



A STUDY ON THE FACTORS INFLUENCING  
PARENTS DECISION IN CHOOSING PRIVATE  
SCHOOLS- A CASE STUDY OF SELANGOR

BY

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## ABSTRACT

Current perspectives highlight the importance of educational sector in designing the socio-economic development of a country. It accelerates the economic growth through knowledge and skills development by improving human capabilities. Education is also perceived as an economic commodity. During the last few decades, private schools in Malaysia have emerged as an essential source of imparting education at various levels (Proap & Rihed, 1995). Private schools received financing in part or as a whole from tuition fees, fundraising, and alumni contribution. Providing the children with the most excellent educational atmosphere is parents' desirable wish. Their choice to invest in their children's education is based on a few numbers of factors; social, economic and cultural factors. The research emphasizes on analysing parents' motivation and factors in selecting private school for their children. It aims at investigating factors that influenced parents' decision when selecting private schools for their children. Three problem statements emphasized which are; Planning or development of private schools are not in the Local Plan (LP), Physical development of facilities provided does not adhere to school development guidelines and Social Exclusion. The objectives of the research are to study the development of private schools in Selangor, to identify the factors influencing parents' decision in selecting private schools over public schools, to assess the physical condition of the selected private schools based on Manual Guidelines of Town and Country Planning Department and/or School Infrastructure requirement by the Ministry of Education, and to provide suggestions and recommendations in enhancing the development of private schools within the study area. The data for this research were collected through site observation of physical conditions and facilities of participating private schools, questionnaire survey of 510 respondents among parents and interview sessions with the administrators and parents to validate the findings from site observation and questionnaire survey. The state of Selangor is selected to represent the overall states in Malaysia due to the presence of many esteemed and established private institutions. Based on the study, the potential relationship of Social Background/Status, Income Level, School Syllabus, School Environment/Facilities, School Performances, Location, Teacher Quality and Distance were analysed. Using the Relative Important Index (RII), it was found that the parents ranked factors as stated; school syllabus, school environment, school performances, teacher quality, location, distance, social background and income level. The recommendations for the study is to provide a specific guidelines as well as proper land use provision for private educational institution in land use planning and highlighted the important of private schools in providing alternative, variety and specialist education other than offered by normal public schools in Malaysia. The study also acknowledge that the provision of proper and adequate facilities and formulation of a detailed and inclusive private school environment to all children.

