Factors Influencing Parent Loyalty in Adventist Schools: An Empirical Analysis in Romania

Factores que influyen en la lealtad de los padres en las escuelas adventistas: Un análisis empírico en Rumania

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the predictors of parent satisfaction and asses the effect of parent satisfaction on parental loyalty towards Adventist educational institutions, including primary, secondary and high schools, within the context of Romania. The research is carried out using a structured questionnaire administered to parents who have chosen Adventist schools for their children's education in Romania. A total of 297 parents agreed to take part in the research. A path analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the factors perceived value, service quality, corporate image, communication and convenience and the effect on parent satisfaction, and in its turn on parent loyalty. The results indicate that perceived value ($\beta st = 0.58$), service quality ($\beta st = 0.34$) and convenience ($\beta st = 0.07$) are significant predictors that explain 85% of the variance of parent satisfaction, which subsequently has a positive effect on loyalty ($\beta st = 0.85$), explaining 72% of the variance of the endogenous variable. Further research may expand upon the results of this study and explore further variables that may have a significant impact on parent satisfaction and parent loyalty.

Keywords: parent satisfaction, parent loyalty, perveived value, corporate image.

Introduction

The contemporary society is characterized by an education system, which serves as a vehicle for fostering the economic growth at both the national and international levels through the provision of advantages to individuals and society as a whole (Khan et al., 2023).

In the modern globalized world, education system is viewed as a service industry and schools as service providers. This shift requires a stronger focus on meeting the needs and expectations of all stakeholders, students and parents alike (Scott, 1999).

The success of education institutions is closely tied to parent loyalty, which is measured by the ability to meet parents' expectations, foster their ongoing support, and encourage their continued engagement with the institution (Anton et al., 2025).

Parental loyalty in the educational context refers to the level of commitment, satisfaction, and engagement that parents demonstrate toward a school, program, or course.

Loyal parents are in fact good advocates who recommend the institution to others or come back with the intention of enrolling other students (Huang et al., 2022).

Understanding the factors that drive parent loyalty in Adventist schools in Romania is crucial for enhancing student retention rates and ensuring the long-term success of these institutions. Despite the growing interest in parental loyalty within faith-based education, no studies have specifically examined the factors influencing parent loyalty in Romanian Adventist schools. While similar factors may have been explored in other religious institutions, the unique cultural, educational, and religious context of Romania remains unexamined, highlighting a significant gap in the literature.

Researchers have extensively explored the concept of loyalty, recognizing its impact on the performance of educational institutions. The literature highlights key determinants of parental loyalty, with studies showing that factors such as service quality and parental satisfaction play a crucial role. Savira et al. (2024) found that while parental involvement did not directly influence satisfaction, this relationship was moderated by school service quality, which had a significant effect. These findings align with previous research across both educational and service sectors (Bejou, 2013; İncesu and Asikgil, 2012).

However, much of the existing literature focuses on general education

settings, with limited research examining loyalty within religious schools. Faith-based institutions often emphasize values, community engagement, and spiritual development, which may influence parental loyalty differently than in secular schools. This study aims to bridge this gap by exploring whether the factors driving parental loyalty in religious schools, such as Adventist institutions in Romania, align with or diverge from those observed in non-religious educational settings.

A study on the predictors of parent loyalty in Higher Schools in Romania is important for several reasons. Understanding the factors that impact parent loyalty can enable educational institutions to enhance the overall quality of education they provide. Hence, the reason of the study is to elaborate a scientific investigation on the predictors of parent loyalty. This research will provide valuable insights to school administrators in establishing effective strategies to retain and re-engage students, thus enabling the creation of fruitful long-term relationships with parents through the facilitation of parent loyalty.

Summing up, a study on predictors of parent loyalty in Higher Schools in Romania can have policy implications, provide feedback for improvement, and be a valuable source of information for educational institutions. It has the potential to enhance education quality, improve resource allocation, retention rates, and overall higher education experience. It can also offer significant perspectives for policymakers, educational institutions, and educators.

This study conducts an empirical investigation into a theoretical framework regarding parent loyalty. Like research in other domains, academic exploration of parent loyalty in education primarily revolves around constructing theoretical frameworks encompassing antecedents and mediators of loyalty. Consequently, this article seeks to assess the empirical model, examining whether the influence of educational quality on parent loyalty, mediated by satisfaction and institutional image, aligns acceptably with the theoretical model, specifically within the context of Romanian Adventist schools.

Literature Review

Parental satisfaction with schools serves as a vital indicator of the effectiveness of the service provided. As primary stakeholders, parents' contentment and satisfaction plays a key role in shaping the school's reputation and driving its growth (Vesely et al., 2014).

In the literature, researchers have explored the concept of loyalty since it was identified as a key factor in the performance of educational institutions, highlighting various determinants such as service quality, parental satisfaction, and

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institutional image as predictors of parental loyalty. Similarly, studies on parent loyalty focus on developing comprehensive models that encompass the factors driving loyalty. Recent findings indicate that service quality has a positive impact on student loyalty, commitment, trust, and satisfaction (Chandra, 2018; Ismanova, 2019; Jie et al., 2023).

Moreover, it has also been demonstrated that dedicated students contribute positively to the quality of teaching by engaging actively and exhibiting committed behavior (Todea et al., 2022).

