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**DETERMINANTS OF PARENTS' SCHOOL CHOICE
DECISIONS IN MALAYSIA**



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**MASTER OF SCIENCE (MANAGEMENT)
UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA
JANUARY 2026**

**DETERMINANTS OF PARENTS' SCHOOL CHOICE DECISIONS IN
MALAYSIA**



**Thesis Submitted to
College of Business
Universiti Utara Malaysia,
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Master of Sciences
(Management)**



**Pusat Pengajian Pengurusan
Perniagaan**

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

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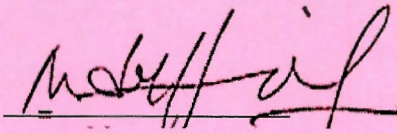
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ABSTRACT

This study discusses about determinants of parents' school choice decisions in Malaysia that shape parents' choices and examines their strategic impact on the management of international schools. In recent years, Malaysia's education landscape has witnessed a steady increase in parents opting for international schools instead of national institutions. This shift highlights growing parental expectations for higher educational standards, globally oriented curricula and improved learning outcomes. The study addresses the general issue of diminishing confidence in the national school system and the managerial need for international schools to align with changing parental demands. Its objectives are to identify the main determinants of parental preferences, evaluate perceptions of education quality and analyze the strategic responses required from school administrators. A quantitative research approach was applied through the distribution of structured questionnaires to parents whose children attend international schools across Malaysia. Data were examined using descriptive and inferential statistical methods to identify relationships among factors such as curriculum quality, instructional approach, school facilities, teacher performance and tuition fees. The results reveal that parents place the greatest importance on financial affordability, teacher quality and professionalism, curriculum quality, English-medium instruction and global exposure opportunities. Cultural value also influence decisions to a moderate degree. The study concludes that international schools should prioritize continuous teacher professional development, curriculum innovation, and effective communication strategies to maintain competitiveness and meet evolving parental expectations.

Keywords: Parental choice, international education, school management, Malaysia, strategic response

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneliti faktor-faktor penentu yang mempengaruhi keputusan pemilihan sekolah oleh ibu bapa di Malaysia. Dalam beberapa tahun kebelakangan ini, berlaku peningkatan dalam kecenderungan ibu bapa memilih sekolah antarabangsa berbanding sekolah kebangsaan, sejajar dengan peningkatan jangkaan terhadap kualiti pendidikan, kurikulum berorientasikan global dan hasil pembelajaran yang lebih baik. Kajian ini bertujuan mengenal pasti faktor utama yang mempengaruhi pilihan ibu bapa, menilai persepsi terhadap kualiti pendidikan, serta menganalisis implikasi strategik terhadap pengurusan sekolah antarabangsa. Pendekatan penyelidikan kuantitatif digunakan melalui pengedaran soal selidik berstruktur kepada ibu bapa yang mempunyai anak bersekolah di sekolah antarabangsa di seluruh Malaysia. Seterusnya, data dianalisis menggunakan kaedah statistik deskriptif dan inferensi bagi mengenal pasti hubungan antara faktor sosioekonomi, kualiti sekolah, pengaruh sosial, kualiti dan profesionalisme guru serta faktor budaya terhadap pemilihan sekolah. Keputusan kajian menunjukkan bahawa faktor sosioekonomi merupakan penentu paling signifikan dalam pemilihan sekolah, diikuti oleh kualiti dan profesionalisme guru, kualiti sekolah dan pengaruh sosial. Faktor budaya didapati tidak memberi pengaruh signifikan apabila pemboleh ubah lain dikawal. Akhir sekali, kajian ini merumuskan bahawa sekolah antarabangsa perlu memberi penekanan kepada pembangunan profesional guru, peningkatan kualiti kurikulum dan strategi pengurusan yang berkesan bagi memenuhi jangkaan ibu bapa dan mengekalkan daya saing.

Kata kunci: Pemilihan sekolah, ibu bapa, sekolah antarabangsa, pengurusan pendidikan, Malaysia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed to the successful completion of this study. Firstly, my sincere appreciation goes to my respected supervisor Professor Dr. Mohamad Hanif Bin Abu Hassan for his invaluable guidance, constructive feedback and unwavering support throughout this research. His expertise and encouragement have been instrumental in shaping this study. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the lecturers of my university for their invaluable guidance, support, and knowledge throughout the course of my study. Their dedication and academic insights have contributed significantly to the successful completion of this thesis. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the respondents who took the time to participate in the surveys and interviews, providing essential insights that made this research possible. Your contributions are greatly appreciated. Furthermore, I am thankful to my family and friends for their continuous encouragement, patience and understanding throughout this journey. Your unwavering support has been a source of motivation for me. Lastly, I acknowledge the contributions of all authors and researchers whose work has provided the foundation for this study. Without their scholarly efforts, this research would not have been possible.

Thank you all for your invaluable support and guidance.

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF RESEARCH

1.0 INTRODUCTION

From the 1960s to the 1990s and beyond, most of us began our education in national schools, whether in Malay-medium institutions or vernacular schools like Tamil and Chinese schools. Over the years, Malaysia's education system has undergone numerous transformations. Schools have traditionally been seen as a foundation for nurturing students and preparing them for the future. However, in recent times, many parents have lost confidence in national schools' ability to educate and guide their children effectively. They perceive international schools as better alternatives for securing their children's academic and personal development. Over the past decade, international, private and Islamic schools have gained significant attention in the education sector. Despite ongoing investments and policy efforts aimed at enhancing the national education system to meet global standards, parental trust in the system remains a concern. Many parents believe these schools provide a more holistic and globally competitive education compared to national schools, which often face criticism for rigid curricula, language barriers, and concerns over declining educational standards.

Understanding why parents choose international schools over national schools is crucial for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in the Malaysian education sector. By analyzing these factors, this research aims to shed light on parental expectations, concerns about public schooling and the broader implications for Malaysia's education system.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Malaysia's educational system has experienced profound changes over the years. Initially, learning was primarily delivered through Islamic religious institutions such as madrasahs and sekolah pondok, which represent some of the earliest formal educational structures in the region (Muhamad & Othman, 2020; Ninot Aziz, 2020). With the advent of British colonial rule, a secular schooling system was introduced,

including teacher training colleges aimed at uplifting Malay education and developing local educators. The colonial era also saw the emergence of vernacular schools by Chinese and Indian migrant communities, which employed teachers from their respective homelands (Kadir, 2020).

A pivotal reform came with the 1956 Razak Report, which sought to standardise the schooling system by introducing a unified national curriculum across language streams Malay, English, Chinese and Tamil at primary level, and only Malay and English at secondary level. Schools using Malay became designated as “national schools,” while those conducting instruction in other languages became “national-type schools.” In the following decades, especially during the 1970s, the government pursued a shift of English-medium national type schools toward full Malay-medium national schools, aligning with language policy goals.

From the 1990s onward, Malaysia witnessed a marked surge in demand for private and international schooling. This shift was driven by both domestic families and expatriate communities seeking globally recognised curricula and English-medium instruction. Malaysia now offers several internationally accredited programs such as the International Baccalaureate (IB), A-Levels and the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), which have grown increasingly popular among parents. As entry into tertiary education via these pathways often depends on rigorous assessments, demand for specialised tuition and academic support has expanded accordingly.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In recent years Malaysian parents have been shifting their schooling preferences toward international, producing notable market and managerial challenges for both international and national education providers. Enrollment in Malaysia’s international schools rose by about 11% over the five years to July 2024, reaching roughly 111,185 students (ISC Research as reported in The Straits Times, 2024). Local Malaysian students now constitute the majority of that growth, representing approximately two-thirds of enrolments (Malay Mail, 2024; The Edge Malaysia, 2024). The increase includes a near-50% rise in Bumiputera enrolment in

international schools between 2019 and 2024, signalling widening appeal across demographic groups (Free Malaysia Today, 2024).

Concurrently, the national system confronts persistent operational problems that risk further shifting parental confidence: teacher shortages (an estimated shortfall cited by unions and sector reports), ageing infrastructure and overcrowded classrooms in some districts, and uneven learning outcomes that widen perceived quality gaps (Education International reporting NUTP statements, 2024; sector analyses, 2024). These supply-side constraints coincide with rising parental demand for English-medium, internationally benchmarked curricula (IB, IGCSE, A-Levels) and for schools that demonstrate global pathways to higher education drivers that also fuel demand for private tutoring and academic support services (The Straits Times, 2024; Grand View Research, 2023).

This convergence of rising demand for internationalized education and systemic pressures in the national sector creates an important knowledge gap, there is limited recent empirical evidence on which specific factors (curriculum type, language of instruction, perceived employability/tertiary outcomes, school facilities, teacher quality, price/value) most strongly drive Malaysian parents to choose international schools and how international school leaders are adapting strategy (capacity planning, branding, pricing, teacher recruitment/retention, and parent engagement) to manage rapid growth and maintain quality. Without contemporary, evidence-based understanding of parental priorities and managerial responses, schools risk misaligned strategies that could undermine educational quality, financial sustainability, and sector equity.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. Does parents' socioeconomic status significantly influence the likelihood of enrolling children in international schools in Malaysia?
- ii. Do parents' cultural values and beliefs significantly influence their choice between international and national schools in Malaysia?

- iii. Is there a significant relationship between parents' perceptions of school quality, curriculum, and facilities and their preference for international schools in Malaysia?
- iv. Is there a significant relationship between peer and social influence and parents' decisions to enroll their children in international schools in Malaysia?
- v. Is teacher quality and professionalism significantly related to parents' school choice decisions in Malaysia?

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

In this research, objectives are stated in order to identify the goals for this research project.

- i. To examine the influence of parents' socioeconomic status on the likelihood of enrolling children in international schools in Malaysia.
- ii. To determine whether parents' cultural values and beliefs significantly influence their choice between international and national schools in Malaysia.
- iii. To assess the relationship between parents' perceptions of school quality, curriculum, and facilities and their preference for international schools in Malaysia.
- iv. To investigate the relationship between peer and social influence and parents' decisions to enroll their children in international schools in Malaysia.
- v. To analyse the relationship between teacher quality and professionalism and parents' school choice decisions in Malaysia.

1.4 SCOPE OF STUDY

This study focuses on analyzing the factors influencing parents' preferences for enrolling their children in international schools rather than national schools in Malaysia. The scope of the study includes the following key areas:

The study will consider educational institutions as international schools and national schools. Specifically, it will compare and contrast the educational offerings, curricula (e.g., International Baccalaureate, A-Levels, IGCSE) and facilities provided by these institutions.

Next, the research will focus on parental demographics as parents of school-age children, considering different socio-economic backgrounds with particular emphasis on those with higher financial means who can afford private or international education also lower income group of parents who still want to enroll their kids in these schools.

Followed by that, the study will focus on the timeframe like period post-pandemic (2020 to present) examining how the educational landscape and parental preferences have shifted in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis. It will also explore the impact of economic factors, such as financial instability and employment changes, on parents' willingness to invest in private or international schooling.

By examining these key areas, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of why parents are increasingly opting for private and international schools and the implications this has for Malaysia's national education system.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This study is significant for several stakeholders in Malaysia's education system, offering valuable insights that can influence educational policies, improve institutional practices and better align the education system with parental expectations. The key contributions of this study are as follows:

The findings will provide essential data for policymakers to understand why there is a growing shift from national schools to private and international schools. By identifying the factors behind this trend, the study will inform future educational policies aimed at addressing these concerns, improving public education quality, and re-establishing parental trust in national schools (Rahman & Ghani, 2015).

Schools, both national and private, will benefit from understanding the preferences and priorities of parents when it comes to educational choices. Private and international schools could refine their strategies to meet these demands, while national schools could assess how to improve their offerings to retain and attract students (Aziz, 2021; Lee & Tan, 2020).

The research provides a deeper understanding of the underlying reasons why certain groups of parents, particularly those with higher financial means, prefer international schools despite the availability of free public education. This insight will help educators and school administrators better align their offerings with parental expectations, particularly when it comes to academic rigor, facilities, and global exposure (Yusof & Ibrahim, 2020). Furthermore, it highlights the growing demand for religious-based education, such as private tahfiz schools, among Muslim families (Ismail & Hassan, 2020).

1.7 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

The following words or key terms are used in this study and their definitions are as below:

International Schools

Educational institutions that offer curricula from foreign countries, such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) or Cambridge International Examinations (CIE), and cater to both expatriate and local students seeking a global education experience (Hayden & Thompson, 2013; Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2012). □

National Schools

Public schools in Malaysia that follow the national curriculum established by the Ministry of Education, primarily using Bahasa Melayu as the medium of instruction, and aim to provide standardized education that is accessible to all Malaysian citizens (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013; UNESCO, 2015).

Parental Preference

The decision-making process and criteria used by parents when selecting an educational institution for their children, based on factors such as perceived quality, cost, reputation, and future opportunities (Bekele, 2023; *Frontiers in Education*, 2022).

Education Quality

The standard of education provided by a school, encompassing aspects such as curriculum effectiveness, teacher qualifications, student performance outcomes, and available learning resources that support effective teaching and learning processes (Scheerens & Creemers, 2023; UNESCO, 2023). □

Socioeconomic Factors

Financial and social conditions influencing parents' school choices, including household income, occupation, social status, and the affordability of tuition fees, which affect both access to and preferences for different types of schools (OECD, 2023; Reardon, 2021). □

Cultural Factors

Beliefs, values, and traditions that shape parental preferences for certain types of schools, including language of instruction, religious considerations, and exposure to global perspectives, which influence educational expectations and choices (Yamamoto & Holloway, 2019; Archer, 2020).

Curriculum Differences

Variations in subjects offered, teaching methods, and assessment systems between international, private, and national schools. National schools in Malaysia follow the Malaysian national curriculum (KSSR/KSSM) with standardised content and national examinations, while private and international schools adopt foreign or globally recognised curricula (e.g., Cambridge IGCSE/A-Levels, IB) that feature different grading systems and academic standards oriented toward global benchmarks (CHIS, 2025; educationdestinationmalaysia.com, 2024).

Medium of Instruction

In Malaysian national schools, Bahasa Malaysia is the main medium of instruction with English taught as a second language, while international schools primarily use English as the language of instruction, often alongside additional languages depending on the curriculum. Parental choices of schools may be influenced by language preferences due to perceived impacts on children's academic development, future education, and career prospects (educationdestinationmalaysia.com, 2024; UTM Language Studies Journal, 2025).

