

EXPLORING REASONS PARENTS CHOOSE PUBLIC MAGNET
SCHOOLS, PRIVATE SCHOOLS OR HOME SCHOOLING
FOR THEIR CHILDREN: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

By

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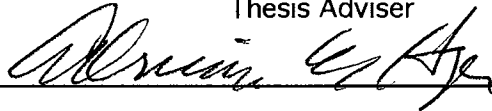
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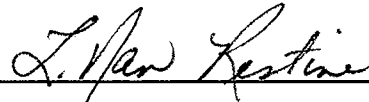
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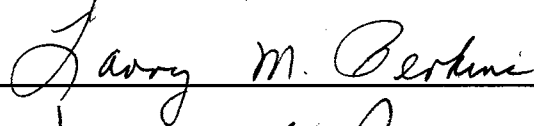
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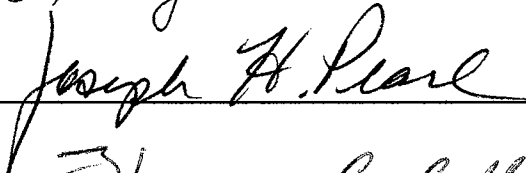


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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

A crisis exists in our nation's public schools, evidenced by the plethora of negative publicity and the exodus of students from public schools (Bourgoin, 1982; Elam, Rose, Gallup, 1992; Graybill, 1992; Katzman, 1983; Kidder, 1982; Maddaus, 1988; McCurdy, 1985;). The crisis is particularly dramatic in urban school systems (Armour, 1982; Blum, 1985). Many parents believe that to provide educational excellence they must explore alternatives to the neighborhood public school. Whether the schools are actually substandard or only perceived to be substandard becomes irrelevant, because the public perception is the reality that impacts enrollment. Therefore, it is important to have a thorough understanding of the conditions and considerations that impact perception and motivate parental decisions in choosing educational opportunities for their children.

All parents want the best educational option for their children, and middle and upper socio-economic class parents are in the best position to provide alternatives to the neighborhood public school. When the public schools lose middle and upper class students to private schools and other alternatives, society as a whole is the big loser and the public school is measurably impacted by the loss of talent, leadership, and money because the financing of public schools is based on per pupil enrollment (Shanker, 1982).

A trend crossing all socio-economic lines, but most prevalent among low socio-economic communities, is to send children to very small neighborhood private schools (Katzman, 1983; Ratteray, Davis, & Mwalimu, 1987). Often each school will have fewer than 30 children and will be located in a home or church. Parents often cite safety concerns when asked why they chose the neighborhood private school (Bourgoin, 1982). The public schools have not only had trouble with perceptions of unsatisfactory climate and safety but also with concerns about the quality of the education students are receiving.

The Nation at Risk report written by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) was a much publicized critique of

the nation's public school systems. It was a scathing report that was frequently quoted, heightened public awareness and increased concerns about public education.

The current stigma against public education has caused unrest and alarm. Parents, the business community, and educators have called for reform. In the literature, reform to improve schools usually focuses on empowerment of the immediate community, teachers, and parents and on allowing parents the opportunity for choice (Alexander, 1993; Clinchy, 1989; Cooper, 1984; Sizer, 1992.).

Parents want an educational system that reflects their priorities and values. Families often buy the house in which they will live based on the school district that would serve their children (Maddaus, 1988). When parents have made a conscious choice on which school their children will attend, their level of satisfaction is higher (Weston, 1989).

Parents can choose from three types of educational experiences: public schools, private schools, and home schooling. Parents' opportunities to choose the school which their children will attend is the subject of much discussion and some heated debate .

Current literature acknowledges the importance of parental

choice for the education of children (Bainbridge, 1990; Bauch, 1992; Conway, 1992; Hawkins, 1982; Holloway, 1992; Maddaus, 1988; Powell, 1982; Sizer, 1992; Raywid, 1989; Weston, 1989). For several years the public schools have been in the process of developing two kinds of schools of choice, the magnet schools and the alternative schools (Raywid, 1989). Thus, within the public schools choices exist, and certainly many dramatically different types of private schools are available.

A less common choice involves keeping children out of the educational institutions by having the parents provide instruction. Even though home schooling has not been common in recent history, it is a rapidly growing trend that has become a serious option (Knowles, 1988, Mayberry, 1988; Moore, 1986).

Each setting has the same goal, the education of children, but what does that mean to individuals? What do parents want for their children from the educational system? Why do they choose one school over another? From what perceptions and data do they base their opinions of "a good education?" What are the wants and needs that influence parental decision making? Schools exist because of an unwritten but clearly understood agreement between family and

school. That agreement is, families provide funds, support, trust, and their children. The school is expected to support the values of the home and prepare their children to live in the world within the family and community (Cooper, 1984).

Statement of the Problem

Parents make educational decisions based on perceived outcomes and benefits of a particular school setting. Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory of motivation presents motivation as a response to a person's needs or to a specific goal. If people are motivated to make decisions based on perceived outcomes, then it follows that parents should make educational decisions based on perceived outcomes. This research will be an exploration of that concept, and the question "why do parents choose a particular schooling option for their children?" Parents should construct expectations for each educational option that they ponder and select the option that will result in the best fit with the goals or visions that the parents hold for their children. Educators who are trying to better provide the kind of educational experience that parents will consistently choose for their children, they must understand the

outcomes parents seek. The primary research question is: "What do the parents in this study believe the outcomes will be when they make decisions about education for their children?" Peripheral questions would include:

1. What are expected outcomes from specific school choices?
2. Where do parents in this study get the information they use to make decisions?
3. What information do parents in this study use to make schooling decisions?
4. What non-academic issues impact schooling decisions?
5. What reasons do parents in this study give for the selection of an educational choice?

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to explore the motivating reasons behind the parents' decisions as they motivate parents to make educational choices for their children. This research did not attempt to determine the positive or negative impact of parental choice nor validate or negate parental wisdom in making educational

choices. Rather it provides insight into "why" the parents in this particular study made the choices that they did about the education of their children.

Theoretical Framework

In order for this study to have significance and maximize usefulness it builds on two theoretical assumptions. First, realities are constructed by participants as a result of experiences, feelings and information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Second, the motivation for decisions is based on predicted consequences. The desire for the perceived outcome motivates the decision maker. The idea that the motivation for action is based on the perceived outcomes which will result in goals being reached or needs being met is the basis of the expectancy theory developed by Victor H. Vroom (Owens, 1991). Thus, a study that looks at the considerations and conditions that parents use to formulate opinions and make educational decisions is actually probing the process of creating and defining individual realities. Parents use their knowledge, experiences, and beliefs to anticipate that specific outcomes will occur in specific school settings with predictable results. The outcomes that will occur

will have personal impact on the students or the students' families. The parents' desire, or lack of desire, for these predictable outcomes motivates decision making. If parents are the decision makers in educational matters, then parents' perceptions of desirable outcomes are of paramount importance to all the players in our educational system.

The differences between the realities of participants is the source of conflict that leads to dissatisfaction and calls for reform (McWhiney, 1992). "Differences in the construction of reality provide not only the conditions of interpersonal, social, and international conflict but also the patterns through which we organize society" (McWhiney, 1992, p. 22). As dissatisfaction with public education becomes more and more prevalent and increasingly impacts the educational systems, educators must have an extensive body of knowledge to understand and use. What do parents want when they make schooling choices?

In summary, when parents make educational decisions for their children, those decisions are based on the expected outcomes. Expected outcomes that are constructed by the parents as a result of their experiences, knowledges, and cultures. The same range of

factors and influences that effect people when they construct their individual realities according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) could effect parents when they construct expectations concerning schooling. Constructed expectancies should motivate parents' choice of school for their children. Educators must know how and why parents make educational choices, and what the constructed expectancies are for each of the three major choice options: public school magnets, private schools, or home schooling.

Methodology

This study was a qualitative research project, based on the naturalistic inquiry process. The goal of this research was to explore motivational factors that guide parents in making educational decisions regarding their children. This study adds to the current body of knowledge relating to factors that motivate parents as they make educational choices for their children. The research broadens the descriptions of interconnected and interactive motivating factors.

Data Collection

The primary tool or method of data collection was the semi-structured long interview. McCracken states that "The long interview is one of the most powerful methods in the qualitative armory. For certain descriptive and analytic purposes, no instrument of inquiry is more revealing" (McCracken, 1988 p. 9).

A list of questions, central to the issues surrounding why parents made specific schooling decisions for their children, was developed. However, the interviews were as conversational in nature as possible. In most instances, the information sought was obtained when a natural conversation developed as a result of only one or two questions specifically asked.

Coding Procedures and Data Analysis

Data from the interviews were transcribed and coded through an ethnographic software program Data Collector, copyrighted by Redgate Communications Corporation, 1992, to assist in managing and manipulating the information.

The working definition of coding refers to naming and categorizing phenomena through a close examination of the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). This close examination and coding is the

method in which data were broken down, re-conceptualized and put back together in new ways using inductive reasoning. This allowed the researcher to make specific conclusions based on general premises using the data for confirmation. Descriptions of the people, places, and intuitive observation notes were also collected, to promote deeper understanding.

Participants

Included in the sample are parents who have chosen to send their children to private schools, parents who have chosen magnet public schools, and parents who have chosen to home school their children. The sampling is purposeful as opposed to random or representative, which means samples provide the greatest possible depth or diversity of information. Purposive sampling is central to naturalistic research because "it increases the range of data exposed and maximizes the researcher's ability to identify emerging themes that take adequate account of contextual conditions and cultural norms" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993, p. 82). All the parents reside in the selected urban public school's attendance area.

Interview Protocol

The interviews were designed to be semi-structured and as conversational in nature as possible. In most instances the information sought was obtained when a natural conversation developed as a result of only one or two questions specifically being asked. If the information needed to provide data for exploring the research purpose was not provided by the respondent during the conversation, then additional protocol questions or probing questions were asked.

1. What do you want for your children from their school?
2. What is the best thing about your children's school/or your children's home schooling experience?
3. If you were to improve something about your children's school/or your children's home schooling experience, what would it be?
4. In what ways are you involved in (or with) your children's schooling?
5. What were some of the pros and cons that you had to consider as you made the educational choice for your children?

6. How do you get information about education in general and your children's school specifically?

Significance

The purpose of this study is to explore the reasons and expectations that parents use to formulate decisions about school and education. This study will provide insight into how and why parents make decisions concerning their child's education. This insight could impact future educational options, because the educational community needs to understand parental decisions to make informed program and policy decisions.

Definitions

The following definitions will provide a baseline for readers to have a better understanding of this study.

Alternative School - a non-traditional public school that is structured to accommodate students who have difficulties in the traditional public schools.

Educational Option or Educational Choice - an educational program that may be selected.

Expectancy - the belief that a behavior will result in a predictable outcome.

First-level Outcome - the direct or immediate consequence of one's behavior.

Home Schooling - the process of providing for the education of one's own children primarily within the home environment.

Instrumentality - the strength of the correlation between the first-level outcome and the second-level outcome.

Magnet School - a public school that has a specific curriculum emphasis or a specific educational philosophy that requires a unique style of teaching-learning.

Private School - a school that is not open to the general public and/or does not use public monies.

Public School - a school that is open to the general public in an assigned attendance area and functions on public monies.

Second-level Outcome - the personal impact that the first-level outcome has on an individual.

Traditional School or Neighborhood School - a public school that provides schooling for the students that live in the area.

Valence - the degree of preference that an individual has for a

potential outcome.

Summary

Educators who want to maintain maximum enrollment in their schools need to understand how and why parents make the decisions that they do concerning their children's education. Parents make educational decisions based on constructed expectancies of education and the educational settings available. This study examined the reasons and expectations that impact those decisions. This study was a naturalistic inquiry using the long interview. Vroom's expectancy theory (1964) was the theoretical framework used to view the data.

Reporting Overview

Chapter Two contains a thorough review of related literature.

Chapter Three contains a description of the ethnographic observations, documents, and the in-depth observations. Open coding is the method by which the interview data is categorized.

Chapter Four provides the examination and analysis of the data that was gathered from the interviews of parents who have

chosen either a private school, a public magnet school, or home school.

Chapter Five provides the summary, conclusions, discussion and recommendations for educators who wish to establish or maintain educational options that parents would choose.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter provides a thorough review of current literature concerning educational choice and a review of two theories that are the framework for this research project.

An overview of parents' attitudes and rights, the impact of educational choice, and a brief discussion of the national desegregation effort as it relates to school choice will be followed by an examination of the three schooling options that this research focuses on, private schools, home schooling, and public magnet schools.

Constructed realities (McWhiney, 1992) and the expectancy theory of motivation (Vroom, 1964) will be used to establish a perspective with which to examine the decisions that parents in this study made when they chose a schooling option.

Parental Attitudes and Rights

One of the most significant aspects of a child's life is the educational environment in which he/she spends much of his/her time during the important years of development between the ages of five and 18 (Ratteray, Davis & Mwalimu, 1987; Schmidt, 1989). In today's world, it seems that parents share the responsibility of 'raising' a child with the school. Many parents claim that during the school year the teachers see more of their children than they do. For a few parents this is a reality that does not cause them to pause, but for most concerned parents the school environment is of paramount concern (Pike, 1992; Wartes, 1988; Weston, 1989).

Parents choose educational options that reflect their priorities and values (Maddaus, 1988). When parents have made a conscious choice on which school their children will attend, their level of satisfaction is higher (Weston, 1989).

