

Determinants of School Choice: Understanding How Parents' Choose Primary School for Their Children in Arba Minch, Southern Ethiopia

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Abstract: Almost all parents want to educate their children in the best possible educational environment. Their decision to invest in children depends on a number of social, economic and cultural factors. Education in Ethiopia is offering by both public and private sector educational institutions. It is free of cost in public schools whereas in private schools, the parents have to bear the financial burden. For the last two decades private sector is emerging as an important source of imparting education in Ethiopia particularly in the study area. Many aspects regarding the education system of Ethiopia have been discussed in various studies so far. However, the factors which motivate the parents to make a decision about private sector are yet to be explored. The present study was conducted in Arba Minch town to scrutinize the factors which motivate the parents to educate their children in private schools. Primary data was collected for this purpose from 119 parents of elementary school students. The results were derived by using descriptive as well as inferential analysis. The logistic regression analysis suggests that parents' perceptions play an important role in the school-choice decision. In particular, perceptions of school quality, cost of school, and teacher performance emerge as key determinants of private school choice. Additionally, age of the child, monthly income of household, distance from home to school, and numbers of children in family have a significant impact on parents' probability of choosing a private school for their child. In the context of Ethiopia, we can therefore conclude that the school-choice decision is a combination of child, household and school characteristics. Moreover, these findings are important in unraveling the factors based on which parents decide which type of school to send their children.

Keywords: Determinant, School Choice, Binary Logistic Regression

1. Introduction

Education is a process through which mankind transmit experience, new findings and value accumulate over time with the aim of individuals and societies, to make all around participation in the development process. Education plays a great role in the development and socio-economic welfare of the society and it enables people to become more productive member of the society. Over all the development of the human resource is impossible without emphasis on education [1].

Majority of the parents want to provide their children with the best possible educational environment. Their decision to

invest in children in form of education depends on a number of social, economic and cultural factors [2]. Education in Ethiopia is offered both by public as well as private sector. It is free of cost in public schools whereas in private schools, the parents have to shoulder the finances.

In the past, several efforts were made to up lift the education sector. The government of Ethiopia issued two policy documents titled the "Education and Training Policy and the Education Sector Strategy" in 1994 in which it committed itself to achieve universal primary education by 2015. The government made it clear that it would play a major role in the development of education by increasing the financing of the educational system

through budget allocation. At the same time, it has recognized that it won't be able to bear the costs of educational expansion alone. Thus, it proposed privatization as another option [3].

The decision about primary child schooling is mainly dependent upon their parent's choice. Parents decide about their children schools on the basis of various factors. The probable determining factors are: households' characteristics e.g. household income, parent's education, location, area, region, class besides community and social set up. The demand and supply side characteristics also affect the decision making of parents [4].

School choice is relevant with children's academic attainment and school performance levels [5]. Parents generally point out school performance and near home location of the schools as the main indicators of their choice [6]. However, there is a social class variation among parents who exercise their right to choose school [7, 8]. Parents with low socioeconomic status are less likely to make a choice and are also less likely to choose school performance as an important criterion for the school selection [9]. Parents with higher socioeconomic status and higher qualifications not only actively engage in making school choice for their children but also give preference to school academic performance in the selection process [10]. School selection is an important aspect of parental engagement with their children's education.

Another study conducted in Pakistan on determinants of school choice gave emphasis to understand why parents in rural areas of Punjab, Pakistan, chose to send their children to private schools when free public schools were available. It revealed five main factors as important determinants of private school choice. These included the socioeconomic status of the household, the degree of a school's accessibility, the cost of schooling, parents' perceptions of school quality, and their perceptions of the available employment opportunities in the region. The findings suggested that parents' perceptions played an important role in school choice. In particular, their perceptions of school quality and employment opportunities emerged as key determinants of private school choice. Additionally, expenditure on and access to private schooling relative to public schooling as well as the socioeconomic status of the household had a significant impact on parents' probability of choosing a private school for their child [4].

In addition, the distance to school was found to be an important factor in parents' school choice behavior. In a sample of 812 schools in three rural districts of Punjab, 34 percent of children lived at a walking distance of 5 to 15 minutes while 40 percent lived at a walking distance of 5 minutes or less [11]. The study also found that private schools in rural Pakistan were generally clustered around the main village settlements while public schools were located mostly in the peripheral areas. Given this clustering of private and public schools in the education market, it was a natural response for distance-conscious parents to choose nearby private schools rather than far-away public schools [4].

