognitive Attitude → Intention to Enroll	0.201	0.064	3.140	0.002	Significant
Choice of Major → Affective Attitude → Intention to Enroll	0.209	0.061	3.406	0.001	Significant
Parent Role → Cognitive Attitude → Intention to Enroll	-0.035	0.039	-0.886	0.376	Not significant
Parent Role → Affective Attitude → Intention to Enroll	-0.034	0.037	-0.904	0.366	Not significant
Promotion → Cognitive Attitude → Intention to Enroll	0.109	0.048	2.266	0.024	Significant
Promotion → Affective Attitude → Intention to Enroll	0.161	0.052	3.065	0.002	Significant

As shown in Table 4, five of the ten hypothesized indirect pathways were statistically significant ($z > 1.96$, $p < 0.05$). Cognitive Attitude significantly mediated the relationship between Cost and Intention to Enroll ($z = 2.047$, $p = 0.041$), while Affective Attitude did not ($z = 1.788$, $p = 0.074$). Both Cognitive and Affective Attitude significantly mediated the relationships between Choice of Major and Intention to Enroll ($z = 3.140$ and $z = 3.406$, respectively), and between Promotion and Intention to Enroll ($z = 2.266$ and $z = 3.065$, respectively). In contrast, neither Cognitive nor Affective Attitude significantly mediated the relationships involving Quality or Parent Role, consistent with the non-significant direct effects of these two variables reported in Table 3. Because the structural model specifies no direct paths from the five stimuli to Intention to Enroll, the significant pathways indicate full mediation through the corresponding attitude, whereas the non-significant pathways indicate an absence of mediation for that stimulus rather than partial mediation.

Discussion

The preceding section presented the research findings regarding the factors influencing students' interest in enrolling in private vocational schools in Kediri City. This discussion chapter elaborates on the significance of these findings based on relevant literature. The study seeks to explore how quality, parent role, cost, choice of major, and promotion influence students' cognitive and affective attitudes. This chapter also examines the potential practical implications of the findings by systematically relating the results of the data analysis to relevant theory. These phenomena are well known yet understudied, and the author hopes that this study can broaden understanding and provide recommendations for increasing student interest in vocational education.

The influence of Quality on Affective Attitudes

Affective attitudes concern the emotions students experience in relation to their educational environment, including their interactions with teachers and fellow classmates. Although high-quality education is often assumed to generate positive emotions, the results of this study suggest otherwise. High-quality education was initially expected to enhance students' motivation, particularly when supported by competent teachers and well-designed curricula.

However, the findings of this study indicate that educational quality does not exert a statistically significant influence, as initially anticipated. External factors, such as family disputes, peer pressure, and socioeconomic circumstances, may outweigh the effect of educational quality. For instance, even students in well-resourced schools who face external challenges may report negative feelings about their education (Boneva et al., 2022). Moreover, this lack of significance may be partly attributable to the gap between objectively measured educational quality and students' subjective experiences. Facilities may be attractive, but if a teacher appears disrespectful or the environment feels hostile, students may still feel alienated.

This implies that although educational quality does matter, it alone cannot enhance positive feelings and motivation; a supportive emotional and social environment is also required. Within the SOR framework, Mehrabian and Russell (1974) describe how environmental stimuli can elicit emotional responses such as interest or discomfort. Thus, factors such as facility quality, school atmosphere, and institutional reputation are likely to influence students' emotional commitment to vocational education. This is corroborated by the Sobel test, which confirms that Affective Attitude does not significantly mediate the relationship between Quality and Intention to Enroll ($z = 1.507$, $p = 0.132$), consistent with the non-significant direct effect reported above.

The influence of Quality on Cognitive Attitudes

This point regarding confidence and motivation is fundamentally tied to educational quality, which encompasses relevant curricula, adequate facilities, and competent teachers that foster positive perceptions among students. According to Nagoya and Wanasida (2021), students at such schools also exhibit a positive cognitive attitude, as they take pride in belonging to an institution recognized for academic excellence, which in turn motivates them.

