STUDENT USE BEHAVIOR IN DETERMINING MAJORS: IS IT DETERMINED BY SELF-CONGRUITY, SOCIAL INFLUENCE, INFORMATION USEFULNESS, THROUGH MEDIATING INFORMATION ADOPTION, AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS

Fredson Kotamena, Poltak Sinaga, Niko Sudibjo, Dymoon Hidayat

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study investigates factors influencing students’ Use Behavior (UB) through Self-Congruity (SC), Social Influence (SI), and Information Usefulness (IU), focusing on direct and mediating variables Behavioral Intention (BI) and Information Adoption (IA).

Method: The study involved 400 12th-grade students, who were selected using simple random sampling and validated used SEM-PLS, confirming the researched hypothesis. The research used simple random sampling. Grade 12 students are crucial for higher education and career decisions. The study included 223 public school and 177 private school students, with 400 students from each stratum, based on the Slovin formula. The researcher contacted foundation owners and school administrators via social media to distribute survey links, collecting 476 questionnaires from 234 private and 242 public schools. Erroneous data was corrected, including participants not in grade 12 or high school, those not yet choosing their tertiary education major, and those who remained vague.

Result: This study found that the variables SC, SI, and BI had a positive and significant influence on students’ UB. Meanwhile, the variable IU had not performed as planned. However, it was possible to raise BI through IA mediation, which eventually boosts students’ UB.

Conclusion: This study offers a fresh theoretical perspective on students’ UB and valuable insights for university administrators. IA helps students internalize new information by linking concepts, forming a complex network of knowledge, understanding meaning, and applying it in various contexts. There was also discussion of limitations and potential researched directions.

Keywords: use behavior, self-congruity, social influence, information usefulness, behavioral intention, information adoption.

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O COMPORTAMENTO DO USO DO ALUNO NA DETERMINAÇÃO DAS MAIORES: É DETERMINADO PELA AUTOCONGRUÊNCIA, INFLUÊNCIA SOCIAL, UTILIDADE DA INFORMAÇÃO, ATRAVÉS DA MEDIAÇÃO DA ADOÇÃO DA INFORMAÇÃO E INTENÇÕES COMPORTAMENTAIS

RESUMO

Objetivo: Este estudo investiga fatores que influenciam o Comportamento de Uso (UB) dos alunos através da Autocongruência (SC), Influência Social (SI) e Utilidade da Informação (IU), com foco em variáveis diretas e mediadoras Intenção Comportamental (BI) e Adoção de Informação (IA).

Método: O estudo envolveu 400 alunos do 12º ano, que foram selecionados usando amostragem aleatória simples e validado utilizando SEM-PLS, confirmando a hipótese pesquisada. A pesquisa utilizando amostragem aleatória simples. Os alunos de grau 12 são cruciais para as decisões de ensino superior e carreira. O estudo incluiu 223 escolas públicas e 177 alunos de escolas privadas, com 400 alunos de cada estrato, com base na fórmula eslovaca. O pesquisador contatou proprietários de fundações e administradores escolares por meio das redes sociais para distribuir links de pesquisa, coletando 476 questionários de 234 escolas particulares e 242 públicas. Foram corrigidos dados errôneos, incluindo participantes que não estavam no 12º ano ou no ensino médio, aqueles que ainda não tinham escolhido o ensino superior e aqueles que permaneceram vagos.

Resultado: Este estudo concluiu que as variáveis SC, SI e BI tiveram influência positiva e significativa na UB dos alunos. Entretanto, a variável UI não teve o desempenho planeado. No entanto, foi possível levantar BI através de mediação IA, o que eventualmente estimula o UB dos alunos.

Conclusão: Este estudo oferece uma nova perspetiva teórica sobre a UB dos alunos e insights valiosos para os administradores universitários. A IA ajuda os alunos a interiorizar novas informações, ligando conceitos, formando uma rede complexa de conhecimento, entendendo significado e aplicando-o em vários contextos. Houve também discussão sobre limitações e potenciais direções pesquisadas.

Palavras-chave: comportamento de uso, autocongruência, influência social, utilidade da informação, intenção comportamental, adoção de informação.

EL COMPORTAMIENTO DEL USO ESTUDIANTIL EN LA DETERMINACIÓN DE LAS ESPECIALIDADES: ¿ESTÁ DETERMINADO POR LA AUTOCONGRUENCIA, LA INFLUENCIA SOCIAL, LA UTILIDAD DE LA INFORMACIÓN, A TRAVÉS DE LA ADOPCIÓN DE INFORMACIÓN MEDIADORA Y LAS INTENCIONES CONDUCTUALES?

RESUMEN

Propósito: Este estudio investiga los factores que influyen en el comportamiento de uso (CU) de los estudiantes a través de la autocongruencia (CS), la influencia social (IS) y la utilidad de la información (UI), centrándose en las variables directas y mediadoras Intención Conductual (IC) y Adopción de Información (AI).

Método: Participaron 400 estudiantes de 12º grado, seleccionados mediante muestreo aleatorio simple y validados utilizando el SEM-PLS, confirmando la hipótesis investigada. La investigación empleó un muestreo aleatorio simple. Los estudiantes de grado 12 son cruciales para la
educación superior y las decisiones de carrera. El estudio incluyó 223 estudiantes de escuelas públicas y 177 estudiantes de escuelas privadas, con 400 estudiantes de cada estrato, basado en la fórmula eslovaca. El investigador contactó a los propietarios de la fundación y a los administradores de la escuela a través de las redes sociales para distribuir enlaces de encuestas, recogiendo 476 cuestionarios de 234 escuelas privadas y 242 públicas. Se corrigieron los datos erróneos, incluidos los participantes que no estaban en el grado 12 o la escuela secundaria, los que todavía no habían elegido su especialidad de educación terciaria, y los que permanecieron imprecisos.