Not so many studies had been done in Africa on the topic of school choice. The study carried out in Kenya suggested that more parents and children would tend to choose private schools over public schools on the basis of performance. The findings also showed that girls and boys from wealthier households, measured by the household assets, were more likely to attend private schools than girls from less wealthier households. According to the results of the study conducted, they showed that educated mothers seemed to prefer sending their children to private schools [12].

Furthermore household attributes such as family income and parents' education are important determinants of private school choice [2, 13, 14]. The impact of mother's education on child enrolment in private school was greater than father's education. In developing countries like Ethiopia, children who lived with educated parents mostly in urban areas were likely to be enrolled in private school.

Moreover, it was also evident from literature reviewed that parents would like to send their children in private school due to quality perspective [14, 15]. The demand for private schools in urban and rural areas was driven by quality of education.

Since some parents had an option of private schooling available to them so, it is important to study how private schools respond to parents' demand for education. Socio demographic and economic characteristics are expected to influence parents' decision to send their children to either a private or public school. Analyzing these factors would help to identify the reason why parents with limited resources are willing to incur expenditure on private schooling for their children when free public schools are available.

Many aspects regarding the education system of Ethiopia have been discussed in various studies so far. However, the factors which motivate the parents to make a decision about private school are yet to be explored. Generally this study was aimed to answer, what are the determinants of school selection which parents consider at the time of school selection for their children at elementary level in Arba Minch town.

2. Methodology

2.1. Study Area and Target Population

This study was conducted at Arba Minch town which is located in southern Ethiopia; which is about 505 kilometers far from Addis Ababa, capital city of Ethiopia. In the study area there were a total of ten private primary schools and thirteen public primary schools. The study emphasized on selected two schools, namely, Rehobot primary school and Kulfo primary school. The data used in this study was primary in nature and collected through self-administered questionnaire from parents of primary school students. The questionnaire was translated to local (Amharic) language and then distributed to parents through their children during January-February 2018. All parents who had children in

primary school (grade 4-8) were identified as target population for this study.

2.2. Study Design and Sampling Techniques

A cross-sectional study design was used among parents who had primary school children. Randomly 119 students were selected using simple random sampling. Out of this, 59 students were selected from private school and 60 students were selected from government school respectively.

2.3. Variables Considered in the Study

Response Variable: In this study the parents' school choice has been treated as response variable. It has been taken as dummy variable with binary values 1 and 0. Where, '1' stands for choice of private school while '0' means avoiding private school. Parents' socio-economic status, Location of parents to school, Sex of students, Age of student, Family size, Mother and Father educational level, Perception of parents due to: quality of education, Cost of school, Female teaching staff, Good environment and facility, Teacher performance are major variables which are expected to affect the parents' decision in selection of public or private school.

2.4. Methods of Data Analysis

For the data analysis both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. Frequency table and charts were used as descriptive analysis whereas Chi-square and binary logistic regression were applied as inferential analysis.

Chi-square Test of Association

The Chi-Square test of association is used to determine if there is any association between two categorical variables. Particularly this is used to test the null hypothesis that there is no association between two categorical variables.

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{j=1}^r \sum_{i=1}^c \frac{(O_{ij} - e_{ij})^2}{e_{ij}} \sim \chi^2(c-1)(r-1), \quad (1)$$

where c and r represent total number of column and row, respectively; O_{ij} and e_{ij} denote Observed and expected frequencies of i^{th} row and j^{th} column respectively.

Binary Logistic Regression Model

Binary logistic regression analysis is appropriate when response variable is dichotomous. For the moment we will assume that each of the independent variables is at least interval scale. If some of the independent variables are categorical, it is inappropriate to include them in the model as if they were interval scale variables. The numbers (code) used to represent the various levels of these categorical variables are merely identifiers, and have no numeric significance. The binary logistic regression model is described as follows. Let the conditional probability that the outcome is present be denoted by $p(Y = 1|X) = \pi(X)$. The logit of the multiple logistic regression model is given by the equation:

$$\text{Logit} [\pi(X)] = \text{Log} \left(\frac{\pi(X)}{1-\pi(X)} \right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_k X_k \quad (2)$$

in which case the logistic regression model is

$$\pi(X) = \frac{e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_k X_k}}{1 + e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_k X_k}} \quad (3)$$

Where Y denotes a dichotomous outcome random vector with categories 1 and 0; X represents the collection of k-explanatory variables, and β 's denote unknown parameters of the covariates and intercept.