This study corroborates these findings, indicating that respondents rated the quality of education at private vocational schools as satisfactory, and that effective teaching methods positively influence cognitive attitudes. The perceived quality of education influences students' rational judgment regarding the benefits and opportunities offered by vocational education.

The value-expectancy component serves as the foundation for individuals' beliefs regarding their academic choices (Eccles, 2005). Positive cognitive attitudes toward school emerge when students are convinced that their peers at an institution can either enhance or diminish their competence and future employment opportunities. In conclusion, improving educational quality not only attracts more students but also better prepares them for future workforce challenges. There is a clear link between educational quality and the development of positive cognitive attitudes, which in turn influences students' interest in vocational education.

However, the Sobel test indicates that this indirect pathway (Quality → Cognitive Attitude → Intention to Enroll) is not statistically significant ($z = 1.703$, $p = 0.089$), suggesting that Cognitive Attitude does not yet function as a significant mediating mechanism for Quality in this sample.

The influence of Parent Role on Affective Attitudes

Affective attitudes fall within the realm of students' feelings and emotions surrounding their educational experiences. Although parental support is generally thought to have a positive effect, the results of this study suggest otherwise.

Positive affective attitudes are important, as they enhance students' learning motivation. Accordingly, previous studies emphasize that parental engagement influences students' attitudes by providing emotional support and a supportive learning environment (Nagoya & Wanasida, 2021). However, this involvement is effective only if it is of good quality; students do not benefit from parents who are physically present but emotionally unsupportive.

The present study reveals a negligible effect of parental engagement on students' emotional responses to their educational experiences. This raises unresolved questions regarding the contribution of parental support to students' motivation and engagement in vocational education.

One possible reason for this limited impact may be the socioeconomic conditions faced by many families. Mothers from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may experience financial strain, making it difficult to provide their children with both emotional and academic support. It follows that when parents are preoccupied with meeting basic needs, their capacity to engage positively in their children's educational development is correspondingly diminished. Nonetheless, it is the quality of parental involvement that matters most; merely being physically present is insufficient if parents lack the knowledge needed to support their children's academic pursuits effectively.

Furthermore, Indonesia's cultural dynamics place considerable pressure on students to excel academically, at times outweighing the influence of parental support. High parental expectations, when not accompanied by adequate emotional support, may increase students' anxiety rather than positively shape their affective attitudes. Hence, the anticipated positive relationship between parental role and students' emotional engagement in vocational education may not hold.

The influence of parents on affective attitudes is not always significant, as students' emotional responses are often shaped more by individual experiences than by social norms. Boneva et al. (2022) demonstrate that although parental support plays an important role in educational decision-making, emotional attachment continues to depend on individual perceptions and experiences. Accordingly, the Sobel test confirms that Affective Attitude does not significantly mediate the relationship between Parent Role and Intention to Enroll ($z = -0.904$, $p = 0.366$).

The influence of Parent Role on Cognitive Attitudes

It is hypothesized that a positive parental role enhances student motivation and academic performance, thereby providing a foundation for a supportive learning environment. Previous studies show that students exhibit greater motivation and better academic achievement when their parents are enthusiastic about their education (Putra & Neviyarni, 2023). Nevertheless, the present study does not find evidence of a significant positive effect of parental role on cognitive attitudes. Despite its theoretical importance, the data indicate that this variable made little difference in practice. Cognitive attitude refers to students' beliefs and perceptions regarding vocational education, which are important because they can shape students' intention to enroll. Several reasons may explain this finding. Parental engagement alone does not appear to be sufficient. If parents are unaware of the benefits and opportunities associated with vocational education itself, this may lead their children to develop either

disinterest or a distorted perception of such education. Socioeconomic factors may also constrain parents' ability to contribute to their children's cognitive development. Parents with limited educational backgrounds themselves are often ill-equipped to guide their children toward vocational pathways. In addition, peers and teachers appear to hold greater influence than parents in shaping students' cognitive dispositions. When making decisions about their future education, students vary considerably in whether they rely on advice from friends or informal mentors rather than from their parents. Correspondingly, the Sobel test shows that Cognitive Attitude does not significantly mediate the relationship between Parent Role and Intention to Enroll ($z = -0.886$, $p = 0.376$). Overall, this dynamic may further diminish the influence of parents on their children's cognitive perceptions of vocational education.