## ملخص البحث

يوضح البحث الحالي اهمية قطاع التعليم في ضمان التطور الاقتصادي والاجتماعي للبلدان من حيث المساهمة في دفع وتيرة النمو الاقتصادي من خلال تنويع المعرفة والمهارات عن طريق تطوير القدرات البشرية اذ يعتبر التعليم كقطاع اقتصادي. خلال العقود الماضية لعبت المدارس الخاصة في ماليزيا دورا مهما كمصدر اساسي لنشر التعليم لمختلف المراحل حيث تؤمن المدارس الخاصة مواردها المادية بشكل جزئي او كلي من خلال تحصيل الرسوم الدراسية و حملات التمويل وكذا مساهمات الطلبة الخريجين سابقا. ان تأمين الجو الدراسي الممتاز للاطفال هو غاية مرجوة من اولياء الامور. ان اختيارهم تعليم ابنائهم يعتمد على بعض العوامل منها الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والثقافية. يركزالبحث الحالي على تحليل دوافع اولياء الامور والعوامل المؤثرة على قراراتهم عند اختيار المدارس الخاصة لتعليم اطفالهم و على هذا الاساس الهدف الاساسي من هذا البحث هو بحث العوامل المؤثرة على قرارات اولياء الامور. هناك ثلاثة اشكاليات تم بحثها في هذا العمل وهي : تخطيط او تطوير المدارس الخاصة غير الموجوده في الخطط المحلية , التطوير النوعي للقدرات المتوفرة والتي لا تتحانس مع القوانين الموضوعه للمدارس الخاصة وكذلك تلك التي لا تتحانس مع الموانع الاجتماعية. ان الهدف من هذا البحث هو دراسة تطور المدارس الخاصة في ولاية سلانجور لتحديد العوامل المؤثرة في تفضيل اولياء الامور للمدارس الخاصة على المدارس الحكومية وكذا تقييم الحالة النوعية للمدارس الخاصة والتي تكون منتقاة بالاعتماد على دليل القوانين في المدينة و قسم التخطيط في البلد ومتطلبات البنية التحتية للمدارس المحددة من قبل وزارة التربية الى جانب تقديم مقترحات و توصيات لغرض تحسين المدارس الخاصة في منطقة الدراسة. ان البيانات المعتمدة في هذا البحث تم جمعها من خلال الملاحظة الموقعية لحالات وامكانيات المدارس الخاصة المدروسة, استبيان للرأي لحوالي 510 من اولياء الامور بالاضافة الى مقابلات تمت مع اولياء الامور و ادارات المدارس لتأييد النتائج المستقاة من الملاحظات الموقعية واستبيان الرأي. كذلك وتم اختيار ولاية سلانجور كنموذج لبقية الولايات الماليزية لما تحتويه من مؤسسات تعليمية خاصة ومحترمة وذات سمعة عالية . ان نتائج البحث تلخص العلاقة الكامنة للخلفية الاجتماعية ومستوى الدخل ومنهاج المدارس واجواء وامكانيات المدارس واداء المدارس والموقع ومستوى الكادر التدريسي باستخدام ((R II) تم ايجاد ان ترتيب العوامل المؤثرة بحسب اولياء الامور هو : المناهج الدراسية والاجواء المدرسية والاداء المدرسي ومستوى الكادر التدريسي والموقع والبعد والخلفية الاجتماعية و مستوى الدخل. و في الاخير تمثلت توصيات هذا البحث في ايجاد قوانين وتعليمات خاصة بالاضافة الى توفير ارضية مناسبة تزود بها المؤسسات التعليمية الخاصة وتوضيح اهمية المدارس الخاصة من ناحية توفير البدائل والتخصصات والتنوع في التعليم بالمقارنة مع باقي المدارس الحكومية في ماليزيا كما تؤكد هذه الدراسة ايضا على ضرورة تجهيز المدارس الخاصة بتسهيلات ملائمة وصيغ مفصلة لتلائم جميع الاطفال.

## APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science (Built Environment)

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Noor Alyani Binti Yaacob

Signature.....

Date .....

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CHOOSING PRIVATE SCHOOLS-A CASE STUDY OF SELANGOR**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABE	Attribute Based Education
DV	Dependent Variable
EDMP	Education Development Master Plan
EDP	Education Development Plan
GTP	Government Transformation Programme
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HPS	High-Performing Schools
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
IIUM	International Islamic University Malaysia
IV	Independent Variable
JAIS	<i>Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor</i>
JPBD	Jabatan Perancang Bandar dan Desa
KBSR	Integrated Primary School Curriculum ( <i>Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah</i> )
KBSM	Integrated Secondary School Curriculum ( <i>Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah</i> )
KSSR	<i>Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah</i>
LINUS	Literacy and Numeracy Screening
LP	Local Plan
MOE	Ministry of Education
NDP	National Development Plan
NEP	New Economic Policy

NGO	Non-Government Organization
NKRA	National Key Results Areas
NPE	National Philosophy of Education
RII	Relative Important Index
RMC	Research Management Centre
SPC	State Planning Committee
SPM	<i>Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia</i>
STPM	<i>Sijil Tinggi Persekolah Malaysia</i>
SPSS	Statistical Package of Social Sciences
SRI	<i>Sekolah Rendah Integrasi</i>
TCPA	Town and Country Planning Act
TCPD	Town and Country Planning Department
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
9MP	Ninth Malaysia Plan

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Recent developments in Malaysia have been geared towards making a mark on the world map as a knowledge-based economy. Malaysia is now becoming recognized within the region as an excellent educational centre. The Government of Malaysia has initiated major educational reforms covering all education levels from pre-school to primary, secondary, post-secondary and higher/tertiary education (Islam & Cheng, 2008). As Malaysia targets to become an outstanding educational contributor, and therefore meeting demand as well as new millennium requirements, the latest education blueprint was formulated (“Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 - 2025,” 2013).