1.8 ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

This study is structured into five chapters, each focusing on different aspects of the research.

Chapter 1: Introduction provides an overview of the study, including the background, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study and scope of the research. It also outlines the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review presents an analysis of previous studies related to school selection factors in Malaysia. It discusses various aspects such as education quality, socioeconomic factors, cultural influences and parental perceptions. Theoretical frameworks and models relevant to parental decision-making in education are also examined.

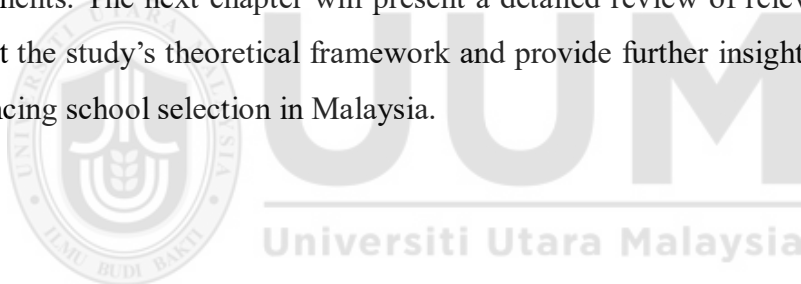
Chapter 3: Research Methodology explains the research design, data collection methods, sampling techniques and data analysis procedures. It provides details on how the study is conducted, including the research instruments used, ethical considerations and limitations of the methodology.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings presents the results of the data collected from surveys, interviews or other research methods. The findings are analyzed and discussed in relation to the research objectives and questions with statistical and thematic interpretations where applicable.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations summarizes the key findings, discusses their implications and provides recommendations for policymakers, educators, and parents. It also suggests directions for future research based on the study's limitations and findings.

1.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In conclusion, this chapter has provided a comprehensive introduction to the study on the factors influencing parents' preference for sending their children to international schools rather than national schools in Malaysia. The chapter began with a background discussion on Malaysia's education system, followed by the problem statement, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, scope of the research and definitions of key words. Overall, this chapter has set the foundation for the subsequent chapters by framing the research context and outlining its key components. The next chapter will present a detailed review of relevant literature to support the study's theoretical framework and provide further insight into the factors influencing school selection in Malaysia.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The choice of schooling for children is a critical decision for parents, influencing their child's academic and personal development. In Malaysia, parents have the option of enrolling their children in national (public) schools, private schools or international schools. In recent years, there has been a growing trend of parents preferring private and international schools over national schools. This literature review explores the key factors influencing this preference, including curriculum quality, language of instruction, teaching methodologies, school environment, future opportunities and parental concerns about the national education system.

2.1 THEORETICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.1 Theories on Parents' Decisions

The decision-making process of parents in selecting schools for their children is complex and influenced by a combination of economic, social, cultural and psychological factors. Several theories provide a foundation for understanding these decisions.

2.1.1.1 Human Capital Theory

According to human capital theory (Becker, 1964), parents view education as an investment in their children's future economic and social success. Recent research supports this: for example, Hung & Ramsden (2021) found that parental investment in education serves not only to build children's skills (human capital) but also to signal social mobility opportunities. In the Malaysian context, Salleh et al. (2023) emphasise that national education reforms aim to strengthen human capital through schooling improvements. Furthermore, Behrman (2022) shows that in low and middle income countries, parental investments (in schooling, health, cognitive and non-cognitive skills) are key determinants of children's human capital formation. Finally, a 2025 study in IJFMR underscores how education/training investments

increase individual productivity and economic value, directly aligning with the logic of human capital theory.

2.1.1.2. Rational Choice Theory

Rational Choice Theory holds that decision-makers seek to optimise outcomes by comparing the likely advantages and disadvantages of each available option. Applied to school selection, it implies that parents weigh factors such as better teaching quality, global curricula, English language instruction, enhanced facilities and international recognition against higher tuition, travel time and other costs. Contemporary studies validate this view: one UK-based analysis found that parents' school preferences follow a utility-maximising logic, influenced by academic ratings, socio-economic makeup and geographical proximity (Jackson, 2024). Research in other national settings also demonstrates how parents assess trade-offs between cost and quality in educational choices (Bekele & Kenea, 2024). Accordingly, the decision to enrol a child in an international school rather than a national school emerges as a rational strategy when the expected long-term benefits (in terms of earnings potential, upward mobility and global opportunities) appear to surpass the extra costs incurred.

2.2 EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Factors parents prefer to send their kids to International Schools rather than National Schools:

2.2.1 Curriculum and Academic Quality

One of the primary reasons parents opt for international and private schools is the perceived superiority of their curriculum. International schools in Malaysia offer globally recognized curricula such as the International Baccalaureate (IB), the Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and the American curriculum (Tan, 2019). These curricula are often considered more comprehensive and emphasize critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills (Lee, 2021). In contrast, the Malaysian national curriculum is sometimes criticized for its heavy emphasis on rote memorization and standardized testing (Mohamad & Yusof, 2020).

Here's a table comparing key aspects of the different curricula mentioned:

Comparison of International and National School Curricula in Malaysia

Table 2.1

Comparison between schools. (Sources: CHIS, 2025; MIGS, 2024; IBO, 2021)

Aspect	International Baccalaureate (IB)	Cambridge IGCSE	American Curriculum	Malaysian National Curriculum
Focus	Inquiry-based, interdisciplinary learning	Subject-focused, exam-driven	Broad-based, flexible learning	Standardized, exam-oriented
Assessment	Internal & external assessments, coursework	Exams & coursework	Continuous assessment, GPA system	Standardized exams (SPM, PT3)
Skills Emphasized	Critical thinking, research, global perspective	Analytical skills, independent learning	Creativity, leadership, problem-solving	Memorization, exam performance
Recognition	Global university recognition	Widely accepted in UK, US, Australia, etc.	Recognized mainly in US institutions	Recognized mainly in Malaysia
Language of Instruction	English (varies by school)	English	English	Primarily Malay
Cost	High	Moderate to high	High	Low (government-funded)

2.2.2. Language of Instruction

The language of instruction is another crucial factor influencing parental choices. International and private schools typically use English as the primary medium of instruction, which aligns with global academic and professional requirements (Chong & Abdullah, 2018). In contrast, national schools primarily use Bahasa Malaysia with limited English exposure which some parents believe may hinder their children's future opportunities in an increasingly globalized job market (Lim, 2020). Parents who prioritize bilingual or multilingual education are therefore more inclined towards private or international schools.

The graph below shows the preference of parents based on the language of instruction for their children in different types of schools in Malaysia.

Table 2.2

Comparison of preferred language (Sources: Lee, D. P.-Y., & Ting, S.-H., 2015; Albury, N. J., 2020; Mahmud, F. N., & Salehuddin, K., 2024)

Type of School	English Preference (%)	Bahasa Malaysia Preference (%)	Bilingual (Malay + English) Preference (%)
International Schools	90%	5%	5%
Private Schools	75%	15%	10%
National Schools	30%	65%	5%

2.2.3. Teaching Methodologies and Learning Approaches

International and private schools are often preferred due to their innovative teaching methodologies. These schools emphasize student-centered learning, interactive teaching and project based assessments, which many parents believe enhance their children’s cognitive and social development (Rahman & Tan, 2021). National schools, on the other hand, still rely heavily on traditional lecture-based teaching and standardized examinations, which may not cater to diverse learning styles (Ismail et al., 2019).

2.2.4 School Environment and Extracurricular Activities

The overall learning environment plays a significant role in school selection. Private and international schools generally have smaller class sizes, allowing for more personalized attention and interaction between students and teachers (Ariffin & Mahmud, 2022). Additionally, these schools often provide better infrastructure, well-equipped facilities, and a wider range of extracurricular activities, including arts, music, sports and leadership programs (Hassan, 2020). Such holistic development opportunities attract parents seeking a well-rounded education for their children.

2.2.5 Social and Cultural Exposure

International schools, in particular, offer diverse cultural exposure by enrolling students from various nationalities. This multicultural environment fosters global perspectives and cross-cultural understanding, which many parents value for their children’s personal and professional growth (Cheong, 2019). On the other hand,

national schools, despite promoting national identity, may lack the same level of international exposure and diversity (Rahim, 2021).

2.2.6 Future Educational and Career Opportunities

Another key motivation for parents is the future educational and career opportunities provided by private and international schools. Graduates from these institutions are often better prepared for admission to top universities worldwide due to their internationally recognized qualifications (Mok & Lee, 2021). Parents perceive this as a long-term investment in their children's future, increasing their chances of success in competitive global job markets.

2.2.7 Concerns Over the National Education System

Many parents have concerns regarding the Malaysian national education system, including the quality of teaching, rigid curriculum, and political influences (Ahmad & Zain, 2020). Issues such as inconsistent education policies, frequent syllabus changes and perceived declining standards in public education have contributed to the shift towards alternative schooling options (Ali et al., 2018). Furthermore, concerns over student discipline, peer influence and safety in public schools have further reinforced this preference (Kaur, 2019).

Here is the pie chart visualizing parental concerns regarding national schools in Malaysia. It illustrates the distribution of concerns, such as quality of teaching, curriculum rigidity, political influence, inconsistent education policies, and issues related to discipline and safety.

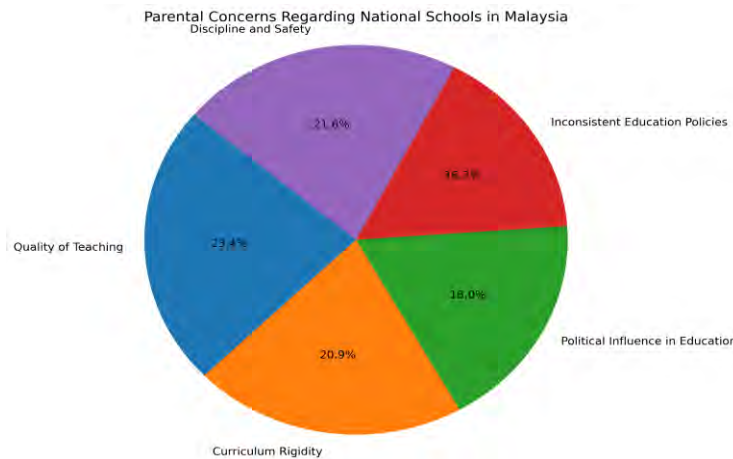


Figure 2.1

Parental concerns (Sources: Ismai, K., Mohamad Shukri, M. F., & Badzis, M., 2024; New Straits Times, 2025; IPGCE @ UWE, 2024;

2.3 VARIABLE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the key variables identified in the theoretical framework that influence parents' decisions regarding school choice. The variables are school choice, socioeconomic factors, cultural factors, school factors, and social influence. Each variable is explained in relation to previous literature and theoretical perspectives.

2.3.1 School Choice

School choice describes the process by which parents decide on the type of schooling best suited to their children's academic, social and moral development. In making this decision, families evaluate a range of school attributes such as academic reputation, curriculum type, instructional language and accessibility. Recent research shows that parents place high value on schools with strong academic credentials and favourable peer composition, even when faced with trade-offs in distance or cost (Jackson, 2024). In the Malaysian context, numerous parents opt for international schools because these institutions promise English-medium instruction, globally recognized curricula and pathways to overseas tertiary institutions, while national schools are often chosen for their affordability, proximity and alignment with local community values (SchoolAdvisor Team, 2025). Hence, selecting a school reflects both a strategic investment decision and a sociocultural orientation.

2.3.2 Socioeconomic Factors

Socioeconomic factors remain one of the most influential determinants of parental school choice. This dimension typically encompasses household income, parental education level, and occupational status, which together shape both financial capacity and access to educational information. Families with higher socioeconomic status (SES) are often better positioned to afford tuition fees, transportation, extracurricular activities, and other expenses associated with private or international schooling (Abdullah, Mohd Salleh, & Jamaluddin, 2024). Parents from more affluent backgrounds also tend to exhibit higher expectations regarding school quality and are more likely to pursue institutions that emphasize global exposure and advanced curricula (Hai Rul Halim & Safiai, 2024).

Furthermore, parents' educational attainment significantly affects their awareness and valuation of diverse schooling options. Educated parents are more inclined to research curriculum types, teaching quality, and international accreditation before deciding on a school (Ramasamy, Singh, & Singh, 2024). Occupational prestige likewise plays an indirect role by shaping parents' social networks and the information they receive about reputable schools, thereby reinforcing the desirability of certain educational pathways (Tan, Cheah, & Siaw, 2023). Recent findings in Malaysia reveal a positive correlation between socioeconomic status and enrolment in international or private schools, highlighting that SES influences not only access to quality education but also the cultural and aspirational values driving parents' decisions (Abdullah et al., 2024; Yusof & Ibrahim, 2020). In this context, socioeconomic status functions as both a material and symbolic form of capital that guides how families strategically invest in their children's education.

2.3.3 Cultural Factors

Cultural factors encompass parents' educational beliefs, value orientations and preferences regarding curriculum, including whether they favour local or global frameworks, place importance on international exposure, or prioritise religious or national identity. Parents' attitudes shaped by cultural norms and identity, strongly influence their school-selection intentions (Ting, 2022). For example, in Malaysia,

many parents choose schools that align with their ethnic or language identity, such as Malay-medium, Chinese-medium or international schools, with language of instruction and cultural alignment playing a key role (Ismail, 2024). Families who prioritise global competencies typically favour schools offering English-medium instruction, multicultural learning environments and internationally recognised curricula, while those emphasising national heritage, values or religious alignment may opt for national or faith-based schools. In this way, cultural capital parents' internalised predispositions and socialised preferences shapes both how schooling options are evaluated and how school type is selected.

2.3.4 School Quality Factors

School quality factors refer to the internal attributes of a school that parents assess when selecting an institution. These include educational quality, institutional reputation, the standard and availability of facilities, scope of extracurricular activities, and class size or teacher-student ratio. Many parents make decisions based on visible cues of quality such as the school's accreditation, its record of university placements or global pathways, and the reputation it holds in the market (Bekele & Kenea, 2024; StudyMalaysia, 2024). In the Malaysian context, parents frequently cite modern facilities, well-qualified teachers, smaller class sizes and international affiliations as key distinguishing features of preferred schools (The Straits Times, 2024; StudyMalaysia, 2025). Thus, school-related factors serve as both tangible assets (labs, sports facilities, infrastructure) and intangible markers (brand, teacher expertise, reputation) that significantly shape parental perceptions and decisions about school choice.