Parents right to choose the school which their children will attend is the subject of a large volume of educational literature which stresses the importance of parental choice for the education of children (Bainbridge, 1990; Bauch, 1992; Conway, 1992; Hawkins, 1982; Holloway, 1992; Maddaus, 1988, 1990; Nathan, 1987; Powell,

1982; Raywid, 1989; Sizer, 1992; Weston, 1989). Parents can choose from several types of educational experiences: (a) public schools, (b) private schools, and (c) home schooling. Why do parents choose one school over another? One study indicates that parents choose schools that most closely mirror family values (Cooper, 1984). Parents want the school to prepare their children to live successfully in the world, as each individual family defines successful. This desire is probably true of all parents but most clearly the expectation of parents who send their children to private schools (Erickson, 1983).

Schooling Choices

There are three primary types of educational choices. The only public option is a magnet school, however, there are many private school opportunities. In addition, to public and private opportunities parents may choose to educate their children at home. The impact on society of educational options and the national desegregation effort will be reviewed in the following sections.

The Impact of School Choices

School choice has become an issue of paramount importance today because public school educators have seen a shifting in enrollment patterns, particularly in urban districts. When enrollment goes down so does available money, given traditional funding formulas. Educators look for answers to questions like: Who is leaving the urban public schools? Have private school enrollments significantly increased? Why are people choosing to leave public schools? What can public schools do to keep their students?

Desegregation

Some parents leave the public schools because of the magnitude of problems (Bourgoin, 1982). Some problems escalated as schools implemented desegregation plans (Armor, 1982). David Armor (1982) conducted a study of "white flight" and described three results: (a) relocation to other districts, (b) transfers to private schools, and (c) failure to replace the families who were leaving without significant reasons. He concluded that if an end to mandatory bussing in Norfolk, Virginia were to become policy then the white population would stabilize and actually increase in

elementary schools. He concludes that these 1982 predictions have come true (Armor, 1991). A study that analyzed school data from 1968-1984 did not reveal significant patterns of change in enrollments after desegregation (Smock, 1991). One of the nine districts selected in the Smock study is the site of this research project.

The flight of black students from the crime ridden city schools to the suburbs has been occurring in increasing numbers and this has impacted school populations a great deal (Katzman, 1983). If the black children remain in the community, many are attending small neighborhood private schools.

Private Schools

Private schools are a part of the history of education in America. The percentage of American students attending private schools has fluctuated as different factors affected our society as a whole. Several writers urge the public schools to look at private schools to find the keys to excellence, or at least the keys to slow the exodus of students from public to private schools (Kidder, 1982; McCurdy, 1985; Nickerson, 1985). Nickerson (1985) lists four things that private schools do better than public schools: (a) private

schools involve parents better, (b) private schools have increased expectations for the students who attend their schools, (c) private schools seek dollars to operate their schools more effectively than public schools do, and (d) private schools advertise better than the public schools do. He contends that necessary changes would not cost too much to make in public schools. Some parents who enroll their children in private schools believe their decision is temporary. They wish to change from the public schools to the private so their children can improve study habits and skills (McCurdy, 1985). Many of these children began to struggle in public schools, and the parents did not feel that they were receiving any kind of help; no one was listening or caring (McCurdy, 1985).

The overwhelming majority of parents list religious reasons for choosing not to participate in public schools (Erickson, 1983; Maddaus, 1988; McCurdy, 1985). Middle class parents on the whole were not as concerned about religion per se or academic achievement; rather they chose a school for religious reasons in reaction to public school policies on sex education, aids, or bussing. Upper middle and upper class parents wanted superior schooling and valued the social connections (McCurdy, 1985). Parents see some

prestigious private elementary schools as the first opportunity for networking, to make friends who will be a part of their future endeavors.

Black parents who were polled and who were currently sending their children to small neighborhood private schools listed school climate as their number one reason. They also mentioned that the school personnel had a deeper respect for their cultural heritage. Hispanic parents wanted a safe school climate and say they would choose a school accordingly (Blum, 1985; Cooper, 1983).

Arthur Powell (1982) looked at the strengths of private schools and emphasized their use of history and tradition to create and maintain moral ideals. In addition, private schools have the decision-making power at the building or site rather than the district office or state legislature. Strengths of public education include the continual forging of a positive school climate from a pluralistic population. "The importance of investigating private and public choices will be to disabuse people of the notion that the qualities that make schools good or bad are directly and inevitably connected to their publicness or their privateness" (Powell, 1982, p. 19).

When discussing private schools and public schools, it is important to remember that both are respected options. Public schools that do a very good job of selling their product can increase their enrollments and attract good candidates. Many alternative schools and magnet schools have characteristics in common with private schools (Kidder, 1982).

Home Schooling

Home schooling has been an option that few people discussed openly until recently. The average citizen thought that only extremists pulled their children out of the public school system and educated them in the home (Knowles, 1988). Only recently have people who choose to home school not violated the mandatory school attendance laws (Warts, 1988).

Most of the information available today is the result of case studies. Qualitative data has helped illuminate the type of parents who choose to keep their children at home and, to some degree, the type of curriculum used. Individual researchers have collected some descriptive data, but shortage exists (Wright, 1988).

Accurate accounting of exact numbers of families who participate in home schooling and the use of tests with established

reliability and validity to assess home schooling has been very limited. One exception is Jon Wartes' (1988) study. When the Washington state legislature legalized home schooling, it required that all students be tested once a year. Wartes (1988) claims to have a 100% sampling for a two-year period. When the parents signed up for the standardized tests (the Scholastic Achievement Test-SAT) they were given a questionnaire to complete. In his study the typical family, earned slightly more than \$25,000 a year, consisted of two parents, and enrolled their children in public schools before deciding to school at home (Wartes, 1988). In the Washington study, religion or philosophy was the number one reason parents gave for home schooling. Another study that includes a significant amount of quantitative data took place in Oregon where parents who chose home schooling tended to be more educated than the average parent, more religiously committed, and had jobs that offered a high degree of autonomy (Mayberry, 1988).

Ideologues and pedagogues are two categories of home schooling parents as identified by VanGalen (1988). The ideologues object to what is being taught in both the public and private schools. The pedagogues believe that what is being taught is fine; it is just it

is being done ineptly (VanGalen, 1988). A number of parents felt their children were being overlooked at school or had specific needs that were not addressed (Pike, 1992).

The limited research that has been done indicates that children who are home schooled score equal to or better than the students in conventional schools on cognitive achievement tests (Ray, 1988).

Public School Magnet Programs

The public school magnet programs are based on the assumption that no singular definition of educational excellence exists (Clinchy, 1989). Supporting this kind of educational choice assumes that there is a need for educational diversity, a range of educational options that extends from pre-school through high school that will allow parents and students to choose curriculum issues, teaching styles, and an emphasis or theme (Kohn, 1993; Nathan, 1987).

Once a magnet school has been created, it should be given the power to determine its educational philosophy, its curriculum, and its organizational and governance structure. The people at that site should be able to choose the teaching staff and the administration and to set up spending priorities, commonly referred to as site-

based management (Clinchy, 1989). Site-based management must include the educators, the teachers, the building principals, and of course, the families who wish to participate in the magnet program.

The magnet school concept is currently spreading because of court desegregation orders. Magnet schools are one way of designing a legally acceptable desegregation plan. Choice integration is more palatable and positive to parents than forced cross-bussing. The magnet school concept has successfully allowed for students from diverse backgrounds but with common goals to come together (Clinchy, 1989; Hawkins, 1982).

Magnet schools also provide a tool for revitalizing school areas where the population is dwindling, and helps retain students that are potential dropouts. The 1987 Phi Delta Kappa Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education showed that 71% of all the adults who participated in the poll believed that parents should be allowed to select the public schools their children would attend.

Magnet schools are based on three premises: (a) that there is no one best school for everyone, (b) that it is necessary to provide diversity in school organization and programs in order to meet the needs of all students and enable them to be successful, and (c) that

students will perform better and accomplish more in a school setting they have chosen than in one in which they simply reside (Raywid, 1989).

Several questions should be considered when choice plans are being developed. Who will choose to exercise the privilege of choice? What will happen to those students who stay behind? Will competition among schools be valuable? Will open enrollment provide equitable access to all? Will families make choices according to educational needs or for other reasons, and does it matter? Is open enrollment elitist? Do parents want an elitist school? Will students jump from school to school on a whim, or will they stick with a choice that is made? (Chubb & Moe 1989; Coleman, 1992; McCurdy, 1985; Sagor, 1993). A review of the current research provides as many questions about magnet schools as answers.

Summary

Allowing parents to choose how and where their children will be educated seems to make them more satisfied with their school.

The national effort to desegregate public schools brought a multitude of issues concerning school choice to the forefront.

Private schools vary greatly in quality, size, and goals. The majority of the private schools are religious, but some are college preparatory, and a few are political.

Home schooling is currently becoming more and more popular according to the number of families that are making it their schooling choice.

Public magnet schools have been created to satisfy parents that want something different or special, and magnet schools have been used to entice students into integrated school situations.

Theoretical Considerations

Two theories will be reviewed in this section, constructed realities and the expectancy theory of motivation. These two theories will be used to establish a perspective with which to examine the decisions that parents in this study made when they chose a specific schooling option.

Constructed Realities

Exploring parents' decisions leans heavily on two questions, "what do parents want and expect when they make educational decisions for their children and why do parents choose a particular

school?" According to McWhiney (1992), some researchers ask "why" in a quest for knowledge; others ask "why" to seek intention. This researcher will be asking "why" to parents who have chosen to send their children to schools of choice, either public school magnets, private schools, or the parents have chosen to home school. Finding out "why" parents made the choices they did is the basis for this research project. In this research, "why" will be a combination of both questions, a quest for knowledge and a search for intention. Combining these two aspects of "why" will require understanding what people know and understand about education including their own educational experiences and what parents expect from the schools that they have chosen for their children.

According to Lincoln and Guba, four types of ontological positions can be described: (a) Objective reality assumes that there is a reality and that it can be fully known; (b) Perceived reality assumes that there is a reality and that it can be seen or perceived to some extent by some people; (c) Constructed reality assumes reality is constructed in the minds of individuals and there are an infinite number of multiple realities, and (d) Creative reality that assumes there is no reality at all, only the results of our actions, or

our interactions. This research will be based on the constructed realities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Expectancy Theory

In this study Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory will be used to examine the decisions that parents have made when choosing a schooling experience for their children.

Vroom based his expectancy model on three assumptions, these include: (a) People anticipate that certain things will occur and that specific behaviors in response to those events will probably produce predictable consequences, and people do more than just respond, they are very pro active, (b) People usually confront possible alternative behaviors, and the probable consequences, in rational ways, (c) People change their responses as they have experiences and learn to anticipate the likely consequences of various alternatives (Owens, 1991).

Vroom's expectancy theory is a contingency theory. Which means that the validity of this theory is based on the fulfillment of certain conditions. Vroom views motivation as a response to a person's needs to a specific goal that the person seeks. Thus, he

establishes first-level outcomes and second-level outcomes as part of the foundation of his model. First-level outcome means the direct, or immediate consequences of one's behavior. For example, the first-level outcome of one's decision to study might be to score higher on a test. Second-level outcome refers to the personal impact that the first-level outcome has on the individual. For example, scoring higher on a test might result in gaining scholarship opportunities.

Other key components of Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory are: valence, expectancy, and instrumentality. Valence refers to the degree or intensity of preference that one has for a potential outcome. Valence defines what a person wants. Valence can be either positive (desired) or negative (not desired). People will assign different valence values to experiences. Expectancy is the belief that a behavior (or choice) will result in a predictable, first-level outcome. For example, a more rigorous curricular program might result in higher standardized test scores. Instrumentality refers to the strength of the correlation between the first-level outcome (rigorous curricular program) and the second-level outcome (higher test scores).

Individual motivation is described as a function of a person's perception that his or her performance will result in certain rewards that will help him or her obtain personal goals. Since personal goals for individuals vary, one set of motivating factors cannot be all inclusive. Factors that motivate one person may not appeal to another.

Vroom's expectancy model is a cognitive approach to motivation. His model has been used primarily in the work place to determine what factors influence job performance. What incentives and rewards impact motivation and work performance. Vroom developed and tested mathematical formulas to determine motivation and performance. Examples of these formulas are:

$$M = E (XIV)$$

$$\text{Performance} = f (\text{ability} \times \text{motivation})$$

M = motivation, E = expectancy, I = instrumentality, V = valence, and X = scale value of the corresponding item from a specific instrument. In the second formula Vroom is equating performance to function.

Literature reviewing Vroom found a significant interest and support for the expectancy theory in psychology. Looking at more

than 30 investigative studies found the model to be predictive for job satisfaction, value of work performance, and work effort. It was determined that the model's validity had a great deal of support (Hoy & Miskel, 1978).

Effort and ability has been added to the basic expectancy model on occasion. It was concluded that a person will be motivated to behave a certain way when he or she believes that this behavior will lead to a specific outcome (Hoy & Miskel, 1978).

Basically, individual motivation is viewed as a function of a person's perception that his or her increased performance will result in certain rewards that will help him or her attain personal goals (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1983).

The acceptance and appreciation of Vroom's expectancy model in research dealing with motivation has been varied. The model has been used frequently during the last 30 years. In this study the focus will not be on these formulas because the purpose of the research is a naturalistic inquiry. However, the relationship of motivating factors to behavior and decision making as described by the expectancy model will be reconstructed and tailored for this qualitative research.

Summary

This review of current literature focused on educational choice and the three main choices that parents have in educating their children: public schools, private schools, and home schooling. Adequate data is available on the number of students who make the choices. Some information is available about what qualities parents want when they choose their school. What is lacking is a study of the reasons behind the parents decisions. What are the expectations that parents have when determining the school that will fit their student? What are the immediate results that parents expect and what do they perceive will be the outcomes of those immediate results?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Prospective

The purpose of this research is to explore the reasons behind parents' decisions as it relates to choices for educating children. Specifically, the focus is on parents who live in an urban setting and with a public school system that is struggling with all the educational concerns that have increased as urbanization continues in the 1990's.

