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Promotion, Brand Image, and Link and Match on the Decision to Choose SMKS 1 Parahyangan

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship of promotion, brand image, and link and match with the world of work to the decision to choose SMKS 1 Parahyangan. A quantitative approach with an associative design was employed. Primary data were collected through a five-point Likert questionnaire from 120 respondents consisting of 50 active students, 40 alumni, and 30 alumni parents. The instrument comprised 16 statements, with four items for each variable. Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression preceded by validity, reliability, and classical assumption tests, followed by t-test, F-test, correlation, and coefficient of determination. The results show that promotion has a positive and statistically significant relationship with the decision to choose (B=0.351; β=0.334; t=4.222; p<0.001), as does brand image (B=0.370; β=0.360; t=4.469; p<0.001). Link and match has a positive coefficient but is not statistically significant at the 5% level (B=0.132; β=0.133; t=1.682; p=0.095). Simultaneously, the three predictors are statistically significant (F=28.537; p<0.001). The model reports R^2=0.425 and Adjusted R^2=0.410, indicating that 42.5% of the variation in school-choice decisions is accounted for by the model, or 41.0% after adjustment. The findings highlight the managerial relevance of strengthening school image, improving promotional communication, and making industry-partnership evidence more visible.

Keywords: Promotion, Brand Image, Link And Match, School Choice Decision, Vocational High School

INTRODUCTION

Competition among educational institutions makes school-choice decisions increasingly related to how prospective students and families receive information, assess reputation, and understand the benefits offered by education. In the context of vocational high schools (SMK), school choice is not only related to promotional communication but also to perceptions of school image and the relevance of education to the world of work. Recent empirical studies indicate that promotion and school image can be associated with school-

choice decisions, although the strength of the relationship may differ according to context, respondents, and research models (Arif & Nurhadi, 2026; Muslimah & Syah, 2024; Nurohman et al., 2025).

For example, Nurohman, Kasyadi, and Sari (2025), using 380 parents of students at private vocational high schools in West Jakarta, reported significant effects of promotion and school image in a model that also included service quality. Nuraisah et al. (2024), in a study at SMK Nusa Bangsa, also found a significant relationship between school image, social-media promotion, and parents' decisions. Meanwhile, Fauzan et al. (2023) placed promotional media and brand image in a school-choice decision model with digital marketing as an intervening variable. These findings demonstrate the relevance of marketing communication and image in educational choice contexts.

On the other hand, the characteristics of vocational high schools add another dimension through the connection between education and the world of work. Arifah and Salsabila (2025) showed that partnerships with business and industry can be implemented through workplace practice, industrial visits, and the Special Job Exchange (Bursa Kerja Khusus) to support work readiness and graduate quality. However, evidence on whether perceptions of link and match are directly associated with school-choice decisions at the school level remains limited. Therefore, this study examines these three aspects simultaneously at SMKS 1 Parahyangan.

Based on the source thesis, there were issues concerning perceptions of promotion, brand image, link and match, and school-choice decisions. The preliminary survey data underlying the study showed average scores of 2.52 for promotion, 2.58 for brand image, 2.45 for link and match, and 2.79 for school-choice decisions. These conditions provide an empirical context for examining whether the three stimuli have measurable relationships with school-choice decisions.

The contribution of this study is not merely to repeat tests of promotion and school image, but to integrate them with perceived link and match in a single model in a private vocational high school. The heterogeneous findings across variables are also important: promotion and brand image show statistically significant relationships, whereas link and match does not reach statistical significance at the 5% level. This pattern suggests that relevance to the world of work does not automatically become a measurable consideration in school choice when evidence and information about it are not yet a strong part of respondents' decision-making process.

The objective of this study is to analyze the effects of promotion, brand image, and link and match with the world of work on the decision to choose SMKS 1 Parahyangan, both partially and simultaneously. The hypotheses tested are: H1 promotion has a positive effect on the decision to choose; H2 brand image has a positive effect on the decision to choose; H3 link and match has a positive effect on the decision to choose; and H4 promotion, brand image, and link and match simultaneously affect the decision to choose.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study used a quantitative approach with an associative design. The research location was SMKS 1 Parahyangan. Primary data were obtained through a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire. Based on the source thesis, the number of respondents was 120, consisting of 50 active students, 40 alumni, and 30 alumni parents. The sampling technique was non-probability purposive sampling.

The instrument consisted of 16 statements, with four items for each of the variables: Promotion, Brand Image, Link and Match, and School-Choice Decision. Instrument testing included validity and reliability. Reliability results showed Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.851 for Promotion, 0.880 for Brand Image, 0.883 for Link and Match, and 0.864 for School-Choice Decision.

Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression. Assumption tests covered normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and linearity. Subsequently, the t-test was used for partial effects, the F-test for simultaneous effects, and correlation and determination coefficients were examined. Because the research design was a cross-sectional survey using observational regression, the interpretation of results in this article is directed to statistical relationships/effects within the model and is not treated as evidence of experimental causality.

3.1 Variable operationalization

Variable	Indicator focus based on source thesis	Scale
Promotion (X1)	Sales promotion, personal selling/word of mouth, publicity, and forms of promotional communication	Likert 1–5
Brand Image (X2)	Brand reputation/trust, product/service image, and perceptions of the school	Likert 1–5
Link and Match (X3)	Industry cooperation, workplace practice, competency alignment, and graduate absorption	Likert 1–5
School-Choice Decision (Y)	Confidence in choosing, first choice, and willingness to recommend	Likert 1–5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Assumption tests and instrument quality

The reliability tests showed that all constructs had Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.80, indicating high internal consistency in the research data. The multicollinearity test showed Tolerance values of 0.795, 0.765, and 0.788 and VIF values of 1.259, 1.307, and 1.270 for Promotion, Brand Image, and Link and Match, respectively. These values do not indicate a multicollinearity problem.