2.3.5 Social Influence

Social influence refers to how parents' decisions about their children's schools are shaped by the recommendations, behaviours and expectations of their social networks such as relatives, friends, colleagues and community members. According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, subjective norms what individuals believe others expect of them play a key role in shaping intentions to act. Many parents rely on advice and first-hand experiences within their social circles when choosing

schools. In Malaysia, evidence shows that parents may lean toward certain schools because peers in their social group have done so, thereby reinforcing the school's legitimacy and desirability (Scoop, 2024). Moreover, studies reveal that social media and other communication networks amplify these influences, making social influence one of the strongest determinants of school choice (Salleh, 2023). Therefore, social influence operates both as a psychological mechanism through subjective norms and as a structural one through network effects and social capital guiding parents' selection of international, private or national schools.

2.3.6 Teacher's Quality & Professionalism

Teacher quality and professionalism are widely recognised as critical determinants of effective schooling and parental school choice. High-quality teachers are characterised by strong subject knowledge, effective pedagogical skills, classroom management competence, and continuous professional development, all of which contribute to improved student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2022). In international school contexts, parents often associate teacher professionalism with instructional credibility, academic rigor, and the ability to support students in globally oriented curricula (Zhao & Qiu, 2023). As a result, teacher quality serves not only as an indicator of educational effectiveness but also as a key factor influencing parents' confidence and decision-making when selecting schools.

2.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK DISCUSSION

School quality factors refer to the institutional attributes and features of a school that influence how parents evaluate and select it. These include educational quality, institutional reputation, infrastructure and facilities, the breadth of extracurricular activities, and teacher-student ratios. Research shows that parents often rely on proxies of school effectiveness such as accreditation, teacher capability, modern infrastructure and alumni outcomes to guide their choices (Jonathan et al., 2023). In the Malaysian context, rising preference for international schools has been linked to perceptions of high-quality instruction, superior facilities and globally-recognised curricula (The Straits Times, 2024). Consequently, these school-level characteristics operate as both tangible assets like labs, sports, tech infrastructure and intangible

signals like brand prestige, teacher expertise, global pathways that significantly shape parents' decision-making about whether to enrol their child in an international, private or national school.

2.5 HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

This section develops hypotheses based on the conceptual framework presented earlier. The framework suggests that socioeconomic, cultural, school-related, and social factors influence parents' decisions when choosing among international, private, or national schools. Drawing on relevant theories and empirical evidence, the following sub-sections elaborate the proposed relationships.

2.5.1 Relationship between Socioeconomic Factors and School Choice

Socioeconomic factors are widely recognised as significant determinants of parents' school choice decisions, particularly in the context of international education. Parents with higher household income, education levels, and occupational status generally possess greater financial capacity and informational resources, enabling them to consider international schools as viable options. Recent studies indicate that higher socioeconomic status is associated with a stronger preference for schools perceived to offer superior academic quality, global exposure, and long-term educational advantages, despite higher tuition fees (Bekele & Kenea, 2024; OECD, 2025). Therefore, it is hypothesised that socioeconomic status positively influences parents' likelihood of enrolling their children in international schools rather than national schools.

H1: Socioeconomic status positively influences the likelihood of enrolling children in international schools instead of national schools. (Bekele & Kenea, 2024; OECD, 2025)

2.5.2 Relationship between Cultural Factors and School Choice

Cultural factors play an important role in shaping parents' educational preferences and school choice decisions. Parents' cultural values and beliefs such as attitudes

towards language of instruction, pedagogical approaches, discipline, and global orientation often influence their perceptions of what constitutes a “good” education for their children. Recent studies suggest that parents who value international exposure, multicultural learning environments, and global competencies are more inclined to consider international schools as aligning with their cultural expectations and aspirations for their children (Hornberger & Vaish, 2021; Zhao & Qiu, 2023). Cultural beliefs also guide parents’ interpretations of curriculum relevance and school ethos, which can affect their school type selection. Therefore, this study hypothesises that parents’ cultural values and beliefs significantly influence their choice of school type.

H2: Parents’ cultural values and beliefs significantly influence their choice of school type. (Hornberger & Vaish, 2021; Zhao & Qiu, 2023)

2.5.3 Relationship between School Factors and School Choice

School-related factors such as perceived school quality, curriculum relevance, and adequacy of facilities are widely recognised as critical determinants of parents’ school choice decisions. Parents tend to prefer schools that demonstrate strong academic standards, well-structured curricula, and supportive learning environments, as these factors are associated with positive educational outcomes and future opportunities for students. Recent studies indicate that international schools are often perceived as offering superior curricula, modern facilities, and globally oriented educational experiences, which significantly influence parental preference toward such institutions (Bekele & Kenea, 2024; Darling-Hammond et al., 2022). Consequently, this study hypothesises that positive perceptions of school quality, curriculum, and facilities are significantly associated with parents’ preference for international schools.

H3: Positive perceptions of school quality, curriculum, and facilities are significantly associated with parents’ preference for international schools. (Bekele & Kenea, 2024; Darling-Hammond et al., 2022)

2.5.4 Relationship between Social Influence and School Choice

Social influence plays a significant role in shaping parents' school choice decisions, particularly through recommendations, shared experiences, and opinions from family members, peers, and social networks. Parents often rely on information from trusted social sources to reduce uncertainty and evaluate the suitability of different school options. Recent research suggests that positive word-of-mouth communication and peer endorsement can strengthen parents' confidence in selecting international schools, especially in contexts where educational quality and reputation are highly valued (Kwon & Kim, 2021; Lei & Zhao, 2023). Accordingly, this study hypothesises that peer and social influence is positively correlated with parents' decisions to enrol their children in international schools.

H4: Peer and social influence positively correlates with the decision to enroll children in international schools. (Kwon & Kim, 2021; Lei & Zhao, 2023)

2.5.5 Relationship between Teacher's Quality & Professionalism and School Choice

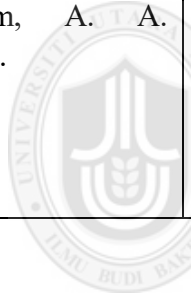
Teacher quality and professionalism have been consistently highlighted as critical factors influencing parents' decisions when selecting schools for their children. High-quality teachers are often associated with effective teaching methods, subject mastery, and the ability to foster a supportive learning environment (Darling-Hammond, 2021). Professionalism, including continuous development, adherence to ethical standards, and commitment to student outcomes, further enhances parents' confidence in a school's ability to deliver quality education (OECD, 2022). Previous studies indicate that parents often prioritize schools with competent and professional teachers, believing that teacher expertise directly impacts academic achievement and holistic development (Akmal et al., 2023; Tan & Lee, 2022). Therefore, it is posited that the perceived quality and professionalism of teachers play a significant role in shaping school choice.

H5: Teacher quality and professionalism have a significant positive relationship with school choice. (Akmal et al., 2023; Tan & Lee, 2022)

Table 2.3: *Summary of Key Variables*

Author & Year	Title	Variable
Ramasamy, R., Singh, G. K. S., & Singh, R. K. P. G. (2024).	Evaluating Parental Preferences for Preschool Education in Malaysia: A Case Study of Kindergartens in Pulau Pinang. <i>International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development</i> , 13(4), 1225-1246.	Socioeconomic status (income, education), cultural values, and school quality as predictors of school choice.
Tan, S. M., Cheah, S. L., & Siaw, Y. L. (2023).	Entrepreneurial Leadership and Parents' Private Schooling Intention: A Study in the Malaysian Education Landscape. <i>International Journal of Behavioural Analytics</i> , 3(2), 1-16.	Parental income, perceived school quality, and social influence on intention to choose private schooling.
Mustapha, R., & Ahmad, M. (2022).	Determinants of Parental Decision-Making in Choosing Private and International Schools in Malaysia. <i>Malaysian Journal of Education</i> , 47(2), 55-70.	Socioeconomic factors, peer and family influence, perceived curriculum quality.
Tan, C. K., & Lim, A. (2021).	Factors Influencing Parental Choice of Schooling in Urban Malaysia. <i>Asian Education Studies</i> , 6(3), 44-59.	Cultural exposure preference, language of instruction, and perceived academic standards.
Abdul Rashid, R., & Ismail, I. (2020).	Socioeconomic Status and Its Impact on Parents' School Choice in Malaysia. <i>International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies</i> , 8(4), 60-67.	Parental income, education, occupation → type of school selected.
Aziz, N. A. A., & Ibrahim, Z. (2020).	Parents' Perceptions of International Schools in Malaysia. <i>Journal of Contemporary Educational Research</i> , 4(3), 95-107.	School quality (curriculum, facilities, teaching), social reputation, global exposure.
Hallinger, P., & Lee, M. (2021).	Understanding Parental Choice of International Schools in Asia: A Cross-	Cultural values, global mindset, and perceived quality of education as drivers of

	Cultural Perspective. Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education, 51(5), 762-781.	school choice.
Hashim, H., & Rahman, M. S. A. (2023).	Social Capital and Educational Choices among Malaysian Parents. Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 20(2), 188-202.	Family and peer influence, societal prestige, social norms → educational decisions.
Rahman, N. H., & Lee, W. K. (2022).	Cultural and Economic Determinants of Parents' Decision to Enrol Children in International Schools in Kuala Lumpur. Southeast Asian Journal of Education, 43(1), 75-91.	Cultural factors (English-medium preference), income, perceived opportunities abroad.
Yusof, N., & Ibrahim, A. A. (2020).	The Rise of Private and International Schools in Malaysia: Parents' Motivations and Concerns. Asia Pacific Education Review, 21(4), 589-602.	School quality, international exposure, social status, parental education, and peer influence.



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2.6 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

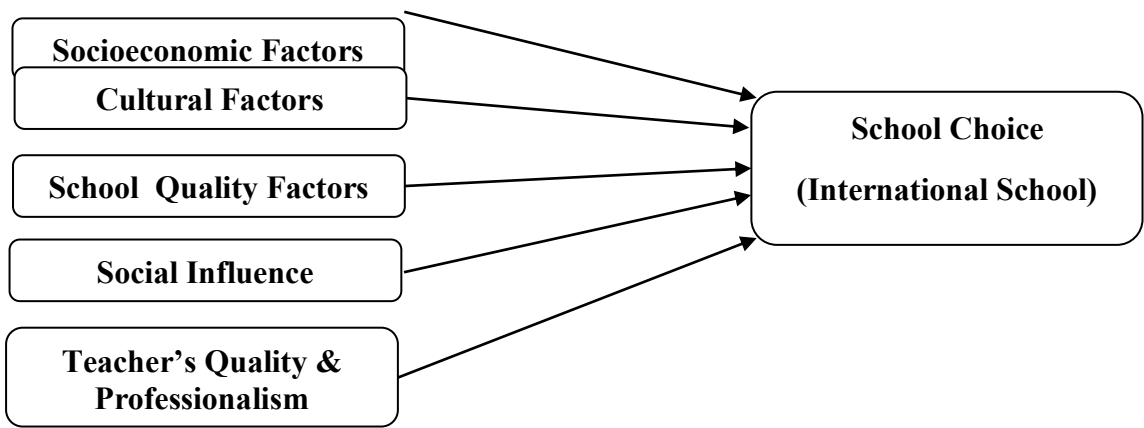


Figure 2.2 Research Framework

2.7 VARIABLE DISCUSSION

2.7.1 Independent Variables:

- **Socioeconomic Factors:** Income, education level of parents, type of occupation, family structure.
- **Cultural Factors:** Preference for international exposure, cultural values, language of instruction.
- **School Quality:** Parent perceptions of educational quality, facilities, and curriculum.
- **Social Influence:** Influence of family and friends, societal norms or expectations.
- **Teacher's Quality & Professionalism:** Professional behavior, qualifications & certifications, leading classroom ability.

2.7.2 Dependent Variable:

- **School Choice:** Categorized as international school, private school, or national school.

2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The increasing preference for international and private schools over national schools in Malaysia is driven by multiple interrelated factors. These include the quality of curriculum, language of instruction, teaching approaches, school environment, social exposure, future opportunities and dissatisfaction with the national education system. Understanding these factors is crucial for policymakers, educators and stakeholders to address parental concerns and improve the overall quality of national schools. In the upcoming chapter, the methodology will be discussed thoroughly.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology used to explore the factors that influence Malaysian parents' decisions to enroll their children in international or private schools instead of national schools. Given the increasing trend of parental preference for non-government educational institutions, it is essential to employ a robust methodological framework to capture relevant data, ensure the validity of findings and support the study's objectives.

This chapter discusses the research approach, the methods used for data collection and analysis, the sampling techniques and the instruments applied in gathering information from respondents. Additionally, it includes considerations related to the reliability and validity of the instruments, as well as the ethical procedures followed throughout the research process. By clearly explaining the research design, this chapter establishes the foundation upon which data is collected, interpreted, and analyzed to answer the research questions and fulfill the objectives stated in earlier chapters.

3.1 DATA SAMPLE

For this study, data like below stated refined data collection with a more focused approach used:

3.1.1 Key Factors Influencing School Enrollment Decisions:

This section will help identify the main factors parents consider when choosing between international schools and national schools.

Table 3.1 *Key Factors Influencing School Enrollment*

Parent Job	Household Income	Location	Child's Age	School Type Chosen	Main Reason for School Choice	Other Contributing Factors
Engineer	10,000-15,000	Urban	7	Private	Quality of education, international exposure	Peer recommendations, location
Business Owner	20,000-25,000	Suburban	10	International	Global exposure, curriculum diversity	Teacher quality, extracurricular activities
Teacher	5,000-7,000	Urban	6	National	Cost, local school reputation	Class size, facilities

Factors to Include:

There are many factors to consider before parents make a good decision. They are like quality of education, international exposure, curriculum offerings like international curriculum, local syllabus, cost of tuition, reputation of the school, peer recommendations, teacher quality and distance from home.

3.1.2 Parents' Perceptions of Quality of Education, Facilities, and Curriculum:

This section will focus on the parents' satisfaction levels with the quality of education, school facilities, and curriculum across different types of schools.

