

Significance of Marketing In School

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to focus on the factors that influence parental decision-making when it comes to choosing a school for their beloved children. Studying the factors will give us a deep understanding of what parents look for in a school, which, in return, will help us know what a school should focus on when setting its marketing strategy. In order to achieve our goal, we have interviewed head of admission of different schools in Tripoli, and focused on the most common factors. Finally, we compared our results with different researches, and came up with a marketing strategy that every school needs to apply for a successful campaign.

Keywords: School Marketing, Student needs, Parental Decision Making, school choice.

I. INTRODUCTION

“Intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character is the goal of true education.”

— Martin Luther King Jr.

Education is the main factor of social and economic development. The measurement of a successful educational system relies on student fulfilment and achievements¹.

Many parents could face dilemma when it comes to choosing school for their children. They need to consider multiple aspects and control their priorities (Robbins and Coulter, 2005). When it comes to school choice, multiple factors may be influencing parents' decision making. Some of the factors may be internal related to the parents' social-economic levels, to the age of their children, etc.... Other factors are external related to the type of school, its image, and characteristics².

In our thesis, we are going to investigate parents' preferences for school attributes and we will discuss both factors from a school perspective and from a parent perspective. It is important to know these factors to know our market, our competitor, and more important. Our consumer behaviour, which, in this case, is a sensible person dealing with sensitive decision making.

In addition to understanding the consumer personality, which is a very sensitive personality when it comes to parents and their children, we need to understand as well that the traits of the product/service itself are very sensible as well. Parents are more selective in their choice of school for their children and they do use all the available resources before registering their child (Molland 2007:22)³.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The main problem is that schools do not fully value the prominence of having a marketing department. They find it difficult to market themselves effectively as a result of a lack of information regarding the effective 'choice' factors.

¹ Ball, S.J., Bowe, R. and Gewirtz, S. (1996). 'School choice, social class and distinction: the realization of social advantage in education', *Journal of Education Policy*, vol. 11(1), pp. 89–112.

² Friedman, B.A., Bobrowski, P.E. & Markow, D., 2007, 'Predictors of parents' satisfaction with their children's school', *Journal of Educational Administration* 45(3), 278–288. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09578230710747811>

³ McGovern, M., 2012, 'What motivates parents', *Independent School Magazine* 71(6), 16–21.

Parents have different perspectives, and usually they get affected by different factors whether internal, that is on the personal level, or external, that is through word of mouth and/or the image of the school⁴. A successful marketing strategy will create a marvellous image of a school, and increase the number of registered student, even if the school is not worth it⁵.

The main Question in order to come up with a successful strategy is stated below:

What are the factors affecting parental decision making before choosing a school for their children?

Shall we consider all of these factors as High important?

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many researchers have focused on parental choices in relation to school and the competition acquired such as (Goldring & Philips, 2008; Hausman & Goldring, 2000; Smreker & Goldring, 1999). Other researchers have focused on schooling markets (Adnett & Davies, 1999; 2000; 2003; Chubb & Moe, 1990; Glennerster, 1991; Whitty & Powers, 2000)⁶.

A study made by Kennedy, Dorman & Mulholland (2011) asserts that teacher quality, student relationship whether it was with other students or even their relation with their teachers, and level of attention and concern, were the top important criteria for parents when choosing a Catholic school⁷. Having said so, it means the religious factor might be a very important factor to send their students to a school with the same religion or even same beliefs.

A family's perspective to education is rehabilitated through their personal practice which is the result of their social class position (Ball & Nikita, 2014; Bodovski, 2010)⁸.

When studying consumer behaviour or a parent decision, we can benefit from a psychologist's perspective. According to Freund, 2001; A. McCarthy, 2004; Theobald, 2005), the emotional and psychological safety needs of children are extremely important to parents and they are playing a vital role in school choice⁹.