Further, recent studies have highlighted parent loyalty as an essential construct to examine alongside student loyalty (Savira et al., 2024; Mon, 2019). Notably, Chuktu et al. (2024) conducted a recent investigation into parents' satisfaction with specific services provided by public primary schools, focusing on how various institutional characteristics—such as school security, size, location, and appearance—influence satisfaction. The findings revealed that school attributes play a pivotal role in shaping parents' satisfaction with public primary school services. Key factors, including school security, pupil-teacher ratio, proximity, and the physical environment, were shown to significantly impact satisfaction with the quality of teaching, pupil care, and safety.

The factors influencing parent loyalty, especially in the context of educational institutions, remain insufficiently explored and not fully understood. Cultural and regional differences may lead to variations in the predictors of loyalty across different contexts. Therefore, it is crucial to consider both universal factors and those unique to specific cultures and regions.

Like other sectors, research into parent loyalty predominantly focus on developing comprehensive frameworks that address the factors influencing their loyalty do educational institutions. The factors influencing loyalty in education have been widely examined. However, certain aspects remain underexplored, particularly cultural and regional variations. It is crucial to analyze this issue by considering both universal and context-specific factors. As anticipate, this research focuses on the cultural dimensions of parent loyalty among Romanian parents, considering their heritage and the key factors contributing to long-term commitment. Further exploration is needed to understand the elements that shape loyalty, such as educational quality, alumni engagement, and career opportunities for graduates. Moreover, the dynamic nature of loyalty has not been thoroughly investigated in the Adventist Romanian context. Loyalty can evolve due to factors like parental experiences, institutional policies, and changing personal circumstances, highlighting the need for a deeper analysis.

State of the Art

The examination of relevant literature will now delve into the three primary factors that influence parent loyalty: parent satisfaction, perceived value, service quality, institutional image, convenience, and communication.

Customer Satisfaction/Parent Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a key measure of a company's past, present, and future performance, which is critical in ensuring customer retention (Lee, 2004). It is defined as the outcome of assessing a product or service's performance in comparison to the consumer's expectations at the time of purchase. This evaluation can lead to feelings of either pleasure or disappointment, and occurs after the purchase has been made (Kotler & Keller, 2007).

Customer satisfaction is described as an individual's emotional response, ranging from contentment to dissatisfaction, stemming from the evaluation of a product's perceived performance relative to their expectations (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

In the context of school services, parent satisfaction refers to the level of fulfillment parents feel regarding various aspects of their experience with the school. Satisfied parents are more likely to develop positive perceptions of the institution (Kaczan et al., 2014).

Parental satisfaction, as a specific application of the broader concept of customer satisfaction, is defined as an individual's emotional state of satisfaction or dissatisfaction resulting from assessing a product's or service's perceived effectiveness in meeting their expectations (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Jones (1995) established that higher levels of customer satisfaction are strongly correlated with increased customer loyalty. Similarly, Huang et al. (2022) found that parental satisfaction in kindergarten significantly and positively influences parental loyalty, emphasizing the pivotal role of satisfaction in shaping loyalty. This relationship aligns with prior research, which consistently shows that an increase in satisfaction leads to a corresponding rise in loyalty (Han et al., 2021; Ling & Ding, 2006; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002).

Parental behavior is influenced by how a school is perceived, and the school's reputation, which acts as a bridge between parent loyalty and marketing strategies. This shows that the image of the school is a significant subject of conversation

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among parents. Parents frequently focus on the school's reputation when they ask other parents who have enrolled their kids in international schools for advice (Klomtooksing, 2023).

Perceived Value

Perceived value refers to the evaluation made by customers regarding the advantages of a product or service and its ability to satisfy their needs and expectations, particularly when compared to similar offerings. This concept ultimately relates to the price that consumers are prepared to pay for a good or service. Even a spontaneous purchase made in a retail environment involves an assessment of a product's ability to meet a need and deliver satisfaction concerning competing products from various brands. It is the responsibility of marketing professionals to enhance the perceived value of the products offered by companies. The pricing strategy for products takes perceived value into account. In numerous instances, the price of a product or service may be influenced more by its emotional appeal than by the actual production costs.

Perceived value refers to a consumer's comprehensive evaluation of a product's utility, which is influenced by their perceptions of what they receive in relation to what they give. This concept is inherently subjective and varies from one individual to another. Furthermore, a consumer may evaluate the same product differently at various times. Price often emerges as the most significant factor during the purchasing decision, while a straightforward and comprehensible manual may play a crucial role during the installation and assembly phases (Zeithaml, 1988). However, Zeithaml does not explain the differing perceptions of value among consumers regarding a product or service (Zeithaml, 1988). It is essential to consider that personal values, needs, preferences, and financial circumstances significantly shape consumers' perceived value (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996).

The evaluation of benefits received in relation to sacrifices incurred is fundamentally shaped by the consumer's perceived value (Zeithaml, 1988). Consequently, this concept is understood as inherently subjective and personal (Parasuraman et al., 1988). It encompasses both a benefits component and an expenses component, reflecting a primarily utilitarian interpretation of the outcome. This perspective is widely applicable across various product lines, services, and interpersonal relationships. The benefits aspect, or the advantages a consumer derives from a purchase, includes the perceived quality of the service as well as a range of psychological benefits (Zeithaml, 1988).

The quality of service constitutes a fundamental component in the

assessment of perceived value, as it represents a complex aspect that is challenging for competing firms to replicate (Parameswaran & Glowacka, 1995). This quality serves as the foundation for differentiation (Berry et al., 1988) and the establishment of competitive advantage (Reichheld, 1990). The sacrifices involved, which encompass both monetary and non-monetary costs such as time, energy, and effort, must be considered. Consequently, for a customer to make a purchase or to repeat a purchase, the product must be perceived as valuable. This value is achieved by providing benefits while minimizing the sacrifices required from the customer, alongside setting a price that is within the customer's financial reach (Doods et al., 1991).

