

*Parental Choice of Primary Schools in Hong Kong**

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This study adopted qualitative and quantitative methods in drawing data through a pilot questionnaire survey and focus interviews in chosen schools. Twelve influential factors have been identified: School Reputation; Learning Atmosphere; Quality of Teaching Staff; Results of SSPA; Quantity of Homework; Learning Content; School Activities; School Building, Facilities and Resource; Home-School Cooperation; School Location; Recommendations from Other Parents, and Pupils' Conduct in Public. The author then presented two recommendations for practice and further research for school practitioners.

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Overview

Background of the Study

This research examines the crucial factors taken into account by parents in selecting a primary school for their children's schooling. The authors were involved in the task of developing a laboratory primary school in Hong Kong. This study was initially intended to help a newly established laboratory primary school. The authors deem that the findings can also enable other schools to make informed choices in their overall planning. In times of rapid shrinking of student population due to low birthrate and influx of children immigrants from the Chinese mainland, the findings in this study will help school running bodies, school principals, and teachers to make grounded strategies for school promotion and recruitment applications.

Statement of the Problem

This research was undertaken to determine the relative importance of the factors involved when parents choose schools for their children.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of this research is to find out factors that influence parents in sending their children to a particular primary school. Awareness of the diverse expectations of parents would help the school leaders to make changes in the school program according to the expectations of the social community. The study concentrates on primary school parents living in Hong Kong. The findings will provide valuable information on their expectations in choosing primary schools.

Research Questions

There are three major research questions to be answered in this study. They are:

RQ1: What are the factors that influence parents to choose a particular school?

- RQ2: Is a significant variance found in the profile of school choice factors when examined by parental educational and income levels?
- RQ3: Is there a significant difference between the demographic characteristics of the parents who prefer innovative educational practices to traditional school practices?

Limitations

This research was confined to parents in a particular district, ¹ in Hong Kong, whose one or more children were studying in a sampled primary school in a Chinese social community. The parents might not necessarily be parents of primary school children, as some of them might have children studying in kindergarten or secondary school or both. Inasmuch as there is a variety in the distribution of social economic status among different communities in Hong Kong, the sample selected in this study cannot be generalized to be representative of Hong Kong. We must be aware of the limitations when the findings are applied to the whole Hong Kong context. The definitions of terms are listed in the appendix for concept clarification.

Literature Review

Hong Kong has become a prominent international city since the Second World War and is dominated by Chinese culture. Despite continuous reforms in Hong Kong schooling over the past two decades, the learning and teaching environments have remained basically unchanged. Researchers and educators continually face increasing demands for implementing approaches and accountability structures designed to enhance student success. Chinese parents are more concerned with providing better educational opportunities for their children. Once they understand what parents expect as best for their children, researchers and educators can easily match the expectations of school stakeholders. Thus, the school operator can take measures to attract parents to choose a school and match individual children to a particular school.

The study of the Gallup Public Opinion Poll (1986) reveals the following concerns about public education in America (cited from Ragsdale, 1996):

- drug use in schools;
- grading of schools and their teachers;
- grading schools on various success characteristics;
- goals of education;
- federal, state and local government influence on education;
- financing schools and schooling;
- attitudes about Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and schooling;
- grade promotion and high school graduation requirements;
- national testing;
- time spent on homework;
- teachers: testing, salaries, shortages;
- age at which children should begin school;
- the right to choose children's schools;
- attitudes toward private and parochial schools;
- support for a voucher system.

Even though the Hong Kong social context is different from the American one, we realize that the factors which influence parental choices of a school for their children have been studied for the past quarter century in America (Snow, 1996, p. 21). John Maddaus, in a comprehensive examination of the research issues related to parental choice, had identified the criteria. They were "academic quality (teacher attitude and competence, curriculum, administrative leadership, academic standards, instructional methods, etc.), school atmosphere (climates, discipline, values, etc.), school size, class size (individual attention), parental involvement, extracurricular activities, physical condition of the building, safety, location (distance from home, transportation arrangements), student characteristics (race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status), neighborhood characteristics, financial cost, before- and after-school child care arrangements, personal enrollment, religious

instruction, religious training and commitment of staff, prior enrollment by family members or friends, parental employment, school staff, and child's preferences." (Maddaus, 1990, p. 275)

Snow (1996) concluded that, among the factors that influenced parental choice, teacher quality came first, then, came the school location, teaching methods, curriculum and a program which could meet the individual needs of the child and school reputation.

