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## Effect of Parent's Social Background and Income Level on Decision-Making for School Selection of Their Children

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**Abstract:** *The study titled “Effect of Parents' Social Background and Income Level on Decision Making for School Selection of Their Children” Research objectives of this study were to identify the factors affecting parental decision to enroll children in school selection for children and to identify factors which suggest parents choose private or public school for their children. The study was survey and descriptive in nature. The quantitative as well as qualitative (QUAN-qual) method was adopted. The explanatory sequential technique was used. The population of the study comprised parents/ guardians, teachers, and head teachers of private schools. The purposive sampling technique was adopted. The total sample consisted of eighty (80) respondents. The thirty-two (32) parents/ guardians, thirty-two (32) teachers, and sixteen (16) head teachers of private schools. The questionnaires were developed based on a five-point Likert scale. The validity of the questionnaire was ensured through expert opinion, and the reliability was calculated through SPSS-23 using Cronbach's Alpha. The researcher personally visited and collected the data. The study found that 56% (35%+21%) of parents prefer private school for children because of the shown image. Mean 3.41 and SD 1.24 supported.*

**Key Words:** Parental Decision, Child Enrollment, Data, Children

### Introduction

First and foremost, the aim of education is to achieve quality education. All parents want their children to get standardized education in educational institutions at any cost. Parental involvement plays a vital role in their children's academic and future progress. Parents also are responsible for school choice and career progression as a whole. Parents get admission to the best school for their child, but this may cause overcrowding of these schools. In these overcrowded schools 'teachers don't have enough time to give individualized instructions as teachers are too busy maintaining curriculum and discipline. Parents get the benefit of private schools for their children because they maintain a proper balance of student-teacher ratio, and they also have strict rules and regulations. Recently, due to the political revolution, the parental choice issue has become more emphasized, also the public is giving funds for private school education in many countries (G. Hornby & I. Blackwell, 2018).

Major cause of taking admissions in public schools is that people want to take opportunity of free service provided by Government while others choose them because of financial crisis. All parents want to give their children such an education and opportunities that they would have brighter future but they pay less attention in selecting their school at an early age. Emotional development takes place in healthy school environment by effective teaching, students actively participate in curricular and co-curricular activities (Khaton, 2015). Positive youth development has been practiced firstly. With research followed in the 1990s to likely give scientific support for positive adolescent development based on the number of existing practitioner experience (Romer & Hansen, 2021)

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Survey has been carried out regarding parents' decision making for school selection. It is very complicated task to get data of each and every school curriculum and then select best one. In private schools, student's enrollment is limited and controlled. Mostly students are not more than 15–20 on an average. So, every child takes full attention and time from their teachers. That is the reason parents choose private schools for their children's admission. (Green, Anders, Henderson, & Henseke, [2020](#)).

### Parental Involvement in the School Selection Process

The involvement of parents in the school selection process is the most important factor for their children's academic career progression. All parents want to give their children every possible happiness and facilities which they can give. It is their responsibility to be careful of their children's needs and safety.

Parents should not impose their decisions but also ask children to express their opinions and choices. If their child is making a wrong decision, they can guide them by sharing their life experiences and by describing positive and negative outcomes. Parental involvement is most important and beneficial for their children's future progress and career because they have experience in life. Parents should have friendly relations and debate with their children at home.

Parental involvement results in high achievement as compared to those parents who are not involved. Some parents are careless, illiterate, and not involved in their children's school selection matters. As a result, they get admission of their child in those schools which are mostly public and do not require parental involvement. A number of meta-analyses conducted on a range of populations and educational levels have shown that parental participation has a productive impact on academic attainment. This is also strongly supported by international research (Alsauidi, [2016](#)). Rich parents can provide all the necessary resources and environment to get higher education. They are too conscious for their children's career and education, set prior goals of education for them. (Ukanwa, Jones, & Turner Jr, [2022](#)).