Resultado: Se encontró que las variables SC, SI e BI influyeron positiva y significativamente en la UB de los estudiantes. Por su parte, la variable IU no se había desempeñado como estaba previsto. Sin embargo, fue posible recaudar BI a través de la mediación de IA, que eventualmente mejora la UB de los estudiantes.

Conclusión: Este estudio ofrece una perspectiva teórica fresca sobre la UB de los estudiantes y valiosas perspectivas para los administradores universitarios. La IA ayuda a los estudiantes a interiorizar nueva información vinculando conceptos, formando una compleja red de conocimiento, entendiendo el significado y aplicándolo en diversos contextos. También se debatieron las limitaciones y las posibles orientaciones investigadas.

Palabras clave: comportamiento de uso, autocongruencia, influencia social, utilidad de la información, intención conductual, adopción de información.

1 INTRODUCTION

The National Mid-Term Development Plan (NMTDP) 2020-2024 aims to enhance Indonesia's educational services, focusing on human resources growth, student involvement, and resource distribution. The plan emphasizes the importance of gross enrollment rate (GER) in determining enrollment and ensuring quality education (BPS, 2020; Kemendikbud, 2020).

In 2021, Macao ranked highest with 132.44% of GER achievement, followed by Burundi with the lowest figure at 5.95% and Cambodia and Laos at 12.98%. Indonesia's GER achievement increased from 30.3% in 2019 to 31.19% in 2021, but still falls short of the 2024 NMTDP target of 37.63%, with a gap of 6.44%.

A preliminary examination of 50 males and 19 females in a study involved undergraduate graduates who were employed as management trainees by six prominent national corporations. It shows that 62.3% of respondents have strong preferences for particular vocations and courses of study. Then, 59.4% of the colleges and chosen majors received accreditation. However, it makes sense that the accreditation of majors and institutions would not have a substantial impact if the respondent did not obtain the information or if the information, they did receive was incorrect. Accreditation loses its power in favor of information. 53.6% of respondents said that they believed information
to be an important factor. In addition, 52.2% of respondents said that while choosing majors and universities, friends, teachers, and parents have an influence.

To increase their enrollment, students must choose whether to submit an application to the institution. In order to apply to universities, students must select a major in higher education. Because of this, the GER rises as more students choose majors in higher education. How do seniors select their majors while taking both internal and external factors into account? By concentrating on Self-Congruity (SC), Social Influence (SI), and Information Usefulness (IU), this study aims to investigate the factors that influence students’ Use Behavior (UB), both directly and through the mediating variables Information Adoption (IA) and Behavioral Intention (BI).

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 FRAMEWORK

The theoretical foundation of Ajzen and Fishbein’s Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) has been extensively used to examine the variables that affect a student’s decision to pursue a specific degree (Downey et al., 2011). The likelihood that a behavior will be carried out increases with the level of intention (Kumar & Kumar, 2013). Ajzen then introduced the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in 1985. The behavior image offered by the TPB appears appropriate for examining student decision-making (Lim & An, 2021; Tang & Seng, 2016).

2.2 STUDENT DECISION MAKING FACTORS

Attitudes towards a major, self-image, and social image significantly influence students’ willingness to work in a sector (Downey et al., 2011; Kumar & Kumar, 2013). Self-congruity and self-image congruence impact student evaluations, however understanding SC can simplify decision-making. Without positive SC, students may lose motivation and make impulsive changes (Pinxten et al., 2014; Sirgy, 2018).

Universities are expected to offer resources to aid students in choosing their majors. Universities are urged to disclose additional details on how the various majors relate to the workforce. Students may find this material useful in making judgments (Kumar & Kumar, 2013). IU is thought to be a predictor of information seeking because people tend to interact with information that they find valuable (K. C. Lee & Lee, 2003).
This antecedent and the BI of the students are significantly related (Ha & Ahn, 2011; K. C. Lee & Lee, 2003; J. Zhang et al., 2018).

The novelty of this research is demonstrated. First, SC theory has received a lot of attention and is largely recognized in the marketing and social psychology literature (Plewa & Palmer, 2014). However, in the education literature, SC has not been widely explored. In this study, SC, which is the basis for influencing attitudes in TRA and TPB (Confente et al., 2020), is explored as a direct influence on students’ UB in choosing majors in higher education. Second, IA considers the process of information internalization. Individuals receive information from external sources to expand their knowledge or improve their decision-making (Shen et al., 2014). Without adoption of the information obtained, the students’ BI can be different, and then the students’ UB will also be different. The Information Adoption Model (IAM) (Sussman & Siegal, 2003) emphasizes the evaluation of information value as a mediator in the IA process. Third, this study model can be used to predict majors in higher education.

2.3 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

2.3.1 Self-Congruity and Use Behavior

Research using the TPB reveals that SC, a dispositional construct, is more likely to be an unplanned means of personal behavior when combined with other attributes. SC predicts decision-making behavior and has an impulsive effect on UB (Shin et al., 2016). According to SC Theory, people choose brands or items to express themselves, often choosing ones that affirm their self-image and mirror their own attributes. They thus
frequently select goods that are a reflection of their personality and sense of identity (Shin et al., 2016; Sirgy, 2018). In that sense, student SC leads to students choosing majors that help others see their qualities. Decisions contribute to the student’s image and character in the eyes of others. Furthermore, what other people think about the student’s situation is important because students want others to perceive their personalities through the major, they have selected. Based on the rationale presented above, researchers propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Students’ SC has a positive effect on students’ UB in choosing majors in higher education.