Table 3.2 *Parents' Perceptions of Quality of Education, Facilities, and Curriculum*

School Type Chosen	Perceived Quality of Education (1-5)	Perceived Quality of Facilities (1-5)	Perceived Curriculum Quality (1-5)	Satisfaction with Teacher-Student Ratio (1-5)
Private	4	5	4	4

School Type Chosen	Perceived Quality of Education (1-5)	Perceived Quality of Facilities (1-5)	Perceived Curriculum Quality (1-5)	Satisfaction with Teacher-Student Ratio (1-5)
International	5	5	5	5
National	3	4	3	3

Perception Factors to Include:

Continues by that, there are many factors to include before parents make a good decision such as quality of education (curriculum, academic performance, global exposure), facilities (infrastructure, technology, extracurricular offerings), curriculum (international curriculum, language options, local syllabus) and lastly teacher-student ratio (impact on individual attention)

3.1.3 Socioeconomic and Cultural Factors:

This section will focus on the social, economic, and cultural considerations influencing school choice.

Table 3.3 *Socioeconomic and Cultural Factors influencing school choice*

Parent's Education Level	Cultural Preferences	Socioeconomic Status	Influence of Peer Group (1-5)	Impact of Religious Considerations (1-5)	Influence of Family Background (1-5)
University	Preference for international values (global exposure)	Medium	4	3	5
High School	Preference for Western-style education (liberal values)	High	5	3	4
University	Preference for local culture (Malay values)	Low	3	5	4

Factors to Consider:

In this section, there are few factors to consider too. They are parent's education level (higher education may correlate with school choice), cultural references, socioeconomic status, peer influence, religious considerations, family background like influence of relatives attending international schools and family expectations.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Approach: Quantitative Method was used as research design.

Quantitative: This method contains surveys or questionnaires to collect numerical data (e.g., Likert scale ratings on perceptions, socio-economic factors).

Sampling Method: Also, stratified sampling was used to ensure a representative sample of parents from different socioeconomic, cultural and geographic backgrounds in Malaysia.

3.2.1 Data Collection Methods

Surveys/Questionnaires: This study used a survey method with structured questionnaires to collect quantitative data from parents on their school choice decisions and perceptions. The target population comprised parents with children enrolled in international schools in Malaysia. Due to the lack of a complete sampling frame, a non probability sampling method was adopted, with respondents selected randomly from the accessible population. Questionnaires were distributed through both online methods. Online data collection was conducted using Google Forms. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality of responses was maintained throughout the study.

3.2.2 Data Analysis Methods

Quantitative Data: The quantitative data collected from the questionnaires were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. SPSS was chosen due to its reliability, efficiency, and suitability for handling large datasets and performing advanced statistical analyses commonly used in social science research.

Descriptive statistics, including mean values and frequency distributions, were employed to summarise respondents' demographic profiles and key variables. Regression analysis was then conducted to examine the relationships between socioeconomic and cultural factors and school choice. The use of SPSS enabled accurate data management, systematic analysis, and clear presentation of results to support hypothesis testing.

3.3 REGRESSION MODEL

3.3.1. Type of Regression Model

This study employed multiple linear regression analysis to examine the relationship between the dependent variable and multiple independent variables. The dependent variable in this study is school choice, measured based on parents' overall decision to select international schools. The independent variables consist of socioeconomic factors, cultural factors, social influence, teacher quality and professionalism, and school facilities.

Multiple linear regression was selected as it allows the simultaneous assessment of the influence of several independent variables on a single dependent variable. This method is appropriate for identifying the strength, direction, and significance of each independent variable while controlling for the effects of other variables in the model. Consequently, the regression analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of how different factors collectively and individually influence parents' school choice decisions.

3.3.2. Variables

Dependent Variable (DV): School Choice

Independent Variables (IVs):

Table 3.4 *Independent Variables (IVs)*

Variable	Type	Description
Socio-economic	Numeric (Likert scale 1-5)	Household income, school fees, financial stability

Variable	Type	Description
Cultural	Numeric (Likert scale 1-5)	Multi cultural environment, international exposure, global curriculum
School Quality	Numeric (Likert scale 1-5)	Facilities, academic performance, extracurricular activity
Social influence	Numeric (Likert scale 1-5)	Family/Friends advice, social pressure, school reputation
Teacher quality & professionalism	Numeric (Likert scale 1-5)	Professional behaviour, qualifications & certifications, committed & motivated

3.3.3. Example of the Model - Regression Coefficients

Regression coefficients indicate the strength and direction of the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable, school choice, while controlling for other variables in the model. In this study, the unstandardized coefficients (B) explain how much the school choice score changes when an independent variable increases by one unit, assuming other variables remain constant. A positive coefficient suggests a positive influence on school choice, whereas a negative coefficient indicates an inverse relationship.

The standardized coefficients (Beta) allow for comparison of the relative importance of each independent variable, as they are measured on the same scale. Variables with larger absolute Beta values are considered to have a stronger influence on school choice. The t-values and significance levels (p-values) were used to determine whether each independent variable significantly predicts school choice. A p-value of less than 0.05 indicates a statistically significant relationship.

The multiple linear regression model used in this study is expressed as follows:

$$\text{School Choice} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Socioeconomic Factors}) + \beta_2(\text{Cultural Factors}) + \beta_3(\text{Social Influence}) + \beta_4(\text{Teacher Quality \& Professionalism}) + \beta_5(\text{School Facilities})$$

Where:

- 1) β_0 represents the constant term,
- 2) β_1 to β_5 are the regression coefficients for the independent variables, and

3) ε denotes the error term.

For example, if the regression results show a positive and significant coefficient for **teacher quality and professionalism**, this indicates that parents are more likely to choose a school when they perceive teachers to be competent and professional. Similarly, a significant positive coefficient for **socioeconomic factors** suggests that higher household income or parental education levels increase the likelihood of selecting international or private schools. Overall, the regression model enables the identification of key factors that significantly influence parents' school choice decisions and provides empirical support for the hypotheses proposed in this study.

3.4 QUESTIONNAIRE STRUCTURE

Questionnaires Development

(Suggested scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

1. Dependent Variable: School Choice

Table 3.5 *Questionnaires Development for School Choice*

Authors	Original Item	Adaptation / Adoption
(Jackson, 2024)	I am likely to choose an international or private school for my child because I believe it offers better preparation for university overseas.	Adaptation: I am likely to choose an international school for my child because I believe it offers better preparation for university overseas.
(Ramasamy, Singh, & Singh, 2024)	I prefer private or international schools when I can afford the tuition, even if the national school is more convenient.	Adaptation: I prefer international schools when I can afford the tuition, even if the national school is more convenient.
(Tan, Cheah, & Siaw, 2023)	My final decision about which school to enrol my child in is strongly influenced by the school's curriculum (e.g., IB, IGCSE, A-Levels).	Adoption
(Jonathan, Rantung, & Mandagi, 2023)	I would switch my child to a private or international school if the school's	Adoption

	reputation and academic results are substantially better.	
(StudyMalaysia, 2024)	I consider English-medium instruction a major reason to choose an international or private school.	Adaptation: I consider English-medium instruction a major reason to choose an international school.
(Salleh, 2023)	Recommendations from friends, family or colleagues significantly shape my decision about which school to choose.	Adoption
(The Straits Times/ISC Research, 2024)	The availability of modern facilities and extracurricular programmes makes me more likely to select a private or international school.	Adaptation: The availability of modern facilities and extracurricular programmes increases my preference for international schools.

2. Socio-Economic factors - Income, education of parents, type of jobs

Table 3.6 *Questionnaires Development for Socio-Economic*

Authors	Original Item	Adaptation / Adoption
(Ramasamy, Singh, & Singh, 2024)	My household income allows me to afford private or international school fees for my child.	Adaptation: My household income allows me to afford international school fees.
(Abdullah, Mohd Salleh, & Jamaluddin, 2024)	The cost of school fees influences my decision on which school my child attends.	Adoption
(Bekele & Kenea, 2024)	I consider the long-term affordability of school-related expenses (tuition, transport, books) before choosing a school.	Adoption
(Tan, Cheah, & Siaw, 2023)	Financial stability provides me with more schooling options for my children.	Adoption
(Rahman & Kamarulzaman, 2023)	My educational background helps me evaluate the quality of different schools.	Adoption
(Salleh, 2023)	The type of job I hold	Adoption

	affects the social networks that inform my school choice.	
(Tan, Cheah, & Siaw, 2023)	Parents with professional or managerial jobs tend to choose private or international schools for social and career alignment reasons.	Adaptation: Parents with professional jobs tend to choose international schools for social alignment.

3. Cultural - International exposure, cultural values, curriculum

Table 3.7 Questionnaires Development for Cultural

Authors	Original Item	Adaptation / Adoption
(SchoolAdvisor Team, 2025)	I prefer a school that offers a strong multicultural environment with students from different countries.	Adaptation: I prefer a school with a strong multicultural environment.
(SchoolAdvisor Team, 2025)	International exposure (e.g., global curriculum, overseas student body) is an important factor when choosing a school for my child.	Adaptation: International exposure is important when choosing a school.
(SchoolAdvisor Team, 2025)	I favour a school that offers English-medium instruction rather than purely Malay-medium instruction.	Adoption
(SchoolAdvisor Team, 2025)	I believe that selecting a school with a global curriculum (IB/IGCSE/A-Levels) enhances my child's future opportunities.	Adoption
(Parents-Viewpoint Review, 2024)	It is important to me that the school's values align with my family's cultural and moral beliefs.	Adoption
(SchoolAdvisor Team, 2025)	My decision on choosing a school is influenced by cultural considerations such as language of instruction, diverse peer environment and global outlook.	Adoption

4. School Quality - Education, quality, facilities

Table 3.8 *Questionnaires Development for School Quality*

Authors	Original Item	Adaptation / Adoption
(Sri KDU, 2024)	The school's modern facilities (Labs, library, sports amenities) are a major factor in my decision.	Adoption
(Sri KDU, 2024)	I consider the teacher-student ratio/class size when choosing a school for my child.	Adoption
(Bekele & Kenea, 2024)	The school's track record of academic performance and university placements significantly influences my preference.	Adoption
(Sri KDU, 2024)	I prefer schools with internationally recognised accreditation or curricula as an indicator of quality.	Adaptation: I prefer accredited or internationally recognised curricula.
(Sri KDU, 2024)	The availability of a broad range of extracurricular activities and enrichment programmes affects my choice.	Adaptation: Extracurricular activities influence my school selection.
(Bekele & Kenea, 2024)	A school's reputation among parents and its perceived prestige is important in my selection.	Adaptation: School reputation and prestige are important.

5. Social Influence - Family & friends, expectations

Table 3.9 *Questionnaires Development for Social Influence*

Authors	Original Item	Adaptation / Adoption
(Ahmad Zulhusny Rozali et al., 2025)	My decision on which type of school to choose for my child is influenced by the advice of family members.	Adaptation: My school choice is influenced by advice of family members.
(Hashim, Khamis & Edmond, 2025)	I consider the school choice preferences of my friends/colleagues when deciding which school my child should attend.	Adaptation: I consider preferences of friends/colleagues.
(Tan Shin Mei, Cheah & Siaw, 2023)	I feel social pressure from my social circle (relatives, friends, neighbours) to send my child	Adaptation: I feel social pressure to choose certain types of schools.

	to a certain type of school (international/private).	
(Tan Shin Mei, Cheah & Siaw, 2023)	The reputation of the type of school my peers choose affects my own school choice decisions.	Adaptation: The reputation of schools chosen by peers affects my decision.
(Tan Shin Mei, Cheah & Siaw, 2023)	My decision about my child's school is partly because the school type is seen as "prestigious" among my social circle.	Adaptation: My decision is influenced by perceived prestige among my social circle.
(Hashim, Khamis & Edmond, 2025)	I talk with other parents about which school to choose, and their experiences influence my decision.	Adaptation: I discuss with other parents and consider their experiences.

6. Teacher Quality & Professionalism

Table 3.10 *Questionnaires Development for Teacher quality & professionalism*

Authors	Original Item	Adaption / Adoption
(Rahman & Ikhlas, 2022)	I believe that the teachers' professional behaviour (punctuality, ethics) is very important when I choose a school.	Adoption
(Rahman & Ikhlas, 2022)	The qualifications and certifications held by the teachers influence my preference for a school.	Adoption
(Md. Kenayathulla, Ghani & Radzi, 2024)	I consider the ability of teachers to lead classrooms (teacher leadership) as a mark of quality.	Adoption
(Ahmad, Ali & Hassan, 2024)	It matters to me if teachers are committed and motivated—their dedication affects my school choice.	Adoption
(Parental evaluation of teacher competences during COVID-19, 2022)	I evaluate a school's teacher quality based on how well teachers adapt to digital learning and technology.	Adoption

3.5 FACE VALIDITY AND CONTENT VALIDITY

Face and content validity were established to ensure that the questionnaire accurately and adequately measured the key constructs of the study, namely socioeconomic status, school quality (including curriculum and facilities), social influence, teacher quality and professionalism, and cultural factors influencing parents' school choice. The questionnaire items were developed based on the research objectives, conceptual framework, and a review of relevant literature. To assess face validity, the draft instrument was reviewed by subject-matter experts, including academic supervisors, who evaluated the clarity, wording, and appropriateness of the items in measuring the intended constructs.

Content validity was assessed by examining the extent to which the items sufficiently represented the theoretical dimensions of each construct and aligned with the study objectives. Based on expert feedback, minor revisions were made to improve clarity, remove redundancy, and ensure adequate coverage of each variable. Following this review and refinement process, the instrument was deemed to demonstrate satisfactory face and content validity and was considered suitable for subsequent data collection (Hair et al., 2019; Sekaran & Bougie, 2020).

3.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

This section highlights the panel data analysis method that has been used to test the variables. Before and after running the regression, several econometric tests will be applied to ensure the robustness and validity of the model.

3.6.1 Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the measurement instruments used in this study. Internal consistency refers to the extent to which items within a scale are consistently measuring the same underlying construct. In this research, the internal consistency of all independent variables was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which is one of the most widely used reliability indicators in social science research.

Cronbach's Alpha measures the degree of interrelatedness among items within a construct, with values ranging from 0 to 1. Higher alpha values indicate greater internal consistency. According to George and Mallery (2003), a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 or above is considered acceptable, values above 0.80 indicate good reliability, and values above 0.90 reflect excellent reliability. Overall, the reliability analysis confirms that the research instrument is internally consistent and capable of producing stable and dependable measurements.

3.6.2 Item-Total Statistics and Internal Consistency Analysis

Item-total statistics were analysed to assess the contribution of individual items to the internal consistency of each construct. The corrected item-total correlation values for all items exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.30, indicating that each item was appropriately aligned with its respective construct. In addition, the Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted values showed no meaningful improvement in reliability if any item were removed. Therefore, all items were retained for further analysis, confirming the reliability of the measurement scales.