As per Sam Sims, London Institute of Government, (2012) the high competition in the educational market, and its features and thoughtfulness are creating powerful incentives for schools to develop innovative approaches and improve teaching quality in order to attract more pupils¹⁰.

However, education is intangible (Cant & Van Heerden 2010:450), which makes it difficult for parents to make the choice. Now that we have defined our product/service, the consumer, and the factor that might affect his decision making, it is time to see the role of marketing in communicating and reflecting these factors and to deliver them to the parents in the most effective and positive way.

Marketing in an educational system can be beneficial rather than harmful if used correctly, and especially if a school's mission, vision, objectives, and values are communicated clearly to the consumer¹¹.

⁴ Bosetti, L. & Pyryt, M.C., 2007, 'Parental motivation in school choice: Seeking the competitive edge', *Journal of School Choice* 1(4), 89–108. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/15582150802098795>

⁵ Trends in Higher Education Marketing, Recruitment, and technology. Hanover Research, 2014 p5-24

⁶ Losike-Sedimo, N.C., 2011, 'Factors influencing parents' choice of school for their children in Botswana: Marketing strategy for customer loyalty', *Far East Journal of Psychology and Business* 3(1), 32–40.

⁷ Lewinsohn, S., and Mano, H. (1993). Multiattribute choice and affect: The influence of Naturally occurring and manipulated moods on choice processes.

Journal of Behavioral Decision Making, 6,33-51.

⁸ Ball, S.J., Bowe, R. and Gewirtz, S. (1996). 'School choice, social class and distinction: the realization of social advantage in education', *Journal of Education Policy*, vol. 11(1), pp. 89–112.

⁹ Friedman, B.A., Bobrowski, P.E. & Markow, D., 2007, 'Predictors of parents' satisfaction with their children's school', *Journal of Educational Administration* 45(3), 278–288. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09578230710747811>

¹⁰ Sferle, S., Gârdan, D.A., Gudei, S.C. & Geangu, I.P., 2012, 'Implementation of marketing principles – A necessity in primary school education', *Contemporary Reading in Law and Social Justice* 4(2), 764–773.

A marketing task is to keep consumer satisfaction because a satisfied consumer could bring 10 others through word of mouth, and he could be reflecting a positive image of the school.

A marketing strategy in a school may be considered the same as a service marketing mix strategy. Some researchers have listed 4 P's; others 6P's, or 7P's, and we may even have 10P's. Starting with the original four that all researchers agreed on, these are: Price as tuition fees, Product as a Curriculum, Place as the school's location, and the promotion used by the school through PR, fairs, etc.¹². Due to the factors mentioned by Rushton and Carson who focused on the heterogeneity, perishability, and inseparability and intangibility of the service industries, Led Cowell added three further Ps which represent:

People as "the employees, teachers, and administrators", the physical evidence as "exam results and student motivation", and the process as "the ease of access and facilitations provided for the parents".

According to Maslow's concept of "self-actualization", humans tend to satisfy their basic physical needs before moving to the social, emotional, and career needs. Therefore, parents' first priority by nature is safety. Safety is a general title that may be related to safety environment, safety ambiance, no bullying, safe learning with equality, student individual attention, well-equipped classes, courts, a nurse, etc.

Most parents enrol their children in a school that is similar to their social class and even the influence of the social class (Ball, Bowe, & Gerwitz, 1996; Yates, 2000; Campbell, 2007; Williams, Jamieson, & Hollingworth, 2008; Bodovski, 2010)¹³.

The educational approach for the family is formed through their own previous practices which arise from their class structure (Nikita & Ball, 2014; Bodovski, 2010).

According to a research made on 2010 by Syliva Avram & Jaap Dronkers, the concept of high quality private schools was created to attract the children of prosperous households and clever students¹⁴.

The exceedingly rising competition in the educational market due to solid demand for higher academic level has augmented the quality of schools from a managerial and academic perspective (Hastings et al,2008).

Every father or mother seeks the best for their kids. The achievements of student outcomes were recognized in the importance of teaching quality due to some research indications¹⁵.