We will discuss a variety of factors that affect parental decision-making in the school selection process admission at the primary level, which are:

### Social Background/Status

The socioeconomic status of parents involves income, education, employment, as well as their culture and lifestyle. The most important part of socioeconomic status is income and parent's occupation. Socioeconomic status is directly related to parental decision-making in school selection. Parents who have high socioeconomic status, income, and education admit their children to private schools for better education. Mostly, parents who are financially strong get satisfied by utilizing their resources and choosing better places for their children's education. Socioeconomic status is not limited to parent's income. It includes parents' education, family norms and rituals, ethnicity, and lifestyle are all socioeconomic background indicators. Parents of high social status consider school staff, curriculum, and previous achievements of schools as well. Children are more likely to be motivated to play sports in their free time if their households have access to a range of athletic products, including skateboards, balls, bicycles, ski equipment, gym equipment, and outdoor exercise equipment (Gerra et al., [2020](#)).

### Literature Review

Education is an essential component of personal, social, and economic development for children. By providing children with access to quality education, we can help them develop the skills and abilities they need to succeed in life. Education is not only important for personal growth, but it also helps children become productive members of society. It equips them with the skills and knowledge necessary to pursue careers, earn a living, and contribute to their communities.

Education is important because it helps kids learn how to think, solve problems, and communicate better. By learning how to think critically, children can better analyze and interpret the world around them (Abrami et al., [2015](#)). They can make informed decisions, solve complex problems, and communicate their ideas effectively. These skills are essential for personal development and lifelong learning.

Education also helps children develop social skills that are crucial for building positive relationships and interacting with others. Through education, children learn how to work in teams, respect diversity, and practice empathy (Cook-Sather, 2020). They also learn how to navigate complex social situations, communicate effectively, and resolve conflicts peacefully. These skills are essential for success in both personal and professional settings.

Education is vital for economic development. It is the key to breaking the cycle of poverty and providing children with the tools they need to pursue meaningful careers. Through education, children can learn valuable skills that will help them succeed in the workforce. They can develop technical expertise, gain work experience, and acquire industry-specific knowledge (Patacsil, Tablatin, & education, 2017). With an education, children are more likely to be employed and earn higher wages, which can improve their quality of life and help them support their families.

Education also has a significant impact on society as a whole. By providing children with access to quality education, we can create a more equitable and just society. Education is an essential tool for promoting social mobility and reducing inequality. It can help break down barriers to opportunity and provide children from all backgrounds with the chance to succeed. Additionally, education can help children develop a sense of civic responsibility and become active participants in their communities. By learning about history, government, and social issues, children can become informed citizens who are better equipped to make positive changes in their communities (Lamb et al., 2020).

Education is essential for the personal, social, and economic development of children. It provides them with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in life, contribute to society, and improve their quality of life. By investing in education, we can create a brighter future for our children and build a more equitable and just society for all (Clark et al., 2020).

Education is a fundamental human right and a key determinant of personal and societal development. Children spend a significant amount of their time in school, and the quality of education they receive can have a significant impact on their future success. The decision to enroll a child in a particular school is a crucial one that parents make. A parent's decision about where to send their child to school is influenced by a variety of factors, such as school quality, location, resources, safety, and academic achievement. The importance of parental decision-making in school enrollment has been recognized by scholars, policymakers, and educators (Smrekar & Honey, 2015). Understanding the factors that influence parental decision-making in school enrollment can provide insights that can inform the development of policies and interventions aimed at improving access to quality education for all children.