3.6.3. Frequency Analysis

Frequency analysis was conducted to summarise the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including variables such as age, gender, education level, and household income. This analysis provides a clear overview of the distribution of respondents across different categories and allows for an initial understanding of the sample profile (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Frequencies and percentages were used to present the data in a concise and meaningful manner.

3.6.4. Normality Test

The Normality Test evaluates whether the distribution of the residuals (or sometimes the data itself) follows a normal distribution. This is a critical assumption in classical linear regression models, especially when the hypothesis testing is based on t-statistics or F-statistics and the goal is to estimate population parameters with confidence intervals. Normality ensures that the estimates are unbiased and efficient. Other than that, the standard errors and p-values are valid.

Common Normality Tests:

3.6.4.1 Colmogrov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) and Shapiro-Wilk (S-W) tests were used to assess the normality of the data prior to conducting inferential analyses. These tests evaluate whether the distribution of the variables significantly deviates from a normal distribution. The Shapiro-Wilk test is considered more appropriate for small to moderate sample sizes, while the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is commonly used for larger samples (Field, 2018).

3.6.4.2 Histogram

Histograms were used as a graphical method to assess the normality of the data distributions. A distribution is considered approximately normal when the histogram displays a bell-shaped curve with values symmetrically distributed around the mean (Field, 2018). In this study, the histograms for the dependent and independent variables showed reasonably normal distributions, supporting the use of parametric statistical techniques in subsequent analyses.

3.6.5. Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis was conducted to summarise the key characteristics of the study variables. Measures of central tendency (mean) and dispersion (standard deviation) were used to describe respondents' perceptions of the dependent variable and independent variables. This analysis provides an overall understanding of the data distribution and forms the basis for subsequent inferential analyses (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

3.6.6 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was employed to examine the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable in this study. This statistical technique measures the degree to which changes in one variable are associated with changes in another variable, with correlation coefficients (r) ranging from -1 to +1. A positive coefficient indicates a direct relationship, while a negative coefficient indicates an inverse relationship. Values closer to ± 1 represent stronger relationships, whereas values closer to zero indicate weaker associations. In this study, correlation analysis helped identify whether socioeconomic factors,

cultural factors, school quality, social influence, and teacher quality were significantly associated with school choice. Statistical significance was evaluated at the 0.05 level, providing insight into the meaningfulness of the observed relationships and informing subsequent hypothesis testing.

3.6.7 Hypothesis Analysis

Hypothesis analysis was conducted to examine the proposed relationships between the independent variables like socioeconomic factors, cultural values, school quality, social influence, and teacher quality and professionalism and the dependent variable, school choice. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses simultaneously and to assess the significance of each independent variable while controlling for the others. The acceptance or rejection of each hypothesis was determined based on the standardized regression coefficients, t-values, and p-values at a 0.05 significance level. The results of this analysis provided empirical support for the study's conceptual framework and informed the discussion of findings in Chapter 5.

3.6.8 Anova Analysis

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the overall significance of the regression model and to determine whether the independent variables collectively explained a significant proportion of variance in the dependent variable, school choice. The ANOVA results assessed whether the model provided a better fit than a model with no predictors by comparing the explained and unexplained variance. A significant F-value at the 0.05 level indicated that the regression model was statistically meaningful and suitable for hypothesis testing.

3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined the research design, data collection methods, and analytical techniques used to investigate the factors influencing Malaysian parents' decisions to enroll their children in international schools instead of national schools. A quantitative research approach was adopted, utilizing a structured questionnaire designed to capture information across multiple dimensions. In summary, the

methodological framework employed in this study ensures that the research objectives are addressed in a structured and statistically sound manner.

The next chapter will focus on data analysis and empirical findings, interpreting the results from the regression model and linking them to the research hypotheses and theoretical framework.



CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND FINDING

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings derived from the analysis conducted to address the research objectives and test the proposed hypotheses. Data were collected from 153 respondents representing various International Schools across Malaysia and analysed using SPSS version 27. The analysis followed a systematic process, beginning with preliminary data screening to ensure the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments. This included verifying that the dataset was free from outliers and met the necessary assumptions for applying parametric statistical techniques.

This chapter is organized into several key sections. It begins with an overview of the questionnaire response rate, followed by the reliability analysis used to assess the internal consistency of the survey items. Next, the results of the normality test are presented to determine whether the distributions of both dependent and independent variables meet the assumptions of normality. This is followed by a descriptive analysis, which outlines the central tendencies and variability of each construct. Subsequently, the findings from the Pearson correlation analysis are reported, highlighting the relationships among socioeconomic factors, cultural factors, school quality, social influence and teacher quality and professionalism. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the hypothesis-testing outcomes based on multiple regression and ANOVA analyses, which evaluate the influence of the independent variables on school choice.

4.1 RATE OF QUESTIONNAIRE RETURN

This article analyses the data obtained based on the parents' school choice in Malaysia. Respondents were drawn from the different International Schools students' parents based on of their age group, occupation, monthly household income and number of kids. Data was obtained from an online form using Google Forms, allowing accessibility and avoiding delay in reaching the desired sample. A response number of 153 were retrieved. The response numbers points to participants' active

involvement and increases the data's validity and generalization to the study's population.

4.2 RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

The internal consistency of the independent variables was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Reliability analysis was conducted separately for each construct to ensure that the items measured a single underlying dimension. All constructs reported Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory reliability. A value as per below is commonly used:

$\alpha \geq 0.70 \rightarrow$ Acceptable

$\alpha \geq 0.80 \rightarrow$ Good

$\alpha \geq 0.90 \rightarrow$ Excellent (but may indicate redundancy if too high)

The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.1 below.

4.3 RELIABILITY TEST

To evaluate the internal consistency of the measurement instrument, Cronbach's Alpha was computed separately for each Independent Variable. As shown in Table 4.1, the overall Cronbach's Alpha for the 7 items in the first Independent Variable (School Choice) in the scale is 0.921, indicating an excellent level of reliability (George & Mallery, 2003). This suggests that the questionnaire items are highly aligned and effectively measure the same underlying construct. The Cronbach's Alpha for standardized items is similarly high at 0.922, further reinforcing the consistency of the measurement instrument.

Then, the overall Cronbach's Alpha for the 7 items in the second Independent Variable (Socio Economy) in the scale is 0.886, indicating an good level of reliability. This suggests that the questionnaire items are fairly aligned too. The Cronbach's Alpha for standardized items is similarly high at 0.888, further reinforcing the consistency of the measurement instrument.

Thirdly, the overall Cronbach's Alpha for the 6 items in the third Independent Variable (Cultural) in the scale is 0.942, indicating an excellent level of reliability (George & Mallery, 2003). This suggests the questionnaire items are highly aligned and effectively measure the same underlying construct. The Cronbach's Alpha for standardized items is similarly high at 0.924, further reinforcing the consistency of the measurement instrument.

Followed by that, the overall Cronbach's Alpha for the six items measuring the fourth independent variable, School Quality Factors, was 0.932, indicating an excellent level of internal consistency (George & Mallery, 2003). This high coefficient suggests that the items are strongly correlated and consistently capture the same underlying construct. Similarly, the Cronbach's Alpha for standardized items was 0.933, further confirming the reliability and robustness of the measurement scale.

For the fifth independent variable, Social Influence with 6 items, it is showing the overall Cronbach's Alpha is 0.946 indicating an excellent level of internal consistency among the items. This suggests that the items are highly interrelated and reliably measure the same underlying construct. Similarly, the Cronbach's Alpha for standardized items was 0.944, which closely mirrors the unstandardized value and further confirms the stability and consistency of the measurement instrument. Overall, these results demonstrate that the scale possesses very high reliability and is well suited for subsequent inferential analyses.

For the last independent variable Teacher's Quality with 5 items, The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the scale was 0.952, indicating an excellent level of internal consistency among the items. This very high reliability suggests the items are strongly correlated and consistently measure the same underlying construct. Likewise, the Cronbach's Alpha for standardized items was 0.952, demonstrating that the reliability of the scale remains stable even after standardization.

Table 4.1: *Reliability Statistics for all Independent Variables*

Reliability Statistics			
Cronbach's Alpha Based on			
Cronbach's Alpha	Standardized Items	N of Items	Independent Variable
.921	.922	7	IV1: School Choice
.886	.888	7	IV2: Socio Economy
.924	.924	6	IV3: Cultural
.932	.933	6	IV4: School Quality
.946	.944	6	IV5: Social Influence
.952	.952	5	IV6: Teacher's Quality

4.3.1 Item-Total Statistics and Internal Consistency Analysis

The Item-total Statistics analysis was conducted to evaluate the contribution of individual items to their respective constructs and to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales. Overall, the results indicate that all items demonstrate satisfactory to excellent psychometric properties.

For the School Choice construct, the corrected item-total correlation values ranged from 0.639 to 0.825, all exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.30. This suggests that each item is strongly correlated with the overall scale and contributes meaningfully to the measurement of school choice. Furthermore, the Cronbach's Alpha values if an item were deleted ranged between 0.902 and 0.921, indicating that the removal of any individual item would not substantially improve the overall reliability of the scale. Hence, all School Choice items were retained.

Similarly, the Socioeconomic Factors scale exhibited corrected item-total correlation coefficients between 0.623 and 0.729, reflecting good internal consistency across items. The Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted values ranged from 0.863 to 0.877, suggesting that each item contributes positively to the overall reliability and that none of the items adversely affects the consistency of the scale.

For the Cultural Factors construct, corrected item-total correlations ranged from 0.697 to 0.841, indicating strong associations between individual items and the overall construct. The Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted values (0.902-0.920) further confirm that all items are internally consistent and collectively measure the same underlying cultural dimension.

The School Quality scale also demonstrated strong psychometric performance, with corrected item-total correlations ranging from 0.748 to 0.840. The Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted values remained high (0.915-0.927), indicating that the internal consistency of the scale would not improve with the deletion of any item. This supports the retention of all School Quality items.

For the Social Influence construct, the corrected item-total correlation coefficients were notably high, ranging from 0.636 to 0.898, suggesting very strong item alignment with the construct. Although the Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted for SocialInfluence6 increased slightly to 0.956, the item still demonstrated an acceptable corrected item-total correlation (0.636). Therefore, the item was retained to preserve content validity and theoretical completeness.

Lastly, the Teacher Quality and Professionalism scale exhibited excellent internal consistency, with corrected item-total correlations ranging from 0.828 to 0.907. The Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted values (0.934-0.948) indicate that all items contribute substantially to the reliability of the scale, and none warrant removal. In summary, all items across the dependent and independent variables achieved corrected item-total correlation values well above the minimum acceptable level, and the Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted values did not indicate a meaningful improvement in reliability through item removal. These findings confirm that the measurement instruments demonstrate strong internal consistency and are reliable for use in subsequent inferential statistical analyses.

Table 4.2 *Item - Total Statistics*

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted

SchoolChoice1	24.19	31.247	.825	.902
SchoolChoice2	24.22	32.463	.771	.908
SchoolChoice3	24.01	35.131	.686	.916
SchoolChoice4	24.12	32.012	.791	.906
SchoolChoice5	23.93	33.383	.767	.908
SchoolChoice6	24.17	34.010	.639	.921
SchoolChoice7	23.99	32.868	.815	.904
SocioEconomy1	24.46	26.224	.623	.877
SocioEconomy2	24.15	26.063	.710	.865
SocioEconomy3	24.05	27.452	.670	.871
SocioEconomy4	24.04	26.051	.729	.863
SocioEconomy5	24.03	27.334	.685	.869
SocioEconomy6	24.29	25.246	.702	.866
SocioEconomy7.	24.24	26.408	.642	.874
Cultural1	20.48	21.896	.697	.920
Cultural2	20.73	20.569	.755	.913
Cultural3	20.62	20.421	.778	.910
Cultural4.	20.46	20.685	.841	.902
Cultural5	20.65	20.427	.804	.906
Cultural6	20.69	20.030	.812	.905
SchoolQuality1	21.12	18.486	.773	.924
SchoolQuality2	20.97	18.269	.840	.915
SchoolQuality3	21.04	18.538	.823	.917
SchoolQuality4	20.99	18.796	.830	.916
SchoolQuality5	21.08	18.855	.796	.921
SchoolQuality6	20.94	19.437	.748	.927
SocialInfluence1	17.90	35.260	.874	.931
SocialInfluence2	17.84	35.638	.856	.933
SocialInfluence3	17.96	34.656	.855	.933

SocialInfluence4	17.93	34.751	.888	.929
SocialInfluence5	17.99	34.901	.898	.928
SocialInfluence6	17.54	40.421	.636	.956
TeacherQuality1	17.49	10.765	.880	.939
TeacherQuality2	17.52	10.659	.907	.934
TeacherQuality3	17.51	10.844	.885	.938
TeacherQuality4	17.52	10.843	.840	.946
TeacherQuality5	17.61	11.041	.828	.948

4.4 FREQUENCY ANALYSIS

4.4.1 Frequency Analysis of Respondents by Age Group

In this survey, the age structure of the respondents was studied. These findings are compiled in the table below. And the highest number of respondents (n = 67, 43.8 percent) are in the 30-39 age group, which means middle age employees. It is followed by those aged 30-39 (n = 52, 34 percent) and then 50-59 (n = 27, 17.6 percent). There are respondents in the 60 and above age group; 5 thereof (3.3 percent). Only 2 respondents (1.3 percent) were 20-29 years old.

Table 4.3 *Frequency Analysis of Respondents by Age Group*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	20-29	2	1.3
	30-39	52	34.0
	40-49	67	43.8
	50-59	27	17.6
	60 and above	5	3.3
	Total	153	100.0

The age pattern reveals that parents who choose international schools in Malaysia are predominantly in their 30s and 40s age groups typically associated with career stability, higher income levels, and a strong emphasis on securing quality

education for their children. This demographic insight supports the understanding that international school enrolment is strongly linked to parental maturity, financial capacity, and long-term educational planning.

4.4.2 Frequency Analysis of Respondents by Occupation

A frequency analysis was performed to explore the distribution of respondents over the organization's different occupation. The study revealed that most respondents served in private sector (60 responses, 39.2%). There were also Self-Employed / Business Owners (n = 43; 28.1%) and 2 occupations with same number of responses, which are Government sector and professionals types such as Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers (n = 17; 11.1%). There were fewer Homemakers too which could be the wives (n = 14, 9.2%), other occupations like Insurance agent (n = 1, 0.7%) and Retired parents (n = 1, 0.7%) also took part in the questionnaire.