The importance of funding to support parents is acknowledged by the Australian governments which provides high importance for the scholarships offered for students and stated that these financial aids support the parental choice as well¹⁶.

Another factor is stated by "Hastings et al. (2008)" The location of a school is one of parent's preferences before choosing a school. On top of selecting a school located nearby houses, parents seeks, the academic satisfaction, results, along with the analytical skills are the main factors when choosing a school, while (Ball et al., 1996; Hastings and Weinstein, 2008)¹⁷.

All of these previous factors could influence the decision of a parent. It is highly important to consider the features of the consumer who will be taking the decision, and what exactly is a decision? Most researches agree that a decision is to choose among different options and alternatives.

¹¹ Oplatka, I., 2007, 'The principal's role in marketing the school: Subjective interpretations and personal influences', *Planning and Changing* 38(3), 208–221.

¹² Parker, R.S., Cook, S. & Pettijohn, C.E., 2007, 'School choice attributes: Positioning a private school', *Services Marketing Quarterly* 28(4), 21–33. http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J396v28n04_02

¹³ Zikmund, W.G. & Babin, B.J., 2010, *Exploring marketing research*, 10th edn., intl edn., South-Western, Cengage Learning, Stamford, CT.

¹⁴ Mahr, D., & Lievens, A. (2012). Virtual lead user communities: Drivers of knowledge creation for innovation. *Research Policy*, 41(1), 167–177. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2011.08.006>

¹⁵ Hattie, J., 2003, 'Teachers make a difference: What is the research evidence?' ACER Research Conference, Melbourne 19-21 October

¹⁶ https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/quality_schools_acc.pdf

¹⁷ Allen, R. (2007) Allocating pupils to their nearest school: the consequences for ability and social stratification, *Urban Studies*, 44(4) pp 751-770

In addition to the different choices available, a decision is also related to the personality, and more important to the nature of the person who is making a decision, which in that case are the parents.

One of the best definitions for decision making was presented by (Scott & Bruce, 1995, P.820) when they made a clear distinction between personality traits and habit-based acts. They defined decision making as the learned habitual response pattern exhibited by an individual when confronted with a decision situation¹⁸.

A decision maker will be influenced by many factors such as availability for alternatives, personal values, knowledge of individuals, previous experiences, personal values (Hastie, 2001; Medin et al, 2004; Nezu & Roman, 1987)¹⁹.

Decision-makers are required to make effective decisions to adapt to the changing environment, maintain social competence, and reach goals (Nezu & Roman, 1987; Hastie, 2001).

Decision making differs according to consumers' perspectives. A rational decision making is limited due to lack of information; decision makers would not have had full knowledge of all the possible alternatives according to Simon and March (1955)²⁰.

However, other researchers define decision making as a step-by-step process. Lindblom (1959) considers decision making as an evolutionary process that will lead to problem solving.

The decision making process tends to maximize or to have full satisfaction for the decision made. The process represents an individual self-satisfaction that no matter what the decision is, right or wrong, the consumer would have done all the research needed before taking the decision (Schwartz et al., 2002; Iyengar, Wells and Schwartz, 2006).

A parent should provide to their child the love, care, basis and guidance, respect, and empowerment second by second (Pecnick, 2007). These classifications related to the parental role represent the basic principles that respect and show the finest interests of the child. Those classifications are mentioned below:

- Nurturing behaviour that responds to the child's need for love, emotional feeling, security, belonging and being accepted by the external environment
- Providing a solid base, guidance, and supervision, which means the time spent to distinguish child's awareness, security, and the ability to differentiate between the right act and the wrong one
- Recognizing the child as a human being, or asserting the uniqueness in a child – This makes him feel his importance in the society, and it makes him feel we are listening to him and that every small detail matters, starting with his colleagues in class.
- Child Empowerment: Improve the children's practice, get them more involved in society, get them more skilled in real life, and make them believe in themselves and that they can change the world.