Certainly there are differences in the social structure, ethnic groups, cultures and expectations of pupils and teachers between Hong Kong and America or the Western world. The Gallup Public Opinion Poll reveals public concern about American schools and shows public expectations about quality education. Literature in Western countries reveals that "relatively few studies examining how parents choose primary schools have been carried out" (West, 1994, p. 109). It indicated that the child's happiness, proximity (location of the school) and siblings attending the school were key reasons in parental selection of school (Hughes et al., 1990; Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, 1993, as cited in West, 1994). In other studies, the school's reputation was found to be an important factor for the selection of a primary school (Hughes et al., 1990; Ragsdale, 1996; Snow, 1996; Yeung, 2000). The same case can be applied to Hong Kong.

In the case of Taiwan, which is also predominantly a Chinese society, Yeung's (2000, p. 215) research reveals that teaching quality, safe environment, law and order, child's happiness in school learning, good resources, being in line with the school vision and mission, higher promotion rate to secondary school, and easy access to school, all command higher consideration from the parent's perspective. The ranking order of the influential factors showed "conscientious teaching, good rule and order, regular teaching, learning in school happiness, good school facilities, adapting the school vision, high rate for entering higher schools, easy access to school, emphasis on advanced subjects for higher schools, good environment, emphasis on ECA etc." (Yeung, 2000, p. 217) to be the general parents' expectations about schooling.

In short, Unger (1999, p.19) summarized the common characteristics of the best schools as:

1. clearly stated academic goals and a clearly defined core curriculum with few electives;
2. high expectations and academic standards for students, with student expected to adjust upward to higher standards rather than standards being ever lowered to adjust to unwilling students;
3. concentration on learning during class time, with no interruptions for administrative announcements and procedures;
4. a pleasant, safe and professional work environment;
5. strong administrative leadership;
6. extensive students' participation in student government, school extra-curricular activities and community programs.
7. strong school spirit, with average student and teacher attendance rates of 95% or more;
8. strong community and parental support and involvement.

How about the case in Hong Kong? We would like to reiterate that the context in Hong Kong is different from that of America or other Western countries. For instance, in Hong Kong, "child's happiness" may not be so stressed in the Chinese culture. Would this affect the parental choice in Hong Kong? According to Confucianism, Chinese people believe in diligence and hardship rather than fun and enjoyment in learning. Will parents in Hong Kong take this factor seriously?

So in this study, the two basic questions to be studied are:

1. What kinds of schools do parents pick when they have free choice?
2. What factors influence their choice?

Methodology

The design of the study comprised a pilot study and main study respectively. Definition of terms are explained in Appendix A.

Pilot Study

A pilot test was conducted before the actual administration of the survey. In the pilot test, 20 parents of students from each of the school levels (P1 to P6) were invited to fill in a pilot questionnaire. The school chosen was selected from a convenient sample. The total number of questionnaires distributed was 120 and the return rate was 90.8%. The reliability of the survey items was found to be 0.87.

Analysis of the pilot test results showed that some of the items in the initial design of the questionnaire were not of important concern for primary school parents. They were, therefore, removed from the questionnaire.

Main Study- Selection of Subjects

The research adopted both quantitative inquiry (in the form of a questionnaire) and qualitative inquiry (in the form of focus-group interviews) following the pilot test. All data were gathered from schools in the chosen community.

In the survey, there were 1,680 parents of Primary 1 to 6 students from 14 schools who were invited to fill in the questionnaires. Each school got 120 questionnaires. The schools were strategically randomly selected from different parts of the chosen district. In the questionnaires, parents were required to rate 14 five-scale items in section A, rank 10 items in section B, fill in some basic demographic data in section C and fill in their names and telephone numbers if they were willing to be invited for the focus-group interview to be held at later stage. The return rate was 95.7% and the reliability of the rating items was 0.75. (See Appendix B, Table B.1 to B.3)

The next step was the focus group interviews. This served to interpret and enrich the survey results obtained from the questionnaires. Among the 14 schools surveyed, six schools would randomly be selected for follow-up interview. For each of these six schools, nine parents would be invited for focus-group interview based on the interview protocol. A total of 44 parents participated in the interview. The interview were recorded and

transcribed. The transcribed text was further analyzed through the NUD*IST software.

Survey Instrument

The primary data acquisition instrument was a questionnaire of fourteen rating items, ten ranking items, four demographic and one open question in Chinese. The content of the questionnaire as well as the focus-group interview were adapted from a kindergarten survey of the Model School Project as well as from other literature. The items were rated on the Likert Rating Scale. The demographic items relating to the parents' income and educational level were also included for cross-tabulation analysis with the school choice factors.

Statistical Treatment

Descriptive statistics were generated on a table for each survey item by variable and ANOVA results were presented in Analysis of Variance Summary Tables. A One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to explore answers to the research questions concerning differences in mean scores among parental income and educational levels. The ANOVA was also used to test for significant differences in the mean ratings for each survey item, as it is related to income and educational levels of the parents. Alpha was set at .05 level of significance. All data were analyzed and presented using the SPSS software program.