Service Quality

The term *service quality* is a conceptual construct that presents challenges when attempting to provide a precise definition. In scholarly works, scholars have sought to elucidate this concept by employing marketing research tools, primarily from the perspective of the customers (Hasan et al., 2008).

Service quality is a construct that focuses on processes and can be characterized as the outcome of students' assessment of the quality of teaching, the provision of support services, and the adequacy of facilities (Silva et al., 2020).

In recent years, there has been a significant scholarly interest in the concept of service quality, as it is perceived to be an important dimension of competitiveness. For example, Meštrović (2017) shows that the most important characteristic of service quality is "its commitment to measure how delivery service level matches customers' expectations, which contribute to customers' satisfaction" (p. 68).

Various tools are available for assessing service quality, such as: SERVQUAL, SERVPERV, HEdPERF, EduQUAL, SQM-HEI, and EDUSERVE.

The SERVQUAL model, introduced by Parasuraman et al. (1988), consists of five dimensions such as tangibility, reliability, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy. These dimensions encompass aspects ranging from physical facilities and equipment to the willingness of personnel to assist customers and inspire trust and confidence. For example, (1) tangibility, involving the assessment of physical facilities, equipment, and the appearance of personnel; (2) reliability, measuring the consistent and accurate delivery of promised services; (3) responsiveness, gauging the willingness to assist customers and instill trust and confidence; (4) empathy, assessing the provision of caring and individualized attention to customers; and (5) assurance, evaluating the knowledge, courtesy, and capability of employees to

inspire trust and confidence (Chandra & Suhermin, 2022).[1]

Other authors have identified other dimensions of service quality such as: reliability, responsiveness, competence, credibility, security, understanding, and tangibles (Parasuraman et al., 1985). But this list was criticized for being too long, and then it was shortened to five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1991).

Sulaiman & Hussain (2024) states that satisfaction of parents is significantly influenced by the quality of the program, the interactions with staff, the level of safety provided, and the affordability of the services offered. Other research investigations indicate that service quality has a significant effect on parent satisfaction. For example, Klomtooksing & Sato (2023) shows that quality of education has the most effective impact for parental satisfaction (Nguyen et al., 2021; Sutherland et al., 2018; Yildirim et al., 2013).

Furthermore, Teeroovengadum et al. (2019) demonstrate that the quality-of-service delivery, particularly in terms of core educational quality, plays a significant role in shaping satisfaction levels. Higher service quality leads to more favorable attitudes among parents, as they derive greater satisfaction from their experiences.

A positive perception of service quality significantly influences student

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[1] SERVPERV is an additional model employed to evaluate service quality in the service industry, building upon the SERVQUAL framework by introducing an extra dimension, specifically perceived value. This model encompasses six dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and perceived value.

EduQUAL is a model utilized for evaluating service quality in the realm of e-learning. It encompasses four dimensions: course content, interaction, instructor, and technology.

SQM-HEI is a model employed for assessing service quality in higher education within India. It encompasses six sections, covering teaching methodology, environmental changes in study factors, disciplinary measures implemented by institutions, placement-related activities, overall rating of service quality, and demographic profile information of student respondents.

EDUSERVE is a model used to evaluate service quality in the field of e-learning. It comprises five dimensions: course design, course delivery, assessment, student support, and institutional support.

HEdPERF is a model created to evaluate service quality in higher education, encompassing five dimensions: non-academic aspects, academic aspects, reputation, access, and understanding.

behavior, leading to higher levels of loyalty. Students who perceive high-quality teaching and a strong emotional connection with their institution are more likely to remain committed over time (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2001).

Research in the Vietnamese retail banking sector has demonstrated a strong positive relationship between service quality and customer loyalty. The study found that service quality directly enhances customer satisfaction, which in turn strengthens loyalty. Specifically, statistical findings indicate that service quality has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction ($\beta st = .900$, $p < .01$), customer satisfaction strongly influences customer loyalty ($\beta st = .744$, $p < .001$), and service quality also has a direct effect on customer loyalty ($\beta st = .400$, $p < .001$) (Ngo & Nguyen, 2016).

Similarly, research conducted in India supports the relationship between service quality and student loyalty. Findings indicate that improved service quality leads to a notable increase in student commitment to their institution ($\beta st = .32$, $p < .000$) (Annamdevula & Bellamkonda, 2016).

Previous studies have established a positive relationship between service quality and corporate image. Research in this area has demonstrated that higher service quality contributes to a stronger institutional reputation. For instance, a study tested this relationship and confirmed its significance, highlighting the importance of service quality in shaping corporate image within the context of higher education (Clemes et al., 2013).

Transformative (technical) service quality has been identified as an effective predictor of corporate image in higher education. However, functional service quality appears to have a stronger influence. Findings indicate that functional service quality ($\beta st = .507$, $p < .001$) is a more powerful predictor of corporate image compared to transformative (technical) service quality ($\beta st = .236$, $p < .001$) (Annamdevula & Bellamkonda, 2016). These results align with prior research in higher education, reinforcing the significance of service quality dimensions in shaping institutional perception. Additional studies further support this relationship. Research findings reveal a substantial impact of service quality on corporate image ($\beta st = .754$, $p < .05$), confirming its critical role in institutional branding and perception (Hassan et al., 2019). Similarly, other findings highlight a significant direct effect of service quality on corporate image ($\beta st = .624$, $p < .001$), along with evidence of a mediating effect ($\beta st = .308$, $p < .001$) (Alam & Noor, 2020).