Based on the four factors of parenting mentioned above, it is normal and obligatory for parents to select the best available educational environment for their children.



¹⁸ Denessen, E., Driessena, G. & Slegers, P., 2005, 'Segregation by choice? A study of group-specific reasons for school choice', *Journal of Education Policy* 20(3), 347–368. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02680930500108981>

¹⁹ Price, I., F. Matzdorf and H. Agathi, 2003. The impact of facilities on student choice of university. *Facilities*, 21(10): 212-222.

²⁰ Lockhart, M.J., 2005. How to Market your School. Universe Books.

As stated by (Simonson and Nowlis, 2000; Ranaweera, McDougall and Bansal, 2005), latest studies have been devoted to examine individual characters and how they can affect consumer behavior.

Now that we have a general idea of whom we might be dealing with and the type of service that we will be selling, we will now define marketing and discuss the link between the educational market and the importance of marketing.

According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society. (Approved July 2013)²¹.

As McKenna (1991, p.68) notes, "Marketing is everything and everything is marketing."

Parents nowadays are more attentive to the decision-making process. They rely not only on the image of the school but also on other parents' feedback and opinions. In the educational service, we can distinguish between a consumer and a customer.

Parents are considered as customers who will pay the fees, and students are considered as consumers who are taking advantage of the service provided by the school. A strong correlation between parents, students, and governance needs to be presented. Therefore, a school can benefit from a customer-relationship management.

We need to take into consideration the type of parents. When setting a new strategy, we need to be aware that nowadays parents are called the "millennial parents". According to US chamber foundation, millennial generation is technically integrated, connected to the world with a digital sixth sense. They are considered multitasks, and they are apt to switching tasks quickly. They have a high speed of information analysing process.

This generation wants a clearly structured academic path. They look for special treatment and ask what knowledge is required for exams. There has been a transactional relationship to education, seeing higher education as necessary and expensive.

In the digital age, everyone and everything is connected; educational competition is on the rise especially in Tripoli. Where almost 73% believed there is a wide variety of private schools to choose among, 81% consider changing schools if it doesn't meet their expectations and 66% of the parents have already changed schools for their children's. Therefore, a strategic educational marketing strategy will ensure school success and survival in the market.

A marketing strategy differs according to the type of product or service requested and according to the degree of competence of the market. According to www.schoolnet.edu.lb, Tripoli has 97 public schools, 14 private non-profitable schools, 23 private profitable schools, and 3 schools funded by the UNRWA.

What is the role of the marketing department in a school? How is it related to the educational system? The educational marketing objective is to be responsible for the recognition of student and parent needs in a proper approach (Foskett, 1992).

If the school creates more means of communication, they will get attached with the external environment in order to promote the goals, mission, vision, and values of the school to learners and their parents (Davis and Ellison, 1997)²².

The key for a successful marketing strategy is to best understand consumer behaviours which represents in this case parental behaviour; analysing those behaviours should be a priority for schools (Pardey, 191; Anson 1996).

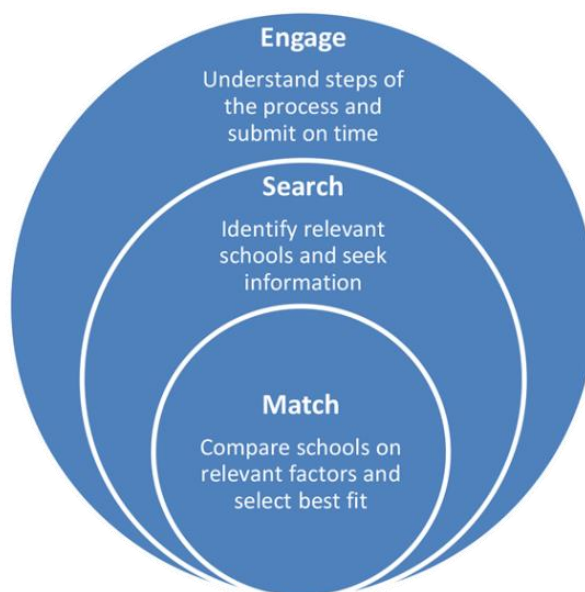
According to (Hanson, 1996; Davis and Ellison, 1997; Kotler and Armstrong, 1999; Foskett and Hemsley-Brown, 2001), the ideal marketing strategy to be set by a school should include the following steps²³: an educational marketing research, an investigation of the environment, formulating a marketing plan and strategy, implementing the marketing mix of the service, and evaluating the results.