Qualitative Inquiry

Open-ended interview questions were sent to parents before the interviews. The data collected allowed the researcher to triangulate with the data between survey ratings and the literature.

For the focus-group interview, the last question of the survey was an optional open-ended question regarding their expectation of a quality primary school. All the written responses were entered into the Microsoft Excel program to be blended with the interview data obtained from the

focus-group interview. All these textual data were sorted into analytic files coded by (1) factors already listed on the survey and (2) new factors that influenced parental choice decisions that were not included in the questionnaire of the survey.

Factors obtained from qualitative inquiry that were not mentioned in the survey questionnaire were then assigned sub-codes and blended after each interpretation into common themes.

For data analysis, as mentioned above, both quantitative and qualitative data were to be collected (i.e., survey and interview). Both kinds of data were analyzed to determine the most influential factors from the parents' viewpoint in selecting quality primary school.

Results and Discussion

Survey and interview data were collected and analyzed to determine the most influential factors in the expectations of parents of primary school children about quality primary schools. Quantitative data reveals ten significant differences in the expectations that parents with different educational or income levels hold about quality primary schools. Qualitative data supports, triangulates and enriches factors identified by quantitative analysis and deepens the understanding of factors relating to quality primary schools among all informants.

Responses to RQ1

This research is intended to identify the influential factors on parent school selection. In order to observe the profile of responses from all parents, a grand mean was computed for each survey item. The purpose of collapsing the data to one grand mean was to rank the survey items from the highest to lowest mean score. The results revealed that the main factors that influence parents to choose a particular school are as listed sequentially in Table 1.

Table 1 Grand Means and Ranks of Factors Affecting Parental School Choice

Survey Item	Mean	Rank
Quality of Teaching Staff	4.6	1
Learning Atmosphere	4.47	2
Learning Content	4.33	3
Conduct of Schoolmates in Public	4.32	4
Results of SSPA	4.31	5
School Reputation	4.25	6
School Building, Facilities and Resources	4.17	7
Home-School Cooperation	4.09	8
Teaching and Learning Activities	4.04	9
Innovative Curriculum	3.89	10
School Location	3.81	11
Quantity of Homework	3.77	12
Recommendation from Other Parents	3.29	13
Using Putonghua*as the Instruction Medium for Chinese Language	3.2	14

* The medium of instruction in the majority of Hong Kong primary schools is "Cantonese". The written language is traditional Chinese. Using Putonghua in daily Chinese subject learning is the latest trial to unify patriotism and it provides communication advantages to local Chinese children.

In the survey, we provided only ten items to respondents for ranking on the selection priorities. The results are listed in Table 2.

Table 2 Ranking of Priorities in Parental Selection

Item	Ranking-No. of case (%)									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Quality of Teaching Staff	332 (24.8)	506 (37.8)	234 (17.5)	119 (8.9)	69 (5.1)	23 (1.7)	18 (1.3)	23 (1.7)	13 (1.0)	3 (0.2)
School Reputation	590 (44.0)	251 (18.7)	159 (11.9)	89 (6.6)	69 (5.1)	56 (4.2)	48 (3.6)	39 (2.9)	22 (1.6)	17 (1.3)
Learning Contents	62 (4.6)	116 (8.7)	193 (14.4)	239 (17.8)	238 (17.8)	178 (13.3)	158 (11.8)	92 (6.9)	49 (3.7)	15 (1.1)
Results of Secondary School Places Allocation	158 (11.8)	127 (9.5)	179 (13.4)	149 (11.1)	132 (9.9)	110 (8.2)	110 (8.2)	153 (11.4)	137 (10.2)	85 (6.3)
School Building, Facilities and Resources	34 (2.5)	122 (9.1)	213 (15.9)	207 (15.4)	166 (12.4)	163 (12.2)	135 (10.1)	131 (9.8)	112 (8.4)	57 (4.3)
Innovative Curriculum	18 (1.3)	35 (2.6)	92 (6.9)	136 (10.1)	150 (11.2)	187 (14.0)	176 (13.1)	178 (13.3)	208 (15.5)	160 (11.9)
School Activities	17 (1.3)	29 (2.2)	70 (5.2)	110 (8.2)	154 (11.5)	207 (15.4)	218 (16.3)	212 (15.8)	191 (14.3)	132 (9.9)
Quantity of Homework	15 (1.1)	42 (3.1)	51 (3.8)	95 (7.1)	157 (11.7)	184 (13.7)	203 (15.1)	205 (15.3)	216 (16.1)	172 (12.8)
Home-School Cooperation	17 (0.9)	34 (2.5)	68 (5.1)	104 (7.8)	138 (10.3)	155 (11.6)	191 (14.3)	228 (17.0)	245 (18.3)	165 (12.3)
School Location	104 (7.8)	78 (4.9)	82 (6.1)	93 (6.9)	66 (4.9)	77 (5.7)	83 (6.2)	78 (5.8)	147 (11.0)	532 (39.7)

It is evident from the results that the "Quality of Teaching Staff" and "School Reputation" have the highest status in the eyes of parents. The next important sets of prioritized ranking would be "Learning Contents", "Results of SSPA", "School Location", and "School Building, Facilities and Resources". The lowest priority indicated by parents were "Innovative Curriculum", "School Activities", "Quantity of Homework", and "Home School Cooperation".