It is not the intent of this research to make determinations about the positive or negative impacts of parental choice nor is it the intent to validate or negate parental wisdom in making educational choices. Rather it is the intent to provide insight into "how" and "why" parents make the choices that they do about the education of their children. I will attempt to look at individual educational expectations through the eyes of interviewees, thus,

providing a unique view of education and educational choices.

Site

All the participants in this study will be selected from a geographically defined area in an urban public school attendance area. That does not mean that all the participants will send their children to public schools, but rather, that if they choose to send their students to public schools that they would all be in the same district. That district is the largest school district in a mid-western state. The school district is the 75th largest in the United States (National Curriculum Audit, 1993).

This school system is a pre-kindergarten through 14 grade system which serves more than 49,000 students. Over 18,000 citizens of all ages attend vocational and continuing education classes in this public school system. There are over 100 schools in this school system. The district has had a reputation for many years as a fine school system (National Curriculum Audit, 1993).

The city has approximately 300,000 people and is the largest city in the state. There are three institutions of higher learning in the city.

The school system is governed by a board of education composed of seven members who serve staggered four year terms. The board is non-partisan and serves without pay.

The majority (65%) of the students in the public schools are Caucasian. Twenty percent of the student population is Afro-American, eight percent is Hispanic, four percent Asian, and about two percent Native-American.

In a ten year period, 1982-1983, school year through the 1992-1993 school year the enrollment figures in this public school system continued to increase until 1992. The increases were slight, but the school system was considered growing and vital.

In 1992, there was sudden drop in enrollment which caused a sense of panic among the public school educators. At that time the communities educational leaders started looking for reasons for the drop in student population.

Surveys were completed and a great deal of time and energy were spent trying to track down the causes for the drop of enrollment. There were newspaper headlines about the monies that the public school system would lose because of the drop in enrollment. Television stations went to the suburbs and found

people that had moved and asked if the school system was the reason for the family move. All of this publicity has caused the average citizen to be very aware of the concern about the urban city schools. In this city, educational excellence has been thoroughly debated by the media (National Curriculum Audit, 1993).

Participants

Parents to be interviewed for this research project were carefully chosen to provide diverse views of school choice. There were parents chosen who have elected to send their children to one of the public school magnets. There were parents chosen that have selected to send their children to a private school within the city limits. And there were parents selected that have chosen to home school.

The local newspaper has published a great deal of information and articles about the school systems loss of enrollment and has taken polls of parent attitudes and run a number of editorials from the constituents of this community. It is my goal to include some of the people who have felt strongly enough to take the time to write editorials for the newspaper and wished to share their views by

signing their names to these commentaries.

In addition to selecting people that had written editorials, I asked the private school Headmaster and the magnet school administrator for suggestions on "good" candidates to interview which included participants that were not as adamant or public, but had specific reasons and ideas for their selection of schools for their children. In summary, all the participants live within the public school assigned attendance area and were notified ahead of time about the nature and purpose of this study.

Instrumentation

The primary instrument for this research project is the researcher. The naturalistic researcher uses himself or herself as the primary data gathering instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The gathering of data is secondary in importance to the human element of making intuitive observations and picking up on the cues and clues given by interviewees. The ability to ask probing questions to discover the reasons or motivation that parents used to make their decisions as it pertains to education depended on the skills of the researcher.

Procedures

Initial contact with each perspective interviewee was made by phone. Each phone call began with an introduction of the researcher, explanation of the project, and an explanation of why this particular person was being asked to participate. The explanation for participation varied from person to person.

The second step was to set up an initial meeting. The meeting was scheduled at a place and time convenient for each interviewee.

The third step was to review the ethic protocol with the interviewee, making sure that each participant was aware of the nature of the study and their rights.

The fourth step was to conduct the interview.

The fifth step was to transcribe the interview and in this case use an ethnographical software package, to facilitate the breaking down and manipulation of the data. During the collection process analysis of the data began. Vroom's expectancy model was used to provide a framework to analyze the data. Conclusions were drawn and recommendations made.

Summary and Final Analysis

Analysis and interpretation began at the inception of the collection process, for the collection of data and the processes of analyzing and interpreting the data are interdependent (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The continuous analysis of data was critical in determining the completion of the data collection. The steps for the data collection-analysis process were as follows:

1. **Reaction Report:** Immediately following each of the interviews a brief reaction report was written to capture personal observations.
2. **Unitizing:** The researcher determined labels or codes for specific phenomenon that made up the parents reasons for educational choices and decisions.
3. **Categorizing:** The researcher grouped coded text segments in several different ways using the Data Collector computer program to amass and print categories for further analysis and interpretation.

Relationships among the categories provided emergent themes which was the basis for preliminary theorizing (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

4. The researcher used Vroom's (1964) expectancy model as a framework to present and analyze the data.
5. Individual Report: Individual reports were written for each participant. Summarizing the interviewer's observations and the general reasons the participant gave for their school choice.
6. Audit Trail: An inquiry audit was conducted to examine the process for confirmability. This means that all appropriate materials are organized and made available to a designated auditor. Those materials include: transcripts of all interviews, data reduction and analysis notes, data reconstruction and synthesis notes, journals, and related research information.

The final phase was drafting a written document to record, explain, and analyze the data on how and why parents make decisions about the education of their children.

In chapter four the data is presented as it has been reconceptualized and in an organizational structure that will preserve the depth and integrity of the information that the naturalistic method yielded.

CHAPTER IV

EXAMINATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data in this chapter is organized to maximize the reader's opportunities to view subtle differences in the responses.

Parents believe or expect that if they make certain education choices that certain things will take place resulting in expected outcomes. As in Vroom's (1964) original expectancy theory model there are first-level outcomes and second-level outcomes. The first-level outcomes are what will happen as a result of selecting this kind of education for the children, and the second-level outcomes are the personalized benefits.

In arranging this chapter using this expectancy theory model, I have taken a departure from the standard presentation of data and analysis in a naturalistic study. Instead of starting with specific findings and moving to the general conclusions, I present the general emergent expectancies and then provide the specific supporting documentation for each. The supporting documentation is divided

into first-level and second-level outcomes. A discussion of valence and a summary conclude each of the three sections; magnet schools, private schools, and home schools.

Magnet Schools

Participants

A purposeful sampling of parents who have chosen to send their children to magnet schools was achieved by asking the principals of two magnet schools to suggest parents. The principals offered suggestions using members of their advisory councils, PTAs and volunteer lists to include active, involved parents; then they added parents who were less active. There was an effort to purposely select a wide range that would include both extremes. However, one of the selection process components for a child being accepted in a magnet school is the parents' commitment to be actively involved. The actual sampling was also impacted by the parents being able and willing to schedule an interview.

The names of all participants have been changed to pseudonyms to insure confidentiality. The first and last name alias for each of the parents who chose public magnet schools have been changed to

names that begin with the letter "m".

Melanie Meyer

Melanie Meyer was a young-looking mother, probably in her early thirties. She had three children; a daughter who was 11 years old and attended a magnet middle school, another daughter, who was 10 years old and was in the fourth grade, going to an elementary magnet school. Her son was three years old, not in school. Melanie Meyer worked at a day care center and spent a great deal of time working in her children's school. Socio-economic status appeared to be lower middle class.

During the interview, Melanie Meyer's demeanor was confident. She had trouble expressing herself verbally but spoke passionately about magnet schools.

Melanie Meyer went to a public school magnet when she was in elementary school. She described that experience as good, very good. She said, "I learned things, but I didn't actually learn things that you would normally learn in school, but I don't think that was necessarily bad. I would never in a million years let my kids go there now, though." Melanie Meyer's husband was also an active parent who went through the public school systems primarily on Air

Force bases.

Mark Miles

Mark Miles was a very tall man who looks distinguished and kindly. He appeared to be in his forties. Mark Miles had three children. A 14 year-old girl who attended a public high school. A 12 year-old girl who attended a middle school magnet, and a son who attended an elementary magnet school. Mark Miles was a minister assigned to an urban downtown ministry . His socio-economic status appeared to be middle class. Relaxed during the interview, he was articulate and used an extensive vocabulary. His own schooling was in a very rural setting in a four-room school house where there were multi-ages in each room. He and his brother were often in the same classes even though they were seven years apart.

Martha May

Martha May a medium-build woman, brunette, in her late forties, presented herself in fashionable business attire. Martha May was married and had one child, a ten year-old daughter, who attended an elementary open-magnet school. Martha May worked in a semi-administrative capacity at Southwestern Bell. Her socio-economic status was upper middle class. Her demeanor was

confident, and she presented herself well. She was very verbal. She attended the public schools in this city.

Mary Moore

Mary Moore, a fashionably dressed woman appeared to be approximately 35 to 40 years old. She had two sons. One was a 14 year-old attending a public high school; the other was 10 years old and was attending a magnet school. Mary Moore worked three or four times a week at an elite boutique as a sales clerk. Her socio-economic status was upper middle class. Mary Moore's demeanor was confident, self-assured. Her verbal skills were very strong so she clearly presented her ideas. She went to the public schools in a small rural community. Her husband, from the same small town, also attended the public schools in that small community.

Melissa Minor

Melissa Minor a tall, thin, attractive young mother who appeared to be in her early thirties, had three children. A daughter, 14, and a son, 12, attended a middle school magnet. She also had a five year-old son who did not attend school yet. Melissa Minor was a real estate agent in this urban setting. Socio-economic status was lower middle class. Her demeanor was cautiously confident. She

expressed herself reasonably well and shared easily. Melissa Minor, who attended public schools in this city, was the only single parent in this magnet group of parents chosen for study.

Data Categorization

When parents were asked why they decided to send their students to magnet schools, they gave many different reasons. These reasons and motivational factors were coded, then grouped into 13 subcategories of immediate first-level outcomes using Vroom's expectancy model. First-level outcomes were the direct or immediate effect. The subcategories were organized into four broader themes or primary categories of expectations by the relationship of each subcategory to the total school experience. Expectancies are beliefs that certain outcomes are predictable. Parents perceptions of outcomes are the foundation of the motivating expectancies. The four categories of expectations that emerged are: academic challenge, adjusted curriculum or delivery system, selected peer groups, and to escape from problems in other school settings. The four expectancies are not assigned numerical values of priority.

Expectancy Considerations

The structure for this section was established to follow Vroom's expectancy model. A brief outline of the data is provided to assist the reader in following this format. Magnet school:

- I. Expectancy #1 Academic Challenge
 - A. First-level outcome--academic rigor
 - B. First-level outcome--individual instruction
 - C. First-level outcome--productive instructional pace
 - D. Second-level outcomes

- II. Expectancy #2 Adjusted Curriculum/Delivery System
 - A. First-level outcome--specifically designed program
 - B. First-level outcome--student responsibility
 - C. First-level outcome--extra activities
 - D. Second-level outcomes

- III. Expectancy #3 Selected Peer Group
 - A. First-level outcome--ability grouping
 - B. First-level outcome--school pride
 - C. First-level outcome--involved parents
 - D. Second-level outcomes

- IV. Expectancy #4 Escape Problems
 - A. First-level outcome--classroom behavior problems
 - B. First-level outcome--negative influences
 - C. First-level outcome--creative problem solving
 - D. Second-level outcomes

- V. Valence

Expectancy #1-Academic Challenge

Academic challenge is defined as an advanced program of study

involving rigorous high standards, and complex subject material.

Most of the parents interviewed cite a desire for advanced academics or academic challenges for their students as one of the catalysts that brought them to a magnet school. Often they were aware that their children were working above the instructional level in the regular classroom, or were given some cues and clues that lead them to believe their children needed academic challenge. The anticipated first-level outcome of a school setting that provided academic challenge would be academic rigor, individual instruction, and a productive instructional pace.

First-level outcome--academic rigor. Parents sending their children to a magnet school expected a more difficult academic program. They believed that their children needed to stretch academically into higher standards. They desired for their children to be working on more complex subject materials, higher level thinking skills and to have meaningful academic experiences. Several of the parents were aware that their children were working above the instructional level in the regular classroom. Parents used information like standardized test scores and classroom achievement tests as indicators that something extra was needed

for their children. In her interview, Melanie Meyer stated, "Then we got her ITBS back and it was so high I didn't know what to do." Mary Moore also alluded to her son's strong academic scores as a reason to consider the magnet school, especially since his scores would not quite put her son in a gifted program. Meyer also said, "The teacher suggested that we check out Bosley Magnet. She had noticed that Shannon was working above grade level and she was giving her extra work."

First-level outcome--individual instruction. "I think the fact that the children in that school are allowed, really encouraged to learn at their own pace, makes for a superior education," stated Martha May. May's response was typical of the comments parents made concerning individual instruction. The teachers were apparently willing to develop a plan of study that addressed the students educational needs and abilities. Content and pace of instruction were tailored to individual students.

First-level outcome--productive instructional pace. Some parents chose the magnet setting because they believed the teacher would have time to teach and did not have to waste time on teaching values. Meyer stated, "The kids that get all the values they need at

home I don't think need to get it at school to the extent that some of the other kids do." The parents believed that this would save time for real learning.

Said Melanie Meyer, "I mostly just wanted her to be somewhere where she could work at the level that she needed to, not really necessarily work ahead. I wanted it to be like, if the whole class was at that level." Melissa Minor stated, "The teachers seem to be able to get twice as much done in a day as the teachers in the neighborhood school." In addition, the children were all capable students so they moved faster through required curriculum. Meyer said that if they just worked on the required studies they would be through by December. She said, "They have time to do extra things cause they work faster, they went on a lot of camping trips, did more research projects and just things that I thought would help later when she's in high school."