²¹ Foskett, N., 1992. *Managing External Relations in Schools: A Practical Guide*. 1st Edn., Route Ledge, New York, pp: 232.

²² Welsh, R., Duque, M., & McEachin, A. (forthcoming). School choice, student mobility, and school quality: Evidence from post-Katrina New Orleans. *Education Finance and Policy*.

²³ Bell, L. and A. Rowley, 2002. The impact of educational policy on headship in primary schools in England, 1994-2001. *J. Educ. Admin.*, 40(3): 195-210.

Figure 1
Levels of school choice action for families



It is very important to understand the geographical characteristics of Tripoli. The population of Tripoli is expected to follow a linear declining growth rate starting at 2.3 percent and reaching 2.0 percent.

The Tripoli old city inhabitants are largely of local origin and are poorer and less educated than the national average. The average population density in the old city centre is 260 persons/ha, varying between 100 persons/ha in Nouri to 500 persons/ha in Al Soueika and Haddadin.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach followed was exploratory and quantitative in nature. The sample included 564 parents from different private and public schools. As mentioned before, we had almost 27 factors affecting parental decision when choosing a school. We filtered those factors to 8 after using a well-structure quantitative questionnaire, followed by an SPSS program to analyse the results. Interviewing 24 school principals, and head of admissions, and comparing our results to previous researches, confirmed our data collected.

This study included a wider research project that is aimed at exploring different factors affecting parental decision when it comes to choosing a school for their children. This purpose was achieved thru qualitative and quantitative perspectives, following Curtis, Murphy and Shields (2014), who believes that these factors are necessary in educational research to address it at different levels.

The Saunders' onion method is used in this research to provide almost accurate data collection techniques achieving a proper research design. First, the study is classified as explanatory, used to ask questions, and clarify reasons behind a social phenomenon and problem. Pragmatism and Positivism are applied as a viewpoint with a deductive approach to proceed in a Mix Method.

A qualitative exploratory study was carried out based on personal meetings, with some school leaders, or even head of marketing in a school in order to identify their vision and mission, the strategy and the load of information they have before setting such strategies. This study is considered as a detailed approach between parental behavior and school marketing strategy.

This research was done to clarify the questions connecting factors affecting choice of school to parents thru setting a successful strategy. Consequently, the investigator will try to answer this key interrogation: What are parent's as customer? What are their requirements for their children's "Consumers"? How important are the factors in the overall educational service?

Data collection is a valuable step in the research process. Secondary data was collected through book, journals, and the internet. Primary data was collected by adopting quantitative and qualitative methods, considering consumers engaged in online shopping chosen in stratified random sampling. This chapter will give clear interpretations of cases studies as a strategy in a cross-sectional time horizon studying the phenomenon of online consumer behavior.

V. FINDINGS

The most important factor parents consider is the way their kids are being taught. This wide-ranging factor includes quality of teaching, of teachers, the curriculum, and the teaching methodology used in class “42.6% responded as Extremely Important”. One main finding is the location of the school because 38.1% have chosen the current school based on “Near the house school”.

Third most important factor before choosing a school is the management style with a percentage of 40.4% extremely important. Finally, as any customer, parents wants to have the high quality of learning in an affordable price, therefore the fourth most important factor was school fees with a 38.3% extremely percent response.