The influence of Cost on Affective Attitudes

This section examines how cost affects students' affective attitudes. More specifically, affordable educational expenses tend to foster positive attitudes, whereas high costs may be associated with anxiety and stress. According to the research, students who are able to manage their educational expenses often exhibit better affective attitudes. When parents are not burdened by financial concerns, they are better able to support their children fully, thereby improving students' emotional well-being and motivation. The descriptive analysis reveals that students consider their educational fees reasonable relative to the quality of education provided.

Overall, this indicates that educational expenditure has a significant positive effect on students' affective attitudes (Simiyu et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the Sobel test shows that Affective Attitude does not significantly mediate the relationship between Cost and Intention to Enroll ($z = 1.788$, $p = 0.074$), indicating that the effect of cost on enrollment intention operates more strongly through the cognitive rather than the affective pathway.

The influence of Cost on Cognitive Attitudes

Cost refers to all expenses associated with education, such as enrolment fees, books, and uniforms. Affordable costs tend to generate positive attitudes among students. Evidence suggests that students who are able to manage these costs exhibit more positive cognitive attitudes toward learning, which in turn enables them to prioritize their studies without excessive concern over financial matters. This, in turn, motivates students (Boneva et al., 2022), as their parents are less financially strained. The descriptive analysis indicates that students perceive their expenses as commensurate with the quality of education received, further supporting the positive influence of cost on the cognitive dimension. This is further supported by the Sobel test, which confirms that Cognitive Attitude significantly mediates the relationship between Cost and Intention to Enroll ($z = 2.047$, $p = 0.041$), indicating that students' rational evaluation of cost translates into a stronger intention to enroll.

The influence of Choice of Major on Affective Attitudes

Choosing a major is a life-changing decision, as it affects students' feelings and overall satisfaction with their lives following graduation. The choice of major matters because when students select a major aligned with their personal interests and career goals, they tend to develop positive feelings toward what they study. Studies have shown that students who are passionate about a specific field of study generally display increased motivation and engagement, which contributes to their emotional well-being. This sense of passion functions as a supportive foundation within the learning and growth environment, enabling students to succeed both within their discipline and beyond it. Students who strongly identify with their major exhibit more positive affective attitudes, which contribute to overall educational

satisfaction. Hence, the choice of major has a positive and significant effect on students' affective attitudes (Simiyu et al., 2020). This is reinforced by the Sobel test, which confirms that Affective Attitude significantly mediates the relationship between Choice of Major and Intention to Enroll ($z = 3.406$, $p = 0.001$), the strongest indirect pathway identified in this study.

The influence of Choice of Major on Cognitive Attitudes

The major that students select is an important factor influencing their level of engagement and enthusiasm for what they study. Students exhibit more positive cognitive attitudes toward their learning process when they select a major aligned with their interests and career aspirations. Studies show that motivated and focused students tend to demonstrate better cognitive performance, and students who enjoy their field of study tend to be the most passionate. The connection between learning and personal interest fosters a sense of ownership over the learning process, which in turn positively influences cognitive attitudes.