Parameters of the model were estimated using maximum likelihood estimation. In a very general sense the method of maximum likelihood yields values for the unknown parameters which maximize the probability of obtaining the observed set of data. In order to apply this method we must first construct a function, called the likelihood function. This function expresses the probability of the observed data as a function of the unknown parameters. The maximum likelihood estimators of these parameters are chosen to be those values that maximize this function. Thus, the resulting estimators are those which agree most closely with the observed data.

Model Checking

Once we have fit a particular multiple logistic regression model, we begin the process of model assessment. For any particular logistic regression model, there is no guarantee that the model fits the data well. Hence we next consider ways of checking the model fit to the data.

The Likelihood Ratio Test: The first step in this process is usually to assess the significance of the variables in the model. The likelihood ratio test statistic (G^2) is the test statistic commonly used for assessing the overall fit of the logistic regression model. The likelihood ratio test is computed based on $-2LL$ (-2 times log likelihood). The likelihood ratio statistic is obtained by subtracting the two times log likelihood ($-2LL$) for the full model from the log likelihood for the intercept only model. This log likelihood-ratio test uses the ratio of the maximized value of the likelihood function for the intercept only model L_0 over the maximized value of the likelihood function for the full model L_1 . The likelihood test statistic is given by:

$$G^2 = -2 \log \left(\frac{L_0}{L_1} \right) = -2(\log(L_0) - \log(L_1)) \\ = -2(LL_0 - LL_1) \quad (4)$$

Where LL_0 is the log likelihood value of the model which has the intercept term only and LL_1 is the log likelihood value of the full model. The likelihood ratio statistic has a chi-square distribution and it tests the null hypothesis that all logistic regression coefficients except the constant are zero. The degrees of freedom are obtained by differencing the number of parameters in the both model. It is compared with chi-square value at the difference between degree of freedom of both models. If p-value is less than 5% level of significance leads the rejection of the null hypothesis that all the predictor effects are zero. When this likelihood test is significant, at least one of the predictors is significantly

related to the response variable [16].

Hosmer-Lemeshow Test

The Hosmer and Lemeshow goodness of fit statistic measures the correspondence between the observed and the predicted values of the response variable. Data is first regrouped by ordering the predicted probabilities and forming the number of groups, g . In this case better model fit is indicated by smaller difference in observed and predicted. Then, the Hosmer-Lemeshow test statistic is given by:

$$G_{HL}^2 = \sum_{j=1}^g \frac{(o_j - E_j)^2}{E_j(1 - E_j/n_j)} \sim \chi_{(g-2)}^2 \quad (5)$$

where, o_j is observed number of cases in the j^{th} group, E_j is expected number of cases in the j^{th} group, $g = 10$ is the number of groups and n_j is number of observations in the j^{th} group, [16].

Wald Test: This usually involves formulation and testing of a statistical hypothesis to determine whether the independent variables in the model are significantly related to the outcome variable. The used for performing the significance of a single independent variable is the Wald test. This test is obtained by comparing the maximum likelihood estimate of the slope parameter, β_j , to an estimate of its standard error. The resulting ratio, under the hypothesis that $\beta_j = 0$, will follow a standard normal distribution. The square of the standard normal distribution, Z^2 , has a chi-square distribution, χ^2 with one degree of freedom [17]. The test statistic is given below:

$$Z^2 = \left(\frac{\beta_j}{\text{S.E}(\beta_j)} \right)^2 \quad (6)$$

3. Results

In this study, the data was obtained from 119 parents of primary school children. The data entry and analysis was done by investigators using SPSS version 16. The analysis includes descriptive and inferential part to pursue information on the determinants of parents' school selection for their children. The results were displayed and interpreted below one after the other.