Responses to RQ2

To answer RQ2, statistical treatment was adopted for this study: a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with alpha set at the .05 level of significance. Analysis of variance was run on each survey item. Ten survey items yielded statistically significant differences at the .05 level within the parent education variable (see Table C.1). Eight items yielded statistically significant differences at the .05 level within the parent income variables, too (see Table C.2 in Appendix C).

In the demographic section of the survey, a total of 1,580 people returned answers successfully. The levels of education were grouped according to five categories: (1) Primary or below (22.1%); (2) Form 1 to Form 3 (33.4%); (3) Form 4 to Form 5(31.6%); (4) Matriculated. Diploma or Certificate (9.7%); and (5) University or above (3.1%).

In the demographic section of the survey, a total of 1,567 people returned answers successfully. The family income levels were grouped according to four categories: (1) Below \$10,000, (25.1%); (2) \$10,001 to \$20,000 (45.9%); (3) \$20,001 to \$30,000 (15.2%); and (4) \$30,001 or above (13.7%).

Means scores for all significant survey items within the parental education and income levels can be found in Table B.3. Further data analysis revealed that parental education levels and parental income by category exhibited different emphases on different items.

Among the category of parental choice in "Learning Content", "Home-

School Cooperation”, and “School Reputation”, education level of parents showed no significant differences in questionnaire data. In the category of parental choice in “School Reputation”, the parental income level showed no significant differences in the same questionnaire data. It revealed that parents alike concerned more about “Learning Content”, “Home-School Cooperation”, and “School Reputation” for school selection, disregarding their educational and income levels.

Moreover, from the qualitative study, respondents expressed serious concern over the two most important expectations, i.e., “Recommendation from Other Parents” and “Conduct of Schoolmates in Public”. The three hypothesized items of primary school concerns mentioned above supported the view that the “Conduct of Schoolmates in Public” should be regarded as quite important [fourth ranking, more important than “Results of Secondary School Places Allocation”]. For the other two, i.e., “Recommendations from Other Parents” and “Putonghua as the Medium of Instruction for Chinese Language”, they were regarded as relatively unimportant criteria for parental choice of quality primary school (ranked 13 and 14 respectively) in the quantitative data. However, during the interview and responses to the open questions from the survey, we sensed that the parents gave serious consideration to “Recommendations from Other Parents”.

Further analysis of the survey data (for both rating and ranking items) showed that “Quality of Teaching Staff” came first in the ranking ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 0.57$). This meant that parents considered that it was the most important factor for a quality primary school. The literature supports the findings (Maddaus, 1990; Ragsdale, 1996; Snow, 1996; Yeung, 2000). An interesting point to note is that the rating question “School Reputation/ Ethos” in “Section A” consisted of “School Reputation” and “Learning Atmosphere”. It was found that “Learning Atmosphere” was ranked second ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 0.63$) and “School Reputation” was ranked sixth ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.67$). When we integrated both to consider the ranking and effect on the parents, it was revealed that parents considered the “School Reputation”

seriously. It alerted us that building a good school image was critical to the success of a prospective school. This finding matched with the qualitative data.

From the interviews and statistical analysis, we found that most parents from the higher income and educational levels did not give great regard to school location. They considered the teaching staff, teaching quality and school capacity to provide happy and nurturing learning experiences for their children as critical factors. This shows that parents in Hong Kong, in accordance with traditional Chinese culture, are ready to sacrifice more for their children if they can afford sending their children further away from their district in order to get quality education. In fact, it is not uncommon for parents in Hong Kong to spend a fortune in order to send their children away to overseas countries to get quality education.

Response to RQ3

There were no significant differences with regard to the innovative educational practices as opposed to the traditional schools according to the quantitative analysis. Thus, this study rejected RQ3. This may indicate that parents did not trust the government's effort in developing an innovative curriculum. This may also show the traditional or conservative outlook of parents in Hong Kong.

Summary of Findings

The research questions in this study were engaged through qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis.