Table 4.4 *Frequency Analysis of Respondents by Job Position*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Government Sector	17	11.1
	Homemaker	14	9.2
	Insurance Agent	1	0.7
	Private sector	60	39.2
	Professional (Doctor, Lawyer, Engineer, etc.)	17	11.1
	Retired	1	0.7
	Self-Employed / Business Owner	43	28.1
	Total	153	100.0

The occupational distribution indicates that parents who choose international schools in Malaysia generally come from economically stable and professionally active backgrounds. Most work in sectors known for higher earning potential or entrepreneurial flexibility, which aligns with the financial commitment required for

international schooling. This pattern reinforces the understanding that parents' professional status and socioeconomic standing play an important role in shaping school-choice decisions.

4.4.3 Frequency Analysis of Respondents by Monthly Household Income

The data collected includes the respondents' monthly household income. Out of the 153 valid answers, the majority of participants (n = 54, 35.3%) had monthly household income in the range of RM6,001 - RM10,000. Then, comes monthly income range of above RM10,000 (n = 52, 34%), range of RM3,001 – RM6,000 (n = 31, 20.3%) and lastly the least numbers of responses with monthly income range of below RM3,000 with respondents (n = 16, 10.5%).

Table 4.5 *Frequency Analysis of Respondents by Monthly Household Income*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Above RM10,000	52	34.0
	Below RM3,000	16	10.5
	RM3,001 – RM6,000	31	20.3
	RM6,001 – RM10,000	54	35.3
	Total	153	100.0

Overall, the income distribution illustrates that international school enrolment in Malaysia is predominantly concentrated among upper-middle to high-income families. This trend reflects how economic capacity is a key factor influencing parents' decision to invest in international education, underscoring the perception of such schools as premium educational institutions.

4.5 NORMALITY TEST

Prior to conducting inferential statistical analyses, it is essential to verify whether the data meet the assumption of normality, as tests such as Pearson correlation and multiple regression require the variables to approximate a normal distribution. In this study, normality was assessed for both the dependent variable, School Choice, and

the independent variables, namely socioeconomic factors, cultural factors, school quality, social influence, and teacher’s quality and professionalism. The assessment was carried out using both statistical and graphical approaches. Specifically, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) and Shapiro-Wilk (S-W) tests were employed to examine statistical normality, while histograms and Q–Q plots were used for visual inspection.

4.5.1 Test of Normality Table

Table 4.6 shows Colmogrov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk Tests for School Choice_Mean, Socio Economy_Mean, Cultural_Mean, School Quality_Mean, Social Influence_Mean and Teacher Quality_Mean. The Shapiro-Wilk test indicated statistically significant deviations from normality for the composite variables ($p < .001$). However, visual inspection suggested that the distributions were approximately normal. Given the sample size ($n = 153$) and the robustness of parametric tests to minor violations of normality, Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses were deemed appropriate.

Table 4.6 *Test of Normality Table*

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
SchoolChoice_Mean	.187	153	< .001	.858	153	< .001
SocioEconomy_Mean	.126	153	< .001	.897	153	< .001
Cultural_Mean	.205	153	< .001	.822	153	< .001
SchoolQuality_Mean	.180	153	< .001	.820	153	< .001
SocialInfluence_Mean	.141	153	< .001	.919	153	< .001
TeacherQuality_Mean	.225	153	< .001	.764	153	< .001

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

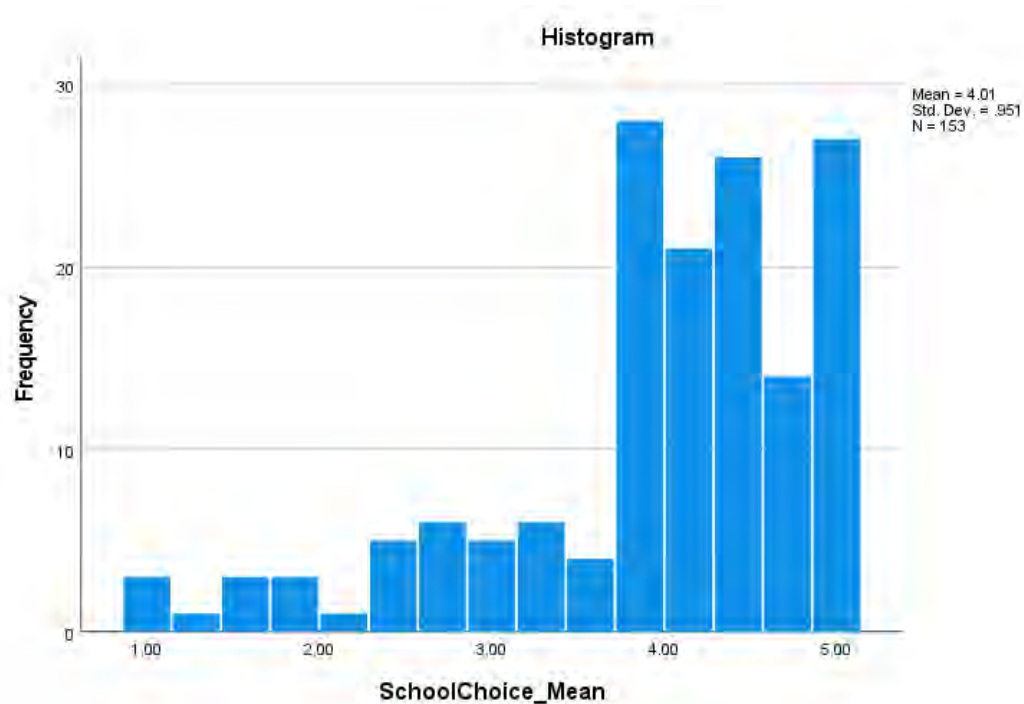


Figure 4.1 *Histogram Analysis*

4.5.2 Histogram Analysis

In Figure 4.1 shown below, the histogram for the composite mean score of School Choice shows a generally unimodal distribution, with most observations clustered toward the higher end of the scale. The mean value of 4.01 (SD = 0.95) indicates that respondents tended to express relatively strong agreement with the school choice items. While the distribution exhibits a slight negative (left) skew, this pattern is expected for Likert-scale data where respondents predominantly select higher response categories.

Importantly, the distribution does not display extreme skewness or outliers, and the overall shape approximates normality. When considered alongside the Q-Q plot, the histogram suggests that the normality assumption is reasonably met. Given the sample size ($n = 153$) and the robustness of parametric techniques, the use of Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses is appropriate.

4.6 Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive statistics concludes the responses of 153 respondents on School Choice on a variety of items that reflect Socio Economy, Cultural, School Quality, Social Influence and Teacher Quality. The Likert scale scores ranged from 1 being the lowest to 5 being the higher scores reflecting a greater agreement.

Table 4.7 *Descriptive Analysis*

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SchoolChoice_Mean	153	1.00	5.00	4.0149	.95145
SocioEconomy_Mean	153	1.00	5.00	4.0299	.84827
Cultural_Mean	153	1.00	5.00	4.1209	.90245
SchoolQuality_Mean	153	1.00	5.00	4.2048	.85978
SocialInfluence_Mean	153	1.00	5.00	3.5719	1.19250
TeacherQuality_Mean	153	1.00	5.00	4.3830	.81788
Valid N (listwise)	153				

4.6.1 Descriptive Analysis for dependent variable and independent variables

This above table presents the descriptive statistics for the dependent variable and independent variables of the study. The mean score for School Choice was 4.01 (SD = 0.95), indicating that respondents generally reported positive perceptions regarding their school choice decisions.

Among the independent variables, Teacher Quality and Professionalism recorded the highest mean score (M = 4.38, SD = 0.82), suggesting that parents place strong emphasis on teacher-related factors when selecting international schools. This was followed by School Quality (M = 4.20, SD = 0.86) and Cultural Factors (M = 4.12, SD = 0.90), reflecting generally favourable perceptions of these dimensions.

Socioeconomic Factors also demonstrated a relatively high mean ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 0.85$), indicating that financial and socioeconomic considerations play an important role in school choice decisions. In contrast, Social Influence recorded the lowest mean score among the independent variables ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 1.19$), suggesting more moderate agreement and greater variability in respondents' perceptions of social influence on school selection.

Overall, all variables reported mean values above the midpoint of the five-point Likert scale, indicating generally positive perceptions among respondents. The standard deviation values suggest acceptable variability in responses, supporting the suitability of the data for subsequent inferential analyses.



4.7 PEARSON CORRELATIONS ANALYSIS

Table 4.8 *Pearson Correlations*

Correlations							
		SchoolChoice_Mean	SocioEconomy_Mean	Cultural_Mean	SchoolQuality_Mean	SocialInfluence_Mean	TeacherQuality_Mean
SchoolChoice_Mean	Pearson Correlation	1	.783**	.694**	.733**	.577**	.633**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	153	153	153	153	153	153
SocioEconomy_Mean	Pearson Correlation	.783**	1	.691**	.733**	.571**	.620**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	153	153	153	153	153	153
Cultural_Mean	Pearson Correlation	.694**	.691**	1	.758**	.451**	.659**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	153	153	153	153	153	153
SchoolQuality_Mean	Pearson Correlation	.733**	.733**	.758**	1	.496**	.699**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	153	153	153	153	153	153
SocialInfluence_Mean	Pearson Correlation	.577**	.571**	.451**	.496**	1	.297**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	153	153	153	153	153	153
TeacherQuality_Mean	Pearson Correlation	.633**	.620**	.659**	.699**	.297**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	153	153	153	153	153	153
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between the independent variables and School Choice among parents of international school students ($n = 153$). The results indicate that all independent variables were positively and significantly correlated with School Choice at the 0.01 significance level ($p < .001$).

Socioeconomic Factors demonstrated a very strong positive correlation with School Choice ($r = .783$, $p < .001$), suggesting that higher socioeconomic considerations are strongly associated with parents' school choice decisions. School Quality also exhibited a strong positive relationship with School Choice ($r = .733$, $p < .001$), highlighting the importance of institutional quality in influencing parental decision-making.

Similarly, Cultural Factors were found to have a strong positive correlation with School Choice ($r = .694$, $p < .001$), indicating that cultural considerations play a significant role in parents' selection of international schools. Teacher Quality and Professionalism showed a strong and significant association with School Choice ($r = .633$, $p < .001$), reinforcing the importance of teaching standards and professional competence in school selection.

In contrast, Social Influence recorded a moderate positive correlation with School Choice ($r = .577$, $p < .001$), suggesting that recommendations and opinions from social networks influence school choice decisions to a lesser extent compared to other factors. Overall, the findings reveal that all proposed independent variables are significantly related to parents' school choice decisions, thereby providing preliminary support for the study's conceptual framework and justifying further analysis using multiple regression.

4.8 HYPOTHESIS ANALYSIS

The model summary indicates a strong relationship between the set of independent variables and school choice. The multiple correlation coefficient ($R = .839$) suggests a high degree of association between the predictors socioeconomic factors, cultural factors, school quality, social influence, and teacher quality and professionalism and

the dependent variable, school choice. The R Square value of .704 indicates that approximately 70.4% of the variance in school choice is explained by the combined influence of the independent variables. After adjusting for the number of predictors, the Adjusted R Square of .694 shows that the model remains robust, explaining 69.4% of the variance, with minimal shrinkage.

The standard error of the estimate (0.52663) suggests an acceptable level of prediction accuracy. In addition, the Durbin Watson statistic of 1.823 falls within the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5, indicating no serious autocorrelation in the residuals. Overall, these results demonstrate that the regression model provides a good fit to the data and is suitable for hypothesis testing.

Table 4.9 *Model Summary*

Model Summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.839 ^a	.704	.694	.52663	1.823
a. Predictors: (Constant), TeacherQuality_Mean, SocialInfluence_Mean, Cultural_Mean, SocioEconomy_Mean, SchoolQuality_Mean					
b. Dependent Variable: SchoolChoice_Mean					

4.9 ANOVA ANALYSIS

The ANOVA results indicate that the multiple regression model is statistically significant. The model produced an F-value of 69.826 with 5 and 147 degrees of freedom, and the result was significant at the 0.001 level ($p < .001$). This finding suggests that the set of independent variables like socioeconomic factors, cultural factors, school quality, social influence, and teacher quality and professionalism collectively provide a significant explanation of variance in school choice.

The significant F-statistic confirms that the regression model fits the data well and that at least one of the independent variables significantly predicts school choice.

Therefore, the model is appropriate for proceeding with hypothesis testing using the regression coefficients.

Table 4.10 Anova Analysis

ANOVA ^a						
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1 Regression	96.829	5	19.366	69.826	.001 ^b	
Residual	40.769	147	.277			
Total	137.599	152				
a. Dependent Variable: SchoolChoice_Mean						
b. Predictors: (Constant), TeacherQuality_Mean, SocialInfluence_Mean, Cultural_Mean, SocioEconomy_Mean, SchoolQuality_Mean						

4.10 REGRESSION COEFFICIENT

The coefficients table below presents the individual contribution of each independent variable in predicting school choice, while controlling for the effects of other variables. Socioeconomic Factors emerged as the strongest and most significant predictor of school choice ($\beta = .384$, $t = 5.125$, $p < .001$). This indicates that higher socioeconomic considerations significantly increase the likelihood of parents choosing international schools.

School Quality also showed a significant positive effect on school choice ($\beta = .170$, $t = 2.072$, $p = .040$), suggesting that perceptions of school facilities, curriculum, and institutional standards play an important role in parents' school selection decisions. Similarly, Social Influence was found to significantly predict school choice ($\beta = .173$, $t = 3.081$, $p = .002$), indicating that recommendations from peers, relatives, and social networks positively influence parents' decisions.

Teacher Quality and Professionalism also had a significant positive relationship with school choice ($\beta = .138$, $t = 2.049$, $p = .042$), confirming that teacher competence and professionalism are important factors in school selection. In contrast, Cultural Factors did not significantly predict school choice ($\beta = .131$, $t = 1.765$, $p = .080$). As the p-value exceeded the 0.05 significance level, indicating that cultural considerations do not have a unique effect on school choice when other variables are controlled for.