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

As descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentages, and cross tabulations were performed to describe the data. From the result in Table 1, it can be seen that 50.4% of parents had sent their children to public schools whereas remaining 49.6% of them sent their children to private schools. This means almost half of the study population prefers private schools for their children. Moreover, among the sampled population 30.3% and 37.0% of children's father were not educated and primary level, respectively. By the same token, in the sampled population 13.6%, 35.3% and 35.3% of mothers have no education, primary and secondary level, respectively.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of child, family and school characteristics.

Variables	Category	Frequency (Percentage)
Sex	Male	49 (41.2)
	Female	70 (58.8)
	Less than 10 years	17 (14.3)
Age	10-12 years	45 (37.8)
	13-15 years	23 (19.3)
	Above 15 years	34 (28.6)
School choice	Public school	60 (50.4)
	Private school	59 (49.6)
	Not educated	36 (30.3)
Father educational level	Elementary	44 (37.0)
	Secondary	16 (13.4)
	College and above	23 (13.4)
Mother educational level	Not educated	16 (13.4)
	Elementary	42 (35.3)
	Secondary	42 (35.3)
Monthly income of parents	Colleges and above	19 (16)
	Less than 2000 birr	19 (16)
	2000- 4000 birr	54 (45.4)
Distance from home to school	4000 birr & above	46 (38.6)
	Less than 1 km	36 (30.3)
	1 to < 2 km	34 (28.6)
Number of children in a family	2 to 3 km	37 (31.1)
	Above 3 km	12 (10.1)
	1 to 2	40 (33.6)
	3 to 4	58 (48.7)
	Above 4	(17.6)

3.2. Cross-Tabulation and Chi-square Test of Association

As it can be seen from the Table 2, there is statistically significant association between the variables like sex, age, monthly income of family, distance from home to school, perception of parents' towards:(quality of education, female teaching staff, male teaching staff and teacher performance) with parents' school choice for their children at 5% level of significance.

In considering sex of students, 71.7% and 45.8% were females among public and private school students, respectively. Similarly, 43.3% of public school students were age of above 15 years whereas large number, 55.9%, of private school students were in age group of 10-12 years. Moreover, at the study period, 41.7% of students in public school as well as 40.7% of students in private school had been traveling 2 to 3 km and 1 to 2 km distance away from their homes, respectively. Despite parents who had sent their children to public school, 65.0% of them believe that no quality education in the public school. Similarly, among parents who had sent their children to private school, only 54.2% believe that quality education had been delivering in the private schools. Among parents who sent their children to public schools, only 35.0% of them were due to perception for teachers' performance. Correspondingly, among parents who sent their children to private school, 69.5% of them were due to perception for teachers' performance.

Upon completion of the bi-variable analyses, we had selected variables for the multivariable analysis. Any variable whose bi-variable test had a p-value < 0.25 was identified as a candidate for the multivariable model along with all determinants of school selection.

Table 2. Cross Tabulation and Chi-square Test of Association between Determinant Variables and Parents' School Selection.