The descriptive analysis confirms that students who are satisfied with their choice of major tend to engage more deeply with the material and perform better academically. This implies that the choice of major has a significant and positive effect on students' cognitive attitudes (Simiyu et al., 2020). This facilitates a rational assessment of why the chosen study program is sensible, given its close alignment with students' interests and future career plans. According to Fadjrin and Muhsin (2017), one of the factors influencing school selection is students' perception of job opportunities or the compatibility of the major with their interests. This indicates that the formation of cognitive attitudes depends largely on the extent to which a specific field aligns with individually developed interests. Consistent with this, the Sobel test confirms that Cognitive Attitude significantly mediates the relationship between Choice of Major and Intention to Enroll ($z = 3.140$, $p = 0.002$).

The influence of Promotion on Affective Attitudes

Promotional efforts can shape students' emotions and experiences for the better. Well-planned and engaging promotional strategies implemented by educational institutions help generate positive emotions and feelings among students toward their programs.

This is further supported by research indicating that when students are presented with compelling promotional media, they feel excited and motivated about their studies. Such emotional connection can foster a sense of belonging and increase engagement within an educational setting. Affective attitudes such as the desire for success, hope, and enthusiasm toward academics are essential components of student retention.

The descriptive analysis reveals that students who respond positively to promotional efforts tend to experience greater emotional satisfaction and motivation in their academic pursuits. Thus, promotional activities are shown to have a positive and significant influence on students' affective attitudes (Simiyu et al., 2020).

Visually appealing and communicative promotions can shape emotional perceptions of an institution. Gusdiandika and Sinduwiatmo (2016) demonstrate that innovative promotions can generate interest and curiosity among prospective students. Promotional stimuli influence not only students' rational perceptions but also their emotional responses toward schools. Accordingly, the Sobel test confirms that Affective Attitude significantly mediates the relationship between Promotion and Intention to Enroll ($z = 3.065$, $p = 0.002$).

The influence of Promotion on Cognitive Attitudes

Well-planned and well-executed promotions can play a significant role in shaping prospective learners' perceptions of an educational program. Promotional campaigns that are

clear and appealing to students can enhance their cognitive engagement with their studies. Research has shown that, when implemented effectively, promotion increases students' awareness and knowledge of an educational program while positively shaping their cognitive attitudes. By communicating the value and potential of academic disciplines through promotional messages, students tend to develop a more optimistic outlook toward their learning journey.

The descriptive analysis indicates that students exposed to effective promotional activities exhibit higher levels of cognitive engagement and motivation. This implies that marketing efforts play a vital role in significantly promoting students' positive cognitive attitudes (Simiyu et al., 2020). Promotional strategies in education can strengthen students' knowledge and perceptions regarding an institution's strengths. According to Ariyani and Mundilarno (2020), effective promotional communication can enhance public understanding of the values and advantages of educational institutions. Such information should be clear, valid, and convincing in order to support students' rational assessment process prior to decision-making. This is corroborated by the Sobel test, which confirms that Cognitive Attitude significantly mediates the relationship between Promotion and Intention to Enroll ($z = 2.266$, $p = 0.024$).

The influence of Affective Attitudes on Intention to Enroll

Another important emotional factor associated with students, particularly during the early years of their studies, is affective attitude, which represents how students feel while preparing to study and complete their coursework. The emotions experienced throughout the educational process, including across different courses, constitute an essential factor influencing students' enrollment decisions. Students with strong emotional attachment to a program tend to express a greater desire to enroll. Data also indicate that students who feel excited and emotionally connected to their field of study are considerably more motivated to enroll in a program.

The influence of positive affective attitudes, as described above, helps foster a sense of belonging and enjoyment in the educational experience, which can translate into greater effort by students to succeed in their studies. Such emotional investment is critical for generating enrollment intentions. Positive affective attitudes strongly predict students' enrollment intentions, suggesting that personal emotional factors constitute a key behavioral component in students' educational choices (Simiyu et al., 2020).