2.3.2 Social Influence and Use Behavior

The SI construct is described as the poorest predictor in the TPB model. On the other hand, adolescent behavior is impacted by what their friends believe or do. Friends are a source of individual opinions on prevalent social norms. Teenagers’ SI, particularly when peer pressure is high, may therefore have a big behavioral effect (Guerin & Toland, 2020). The study suggests that students often choose to enroll in tertiary programs based on credible testimonials and information from important figures, such as friends and parents, despite not having a particular interest in the major, a trend that is not common in the Philippines. Their parents genuinely picked this degree; it’s the same one as his parents or something his parents can afford (Bernardo, 2010). Teenagers may experience large behavioral effects from SI, particularly when peer influence is quite strong (Guerin & Toland, 2020). Therefore:

H2: SI has a positive effect on students’ UB in choosing majors in higher education.

2.3.3 Information Usefulness and Use Behavior

In order to represent customers’ impressions of the quality and accuracy of the information in online group purchases, researchers contend that perceived usefulness in the Information System Continuance Model is substituted by IU (C.-W. Chen et al., 2016). However, consumers pay more attention to IU when information sources have higher skills, as perceived usefulness is higher due to the accuracy of the information (Arora & Lata, 2020). IU has a positive effect on how university website systems are
used. If students utilize the website more frequently, there will be an improvement in student satisfaction (C.-W. Chen et al., 2016). IU has a major influence on students’ UB in using the university’s website (Isaac et al., 2018). In addition, IU has a significant impact on people’s decisions to use a system or product in an online social media group (Cheung et al., 2008). As a result, researchers propose the following hypothesis:

H₃: IU has a positive effect on students’ UB in choosing majors in higher education.

2.3.4 Behavioral Intention and Use Behavior

The primary driver of real behavior in the marketing industry and consumer behavior’ has been identified as BI (Kim & Kim, 2020). BI is an individual’s subjective possibility to engage in certain behaviors. As per the TPB, the BI of a person to engage in or refrain from engaging in a certain activity directly determines their conduct. Individual BI to perform certain behaviors must exist before they take action. This demonstrates how attitudes toward behavior serve as the driving force behind this BI. Hence, if a chance to act exists and BI is correctly measured, it will be the best predictor of UB (Hsiao & Yang, 2010; K. Lee, 2011). According to the TRA, BI directly precedes UB and demonstrates a person’s readiness to engage in a specific activity (Gansser & Reich, 2021; Hossain et al., 2019). Therefore:

H₄: Students’ BI has a confident effect on their UB in choosing majors in higher education.

2.3.5 Self-Congruity and Behavioral Intention

Customers choose brands with comparable personality traits, according to SC, which affects BI positively (Pratt & Sparks, 2014; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). Because people think logically, their BI is a good predictor of what they will do (Schwaig et al., 2013). BI can be used to assess an individual’s level of commitment to a particular behavior (Ain et al., 2016). Research confirms SC theory in tourism, showing that actual and ideal SC positively impact BI (Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). High SC leads to positive attitudes towards conventions and product user image, influencing consumers’ BI to purchase (Aw et al., 2019). As a result, researchers propose the following hypothesis:
H5: Students’ SC has a confident effect on students’ BI.

2.3.6 Social Influence and Behavioral Intention

A pilot study found that SI positively impacts the BI of clinical information system users and e-participation adoption (C. C. Lee et al., 2013). SI in schools, including support and motivation from teachers, friends, and family, is crucial in predicting BI during the learning process (Dajani & Abu Hegleh, 2019). Overall, studies show a strong relationship between SI and BI (W. Wu et al., 2021; T. Zhang et al., 2020). As a result, researchers propose the following hypothesis:

H6: SI has a confident effect on students’ BI.

2.3.7 Information Usefulness and Behavioral Intention

The design of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) describes how IU influences attitudes, or BI. People tend to interact with content when they believe it will be useful; hence, IU is seen to be a predictor of information seeking (K. C. Lee & Lee, 2003). A relationship has been found in research regarding factors that influence users’ BI to purchase by receiving advertising information on social media and social networking sites (Phung et al., 2020). Meanwhile, IU will have a confident effect on BI’s willingness to employ a service, for example, a university website (Almarashdeh & Alsmadi, 2017). As a result, researchers propose the following hypothesis:

H7: IU has a confident effect on students’ BI.

2.3.8 Information Adoption and Behavioral Intention

The IAM and the TRA have both contributed to a better understanding of consumers’ BI to seek information. The IAM assists researchers in better understanding how people get information through computer-mediated platforms (Arora & Lata, 2020). Previous studies have confirmed the link between IA and BI (Phung et al., 2020). Social media users, either consciously or unintentionally, visualize vast volumes of knowledge (Erkan & Evans, 2016). People are bombarded with information, particularly on social media, and when they believe that knowledge is beneficial, they are more likely to engage
with it (Chu & Kim, 2011). According to various studies, the association between IA and BI is important (Phung et al., 2020; Tapanainen et al., 2021). Therefore:

$H_8$: IA has a confident effect on students’ BI.