The regression model can be expressed as:

$$\text{School Choice} = -0.278 + 0.431(\text{Socioeconomic}) + 0.188(\text{School Quality}) + 0.138(\text{Social Influence}) + 0.160(\text{Teacher Quality})$$

*(Cultural factors excluded due to non-significance)

Table 4.11 *Regression Analysis*

		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.278	.249		-1.119	.265
	SocioEconomy_Mean	.431	.084	.384	5.125	.000
	Cultural_Mean	.138	.078	.131	1.765	.080
	SchoolQuality_Mean	.188	.091	.170	2.072	.040
	SocialInfluence_Mean	.138	.045	.173	3.081	.002
	TeacherQuality_Mean	.160	.078	.138	2.049	.042

a. Dependent Variable: SchoolChoice_Mean

4.11 HYPOTHESIS RESULT

This study proposed five hypotheses to examine the influence of socioeconomic factors, cultural factors, school quality, social influence, and teacher quality and professionalism on parents' school choice decisions. The hypotheses were tested using multiple linear regression analysis.

The findings revealed that four out of the five hypotheses were accepted. Specifically, socioeconomic factors were found to have a significant positive effect on school choice, indicating that parents' financial capacity and socioeconomic considerations play a crucial role in selecting international schools. Similarly, school quality significantly influenced school choice, highlighting the importance of facilities, curriculum, and overall institutional standards in parental decision-making.

In addition, social influence was identified as a significant predictor of school choice, suggesting that recommendations and opinions from peers, family members, and social networks contribute meaningfully to parents' school selection decisions. Teacher quality and professionalism also showed a significant positive effect, emphasizing the role of qualified and professional teaching staff in attracting parents to international schools.

Other than that, cultural factors did not have a statistically significant effect on school choice when controlling for other variables. Although cultural considerations were positively correlated with school choice at the bivariate level, they did not uniquely predict school choice in the multivariate model. Therefore, the hypothesis related to cultural factors was not accepted.

Overall, the hypothesis testing results indicate that parents' school choice decisions are mainly driven by practical and institutional considerations than cultural factors alone, providing strong empirical support for the study's conceptual framework.

Table 4.12 *Hypothesis Testing Results*

Hypothesis	Predictor	Result
H1	Socioeconomic status positively influences the likelihood of enrolling children in international schools instead of national schools.	Accepted
H2	Parents' cultural values and beliefs significantly influence their choice of school type.	Not Accepted
H3	Positive perceptions of school quality, curriculum, and facilities are significantly associated with parents' preference for international schools.	Accepted
H4	Peer and social influence positively correlates with the decision to enroll children in international schools.	Accepted
H5	Teacher quality and professionalism have a significant positive relationship with school choice.	Accepted

4.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the empirical findings of the study based on data collected from parents whose children are enrolled in international schools in Malaysia. The analysis was conducted using SPSS and involved a series of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to address the research objectives and test the proposed hypotheses.

The chapter began with a profile of the respondents, outlining key demographic characteristics such as socioeconomic background and schooling context. This was followed by reliability analysis, which confirmed that all measurement scales demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, indicating the suitability of the questionnaire for further analysis. Descriptive statistics were then used to summarise respondents' perceptions of the key variables, including socioeconomic factors, school quality, social influence, cultural factors, and teacher quality and professionalism.

Inferential analyses, including Pearson correlation and regression analysis, were subsequently conducted to examine the relationships between the independent

variables and parents' school choice decisions. The results revealed that socioeconomic status, school quality, social influence, and teacher quality and professionalism had significant positive relationships with parents' preference for international schools. In contrast, cultural factors were found to have no significant influence when other variables were controlled. Accordingly, four of the five hypotheses were accepted, while one hypothesis was not supported.

Overall, the findings provide empirical evidence on the key determinants influencing parents' decisions to enrol their children in international schools in Malaysia. These results form the basis for the discussion of theoretical and practical implications presented in the subsequent chapter.



CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the concluding section of the study and aims to synthesise the key findings derived from the data analysis. Based on the results obtained, practical recommendations are proposed to address the research objectives and provide meaningful implications for relevant stakeholders, including international school administrators, educators, policymakers, and parents. The chapter also highlights the contributions of the study to existing literature on school choice and offers suggestions for improving decision-making processes within international education settings in Malaysia.

In addition, this chapter discusses the limitations of the study and provides directions for future research. By integrating the empirical findings with practical insights, this chapter seeks to offer a comprehensive conclusion and actionable recommendations that may enhance the quality and effectiveness of international school selection and management.

5.1 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1.1 Socioeconomic status & School choice (H1 - Accepted)

The findings of this study indicate that socioeconomic status has a significant positive influence on parents' decisions to enrol their children in international schools, thereby supporting Hypothesis 1 (H1). The regression results revealed that socioeconomic factors were the strongest predictor of school choice, highlighting the central role of financial capacity and household resources in shaping educational decisions among parents in Malaysia.

This finding is consistent with recent education research that highlights the role of family socioeconomic circumstances as a key determinant in school choice behaviour. Contemporary studies indicate that parents from higher Socioeconomic

backgrounds are better positioned to exercise choice in educational markets due to their greater financial capacity, access to information, and educational aspirations for their children (Bekele, 2023). Higher SES often enables families to absorb the higher direct costs of international school tuition and ancillary expenses, making international schooling a feasible option compared to national public schooling where fees are low or nominal.

Overall, the acceptance of H1 confirms that socioeconomic status is a fundamental predictor of international school enrolment in this study. Higher Socioeconomic status enables parents not only to afford the direct costs of international education but also to seek out learning environments that they believe will better prepare their children for competitive academic pathways and global opportunities.

5.1.2 Parents' cultural values & School choice. (H2 - Not Accepted)

The findings of this study reveal that cultural factors did not have a statistically significant impact on parents' decisions to enrol their children in international schools, leading to the non-acceptance of Hypothesis 2 (H2). Although parents may hold specific cultural beliefs and values regarding education, these did not emerge as unique predictors of international school choice when other factors such as socioeconomic status and school quality were taken into account.

This result suggests that cultural values may play a less direct role in school selection decisions within the Malaysian context compared with practical and institutional considerations. Previous research has similarly acknowledged that while cultural and familial values can shape educational aspirations and parenting practices, their influence on school choice may be mediated by other dominant factors such as perceived academic quality, future opportunities, and economic resources (Bekele & Kenea, 2024; Zul et al., 2025). For example, although parents from diverse backgrounds may prioritize certain cultural norms (such as language instruction or moral values), these preferences often become less decisive in environments where international schooling is viewed primarily as a means to secure competitive academic outcomes and global pathways.

Moreover, contemporary studies indicate that cultural alignment between parents and school environments may contribute to satisfaction and long-term engagement rather than initial choice decisions (Zul et al., 2025). In other words, while cultural fit and values might reinforce parents' comfort and sustained involvement after enrolment, they do not necessarily drive the initial selection of international schools over other alternatives. This is especially the case in contexts where international schools are perceived as institutions emphasizing global competence and academic excellence, potentially outweighing distinct cultural preferences.

5.1.3 School quality & School choice. (H3 - Accepted)

The findings of this study show that school quality has a significant and positive influence on parents' decisions to enrol their children in international schools, supporting Hypothesis 3 (H3). This suggests that parents perceive higher quality schools as offering better academic standards, improved learning environments, and stronger preparation for future educational pathways. Recent educational choice research consistently highlights school quality especially academic performance, instructional effectiveness, and overall reputation as a primary factor shaping parental preferences in school selection (Corcoran et al., 2024). Parents are more likely to select schools that they believe provide a higher level of instruction and opportunities for student achievement, reinforcing the role of perceived quality in school choice decisions.

In addition to academic indicators, parents also value the broader aspects of school quality that contribute to a supportive and enriching learning environment. Factors such as well-maintained facilities, comprehensive curriculum offerings, and effective school leadership contribute to perceptions of school excellence and attract parental interest in international education contexts (Bekele & Kenea, 2024). Systematic reviews of school choice literature indicate that school-related attributes including quality of education, performance of teachers, and school facilities consistently influence parental decisions across diverse educational settings (Bekele & Kenea, 2024).

5.1.4 Social influence & School choice. (H4 - Accepted)

The findings of this study indicate that social influence has a significant and positive effect on parents' decisions to enrol their children in international schools, supporting Hypothesis 4 (H4). This suggests that parents are influenced by the opinions, recommendations, and experiences of their social networks including family members, friends, and colleagues when making school choice decisions. Recent research on school choice highlights the role of social factors in shaping educational decisions, parents rely on the experiences of significant others to make informed choices (Kwon & Kim, 2021). Social influence serves as an important source of information that can reduce uncertainty and guide parents toward schools that others in their network perceive as desirable.

In addition to informal networks, social media and online community platforms have become influential sources of school information, amplifying the impact of social influence on parent decisions. Studies have found that parents often engage in online forums and social groups to share reviews, evaluations, and personal experiences of different schools, which in turn shapes perceptions of school quality and suitability (Lei & Zhao, 2023).

Furthermore, research suggests that social influence not only impacts the initial selection of schools but also affects ongoing satisfaction and engagement with the chosen institution (Harris & Kong, 2022). Parents who make school decisions based on strong social recommendations are more likely to develop continued involvement and advocacy for the school community, which can have positive implications for student well-being and parental engagement. Therefore, the acceptance of H4 in this study underscores the importance of social context and interpersonal communication in the school choice process.

5.1.5 Teacher's quality & School choice. (H5 - Accepted)

The findings of this study demonstrate that teacher's quality and professionalism significantly influence parents' decisions to enrol their children in international schools, thus supporting Hypothesis 5 (H5). This indicates that parents highly value

the perceived competence, instructional skill, and professional conduct of teachers when evaluating potential schools. Contemporary research affirms that teacher effectiveness is a central component of parental school choice, with skilled and professional teachers viewed as essential for promoting academic achievement, student engagement, and overall learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2022). In international schooling contexts, where parents often invest considerable financial resources, the presence of high-quality teachers can serve as a key indicator of educational value and justify parents' commitment to costly schooling options.

Recent studies also underscore that teacher professionalism including ongoing professional development, culturally responsive teaching practices, and effective communication with parents enhances trust in schools and reinforces parental confidence in their children's educational environment (Guerrero et al., 2021; Zhao & Qiu, 2023). Parents are more likely to select and remain committed to schools where teachers are perceived as competent, supportive, and engaged in fostering student growth. This aligns with the present study's results, suggesting that teacher quality is not just a background factor but a strong determinant in school choice decisions, reflecting both academic expectations and relational dimensions of education.

5.2 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study provide important theoretical implications by extending the application of Human Capital Theory and Rational Choice Theory in explaining parents' school choice decisions, particularly within the context of international education. Contemporary literature emphasises that education is viewed by parents as a long-term investment aimed at enhancing children's future economic, social, and global mobility outcomes (Marginson, 2019; Kim & Jung, 2022). The acceptance of hypotheses related to socioeconomic status, school quality, social influence, and teacher quality suggests that parents perceive enrolment in international schools as a strategic investment to maximise long-term academic and career returns, which aligns with modern interpretations of human capital accumulation in education decision-making (Tam & Jiang, 2020; Kim & Jung, 2022).

The findings also strongly support Rational Choice Theory, which posits that individuals make decisions by systematically evaluating costs, benefits, and available information to achieve optimal outcomes. Recent studies on school choice highlight that parents actively compare school quality, teacher professionalism, curriculum standards, and peer influence when selecting schools, particularly in competitive education markets (Bonal & Zancajo, 2020; Choi, Kim, & Lee, 2021). The significant influence of school quality, teacher professionalism, and social influence in this study indicates that parents engage in deliberate and informed decision-making, using both objective indicators and social networks to reduce uncertainty and perceived risk (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019; Bonal & Zancajo, 2020).

Finally, the integration of Human Capital Theory and Rational Choice Theory offers a comprehensive explanation of parental school choice behaviour observed in this study. While Human Capital Theory explains parents' motivation to invest heavily in international education due to anticipated long-term returns, Rational Choice Theory explains how parents evaluate and select schools based on perceived benefits, costs, and information availability. The findings therefore contribute to recent educational choice literature by demonstrating that parents' decisions to enrol their children in international schools are shaped by both investment-oriented considerations and rational evaluation processes, reinforcing the continued relevance of these theories in contemporary education research (Marginson, 2019; Choi et al., 2021; Kim & Jung, 2022).

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study offer several recommendations for international school administrators and policymakers. Since school quality and teacher professionalism were found to significantly influence parents' school choice decisions, international schools should prioritise continuous improvement in academic standards, curriculum delivery, and teaching effectiveness. Investment in teacher recruitment, professional development, and performance evaluation systems can enhance instructional quality and strengthen parents' confidence in the school. By maintaining high educational

standards and transparent quality assurance practices, schools can position themselves competitively within the international education market.

Other than that, the significant role of socioeconomic factors suggests that affordability and perceived value for money are critical considerations for parents when choosing international schools. School management should therefore ensure that tuition fees are aligned with the quality of education offered and clearly communicate the long-term benefits of international education to parents. Policymakers may also consider providing targeted financial assistance, tax incentives, or flexible fee structures to make high-quality international education more accessible to a broader segment of society, thereby promoting inclusivity while maintaining standards.

Moreover, the influence of social factors highlights the importance of reputation, word-of-mouth communication, and parent satisfaction in shaping school choice decisions. Schools should actively engage parents through effective communication strategies, community-building activities, and positive parent-school partnerships. Leveraging digital platforms and social media to share authentic success stories, student achievements, and parent testimonials can further strengthen trust and visibility. All together, these practical implications emphasise that international schools must adopt a holistic approach that combines academic excellence, professional teaching practices, and strong stakeholder engagement to meet parental expectations and sustain long-term enrolment growth.

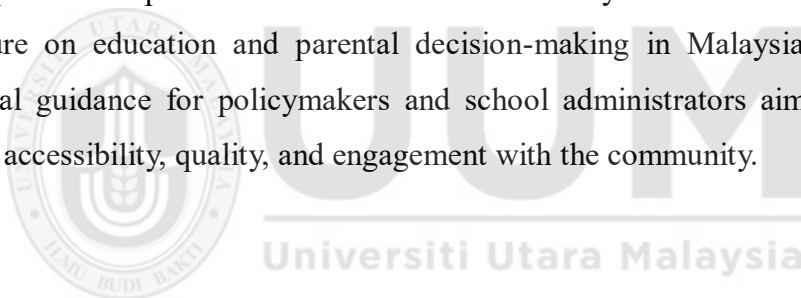
5.4 CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the key factors influencing parents' decisions to enroll their children in international schools in Malaysia, focusing on socioeconomic status, cultural influences, teacher quality and professionalism, and social factors. Based on the analysis of data collected from 153 respondents across various international schools, several important findings have emerged.