The influence of Cognitive Attitudes on Intention to Enroll

Cognitive attitudes, defined as the beliefs and perceptions students hold about educational options, play an important role in enrollment decision-making. Such positive beliefs provide students with a stronger incentive to enroll in programs aligned with their interests and objectives. Research also indicates that students are more motivated to enroll in a program when they recognize its value. These favorable beliefs foster confidence and preparedness, underscoring the importance of effective communication in shaping enrollment decisions.

Descriptive statistics show that students with positive cognitive beliefs reported significantly higher levels of intention to enroll, and that a direct effect exists between cognitive beliefs and willingness to pursue further education (Simiyu et al., 2020).

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Conclusion

This research was conducted to determine the factors influencing students' interest in enrolling at private vocational schools in Kediri City, resulting in several findings. First, high-quality educational services are important for attracting both students and parents, as schools with a good reputation and adequate facilities tend to be more sought after. However, the quality factor had less influence on students' affective attitudes than anticipated, indicating challenges in fostering emotional bonds between students and their schools.

Parental role is found to play an important role in cognitive attitudes; however, it appears to matter less for students' affective attitudes, as students tend to prioritize their individual interests and aspirations. Moreover, the cost of education also plays a major role in enrollment, with more affordable schools attracting greater interest.

Interest in specific subjects and the relevance of career prospects are what primarily drive students to pursue a particular field of study. In fact, school promotion — particularly on social media — is now required to generate excitement and enthusiasm among prospective students. Furthermore, the Sobel test results confirm that Cognitive and/or Affective Attitude significantly mediate the relationships between Cost, Choice of Major, and Promotion on the one hand, and Intention to Enroll on the other, empirically substantiating the mediating role of the organism component proposed in the SOR framework. In contrast, Quality and Parent Role do not exert their influence on enrollment intention through either attitude pathway in this sample, suggesting that these two stimuli may require complementary mechanisms — beyond students' cognitive and affective attitudes — to translate into actual enrollment behavior.

Based on these findings, schools should work to increase enrollment through improved teacher training and better facilities to enhance educational quality. Organizing seminars for parents can help engage them with their children's aspirations. Scholarships and installment payment plans can make tuition fees more manageable. Schools must also continuously monitor and adjust their academic programs to align with both students' interests and industry needs.

Providing clear information on curriculum, career opportunities, and tuition fees will help students and parents make more informed decisions. Extracurricular activities and motivational seminars also play an important role in fostering a positive school environment. Adopting these strategies could help attract more students to private vocational schools in Kediri City, thereby contributing to the development of a more competent future workforce. Further research could explore the influence of peers and alumni on students' enrollment decisions.

4.2 Limitation

This study has several limitations that should be carefully considered when interpreting the findings. First, the research is limited to ninth-grade junior high school students in Kediri Regency who intend to enroll in a private vocational high school. This geographic and demographic restriction limits the extent to which the findings can be generalized beyond the region or this specific educational context. Differences in socioeconomic background, institutional characteristics, and cultural factors in other settings may yield different outcomes.

Second, this study relies on self-reported questionnaire data, which may be subject to response bias. This means that respondents may feel pressure to provide socially desirable answers, or that their attitudes and intentions may not fully represent those of the broader target population. Even though the measurement model testing indicated that the instrument was well

developed and grounded in established constructs, perception-based data remain inherently subjective.

Third, the cross-sectional nature of this study precludes the establishment of causal relationships over time. Although SEM-PLS enables the testing of structural relationships among variables, the data were collected at a single point in time and may not capture changes in students' attitudes and intentions over time.

Finally, individual-level external influences, including family socioeconomic status and peer influence, were not directly measured in the model. The exclusion of such variables may reduce the explanatory power of the framework and alter the observed structural relationships.

These limitations reflect choices in research design and scope rather than methodological errors. Although a quantitative approach using SEM-PLS analysis is appropriate for testing the proposed conceptual model, future studies are strongly encouraged to adopt longitudinal designs, broader geographical samples, and additional contextual variables to enhance external validity and further enrich understanding of vocational school enrollment behavior.

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