The hypothesis established in this research, led to a group of evidence that offer the basis for successful Marketing strategy to be set by a school. This study is following a cross-sectional method; it is an investigation of a particular phenomenon at a specific time.

A Quantitative study took place from March 2017 till September 2018. This type of study requires qualitative methods due to psychological responses that differ according to school, and parent’s background. Many case studies are based on interviews conducted over a short period.

This qualitative exploratory study thus made it possible to highlight the importance of different variables, and let go of other variables that we used to rate as high important factor.

The differences in the demographic aspects of the interviewed sample gave us a clear understanding of the opportunities, and threats faced by the educational market at Tripoli. In addition, the knowledge and the involvement of parents nowadays made it harder for school to maintain client satisfaction.

This study is beneficial to develop knowledge in order to improve parental understanding. A quantitative study to validate these results is to be considered. The overall behavior assessment should be measured, as well as the attitude of both, Parents and students.

The study was based on a sample of 564 parents who already registered their children in school, went through the whole service decision making process, and are involved to know what the main pursued factors when choosing a school are. The percentage is 28.7% and 71.3% for men and women respectively. University graduate represents 52% followed by high school 26%, and post graduate 16%.

In addition, 46.3% of the sample are getting paid a salary below 1000Usd, while 42.5% of sample are having a salary range between \$1000 and \$1500 Us.

Below are some of the important facts, set in tables for a clear understanding of the demographic criteria.

How important were the School Fees when selecting the school?
➤ 38.3% Extremely Important
➤ 36.2% Very Important
➤ 11.2% Moderate
➤ 14.4% Not at all Important

Many reasons are related to this percentage. The most important one is that wages are considered low in Lebanon “According to the World Bank, 70% of the population has an annual income of less than 10,000 USD”²⁴.

Investigating Tripoli in specific, we suffer from poor economic conditions. 60% of Citizens living in Tripoli are placed below the poverty line, and this percentage can rise in some areas such as Tebbaneh and old souqs to almost 80%²⁵.

²⁴http://investinlebanon.gov.lb/ar/doing_business/cost_of_doing_business?catId=55

How important were the Curriculum components and methodology when selecting the school?

- 42.6% Extremely Important
- 37.2% Very Important
- 10.1% Moderate
- 10.2% Not at all Important

We have two major factors “Curriculum components; Methodology” and both are extremely important. The curriculum components matter for parents because they are aware of the importance of having international curriculum base, or high standard curriculum due to multiple reasons cited below:

- instability of life in Lebanon
- High rates of Unemployment
- Possibility of pursuing higher educations in universities abroad.
- High percentage of Lebanese citizens, or part of families living abroad already.

It is important that the curriculum reinforces and builds a positive attitude by offering varied stimulating and enjoyable experiences and this is exactly the role of selecting an approachable methodology because we have converted in the 21st century from indoctrination to students involving.

“TELL ME AND I FORGET, TEACH ME AND I MAY REMEMBER, INVOLVE ME AND I LEARN.” BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

How important were the Management style when selecting the school?

- 40.4% Extremely Important
- 39.4% Very Important
- 17% Moderate
- 3.2% Not at all Important

Once upon a time, a teacher had absolute authority and all it took to send shivers down the students’ spines was a mean look. However, things are harshly different today and kids are well aware that old methods of discipline are not allowed in today’s education. Due to that, Troublemakers number has increased.

It is very critical for the parents to choose a school that fits with their beliefs, and styles of raising their children. Thus, parent cares:

- if a school is too strict or too easy
- patient with their students
- gives high importance for silly causes
- how they deal with bullying
- Teachers monitoring and the way they are treated

How important were the Good discipline when selecting the school?

- 27.7% Extremely Important
- 45.2% Very Important
- 20.7% Moderate
- 6.4% Not at all Important

²⁵ Annahar newspaper, 10 November 2014, Maurice Matta

This interpretation is directly related to the previous finding. It gives us a more precise and clear understanding for the style of management that parent wants. Having a good discipline in school along with a strong classroom management is one of the important keys before choosing a school.