Institutional Image

Institutional image refers to the prevailing perception that individuals

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familiar with an institution retain in their minds. It is a judgment-oriented construct, defined as the perception of an organization stored in consumers' memory, functioning as a filter that shapes their assessment of the organization's effectiveness (Barich & Kotler, 1991; Silva et al., 2020).

This perception significantly influences various aspects of an educational institution, including student enrollment, faculty recruitment, the acquisition of external research funding, and the ability to attract financial support from potential donors. A strong institutional image enhances credibility and fosters positive stakeholder engagement (Terkla & Pagano, 1993).

Institutional image is shaped by a combination of beliefs, ideas, and impressions associated with an entity. People's attitudes toward an organization are largely determined by the perception they hold of it. In the context of higher education, institutional image is influenced by factors such as academic reputation, campus appearance, tuition fees, geographical location, infrastructure, services, outcomes, and institutional values (Kotler, 2003; Hwang & Choi, 2019; Silva et al., 2020).

Corporate image in higher education is generally built upon two primary dimensions: school image and reputation. School image is shaped by academic attributes and media representation, while reputation is associated with the fulfillment of institutional promises and a competitive standing relative to other educational institutions (Nguyen & LeBlanc, 2001b; Wong et al., 2016; Arpan et al., 2003).

Previous research has explored various factors influencing student loyalty, highlighting the role of institutional image as a determinant of student commitment and satisfaction (Ong et al., 2022; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021; Hassan & Shamsudin, 2019; Yusof et al., 2022; Meng, 2018; Radiman et al., 2019; Imam Faisal Hamzah, 2022; Yoyok Cahyono et al., 2020).

Corporate image and reputation exert a greater influence on students' decision-making than service quality. When selecting a higher education institution, students tend to prioritize the perceived image of a university over other factors, as it shapes their initial impressions and expectations (Kotler & Fox, 1995).

Moreover, institutional image plays a fundamental role in shaping consumer perceptions and expectations. It not only affects how individuals evaluate the services or products offered but also has a direct impact on their overall satisfaction. A well-established institutional image fosters trust and reinforces the perceived value of an institution's offerings (Howard, 1998).

Similarly, in the context of higher education, university image is regarded

as one of the most valuable assets for institutions operating in a highly competitive market. A strong institutional image enhances credibility, attracts students, and strengthens an institution's reputation within the academic sector. As a result, universities with a well-defined and positive image gain a strategic advantage in student recruitment and institutional growth (Landrum et al., 1999).

Previous research has indicated a link between corporate image and student satisfaction. Studies indicate that a positive perception of an institution's image contributes to higher levels of parent satisfaction (βst = .288, $p < .001$) (Klomtooksing & Sato, (2023). This finding is consistent with Barusman (2014), who noted that perceptions of a higher education institution's reputation and image have a positive and significant impact on satisfaction and loyalty. The high satisfaction among students and parents can be attributed to the diligent care and attention offered by educators and associated personnel within the educational institution.

Furthermore, some studies suggest that corporate image plays a key role in fostering student loyalty. The study of Mohamad et al. (2009) proves that corporate image has a positive influence on students' loyalty (βst = .420, $p < .003$). Further, Kheiry et al. (2012) provide evidence that university image significantly influences students' loyalty, with a coefficient of (βst = .215, $p < .04$). It highlights that the image has a direct and positive impact on student loyalty. In simpler terms, considering the positive coefficient, any enhancement in the image will lead to an increase in loyalty among students.

While, Usman and Mohd Mokhtar (2016) note that image has a modest impact on student loyalty, with a coefficient of (βst = .085, $p < .078$). The concept of image is primarily associated with attitudes, feelings, and beliefs toward the institution. In addition, Hassan et al., (2019) discovers that corporate image has a direct impact on student loyalty, with a coefficient of (βst = .261, $p < .05$). On the other hand, Wijaya et al. (2021) observed that service quality does not significantly influence student loyalty (βst = -.001, $p < .05$).

Parent Loyalty

Loyalty is defined in the literature in various ways. A loyal customer can be defined as an individual who consistently exhibits a favorable disposition towards a provider of services.

Loyalty is a process which includes cognition, affect, volition and behavior. As per the findings of Adi and Basuki (2019), Nyonyie et al., (2019), Syah and Wijoyo, (2021), loyal customers can be defined as: (a) individuals who engage in repeated

and regular purchases, or in the context of education, as those who consistently utilize educational services or products; (b) loyal customers in the field of education are characterized by their tendency to avail themselves of various product lines and services, which can be likened to the utilization of facilities or services offered by educational institutions; (c) loyal customers in this domain are also inclined to refer others to the same educational service or product; and (d) loyal customers demonstrate a certain level of immunity to competitive forces, remaining steadfast in their commitment to a particular educational institution and not easily swayed by alternative options.

Parent loyalty is demonstrated by their long-term commitment to a chosen school (Li & Hung, 2009). Accordiing to Nguyen et al. (2021) loyalty of parents towards an institution, similar to other forms of loyalty, may manifest through behavioral expressions such as word-of-mouth and advocacy efforts, or through attitudinal expressions including willingness and emotional connection, or a combination of both approaches.

Many authors have shown that student loyalty has a significant impact on educational institutions (Athiyaman, 1997, Alves and Raposo, 2007, Hennig-Thurau et al., 2001, Mansori et al., 2014). Further, Weerasinghe and Fernando (2017) explored this concept and demonstrated that satisfaction represents a near-term assessment of the educational facilities and services encountered by students. In addition, Latif and Bunce (2021) noted significant positive relationships for all three mediating variables with respect to loyalty: service quality, satisfaction and trust. This implies that a heightened perception of service quality, increased satisfaction, and greater trust were correlated with enhanced loyalty.