Second-level outcomes. All five parents believed that a high standard of academic challenge was necessary for their children to have a good education. The parents believed that if there were an academically rigorous program and individual instruction that was paced productively the outcome would be an exceptionally high

education that would make their children better prepared for college. Their students would be a step ahead of other children. College preparation was the desired benefit for having this exceptional and rigorous academic program.

Expectancy #2-Adjusted Curriculum/Delivery System

Adjusted curriculum/delivery system is defined as a change from what is perceived as a traditional school program. The delivery system might include diverse learning styles being taught by unique kinds of strategy, and adjusted curriculum could mean an area of emphasis is integrated through the whole curriculum. For example, a science magnet, a technology magnet, or visual arts school, would have a theme which delivers the language arts curriculum, or mathematical concepts.

First-level outcome--specifically designed program. All five parents sending their children to magnet schools believed that the teachers at a magnet school understand and deal with different learning styles better. They believe that the necessary adjustments are made to have children move at their own pace and to develop their particular strengths. Mark Miles stated, "We like the open educational approach, we think it springs creativity. All three of

our children are different, but we feel like all three of them have benefited from that approach."

Melissa Minor explained her appreciation for specifically designed programs this way, "My children aren't the smartest kids in the world, but they are learning so much, and love going to school. They are real project kids. They can just take a project and go with it." At the magnet school that Minor's children attended, projects were developed to blend with a student's interests, skills, and needs.

First-level outcome--student responsibility. Martha May stated emphatically, "The best thing about our magnet school is that my daughter has learned to be an independent learner. I think she is learning responsibility and self-discipline." Melanie Meyer mentioned self-responsibility being stressed and cited the use of individual contracts by the students, as a productive way to help children learn time management and responsibility.

First-level outcome--extra activities. "I liked the way they incorporated all their field trips and activities and the way their units at school tied in together. Sounded like a lot of fun," exclaimed Mary Moore. Mark Miles also liked the magnet educational

program because it used activities, field trips, and experiences to enrich learning more than a traditional school. Some parents believed that because the teachers could get on with teaching the academic curriculum at a more rapid pace there was extra time for activities that lent themselves to the development of children. Many of the magnet programs included camping trips. Three of the participants believed that this kind of a setting stimulated creativity.

Second-level outcomes. Parents believed that if there was a strong correlation among their child's strengths, interests and the presentation of studies or curriculum delivery created more interest in the project for the student and consequently better performance. Mark Miles described his child as being very verbal and liked to giving speeches in front of the class. This particular child, when given a challenge, went to great lengths to research meticulously a certain topic, if she knew that she would be asked or allowed to share her findings with her peer group in a fun and creative manner such as dressing up for the presentation or using some kind of extra props or cooking. Miles believed that the higher the interest level the more significant the learning.

Parents believed that children would be happier and more eager learners when their school tailored an educational plan to the student. Moreover more personal significance in the learning would occur and the second-level outcomes would be a higher quality of learning and happier children.

Expectancy #3-Selected Peer Group

Selected peer group was defined as a chosen group of people who shared a part of the children's school environment.

Four of the five parents interviewed were glad to have the opportunity to select a school that would in essence select a peer group for their children to interact with during the school day.

First-level outcome--ability grouping. Mary Moore expressed her views on the magnet school selection process and the resulting student population in this way. "They only took kids that wanted to achieve. That were self-starters, self-motivators and could stay on task. Andrew fit that profile wonderfully." Martha May stated it this way, "I want all the students in my daughter's class to be of equal academic ability."

Melanie Meyer said, "Well, they do this testing, and students are screened and only the very top are allowed to attend." Meyer

went on to say, "I suppose that sounds like elitism, maybe it is, but I definitely like the idea of a peer group that likes to learn." Parents are told at screening sessions, "If you don't think your kid can cut it here, don't put them in."

Mary Moore summarized her thoughts by saying,

The neighborhood school where my son attended had such a wide social economic class difference that I felt that he was the good average student and teachers spent the extra time catching up with the lower students and making sure that the gifted students got what they needed. I felt like he kind of got lost.

First-level outcome--school pride. Melissa Minor displayed pride in her children's school when she said,

I've been a real strong supporter for many, many years. I've had very strong positive feelings about Cameron itself and what goes on there. I mean, I know my kids are going to be around really neat people all day long. And wow, they're going to learn so much. I think we are lucky to have these options.

Martha May also mentioned the special pride her daughter had in attending her particular magnet school. Mark Miles believed that

his daughters went to the best school in the city, and Martha May was adamant that every child should have the opportunity to attend a magnet school of their choice.

First-level outcome--involved parents. Most parents mentioned the fact that parents had to be interviewed and commit to being involved in their child's education and doing volunteer work in the school before children were accepted no matter how high the students test scores. More parent involvement was viewed as one determining factor in a higher level (better) educational program by many of the parents. The term parent involvement was defined and expanded by Mark Miles when he said,

We have always felt very welcome. I can go in and out of the classroom any time I want. Teachers like to have me help with assistance but they are also just happy to see us stop by and even drop in and see our kid and give them a hug and leave again, and it's fine and I don't think you always feel that way. But we have always felt that way at Cameron.

Second-level outcomes. A powerful influence in the lives of school-aged children was their peer group and school environment. The parents interviewed in this study were very cognizant and aware

of the importance that the people who surrounded their children every day would be to their children's life. The parents believed that the more positive the influence of the peer group that the better off their children would be. If the peer group was a positive group that valued learning then their child would find it easier to value learning also. If the peer group was modeling eager learning, intellectual curiosity, strong motivation and responsibility then those values would be more likely to become a part of their child as well. These parent unanimously wanted to find the most positive school environment for their children.

In addition to that, some parents believed that when their student was in a classroom of 25-30 students of varying needs that their child would be ignored or forgotten.

Expectancy #4-Escape Problems

Escape problems was defined as the opportunity to leave undesirable situations or to rescue a child from imminent danger.

First-level outcome--classroom behavior problems. A re-occurring theme that parents mentioned is the ability to separate their child from children who have behavior problems. According to Mary Moore, "That was another thing, that was a big plus, they did

not take discipline problems, they didn't take learning disabled."

There was a double benefit because the children were no longer around the negative influence and also because the teacher had more time to teach. Two parents described their children becoming frustrated with unruly students, either being annoyed at being asked to help them academically on various kinds of assignments and projects, or because the teacher had to spend so much time talking about behaviors and values.

First-level outcome--negative influences. Parents tended to believe that every negative trait that their child picked up was because of the exposure to negative traits from some other student from the child's peer group. By controlling the amount of diversity that was in the child's peer group, you limited the diversity of influences. Most of the parents in this survey believed that by limiting the diverse influences, you would directly limit the negative influences. Of course, one of the main things that helped that be true is the selection process at the magnet school. Children who were in trouble at their neighborhood school were not considered for the magnet school setting. The one exception to this belief was Mark Miles. He believed that diverse influences were a

positive thing and did not correlate a wide span of experiences and cultural and socio-economic groups with additional problems.

First-level outcome--creative problem solving. Mark Miles chose to send his daughter to a magnet school to escape behavior problems, but from the opposite perspective. He described his daughter as a very assertive and aggressive child. He chose the magnet school because he believed she was less likely to get into trouble in that environment. He believed that the teachers were better equipped to process conflict resolution with his child and he also believed that her energy was put to creative uses and thus cut down on any potential problem.

Second-level outcomes. Many parents discussed feeling overwhelmed by the kinds of problems that their children encounter and consequently work through in today's schools. The public school system was a gathering place for people of diverse backgrounds, cultures, beliefs, values, and experiences. Parents expressed a fear of the new things to which their children would be exposed. These parents had a desire to limit their children's exposure to too wide a range of behaviors. Some parents believed that their child would be susceptible to negative attributes that other children would exhibit

so that their child would become a conglomerate of bad things that they saw. By eliminating all of the negative influences and negative possibilities the parents believed that they had an advantage over the parents of a public school student.

Children with behavior problems were perceived as more assertive and aggressive. For the average child that would mean encounters in which they might be bullied, harrassed, or at least intimidated. Being in that kind of personal interaction was counter-productive to building self-esteem. Melissa Minor, Martha May, and Mark Miles recounted school experiences in which they felt somewhat intimidated. They talked about the school being a rough place during the first years of the public school's desegregation plan. All five parents seemed to believe that children need to be physically safe and emotionally secure to develop to their full potential. So a second-level outcome was developing to ones own potential without impediment.

Valence

The parents in this study that chose to send their children to a public school magnet were not asked to assign a numerical value of intensity to their desire to participate in the magnet program. But a

significant valence can be established by looking at some of the disadvantages they were willing to accept or sacrifices that they were willing to make. The investment of valued resources specifically time and money are also indicators of the intensity of valence.

The magnet school program requires that children were tested and interviewed. The parents also had to participate in the application process and be interviewed. To go through this kind of process and take the risk of rejection, parents had a significant preference to participate in the magnet schools.

In the school system in this study, the magnet schools were almost all in a very poor socio-economic neighborhood. One of the reasons those schools were chosen is to utilize a building where the neighborhood was starting to disintegrate or was located in a totally minority neighborhood. Thus, parents agreed to send their children into a less desirable neighborhood to attend school. For Mary Moore that was a huge issue. When she was asked if she could change one thing about the magnet program, she talked about the neighborhoods.

The last factor that might help draw accurate conclusions

about the degree of valence that magnet school parents had for their particular schools, would be the fact that each parent was required to commit themselves to at least a minimum amount of volunteer time and to be active members of the school community. That investment of time, along with the time it takes to explore all the different magnet school options, and go through the application process, adds up to a significant impact on a person's time.

Summary

Mark Miles summarized his feelings about magnet schools eloquently when he said,

We thought that our children would be able to develop into the persons that they were capable of being with a greater possibility and not have to fit into some kind of a mold that the majority would create for them and we would have more individuals by the time we were finished if we went the magnet way.

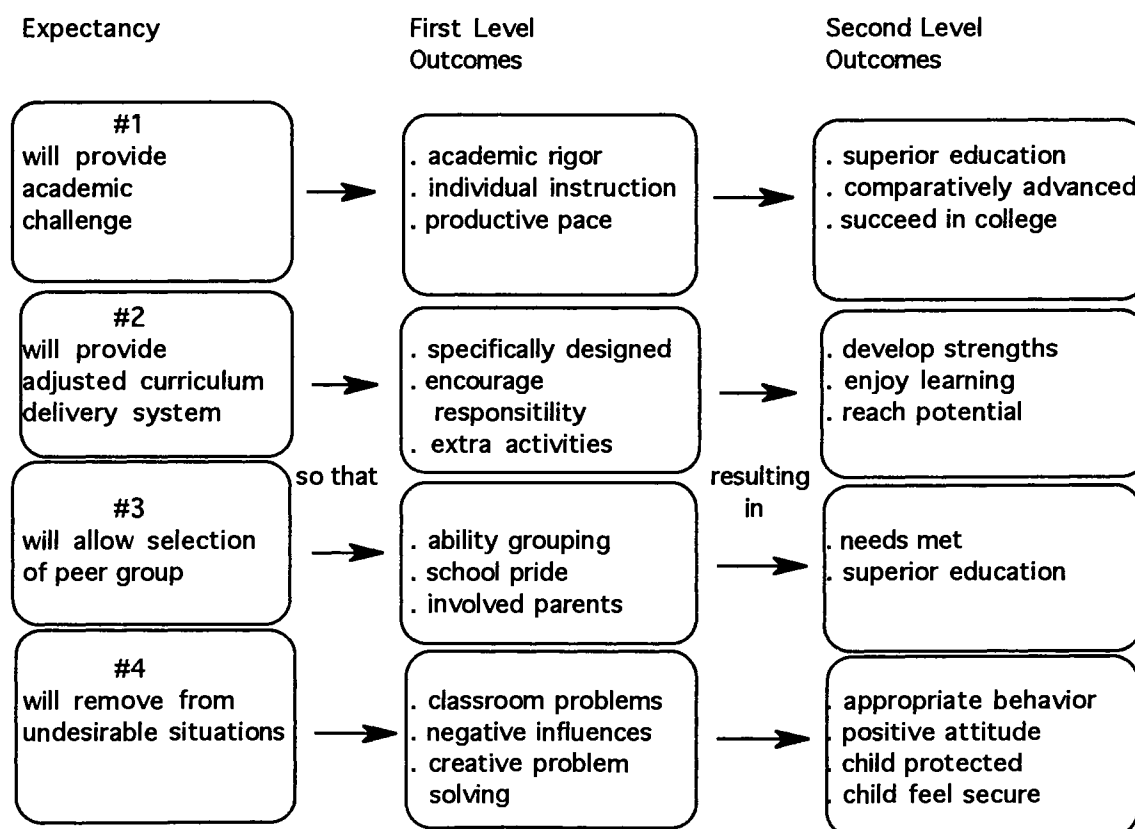
What Miles and the other parents described as long-term benefits or second-level outcomes could be described as self-actualization. These parents wanted their children to be secure, to gain knowledge, to have a positive self-image, and have the power to

make decisions without undue peer pressure.

A variation of Vroom's expectancy model was the pattern for the organization of this section on magnet schools. Table I provides a summary of parental explanations for sending their students to a magnet school. The table shows the relationship and interaction of factors in the parents' explanations. The data are presented in this way to highlight and focus on the relationship and the interrelatedness of the motivating factors.

Table I.