In addition, parents care for their children safety and security, and a school providing high level of good discipline will ensure both terms.

How important were the Convenient location when selecting the school?

- 43.6% Extremely Important
- 44.1% Very Important
- 8.5% Moderate
- 3.7% Not at all Important

The reason for this high percentage can be related to different causes: As stated in the paragraph below, troublemakers number has increased, and so does sending after parents to discuss their children progress for academic or behaviour issue.

A high traffic Jam in Tripoli during school dismissal times leads to children lateness to more than one hour.

Finally, due to school life student opportunities, sport activities, it is more ease to have a school nearby and this answer is found is the followed indicator.

How important were Variety of activities when selecting the school?

- 12.2% Extremely Important
- 46.3% Very Important
- 29.3% Moderate
- 12.2% Not at all Important

The role of a school is to build personality. In order to do so, students need to participate in all the available activities such as joining the varsity team, volunteering in community service missions, exhibitions and fairs, funding projects, joining available clubs such as Drama, Political, Math, etc....

Nonetheless, parents could benefit from some awareness activities that could increase knowledge of the world and the ways of society; ability to conduct oneself well; worldly wisdom, sophistication.

How important were the qualified language teachers when selecting the school?

- 20.2% Extremely Important
- 38.8% Very Important
- 33% Moderate
- 8% Not at all Important

Parents focus on the language teachers for many causes such as the globalization. English language for example is the worldwide, number one, official business language in the world. Students are in need to have fluent English language because they will need it in the future, in their jobs, in their interviews, in pursuing higher education as stated before due to Lebanese instability.

In addition, our mother tongue language “The Arabic Language” is being transformed from classical formal language to informality due to weaknesses in Arabic language, and lack of practices.

Parents are aware of these modifications, and are trying to control it as possible as they can.

How important was the Religion when selecting the school?

- 22.3% Extremely Important
- 47.9% Very Important
- 11.2% Moderate
- 18.6% Not at all Important

Whilst religion is important as a factor, the emphasizing on this factor when selecting schools can be different from one parent to another. The reason for this high percentage is that parents chose religiously-defined schools because they are concerned with ethics, children's morality, beliefs, convictions, family relations, kinship, and character development "Van Pelt et.al. (2007)".

How important were the Small class sizes when selecting the school?

- 23.4% Extremely Important
- 4.5% Very Important
- 26.1% Moderate
- 1.1% Not at all Important

A parent believes that smaller a reduced number of students in on class will lead to improvement in their academic results and, consequently that class size is a noteworthy element of school choice^{26,27}.

Note that we have no official standard for class size; it is remarkable that average number of student per class may vary between 20-22 students. The optimal number may vary between 8 to 15 students²⁸

How important were the Social media when selecting the school?

- 39% Extremely Important
- 27.6% Very Important
- 26.6% Moderate
- 6.8% Not at all Important

Social media factor is a double-edged sword. It can be taken in the positive or the negative side. Some parent wants it to be prohibited because teachers might engage in inappropriate communications with their students.

Teachers are frequently punished for content they or others post on social media²⁹ because school community, parents, teachers, and students can see all the inappropriate pictures, or posts, that do not fit with the school image or school personnel.

The main problem over here is how much school management can control what academic and none academic staff post online.

Thus, Social media if used properly and was controllable by school management can lead to higher communication

How important was the mixed school, masculinity, or feminist when selecting the school?

- 20.7% Extremely Important
- 64.9% Very Important
- 9.6% Moderate
- 4.8% Not at all Important

The reason of this high percentage, is that Tripoli citizen are considered as traditional, old-school, conservative parents. We have no sectarianism in Tripoli, but parents prefer to register their children in a school that have same beliefs or same

²⁶ <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1105167.pdf>

²⁷ Hart and Teeter Research Companies. NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll, question 108.March 1997.