A study of 209 parents of secondary school students (PASESS) in Vietnam found that satisfaction is the strongest driver of loyalty, with attitude and behavior being the only core educational qualities directly impacting loyalty. Competence and curriculum influenced loyalty indirectly, mediated by transformative quality and satisfaction, highlighting the importance of enhancing service quality for long-term school success. The empirical analysis demonstrated that satisfaction significantly impacts loyalty (βst = 0.691, p < .001) (Nguyen et al., (2021).

Methods

Research Design

This study used a quantitative research approach to analyze the predictors of parent loyalty in Romanian Adventist schools. Data was collected throughout a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, targeting parents who

enrolled their children in these institutions. The collected data were analyzed using Path Analysis, an extension of regression modeling, to examine the relationships between service quality, student satisfaction, institutional image, and student loyalty.

Path Analysis was chosen due to its ability to model complex relationships between multiple variables while allowing for both direct and indirect effects. Unlike simpler regression techniques, Path Analysis provides a more nuanced understanding of mediating effects, which is essential for validating the theoretical framework. Given that this study examines how educational quality influences parent loyalty through parent satisfaction, path analysis was the most suitable method to capture these interdependencies. This was facilitated by the software application in order to elucidate the behaviors of the subsequent variables: (a) the exogenous variable (Service Quality), (b) endogenous variables (Student Loyalty), and (c) mediator variables (Student Satisfaction and Corporate Image).

This study utilized **convenience sampling**, which, while practical for reaching a large number of respondents efficiently, may limit the generalizability of the results. The sample may not fully represent the diversity of parents in Romanian Adventist schools, potentially introducing **selection bias**. Future studies should consider **random sampling or stratified sampling** to enhance representativeness and improve the external validity of the findings.

Population and Sample

The study population consists of parents who enrolled their children in Romanian Adventists Schools. The data collection method employed in this study is non-probabilistic and based on convenience sampling. The objective was to gather data from parents who have enrolled their students in Adventist schools in Romania. The data collection process involved around 300 parents, comprising 160 males (60%) and 140 females (40%), resulting in a final sample size of 297 parents.

The development of the questionnaire

The sociodemographic information of the participants was collected from parents using a questionnaire distributed via the Google Forms platform. It comprised five sets of scales regarding perception of perceived value, convenience, service quality, corporate image, communication, parent satisfaction, and parent loyalty. Parents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each item on a scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 represents strong disagreement and 5 represents strong agreement. The questionnaire was administered in Romanian language.

The researchers of the initial study reported a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.779 for the scale (Mon, 2019, p. 21). Therefore, the data may be regarded as both reliable and valid.

Procedure

Data were gathered from parents who enrolled their students to Seventh Day Adventist Schools in Romania. Prior to approaching the parents, consent was obtained from the Romanian Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and school principal. The parents were given an online survey and were invited to fill it out. It is important to note that parents were not obligated to participate in the survey. Data collection occurred from July to December 2024.

Data analysis and Instrumentation

Data was analyzed using path-analysis method. The primary data collection in this study is conducted through a Google Forms questionnaire, namely, primary data as data obtained directly from the main source. The questionnaire serves as an instrument to gather research data by presenting a series of written questions to the respondents. It is divided into two parts: the first part focuses on gathering demographic information about the respondents, while the second part includes questions that prompt respondents to express their level of agreement on a Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

The assessment of the model involves four latent variables: service quality, satisfaction, institutional image (corporate loyalty). The methos was used to identify the substantial direct positive impact of the exogenous latent variable, service quality, on the endogenous latent variables, satisfaction, institutional image (corporate image) and loyalty. The adequacy or appropriateness of the model was assessed by comparing the theoretical and empirical models using the goodness-of-fit model evaluation.

Research Design

This research has a quantitative design, transversal, non-experimental, descriptive, cross-sectional, correlational, and predictive. The data is a survey on parents sending their students to Adventist Schools, including the level of primary, secondary and high school in Romania. As shown above, this data has been examined using a path analysis model to assess the impact of various factors,

including direct and indirect relationships among the variables involved.

Demographic Information

This study's population consisted of parents who enrolled their children in Adventist Schools in Romania. The electronic questionnaire was administered to 297 parents, of whom 255 completed questionnaires were accepted for the analysis, representing a return rate of 85.86 %. Of the total number of 255 parents, 56 (22 %) were male and 199 (78%) were female. Thus, it is evident that the majority of the participants were women.

In terms of profession, 46 (18%) worked as a civil servant/state employee, 50 (19.6 %) employed in a company/NGO, 46 (18 %) persons carrying out other activities (Authorized Physical Person/entrepreneur/self-employed), dependent 9 (3.5 %), pensioner 6 (2.4 %), 98 (38.4) other profession. The income of the parents surveyed ranged from 2,000 Romanian lei to over 10,000 lei. Among them, 27 parents (10.6%) reported an income below 2,000 lei, 100 (39.2%) had an income between 2,000 and 3,999 lei, 56 (22.0 %) earned between 4,000 and 4,999 lei, 58 (22.7%) had incomes between 5,000 and 9,999 lei, and 14 (5.5%) reported earning over 10,000 lei.