Among factors that influence parental choice of school in the chosen district, all the factors were significant in this study except for "The Medium in Learning Chinese by Putonghua" and "Innovative Curriculum". The survey in the questionnaire indicated that there were ten significant factors. They were: School Reputation; Learning Atmosphere; Quality of Teaching Staff; Results of SSPA; Quantity of Homework; Learning Content;

School Activities; School Building, Facilities and Resources; Home-School Cooperation; School Location.

The data from the interviews showed that two additional factors were discovered that affected parental choice. They were: Recommendation from Other Parents, and Pupils' Conduct in Public.

Concerning the effect of the profile of parental educational and income levels on weighing the school choice factors, no variance was found. All parents accorded importance to "Learning Atmosphere" and "School Reputation" in choosing school.

Concerning whether there was a significant difference between the demographic characteristics of the parents who prefer innovative educational practices to traditional school practices, no significant difference was found in this study.

Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

The primary intent of this study was to discover factors relating to parental expectation about quality primary education. In conjunction with this intent, the study was structured to discover if there were differences in the way parents with varying levels of income and education selected schools for their child in the chosen district. The congruence of items between qualitative and quantitative inquiry suggests that a set of influential factors was successfully derived from the study.

The literature reveals that the child's happiness, proximity (location of school), siblings attending the school, the school's reputation, teachers teaching quality, safe environment in the school, law and order in the school, child's happiness in school learning, good resources, in line with the school vision and mission and higher promotion rate to secondary school are all key factors in parental selection of schools in many countries outside Hong Kong. This study focuses on the case of Hong Kong.

From both the qualitative and quantitative methods adopted in this study, twelve influential factors have been identified, which revealed a list of ex-

emplary school characteristics favored by the parents in Hong Kong, listed as follows:

1. The school has a good reputation in the community and in the media.
2. Community members highly recommend this school.
3. There is a good learning and caring atmosphere and a positive school culture.
4. The school has a group of competent teachers of a high quality in terms of academic and practical pedagogical knowledge for teaching.
5. School achievement is high in getting secondary school places.
6. Homework is meaningful and sufficient for the pupils.
7. Extra-curricular programs are offered.
8. The school building has an attractive design and has sufficient and up-to-date facilities for teaching and leaning.
9. The school emphasizes cooperation with and respect for parents.
10. The school is in a convenient location and there is ease of access for schooling.
11. The parents value the school.
12. There is a positive and good performance of the pupils in public.

Implications

The study showed that the parental school choice in Hong Kong is similar to other countries. All parents are deeply concerned about the education of their children. Quality education as indicated by twelve factors listed above, such as school reputation, learning atmosphere, quality of teaching staff, and examination results were significant factors in parental choice.

However, the study also showed the uniqueness of parental choice in Hong Kong. First of all, parents did not consider "Child's Happiness" as an important factor in their choice. Secondly, parents in Hong Kong accorded little importance to "Innovative Practice". Thirdly, they did not consider the "Medium of Putonghua in the Chinese subject" useful in their school choice.

So, the study showed the influence of traditional Chinese culture, particularly the value of diligence in learning. To traditional parents, they would consider "Hardworking" and "Child's Happiness and Fun in Learning" incompatible to their belief in learning. According to Confucian tradition, "everyone is educable, everyone can become a sage, and everyone is perfectible" (Lee, 1996, p. 30). Mencius said:

When Heaven is about to confer a great responsibility on a man, it will exercise his mind and will through suffering, subject his sinews and bones to hard work, expose his body to hunger, put him to poverty, place obstacles in the path of his deeds, so as to stimulate his mind, harden his nature, and improve wherever he is incompetent. (*Mencius*, VIB, p. 15)

This study also unveiled the distrust of parents in Hong Kong on the various curriculum innovations promoted by the government in recent years. In fact, such distrust of the Hong Kong government is not confined to educational innovations but literally to every aspect of the new government after 1997.

Finally, this study showed the bi-language-tri-lingual policy is fighting an uphill battle in Hong Kong where parents did not accord importance to learn Putonghua among their children.

For the policy makers as well as the school running bodies, these findings pose grave challenges to their planning. While the policy elite in education in Hong Kong accord great importance to "child-centredness", "curriculum innovation", and "civic education", the parents were indifferent to them. How to reconcile the differences between the parents and the policy elite is worth further exploration.

Recommendations

Based on this study, two recommendations should be considered for practice and further research.

Recommendations for Practice

When we conduct a pupil-recruiting exercise, we should not over-emphasize innovation in learning and teaching or relish on certain language policies such as using Putonghua in Chinese lessons. Moreover, schools should adopt strategies that promote high quality teaching staff, good reputation, and opportunities in learning from other countries for all pupils. Last but not least, when a school attempted to attract parents with relatively higher education and income levels to send their children to the school, they should be aware that these pupils in school may not reflect the general composition of the population in the chosen community and thus other strategies may be needed to attract other types of pupils.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study should be repeated in other types of communities or to extend coverage to the wider population of Hong Kong in order to achieve greater generalization. Finding out the true picture of the local parental school choice is critical for deepening understanding of our society.