### 2.3.9 Information Usefulness and Information Adoption

Social media delivers a plethora of information, making it critical for consumers to make informed decisions (Salehi-Esfahani et al., 2016). According to the IAM, IU predicts adoption (Zha et al., 2018). The central and peripheral channels of IU, as well as risk reduction and search efforts, all contribute to this. As a result, when people find information helpful, they are more inclined to use it (Tapanainen et al., 2021). IA refers to the process of internalizing information from external sources to motivate individuals to purchase a product or service (Arora & Lata, 2020). This process involves deliberate engagement with comments and opinions suggested for decision-making (Hussain et al., 2017), expanding knowledge, and improving decision-making skills. As a result, researchers propose the following hypothesis:

$H_9$: IU has a confident effect on students’ IA.

### 2.3.10 The mediating role of Behavioral Intention

Previous studies employed the TPB to predict local food purchases. The findings of their study reveal a link between SC and UB, which is mediated by BI (Shin et al., 2016). Meanwhile, the indirect relationship between SI and UB has been demonstrated in the concepts of TRA (Kumar & Kumar, 2013), TPB (Tang & Seng, 2016), and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) (Chauhan & Jaiswal, 2016; Venkatesh et al., 2003). Whereas, the TAM (C. L. Chen & Wu, 2020; Venkatesh et al., 2003) can be used to examine the relationship between IU and UB indirectly through the mediation of BI. According to the TAM, the usage of technology is motivated by BI (C. L. Chen & Wu, 2020). As a result, researchers expect BI to moderate interactions between SC and UB, between SI and UB, as well as IU and UB. As a result, researchers propose the following three hypotheses:

$H_{10}$: BI plays a mediating role in the relationship between SC and students’ UB.
H11: BI plays a mediating role in the relationship between SI and students’ UB.
H12: BI plays a mediating role in the relationship between IU and students’ UB.

2.3.11 The mediating role of Information Adoption

As a mediator in the IA process, the IAM prioritizes evaluating the value of information. It has contributed to a better understanding of customers’ BI to collect information in conjunction with the TRA (Arora & Lata, 2020). Previous studies have revealed that customers’ BI purchases are influenced by IA (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Therefore:

H13: IA and BI plays a mediating role in the relationship between IU and students’ UB.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 MEASUREMENT DEVELOPMENT

All constructs in this study were measured using existing measures with slight modifications to meet the current context and reduce measurement risk. Students’ UB components were examined using a scale adapted from Gansser & Reich (2021), SC from Confente et al. (2020), and SI from Chauhan & Jaiswal (2016), and T. Zhang et al. (2020). BI developed from Hiatt et al. (2018), Lim & An (2021), and IA developed from Cheung et al. (2008), and Hussain et al. (2017). The questionnaire uses five categories of responses on a Likert rate, with 5 representing “strongly agree,” 1 representing “strongly disagree,” and 3 representing “neutral” (Leung, 2011; Tarka, 2017).

3.2 SAMPLES AND DATA COLLECTION

The research using simple random sampling. Grade 12 students are crucial for higher education and career decisions (Tracey & Robbins, 2005, 2006). The study included 223 public school and 177 private school students, with 400 students from each stratum, based on the Slovin formula.

The researcher contacted foundation owners and school administrators via social media to distribute survey links, collecting 476 questionnaires from 234 private and 242 public schools. Erroneous data was corrected, including participants not in grade 12 or high school, those not yet choosing their tertiary education major, and those who
remained vague. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are shown in Table 1.

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<th>Items</th>
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</tr>
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</table>

Source: Author Data Analysis, 2024

3.3 PROCEDURES

The study followed the steps given by Hair et al. (2014) for evaluating PLS-SEM models. The assumption of normality is not necessary with PLS-SEM; therefore, samples are more flexible, and researchers can test all variables simultaneously. PLS-SEM also enables more intricate analyses. Like testing indirect effects, moderating numerous effects, modeling latent variables, and assessing proposed goodness-of-fit models (Hair et al., 2011).

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 MEASUREMENT MODEL

Convergent validity is assessed by looking at the outer loading indicator while calculating the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (Hair Jr. et al., 2017). To support convergent validity, the outer loading of each item must be more than 0.70. If the value is less than one, this indicator must be removed from the following analysis (Hair et al., 2014). As indicated in Table 2, AVE met all conditions with a value greater than 0.50, ranging from 0.645 to 0.722. As a result, our measuring approach has high convergent validity. In this study, researchers looked at composite reliability (CR) to determine reliability. The values in Table 2 vary from 0.838 to 0.949, all of which are greater than 0.70 (Hair et al., 2011, 2019), indicating sufficient dependability.
This study used the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) correlation ratio and the Fornell-Larcker approach to test discriminant validity between constructs. Results showed that the outer model met discriminant validity conditions, with all HTMT readings within the range and did not surpass 0.90, with the highest number being 0.888 (Hair et al., 2020; Henseler et al., 2015). Table 3 also reveals that the main components meeting the discriminant validity criteria using the Fornell-Larcker Technique (Hair et al., 2014; Ringle et al., 2020).