Summary of Motivating Factors for Magnet School Decisions: Expectancy Model



Private Schools

Private Schools

A purposeful sampling of parents that have chosen to send their children to Central Academy private school was achieved by asking the headmaster of Central Academy for a list of recommended candidates. The candidates ran the gamut of very involved parents devoted to the school system, and parent that were lower visibly to the school setting. Other names were submitted by colleagues of the researcher. There was an effort to select a wide range that would span a cross section of the city and incorporate someone from several different socio-economic levels. One participant was specifically selected because a critical incident had impacted her decision and I wished to have at least one person that had that kind of story to be included in the study. The actual sampling was impacted by the availability of the parents who were on the various lists, and their agreeing to be a part of this research, and having a schedule that would allow them to participate.

The names of all participants have been changed to pseudonyms to insure anonymity. The first and last name alias for each of the

parents that chose private schools have been changed to names that begin with the letter "p".

The name of the private school that all these participants chose was changed and an alias used. It will be referred to as Central Academy.

Pat Peters

Pat Peters, a black female, single parent of a 16 year-old daughter. Pat Peters taught instrumental music in the public school setting, both in a middle school and two elementary schools. Her socio-economic status appeared middle class. Pat Peters' demeanor was confident and she was very talkative. She wanted very much to share her experiences and her daughter's experiences in both public school and now the private school setting. Pat Peters was educated in the public schools.

Priscilla Price

Priscilla Price was a tall, thin, female in her late thirties or early forties. She had two children. A son, who was 16 and a sophomore in a private high school. A daughter, who was 14 and was in middle school at the same private school. Priscilla Price was a speech clinician that worked in the public school setting. Her socio-

economic status was upper middle class. Her demeanor was confident and she was very verbal, easily sharing her experiences. Priscilla Price went to public schools as did her husband. Both were well educated and have at least a Masters or Specialists Degree from a local university.

Paula Pay

Paula Pay was a medium build white female. She had two boys, a son in middle school age 13 and a son in high school age 17. Paula Pay was a public school psychologist. Socio-economic status was upper class. Paula Pay's demeanor was confident and caring. She was very verbal and expressed her opinions about school in a thoughtful reflective way. She went through the public schools and graduated from Cornell University. Her husband was equally well educated and both were professional people.

Pam Park

Pam Park, a full-time white, upper middle class homemaker, walked with a limp and had a minor disability. She had one child, 17, who was a junior at a private school. Her demeanor was strong and assertive. She was very verbal and she went through the public schools. Pam Park's daughter started schools in the public schools

in a magnet situation.

Penny Pool

Penny Pool, a very attractive, dark-haired, white female with three children. She had a daughter in the ninth grade, a daughter in the sixth grade, and a daughter in the second grade. Penny Pool was one of the few participants that had her oldest child in a private school and the two youngest attending public school. She was a full-time homemaker. Her socio-economic status was upper middle class. Her demeanor was quiet and reserved. She was not very verbal or very expressive. She gave very short answers and did not become chatty until after the tape recorder was turned off. Penny Pool went through the public schools. She was married and her husband was also an involved parent.

Data Categorization

When parents were asked about their decision to send their students to Central Academy, many different reasons were given. The reasons and influencing circumstances were coded then grouped into 11 subcategories of immediate first-level outcomes using Vroom's expectancy model. First-level outcomes were the direct or immediate effect. The subcategories were organized into four

broader themes or primary categories of expectations by the relationship of each subcategory to the total private school experience. The expectancies are beliefs that certain outcomes are predictable. Parents perceptions of outcomes are the foundation of the motivating expectancies. The four categories that emerged are: academic challenge, selected environment, escape problems, and extracurricular. The four expectancies are not assigned numerical values of priority.

Expectancy Considerations

The structure for this section was established to follow Vroom's expectancy model. A brief outline of the data is provided to assist the reader in following this format. Private school:

- I. Expectancy #1 Academic Challenge
 - A. First-level outcome--college preparation
 - B. First-level outcome--advanced curriculum
 - C. First-level outcome--responsive and available staff
 - D. Second-level outcomes
- II. Expectancy #2 Selected Environment
 - A. First-level outcome--community standards
 - B. First-level outcome--shared values
 - C. Second-level outcomes
- III. Expectancy #3 Escape Problems
 - A. First-level outcome--safety

B. Second-level outcomes

IV. Expectancy #4 Extracurricular

A. First-level outcome--opportunity to participate

B. Second-level outcomes

V. Valence

Expectancy #1-Academic Challenge

Academic challenge was defined as an advanced program of study involving rigorous, high standards, and complex subject material.

The participating parents were in agreement on the importance of an advanced curriculum. They were intense in their statements about the need for an academic program that would offer more challenge than the public schools.

First-level outcome--college preparation. Every parent interviewed had high expectations for academic rigor.

I feel like Central Academy has a very strong curriculum. There are no bones made that it is considered a preparatory school for college. At this point and time there has not been a student that has graduated from Central Academy that has not gone on to college. (Priscilla Price)

"We would like for them (our children) to be able to get into the best

institution possible. We believe that going to a school with a prestigious name gives you an edge," said Paula Pay. She went on to explain,

The fact that I graduated from Cornell for example, opened doors for me. But it was particularly true for my husband, he really believed that in the business world that there were certain doors that open more quickly for you if you come from an institution with a prestigious name. Aside from that, the underlying issue is we have been to a number of institutions and we believe that you do get a higher quality education at a more selective school and so it is a combination of we want doors as many doors open for our kids as possible and we want them to get the best education possible.

The attitude of one's peers impacts college decision making. "My daughter's peers are applying to universities all over the United States and she sees that it is not abnormal to go out of this state to college," stated Penny Pool.

First-level outcome--advanced curriculum. "My daughter had two years of Latin in her seventh and eighth grade years, at that time even the parochial schools didn't offer Latin," stated Park. This

statement was made in a manner that left no doubt as to the importance of Latin. Paula Pay outlined her reasons for sending her sons to a private school in this way,

I want the best quality education possible, by that I mean I want a curriculum that is challenging and I want my children to be well prepared in developing good work study habits. I want a program that will prepare them for life after high school and to be able to compete academically in a college setting.

Many of these parents had specific university preferences for their children. Several said that their children are relatively focused on specific professional careers, according to Pay.

First-level outcome--responsive and available staff. Pool described her daughter as very bored academically at the public schools. So she moved her to get a better education and be more challenged. Pool explained, "My daughter's needs are met at the private school. We talked to the public school principal but nothing was done to help her, we had to leave."

According to Paula Pay, Central Academy teachers were available to parents all of the time and in addition there was a set

tutorial system where the teachers come before and after school, so that students could ask for individual assistance.

Second-level outcomes. Four of the five parents said that high academic expectations and the proper support so their child could be successful was paramount to their future successes. As one parent said it will give children the "edge" and be the "key" to unlocking doors.

Expectancy #2-Selected Environment

Selected environment was defined as choosing the physical setting which would impact all the external conditions surrounding a student. These parents felt a sense of duty to select a safe, secure environment.

First-level outcome--community standards.

Some of the best things about Central Academy are the interactions between the parents and teachers. You know it is a community and a community school. We work together towards the same goal to help children be the very best they can be. (Pam Park)

This sentiment was echoed by Pat Peters, "My daughter feels safe. Central Academy provided that kind of atmosphere. It was a real

small school in terms of student population. It was more like a small community situation." Participants described a small close community as making them feel safe and protected.

First-level outcome--shared values. At Central Academy the students were from a narrow range of socio-economic backgrounds. There was a great deal of common culture and shared values. Because of this, parents felt there was a greater degree of harmony. There was less strife and people were not made to feel self-conscious of their material possessions and their status in the community. As one parent said, "It is not always easy to be a child from a family that is affluent."

Along those same lines several of the parents mentioned that it seemed like a huge benefit to have their children involved in an educational program where all the participants agree that education was extremely important. They did not have the distractors, who tried to convince the students that education or the work involved in education was not important. Even the teachers were hired with an eye on their own values and morals. Teachers were expected to reinforce the values of this higher socio-economic group of parents.

We feel like everyone of the teachers for our children know

them on a first name basis. It is very individualized for each student and I believe my son and my daughter each have different needs, both emotionally and academically and at this point and time I feel like Central Academy is able to address those. (Priscilla Price)

Second-level outcomes. The parents in this group were very aware of the kind of environment in which their children attended school. This included description of the physical site as well as the climate and atmosphere.

Parents intimated that if their children were safe, surrounded with people of similar circumstances, that had similar values than the children could "be all that they could be." By attending the private school, the children would be nurtured and grow without negative restraints thus, they were more likely to blossom into their potential.

Expectancy #3-Escape Problems

Escape problems was defined as the opportunity to leave undesirable situations or to rescue a child from imminent danger.

First-level outcome--safety. Pat Peters moved her high school daughter from the public schools to Central Private School

because she truly believed her daughter was in imminent and serious danger. Pat Peters daughter had become involved in a conflict with people that they believed were part of two rival gangs in the high school setting. She believed that her daughter would continue to be intimidated and could be seriously hurt in that conflict. She was absolutely certain that the educational process had been impaired by the kind of harassment and fear that the daughter was going through. Peters said, "There are some things you take seriously, very, very seriously, and we weren't going to take a wait and see attitude on this issue." Peter's statements were the strongest about safety being a reason for attending Central Academy, but it was a subtle theme that showed up in all the interviews.

Pam Park explained, "My daughter was small for her age and at the public school they had lots and lots and lots of problems. Police had been over there on a daily basis. That's why we moved her to a private school."

Second-level outcomes. These parents wanted to find a protected environment for their children, where all participants were homogeneous in values and culture. The parents believed that their fundamental responsibility to their children was to insure the

child's safety. Removing children from a public setting and attending school in a private school did provide a protected environment. Parents believed that a protected environment allowed their children to grow and develop their individual potential.

Parents did not discuss some obvious outcomes in attending a private school that would fit in this section. Parents did not mention that their children would not have their education hampered or impaired by children that were less able or behavior problems. It was implied in the discussions of academic challenge but never stated. That conspicuous omission might be attributed to the "socially correct" attitudes of this group of parents.

Expectancy #4-Extracurricular

This refers to activities and experiences that are not part of the required course of study. Examples would include sports, clubs, and leadership opportunities.

First-level outcome--opportunity to participate. The private school had a more narrow extra curricular offering but because of its small population there was less competition. Thus, the opportunity to participate was more open.

My son is a prime example of fewer students allowing for

more opportunities. He plays middle school football and standing at five feet, seventy-five pounds, he is not a likely football player. He even got to carry a couple of yards once. It was the highlight of his season. (Paula Pay)

Second-level outcomes. Having the opportunity to participate in activities was described as a growth experience that the parents valued. Children that were reasonably talented had the chance to be "the big fish in the small stream" and enjoying the notoriety that goes with that position. Second-level outcomes would be having experiences that allows the student to discover talents and build self-esteem.

Valence

The degree or intensity of private schooling preference that each of these parents exhibited or professed to was not numerically evaluated. The intensity of their desire to have their children in private school can only be evaluated by looking at the disadvantages they accepted, the sacrifices that they made, and the investment of valued resources, specifically time and money.

For several of these parents money was a significant issue. The tuition for Central Academy is \$6,000 a year for each child.

Price discussed the fact that \$12,000 for her two children was a large amount of money. Their family had to do without other things if they were going to send their children to Central. Price went on to say that they had to prioritize the things that were important and that sacrifices were made because of the money that Central cost. Peters also discussed the high tuition to send a child to Central. Peters put her child into the Central Academy environment because she was fearful for her daughter's well-being. But she did not have the financial resources and she worked diligently to find scholarship opportunities and funding so that her child could go to the private school. Pay mentioned the financial investment and acknowledge that it was significant but did not seem to impact Pay or Park to an extreme.

All five parents talked about the investment in time. Because the private school had a more rigorous academic curriculum each of their children spent more time on homework than they would if they attended the public schools. So a consequence of sending a child to Central Academy was that family time in the evenings and weekends must be flexible enough to accommodate the requirements of the academy.

These factors that impact a family, the investment of time and money, are indicators of the intensity or degree of preference that each parent had for sending their children to Central Academy.