The Glejser heteroscedasticity test reported in the source thesis did not show significance for the three predictors. The linearity test was also reported to meet the criterion because the Significance of Deviation from Linearity was greater than 0.05. For normality, the SPSS output in the statistical results section of the stored thesis showed an Asymp. Sig. of 0.173 in the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. The value 0.173 is used in this article because it comes from the statistical output presented in the analysis; another value appearing in a different section of the document should be standardized before submission.

4.2 Multiple linear regression results

The resulting regression model is:

$$\mathbf{Y = 2.119 + 0.351X1 + 0.370X2 + 0.132X3}$$

The Promotion coefficient of 0.351 indicates a positive direction. The Brand Image coefficient of 0.370 also indicates a positive direction, while Link and Match has a coefficient of 0.132. The coefficient tests are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Multiple linear regression coefficient results

Variable	B	Beta	t	p	Decision at 5%
Promotion (X1)	0.351	0.334	4.222	<0.001	Significant
Brand Image (X2)	0.370	0.360	4.469	<0.001	Significant
Link and Match (X3)	0.132	0.133	1.682	0.095	Not significant

Promotion has a positive and statistically significant effect on the school-choice decision (t=4.222; p<0.001). This finding is consistent with Nurohman et al. (2025) and Arif and Nurhadi (2026), which also place promotion as an important factor in school choice. In the context of SMKS 1 Parahyangan, the result supports the importance of communicating programs, school activities, achievements, open houses, and recommendations.

Brand Image has a positive and statistically significant effect on the school-choice decision (t=4.469; p<0.001). The standardized beta coefficient of Brand Image, 0.360, is the largest among the three predictors. The academically cautious statement is that Brand Image has the largest standardized beta coefficient in the model, rather than stating that it is absolutely the most dominant causal factor outside the model. This result is consistent with Nuraisah et al. (2024), Wahidah et al. (2023), and Nurohman et al. (2025).

Link and Match has a positive coefficient but is not statistically significant at the 5% level (t=1.682; p=0.095). Thus, H3 is not supported at the 5% significance level. This finding indicates that perceptions of the school's relationship with the world of work do not provide sufficient statistical evidence to be associated with school-choice decisions in the research sample. One contextual explanation that should be read as an interpretation rather than causal evidence is that information about industry partnerships, workplace practice, competency alignment, or graduate absorption may not have been sufficiently visible at the decision-making stage.

4.3 Simultaneous test and coefficient of determination

The F-test produced F=28.537 with p<0.001. Thus, simultaneously, the three predictors have a statistically significant relationship with the School-Choice Decision. The R value of 0.652 indicates the model's relationship with the dependent variable, while R^2=0.425 indicates that the model accounts for 42.5% of the variation in school-choice decisions. The Adjusted R^2 of 0.410 indicates the proportion explained after model adjustment. The remaining variation is not explained by the predictors included in the model and should not be stated as being 'caused' by specific unmeasured factors.

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F (p)
0.652	0.425	0.410	28.537 (<0.001)

4.4 Integrative discussion

The results show that two forms of stimuli that are relatively directly visible to respondents—promotion and brand image have statistically significant relationships with school-choice decisions. In contrast, link and match is not statistically significant. Substantively, this pattern can be interpreted as an indication that the benefits of industry partnerships need to be translated into evidence that is easy for prospective students and families to understand, such as workplace-practice programs, industry partners, aligned competencies, and graduate absorption data. However, this interpretation is a managerial implication of the finding, not proof that insufficient information is the direct cause of the non-significant result.

The findings also extend the reading of previous studies. Studies of promotion and school image tend to show positive relationships with school-choice decisions, whereas this study adds the link and match variable and shows a different result for that variable. Thus, the empirical contribution of the article lies in integrating the three constructs and documenting differences in statistical significance among the stimuli in a single private vocational high school context.

5. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Area	Research finding	Management implication

Brand Image	β=0.360; p<0.001	Strengthen reputation, achievement evidence, practical-facility quality, school environment, and alumni track record; communicate the evidence consistently.
Promotion	β=0.334; p<0.001	Expand digital communication, open houses, visits to junior high schools/madrasahs, achievement publications, and word of mouth with consistent messages.
Link and Match	β=0.133; p=0.095	Build and document business-industry partnerships, workplace practice, competency alignment, and graduate absorption data; focus on making evidence visible to prospective students and parents.
Model Monitoring	R^2=0.425	Periodically monitor applicants, first-choice status, promotional engagement, image perceptions, and partnership-communication indicators.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that Promotion and Brand Image have positive and statistically significant effects on the decision to choose SMKS 1 Parahyangan. Brand Image has the largest standardized beta coefficient in the model (β=0.360), followed by Promotion (β=0.334). Link and Match has a positive coefficient but is not statistically significant at the 5% level (β=0.133; p=0.095). Simultaneously, the three predictors are significant in the model, with F=28.537 and p<0.001. The model explains 42.5% of the variation in school-choice decisions, with an Adjusted R^2 of 41.0%.

The main limitations are the use of non-probability purposive sampling and the composition of respondents, which includes active students, alumni, and alumni parents. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as findings within the research sample and should not automatically be generalized to all prospective vocational high school students. Future research may use homogeneous respondents at the school-choice stage and include other relevant variables.

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