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IU05</td>
<td>0.848</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>IA01</td>
<td>0.837</td>
<td>0.949</td>
<td>0.698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IA02</td>
<td>0.824</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IA03</td>
<td>0.829</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IA04</td>
<td>0.850</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IA05</td>
<td>0.852</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IA06</td>
<td>0.859</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IA07</td>
<td>0.848</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IA08</td>
<td>0.782</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author Data Analysis, 2024
Table 3. Discriminant validity HTMT ratio and Fornell-Larcker method (author analysis, 2024)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BI</th>
<th>IA</th>
<th>IU</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>SI</th>
<th>UB</th>
<th>BI</th>
<th>IA</th>
<th>IU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BI</td>
<td>0.850</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>0.675</td>
<td>0.520</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IU</td>
<td>0.602</td>
<td>0.888</td>
<td>0.449</td>
<td>0.809</td>
<td>0.824</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>0.594</td>
<td>0.621</td>
<td>0.519</td>
<td>0.452</td>
<td>0.575</td>
<td>0.465</td>
<td>0.806</td>
<td>0.807</td>
<td>0.803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>0.557</td>
<td>0.608</td>
<td>0.570</td>
<td>0.734</td>
<td>0.430</td>
<td>0.567</td>
<td>0.514</td>
<td>0.677</td>
<td>0.803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB</td>
<td>0.689</td>
<td>0.671</td>
<td>0.557</td>
<td>0.742</td>
<td>0.843</td>
<td>0.471</td>
<td>0.565</td>
<td>0.456</td>
<td>0.617</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author Data Analysis, 2024

Potential multicollinearity issues were also investigated. A Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value of 5 or above indicates a concern with critical collinearity between construct indicators and constructs measured (Hair et al., 2011, 2013, 2019). Table 4 contains no multicollinearity because the values range from 1.000 to 3.418. As a result, there is no substantial multicollinearity concern in our study.

4.2 STRUCTURAL MODEL

The study evaluates the structural model using path coefficient, exogenous variable influence, model suitability (Hair et al., 2020), and R-square calculation (Hair et al., 2019). Results are presented using PLS-SEM estimation with 5000 samples, using Smart-PLS software version 4.0.9.5. The bootstrapping method is used in Figure 2.

![Figure 2. Bootstrapping results (author analysis, 2024)](image)

Source: Author Data Analysis, 2024

The model's R-square and Q-square statistics provide empirical support for its validity and explanatory ability. The model explains 31.3% of the variance in BI, 65.4% in IA, and 56.2% in students’ UB, respectively. The Q-square value for the BI variable is 0.213, while Q-square for IA is 0.450, and for students' UB it is 0.371, indicating high
predictive significance. Both metrics measure the model's predictive potential for endogenous constructs (Hair et al., 2014; Ringle et al., 2020; Sarstedt et al., 2014, 2017).

The PLS-SEM analysis reveals that the exogenous variable IA significantly impacts changes in BI, with an $f$-square value of 0.040, and the lowest change in IU, with a small $f$-square of 0.002. IA is significantly influenced by IU, with an $f$-square of 1.888. SI has the largest impact on changes in students' UB, with an $f$-square of 0.270 (Hair et al., 2019, 2020; Sarstedt et al., 2014, 2017).

Table 4. Outputs of path analysis (author analysis, 2024)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hs</th>
<th>Path</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>supported</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$f^2$</th>
<th>$Q^2$</th>
<th>VIF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$H_1$</td>
<td>SC $\rightarrow$ UB</td>
<td>0.194</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>3.488</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.562</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>0.371</td>
<td>1.992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_2$</td>
<td>SI $\rightarrow$ UB</td>
<td>0.493</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>7.727</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.270</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_3$</td>
<td>IU $\rightarrow$ UB</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>0.420</td>
<td>0.806</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_4$</td>
<td>BI $\rightarrow$ UB</td>
<td>0.152</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>3.120</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_5$</td>
<td>SC $\rightarrow$ BI</td>
<td>0.174</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>2.104</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.313</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>0.213</td>
<td>2.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_6$</td>
<td>SI $\rightarrow$ BI</td>
<td>0.103</td>
<td>0.111</td>
<td>1.593</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_7$</td>
<td>IU $\rightarrow$ BI</td>
<td>0.066</td>
<td>0.430</td>
<td>0.789</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_8$</td>
<td>IA $\rightarrow$ BI</td>
<td>0.308</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>3.367</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.040</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_9$</td>
<td>IU $\rightarrow$ IA</td>
<td>0.809</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>32.030</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.654</td>
<td>1.888</td>
<td>0.450</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_{10}$</td>
<td>SC $\rightarrow$ BI $\rightarrow$ UB</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td>0.101</td>
<td>1.640</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_{11}$</td>
<td>SI $\rightarrow$ BI $\rightarrow$ UB</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>0.142</td>
<td>1.469</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_{12}$</td>
<td>IU $\rightarrow$ BI $\rightarrow$ UB</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.424</td>
<td>0.800</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_{13}$</td>
<td>IU $\rightarrow$ IA $\rightarrow$ BI $\rightarrow$ UB</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>2.081</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author Data Analysis, 2024

PLS-SEM was used to confirm whether the hypothesis was valid after the measurement model was evaluated (Çakıt et al., 2020). If the p-value is <0.05 and the t-value is >1.96, then the hypothesis is accepted (Kock, 2016). The path analysis in Table 4 shows that three factors - SC, SI, and BI - significantly impact students’ UB. $H_1$, $H_2$, and $H_4$ are supported, while IU had no significant impact on explanation. SC and IA were positively significant against BI, supporting $H_5$ and $H_8$, respectively. SI and IU were irrelevant to BI, supporting $H_6$ and $H_7$. IU, however, was statistically and positively significant towards IA, supporting $H_9$. The results suggest that these factors have a significant impact on students' UB.