Variables	Categories	Count and Percent within parents' school selection		Df	Chi-square (P-value)
		Public School	Private School		
Sex	Male	17 (28.3)	32 (54.2)	1	8.241 (0.004)
	female	43 (71.7)	27 (45.8)		
Age	Less than 10 years	8 (13.3)	9 (15.3)	3	20.468 (0.001)
	10-12 years	12 (20.0)	33 (55.9)		
	13-15 years	14 (23.3)	9 (15.3)		
	Above 15 years	26 (43.3)	8 (13.5)		
	No education	21 (35.0)	15 (25.4)		
Father education level	Primary level	21 (35.0)	23 (38.9)	3	3.726 (0.2926)
	Secondary level	5 (8.3)	11 (18.6)		
	colleges and above	13 (15.0)	10 (11.9)		
	No education	8 (13.3)	8 (13.6)		
Mother education level	Primary	18 (30.0)	24 (40.7)	3	2.484 (0.4782)
	Secondary	25 (41.7)	17 (28.8)		
	Colleges and above	4 (15.0)	15 (16.9)		
Monthly income of parent	Less than 2000 birr	15 (26.7)	4 (8.5)	2	15.0999 (0.001)
	2000-4000birr	28 (46.7)	26 (37.3)		
	Above 4000	16 (26.7)	30 (54.2)		
	Less than 1 km	21 (35.0)	15 (25.4)		
Distance from home to school	1 to < 2 km	10 (16.7)	24 (40.7)	3	12.658 (0.005)
	2 to 3km	25 (41.7)	12 (20.3)		
	Above 3 km	4 (6.7)	8 (13.6)		
	1 to 2	14 (23.3)	26 (44.1)		
Number of children in a family	3- 4	33 (55.0)	25 (42.4)	2	5.886 (0.053)
	Above 4	13 (21.7)	8 (13.5)		
	No	39 (65.0)	27 (45.8)		
Quality of education	Yes	21 (35.0)	32 (54.2)	1	4.457 (0.035)
	No	27 (45.0)	20 (40.7)		
Cost of school	Yes	39 (55.0)	33 (59.3)	1	1.534 (0.215)
	No	40 (66.7)	23 (40.7)		
Female teaching staff	Yes	20 (33.3)	35 (59.3)	1	8.083 (0.004)
	No	40 (71.7)	24 (42.4)		
Male teaching staff	Yes	17 (28.3)	34 (57.6)	1	10.424 (0.001)
	No	9 (15.0)	16 (27.1)		
Good environment and facility	Yes	51 (85.0)	43 (72.9)	1	2.633 (0.105)
	No	39 (65.0)	18 (30.5)		
Teachers' performance	Yes	21 (35.0)	41 (69.5)	1	14.181 (0.001)
	No	21 (35.0)	41 (69.5)		

3.3. Binary Logistic Regression Analysis

The binary logistic regression model was used to determine that estimated effect of explanatory variables on the parents' school choice. The significance of individual parameter estimates was tested using Wald test. The results of the binary logistic regression were presented in Table 3.

As the evidence was seen in Table 3, the explanatory variables such as; age, monthly income, distance from school, family size and cost of school were found to be significant variables that determine parents' school choice at 5% level of significance. The result in the regression output also gives us the Exp (β). This is better known as the odds ratio estimated by the model. And interpretation was made in terms of the odds ratio. Odds ratios greater than 1 indicate that the event is more likely to happen in a given category than in the reference category, odds ratios of 1 indicate the event is exactly as likely to happen in the two categories while odds ratios less than 1 indicate that the event is less likely to happen in the given category than in the reference category.

Specifically, Table 3 displayed that parents whose child's age was between 10 and 12 years were 2.135 times more

likely to choose private primary school than those parents whose child's age was less than 10 years. Likewise parents whose child's age was between 13 and 15 years were 123.345 times more likely to choose private primary school than those parents whose child's age was less than 10 years. Additionally, for monthly income from 2000 to 4000 and above 4000 in Table 3 we have that odds ratios 615.85 and 250.39, respectively. This tells us that the model predicts the odds of deciding to choose private primary school are 615.85 and 250.39 times higher for monthly income from 2000 to 4000 and above 4000 than they are for parents' monthly income less than 2000 birr.

Moreover, for 3 to 4 children in a family as shown in Table 3, odds ratio is 0.006. This indicates that private school is 0.006 times less likely to be chosen by parents' who had 3 to 4 children than parents' who had 1 to 2 children in the study population. In the same way, parents who had more than 4 children are 0.035 times less likely to send their children to private schools than parents who had 1 to 2 children. As well in Table 3, it can be seen that parents their homes were 2 to 3 km faraway from school were 0.024 times less likely to prefer private school than those parents their homes were below 1 km apart from school.

Table 3. Binary Logistic Regression Model Relating School Choice with various Factors.