Certainly, further study needs to be done in this area. Research on different communities might yield very different results. We predicted that no parent would want to be restricted to a zone school that did not meet the needs of their children. In fact, most, if not all, parents requested quality schools for their children. This study identified twelve factors that influenced school choice. Moreover, parents were generally traditional in outlook as "Innovative Practices" and "the Medium of Putonghua in the Chinese Subject" were not the common wishes from the parental perspective. However, since the reunification with China, the future of Hong Kong, as well as our students, depend more on China nowadays. The proficiency in Putonghua would offer our students better prospects in their future career. In school promotion, we should be aware of the discrepancies between research findings and government preferences. The researchers should be aware of reality and that the current perspectives may differ in the future.

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Note

1. The chosen district is a newly developed town in Hong Kong during the last three decades. In spite of its rural origin, the district has been much urbanized and the profile of the population in this district shows no significant differences to other districts in Hong Kong.

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Appendix A: Definition of Terms

School

There are two types of schools in this survey, namely subsidized (or aided) school and government school.

Student

Students in this survey refer to primary school students with class levels ranging from Primary 1 to Primary 6.

Parent

Parents in this survey refer to those who have children studying at the primary school levels.

Expectation

The consideration of the parental school choice for their children to attend.

Quality Primary School

This School provides all-round schooling and education opportunity to pupils.

School Location

One of the questionnaire items asking the importance of distance of the school site to their home location in determining a quality primary school in the selected community.

Quality of Teaching Staff

One of the questionnaire items asking the importance of how good the teachers and principals are in determining a quality primary school in the selected community

School Building, Facilities and Resources

One of the questionnaire items asking the importance of the school building, the facilities there and the resources available in determining a quality primary school in the selected community.

School Reputation

One of the questionnaire items asking the importance of the established opinion that people have about how good the school is in determining a quality primary school in the selected community.

Innovative Curriculum

One of the questionnaire items asking the importance of introducing new methods of learning and teaching in determining a quality primary school in the selected community.

Learning Contents

One of the questionnaire items asking the importance of the materials to be learnt by the students in determining a quality primary school in the selected community.

Quantity of Homework

One of the questionnaire items asking the importance of the amount of tasks teachers assign students to do at home in determining a quality primary school in the selected community.

Results of Secondary School Places Allocation

One of the questionnaire items asking the importance of the previous students' records of secondary school allocation in determining a quality primary school in the selected community.

Home-School Cooperation

One of the questionnaire items asking the importance of the school's policy in promoting communication and working-together for teachers and parents in determining a quality primary school in the selected community.

School Activities

One of the questionnaire items asking the importance of the school's design of the various activities (including learning activities and extra-curricular activities) in determining a quality primary school in the selected community.

Parental Education Level

The survey in this study asks for the highest level of education of the parent who filled in the questionnaire. There are five categories for them to choose, including primary or below; Form 1 to Form 3; Form 4 to Form 5; matriculated, diploma or certificate; and university or above.

Parental Income Level

The survey in this study asks for the combined monthly household income of the parent who filled in the questionnaire.

Appendix B

Table B1 Descriptive Statistics Tables

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
a1- School Reputation	1580	1	5	4.25	.67
a2- Quantity of Homework	1582	1	5	3.77	.71
a3- Learning Atmosphere	1583	1	5	4.47	.63
a4- Learning Content	1584	1	5	4.33	.60
a5- Teaching & Learning Activities	1585	1	5	4.04	.68
a6- Innovative Curriculum	1585	1	5	3.89	.75
a7- Results of SSPA	1572	1	5	4.31	.71
a8- Recommendation from Other Parents	1577	1	5	3.29	.80
a9- Quality of Teaching Staff	1583	1	5	4.60	.57
a10- School Building, Facilities and Resources	1586	1	5	4.17	.64
a11- Home-School Cooperation	1585	1	5	4.09	.67
a12- School Location	1578	1	5	3.81	.81
a13- Conduct of Schoolmates in Public	1583	1	5	4.32	.65
a14- Putonghua as the Instruction Medium for Chinese Language	1587	1	5	3.20	.91
b1- School Location	1340	1	10	7.10	3.19
b2- Quality of Teaching Staff	1340	1	10	2.58	1.66
b3- School Building, Facilities and Resources	1340	1	10	5.32	2.39
b4- School Reputation & Ethos	1340	1	10	2.70	2.24
b5- Innovative Curriculum	1340	1	10	6.65	2.33
b6- Learning Content	1340	1	10	4.87	2.08
b7- Quantity of Homework	1340	1	10	6.90	2.23
b8- Results of SSPA	1340	1	10	5.18	2.83
b9- Home-School Cooperation	1340	1	10	6.97	2.24
b10- Teaching & Learning Activities	1340	1	10	6.71	2.17