²⁸ For a review of the class size literature, see Blatchford, P., and Mortimore, P. The issue of class size for young children in schools: What can we learn from research? Oxford Review of education (1994) 20,4:411–28. For a discussion of the Project STAR results, see note no. 5, Mosteller.

²⁹ Complaint at 7–10, *Murmer v. Chesterfield Cnty. Sch. Bd.*, No. 3:07CV608 (E.D. Va. Oct. 4, 2007), 2007 WL 2914769. For more about the case, see *Teacher Hopes To Get Back at Va. District*, FIRST AMEND.CENTER (Oct. 6, 2007), <http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/teacher-hopes-to-get-back-at-va-district-that-fired-him-over-butt-art>.

religion. to verify this criteria, we have questioned the targeted sample the following question: “Which type of schools or education do you consider for your children’s? Answers are stated below:

- 8.5% Public School “No sect difference”
- 35.6% Private School “Catholic or Orthodox”
- 35.6% Private School “Muslim”
- 15.4% Private School “Secularism”
- 4.8% Ordinary Private School “No big deal”

They try to protect their children as much as they can. They believe that school environment,

However, many reasons were not classified as high importance for parents and we will be citing these factors briefly. Parents engagement in school factor, defined as “parents and school staff working together to support and improve the learning, development, and health of children and adolescents³⁰” have a percentage of almost 46% moderate, and 20% not at all important.

“No bullying” factor is not that important for parent. Maybe they believe it’s a forgone conclusion due to prosperous school management. This factor rated 45.7% as moderately important.

VI. CONCLUSION

Parents in Tripoli can easily swap schools and a large number already took the alteration when the school did not meet their expectations. Parents are not suffering from “The nearest school” dilemma because we have a variety of public and private schools within close geographic zone of Tripoli and the areas that surrounds it.

Parents nowadays are seeking to enroll their children at a school of their preference (Van Wyk & Bisschoff 2012:431). The competition in the public school does not exist, because of low cost, and in some cases to the low quality provided by school management, teachers, and staff.

However, due to the high competitiveness of private schools, a better understanding of a comprehensive set of parental decision-making and choice factors that influence private school preference amid potential parents will support these schools to improve their marketing efforts in order to attract new learners, satisfy existing and registered pupils, and to position themselves in the private school market. It is therefore important that the schools’ marketing strategy emphasizes and underlines those choice factors.

The findings of the study exposed many important factors when selecting a school. It is better to focus on these factors in the private schools due to high competition market. Finding a school near home is the most important factor for parents, though this factor may become a problem if a school is located straight in down town were an area suffers from a traffic jam.

This is the case of “Tripoli Evangelical School” where they had for so many years the perfect location, but had to change to a different location at Haykaliyeh where all the new couples are living.

The second most important factor “The School Management Style” considered as so general, and need deep understanding because it do contain many important factors such as school regulations, good discipline, teachers limitations, relation between school and parents, bullying, monitoring, and controlling students, teachers, and staff, etc...

Following these two factors arise “school fees” factor considered as highly important due to many reasons. First, parents are preparing their children for the future, for the university, and are investing in them; consequently, they are seeking a return on their investment ROI, so some parents are comparing the school fees of the service obtained. Because of the presence of many alternatives, and parent readiness to swap schools for their children, school fees factor is very sensitive and needs careful study.

³⁰ Epstein JL. School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools Second Edition. Boulder, CO: Westview Press; 2011

This implies that private schools need to improve their marketing efforts by especially focusing on the factors mentioned above, to have a strong positioning, a long term strategy, a rational and applicable strategy where school communicates its regulations clearly with parents, and most important to apply these regulations as agreed. Another marketing guideline for private schools is to recruit, retain and reward the best educators for their schools.

As a general conclusion from the above, this research has provided a practical answer to some commonly asked questions from parents before choosing a school for their children.

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