Most parents, 101 (39.6%), had completed secondary or lower secondary education. A total of 92 parents (36.1%) held a bachelor's degree, 50 (19.6%) had a master's degree, 4 (1.6%) had pursued doctoral studies, and 8 (3.1%) had completed other types of education.

In terms of regions, 53 participants (20.8%) were from North-East, 77 (30.2%) from South-East, 33 (12.9%) from South-Muntenia, 55 (20.4%) from South-West Oltenia, 6 (2.4%) from the West, 8 (3.1%) from North-West, 6 (2.4%) from the Center, and 20 (7.8%) from Bucharest-Ilfov.

The majority of the participants were women (77%) and the average age was 45 years, with a wide range of distribution from 24 to 77 years. In terms of teaching seniority, this ranged from 24 to 49 years, with a mean of 16.4 years. Most of the teachers (52.2%) had a bachelor's degree.

Regarding the schools where parents enrolled their children: 54 (21.2%) at Liceul Teologic Adventist in Craiova, 42 (16.5%) at Liceul Teologic „Ștefan Demetrescu" in Bucharest, 32 (12.5%) at Liceul Teoretic Eviss in Iași, 30 (11.8%) at Școala Gimnazială „Wilhelm Moldovan" in Constanța, 23 (9.0%) enrolled their children at Școala Gimnazială „Doctor Luca" in Brăila, 18 (7.1%) at Școala Gimnazială Adventistă in Matca, 12 (4.7%) at Școala Primară „Elisei" in Piatra

Neamț, 11 (4.3%) at Școala Gimnazială „Elias" in Podiș, 8 (3.1%) at Liceul Teoretic „Mihai Ionescu" in Bucharest, 8 (3.1%) at Școala Primară Adventistă Târgoviște, 5 (2.0%) at Liceul Teologic Adventist „Maranatha" in Cluj, 3 (1.2%) at Liceul Teoretic „Dr. Lind" in Câmpenița, 3 (1.2%) at Liceul Integritas or Școala Primară Speranța in Macea, 2 (0.8%) at Școala Gimnazială „Excelsis" in Ploiești.

Influencing Factors

To measure the independent variables: *Perceived Value, Corporate Image, Service Quality, Convenience, Communication* and the dependent variables: *Parent Satisfaction*, *Parent Loyalty,* the Instrument created by Mon (2019) was used, which consists of 30 items, with a good level of reliability (α = .843), which shows high reliability.

The influencing factors of Parent Satisfaction (Perceived Value, Service Quality, Corporate Image, Communication): These were determined by the sum of the points given to the 20 items of instrument, developed by Mon (2019). The items were measured with a seven-point Likert-type scale: *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). For the four elements (items) measuring perceived value, the Cronbach's alpha was .839. For the items assessing corporate image, the Cronbach's alpha was .855. The reliability for convenience had a Cronbach's alpha of .630, while communication demonstrated the highest reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .909.

Parent Satisfaction: The level of parent satisfaction was determined by the sum of the points accumulated in the five responses given. The items were measured with a seven-point Likert-type scale: strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Cronbach's alpha was .931, which shows very high reliability.

Parent Loyalty: The level of parent loyalty was determined by arithmetic means where a higher mean means a better level of loyalty. To determine the level of parent loyalty, the five items were measured with a Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), whose value was determined by arithmetic mean where a higher mean means a better level of loyalty towards school. The value of Cronbach's alpha was .895, which is high reliability.

Results

The description behavior of the construct *perceived value*, the item: VP1-*I feel trust and confident in this private school* has the highest score (M = 4.80); VP2-*The service of the school is good* (M = 4.69) has a very good value, and VP3- *The*

school always welcomes and values my comments and suggestions ($M = 4.60$), while lowest scores were related to VP4- *My child's academic and social skill has significantly improved after I put him/her at this private school* and VP5- *Enrollment fee is reasonable for the quality of teaching, facilities and services provided* have a value of 4.56.

Another independent variable analyzed was *corporate image*. The most notable self-related item, CI3, highlights that the private school's image conveys excellence in quality (M = 4.58). Following this, CI2 emphasizes that the private school has an excellent reputation (M = 4.57). In contrast, CI4, which states that the private school is well-positioned compared to others, received a slightly higher rating ($M = 4.65$). The lowest scores were associated with CI5—the school's image having a greater influence on customer choice than other factors ($M = 4.46$)—and CI1, which reflects the importance of prioritizing the school's image ($M = 4.33$).

Service quality was another independent variable examined in the study. The highest score was attributed to SQ1, which states that office staff possess reliable knowledge of school rules and procedures and demonstrate the ability to address students' problems ($M = 4.61$). This was closely followed by SQ2, emphasizing that teachers are well-trained, competent, and experienced ($M = 4.60$). Similarly, SQ3— highlighting the effectiveness of school management in maintaining discipline and resolving complaints—received a comparable score ($M = 4.59$). Next, SQ5, which reflects the school's high examination results, scored slightly lower ($M = 4.53$). Finally, SQ4, which focuses on the school's ability to produce well-rounded and qualified students across academics, arts, and sports, received the lowest score ($M = 4.36$).

Convenience represents another significant variable under examination. The findings indicate that Co4 achieves the highest rating, with the statement "The school environment is comfortable for children" receiving a mean score of 4.84. Following closely is Co5, which pertains to the school payment system being convenient, with a mean score of 4.82. Next in line is Co3, which states that the student registration system is easy and time-saving, earning a mean score of 4.80. A lower score is attributed to Co2, which addresses the quality of the school's transport facilities, rated at 4.52. The lowest score is assigned to Co1, concerning the convenience of the school's location, which received a mean score of 4.46.