The Sarstedt et al. (2014) approach was utilized by researchers to evaluate the mediating role of IA and BI. The bootstrap approach can be used to evaluate the impact of indirect effects, with a significant effect indicated by a p-value less than 0.05 and a t-value larger than 1.96 (Hair et al., 2011, 2020; Kock, 2016). Table 4 shows that not all
exogenous variables influence endogenous variables through mediating variables. The mediating roles of BI to SC, SI, and IU towards students’ UB are not significant, indicating that BI does not play a role in moderating the link between SC and students’ UB, SI and students’ UB, and IU and students’ UB. Hence, $H_{10}$, $H_{11}$, and $H_{12}$ are thus not supported. However, IA’s moderating impact demonstrates that IU has a considerable indirect influence on UB via BI, thus supporting $H_{13}$.

4.3 FINDINGS

Researchers hypothesize that SC, SI, IU, and BI influence students’ UB in selecting a major in higher education independently, with IU potentially influencing IA. Further discussion is needed on the findings.

4.3.1 Students’ SC has a positive effect on students’ UB

This study accepts Hypothesis 1, which suggests that students’ lack of self-concept can lead to a discrepancy between their actual SC and ideal SC (Sirgy, 2018). SC refers to students’ self-image, driven by self-consistency and major choice, while ideal SC is their self-presentation, driven by self-esteem (Usakli & Baloglu, 2011; Yusof et al., 2013). Understanding how SC influences UB is crucial, as students can create self-images reflecting their identity and desires (Koo et al., 2014). The SC Theory suggests that students’ self-concept and major in higher education must be consistent (Hung & Petrick, 2012). However, students’ lack of self-concept can lead them to choose majors to express themselves, conforming to social expectations and maintaining social consistency. Ideal social SC refers to students’ desire to be perceived by others, influencing their choices for higher education majors (Sirgy, 1982, 1985, 2018).

4.3.2 SI has a positive effect on students’ UB

The study confirms hypothesis 2 about the relationship between SI and students’ UB, however the family dimension is absent, suggesting limited parental influence. Parents can boost confidence in choosing the ideal major (Nguyen et al., 2023) and reinforce or inhibit certain behaviors related to a child’s talents (Koech et al., 2016; Nguyen et al., 2023). The friend dimension has a stronger influence on students’ UB than the family dimension, as students develop closer bonds through physical activity or common pursuits, leading to peer pressure and dominance in social settings (Franken et
al., 2023; Zhong et al., 2022). Teachers significantly influence student decisions by dedicating more time and resources to each student, allowing them to understand their needs, opportunities, and difficulties (Sorensen & Holt, 2021).

4.3.3 IU has a positive effect on students’ UB

The study reveals that university websites, particularly social media, do not significantly influence students’ IU and UB. Students may struggle to find necessary information due to unresponsive interfaces and unreliable websites. They demand interactive elements and easy access to help online (Cohen et al., 2022; Loureiro et al., 2018). The social media influencer dimension should be removed due to a loading factor value below 0.70. Social media influencers, such as lifestyle content creators and entertainment vloggers, can either prevent or encourage student behavior depending on their use and content (Al-Ansi et al., 2023). University social media is significant due to its easy access via mobile devices and affordability. It facilitates finding useful information and making connections in new environments, making it a valuable tool for students. Universities should use social media as a marketing tool to effectively interact and increase student loyalty (Maresova et al., 2020).

4.3.4 Students’ BI has a confident effect on their UB

This research confirms hypothesis 4 about the relationship between students’ BI and UB. BI, which reflects a person’s intention to engage in an action, is a significant predictor that can influence the actual realization of behavior. It is consistent with the TRA and indicates the motivation that influences students’ UB. BI plays a crucial role in predicting and classifying students’ UB, as it indicates the extent to which students have the intention and determination to adopt certain behaviors. This understanding can influence the extent to which UB actually occurs (Guerin & Toland, 2020; Hossain et al., 2019; Ng & Phung, 2021).

4.3.5 Students’ SC has a confident effect on students’ BI

Hypothesis 1 shows that students’ actual and ideal SC are completely eliminated, but they still influence social SC and ideal social SC. Hypothesis 5 results: high social SC towards majoring in higher education aligns with students’ social identity and social group, inspiring positive BI. Ideal social SC views a major as a step towards a desired
social image, strengthening positive BI. Strong consistency is produced by aligning the
department’s image with students’ social identity and personal goals, resulting in
behavior that supports and reflects their desired social identity and personal goals (Sirgy,

4.3.6 SI has a confident effect on students’ BI

Hypothesis 6 was not accepted due to the dynamics of communication and
interaction between individuals. Students are more accepting of peer influence when it
comes to risky behavior or decisions. Additionally, group environments tend to prioritize
shared views, which also influences how students accept and respond to peer influence
(Franken et al., 2023; Zhong et al., 2022). Teachers’ impact on students’ BI can be
significantly reduced if they fail to build meaningful relationships with their students. The
level of ties formed is closely related to the level of influence generated. Obstacles to
overcoming social and emotional problems in the classroom can lead to a decline in
students’ behavior and task performance. This lack of resources affects classroom
management and the learning climate, creating disagreements between teachers and
students and a less responsive attitude toward teacher advice (Jennings & Greenberg,
2009).