The Education Act 1996 was enacted to ensure the high quality of the National education system in Malaysia. This act is implemented to improve and strengthen the education system in terms of kindergarten level, training for teachers, special education, private education, technical education and polytechnics. At the same time, it also emphasizes the values of education in terms of intellectual and economic values. Malaysian citizens may obtain education either from free education offered through the public school system in multilingual medium (Malay, Chinese and Indian), private school, or through home-schooling. Currently, the Malaysian education system is overseen by The Ministry of Education concerning matters involving kindergarten, primary, secondary, post-secondary, and tertiary level education.

Education in Malaysia is offered by both the public and private sectors. Public schools in Malaysia are mostly supervised and funded by the government whereas

private schools are run and funded mostly by private sector with a school governor in place. To conclude, the government bears the expenditure on education and the process of facilitating it, while parents and guardians bear expenditure such as tuition fees and many more.

## **1.2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND**

Education is one of the crucial aspects in the socio-economic growth of a country. It enhances human capital capability since this largely involves learned skills that are not readily gained at birth. Via knowledge and skill-development, education helps in accelerating economic growth. It boosts ones confidence, awareness and perspective in his/her everyday life. Education is also perceived as an economic commodity. By saying this, it serves both consumer and capital good as people utilize the knowledge they obtain through education and at the same time provides input for the production of goods (Olaniyan and Okemakinde, 2008). Ultimately, education develops human resources that are needed for the social and economic development of a country. Realizing its important roles, both government and individuals spend a lot of money on education. The government allocates a substantial amount of funds for education and its facilities whilst the parents would pay for it in terms of school fees.

Providing the children with the most excellent educational atmosphere is parents' desirable wish. Their choice to invest in their children's education is based on a few numbers of factors- social, economic and cultural. In the last few decades, the private sector has emerged as an essential source of impart education in Malaysia at all levels (Proap & Rihed, 1995). In recent years, private schools have improved their quality in terms of academic performance, teachers' quality and quality of facilities, attracting good effort through fee concession ranging from one to one hundred percent

full fee concessions. These schools, in a way, are providing education for the youth, and at the same time serve as a source of profit to investors who are investing their money into this sector.

This study's aim is to examine the development of the private school in Malaysia, and to analyse factors influencing parents' decision in choosing private sector education for their children. The study area focused on Selangor state, due to its many established private schools that can become a benchmark for other states to follow in the near future.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENTS**

Private sector education has become the preference of parents because it provides an alternative environment in which to invest their children's future. These schools provide alternative syllabi; claim to have better facilities, comprehensive environment and quality teachers. These are among the reasons why parents choose private schools over public schools. Based on the current physical development of private schools in Selangor, several issues or problems have been identified. These issues among others are:-

#### **I. Planning or Development of Private Schools are not in the Local Plan (LP)**

The Local Plan (LP) is a plan of an area prepared under the provision of Section 12. Act 172, formulating a detailed and appropriate proposal for the development and use of land in an area of local planning, including such measures as improvement of physical environments, the improvement of communications and management of traffic (TCP Act 172). Currently in Malaysia, the planning or development of private schools is usually undertaken at basic levels and is usually not in accordance with guidelines on school development, especially in terms of facilities provision. For instance, the

provisions of certain private schools do not achieve the standards of requirement framed by the Ministry of Education (MOE) or the planning authority of that area. Furthermore, for most local plans in Selangor, allocation of schools is typically secured for public schools and not private schools. The development of private schools is not planned/ allocated within the Local Plan of an area. Some private school locations are unsuitable, especially those that operate within commercial areas, and not within suitable site lots as private school land use are categorized under the commercial land use instead of public facilities land use. Apart from that, private schools also encounter lack of access related to planning matters such as traffic management and land use conflicts.