The final independent variable is *communication*. The highest rating is attributed to Cm3, which indicates that the school effectively and promptly communicates essential information such as openings, closings, and schedules, with a mean score of 4.79. Following closely is Cm5, where the school consistently shares updates regarding the qualifications and achievements of its students, achieving a

mean score of 4.73. A slightly lower score is recorded for Cm4, which reflects the school's regular communication of student successes, including academic, athletic, and performing arts achievements, with a mean of 4.68. Next is Cm2, where the school keeps parents informed about their child's progress, scoring a mean of 4.67. The lowest score is for Cm1, which pertains to staff explaining how parents can assist their children at home, with a mean score of 4.54.

The dependent variable, *satisfaction*, received notable scores. The highest rating was attributed to Ps3: "I am satisfied with my decision to choose this private school" ($M = 4.80$). This was closely followed by Ps5: "Overall, I am satisfied with this private school" ($M = 4.79$). Next was Ps4: "I think this private school is capable of meeting parents' needs" ($M = 4.72$). A slightly lower score was observed for Ps2: "I am satisfied with the services provided by this private high school" ($M = 4.65$). The lowest score was associated with Ps1: "The private high school fulfills my expectations" ($M = 4.55$).

The final dependent variable is *parent loyalty*. The highest score is associated with the item PL2 - "I will share positive experiences about this private high school with others" ($M = 4.86$). Following closely are PL3 - "I will persist in enrolling at this private high school" and PL4 - "I regard this private school as my top choice, both of which received the same score" ($M = 4.83$). Subsequently, PL1 - "I would recommend this private high school to others" garnered a score of ($M = 4.82$). The lowest score is linked to PL5 - "Even if the fees of other private high schools are lower, I will continue to select this private high school" ($M = 4.76$).

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviation, and reliability as measured by Cronbach's alpha for each construct.

Table 1

The Description of the Construct

Construct	*M*	*SD*	Cronbach's alpha
Perveived Value	4.64	0.50	.839
Corporate Image	4.52	0.59	.855
Service Quality	4.53	0.57	.844
Convenience	4.68	0.41	.630
Communication	4.68	0.59	.909
Parent Satisfaction	4.70	0.49	.931
Parent Loyalty	4.82	0.40	.895

Hypothesis testing

The null hypothesis (H0) states that: *Perceived value, corporate image, service quality, convenience* and *communication* have no direct effect on *parental loyalty*, mediated by *parental satisfaction*.

After removing 42 outliers, the Path Analysis Model was conducted to examine the strength of the relationships between the exogenous variables and the endogenous variables, using the generalized least squares estimation method. This type of analysis reveals the direction, relationship, and extent of effects of variables in a model.

Path analysis can be performed through a series of multiple regression analyses. In this approach, multiple regression coefficients serve as path coefficients, with the standardized β scores indicating the strength of the effects of the independent variable(s) on the dependent variable.

The Generalized Least Squares (GLS) estimation method was employed as an alternative due to the lack of multivariate normality in the data, following the recommendations of Kline (2016).

The model's goodness-of-fit index (χ^2/DF = 1.570, p = .194, CFI = .985, GFI = .993, TLI = .951, RMR = .002, and RMSEA = .047) suggests that the model fits the data well (see Table 2), offering empirical evidence for the theoretical relationships proposed between the constructs, according to the criteria established by Hu and Bentler (1999).

Table 2

Estadísticos de bondad de ajuste

Statistic	Abbreviation	Criterion	Result	Decision
Chi-squared	χ^2	p > .05	.194	Acepted
Goodness of Fit Index	GFI	≥ .90	.993	Acepted
Comparative Fit Index	CFI	≥ .90	.985	Acepted
Tucker-Lewis Index	TLI	≥ .90	.951	Acepted
Root Mean Square Residua	RMR	< .08	.002	Acepted
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	RMSEA	< .06	.047	Acepted

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The model in Figure 1 shows the effect of three exogenous variables on parental satisfaction: *perceived value* (βst = .58), *service quality* (βst = .34), and *convenience* (βst = .07), which explained 84% of the variance in parental satisfaction. Furthermore, *parental satisfaction* had a positive effect on *parental loyalty* (βst = .85). Together, the direct and indirect effects of the model explain 72% of the variance in *parental loyalty*.

Two variables, *corporate image* and *communication*, were eliminated since they did not contribute significantly to explaining *parental satisfaction.*
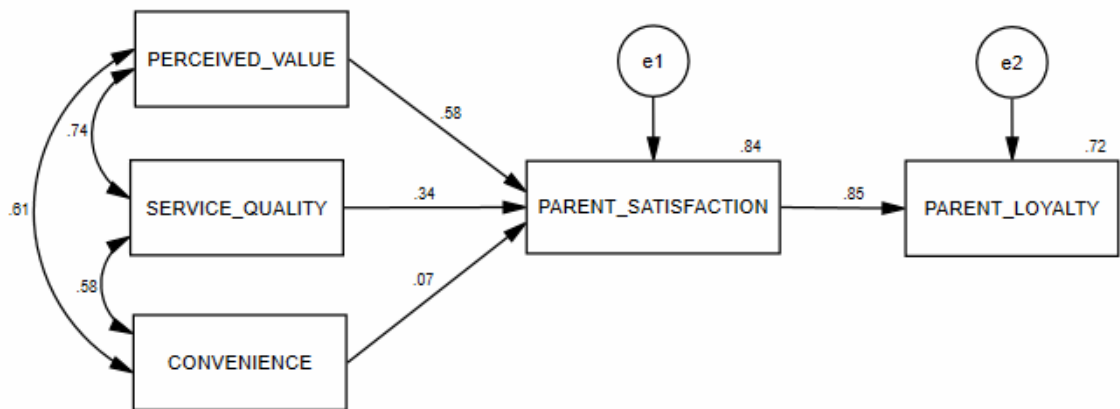
Figure 1

Path Analysis Model

Table 3 presents the direct and indirect effects among the variables in the model, highlighting the influence of perceived value (PV), service quality (SQ), and convenience (C) on parental satisfaction (PS) and loyalty (PL), as well as the significance of parental satisfaction as a key mediator in these relationships.