4.3.7 IU has a confident effect on students’ BI

Hypothesis 7 about the relationship between IU and students’ BI is not accepted.
IU refers to an individual’s perception of the reliability of information, comments, or
reviews. It assesses the importance of the information presented, focusing on its meaning,
relevance, understanding, and decision-making assistance. Students must emphasize the
relevance of the information or service in helping users make decisions, highlighting the
benefits users can obtain from existing information (Almarashdeh & Alsmadi, 2017;
Erkan & Evans, 2016; Hussain et al., 2017; Tapanainen et al., 2021). The relevance of
the information provided to students depends on their individual needs. If students cannot
identify valuable information that helps them achieve their goals, they may not let it
influence their BI, especially if they cannot see its connection with established directions
and goals (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Hussain et al., 2017; Sussman & Siegal, 2003).
4.3.8 IA has a confident effect on students’ BI

The study supports hypothesis 8 about the relationship between IA and students’ BI. Students internalize new information through IA, linking new concepts with existing ones and creating a complex network of knowledge. This process not only memorizes information but also helps them understand the meaning and relationship between new and existing information, enabling them to apply it in various situations (Shen et al., 2014). Students actively receive and explore new information, including social media, to develop their insights and knowledge (Chu & Kim, 2011). This cognitive process integrates new knowledge into existing beliefs and expands their conceptual framework (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Hussain et al., 2017; Sussman & Siegal, 2003).

4.3.9 IU has a confident effect on students’ IA

The study supports hypothesis 9 about the relationship between IU and IA. Students are more likely to accept and internalize information if it has significant value, is relevant to their needs, goals, or problems, and can be related to concrete benefits or solutions (Ling et al., 2021). Trustworthiness is crucial for students to adopt knowledge, as doubtful or unreliable information may lead to rejection or ignore (Arora & Lata, 2020). Higher adoption rates are linked to information being easy to find, understand, and use, as it requires minimal effort and is simpler in language, format, and communication tools. Therefore, avoiding false or misleading information is essential for successful information adoption (Cohen et al., 2022; Loureiro et al., 2018).

4.3.10 BI plays a mediating role in the relationship between SC and students’ UB

The study found no significant association between students’ SC and UB through the mediation of their BI. This contradicts previous hypotheses, which identified a significant link between BI and UB. The data analysis did not confirm these findings, suggesting that SC refers to a student’s alignment with their major in higher education, causing a strong emotional reaction. When students believe their major aligns with their beliefs, they may engage in impulsive actions or purchasing processes (Shin et al., 2016; Sirgy, 2018). This “impulsive effect” can result in students making hasty, careless, or interested purchases or uses. High levels of SC can lead to students identifying more closely with their majors, causing them to make hasty decisions without considering their choices. This suggests that students often rely on emotional reactions rather than
considering their choices when making decisions. Students who closely identify with a certain major may be more sensitive to its effects, which may lead to impulsive consequences for UB. Students may feel compelled to choose a major to meet social criteria, enhance their identity, or reach a greater degree of conformity. Because SC has an impulsive effect on UB, BI is not a mediator between SC and UB in this scenario (Shin et al., 2016).

4.3.11 BI plays a mediating role in the relationship between SI and students’ UB

The study found that the previously hypothesized association between SI and UB through BI mediation did not directly impact students’ UB, contradicting the hypothesis. The fourth hypothesis confirms a significant relationship between BI and UB, suggesting BI influence UB independently of SI, while the sixth hypothesis suggests SI doesn’t impact BI. The study reveals that SI doesn’t directly influence students’ behavior in terms of BI and consumption, but rather, student intent has a stronger influence on UB, as students tend to act according to their own goals (Chauhan & Jaiswal, 2016; Cimperman et al., 2016; Dajani & Abu Hegle, 2019; Verma & Sinha, 2018).

4.3.12 BI plays a mediating role in the relationship between IU and students’ UB

Hypothesis 12 predicted a relationship between IU and UB, with BI acting as a mediator. Nevertheless, the results contradicted this theory. The significant relationship between BI and UB was found in Hypothesis 4, while the relationship between IU and BI was not supported in Hypothesis 7. In other words, IU has little or no influence on student behavior. Although knowledge is deemed helpful in this case, it does not always motivate pupils to have higher intentions to engage in UB acts. The main factor driving UB is not always the usefulness of information, but a strong intention to use it. Students with high BI are more likely to adopt it. Strategies for increasing BI include providing specific information, raising awareness of its benefits, and increasing willingness to use the information. Finding valuable information increases adoption (Erkan & Evans, 2016).

4.3.13 IA and BI plays a mediating role in the relationship between IU and students’ UB

The study explores the correlation between IU and UB through students’ IA and BI, finding a significant relationship between IU and IA, suggesting useful information
increases intention to engage. They also found a significant relationship between IU and IA, indicating that the usefulness of information affects students’ adoption and usage. These findings suggest that perceptions about the usefulness of information play a crucial role in students’ IA processes (Shen et al., 2014; Tapanainen et al., 2021). Research indicates that students are more likely to accept information when they perceive it as useful, leading to a higher intention to act in line with the information's predictions, which occurs in two stages: Information Acceptance and Information Implementation (Shen et al., 2014; Sussman & Siegal, 2003). The study indicates that IU can motivate students to alter their behavior, involving adoption and intention. It underscores the significance of understanding and effectively applying information, thereby positively influencing students' UB (Cohen et al., 2022; Erkan & Evans, 2016; Loureiro et al., 2018; Tapanainen et al., 2021).