Table B2 Main Survey Questionnaire Returned

School	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	120	7.5	7.5
2	120	7.5	14.9
3	119	7.4	22.3
4	119	7.4	29.7
5	118	7.3	37.1
6	109	6.8	43.9
7	115	7.2	51
8	88	5.5	56.5
9	116	7.2	63.7
10	116	7.2	70.9
11	115	7.2	78.1
12	120	7.5	85.6
13	115	7.2	92.7
14	117	7.3	100
Total	1607	100	

Table B3 Summary Table for Parental Educational Level and Income**By Education Level**

Survey Item	Level	N	\bar{X}	SD
a1- School Reputation	Primary or Below	343	4.14	0.76
	Form 1 to Form 3	517	4.29	0.65
	Form 4 to Form 5	497	4.29	0.64
	Matriculated, Diploma or Certificate	154	4.32	0.58
	University or Above	49	4.10	0.51
a12- Quantity of Homework	Primary or Below	341	3.77	0.72
	Form 1 to Form 3	521	3.85	0.69
	Form 4 to Form 5	498	3.78	0.68
	Matriculated, Diploma or Certificate	154	3.53	0.83
	University or Above	48	3.52	0.68
a3- Learning Atmosphere	Primary or Below	343	4.29	0.69
	Form 1 to Form 3	518	4.41	0.63
	Form 4 to Form 5	499	4.58	0.56
	Matriculated, Diploma or Certificate	154	4.75	0.43
	University or Above	49	4.45	0.65
a4- Learning Content	Primary or Below	343	4.29	0.64
	Form 1 to Form 3	520	4.29	0.61
	Form 4 to Form 5	498	4.40	0.57
	Matriculated, Diploma or Certificate	154	4.44	0.56
	University or Above	049	4.22	0.55
a5- Teaching & Learning Activities	Primary or Below	344	3.94	0.74
	Form 1 to Form 3	522	3.99	0.67
	Form 4 to Form 5	496	4.10	0.65
	Matriculated, Diploma or Certificate	154	4.25	0.57
	University or Above	49	3.98	0.75
a7- Results of SSPA	Primary or Below	342	4.39	0.73
	Form 1 to Form 3	515	4.36	0.66
	Form 4 to Form 5	492	4.29	0.73
	Matriculated, Diploma or Certificate	154	4.23	0.69
	University or Above	049	3.88	0.73
a8- Recommendation from Other Parents	Primary or Below	343	3.21	0.82
	Form 1 to Form 3	519	3.24	0.79
	Form 4 to Form 5	493	3.38	0.81
	Matriculated, Diploma or Certificate	154	3.40	0.73
	University or Above	49	3.18	0.78
a9- Quality of Teaching Staff	Primary or Below	340	4.52	0.64
	Form 1 to Form 3	521	4.62	0.54
	Form 4 to Form 5	500	4.62	0.55
	Matriculated, Diploma or Certificate	154	4.69	0.48
	University or Above	48	4.58	0.61
a10- School Building, Facilities and Resources	Primary or Below	344	4.08	0.69
	Form 1 to Form 3	520	4.17	0.62
	Form 4 to Form 5	500	4.21	0.63
	Matriculated, Diploma or Certificate	153	4.24	0.56
	University or Above	49	4.18	0.53
a11- Home-School Cooperation	Primary or Below	344	4.03	0.74
	Form 1 to Form 3	520	4.08	0.64
	Form 4 to Form 5	498	4.12	0.66
	Matriculated, Diploma or Certificate	154	4.21	0.63
	University or Above	49	3.94	0.69