## **II. Physical development of facilities provided does not adhere to school development guidelines.**

According to Castaldi (1982), students' attitude and behaviour are depends on the facilities provided. Thus, it is important that sufficient facilities are provided as the school is a crucial institution where high quality physical and social environment is needed (Y, Sapri, & R, 2011). At the same time, Lackney (1999) also agreed that a conducive physical and social environment produce optimistic impact towards students' performance in education. Based on inventory and site observation by the researcher, only several of the selected private schools provide adequate facilities according to authorities' guidelines and requirements. Thus, this study also needs to identify the reason that parents still choose private schools despite this lack in facilities provision.

## **III. Social Exclusion**

Silver (1994) and Levitas (2005) concluded that the concept of social exclusion can be described in different meanings. They also stated that it has the potential benefit of

emphasizing social problems that do not fall under the conventional concept of poverty. However, the idea of social segregation turns out to be an influential ideological tool that legitimizes modest policy reforms completely compatible with rational understandings. Consumers perceive that a higher price indicate better quality. As private schools are not socially funded and expensive, the children are excluded from mixing with children from different backgrounds, incomes and races such as children who attend Chinese private schools and Islamic private schools. They only mix with children of their own race, thus contributing to this so-called social exclusion. According to McDaniel, (2006), parents want their children to socialise with children who are of equal status. Moreover, Halstead (1994) assured that parents who send their children to branded private institutions occasionally want to maintain their social class and this reflects the values of the child's family.

#### **1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

The aim of the research is to study the development of the private school sector and analyse the factors influencing parents' decision and criteria in choosing private schools over public schools. Based on the literature review, several factors that influence the parents' decision in selecting schools for their children have been identified. In this study, eight highly significant factors have been highlighted. The objectives that have been formulated to achieve the goal are:

- i. To study the development of private schools in Selangor.
- ii. To identify the factors influencing parents decision in selecting private schools over public schools.

- iii. To assess the physical condition of the selected private schools based on Manual Guidelines of Town and Country Planning Department and/or School Infrastructure requirement by the Ministry of Education.
- iv. To provide suggestions and recommendations in enhancing the development of private schools within the study area.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

From the research objectives formulated, several research questions are derived as follows:-

- i. What is the development of the education system include the development of private schools and types of privates schools established in Malaysia?
- ii. What are the factors that determine parents' preference in choosing private schools for their children?
- iii. What are the guidelines/requirements by the TCP Department or Ministry of Education pertaining to private school provisions?
- iv. What are the guidelines or requirement provided by the local authorities for school infrastructure provisions?
- v. What does the private school sector contribute in enhancing the education system in Malaysia?

## **1.6 RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCES**

The research of factors influencing parents' decision in choosing private schools for their children discussed contributing reasons from the parents' perspective. This study highlights several influencing factors as being discussed in literature review chapter. The compatibility of these factors is then compared between the literature review

method and on field questionnaires survey. The factors compared are generally based on research papers from previous researchers who studied a similar research topic.

Therefore, this study provides an analysis on the choice of several main influencing factors contributing to the parents' selection. As enrolling children in private schools has now become a trend, this research is significant to the parties involved, such as the education department within the government, the investors, the parents and students' guardians, the teachers, private school administrators, as well as the local authority in terms of the enhancement of the private school sector. This can garner more attention in order to attract local and foreign investors of private education in Malaysia.

Moreover, the private sector hopes to support the public sector in educating and civilizing human capital as well as sustain the improvement of the education system in Malaysia. Involvement of the community and other involved parties might positively enhance the education system.

*“The Ministry will ensure that parents, the community, and the private sector are fully engaged as partners in education. The focus is to deliver quality education in an integrated, effective and efficient manner.”*  
(Malaysia Blueprint 2013-2025 p.194).

This research also identified anticipation from the analysis, suggested methods and guidelines contributing to strengthening both the private and public school sectors in Malaysia's education system. This research looks forward to contributing to the local authorities, education divisions and town and country planning boards, as well as involved communities. Improvement in terms of providing better facilities within the education sector, framing of policies and new guidelines for the construction and development of private schools relevant to the current context can be formulated to