Research has shown that parental decision-making in school enrollment is complex and multifaceted. Various factors influence parents' decisions, and these factors may differ depending on the context, the family's background, and the child's needs. Some of the factors that have been identified as influencing parental decision-making include school quality, teacher quality, academic performance, extracurricular opportunities, proximity to home or work, transportation, cost, and social and cultural factors. In recent years, the availability of online and virtual learning options has added another dimension to parental decision-making (Becker et al., 2017)

## Research Objectives

The research objectives of this study were:

- To explore the effect of parents' social background and income level on decision-making for School Selection of their Children
- To identify the factors affecting Parents' Social Background and Income Level in Decision Making for School Selection of their Children

## Research Questions

The research questions of the study were:

1. What is the role of parents' decisions in school selection process?
2. What causes influence parents to choose a private school?



## Research Methodology

The data was collected from different schools of Rahim Yar Khan. Schools were visited, especially in private schools. Data was collected from the head teacher, class teachers, and Parents/ guardians of children admitted to the school to confirm the validity of the data. The factors affecting on educational system were compared to the demographic variables like area, gender, school level, teacher experience, and trained teacher. The questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers, head teachers, and parents/guardians. It helped in validating the collected data from schools.

The population being studied included:

- Parents/ guardians of children admitted to private school.
- Teachers serving in private schools in Rahim Yar Khan.
- Headteachers serving in private schools in Rahim Yar Khan.

For this study, a purposive sampling technique was used. The research population was divided into 80 participants. The total number of participants in the study was:

- Thirty-two (32) parents/ guardians of students
- Thirty-two (32) teachers of private schools
- Sixteen (16) head teachers of the private schools

According to Best and Khan (2003), in survey research, the sample size should be larger compared to experimental research in order to accurately represent the population. Gay (2005) concluded that for smaller populations, such as those with 100 people or fewer, it is considered appropriate to include the entire population as the sample size. Even for survey studies with populations as small as ten or twenty, a sample size of 100 percent is considered suitable.

The tools were developed after reading many article's latest and relevant literature on the topic of parental decisions to enroll children in schools. The primary focus is to identify factors affecting parental decision to enroll children. The fundamental guideline was taken from research objectives, guidance of the supervisor, and discussion with colleagues and seniors for developing the instruments for these indicators. As per instructions and guidelines of the supervisor and other educationist professionals, tools like questionnaires for parents, teachers, and head teachers were developed. The primary goal of these tools was to collect information on factors affecting parental decision to enroll children in schools. To ensure validity and reliability pilot study was conducted. Questionnaires, along with the research synopsis, were presented to experts, teachers, field researchers, and class fellows for their opinions to make the questionnaires valid.

## Validity

The questionnaires used in the research were given to research experts, faculty members, senior researchers, and classmates to get their expert opinions and suggestions for improving any grammatical mistakes. Based on these expert opinions, the research tools will be modified and finalized.

## Reliability

Furthermore, the reliability of instruments was checked in SPSS by Cronbach's alpha technique, which was as follows.

**Table 1**

*Reliability of Research tools*

S.No	Tool	No of items	Cronbach's alpha
1	Questionnaire	42	0.815

The above table (1) shows the reliability statistics of research tools. The reliability of research instruments, i.e., the questionnaire for teacher, was 0.815, considered reliable and valid because values 0.70 and above was reliable (Inglalill, 2007).

## Data Collection

The researcher conducted a thorough data collection process by personally visiting selected private schools

and administering questionnaires containing Likert Scale questions to teachers, head teachers, and parents. This approach allowed for direct interaction with the respondents, ensuring accurate and reliable data.

The Likert Scale is a widely used measurement tool that enables individuals to express their opinions or attitudes by rating a series of statements on a scale. By including Likert Scale questions in the questionnaires, the researcher obtained quantitative data that could be statistically analyzed. This provided a clear measure of the participant's perceptions and allowed for comparisons between different respondent groups.

To ensure accessibility and ease of data collection, hard copies of the questionnaires were distributed during the visits. This allowed the participants to provide their responses in a tangible format. By personally visiting the schools, the researcher established a sense of credibility and trust, which encouraged the participants to provide honest and accurate responses.