Summary

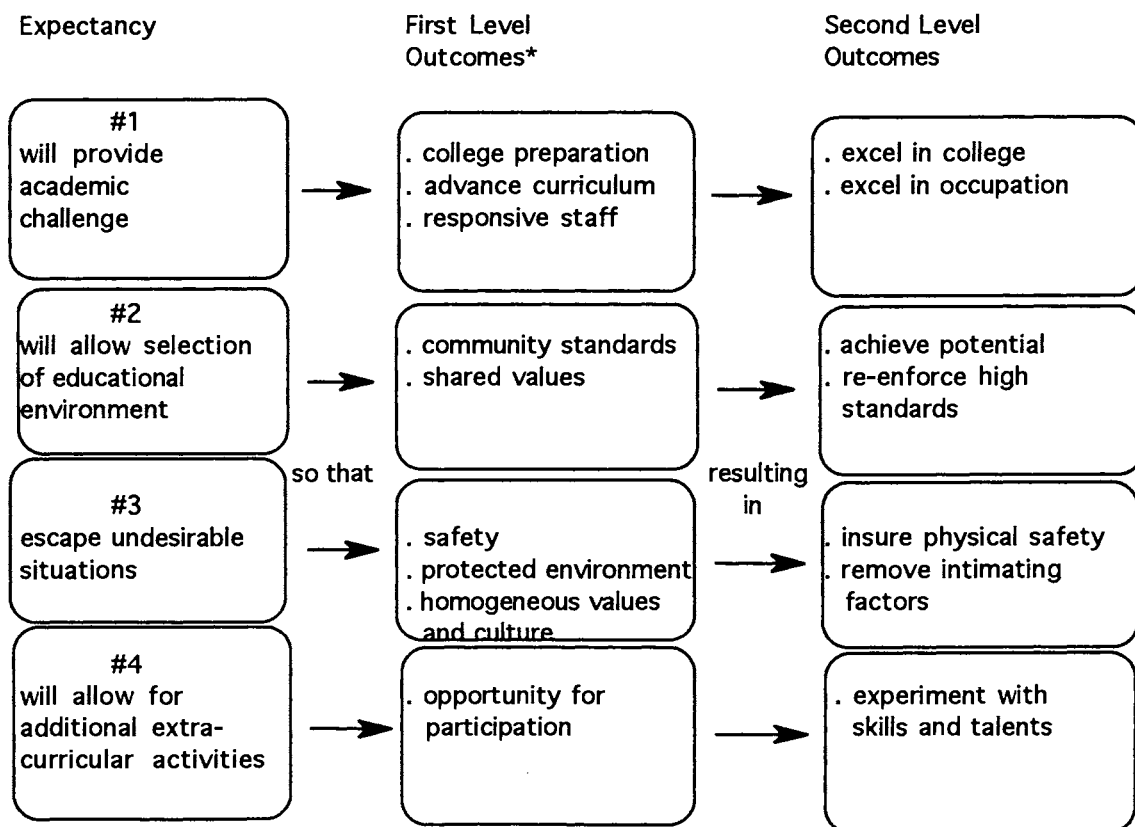
In this study the parents that chose to send their children to private school expected academic challenge, a selected environment to escape problems, and have extracurricular opportunities that the public school would not provide for their children. These parents believed that the outcome would be high academic goals for each child, a framework of support for each child to help them achieve or succeed with those goals. They expected that an outcome would be a safe environment free from some of the kinds of problems that they had heard about or seen in the public schools. They believed that an outcome of the private school education would be an opportunity for their child to explore and test talents that they might not otherwise be able to do.

These outcomes would correlate to second-level outcomes of children that were prepared for college, that felt good about themselves, and that had experiences that provided for real self-esteem based on achievement.

A variation of Vroom's expectancy model was the pattern for the organization of this section on private schools. Table II provides a summary of parental explanations for sending their students to a private school. The model shows the relationship and interaction of factors in the parents explanations. The data is presented in this way to highlight and focus on relationship and the interrelatedness of the motivating factors.

Table II

Summary of Motivating Factors for Private School Decisions: Expectancy Model



Home School

Participants

Developing a list of possible participants for the home schooling portion of this study required several different kinds of actions. First, I kept a list of parents who wrote editorials to the local newspaper and expressed interest in or advocacy for home schooling. One particular person whose name appeared several times on that list was also in the media frequently, both radio and television doing interviews or being used as an authority on home schooling. He heads the local organization of home schoolers that is well organized and politically active. I chose to interview him first so that I could extend my list of possible candidates on his recommendations. I asked him to give me a list of people who would be very strong advocates of home schooling, people who might have a special story to tell, and people who were less visible and less active in the organization.

The names of all participants have been changed to pseudonyms to insure anonymity. The first and last name alias for each of the parents that chose to home school have been changed to names that begin with the letter "h".

Harvey Hogan

Harvey Hogan was a well dressed white male of short to medium stature with a trim, athletic build. He was dressed in a suit for the interview and could be described as immaculately dressed. Harvey Hogan had three children. The oldest two were twins, one boy one girl 13 years old, and another daughter who was 10 years old. Harvey Hogan was an accountant. His socio-economic status appeared to be upper middle class. His demeanor was confident, assertive, and he was very verbal. He went through the public schools and believed that he was very successful.

Hannah Hayden

Hannah Hayden was a white female, medium build, in her mid forties. She had four children, three daughters and one son. Two children were in college and one was married. She had two grandchildren and she had the one daughter of high school age, 16. Hannah Hayden was a public school teacher. Her socio-economic status was middle class. Her demeanor was very confident, very assertive, very knowledgeable. She was very verbal and expressed her ideas clearly. She went through public schools, but not in this particular area.

Hillary Hillan

Hillary Hillan was a white female between the ages of 37 to 42. She was tall, looked very much like the back to basics outdoor woman. She had four children. They were 14, 12, 9, and 5. The oldest was a daughter, then the 12 year old and 9 year old are boys, and the youngest was a girl. Hillary Hillan was a full-time homemaker and home school teacher. Socio-economic status was upper high. Her demeanor was gentle and kind but firm. She was very verbal, willing to be reflective and share. She went through the public school system. Her husband, however, was a product of the private schools in this area. Private school, which was very much a respected institute in this urban setting, was founded by his father for the sole purpose of having him privately schooled.

Hope Hoffman

Hope Hoffman was a white female, medium height, thick build. Her husband was also present during the interview. He was a tall, thin man. They were a cute, homey couple. They had five children, a girl 16, a girl 12, a girl 10, a boy 5, and a girl 4. Mrs. Hope Hoffman was a homemaker and home school parent. Mr. Hoffman was a fireman and home school parent. Their socio-economic status was

middle class. They were both easy to talk to. They seemed to be very nice, very sincere people. Mrs. Hoffman seemed to be assertive but acquiesces to him when he spoke. Both Hoffmans went through the public school system.

Heather Hilt

Both Mr. and Mrs. Hilt were present for the interview. Both were of medium to tall height of sturdy build. The Hilt's had five children. A boy 12, a boy 10, a boy 7, a boy 3, and a girl that was one year old. Mrs. Heather Hilt was a homemaker. Mr. Hilt was a silversmith and taught art classes at a nearby junior college. Their socio-economic status was middle middle class. They were firm in their beliefs, assertive, and yet very pleasant. Mr. Hilt went to non-traditional private schools. Mrs. Heather Hilt went through the public schools.

Data Categorization

When parents were asked about their decision to home school their students the reasons varied. The reasons and influencing circumstances were coded, then grouped into 12 subcategories of immediate first-level outcomes using the motivation for school selection model. First-level outcomes being the direct or immediate

effect. The subcategories were organized into three broader themes or primary categories of expectations by the relationship of each subcategory to the total home school experience. The expectancies are beliefs that certain outcomes are predictable. Parents perceptions of outcomes are the foundation of the motivating expectancies. The three categories that emerged are: values, escape problems, and autonomy. The three expectancies were not numerical values of priority.

Expectancy Considerations

The structure for this section was established to follow Vroom's expectancy model. A brief outline of the data is provided to assist the reader in following this format. Home school:

- I. Expectancy #1 Values
 - A. First-level outcome--religious values
 - B. First-level outcome--family values
 - C. First-level outcome--personal growth
 - D. Second-level outcomes

- II. Expectancy #2 Escape Problems
 - A. First-level outcome--unsatisfactory curriculum
 - B. First-level outcome--unsatisfactory peer group
 - C. First-level outcome--failing
 - D. Second-level outcomes

III. Expectancy #3 Autonomy

- A. First-level outcome--spontaneity
- B. First-level outcome--natural process
- C. First-level outcome--power/control
- D. First-level outcome--academic freedom
- E. First-level outcome--individualization
- F. Second-level outcomes

IV. Valence

Expectancy #1-Values

Values were defined as the standards, morals, customs, or beliefs, that influenced an individual.

First-level outcome--religious values. Four of the home school parents interviewed listed religious reasons as part of the motivation for their decisions. "We are able to instill Godly values in our children's lives and we can do that every day, in every subject," said Hope Hoffman. "We want our children to have a deep and abiding faith in the Lord," said Heather Hilt. Some parents expressed sentiments that indicate an intensity in their religious motivation.

When we feel afraid and nervous sometimes about we're behind in math, we're really not where we want to be in math, I'm just reminded, but we're learning some things that are eternal, that no one can ever take away or change. (Hope Hoffman)

It is of paramount importance to this parent that they do not have to take religion out of her children's education.

Hoffman explained the role of God in education from her perspective.

We feel the root of the problems in the public school system in this nation stem from the fact that we have completely rejected God. We don't have a problem with public education, we have a problem with their rejection of God. If, the school system had not become so anti-God we would still be in it. The public schools have turned their back on God in such a manner that God has taken his hand off and is saying that if you want to reject me than I'll show you that your education is useless and so we continue to graduate thousands of children that can't read, can't write, can't do math, can't think.

Religion was a part of the reason to home school for four of the participants, but Hoffman was the most passionate in her discussions of God and his role in education.

First-level outcome--family values. Visiting with the home schooling parents allowed me to hear and see the importance of the family. During the interview it was common for children to come up

and lean on a parent or climb onto their lap for a short time. The home school homes were full of family pictures, needle point plaques, and other memorabilia that emphasized the importance of family. "We wanted our children to grow up with a consistent and constant exposure to our values, our principles and our beliefs rather than those of their peers or of the educational system," said Hope Hoffman. "The notion of value free education is a contradiction in terms. It cannot be accomplished no matter how much people might think it can. Because your values are inherent in the way you teach," said Harvey Hogan.

"With my husband's background and his family always being for and involved with private schools, our kids would have been destined to a private school setting if we hadn't home schooled," said Hillary Hillan. The family culture demanded that a great deal of serious attention be given to the raising and educating of ones children. Furthermore, a significant stigma against public schools was established in Hillan's family.

When we are tempted to be afraid and worried and anxious about our kids' academic learning, we're always brought up short and reminded the Lord reminds us, our main goal here is

building character. What we want for our children is strong Christ like character and that is the thrust of our school. Teaching our kids how to be gracious, how to be self-control, how to be kind, how to be humble, how to relate to one another in this house. (Hope Hoffman)

All of these things were extremely important to Hoffman and her extended family. To Hoffman, religious values and family values were almost the same, certainly there was a great deal of overlap.

To other parents the family relationship and the family interactions were paramount.

I heard an interview on a radio station with some home schooling people. It was a focus on the family, James Dobson program, and they were interviewing a couple named Ray and Dorothy Moore. And they were talking about home schooling and specifically about the ideas of nurturing your child or being involved with you child on a day-to-day basis. (Hillary Hillan)

This was the planting of the seed for home schooling for Hillan.

"We have had experiences and done things as a family that we could never have done before. I've seen a love develop between the

kids that wasn't there before. A fierce loyalty, we were always very loyal to one another, but it's just different, there's just a bond between these siblings that is pretty rare," said Hope Hoffman.

First-level outcome--personal growth. Parents often discussed the importance of each individual child and insuring maximum personal growth.

I know they provide that to some extent in the other schools whether it be a Christian, private, public school, they read to children. But, then again, you can't zero in on just that particular child's interest, or just that particular child's needs. (Hillary Hillan)

Second-level outcomes. "We've seen enormous emotional and spiritual growth in our three oldest kids in the three years we've been doing this. Just a lot of changes and attitudes toward one another and toward responsibility, toward life, just a lot of real positive things," said Hope Hoffman. "I realize if Heather is willing to home school again next year, my kids would really benefit. I absolutely have no doubt about that at all, academically, spiritually, and socially," said Harvey Hilt.

It is apparent that these parents believed that if values are

incorporated into the school experience the outcome would be children with better moral characters and stronger family ties.

Expectancy #2-Escape Problems

Escape problems was defined as the opportunity to leave undesirable situations or to rescue a child from imminent danger. The parents interviewed all focused on an undesirable situation instead of a physically dangerous situation.

First-level Outcome--unsatisfactory curriculum. The content of education, or the curriculum, can offend or disturb parents. Sometimes parents were upset about what was included, sometimes by what was not included.

You can't discuss history without getting into moral issues. And if you don't come up with judgments with what this person did was right or wrong in the context in which you are studying then you haven't really studied the subject. (Harvey Hogan)

Not only were they not getting a Godly perspective at school, they were getting a very, very, slanted anti-God perspective in the public schools. We felt that was so damaging that we couldn't, we just couldn't accept it any more. (Hope Hoffman)

Several parents felt that the public school curriculum was

"watered down" so that more children could succeed.

I'm biased by thinking that we really don't teach to the kids' level, we teach to somewhere below center. The good kids will get it on their own, the bad kids will be yelled at, no kind of motivation, and we just kinda teach a little bit above them.

(Heather Hilt)

Hoffman was worn out and frustrated trying to make the public school curriculum and her beliefs congruent.

Our last year in the suburban schools, the school counselor began coming in the room every week and she was doing a lot of Eastern mystic relaxation techniques which go directly against our Evangelical beliefs. So, we had to opt out of that. Every year we always had to opt out of sex education. It just became a full-time job for me to be down there constantly, ok what are you going to do now, what are you going to say about this, what do you think my kids are actually going to hear when you say that. I just was constantly the watch dog. I had to constantly stay right on top of everything. They can hear the truth at home and I won't have to continually upset by what I see going on at school. We were very unhappy with the

counseling sessions that were taking place and we got more unhappy with the sex education curriculum that they were using in the schools.

First-level outcome--unsatisfactory peer group. Parents were consciously working to deemphasize the child's peer group thus, taking away the power of peer pressure. However, the word socialization came up in every home school interview.

We made the commitment that we're not going to be hermits. We'll be involved in a group and the kids will get socialization there, but it will be positive. We've always felt and taught our children no friends are better than bad friends. Being away from what we felt were negative peer influences wasn't a problem at all, that's a plus to get away from that. (Hope Hoffman)

Sometimes a peer group can impede learning.

Sally is an average to above average student. Very social and needs lots of positive reinforcement, lots of attention and she works for that feeling of success and she wasn't getting that in public school. She also has to complete something and move on to something else and feel that she is moving toward a goal.