5 CONCLUSION
5.1 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study contributes significantly to the theoretical literature on the process of a student’s choice of major in higher education. First, to our knowledge, this is the first study to examine SC as a determinant while considering students as consumers. The study found that SC significantly impacts students’ UB and BI, with higher levels indicating higher behavior and lower levels indicating decreased behavior. However, it also found a positive influence of SC through BI, contradicting previous research. The indirect relationship, which should be significant, was not found to be significant. Although these findings support previous studies by Shin et al. (2016), SC refers to the alignment between a student’s choice of higher education and their self-image. Students may react more emotionally to a strong direction if it aligns with their identity. BI, on the other hand, refers to the deliberate choices and intentions behind certain activities (Maggioni et al., 2020). The research indicates that choosing a major in higher education involves self-responsibility and conscious behavior, reflecting rational decision-making. Impulsive decisions, often triggered by sudden emotional reactions, do not align with planned behavioral intentions, indicating that these decisions do not require mediators like BI. The study suggests that due to time and context differences (Liu & Otto, 2020; Papagni et al., 2022), students do not require BI mediation to understand the relationship between SC and UB.
Second, SI significantly influences students’ UB, with greater influence increasing behavior likelihood and decreasing influence decreasing it, confirming SI theory. However, SI has a positive but not significant impact on students’ BI, indicating no direct effect. This finding contradicts several existing theories but is in line with research by Chauhan & Jaiswal (2016), Cimperman et al. (2016), Dajani & Abu Hegleh (2019), Dwivedi et al. (2021), and Verma & Sinha (2018). The study reveals that SI does not significantly influence BI, indicating that the mediator’s role is not fulfilled, as it does not direct the dependent variable.

Third, the study reveals that IU positively impacts students’ UB and BI, but it doesn’t significantly affect their behavior, contradicting the theory of its positive impact. However, this research is in line with research by Ebnehoseini et al. (2020) and Swaak et al. (2009). The mediator’s role is not fulfilled when IU doesn’t directly influence BI, as there’s no direct path for the mediator to follow.

Fourth, the study reveals that IA plays a crucial role in influencing students’ UB through the mediation of BI. IU significantly influences students' UB, with increased IA leading to increased BI, contributing to increased UB. However, there is no significant relationship between IU and UB through BI mediation. Effective IA is essential for changing student intentions and behavior, requiring understanding of the adoption process for universities to effectively utilize this information.

5.2 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The research reveals that SC, SI, and BI positively influence students’ UB, while IU has not been as effective. However, through IA mediation, BI is increased, ultimately leading to increased UB in students. The study offers significant implications for practice in several ways.

First, school administrators play a crucial role in enhancing student SC by fostering positive interactions with parents and teachers through counseling and career guidance programs (Karimi Muthuri & Nyaboke Arasa, 2017; Ma et al., 2021). They should also design self-development programs, such as leadership and career development, to help students understand themselves, recognize their strengths and limitations, and build self-confidence (Karimi Muthuri & Nyaboke Arasa, 2017). School administrators can enhance students’ SC by implementing book review programs and discussion in small groups with peers to increase positive interactions with others (Karimi
Muthuri & Nyaboke Arasa, 2017), as well as physical activities like sports (Melguizo-Ibáñez et al., 2023; Vaquero-Solís et al., 2021). School administrators can implement outward bound programs to enhance leadership, social skills, and positive interactions among students, while also fostering student characteristics through physical challenges. These strategies can foster positive interactions, self-confidence, and growth according to individual potential, thereby helping students develop a better understanding of themselves.

Second, parents play a crucial role in increasing SI by fostering collaboration between schools and families. This involves increased communication about school programs and student progress using notifications, memos, and parent-teacher conferences. As well as family participation in designing and improving school policies that impact children and families (Assefa et al., 2022).

Third, to increase IU for students, it’s crucial to build useful, educational, and relevant content. Students should be aware of the availability of information on platforms like university social media, which allows them to access useful information quickly and easily (Maresova et al., 2020; Najimudinova et al., 2022). Universities should use social media as an efficient marketing tool to increase student loyalty and trust, as successful interactions can strengthen their loyalty and trust in the university (Cohen et al., 2022; Loureiro et al., 2018; Maresova et al., 2020).

The final step is IA, because improving BI means improving IA. IA is the process where students actively receive and use information in a suitable context. University marketing strategies can support this process by organizing career guidance activities and campus visits for high school students (Najimudinova et al., 2022). Virtual campuses can provide students with access to information through online platforms, such as campus virtual tours, which can be integrated with the university website, social media, or special applications. These tours visually describe students’ journey around the university campus, including administrative buildings, academic buildings, and dormitories. This approach encourages students to be more receptive to new ideas and knowledge (Boukerch et al., 2021; Liang et al., 2021; Osman et al., 2020; Tewari et al., 2017).

5.3 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study presents original findings with significant theoretical and practical implications, but its limitations should be acknowledged for future research benefit. First
of all, the research used a simple random sampling technique, resulting in high heterogeneity in the collected data. Further research is needed to obtain more homogeneous data. The unit of analysis should include first-year students from the same major, such as mechanical engineering or accounting. Second, because the data in this study is cross-sectional, it focuses on a given point in time. More research is needed to investigate how students’ attitudes and behaviors develop over time using longitudinal data. Third, the research conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic may have had differing results due to the rapid advancement of technology. Nevertheless, the impact of technology eliminating human interaction on future research remains uncertain. Lastly, the research indicates that the IU path is the most significant indirect path towards students’ UB, mediated by IA and BI. Future research should explore the effectiveness of IU mediation in changing ineffective pathways. Two paths worth further investigation are the SC path and the SI path.
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