The researcher's personal visits to private schools and the administration of Likert Scale questionnaires to teachers, head teachers, and parents ensured a robust and comprehensive data collection process. The combination of quantitative Likert Scale responses and qualitative insights gathered during the visits will contribute to a thorough analysis of the research topic, providing valuable insights into the perceptions and experiences of the stakeholders involved.

## Data Analysis

In the data analysis process, both SPSS software and Microsoft Excel are utilized to analyze and interpret the data collected. The software allows for comprehensive analysis, and the results are presented visually through tables and graphs. The tables provide a detailed description of the data, presenting the findings in a structured manner. Each statement from the questionnaire is carefully described using the tables, providing a clear representation of the responses received. Through this analysis and interpretation, researchers can gain valuable insights and make informed conclusions based on the collected data.

**Table 2**

*Factor-1 Social Background of Parents*

S.No	Stat.	Responses					Total	Mean	SD
		SDA	DA	UD	A	SA			
1.	F	5	19	11	28	17	80	3.41	1.24
	%	6.3	23.8	13.8	35	21.3	100		
2.	F	4	1	6	33	36	80	4.20	1.00
	%	5.0	1.3	7.5	41.3	45	100		
3.	F	2	7	2	37	32	100	4.13	1.00
	%	2.5	8.8	2.5	46.3	40	80		
4.	F	8	11	10	25	26	80	3.63	1.33
	%	10	13.8	12.5	31.3	32.5	100		
5.	F	11	17	13	21	18	80	3.23	1.38
	%	13.8	21.3	16.3	26.3	22.5	100		
6.	F	9	17	11	21	22	80	3.38	1.38
	%	11.3	21.3	13.8	26.3	27.5	100		
7.	F	9	13	5	29	24	80	3.58	1.37
	%	11.3	16.3	6.3	36.3	30	100		
Total	F	48	85	58	194	175	560	3.6	1.24
	%	7	15	10	36	32	100		

Table 2: Factor 1 represents the Social Background of Parents. According to data, 36% of respondents agreed with the statement about the Social Background of Parents, 32% of respondents strongly agreed, 15% strongly disagreed, 7% disagreed 10% were undecided. Collectively, 68% (36% + 32%) were agreed on the Social Background of Parents. Mean 3.6 and SD 1.24 supported.

**Table 3**

Factor-2 Income Level of Parents

S.No	Stat	Responses						Mean	SD
		SDA	DA	UD	A	SA	Total		
1	F	9	3	3	37	28	80	3.90	1.25
	%	11.3	3.8	3.8	46.3	35	100		
2	F	5	10	18	29	18	80	3.56	1.16
	%	6.3	12.5	22.5	36.3	22.5	100		
3	F	5	13	7	39	16	80	3.60	1.16
	%	6.3	16.3	8.8	48.8	20	100		
4	F	4	15	16	31	14	80	3.45	1.14
	%	5.0	18.8	20	38.8	17.5	100		
5	F	6	9	16	34	15	80	3.54	1.15
	%	7.5	11.3	20	42.5	18.8	100		
Total	F	29	50	60	170	91	400	3.6	1.2
	%	7	13	15	43	23	100		

Table 3: Factor 2 represented the Income level of parents. According to data, 43% of respondents agreed with the statement about the Income level of parents, 23% of respondents strongly agreed, 13% disagreed, 7% strongly disagreed, whereas 15% of respondents were undecided with the statement. Collectively, 66% (43%+23%) agreed on the Income level of parents. A mean score of 3.6 and a standard deviation of 1.2 supported the statement.

## Findings

The findings of the study were:

### Factor 1: Social Background of Parents

- 35% of respondents agreed with the statement that parents prefer private schools for children because of the shown image, 21% of respondents strongly agreed, 24% disagreed, 6% strongly disagreed, whereas 14% of respondents were undecided about the statement. Collectively, 56% (35%+21%) of Parents prefer private schools for children because of shown image. Mean 3.41 and SD 1.24 supported.
- 45% of respondents strongly agree that parents select private schools for children because of their higher academic achievements, 41% of respondents agreed, 5% strongly disagree, and 1% disagreed, whereas 8% of respondents were undecided about the statement. Collectively, 86% (45%+41%) of parents select private schools for children because of their higher academic achievements. Mean 4.20 and SD 1.00 supported.
- 46% agreed that parents prefer private schools for children because of their greater performance, 40% strongly agreed, 9% disagreed, and 3% strongly disagreed, whereas 3% of respondents were undecided about the statement. Collectively, 86% (46%+40%) of parents prefer private schools for children because of their greater performance. Mean 4.13 and SD 1.00 supported.
- 33% strongly agree that parents admit children to private schools because of reputation, 31% agree, 14% disagree, and 10% strongly disagree, whereas 13% of respondents were undecided with the statement. Collectively, 64% (33%+ 31%) of parents admit children to private schools because of reputation. Mean 3.63 and SD 1.33 supported.
- 26% agreed that parents admit children to private schools because of their popularity, 23% of respondents strongly agreed, 21% disagreed, and 14% disagreed, whereas 16% of respondents were undecided about the statement. Collectively, 49% (26%+ 23%) of parents admit children to private schools because of their popularity. Mean 3.35 and SD 2.12 supported.
- 28% strongly agreed that parents select private schools for children due to their own self-respect, 26% of respondents agreed, 21% disagreed, and 11% strongly disagreed, whereas 14% of respondents

were undecided about the statement. Collectively, 54% (28%+26%) of parents prefer private schools for children due to their own self-respect. Mean 3.38 and SD 1.38 supported.

- 36% agreed that Parents prefer private schools for children based on their social status, 30% strongly agreed, 16% disagreed, and 11% strongly disagreed, whereas 6% were undecided with the statement. Collectively, 66% (36%+ 30%) of parents prefer private schools for children based on their social status. Mean 3.58 and SD 1.37 supported the statement.

## **Factor 2: Income Level of Parents**

- 46% agreed that parents choose private schools because of more competition, 35% of respondents strongly agreed, 11% strongly disagreed, and 4% disagreed, whereas 4% of respondents were undecided with the statement. Collectively, 81% (46%+35%) of parents choose private schools for children because of more competition. Mean 3.90 and SD 1.25 supported the statement.
- 36% agreed, 23% strongly agreed, and 13% disagreed that parents prefer private schools for children according to their salary, 6% of respondents strongly disagreed, whereas 23% of respondents were undecided about the statement. Collectively, 59% (36%+23%) of parents prefer private schools for children according to their salary. Mean 3.56 and SD 1.16 supported.
- 49% agreed, 20% strongly agreed, and 16% of respondents disagreed with the statement that parents prefer private schools according to their economic condition, 6% of respondents strongly disagreed, whereas 9% of respondents were undecided about the statement. Collectively, 69% (49%+20%) of parents prefer private schools according to their economic condition. Mean 3.60 and SD 1.16 supported the statement.
- 39% agreed, 18% strongly agreed, 19% disagreed that the Parents choose private schools for children according to their financial status, 5% respondents were strongly disagreed 20% were undecided with the statement. Collectively, 57% (39%+18%) of parents choose private schools for children according to their financial status. Mean 3.45 and SD 1.14 supported the statement.
- 43% agreed, 19% strongly agreed, and 11% disagreed that parents choose private schools for children according to their income level, 8% of respondents strongly disagreed 20% were undecided. Collectively, 62% (43%+19%) of parents choose private schools for children according to their income level. Mean 3.54 and SD 1.15 supported the statement.