In public school, because of the grouping situation where everybody is kind of grouped and you move along when the group moves along, she wasn't feeling that success. (Hannah Hayden)

The socialization skills and problems that we deal with as parents are explaining why peers do such stupid things, we would just as soon they would miss out on that. So, we're not thrilled with some of the socialization experiences that they do encounter. (Heather Hilt)

First-level outcome--failing. Two of the families started investigating home schooling because their students were either failing or struggling in public schools. "My daughter was flunking, skipping school, partying, all of those horrible things that a parent doesn't want to see," said Hannah Hayden.

Heather and Harvey Hilt believed that they actually rescued and that is their word, "rescued" their son from the public schools and the damage that was being caused. The Hilt's son was in the lowest of the three reading groups. He was in the bottom of the different math groups. He had already been labeled as way behind and too distractible to really learn effectably. Heather Hilt started tutoring

him at home and she worked with the teacher with the public school curriculum to pull him up to the level of the rest of the class. Because of this start with working with the public schools, Hilt began to realize that her son thrived on individual attention and his success was actually the catalyst for deciding to home school.

Second-level outcomes. By removing children from negative peer groups these parents believed they would not have to reteach, correct values and correct behavior. They would not have to explain and justify why some people make bad decisions. They also believed that their children would not see inappropriate actions and believe that that was acceptable.

Four of these parents felt compelled to remove their children from: unsatisfactory curriculum that was in opposition to their beliefs and values, institutional standards and harmful labeling, and peer groups that did not always conform to the standards these parents desired.

By removing public school and peer group influences the parents influence becomes more substantial or powerful. The parents were in a better position to assess what they wanted for their child and fulfill that desire.

Expectancy #3-Autonomy

Autonomy was defined as the freedom, independence or liberty to self govern.

First-level outcome--spontaneity. Controlling the curriculum and the schedule allowed parents to change plans without effecting others. This gave them control over their time more completely than any other type of school. Home schoolers had the luxury to be spontaneous. This benefit was mentioned by all five home school participants. Hope Hoffman expressed it in this statement.

We're free, a lot freer than your average school student. If something comes up and we want to go, if there is an exhibit at the art museum we just go. If it's a nice day and the weather is beautiful, we go to the park.

First-level outcome--natural process. Home schoolers discovered that learning is a natural process. When educating children at home it was not necessary to constantly break curriculum into small parts that can become disjointed which sometimes causes the learner to lose sight of the complete picture. Demystifying education was described in several ways.

We found out that we've all gone to these large schools for so

long that we think learning is very difficult, but it's not, it comes very natural to people and so children learn easily. It comes very naturally to the children, they like to learn, everyone likes to learn and one thing we can do at home that you can't do in a public school setting, these children can pursue things that interest them. Instead of just hitting it for a day or two and moving on they can pursue it. They are free to learn and to grow in things that interest them. (Hope Hoffman)

"Our children cook with us, they clean with us, garden with us, that sort of thing. So, home schooling just seemed like a natural extension of that," said Hillary Hillan.

"Our philosophy of education we feel like education doesn't take place necessarily in a classroom, but life, all of life, is an education," said Hope Hoffman. "Children are just little sponges when they're young. If you feed into their interests, they're little sponges to absorb all that you can give them, and all that you can encourage them to explore," said Hillary Hillan.

First-level outcome--power/control. Having the ability to control the types of people that interacted with their children was important and these parents went to the necessary lengths to

control the external influences and reduce exposure to what they deem as undesirable traits.

We were concerned just as much about their hearts and souls as we were about their minds and now we can do all those things at once and not worry about the fact that maybe this year their teacher is a Lesbian, feminist, radical that we can't do anything about, because this way we are in control of every aspect of the school. (Harvey Hogan)

Hayden believed that empowering her daughter was the only possible solution to her disdain for adult goals and authoritarian dictates, particularly as her attitude related to schooling. "The kids can set their own goals and move at their own rate. There are no outside distractions, basically," said Hannah Hayden. "At this age that she is the one who is going to ultimately be responsible for her success, it is not me. And so it was her choice," said Hannah Hayden.

According to these parents, peer pressure was a controlling force in the lives of most children. Reducing the power of the peer group increased the power of the individual and/or the family. Another benefit to decreasing the influence of a peer group was explained by Hillan.

It is good that kids don't have to be under so much pressure from other kids, peer pressure, saying you're skinny, you're ugly, or you're stupid in this area. Yes, they are protected from that and there is no doubt about it, there is this little cocoon that a home schooling environment provides, but I don't see anything wrong with providing that cocoon when they are young so that their foundations are established and from there they can go out and face the demands and the pressures that they are going to face even as young people. So, you know, I think the cocoon and the protection is legitimate.

First-level outcome--academic freedom. Harvey Hogan

said,

We can teach our values right along with the multiplication tables. That way everything fits together very nicely in a well integrated curriculum, because it is all designed to head towards a specific goal and that goal is a well educated, moral individual.

Participants pointed out situations in which home schoolers were able to do things that a regular school could not do because of the constraints.

We got to do a Veteran's Day presentation at the VA hospital because the public schools are all closed on Veteran's Day, so they couldn't do something for the veterans and home schoolers are flexible so Hannah got to prepare a recitation for that and Peter did as well, when he was five. The t.v. station that was there came and interviewed Peter cause they were so impressed. So, those kind of fun things do happen. (Hillary Hillan)

First-level outcome--individualization. Parents insisted that the family was more likely to identify and care enough to meet each child's special needs. They included developing a child's unique talents and stimulating a child's personal curiosity as things that family was in a position to do best. "The teacher couldn't spend the individual time developing that child's individual potential because she had so many other children to deal with," said Hillary Hillan. The Hoffman family described individualization this way.

Erin is very interested in horses and has learned and read so much about horses, she knows more about horses in her little finger than I'll ever know. Ellen is very interested in birds and has gotten into bird watching and has the time and freedom to

explore that and to become somewhat of a little expert on birds and Emily studied U.S. History this year, and our pastor happens to be a Civil War expert, and is just a fanatic. He has all kinds of memorabilia and artifacts and has more books on Civil War than I have ever seen any where. So, she went his house for about six weeks and he taught her the Civil War unit. She did a research paper that is college level. This has been really exciting, these are just opportunities that they would not have had. It's been really fun.

Second-level outcomes. By accepting the responsibility for educating their own child these parents had also taken control of their children's schooling. Every decision concerning education was in the parents hands: when to study, how long to study, what to study, etc. Making these decisions allowed the parents to guide their children to develop into the kind of adult the parents wished. It also put the growth, development and education in the hands of the people that were most likely to care about and love the children most deeply according to these parents.

Valence

The parents that chose to home school their students were not

asked to put a numerical value of intensity to their desire to home schooling. However, looking at some of the disadvantages that they have had to accept or sacrifices that they have had to make or investment of valued resources such as time and money can provide insight that allows conclusions to be drawn concerning the significance of valence.

Home school teachers made it very clear that when they decided to home school, they made a serious commitment of their time. Hope Hoffman was one of the most articulate and strongest spokespersons for the amount of time and personal freedom that home schooling took. She believed that her life was drastically different. She could not put her children on the bus and send them off to school and have the freedom to do her shopping without children or have the freedom to go do things with her own friends. She had a full-time job and commitment that did not pay her financially. Her pay was the fulfillment of doing what she believed was right and seeing her children grow in the direction that she wanted. But she was adamant about the loss of personal freedom and time.

Heather Hilt talked about the responsibility as a burden at

times. The only parent that did not bring up the subject of time commitment was Hillary Hillan. Hillan seemed to value that extra time in a different kind of way than the other four parents. Possible because several years ago she had been diagnosed with M.S. her attitude was altered.

Two of the parents also mentioned that there is a potential for a stigma against their children because they home school. Both of these parents mentioned incidences where neighbors would question them if they saw their children outside playing during what would be a traditional school day and ask them why the children were not in school. If they were home schooling, why they were not inside the home.

Each parent that home schools talked about the availability of curriculum and supplies, but it does take some time and some effort and some monies to purchase the materials and to evaluate which ones you want to use.

Each of these factors is evidence of the degree or intensity of preference that these five parents have for home schooling.

Summary

The home school parents were sincere, delightful people who

were not noticeable outside societal norms except, of course, they chose to home school. As a group they were not too assertive or too meek. Religion was mentioned, but only one parent could possibly be considered zealous. I was struck by their honest sharing of personal thoughts and private feelings.

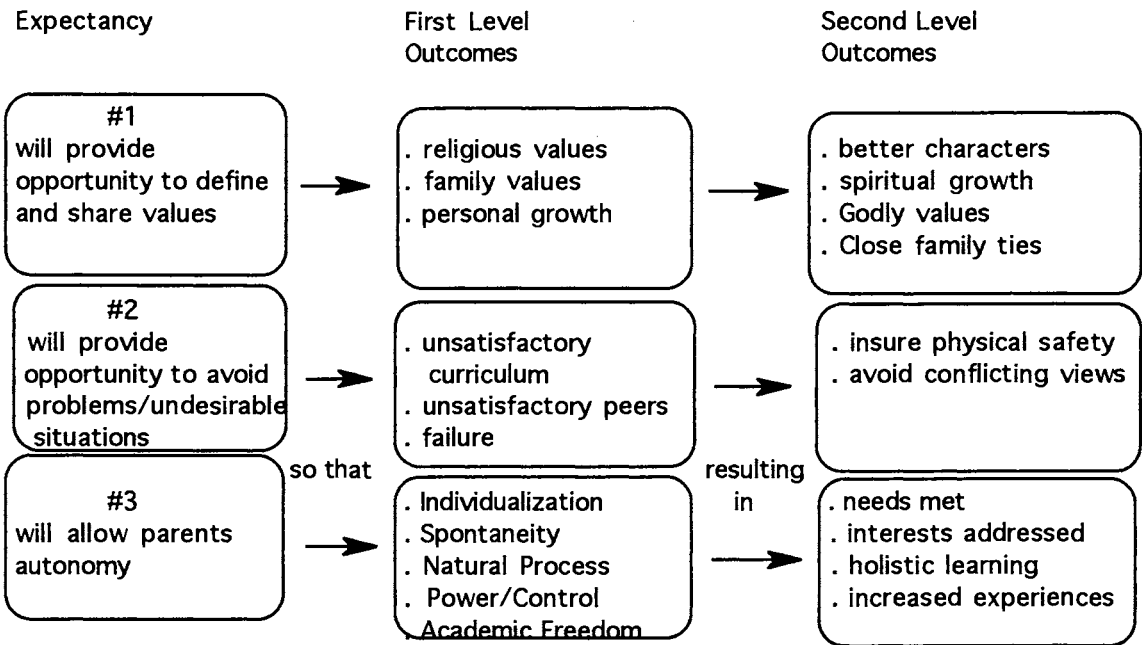
These parents expected home schooling to remove negative influences, return the power to influence their children to the family, and allow them to instill religious values in every aspect of their child's development.

They believed the result will be children who understand God's place in daily life, children with high moral character, children with close family ties, and children who have not had to conform to institutional education.

A variation of Vroom's expectancy model was the pattern for the organization of this section on home schools. Table III provides a summary of the parental explanations for home schooling. The model shows the relationship and interaction of factors in the parents explanations. The data is presented in this way to highlight and focus on the relationship and the interrelatedness of the motivating factors.

Table III.

Summary of Motivating Factors for Home School Decisions: Expectancy Model



Summary

Parents described why they chose to send their children to a public magnet school, a private school, or to home school. All three groups had reasons that were concerned with academic standards, how the academics were presented, and safety. Exactly what parents wanted and expected did vary within even the common themes. In Chapter five I examine the desired first-level outcomes and second-level outcomes as shown on Tables I, II, and III to differentiate between what each group means when they give the same initial responses.

Magnet school parents focused on their children receiving adequate attention to grow and develop, private school parents focused on academic rigor, and home school parents focused on values.

CHAPTER V

Comments, Conclusions, Implications, Suggestions, and Commentary

This chapter was organized to provide a clear and complete summary of this naturalistic exploration of what parents want when they make decisions about education for their children. There will be comments on the research process, along with a review of the data collection, data analysis, and findings. Conclusions of the study will be addressed with regard to the proposed research purpose. Implications resulting from conclusions, suggestions for further research, and final commentary will complete this chapter.

Comments

The primary purpose of this research was to explore the motivation behind the parents' decisions as it relates to the education of their own children. The three schooling choices that were investigated were: public magnet school, private school, and

home schooling.

There have been many quantitative instruments used to try and determine what parents wanted from a school. That approach does not lend itself to understanding what parents expect and what they perceive the outcomes will be of their choices. Parents' perceptions of cause and effect relationships in the education of their children are not fully explained in numerical terms, but rather need to be viewed as interdependent, multifaceted expectations and perceived outcomes.

Reconstructing Vroom's expectancy model to display the layers of parents' desired results allows for a stratification yet clear view of the relationship of the motivating factors. Vroom's (1964) original definition and explanation of: expectancy, first-level outcomes, second-level outcomes, and valence, along with the theoretical relationship of these factors, fit this naturalist study. The parents had a vision of what their school of choice would be like. That vision fulfilled one or more need. First-level outcomes were immediate needs and second-level outcomes were needs met as a result of first-level outcomes. This framework allowed the data from the individual interviews to be analyzed and recorded

preserving the depth and interrelatedness of the motivating factors. The naturalistic process and the analysis framework lends itself to exploring and describing the reasons behind parents decisions as it relates to the education of their own children.

Data Collection

The semi-structured open interview was the primary method of data collection in this study. Six general questions were developed to assure a level of consistency and aid in the interview process. A conversational format was used to ask probing questions.

Several interviews of a similar nature were conducted to give the researcher experience with the long interview and to try out questions before the study actually began.