Variables	Categories	β	S. E	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp (β)	95% CI for Exp (β)	
								lower	Upper
Sex	Male (ref.)								
	female	1.63	1.131	2.078	1	0.149	5.102	0.556	46.78
Age	Age<10 (ref.)			9.884	3	0.02			
	Age 10-12	0.758	1.810	0.175	1	0.675	2.135	0.061	74.16
	Age13-15	4.865	1.606	9.174	1	0.002	129.646	5.567	123.345
	Above 15	-0.574	1.596	0.129	1	0.719	0.563	0.25	12.864
	<2000 (ref.)			10.008	3	0.019			
Monthly income	2000-4000	6.423	2.844	5.102	1	0.024	615.85	0.01	0.428
	4000-6000	5.523	2.384	5.368	1	0.021	250.39	0.002	0.427
	Above 6000	2.329	2.165	1.157	1	0.282	10.27	0.001	6.787
	<1 km (ref.)			7.125	3	0.068			
Distance from home to school	1 to < 2 km	3.854	1.655	5.423	1	0.023	47.18	1.84	2.463
	2 - 3 km	-4.180	1.854	5.085	1	0.024	0.0153	1.728	2.4743
	Above 3 km	1.116	1.425	0.614	1	0.433	3.053	0.187	49.813
Number of children in a family	1 to 2 (ref)			6.398	2	0.041			
	3 - 4	-5.116	2.043	6.272	1	0.012	0.006	3.042	9.141
	Above 4	-3.128	1.616	3.745	1	0.035	0.044	0.961	542.129
quality of education	Yes	4.793	1.61	8.860	1	0.003	120.66	0.01	0.195
Cost of school	Yes	-2.140	1.029	4.326	1	0.038	0.118	0.016	0.884
Female teaching staff	Yes	-2.520	1.633	2.381	1	0.123	0.08	0.003	1.975
Good environment and facility	Yes	-2.520	1.633	2.381	1	0.123	0.08	0.003	1.975
Teacher performance	Yes	5.441	1.583	11.818	1	0.001	11.485	0.02	0.096
constant		0.764	3.465	0.49	1	0.825	2.147		

Table 4. Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients.

	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Step 1	108.880	18	.000
Block	108.880	18	.000
Model	108.880	18	.000

As displayed in Table 4 the test of full model versus intercept only model (the null model), based on difference of -2log likelihood of each. The Chi-Square value of 108.88 with 18 degrees of freedom is significant at 5% level of significance. This leads the rejection of the null hypothesis that all the predictor effects are zero. Thus, one can conclude that at least one of the predictors is significantly related to the response variable, parents' school selection.

Table 5. Model Summary.

Step	-2Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	56.081	0.599	0.799

The model summary provided some approximations of R^2 statistics in logistic regression in the above table. Cox & Snell R-square attempts to initiate multiple R-square based on likelihood in this study Cox and Snell R-square indicate that 59.9% of the variation in the parents' school selection was explained by its determinant variables. Additionally, the Nagelkerke R-square is indicating that 79.9% of the variation in the parents' school selection was explained by its determinant variables.

Table 6. Hosmer and Lemeshow Test.

Step	Chi-Square	Degree of freedom	Sig.
1	3.538	8	0.896

The value of the Hosmer-Lemeshow test statistic is 3.538 with 8 degrees of freedom and large p-value of 0.896 suggests not rejecting hypothesis of data fits to the model at 5% level of significance. Hence the fitted model is an adequate.

4. Discussion and Remarks

The study was carried out in Arba Minch town, Ethiopia. The aim of the study was to find out the factors which motivate parents to choose a particular school for their children. All factors considered in this study were taken by reviewing different literatures. Both descriptive as well as inferential analyses were used to derive the results.

The findings of the study confirm many hypotheses generated by the literature review. The result confirmed that quality of education was a strong determining factor relating to school choice. The coefficient of the quality of education was positive and significantly different from zero at five percent level of significance. The quality of private schools was significantly influenced the enrolment decision. This clearly indicated that parents would like to send their children in private schools for better education. The results were consistent with [15] who also found that school choice was positively related to quality and negatively to multi-grade teaching and poor facilities.

Cost of schooling was negatively related with private school enrolment. The coefficient was statistically significant at five percent level of significance. It expressed that increases in cost of schooling decreased the probability to enroll in private school. Cost of schooling was a sensitive issue for decision making. In developing countries like Ethiopia where literacy rate was low as compared to developed countries, government played a significant role to enhance the education level. This study was in line with [4].

5. Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to assess determinants of parents' school choice for their children. It can be concluded on the basis of the results of the study that number of children in the family, age of their child, distance from home to school, and income of parents were the most important variables which affect the parents' decision regarding selection of public or private school in the study area. Our findings also suggest that parents' perceptions play an important role in the school-choice decision. In particular, perceptions of school quality, cost of school, and teacher performance emerge as key determinants of private school choice.

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