## **Conclusions**

The study concluded that the majority of parents prefer private schools for children because of the shown image. A lot of primary school teachers strongly agreed, and most disagreed, and a very few strongly disagreed, and some primary school teachers were undecided. Collectively majority of parents prefer private schools for children because of the shown image. The study explored that the majority of parents select private schools for children because of their higher academic achievements; most primary school teachers agreed, very few strongly disagreed, and very few disagreed, whereas very few respondents were undecided. Collectively, the majority of parents select private schools for children because of their higher academic achievements. The study depicted that the majority of parents prefer private schools for children because of their greater performance. Most respondents strongly agreed, very few disagreed, and very few strongly disagreed, whereas very few respondents were undecided. Collectively majority of parents choose private schools for children because of their greater performance. The study indicated parents admit children to private schools because of reputation; a lot of respondents agreed, and few disagreed, and few strongly disagreed, and a few respondents were undecided. Collectively majority of parents admit children to private schools because of their reputation. The study revealed that the majority of primary school teachers agreed with the statement that parents admit children to private schools because of their popularity. A lot strongly agreed, some disagreed, and a few disagreed, and a few respondents were undecided. Collectively majority of parents admit children to private schools because of their popularity. The study affirmed that the majority of parents prefer private schools for children due to their own self-respect. Some of the respondents agreed, some disagreed, and a few strongly disagreed, whereas a few of the respondents were undecided with the statement. Collectively, the majority of parents prefer private schools for children due to their own self-respect. The study illustrated that the majority of parents prefer private schools for children based on their social status; a lot of respondents strongly agreed, and few



disagreed few strongly disagreed, and very few respondents were undecided. Collectively, the majority of parents prefer private schools for children based on social status.

The study concluded that the majority of parents choose private schools for children because of more competition; the majority of parents strongly agree, and few strongly disagreed, and very few disagree, whereas very few respondents were undecided with the statement. Collectively, the majority of parents choose private schools for children because of more competition. The study explored that the majority of parents agreed and, some strongly agreed, and a majority of parents disagreed with the statement that parents choose private schools for children according to their salary. Very few respondents strongly disagreed whereas the majority of primary school teachers were undecided about the statement. Collectively, most of were agreed that parents choose private schools for children according to their salary. The study depicted that the majority of parents agreed, some strongly agreed, and few respondents disagreed with the statement that parents choose private schools for children according to their economic condition. Very few strongly disagree, and very few respondents were undecided. Collectively, the majority choose private schools for children according to their economic condition. The study indicated that the majority of parents agreed, few strongly agreed, and few disagreed that the parents choose private schools for children according to their financial status. Very few respondents strongly disagreed, whereas some respondents were undecided. Collectively, the majority of parents choose private schools for children according to their financial status. The study revealed that the majority of parents agreed, few of were strongly agreed, and few respondents disagreed that the parents choose private schools for children according to their income level. Very few strongly disagreed, and some respondents were undecided. Collectively, the majority of parents choose private schools for children according to their income level.

## Recommendations

The study recommended that:

- The socially poor parents don't get updates on admissions of their children from public as well as private students. The study recommended that updates of the enrollment must be provided to the parents.
- The financially poor parents don't get updates about enrollment because of financial constraints. The study recommended that updates on enrollment may be given to the parents.
- The study recommended that School Syllabus is significantly different among public and private schools. This difference affects student's future progress and IQ level.
- The study recommended that the School Environment of private schools is more conducive and comfortable than public sectors. Public schools should have supportive learning environments to fill the gap between them.
- The study recommended that school performance is another important factor that affects enrollment rates in public and private schools. Private schools show excellent performance in the end; that's why they have a high enrollment rate as compared to public schools.
- The study recommended that the Location of schools play an important role in children's enrollment rate. Private schools have safer locations, and they are easily accessible. That is another reason private schools have a higher enrollment rate than public schools.
- The study recommended that the Quality of Teaching affects children's educational standards and future progress. Private schools have an excellent quality of teaching than public ones. Therefore, private schools have high educational standard, and children are more intelligent and competent, which ultimately affect their future progress.

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