All interviews were conducted from March, 1993 through May, 1994.

Data Analysis

In this particular study the breaking down of data into small coded units followed a routine or standard process, however, during the reconceptulization it became apparent that to be truly representative, something different than a list of emergent themes was necessary. Thus, a special framework was developed which

included a model of motivation for school selection based on Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory and similar to the model he developed to explain performance motivation in the work-place.

The framework that allowed the data to retain the informative stratifications in the reasons for school choices that parents shared during the interviews required layers of outcomes and expectations to emerge. That framework is exemplified by the structure of tables I, II, and III.

Summary of Findings

All of the parents consistently included two factors in their list of reasons for choosing a certain educational program for their children. The two elements are a safe, comfortable, environment and good academics. All parents wanted their children to learn and be safe. There is a great deal of similarity in initial answers, but when the desired outcomes were explored, it was apparent that even with two basic ideas like safety and academics, there were subtle differences in what parents want. Thus, looking at the data in terms of original expectations, desired first-level outcomes, and desired second-level outcomes, allows the subtle differences to be filtered and become visible.

Academic excellence is a dominant theme throughout this research. Magnet school parents want a strong academic program to make sure their children are ready for college or life's work. They also want their children to feel good about themselves and have a slight edge over other students.

The private school parents are more intense in their desire to have their children prepared for the most rigorous of future challenges. Their children are not to be denied any opportunity because of an insufficient academic program. Private school children must have everything in place to excel if the children are capable of capitalizing on the opportunities.

Home school parents tend to want their children to learn all that they can, so they will be able to use the knowledge in ways that will bring personal satisfaction and help the children make good decisions in their futures. Academics were important to home school parents primarily because they want to exercise control over the academic content and teach their children the value laden uses for knowledge.

All parents say they want academic excellence, but what academic excellence is and the reasons they want academic

excellence are not identical. The best picture of what academic excellence means to parents and why they desire it for their children, comes when parents describe the outcomes of academic excellence and how that will effect their children.

Safety was another major issue for most of the parents. They wanted a safe environment. That usually was described as being physically safe as well as emotionally safe. Subtle differences became apparent as parents began to elaborate.

Magnet parents tended to be more focused on emotional comfort and the avoidance of harassment and intimidation than actual physical safety, although it was mentioned.

Several of the private school parents went into great detail to explain their need to find a safe environment. They were specific in meaning physically safe.

The home school parents would not have listed safety as one of their major concerns. It was very much a secondary issue. They had a desire to shelter their children, but physical safety did not seem to be a specific catalyst for their decision to home school.

Once again, an element, safety, that was present throughout all the interviews had different meaning and depth of significance to

each parent. Yet, there was some commonality among the parents that chose the same type of schooling option. Table IV displays the difference in meanings that parents in the various school settings reported.

This table presents data that looks at parents that chose each school option as a group, where as previous tables focused on each participant as individuals within a group. This table is not structured using Vroom's expectancy theory s a framework. Vroom's theory is based on the motivaton for individual behavior not social groups.

Table IV
Examples of Different Meanings for Identical Concepts

Concept	Schooling	Meaning (Outcome)
Academic Excellence	Magnet	Ready for college Slight edge
	Private	Prepared to excel Seize opportunities
	Home	Personal satisfaction Use knowledge wisely
Safe Environment	Magnet	Emotional comfort Avoid intimidation
	Private	Physical safety
	Home	Shelter Nuture

Parents unanimously want their children to receive the necessary attention to flourish. This was an area where each parent had a different view of what would be required or needed.

Control and freedom were issues of extreme importance to the home school parents, but rarely mentioned by the other parents.

Some parents seemed to enjoy having their children educated in a different manner than the average child. Being different was a small but detectable incentive to choose the public magnet school particularly.

Removing their children from problems was often mentioned but usually as a secondary reason. Sometimes it was to get away from a poor teacher, sometimes curriculum that was in conflict with the parents values, sometimes peers, and in one case to prevent failing.

In each and every interview, the parents made statements that indicated a desire to find an educational option that would suit their children. Parents made decisions based on what they perceived their children needed.

Conclusions

During the early stages of this study, it became apparent that most parents were tying their choice of schooling to their specific children. They would say things like: "My daughter needs. . ." or "What I want for my children." Sometimes parents would express the same attitude as an end product. For example, "We wanted . . . so that he could be all that he could be," or "I wanted my children to be their real inner selves." The message became clear that parents had individualized goals or visions for their children and that they were attempting to fulfill those goals or visions when they made the school choices. It was at this point that I noticed how similar the parents' goals and visions paralleled the goals or visions described by Vroom (1964) as the end product in his performance motivation model.

I decided to look for further parallels between the parents' reasons for school choice and the elements of Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory and specifically his motivation model. The other elements of Vroom's (1964) model are: the expectancy, which is a describable anticipation; first-level outcomes, which occur because of the situation; and second-level outcomes, which occur as a result

of the first-level outcomes. There was an immediate belief that the layered or multi-faceted reasons that parents in this study shared would definitely parallel Vroom's (1964) model. Three tables were developed, one for each of the school choices studied, to see if parent responses would be accurately described in expectancies, first-level outcomes, and second-level outcomes (see Tables I, II, and III). The three tables exemplify the manner in which the data from this research verify a model for the motivation for school selection would parallel Vroom's (1964) motivation for performance model. Both Vroom's (1964) model and my model for the motivation for school selection are based on Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory. Each parent in this study had a personalized perception of what their school of choice would be like. They believed that certain things would take place resulting in some predictable outcomes (first-level outcomes), which in turn would effect their children or themselves in a positive way (second-level outcomes). All of these occurrences would lead closer to the parents' goals or visions for their children.

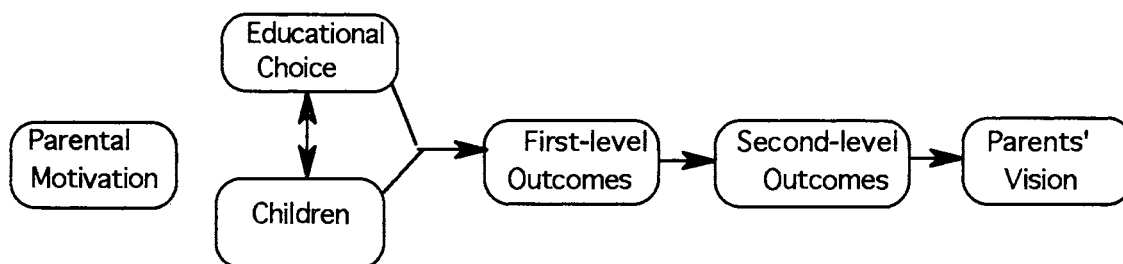


Figure 1 The motivation for school selection model of expectancy theory.

A variation of Vroom's expectancy model for motivation was developed to explain the parents' reasons for choosing either a public magnet school, a private school, or to home school. This model is the motivation for school selection model of the expectancy theory and was developed as a result of the specific data that was collected during this study.

Implications

The findings in this study provide several implications that people involved in educational leadership and programming could find helpful. A school board or superintendent that wished to provide schooling that parents would choose for their children should consider the following ideas that are based on the parents expectations and desired first-level and second-level outcomes.

The message is clear that educators will have to meet the

individual needs of each student as defined by their parents. Some ways that educators might achieve that goal are listed below.

- Empower parents in authentic decisions concerning all aspects of school.

- Provide maximum opportunities for choice. This could easily translate into more magnet schools with a great deal of diversity in themes.

- Establish and maintain high standards of academic performance. The image or public opinion of the school needs to include or reflect the high academic standards to provide the optimum benefit.

- Secure an environment that is safe and emotionally comfortable. Again safety needs to be part of the public perception.

- The most dramatically different idea is the accepting of part time students that partake of educational opportunities and experiences as desired. This would mean changing the attendance paradigms that currently prevail. For example, parents might choose to send their children one day a week, or everyday but just for biology and physical education. This idea of an educational smorgasbord would give parents the ultimate kind of choice, instead

of an all or nothing paradigm that public schools now maintain.

- Anticipate that some parents will choose to educate their children in ways that a public school could not or should not try to provide. For example the inclusion of specific religious training.

Suggestions

This research has increased the current knowledge base and provided insights into the reasons that parents have chosen to send their children to public magnet schools, or private schools, or chosen to home school. This should be of assistance to further research efforts which attempt to examine theories of the motivation for decisions concerning school selection.

Suggestions for further research emerged as this study progressed. A follow up study of the children whose parents were involved in this study to determine the impact of their alternative education on decisions that they will make for their children.

It would be beneficial to complete a study that would follow the children of the participating parents and make observations on whether or not the second-level outcomes actually occurred. In other words, to find out if parents perceive that they were accurate

in their original perceptions.

A study to determine how similar parents describe what they want in their job situation and what they want in their child's school situation, might shed additional insight into what motivates school decisions.

I believe there is a strong parallel between parents' consumer attitudes as they relate to school selection and consumerism in our free market system in the United States. A study to investigate current trends in consumerism and parents shopping for a school could result in the expansion of marketing theories in education.

I would be interested in a study to explore the impact of "political correctness" on interviewees. This would require some method of having the participants feel totally anonymous. Perhaps a combination of interview and unsigned surveys with significant time in between. Are there hidden agendas and personal biases that impact naturalistic.

Commentary

This study was limited to fifteen parents that had chosen one of three educational options for their children. This excludes

parents that chose several other educational options that would provide more depth to the research.

Another issue to consider is the human phenomenon in which people justify behavior or decisions with more extensive rationale than they actually used to make the original decision. Decisions which could have been made very flippantly or strictly for reasons of convenience can be justified later with rationale that would indicate a great deal of thoughtfulness.

Yet, I believe that these parents were sincere and most of them extremely reflective. It appears that parents base decisions concerning the education of their children on their perception of their children and the vision or goals that parents hold for their children. There are two themes that stand out as fundamental when parents choose a school for their children, academics and safety.

This study offered insight into the reasons parents choose a particular type of schooling for their children which could prove beneficial for anyone involved with education. Particularly someone that is responsible for procuring or maintaining student population, satisfying parents, developing attractive alternative programs, etc.

Theorist could use the data from this research to verify or

contradict their own research. Perhaps additional uses for the motivation for school selection model of expectancy theory will be discovered.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A
CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent Form*

My name is Deborah Laudermilk and I am a doctoral student at Oklahoma State University. I am currently interviewing parents that have made definite educational choices for their children. You were selected as a possible participant.

The purpose of this research is to provide in-depth and thorough coverage of the parental experiences, observations, and perceptions that influence their decision making as it relates to the education of their children.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project. Your participation is very much appreciated. Just before we start the interview, I would like to reassure you that as a participant in this project you have several very definite rights.

First, your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary.

You are free to refuse to answer any question at any time.

You are free to withdraw from the interview at any time.

This interview will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to members of the research team.

Excerpts of this interview may be made part of the final research report, but under no circumstances will your name or identifying characteristics be included in this report.

I would be grateful if you would sign this form to show that I have read you its contents.

(signed)

(printed)

(dated)

Should you desire more information, you may contact:

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*adapted from Grant McCracken's Standard Ethics Protocol
(1988)

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Note: The interviews were designed to be semi-structured and as conversational in nature as possible. In most instances the information sought was obtained when a natural conversation developed as a result of only one or two questions specifically being asked. If the information needed to provide data for exploring the research purpose was not provided by the respondent during the conversation, then additional specific questions were asked:

Interview Protocol

1. What do you want for your children from their school?
2. What is the best thing about your children's school/or your children's home schooling experience?
3. If you were to improve something about your children's school/or your children's home schooling experience, what would it be?
4. In what ways are you involved in (or with) your children's schooling?
5. What were some of the pros and cons that you had to consider as you made the educational choice for your children?
6. How do you get information about education in general and your children's school specifically?

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FORM

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 02-25-94

IRB#: ED-94-068

Proposal Title: PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL CHOICE: A
QUALITATIVE STUDY

Principal Investigator(s): Edward Harris, Deborah Lauder milk

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

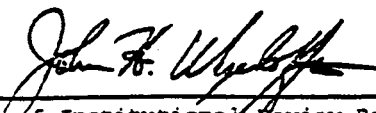
APPROVAL STATUS SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT
MEETING.

APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR
RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL. ANY MODIFICATIONS
TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for
Deferral or Disapproval are as follows:

Please substitute the name Beth McTernan for Terry Macuila on the
consent form.

Signature:


Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: February 28, 1994

VITA

Deborah Ray Laudermilk

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: EXPLORING REASONS PARENTS CHOOSE PUBLIC MAGNET SCHOOLS, PRIVATE SCHOOLS OR HOME SCHOOLING FOR THEIR CHILDREN: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

Major Field: Educational Administration

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Sterling, Kansas. The daughter of Wanda Fitelson and Bob Ray. Married to Terry A. Laudermilk, June 7, 1969, and have lived in Wichita, Kansas since that time. Two children; a son, Ryan Allen Laudermilk, and a daughter, Cara Ann Laudermilk.

Education: Graduated from Sterling High School, Sterling, Kansas, in May, 1967; received Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Education from Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas in December 1971; received Master of Education degree with a major in Educational Administration and Supervision from Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas, May 1977, received Specialist in Education in Educational Administration and Supervision, from Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas, 1986; completed requirement for the Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University in December, 1994.

Experience: Elementary instructor, 1972-1988, Principal, 1988 to present, Wichita Public Schools, Wichita, Kansas.

Professional Memberships: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, Phi Delta Kappa, Wichita Educational Administrators Association (Executive Board 1989 to present), Wichita Association of Elementary School Principals (President, 1993-1994).