Table 3

Direct and indirect effects among the variables

Hypothesis			Standarized Coefficient	t-Value	Decision
		Direct Effect			
PV ⟶ PS			.580***	14.344	Acepted
SQ ⟶ PS			.344***	8.740	Acepted
C ⟶ PS			.072**	2.183	Acepted
PS ⟶ PL			.848***	24.358	Acepted
Nota					
		Indirect Effect			
PV ⟶ PS ⟶ PL▶			.492***	9.147	Acepted
SQ ⟶ PS ⟶ PL▶			.292***	7.210	Acepted
C ⟶ PS ⟶ PL▶			.061*	1.944	Rejected

Nota. *** $p < .001$, **$p < .05$, *$p > .05$. PV: Perceived Value, SQ: Service Quality, C: Convenience, PS: Parental Satisfaction, PL: Parental Loyalty

Discussion

This study aimed to determine whether *perceived value, corporate image, service quality, convenience,* and *communication* serve as predictors of *parent satisfaction* and *parent loyalty* in Adventist schools in Romania. This research showed that *perceived value* and service quality are the main factors influencing *parent satisfaction.* Of these, the most important predictor of *parent satisfaction* is *perceived value*. This highlights the critical role that parents' perceptions of the school's value have in determining their overall level of satisfaction. Our result is in agreement with the findings of other researchers (Desianti et al., 2021; Chang et al., 2024). All this proves that parents' perceived value can enhance their satisfaction with school.

Recently, Julio & Shihab (2024) proved that perceived value plays a crucial and predominant role in shaping the decisions made by parents when selecting Sekolah Kids Republic Jakarta. This is further supported by Lovelock and Wright (2004) who emphasize that the appearance, behavior, and expertise of staff play a vital role in service marketing, influencing how the service is perceived and valued.

Ullah's findings (2012) indicated that perceived value plays a significant role in how customers assess their level of satisfaction. The relationship between customer-perceived value and customer satisfaction is positively correlated (Tukiran et al., 2021). Consumer perceptions of value play a crucial role in shaping purchasing behavior, satisfaction levels, and customer loyalty (Yoo & Park, 2016).

The second predictor is *Service Quality* which explains 34 % of the variance in *Parent Satisfaction,* indicating its substantial influence on how satisfied parents feel with the school. For example, İncesu & Asikgil (2012) indicate that the dimensions of tangibility, reliability, assurance, and empathy in service quality are crucial factors that exert a significant positive influence on parental satisfaction. Similarly, Ling et al. (2019) demonstrates that the five dimensions of SERVQUAL have a positive influence on parents' satisfaction. Thus, it is essential to prioritize the establishment of ongoing communication of the schools with parents. This continuous dialogue fosters a collaborative environment that supports the development of the students and enriches the educational experience. As a result, schools need to place a greater emphasis on this issue to increase parents' satisfaction with their programs. Further, Budiyanto et al. (2021) proves that service quality directly influences the loyalty of parents students' parents. Therefore, it is evident that when parents receive quality services for their children, they will be positive about the institution in which their children are enrolled. Further, Jamaludin & Mohamad (2018) proved that service positively influenced parental satisfaction explaining a 13.8% variance.

The third predictor is *Convenience*, which explains 7% of the variance in Parent Satisfaction. Although convenience is a relevant factor in explaining customer satisfaction and revisit intentions, it is often one of the least noticeable dimensions for users, as observed by Kim et al. (2009) and Srivastava & Kaul (2014). These findings align with prior research showing that service convenience has a positive impact on customer satisfaction (Sun & Pan, 2023).

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that *Perceived Value*, *Service Quality,* and *Convenience* are key predictors of *Parent Satisfaction,* which in turn, significantly influences *Parent Loyalty.* Satisfaction serves as the foundation for fostering loyalty, as parents who report higher satisfaction levels exhibit stronger commitment and fidelity towards the school. The findings of the study show that parents of students in Romanian Adventist schools are generally satisfied with the institution and are willing to invest financially in their children's education.

From a practical perspective, these insights can inform educational policy and strategic planning within Adventist schools. School administrators can leverage these findings to enhance service quality, convenience, and perceived value,

ultimately improving parent satisfaction and strengthening long-term loyalty. By implementing policies that prioritize high-quality educational services and a more parent-friendly experience, schools can foster a loyal and engaged parent community while ensuring institutional sustainability.

However, this study has a notable limitation regarding sample selection, as it relied on a convenience sample. To enhance the generalizability of the findings, future research should employ random probability sampling methods. Additionally, future studies should expand the scope by replicating the research in other religious and non-religious schools, different educational contexts, and broader geographic regions. Further investigation into additional factors, such as trust, communication, and religious commitment, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of parent satisfaction and loyalty. By continuously refining their services and addressing parents' expectations, Adventist schools in Romania can strengthen their institutional reputation, increase enrollment, and secure long-term sustainability.

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