By Income

Survey Item	Level	N	\bar{X}	SD
a1- School Reputation	Below 10,000	384	4.18	0.75
	10,001 to 20,000	711	4.27	0.68
	20,001 to 30,000	237	4.31	0.57
	30,001 or Above	215	4.31	0.57
a2- Quantity of Homework	Below 10,000	383	3.89	0.73
	10,001 to 20,000	716	3.80	0.67
	20,001 to 30,000	237	3.64	0.72
	30,001 or Above	213	3.57	0.77
a3- Learning Atmosphere	Below 10,000	389	4.35	0.67
	10,001 to 20,000	710	4.46	0.64
	20,001 to 30,000	236	4.53	0.55
	30,001 or Above	215	4.68	0.49
a5- Teaching & Learning Activities	Below 10,000	389	4.02	0.73
	10,001 to 20,000	713	4.01	0.69
	20,001 to 30,000	237	4.05	0.60
	30,001 or Above	214	4.19	0.63
a7- Results of SSPA	Below 10,000	382	4.43	0.68
	10,001 to 20,000	709	4.31	0.72
	20,001 to 30,000	235	4.34	0.67
	30,001 or Above	213	4.12	0.74
a8- Recommendation from Other Parents	Below 10,000	385	3.28	0.82
	10,001 to 20,000	712	3.24	0.83
	20,001 to 30,000	234	3.41	0.72
	30,001 or Above	213	3.37	0.74
a9- Quality of Teaching Staff	Below 10,000	388	4.55	0.64
	10,001 to 20,000	711	4.60	0.57
	20,001 to 30,000	237	4.62	0.53
	30,001 or Above	214	4.70	0.49
a12- School Location	Below 10,000	386	3.93	0.77
	10,001 to 20,000	712	3.81	0.82
	20,001 to 30,000	235	3.74	0.78
	30,001 or Above	214	3.68	0.84

Appendix C

Table C1 ANOVA to the Parental Educational Level Variable

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
a1-	School Reputation	Between Groups	7.658	4	1.915	4.338 0.002
		Within Groups	686.264	1555	0.441	
		Total	693.922	1559		
a2-	Quantity of Homework	Between Groups	15.171	4	3.793	7.594 0
		Within Groups	777.6	1557	0.499	
		Total	792.771	1561		
a3-	Learning Atmosphere	Between Groups	30.48	4	7.62	20.934 0
		Within Groups	567.114	1558	0.364	
		Total	597.594	1562		
a4-	Learning Content	Between Groups	6.177	4	1.544	4.356 0.002
		Within Groups	552.593	1559	0.354	
		Total	558.769	1563		
a5-	Teaching & Learning Activities	Between Groups	13.418	4	3.354	7.445 0
		Within Groups	702.883	1560	0.451	
		Total	716.3	1564		
a7-	Results of SSPA	Between Groups	13.971	4	3.493	7.086 0
		Within Groups	762.586	1547	0.493	
		Total	776.557	1551		
a8-	Recommendation from Other Parents	Between Groups	9.484	4	2.371	3.72 0.005
		Within Groups	989.879	1553	0.637	
		Total	999.363	1557		
a9-	Quality of teaching Staff	Between Groups	4.064	4	1.016	3.204 0.012
		Within Groups	493.999	1558	0.317	
		Total	498.063	1562		
a10-	School Building, Facilities and Resources	Between Groups	4.292	4	1.073	2.665 0.031
		Within Groups	628.501	1561	0.403	
		Total	632.792	1565		
a11-	Home-School Cooperation	Between Groups	5.061	4	1.265	2.835 0.023
		Within Groups	696.131	1560	0.446	
		Total	701.192	1564		

Table C2 ANOVA to the Parental Income Variable

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
a1-	School Reputation	Between Groups	3.611	3	1.204	2.707	0.044
		Within Groups	685.995	1543	0.445		
		Total	689.606	1546			
a2-	Quantity of Homework	Between Groups	18.624	3	6.208	12.492	0
		Within Groups	767.839	1545	0.497		
		Total	786.464	1548			
a3-	Learning Atmosphere	Between Groups	16.237	3	5.412	14.321	0
		Within Groups	584.282	1546	0.378		
		Total	600.519	1549			
a5-	Teaching & Learning Activities	Between Groups	5.68	3	1.893	4.098	0.007
		Within Groups	715.683	1549	0.462		
		Total	721.363	1552			
a7-	Results of SSPA	Between Groups	12.839	3	4.28	8.648	0
		Within Groups	759.687	1535	0.495		
		Total	772.526	1538			
a8-	Recommendation from Other Parents	Between Groups	6.728	3	2.243	3.51	0.015
		Within Groups	983.778	1540	0.639		
		Total	990.505	1543			
a9-	Quality of teaching Staff	Between Groups	3.169	3	1.056	3.242	0.021
		Within Groups	503.608	1546	0.326		
		Total	506.777	1549			
a12-	School Location	Between Groups	10.451	3	3.484	5.365	0.001
		Within Groups	1001.81	1543	0.649		
		Total	1012.26	1546			

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摘要

本研究採用量化及質化的研究方式進行，向選定學校進行前測、問卷調查和訪談。研究發現12項影響家長選校的因素，包括：學校聲譽、學習氣氛、教學人員素質、升中派位成績、家課量、學習內容、學校活動、校舍、校舍設施和設備、家校合作、學校位置、其他家長之推薦、學生在公眾地方的行為表現等。文章之末，作者更為同工在實踐及進一步研究上，提出兩項建議。

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