Firstly, the results indicate that socioeconomic status plays a significant role in school choice, with parents' financial capabilities and education background

influencing their decisions. Cultural factors also showed a meaningful impact, suggesting that parents consider alignment with family values, language preferences, and cultural exposure when selecting schools. Furthermore, the quality and professionalism of teachers were found to be crucial, highlighting the importance of competent and experienced teaching staff in shaping parents' perceptions of educational quality. Social influence, including recommendations from peers and community networks, was identified as another contributing factor in the decision-making process.

Overall, the findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between personal, social, and institutional factors in shaping school choice. The study underscores the importance for international schools to maintain high teaching standards, effective communication, and culturally responsive practices to meet parental expectations. These details not only contribute to the academic literature on education and parental decision-making in Malaysia but also offer practical guidance for policymakers and school administrators aiming to improve school accessibility, quality, and engagement with the community.



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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A - QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS



Factors influencing parents' school choice for their kids.

Punitha Mani

Post Graduate School of Business

Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur

Email: remy_1316@yahoo.com

Dear Respondents,

I am a post graduate student in MSc (Management) from School of Business, Universiti Utara Malaysia. I would like to request your kind assistance in completing a confidential questionnaire for my Master's research. The purpose of this study is to examine "Factors influencing parents' school choice for their kids" in Malaysia, and your input will be highly valuable in ensuring the accuracy and depth of the findings. The respondents are anonymous, whereby your identity (name, organization, phone number, etc) will not appear in the responses generated. All the information and responses provided are strictly confidential and will be used solely for academic purposes. Please spend your valuable 10 minutes to complete and return the form. Thank you very much for your kind cooperation and time.

Your sincerely,

Punitha Mani

Post Graduate UUM, Kuala Lumpur.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Details of Participants

1. Age:

- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 and above

2. Gender:

- Male
- Female

3. Highest Education Level:

- SPM
- Diploma
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

4. Occupation:

- Government Sector
- Private sector
- Self-Employed / Business Owner
- Professional (Doctor, Lawyer, Engineer, etc.)



Homemaker

Other:

5. Monthly Household Income:

Below RM3,000

RM3,001 – RM6,000

RM6,001 – RM10,000

Above RM10,000

6. Number of Children:

1

2

3

4 and above

7. Type of School Your Child Currently Attends:

National School (SK/SJKC/SJKT)

Private School

International School

Homeschooling

Other:

SECTION B: SCHOOL CHOICE

Please rate each item using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree

1. I am likely to choose an international school for my child because I believe it offers better preparation for university overseas.

1

2

3

4

5

2. I prefer international schools when I can afford the tuition, even if the national school is more convenient.

1 2 3 4 5

3. My final decision about which school to enrol my child in is strongly influenced by the school's curriculum (IB, IGCSE, A-Levels).*

1 2 3 4 5

4. I would switch my child to an international school if the school's reputation and academic results are better.*

1 2 3 4 5

5. I consider English-medium instruction a major reason to choose an international school.

1 2 3 4 5

6. Recommendations from friends, family or colleagues influence my school choice.*

1 2 3 4 5

7. The availability of modern facilities and extracurricular programmes increases my preference for international schools.*

1 2 3 4 5

SECTION C: SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

Please rate each item using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree

1. My household income allows me to afford international school fees.

1 2 3 4 5

2. The cost of school fees influences my school choice.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I consider long-term affordability before choosing a school.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Financial stability provides more schooling options.

1 2 3 4 5

5. My educational background helps me evaluate school quality.

1 2 3 4 5

6. The type of job I hold affects the social networks informing my school choice.

1 2 3 4 5

7. Parents with professional jobs tend to choose international schools for social alignment.*

1 2 3 4 5

SECTION D: CULTURAL FACTORS

Please rate each item using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree

1. I prefer a school with a strong multicultural environment.

1 2 3 4 5

2. International exposure is important when choosing a school.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I favour English-medium instruction over Malay-medium instruction.

1 2 3 4 5

4. A global curriculum enhances my child's future opportunities.

1 2 3 4 5

5. It is important that the school's values align with my cultural beliefs.

1 2 3 4 5

6. My decision is influenced by cultural considerations (language, diversity, global outlook).*

1 2 3 4 5

SECTION E: SCHOOL QUALITY

Please rate each item using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree

1. The school's modern facilities influence my decision.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I consider teacher-student ratio/class size.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Academic performance and university placements affect my preference.

1 2 3 4 5

4. I prefer accredited or internationally recognised curricula.

1 2 3 4 5

5. Extracurricular activities influence my school selection.

1 2 3 4 5

6. School reputation and prestige are important.

1 2 3 4 5

SECTION F: SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Please rate each item using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree

1. My school choice is influenced by advice of family members.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I consider preferences of friends/colleagues.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I feel social pressure to choose certain types of schools.

1 2 3 4 5

4. The reputation of schools chosen by peers affects my decision.

1 2 3 4 5

5. My decision is influenced by perceived prestige among my social circle.

1 2 3 4 5

6. I discuss with other parents and consider their experiences.

1 2 3 4 5

SECTION G: TEACHER QUALITY & PROFESSIONALISM

Please rate each item using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree

1. I believe that the teachers' professional behaviour (punctuality, ethics) is very important when I choose a school.

1 2 3 4 5

2. The qualifications and certifications held by the teachers influence my preference for a school.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I consider the ability of teachers to lead classrooms (teacher leadership) as a mark of quality.

1 2 3 4 5

4. It matters to me if teachers are committed and motivated their dedication affects my school choice.

1 2 3 4 5

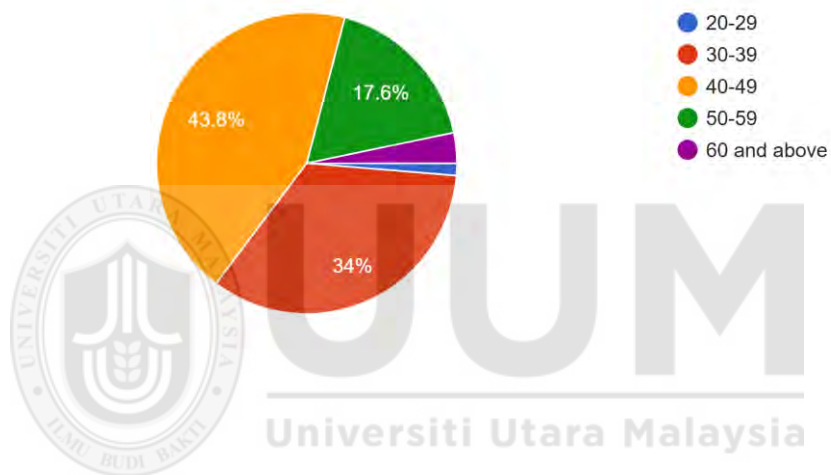
1. I evaluate a school's teacher quality based on how well teachers adapt to digital learning and technology.

1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

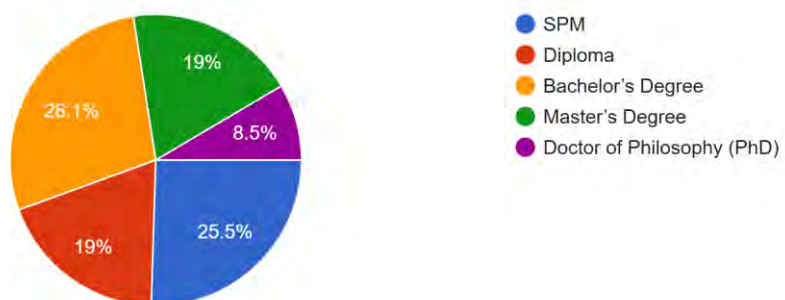
1. Age:

153 responses

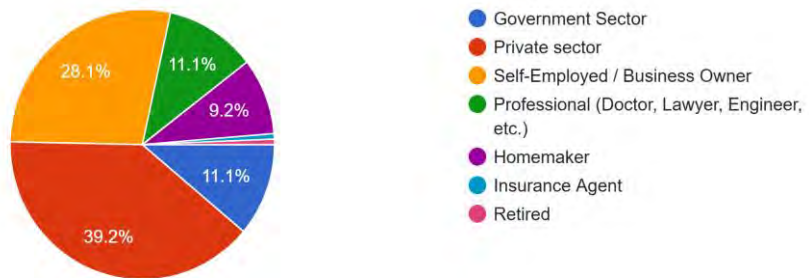


3. Highest Education Level:

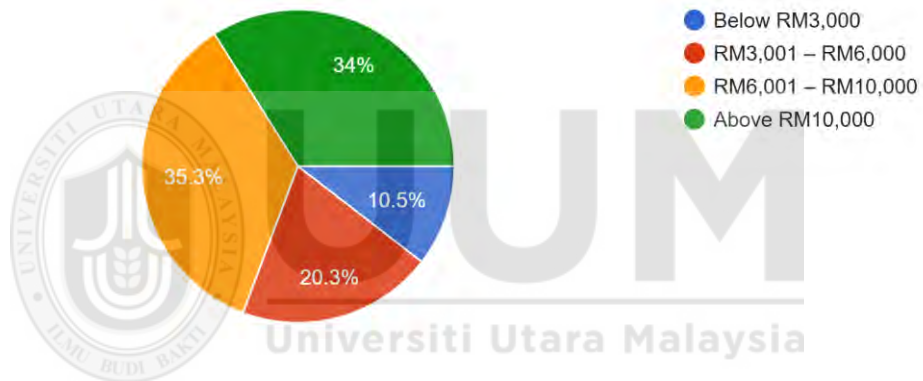
153 responses



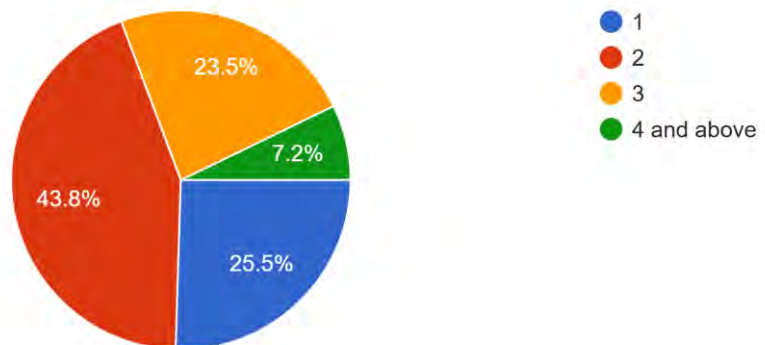
4. Occupation:
153 responses



5. Monthly Household Income:
153 responses



6. Number of Children:
153 responses



APPENDIX C: DATA COLLECTION LETTER



UUM KUALA LUMPUR
Universiti Utara Malaysia
41-3, Jalan Raja Muda Abdul Aziz
50300 KUALA LUMPUR
MALAYSIA



Tel: 603 - 2610 3000
Faks (Fax): 603 - 2694 9228
Laman Web (Web): <http://uumkl.uum.edu.my>

Our Ref: UUM/UUMKL/ P-39/003/02
Date: 03 February 2026

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

COLLECTION OF DATA FOR RESEARCH PURPOSE

We are pleased to inform you that the following student is from UUM Kuala Lumpur and is presently pursuing their **Master of Science (Management)**. They are required to collect data from your organization as a requirement for the **BPMZ69912 Research Paper** course this semester.

NO.	NAME	MATRIC NO.	PHONE NO.	ID NO.
1.	PUNITHA A/P MANI	832841	014-9046185	851116-01-6588

Please be informed that the data collected is purely for academic purpose and we assure you that all information will be kept strictly confidential. We really appreciate your kindness and cooperation in the above matter.

Thank You.

"BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA"
"MALAYSIA MADANI"
"KEDAH SEJAHTERA – NIKMAT UNTUK SEMUA"
"ILMU, BUDI, BAKTI"

Sincerely yours

HISSARUDDIN BIN AHMAT
Deputy Assistant Registrar
Universiti Utara Malaysia Kampus Kuala Lumpur (UUMKL)


s.k. No: 832841

Universiti Pengurusan Terkemuka
The Eminent Management University



APPENDIX D: INTENT S TO SUBMIT GRADUATE RESEARCH PAPER LETTER

UUM/COB/SBM/B-9/002



**Pusat Pengajian Pengurusan
Perniagaan**
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
Universiti Utara Malaysia

INTENT TO SUBMIT GRADUATE RESEARCH PAPER

To: Dean
School of Business Management (SBM)
Universiti Utara Malaysia
06010 UUM Sintok, Kedah
Tel: 6 04 928 7401 Fax: 6 04 928 7422
www.sbm.uum.edu.my
(Attn: Zaini bt. Majid)

PART I (To be filled up by Student)

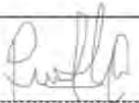
I intent to submit my research paper to be examined within 3 weeks.

Name of Student : Punitha a/p Mani

Matric No. : 832841 H/P No: 014-9046185 Email: remy_1316@yahoo.com

Programme of Study : Master by Coursework
 Master by Coursework and Dissertation (for Economic Students only)

Research Paper Title:
Determinants of Parents' School Choice Decisions: The Roles of Socioeconomic, Cultural, School Quality, Social Influence, and Teacher Quality Factors



Candidate's Signature

10 January 2026
Date

** Note: Please submit 2 copies of the Research Paper together with this form.*

PART II (To be filled up by the Supervisor)

I am satisfied with his/her progress and have no objection regarding his/her intention.


Signature and Official Stamp

10 January 2026
Date

PART III (To be filled up by the Main Supervisor)

I hereby nominate the examiners as details below:

INTERNAL EXAMINER

- 1 Name : Dr. Mohd Salahudin Bin Shamsudin
College : UUM College of Business
Ext.No : 04-928 7461 Hand Phone No: - E-mail : salahudin@uum.edu.my
- 2 Name :
College :
Ext. No : Hand Phone No: E-mail :

CHAIRMAN

- 1 Name : Dr. Muhammad Fadzly bin Zakaria
College : UUM College of Business
Ext. No : 04-928 7520 Hand Phone No: - E-mail : fadzly@uum.edu.my

PART IV (For Office Use Only)

Received:
Appointment of Examiners:
Research Paper Submitted to Examiners:
Viva Date: