Stakeholders' Perceptions on the Impact of Private Schools on the Educational Process in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

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Abstract

The interest in, desire for, and quantity of private schools in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (the KRI) has substantially increased in the last decade. However, despite their rise in number, there exists a scarcity of research investigating the situation of private schools in the KRI. Accordingly, this study aims to investigate stakeholders' perceptions of the impact of private schools on the educational process. Additionally, the social education theories: functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interaction, are embedded to obtain an in-depth analysis, leading to a comprehensible picture of the impact of private schools on the community.

Using a mixed-methods approach, data were obtained from three state and three private schools in Erbil, the capital of the KRI. Quantitative data were obtained via questionnaires from 150 grade twelve students and 42 teachers, and qualitative data were gathered via semi-structured interviews with six welfare managers and six school managers. Documentation and archive records were also collected from the selected schools and the Ministry of Education.

Management and organisation were found to be different between private and state schools, with private schools having more flexibility over control, curriculum, and admissions. Factors such as crowded classrooms, a lack of teachers and teaching aids, and traditional teaching methods have generated negative state school perceptions and a stronger preference for private schools. The selected stakeholders perceived that families chose private schools due to different household backgrounds and preferences. They also perceived that private schools cause dissociation from society and generate educational, social, and gender inequality. Additionally, private school students were believed to achieve higher exam results and more university admissions, and yet their families faced increased financial constraints.

This study makes its main contribution by serving as one of few and foremost research examining private schools in Kurdistan. Performing as an initiator for future researchers to expand upon.

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List of Abbreviations

ACT: American College Testing

BERA: British Educational Research Association

GCE: General Certificate of Education

GSCE: General Certificate of Secondary Education

IDP: Internally displaced persons

KRG: Kurdistan Regional Government

KRI: Kurdistan Region of Iraq

MoE: Ministry of Education

NGO: Non-governmental organisation

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PE: Physical education

SPSS: Statistical Package of the Social Sciences

UK: United Kingdom

UNESCO: United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

USA: United States of America

USD: United States Dollar

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In many countries, private schools have a substantial role in the education sector, which Ewert (2013, p. 1) affirmed in his publication, *The Decline in Private School Enrolment,* indicating that 'private schools represent an important part of the education sector'.

In addition, as I have approximately eighteen years of teaching experience in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (the KRI), I can acknowledge that, during the last decade, the interest, need, the existence of private education has notably increased. Moreover, as stated by Sindi (2013), although there are still few private schools in the KRI, the private education sector is continuously growing in its expanse and significance. Currently, private schools in the KRI provide services for all students regardless of age or level of education, mainly students attending elementary and secondary schools. Nevertheless, the engagement of high school students in private schools is also prevalent.

On a global scale, there is a variety of views on the current functioning and governance of private educational institutions. Authorities lack agreement on the goals of these institutions, and have differing perspectives on the necessity for private school provision. As a result, the overall level of support for private schools is fairly low (Day-Ashley *et al.*, 2015) owing to the impression that private school education has both benefits and drawbacks (Goyal and Pandey, 2009). As a consequence, the focus of this thesis is a comprehensive study on private schools.

1.1.1 Background

Notably, Shabiralyani *et al.* (2015) remark that the primary factor in determining one's future success in terms of personal growth includes acquiring an education. Pertinently, Hartmann (2008) refers to education as a shared societal benefit and emphasises that the state should be at the forefront to facilitate access to education in the nation and, hence, leverage its merits in socio-economic development. Presently, the competitive education sector plays a significant role in strengthening the foundation of an entire nation. Subsequently, the implementation of effective strategies facilitating development in the different nations has been initiated, with a particular focus on primary schools. By consensus, parents instil and underscore the importance of acquiring quality education to improve their children's chances of success in life through the exploration of

personal growth that advances society as a whole (Davies and Quirke, 2005). Furthermore, the value of education further correlates with its quality, noting that most people promote and prefer the optimal quality of education. Communities access education mainly through state and private schools, which have varied financing and administrative systems. State schools rely on the government for funding and human resources to facilitate education (Teddlie and Reynolds, 2000). On the other hand, private schools depend on private entities and school fee payments from parents to facilitate education provision in the institution (Awan and Zia, 2015).

1.1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide insight into the perspective of stakeholders on the status and situation of private schools in the Kurdish community. In addition, the study is an attempt to resolve the gaps in evidence on the success of private schools in Kurdistan in relation to their increased demand in the region.

Scholars have conducted multiple research studies on private schooling, including on the competition between state and private academic institutions, for instance Hoxby's study of 1994. Notably, there is a lack of conclusive research findings to confirm or refute the significance of private schooling, especially in the region of Kurdistan. While there is substantial prior research on private schooling in a broader context, minimal to no consideration has been dedicated to localised assessment studies on Kurdistan. Hence, this study is aimed at resolving the research gaps through a focused study on the Kurdistan region, addressing the research questions, examining the literature, and considering how the findings can be utilised in the context of the Kurdistan region. There is also an assessment of the factors influencing school choices and the substantial demand for private schooling, and an evaluation of the implementation strategies adopted for both state and private schools that lead to significant disproportionality in quality. Private schools are assessed in terms of how they are perceived regarding their subsequent impact on teaching and learning. The research's scope is limited to the Kurdistan region.

1.1.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to explain the increased demand for private schools in the KRI. Therefore, the research covers the following objectives:

1- Determine how private and state schools are managed and organised;
2- Explore perceptions of the quality of teaching and learning in private and state schools;

3- Determine why students' parents prefer to opt for private schools when there are free state schools available;

4- Establish the impacts of private schools on the educational process from the perspective of stakeholders.

1.1.4 Research Questions

The aim of the research questions is to meet certain objectives. This research focuses on four wide research questions. The reason for this is to understand the perceived impact of private schools on the education process; it is important to have an idea or tell the reader about the management and organisation of private and state schools, perceptions of the quality of education in state schools, reasons for choosing between them, and the impact of private schools. The four research questions allow the researcher to obtain a response to the research topic 'the perception of the impact of private school' in a step-by-step manner. Whereby all the four research questions are contributing to the 'impact on the educational process'. The research questions are interconnected and complement one another. For example, to receive an answer to the impact of private schools on education equality, it is important to have an understanding of the quality of education in the schools. Similarly, to understand the impact of private schools on social values and traditions, it is necessary to have an understanding of the school control, and the curriculums covered in the two school types. Therefore, the research questions are:

1- How are private and state schools managed and organised in the KRI?
2- How does the perceived quality of state education affect the demand for private schools?
3- How do families choose between private and state schools in the KRI?
4- What is the perception of the impact of private schools on the educational process in the KRI?

1.1.5 Terminology—The Main Concepts

In this section, definitions and brief explanation of several main concepts used throughout the study are given. In particular, definitions of *private school*, *state school, stakeholders* and *education process* as used in the context of this study are provided.

Private schools, according to Day-Ashley *et al*. (2015), conform to three fundamental themes: they strive to cover all their operational expenses using the student school fee payments; they are autonomous from state intervention; and, private investment ensures they are not affiliated with

the state budget. Private schooling is defined as a fee-paying one, capable of creating its own budget (Bradley and Green, 2020) and providing flexibility accompanied by independence in scheming programmes, curricula, and the apportioning of funds. In terms of their teaching staff, private schools are commonly known for being flexible in administration, where factors such as qualification and expertise play a central role in selection (Bryson and Green, 2020).

State schools, as outlined by Kharman (2005), depend on the government for budget allocation and administrative procedures, and hence facilitate free education provision for the community. State school is an educational institution funded by the state and monitored and regulated by state officials; it functions on the basis of free and open admission within its district (Mohammed *et al.*, 2021). Bradley and Green (2020) also defined state schooling as one funded and governed by the state. In the context of Kurdistan, the term 'state' and 'public' schools are used interchangeable with no difference in between. Additionally, regarding the teaching staff, state school teachers in the majority of cases are required to meet the government standards and qualifications (Vernez *et al.*, 2016).

Stakeholders, according to Freeman (1984, p.25) are "any individual or group who can affect or is affected by the actions, decisions, policies, practices, or goals of the organisation", that organisation being any community which they socialise at. Olaye, Potter and Lucas (2024), explain that the key stakeholders of education include families, community members, students, teachers and school leaders, while Schneider (2005) describes stakeholders as any individual that has a link to or plays a role in a school. The stakeholders in this study include school managers, welfare managers, teachers and students.

The education process involves the strategies and practices incorporated during teaching and learning within academic institutions and school-like contexts, in contrast to non-formal and informal techniques adopted during social interaction. Therefore, education means a transfer of societal values that facilitate the acquisition of knowledge to enhance skills and expertise. Educating successive generations of society through the transfer of principles and values ensures the development and civilisation of the people. The education process further involves an interaction between an expert (teachers) and students (Lynch and Moran, 2006), as well as a learning approach that engages an individual or generation in conveying knowledge, habits, and skills to another through research, training, and instruction (Lapovsky and Hubbell, 2003). The

process is further defined as one reciprocally related to the development of society through the evolvement of knowledge, skills, and human experiences (Murati, 2015). Therefore, the education process can be defined as a system which the socialises members of a society, transmits culture and principles between generations, enables social mobility, and promotes intergenerational change in society (Nalle, Sogen and Tamunu, 2018).

1.1.6 Structure and Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into six chapters with inter-related subsections. Chapter One has two sections, with Section 1.1 addressing the purpose of the research, research aims, research questions, significance and scope, and terminology of the main concepts. Section 1.2 introduces a brief history of Kurdistan, a history of its education and the education system in the KRI, its modifications and the lead up to the establishment of private schools.

Chapter Two contains the literature review, in two sections. Section 2.1 addresses the conceptual framework, educational process, and theoretical framework of social education theory. Section 2.2 presents private schools and state schools, the distinguishment between private and state schools, the quality of education in private and state schools, the reasons for choosing private or state school, and the impact of private schools. Chapter Two also provides a critical discussion of the literature related to the situation and experience of other countries. The reason for looking into the experience of, and literature on, other countries is that, even though there are many literature reviews on the practice of private school, little or no emphasis has been placed on this factor in the context of the Kurdistan region.

Ontology and epistemology, philosophical positions, research methodology, location and the sample of the study are outlined in Chapter Three. This is followed by the presentation of the data collection process and data analysis techniques, validity, and reliability, including the ethical considerations.

Chapter Four reports the quantitative and qualitative data obtained from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with students, teachers, welfare managers, and school managers.

Chapter Five presents the analysis of all the collected data and elucidates the detailed discussion of the thesis by combining the numerical and verbal responses with the literature review and background research.

Chapter Six ends the thesis with the conclusions, forming a comprehensive response to the research questions. The conclusion chapter also presents a description of the study's contributions, obstacles and challenges, limitations, and recommendations for future researchers.

1.2 Background to Kurdistan

1.2.1 An Overview of Kurdistan

The long historical struggle for a self-ruling Kurdistan has involved considerable political negotiations, uprisings, and military conflicts. In 1920, King Sheikh Mahmood sought recognition of the Kurdistan region as an independent state through the Treaty of Sèvres. However, the promise of independence never came to pass due to complications resulting from economic instabilities in France and Britain. Instead, territorial provisions for Kurdistan were included among the sub-divisions of other Middle Eastern countries, in particular modern Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria, and, in part, Armenia (Heevie Nazdar for Children, 2010).

Attempts to attain political autonomy for Kurdistan continued into the 21st century. Specifically, the Iraq-Kurdistan conflict continued up to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, when the United Nations and Iraq granted Kurdistan increased political rights in the northern regions of Iraq. The 2005 Iraq constitution stipulates an independent Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) unaffiliated with the central government. Figure 1.1 shows present day Kurdistan, the KRI, which borders Turkey, Syria, and Iran. Major cities in Kurdistan include its capital, Erbil (also known as Hawler), Sulaymaniyah, and Duhok. With a population of over five million, the region is predominantly populated by ethnic Kurds living among Arabs, Turkmen, Assyrians, and other minority communities (KRG, 2013). The KRI's economy involves agriculture, tourism of its archaeological sites, and the mineral, gas, and oil industries. As a federal unit of Iraq, the KRI has increased autonomy and self-rule because the KRI functions independently from central Iraqi governance.
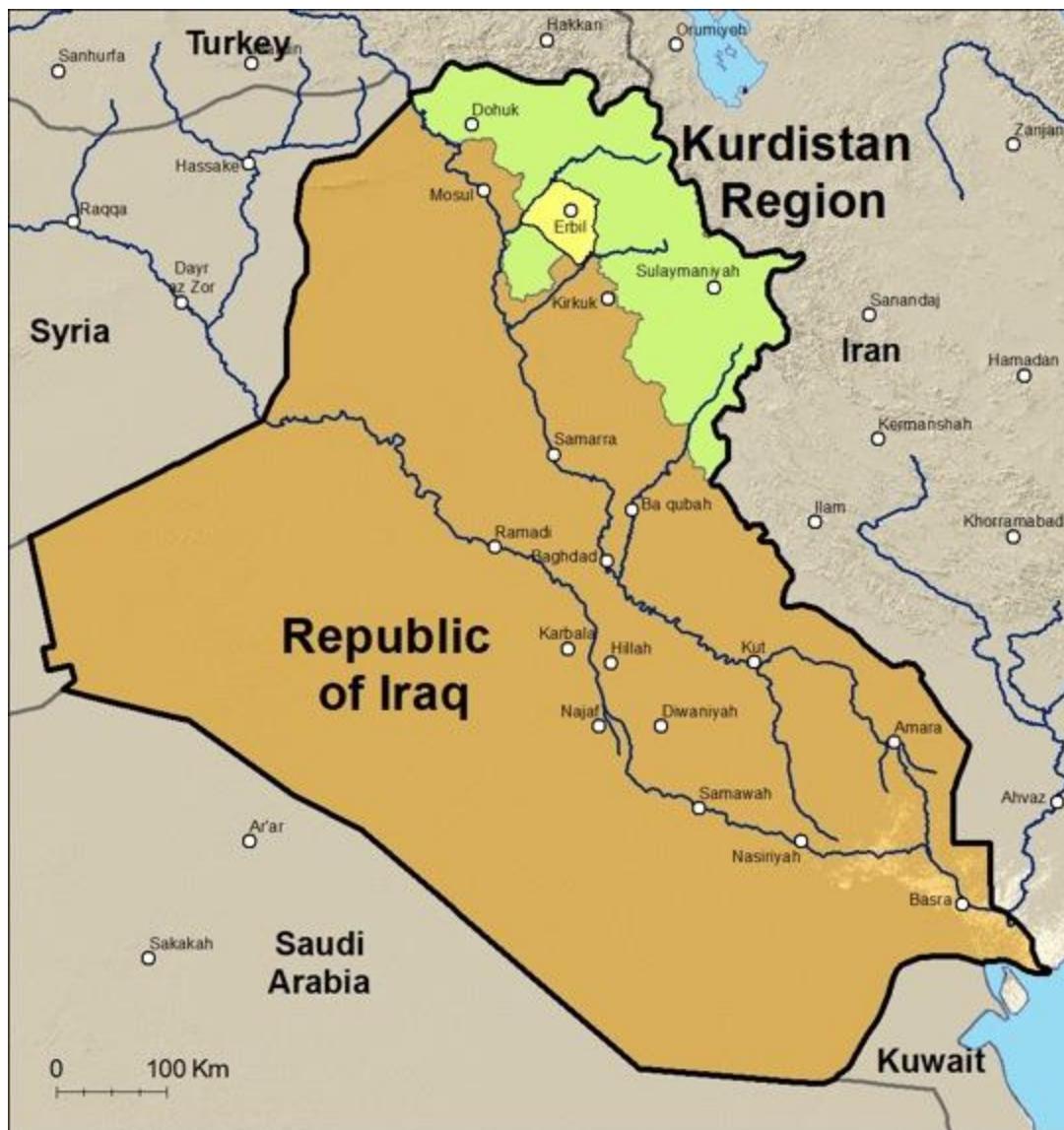
Figure 1.1 Kurdistan Region of Iraq Source: Kattan and Alrawi (2018)

Nevertheless, according to Esposti (2021), the KRG held a referendum on liberation from Iraq in September 2017, despite the fact that severe retribution was highly likely in the form of negative outcomes for the KRI. Although Kurdish voters almost unanimously (93%) showed their desire to secede from Iraq, the referendum was a catastrophe as widespread disapproval from the global community impeded the Kurdish president, M. Barzani, from announcing the region's liberation from Iraq (Esposti, 2021). In fact, the independence of the KRI was impossible considering its financial state. First, it had amassed substantial debts between $19–22 billion. O'Driscoll and Baser (2019) stated that the political elite is partially to blame for the severity of the financial

disaster as, during times of relative wealth and affluence in the region, they did not expand the economy or encourage the development of the private sector. Moreover, corruption has not been properly tackled, resulting in a major drain on the public coffers.

Thus, salaries in the KRI dropped substantially and for months many employees were not even paid. The KRG illegally reduced salaries by more than half, resulting in a significant pressure from the public as people's anger reached the point when there were widespread calls for uprisings against the government (Hama, 2020). The Iraqi constitution values the country's natural possessions as shared property, and incomes is reallocated by the federal government. Thus, when the constitution was accepted, the KRG appeared not to have an operative oil manufacturing segment, even though the area had enormous reserves of oil and gas. Hence, the region should be prosperous and wealthy, and able to exist without external help (Esposti, 2021). When the region started exporting its own oil and evolving its individual hydrocarbon export infrastructure, Baghdad ceased to pay 17% of the KRI's national budget, although it continued paying pensions and salaries to IDPs (internally displaced persons) (who had appeared after the war against the Islamic State, IS), which was a welcoming influx of cash into the faltering economy (O'Driscoll and Baser, 2019). Moreover, the war and growth in the number of IDPs led to an increase in the operations of international NGOs (non-governmental organisations), which led to an additional inflow of foreign currency, and still the region needed Baghdad's financial support, specifically because of the generally poor performance of the region's economy.

1.2.2 The History of Education in Iraqi Kurdistan

In ancient times, Iraq was known as Mesopotamia and is considered the cradle of human civilisation. It witnessed the flourishing of the first forms of social, political, economic, and educational organisations. One main representation of this development is the Library of Ashurbanipal, established in the 7th century BCE. It was the first systematically organised library, consisting of more than 30,000 clay tablets of texts, including religious pieces, traditional Mesopotamian stories, political documents, dictionaries, and scribal educational system textbooks (Mardon and Sami, 2021).

The origins of the Iraqi education systems date back to the Abbasid era, when education was grounded on Islamic philosophy and based on two major establishments: Al-kuttab and Al-madrassa. These represent the key subjects of Islamic theology, philosophy, history, and Quranic

interpretation (Fadhil, 2012). This education form prevailed until the middle of the 16th century, when Iraq came under Ottoman rule and military schools were established. Most other schools were training schools for handicrafts, and elementary education in the period before the 1880s was largely neglected (Fadhil, 2012). Nevertheless, in 1889, Medhat Pasha (the Ottoman governor of Baghdad) established four elementary schools which became the pillars of the modern state education system in Iraq (Mohammed-Marzouk, 2012). By the end of the 19th century, the following types of secular schools existed in the empire, including Iraq: primary school of three years' duration, post primary school (three years), and secondary school (five years) (Mardon and Sami, 2021).

The occupation of Iraq by the British in 1918 changed the structure of the education system. The primary level was split into two types of schools based on whether English was in the curriculum or not, with both lasting for six years. The secondary level lasted for four years, and higher education became available in three colleges (law, medicine, and commerce) (Fadhil, 2012). Modern state Iraqi schools appeared at the end of the 19th century together with the creation of the Iraqi Kingdom. At the time of its foundation, education provision was poor as the number of primary schools was scarce and the above-mentioned colleges did not have a collegiate standard (Fadhil, 2012). Although the expansion of primary education was prioritised, many untrained teachers were recruited and so in 1931 there was an attempt to reform the education system as a whole. Further progress was achieved in the period 1958–1968, after a UNESCO technical expert made recommendations on the establishment of a permanent programme, leading to the creation of the University of Baghdad, higher-level colleges, and an overall increase in student numbers (Fadhil, 2012).

Despite these changes to education, the system suffered a great deal as Iraq was consecutively thrown into conflict in the wars of Iran-Iraq (1980–1988) and the Gulf (1990–1991), and then the Civil War (1995–1996), and the Iraq War (2003). Three decades of conflict led to an economic crisis and made teachers flee the country; hence, education in the region entered a dark period (Mohammed-Marzouk, 2012). After the fall of Sadam Hussein's oppressive regime in 2003, Iraqi education began to evolve and specific attention was dedicated to a culture of peace. The previous distortions in the education system, in which both teachers and students were oppressed, had elevated the spirit of hatred, especially because of the biased curriculum, misrepresentation of the

image of intellectuals, and destruction of schools due to war (Bedan, 2022). Hence, the Iraqi state is now rebuilding its education system in an attempt to return to its previous level.

Formal education systems in the KRI were established in 1917 during the British occupation of Baghdad, Iraq. At the time, Kurdistan was under Iraqi governance; hence, under the British mandate, the existing Ottoman Turkish education system was remodelled to conform to elements of European, especially French, education curriculums. Hassanpour and Amir (1993) indicate that the reconstruction of the education system in Iraq enabled further diversification in languages away from the dominant Turkish to include Arabic, Kurdish, and Syriac.

A comparative review of data trends of schools in Iraq and Kurdistan indicates an overall increase in the number of schools over time in both regions. Each region has experienced a significant increase in every emerging year since 1923. However, between 1929 and 1930, while 20 new schools were established in Iraq, the summary states that there was a decrease of three schools in Kurdistan (Fadhil, 2012). Nonetheless, Fadhil (2012) notes that, in later years, specifically between 1932–1958, in the post-1958 revolution period, Kurdistan witnessed the localisation of its education systems, which improved the situation; however, the quality of education was not of the anticipated standard.

Notably, the states of Kurdistan and Iraq mandate free and compulsory primary education. The development and evaluation of their education policies fall under two ministries: 1) the Ministry of Education, which oversees early childhood, elementary, secondary, and skill-based vocational education; and, 2) the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, which handles higher education and research institutions (Fadhil, 2012).

Subsequently, the established education ministries led to improved education provision, marking a 'golden' era for Kurdistan and Iraq in which their education systems were reputable within professional contexts. In addition, a positive impact on enrolment rates and literacy levels, among other advancements within Kurdistan, was evident by 1984. A Kurdistan student census showed an increased occupancy rate beyond the elementary schools' student capacity. Fadhil (2012) reports that the illiteracy rates for Kurdish citizens aged 15–40 years fell below 10%. As a result, the lowest dropout recurrence rates were recorded in the Middle East and North African regions (Fadhil, 2012). The Iraqi government's spending on education accounted for 20% of its overall budget, having an average expenditure target of $620 per student; this was 6% of the gross national

product (GNP). Nonetheless, the ever-emerging political and military conflicts in the region, such as the Iraq-Iran war in the 1980s, impeded consistent quality improvement in the education sector in Iraq and Kurdistan because military spending took precedence over other financial concerns in the country (Invest in Group, 2014).

By 1996, according to UNESCO, schools in Kurdistan were far from satisfactory, as most of them were damaged and required renovation and repair (Hassan, Toma and Qader, 2019). Thus, by 1996 Kurdistan had a total of 2,330 schools, 29,000 teachers, and 161,000 pupils. The majority of schools operated on a double-shift basis, six days a week, and four hours a day (ibid). After this, the system of education was reformed, which enabled the number of schools to be increased and the curriculum updated.

Currently, Iraq has 15,000 primary schools with only 11,000 available, requiring schools to double the number of students. Nevertheless, more than three million Iraqi children have no access to schools. Primary schools represent a 72% share of the total number of schools requiring repair and innovation (Khan, Mansour-lle and Nicolai, 2020). In terms of Kurdistan, there are 6,700 schools in the region (state), of which 445 are private, and, still, the region needs 3,000 extra schools to accommodate all its students (MoE database, 2018). In the recent past, the trajectory of the education sector in the KRI has significantly progressed to accommodate the increasing population, mainly consisting of the young. Specifically, the state's expenditure has been increased to accommodate the population increase; for instance, the KRG recorded 16% of its overall budget as the highest budget allocation for education in 2013 in the region (Hassanpour, Shutnabb-Kangas and Chyet, 1996). According to Khan, Mansour-lle and Nicolai (2020), the Ministry of Education is the predominant government organisation responsible for an estimated 24% of the local labour force. New education policies have also extended free education provision from primary through secondary to university levels, and education is mandated from the age of six until grade nine. The primary objective of the existing education system involves effective teaching and learning.

Furthermore, since it became the inaugural cabinet department in the KRG in 1992, the Ministry of Education has envisioned an education system that incorporated innovative teaching and learning techniques. For instance, the ministry proposed an integration of international languages alongside the dominant Kurdish language in the education system, to broaden curriculum coverage to a global quality, while preserving the localised element of the system (Jukil, 2009).

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1.2.3 The Education System in the KRI

The basic structure of the education system in Kurdistan is similar to that of the rest of Iraq, except for the fact that compulsory education lasts until grade nine, which constitutes basic education, while in the rest of the country this is grade six (Mohammed *et al*., 2021). This innovation has been introduced since 2009 as the region has been working to bring basic and secondary education to the international standards through the introduction of a new more rigorous K-12 curriculum and compulsory education through grade nine (World Bank, 2015). The range and content of the subjects studied in elementary and secondary education is also slightly discrepant as Kurdish language is an additional subject, and the language of school is mainly Kurdish. The education system was also restructured moving from the previous three levels of school to two, basic and secondary (encompassing grades 10–12). Basic education is fee-free and equipped for all six-year-olds, even in remote regions. In terms of high school level, students can select one of two classes, either vocational or preparatory, with most students selecting the latter[1] (Mohammed *et al*., 2021). Besides systematic education, unsystematic schooling is also provided to unroot illiteracy (Ali *et al*., 2021). Those who are in the age range 15–45 can attend unsystematic education, which provides them with a two-year curriculum in one year for them to reach their level quickly. Admission to university is possible after passing the Kurdistan regional exams, which is the final grade 12 Kurdistan national examination or equivalent. As this exam is acknowledged internationally, Kurdistan students can apply to study at international universities (Vernez *et al*., 2016). Regional exams are generally held in grades nine and 12, and this requires all teachers to hold at least a bachelor's degree to be capable of preparing future students for entrance to selected universities[2] (Mohammed *et al*., 2021). The Kurdish education system relies on the region's ministries, including the Ministries of Education and Higher Education and Scientific Research. Regional officials are responsible for all serious policy- and decision-making, such as legislation, strategy, and monetary administration solutions, and even some minor issues, such as the budget

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[1] Data collected from school managers confirmed that the Kurdish education system includes free state education provision for all students, who start school at six-years-old and proceed to grade 12 in high school (data collection responses).

[2] According to the school managers, the entrance of students into desired universities is dependent on the results from end of year exams in grade 12. In Kurdistan, the majority of university courses run for a total of four to five years, expect for the six-year duration of medical courses (data collection responses).

for the construction of a new private school or employment of a young teacher. This obviously delays decisions and leads to a lack of transparency.

Kurdistan has two major types of schools, including state (public) and private schools. The latter can be divided into local and international. The emergence of private schools started to surface around 2007 when private investors ventured into academic institutions independent from state interference. Vernez *et al*. (2016) observed the capital city of Kurdistan, Erbil, as the first region where private schools were established. Furthermore, the ministry has encouraged private schooling, leveraging its significant role in advancing the education quality within Kurdistan. In contrast to state schools, private schools have managed to implement innovative education processes, which significantly influences the public perception of private school education quality (Ali *et al*., 2021). Jukil (2009) highlights that private schools include more international languages in the education curriculum, including Turkish, French, and English.

According to Vernez *et al*. (2016), Kurdistan had approximately a 2.5% increment in the establishment of private schools between 2010–2013. The increase in the number of private schools in the Kurdistan region aligned with the increased demand for their quality education provision (Vernez *et al*., 2016). Jukil (2012) reported increased public interest in education and its associated quality among Kurdistan. Among other significant factors, Wenglinsky (2007) explored varying considerations, such as the type of school, which impact the evaluation of the quality of education provision and student outcomes. Vernez *et al*. (2016) discussed the 2013 Law on Private Schools and Institutions in the KRI regarding the education policies that regulate private schooling in the region, facilitating the growth of private schools. In particular, private schools have had to comply with stipulated regulations, such as licensing, to operate legally in Kurdistan's education system (Mohammed *et al*., 2021). According to Vernez *et al*. (2016), private schooling is also subject to inspection by the Ministry of Education for the assessment of organisational administration, education processes, teacher and staff competencies, exam administration, and finance systems, to ensure they operate effectively. Despite state and private schools sharing the fundamental principles of education, the distinct characteristic between them is that state schools offer free education while private school students incur fees to access education. Education quality assurance in Kurdistan requires both state and private school students to pass the state exam to acquire legal academic qualifications. Nonetheless, private schools exercise increased autonomy

in developing their internal education curriculum, with the objective of preparing their students to sit for the state exam and graduate (Ali *et al*., 2021).

There are several reasons why Kurdistan has witnessed an increase in the number of private schools. Until 2004–2005, education in the region was a public good which was equally and freely provided by the government for anyone (Ahmad and Shah, 2016). In recent years, however, the region has seen an unprecedented increase in the demand for higher education, which has stimulated the development of basic education due to the demand for skilled labour (Standfield and Shareef, 2017). As mentioned previously, the region has suffered from war and economic instability and, thus, it was difficult to finance state education at an appropriate level; in turn, the region saw a growth in private schools. The reasons for the increase in the number of private schools in Kurdistan are:

- The number of companies has increased;
- The government wants this increase because it can benefit from moving the responsibility of education elsewhere;
- A shift from socialism to capitalism.

The increase in foreign companies has had a positive effect on all spheres,[3] including education. In 2006, the Kurdistan Parliament approved an investment regulation, which was intended to form appropriate circumstances for endorsing investment in the region (Ahmad and Shah, 2016). In accordance with this investment law, private schools and universities are equipped with a number of different incentives, encompassing the allocation of free land and tax exemption for ten years. This created a perfect environment for foreign investment and the entrance of private companies to the market, benefitting not only the companies themselves, but also regional development. The rising number of companies due to the tax-free period stimulated an increase in the number of private schools.

In addition, the region did not have relevant governmental regulations connected to education (including monitoring, control, programmes and syllabi, etc.), which stimulated businesspeople (both local and international) to establish private educational institutions, as there was no

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[3] The P1 welfare manager mentioned that 'the number of private schools has increased; this is due to the number of private companies increasing in the country' (data collection responses).

requirement either to have a specific degree or be connected to education (Ahmad and Shah, 2016). Hence, private schools were created as a method of generating more costs and filling the existing gap (the number of existing state schools was too low for a growing population of children in need of education). A lack of regulation and required knowledge resulted in inappropriate control and monitoring due to inexperience and an unprofessional approach. This is why some school managers became dissatisfied with the level of education in private schools, which will be demonstrated further.

As mentioned previously, the region could not finance all schools appropriately, and so the growth of the private sector assumed some of the state's burden, which means that the government could benefit from the increase in private schools (Fazil and Baser, 2021). The KRG is very interested in foreign direct investment, including in education, which is possible through the formation of private schools and universities. Direct investment from foreign countries is connected to economic growth, as this is a tool for enhancing the flow of information, technology, skills, and access to international markets (Yaba, 2018). The positive impact of foreign investment in the Kurdistan region is obvious, since a comparison of the state of the region prior to 2004 and now demonstrates that the main cities are flourishing with vibrant activities, a wide selection of educational institutions, and a range of opportunities.

Hence, the government is interested in foreign investment as it can bridge the existing gap between the number of students in need of education and the number of existing schools. The increase in the number of students observed since 2011 (between 2011 and 2019, the number of students rose by 8%) required the building of more state schools. However, due to Kurdistan's financial crisis, the government was not capable of providing the required numbers of schools, as it meant building 400 new schools annually to resolve the shortage which began in 2004 (Fazil and Baser, 2021). Existing state schools, regardless of the implementation of double shifts, could not take more students, and teachers were suffering from ever-increasing levels of stress due to the requirement of working on a double load basis. Thus, private school became a necessary solution, despite their expense (Fazil and Baser, 2021). The increase in the number of private schools should have lowered the level of stress among educational workers, as more private schools could mean that some children would transfer there, and state schools would not be overloaded. However, this did not happen, specifically because of a mismatch between the price and quality of education in private schools.

The previously mentioned lack of proper regulation of private schools resulted in educational workers not being satisfied (Standfield and Shareef, 2017), and indeed the interviews with school managers revealed complaints about high private school fees and a lack of response from the government.[4] In fact, many parents find it extremely difficult to pay such fees, which explains why the enrolment in private schools has decreased for two years in a row (2014–2015) (Standfield and Shareef, 2017). Moreover, educational workers are dissatisfied because these fees are not properly utilised. Instead of elevating the quality of education, the fees are merely viewed as financial gains benefitting private school owners.[5] Thus, while the government's interest is apparent, private schools are a burden for families in times of crisis and are not always associated with better level of education.

Privatisation, including the privatisation of the educational sphere, is often viewed as a necessary condition for the successful transition to capitalism. The shift to capitalism is associated with improved growth in most sectors, including education. Thus, the region is shifting from socialism to capitalism. The KRG wants to fit into the current globalised capitalist system (Standfield and Shareef, 2017). As the region desires to have a viable economy, it understands the necessity of transiting from socialism as it does not have a positive influence on the economy of the region. The region's governors desire that it be developed based on a capitalist mode of production, industrialism, and nation-statism (Sunca, 2020). Socialism did not allow the region to develop appropriately, as the government does not have the necessary funding to secure all of its segments, including education. The number of children in need of education is growing, but the state cannot provide enough schools to bridge the existing gap, which justifies the need to change the economic system.

The KRI has encountered many issues, including economic crisis, corruption, and a fragmented government. They all negatively impacted education, depriving it of necessary funding and development. Private schools and universities thus appeared as a solution.

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[4] The S1 welfare manager explained that 'the ministry keeps quiet about this because they benefit from it by moving the responsibility of education onto another unit' (data collection responses).

[5] The S2 welfare manager stated: 'The government is encouraging this movement towards private schools [which] are only constructed for the purpose of business and benefit, causing a decline in the education level and degrees. Education and degrees in this case are viewed as a financial property and not a gain of knowledge' (data collection response).

1.3 Chapter Summary

The educational process is a societal concept, as it not only teaches how to live in a society, but also depends on numerous societal processes and structures, including family, economy, and politics. All these structures played a crucial role in the development of education in Iraq and the KRI. Iraq's history of education dates back to Mesopotamia, while Kurdistan started developing its education system in 1917. Even though education in the region attained its golden age before the 1980s, continuous incessant wars ruined it, leaving the region with limited resources for financing state structures. In the post-war period, the reconstruction of the education sector has started and this includes an increase in private schools based on a fee-paying system. The government is interested in encouraging foreign direct investment and privatisation as this allows existing financial gaps to be bridged through private companies. Nevertheless, a lack of appropriate state control and pure state interest in the growth of private schools, explained by the lowering of the financial burden, has led to uncontrolled growth in fees and a mismatch between prices and quality. This explains some of the level of dissatisfaction demonstrated by educational workers and reveals the need for further analysis of private schools to see how they have impacted education in the region, alongside which areas need improvement. The next chapter is aimed at analysing the existing literature to understand the context of the research better.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review will consider the impact private schools have on the educational process in the KRI. In order to gain a better grasp of the influence of private schools, the functions and positions of state and private schools need to be considered and, therefore, it is important to become familiar with the discrepancy between state and private schools, their education quality, and the reasons for choosing between private and state schools

When examining the impact of private schools on the educational process, it is important to acknowledge that the term 'impact' in this study is a multifaceted concept. Examining it requires more than a single indicator or a measure; rather, multiple indicators are used within this research to gather responses on the various dimensions of the educational process. The educational process itself is composed of multiple elements and their contributions, including the economy, religion, family, health, etc. Each of these elements contributes to the overall 'impact' private schools may have on the educational process. Through the application of multiple indicators assessing the different elements of the education process, the researcher has the potential to develop a more comprehensive awareness of how private schools affect these diverse elements. This approach takes into account the complexity that lays with the educational process and minimizes the oversimplification that may be generated from relying solely on one measure. By having multiple indicators in the research, the researcher can create a more nuanced assessment and acknowledgement of the impact of private schools on the educational process which reflects the multi-dynamical real-world.

This chapter begins with private schools. Evaluating the contemporary literature on private schools will assist in comprehending and recognising the primary factors which may play a role in the increase in private schools and develop a more nuanced appreciation of how private schools are influencing Kurdistan's educational process. The purpose of the literature review is to carry out a comprehensive and detailed investigation of the existing sources, literature and knowledge in the area of private schools and their impact on both the educational process and the community in general. There is a scarcity of research concerning private schools in the KRI, and this will be illustrated by the investigation and evaluation of data on the theme from a global perspective.

Furthermore, this process will help with exploring explanations for the research questions and the application of the existing knowledge to the context of the KRI.

The analysis of the literature review was mainly carried out through various literature resource providers, such as the Robinson Library of Newcastle University, where research, newspapers, journals, e-journals and main catalogues are held. Additionally, the Library of Salahaddin University in Kurdistan was utilised, alongside Ethos of the ACM digital library, ProQuest, Copac and Cambridge Journals. It is evident that the assurance of an effective study can be credited to correct, reliable and up-to-date sources (Fink, 2014). The keywords of the literature searches were Kurdistan, educational process, private schools, state schools, education quality and social education theory (functionalist theory, conflict theory and symbolic interaction theory).

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first contains the part of the literature review which introduces the educational process as the conceptual framework, as well as the social theories of education. In so doing, a research framework is developed for the private schools of Kurdistan. The rationale for the selection of the social education theories used in this research is also presented. The second section of the literature review focuses on discrepancies, evaluation, and discussion within the literature by studying the peculiarities of private and state schools.

2.2 The Conceptual Framework and Social Theories of Education

The following subsection lays out the educational process and the social education theories selected for the study. The educational process is the conceptual framework of the study. In analysing the influence of private schools on Kurdish society, attention should be paid to the whole educational process with reference to state schools. Furthermore, the theoretical framework of this study is built on three social education theories: functionalist, conflict and symbolic interaction. The selection of these theories was based on multiple rationales. First, they are the most popular (Hammond, Cheney and Pearsey, 2015) since they can be applied to all aspects of human life. This research thus applied these theories to find out the impact of private schools on the educational process. Second, these are social theories which explain the processes and relationships in society, and they are appropriate for a discussion of the impact of private schools on education and the community. The analysis of the impact of private schools in Kurdistan depends on how state and private schools cooperate in society, which is the focus of the social theories.

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Third, the choice of theories was personal, because the researcher graduated from a sociology department and works in a sociology department as an assistant lecturer. The study of sociology encompasses many fields, such as social economics, family, politics, psychology, rural sociology, and education, among others. The researcher's speciality is in the sociology of education. Therefore, the conditions were favourable for the researcher to apply social education theories to her personal range of interests. Fourth, since each of these theories is usually discussed separately, there is a lack of research encompassing all three theories in the same situation. The focus on private schools in Kurdistan is a good opportunity to unite these three theories in the same context and to look at how they work interdependently from the perspective of education. The three theories will help articulate a comprehensible explanation for the relationship between the private and state schools as part of the education process, which are the key variables in the study.

2.2.1 Conceptual Framework: Educational Process

The education process is a learning approach that entails knowledge transfer, as well as the transfer of skills and habits from one individual or generation to the other using research, teaching, and training. The education process 'focuses on teaching and learning methods in school or school-like environments, unlike numerous forms of non-formal and informal socialization' (Lapovsky and Hubbell, 2003, p. 24). Hence, a review of the educational process assists in the definition and distinction of the processes followed in private and state schools in Kurdistan in tandem with the education process, which focuses on the approaches of teaching and learning. The relationship between education and culture is close and inverse and, thus, the analysis of the education system has to have a cultural anchor, which has its connection to society (Obanya, 2005). Together with societal progression and complexity, the knowledge transferred to subsequent generations needs prioritising within a formal setting by an expert, such as between a teacher and student (Lynch and Moran, 2006).

According to Keegan (2013), learning is one of the most critical activities that individuals engage in. Furthermore, learning has a crucial role in the education process. As per Keegan (2013), learning is recognised as a process that aims to integrate environmental and personal experiences utilised to acquire, modify, or enhance an individual's worldviews, values, knowledge, behaviour, skills, and attitudes. Indeed, teaching is the skilful act of introducing a new subject to enable an individual to acquire new knowledge that they may not be aware of initially. It does not usually

refer to the transfer of facts, knowledge, and information, but rather points towards a broader view of education and instruction (Wong, 1994). Teaching and learning are both commensurate of one another (Wong, 1994), The relationship between learning and teaching is symbiotic, meaning they depend on one other (ibid), since excellent teaching is crucial for valuable learning. Nonetheless, teaching and learning must be interactive as they are interdependent, and one cannot occur without the other. Teaching needs effort, capability, and support, whereas learning requires a mix of these variables. In addition, a clearer comprehension of learning provides an opportunity for effective teaching. Darling-Hammond (1997a) stated that proficient learners are involved and inspired to learn more specifically because they are aware of the entire process and approaches of learning.

Psychologists and philosophers have for a long time sought to comprehend the process of learning, its outlook, and the ways in which an individual's development can be determined by learning. Various theorists hold divergent viewpoints on educational systems. For any education system, teacher competence is a critical variable influencing the success of the entire system (Rosenblum, 2008). Furthermore, the effectiveness of the teacher has been found to be a crucial factor in predicting students' classroom performance (Zhan *et al*., 2013). Consequently, there is a correlation between effective teaching and excellent performance by students in the classroom (Robinson, 2007). The efficiency of teachers has a notable impact on the learning of students (Akiri and and Ugborugbo, 2009). According to McBer's argument (2001), excellent teachers need to be gifted in their craft of teaching. They should also possess a genuine passion for their profession by being excited about teaching since only a high level of commitment to the job enables individuals to contribute to what they undertake and come up with more innovative and valuable approaches for educating students. More so, the educational process brings together a student who desires knowledge and a teacher who imparts this knowledge to a student (Mahmud and Amin, 2006) in the school the individual attends to acquire knowledge. Therefore, when analysing the educational process from the perspective of society, it is important to link it to different aspects of social life, not only to the process of gaining knowledge. The education process includes the contribution of all the structures in a society, such as family, economy, religion, politics and health, all working together and affecting each other as a social body. Therefore, the education process is a system, which involves a number of factors and participants performing roles (Demaine, 1981). Understanding the role of schools in the education process will help consider the way how schools affect society, and vice versa. The educational process is connected to the community and,

therefore, the analysis of this process is better deciphered when held from the position of the social educational theories.

2.2.2 Theoretical Framework: Social Education Theory

Society is comprised of education, religious, economic, political, family, and legal structures that are directly connected and impacted by one another. For instance, any issues within the economic or political structure have a direct impact on the functioning of other components of the structure representative of the society's functioning. The educational structure is an essential component of society. According to Demaine (1981, p. 14), the 'sociology of education is concerned with the family, the education system, the economy and the polity, and with relations between them. It is concerned with social institutions and with the socialization process with which they are involved'.

Due to the limited emphasis on formal education in the works of Marx and Engels, Marxists have depended on 'translating' what they consider to be Marx's approach into the realm of education. This essentially means starting with the comprehension of the social universe based on value, specifically, production and exchange, exploitation, and control. Althusser (2006) has been acknowledged for starting the spread of Marxist theory that arose throughout the 1970s. Althusser comprehended the fact that education is the primary ideological institution in capitalist societies, the standout variable of economic and cultural reproduction. Althusser did not propose that the structure and content of schooling were directed and enforced on the community in a straightforward manner, as consent and recruitment are critical to the educational project. However, schooling is inherently characterised by domination and suppression; it is, ultimately, the sole social opportunity that is mandatory (Murphy and Allan, 2013).

The main concern for individuals who followed Althusser was social reproduction. Marxist educational theory, as a type of critical social theory, was established based on assumptions that align with those presented by Raymond Morrow and Carlos Torres in their work *Social Theory and Education* (1995). Firstly, society is comprehended as an intricate totality wherein specialised educational institutions play a significant role, irrespective of whether their ownership is public or private. Secondly, educational institutions have a crucial role in both maintaining societal stability and availing opportunities for its transformation (Warmington, 2015). The relationship between educational institutions and overall society has been the subject of sociological investigation, with researchers increasingly interested in understanding the social and cultural factors that contribute

to the efficacy of the schooling system. Moreover, the position of a teacher has been socially defined as one that exhibits responsibility, interest, and enthusiasm to foster the development and growth of students (Hansen, 1998). According to Althusser, the role of teachers is to transmit the ideas mandated by the state (Resch, 1992). Hence, within the context of the social theory approach, the designated duty of a teacher is to assist in critically assessing the influence of private schools on the educational process and the quality of teaching and learning in both private and state schools in the KRI. O'Connor (2008) stated this to realise the objective that teachers could strive to optimise student learning and development, and they could anticipate the private versus state education systems to offer a conducive work environment for them to teach students.

Social education theory is applicable to the analysis of private education. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of research in the realm of social theory that elucidates the concept of private school education as a whole. This explains why this study holds significant value for social education theory, as it seeks to justify the increasing demand for private schools in the KRI and the influence they may have on the educational process. Hence, the research framework of the study is grounded in three theories of social education, namely symbolic interaction, functionalism, and conflict. The selection of these theories is warranted due to their ability to elucidate the connections between the fundamental factors of the current study, specifically the society and the educational process in both state and private schools. Sociological theories of education have emerged to explicate the influence of private schools on society, as these theories can help with comprehending the impact of private provision of education. It could also aid in examining the influence of private schools on students and teachers, exploring the socio-economic viewpoints associated with studying the effects of private education on the discrepancies in Kurdish society, and identifying social and cultural roles in the efficacy of the schooling system, and vice-versa. The focus of this section now turns to the functionalist theory as part of the theoretical framework of the thesis.

(i)   Functionalist theory

Functionalism posits concepts which apply to the analysis in this research study. Emile Durkheim, who 'is considered to be one of the founding fathers of sociology and of the sociology of education' (Demaine, 1981, p. 16), was responsible for the development of the functionalist theory (ibid). According to the functionalist theory, society involves a system of interrelated components that collectively facilitate balance and stability (Sever, 2012). Durkheim asserts that schools' role in

society involves transferring basic skills and knowledge from generation to generation (Zgourides, 2000). The theory was further developed by numerous scholars including the American sociologist Talcott Parsons. Talcott Parsons, who elaborated on Durkheim's views, believed that education serves several tasks for society, as an element of the social body. First and foremost, education provides the means to transfer and preserve a society's culture (Parsons, 2005; Ballantine and Spade, 2008). The second presupposition of functionalist theory is that schools are settings for secondary socialisation, given that they function as a miniature version of society (Parsons, 2005). Third, schools connect the values ingrained by families with those prevalent in industrial societal contexts (Parsons, 2005).

Talcott Parsons further advanced the functionalist approach in the 1950s and 1960s and expanded its understanding as structuralism. By the end of the 1960s, Parsons' Structural Functionalism in society emerged as the dominant sociological perspective (Demaine, 1981). This approach underwent a new stage after the devastations of the Second World War and, with the emergence of technology, there was concern that having a technological advantage could lead to military supremacy (Karabel and Halsey, 1977). The idea of structural functionalism is that education has the capacity to educate talent emanating from the traditional channel of education (Karabel and Halsey, 1977).

Parsons views schools as fundamental institutions that cultivate pupils' acquisition of essential abilities to prepare them for future roles in the broader society. Giroux (1983) also regards schools as a foundational establishment that offers learning environments accessible to everyone, in which students acquire the needed knowledge and capacity to navigate the social hierarchy effectively. Attaining equal opportunity is challenging because students have varying levels and foci on education, family backgrounds, and individual motivations. Education is designed to eliminate wide discrepancies based on the assumption that excellent performance in schools is rewarded in a fair manner. According to Blackledge and Hunt (1985), every society possesses a shared culture and, as a result, schools have the ability to provide opportunities to all individuals in the society on a nearly equitable basis. Schools are interconnected to economic shifts, necessitating the modification of their curricula in both developed and developing nations. Schools are also continuously involved in research.

Ladwig (2013) highlights that the functionalist theory of education is disapproved of for overlooking the conflict ideology in society. The primary issue lies in the functionalists' failure to elucidate the means by which the collective demands of society might be fulfilled, given the divergence in social and economic viewpoints (King, 1983b). Hence, King's perspective (1983b) prompts an inquiry into whether private or state schools can adequately cater to the requirements of Kurdistan's society and whether they can substantiate the increasing demand for private schools in Kurdistan. In the context of functionalism, Coleman (1968) characterised schools as neutral environments based on the functionalism framework. The functionalist idea advocates for education as a system designed to promote stability within the community.

Indeed, this advocation is how state and private systems are similar. Both state and private schools have the objective of cultivating the abilities, knowledge, and moral qualities of students in order to equip them for their future endeavours. Both educational systems are similar in how they structure their assessment, teaching, and examination approaches (Srivastava, 2008). Despite the presence of these parallels, there are still distinctions in the operational methods of both types of schools. The subjects taught in state schools are shaped by government and community requirements (Primrose and Alexander, 2013). Regarding private schools, the current research adopts the definition provided by Tooley and Longfield (2015). They define private schools as institutions that charge fees to students, have limited or no government control, and are owned by entities separate from the state. In the majority of cases, private schools have the autonomy to select the subjects they wish to provide to their students, and so they have a certain degree of freedom. Thus, in most instances, private schools provide a diverse range of subjects, which helps alleviate the burden on the core ones, but this does not necessarily mean they impact the quality. For instance, in India, there has been a reduction of up to 40% in the amount of time dedicated to Hindi and English, although pupils still perform at a similar level to their counterparts in state schools (Singh, 2013).

Thus, the primary concept of the functionalist theory is to make sure that society equips individuals with the necessary skills for undertaking the required job (Ferrante, 2011). Consequently, schools facilitate the allocation of tasks, as every individual is afforded an equitable opportunity to acquire an education, and their societal roles are contingent upon their hard work. Ultimately, functionalists argue that modern society can be described as meritocratic, as individuals are rewarded based on their effort and talent (Hurn, 1994); nevertheless, this is often not the reality,

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as wealthy individuals in contemporary society tend to receive more rewards than those who are poor.

A meritocratic society enables individuals to advance based on their talent and competence rather than their material wealth. Private schools strive to advance quality education by focusing on individual student knowledge, whereas state schools advance quality education based on a standardised curriculum provided by the MoE (OECD, 2012). This may explain why functionalism is associated with the role that private schools serve. Nevertheless, opponents of this theory argue that functional theory cannot be applied to private education due to the fact that the distinction between private and state education cannot be part of a meritocratic society (Cookson and Sadovnik, 2014). Whereby most private schools are known to demand fees and this makes private education available to only individuals within a particular socioeconomic bracket, thus opposing this principle. The current research is specifically centred on the Kurdistan region, which explains why, when reference is made to private schools in the discussion, the study's focus narrows down on institutions that need payment of fees. Hassan (2017) states that private education in Kurdistan is costly. Consequently, due to the high cost of private schools, their advantages are limited to affluent individuals, thereby opposing this theory.

Regarding state institutions, they are usually available for everyone without requiring any fees, and offer equal opportunities for everyone to advance regardless of their talents and abilities (Soderberg and Phillips, 2015). Additionally, it is crucial to acknowledge that the learning environment has a significant role in facilitating the development of students in their talents and abilities. As per the functional theory, the learning environment provides ample room for adequate education. Nevertheless, student talents are cultivated and recognised during the initial phase of education through the assessment of their knowledge and abilities.

When applying the functionalist theory to the Kurdish society, it is crucial to recognise that private schools as a component of the education process facilitate stability and solidarity in the society by providing individuals with a choice and addressing their educational demands. The subjects provided to them are in alignment with the economic context of students and their families. However, those against the functionalist theory argue that private schools contribute to inequality in the community by providing education to a limited number of individuals because of the fees

that is needed (Heyneman and Stern, 2015). Having considered functionalism, the focus now turns to the conflict theory.

(ii)   Conflict theory

Karl Marx (1818-1883) posited that, due to perpetual competition and limited resources, human society experiences intermittent and ongoing conflict (Omer and Jabeen, 2016). He further suggested that human society at all social levels is not accomplished via harmony and compliance, but rather through the exertion of force and domination. In conflict theory, conflict arises throughout society as a result of divergent interests between various groups. The theory provides crucial solutions to difficulties in fields with competing interests. For example, in a context in which numerous contending interests are involved, conflict theory provides vital answers to matters such as politics (Sellar and Cole, 2017). However, the theory has become less influential in recent times, as personal or corporate interests have taken precedence over the public interest. The change has proved disadvantageous. One limitation of conflict theory, identified over time, is its failure to interpret correctly the behaviour of individuals (Wexler, 2014).

In conflict theory, the aim of education is to perpetuate social inequality and uphold the authority of those who hold power in society (Omer and Jabeen, 2016). As such, private schools have faced allegations of exacerbating inequality due to their exorbitant fees that are accessible only to the most affluent members of society. Public schools are funded by the government, making them available to all individuals, but some may have insufficient infrastructure, sanitation, resources, qualified teachers, and other facilities (Moumne and Saudemont, 2015). In several nations, including Austria, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Spain, and Sweden, public financing is provided for private education (OECD, 2012). Private schools in these nations possess numerous characteristics that are similar to those of state schools (Srivastava, 2010). Hence, it is evident that, in certain nations, the source of financial support cannot be regarded as a determinant in distinguishing between state and private educational institutions. Therefore, funding alone cannot be attributed as the single factor that differentiates the two (Rose, 2006).

Immelman and Roberts-Lombard (2015) have identified marketing strategy as an additional differentiating factor between these two categories of educational institutions. Private schools must adhere to this approach in order to recruit new students and maintain current ones, which positions private schools as prominent socioeconomic determinants of high-quality education. In terms of

conflict theory, life is perceived as a competition (Omer and Jabeen, 2016). This competition is prevalent in education systems where state schools are compared to private schools regarding the supposed educational quality in both types of schooling systems in a society. In some nations, for instance, some countries in Africa, private schools that require the payment of fees perform better than state schools in regard to educational quality (Rolleston and Adefeso-Olateju, 2012).

Thus, private schooling is endorsed by the conflict theory of education (Omer and Jabeen, 2016). Individuals in Kurdistan have varied levels of education, like any other place. Affluent individuals who have the financial means to cover expensive fees opt for private schools, whereas others attend state schools (Hassan, 2017). This exacerbates inequality in the region, as private schools cater exclusively to a specific socioeconomic stratum within the community. Therefore, the selection of private schools is justified by the conflict formed in the society between private and state schools.

One criticism of conflict theory concerns its negation of social stability, due to ongoing disputes that disrupt the community. The majority of social structures have undergone a slow progression or achieved a high level of stability over time, rather than experiencing sudden changes. There is no tension between private and state schools in education due to the understanding that education is a costly undertaking (Macionis and Gerber, 2010). State schools may provide a superior education compared to private schools, as parents who pay for education in private schools cannot guarantee the best degree of teaching quality (Goyal and Pandey, 2009).

Conflict is an integral aspect of social development, as posited in conflict theory, and it aids in illuminating the discrepancies between state and private education. The state has created a standardised framework that governs the curriculum taught in state schools. Nevertheless, in the majority of cases, private schools have the freedom to modify the curriculum and incorporate subjects that they deem essential. Additionally, private schools have the ability to modify the workload for students by intensifying it in certain subjects while reducing it in others (Godsey, 2015). Inequality is created by the presence of advanced technologies in private schools and the lack of resources in state schools (Darling-Hammond, 2001). Sommers (2013) contended that this circumstance also differs across countries. Developing countries have a significant disparity, while in developed countries the disparity is not substantial. The meaning here is that the level of education in developing countries could be higher compared to developed countries. The preceding argument demonstrates the presence of conflict, albeit of a situational one.

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Both approaches adopt diverse positions on the comprehension of human society. Conflict theory is highly effective when examining group dynamics, but less so when examining individual behaviour. Both functionalism and conflict theory utilise a macro-level approach to understanding society. In functionalism, society is viewed as a system of collective pursuit of a shared objective or common purpose, whereas, in conflict theory, society is viewed through social disputes in the framework of inequality between social classes in the society (Lau, 2014). Conflict theory can be distinguished from structural-functionalism based on these criteria. Functionalists introduce the concept of communal consciousness. Durkheim posited that the collective consciousness is founded upon the shared beliefs that are frequently adhered to within a society. These beliefs serve as the basis for society, acting as a crucial element for functionalism (Steele, 2011). In contrast to functionalist theory, in which it is claimed that all components of society collaborate to foster unity and stability (Kelly, 2015), in conflict theory it is asserted that conflict is an essential aspect of societal progress (Crossman, 2017). Conflict theory postulates that schools serve as a breeding ground for the perpetuation of social inequalities (Trevino, 2015). Unlike functional theory, conflict theory assumes that success is not necessarily guaranteed by meritocracy or an individual's efforts and hard work. It is associated with the understanding that knowledge base is usually impacted by cultural factors, and because culture often leads to conflict, conflict is a fundamental element of social progression (Trevino, 2015).

Hence, conflict theory will contribute to addressing the social and cultural conflict in Kurdistan by considering the dichotomy between private and state schools as a crucial aspect of social progress. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that the assessment of social conflict cannot be applied globally due to variations in economic, political, institutional, and social structures across different countries. Thus, Singh's perspective advocates for exploring the notion that private schools offer a service accessible to all social strata within Kurdish society. The significance of conflict theory lies in its ability to provide a critical understanding of the social conflict in Kurdistan's society over the preference for private schools over state. However, the King's perspective is favourable to examining whether private or state schools are more suitable for meeting the requirements of Kurdistan's society, and could explain the increasing demand for private schools in the country. Both functionalist and conflict theories will contribute to the analysis of the topic by illustrating the connection between schools and society. Nonetheless, the link between private and state schools is explained not only by social interactions, but also by

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teacher-student relationships, underpinned by symbolic interaction theory. The final theory considered in this section is the symbolic interaction theory.

(iii)   Symbolic interaction theory

Froehlich (2007, p. 85) states that 'there is a preference for certain types of knowledge over others'. Symbolic interaction theory suggests that students may achieve optimal productivity when they are given a conducive learning environment. The symbolic interaction theory primarily examines the correlation between the teacher's expectations and the performance of the student (Smith and Bugni, 2006). Proponents of this theory argue that education categorises students based on a teacher's subjective perception of them (Ballantine and Hammack, 2012). Wineburg (1987) established the concept of the self-fulfilling prophecy in revealing that students with greater information tend to exhibit superior performance, and vice-versa. In summary, the symbolic interaction theory will aid in the comprehension of the influence of social interactions and teacher expectations on the decision to choose a private school within the Kurdish community.

Symbolic interactionism acknowledges the crucial connection between persons to shape symbolic worlds that help influence individual actions. This theory stems from the philosophy and practice of pragmatism and methodology, which help the analysis and understanding of social interactions (Alver and Caglar, 2015). This theory is comprised of four main principles: human agency (the intentional actions of individuals), interactive determination (the mutual influence between different elements of analysis), symbolisation (the use of events, objects, and people as symbols), and emergence (unexplored aspects of social life), which serve as thematic foundations for identifying and understanding the impact of social movements on society (Aksan *et al*., 2009). Symbolic interactionism emanates from a sociological perspective and seeks to understand how individuals create symbolic worlds through their interactions with others, which in turn influences their behaviour.

A seminal study by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) suggests that students perform in accordance with the expectations set by their teachers. For example, if a teacher anticipates that a student will demonstrate improved or poor performance in the future, this anticipation influences the teacher's demeanour toward the student. Ultimately, the performance of students is swayed by the expectations of their teachers and is strongly interconnected with them (Ballantine and Roberts, 2011). The 'self-fulfilling prophecy' phenomenon is rooted in the observation that pupils tend to

conform to the expectations set by their teachers (Wineburg, 1987). When students enrol in private schools, their families, teachers and their own psyche await the attainment of higher knowledge than if they were to attend state schools (Sammons, 1995; Ballantine and Roberts, 2011). Hoxby (1994) affirmed that private educational institutions possess greater expectations in comparison to public schools. Teachers in private schools prioritise student progress and strive for the highest levels of achievement. Consequently, they anticipate favourable outcomes from children. The state has jurisdiction over accountability, timetables, vacations, compliance programmes, and educational methods. Hence, it is evident that, in numerous cases, both private and state schools are profoundly influenced by the state, which governs the teaching approach in both types of educational institution. The lack of testability of this theory has been subject to criticism (Carter and Fuller, 2015). Interactionism, when used as a framework instead of a theory, does not provide the means to evaluate in the same manner as a specific theoretical assertion that examines the relationship between different variables in a certain situation. For example, in public schools, where the expectations of teachers and parents for their children are not expected to be as elevated as in private schools, there are students who achieve outstanding results.

The selection of symbolic interaction theory to examine the influence of private schools on Kurdistan is warranted due to its ability to elucidate the interplay between the essential elements of the educational process. Thus, the teacher and student vision of the educational process can be observed because the main idea of symbolic interaction is to show how teachers and students cooperate in the classroom, playground, and any school-related activity. Thus, the theory can be used to explicate the dynamics of social interaction between students and teachers within the classroom setting.

2.2.3 Summary

This sub-chapter contained an elaboration of the social education theories as part of the theoretical framework, and the educational process served as the current study's conceptual framework. It was established that functionalists perceive education as primarily serving the purpose of imparting fundamental skills and information to the next generation. Similarly, conflict theory reveals the presence of inequality and the upholding of power in society through private schools, whereas symbolic interaction theory allows for an examination of how teachers' expectations shape student performance, attitudes, and perceptions. Hence, these three theories are valuable for

comprehending the function of private schools in Kurdish society and will aid in addressing the research's enquiries regarding the following: the management and organisation of private and state schools; the perception of the quality of private and state schools; the rationale behind selecting private schools over state ones; the influence of private schools on the educational process; and, the role of education inequality as a catalyst for private schools. This information will provide comprehensive guidance throughout the research process, thus offering a significant and valuable contribution to theoretical and practical knowledge pertaining to Kurdistan.

The next section of the literature review examines private and state schools from the perspective of different scholars in terms of the quality of education and the reason why people choose private education over state schools. It also deals with the differences between state and private schools. Finally, this chapter will end with an overview of the impact of private schools as derived from the discussion as a whole.

2.3 Private and State Schools in the Literature

This part of the literature review is focused on an assessment of the literature regarding the key aspects of private and state schools, to explore the differences between the schools, assess their quality, discuss why parents choose them, and examine views on their effect on educational results. As well as providing a general perspective on private and state education more globally, this part also covers the KRI. However, although there is a great deal of literature on state and private schools, there is a lack of research on private schools in the area. In this regard, the section covers the gap in the literature in terms of the impact of private schools on education in the KRI.

2.3.1 Introduction to Private Schools

Tooley and Longfield (2015, p. 8) characterise private schools according to three key principles: they are 'dependent on user fees to cover all or part of their operational and development costs'; they are 'managed largely independently of the state'; and, private schools are 'owned or founded independently of the state'. The definition of private schools conforms to these three interrelated functional elements. According to Day-Ashley *et al*. (2015), the perspective of 'private schools' changes in the context of academic research and policy discussions. Day-Ashley *et al*. (2015) further indicated that the distinct characteristics of private academic institutions include their reliance on school fee payments to cater, fully or partially, to their financial concerns, such as

operational and development expenses. Subsequently, private schools are set apart in their need to align with market forces and increased demand among students to ensure financial sustainability. In their entirety, private schools are thus academic institutions under the supervision or administration of private entities or NGOs, including churches, private institutions and businesses, and trade unions (Crawfurd, Hares and Todd, 2023).

This review explores the broader perspective of private academic institutions. Specifically, both in the aspects of financial support and management, private schools can be utterly autonomous from the government or reliant upon it (Gamsu, 2020). As government-dependent academic institutions, they are entirely or partially financially dependent on the state's budget (Dronkers and Robert, 2008). Unlike state-dependent schools which are supported by government budgets and hence do not need endowments, independent academic institutions access other private entities to meet their financial needs. For example, in some areas of the U.S., every year, private schools typically receive a designated amount of resource allocation (Cunningham, 2014). Overall, private education includes both government-affiliated schools that receive funds from the state and fully autonomous private schools that have their own budgets and administrative systems.

Fully autonomous schools depend on school fee payments settled by parents instead of federal funding (Crawfurd, Hares and Todd, 2023). Nonetheless, fully independent schools are not limited to tuition fees settled by parents for endowment; they usually use alternative funding streams from private institutions, such as charity organisations, that support management and financing to meet all their financial concerns (Johnson, 1987). Glennerster and Wilson (1970), who looked into the setting of England, observed several instances where the government also provided grants to private schools, with free education given to some students, bringing them up to par with state schools. Nonetheless, schools that receive direct grants can create additional connections with the state and obtain cumulative revenue from parental fees, government grants (which make up around 40% of parental fees), and other supplementary income. Hence, private schools operate under the administration and management of private entities, mostly dependent on parental fees according to government regulations. Private academic institutions can be driven by charitable or commercial overarching missions, including costly, moderate, or low tuition payments, and driven by for- or non-profit goals. In addition, the private education sector can include significant role players affiliated with the government through state-private partnerships or binding contracts (Moumne and Saudemont, 2015). Therefore, private schools significantly depend on parental fees for

financing and, on occasion, they can engage additional external sources, including the government and charity organisations.

In most cases, private academic institutions exercise autonomy and versatility in their operations but must comply with government regulations. Unlike state schools affiliated with the government, private academic institutions' decisions are not restricted by the bureaucratic burden imposed by the state, hence their freedom and flexibility in establishing the academic environment and education process (Lockheed and Jimenez, 1994). Even so, the degree of autonomy does not extend to all private schools as some operate under more regulations than their counterparts in the public sector (Tooley and Dixon, 2005a). Kurdistan Iraq provides a contextual example; Law No. 14 of 2012 on Private Schools and Institutions in the KRI stipulates strict regulations for private schooling in the region. All private schools must undergo a stringent licensing process regulated by the government to operate in the region legally. The law also subjects Kurdistan private schools to government supervision and appraisal of teachers' work and the state of its facilities. Vernez *et al*. (2016, p. 51) state that the Kurdistan law on private schools regulates 'educational programs, enrolment, and exam systems; administration and finance systems; and violations'. Hence, despite the established correlation between financial independence and increased autonomy, the schools are subordinate to the state and must operate under complete state oversight (Vernez *et al*., 2016). Accordingly, the regulations on private schools exercised in Kurdistan align with the functionalist theory that establishes the significant role of education as a unified process to facilitate societal benefits and socialisation. Private educational institutions follow the same guidelines as state schools to ensure that all educational system components are cohesive and work as a whole. Therefore, although they have increased freedom and flexibility, private schools are usually subject to government rules.

Since the comprehension of private academic institutions is intricately connected to the community's perceptions of state schools, to see how private schools work, it is important to compare and contrast private and state schools, as presented in the next sub-section.

2.3.2 Distinction between Private and State Schools

This subsection explores the differences between private and state schools. Johnson (1987) notes that private and state schools are two distinct establishments within the same education system, and can work in conjunction or against one another. The primary variations between the two

institutions are manifest in their funding streams, student enrolment policies (Lieberman, 1990), organisational structure, accountability, and regulations. Arguably, private schools can also work to lessen the burden on state schools and permit state financing of private education for those who cannot afford it (Da, 2007). State schools are funded by the government and managed at local, regional, and federal levels (OECD, 2017). In contrast, the primary source of funding for private schools is the tuition fees of the enrolled students. The United States Department of Education (2009) notes that private schools also utilise alternative funding streams such as grants. In other cases, governments provide financial support to private schools to offset specific expenses such as transportation. Hence, the primary distinguishing factor between state and private schools is their main funding source (OECD, 2024). This distinction is not universally applicable, as seen in some countries, including Denmark, Austria, and Germany, where private schooling is funded by the state (Srivastava, 2010). For this reason, it is not plausible to differentiate the two categories of schools only by funding source (Rose, 2006). Hence, it can be said that state and private schools have distinctions that go beyond simple financial differences.

Immelman and Roberts-Lombard (2015) assert that private schools must adopt effective marketing strategies to draw in new students while maintaining the current students; in contrast, state schools receive consistent support from the state, and so there is no need for similar specific tactics. Notably, education is best defined as a service, meaning that efficiency in delivering education as a service improves student or client interest in the education (Baker, 2008). Private schools distinguish themselves from other schools in the region by promoting education as a service and promising the best quality provision as a competitive advantage to increase their demand; increasing student enrolment means more tuition fee payments to cover their finances (Baker, 2008). By implementing marketing strategies, the competition increases among private schools and also causes a decline in student enrolment in state schools (Uchendu, Nwafor and Nwaneri, 2015). In response, Clark (2015) posited that this is the ideal time for state schools to take on innovative marketing plans. Marnie Cooke, the Director of Marketing and Communications for Noblesville Schools, is at the forefront of advocacy of marketing approaches in boosting state schools. Cooke has ensured the financial public sector underscores the dissemination of the state's school objectives to parents and taxpayers (Raffin, 2016). Therefore, the community must develop an active interest in why and what the school does to teach or promote development in children.

In the end, the evolving character of educational institutions emphasises the significance of transparency and effective promotions for both private and state schools.

Furthermore, the respective origins of state and private academic institutions distinguish them from one another. The government plays a central role in facilitating education in the community. In Europe, the inception of state school education systems is viewed as a result of exercising sovereignty (Ashley, 2009). Subsequently, this impact has been instrumental in moulding current logical reasoning, with its roots dating back to the Age of Enlightenment. (Muralidharan and Kremer, 2006). Pertinently, the notion that private schooling is an entirely novel concept is incorrect. Earlier on, the existence of private and religious schools preceded and led to the emergence of state schools (Kennedy, 2017). The establishment of Chengdu Shishi High School in China in 143 BCE or Marcus Fabius Quintilianus' private school in Rome in 69 CE are examples of many first schools to be established in particular regions as privately owned. State schools gained prominence in later years with the evolution of the Enlightenment, which perceived religious education as ineffective and a cause of social illness (Alexander and Alexander, 2011). The 18th century BCE reign of King Hammurabi in Mesopotamia, present-day Iraq, witnessed considerable advancement, as the king initiated the Code of Hammurabi, the law of community that governed social conduct. Notably, the establishment of the first schools and education in the region was endorsed by King Hammurabi (Ascaso and Huerva, 2013). Hammurabi believed that a well-educated community would advance the culture within the region, and although the king's ideas were limited to Mesopotamia, his initiatives impacted the progress of education in the eastern region of the world (Arvind, 2016). This historical account illustrates an evolution in education, noting how private and religious schools existed before state schools and how state schooling gained popularity later in the years.

Additionally, differences between private and state schools further arise regarding structure, accountability, and inspection policies. In particular, parents consider paying tuition fees to guarantee their influence over their children's education, for which the schools must account (Tooley, 2017b). A broader process of concurrent revision impacts their structure, as some pre-existing courses are highlighted differently or there are alternatives in the post-bureaucratic model (Goldhaber, 1996). According to Desai *et al*. (2008), state schools are associated with increased autonomy, while private schools are decentralised (Lynch and Moran, 2006). Furthermore, in Italy, approaches are applied that do not entail significant cutbacks of state interference in education

management or which are characterised as completely dependent on the market. Chudgar and Quin (2012) observe Italy progressing toward an evaluative state. Usually, the privilege of initiating private schools coincides with the state's jurisdiction to oversee and guarantee that the responsibilities expected of the institutions are met. In addition, it is crucial for the teaching strategies used in the establishments to comply with the state's standards (Braun *et al*., 2006).

State and private schools can also be differentiated by student admission policies. In most instances, such as most cases in the U.S., private schools are selective in their admissions, but state schools are not significantly restrictive (Riley, Cortines and Forgione, 1997). State schools provide chances for most students in the community, regardless of cultural or religious backgrounds, as the state finances them. Consequently, state schools must comply with government stipulations when establishing their educational policies and curricula (Lieberman, 1998). When private schools are juxtaposed with state schools, it is observed that they can refuse to admit students or employ staff, depending on internal job requirement qualifications that can choose to disregard accredited credentials without interference from government agencies. Moreover, student entry requirements include merit-based criteria that assess new students' performance and knowledge to guarantee their qualification for the school's educational process (Johnson, 1987). The different admissions procedures in both schools highlight the disparities in control and adherence to laws, which affect student access and school staffing.

In addition, the distinctions between the education system and its regulations delineate diverse social groups, mirroring the country's multifaceted political and cultural history (Johnson, 1987). This confirms that the functional distinction within society has resulted in the conflict between private and state schools. A discord within the community emerges because, while private schools set themselves apart by providing wealthy students with high-quality education provision that corresponds to tuition fee payments, state schools can only provide standard education for all students (Johnson, 1987). Scholars argue for the endowment of academic freedom to schools, hence establishing a process for enrolling students and hiring teachers that promotes social justice (Tooley *et al*., 2011; Miller, Craven and Tooley, 2014). Tooley (1998) emphasises that a school's optimal education provision must be accessible to any household, regardless of cultural or political ideologies. Nonetheless, modern society is associated with social characteristics that lead to disparities, hence the education system's differences and implementation. The convergence of

cultural, political, and economic elements ultimately perpetuates educational inequalities, demonstrating persistent challenges of equality to quality education for all in society.

Despite the distinguishing factors between private and state schools, they have considerable similarities. Both establishments are driven by the primary objective of preparing students to assume adult roles in their future lives as they acquire knowledge and expertise, and develop character (Smith and Joshi, 2016). This fundamental principle of both schools aligns with symbolic interaction theory, which endorses the development of skills and knowledge for future life. Furthermore, for example in India, private and state schools structure the education process and complement each other in the interrelation of assessment, teaching, and examination aspects of the system (Srivastava, 2008). Although private schools manage to offer additional subjects in the education curriculum, supported by adequacy and freedom in resource allocation, common subjects are taught in both schools that align with the demand for competencies in the country and which are approved by the state to be accessible to the community at large (Singh, 2013). Hence, it seems that state and private schools share similarities in their core objective of preparing students for the future to adopt education systems with similar subjects and elements.

The discussion above has revealed that private and state schools have distinguishing characteristics, but that they are situational in nature. Each country has different institutional, political, economic, and social structures which cannot therefore be universally utilised. However, in some situations and nations, they can be used in conjunction with both private and state schools. Overall, the difference between state and private schools exists and is reflected in many aspects. Private and state schools' main objective involves providing quality education significantly influenced by their respective funding, among other factors, including teacher competencies and teaching methods, the environment, administration, and teacher training. The perceived dissimilarities between the two schools encourage societal inequality, thus validating conflict theory. These differences create inequality in society, justifying conflict theory by ensuring that various aspects of human life appear in conflict with each other; specifically, this conflict allows parents to choose either private or state schools. Hence, the comprehension of the differences between private and state schools must take note of the quality of education provision offered by the institutions.

2.3.3 Quality of Education in Private and State Schools

Quality education plays a significant role in the holistic educational process, demonstrating the importance of all interrelated elements functioning cohesively in the process, where the type of competence forms one of the major signs of the conflict needed to achieve greater effectiveness. Therefore, functional and conflict theories are considerably taken into account when one assesses one's school choice. Pertinently, in the education sector, there is not a single universally accepted definition of quality of education. As outlined by UNICEF (2004), students, environments, methods, content, and results are among the factors that influence the quality of education. The mentioned aspects are crucial in finding insight into the quality standards that best define quality education provision. Fredriksson (2004) defines quality education as a transfer of knowledge that equips students with the necessary skills to recognise and resolve challenges while people live their lives. Subsequently, Creemers *et al*. (2013) emphasise that the concept of quality education is inherently changeable to align with the dynamic nature of the world. For the most part, quality education relies on the teaching and learning process. The definition of quality in education is also associated with the intricacies of the teaching process (Crebbin, 1997). Accordingly, Bobby (2014) indicates that the interpretation of quality in education significantly conforms to the viewpoint one chooses. Schindler *et al*. (2015) further consider four thematic elements that impact the context of understanding quality in education: funding bodies, learners, institution administration, and teachers. Pertinently, the nature of the school, whether private or state, will determine how each of these components is different.

Equality, which is a social issue, is a major defining factor in the quality of education (Van de Werfhorst and Mijs, 2010). While private education provision may not be accessible to everyone, state schools offer education for all students. There is no guarantee that low learning outcomes inevitably indicate low socioeconomic divides in the provision of education (Pfeffer, 2012). Hence, the unequal education provision between private and state academic institutions should not be construed as an indication of the quality or inadequacy of education. Several factors are considered when evaluating the quality of education, including teaching expertise and strategies, instructional material, assessment and feedback methods, educational environments, and classroom management (Dolton and Vignoles, 2000; Dearden, Ferri and Meghir, 2002). The increased demand for education across the world has prompted people to strive for professional advancement, and so education has become an internationally acknowledged endeavour (World

Economic Forum, 2014). Both private and private schools equip students with the necessary knowledge and expertise for career advancement in the future, which coincides with functionalist theory.

Dahlman (2007) observed that the rapid rate of globalisation has led students to consider the possibilities of working in diverse regions worldwide, which calls for exceptional knowledge and abilities. Therefore, in order to endorse student development in acquiring proficient skills, the global society aims to standardise the education needed for everyone. Obtaining a more profound perspective through evaluating the diverse factors that impact the quality of education can enhance the comprehension of the functionality of the education process. These factors will now be discussed in turn.

The first factor considered here is teaching methods. Different teachers use different teaching approaches depending on their preferences and the nature of the subject (Felder and Brent, 2005; Alade and Ogbo, 2014). Felder and Brent (2005) identified teachers' competencies and experience, morale, and dedication, the availability of resources, and the learning environment as factors that determine the quality of learning. Commonly, private and state schools adopt the same teaching approaches (Choy, 1997). Despite each teacher utilising particular teaching styles, effective learning often proves challenging when confined to a single approach to teaching (Wilson and Peterson, 2006). Symbolic interaction theory advocates for teacher-student interaction in the classroom setting. Furthermore, cooperation can be fostered through school-related facilities and teaching approaches (Ronfeldt *et al*., 2015). Therefore, depending on their preferences and the nature of the subject, different teachers adopt different approaches to teaching.

Teaching methods tailored to student needs are crucial in ensuring quality education provisions cater to individual needs (Chuunga, 2013). According to Rigelman and Ruben (2012), teaching methods include guiding and scaffolding, direct teaching using instructional materials, and engaging students in discussions and classroom assignments. Barrow and Leu (2006) further recommend practice, question exchange between students and teachers, and revisiting topics during class sessions as additional teaching methods. Moreover, the collaborative method is a strategy that addresses student needs by fostering a student-teacher relationship in which students receive positive reinforcement and support (Kemizano, 2007). Specifically, collaboration is integral to learning because students feel secure when learning with mentors and peers (Rigelman

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and Ruben, 2012). Students are also recommended to learn in groups or pairs so that teachers can conveniently oversee and monitor learning progress (August and Shanahan, 2006). In order to promote intellectual teaching-learning in the classroom, Johnson, Hayter, and Broadfoot (2000) proposed an activity-based approach in which students engage in activities at home or school. Therefore, teaching strategies that are centred on the needs of individual students are imperative for high-quality education.

According to Serbessa (2006), who focused on Ethiopian primary schools, traditional teaching approaches, characterised by lectures where students listen and answer questions, continue to be the predominant strategy in state schools. This prevalence is attributed to financial constraints, insufficient teaching resources, and inadequate teaching expertise. Russell and Yañez (2003) argue that the centralised management of state schools is the reason for the absence of advanced teaching strategies in schools in developing countries. In retrospect, the development of teaching strategies directly correlates with teacher training and technology advancement, both of which demand additional allocation of resources, which private schools leverage to adopt advanced teaching methods as a competitive advantage to draw in more parents (Parboteeah and Anwar, 2009). Dimitrios *et al.* (2013) outlined the traditional teaching methods prominent in state schools, including reading texts, formulating questions, instituting teaching sessions, holding discussions, finishing written assignments, tackling structured and unstructured cases, holding oral presentations, and evaluating existing research studies. Overall, traditional methods of teaching significantly involve passive approaches wherein students acquire knowledge and generate fresh insights based on the received information (del Campo, Negro and Núñez, 2012). However, that is not to say that traditional methods of teaching are ignored in private schools, as it has been noted by Gupta (2008) that traditional methods of teaching can still be a more favourable approach by educators due to their enhanced productive learning attributes.

Nonetheless, it should not be inferred that traditional teaching methods are unproductive. For instance, virtual classes are widely recognised as effective (Basar *et al.*, 2021), and yet, since their initiation, they continue to utilise traditional teaching methods. In addition, education provision through traditional approaches has produced good learning outcomes on past accounts when adopted, which teachers must consider while establishing their teaching approaches (Wang, 2022). Furthermore, the higher level of student-teacher interaction associated with traditional teaching methods is an added advantage for some students. The organised and well-structured lessons

covered in a traditional classroom setting further facilitate a learning environment that boosts the morale of students to study. In some instances, students might have financial difficulties meeting the cost of the technological resources needed in a class using innovative teaching methods, impeding their education acquisition (Gupta, 2008). Hence, traditional teaching approaches facilitate adequate education provision, especially for schools limited by resources or technology.

A comparative table detailing the features of private and state schools by Olasehinde and Olatoye (2014, p. 204) reveals that private establishments 'do not use up-to-date teaching methods' (see Table 2.1 for a copy of the comparative table). Critically, the notion has been disapproved by several scholars (Boumová, 2008; Yakovleva and Yakovlev, 2014). In contrast to passive learning, active learning calls for teachers to engage in further research to improve classroom teaching methods. Ramak and Ziabari (2017) note that active learning significantly involves collaborative and project-based learning sessions. In order to attract students to prefer private schools, the institutions utilise innovative technologies for teachers to establish advanced methods that incentivise parents to pay the tuition fees (Awan and Zia, 2015). Hence, private school teachers are more likely to prioritise innovative teaching strategies, such as incorporating video and computer technologies, for improved learning outcomes (Ghavifekr and Rosdy, 2015). Overall, private schools are at the forefront of utilizing innovative and modern teaching techniques.

Table 2.1: Characteristics of Private and Public Schools (Olasehinde and Olatoye (2014))

Private School	Public Schools
Mostly have small class size	Mostly have big class size
Lack accountability to the public	Accountable to the public
It is autonomous	It is not autonomous
Ignore recent curricular trends in education	Do not ignore curricular trends in education
Do not always hire certified teachers	Hire certified teachers
Most have religion inclinations	Do not have religious inclinations
Set no fund apart for teacher professional development	Set fund apart for teacher professional development
Set attraction to parents to show safe, neat and welcoming environment	Set no attraction beyond Government provision
Do not use up-to-date teaching methods	Use up to date teaching methods

Financial constraints are the main cause of inconsistencies in teaching strategies in private and state schools. In particular, the case of the KRI shows that the lack of availability of resources and a limited emphasis on teacher-centred approaches during education provision is challenging the development of education in the region (Saleh, Al-Tawil and Al-Hadithi, 2012). Pertinently, Kareem (2017) indicates that innovative teaching technologies are utilised in private schools as perceived by a substantial 89.8% of the public, while state schools only resort to advanced technologies in 10.2% of cases. Therefore, much as in other countries, teaching strategies in KRI schools rely on teachers' openness to change, development, and financial accessibility.

The second factor to consider is the role of assessment and feedback. The close association between mistakes and feedback is a central learning component because it allows for knowledge growth as learners improve on their mistakes (Wenzel, 2002). William (2013) argues for the development of a reimagined view of feedback and assessment from the perspective that they are a teaching strategy rather than a punishment. Notably, different errors require different responses, some calling for immediate rectification while others are deliberately overlooked (Behroozi and

Karimnia, 2017). Existing research further reveals that the nature of corrective feedback is influenced by several factors, including the teaching environment, the context within which learning occurs, and the learner's cognitive orientation scope (Nabei and Swain, 2002). In this manner, feedback and assessment are valuable in learning because they impact the quality of education acquired. Conflict theory also coincides with how teachers normally encourage competition when evaluating student performance.

The education process relies heavily on assessment to address students' learning challenges. Johnston and Costello (2009) describe assessment as a social practice involving various activities, such as identifying, articulating, and responding to literate behaviours in learners to improve their capacity to produce audience-specific meaning. Wold, Young and Risko (2011) distinguished formative and summative assessments within the context of academic teaching-learning. First, formative assessment is a continuous process of enhancing learner competencies, while summative assessment occurs at the end of a school session to assess student achievement. While summative assessment may be helpful in large-sized classes, it can create learning gaps between fast and slower learners, resulting in lower class performance. Abdulovic (2008) outlines dynamic assessment strategies that include content review and analysis of students' work on assignments, exams, and learning materials. These techniques seek to appraise teacher performance and understand student needs, which are imperative in the education process. It is also important to acknowledge that, while dynamic education strategies encourage a personalised approach to instruction, teachers' capacity to deliver such a learning model is limited when they operate in overpopulated classrooms. Overall, formative assessment offers more significant promise of practical gains in student performance than verbal evaluation used during teaching-learning.

Learning outcomes are a component of feedback that helps assess whether lessons are suitable for the student or not. Tailoring feedback to meet the specific needs of learners allows teachers to assess their knowledge, skills, learning capabilities, and needs effectively (Johnson, Hayter and Broadfoot, 2000). Furthermore, there are times when feedback may have minimal learning value when implemented. According to a study by Ackers and Hardman (2001), who focused on classroom interaction in Kenyan primary schools, teachers tend to provide feedback or make no acknowledgement of pupils' responses and proceed to other activities. While positive affirmation has its advantages, teachers must insist upon adopting a deliberate strategy by which they convey interest and responsibility in their students' emotions, classroom conditions, and concerns.

Specifically, Abdulovic (2008) argues that teachers must create opportunities within the classroom whereby students can openly share and have their emotional concerns addressed. Hence, teachers also have the chance to commend students vocally for their performance. Ackers and Hardman (2001) express their opposition to this strategy, noting that it has the inadvertent effect of discouraging class engagement and participation.

It is reasonable to assume that state and private schools employ assessment and feedback differently, as they are essential elements of teaching strategy (Segers, Nijhuis and Gijselaers, 2006). The forms of feedback used in the learning process include repetition, recast, elicitation, explicit correction, clarification, and request (Lyster and Ranta, 1997). Studies conducted in Iranian state and private schools found that teachers were more prone to using feedback and assessment mechanisms involving repetition (Behroozi and Karimnia, 2017). However, this is not to say that they completely ignored other strategies, such as clarification, outright correction, and recasting. Conversely, teachers from private schools appeared to prefer strategies such as clarification requests, elicitation, and repetition as in a combined approach to error correction. Compared to private school teachers, state school teachers were found to use more explicit corrective and repetition techniques (Behroozi and Karimnia, 2017).

Concerning the situation of the KRI, it is important to mention that teachers in the KRI have utilised information technologies for knowledge sharing, teacher feedback, and peer assessment (Kareem, 2017). Vurdien (2013) and Hennessy (2005) also discuss the use of computer technologies to provide feedback during the learning process. Kareem (2017) further expounds on this topic by stating that private learning institutions in Kurdistan with access to computer technologies have already embraced them as a learning resource, helping to provide feedback. In addition, self-evaluation is a commonly used strategy in Kurdistan, where teachers use it as a way of evaluating personal skills (Vernez *et al*., 2016). The tactic further aids in assessing student achievements. Feedback and assessment evaluation are important components of learning techniques since they impact the school's learning environment, which varies depending on whether it is a state or private institution.

The next factor to consider is the learning environment, which has a crucial role in the educational process. Educators have the power to shape this environment by deploying the principles of the symbolic interaction theory, which helps parents clearly distinguish between private and state

schools. The existing scholarly efforts on the topic of the learning environment leave little doubt regarding the role of the learning environment on learner outcomes. The role of the learning environment becomes manifest in teachers when they create a welcoming and enabling environment to improve learning outcomes (OECD, 2009). Other studies have also suggested that the environment must be open and safe enough to encourage students to develop a shared culture of listening and respecting the divergent ideas of others (Bucholz and Sheffler, 2009). The work of Kemizano (2007) indicates the practical importance of an enabling environment by referring to a case in Uganda, where the use of customary practices in the course of learning was compared to performance. In this case, the customary teaching environment took away from the beneficial impact of resources such as instructional materials, meaning that it did not help to develop proper reading skills. Therefore, teachers must develop a welcoming and efficient environment since this has a significant impact on academic performance.

On a closely related note, learner motivation and attitudes correlate with the classroom environment facilitated by the teacher. Accordingly, learning is typically facilitated in learning sessions that are purposeful, task-oriented, and supportive (Kyriacou, 1998). Kyriacou (1998) argued that classrooms must include resources, especially printed reading and writing aids. The author recommended that classes also offer mini-libraries, so that learners can access diverse reading and writing resources for specific tasks, such as poems and lists. The importance of creating a supportive environment is to facilitate learning and create positive attitudes to it. Indeed, various studies have shown a close association between how learners perceive their learning environment and their learning progress and outcomes (Bakhshialiabad, Bakhshi, and Hassanshahi, 2015; Johnson, 2016). Lizzio, Wilson and Simons (2002) noted that it was possible to use student perception of their environment effectively to make accurate suppositions regarding their learning progress and outcomes. This implies that making a deliberate effort to curate an enabling or supportive environment is one way for teachers to improve learning conditions. This assumption borrows from the approaches to students in learning theory, which describes learning as involvement. Furthermore, student learning theory refers to learning as a product of three main components that confirm the impact of the learning environment on learning progress. These three components include the characteristics of students and their understanding of the learning environment, the approaches employed by them while learning, and the standard of their learning outcomes (Suksudaj *et al.*, 2015). Since the psychological, social, and pedagogical contexts are

those in which learning occurs, it is essential to take these contexts into account when establishing the learning environment (Lizzio, Wilson and Simons, 2002). Hence, the academic environment is constituted by both these approaches and the members with whom students collaborate and engage. This consideration necessitates a focus on issues such as the standard of teaching, assessment, and anticipated workloads (Lizzio, Wilson and Simons, 2002). Therefore, the classroom environment has a significant effect on student motivation and attitude towards learning, and hence teachers should develop one that boosts student morale.

Trust, caring, respect, and fair interactions are fundamental elements of the teacher-student relationship. Incorporating these aspects in an effective learning environment facilitates a form of teacher-student interaction in which the goals of the learning process are attained. According to Kesner (2000), the teacher-student relationship features several notable components. Greene, Abidin and Kmetz (1997) suggest that the teacher-student relationship should be one in which input from both parties is paramount for success, even though the relationship remains asymmetrical with teachers having power and responsibility over students. Within this unique relationship, the students who perceive respect and genuine regard from their teachers are more likely to develop a commitment to learning and readiness to apply effort in resolving challenges that emerge in the course of learning (Green, Abidin and Kmetz, 1997). The significance of shared commitment to the teacher-student relationship relies on the readiness of both parties to strengthen the relationship. Some specific ways that teachers can strengthen the teacher-student relationship include demonstrating a willingness to show responsibility in helping and assisting students while applying values such as tolerance and fairness. Wentzel (2002) recommends that teachers utilise skills such as humour to create an open and fair environment through which students can slowly master the art of independence.

The learning environment in private and state schools is dissimilar because, when at school, students bring their background characteristics with them (Choy, 1997). Some differences between private and state schools have a socioeconomic origin, stemming from the enrolled students having different backgrounds and bringing their unique circumstances into the learning environment (Choy, 1997). Torche and Mizala (2012), who focused on Chile, noted that state school students come from a lower socioeconomic status than private school students. Furthermore, referring to countries such as the U.S., state schools usually have a more diverse student population in aspects of racial and ethnic backgrounds (Choy, 1997). State schools also host more students with

limitations in terms of language capabilities. Compared to private schools, state schools have a higher percentage of minority teachers and principals (12% and 16% versus 6% and 8%, respectively) (Choy, 1997). Although private school teachers face higher recruitment requirements (Estevan, 2012), state school teachers have been found to have higher teaching competencies (Choy, 1997). Furthermore, the learning environment and teaching outcomes largely depend on the location. The learning outcomes in a country such as Nepal are improved because of quality, private education provision (Joshee, 1994). Besides human and physical facilities, family socioeconomic status plays out in the learning environment (Akmal, 2016). Other researchers, however, have failed to find any substantial difference in the quality of the learning environment in state and private schools (Iqbal, 2012). As for the KRI, the formation of an interactive and informative environment is the main objective of education in both schools, as most are dependent on teacher-centred or autocratic methods of teaching (Kareem, 2017), which are less conducive to friendly learning and collaboration.

The next factor covered in this section is classroom management. There are different approaches deployed when organising a class. The whole class approach can be used to impart identical content to every student in the class, as noted by Abdulovic (2008). In addition, this method enables the assessment of pupils by encouraging group members to collaborate and assist each other in approaching tasks through various methods. Nonetheless, classrooms ought to be set up so that the teacher, group, and group members can collaborate and assume their respective roles. In this context, enhanced consistency in communication is paramount because it allows for better classroom management (Rigelman and Ruben, 2012). The concept explains why traditionally set-up classrooms frequently result in lower productivity and success in the teaching-learning process. When all the parts of the educational process work together, classroom management is deemed effective, as posited in functionalist theory. On the same note, teacher perceptions and understandings of classroom management and the educational process are supported by symbolic interaction theory. The premise of symbolic interaction illustrates how teachers' perceptions can influence the classroom as a whole.

Student-teacher collaboration is part of classroom management. Ackers and Hardman's (2001) work on classroom interaction in Kenyan primary schools showed that classroom overcrowding compromises teacher-student interaction and learning. In overcrowded classrooms, their interactions are limited to a series of pre-defined questions accompanied by discussion on pre-

planned topics, which means teachers rarely ever interact with the substance of student answers until they assess them. Furthermore, overcrowded classes provide minimal opportunities for real discussion and such settings have been shown to limit the occurrence of student collaboration, independent learning, and motivation to develop ideas in the form of questions or theories. The authors' study revealed that the teacher's recitation style was used to probe knowledge and comprehension during teacher-pupil interactions. Student-generated questions were extremely uncommon, in contrast to the regular questions from teachers (ibid).

The size of the class, the teacher-to-student ratio, and the instructional materials utilised during a learning session determine classroom organisation. In a qualitative case study conducted in Zambia, Chuunga (2013) found that several issues, including overcrowding, teacher-student ratios, and insufficient education resources (Buckingham, 2000), have a substantial influence on teachers' pre-planning before giving lectures. The concept of a whole-class approach again emerges as a beneficial requirement, ensuring that all students have access to information via the mutual interaction that occurs at the teaching venue. Teachers consider the class size because the number of pupils in the classroom affects their conduct, and the latter requires comprehensive guidelines for selecting a classroom management method. Private schools usually offer smaller class sizes, averaging around 15–16 students, whereas state schools often contend with larger classes due to resource and staff shortages, often accommodating 25–30 students or more in urban areas (Grossberg, 2017). The situation in state schools is not a universal phenomenon, given that state schools in countries such as Spain, Italy, Chile, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, Australia, and Greece have reported smaller class capacity in state schools (Rampell, 2009). Hence, although the class size does influence class management strategy, it does not always negatively impact the classroom. Small classes allow an adequate teacher-student ratio, which facilitates the teacher's attention for each student and convenient classroom management (Blatchford, Bassett and Brown, 2011). Potentially, effective management of larger classes can also produce positive learning outcomes, resting on the capacity of teachers and the organisation to collaborate and implement best practice organisation and management strategies (Epri, 2016).

The next aspect to consider in understanding the learning environment is student motivation, or even de-motivation, which Sadruddin (2012) notes is imperative in classroom management. Dornyei (2001, p. 143) specifically defines student demotivation as the 'specific external factors that decrease or diminish the motivational foundation of a behavioural intention or an ongoing

action'. According to Dornyei (2001), these external forces include overcrowded classrooms, teaching methods, recurrent changes of teachers, insufficient learning materials (i.e., books), and unfavourable attitudes among members of the class. Motivation/demotivation factors can include a range of variables including class size, teaching approaches, peer attitudes, staff changes, and inadequate learning resources, all of which influence classroom management (Dornyei, 2001; Sadruddin, 2012). Demotivation factors cannot always be avoided in state schools where the administration is required to maintain an open admissions policy (Dornyei, 2001). In a number of countries, state schools are required to admit all students and this may cause such institutions to be less motivated and ambitious towards change and enhancing their academic attainments (Sladoljev-Agejev *et al*., 2005). Research on public schools in the Philippines found that students lacked effective teacher involvement and challenging academic goals compared to private schools (Bernado, Ganotice and King, 2014). The authors added that private schools displayed a more comprehensive engagement with the education environment, process, and pupils' school lives, and so a much more positively constructed learning environment is manifest in private schools in comparison to state.

A significant part of classroom management is managing challenging behaviour in students to ensure that lessons proceed successfully (Ahmad, 2010). Furthermore, class management includes how teachers manage time, materials, coursework, and classroom layout. The aim of classroom management is to ascertain that students enjoy a process of deep engagement in the study process, which helps to create a productive working environment. Effective classroom management facilitates an efficient learning environment, which is manifest in indicators such as student engagement. In most cases, teachers report that classroom management and its connection to elements such as motivation (Alderman, 2004), discipline (Levin and Nolan, 2007), and respect (Sieberer-Nagler, 2016) make for one of the most challenging parts of their job as it is closely associated with motivation.

Kurdistan has recently adopted a new approach to teaching which has influenced the classroom environment. According to Kareem (2017), the country's learning approach was autocratic and centred on the teacher. The advent of student-centred instruction has changed the face of education. As a result of this change, Kurdistan has adopted less traditional methods associated with classroom management strategies, such as group projects that foster a more flexible learning environment and an overall greater freedom in the classroom (Vernez *et al*., 2016). Karim (2014)

further mentions that both state and private schools in Kurdistan are facing transformative changes that impact class management, subsequently influencing student behaviour. Overall, schools in Kurdistan are leaning towards a more expansive interpretation of general freedom in classroom management.

The use of teaching aids in private and state schools is another factor influencing the diversity in the quality of education. Since education is an integrated functional process that depends on many different factors, its overall quality may be negatively impacted by both inadequate physical facilities and teaching resources (Ackers and Hardman, 2001). Effective education provision requires the adoption of technical-material resources that provide support for teachers. Čirić (2014) termed the educational facilities, tools, and various learning resources teachers employ to deliver instruction as the material-technical base. Others, such as Ogbulogo, George and Olukami (2014), conceptualise the technical-material base as a collection of resources, gadgets, and materials. In summary, the careful selection of devices, resources, and materials to serve as teaching aids, alongside a carefully prepared lesson, produces high-quality instruction engagement. Notably, there are no defined rules as to what can serve as a technical-material base, as even simple objects such as teaching sheets can be used to enhance the quality of instruction and meet learner needs. In other words, teaching aids are only one aspect of the learning process. The relationship between the different aspects of the learning process fits into functionalist theory, which elaborates on those concepts in the education process that guarantee students will comprehend information faster, and generate unity in learning.

Teachers can utilise different teaching aids tailored to student needs, to facilitate immersion into the learning process. For instance, when teaching second languages, instructors can use practical objects, such as books, pencils, and other handout material, for more effective teaching. The efficacy of teaching aids becomes manifest in how these resources rely on the senses, such as sight and touch, ensuring a contextual application that students can relate to (Agun and Okunrotifa, 1977). Teachers can further utilise instructional objects bearing a close resemblance to real-life objects. As such, Singh (2015) observes that teachers in urban and rural India can use objects such as models for fruits and animals or dolls to illustrate topics of gender and family. Koech (2017) states that teachers should also refer to real-world situations in their teaching materials. Since they can build a deep bond between students and the subjects they are studying, visual aids are effective teaching tools (Yunus, Salehi and John, 2013).

Visual teaching aids are firmly part of the teaching process because of their strong effect on associations between students and subjects (Yunus, Salehi and John, 2013). Notably, visual materials are not the only resources available to create a positive classroom experience. Indeed, teachers can also utilise auditory teaching aids in the form of audio material. Other options available to the teacher and students include audio-visual teaching aids delivered via visual and audio mechanisms (Ogbulogo, George and Olukanni, 2014). The work of Rupere *et al*. (2013) recommends the use of social games as tools to promote learning in the classroom. In addition, technology has also emerged as a strong contender for one of the best teaching aids. Digital resources such as personal computers, the internet, smartphones, and related hardware and software are all practical tools that teachers can leverage to promote learning within classrooms and encourage home learning for students (Simelance and Mji, 2014). Some particularly innovative usages of technology tools include using computers to create simulations of the natural world that support immersive learning (Prensky, 2001).

The Kurdish education environment has not resisted the inroads of technology as teachers rely more on technology as teaching aids (Balisane, 2015). Due to their innovative resources, private schools frequently provide higher quality education, while state schools benefit from government support and vast experience in their operations. Private schools typically have access to the newest technology. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also referred to a study of 35 Western states which illustrated the resource superiority in private schools and noted how the schools had current visual teaching aids, among other technologies (Dronkers and Robert, 2003). In contrast, research has shown dire resource shortages in regions such as Africa, where education stakeholders have limited financial means of securing resources such as computers and up-to-date books (Ackers and Hardman, 2001; Adomi and Kpangban, 2010). Despite these apparent challenges, state schools are also shifting toward modernisation, particularly for using technology as a teaching aid. Some specific examples of such progress can be seen in Riyadh City, Saudi Arabia, where about 40% of state schools are reported to have modernised (Alsauidi, 2015). Indeed, students and schools that lack such modern resources face inadequate student-teacher interaction, which is imperative in education. Today, private schools have advanced from using technology exclusively for learning and now use such systems as Lebanon's School Information System to create an integrated learning process (Najjar, 2008). The enhanced communication between teachers and parents helps to navigate learning barriers and

improve education. However, traditional learning models are not entirely obsolete as they are teacher-centred and foster better student-teacher relationships, resulting in a productive learning process (Gupta, 2008).

Cates (2006) indicates that the use of teaching materials favourably impacts learning outcomes, such as knowledge improvement, skills, and attitudes. While learning materials are beneficial, Kurdistan faces a shortage of such resources (Hassan, 2014). Kurdish teachers have pointed out that the existing educational resources are not entirely practical as they are not tailored to meet student needs (Hassan, 2014). Moreover, Kraft and Noukahoua (2016) found that only those learning institutions with small populations and adequate technical resources can effectively leverage existing benefits to improve student learning outcomes. Most importantly, the question of teacher support also emerges as a factor affecting resource use. In other instances, the teaching materials fail to offer teachers the required assistance.

The final aspect to consider under the umbrella of education quality is teacher's education in private and state schools. Students are deserving of an educator who can assist them in learning independently (Rigelman and Ruben, 2012). At the same time, the teaching profession requires individuals to be able to harness several facilities concurrently to become effective instructors, and this involves the various aspects of collaboration with one another. This conceptualisation of the teaching role aligns with functionalist theory. Ball and Cohen (1999) recommend that teachers constantly enquire, review, and improve their teaching style to encourage continuous student learning. A shared or collaborative approach to learning also plays into teachers' continuing improvement as they experience knowledge growth. Additionally, teachers learn from assisting students, co-teaching, co-planning, and exploring students' intellects. In sum, experience is vital to teachers' performance because experienced teachers possess expertise and can effectively manage student behaviour more than less experienced teachers (Chuunga, 2013). As seen in a study conducted by Johnson, Hayter, and Broadfoot (2000), in Malawi and Sri Lanka, teachers can effectively employ their knowledge of norms and standards and their professional experience to overcome deficiencies in teaching-learning resources. In this way, they can enhance assessment procedures, maintain assessment tasks and collect portfolios on learners and their achievements.

In addition, teachers must be able to address any emerging challenges during the teaching process effectively. Black and Wiliam (1998) assert that teachers must be adept at conflict resolution

amongst groups of people, students in this case, to facilitate their learning progress. Moreover, teachers should excel in propelling student progress and recognising their weaknesses to facilitate student-centred learning approaches catering to the learner's needs. In particular, effective teaching in this context is significantly impacted by the teachers' academic qualifications, roles, expertise, attitudes, and mannerisms (Darling-Hammond, 1997b). Quite simply, a competent teacher establishes an effective academic environment in the classroom. In retrospect, Craig, Kraft, and Du Plessis (1998) emphasised that efficient teachers need to be proficient in the subject and content-based pedagogical knowledge, demonstrate expertise in the language of instruction, establish a productive and welcoming learning context, encourage learners to be engrossed in their studies, ensure a classroom environment sensitive to the individual needs of a student, uphold high ethical standards, be committed to their work and ensure comprehensive support for the learners. Therefore, being a quality teacher demands an optimistic mindset, punctuality, and high expectations. Furthermore, teachers' credentials and expertise are integral to high-quality teaching. Teaching-learning is rewarding when teachers are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, experience, and expertise. Similarly, subject-based knowledge and effective instructions may also benefit students.

Teacher education involves obtaining specific knowledge and skills to guarantee student achievement. According to Blömeke and Delaney (2012), teachers' professionalism directly correlates with their knowledge. Teachers' education is the primary process to ensure one acquires relevant professional knowledge. It is essential to note that the requirements for teachers' education may vary between countries and regions, just as education provision differs between private and state academic institutions. For instance, in the USA, the professional requirements for teachers in private schools in Alabama must have certification credentials but the same policy is not imposed in Arkansas (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The fundamental aspect for the general quality of education is viewed as determined by teachers' education (Metzler and Woessmann, 2012). In order to teach in both private and state schools, teachers must possess certification or other evidence of having acquired the required level of competence. Teachers are required to prove their credentials within designated timeframes in some countries. Similarly, teachers in the Kurdistan region must have proof of their academic credentials. Nonetheless, verifying teacher credentials and making necessary improvements is associated with significant hindrances (Vernez *et al*., 2016). In the recent past, Kurdistan implemented policy reforms that

mandated specific standards for teachers' education. Currently, the minimum requirement to qualify to be a teacher is a bachelor's degree (Kurdistan Region, 2013). Notwithstanding the reforms in the education sector in Kurdistan, Fox (2017) emphasises that the region has neglected the impact of globalisation on education, which has negatively affected teachers' education. However, the Ministry of Education continues to regularly facilitate teacher training programmes (Jamal, 2008).

Overall, the quality of education depends on many factors, including teaching methods, assessment and feedback, learning environment, classroom management, teaching aids, and teachers' education. Each of these parameters has been considered with reference to the literature. The main conclusions drawn from the accumulation of literature analysed in this chapter is that there is a difference in the quality of education in private and state sectors, but this difference varies from region to region. The level of education in state schools in most developed countries in affluent regions does not differ from the level in private schools; however, in developing countries, where state financing of the public sector is insufficient, private schools can offer better quality education due to the implementation of more developed teaching methods and innovative aids, a more competitive salary which attracts better professionals, and a learning environment based on more positive aspects. Kurdistan is undergoing substantial change in the education system, with progress observed in both the state and private education sectors, as affirmed by the limited accessible information regarding the specifics of schools in both sectors. In the next subchapter, the reasons for choosing a private or state academic institution are explored.

2.3.4 Reasons for Choosing Private or State School

The choice of either private or state school is influenced by various reasons and some common themes were identified in the exploration of literature. As mentioned, the choice between private or state school, particularly in developing countries, is influenced by people's perceptions of their quality (Aslam, 2009; Talance, 2016). In essence, different factors, such as the opportunity for professional progress and academic achievement, influence this choice (Jimenez and Lockheed, 1995). In this literature review section, these factors will be explored in a more in-depth and extensive manner. Just as functionalism helps explain the rise of social cohesion, conflict theory helps explain social inequality, and symbolic interaction theory helps explain the influences of

classroom relationships. In this context, special circumstances are created for the development of the educational process in both state and private schools.

Every state has the primary responsibility to make sure that education is based on four foundations—accessibility, adaptability, acceptability, and availability—regardless of the provider, including non-state entities such as religious organisations and other private authorities (Moumne and Saudemont, 2015). This commitment is based on Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights as adopted by UNESCO. It states that every human being has a basic right to education. It is worth emphasising that choosing a private school is anchored in the fundamental and protected right of students to education. In seeking schools and institutions of learning, people consider the availability of adequate and quality resources such as well-equipped classrooms, trained educators, clean water for students to drink, well-maintained washrooms, and adequate reading and writing materials (ibid).

Therefore, education provided by both state and private schools must be accessible to everyone, irrespective of the legal circumstances and without discrimination. However, accessibility is concerned with education being accepted by both parents and students and displaying characteristics of cultural appropriateness, relevance, and impeccable quality. As outlined by Denessen et al. (2001), parents make their choice of school for their children based on various attributes they view as significant, including the cultural appropriateness and cultural values of the school. Educational institutions should be adaptable enough to accommodate such attributes. As a result, adaptability requires educational institutions to be responsive to the changing cultural and social environments in which their students are immersed (Moumne and Saudemont, 2015). Essentially, the reasons impacting the choice of private or state school are at the heart of the issue. These four foundations are related to the theories of conflict, symbolic interaction, and functionalism. Conflict theory, for example, is pertinent to the fundamentals of availability and accessibility by justifying inequities in society that may restrict access to education. Furthermore, functionalist theory is linked to the need for adaptation, where the development of solidarity is essential to provide adaptable education that adapts to changing conditions. Last but not least, symbolic interaction theory emphasises the need for a positive relationship between educators and their students in a non-discriminatory school atmosphere. Although the facilities at private schools have a tendency to be greater, many parents choose to send their children to state schools for a variety of reasons. According to Beavis (2004), parents' failure to make educated decisions may

be due to their own lack of education. Furthermore, some base their decisions on purely financial considerations. Parents who are more committed to their children's academic achievements may enrol them in a private institution rather than a state one (Pandolfini, 2013). Simply said, there are a number of potential reasons for selection bias (irregular bias). Selection bias arises when parents choose private or state schools based on subjective qualities related to desired educational results, and students fail to manage these attributes. Despite the expensive tuition and other fees, parents send their children to private schools because they have higher expectations for their children's academic achievement. Ultimately accomplishing the expectations of parents generates successfulness. Given that they must account for the inputs (costs) and related expectations, private schools must maintain higher standards of performance (ibid). The rest of the subsection will cover some of the rationale for selecting a state or private schools. Specifically, the roles of family, students, teachers, and the educational process will be explored in detail.

The role of family is a key theme when examining the elements that influence parents' judgements on public or private school (Kornblum, 2011). The significant role of the family as part of the society cannot be overemphasised. For instance, the family plays a critical role in the upbringing of the child, facilitating socialisation, as explained in functionalist theory. Conflict theory, on the other hand, describes how families contribute to societal inequality by providing their children with a variety of opportunities. The selection of a school relies greatly on the family because parents determine the type of school that their children will attend, either private or state. The selection of a school is anchored in the parents' desire to have their children access the best possible education (Buddin, Cordes and Kirby, 1998; Kornblum, 2011). The family's social standing, financial position, and the perspectives of parents on the world are key factors that impact the selection of a school. A student's desire to select a specific role is impacted by the family's social background, influencing their desire to choose a particular role.

Affluent families, on the other hand, choose private schools, while those with little financial resources seek diversity in public institutions (Byard, Kosciw and Bartkiewicz, 2012). Wealthy families from countries such as Liberia are more likely to have their children join private and religious schools that post higher standardised test scores than government schools, whereas low-income families are more likely to send their children to government schools (Dixon and Humble, 2017). Financial factors, such as a family's wealth, do not always influence the choice of whether a child attends public or private school. Countries such as Germany and the Netherlands, where

both public and private schools are rarely influenced by tuition costs, are excellent instances of this phenomenon (Dronkers and Avram, 2009). Nevertheless, the situation is different in countries such as the USA and UK, where parents are more likely to pay a premium for a private school (Dronkers and Avram, 2009).

The socio-economic status of the family plays a fundamental role in determining the preference for costly private schools. The family's ability to pay for a prominent private school is an important aspect, as families with more disposable income are more likely to enrol their children in private schools compared to families with low incomes (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987). Such sites are critical places where their children can interact with peers from better educated families and who possess diverse cultural resources that can assist the development of their children (Yaacoba, Osman and Bachok, 2014). Conflict theory, which posits inequality in the community, can be used to explain this, but, nonetheless, it does not imply that state schools are solely for low-income students.

In further reviewing this element of socio-economic status, a family's income is one of the factors in school choice for their children. Although according to Rehman *et al*. (2010) the financial position of a family has a significant influence on school choices, this is not always the case. For example, despite the availability of state schools, many low-income families in Lahore, Pakistan, prefer private schools (Alderman, Kim and Orazem, 2003). These families prefer low-cost private schools and the wealthy choose more expensive private institutions. For instance, private schools in underdeveloped countries accommodate 51% of children from families earning less than USD $1 per day (Alderman, Orazem and Paterno, 2001). Another good example of this is the high number of low-cost private schools in India. Tooley (2009) found that a majority of urban children from low-income families in India attended budget private schools, which provides an appropriate explanation for this phenomenon. Parents that desire the best education for their children choose these schools (Nambissan, 2012). Even in low-income districts, state school attendance is only marginally higher than private school enrolment, at 40% compared to 37% in private schools (Alderman, Orazem and Paterno, 2001).

The image or reputation of a school matters to families because it is believed to reflect the family's status. Tooley (2017b), for example, quotes the *Oxfam Education Report* from 2000, which states that some low-cost private schools, particularly in Africa, are perceived as being of inferior quality compared to public schools; therefore, the preference of parents would be to have their children

attend public schools rather than low-cost private schools that exhibit low quality and undesirable reputation. The main attraction to state schools for parents could possibly be attributed to the name of the school, which represents their image. Parents make conscious decisions, according to Cheng, Trivitt and Wolf (2016, p. 362), because 'parents who value particular school characteristics tend to choose schools with brands that espouse those characteristics'. When choosing a state school, elements such as cultural and social security, academic impact, and knowledge of the institution all have a direct impact on school reputation and image.

As part of the choice, the values of a family and those of the chosen school should also be in tandem. Wearing a uniform is part of school tradition (Andersen, 2008), but not all families accept this. Religious beliefs can also be an important part of a family's values. This perspective resonates most with parents who believe that the structure of religious thinking is more effective in private schools (Driessen, Agirdag and Merry, 2016). Coleman, Hoffer and Kilgore (1982) claim that 'a family's Catholic religion increases the likelihood of children enrolling in Catholic schools'. In addition to this argument, Yang and Kavaardi (2004) explain that factors such as religion, socio-economic position, age, origin, number of children, and region significantly influence the parental choice of a Roman Catholic church-run schools over other schools. Moreover, the preference for a Catholic school over another is founded on the parents' belief that these schools prioritise academic performance, foster emotional growth in pupils, advance religious growth in line with Catholicism, and operate as communities rather than bureaucracies (Giza, 2019). Religious affiliation has traditionally played a role in defining educational priorities, as seen in the case of Muslims in Bangladesh (Suppramaniam, Kularajasingam and Sharmin, 2019).

Parents expect good academic performance when sending their children to school. The belief that private schools provide better knowledge, which results in higher academic performance than in state schools (Joly, Barros and Marini, 2009), has led to the question of whether private schools are more effective than public schools (Duncan and Sandy, 2007). However, Silva and Crenitte (2015) offer a different perspective, as they posit that academic performance varies with levels of growth, making it difficult to differentiate between the quality of education provided by state and private schools. Exam scores have always been used to assess academic progress in both types of institution. Consequently, comparing the results can help one understand more about the best type of school, based on the scores posted by students. Even with this reasoning, there are still ongoing arguments on the variations of state scores compared to private and public schools (Duncan and

Sandy, 2007), emphasising the significance of other factors when looking to understand and determine the performance of state and private schools.

The level of education of the parents also plays a factor in determining school choices. Educated parents, as suggested by Mbagwu and Ajaegbu (2016) in their study on Owerri, place a higher importance on education and are more likely to believe that a good education would lead to their children's successful adulthood. Arguably, parents with high levels of education place a high importance on education and send their children to private schools where they believe they will receive a more tailored education that would guarantee them a better future (Yaacoba, Osman and Bachok, 2014). In most cases, the level of parents' education has been a deciding factor for families when selecting a private school to enrol their children in (Duru-Bellat, 2004). Highly educated parents are more likely to conduct research before selecting a school to be in a position to make more informed decisions about the school. For example, Catt and Rhinesmith's (2016) findings imply that parents in such locations as Washington, D.C., do a better job of researching private schools in order to make informed selections about where their children should attend. The target is to choose schools that would guarantee their children high academic outcomes. Nonetheless, some parents who lack expertise or time and are unable to assist their children with their education may be willing to send them to private schools in order to allow them to receive greater attention, resulting in an increase in educational level. Most parents would want their children to attend a prestigious university, so they seek out the best schools to prepare them for entrance into university.

In addition, students can determine whether private or state schools would be chosen. Parents consider their children's personality as well as their educational needs when picking state or private school. The intellectual capabilities of students and level of critical thinking of a student, for example, will play a part in identifying the optimum educational setting for them. Academically competent students are more likely to attend expensive schools, where their parents believe they will receive the best education (Lankford and Wyckoff, 1992). Sherafat and Murthy (2016), who focused on Mysore city in India, identified the intellectual capacities of students and the level of personality of individual learners as factors that influence decision-making about the schools that students attend. In numerous countries, for example, private schools can concentrate on any subjects they like, such as economics, languages, or history. Thus, in order to enrol in these institutions, a student must be proficient in the basic disciplines that are offered. State schools,

albeit not all, encourage equality in education by admitting all students as those having the same abilities. Not all state schools uphold fairness and equality while handling students. In countries such as Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, some state schools have a tiered system that guarantees special provisions for young talented students (Wolfensberger and Hogenstijn, 2016). Irrespective of what happens in state schools, it is widely recognised that gifted students have a better chance of receiving an education commensurate with their mental capacities in private schools than in state schools. More particularly, gifted students attending private schools in some countries have access to special supporting initiatives. One of the notable initiatives is the scholarships that are more pervasive in private schools as compared to state schools. In this case, scholarships and awards are encouragement for gifted students as reflected in countries such as Turkey (Sahin, 2015).

The location of the school is also a significant factor that affects students' desire to attend a particular school. Distance is an important reason why students would choose to go to a new schooling environment, with others preferring the same familiar locations they are used to. These differences can be explained by the differing student preferences and desires. It is likely that students might choose state schools because they live in the same neighbourhood, know most of the people, and their friends attend the school (Walford, 2004; Davis, 2011). The advantage is that the students then do not have to change their common environment, and can continue having the same friends and interacting with the same people. As a result, location is an important factor when selecting a school (Yaacob, Osman and Bachok, 2014). Parents themselves might also be of the same idea, expecting their children to attend the same local schools with familiar faces and neighbourhood students rather than being in a new environment. As a result of this, parents end up expecting students to choose schools that are nearest to them (Suppramaniam, Kularajasingam and Sharmin, 2019). Logistically, these locations make it easier for students to attend school, as things like transportation arrangements are easy to make. However, choosing a school based on location might mean the student misses out, as the nearest schools they like might not necessarily be the best schools in the eyes of some parents (ibid). This is vital in revealing that there are many other factors that play a role in determining the selection of a private school. In further exploring the role of location in influencing the decision for selection of a school, the notion of the popularity and unpopularity of schools becomes apparent because of their strategic location, which is an area

that leads to a balance of supply and demand for the school (Yaacob, Osman and Bachok, 2014). Essentially, the school chosen should be the one that is generally the most convenient.

In some instances, students choose their schools based on their performance in different education-related subjects. Students who are at risk of dropping out or who have behavioural issues have the choice of attending schools that specialise in assisting them with different issues (U.S. Department of Education Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2007). Some students may wish to pursue a career in sports, and there are institutions where they can be assured of both academic success and completion of school, as well as admission to a sports programme from which they may benefit professionally (Crandall, 2007). Other students seek institutions based on their social subject preferences, searching for schools that provide extracurricular activities based on the notion that these preferences tend to outweigh the typical academic considerations (Kamenetz, 2015). In the overall sense, the decision about which school to attend is sometimes made solely by the student, with no regard for any other factors.

Parents also tend to consider how well schools can handle special educational needs. Some students might require additional resources when it comes to meeting their educational needs. As it was noted from the schools of New Haven, Connecticut, given how resource-endowed private schools are, they tend to be more likely than public schools to meet these special educational needs (Neilson and Zimmerman, 2014). This could be one of the reasons why parents choose private schools over public schools for their children. Parents also tend to look at schools that are more inclusive in terms of how they ensure the educational rights of students, especially children with special needs (Lindsay, Wedell and Dockrell, 2020). Thus, parents would look for schools that have the necessary facilities, particularly for children with special needs, to ensure that they are also well-included in the educational process.

Finally, parents consider the school's safety. When it comes to their children's educational environment, parents usually consider school and neighbourhood safety (Hsu and Yuan-fang, 2013). It is widely believed that students would greatly benefit from a better educational experience if they attended a safer school. Generally, it is critical that the schools chosen provide their children with a safe environment in which to learn, as this translates to better learning for students.

Furthermore, the educational process revolves primarily around its two main actors, the teachers and students. The collaboration between students and teachers could be explored from the perspective of the symbolic interaction theory, which holds that quality educational results could be realised when there is a successful teacher-student. A teacher is someone who will help a child make the transition from childhood to adulthood. Some parents and students use class size as a criterion for selecting a school because they believe smaller classes result in better education for their children because teachers are bound to give more attention to students because of reduced workload (Dauber, 2013). Nevertheless, Hattie's research shows that class size is not always a factor, and that teachers' efficacy does have an effect on students' achievement (Hattie, 2008).

The relationship between a teacher and a student is a vital consideration. The rapport between teachers and students is an additional selling point for a school (Dauber, 2013). Maintaining a cordial and amicable rapport with a child can be especially challenging because of the inherent complexity of human relationships and the need for a friendly relationship. Working together as a team, a teacher and student make up an integral part of the educational process. Symbolic interaction theory asserts that teacher expectations are at the centre of the educational process. As Brück, Di Maio and Miaari (2019) note, conflicts, which are an inevitable part of any educational process, even the ones that function properly, should be avoided or resolved amicably rather than allowed to grow, as growing conflicts are likely to have a negative effect on students' academic performance.

The knowledge, experience, and qualifications of educators are crucial to the success of any educational process. Being an effective educator calls for extensive knowledge and the capacity to work in tandem with students. The success of a classroom relies heavily on the expertise, experience and qualifications of its teachers, especially when it comes to the management of students. Teacher qualifications depend on the certifications they get after attending approved courses and training programmes (Kane, Rockoff and Staiger, 2008). Those who commit themselves to teaching succeed no matter what type of school they work in, whether state or private (Pelt, Allison and Allison, 2007). The choice of the teacher as the main factor in the choice of school is explained by the desire to study with a teacher who has better qualifications and can teach students more efficiently. Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005) defined a quality teacher as a successful teacher. Additionally, being a qualified teacher means that his/her knowledge is highly appreciated and that such teacher will be able to impart considerable knowledge to students.

Teacher absenteeism is another factor in deciding on a school. In line with the study by Watkins (2000), absenteeism is more common among state school teachers, particularly in rural areas like Rajasthan. State schools, especially those in low-income areas, often struggle with teacher absenteeism and apathy (Tooley, Dixon and Olaniyan, 2005). In India, for instance, 5.7% of teachers were absent from their classrooms in state schools, but this figure was only 0.5% in low-cost private schools. In the same country, teacher absenteeism in primary state schools equated to 25% and was even as low as 50% when the schools were checked spot checked (Kremer *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore, while only 5.2% of students were absent from their private schools, 15% were absent from their public schools in Ghana (Tooley and Dixon, 2005b). Additionally, having visited both government and private schools unannounced, Tooley and Dixon (2005b) found that 98% of teachers in private schools were teaching at their designated teaching time, while 75% of government school teachers did the same, finding a statistically significant association ($p < 0.01$) between school type and teacher activity (whether teaching or non-teaching at their teaching hours).

Professionalism in pedagogy, methodology, and techniques of teaching (Rotana, 2013) as well as teacher credentials (Betts *et al.*, 2006) are also crucial for teachers. Teacher credentials are not only concerned with rates but also include appraisals for the achievements of teachers, which are often confirmed through properly graded research. These credentials provide evidence of a teacher's achievements, helping parents choose the right schools. On the other hand, situations where schools lack teachers might also be a reason for the parents not to choose specific schools, given that the presence of a certain number of teachers with appropriate qualifications almost always guarantees students will receive the necessary skills from professionals. Nevertheless, when teachers are unavailable or their qualifications inadequate, these schools might be a questionable choice for the parents.

Additionally, a key component of excellent teaching and learning is the educational process, which encompasses the instructor, student, family, and society. The application of functional theory to the education process stems from the socialisation element, which is focused on the seamless working of all parts. According to symbolic interaction theory, a seamless educational process is guaranteed in instances where all members of the society work together without conflict. According to Skutil, Havlková and Matjková (2015), the teaching methods employed, the learning resources offered, the class size, curriculum, and teacher-student ratio are critical aspects of the

educational process. As per the research conducted in the UK by Blatchford *et al*. (2003), class size stands out as a critical aspect of a successful education process. Even though Hattie recommends cutting class size from 25–15 students (Hattie, 2008, p. 86), the author also states that class size is not always an important factor because reducing a class from 25 to 15 students does not necessarily mean that teachers will maximise the opportunities of having fewer students. This is because, regardless of class size, teachers often use the same teaching methods with large classrooms (Hattie, 2008). Hanushek (1998) discovered no link between class size and student performance. Extensive econometric research backs up this finding. Hattie (2008) and Hanushek (1998) both demonstrate that class size is not significant.

Regarding school subjects, these are the different elements taught in school, with a single lesson often focusing on one subject matter. The most common subjects, for example in Ireland, are science, physical education, mathematics, history, and English (Lynch and Moran, 2006). However, different schools will likely have the freedom and opportunity to add subjects to their curriculum, enabling students to expand their knowledge and horizon. Private and state schools tend to differ in the extent or scope of their curriculum (Choy, 1997). For instance, countries like Finland provide their private schools with greater freedom and flexibility in teaching, and they can ground their subjects on specific state curriculum proposals and regulations (Sahlberg, 2012). Public schools in Finland, as well as in countries like Nigeria, China, and Ghana, however, have rigid curriculum standards (Tooley, 2004; Sahlberg, 2012). This might include subjects that students are not interested in. As stated by Epple and Romano (1998), given the greater freedom and flexibility given to private schools in determining their education plan and subjects, learners become attracted to private schools to attain the level of knowledge and information that they wish for. The state school system tends to base subject choices on what they perceive necessary for the attainment of basic knowledge. However, when students enter private schools, they likely will be more eager to choose the subjects they want to study and only have a limited number of subjects depending on the direction of the schools (Robertson, Mundy and Verger, 2012). The curricula in state schools might not allow much freedom, and therefore could be boring for students (ibid). This is how the school subject influences students' choices between private and state schools. Some students therefore become disillusioned in state schools and search for more attractive options in private schools. This is how subject choice and freedoms affect school choices. The alternative to this is that students might fall short of state academic standards.

Quality school buildings and a safe environment are an important part of the educational process. According to Woolner *et al*. (2007), the actual physical environment is one of the features that should be considered when looking to enhance the learning environment of the school. Furthermore, Neilson and Zimmerman (2014), who focused on New Haven, Connecticut, found a link between the condition of the educational facilities and the performance of the students. In rural areas, when new school buildings are constructed and old ones repaired, student scores are affected positively (Neilson and Zimmerman, 2014). However, the planners of schools in the city rarely ever consider student needs when planning schools. As a result of this, schools planned in the city tend not to account for obstacles in the educational process, such as the increased numbers of students and other possible educational conditions, and this is mostly the case in poor areas. This will then not motivate students to learn (Vincent, 2006). Safety at school is another effect of this scenario even when it is not convenient for other reasons (Jochim *et al*., 2014).

It is important to place school facilities in the appropriate context. School facilities, understood as 'the space interpretation and physical expression of the school curriculum' (Alimi, Ehinola and Alabi, 2012, p. 44), are an important part of the student learning and educational process. Notably, the same authors discovered no association between school amenities and student achievement in both state and private schools in Nigeria. Still, Adebayo (2009), who also focused on Nigeria, disagreed with this conclusion, pointing out that infrastructure in state schools appears worse than in private ones. In Pakistan, however, state schools have better educational facilities than private schools (Farooqi *et al*., 2015). Tooley and Dixon (2005b) reported that both private and state schools in Sub-Saharan Africa have an adequate supply of blackboards, desks, and chairs. Private schools, on the other hand, provide students with amenities such as safe drinking water. Importantly though, state schools have more playgrounds than private schools (Tooley and Dixon, 2005b).

Students require both academic development and extracurricular activities. Physical education and sports programmes are frequently used in both state and private schools to help children develop their psychomotor skills and learning. Schools conduct physical education programmes to encourage children to live healthier lives (Institute of Medicine, Food and Nutrition Board, Committee on Physical Activity and Physical Education in the School Environment, 2013). According to Pearsman *et al*. (2001) in research conducted in South Carolina, comparisons of the physical activity of boys and girls in private and public schools found that private school students

tended to participate more in sports. Public school boys were more interested in community-based sports than private school boys or girls (Pearsman *et al*., 2001). Physical activity has numerous health benefits, making PE classes invaluable for children of any school (O'Reilly and Brunette, 2013). Saudi Arabia has its own cultural norms when it comes to sports. For many years, only boys were allowed to participate in sports programmes and it was not until the 2017–2018 school year that public schools began offering PE classes to female pupils (Hubbard, 2017).

. As per the Institute of Medicine's Committee on Physical Activity and Physical Education in the School Environment, schools need to consistently value the need of students to engage in co-curricular activities such as sports. The institute discovered that students who engaged in regular physical activity had higher GPAs given the positive influence physical activity had on academic achievement (2013). Parker (2016) also reported similar results when comparing the impacts of physical activity on student education. Thus, schools should not eliminate PE time in order to increase student achievement (Rodenroth, 2010; Howie and Pate, 2012). Based on this, more physical activity classes and school sports may be a reason for choosing private or state schools. Unfortunately, there no comparative research could be found on private and state schools in terms of their physical education programmes.

2.3.5 The Impact of Private and State Schools on the Educational Process

Private and state schools influence the education process in numerous ways. The controversy arises due to the fact that, while fostering educational unity and adhering to functionalist theory, they simultaneously generate conflict in the community and stimulate discussion within the process of education (Thompson, 2015). Private and state schools have numerous impacts on the manner on how the educational process is arranged, and these influence the society. The aforementioned differentiations between state and private institutions significantly influence the educational process overall. Conflict theory supports the educational process by cultivating intense competition between teachers and students competing for higher paid positions and grades, respectively. Meanwhile, the educational process endeavours to impart students with a harmonious integration of knowledge and skills, which resonates with functionalist theory. Ultimately, the educational process constitutes a social process wherein numerous individuals aspire to achieve steadiness and equality. The former process affords students equal opportunities, which they ought to exploit to the fullest to realise their targets. In order to understand comprehensively the

ramifications of private and state schools on the educational process, further investigation and analysis are necessary; this includes the analysis and evaluation of economic, social and academic variables.

To begin with, this subsection explores the impact on family budget. Every school, whether state or private, possesses a portion of funds in their accounts that are utilised to accomplish educational goals. State institutions in developing nations have scarce finances (Hillman and Jenkner, 2004). Private schools possess a greater financial investment and exert a more pronounced influence over the educational process (Clarke-Molloy and O'Brien, 2017). Consequently, private schools prioritise technological developments that significantly influence the educational process. There is little amount of research that focuses on the state school effects on the educational process in an economic context. Additionally, in cities such as Monorovia, Liberia, parents take into account school affordability as a determining element in the school selection process (Humble and Dixon, 2017). The financial burden of sending their children to private institutions can be significant since middle-class families spend a significant amount of their budget to enable their children to attend private schools (Goggins, 2010). In low-income households, where parents desire for their children to excel academically but are unable to do so because of high level tuition fees, the situation becomes even more convoluted. This is demonstrated by reports (Rudaw, 2017) of a rise in student withdrawals from private institutions attributable to prohibitively unaffordable tuition. However, low-cost private schools have been helpful for underprivileged parents. An illustration of this can be found in developing nations like Kenya, Indonesia, Pakistan, Tanzania, Jamaica, and Ghana, where private schools serve affluent communities and there are also a number of affordable low-cost private schools to accommodate low-income households (Heyneman and Stern, 2015).

Additionally, when considering the impact on society, low-cost private schools are generally regarded as advantageous, but they can perpetuate inequality. Mcloughlin (2013, p. 1), for example, states that 'concerns that the growth in low-cost private schooling is exacerbating or perpetuating existing inequalities in developing countries—particularly between urban and rural populations, lower and (relatively) higher-income families, and girls and boys—are in the literature'. In essence, low-income private schools are becoming accessible for some poor families, albeit in smaller proportions in comparison to their higher-income counterparts. India is used as an example of inequality by Mcloughlin (2013), who states that only 10% of children from underprivileged families enrol in low-cost private schools, while 70% of students from wealthier families attend.

Inequality was defined by Lee (2013) as the difference that exists between the low and high academic excellence of students. Similarly, inequality is shown among state school students who acquire lower education levels, leading to lower-paying jobs in the future, and those who attend private schools and then acquire better knowledge and higher-paying employment (Douglas-Hall and Chau, 2007). Students perceive that inequity stems from the inability to post good academic results, which is the outcome of being enrolled in either private or state schools. Aslam and Atherton (2012) posit that the costly tuition fees associated with private schools contributed to the perpetuation of educational inequality. Conversely, Foondun (2002) contends that such fees only intensify pre-existing social inequalities. Consequently, it can be deduced that the degree of inequality will only rise, as the gap between the rich and poor widens (Reardon, 2012). Private schools, as argued by Mundy and Menashy (2014) and O'Keeffe (2001), exacerbate socioeconomic inequality by restricting tuition to children from affluent households. Overall, state schools exhibit a higher level of inclusion for students irrespective of their socioeconomic backgrounds, thus, advancing social justice, fairness, inclusivity, tolerance, and diversity in the society.

Additionally, private institutions bring about inequality in education, as a consequence of diverse financial backgrounds of people, for instance, in countries such as India (Mcloughlin, 2013). Conflict theory can be used to explore how private schools generate inequality. Education, in accordance with the theory, does not afford individuals social benefits or opportunities; instead, it serves as a means to maintain power. Essentially, private schools in this context limit advantages and opportunities to a great number of families living below the poverty line and even others who live above the poverty line. From this viewpoint, inequality emanates from the expensive education in private schools that make it accessible to only the most affluent individuals in society (Moumne and Saudemont, 2015). In addition, the financial concerns that many families encounter present a variety of obstacles to private school enrolment. Consequently, those with the means to enrol in private institutions seem to be situated at an advantage over the general populace.

Stecher and Bohrnstedt (2000), Stasz and Stecher (2000), and Ehrenberg *et al.* (2001) all concur that private schools have a more stringent admissions policy than their public counterparts. Particularly, selection concerns arise due to the more stringent admission criteria of private schools (Frenette and Chan, 2015). Under most conditions, state institutions are obligated to admit students who need to get an education, in line with admissions policies, at the requisite age. In the case of

private schools, the probability of these students being denied admission is more probable. In general, admission to high-end private schools is primarily determined by a student's knowledge and skill level; in contrast, low-cost private schools exhibit greater flexibility in student acceptance (Munteanu, 2021). Students who have the desire to acquire knowledge but lack adequate skills are rejected, thus contributing to inequality. The inequality goes against the key features of the right to education as espoused by UNESCO. Private institutions, in conclusion, have more stringent admissions requirements, which exacerbates inequality.

Finances may exert influence on an individual's choice of school. In Pakistan, for instance, the society is split between those who possess the means and opportunity to attend private institutions, and those who would, in theory, based on their knowledge, but cannot in practice owing to financial limitations. As articulated by Omer and Jabeen (2016), parents' decision-making process in Pakistan is determined by their financial capacity. Additionally, there are instances where families are capable of paying tuition in private establishments, but the degree of knowledge restricts them from getting into private schools. This gives rise to societal divisions, specifically among the youth, and may result in social status-based discrimination. Consequently, this occurrence contravenes the fundamental tenets of functionalist education theory because education addresses the needs of society by advancing rights, social esteem, and networking (Griffiths et al., 2012).

Iqbal et al. (2012), who focused on 59 developing countries, suggest that education does not promote women to take an active role in society, further asserting that education does not support gender equality. Similarly, considerable numbers of women in nations like India and Bangladesh continue to be unable to access education, demonstrating that the gender divide persists (John, 2017). Regarding state and privates, their institutions can offer mixed-gender classes. However, nations such as Turkey advocate for single-gender schools, specifically those catering to females (Başkurt and Ranklin, 2013). In the West, separate education for boys and girls is limited to a handful of private institutions, but in the East this is a more pervasive practice, as the Islamic religion is dominant and associations between men and women are based on different considerations (Hamdan, 2005). In Kurdistan, Islam is also prominent. Despite women still being more controlled compared to men, the reformation of Kurdish society has occurred and women's involvement in social life has become more pronounced (Kaya, 2016). Conversely, with regard to gender equality in academic settings, women are afforded equivalent educational opportunities to

men. Nonetheless, when discussing gender equality in the educational context, boys tend to dominate elementary school in terms of gender equality, while girls dominate in the second grade. This continues inequality in the society (Kaya, 2016).

Gender inequality can manifest itself in the selection of state or private schools within contexts where parents hold specific beliefs regarding the social and religious responsibilities of men and women. Indeed, this disparity often becomes more pronounced and pervasive in underprivileged societies, such as the case of Malawi schools, where financial resources are allocated to the education of males (Kamwendo, 2010). Subsequently, women face having to stop their education due to financial constraints on their families. Nearly 57 million children of school-age are not enrolled, as per a UNICEF survey (Dei *et al*., 2006). In certain nations, such as India, the majority of children who are not enrolled in school are females, as gender inequality disproportionately affects this demographic group (John, 2017). As a result of elevated levels of poverty, the education sector is primarily supported by insufficient public funds (Dei *et al*., 2006). Moreover, the limited opportunities that do arise are predominantly extended to males. Similarly, aside from the financial constraints, gender inequality can still occur when the rights of individuals of a particular gender are restricted. Globally, gender inequality has endured for an extended period of time (Kamwendo, 2010). There is a prevalence of gender inequality in societies that have high rates of illiteracy and poverty. Human rights violations have also been associated with gender-related concerns. Moreover, women are frequently expected to provide domestic care for the family in numerous nations. Additionally, female enrolment is virtually equivalent to that of males during the early years of education. Conversely, the quantity of female learners diminishes as they progress through the stages and progress to higher levels (Connell and Wellborn, 2009). Fewer women in higher education can be attributed to the higher rate dropouts among women compared to males (ibid). Presently, there is a worldwide trend toward equality in every aspect of society, with the purpose of every institution and process being to ensure that all individuals are treated impartially and equally. Nevertheless, inequality still exists globally. In this context, access to school education is unequal in some countries.

Furthermore, positions of authority are typically delegated to men in many societies. Recent developments across the globe have contributed to the widespread belief that education equips students with the skills necessary to perform their responsibilities effectively. Usually, priorities are given to men's educational opportunities due to the perception that masculine responsibilities

hold greater significance (Adkins, 2002). Nonetheless, women are primarily trained for the home in regard to the roles that they are expected to execute in society (Chang, 2000).

Furthermore, it is vital to consider the impact on exam results. The functionalist view holds that the purpose of education is to equip students with the skills necessary for socialising with others in the community. Parents anticipate that educators will impart the most knowledge possible to their children when they fund their education. Additionally, parents who demand such knowledge anticipate higher test and exam scores. Each of these variables plays a role in elevating the standard of education in private institutions. Nevertheless, as stated previously, geography does matter and, in some nations, public institutions provide a superior education. In Nigeria, as stated by Olatoye and Agbatogun (2009), academic achievement is comparatively higher among pupils attending private schools as opposed to state institutions. This generates discord among students attending public schools, as they lack access to supplementary materials. Increased funding for technological instruments and improved laboratories can help private schools achieve high test scores (Olasehinde and Olatoye, 2014). Research conducted by Ryan (2014) in Australia on the effect of school choice on student academic achievement indicated that exam performance and university admission are contingent on a multitude of factors, not solely the decision between private and public schools. Therefore, education remains crucial due to the standardisation of the knowledge assessed in examinations; academic background is largely inconsequential, so long as students diligently pursue their studies and possess the necessary skills and knowledge (Ryan, 2014). This suggests that it is critical for the education process to go beyond standardised exams.

As a measure of institutional quality, the university admissions rate is one component. For instance, GCSE/GCE grades hold significant importance for students in England (Gorard, 2007). Admission to the preeminent institution of higher education is contingent upon performance in examinations. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, private schools can modify their curriculums as they wish, and such modifications potentially affect the quantity of standardised knowledge that students acquire (Cedar Hill Preparatory School, 2019). Similar to the requirement for secondary school examinations, university admission is contingent upon the possession of certain fundamental knowledge and skills. In its 2012 report, the Council for American Private Education evaluated the ACT (American college testing) scores of prospective students in relation to university admission. Based on academic performance, private school pupils had 15–20% greater opportunities for university admission than their public school counterparts. The substantial

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discrepancy between the two can be rationalised on the grounds that public schools offer general education, whereas private schools exclusively prepare students for college admissions.

Nonetheless, student intentions, behaviours, and attitudes also impact the university admissions rate (Ryan, 2014). A student's decision not to enrol in university immediately after completing high school is not contingent upon the institution they attended. Entrance rates are frequently assessed in the immediate aftermath of high school graduation; therefore, these data are disregarded if a student enrols at university within a year or two of graduating from school. Hence, entrance rates can be influenced by a multitude of factors beyond the sector of the educational institution (state or private).

2.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the primary attributes of state and private institutions were analysed. The literature suggests that majority of private schools exhibit a significantly greater degree of autonomy due to their status as non-state institutions and receipt of private funding. All other variations between private and state schools such as the curriculum, governance, and the level of state control are dependent on the country. The main similarity between the two types of institutions is their shared objective of providing students with high quality of education. Nevertheless, due to the financial dependence of numerous elements (e.g., materials, teaching aids, and physical environment), private schools are more probable to have the capacity to provide higher quality education; this, in turn, contributes to societal inequality. Although private schools possess greater financial resources and funding, state schools generally benefit from years of governmental regulation and expertise, both of which are crucial for the advancement and development of a particular nation and its citizens. The reviewed literature suggests that the majority of parents believe that private schools can provide a superior education for their children, specifically due to their perception that such institutions offer a more secure learning environment, yield superior exam results, and guarantee admission to prestigious universities. However, due to severe economic constraints, private school tuition fees are prohibitively high, and only a few families are able to provide their children with such an education as they are associated with greater financial burdens. This further exacerbates social inequality.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The methodology chapter presents the methodological framework and the strategies implemented in this study. Accordingly, the aim of this chapter is to provide a detailed account of the steps taken in this research, and justify the choice of technique and research tools. Before embarking on a detailed discussion, it is essential to understand the structure and provide an overview of what the methodology chapter covers.

This chapter of the thesis concentrates on the methodologies adapted for the research, as a logical continuation of the previous chapters. The choice of research questions generates the need for a particular research methodology (Pring, 2000). The literature review has led to the indication of the research gap, which in turn has led to the choice of the research method. Chapter 3 is divided into several sections. In the introduction to the methodology chapter, the general idea of the chapter and its outline is presented. The ontology and epistemology section covers how the researcher understands the point of the study and the study's reality (Robson, 2002). Furthermore, through the research design, the choice of the selected study type is highlighted, while the research strategy indicates the study's sub-type (Grix, 2004). The next section presents the location of the research and an analysis of why this region was selected for the research (Gay and Airasain, 2003). The sample section contains an analysis of the subjects selected for the study, how they were selected, and the criteria for their inclusion in the research (Johnson, 2017). The data collection section discusses in detail how the research was conducted, what instruments were used and why, as well as how the data were documented (Berliner, 2002). The data analysis section describes the tools for analysing the collected data (Sharp, 2009), while the validity and reliability section clarifies the confidence and reliability that can placed in this study by establishing the trustworthiness of the methods of data gathering and the steps taken to ensure validity and reliability (Wilson and Stutchbury, 2009). The consideration given to ethics is presented next, with attention given to the ethics and rights of all the participants in this research. Finally, the chapter ends with a summary.

3.2 Ontology and Epistemology

3.2.1 Purpose of Ontology and Epistemology in the Research

Ontology and epistemology are significant components of research (Schraw, 2013). The primary objective of this section is to establish the philosophical foundation of this thesis (Scotland, 2012). The objective of both ontology and epistemology is to justify and explain the nature of this study and how it is associated with the wider world and the awareness individuals hold (Theodor, 2017). With the social science positions taken in this study, there is a set of established philosophical standards (Gray, 2013). These philosophical standards influence the approaches and structures adopted in the research design (Wynn and Williams, 2012), specifically the ontology and epistemology (the research paradigm), the research methodology, data gathering techniques, and analytical processes (Meer-Kooistra and Vosselman, 2012). Therefore, further examination of the principles of ontology and epistemology is required to facilitate a more comprehensive acknowledgement of the research strategies adopted for this study (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017) and the personal perception of the researcher, as well as why and how the study was conducted (Bracken, 2010).

3.2.2 Value of Ontology and Epistemology in the Research

The value of ontology and epistemology is seen in the detailed analysis of the researcher's position (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000), how they have arrived at this position, where they stand, and how they later use the aspects discussed. Al-Saadi (2014) states that ontology and epistemology facilitate the understanding of how the knowledge obtained from the study applies to the contemporary world and the understanding of its phenomena. As suggested by Johnson and Duberley (2000), the components gathered in this part of research, and their associations, will sway the composition and knowledge (epistemology) of the inferred reality (ontology). This study is a mixed research design, which assists in specifying the reliance and individualistic beliefs of the respondents. In turn, both qualitative and quantitative processes support the validity of one another (Bazeley and Kemp, 2012). As noted by Morgan (2007), this provides the researcher with findings that they can utilise in subsequent theoretical understandings and studies. Consequently, the data collection for this research are questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, and archive records and documentation. Therefore, trustworthy findings were acquired for the study. Additionally, the evaluation of the opinions and responses collected from students, teachers, welfare manager and

school managers ensures that a valid, logical and legitimate breadth of responses and information is covered to achieve the study's goals.

3.2.3 Ontology

Ontology is the branch of philosophy that deals with the notion of what 'the nature of reality' is (Al-Ababnesh, 2020). It deals with 'what kind of world we are investigating, with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality as such' (Crotty, 2003, p. 10). This research was carried out to reduce gaps in knowledge on the nature of reality in the KRI, specifically in the context of both state and private schools. The reality of this study was to find evidence that the growth of private schools in the KRI has affected the general system of education. To study the perception of the education system and how or if it has changed due to the increased prevalence of private schools, the study's aim was to understand the overall implications of education in state and private schools. Education is a complicated process which involves both teachers and students. This is why the current study aimed to collect data from students, teachers, school managers and welfare managers, to present a comprehensive picture of how education takes place, and to gather reliable information from which to draw realistic conclusions (House, 1991; Robson, 2002). The researcher is interested in obtaining data which clearly indicates the situation.

3.2.4 Epistemology

On the other hand, epistemology is established by determining the purpose of the study, as it is corresponds to the understanding of its reality (Edelheim, 2014). These are the ways in which individuals perceive the world, and grasp and fathom its reality (Crotty, 1998). In the context of this study, epistemology promotes an understanding of the impact private schools have had on KRI's educational process, and the ways in which this method is endorsed. By the employment of the defined epistemological approach, key outcomes are collected to offer contemporary knowledge on the situation of private schools in the KRI, making it the focal point of research. Additionally, as Siegel notes (2006), the area of research usually determines the procedures and degrees of its precision and validity. In order to understand what happens in Kurdistan's education, the research draws on data collected from questionnaires, interviews, and documents. A clear vision of what findings the researcher wants to obtain helps with focusing the discussion in the initially defined direction. Education, both private and state, is the focus of the current research. The data collection methods helped to obtain the necessary information. To explain the impact of

private schools on the educational process, the personal experience of teachers and students is used to validate the findings.

3.2.5 Philosophical Positions

Social science researchers use a variety of research paradigms to determine the criteria for selecting and formulating research topics. The term 'paradigm' in this instance refers to the theoretical assumptions or views that illuminate the researcher's ideas and perceptions about reality and, as a result, govern their study procedures (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). The term 'paradigm' is frequently used interchangeably with 'worldview,' denoting the basic cognitive framework and perceptual lens through which individuals grasp the complexities of the tangible world, as well as the underlying rationale that regulates it (Creswell, 2014).

Several philosophical assumptions have been recognised in relation to research in the social and human sciences. The two main philosophical assumptions, positivism and interpretivism, are acknowledged to be different and contrasted in nature, representing two opposite extremities of the spectrum. These conflicting viewpoints, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018), can be understood as binary poles, with other philosophical orientations residing along a continuum between these two extremes. Positivism and interpretivism are two paradigms that are frequently considered to be mutually exclusive or non-simultaneous due to their association with distinct perspectives on the nature of reality (ontology) and knowledge (epistemology) (Tuli, 2010). Nonetheless, to achieve certain study aims, researchers must occasionally adjust their assumptions and migrate from one philosophical standpoint to another throughout their research undertakings. The evolution of philosophical perspectives and presuppositions has resulted in the formation of a distinct paradigm known as pragmatism. Pragmatists regard the research question to be a critical component of research philosophy, indicating that researchers should take the philosophical perspective that best addresses their research query. Depending on the focus of the research and the nature of the questions, the pragmatism technique allows researchers to integrate positivist and interpretivist ideologies in a single study.

The next subsections provide a comprehensive analysis of the three philosophical paradigms: positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism, followed by an explanation of why the researcher chose the pragmatism paradigm for this particular investigation.

3.2.6 Positivism

The positivist paradigm allows the researcher to investigate social science topics by evaluating the laws of probabilistic causality, enabling them to make broad predictions about human behaviour. In this endeavour, social science methods are used to investigate individual human behaviour using deductive reasoning (Yilmaz, 2013). The positivist philosophical framework holds the underlying ontological perception of there being a single truth or objective reality that coexists with individual perceptions or ideas (Bryman and Allen, 2011). An epistemological approach, according to Bryman and Allen (2011), holds that there is no association between the study researcher and context. As a result, the positivist paradigm entails that the researcher is distinct from the phenomenon under examination, and that the phenomenon is distinct from the researcher. In summary, the positivist paradigm presumes objectivity on the part of the researcher.

Scholars supporting the positivist approach often seek out variable characteristics or constructs that are pertinent to their research questions and hypotheses, studying the links between these research variables (Bryman, 2012). Additionally, they assess the associations between the research construct and the subsequent development of events. Positivist scholars also look for elements that influence study results (Bryman, 2012). The use of standardised exams and questionnaires, as well as the conduct of experiments and the use of standardised observation methods to understand phenomena and analyse them quantitatively, all help to achieve these goals (Bryman, 2012).

Therefore, one of the principal benefits of positivism lies in its employment of evidence-based statistical and methodological approaches to data collection and analysis. Whereby findings of a research can be readdressed and replicated by researchers using the same or a divergent group of participant in a different social context. Hence, positivism can facilitate opportunities where reduced time and resources are required by leveraging the findings of a specific study for future quantitative forecasting. As opposed to constructing a new methodology for every new participant group, existing findings can be either used to guide new studies or help researchers make prediction of future research (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In relation to what implications this holds for the researcher, the utilization of such an approach will help in generating rigorous and widely applicable deductions from the empirical data, which can be implemented as a reliable predictor for other populations.

Additionally, Dönyei (2007) further suggests that due to positivism being gathered through the lens of objectivism epistemology, the data gathered can be regarded as reliable and will have the potential to help make scientific assumptions. Dönyei (2007) further explains that such reliability can be assured and tested through statistical analysis that assesses correlations and consistencies between the different variables. With reference to this research, statistical tests (such as Cronbach's alpha) can be used to in the analysis phase of the research to estimate the reliability of the findings.

While the positivist approach is widely used in education, particularly when researching school settings, many still see it as an approach that has significant limitations (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). According to Bryman and Allen (2011), the approach has distinct problems compared to other fields due to the intrinsic intricacies of education research. As a result, the factors in educational research cannot be easily quantified or examined. One limitation of the strategy in this context is its inability to account for the influence of contextual variables. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) emphasised the weakness of the positivist approach in thoroughly clarifying human behaviour. The methodology's predictions and generalisations fail to account for the intentions of human actors, resulting in an unsatisfactory understanding of human behaviour (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). As a result, the positivist technique can be useful in the classification and quantitative evaluation of human activities and complex behaviour (Kim, 2003). However, it may be insufficiently effective in terms of comprehending human behaviour (Scotland, 2012).

Moreover, as suggested by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), a key drawback of positivism stems from its generalisation of data, through which individual experiences and opinions that may provide key interpretation or revelation are ignored. Responses related to personal cases or the experience of a local context are neglected within the context of extensive data sets. Therefore, the researcher of this study needs to acknowledge these limitations and address them accordingly (as discussed in the subsequent subsections).

3.2.7 Interpretivism

The interpretive approach differs from positivist research in that it seeks to investigate individuals' subjective perceptions and beliefs. It tries to comprehend social phenomena by investigating the interaction between subjective experiences and the historical and social circumstances in which they occur (Creswell, 2014). Proponents of interpretivism, according to Walsham (2006), believe that a complete understanding of reality and the acquisition of knowledge entail the analysis of

social constructions such as language, consciousness, tools, shared meanings, and artifacts. Individuals view and comprehend reality within this paradigm by establishing a grasp of the logical rules controlling the world and adapting to changing situations; these individuals prefer to focus on the complexity of human sense-making.

As a humanistic research approach, interpretivism generally focuses on human actions. The application of this paradigmatic approach enables the recognition of the complexities inherent in the education domain. It provides researchers with a thorough grasp of both instructors' and students' experiences in the context of schooling, as well as a deeper awareness of the social dynamics present in classrooms, schools, and associated groups (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018), a variety of political, financial, and social factors contribute to our understanding of human experiences and social relationships. Cohen also emphasises the importance of these factors in defining the syllabus, schooling system, and teaching strategies.

Interpretivism enables researchers to understand the processes of human thought and social interactions within a social context. It mainly focuses on knowledge creation with the express focus of understanding human behaviour. This involves researchers attempting to reflect on their own social experiences, which they use as a basis for studying participants and allowing them to express their opinions (Tuli, 2010).

With the considerations discussed above, it can be perceived that interpretivism encompasses its own benefits. To illustrate, the diversifying views of participants can provide different approaches of looking at a phenomenon. Whereby research analysis is not solely limited to the numerical outputs outlined by the instrument of data collection, but rather the humans, objects, events and the social contexts of study (Tuli, 2010). In this study, to comprehend a nuance understanding of stakeholders' perceptions of private schools, the researcher does find it necessary to capture the subjective views and experiences of participants to gain a more detailed and diverse understating of the responses and to gain a more holistic representation of the stakeholder insights.

Additionally, interpretivism will enable the researcher to uncover and explore the aspects of study that cannot be directly observed. By using methods, such as interviews, a researcher can probe into the participants thoughts, perceptions, opinion and emotions (Wellington and Szczerbinski, 2007). Such exploration of participants' internal experiences become rather unlikely when

research is set on the principles of positivism instead. Therefore, by employing an interpretive approach to this study, the research will not limit their understating solely to the numerical interpretations gathered from participants.

Nonetheless, Guba and Lincoln (1994) proposed an alternate viewpoint, emphasising how subjective reality is, and how this then leads to variances in the understanding of reality among different people. As a result, the interpretivism paradigm's primary ideology revolves around the concept of inter-subjectivity in respect of both reality and knowledge. Furthermore, it is considered within this theoretical framework that there is a reciprocal interaction between the research context and the researcher. As a result, the research yields results as it progresses (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Another limitation of the interpretative technique is the lack of generalisation (Yilmaz, 2013), which indicates that the study findings may not be transferable or beneficial to the larger population or other research setting. With regards to this study, the researcher needs to be aware that study findings can become subjective as opposed to them being objective. Hence, the research outcomes of the study can become influenced by the researcher's own beliefs and their interpretation of participants viewpoints. Variables such as the researcher's cultural preferences, experience and ways of thinking may introduce bias into the research.

3.2.8 Pragmatism

One of the key differences between the positivist and interpretivist methods is their respective objectives. The positivist method involves collecting empirical data in numerical form to quantify social phenomena, while the interpretivist method concentrates on the qualitative evaluation of human acts and events, applying inference to comprehend social phenomena. As previously stated, adhering to one of these paradigms may place limits on the scope of the research or the researcher's autonomy. In contrast, pragmatism entails the belief that researchers must choose the best strategy, whether methodological or theoretical, for addressing the research subject at hand (Feilzer, 2010). Pragmatist researchers prioritise research queries and the achievement of accurate outcomes over a particular approach being utilised. According to Creswell and Clark (2011), the ability to apply mixed approaches is the result of adopting pragmatism, which makes it different from positivism or interpretivism.

The pragmatist research paradigm does not involve investigating the differences between truth and reality. In contrast, this concept includes the possibility of unique or multiple realities that can be

investigated empirically (Creswell and Clark, 2011). Proponents of the pragmatic perspective, according to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2008), argue for the existence of an objective reality that exists irrespective of human experience. They went on to say that, in order to get a thorough grasp of this reality, which is closely connected with the surrounding environment, scholars must seek to fathom the human experience. The pragmatic paradigm is based on the philosophical viewpoint that socially generated ideas and behaviours shape knowledge and reality (Yefimov, 2004). Pragmatists argue that social construction shapes knowledge and reality more than anything else. Nonetheless, certain social constructs may be more closely related to human experiences (Morgan, 2014).

Despite this, the critiques of pragmatism have pointed out the short-term focus and the challenges affiliated with the identification of a socially placed problem. Thompson (1997) highlights the issue of research findings not being concordant with the contextual social issues, through which deeper systemic problems and theoretical frameworks are ignored, and findings are only associated with the time-frame they were taken. However, with this research's inclusion of social theories in the theoretical framework, a more comprehensive understanding of the societal phenomenon is presented. Whereby functionalist, conflict and symbolic interactionism assesses the larger social system, which has altered and generated over time. The focus of the research can no longer be affiliated solely to immediate issues, but rather the broader societal implications.

3.2.9 Rationale for Adopting Pragmatism

The current study adopts pragmatism because, as argued here, it best allows the researcher to address the research phenomenon without being restricted by what to investigate or how to do so.

One of the issues the research examined is the education systems of private and state schools in Kurdistan, with the aim of finding out how they differ. This entailed questioning participants in an exploratory manner to obtain this type of information. Such exploration can best, and more practically, be conducted by interviewing participants and engaging with them in discussions about their school systems. This, in turn, requires an analysis and interpretation of participants' experiences, ideas and meanings, which necessitated adopting an interpretive approach.

Two other issues researched in this study were the participants' perceptions of the quality of education in private and state schools and their perceptions about their reasons for choosing one type of school rather than the other. Although perceptions can be investigated by probing

participants during interviews, such an approach could have limited the number of participants and, thus, impact the reliability of the data collected. To clarify, the data on perceptions had to be gathered from students inside schools, and the larger the sample size, the more reliable and representative the collected data would be. Given the limited time allowed to complete this study, interviewing a large number of students seemed untenable. This made the interpretive approach an impractical means of addressing this issue and could have rendered less reliable and representative data. On the other hand, using a method such as questionnaire allowed data to be collected from a larger sample in a shorter time, which would reflect positively on the reliability of the gathered data. Such data, in turn, require quantitative evaluation, which makes the positivist approach necessary.

This study also analysed the results equipped from students, school managers and welfare managers to investigated how family characteristics and perceived parental preferences contributed to school choice. To address this, the researcher needed to investigate the relationship between a number of variables related to characteristics and preferences, on one hand, and school choice on the other. Doing this dictated engaging in numerical calculations and statistical evaluations, which necessitates adopting a positivist approach.

Finally, the current study also endeavoured to explore the perceived educational, social and economic impact of private schools. Since this issue is related to perceptions, the previous argument on the practicality of using questionnaires and the reliability of the gathered data applies here also, and makes the positivist approach necessary. However, addressing the perceived impact by relying solely on the positivist approach could have led to ignoring critical information about the reality of this perceived impact. This is because of the complexity of the impact construct making it unfeasible to design a questionnaire which captured all possible aspects of this construct. Therefore, it was necessary to interview participants to understand their opinions about how and why private schools could have a certain impact. In doing so, an analysis and interpretation of participants' ideas was needed and, thus, the interpretive approach was adopted alongside the positivist approach.

All in all, choosing between positivist and interpretivist positions could have limited the researcher in this study. It would have also led to the collection of inadequate data on the issues under

research. Therefore, adopting the pragmatist paradigm by combining with both the positivist and interpretivist approaches seemed necessary to investigate the research phenomena adequately.

3.3 Research Methodologies

Research methodologies are the theoretical and analytical approaches to studies which are the cornerstone of any investigation/study (Merriam, 2009). Research methodology refers to the structured, conscious and organised set of approaches utilised during the study to guarantee the gathering and analysis of the appropriate and needed quantity of data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Research methodology as a whole is comprised of the adopted theories and analysis which determine the research's foundation. In this study, a mixed-method design was chosen to analyse and comprehend: how private and state schools are managed and organised; how the quality of state school education influences the preference for private schools; the reasons for choosing private or state school; and, the perceived impact of private schools on the educational process of the KRI. Therefore, to achieve the purpose of this study and obtain responses to the research questions, a mixed-method approach was employed to investigate the demeanours and perception of stakeholders regarding private schools, in Erbil, capital of the KRI. Accordingly, the researcher has concentrated on mixed research methodology with regard to the analysis of literature in this research (Greene, 2015).

3.3.1 Mixed Research Design

This study has adopted a mixed-methods research design by quantitatively gathering data from questionnaires directed at students and teachers, and qualitatively by gathering data from school and welfare managers via semi-structured interviews. As defined by Tashakkori and Creswell (2007, p.4), mixed research design entails 'research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study'. The approach of mixed method is notable for its manner in not being limited to the conventional methods of data gathering but rather is directed upon the foundation of research queries and aims (Creswell, 1994). However, there is not an agreed foundational approach to what should mixed method research be composed of (Bryman, 2007), with Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007) explaining that such research design is still in its adolescence,

and it is rather foreseeable for it to be further altered and reformed over the coming years (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007).

A key rationale for this research adopting mixed method design was in its central attribute of triangulation. Triangulation refers to the 'combinations and comparisons of multiple data sources, data collection and analysis procedures, research methods, investigators, and inferences that occur at the end of the study' (Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009, p. 27). By looking at research using various perspectives and instruments of data collection, a researcher is more prone to being in a greater position of understanding the 'true' situation under study (Silverman, 2010, p. 277) or uncovering the different opinions that lay in a studied population when using different methods of study (Greece, Caracelli and Graham, 1989). Moreover, as proposed by Heale and Forbes (2013), compared to a single research approach, using a mixed research design can significantly mitigate bias. Therefore, mixed methods research design assisted the researcher in grasping the underlying principles and discerning the implication of data by accumulating, comparing and analysing the different participants' responses from the different data collection approaches.

Additionally, using a mixed research design provides a greater assurance to study completeness. Completeness refers to employing a blend of research approaches to offer a more nuanced comprehension of the study phenomenon (Doyle, Brady and Byrne, 2009). In this study, the different method has been used to target the phenomena's being studied. To elucidate, the quantitative methods of gathering were targeted to understating the 'what' of the phenomenon's, while the qualitative ones were targeted to understanding the 'why' and 'how'. In other words, the findings of both data collection methods were amalgamated to complement one another to yield a comprehensive view of the findings.

Furthermore, mixed methods design has been praised for ability in 'offsetting weaknesses and providing stronger inferences' (Doyle, Brady and Byrne, 2009, p. 178). It has been argued by many academics that using a mixture of methods, appose to only adopting one, will allow for the limitations of the singular methods to be neutralized. (Bryman, 2006). Whereby more accurate inferences will be generated from the collected data (Creswell, et al., 2003). To illustrate, the weaknesses proposed by the quantitative approach (e.g. limited depth of context), and those acquired from the qualitative approach (e.g. lack of quantification) can be reduced when used in complement of one another. Hence, the quantitative findings of this study were obtained from an

adequately quantifiable sample, with the qualitative findings proving the sufficient depth and context to study.

However, it is essential to mention that mixed method design does exhibit its own limitations, and this research had to be conscious of mitigating such constraints. Firstly, the data collection can become rather lengthy, which raises concerns regarding time and cost effectiveness (Fauser, 2018). Nevertheless, such confinement can be reduced through careful preparation, strategizing and implementation. The researcher of this study continuously wrote and updates their study timeline to ensure the study complied with the plan and adhered to the timeline. The success of following the proposed study plan of this research can be credited to the regular monitoring done by the researcher. The researcher tracked her progression against the timeline persistently. The study was regularly reviewed and if any deviations were found from the original proposed timeline then they would be identified and altered to fit into the required timescale.

Secondly, many authors argue that such a research approach is incompatible, namely, the conviction that quantitative and qualitative methods are not able to co-exist with one another in a single setting as they have dissimilar ontological and epistemological origins (Guba, 1987). As suggested by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), mix methods will lead to dichotomic research approaches and world views and thus they argue against combining the two approaches. Guba (1987, p. 31) elaborates further through the analogy of how 'the one precludes the other just as surely belief in a round world precludes belief in a flat one. However, this does study utilize mixed method design, recognising the discourse concerning the incompatibility of research and taking the steps deemed necessary by the researcher to mitigate such issues. The integration of both the qualitative and the quantitative methods was carefully structured to enhance and complement each other. By carefully delineating the role of each method in regards to each research question and ensuring methodological rigour, the researcher was in a better position to maintain the integrity of both the qualitative and the quantitative approaches. This comprehensive consideration allowed the researcher to gain a more comprehensive appreciation of the research questions and the adjustment and fixation of the two approaches.

Therefore, this study has integrated both quantitative and qualitative approaches in a mixed study research design to enhance the scope, detail and richness of the study findings and their interpretations and has enhanced the researcher's position in gaining a better picture of the

stakeholders' perceptions of the impacts of private schools on the education process. The next two subsections of the chapter will provide more detail on the quantitative and qualitative research approaches.

3.3.2 Quantitative Methods

Quantitative methods enable direct analysis to establish the links in the data between different respondents' viewpoints. According to Cleland (2015), the use of quantitative techniques allows for a direct examination of the replies and the identification of interrelationships between the various viewpoints offered by survey participants. The use of a quantitative research design allows for the incorporation of descriptive and inferential statistics, allowing for the collection of large quantities of data and the surveying of several individuals at the same time. The convenience of surveying a large number of students concurrently and capturing their viewpoints supports the choice of a quantitative research design in this case (Serban, Gruiescu and Mitrut, 2013). Nonetheless, using a quantitative study approach has downsides, one of which is the inability to provide a thorough reason for the observed events (Goertzen, 2017). A quantitative research design's primary goal is to collect and analyse data in order to use the statistical technique. This is due to the regular structure of quantitative data, which lends itself to uncomplicated analysis (De Vaus, 2014). As a result, the reason for using a quantitative approach for data collection is based on its ability to survey a large number of students and teachers while also producing measurable data for statistical analysis (Aggarwal and Ranganathan, 2016). Additional information about the quantitative research design will be offered in the section on data analysis.

3.3.3 Qualitative Methods

Through semi-structured interviews, qualitative data were gathered to determine the impact of private school on KRI education. Interviews were held with six school managers and six welfare managers, half of whom worked at private schools and half from state schools. The qualitative research design enables the collection of data in a descriptive manner in relation to the opinions and experiences of individuals (Creswell, 2014). This form of data is particularly valued for its capacity to provide a more in-depth understanding of the subject matter (Marshall and Rossman, 2014). The qualitative approach facilitates understanding of the rationale for the parents' choice of private schools for their children, despite the availability of free state schools, as well as their opinions of the benefits and downsides connected with such choices (Daniel, 2016). The primary

goals of the qualitative research design are: to produce and explain the findings and theories apparent to the participants; to conduct formative evaluation; and, to establish a personal connection with the subjects to gain a deeper understanding of their perspectives (Maxwell, 2013). Overall, qualitative methods are frequently connected with specific disadvantages. The execution of a qualitative research design demands a thorough examination of various sensitive factors, which can be a time-consuming procedure (Lichtman, 2013). Furthermore, presenting qualitative data succinctly can be difficult (Watkins, 2017). The subjective nature of qualitative data necessitates substantial research and careful attempts to demonstrate its validity and trustworthiness (Brew *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, a qualitative approach is frequently related to the concept of 'interpretations', as researchers categorise, characterise, and interpret the data obtained. The researcher's perspective or opinion may have an impact on the findings of their research, either positively or negatively (Al-Natour, 2011). The next subsection will focus on providing details on the specific mixed-method design adopted by the researcher in this study.

3.3.4 Application of mixed methods

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) emphasise researchers' methodical selection of methods based on the appropriateness of the context and the research questions. However, as highlighted by Leech and Onwuegbuzie, there are many different mixed-method designs in operation, with Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) proposing over 30 designs in their work. This has resulted in the proliferated hurdle researchers face when selecting the most suitable mixed methods design. Hence several researchers (e.g. Creswell et al. (2003) and Johnson and Onwuebugie (2004)) have focused on offering different typologies to streamline the selection process. Nevertheless, as noted by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009), most of the proposed typologies have been criticised for their (i) complexity, (ii) basicness, whereby key principles are lacking; or (iii) they lack coherence and uniformity, in which they do not adhere to a unified set of principles/structures.

Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009) propose a 'three-dimensional' typology for mixed method design, which was considered in this study for its adequacy. The three dimensions are (i) the level of mixing (whether fully mixed or partially mixed design), (ii) time orientation (whether concurrent or sequential), and (iii) approach emphasis (whether equal statues or dominant statues). The design implemented in this research was a partially mixed concurrent equal status design. Specifically, data was gathered quantitatively from students and teachers, and qualitatively from welfare

managers and school managers simultaneously (concurrent), with both forms of data gathering approaches having near equal statues (equal statues). Additionally, both the questionnaires (quantitative) and semi-structured interviews (qualitative) were not mixed, until they were both gathered and analysed (partially mixed).

3.4 Location

3.4.1 Rationale for the Choice of Location

The KRI is comprised of three main cities with several towns and villages. For this research, Erbil, the capital of Kurdistan, was chosen. This choice of research location is justified by several factors. However, before making the final decision, the researcher spent some time on location analysis (Beresford and Sloper, 2008). The first reason to choose Erbil was the geographical factor (Mafuwane, 2011). Erbil is in the centre of Kurdistan. The accessibility of schools in the area is quite easy, which was convenient for the research. As the capital of the KRI, Erbil is the most advanced and progressive city and has more access to the facilities needed for the study. Such facilities include having an adequate amount of state and private schools for the research requirements, and these may be scarce in other areas of the region.

According to Vernez *et al*. (2016), and as discussed in Chapter 2, the number of private schools has significantly increased in recent years. Sun *et al*. (2012) referred to the principle of maximisation as an aspect of location selection. The researcher followed this principle by identifying cities with a representative sample of private and state schools. In addition, the cost-effectiveness of the study was also an important factor for location choice (Kim and Aguilera, 2015). Attending Erbil did not require much time or expense. Also, I received approval from the Ministry of Education to conduct research in this area (see Appendix C).

Personal preference was another reason for the location choice. The researcher preferred large developed cities with advanced infrastructure and a range of choices, where people are free and more educated, compared to rural and suburban areas (Pateman, 2011). Having obtained a degree in sociology, the researcher wanted to apply the sociology education theories of functionalism, conflict, and symbolic interaction. The researcher believed that she could integrate them better in a populated developed city, the capital of the region, due to the difference in economic class, social class and cultural backgrounds of the people. Political and cultural aspects also impacted the

researcher's choice of study location (Saukko, 2003). Kurdistan is a culturally diverse region with a developing political system. The city is developing and its political and cultural diversity impacts the development of the education system, which is the focus of the current research.

For the purposes of the research, Erbil city was split into three geographical areas. The rationale for this division was based on the need to collect responses from participants in different locations, in order to determine whether they had different ideologies, beliefs, and positions. In total, three state and three private schools were randomly selected for the study. In this section, the researcher would have liked to display a map of Erbil to show the six schools' locations, but, unfortunately, no suitable map could be found, not even on the internet.

3.5 Sample

After determining the research strategies and location, the process of selecting and initiating the sample can begin. Sampling, in the context of research, refers to the 'group of people, objects, or items that are taken from a large population for measurement' (Bhardwaj, 2019, p. 158). This study employed a two-stage sampling technique that considered strategies for the respective selection of schools and participants. Clustered sampling and simple random sampling were the utilised techniques, implemented for the purpose of guiding data collection process and selecting the required subjects.

Generally, the two notable sampling procedures are probability and non-probability. Probability sampling ensures equal and unbiased selection of the subjects for the study (Wretman, 2010), while non-probability sampling has no systematic process and cannot guarantee equal chances of selection for all subjects (Shorten and Moorley, 2014). Initially, this study employed cluster sampling, a type of probability sampling, to select the schools for this research. This decision was made due to the distinct advantages and disadvantages associated with each selection approach. In clustered random sampling, 'various segments of a population are treated as cluster, and members from each cluster are selected randomly' (Bhardwaj, 2019, p. 161). The choice of clustered random sampling was primarily based on the advantage it holds for receiving answers from a large of population of subjects, and the benefit of saving costs and time (Davis, 2005). Cluster sampling was employed to choose the schools in Erbil city for this investigation. Erbil city was arbitrarily divided into three equidistant segments. Subsequently, two schools, one state and one private, were

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randomly chosen from each of these areas. This study encompassed six schools, with an equal distribution of three state and three private.

During the data collection process, the researcher noted that two types of private school exist in Erbil: local and international. Despite the independent control of private schools, under Private School Law 14 in the KRI-2012, disclosed by the Ministry of Education, all private schools must follow strict regulations for their establishment and continuation. Hence, all six schools used in the research were registered and recognised by the Ministry of Education.

Regarding the selection of the participants, this study included students, teachers, welfare managers and school managers as participants. Once the schools were selected, the convenience and accessibility of the school and welfare managers were taken into account in relation to their selection, while the student and teacher participants were selected using a simple random sampling method. The research design is characterised by a finite number of mapped subjects (West, 2016), to ensure that each participant had an equal chance of being selected (Stewart, 2011). This characteristic is also representative of the population of Kurdistan. Simple random sampling is a feasible and successful strategy for reducing bias in research results (Filho *et al*., 2013). It involves including a sample size of over one hundred individuals (Kim and Shin, 2014), which is reflective of the requirements of this study.

Beginning with the student sample, the study had a cohort of 150 students enrolled in the 12th grade of high school. The last year of their programme concludes with an external state examination, similar to the GCSE exams in the UK, which was the primary rationale for the selection of grade 12 students. Most students seek to gain admission to universities and so they exert significant effort in their academic pursuits. The objective of the researcher was to enlist an equivalent number of males and females from state and private schools. A sample of 25 students was therefore randomly chosen from each of the three private and three state schools. As stated by Martínez-Mesa *et al*. (2016), this data analysis method is deemed fair because, when a substantial number of individuals are randomly selected, the characteristics of each person become representative of the entire group. The selection of this technique, as stated by Banerjee and Chaudhury (2010), was based on the need for accurate and trustworthy findings. The student participants were not restricted from participating under any defined characteristics or attributes they may have possessed. This included attributes such as familial background, race, ethnicity, and academic performance. In

addition, the sample of teachers consisted of forty-two individuals. Validity and reliability were guaranteed by carefully choosing seven teachers, each specialising in one key subject area, from each of the six schools.

Convenience non-probability sampling was used to select six school managers for this study. The rationale for this approach was due to it considering the participants' roles, availability, and willingness to engage in a qualitative interview (Bryman, 2012). In order to ensure comprehensive participation from all stakeholders at a particular school, including the school managers, welfare managers, teachers, and students, the researcher would have needed to replace the chosen school with another at random if a school manager was unavailable or unwilling to participate.

Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011) state that there is no prescribed guideline for the number of individuals who should be included in a qualitative interview sample. However, collecting qualitative interview data necessitates a significant degree of integrity (Moser and Korstjens, 2018). Consequently, this assisted with acquiring a more profound understanding of state and private schools. Furthermore, information pertaining to the students' educational and socioeconomic backgrounds was gathered via semi-structured interviews conducted by a total of six social researchers (welfare managers), with one assigned to each school. Welfare managers, also known as auxiliaries, assistants, health managers, and wellbeing counsellors, are those who perform various roles in the field of welfare (Clayton, 1991). To tackle any obstacles that students might encounter in their lives or studies effectively, welfare managers proactively gather information about students' backgrounds through active engagement with the students themselves, their families, and their teachers. Additionally, as highlighted by Clayton, they aid students in maintaining social control. Most schools in the KRI have multiple welfare managers, but only one was chosen in this research based on their personal preference and availability; for this reason, the type of sampling is also convenience sampling because it depended on the member's willingness to take part.

Originally, as part of the sampling, this research was planning to incorporate the participation of students' parents into their data collection process in the form of semi-structured interviews. This approach would have provided a direct acknowledgment in connection to the third main research question of this study (i.,e *"How do families choose between private and state schools in the KRI?"*). However, the assurance that Kurdish houses have the correct digital devices/software and

internet cannot be guaranteed in the region. With the inability of the researcher to travel back to KRI to conduct the interview process face-to-face, the online interview would raise questions about the reliability and the validity of the research. This is due to the gathered results being only those accumulated from the families that have the potential to attain such technological advantages. Therefore, as a substitute for the lack of direct parental involvement in the data collection; the researcher further revised both the questionnaires directed at students and interview questions directed at school and welfare managers to understand their perception of what parents/families take into consideration when inquired about choice of school type. The next section of this chapter details the data collection techniques.

3.6 Data Collection

3.6.1 Choice of Data Collection Techniques

The data collecting section outlines the different strategies used for acquiring data in this research. Driscoll (2011) lists common data collection methods as surveys, interviews, questionnaires, ethnographic observations, focus groups, records, oral histories, documents, and case studies. According to Plano and Crewell (2008), the current study's methodology and research design included the collection of both primary and secondary data. Researchers use semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis to obtain primary data (Dunemn, Roehrs and Wilson, 2017). Primary data was used in this study because of its intrinsic resistance to modification (Peersman, 2014). Furthermore, it is the most practical way for examining individuals' opinions and viewpoints (Alshenqeeti, 2014) on private and state schools in the KRI. The data collection technique is chosen depending on the research strategy used to gather data, and is important because it affects the overall validity of a study and the potential generalisability of later findings (Paradis *et al*., 2016). A critical component of data collection tools, no matter which form, is their ability to address the research questions of a study.

Overall, the main idea of the current study is to understand the perception of stakeholders' on whether private schools impact the education process in the KRI. A combination of semi-structured interviews and questionnaires can assist with answering this question. Additionally, the documentation provided by the schools under investigation and the data provided by the MoE furnish further information to help answer the research questions. Therefore, providing a 'thick

description' of the steps taken and research techniques implemented is necessary as this justifies and clarifies why certain techniques and data collection approaches were selected over others.

3.6.2 Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a data collection tool for gathering responses from a set of participants (Elmoselhy, 2015). The use of quantitative questionnaires aided the thorough collection of data, allowing the researcher to collect large amounts of information rapidly from participants. The questionnaires include both closed and open-ended questions (Ruane, 2005). In this research, a total of 192 questionnaires were collected from students and teachers (150 and 42, respectively). The questionnaires delivered to the students and teachers were different in their aims and question content (see Appendices N and P). The student questionnaire was divided into eight different sections: background information, school experience, school curriculum, quality of education, learning environment, assessment and feedback, teacher's education, reason for choice of school, what encouraged them to choose their school type, and the impact of private schools, if they were attending one. The teacher questionnaires were divided into four different sections: teachers' background information, quality of education, rationale for choosing between private and state schools, and the positive and negative impacts.

Both questionnaires contained several types of questions, as follows: dichotomous questions, i.e., those which can be responded to with yes or no; multiple choice questions, for which students were given response options; open questions, for which participants had to explain their responses and beliefs, with no specific word limit; rating scale questions, which are responded to with different degrees of agreement and disagreement; and, ratio questions, for which students are required to select the numbers most applicable to them. The questionnaires used a structured approach. Each questionnaire was composed of a variety of question styles rather than solely relying on open-ended questions, as this would have been more time-consuming for the participants to answer and the researcher to analyse later.

Another reason for using questionnaires in the research was how familiar most students and teachers are with this method, as it is rather likely for a large proportion of them to have had prior experience with questionnaire-based surveys. This familiarity tends to alleviate any concern they may feel about submitting their comments (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). The rationale for using a questionnaire as the research instrument in this study was based on its ability to administer

identical sets of questions to a large number of students and teachers, allowing for meaningful comparison of their responses (Henning, Stone and Kelly, 2009).

Questionnaires provide structured and numeric data, and can be managed without the attendance of the researcher; they are also straightforward to analyse. This was important in the research because the researcher was unable to travel to Kurdistan to collect data due to personal circumstances. For this reason, an email was sent to the social researcher (welfare manager) at Salahaddin University. The reason for choosing this person was, firstly, that she was a colleague of the researcher in Salahaddin University Sociology Department. Secondly, she specialises in researching and is familiar with ethical considerations and was easily able to understand the instructions provided to her. The questionnaires were sent by email to the social researcher and hard copies of the questionnaires were delivered by her to the schools identified in this study. The questionnaires were handed to each school's welfare manager, who later handed out the questionnaires to the students and teachers. After the students had completed the questionnaire when supervised by their teachers in their classrooms, and the teachers had completed their questionnaires, the welfare managers gathered both questionnaires on the same day and handed them back to the social researcher at Salahaddin University. A total of 192 questionnaires (150 from students and 42 from teachers) were collected and sent back via email and later by post (hard copies).

Questionnaires have both advantages and disadvantages. For instance, the utilisation of closed-ended questions restricts the possible responses to either yes or no, so enabling the quantification of outcomes. This characteristic of closed-ended questions, as highlighted by Singer and Couper (2017), ensures that only one response is deemed valid. This strategy is exclusively employed for features that have been extensively researched and are well-understood. Open-ended inquiries have proven advantageous to the investigation of further interconnected information, perspectives, and convictions. Therefore, the selection of the question type should be contingent upon the desired data to be obtained from participants and the subsequent data analysis approach to be employed in order to derive meaningful findings. According to Maxwell (2004), the inclusion of open-ended questions in data collection methods can facilitate the gathering of a diverse array of information. Hence, the examination and processing of these findings requires a significant time investment (Smith, 2008; Caruth, 2013). However, this difficulty can be effectively addressed by implementing a predetermined duration and temporal constraint for providing responses.

The use of questionnaires presents several issues. The failure to answer questions can be attributed to the lack of motivation among respondents, who may perceive no personal reward in delivering their replies. Furthermore, it is worth noting that a considerable proportion of students may encounter difficulties in providing precise and candid responses, primarily stemming from the anxiety associated with the apprehension of potential criticism for expressing beliefs that may not align with prevailing viewpoints (Gangrade, 2006). There is a potential hazard in providing inaccurate, shallow, or even deceptive responses, particularly when dealing with questionnaires that require a significant time investment. When faced with a substantial number of questions, such as 24 or more, respondents may employ a shallow strategy to expedite the completion of the work. Thus, to minimise participant exertion and fatigue, the questionnaires were direct, clear and simple. Each question was asked separately, with no confusion around to what the researcher was referring. Additionally, as discussed above, the researcher found it most appropriate to reduce the number of open-ended questions, but still asked all the needed and appropriate questions needed for this study. The rationale for these adjustments was to reduce participant over-exertion, demand and withdrawal from the study.

3.6.3 Interviews

An interview is a structured conversation between two individuals, typically conducted in a question-and-answer format (Elmoselhy, 2015). According to Walliman (2009), interviews are used to gather data from the individuals being studied. The semi-structured interview is a variant of the interview method characterised by the provision of a determined set of questions. However, this approach allows for flexibility and interpretation in the research process, enabling respondents to stray from the prescribed questions, as necessary. During an interview, participants respond to the inquiries posed by the interviewer, employing both verbal and non-verbal means of communication (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

The selection of semi-structured interviews as a qualitative method is based on the assertion of Vogt, Gardner and Haeffele (2012) that interviews are the sole qualitative research tool capable of providing a comprehensive understanding of respondents' reactions to research inquiries (Anderson, 2010; Jamshed, 2014). The significance of this cannot be overstated, since it allows the researcher to acquire precise and reliable data pertaining to the regions under investigation. The rationale for selecting interviews as a primary method of data collecting in this study is

grounded in the recognition that interviews provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the research topic, as compared to alternative data collection methods (Paradis *et al.*, 2016). According to Nardi (2003), the semi-structured format can be implemented through various means, including face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, or chat messaging. The present study did not adhere to a predetermined interview; rather, the participants were afforded the flexibility to choose a format and time that suited their convenience. The choice between Zoom and Whatsapp as preferred communication platforms for interviews was contingent upon the convenience and availability of the interviewees.

A total of twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted, six with school managers and six with welfare managers (see Appendix R and T for the interview questions). The interviews with the school managers consisted of six main questions, with interrelated sub-questions in between, on: finance support, school control and management, student and teacher admission, curriculum, teachers' expectations, and criteria parents use in school selection. The welfare manager interviews were comprised of twelve questions on various topics such as: factors underlying education inequality; family social status; the relationships between schools and the other components of the social structure; and, how private schools impact exam results.

One of the primary benefits associated with interviews is their capacity to obtain a comprehensive understanding of private educational institutions (Zohrabi, 2013). The use of interviews as a research method offers numerous advantages, mostly in terms of its efficacy in collecting the perspectives and viewpoints of respondents pertaining to a specific subject (Cramer, 2003). The interviews encompassed a predetermined set of topics, providing ample flexibility for the respondents to include additional material (Cramer and Howitt, 2004). Interviews are also used as a means of gathering qualitative data, allowing for the identification of incomplete responses and so encouraging respondents to participate actively in conversations. This creates an environment that facilitates the provision of more extensive data. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured style, which, as Nardi (2003) points out, can be administered through face-to-face interactions, telephone interviews, or chat messaging. One primary benefit of conducting interviews online is the potential for greater confidence between interviewer and interviewee due to the fact that participants can refer to notes displayed on their screens or on paper, which can assist them in providing well-informed responses to questions. Additionally, a considerable number of candidates exhibit a preference for conducting interviews within the confines of their

own homes. This setting offers a more relaxed atmosphere, which serves to alleviate anxiety and provide a sense of increased autonomy (Lacono, Symonds and Brown, 2016).

An online interview is a cost-effective and convenient solution that alleviates limitations related to travel, time, and finances. Due to being unable to travel, the researcher could not conduct interviews face to face. The use of online interviews enables researchers to deal with space and geographical issues (Lacono, Symonds and Brown, 2016), allowing them to interview respondents without the need for travel (Burkitt, 2004).

Despite the clear advantages, online interviews also come with a number of disadvantages. It is important to note that there are still circumstances in which individuals do not possess unrestricted 'internet connectivity' (Lacono, Symonds and Brown, 2016). Since this is especially common in the KRI due to electricity shortages, this meant that exact interview times had to be put in place to overcome this difficulty. Therefore, the participants were messaged half an hour before the scheduled interview time via their in-hand communication methods (message or email). If the participants replied that there were no electrical/internet or availability issues, then the interview went ahead. Fortunately, none of the participants had issues at the date and time of the interviews. However, the researcher did plan to reschedule in the event of any issues being notified.

The challenge of simultaneously operating two video cameras hinders the capacity of maintaining eye contact and accurately gauging a respondent's emotional state and reactions when posing research inquiries. This obstacle can lead to a false reading or suggest a lack of interviewer confidence. It represents a significant challenge to surmount when administering personality assessments.

Choosing the right sample for the research questions is determined by the research (Rice, 2010). Further risk can come from interviewees failing to be present as previously arranged. This can lead to cancellations of interviews, given that the researcher has no influence on the interviewees' decisions (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Thus, the researcher should think about each detail in order to reduce the risk of withdrawal from the interviews. To reduce the risk of non-attendance by a participant, they were emailed/messaged by the researcher a day before the interview to remind them of their scheduled time and to recheck their availability.

One potential risk associated with questionnaires arises in the form of the questions, since, if inquiries are too comprehensive, they can potentially elicit defensive responses and hinder

respondents' willingness to cooperate. Hence, it is imperative for the interviewer to be diligent in overseeing the types of questions and their manner of delivery to foster an environment conducive to amicable discourse, as opposed to an interrogative approach (Silver, 2008). To achieve this, the piloting of the interviews was carried out before the actual interviews by two random participants, a school manager and a welfare manager of another school in Kurdistan. The gathered data did not contribute to the final data collection and were used to determine the suitability of the questions and find areas of improvement beforehand. Furthermore, the interview questionnaires were pre-reviewed by two supervisors at Newcastle University's School of Education and Communication.

It is essential to retain control of the conversation. Upon receiving a comprehensive response, certain inquiries may appear unnecessary. In order to provide additional clarity on specific subjects, the interview may require supplementary questions that are not listed. Hence, the researcher should not be a passive observer of the interview; rather, they should actively engage by posing inquiries and documenting information. Upon recording the interview, the interviewer should attentively monitor the interviewees' behavioural patterns and imitative tendencies. When finalising the data analysis, it is crucial to analyse the most prominent behaviours carefully.

To ascertain that full attention was paid to the respondents, the researcher recorded the interview process, as taking notes during the interview could have distracted both the researcher and respondent. As addressed in the *Ethical Considerations* sub-section, the consent of the respondents was received before initiating the audio recording process, which also had the potential to increase confidence and trust between both members of the interview.

3.6.4 Document Data

According to Munday (2013), a document can be described as a permanent record medium produced by either a public or private entity for the documentation of activities. The utilisation of document data as a key source of information is well acknowledged in academic literature (Şentürk, 2013). This type of data holds significant importance for researchers due to its inherent dependability and validity. Document analysis is a systematic procedure employed to examine or evaluate documents to observe and extract pertinent information from official data sources (Mogalakwe, 2006). The tool in question is utilised for the purpose of gathering results, encompassing the examination of data disclosed by the study subject, with the aim of acquiring the desired responses. The tool in question is employed within the realm of qualitative research as

a means of conducting qualitative analysis (Viswambharan and Priya, 2015). According to Keyton *et al.* (2004), this particular analysis method has a higher level of effectiveness compared to alternative approaches utilised in previous investigations. According to Bowen (2009), utilising this method is advantageous in terms of its time efficiency and capacity to acquire reliable data, even from a small sample of participants.

The rationale for selecting document analysis as the methodological approach in this study is based on the objective of conducting a comprehensive examination of the material, with a specific emphasis on the statistical information. The capacity to examine large-scale patterns is a fundamental aspect of document analysis (Hageman, 2008). Therefore, this approach facilitates the acquisition of statistical data over an extended period of time by utilising primary data as a point of reference. This is important for this study because, even though there is a considerable amount of literature concerning the context of private schools, insignificant attention has been provided on the KRI. Hence, appreciating and investigating the little existing literature is crucial in comprehending the study prior to further analysis.

The researcher analysed documents from the MoE and the respective schools. To ascertain the aggregate count of private and state schools in Erbil, the researcher sought authorisation from the Ministry to obtain the requisite data.

Document analysis was beneficial to this study since the same data type could be gathered from various schools and compared, following which conclusions could be drawn. The study collected data on student enrolments in both private and state schools over the last decade; as such, the capacity to collect reliable data from the past was another benefit of analysing documents from the six selected schools. Data were also collected on: teacher qualification and their experience; how many classes there were in each school and what their stages were; and, class sizes, i.e., how many pupils in each class. Additional sources of data came from a planned meeting with families, as well as letters, photographs, handbooks, salaries, progress reports, and student results from the 12th grade.

The approach has, however, faced criticism for its limited perspective, as the documents analysed may not offer comprehensive information or directly address the study inquiries (Bowen, 2009). Additionally, certain documents may be hindered by a lack of availability or immediate

accessibility (Morgan, 2022). The absence of a human perspective is another drawback of document analysis.

3.7 Data Analysis

3.7.1 Mixed Data Analysis Techniques

In order to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the data, this study employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques (Schoonenboom, 2016). To achieve reliable results, it may be necessary to employ distinct techniques for both data analysis and interpretation with mixed data analysis.

The qualitative technique employed for data analysis assumes that the method of presenting the studied material is both comparative and descriptive (Anderson and Shattuck, 2012). In order to conduct a qualitative analysis, it is necessary to identify and define the prominent themes and patterns that arise from the data pertaining to the topic at hand. Throughout the interviewing process with the six welfare managers and six school managers, the interviews were audio recorded for later analysis. Initially, the researcher was planning to use Dragon software, a speech recognition technology with an accuracy level of 99%, which is specialised in recognising and transcribing audio speech. However, the software did not offer Kurdish language and so the researcher had to transcribe the interviews manually. The manual writing of the interviews, although was time consuming, helped the researcher become more familiar with the responses and data.

A key issue that had to be considered when later translating the data was the awareness that some concepts are hard to translate from Kurdish to English as they may not exist or may present a different meaning. Therefore, to ensure that the translation made by the researcher agreed with the original interview responses, two PhD colleagues from Newcastle University were given anonymised translations and transcripts (participant and school names and dates were removed) and asked their opinion on whether the translation matched the interviews.

Having transcribed and translated the interviews, the responses were again checked, and similar topics mentioned by the interviewees were highlighted in subjects and colour. Ideas not mentioned by any other interviewee were coloured differently to emphasise this originality (Ponce and Pagán-Maldonado, 2015). Braun and Clarke (2006) state that thematic analysis can be used for

'identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data' (p. 79). Because a 'rigorous thematic approach can produce an insightful analysis that answers particular research questions' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 97), the selection of this method of data analysis for the interviews was the best choice for analysing ideas on private and state schools (Kincheloe and Berry, 2004). The topics revealed by the data analysis facilitate determination of the general picture created by the results (Bazeley, 2009), and so thematic analysis was valuable in assessing the school and welfare manager data. The six steps of thematic analysis by Braun and Clark (2006) were utilized, and is it outlined below:

Step 1: Becoming familiar with the data

The first step of thematic analysis involves repeated cycles of reading and re-reading of all gathered results. As explained above, before the data analysis could take place the results accumulated from the interviews were transcribed and translated. Although software-based transcription would have been more ideal due to its advantages in speed, accuracy and consistency, no such software was identified by the researcher that could serve the Kurdish language, hence manual transcription was deemed most suitable. Transcribing the content of the interviews helped me gain an initial understanding and familiarity with the results. Such familiarity was further enhanced by the repeated translation of the transcripts and translation accuracy checks. The researcher made their initial notes on the data and the impressions they got from the responses they read, i.e. a stream of consciousness. Hence, from an initial phase, general thoughts and impressions were established.

Step 2: Formulating initial codes

This step of the analysis involved the systematic examining of all the responses and sorting them out into different codes. In relevance to the researcher's work, 'codes' were labels generated on some of the data that the researcher believed will have some relevance to the research. The researcher assigned the codes in both a semantic and a latent way, i.e., both in a directly said or an interpretative way. After the coding was identified and the researcher went through the work systematically multiple times, the codes and their extracts were transferred to a separate file.

Step 3: Searching for themes

In this stage of the analysis, the researcher started shaping codes into themes. The researcher had to look for any similarities or overlaps ('cluster codes') between the codes and then assign them under relevant themes/sub-themes. Such themes were key terms that related relevant coding to relevant research questions.

Step 4: Reviewing potential themes

All themes generated under step 3 were reviewed and reassessed to see their relevance and whether they could be amalgamated, renamed, segregated or discarded. The review was based on two steps: checking them against the accumulated coded extracts and then later against the entire data set. Initially, the researcher reviewed the accumulated coded extracts, resulting in multiple themes being amalgamated and some being separated, creating an overall more coherent set of themes. Secondly, the researcher reviewed the themes against the entire dataset, to see if the themes were representative of all responses. This entailed the researcher having one final re-read of all the work and agreeing on whether the conjured themes are capturing the overall image of the data set and whether they are in relation to the research questions.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes

As stated in the title, this stage of the data analysis required reviewing all the constructed themes, defining them and giving them a correct naming. Naming the themes and defining them required the researcher to clearly think about whether the names given to the themes were easily understandable. This stage of the analysis process is where deep analytic work got involved, whereby the researcher had to select certain extracts that could represent the themes, as well as the capability of setting out a 'story' concerning the research questions. The researcher had to be cautious about selecting extracts from the entire data set as all participant views had to be measured up. Appendix II illustrates an exemplary thematic analysis approach constructed by the researcher.

Step 6: Producing the report

This final step of thematic analysis is the development of the actual thesis. Whereby when writing the thesis, the researcher had to reflect back on the themes identified and provide the extracts that support or explain such key findings. In other words, this stage involved the discussion and

interpretation of the constructed themes, whilst also correlating them to the research questions and existing literature.

Moving on to quantitative data analysis techniques, these are predicated on the availability of numerical data (Munđar, Matotek and Jakuš, 2012). The utilisation of closed-ended questions inside the questionnaire facilitated the examination of quantitative data (Small, 2011). The questions were subjected to quantitative analysis (Freedman, 2010). The analysis of quantitative data was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, as described by Pallant (2011). Moreover, the utilisation of descriptive statistics was employed to elucidate factors such as participants' responses, while inferential statistics were utilised to build meaningful associations between the variables (Levesque, 2005).

Other statistical tests conducted on the close-ended questions involved cross-tabulation to compare and observe connections between categories, and Chi-square tests to find any associations between schools and variables. Throughout the analysis, Cramer's V value was checked to test the strength of each association. Other statistical tests were Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis H for independent variable comparisons. Finally, binary logistic regression was used to test whether family demographics and family preferences affected the type of school selected.

According to Bergman (2008), descriptive statistics involve employing percentages as a means of indicating the prevalence or prominence of the variables under investigation. The use of statistical analysis provides a framework for interpreting research outcomes through a quantitative lens (Blume and Peipert, 2003). By examining the relationships between variables, it becomes possible to determine their interdependence or lack thereof (Bryla-Cruz, 2016). Gogtay and Thatte (2017) define correlation as a statistical measure that signifies the connection or association between two or more quantitative variables. Correlation analysis is a statistical technique employed to examine the relationship between variables that are quantifiable in nature (Deshpande, Gogtay and Thatte, 2016). The objective of the researcher is to establish a correlation between multiple categories to address the research inquiries and evaluate the hypotheses (Gogtay, Deshpande and Thatte, 2016). Therefore, the data obtained from the questionnaires were utilised for this particular step.

3.7.2 Document Data Analysis

The document data were carefully examined by the researcher to determine the relationship with the data from the questionnaires and interviews. The document data were initially subjected to

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human categorisation and classification based on the institution's name, structure, and location (Owen, 2014). The results were additionally encoded to document the specifics of the analysis, such as the number of schools, teachers, and students, as well as the professional credentials of the teaching staff and the academic performance of the pupils. These data were used in the analysis of the document data to reveal and elucidate discrepancies in the numbers of privately-owned and state-funded educational institutions.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

3.8.1 Validity and Reliability in the Current Research

A study's validity and reliability ensure the efficacy of the research (Dörnyei, 2007). According to Joppe (2000), reliability can be defined as the degree to which findings remain consistent and stable over a period of time. The use of mixed research in this study presents a potential avenue for replicating the study's findings using a comparable methodology (Jandagh and Matin, 2010). The concept of reliability implies that the outcomes of the research may be replicated under comparable circumstances (Brewerton and Millward, 2001). If a different researcher were to replicate the same study using identical tools, locations, selection techniques, and conditions, it is anticipated that comparable findings would be achieved.

Furthermore, a study's validity contributes to the ability to extrapolate the findings derived from interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis (Berg, 2007). Validity refers to the extent to which a research study accurately measures what it is designed to measure or the degree of truthfulness in the obtained research results (Joppe, 2000). The interview and questionnaire for this study were designed with the objective of assessing the influence of private schools on the education process in Kurdistan. The study's validity is supported by the reference to the mixed research design (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006), which allows for the incorporation of personal experiences and the measurement of quantitative outcomes (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Therefore, the study possesses both reliability and validity as the results can be reproduced and the questionnaire effectively captures the necessary data (Neuman, 2003). In order to verify the validity and reliability of the study, Noble and Smith (2015) emphasised the importance of considering the true value, consistency, and applicability of the findings. The concept of true value is elucidated by the voluntary engagement and keenness of the research participants.

Researchers have at their disposal a range of procedures to ascertain the reliability and validity of their research. In accordance with Creswell's (2014) work, it is imperative to address five specific criteria in qualitative and quantitative studies to uphold the research's quality. These criteria encompass: i) content validity; ii) construct validity; iii) internal validity; iv) external validity; and, v) reliability. The subsequent subsections provide additional information on the aforementioned criteria and outline the procedures employed by the researcher to assure their fulfilment in the present study.

i) Content Validity

Research tools can be used for the comprehensive measurement and adequate examination of a topic from its various perspectives and elements. Within this particular framework, the term content validity is used to refer to the extent to which the research instruments are successful in accurately assessing and investigating the targeted domain of knowledge (Oluwatayo, 2012). Babbie (2007) suggests that content validity can be established through the utilisation of procedures such as expert consultation and thorough literature review. The first technique entails the assessment of the research instruments by specialists to determine their suitability and precision in measuring and investigating the concepts being studied. The second approach assists the researcher in constructing the tools by taking into account the existing knowledge about the concepts (Babbie, 2007).

According to Babbie (2007), two standard approaches can be adopted to ensure content validity, and these are: 1) the formulation of a literature review that looks at all relevant data and information available on the scope of interest; and, 2) the involvement of experts in the field of study who are responsible for supervising the study, and reviewing the constructed literature review and research methodologies. As this thesis is a component of a PhD submission, both of these approaches are standardised and are a necessity. To clarify further, the current research contains questionnaires and semi-structured interviews developed by modifying and implementing items from previous research which were used to assess similar fields of study. Research such as that of Alsuiadi (2015) and Alsuwaileh (2013), and a questionnaire guide sheet provided by my supervisor were the main initiators in generating the questionnaires and interview questions adapted for this study. The objective of choice was justified for their scope coverage, whereby these researchers assessed common items of education, private schools, state schools, and types of

participants used. Originally, the students' questionnaire was composed of 69 items, the teachers' questionnaire was made of 43 items, the school manager interviews had nine main interview questions, and the welfare manager interviews had 15 main questions. However, after careful consideration, the questions were modified to improve their fit with the study, its literature review, and the context of Kurdistan. This led to the questions being amended (covering the scope of the research better) and reduced (the numbers of questionnaire items and interview questions) to also lessen the likelihood of withdrawal and exhaustion (Denscombe, 2010).

To further make sure the domain of concepts was representative (Bollen, 1989), the researcher's supervisors reviewed the questionnaire and interview questions independently. As experts in their field, the supervisors commented on the relevance of topics, questions and language clarity, as well as layout and question format (i.e., the suitability of an open-ended question or a Likert scale). All guidance and suggestions were taken into consideration to generate the final adaptation used to accumulate responses from participants; it covered the representative topics and domains to a competent degree. Thus, the content validity of this study was ensured through the application of conventional strategies.

ii)   Construct Validity

Oluwatayo (2012) defines construct validity as the extent to which the operational definition of a variable accurately represents the theoretical implications of a term. In other words, construct validity is the appropriate operational measurement for a research concept. This particular form of validity centres on ensuring that the research instrument is equitable in its ability to provide both confirming and refuting data pertinent to the idea being examined (Campbell and Fiske, 1959). Previous studies have identified the effectiveness of data source triangulation in assuring this particular form of validity (Brock-Utme, 1996; Oluwatayo, 2012). This procedure permits the researcher to assess and validate the evidence acquired from one source by utilising the data gathered from another source. The use of a solitary technique in data gathering may be deemed as having limitations in terms of its strength, potential bias, and reliability. However, the confirmation of findings can be achieved when information is gathered through many procedures and sources. Therefore, when the same results are achieved, the data is deemed to be valid. Triangulation is a method that enables the acquisition of both qualitative and quantitative data, facilitating the verification of research conclusions.

The data collection process in this study involved the use of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, with data being collected from students, teachers, welfare managers and school managers. Therefore, data were collected using a cross-method manner (mixed method design), whereby the same concepts and research questions were investigated with the use of different participants and techniques.

iii) Internal Validity

Internal validity refers to the extent to which study findings accurately reflect the true reality (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, it measures the degree to which the researcher has successfully captured or observed the specific variables that require measurement (Creswell, 2014). According to Merriam (1998), there are numerous recommended approaches that can be employed to enhance the research instrument and data internal validity. One of the steps taken to ensure internal validity is the implementation of triangulation in the study (previously discussed in detail). The application of triangulation is vital in ensuring internal validity, as research findings are provided from multiple sources and perceptions. Inconsistencies and divergence are more likely to be identified when a comparison of results can be accomplished (Yeasmin and Rahman, 2012). Triangulation in this study has allowed the cross-checking of outcomes and convergence of perceptive, whereby respondents' consistency in beliefs were identifiable. Additionally, Merriam (1998) has also recommended the use of peer reviews and member checks. Both procedures were employed and are reviewed in detail below.

To begin with, Merriman (1998) proposes the use of member checks. Member checks involve the confirmation and agreement of the research outcomes and analysis by members of the researched group. The essence of member checks is to ensure that the outcomes of research are trustworthy and credible, in the sense that they reflect the reality of the phenomenon under study (Lincoln and Guba, 2013). Member checks in this study were completed through a meeting (WhatsApp or Zoom, depending on preference). In the meeting, the researcher reported the research outcomes and analysis to one school manager and two welfare managers. The participants were asked for their opinions on whether they agreed with the obtained outcomes and whether they reflected the reality of the situation. Moreover, one of the main purposes of these meetings was to assess whether any cofounding factors, unbeknown to the researcher, affected the results (e.g., time of day the interviews were taken or the stress level of the participants). However, the opinions during

the meeting indicated no signs of extraneous or cofounding variables and the three participants generally agreed and held a positive outlook towards the outcomes of the study.

Secondly, this research also implemented peer reviews, whereby the research outcomes, procedures and methods were shared with two peers studying or specialising in the same field. As stated by Lincoln and Guba (2013), the existence of peer reviews not only secures the possibility of research gaps and alternative interpretations being identified but also guarantees a more critical analysis of the research outcomes and implemented process. In the current study, the peer review procedure was employed by having continuous meetings and discussions on the study with two colleagues from the field of education. Both colleagues were PhD holders who had received their PhDs from UK universities and were then working as lecturers at Salahaddin University, Kurdistan. They provided various valuable suggestions, feedback and perceptions, enabling the construction of a more robust study.

Another important aspect of research is external validity. This pertains to the degree to which the findings of the study may be applied or generalised to a broader population or other contexts (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). The focus concerns the potential replication of research findings in similar locations as different participant cohorts. In the context of this particular study, the concept of generalisability pertains to the degree to which the observed findings may be applied to a broader population encompassing students, teachers, welfare managers, and school managers within both public and private educational institutions in the KRI.

iv)   External Validity

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018), it is recommended in quantitative research to employ a standardised technique in order to enhance the external validity of the study. This includes following a sampling procedure that allows for a sample representative of the larger population to be obtained. This can be achieved through the kind of random sampling that reduces researcher bias and includes a large sample size (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). This thesis was not subjected to sampling or selection bias in the selection of its schools and participants. To begin with, the researcher approached all schools registered under the MoE; as stated in the literature review chapter, all schools in the KRI, whether state or private, are subject to MoE licensing regulations and registration. After the identification of all schools in the region that deliver classes to grade 12 students, their participation was subject to their willingness and

availability. A school was included if it was approved for investigation by the MoE and by the school's manager. From the list of schools identified during this stage, three state and three private schools were randomly selected, as discussed in the sampling subsection of this chapter. Similarly, all students (those of grade 12), teachers, welfare managers and school managers were selected to participate in this study. Additionally, the inclusion of high school students was limited to their willingness to take part. Considering the questionnaires, a total of 150 students and 42 teachers were asked to participate.

According to Lincoln and Guba (2013), the external validity and transferability of qualitative research is enhanced when researchers engage in thorough documentation regarding the descriptions offered of the methodological procedures and decisions of the study. This enables the replication of the study by others. Bryman and Teevan (2005) further outline the fact that a comprehensive account of the data collection approach enables readers to analyse the data and determine whether the appropriate processes were employed, as well as allowing future researchers to replicate the work. The researcher in this study adhered to the notions put forward by Lincoln and Guba (2013) and Bryman and Teevan (2005). This chapter provides comprehensive explanations of the methods involved in data collection and analysis, as well as the characteristics of the research participants and the methodological choices made.

v)   **Reliability**

The concept of reliability pertains to the ability to reproduce and maintain the consistency of research outcomes across various conditions and timeframes (Lincoln and Guba, 2013). This implies that the findings of the research will be replicated if the identical research protocols are employed again. The significance of this lies in demonstrating that the results of the investigation accurately represent the reality of the phenomenon being investigated. Lincoln and Guba (2013) propose many procedural steps that researchers might undertake to establish and maintain reliability in their studies. Two examples commonly used in academic studies are 'thick description' and 'expert consultation'.

'Thick description' methodology, as previously said, entails furnishing comprehensive particulars regarding the processes and choices undertaken during the course of the research. This enables researchers not only to duplicate the study, but also to allow researchers to assess and determine the validity and robustness of the steps employed. Emphasising the significance of this approach,

Lincoln and Guba (2013) assert that it is a prevalent occurrence in qualitative research for different researchers to yield different conclusions. Whenever different research outcomes are generated by different researchers studying and analysing the similar studies, the result of a different outcome may be attributed to the variation in methodological approaches. Therefore, the necessity of providing a 'thick description' of the study is crucial as it reveals the sources of such differences. Considering what has been discussed, in this study, close attention was paid to providing a 'thick description' of all the steps in the study.

According to Guba and Lincoln (2013), the inclusion of the 'expert consultation' approach is deemed essential for establishing reliability. This individual possesses the expertise to offer valuable insights into the methodological choices undertaken across various stages of the research process, encompassing study design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Hence, the inclusion of an expert can not only enhance the reliability of the instruments (Babbie, 2007; Oluwatayo, 2012), but also validate the rigour of the methodologies employed throughout the study. As described earlier, this thesis is part of a PhD submission, whereby the researcher is guided by two supervisors. As specialists in the field of this study and research, the role of the supervisors is to provide constant feedback and suggestions throughout all the stages of the thesis composition process.

Additionally, to assess the reliability of the questionnaire responses, specifically to assess the internal consistence of the Likert scale questions used in this study, Cronbach's alpha was utilised. Cronbach's alpha is one of the most common tests used to assess research reliability (Field, 2009). Following the test, any Cronbach's value that equates to 0.7 or higher is considered reliable, as the results demonstrate a high internal consistency (De Vellis, 2003). The Cronbach's alpha values from the current study ranged from 0.720 to 0.868 (see Appendices BB-DD for the Likert scale questions and their reliability statistics), representing a satisfactory reliability level.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

3.9.1 Introduction

Research ethics refers to the sufficient amount of emphasis placed on the principles of morality that ensures research aims are accomplished within a morally acceptable framework (Chiang, Jhangiani and Prince, 2015). As such, ethics needs to be emphasised throughout all stages of the

study, from its conceptualization to its analysis and conclusion. Therefore, different research institutions establish their guidance around research ethics, with the right committees to ensure such guidelines are adhered to. Newcastle University is a research-intensive institution and a member of the Russel Group organisation (an organisation accompanying 24 leading public research universities in the UK). Hence, the university's policies of ethics have worked as a primary focus of this study's advancement. As such, the researcher was granted their Ethical Approval from the University's Ethics Committee on 21/08/2017 (see Appendix E for the Ethical Approval).

However, as it has been argued by Creswell (2007), simply adhering to the principles of a research institution should not be the sole source of ethical establishment in research. A researcher needs to gather the right skills and knowledge about the risks they or their participants could face and how to avoid such risks (Creswell, 2007). Some of the critical steps the researcher took into consideration were adhering to the BERA's (2018) ethical standards, acquiring informed consent, and practising safe participant anonymity and confidentiality. These steps are outlined below.

3.9.2 British Educational Research Association

The present study examined the ethical considerations outlined by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) as a prerequisite for adhering to ethical standards (BERA, 2018). To be certain that the moral principles ensuring participant and research safety, rights and norms are followed and conducted appropriately, reference was made to the principles set out by the BERA. The application of BERA (2018) in this research was essential as it provided a foundation for the norms that define and explain ethics. Additionally, as Nolan and Putten (2007) state, in the case of research participants involving human beings, ethical issues and principles must be consistently taken into account, investigated, and eventually established. Accordingly, the ethical well-being of the participants in this study was carefully checked by the researcher, and Newcastle University further checked the procedures and steps for their safety and evaluated whether the study respected human dignity, life, and all other research matters.

3.9.3 Informed Consent

Informed consent refers to the respect and dignity given to participants as their own self-determinants (Manandhar and Joshi, 2020), to ensure the safety and privacy of any personal information presented in the research (Figer *et al*., 2017). In accordance with the beliefs of Howe

and Moses (1999), and Shenton (2004), informed consent has the main concern of maximising participant compliance to take part through the application of a secure, honest and friendly environment. In order to gain the trust and support of the participants, a researcher is required to clearly clarify the aims of their research, stating out all the necessary steps without causing any confusion or spreading misinformation (Creswell, 2007). Hence, the provision of an information sheet becomes a basic ethical principle. An information sheet contains all the necessary information a participant may query about. An information sheet was given to all the participants of this study (see Appendix F-I for Participant Information Sheet), detailing information about the research tile, research aims, their involvement, right to withdraw, data collection and storage, confidentiality, research advantages and disadvantages, ethical approval status, contact detail for further information and contact details for complain if they wish to do so. There is a notable difference between the Information sheet given to welfare managers and school managers and those that were given to teachers and students. The difference was due to their data collection difference and the use of audio recordings (all clarified in the Information Sheet). Having read the information sheet provided, participants had the choice whether they would have wished to participant or not. If upon said decision they had agreed, then their informed consent was gathered afterwards (see Appendix J-M for the Informed Consent sheets).

Furthermore, the consent sheet provided in this study assured participants of their capability and capacity to answer questions voluntarily (i.e., they did not need to take part in the study if they did not wish to do so); they were made aware that they could withdraw from the study at any stage without explanation or consequence, and they were free to refuse/overlook certain questions when they wished to do so. The sheet assured participants that any information collected in the study would solely be utilised for research purposes. Additionally, before the interview process took place, the school managers and welfare managers were re-briefed on the aim of the study, its implications, and the purpose of listening to audio recordings, and were again told of their freedom to agree or refuse to consent to participate (Sikes, 2004). The reason for, and importance of, using the audio recordings during the interview process was justified by their ability to guarantee the reliability of the information collected. The use of the recording ensures that no data is missed, misunderstood or overlooked. Additionally, the researcher can build a stronger rapport with the participants through the creation of a friendly environment through the interactions that take place between the two individuals, which otherwise would have been wasted on note-taking with a more

self-conscious interviewee. Similarly, to ease the student and teacher participants further, the questionnaire sheets were first reviewed and approved by the school manager. With the stamp of the school managers on each sheet, the participants would feel much safer.

3.9.4 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured, with the information submitted being kept confidential and documented inside the study. The study also implemented measures to safeguard data confidentiality, with the interviewer being the sole authorised individual granted insight and access to the data. The subjects were ensured of data privacy and confidentiality. No third party was authorised in checking the raw materials of the research (Nolan and Putten, 2007). The public will see only the data available for them in the final research paper, where no particular reference to specific participants or schools was made. To assure all the participants' safety and gain their trust, they were informed about the confidentiality and anonymity of the research beforehand.

3.9.1 Research Gatekeepers

Gatekeepers work as a fundamental component of ethical process by providing authorisation to research (Kay, 2019). A gatekeeper may include an individual or an organisation that is in charge of granting access to participants of research. They may include "community leaders, elders or respected figures who facilitate or restrict access to community" (Glesne, 2011, pp. 45). The two main gatekeepers for this research were KRI's MoE and different school managers (six in total).

It is essential to be mindful of the ethical implications of involving gatekeepers. The possibility of coercion rising in research becomes one of the central issues. The formation of a voluntary study is correlated with the validity of consent. However, gatekeepers may unintentionally pressure participants (school managers, welfare managers, teachers and students) to participate in the study, breaching the principles of voluntary consent (Dahlke and Stalke, 2020). To ensure such circumstances do not emerge in this study, the participants were given informed consent sheets to fill out, whereby the explanation of the participation being voluntary was provided and the reassurance that withdrawal will not cause any penalties. In addition to the consent sheet, vocal consent was taken from the school managers and the welfare managers at the beginning of the online interview.

Another key issue that may emerge is the issues associated with the balance of power. A gatekeeper may wish for their own values and beliefs to be present in the research findings. Such values and

beliefs may clash with those of the other participants. The influence and power of a gatekeeper should not overshadow the judgement of participants (Klitzman, 2013). This necessitated the importance of safe data collection, whereby all information collected from participants remains confidential and anonymous. The safeguarding of the participants was ensured both on the information and the consent sheet, and if the participants had any questions/complaints then they were welcome to contact the researcher.

Furthermore, the involvement of gatekeepers may subject the study to bias. Gatekeepers can influence which participants to select for the research, through which only the views of a certain population of participants will be represented (Resnik and Sharp, 2006). To verify the validity of the research will not be affected, the researcher selected the schools and participants randomly. Fortunately, the MoE did not deny access to any school for research, and neither did the school managers oppose the random selection of participants.

An emerging query during this research was whether parents are deemed as gatekeepers, i.e. should consent be taken from parents for children (student participants) to be involved in the research. The student participants of this study were aged between 17 to 19. In numerous jurisdictions such age groups are considered as 'mature minors', whereby they are deemed to have the mental capacity to offer their own consent without the involvement of their parents, especially in a circumstance of low risk (Santelli et al., 2003). The University Ethics Committee have classified this research as a 'low-risk research'. To err on the side of caution, both the MoE of KRI and the school managers were questioned on their opinion on whether they believe parents should be involved in providing consent. Both parties deemed it as unnecessary and clarified that such principle was not a component on their school policy. Overall, the school managers acted as the gatekeepers of the students and parents were not involved in this research.

3.10 Limitations of the Methodology

The first limitation the researcher faced was the use of other languages. When preparing the list of questionnaires and during the interview process, the Kurdish language was used. Therefore, translation to English was needed; this was a major challenge as finding the definitive meaning of certain words and concepts was difficult to find (e.g., 'reary children', where the closest English equivalent word is 'Upbringing of children'). Therefore, to ensure that the correct translations

were made by the researcher and that the concepts were equivalent to their origin, the transcripts of the interviews were reviewed by two Kurdish speaking PhD colleagues at Newcastle University. The colleagues were asked to state their opinions and approvals of the translations provided by the researcher.

Another encountered obstacle was receiving the questionnaire responses. The completed teacher and student questionnaires were first emailed to the researcher by the social researcher at Salahaddin University. Each individual questionnaire was made up of several pages; to avoid the mixing of questionnaires, each page of the participant questionnaire responses was numbered, and each participant questionnaire was sent separately (for example, P1, Student 1). This made the process time consuming but the issue was resolved after the researcher received the questionnaire responses by post.

Moreover, during the interviews, the researcher planned to use Dragon software, but unfortunately it did not work with Kurdish. For this reason, voice recorders were used and this was time consuming as the responses needed to be manually written down by the researcher.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an explanation of the research methodology adopted for the thesis. The central aim of the chapter was to discuss the different approaches and structures employed in this study to ensure the creation of constructive and valid data-gathering and analysis approaches. The key research objective was the implementation of a pragmatic research paradigm. The research has accumulated data from various participants, who included students, teachers, welfare managers, and school managers. The data gathered from each participant was utilised for the purpose of finding responses to the research questions. Responses and information gathered from questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, school documentation and the MoE's archive records were later used in the stage of data analysis. The accumulation of data from various sources and resources was used to ensure data triangulation. Furthermore, the chapter has explored and explained the quantitative analysis approaches taken for the quantitative data, and the qualitative analysis approach for the qualitative data, as well as the justification of the approaches taken.

The chapter also covers the choice of location and the justification of its selection. Overall, this chapter has comprehensively presented the philosophical positions, research methodology,

location, sample, data collection and analysis techniques, validity and reliability, as well as the ethical considerations of the research. The next chapter on the results presents the data collected from the study.

Chapter Four: Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on the results to answer the research questions of this study. For ease of reference, the research questions are:

1) How are private and state schools managed and organised in the KRI?
2) How does the perceived quality of state education affect the demand for private schools?
3) How do families choose between private and state schools in the KRI?
4) What is the perception of the impact of private schools on the education process in the KRI?

As discussed in the previous chapter, the findings of the study are based on quantitative and qualitative analyses of primary data gathered by means of interviews and questionnaires, and secondary data from document analysis and archive records from private schools, state schools and the MoE. SPSS software was used to analyse quantitative data. For the qualitative data, thematic analysis was used to identify the dominant themes and patterns.

Chapter 4 is divided into seven main sections, with interrelated subsections. Following the introduction, the demographics and the background of the research area and its participants are detailed; collated data are given in figures and tables. In the four following sections (management and organisation in private and state schools, perceived quality of state school education, the rationale behind choosing private and state schools, and the perceived impact of private schools), the findings related to the four research questions are presented. This includes quotations from the qualitative data and statistical representations of participants' responses, along with information from archive records and analysis of documents from the MoE. The chapter ends with a conclusion of the gathered results.

4.2 Research Setting and Study Participants

The setting of the current research is three private schools (referred to here as P1, P2 and P3) and three state schools (referred to here as S1, S2 and S3) located in Erbil, the capital of Kurdistan (see Section 3.4.1. Reasons for Location Choice for the school selection rationale). All these state and private schools are high schools covering grades 10 to 12. As discussed in previous chapters, MoE policies mostly favour gender segregation, but not all schools in Kurdistan follow this policy and this has led to an increase in mixed schools. This study covers both the more traditional single-sex and mixed schools, with S1, S2 and P1 being single sex and S3, P2 and P3 being mixed. It is important to know that there are two kinds of private schools in the KRI, international and Kurdish (local), and both of these types are covered in this research (two Kurdish [P1/P2] and one international private school [P3]).

The participants in this study were students, teachers, welfare managers and school managers. The total number of student participants was 150 (25 students from each school) and these were in grade 12, mainly aged between 18–19 (see Appendix V). To ensure that equal quantities of male and female respondents were considered in this study, 75 of these students were male and the other 75 were female. As for the teacher participants, there were 42 in total, with seven teachers from each school teaching seven main subjects in grade 12. In addition, the welfare manager and school manager of each of the researched schools participated in the study. All this information is summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Demographic Data

Schools[1]	Gender of students	No. of High School Students[2]		No. of Teachers		No. of Welfare Managers		No. of School Managers
		Total No.	Researched No.	Total No.	Researched No.	Total No.	Researched No.	
S1	Female	613	25	56	7	2	1	1
S2	Male	980	25	48	7	4	1	1
S3	Mixed	625	25 F: 12 M: 13	28	7	3	1	1
P1	Female	342	25	32	7	2	1	1
P2	Mixed	306	25 F: 0 M: 25	39	7	2	1	
P3	Mixed	263	25 F: 13 M: 12	50	7	2	1	1
Total			150 F: 75 M: 75		42	15	6	6

[1] School names in coded form. S = state school and P = private school, and all are high schools = grades 10–12

[2] Only high school students and teachers participated since the research focused on grade 12 (a high school level)

4.3 Management and Organisation of Private and State Schools in the KRI

The first research question addressed in this study focused on how state and private schools in the KRI are managed and organised. This section reports the results related to this question based on the analysis of data collected from school internal stakeholders (i.e., managers, teachers, and students). The results relate to management and organisation in terms of admission policies, school control, and school curriculum. It is worth pointing out that the management of these schools includes school control and admission policies, while school organisation is mainly discussed in terms of school curriculum. The combination of different responses enabled concentration on the factors that could help explain the management and organisation of private and state schools; the following subsections address the approach to management and organisation of these schools in turn.

4.3.1 School Management

Two key emerging concepts resurfacing from the accumulated results under school management were school control and admission policies. The results for these areas are presented next.

Regarding school control, the interviews with the school managers addressed the topic of who controls the schools and how decisions are made regarding aspects of running the school. In the case of state schools, it appeared that every aspect of school life is controlled by the Ministry of Education. For example, S3 said that '...we are routinely sent regulations from the Ministry of Education, and we are required to follow them'. S2 expressed the same idea but in a more detailed manner:

> The Ministry of Education governs the school life. This includes them financing us […], education, any admission of teachers or students, school events, and any permits and approvals. […] We are all compelled to follow the regulations sent to us by the Ministry of Education (S2 school manager)

Furthermore, the S2 school manager elaborated to explain that the MoE sends inspectors to ascertain that policies and regulations are being followed appropriately:

> Examination inspectors, school and building inspectors, and local school inspectors visit us three times a year. Three times a year, we are visited by subject supervisors. […] They all check the standard of learning and teaching by looking at our environment and how our teachers teach. […] If they find any aspects they do not like, then they will encourage us to improve. (S2 school manager).

As for the private schools, upon asking their managers about who runs and controls the school, P1, P2 and P3 stated that their schools are run and controlled by the respective organisation or individuals who funds them. They stated that the MoE only controls the licensing and opening of the schools and sends inspectors to check if regulations are being followed. The licensing process, as the P3 school manager mentioned, 'refers to obtaining approval or consent from the Ministry of Education to operate in the Kurdistan Region'. P2 elaborated on this point by stating that 'individuals or companies who established or opened a school without the Ministry of Education license approval are punished and their schools would be closed'. In a follow-up question about the reason for inspections of private schools, the P1 school manager stated: 'The inspectors ask us to hand them our teaching plan, our timeline and holiday dates, methodology of any used

examinations, student, and teacher enrolment data. They also decide if the learning environment is safe and suitable'.

Any violation of the above requirements would be followed with a penalty, as expressed by the same school manager. In addition, these inspectors do not interfere in the management policies or provide any kind of advice. This was articulated by the P2 school manager:

> After we opened our school and welcomed the students, the Ministry of Education has never been involved. Although they do send supervisors and inspectors, they only gather data, such as environmental conditions or the cleanliness of the school. We do not receive any advice or any management policies from them'. (P2 school manager)

The researcher also perceived the limitations and language barriers between the lessons taught in private schools and inspectors sent by the MoE, as explained during the interviews. The inspectors sent by the MoE either have little or no understanding of languages other than Kurdish. As stated by the P3 school manager:

> All of our lessons are taught in the English Language; the inspectors sent from the ministry are not familiar with it or with the curriculum we follow. [...] I do not think that they can direct us, if they are not familiar with the language or our programme'. (P3 school manager).

Regarding admission policies, the view of school management was also assessed in terms of students and teachers.

Firstly, based on the interview data collected from the school managers, all schools appeared to have admission criteria to decide which students receive places. In the case of state schools, this criterion is determined by the MoE, as stated by S1, S2 and S3 managers. The MoE's regulation states that schools should admit students that live closest to them, and students have the right to be selected if the geographical distance is close. This was supported by the three school managers. For example, the S2 school manager stated:

> The geographical area of the student's house plays an important part in admission policies. Students are selected according to their geographical locations; it is all about which school they are the closest to'. (S2 school manager)

In addition, the three school managers reported that students also have selection entitlement in state schools without any prior testing. This is clear from what the S3 school manager said: We do not test our students on anything when admitting them. Every student has the right to be admitted into our school'.

In contrast, the admission criteria in private schools seems different as none of the school managers mentioned the proximity of residence as a prerequisite for admission. Academic performance from previous years is the admission criteria, as mentioned by the P1 and P2 school managers. For example, the P2 school manager stated that, 'In most cases, we accept students transferred from other schools to study their finale year in our school to get prepared for the Grade 12 examination. We do not examine them while admitting. We only look at their exam results from their previous year'. In P3, which is an international private school, previous academic performance is also an admission criterion but an additional procedure was mentioned by the school manager. This additional procedure involves making students with the best academic performance in previous years sit an additional exam. This was articulated by the P3 school manager: 'The admission procedure to our school starts with scrutinising the student's previous year exam results. Subsequently, students with the highest grades are selected to sit an exam arranged by the school'. In a follow-up question on the nature of this exam, the P3 school manager stated that, 'this is a general test, and it includes a range of tick-box question types, ranging from physics-based questions to language-based ones'. The school manager clarified that:

> English language skills are one of the most important requirements for admission to the school. Therefore, we have a higher demand of English-speaking students. However, this is not mandatory; students with no English background can be accepted. This means students who do not meet this requirement are offered a year of English training before starting their study. (P3 school manager).

Regarding teachers, the six school managers were asked about their teacher recruitment procedure, and some differences between state and private schools were revealed. As for state schools, the three school managers stated that they are not involved in recruiting and selecting teachers. The manager of S1 said, 'We don't have the power to interfere in the recruitment or selection procedure and we don't know when this takes place. All this happens at the Ministry of Education'. In a

follow-up question about qualifications, skills and experience of teachers who join the school, the S3 school manager said:

> All the teachers that I have administered have been sent to us by the Ministry of Education. I personally do not know the amount of skill or the training they have until I recruit them, but the MoE guarantees that they hold at least a bachelor's degree and that they have all passed their minimum expected training time. (S3 school manager)

However, interviews with the private school managers indicated that private schools have different teacher admission policies and practices. First, as the MoE does not assign teachers to the schools, they have the freedom to choose from the diverse and large pool of candidates. In this case, the definitive decisions of P1 and P2 when reviewing a candidate's characteristics are no longer limited by the subject in demand; rather, they extend to qualifications, knowledge, and personal characteristics, as indicated by all the private school managers. Whilst qualifications, experience and background are reviewed in the three private schools, P3 (international) even went so far as to interview possible teachers to assess their personality and whether they have the characteristics needed at their school:

> Our interview takes about 15 to 20 minutes, and in that small window of time, we have to figure out whether the teachers have the capability of teaching our students efficiently [...] We also mainly look at the degree the teacher holds; the higher their degree, the more likely they are to be recruited by us. Admitted teachers are required to have a decent level of English-speaking skills and they should meet the minimum requirement of the job and person description. (P3 school manager)

The teacher's questionnaire collected data on qualifications, training, and years of teaching experience. The data were analysed to find whether there was a difference between these private and state schools in relation to their teachers' attributes. Initially, cross tabulation with the aid of a chi-square was employed to explore if there were any associations between school type and the categorical variables of qualifications, training, and years of teaching experience. Cramér's V (φc)[6]

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[6] The Cramér's V test measures the strength of association between variables. It assesses a scale of 0 to 1, with 0 exhibiting no association and 1 exhibiting absolute association. As expressed by Cohen (1988), a scale of 0.1 demonstrates a small association; 0.3 is medium; and 0.5 is large.

was also used to estimate the strength of the association between the variables. As shown in Table 4.2, nearly all the state school teachers held a bachelor's degree as their highest qualification (90.5%). Nevertheless, the private schools had fewer teachers with bachelor's degrees as their highest qualification (57.1%). The private schools had a higher proportion of teachers with either a master's or doctorate (28.6% or 14.3%, respectively), compared to the state schools' teachers (9.5% and 0%, respectively). Indeed, statistical analysis showed a significant association between the school type and teacher's qualifications (χ^2 = 6.581, df = 2, p-value < 0.05). The association is of medium strength (φ_c = .396). This indicates that the private school teachers had higher degrees compared to the state school teachers.

Table 4.2. School teachers' background data

Variables	Item	State	Private	χ2	Df	*Φc*
Qualification	Bachelor	90.5%	57.1%			
	Masters	9.5%	28.6%	6.581*	2	.396
	Doctorate	.0%	14.3%			
Training	Trained	100%	57.1%	11.455**	1	.522
	Un-trained	.0%	42.9%			
Age Mean		42.4	33.4			
Years of teaching experience	1–10	14.3%	76.2%			
	11–20	38.1%	19.0%	17.628**	3	.648
	21–30	42.9%	4.8%			
	31–40	4.8%	.0%			
Years of teaching experience at private school	1–4		47.6%			
	5–8		33.3%			
	9–12		9.5%			
	13–16		4.8%			
	+17		4.8%			

Note: * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$. Source: Teachers' questionnaire data collected for this research, 2021

Table 4.2 also shows that all the state school teachers in the research were trained before entering the profession (100%), whereas approximately half of the private school teachers had undergone training (57.1%). The statistical test revealed a relatively strong association between the school

type and the teachers trained or untrained status ($\chi^2 = 11.455$, df = 1, $p < 0.01$, $\varphi_c = .522$). A similar picture arises when the teaching experience is considered; Table 4.2 shows that the state school teachers mostly had teaching experience of between 21–30 or 11–20 years (42.9% and 38.1%, respectively), whereas the private teachers with less than ten years of experience comprised 76.2%. The statistical test also supports this difference as it revealed a strong association between the type of school and years of teaching experience ($\chi^2 = 17.628$, df =3, $p < 0.01$, $\varphi_c = .648$). These differences are discussed further in the Discussion Chapter.

4.3.2 School Organisation
The second part of the first research question was on how schools are organised and who is responsible for the organisation. School organisation in the context of this research encompasses curriculum organisation and provision, the results for which are presented next.

During the interviews with the school managers, they were asked about the curriculum in their schools. All the state school managers stated that they follow the national curriculum of Kurdistan provided by the MoE. When asked what this included, the S2 school manager said that 'what is taught in schools guarantees students' understanding of their language, background, and country. It teaches us disciplines that define Kurdish people'. The S1 school manager provided a more detailed answer:

> The national curriculum ensures that all of us have similar opinions and have a baseline knowledge to function as educated citizens. […] It covers all target subjects: mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, history, geography, Kurdish language, English language, Arabic language, religion, physical education and art. (S1 school manager)

The interviewer enquired further into how students are assessed. The three state school managers mentioned a regional exam designed and governed by the MoE. For example, the S1 school manager said that 'at the end of Grade 12, students sit a regional exam to test their level of knowledge and understanding and this test is sent to all state schools from the Ministry of Education'.

With regards to private schools, the interviews revealed a difference between the curricula of P1 and P2 (Kurdish private schools), and the P3 (international). Similar to the state schools, P1 and P2 follow the national curriculum but, as private schools, they have the choice to add additional subjects as they see appropriate. This was noted by the P1 school manager:

We follow the national curriculum set by the Ministry of Education because students sit the regional exams, and they are tested based on this curriculum. However, there are additional subjects we give to students. Currently, we provide subjects such as computer science, IT, economics and Turkish. (P1 school manager)

Additional subjects are also offered by P2. According to the manager of this school, these are 'computer science, business studies and economics'. Thus, both P1 and P2 are similar to state schools as they follow the national curriculum, but they differ in that they offer additional subjects to their students. The situation is different in P3; the manager of this school stated that, 'we follow the English World Curriculum'. According to this manager, 'this is a curriculum recognised by England'. As for the assessment, the manager said that 'there is a special assessment associated with this curriculum, but students can choose to sit our exam, or the national exam provided by the Ministry of Education'. Table 4.3 provides a summary of the curriculum followed at each school in this research.

Table 4.3. School curricula

S1	MoE's National Curriculum	P1	MoE's National Curriculum, international subjects: computer science, IT, economics and Turkish
S2	MoE's National Curriculum	P2	MoE's National Curriculum, international subjects: computer science, business studies, economics
S3	MoE's National Curriculum	P3	'English World Curriculum'

Source: School managers' interview data collected for this research

4.3.3 Research Question One Summary

This section presented the findings of the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data obtained through teachers' and students' questionnaires, school managers' interviews, and the archive records and document analysis. It can be concluded from the findings that these private and state schools are managed and organised differently in terms of school control, admission policies, and school curricula.

Starting with the question of how schools are managed, it appeared that a difference exists in the state and private schools in terms of how they are controlled. School life is controlled by the MoE in the state schools, but the private schools are controlled by their respective organisation or the individuals who opened them; however, the MoE sends inspectors to ascertain that policies and regulations are followed appropriately in both types of schools.

Moreover, the results also showed school management in terms of the admission criteria and policies. The state schools admit students based on the vicinity of their residence, while the private schools offer places to students based on their academic performance in previous years (local and international private schools) and their performance in a placement test (international private school). Teacher recruitment in the state schools is conducted by the MoE, which ensures that teachers hold at least a bachelor's degree and that all teachers have completed a minimum expected training time. In contrast, the recruitment in the private schools is performed by the schools themselves, which take into account teachers' qualifications, experience and background (local and international private schools), as well as personality (international private school). Additionally, the analysis of the teachers' biographical data on qualifications, training, and years of teaching experience also revealed that the private school teachers have higher degrees compared to those in the state schools, but the state school teachers have a higher level of training and teaching experience than their counterparts in private schools.

Further, it was found that both state and private schools have their own organisation criteria. In terms of school curriculum, both the private and state schools follow the national curriculum of Kurdistan provided by the MoE, although local private schools can add additional subjects as they see appropriate. The international private school in this study, on the other hand, adopts 'the English World Curriculum', which is recognised in England.

The next section of this chapter addresses the second research question.

4.4 Perception of the Quality of Education in State Schools

This second research question concerned how the perceived quality of state education affects the demand for private schools. To answer this question, teacher questionnaires and interviews with welfare managers were employed.

First of all, the teachers' perception of the quality of education was investigated by asking the teacher participants to rate the quality of education in their schools on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = alright, 4 = good, and 5 = excellent). The mean responses are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Teachers' perception of the quality of education in their schools

Statement	School Type	Mean Response	Mann-Whitney U	Z-score
How would you rate the quality of education at your school?	State	2.71		
			82.500**	-3.657
	Private	3.90		

$* p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01$. Source: Teachers' questionnaire data collected for this research

As shown in Table 4.4, the private school teachers perceived the quality of the education in their schools more positively, as indicated by the higher mean of the responses from the private school teachers (3.90) in comparison to the state school teachers (2.71). This difference in means is confirmed as statistically significant by the Mann-Whitney U test ($p < 0.01$). An open question in the questionnaire asked the teachers to explain the rating they provided. The responses of the state school teachers focused mainly on negative aspects in their schools. The following were the most recurrent aspects of the state school teachers' responses, along with the number of teachers stating the theme and an example of the responses they provided:

- Repetitive methods of teaching with lack of variation were mentioned by eight teachers. For example, 'The methods used in our class are quite old. It also means the same way of learning is delivered every day, causing the rise of boredom and the loss of learning motivation'. (S3 Chemistry teacher)
- The lack of teaching aids (eight teachers). For example, 'I do not remember the last time we received new teaching aids' (S2 English language teacher)
- High number of students in each class (11 teachers). For example, 'We feel exhausted, because the number of students is very large' (S1 mathematics teacher)
- Lack of teachers (6 teachers). For example: 'I have an Arabic qualification, but I also teach religious studies […], we do not have enough teachers available so we have to cover other subjects'. (S1 Arabic language teacher)

Furthermore, the perception of the quality of education was assessed by questioning the welfare managers as to the extent to which they believed the quality of their state school's education contributes to generating supply and demand for fee-paying private schools. Interestingly, the results were inconclusive as similar statements were provided by the interviewees, who mostly acknowledged that students and their families look at private schools when efficient education is lacking in state schools. Five out of the six welfare managers stated that students and their families prefer private schools because of the lack of efficient education in state schools. For example, the S1 welfare manager stated that, '... of course, if the quality of education was good at state schools, then students would be less likely to go to a private school'. Along the same lines, the P2 welfare manager said that, 'The quality of education in state schools is the major reason for students wanting private schools'. Only one welfare manager did not say that state schools lack efficient education but did say that private schools are better: 'It is easy to say that the quality of education is better at private schools than state schools' (P1 welfare manager). These results indicate that all the welfare managers believed that the perception of quality is a deciding factor in the demand for a certain type of school. In a follow-up question on what causes this negative view of the quality of education in state schools, the respondents focused on the 'lack of the number of teachers'. For example, the S1 welfare manager said: 'There are not enough teachers to teach the lessons in our school. So, I think it means that our quality is not that good, which makes parents look into private schools' (S1 welfare managers).

Across the interviews, the welfare managers agreed with the statement that 'since 2014, we [S2 welfare manager] have seen a significant drop in new teachers' employments'. The S3 welfare manager said, 'There is a lack of teachers in our school. Every year we hear rumours that more staff members will be employed to cover the shortage, but nothing happens'. This staff shortage problem is leading some teachers to cover subjects outside of their specialty: 'We have teachers who are given subjects to deliver for which they have no training or qualification for'.

Another reason for the negative view of the quality of state school education is the 'lack of motivated teachers in state schools'; as noted in the interviews with the welfare managers, this was because of no/low salaries that teachers are paid (i.e., 'Teachers do not get paid enough in state schools, so they have no reason to be motivated to work hard' S1 welfare manager). The 'lack of salary' was mentioned by all the welfare managers in the three state schools. For example, the S3 welfare manager complained that, 'Teachers have to continue teaching as normal and they must

deliver lessons as normal, but they do not even receive their salary as normal'. The lack of salary seemed to affect the teachers' wellbeing and caused them to continue their work with a negative attitude. S3 welfare manager stated that:

> We all have families and we need money to be able to live and continue work. We have many problems because we don't have money […] when we can't pay the house rent and can't buy food for our families, don't expect us to do our jobs properly and for the teachers to do their best in teaching […] the teachers do not even know if they will get paid this month or next month and this is keeping them stressed when they are preparing and delivering their lessons.

4.4.1 Research Question Two Summary

The second research question focused on how the perceived quality of state schools affected the demand for private schools.

Firstly, significantly more of the state school teachers perceived the quality of education in their schools negatively. These teachers' perceptions seemed to arise due to the state school teachers being unhappy with the quality of education in their schools, due to: repetitive methods of teaching lacking variations, a high number of students in classrooms, a lack of teaching aids, and a lack of teachers, as well as asking teachers to cover subjects they had no experience with. Furthermore, the quality of education at the state schools, according to the welfare managers, is lacking. They stated that parents would not look at private schools if they believed the quality of education in state schools was decent. The next section reports the results for the third research question.

4.5 Rationale for the Choice of Private or State School

This section addresses the third research question concerning how families choose private or state schools in the KRI. The results presented in this section are based on data collected from students, welfare managers and school managers, with a focus on the individuals and factors that contribute to school choice. Initially, the researcher focused on the influential factors that may affect the preference between the two school types. These are now reported in turn.

4.5.1 Household Characteristics

To investigate influences that may affect school type (state=1 and private=2), the household characteristics from the data were defined. The demographic variables included: the gender of the student (female=0, male=1), the student's age, and the educational level of the student's father and mother. The economic variables included: the number of bedrooms, cars, computers/laptops, mobile phones, bicycles, motorcycles, residence ownership, and having a separate room and study room. In addition, the 'crosstabs' between categorical variables and the dichotomous variable of school type were conducted to check the data distributions, to determine that we do not have a variable with very little measurement for one of the school types. The variable 'resident', which had four choices (ownership, rent, government flat, and other), was transformed to the dichotomous variable of 'res' (0=rent, 1=ownership).

4.5.2 Dimension Reduction using Principal Component Analysis

The student survey asked a range of questions about family possessions and wealth. It was necessary to structure some of them into a smaller set of combined factors; otherwise, there would have been too many independent variables to fit a reasonable model to the data. These have been combined into a smaller set of measures using exploratory factor analysis, rotated using the Varimax procedure. The factor analysis was run to explore themed wealth factors. The preliminary output offered three factors; however, the eigenvalue for one component was only 1.058, just above 1 (see Appendix FF). Therefore, a two-factor solution was found to be optimal. Furthermore, since most families reported no motorcycles for both school types, the variable for the motorcycles was dropped. The combined factors were then given the following descriptions:

• Factor 1: Wealth 1 – bedroom, car, computer/laptop, res, separate room, study room

• Factor 2: Wealth 2 – mobile phone, bicycle.

These two factors explain about 52% of the variation in this data set. Factor scores for these wealth factors were derived for each student in the data set. As we were looking for factor scores that are only correlated with items within the latent factor, the Bartlett method was used to produce Wealth 1 and Wealth 2 variables.

4.5.3 Logistic Regression

Using logic models, the study tested whether, in accordance with students' responses, the family preferences and demographic characteristics affected the choice of different types of school. The

proposed model assumed that all participants could choose either a private or state school. Table 4.5 shows the coefficient estimates of the logistic regression model in terms of odds ratios, with the reference group being state schools. Each coefficient indicates the change in the odds of the given success outcome, which, in this study, is a private instead of a state school for a one standard deviation increase in the preference for the respective school characteristic. To clarify, the logistic regression model was used to find association between the school the students are attending, and their responses related to (i) household characteristics (asked in the demographic section of the student questionnaires) and (ii) to what degree they agree or disagree (in accordance to a five-point Likert scale) to the different factors they believe was considered by their families when selecting the schools they are currently attending.

Table 4.5. Estimates of the empirical model

Variable	Coeff.	SE	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Family educational preference						
Understand the subjects better	0.921	0.682	1.823	1	0.177	2.512
Having different curricula	2.136*	0.855	6.245	1	0.012	8.464
Students imitate their friends	-0.124	0.647	0.037	1	0.848	0.883
Availability of subject-specialised teachers	0.336	0.660	0.259	1	0.611	1.400
Getting good exam results	2.014*	0.808	6.212	1	0.013	7.495
Getting a university place	1.597*	0.796	4.028	1	0.045	4.940
Having a different number of students in each class	2.357**	0.887	7.055	1	0.008	10.559
Teacher-student relationships	0.994	0.857	1.347	1	0.246	2.703
Household characteristics						
Age	0.787	1.072	0.539	1	0.463	2.196
Gender	2.200	1.498	2.157	1	0.142	9.028
Father's education level	0.024	0.052	0.202	1	0.653	1.024
Mother's education level	-0.046	0.106	0.184	1	0.668	0.955
Wealth 1	2.106*	0.813	6.717	1	0.010	8.216
Wealth 2	1.734*	0.765	5.138	1	0.023	5.661
Constant	-41.187	22.901	3.235	1	0.072	0.000

*$p <0.05$, **$p <0.01$ Reference group state schools

Table 4.5 shows that in alignment with the student responses, there were four family educational preferences around school types which were statistically significant when controlled for age, gender, and father and mother's education level. These demographic variables were non-significant, which means there is no significant difference in these variables in the two school types. However, the economic factors (Wealth 1 and Wealth 2) were significant. This means that

the children in private schools were from wealthier families, but we controlled for this difference by adding these variables into the logistic model.

The student participants who stated a parental preference when selecting schools due to their having different curriculums were more likely to send their children to a private school. The results, in accordance with the student responses, indicate that parents selecting a private school for their children was approximately eight times as large as the likelihood of choosing a state school for every single SD increase in the preference rating ($p<0.05$). Participants who reported getting good exam results as a preference were more likely to register their child in a private school. A one SD increase in the preference indicator of 'good exam results' is associated with an increase in the likelihood of selecting private schools instead of state by a factor of 7.495 ($p<0.05$). The student questionnaire suggests that parents were more likely to send their children to private schools when stating this preference ($p<0.05$) regarding getting a university place. A single SD increase in the preference indicator of getting a university place is associated with an increase in the likelihood of selecting a private school instead of state by a factor of 4.940 ($p<0.05$). Finally, it can be implied in alignment with the students' responses that parents who selected schools due to their having a different number of students in each class were more likely to send their children to a private school. The results indicate that the likelihood of parents selecting a private school for their children is approximately ten times as large as choosing a state school for every single SD increase in the preference rating ($p<0.01$). As the results show, the other parental preference variables, including 'understanding the subjects better', 'students imitate their friends', 'availability of subject-specialised teachers', and 'teacher-student relations', were not statistically significant in predicting the outcome of interest in this study.

Next, the variables 'residence' and 'number of bedrooms' as wealth factors were added to the model to check whether the economic factors were producing genuine relationships. The results were very similar, indicating our model's overall accuracy in predicting school choice (see Appendix GG). Measures show that the proposed model fits the data well, with the likelihood ratio test ($\chi^2(14) = 168.672$, $p<0.001$), implying that the model as a whole fits significantly better than an empty model with no predictors. The pseudo-R2 likelihood ratio indicates: 0.688 (Cox and Snell) to 0.917 (Nagelkerke).

The sum of all the wealth variables was calculated as *Wealthsum = bedrooms + cars + computer/laptop + mobile phones + bicycles + res + separate room + study room.* Then, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted between all wealth factors to check the collinearity between the wealth variables. The results show that *Wealth 1* was highly correlated with *wealthsum* and *res* variables (see Appendix HH). *Wealth 2* was the lower wealth group as the results from the correlation with *res* show a negative direction.

Concerning the rationale of the students and parents when choosing school types, each school manager was asked about the criteria parents used to select the school. The state school managers focused mainly on the proximity of the students' residence to school. These school managers said that 'most students live nearby' (S1 school manager), that 'it is easy to travel to this school because it is just a 5–10-minute walk from where students live' (S2 school manager) and 'the school is close to the students' residence' (S3 school manager). In addition, the affordability of education in state schools was mentioned by the three state school managers as the expression of 'free education' as part of their responses.

On the other hand, when the same question was directed at the private school managers, they mainly focused on either the 'extra-curricular lessons' or the 'English language teaching' the school provides. The P1 school manager attributed this to the extra-curricular subjects they offer to students, saying: 'For example, computer science is highly valued, but this is not taught in state schools. The extra-curricular subject is highly valued in the country' (P1 school manager). The P3 school manager, on the other hand, attributed this to the higher English language proficiency students obtain when they study at their school. This is expressed in their own words as follows:

> Our school follows a simplified version of England's national curriculum. While some students have returned from outside countries, where the education system and the language are familiar [...] the local students and their parents understand that having an international degree and an English education means that they are more likely to get a stable job in the future, especially since English itself is a widely used language in the country. (P3 school manager)

The perspective of the welfare managers was also considered when they were asked about the reasons for choosing between a private or state school in the KRI. Private schooling being part of a 'social phenomenon' or 'trend' was the rationale expressed by the three private school welfare

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managers (as well as S1 and S3 welfare managers). This was articulated by the P2 welfare manager, who said:

> Private schools are seen as a social phenomenon, a trend or a model/style in Kurdistan. Families move their children into private schools to imitate those around them. For most of them, putting your child in a private school is something to boast about. It is like buying an expensive new car (P2 welfare manager)

4.5.4 Research Question Three Summary

This section of the chapter assessed how families choose private or state schools in Kurdistan by focussing on the responses gathered from the students, school managers and welfare managers. The logistic regression analysis conducted in this study revealed that in accordance with student responses, certain family characteristics and parental preferences contributed (or did not contribute) to school choice. In this regard, it was found that the wealthier the family, the more likely the student would register for a private school. However, the gender and age of the students did not appear to be contributing factors in school choice. As for the parental preferences, that were found to be significant in the student questionnaire, having a different curriculum, a different number of students in each class, getting good exam results, and getting a university place were all found to contribute to sending students to private schools. By contrast, understanding subjects better, subject-specialised teachers, and teacher-student relations did not have a major influence on the decision to send children to private or state schools.

A further area of interest explored in the current study is family reasons for school choice. According to the state school managers, some students and their parents preferred state schools mainly due to the proximity of students' residence to school and the purpose of education being 'free.' By contrast, the choice of private schools was also attributable to the need for the additional subjects and English language training provided by private schools, which is more valued for jobs. Moreover, the welfare managers expressed their opinion about the rationale pointing to the 'phenomena,' and 'trend' of private schools that exists in Kurdish society.

The next section of this chapter looks into the perceived impact that private schools have on the education process in the KRI.

4.6 Perceptions on the Impact of Private School on the Education Process in the KRI

The fourth research question dealt with whether the provision of private schooling impacted the education process in Kurdistan. In this section, the objective is to explore the perceived impact of private schooling. In this regard, an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data was carried out, to see the perceived impact on 1) society: social values and traditions (i.e., whether the private schools focus on social values and traditions in line with the state schools); educational, social and gender equality (i.e., whether the private schools promote education, social and gender equality); 2) academic performance: university entrance and exam results (i.e., whether the private schools support education and academic performance in terms of university entrance and exam results); and, 3) the families' financial situation (i.e., whether the private schools impact families' financial situation). The following subsections report the results in relation to these aspects.

4.6.1 Perceived Impact on Social Values and Traditions

This section addresses the perceived impact of private schools on social values and traditions in Kurdistan, i.e. whether private schools attend to social values and traditions in line with the state schools in Kurdistan. The results of this section are based on data collected from the students and welfare managers.

In the students' questionnaire, participants were asked whether their schools follow their country's values and traditions. The results based on students' responses to this question are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6. Students' perceptions on whether their schools consider social values and traditions

	State %	Private %
Yes	88.0%	37.8%
No	12.0%	62.2%

The results show that most of the state school students agreed that their schools follow the social values and traditions of their country (88.0%). However, about a third (37.8%) of the private school students believed that this was the case in their schools.

The welfare managers were also questioned during the interviews regarding how their schools focus on the norms and values of the country. The responses of these participants revealed clear differences between the state and private schools in this regard. The state school welfare managers responded similarly in that they follow the MoE's policy by attending to 'cultural celebrations and memorial events', in which social values and traditions are endorsed. For example, the S1 welfare manager said: 'Days like Newroz, Flag Day and religious events are taught to students from the day they start school and are reminded throughout the years to respect and treasure these moments' (S1 Welfare manager).

According to the state school welfare managers, these values and traditions are introduced from the earliest stage of education and remain throughout the extent of the student's educational upbringing. Also, cultural celebrations and memorable events are appraised to remind students of events and the people that define who they are. This was expressed by the S2 welfare manager as follows:

> The aim of the Ministry of Education in Kurdistan is firstly the 'reary/upbringing' of children, and secondly it is 'education'. From the day the child joins education, they are introduced to the society's values. Cultural celebrations and memorable events are appraised in an attempt to remind the students of the events and the people that define who they are.

There was no difference in the responses provided by P1 and P2, as they were similar to S1–S3.

However, P3 (international) adopts the education system of an external society, leading to the 'disregard of cultural celebrations and memorable events'. This point was confirmed by the P3 welfare manager:

> We have never paid attention to days like Newroz or even Moulood [Prophet Mohammed's birthday], however, we do celebrate other foreign dates adopted from an external society […] because we have some Kurdish students that have been raised in other countries were these dates are more valued, but this has no connection with the Kurdish society.

Following the question of the relationship between the respective schools and other parts of the social structure, the state welfare managers determined that there is a strong association between schools and society. Upon further questioning of welfare managers on how this relationship is formed, the state school welfare managers responded similarly in that they follow the MoE's policy specifically by giving attention to the subjects through which social values and traditions are endorsed. For example, the S3 welfare manager said that:

> State schools value subjects such as *Madani* [Kurdish literature, history, culture, politics and human values]*, Maldari* [the acceptable behaviours followed by Kurdish people, such as acceptable behaviours and good manners within the family] and Human Rights and Religious studies [teachings of Islam, which is the main religion followed by the majority of people in the country]. (S3 welfare manager)

In contrast, the private school welfare managers' responses were different from those of the state schools. The P1–P3 welfare managers similarly stated that they focus on the main subjects. Although Kurdish private schools (P1 and P2) do follow the MoE's curriculum, the welfare managers confirmed that attention is only given to the 'main subjects' (e.g., sciences and mathematics), with 'little to no consideration given to side/minor subjects, such as Madani, Maldari, Human Rights and Religious studies' (P1 and P2 welfare managers). The lack of focus on Kurdish social values and traditions was even clearer in P3 (international). It seems that there is a dissociation between their students and Kurdish social values and traditions, which was clear from the remark of the P3 welfare manager: 'This school attempts to establish an entirely new curriculum from outside countries, [and] hence with it we bring in new culture and traditions that are different from those of the Kurdish society'.

4.6.2 Perceived Impact on Educational, Social and Gender Equalities

This section addresses the perceived impact of private schools on educational, social and gender equalities, i.e., whether private schools promote these in the KRI.

Firstly, considering education equality, the teachers were given a questionnaire statement saying that 'private schools promote inequality in education', and were asked to indicate their agreement/disagreement. The responses showed that more than 95% of the state and private school teachers agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, as Figure 4.1 shows.
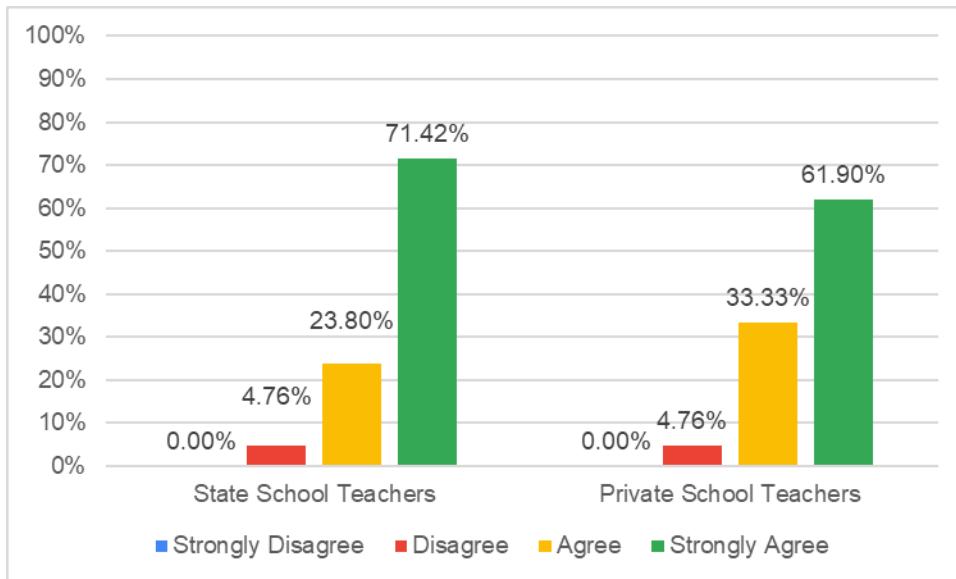
Figure 4.1 Teachers' perceptions of whether the private schools promote inequality in education

These views are consistent with those of the welfare managers, as all agreed that private schools create inequality in education in Kurdistan. To understand how this is so, the welfare managers were asked to explain. The main theme arising from these participants' responses was that 'better education is provided to those who can afford it'. For example, the P2 welfare manager mentioned that, 'our students receive better education than that received by state school students and this is inequality in education, but we can do nothing about it'. Two welfare managers in the state schools blamed the MoE for this situation. For example, the S2 welfare manager stated that 'when schools are not given sufficient funds from the Ministry of Education, they will have many problems affecting the quality of education'. For the S3 welfare manager, the problem was that:

> Private schools can provide better education because they can select the best teachers and provide the best services, but this is not the case in state schools […] In our school, you can easily see that students are only provided with a room, a desk and old books to study on. But when we consider private schools, then they have allocated funds and they can spend their money on whatever they believe would help their students.

Secondly, to explore whether private education is perceived to create a wider form of social inequality, two statements were given to teachers to indicate their agreement/disagreement. The

majority of the state and private school teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that 'private schools provide education for all social classes' (Figure 4.2) and agreed or strongly agreed that 'private schools create social class division' (Figure 4.3).
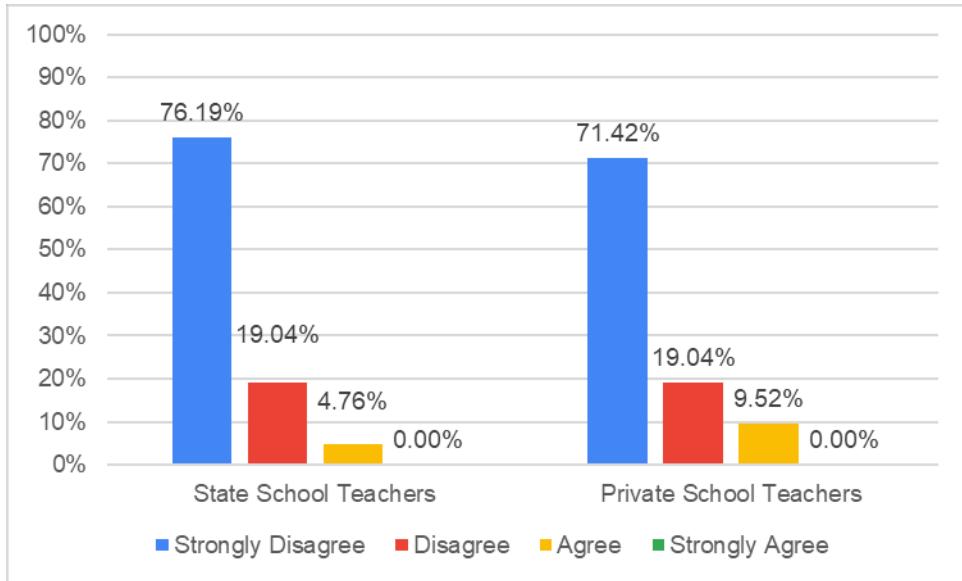
Figure 4.2 Teachers' perceptions of whether private schools provide education for all social classes
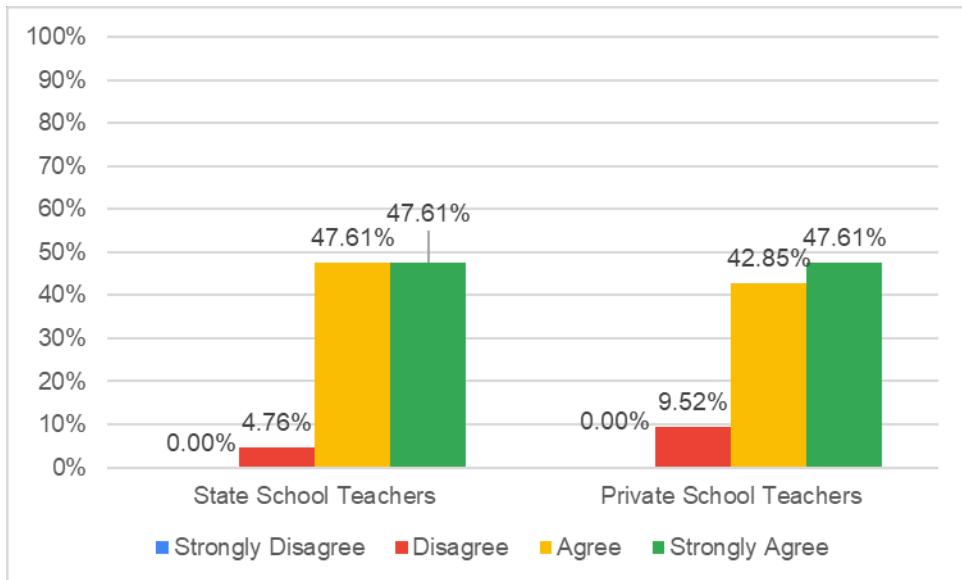
Figure 4.3 Teachers' perceptions of whether private schools create social class division

The teachers' perceptions seem consistent with the perceptions of welfare managers on whether private schools provide education for all social classes in Kurdistan. The six welfare managers concurred that private schools are only for those who can afford it and do not serve every member of society. For instance, the P2 and P3 welfare managers stated that 'private schools are only made for those who can afford it'. The P1 welfare manager stated that:

> Some families can never afford private schools. It is not as simple as cutting of the cost of other luxuries such as holidays and cinema to be able to afford private schools. Not in the slightest, for some families, even if they decided to work every day with their current job for the rest of their lives. It is just not possible for everyone.

Subsequently, the welfare managers were asked whether private schools create social class division in Kurdistan. Four of the welfare managers (S1, S2, P1 and P3) concurred that private schools create social class division; for example, the P3 welfare manager concluded that 'private schools create social class division, because the fee cannot be paid by every family'. The other two welfare managers (S3 and P2) believed that social class division already exists in society and that private schools widens it. They held the opinion that students in private education have a brighter future, which will widen the gap between social classes. For example, the S3 welfare manager stated that: 'We have two groups of people; one of them has higher potential to go to university and get the best jobs but very few of the other group have similar opportunities. This is what I mean by a widening gap between social classes'.

Thirdly, considering gender equality, the welfare managers of mixed-sex private schools (P2 and P3) were asked during interview whether their schools host approximately equal numbers of males and females. They stated that their schools have more males than females. According to the P2 welfare manager 'the higher number of boys compared to girls is clear in every class'. To check gender equality/inequality in private schools further, records for the numbers of males and females in private education in Erbil city of Kurdistan over ten years between 2010–2020, were retrieved from the MoE. Table 4.7 shows that there were more male than female students present at all stages of education from kindergarten to high school.

Table 4.7 Numbers of male and female students in private education in Erbil from kindergarten to high school between 2010–2020

		Kindergarten	Primary	Secondary	High School
2010–2011	Boys	1863	9380	1315	2498
	Girls	1420	6203	589	1465
	% Difference	26.99%	40.78%	76.26%	52.13%
2011–2012	Boys	2061	9498	1362	2832
	Girls	1750	6526	601	1776
	% Difference	16.32%	37.09%	77.53%	45.83%
2012–2013	Boys	2160	9832	1380	3266
	Girls	2024	6852	871	2242
	% Difference	6.50%	35.72%	45.22%	37.18%
2013–2014	Boys	2679	10156	2203	3403
	Girls	2414	6970	1497	2528
	% Difference	10.41%	37.21%	38.16%	29.51%
2014–2015	Boys	2360	9127	2168	2856
	Girls	2118	6927	1262	2045
	% Difference	10.81%	27.41%	52.83%	33.10%
2015–2016	Boys	2080	7409	2019	2730
	Girls	1725	5339	1032	1879
	% Difference	18.66%	32.48%	64.70%	36.93%
2016–2017	Boys	2167	7776	2123	2721
	Girls	1864	5875	1129	1966
	% Difference	15.03%	27.85%	61.13%	32.22%
2017–2018	Boys	2490	8023	2365	2868
	Girls	2052	6238	1262	2115
	% Difference	19.29%	25.03%	60.82%	30.22%
2018–2019	Boys	2834	9844	2613	2978
	Girls	2337	7574	1338	2435
	% Difference	19.22%	26.06%	64.54%	20.06%
2019–2020	Boys	2988	10337	2762	3147
	Girls	2592	8011	1457	2635
	% Difference	14.19%	25.35%	61.86%	17.71%

4.6.3 Perceived Impact on Education and Academic Performance

This section focuses on the perceived impact of private schools on education and academic performance, i.e., whether private schools support education and academic performance in terms of university entrance and exam results. Firstly, to explore whether the private schools support education, the teachers' views were gathered. Figure 4.4 shows how two thirds of the state school teachers and the majority of the private school teachers agreed or strongly agreed that 'private schools support education'.
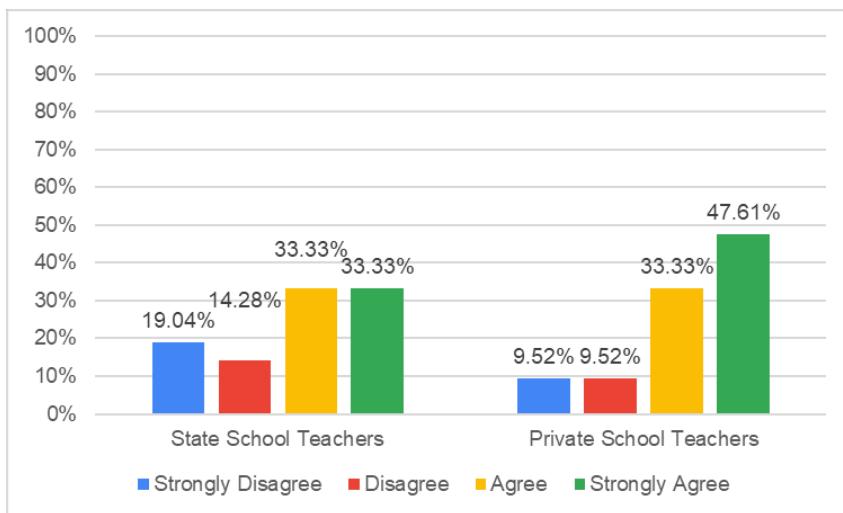
Figure 4.4 Teachers' perceptions of whether private schools support education

In addition, during interview, the six welfare managers agreed that private schools have a positive impact on education. Three themes appeared in these participants' explanations. First, the three welfare managers thought that private schools raise the quality of education. A representative opinion of this was stated by the P1 welfare manager, who said:

> We came to being in response to the need for better quality in education and we wouldn't have stayed in operation had we not been able to satisfy this need. […] Everyone knows that private schools provide a variety of lessons, useful equipment, and technology, and all the needed features that are considered advantages.

The P3 welfare manager also said that, 'private schools are an example that should be followed to improve the quality of education in the country'.

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Secondly, three of the welfare managers clarified that private schools support the education system when the government cannot. The P2 welfare manager explained that:

> It removes the pressure on the government when the government is unable to provide a good education […] And right now, it is quite clear to see how the government is not able to carry the load of education for the whole region. Having private schools around will help elevate some of the load by helping in educating students.

The third theme that appeared in welfare managers' explanations was 'achieving better exam results and securing a place at university'. This theme was clearly stated in the data from five welfare managers (S1, S3, P1, P2 and P3). For example, P2 said: 'When we consider the final outcome, we find that students get high scores in exams and secure a place at university. Can you see how positive this impact is?'.

However, the S2 welfare manager had a different opinion, proposing that 'there is no relation between the type of school and students' exam results'. What is more, they clarified that:

> If a student's aim is to study and do well, then they will study no matter the type of school they are at. Exam results are dependent on the student and their motivation, and their school should not be considered as the main factor behind educational judgments.

To assess whether private schools impact exam performance, the six schools were asked to provide statistical data regarding students' performance. The researcher was given access to the 2020–2021 students' records in these schools. The records included the students' scores in their end-of-year/regional exams, including the information of students who passed or failed their examinations. Based on the numbers, the success rate in each school was calculated and the percentages are reported in Figure 4.5. As this figure demonstrates, the success rate in the three private schools was clearly higher than the success rates in the three state schools.
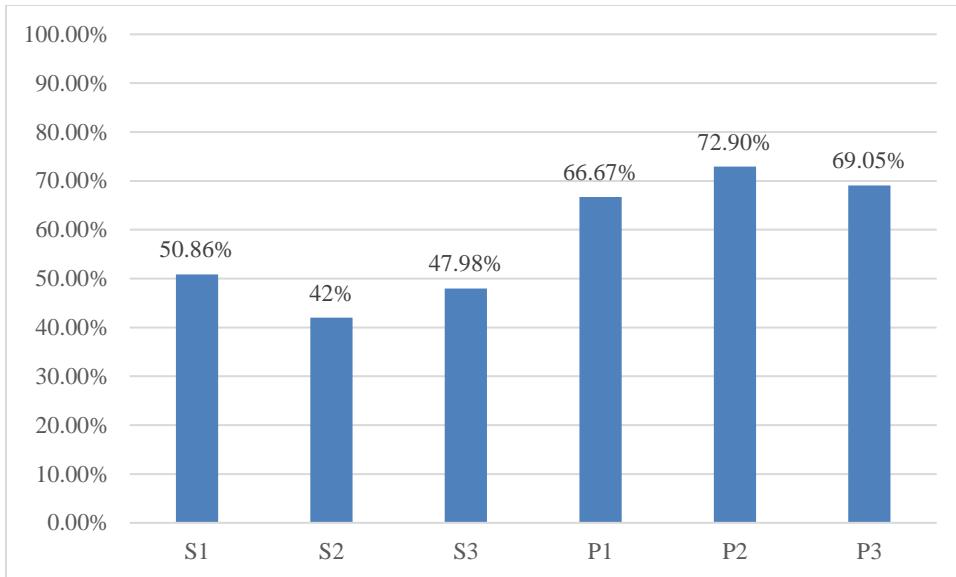
Figure 4.5 The 2020–2021 success rate of students in the six schools under study

4.6.4 Perceived Impact on Families' Financial Situation

This section investigates the perceived impact of private schools on families' financial situation, i.e., whether private schools impact families' financial situation. To investigate whether private schools impact families economically, the students' questionnaire and welfare managers interviews introduced questions in relation to this. First, the private school students were asked whether private schools affected their family's budget. The results are presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Private school impact on family budget

	Private schools affect your family budget		
	P1	P2	P3
Yes	80%	82.61%	28%
No	20%	17.39%	72%

It is clear from these results that the majority of the P1 and P2 students believed that private schools did affect their family budget, but only about a quarter of the P3 students believed so. The results from the welfare manager interviews clarify the discrepancy between these responses from Kurdish private school (P1 and P2) students and the international private school (P3) students.

Furthermore, the six welfare managers were asked during the interviews about the economic impact of private schools on families. Apart from the P3 welfare manager, all the welfare managers believed that private schools form a great financial burden for most families. The expression 'great financial burden' was voiced by S1, S2 and P1 welfare managers, and 'not affordable by most families' appeared in S3 and P2 welfare managers' interview data. They seemed in agreement about this impact. Clarifying the 'financial burden' on families, P1 stated that some families are forced to borrow money in order to enrol their children at their school. They stated:

> Some families borrow money from others to pay the fees, where they face pressure for the need of paying their lenders back yet they still admit their children to private schools. […] And in most of the cases the cost that needs to be lent back is too high, so it becomes a constant pressure not only on the parents to pay back the cost, but also a constant discomfort for the student.

The P2 welfare manager stressed that families suffer financially as a result of enrolling their children in private schools:

> Most of the students in our school do not come from families with stable economic situations. The families' economic instability has become apparent as parents regularly draw their children from their school when they face difficulties in paying. (P2 welfare manager).

A follow-up question asked them about the reason for this impact in light of the fact that families do have the option to send their children to state schools. They clarified that this is a result of the public desire for better education provision for their children and the belief that private schools are more likely to provide this education; private schools are now 'seen as a duty and a responsibility' (S1 welfare manager) for parents to send their children to. This was explained by the S3 welfare manager, who said that: 'Every family aims to get their child into a better school or a private school, no matter how expensive this school is. However, the prices are not affordable for many people. This has created a lot of pressure on the parent to do more'.

Two of the state school welfare managers (S1 and S2) complained that private schools fees are very high and the government does nothing about this. The S1 welfare manager explained that 'the ministry keeps quiet about this because they benefit from it by moving the responsibility of education onto another unit'. According to the S2 welfare manager, this is leading to a decline in

education because the focus is directed at financial gains from students. They expressed by saying that:

> The government is encouraging this movement towards private schools. Private schools are only constructed for the purpose of business and benefit, causing a decline in the education level and degrees. Education and degrees in this case are viewed as a financial property and not a gain of knowledge. (S2 welfare manager)

Unlike the other welfare managers in this study, the P3 (international private school) welfare manager was the only participant who said that private schools do not create a financial burden for families. When further questioned on the reason for this answer, they clarified that 'the families attending our school all come from a stable background, otherwise they would not have attended.'

4.6.5 Research Question Four Summary

This section of the chapter provided findings about the perceived impact of private schools socially, academically, and financially. One of the findings was that, while most of the state school students agreed that their schools follow the social values and traditions of their country, only about a third of private school students believed so. According to the welfare managers, this is because state schools give attention to the subjects through which social values and traditions are endorsed, and cultural celebrations and memorable events are appraised. Even though Kurdish private schools also follow the culture of the country by following the MoE, there is a general disregard of values, traditions and celebratory events as more focus is provided on 'main subject' educations rather than the country's values.

Another impact for private schools in Kurdistan as perceived by the teachers and welfare managers is that they promote inequality in education and society. Education inequality is promoted by private schools, according to the welfare managers, because better education is provided to those who can afford it. This is also believed to lead to a wider form of social inequality, create social class division, and further widen the gap of future opportunities, although some welfare managers proposed that social class division already exists, and private schools cannot be blamed for that. Additionally, all welfare managers in private schools indicated that they have more males than females, which was indeed confirmed in this study by the records retrieved from the MoE on the numbers of males and females in private education in Erbil between 2010–2020.

A further perceived impact for private schools, but a positive one this time, is that they support education, as stated by the majority of participants. For the welfare managers, private schools have a positive impact on education because these schools raise the quality, support education when the government cannot, and help students achieve better exam results and secure a place at university. Moreover, this positive impact on education was further confirmed in this study through the records of students' exam performance in the six schools in the 2020–2021 academic year, which demonstrated higher success rates among private over state school students.

Moreover, the majority of students and welfare managers, apart from those in the international private school, believed that private schools place financial pressure on students' families. According to the welfare managers, families tend to enrol their children in private schools even when they cannot afford it due to a public trend or belief that private schools are more likely to provide better education. This difficulty that parents face was apparent to the welfare managers in the way parents borrow money to pay for fees and remove their children when they can no longer afford the; however, despite the fees being high, parents see them as a 'duty' and a 'responsibility' to admit their children to the desired education of private schools. This, however, does not hold true in the international private school for the reason that, as explained by the welfare manager in this school, their students come from well-off families.

4.7 Summary

To display the findings, this chapter has reported the discoveries related to the four research questions under four different headings, along with a research setting and study participants section. The chapter exhibits both the quantitative data (displayed in table form with numeral and statistical test values shown), and qualitative data (as quoted with recurrent 'themes' identified and outlined from participant responses).

In relation to the first research question, the study findings suggest that certain differences exist in the management and the organisation of private and state schools, with such differences existing in their school control, admission policies and school curricula. Participant responses can imply that MoE has main control over the state schools, while private schools are controlled by their respective organisations, with both school types getting inspected regularly by MoE inspectors. Regarding admission policies, state school students are mainly selected according to their

catchment area, while the MoE is responsible for teacher requirements. On the other hand, private school students are not inclined to catchment areas but rather are subjected to past exam results and sitting entrance exams. While teachers are assessed and selected by the private schools themselves. Biographical data from teachers of both state and private schools suggest that although private school teachers on average have a higher qualification in terms of their highest degree, but are less likely to have done their teacher training and have fewer years of experience as a teacher. Finally, it was expressed by the participants that state schools and private schools are subjected to the state's national curriculum and regional exams, with private schools having the flexibility of adding additional subjects. Conversely, it was explained that students in international private schools study international curriculum and can choose whether they wish to sit the international exam or the regular regional exams.

With regard to the key findings associated with the second research question, the state school teachers exhibited a generally negative perception of the quality of education at their schools. Such perceptions seemed to have emerged from the repetitive methods of teaching lacking variation, crowded classrooms, and a lack of teaching aids and teachers, including teachers covering multiple subjects most of which they have no experience nor qualification for. Additionally, according to welfare managers, state schools are facing a lack in the quality of education. Explaining that families will search for private schools if they think the quality of education in state schools is not sufficient.

According to the key findings related to the third research question, it may be implied that in alignment with students' responses to the questionnaires, wealthier families were more likely to have their children registered to a private school, while age and gender did appear to play a major role in school choice. As for the student's perception regarding their parental preferences, factors such as different numbers of students in each class, getting good exam results and getting a university place appeared to be contributary to students getting sent to private schools. On the contrary, understanding the subject better, having subject-specialised teachers, and teacher-student relationships did not seem to play a major role in the decision of school choice. In addition, after assessing school manager perceptions, it seems that state schools are favoured by some parents for their proximity and their free education provision. A further expressed opinion was attributed to private schools being viewed as a 'trend' in KRI.

The fourth research question addressed the perceived impact private schools have socially, academically and financially. As noted by the student participants, state schools are believed to be more inclined to follow the social values and traditions of the country. In line with the welfare manager's perceptions, this is because state schools are noted to pay more attention to subjects that bring students closer to the Kurdish social values and traditions and exercise their memorial events and cultural celebrations, while private schools are believed to disregard such events and pay more attention to main subjects. Furthermore, per teacher and welfare manager responses, private schools are believed to promote inequality in both education and society. This was articulated to 'better' education being provided to a selected few in society who can afford it, leading to widening the gap for students' future opportunities, generating social class divisions and creating a wider form of social inequality. It was also argued by some of the welfare managers that private schools are not necessarily creating a social class division, as it already exists, but are rather widening it. Additionally, as confirmed by the welfare managers and the national data analysed from the MoE's database, there is a general disproportion between the number of male and female students in private schools, with males being in the majority. On the other hand, a positively perceived impact of private schools was believed to be in their provision of high-quality education, assisting the government in difficult times and supporting students in getting better exam results/getting university places. An analysis of the exam performance of the researched state and private schools (of the academic year 2020-2021) suggests better success rates in the private schools. Finally, the majority of participants believed that private schools generate a financial burden on student families and the families continue to aim for their children's admission to such schools because of the belief that they provide better education.

This chapter has been presented for the sole purpose of displaying the research findings, and hence no attempts have been made to interpret the data. The next chapter presents the interpretation of the findings, with correlation and comparison to the existing literature.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings on the research topic are discussed by combining the data gathered from the results chapter with the current literature and applying the three sociological education theories discussed in the Literature Review chapter.

As mentioned in previous chapters, this research focuses on four overarching research questions. To comprehend the perceived impact of private schools on the education process, it is important to understand the general position of private schools in relation to the education process, in connection to state schools; this is due to the lack of research and literature assessing the setting in the KRI. Therefore, the researcher found it necessary to know the background of the management and organisation of private and state schools, perceptions of the quality of education in state schools, the reasons for choosing one or the other, and the impact of private schools. The reason for having four wide research questions is to understand the perceived impact of private schools on the education process; it is important to have an idea or tell the reader about the management and organisation of private and state schools, perceptions of the quality of education in state schools, and the reasons for choosing between them. The four research questions enable the researcher to get an answer to the research topic 'the perception of the impact of private school'. The research questions are interrelated and complement one another. For example, to get a comprehensible understanding of the impact of private schools on social values and traditions, the research needs to show how private and state schools are managed and organised in KRI, or to get a comprehensible understanding of education equality it is essential to understand the different education qualities between the schools. Hence, to discuss the perceived impact of private schools, four main research questions were investigated:

1) How are private and state schools managed and organised in the KRI?
2) How does the perceived quality of state education affect the demand for private schools?
3) How do families choose between private and state schools in the KRI?
4) What is the perception of the impact of private schools on the education process in the KRI?

The discussion chapter is divided into six sections with interrelated sub-sections. Following the introduction, the second section addresses the first research question by focusing on aspects such as school control, and students' and teachers' admission and curricula. The third section deals with the second research question by focusing on the teaching methods and teaching aids, number of students in class, and lack of teachers. The fourth section presents the discussion of the third research question by considering the students', school managers', and welfare managers' perspectives on family characteristics and reasons for school choice. The fifth section deals with the fourth research question, covering the social, academic, and financial impacts of private schools. The chapter ends with a summary.

Throughout, the three theories are reflected in the discussion of the impact of private schools on the education process in the KRI. These theories of functionalism, conflict, and symbolic interaction are based on issues such as solidarity in society, inequality in the community, and interaction between teachers and students. As discussed in the Literature Review (Chapter Two), the selection of social education theories was based on various reasons. The theories formed the basis of the study's theoretical framework to facilitate a well-defined discussion of the impact of private schools on the education process in the KRI. The three theories were applied to find out whether they are reflective of the private schools in Kurdish society.

Hence, constructing a comprehensive analysis relied on combining the results with the selected social education theories. Figure 5.1 showcases the relationships that were made between the study findings and the three theories. The interconnection and interpretation of the social educational theories with the study findings are discussed and analysed further in this chapter.
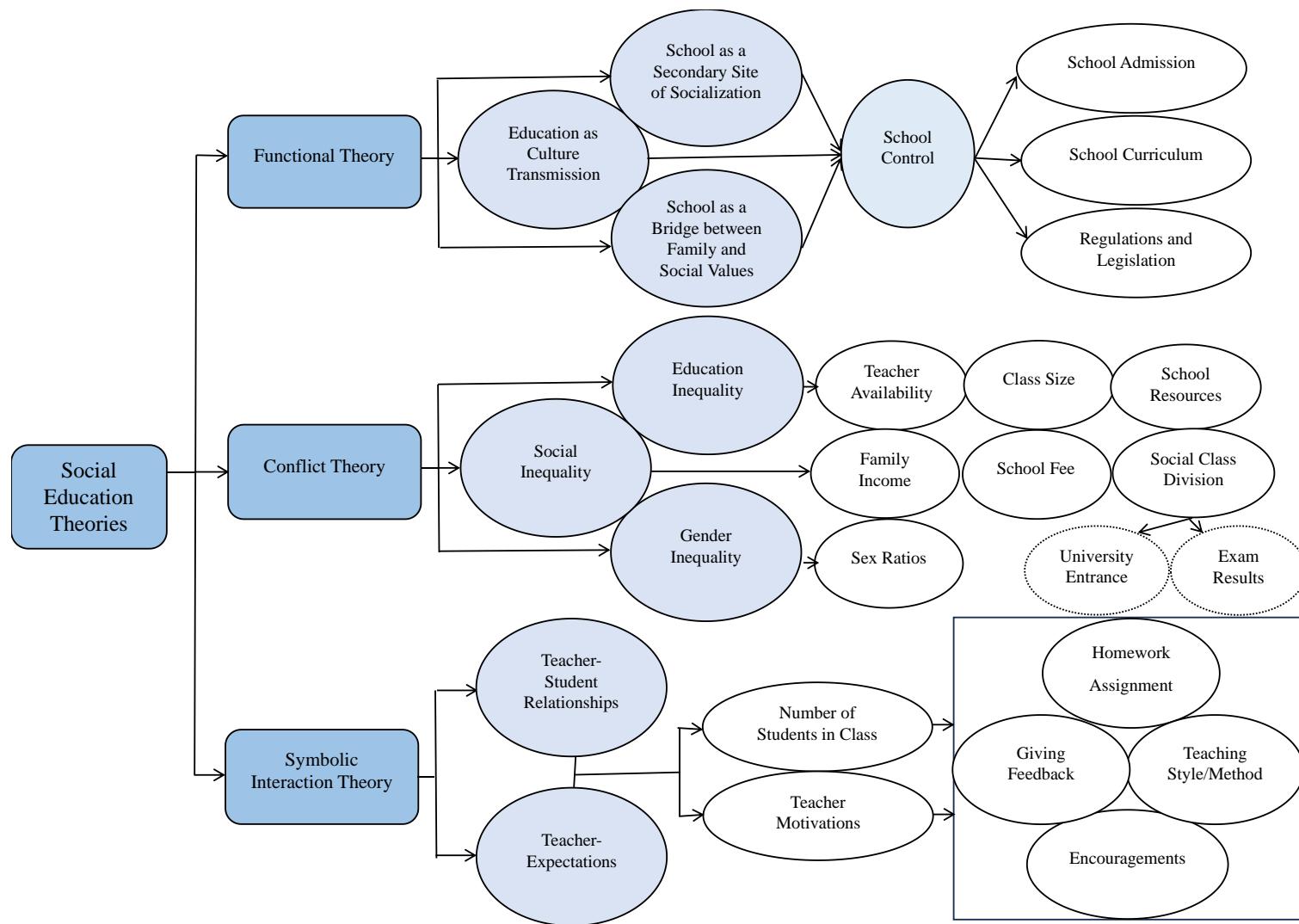
Figure 5.1. The relationships between the social education theories and the research findings

5.2 How Private and State Schools Are Managed and Organised in the KRI

The first research question investigated the management and organisation of private and state schools in the KRI. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, in this research, school management is comprised of school control and admission, while school organisation includes curriculum organisation.

5.2.1 School Control

It is widely accepted that private and state schools are two educational establishments which differ in terms of their management and organisation. As shown in the interview responses gathered from the school managers of this study, this difference occurs primarily because of school control, as it is a prominent factor provoking distinctions in financing, programme and curricula creation, inspection, and accountability. In the current research, it has been suggested that the main difference between control in state and private schools lies in the fact that most aspects of the state school life is controlled by the MoE, while private schools are controlled either by funding organisations or those who established the school, who are equally responsible for financing this educational institution. The results are in line with the research by Saeed (2015) which demonstrates that Kurdistan Region Government administers all teaching and educational policies through the MoE, including the preparation of study plans, curricula, and study materials, including course books. The question of school controls was also addressed by Mohammed *et al*. (2021), who focused on Columbian, Iraqi, and Kurdish cases, and the results presented in the current study appear similar with their analysis, revealing heavy reliance on the region's MoE. They postulated that the country's officials are responsible for making all fundamental choices starting with regulations and ending with employment of new teachers in state schools, which is in line with the current research. The analysis of the school manager interviews demonstrated that all state school managers are routinely provided with regulation which should be strictly followed. According to Saeed (2015), state schools hold a central position in terms of education provision, which explains the ministry's pivotal role in controlling every aspect of education, as suggested by the results of the current study.

The results also suggest that the MoE makes every effort to ensure that schools genuinely follow all the recommendations and regulations, which explains regular inspections by local school inspectors, in line with the research by Vernez *et al*. (2016). Being similar in approach to Korea,

Turkey, the UAE, and Austria, the KRI has a directorate of general education, which curtails the requirement for cross-school coordination, facilitates teacher preservice training, and enables curriculum development (Vernez *et al*., 2016). The current research is in line with that of Vernez *et al*. (2016), who found uniformity in the control over state schools. Through the MoE, examination inspectors, local school inspectors, subject supervisors and building inspectors were consistently sent to the state schools in the current research, with the purpose of checking whether the regulations are being followed and suggesting improvements when needed. Thus, it can be presumed that state schools in the KRI are under strict Ministry control, so that students are provided with relevant knowledge and skills necessary for future employment. The control of state schools aligns with functionalist theory because control can be achieved through the focus on universal education that uniformly meets the needs of every student attending these schools (Majumdar, 2021). The functionalist theory perceives society as a system in which all work towards a common goal. In the context of the results, the functionalist theory highlights the point that, as the main controlling agent, the MoE has the responsibility to ensure universal education that meets the needs of every student, and that education is delivered efficiently with the assistance of teachers. Teachers are expected to implement the directives from the MoE and work closely to ensure effective delivery of universal education across all state schools. According to Majumdar (2021), functionalists view education through the prism of positive functions, including the creation of social solidarity, teaching professional work skills and core values, etc., all of which are reflected within state schools. As it was noted from the state school participants involved in this research, regular inspections are appropriate to ensure programmes, curricula and learning environments suit educational objectives and expected knowledge levels.

The regulation of private schools, compared to state schools, differs from country to country. In some countries, for instance, the Ministry, governing bodies or individual states have responsibility for governing and controlling private schools. For example, the USA requires governing boards to control and supervise private schools, while in Germany they are subject to the individual German states. In the majority of countries (e.g., the USA, UK), private schools are controlled at the same level as state schools (Steiner-Khamsi and Draxler, 2018). However, the results of this study have highlighted that the selected private schools in Kurdistan were established and are funded by international organisations and/or private founders, and are not controlled by the MoE. Nevertheless, these results align with the research of Khan, Mansour-lle and Nicolai (2020), as

both Kurdish (local) and international private schools are controlled by the MoE in terms of the opening and licensing of the private school, but are rarely involved with organisational and the regulative processes of private schools after their opening. According to archive records analysed by the researcher, the licensing process refers to gaining approval or consent from the MoE to operate in the KRI. Individuals or companies who established or opened a school without MoE licence approval are punished by either imprisonment (less than six months), or fined, or both. In this case, illegally operating schools are closed. Thus, private schools are still subject to the MoE regulations and policies, where licensing is frequently exercised to govern the private schools in addition to regular checkups. In addition, the current results are in congruence with Vernez *et al*. (2016), revealing that policies for teachers, teaching plans, timelines, management of student outcomes, etc. are also tracked and overseen by the MoE, as it is crucial for securing the appropriate level of safety and suitability of the learning environment. This study's results coincide with those of Singh (2013) in urban and rural Andhra Pradesh, India, as subjects and expected educational levels are based on national demands and, therefore, private schools cannot remain uninspected. Despite having freedom over the provision of additional materials and skills, private schools need to have a standard set of subjects and skills which are necessary for the entire community; this adheres to the universal nature of education, in accordance with functionalist theory (Giddens and Sutton, 2021). A unified approach in education, regardless of whether it is conducted in a state school or a private one, should be aimed at making the education serve the needs of society; this society should be viewed as complex, parts of which (including economy, culture, religion, etc.) should work together for the benefit of the entire society (Giddens and Sutton, 2021). The results are in line with those of Singh (2013), as any violation of ministry requirements results in penalties, making private schools supportive of the role of education and adhering to its universal nature of education in society. The functionalist theory here would explain the intension of the owners to provide universal education that serves the needs of society, and the role of the MoE in overseeing this by ensuring that schools are licensed.

Research by Mohammed *et al*. (2021) concludes that private schools have 'unlimited freedom' in their decisions and regulations (p. 117). This statement contradicts the current research, as the involvement of punishments and penalties (e.g., the closing of a private school if opened without Ministry permission), as well as regular visits by school inspectors, demonstrates the limitations imposed on Kurdish private schools. However, it can be said that, in some cases, the current

research is somehow in compliance with the study by Mohammed *et al*. (2021), because most state inspections connected to private schools have a pro-forma nature and are not aimed at any robust changes; this feature also aligns with the findings of Vernez *et al*. (2016). In the current research, it was also found that the school managers were dissatisfied with the fact that school inspectors rarely give them advice on their methods of teaching or their formulated regulations. Moreover, with regards to the international private school, this formality is based on most programmes, curricula, and lessons being provided in a foreign language (English); it was suggested that inspectors might not have sufficient expertise to govern international practices or internationally approved programmes. However, these aspects contradict Vernez *et al*. (2016) in so far as the MoE had introduced a team of English-speaking supervisors specifically to work with international private schools; however, the current research did not reveal the involvement or existence of English-speaking supervisors. Therefore, in this context, it can be suggested that private schools do not align with functionalist theory because the MoE is not ensuring whether they meet the need for a universal education. Private schools can adapt and create their own forms of education, without direct monitoring or advice from the MoE; hence a universal education cannot be guaranteed, neither can it be guaranteed that private schools meet the needs of Kurdish society.

It can be perceived from this study's analysis that school control is different in private and state schools in the KRI, impacting numerous segments of the school management process. To further understand private and state school management, the next subsection covers the issue of school admission.

5.2.2 School Admission

Analysis of the admission criteria for the purposes of the current study encompassed not only admission criteria for student entrance into the selected school, but also teacher recruitment; the approaches of both state and private schools are different in terms of these aspects. Van de Werfhorst and Mijs (2010), following a social approach, suggested that education should be equal and, thus, providing equal education to everyone is necessary. The current research is in line with this analysis in terms of state schools, which operate on the principle of 'the geographical area' (catchment area), as the location of a student's house defines the school in which this student can study. Therefore, no additional tests are performed, allowing almost every student to be admitted. This coincides with Saeed's research (2015) into the KRI which showed the importance of

providing each child with an equal opportunity to study. On the other hand, the current research contradicts these approaches and statements, since in the selected private schools it was determined that academic performance is analysed for admission, and some schools even perform additional tests. It was found that the Kurdish private schools in this research assess and look into students' previous exam results/history and admit students with the highest previous exam scores. The international private school goes even further with their admission procedure by selecting those students with the highest exam results; these students sit an entrance exam and those with the highest scores are selected. This is different to the state schools' catchment area approach, as location seemed not to be significant for the private schools studied in this research. Such an approach is advocated by Frenette and Chan (2015), whose research in Canada found that private schools are more stringent in their admission approaches.

With regard to the international private school in this study, English language skills are positioned as one of the most important requirements for school admission, leading to a greater demand for English-speaking students (Sofi-Karim, 2015). However, the current research found that knowledge of English is not mandatory as students with a limited English-speaking background can still be admitted; they receive a one-year English-language training before starting the programme. Such student division additionally facilitates the problem of inequality, which disregards the essential features of the right to education expounded by UNESCO (Boronski and Hassan, 2020). In the current research, it was postulated by the participants that high achievers can be admitted to the private school, but, due to the fact that all programmes and lessons are conducted in English, they would be considered less likely to remain high achievers. This is in line with Sofi-Karim (2015), who stated that a good background/previous knowledge of English is essential to pass the grade.

Teacher recruiting principles are also different in state and private schools. Bryson and Green (2020), who conducted an analysis of Britain's private schools, arrived at the conclusion that teachers and their qualifications are a core aspect of the learning process, and, typically, private schools are very strict when enrolling teachers. Focusing on South Africa, Immelman and Roberts-Lombard (2015) found that private schools have to follow specific strategies to attract and retain students, and these strategies encompass the selection of the best materials and professionals. These statements are supported by the results of the current study, in which it was found that qualifications, knowledge, background, and personal experience are reviewed before enrolment.

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The results demonstrate the importance of degree, with private schools showing a tendency to employ teachers with higher degrees compared to state schools, while some private schools even interview the candidates. The purpose of the interview process is to evaluate and select teachers based on their characteristics, knowledge, qualifications, and efficiency.

Moreover, in terms of international private schools, the results also suggested the importance of having a decent level of English language. Private schools have a highly selective approach, not only for students and their admissions, but also for teachers. Such scrutiny in teacher selection from private schools is understandable and is supported by Kane, Rockoff and Staiger (2008), who suggested that teachers should be viewed as the main factor for selecting a specific school due to the desire to attain knowledge from a more qualified professional capable of teaching students more efficiently. The possibility of having better professionals differentiates these schools from others, and especially from state schools. Bryson and Green (2020) showed that private school teachers have a greater likelihood of having higher qualifications, such as master's degrees. The current research is in line point, as the results demonstrated that private school teachers were more likely to have higher qualifications than their state school counterparts. This is due to private schools having a pool of candidates to choose from, and so competition between candidates is formed and those with higher qualifications are more likely to be selected. In contrast, state school teachers are sent by the MoE, with little to no decision being made by the school managers, and they only require a bachelor's degree to be accepted.

Professional qualifications and knowledge are crucial, but experience and professional training allow the transformation of theoretical knowledge into practical skills, which are important when working with children and teenagers. Tandon and Fukao (2015) found that UK public schools require recognised teacher qualifications and initial teacher training, while in the USA state schools require trained teachers. In this research, the data indicated that teachers from state schools are more likely to have longer years of training than in private schools. The reason for this difference in training may be because the government of the KRI faced a financial depression from 2014, meaning there was a lack of income for teacher training programmes after graduates had received a degree. There was even a pause in new teacher admissions to state schools, leaving the majority of newly graduated teachers unemployed in the government sector and most newly admitted teachers having completed no training (Fazil and Baser, 2021). This could be a possible justification as to why state school teachers have more years of teaching experience than private

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teachers. It should also be noted that teachers at state schools were mostly admitted before 2014 and had received training, in contrast to the private school situation.

A difference was found in the management of private and state schools, caused by a different approach to the admission of teachers and students, with private schools having more freedom to select teaching staff, and how to do so. However, the success of this process largely depends on the school curriculum. The next subsection covers the issue of school curriculum.

5.2.3 School Curriculum

An effective curriculum requires a quantifiable strategy and structure. The current research is in line with Ali *et al*. (2021), who revealed that private schools have the right to change their curriculums as they wish. Although they follow the national curriculum, they also have the right to add subjects, which they believe to be important and relevant. This aligns with Araneda, Guzman and Nussbaum (2019), who showed how the addition of business and computer studies, IT, and economics, for example, helps create an ideal curriculum from the viewpoint of education stakeholders, including teachers, pupils, and parents. On the other hand, regarding state schools, the current research also aligns with the conclusions of Ali *et al*. (2021); these authors found that state schools follow the national curriculum of Kurdistan provided by the MoE in order to guarantee students' understanding of their language, background, and country. There were no additional subjects in state schools outside of the curriculum established by the MoE. On the contrary, this research found that international private schools diverge further from the national curriculum by following an international universal curriculum that frequently lacks culturally-specific subjects, as also mentioned by Saeed (2015).

Differences were also found in private and state schools' methods and sources of management and organisation, demonstrated by factors such as school control, school admission and curriculum. There is a requirement to understand how the quality of state school education impacts the demand for private schools and this factor is discussed next.

5.3 How the Perceived Quality of State Education Affects Demand for Private Schools

The second research question concerned how the perception of the quality of state schools influences the demand for fee-paying private schools in the KRI. The current research found that

the perception of the quality of state school education may act as a contributor in generating the supply and demand for private schools. According to the current research, students and their families prefer private schools due to the lack of efficient education in state schools. This is in line with Niaz, Ali and Kiazai (2021), whose research into the Quetta context found that quality of education delivered within schools typically appears to be a deciding factor for parents to select a particular school for their child. Moreover, the analysis of welfare managers' responses shows that the availability of high-quality state education is a deciding factor for the school type selection, as if the state school's quality of education is appropriate and satisfying, then students will be less likely to go to a private school. Hence, the quality of school education is a deciding factor not only for parents, but also for learners. In the present research, it was perceived by stakeholders that the quality of education in state schools is the major reason for students wanting private schools, as state schools lack efficiency. The results indicate that the perception of quality is a deciding factor in school type choice.

Therefore, to understand the demand for private schools, the quality of state schools needs to be assessed. According to Mupa and Chinooneka (2015), who conducted their study on the context of Zimbabwe, the quality of education is defined by factors such as teachers and their approaches, learning environment, teaching methods practised and supported by schools, teaching aids, and feedback. The next section of the chapter covers the second research question by reflecting on the definition of quality.

5.3.1 Lack of Teachers

One main aspect affecting the quality of education in state schools is the lack of teachers for required subjects. One of the two main functions of education is teaching specialist skills (Majumdar, 2021). This can be achieved only by teachers performing their functions professionally and conscientiously. However, the issue of 'lack of teachers' expressed in the current research means that state school teachers are having to cover multiple lessons, meaning that some subjects are taught by teachers who do not specialise in that subject. For example, Arabic teachers may teach Islamic studies, and science teachers may teach English. The state school teacher participants of this research expressed their opinion that the quality of education is not satisfactory because of the lack of teachers. When a school lacks specialist teachers, the quality of education becomes low, threating 'the ability of students to learn', while also impacting the

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effectiveness of the teachers (García and Weiss, 2019). According to Hobbs and Porsch (2021, p. 601), from 'within such constraints, the question then becomes what is a person "capable" and "willing" to teach rather than what is a teacher certified/approved to teach or specialised in'. This means that the available teachers are forced to teach any subject regardless of not being specialised in it, and thus there is no guarantee of a quality outcome regarding student performance. Hence, the lack of teachers in state schools has a negative effect on the quality of education.

The KRI has a definite issue concerning the availability of teachers, provoked by a financially unstable situation after the post-war economic crisis and the financial crisis of 2014, further compounded by the global economic crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic, during which teachers suffered from payment instability (Mohammed-Marzouk, 2012; ACAPS, 2020). Most teachers working in state schools have basic fundamental qualifications required by accreditation programmes, but additional training and the development of expertise requires extra spending that state schools cannot provide and teachers themselves cannot afford (Hassan, Toma and Qader, 2019). The results of this research support this statement in that the state school welfare managers reported the lack of specialist teachers in many subjects, a clear decrease in new teacher employment, and shortages in teacher numbers not being covered. This leads to situations when either there are no teachers on site or they are teaching subjects in which they have no qualification or training, further affecting the quality of teaching and education.

As a result of the negative outcomes of the failed Kurdistan independence referendum on September, 2017 (Esposti, 2021), the government has been illegally reducing salaries, including those of teachers. In some cases, state-sector salaries have been unpaid for months (DeWeaver, 2015), leading to demotivated teachers, as demonstrated by the teachers of the current research. In addition, the complicated situation in Kurdistan has resulted in long delays to teachers' salary payments; teachers have been motivated to change their place of work, leading to an overall lack of teachers in the public sector (ACAPS, 2020). The current study supports this, as welfare managers specifically reported that state school teachers are not paid enough to remain motivated.

On the other hand, private schools tend to employ teachers as needed, without having to wait for a decision from the MoE or depend on the condition of the state sector. This presupposes that private schools have more specialist teachers and are capable of hiring new teachers when needed, in line with Bryson and Green (2020), who found that private schools in Britain typically employ

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professionals as required. In contrast, the experience of Finland demonstrates that both state and private schools have an almost equal attitude towards the employment of teachers (Sundqvist *et al*., 2020). In this regard, the current study does not support the findings from Finland, as there is a difference in the availability of teachers due to shortages and a lack of employment in state schools. Hence, a factor affecting the quality of education in private and state schools is due to the lack/availability of teachers. The quality of education improves when there are more specialist teachers available to facilitate better student learning. A Canadian study by Pollock and Mindzak (2018, p. 10) found that 'specialist knowledge is one measure of what makes a high-quality teacher'. As such, the availability of specialist teachers may imply that students in private schools receive richer content.

In summary, it seems that a factor affecting the quality of state schools is the shortage of teachers. However, there are other decisive influences and factors that may also affect the quality of education at state schools, as discussed next.

5.3.2 High number of students in each class

Another factor that may affect perceptions of the quality of state schools, and therefore the demand for private schools in the KRI, is the number of students in a classroom. Class size is a crucial factor impacting school education and private schools are known to have an advantage in this matter, particularly because their class sizes are smaller than those of state schools. Due to insufficient funding, state schools frequently experience full classes and have limited classroom space. The recommended class size depends on a number of factors but is not supposed to exceed 30 pupils (Owuor, 2018), whereas the ideal class size is 18 students. This allows enough time and effort to be dedicated to each individual and so that the overall quality of education can increase. Ahmed (2015), focusing on the KRI, found that the average class size was 42 students per class in state schools. This figure is even higher in urban areas, reaching 45 students per class. The current research supports these findings as the class size of the selected state schools was 43–52 students (see Appendix W). A higher number of students in a class can affect the quality of their education as it changes the dynamics of learning. Therefore, having more students in state schools decreases the attention they receive, making it hard to engage pupils in learning and in turn decreasing the level of engagement. Wang and Calvano (2022) stated that, 'large classes allow students to have a passive role in class, which may decrease the likelihood of initiating and responding to the teacher'.

Furthermore, a study in Turkey by Küçükler and Kodal (2019, p. 169) highlighted that, 'A classroom that is full, faces challenges that can feel nearly impossible to conquer, even towards the most effective teachers there is not enough of the trained instructor to go around'. As a result, pupils may not receive proper support from teachers, which in turn negatively affects their academic performance and decreases the quality of education in state schools.

On the other hand, the private schools of the current research were more positive towards the numbers of students in their classrooms and overall class size, with the number of students in each class being between 17–22 students (see Appendix W). As mentioned by the welfare managers and the teachers, the quality of education is positively affected. This is in line with Owuor (2018), who stated that smaller classes are more advantageous for students, who benefit from being given more attention by teachers, leading to better attention spans and higher academic results overall.

In addition, the teachers of the state schools were greatly dissatisfied by the excessive number of students in their classes, as they felt this led to teacher exhaustion (11 teachers mentioned this aspect as a negative associated with their school). The higher the level of teacher exhaustion and burnout, the higher is the possibility of increasing teacher turnover and overall rate of quitting, oftentimes with state school teachers shifting to private school settings (Brady and Wilson, 2021). Thus, private schools have a clear advantage over state schools in terms of class size, which was noticed not only by school managers and teachers but also by students (see Appendix DD). In addition, international private schools operating in Kurdistan provide a more convenient experience to their students with their even smaller class sizes, as per the results of the current study. Such an environment is associated with the teachers' being able to get to know their students better and recognise their potential (Szumski and Karwowski, 2019). Day (2020) provides evidence that the teacher's individual professional autonomy can effectively promote the student's progress. Thus, from the perspective of symbolic interaction theory, their views and beliefs become helpful in selecting the most appropriate education tools and tasks for specific individuals.

Class size affects numerous aspects of education and may impact how students learn. One crucial factor affecting learning quality is the expectations teachers have of students, who often pick up on these expectations and perform accordingly. Teachers are crucial to the education process, as they can empower student learning. Teacher prospects create a reinforcing cycle, as teachers' assumptions regarding students' potential inform teachers' actions, while simultaneously

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influencing students' development (Liou and Rojas, 2016). The findings of this study may suggest that teachers in private schools have high expectations of their students, as per the students' perceptions (see Appendix CC). The tendency of having higher teacher expectations in private schools is supported by studies conducted in Spain (Soto-Ardila, Caballero-Carrasco and Casas-Garcia, 2022), Australia (Johnston, Wildy and Shand, 2019), Chile (Barriga, Rodriguez and Ferreira, 2019), and Pakistan (Zamir, Arshad and Nazir, 2017), among others. In accordance with symbolic interaction theory, communications between students and teachers influence prospects connected to academic achievement and social behaviour (Andersen, 2019). Thus, these expectations essentially provoke the behaviour rather than predict it. The higher the expectations, the more encouraged students feel, and the more actions are dedicated by the teacher to empowering students.

Similarly, when classrooms are overcrowded, the teacher finds it difficult to give their attention to individual students, which leads to the former not having certain expectations of certain individuals. On the other hand, because of the lower number of students in private classes, teachers adapt and learn the features and needs of individual students and create their own expectations of them.

The number of students in a class affects not only academic achievement, but also the social interactions between teachers and students, as per symbolic interaction theory. Hence, the levels of friendliness and sincerity exhibited by a teacher and perceived by a learner is also crucial in an educational setting (Andersen, 2019). Students encounter teachers with different personalities, but, apparently, most students prefer friendly teachers (who are approachable) as strict teachers add to the overall level of anxiety. Such teachers may demonstrate low expectations towards even straight A students (Potts, Maadad and Marizon, 2017). A friendly teacher will make the quality of education better by engaging the students more. The student will begin looking up to the teacher as their mentor because they trust them. Thornberg *et al*. (2020), who studied how the student-teacher relationship affects student engagement, stated that 'teacher–student relationships, which can be linked to students' basic psychological needs, are among the most proximal levels of influence on student development at school'. At the same time, a good relationship affects the quality of education as the students becomes more engaged in their homework, academic learning, schoolwork, and classroom tasks, leading to higher grades (Thornberg *et al*., 2020). Research in England by Brady and Wilson (2021) found that teaching in state schools was regarded as a highly

stressful occupation, with large class sizes being the main factor of teacher dissatisfaction, stress, and burnout thus leading to generally more negative moods. Therefore, the higher stress accountability in state schools is due to having a higher number of students in each classroom as inferred in the data gathered from the results, which in all, effects the quality of education negatively.

Furthermore, the current research suggests there may be a relationship between the number of students in each class and the attention students receive through their one-to-one assessment feedback and homework assignments. The state schools were believed to dedicate much less time and effort to one-to-one assessment feedback and homework, as demonstrated in the student questionnaire (see Appendix AA). This may be explained by heavier teacher workloads and larger class sizes, both of which make it impossible to dedicate enough time for revising and homework checking (Araneda, Guzman and Nussbaum, 2019). In overly excessing classrooms homework checking might require an entire lesson, leaving no time for work on new material. The same reasons could be associated with generally higher level of one-to-one feedback being more popular and prevailing within private schools. Gentrup *et al*. (2020) found that the teacher feedback is generally more constructive and positive for students of whom teachers have higher expectations. Therefore, when a teacher finds enough time and inspiration to review work, the student's outcomes are improved. Hence, private schools are more likely to provide enough time for exam/homework/classwork feedback, but state schools struggle to do so.

Mustary (2020) states that, in the Bangladeshi context, huge classes 'containing up to a hundred students' (p. 132) in state schools make it difficult to establish a teacher-student relationship. The analysis of the existing literature may denote that private school teachers use more pedagogical strategies, which makes education student-oriented and positions teachers as mentors, rather than being the single source of information and knowledge (Awan, 2020). Hence, private schools predominantly see students as the main stakeholders, which allows the formation of a welcoming education atmosphere in which everyone has a say in the teaching-learning procedure. Khan (2020), who conducted research in Pakistan, stated that teachers working in private schools appear to be more involved in flexible student-centred approach, particularly due to the fact that they have fewer students to attend to. However, the same level of teacher-student relationship is difficult to form in state schools, as education is more generic for every student and barely individually-oriented for the students.

The current research is in line with existing studies revealing that the number of students in each classroom in state schools is perceived to impact the quality of education, and possibly the demand for private schools. Nevertheless, the provision of high-quality education is a challenge without the relevant application of a variety of teaching methods and teaching aids. This is the focus of the next section.

5.3.3 Teaching Methods and Aids

It is widely accepted that teaching methods and approaches differ from teacher to teacher and from subject to subject. Nevertheless, the majority of research based on comparing state and private schools demonstrates that in terms of teaching methods, state school teachers typically follow direct methods and structural approaches caused by the lack of resources provided by school management. In contrast, private school teachers apply an array of mixed methods while staying focused on the individual needs of their students, according to Zahra, Butt and Rafique (2021). The current research is in line with this study and as it was found that the private school teachers were more prone to using a variety of teaching strategies and learning activities compared to the state school teachers. The results of the current research reveal that Kurdistan state school teachers highlighted a variety of negative aspects in their schools, including repetitive methods of teaching with a lack of variation (eight teachers), causing boredom and loss of learning motivation, as well as excessive focus on theory. The study by Hammoumi, Bakkali and Youssfi (2020) suggests that, in the Moroccan context, the use of various methodologies within classrooms appears to be more effective for learning, becoming a powerful engagement and motivational instrument. For instance, Zahra, Butt and Rafique (2021) stated that the use of authentic materials by a teacher promotes language study and allows students to encounter target languages in natural contexts rather than the artificial applications provided in a textbook. In this way, learners have a natural experience. However, in the current study, the state school teachers were more likely to use teacher-centred learning, mostly using techniques such as lectures, developing questions, and completing written assignments (see Appendix Y). As explained, this may not be beneficial to the students and less direct.

The majority of existing studies support the idea that teaching methods impact the quality of education within state and private schools, with state school teachers following a more traditional approach and private school teachers having more flexibility (Niaz, Ali and Kiazai, 2021). Private

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school teachers practise a more student-oriented approach, thus mostly abandoning teacher-centred lessons (Muhammad, Hafsa and Iqra, 2018). The current research stands in line with these conclusions since the private school teachers were actively involved in group work, student-centred lessons, presentations, and discussions. Hence, this may suggest that the private school teachers were more interested in participatory pedagogical strategies. In this two-way approach, the teacher is not viewed as a sole source of information and knowledge (Awan, 2020). However, proper discussion and seminars are impossible in classes that exceed the recommended class size, since they do not allow the adequate participation of all students (Shavelson, 2018). The current research stands in line with these conclusions as the analysed private schools had smaller classes, as discussed in the previous section. Therefore, they are more prone to allowing the performance of discussions, groups work, and seminars among other flexible and student-centered teaching methods.

In addition, the research of Chuunga (2013) emphasised the significance of implementing teaching aids focused on each student's needs as a primary indicator of high-quality education. The current research vividly demonstrates that private schools have higher availability of teacher aids. As demonstrated from the current results, the private schools were more likely to have multimedia aids, smartboards, and audio aids, while the only factor in common with the state schools was the use of textbooks and whiteboards. Furthermore, the questionnaire results show that these aids were regarded by the private school students as beneficial and helpful, especially in terms of innovative instruments (see Appendix CC); this includes smartboards and audio aids that are not available in state schools. The results also indicated that the state school teachers felt disadvantaged by the fact that they lacked teaching aids (eight teachers), and they believed that because of this the quality of education in their schools is negatively affected.

The quality of education can depend on teaching methods and aids, and the research may suggest that the teaching methods applied and aids used by the teachers in the state schools are in the few and lack variety, lowering the overall level of quality education within them. Parent and student choices between private and state schools depended on numerous factors connected to the quality of education, as discussed in this current section; however, some other decisive influences were found, which will be discussed next.

5.4 How Families Choose Private or State Schools in the KRI

The third research question focused on the rationale behind the students' and parents' preferences for choosing private or state school. This section deals with household characteristics (family size, income, residence location), students ('understanding the subject better', 'securing university entrance', 'good exam results', etc.), and reasons for selecting a private over state school ('social trend').

According to Suppramaniam, Kularajasingam and Sharmin (2019), who focused on Bangladesh, parents naturally desire the best for their children and often select a school that they want their children to attend, based on their preference. The incentive for the selection of school is the desire to attain better education for children (Curry, 2018). School selection is made by parents using their knowledge, capacities and social influences to register their youngsters at an appropriate school (Billingham and Hunt, 2016). Therefore, it is crucial to recognise the parental role as being based on a number of associated factors, including household characteristics and residence location, as well as parental preferences and overall reasons for selecting private or state school. However, it is worth mentioning that the current research did not collect data on the family role directly; rather, it uses the opinions of welfare managers, who, as mentioned in the Methodology Chapter, had a strong relationship with students and were aware of their family background. Hence, all the information presented and analysed at this point stems from the welfare managers and the responses of students, teachers, and school managers.

5.4.1 Household Characteristics

Humble and Dixson (2017) conducted a study dedicated to post-conflict areas (Monrovia, Liberia), finding that parental preferences were given to government schools over all other types, especially when affordability is the main preference. The current findings coincide with this study as school managers specified that most of the families selected state schools due to free education provision. According to Suppramaniam, Kularajasingam and Sharmin (2019), family background is a defining factor in selecting private school for children in Bangladesh. Income is a key factor for children in Pakistan, as parents with high income levels can afford private school costs, while lower- and middle-income families prefer state schools due to their affordability. Similar ideas can be found in Dixon and Humble (2017), who studied Western Area, Sierra Leone, and found that higher economic well-being tends to increase the probability of a family selecting a non-

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government school. The current study coincides with these conclusions, as analysed in the student questionnaires, the higher the wealth of the family, the higher was the chance of selecting a private school. Hence, it can be articulated that the social and financial positions of the family were the major aspects which encouraged student preference of a school. Hence, the current study supports the statement by Ahmed and Sheikh (2014) that wealthy families appear to be more interested in fee-paying education.

The notion of wealth can be subdivided into two categories. The first encompasses the number of computers, cars, bedrooms, etc., and the likelihood of going to private school when this wealth rating was higher was greatest. The second category of wealth incorporates possessions such as mobile phones, bicycles, and motorcycles and this was also positively associated with a higher likelihood of students going to private schools, but not as high as the first category. Thus, when parents have a stable income and occupational background, they prefer private schools to state ones (Naveen, 2019). In terms of developed countries, families often pursue a tradition of being faithful to elite schools which they also attended and which provided them with the necessary knowledge and skills to attain their current position in life. A study by Erickson (2017) revealed that, if parents were given the freedom to select a school regardless of income, even low-income parents would prefer private schools, because they believe it meets their children's needs. These needs include health and safety, as first and basic needs, and then academic quality once the basic needs are met. The current study agrees with the majority of available research from a variety of countries in that family income can be deemed as a crucial factor in defining family preference for private school.

Different types of parents may have discrepant preferences concerning schools. According to He and Giuliano (2017), of all the factors, the two most frequently cited are location and academic performance. Dixon, Humble and Tooley (2017) studied Lagos, Nigeria, and found a statistically significant partiality for low-cost private schools when nearness to home and robust school leadership were vital to parents. The location of a school, whether state or private, defines the general cost of the journey to school and is often viewed as the most important reason for determining parental school choice, especially in the USA and Britain, with 70% of parents specifying a maximum limit of travel-time to school and the limit fluctuating between urban and rural respondents (Burgess, Greaves and Vignoles, 2019). These conclusions coincide with the opinions presented in the current study by the state school managers. Their answers indicate that

the parents preferred schools based on their proximity to the child's residence. Thus, in Billingham and Hunt's study (2016) in the USA, parents used the distance from home to school as a factor to eliminate most schools, regardless of their nature. In the research by Easton and Ferrari (2015), their survey analysis revealed that parents in England viewed proximity to home and a school's generally good impression as the two most important factors in the parents' first choice of school. In fact, as many as 30% of parents stated that proximity and ease of travel were the most significant criteria for school preference, regardless of its type. This is supported by the fact that, by 2013, travel distance had practically doubled compared to statistical data from the 1980s, in particular because of urban sprawl (Easton and Ferrari, 2015). The analysis of urbanisation in Kurdistan suggests that the region is also facing urban issues and city transformation, which are typically sporadic (Jarah *et al.*, 2019). These factors may underlie the state school managers' belief that the proximity of the students' residence to school, combined with an easy 5–10-minute walk from the students' home, were the keys to parents choosing a specific school; in this matter, a state school is a primary choice due to its proximity. However, in the case of private schools, the proximity of the school was not a factor perceived by the school managers in school choice.

The analysis of the data provided by stakeholders on household characteristics has suggested that family income and size have a clear impact on the decision to choose private or state schools.

5.4.2 Preferences

Pakistan has seen a rapid increase in private schooling, as parents believe education in private school to be better compared to public ones. This belief relates to factors such as better subject understanding, which stimulates parents to pay high fees in private schools (Naveen, 2019). In addition, Salih, Rahman and Othman (2017) found that Kurdish parents whose children attend foreign private schools were satisfied by their children's understanding of subjects, and they also found those covered to be very useful and understandable by their children. Moreover, the schools played a positive role, particularly in science subjects. The current study found no statistically significant results and so contradicts the Pakistani experience, suggesting that Kurdish students do not believe their families necessarily have a preference for private schools based on merely gaining a better understanding of a subject.

Mohammed *et al.* (2021) concluded that private schools in the KRI have 'unlimited freedom' in their decisions and regulations, which allows them to have different programmes and agendas,

including the standard curricula and additional subjects. This allows them to incorporate extra elements such as computer science, and extra courses like ballet or musical instrument teaching (Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies, 2018). Moreover, according to Salih, Rahman and Othman (2017), most of the schools in Erbil have English as their main language and parents approve of this, with most students having a strong desire to learn it. The majority of Kurdistan's universities have announced that English is their key language, which has led parents to value it as the most useful language for their children and therefore they look for curricula teaching or taught in English. Wei and Mhunpiew (2020) stated that parents want to place their children in schools with an excellent curriculum and academic performance, even when it requires sacrificing time and money. Although they based their research on Thailand, similar outcomes can be seen for South African parents who also place emphasis on the curriculum, with their appreciation increasing when additional curricular elements are provided (Venketsamy and Miller, 2021). In fact, the current research confirms the importance of specialised curricula, as the surveyed private school managers assumed curricula, extra-curricular activities and English language proficiency to be the main factors impacting parents' preference for private schooling. These results match a poll conducted in the USA which found that parents were the most satisfied with the curricula and extra-curricular activities performed in private schools (Barrows, Peterson and West, 2017). The current study found that even the school managers believed private schools provide better extra-curricular activities, for instance computer science, as extra-curricular activity is greatly valued. In addition, the provision of a simplified version of England's national curriculum promotes having an international degree and then a stable job. The literature analysis of different contexts coincides with the current research, as this study's stakeholders perceived 'having different curriculum' as factor parents consider, making them more likely to select private schools.

The current study also suggests that students assert getting good exam results as a significant factor considered by their parents when sending their children to private schools. Curry (2018) also identified a similar trend and attitude in American parents, who selected private schools for their children to gain 'a good education [revealed through tests and exams], an opportunity to continue to grow, […] and to be able to thrive' (Curry, 2018, p. 50). The current study accords with the above-mentioned parental desire to see their children thrive. It was also mentioned by one school manager interviewed in this study that most parents transferred their children to private school in the 12th grade, to enable them to study for their final examinations, in the belief that private schools

enable children to achieve higher grades. Suppramaniam, Kularajasingam and Sharmin (2019) analysed parental preferences in Bangladesh, and found that good exam results and overall reputation were among the prime reasons influencing parents selection of private schools. This aligns with conflict theory, as families understand that private schools promote social inequality by providing children with different opportunities (Mishra, 2013). Tooley *et al.* (2011) found that the majority of children registered in private schools outperform children in state-run schools. Private schools provide enhanced programmes and have greater access to innovation and necessary aids, which facilitate learning better and hence lead to better overall exam outcomes. Thus, it can be said that one of the reasons for selecting between private and state schools in Kurdistan Region of Iraq is to get good exam results.

Cavalcanti, Guimaraes and Sampaio (2010) based their research in the Brazilian context and found that public school students are on 'average about 4.2–17% lower on university entrance tests' than those taken by private school students, which motivates parents to consider private schools for their children's education (p. 396). In addition, Tesema (2014) found that, in Ethiopia, university entrance exam outcomes were generally higher for private school pupils than state school ones. The current study agrees with these findings as, when 'securing university entrance' is selected as a main preference, the students' family is more likely to send their children to private schools. This research demonstrates that private schools provide their students with a competitive edge through advanced programmes (for instance, computer studies are crucial for further studies in IT-specialised universities) and English language proficiency (with most universities, especially private ones, requiring advanced knowledge of the language). In addition, the assumption regarding private schools' granting university entrance is supported by the welfare managers suggestion that private school students can easily get a place at university and a job in the future.

The strongest reasons for parents selecting a private school, as proposed by participants, are 'securing university entrance', 'having good results', and 'having different curricula'. Despite the fact that other factors are reported to be just as significant in the existing literature, in the current study they were found not to be so.

In terms of social trends, private schools are viewed as a universal phenomenon in both developed and developing countries (Kitzmiller, 2022). Developed countries demonstrate a tendency of being either devoted to private schools (especially among the elite) as a family tradition or because they

provide better career opportunities (Yaacob *et al.*, 2014; Awan, 2020; Kitzmiller, 2022). With regard to Britain, the success of private schools is attributed to bringing high academic achievements and better-paid jobs (Green *et al*., 2017). Developing countries have a high public demand for private schools associated with higher quality education and the possibility of imitating others in their choice (Kingdon, 2020). The existing social trend has stimulated families from a higher social stratum to turn to private schools, while families from the lower social strata typically turn to state schools (Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies, 2018). The current research partially aligns with the above study, as the welfare managers stated that private schools are a social trend, with parents feeling the need to keep up with others to provide their children with what is thought to be the best education, and to boast about it. The welfare managers explained that parents feel obligated to send their children to private schools as it has become a notion in society. As expressed by Markey (1926), a social phenomenon reflects the behaviours, beliefs, actions, and thoughts held by society or a group of people, and as a result influences the individual behaviours of a person. According to the welfare managers of this research, most of the parents were sending their children to private schools to follow the 'social phenomenon' in the KRI. Hence, it can be said that private schools have become a social trend in Kurdistan.

The rationale behind the preference for a type of schooling is multifaced, incorporating not only financial and household elements, but also specific parental expectations of schools as crucial for the future of their children, and the social trends prevalent in a society. Nevertheless, it is important to understand whether the inclination towards private schools, as revealed in both the literature and the current study, has demonstrated the impact of private schools on the education process in the KRI. This is analysed next.

5.5 Perceived Impact of Private Schools on the Education Process in the KRI

The fourth research question explored the perception of the impact of private schools on the education process in the KRI. As explained in Chapter Two, when investigating the education process through the perspective of society, it is vital to link it to different aspects of social life, and not only the process of gaining knowledge. The education process is comprised of the contribution and involvement of all the structures of a society, such as economy, religion, family, health and politics. All the structures work as one social body. Therefore, the education process can be considered a system, with all the other structures and individuals contributing to its function.

Hence, to understand the perceived impact of private schools on the education process, the role and effort of the other structures should be taken into consideration.

Subsequently, this chapter will focus on the perceived impact of private schools in terms of their impact on: 1) society, including social values and traditions, as well as education, social and gender equality; 2) academic performance, entailing university entrance and exam results; and, 3) families' financial situation.

5.5.1 Perceived Impact on Social Values and Traditions

This subsection deals with the perceived impact on social values and traditions, i.e., whether private schools attend to social values and traditions in line with state schools in Kurdistan. The analysis is based on functional theorists' view of education and its connection to social values and traditions. This subsection covers three main areas in turn: education as cultural transmission; school as a secondary socialisation site; and, school as a bridge between family and social values.

The founder of functionalist theory, Emile Durkheim, believed that the main societal function of schools is to transmit basic knowledge and skills to the next generations (Malik and Malik, 2022). Durkheim defined education in three major points, with the first being that education passes on the culture of the society. As such, education is an instrument which transmits central norms, values and societal culture to children (Indriyani and Ishomuddin, 2022). Schools are the primary establishments responsible for the equal preparation of youngsters seeking to find their place in the society (Tandi, 2019) and embedding shared social values into new generations (Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2021) The current study found that the sampled state and private schools had unequal approaches to culture in general and social values and traditions in particular. These results support Saldana's view (2013) of school purpose, which is the 'transmission of culture', making schools one of the main traditional agents of culture transmission (p. 228). Furthermore, private schools can introduce new values. These are primarily adopted from developed societies, but are introduced via new curricula which expose pupils to new cultures and promote universal norms as superior (Ahmad and Shah, 2016). The current study found that state schools dedicate a great deal of attention to the Kurdistan culture, in accordance with the state school's welfare manager comments on such celebrations as 'Newroz, Moulood, Flag Day and religious events' being taught to students since day one. This is a requirement of the MoE, whose aim is two-fold: 'upbringing' comes first, and then education. These results agree with Salih, Rahman and Othoman (2017), who

found that in the KRI some values and traditions are practised only because the MoE requires it. Boronski and Hassan (2020) state that functionalist theory perceives a society as a system in which the culture not only directs people towards certain values and traditions, but also defines their mindset, behaviour, and position in the world; hence, culture plays a crucial role in the education of youngsters. Quoting Miran, Novakova and Ahmed (2021), Kurdish society is presently at a turning point, due to the fact that plentiful features of 'ancient and contemporary culture have mingled, leading to the imminent threat of losing Kurdish-specific cultural uniqueness' (p. 359). In private schools, according to the sampled welfare managers, all Kurdish-specific subjects are perceived as 'minor/side' ones, meaning that students in private schools become dissociated from their social values and traditions. This may suggest that private schools are impacting social values and traditions by paying less attention to the norms of Kurdish society.

Turning to the second theme of school as a secondary socialisation site, Durkheim stated that schools provide such socialisation by operating as micro-societies (Tandi, 2019). Secondary socialisation is aimed at passing on the universal values and norms shared by broader society, allowing students to become fully functional members of the society in order to meet and fulfil societal requirements through social unity, social commonality formation, and the teaching of essential values (Giddens and Sutton, 2021). Ballantine, Stuber and Everitt (2021) found that the essential function of school is preparing students to become active participants in all societal institutions, and this marks social values and traditions as extremely significant for individual development. Furthermore, Saldana (2013) suggested that, in the American context, state schools are the most steady and proper socialising agent, designed to equip pupils with fundamental societal values, including loyalty to country, civility, and respect for culture respect. In the current research, the students' perceptions of how their schools follow social values and traditions revealed a crucial discrepancy between state and private school approaches. State schools, being administered by state regulations, are actively involved in the practice of Kurdistan-specific social values and traditions (88% student conformation compared to merely 37.8% in private schools). In accordance with Shanks (2019), education cannot exist in isolation from broader social influences, as it ultimately translates into further positive societal outcomes aimed at promoting social integration. This present results support these statements, as the state welfare managers insisted that there is a clear association between schools and society in the endorsement of social values and traditions, allowing students to understand their place in society. This tendency

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positions Kurdistan state schools at a midpoint for the socialisation of the young in the Kurdistan society. However, a clear dissociation was found between the private schools and social values and traditions, as the sampled schools do not necessarily prepare their students to become active participants of Kurdish society, but rather an external one. Private schools often do not promote social integration that is required to integrate students to the broader society of the community, as they tend to be more focused on global values and uniformity (Baser *et al*., 2019), i.e., the provision of principal occupation capabilities.

On the theme of school bridging family and social values, Durkheim stated that, although schools provide secondary socialisation, families are responsible for primary socialisation (Ballantine, Stuber and Everitt, 2021). Families provide their children with particular norms and values, while schools teach universal societal values and traditions, allowing students to become fully functional in their society. Schools are the main establishments responsible for equally preparing youngsters for their place in society, regardless of family peculiarities (Tandi, 2019). The current research found a relationship between the state schools and other social structures as they paid attention to subjects where social values and traditions are endorsed. Such subjects include: Madani and Maldari. On the other hand, it was also found that the private schools aimed to introduce new values, primarily adopted from developed societies via new curricula and exposure to new cultures, with universal norms being seen as superior. This approach could be responsible for disturbing the cooperation between families and schools (Ahmad and Shah, 2016), as the sampled private schools had an entirely new curriculum taken from England, bringing with it a new culture and traditions different from Kurdish society.

However, parents are not always satisfied with such innovations. In the Salih, Rahman and Othoman (2017) study, parents were dissatisfied because a bare minimum of Kurdish values and traditions were practised by private schools, and this only because the MoE requires it. The findings of the present study have exposed that some of the private international schools celebrate other foreign dates adopted from an external society specifically because a number of Kurdish students were raised in other countries, hence schools try to adhere to the family values of these students, but it entirely disconnects them from the Kurdish society.

The research also found discrepancies between the private and state schools' approaches to social values and traditions, as private schools cannot properly meet the needs of Kurdistan society and

often ignore social values and traditions. It seems that the three points used by Emile Durkheim to define education are not associated with private schools in the KRI. Hence, it can be said that functionalist theory is not applicable to private schools in Kurdistan. The following section considers how these discrepancies influence educational, social and gender inequalities.

5.5.2 Perceived Impact on Education, Social and Gender Equalities

The perceived impact on education, social and gender inequalities is considered under the question of whether private schools promote education, social and gender equality. The analysis is based on functionalist, conflict and symbolic interaction theories on education and its connection with these forms of equality.

Currently, private schools are believed to a cause of educational inequality, as they have adequate financing while most state schools are underfunded. The sampled state school welfare managers blamed the MoE for the existing educational inequality. Moreover, as expressed, when schools were not provided with sufficient funds by the MoE, this led to educational inequality.

One of the first problems related to educational inequality is overpopulated classes. As discussed previously, the quality of education is greatly affected by the number of students in a class. In the current research, the average class size of state schools was found to be 43–52 students, while private schools had 17–22 students. This presupposes that each student in a private school receives a higher level of attention from the teacher, and higher quality feedback. Being overpopulated, state schools lack equal student participation (Shavelson, 2018). In addition, huge class sizes in state schools are associated with heavier teacher workload, making it impossible for teachers to dedicate sufficient time for revising material, checking homework, and providing feedback (Araneda, Guzman and Nussbaum, 2019). According to the symbolic interaction theory of education, teacher-student communication influences an assortment of expectations connected to educational achievement and societal conduct (Andersen, 2019). As the level of communication in state schools is more probable to be poor due to overpopulation, students have lower expectations and the overall dynamics of the classroom are low; student learning, comprehension of lesson material, and learning new knowledge is also insufficient. Symbolic interaction theory also views education as a form of labelling. Thus, in highly dynamic overpopulated classrooms, students might be labelled as low achievers even for a minor failure, and these labels are difficult to get rid of (Andersen, 2019). In fact, these labels aggravate behaviour and achievement rather

than predict it. The higher the prospects, the more encouraged pupils feel, and the more efforts teachers dedicate to encourage pupils, which will eventually lead to higher academic achievements. Thus, it can be suggested that students in private schools generally feel more encouraged to achieve better results, while most students in state schools do not receive individualised encouragement from their teachers.

A second problem causing inequality in education is the difference in the allocation of school resources, which are highly dependent on school financing. Sommers (2013) demonstrates that developing and developed countries have significant discrepancies in resource supply to schools, both private and state. The findings of the current study fall in line with this statement, as revealed by the students, there is a better provision of smart boards, projectors, computer services, libraries, laboratories, etc (see Appendix BB) in private schools compared to state. Moreover, the comparison of the local Kurdish private schools with the international one revealed that international funding enables better quality and quantity of provision. The reason for the difference in provision may be due to the difference caused by private school tuition fees, as seen in Appendix X. The current research found that the higher the tuition fee, the higher the rate of resource allocation. Moreover, the lack of appropriate funding of state schools is explained by Fazil and Baser (2021), who found that Kurdistan is in a financial crisis and the government is incapable of establishing the necessary number of schools (lacking at least 400 to accommodate all students); hence, additional spending on school resources is unachievable. According to Kitzmiller (2022), who conducted research in Philadelphia, such differentiation of school resources also increases inequality, as students in state schools cannot develop all the necessary skills connected to the digitalisation of the education process.

The third problem concerning inequality is the lack of available teachers. Ruzgar (2021), focusing on the Midwest USA, stated that teachers are often perceived as the main factor in selecting a specific school, as a more qualified professional can teach pupils more effectively. Private schools are positively differentiated as they hire teachers with master's degrees and higher, while state schools require merely a bachelor's degree (Awan, 2020). This argument is supported by the findings of the current study, as the state school welfare manager believed that education inequality arises because private schools provide higher quality education due to being able to select the best teachers and provide the best services, which is harder in state schools. The analysis of the available literature revealed that the lack of training and qualifications leads to state school teachers

utilising teacher-centred approaches which do not benefit pupils, while private school teachers have a higher level of freedom and more resources and/or time to get involved in student-oriented practices (Muhamad, Hafsa and Iqra, 2018; Hammoumi, Bakkali and Youssfi, 2020). In addition, symbolic interaction theory holds that the teacher-centred approach disregards students and their needs, and so the latter do not have realistic expectations (Blackledge and Hunt, 1985). In contrast, private schools position students as their main stakeholders, which stimulates the creation of a welcoming educational environment (Khan, 2020). The results of the current study and the analysis of the existing literature suggest that private schools have a greater likelihood to contribute to educational inequalities, widening the existing educational gap between state and private school students.

Hence, in Kurdistan, it seems that functionalist theory does not apply to private schools, because it is focused on uniform, equal opportunity. Education institutions are accountable for sorting students and preparing them for their future societal roles, equally benefiting everyone in the society (Ballantine, Stuber and Everitt, 2021). As such, under functionalist theory, education allocates pupils to relevant roles based on academic performance and talents, securing proper social placement (Bryson and Green, 2020). Nonetheless, the critics of functionalism contend that the education system cannot be viewed as equal in a situation in which both state and private schools exist, since the latter benefit wealthier individuals or those coming from well-off families, through the provision of the best teaching and resources (Giddens and Sutton, 2021). These statements are supported by conflict theorists, who argue that the existence of both state and private players in the modern education system is aimed at maintaining social inequality, due to different types of schools preserving existing subdivisions in society, with education allowing existing power structures to remain.

In a number of countries, including Germany and Scandinavian states, private schools appear to perform a nominal role in the education system, which is state school dominated. This means that private schools cannot contribute to existing educational and societal conflicts as they have a minor impact on the allocation of students (Hamnett and Butler, 2013). In contrast, countries such as the USA and Spain appear to have an extremely large private school sector, and so private schools impact education and its provision, leading to educational inequality. In Britain, whose private school system is prominent on the international level, private schools account for only 7% of all pupils; hence, their power to impact education equality is limited and can only be observed at the

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local level, for example, leading to potential educational inequality in London (Hamnett and Butler, 2013). Compared to the above-mentioned countries, Kurdistan's private school sector is known to be small, and yet it is growing rapidly and increasing its impact on education in the region. The analysis of current statistics demonstrates that the KRI has 1,800,232 pupils, with 1,664,122 of these being educated in state schools and only slightly more than 136,000 pupils studying in private ones; this equates to less than 8%, indicating clear educational inequality in terms of access (Habib and Shahab, 2019). Therefore, it seems that the KRI is experiencing inequality in education between private and state schools. The next set of paragraphs looks at the perceived impact of private schools on social inequality.

This analysis of the KRI has shown that social differences are immense, and events in the region since the 1980s (see Literature Review) have had an enormous influence on the well-being of the population (Habib and Shahab, 2019). As stated by Habib and Shahab (2019), the poverty line in Kurdistan is 6.3% and 19% of the Kurdish population live on less than US $2.2, while 6% of the population face food insecurity. In terms of education, state schools are accessible to every child as they are financed by the government, while private schools require tuition fees, which range from one to ten thousand dollars (Baser *et al.*, 2019). As a result, only rich households can afford to provide their children with private education, pointing to the existence of apparent social inequality in terms of access to private schooling (Yaba, 2018). The current study's results support this statement, as the majority of state and private school participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that private schools provide education for all social classes, while they agreed or strongly agreed that private schools create social class division. According to the Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies (2018), the average monthly salary of a government worker in Kurdistan is approximately US $400, which clearly demonstrates that private education is unattainable for many low- and medium-income families. The welfare managers mostly agreed that private schooling does not suit and serve every societal member, as many people cannot afford it. This is in line with research by the Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies (2018), which stated that most Kurdish families with children in private schools spend more financing education than they earn. Moreover, as elucidated by the welfare mangers of the current research, many families are scared that at some point the tuition fee will grow beyond the available means, leading to possible negative effects on children's education. The welfare managers also explain that families also associated education in private schools with better future education achievements,

including entrance to higher education institutions; a lack of financial means will deprive these students of the chance to change their social status through higher education and better job opportunities. Hence, the existing social inequality in Kurdish society will remain.

Moreover, as mentioned above, it seems that private schools play a key role in the creation of social class division in Kurdistan. In the current study, some of the state and private school welfare managers agreed with this statement by suggesting that not every family can pay private school fees. Hence, it is estimated that the majority of pupils will follow their parents in their future role in society and remain within their social class. This viewpoint coincides with conflict theory, which suggests that schools are aimed at keeping the working class in the lower class of society, while at the same time benefiting the elite by giving them better access to education, such that their wealthier position is preserved. Since some middle-income parents might outstretch their resources to give their children private schooling, this can negatively impact their social status and thus their children's education (Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies, 2018). In addition to the discussion of social classes in the KRI, it is important to mention that the country is has separate social classes and it is comparatively difficult for an individual to change them. Thus, the wealthiest class comprises just 10% of the population, while more than 60% can be categorised as lower class (Habib and Shahab, 2019). In the current research, some of the welfare managers agreed about the existing problem of social class division in society by stating that private schools further widen the immense gap between the rich and poor. Nevertheless, there is a belief that private schooling is capable of providing students with a better future as it is often associated with a better chance of entering university. Cavalcanti, Guimaraes and Sampaio (2010), who based their study on the Brazilian context, found that state school pupils score appropriately 15% lower on university entrance exams (p. 396); this finding is supported by Tesema (2014), who reported that university entrance test results in Ethiopia are much better among private school pupils. In line with this, two welfare managers from the sampled state and private schools believed that students receiving private education have a brighter future because of the greater potential to go to university and get the best jobs. However, judging from the number of private schools and families who can afford private schooling for their children, existing social inequality are rather likely to increase, widening the existing social class gap.

Taking the three social education theories into context, it can be said that, contrary to the popular beliefs held by functionalists, the conflict theory of education suggests that schools cannot lower

the existing social inequality through the provision of equal opportunities. Conflict theorists assume that the education system actually strengthens and prolongs existing social inequalities, which appear from discrepancies in social class, gender, and ethnicity (Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2021) This finding is more lenient towards the conflict theory, which suggests that education preserves class division due to the high level of competition. Pupils from lower-income households have less chance of continuing their education in higher education institutions and will most probably remain at a similar social level as their parents. Hence, the existing rich-poor gap might even widen over time (Chudgar and Creed, 2016); with socioeconomic differences being apparent in private schooling, this will lead to even greater social inequalities (Chudgar and Creed, 2016). As found in from the current work, participants perceived private schools to be an instrument in the widening of the division between the social classes. Therefore, existing social inequality remains, with wealthier families being capable of providing their children with presumably higher quality of education and with greater chances of entering university and having better jobs, while the children of lower-income families will supposedly be incapable of doing so and have a lower chance of having a prosperous future, thus retaining their social status.

The next theme concerns gender inequity. According to functionalist theory, gender inequalities are an effective way of creating a proper division of labour as each gender segment is accountable for a specific labour act, and hence is perceived positively (Boronski and Hassan, 2020). However, conflict theory suggests that gender inequality is a negative element as education forces people into obedience since they have less power. Despite the fact that women currently have more access to education, the problem persists. The analysis of private school education in Erbil over a period of ten years revealed that the schools had more male students. Bizenjo (2020) showed that, in Pakistan, male pupils were more likely to enter private schools. In some cultures such as India and China, sons are perceived as future wage earners, and so their schooling is more important. However, in China, the one-child policy increased budget apportionment, compelling parents to finance their daughter's schooling (Peng, Anwar and Kang, 2022). Siddiqui and Gorard (2017) reported that girls' school attendance in Pakistan has a higher level of absenteeism. The results of the current study support this finding, as two-thirds of the private school teachers agreed on the difference in the gender ratio in private schools (see Appendix EE). The welfare managers of the mixed-gender schools agreed that they enlist more boys than girls in every class. However, some research, such as Salih, Muhammad and Othman (2017), found that respondents observed positive

changes in terms of gender equality as private schools are more involved in practising gender equality. In the current study, however, both the private and state schools still had more male students than females, and so positive changes appear to be lacking in the analysed context.

The present research suggests that private schools are perceived to carry a strong impact on education, social, and gender inequalities. Although private schools are associated with better quality education, less than 10% of the population can afford to educate their children at these schools, which certainly widens the existing social class and gender gaps. The following section contains a discussion of how private schools influence education and academic performance.

5.5.3 Perceived Impact on Education and Academic Performance

Whether private schools support education and academic performance in terms of university entrance and exam results is the subject of this section. The discussion and analysis are grounded on three sociological education theories, with the symbolic interaction theory of education being the main one, particularly concerning academic performance.

To begin with, the research of Green (2020b) revealed that private schools have a positive impact on education, as they are free of state sector constraints and, when funded properly, exemplify the effectiveness of education by having more flexibility to implement what they believe may be beneficial to their students. For example, they have a high resource input and allocation as required. Doğan (2020) found evidence to support this statement, revealing that Turkish teachers and administrators viewed private schools positively as they are rich in extra-curricular activities, have more variable teaching methods, and contribute greatly to students' progress. The current study found strong evidence for the statement that private schools support education, as shown in the positive answers of two-thirds of sampled state teachers (the percentage of those agreeing/strongly agreeing was 66.66%) and the majority of private school teachers (80.94%). In fact, the opinion that private schools support education is even sustained by Kurdistan's MoE, which believes that private schools can provide quality education to support students' learning (Sadik, 2018). A literature analysis by Ali *et al*. (2021) found that the majority of researchers agreed that, when comparing private and public education sectors, the former appears to be better and more preferable as it sustains the overall development of education in the region. The current research aligns with this as the analysis of the welfare managers' interview data demonstrated mutual agreement on the fact that private schools have a positive impact on education. This positive impact

is explained by a number of factors, including the raised level of education and support for the education sector when the Kurdistan government is incapable of doing it. State schools often face a shortage of funds and personnel, which are currently the major challenges encountered by the state education sector of Kurdistan. Hence, there is a growing need among parents to find an alternative for their youngsters' education, which presupposes that this demand will be met by the increasing number of private schools (Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies, 2018). Thus, in cases when the government cannot provide adequate education, private schools bridge this gap. In other words, as clarified through the participant responses, if private schools were incapable of dealing with these challenges, they would not remain in operation.

Furthermore, as cited by Day-Ashley *et al*. (2015), the majority of researchers in the field have come to the conclusion that private school pupils attain higher educational achievements compared to state school. Thus, Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies (2018) highlights how the percentage of private school pupils passing the secondary education certificate exam is much higher than the percentage of state-school pupils. According to Tooley *et al*. (2011), pupils attending private schools show a strong tendency to outperform state school pupils during exams. This may be explained by the fact that private schools can equip more sophisticated programmes, and have greater access to innovation and a variety of teaching aids, all of which eventually lead to better overall exam outcomes. Cavalcanti, Guimaraes and Sampaio (2010) support this conclusion; their study in Brazil found that private school pupils were up to 17% higher achievers in terms of university entrance exams when compared to state. The same results were reported by Tesema (2014), who showed that university entrance exam scores were significantly higher for private school pupils in Ethiopia. In fact, both researchers arrived at the conclusion that rich private schools' resources pool is partly responsible for their higher achievements, giving them a solid advantage. In addition, teacher qualifications, access to special tutoring, and effective teacher feedback were also mentioned as allowing private school students to be higher achievers.

The current study stands in line with these results, revealing that the majority of teachers agreed that private schools 'enable students to achieve high exam scores and secure admission to university' (80.94% of state school teachers and 85.71% of private school teachers agree/strongly agreed). These findings coincide with the opinions of the welfare managers, most of whom believed that private school students get higher exam scores which eventually secure them a place at university. The results of the current study demonstrate that only one of the participants believed

that the school type should be considered irrelevant, as exam results are dependent on students and their motivation. These interpretations contradict the results of the research conducted by Guimarães and Sampaio (2011), who found that in Brazil the study environment was a main factor determining student achievement and educational path. Likewise, Gök (2010) reported that the majority of high school graduates in Turkey felt the need to take private lessons or transfer to private schools in the course of their studies in order to succeed in the university entrance examination. Thus, education in private schools is more frequently associated with successful university admission.

However, it is important to differentiate between private and state universities in Kurdistan in terms of university admission. Student admission norms for private universities are lower than for state ones, and thus the former provide access to university education to many students otherwise unable to matriculate at a state university (Mohammed *et al*., 2021). For example, if students want to study engineering at a state university, they are required to score at least 90% in year 12. In contrast, at private universities, students are admitted with an average of 75–80% (Ahmad and Shah, 2016). Hence, even students with 50% have a chance of being admitted to a private university in some less popular fields. From the viewpoint of conflict theorists, this further reinforces the existing social inequality (Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2021) as even academically weaker students from richer households can be admitted to private universities, securing their future career, while students from lower-income families will encounter a high level of competition to gain admission to a state university. Guimarães and Sampaio (2011) demonstrated that the main determinants of successful university admission are private school attendance as the main educational environment, in combination with either private tutoring or specific help and attention from private school teachers. Moreover, private school students commonly have greater access not only to tutoring or help from teachers, but also to a greater educational resource pool, such as the Internet, laboratories, and foreign language teaching classes (Guimarães and Sampaio, 2011). The current findings support these conclusions, as the analysis of the student data for the period 2020–2021 showed a higher success rate among private school students compared to state school. These results are compatible with the findings of the majority of researchers investigating the topic, as well as the opinions of the majority of teachers and welfare managers sampled for this study, who said that private schools have a positive impact on students' exam results.

Furthermore, education performs an essential function in students' life in particular and in the society in general; however, sociologists view that function from numerous diverse viewpoints. For instance, functionalists state that education assists people in performing different functional roles in society, which is essential for understanding the ways in which education and academic evaluation impact students and their future (Boronski and Hassan, 2020). In contrast, conflict theorists believe education is the means of worsening social inequality, which will exacerbate existing issues connected to university entrance, especially in terms of state and private universities and relevant challenges (Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2021). As suggested in the current research, although private schools are contributing to the education process by giving access to education and universities, it cannot be stated with certainty that private schools are responsible for solidifying the social values and norms of the country. This is because, as gathered from the current research, they are not accessible to everyone and therefore this supports conflict theory. Moreover, symbolic interactionists have analysed classroom dynamics and interactions between students and teachers, revealing how these interactions influence students' academic performance (Blackledge and Hunt, 1985). State schools frequently appear to be undercapitalised and understaffed, which could negatively affect teacher-pupil communication. According to symbolic interaction theorists, the atmosphere of the classroom is typically created by the teacher, while communication between teachers and pupils strongly impacts the ways in which students absorb and comprehend the material and skills on a regular basis (Andersen, 2019). Hence, when teachers do not have enough time to check homework, provide feedback, or organise appropriate revision prior to tests, students' achievements may be lower than expected.

The current research proposes that private schools are perceived to have a strong impact on education and academic achievements. In conjunction with the literature review analysis, the research results indicate that the majority of teachers, welfare managers associated private schools with better quality education, higher academic achievements and exam scores, and better chances of successful university admission. In the next section, the ways in which private schools influence a family's financial situation are discussed as, despite all the positive factors associated with private schooling, it is known to be highly expensive.

5.5.4 Perceived Impact on Families' Financial Situation

The question of whether private schools impact families' financial situation is discussed now. The conflict theory of education suggests that education broadens the existing social inequality gap (Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2021). Hence, conflict theorists do not view schools as meritocratic, which means that personal talent and hard work cannot guarantee future success. Schools, like all social institutions, experience inequalities of power, creating social and economic inequality through the creation of a system of winners and losers (Mishra, 2013). Private schools, added to the assortment of other educational institutions, only enhance existing inequality, as education can no longer provide equal opportunities. The education system is based on the pillars of state, and private schools reinforce and perpetuate social inequalities arising from discrepancies in class, ethnicity, race, etc. Private schools are often unattainable for students of a lower social class due to the high fees creating a situation in which opportunities are unequal, as students of low socio-economic status cannot afford the same as students of higher status, regardless of their academic abilities or desire to learn (Mishra, 2013). In fact, private schools can cause financial strain and impose a heavy burden on the family budget due to the fact that middle- and low-income families are supposed to spend insurmountable sums on sending their children to private school (Härmä, 2011). Obviously, the situation is more difficult in low-income families as parents may not be able to provide their children with the best education and life and/or academic opportunities due to high tuition fees (Mottaleb, Rahut and Pallegedara, 2019). The analysis of statistics on the KRI demonstrates that almost 88% of Kurdish families have a monthly income lower than one million Iraqi dinars, amounting to about $850 (KRSO, 2018). School fees vary considerably in different private schools, especially Kurdish and international private schools, ranging from one thousand to ten thousand dollars (Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies, 2018). In fact, parents have to pay from one thousand to more than four thousand US dollars for primary school pupils annually, with the sum increasing when students move to secondary school (Vernez *et al*., 2016). Due to the fact that the average monthly salary of a state employee in Kurdistan amounts to approximately $400 monthly, private education is unattainable for a wide range of families (Ahmad and Shah, 2016). Moreover, many families barely manage to provide their children with private education, with the majority being afraid that tuition fees will exceed their possibilities and means, which will eventually negatively influence their children's schooling (Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies, 2018).

A family's financial situation is one of the most crucial factors for choosing between private and state schools and, in different countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan, only high-income families are capable of paying private school fees without encountering severe financial constraints (Suppramaniam, Kularajasingam and Sharmin, 2019; Bizenjo, 2020). In some countries (largely India and Pakistan), low-cost private schools are popular, but even low fees are considered inequitable since most poor families cannot afford to send their children to such schools, which constrains the issues of educational equality (Bennell, 2022). The current study coincides with the existing pool of literature, as the majority of sampled students assumed that private schools affect their family budget. In fact, only one fourth of the international private school students voiced the same opinion, which coincides with the above-mentioned statement that higher-income families are less affected by private school fees. Chaudhry and Hassan (2014) reported that the parents of students studying in private schools in Pakistan bear considerable expenses caused by high tuition fees. Hence, the family budget is significantly impacted, which means that families have to limit all additional expenses such as for vacation and entertainment, and may not be able to save any money (Habib and Shahab, 2019; Alkaabi, Cherian and Davidson, 2022). This study demonstrated that most students believe their families have encountered financial issues caused by the need to provide them with private education.

In addition, the current study found that the majority of teachers of both private and state schools agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that private schools place financial pressure on the students' families. Similar findings were reported in a study conducted by Mahmud (2021), which revealed that both teachers and parents acknowledged the financial pressure of private education on households. The cost of sending a child through private schooling system amounted to $24,000; private schools' fees continuously rise, while increases in average salary are small. As of 2023, the salary in the public sector was around $330 (+$10 compared to 2022), while large companies paid $570 (+$10 compared to 2022, BDEX); hence, annually payments for a child's private education is inaccessible for the majority of middle- and low-budget families. All these figures concern the capital city, Erbil, and salaries elsewhere in Kurdistan may be significantly lower. Mahmud (2021) revealed that almost 26% of respondents in Bangladesh expressed their inability to meet the cost of private schooling. Teachers in the USA acknowledged that more well-off families can secure not only private education but also all additional materials and equipment, including textbooks and computers, whereas poorer families struggle with paying tuition fees

(Murnane and Reardon, 2018). Private school tuition thus appears to be a great burden for middle- and low-income families, with the latter suffering the most.

The deterioration in the relationship between the KRG and the Iraqi government in 2014 led to budget reductions for Kurdistan, and then salary cuts and delays (Reza, Mohammad and Siamak, 2020). Being in such an unstable situation, the Kurdistan government encouraged the development of the private sector, including private schools. However, the sampled state school welfare managers viewed this shift as negative, stating that private schools are 'only constructed for the purpose of business and benefit'. They were simultaneously viewed as causing a decline in the education level and degrees, because they are perceived as financial property and not a gain of knowledge. Nevertheless, Reza, Mohammad and Siamak (2020) stated that private schools are an attempt to meet the need for schools, which has arisen due to the poor state of public education since 2014. This decline includes a rise in the dropout rate (amounting to 16%), fewer failing students (24%), and not dealing with gender inequality, as represented by the gender gap (33% as of 2017). Some of these gaps are explained by immense class sizes, inadequately qualified teachers, old-fashioned curricula, and generally low teacher morale due to annual salary cuts of up to 70% (Reza, Mohammad and Siamak, 2020). Private schools having higher programme and teacher employment standards (requiring a master's or higher degree) are aimed at resolving existing issues, but they simultaneously create new ones, in particular lack of affordability. The current study found that, apart from the international private school welfare manager, all the respondents assumed that private schools impose a great financial burden on most families. This one welfare manager explained that private school fees are not viewed as a burden because these students have a stable background. Nevertheless, recent global issues resulting from the pandemic and the economic crisis have increased unemployment, especially among the younger generation, threatening everyone's stability (Noori and Sidiq, 2021). Statistics show that 81% of the working population is employed in the public sector and dependent on stable government, which cannot be guaranteed in the face of a global crisis (Noori and Sidiq, 2021).

As elucidated by the welfare managers of this study, some families are forced to borrow money to enrol their children in private school, and this is not peculiar to the KRI. A Global Education Monitoring Report demonstrated that one in six families is forced to save money to pay school fees, while 8% of families in low- and middle-income countries borrow money for private education (Chudgar and Creed, 2016; Sakaue, 2018; Zuilkowski *et al.*, 2018; UNESCO, 2022). In

some countries such as the Philippines, Kenya, and Uganda, more than 30% of families borrow money to pay for their children's private education (Kingdon, 2020; Mohammed *et al*., 2021; UNESCO, 2022). Hence, the results of the current thesis and the above-mentioned report align, indicating that although borrowing to pay tuition fees resolves the issue temporarily, it leads to greater pressure and a financial burden when families have to pay back the loan. Therefore, it can be posited that families therefore suffer financially from enrolling their children in private schools.

The financial burden on families is connected to their overall economic instability and inability to provide their children with education. The current study postulated that, due to the unstable economic situation, and thus inability to pay tuition fees, families are often forced to withdraw their children from private schools. The findings of Mahmud (2021) support this statement by revealing that increasing fees, especially when combined with the need to pay back loans, has led to growing dropout rates in Bangladesh due the insurmountable burden on family finance. In fact, almost 26% of the study's respondents expressed their inability to meet the costs of private schooling, which ultimately resulted in a dropout (Mahmud, 2021). A high dropout rate and a change of school negate all the positive effects of private education, requiring students to adapt rapidly to a new curricula and environment change, which often leads to much lower academic achievement due to increased pressure.

Given that private schooling is such a heavy burden, it is necessary to analyse the reasons why parents struggle to provide their children with private education despite having the option of sending them to state schools. In the current study, the welfare managers believed that the underlying reason is the desire to provide children with better education and the belief that private schools are more likely to fulfil this objective. According to Naveen (2019), parents with a stable income and occupational background prefer private schools to public ones in Pakistan, considering them to provide higher quality education and better career opportunities in the future. With regard to developed countries, families often select the private school that they attended themselves as they proved to be effective in equipping them with all necessary knowledge and skills to become successful (Henseke *et al*., 2021). This is especially common in Britain, where private schools, which in most cases are elite, are associated with a specific social class and/or family income (Anders *et al*., 2020). In the USA, Erickson (2017) found that when parents are provided with an opportunity to select the type of school irrespective of their financial situation, even low-income families favour private schools, associating them with a higher quality of education and better need

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fit. In Kurdistan, the current study's findings suggest that private schools are now 'seen as a duty and a responsibility', which stimulates practically most family to enrol their children in this type of school, regardless of the fees. The analysis of the literature and this study's results have revealed that private education is not affordable for the majority of Kurdish families, which obviously creates a great deal of financial pressure, with tuition fees becoming an insurmountable burden.

The results also suggest that the private schools are perceived to have a clear economic influence on families' financial situation. According to the same results and the literature review, the majority of researchers in the field, as well as the sampled teachers and welfare managers, associate private schools with an insurmountable burden on the families' financial situation, particularly those belonging to low- or middle-income class. Private education is viewed as an essential duty by families as it is associated with supposedly better educational and career achievements and considered to be a sign of status. As a result, families borrow money and cut all the basic expenses to pay for their children's education, which could articulate to private schools placing considerable financial pressure on low- and middle-income families.

5.6 Summary

This chapter presented the analysis of the findings in relation to the available literature and the study's theoretical framework in mind. The findings suggest a disparity between state and private schools' management and organisation. While the private schools can be considered more flexible in their school control, admission of students and teachers, and curriculum, the state schools are considered more stringent in their approaches, reflecting the unified and universal nature of education expressed in the theory of functionalism. This chapter also displayed some of the key education quality variables that generate adverse perceptions of state schools and greater preference for private ones. Moreover, this study's stakeholders (students, teachers, welfare managers and school managers) revealed that parents select private schools over state schools due to different preferences, family circumstances and social trends. Furthermore, the findings revealed that, when investigating the influence of schools on the transmission of social values and traditions, the state schools were in alignment with functionalism as they support the transmission of Kurdish norms and values, while the private schools create a dissociation between the students and values of the Kurdish society. Furthermore, there exists social, academic and gender inequalities between the private and state schools, due to differences in opportunity. The private

schools reinforce conflict theory through the class division they generate and support symbolic interaction theory through the favourable environmental conditions that encourage positive teacher-student relationships. However, the private school families are considered more likely to experience financial challenges. A summary of the thesis is provided in the next chapter, including the study's limitations, contributions, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The final chapter provides a summary of the research, divided into four sections. After the chapter introduction, the findings are summarised, followed by the contributions of the study. These are followed by the limitations and recommendations for future studies at the end.

6.2 Summary of Findings

As indicated in Chapter 1, private schools have been shown to play an important role in the education sector in many countries (Ewer, 2013). In the context of the KRI, although a small component of the education sector is composed of private schools, it is quite evident that their importance is growing and that they are increasing in number (Vernez *et al*., 2016). Presently, private schools in Kurdistan have grown to provide services for all age groups and education levels.

The aim of this study was to provide a broader perceptive of the situation of private schools in the KRI, since, although the number of private schools is increasing in the region, the nature of the impact remains unknown. In this way, the aim of the research was to add new knowledge to the existing literature. Furthermore, to gain a clear understanding of the impact private schools are having in the KRI, it was important to provide a general background of private schools in the country. Hence, the research presented details on how private and state schools are managed and organised in the KRI, whether the perceived quality of state schools is influencing the need for private schools, the reasons for choosing private or state schools, and finally the stakeholders' perceptions of the impact of private schools on the educational process. The research questions were laid out as follows:

1) How are private and state schools managed and organised in the KRI?
2) How does the perceived quality of state education affect the demand for private schools?
3) How do families choose between private and state schools in the KRI?
4) What is the perception of the impact of private schools on the educational process in the KRI?

As indicated in the literature, the term 'education process' has a variety of meanings. Lynch and Moran (2006) for example, give a definition of the education process which concerns the methods and acts of teaching and learning, as well as how knowledge is spread and passed on in society. In contrast, Murati (2015) defines it as the process of social development through the evolution of knowledge, experience, and skills. Nalle, Sogen and Tamunu (2018) defined the education process as a system in which transmissions of culture and ideology occur, helping to socialise individuals in society. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, when investigating society's perspective on the education process, a combination of different definitions was employed, concluding with the definition that the educational process is a social construct. The construct not only depends on the act of gaining knowledge, but also on the contributions of all societal structures, such as family, politics, law, religion, and economy, all working in unison and complementing each other. Hence, the impact on the education process in this study is considered with regard to the perceived impact on social values and traditions, equality of education, society, and gender, academic performance, and financial situation.

Furthermore, the research framework was comprised of the three social education theories of functionalism, conflict and symbolic interaction. The theories were used for several reasons, including: their potential to be implemented in all parts of human life; that they can be constructively used to discuss relations in society and the impact of private schools on the community; the researcher's speciality in education sociology in Salahaddin University sociology department; and, to see whether the theories are applicable to the context of private schools in Kurdistan.

To obtain answers to the research questions, the study relied on a mixed-method approach. The research was conducted in Erbil, the capital of Kurdistan. Three private and three state schools were selected as the subjects of the research. The samples for this study were students, teachers, welfare managers and school managers. In this study, the data were gathered via questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and archive records collected from the six schools and the MoE. The questionnaires directed at students and teachers were analysed quantitatively with the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software. The semi-structured interviews aimed at the welfare and school managers were analysed qualitatively using Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic analysis approach.

From the findings, it can be concluded that school management and organisation are different between private and state schools in terms of school control, admission policies and school curricula. When considering school control, this study determined that nearly every aspect of state schools is controlled by the MoE, while in private schools it is the establishers or the funding organisation. However, the MoE is still responsible for the licensing and opening of private schools. The distinction in control has led to distinctions in financing, curriculum, and inspections. Moreover, in terms of admission policies, this study concluded that state schools' teachers are restricted to MoE recruitment and students mainly to their catchment area, while private schools are free to choose from a pool of candidates by assessing and evaluating the teachers' and students' attributes. Private schools are more likely to have teachers with higher degrees, and students with higher past exam scores. In addition, when the school curriculum is considered, both the state and Kurdish private schools are required to follow the national curriculum. However, the difference in private schools has led to them having the capacity to add or remove subjects as they deem appropriate, e.g., IT, computer studies, business studies, Turkish language, and economics. Additionally, international private schools in the KRI also have the capability of following international curriculums as they find appropriate.

In addition, in accordance with the second research question, this study concluded that the quality of state schools is viewed as less competent than their private school counterparts. The generally negative perspective of state school quality was summarised as due to the following factors: repetitive methods of teaching with lack of variation, lack of teaching aids, a high number of students in classes, and a lack of teachers. These factors are demonstrated to cause further detrimental effects on state school quality. For example, a lack of teachers in state schools due to fewer new teachers being employed has led to teachers covering multiple subjects, including those that they do not specialise in, causing further burnout among teaching staff. Having a high number of students in classes caused: a withdrawal from dynamic learning; less individualised attention and expectations; a weaker teacher-student relationship; and, less help with homework and one-to-one feedback. In addition, the lack of diverse teaching methods and teaching aids in state schools has caused a shift to a teacher-centred approach and the use of old-fashioned teaching aids.

Regarding the outcomes of the third research question, several household characteristics and academic preferences were considered by families when choosing private or state schools. In general, it was determined that families are less likely to send their children to private schools

when students come low-income families. Families are more likely to consider private schools for their curriculum variation, smaller class sizes, and the belief that students will have a greater likelihood of obtaining a place at university and good exam results. One of the interesting results of this study was attained from the welfare managers who expressed their perception that most of the parents chose private schools because it has become a social phenomenon in Kurdistan. It has become a notion in society, functioning as a 'trend' between families.

For the fourth research question, the perceived impact of private schools was investigated in terms of society (social values and traditions), equality in education, society, and gender, academic performance (university entrance and exam results), and families' financial situation. When considering the effect of schools on the transmission of social values and traditions, it was found that private schools are causing a dissociation in their approach. In state schools, it can be said that there tends to be support for functionalism in their transmission of culture, forming a bridge between families and schools, and by acting as a secondary site of socialisation. In contrast, the sampled private schools in the KRI appear to create a dissociation from society as they introduce new values from other societies, and pay less attention to the cultural events and celebration dates of the KRI where social values and traditions are endorsed. The schools also prepare students to function in an external society and discard the more traditional Kurdish subjects, such as Madani and Maldary, that interlink schools with other parts of the social structure.

The stakeholders in this study expressed their belief in private schools causing educational inequality in Kurdish society. They blamed the MoE for the imbalance between the two school types as it is incapable of providing sufficient funds to state schools to the same degree as the establishers funding private schools. Firstly, it was concluded that the unavailability of funds has caused significant problems for state schools, such as overcrowded classrooms. On the other hand, due to the low number of students in their classes, the private schools are more efficient in providing greater attention to students, offering more feedback and checking homework, and producing less general negative student labelling. Secondly, inequality in education was seen in the unequal resource allocation, i.e., private schools have more access to projectors, smart boards, computer services, laboratories, and libraries. Thirdly, there is the existence of the lack of available teachers in state schools and the greater likelihood of private schools admitting more teachers and higher qualified teachers. Furthermore, when considering private schools' effect on exam results and university entrance, private schools are believed to be more capable of supporting students to

achieve the desired attributes. In accordance with the social education theories referred to in this study, it was quite evident that, when considering the perceived impact of private schools on education equality, symbolic interaction theory was applicable due to their student-centred approach. Moreover, private schools conformed to conflict theory as their existence helps preserve the power structures and class subdivision in the KRI.

When assessing the perceived impact of private schools on social equality in the KRI, it can be concluded that, because of the private school requirement for tuition fees from families and the average workers' salary being much lower than this requirement, private schools in the KRI mostly function for those who can afford them. This determined the belief that social class division is being created. Furthermore, in accordance with conflict theory, it was further revealed that due to private schools being more likely to meet students' academic needs and enable access to higher education, they are reinforcing social class division for future generations because of the difference in opportunity they offer. State school students from lower-income households are less likely to obtain such opportunities.

Moreover, the analysis of private education in Erbil revealed that private schools have a higher number of male students in each class, with stakeholders agreeing that private schools create gender inequality in the KRI. However, it is important to note that gender inequality may already exist in the KRI, and private schools are only further nurturing it.

Finally, this study revealed the stakeholders' perception of private schools having a clear impact on families' financial state. An insurmountable burden has been placed on families' financial income, especially those from low/middle-income classes. However, with consideration of the current lack of state school quality, sending children to private schools is seen as a 'duty' for parents, causing them to cut all but basic expenses and pressure themselves by borrowing money from other families. It was thus determined that private schools place considerable pressure on low- and middle-income families.

6.3 Contribution of the Study

Chapter 1 set forth the pressing need to investigate the stakeholders' perception of the impact of private schools in the KRI. Prior to this study's endeavour, and despite a growth in their demand, few studies have investigated the situation of private schools in the Kurdistan region. In this regard,

this study focused on addressing the identified research gap by answering the formulated research questions. The findings of the study add to the knowledge of both private and state schools operating in the KRI region, offering a general background for researchers to reflect on and develop.

From a sociological point of view, this study's importance lies in its attempt to combine and interchangeably implement the three sociological education theories of functionalism, conflict, and symbolic interaction. However, each of these theories has rarely been employed in the Kurdistan setting, especially in an educational context. The use of the three theories in this research helped to organise the empirical data, providing a deeper understanding, meaningfulness, and explanation of the context and phenomena in Kurdish society.

Additionally, considering this study's methodological contributions, it is one of the few in the context of Kurdistan to collect qualitative data to investigate private schools, alongside quantitative and empirical data collected from the MoE's archive records. Unlike most research in the region that has relied on quantitative data to assess factors such as impact and effect, this research adopted a mixed-methods design. While the statistical findings provided straightforward answers to key variables, the qualitative findings gave the study a unique depth of understanding of the distinctions in the key variables. The in-depth analysis of the qualitative data with the additional implementation of the social education theories provided a robust method of investigation and analysis.

One of the key contributions of this study is how it has provided some Kurdish people with the 'voice' to state their beliefs and opinions on the topic of education, since in most cases such an opportunity has not been available. The data collected from stakeholders gave the researcher the opportunity to collaborate with members of the Kurdish society to understand their position and beliefs better. Investigating the responses provided by the welfare and school managers helps to preserve the voice and beliefs of the participants, which would otherwise not have been captured by quantitative findings alone.

6.4 Limitations and Future Recommendations

As with all studies, this research has limitations, the first of which arises from its methodology. Initially, it was intended that the research would collect data to recognise the impact private schools

have on the KRI's educational process. However, it was soon noted that, in order to assess the term 'impact', the study would require a sample larger in scope than the study was capable of covering. Although a total of 192 questionnaires (150 from students and 42 from teachers) and 12 semi-structured interviews (six from welfare managers and six from school managers) were implemented, a greater data collection distribution would have been required to investigate the broad term 'impact'. Therefore, rather than investigating the full scope of private schools' impact on the KRI's education process, the study aimed to investigate the perception of stakeholders regarding the matter. Assessing the 'perceptions' of participants was more appropriate to the sample size under study. Furthermore, to further address the limitation and get a comprehensible understanding of the responses to the research questions, qualitative research methods such as semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis were employed to gather detailed insight into the participants' responses. By collecting meaningful and nuanced data, this study provides an opportunity to capture a deeper understanding of the stakeholders' perceptions. Additionally, with this study outlining the perceptions of stakeholders on the topic of private schools, future researchers can aim to collect gross and comprehensive data to assess 'impact', opening up an array of opportunities for future research. Therefore, a clear recommendation for future researchers is to build on this study to investigate, more firmly, the impacts private schools hold on the education process in KRI.

Secondly, it is important to note that the stakeholders of this study included students, teachers, welfare managers, and school managers. Parents were not of the participants investigated in this study. The rationale for such decision, as further clarified in the methodology chapter, was due to the influence such decision would have had on the fairness and reliability of the study. With the researcher not being able to travel back to KRI to conduct the research, conducting online interviews would have been the only way interview the parents. The issue of families lacking technological advancements such as computers, smartphones, and internet would have limited parental involvement to only the parents who were in the possession of such advancements. Hence, the research would have only collated the views of a specific participant group. Instead, welfare managers were asked throughout the study to provide their perceptions on the views parents might have in accordance with their knowledge and experience of working closely with the parents. Welfare managers, as explained in detail in the methodology chapter, were selected for their role in working closely with the students and their families. As for future recommendations, it would

be highly beneficial to document the perceptions and beliefs of parents directly. A face-to-face interview with parents of KRI students may provide the opportunity to investigate perceptions not identified in this research.

Thirdly, one of the main struggles of this study was the lack of data stored by the MoE on both private and state schools. For both types of school, there was a lack of systemic data about school management, organisation, performance, feedback, and rating. Exam results data and university entrance rates were mixed data, and there was no distinguishment between private and state schools. This made it impossible to make comprehensible evaluations of whether one school type was in fact more capable than the other or whether there were any changes in scores and admissions over time. For example, when I needed data regarding the exam results of students in grade 12 in private and state schools, only mixed data were available on both, rather than separately. Therefore, only the data gathered from the six schools in the study sample were used. To address this limitation, several other strategies were employed to mitigate the limitations. For example, interviews with welfare managers and school managers specifically those who had experience in both teaching in state and private schools helped gain a better comprehension of the differences that may exist in the exam scores, gender distribution and university entrance frequencies. Additionally, conducting a detailed literature review incorporated to the general understanding of the type of data and findings MoE's around the world gather. Although such literature were not specific to the case of KRI, because of the general lack of literature in the field, understanding the general trend of literature findings, specifically that of Middle Eastern countries, contributed to providing a comprehensive insight into the general stored data and findings. Thus, as this study provided a broad background to the 'perception' of private schools' impact, future research and the MoE can work to explore the schools over the course of time to understand their full stance and impact on the KRI.

Last but not least, it is important to appreciate that the data collection process of this study occurred over one year and was only aimed at grade 12 students. Contextual and unidentified factors need to be appreciated. The study took place during the spread of Covid-19 in Kurdistan, which may be present as a stress factor affecting some of the interview and questionnaire responses. Likewise, the student responses may have been affected by the students being in their last year of high school. Ideally, grade 12 students are the most likely individuals to desire good exam scores and university admission, while responses from other year groups may vary due to the students being further

away from their final national examinations. Therefore, future studies could aim to investigate other unidentified factors and investigate responses from a substantial number of students of different age groups.

6.5 Lessons Learned during the Research

Writing and completing a PhD has been a life-changing journey that has reshaped and enhanced my way of thinking about the vast world of research and literature. It has been an exciting yet demanding adventure that required both academic and personal growth. While reflecting on such a strenuous and mind-opening journey, I can see that I have developed and grown as a researcher in numerous ways. The aim of this section of the conclusion chapter is to address and express some of the ways in which this research has advanced and evolved me as a researcher and as a person.

Among the most important skills that I have acquired during my journey is learning to, and becoming, more resilient and determined. I have come to understand that a researcher's journey is not a straight path, but rather an unsteady one full of highs and lows. Ill health, family bereavements, and home and childcare responsibilities are just a few of the setbacks faced during this prolonged journey. However, despite the sense of frustration and sorrow that followed during those times, there was always a spark of resilience and hope that came. Such setbacks must be embraced to realise that research is not only library-based but also in the realm of life and the everyday perception of it.

One of the deeply impactful enlightenments acquired in my journey was learning and appreciating the significance of failure during my work. The collection of data and its process often gave rise to unforeseen obstacles, circumstances and findings. However, I have come to realise that such surprises are not failures but opportunities from which to learn and grow. Creating a backup plan for a backup plan is a new life skill that I have learned through my journey. I have also come to embrace the unknowns, which has ultimately led me to become confident in my research findings and conclusions.

Additionally, through analysing the research literature, I have gained a stronger sense of humbleness. I have come to accept that, as much as I could understand and acquire new skills in research and critical analysis, there are still some fields left for me to discover and learn more about. The process of questioning reality and seeking an answer for such reality has made me

realise that the deeper I look into a topic, the more I find what is out there to learn. This shows me that there still are multiple areas that I could look into and further academically and personally grow from.

Another key lesson I have learned is an appreciation of group work and intercommunication. Results, literature and ideas are interpreted and perceived differently by everyone. Supervisors, academic members, colleagues and friends showed me the different ways everyone perceived the bigger, wider world and the necessity of addressing the interpretations of the wider world. To make my writing and results reach a wider audience, I have learned multiple ways to critique and interpret my findings, which is a key skill for acquiring a professional career.

In conclusion, my PhD journey has been a life-changing experience. It has helped me acquire vital skills and understandings that have helped reshape my ways of thinking about and perceiving the world. This has been an exciting trip that has enriched my life in more ways than I could write down in words, and situated me in a position where I can contribute to the world of research. Even at the end of this voyage, I will continue to grow and enhance both personally and academically.

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Appendices

Appendix A MoE's Permit to Conduct the Research

Rizgar Office
For Translation & Printing

Kurdistan Region – Iraq
Council of Ministers
Ministry of Education
General Directorate of Education in Erbil
Directorate of Education in Erbil Center
Planning

No.: **6398**
Date: **19.04.2021**

0 3 APR 2022

To: **All Schools of our Directorate**
Subject: **Facilitation**

Refers to the letter of General Directorate of Education in Erbil / Directorate of Educational Planning / numbered (**7966**) on (**18.04.2021**) please make facilitation to the student (**ARAM IHSAN SALEH**) PhD student at Newcastle University in the UK, for doing to questionnaire conduct the referendum, doctoral research entitled (**The Impact of Private Schools on the Teaching Process in Kurdistan Region**) and distributing questionnaires form on director, some teachers and students in a part of Governmental and Non-Governmental Schools, in a condition that it isn't out of the directives of Ministry of Education and doing all health procedures at schools.

Attachment: poll form (18 pages).

Sign and Seal
Dler Abdullah Hassan
Director

RIZGAR
Bureau for Legal Translation
Rizgar Sharif Qurtas ... Legal Sworn Translator, license No.: **27/2012**
Aras Street – Opposite to General Directorate of Education – Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq
Email: rizgarqurtas@gmail.com – Phone No.: **+964 750 462 0108**

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Appendix B MoE's Permit to Conduct the Research (Kurdish)

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العدد: / ٧٢٩١

التأريخ: ٢٠٢١/٤/١٩

ژمارە : /

ڕێکەوت: / ٢٧٢٠ کوردى

بۆ/گشت قوتابخانەکانى سنورى پەروەردەکەمان

ب/ ئاسانکارى

ئاماژە بە نووسراوى بەڕێوەبەرایەتى گشتى پەروەردەى هەولێر / بەڕێوەبەرایەتى پلاندانانى پەروەردەیى / هۆبەى پلاندانان / ژمارە (٧٩٦٦) لە (٢٠٢١/٤/١٨) ئاسانکارى بکەن بۆ قوتابى (ارام احسان صالح) قوتابى دکتۆرا لە زانکۆى نیوکاسل لە وڵاتى بەریتانیا بۆ ئەنجامدانى راپرسى تویژینەوەى دکتۆراى بە ناونیشانى (کاریگەرى قوتابخانەى تایبەت لەسەر پرۆسەى خوێندن لە هەرێمى کوردستان) و دابەش کردنى فۆرمى (استبیان) لەسەر بەڕێوەبەر و هەندێک مامۆستا و قوتابى لە بەشێک قوتابخانەى حکومى و ناحکومى بەمەرجێک لە رێنماییەکانى وەزارەتى پەروەردە دەرنەچێت و گشت رێکارەکانى تەندروستى خۆپارێزى رەچاو بکرێت .

هاوپێچ // فۆرمى راپرسى (١٨ لاپەرە)

دلێر عبدالله حسن
بەڕێوەبەرى پەروەردە

وێنەیەک بۆ:-

* یەکەیى سەرپەرشتیکردنى پەروەردەیى بنەرەتى و باخچەى مندالانى هەولێر / بۆ زانینتان / لەگەڵ رێزماندا ...
* یەکەیى سەرپەرشتیکردنى پەروەردەیى ئامادەیى و پیشەیى سەنتەرى هەولێر / بۆ زانینتان / لەگەڵ رێزماندا ...
* پلاندانان

Appendix C MoE's Permit to Conduct the Research in all Schools in Erbil

Rizgar Office
For Translation & Printing

Kurdistan Region – Iraq
Council of Ministers
Ministry of Education
General Directorate of Education in Erbil
Directorate of Educational Planning
Planning Department

No.: **7966**
Date: **19.04.2021**

0 3 APR 2022

To: **Directorate of Education in Erbil Center**
Subject: **Facilitation**

Please make facilitation to the student (**ARAM IHSAN SALEH**) PhD student at Newcastle University in the UK, for doing to questionnaire conduct the referendum, doctoral research entitled (**The Impact of Private Schools on the Teaching Process in Kurdistan Region**) and distributing questionnaires form on director, some teachers and students in a part of Governmental and Non-Governmental Schools, in a condition that it isn't out of the directives of Ministry of Education and doing all health procedures at schools.

Attachment: poll form (18 pages).

Sign and Seal
Raqib Saeed Najm
Deputy Director

RIZGAR
Bureau for Legal Translation
Rizgar Sharif Qurtas ... Legal Sworn Translator, license No.: **27/2012**
Aras Street – Opposite to General Directorate of Education – Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq
Email: rizgarqurtas@gmail.com – Phone No.: +964 750 462 0108

Appendix D MoE's Permit to Conduct the Research in all Schools in Erbil (Kurdish)

حكومة إقليم كوردستان- العراق		حكومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان- عێراق
مجلس الوزراء		ئەنجومەنی وەزیران
وزارة التربية		وەزارەتی پەروەردە
المديرية العامة لتربية اربيل		ب.گ . پەروەردەی هەولێر
مديرية التخطيط التربوي		ب. پلاندانی پەروەردەیی
شعبة التخطيط		هۆبەی پلاندانان

العدد: ٧٨٦٦ /
التأريخ: ١٨/ ٤ / ٢٠٢١

ژمارە :
رێکەوت: / ٢٧٢١ کوردی

بۆ/ بەرێوەبەرایەتی پەروەردەی ناوەندی هەولێر

ب/ ئاسانکاری

داواکارین ئاسانکاری بکەن بۆ قوتابی(ارام احسان صالح) قوتابی دکتۆرا لە زانکۆی نیوکاسل لە ولاتی بەریتانیا بۆ ئەنجامدانی راپرسی تویژینەوەی دکتۆرای بە ناونیشانی (کاری گەری قوتابخانەی تایبەت لەسەر پرۆسەی خوێندن لە هەرێمی کوردستان)، و دابەش کردنی فۆرمی (استبیان) لەسەر بەرێوەبەر وەهەندێک مامۆستا و قوتابی لە بەشێک قوتابخانەی حکومی و ناحکومی، بە مەرجیک لە رێنماییەکانی وەزارەتی پەروەردە دەرنەچیت و گشت رێکارەکانی تەندروستی خۆپارێزی رەچاو بکرێت.

لەگەڵ رێزدا ...

هاوپێچ:
فۆرمی راپرسی (١٨ لاپەرە)

سعید رقیب نجم
ی.بەرێوەبەری گشتی تەکنیکی بە وەکالەت

وێنەیەک بۆ:-
- نووسینگەی بەرێز بەرێوەبەری گشتی/ بۆ زانین/لەگەڵ رێزدا.
- بەرێز یاریدەدەری بەرێوەبەری گشتی تەکنیکی/ بۆ زانین/لەگەڵ رێزدا.
- بەشی باخچە و قوتابخانە ناحکومییەکان/ بۆ کاری پێویست / لەگەڵ رێزدا.
- پلاندانان/ لەگەڵ سەرەتایەکان.

کوردستان یونس /هۆبەی پلاندانان ٢٠٢١/٤/١٨

KRG, Erbil, Aras street, G. D. of Erbil Education
Phone:+964(750) 449 1804

gdoe.erbil@moe.gov.krd
www.gov.krd

هەرێمی کوردستان- هەولێر- شەقامی ئاراس – ب.گ.پەروەردەی هەولێر
تەلەفۆن: ١٨٠٤ ٤٤٩ (٧٥١) ٩٦٤+

Appendix E Ethical Approval Document

Ethics Form Completed for Project: The Impact of Private Schools on the Educational Process in Kurdistan of Iraq

Policy & Information Team, Newcastle University <noreply@limesurvey.org>

Fri 24/11/2017 18:11

To:Aram Saleh (PGR) <a.saleh@newcastle.ac.uk>;

Ref: 2180/2017

Thank you for submitting the ethical approval form for the project 'The Impact of Private Schools on the Educational Process in Kurdistan of Iraq' (Lead Investigator:Aram Ihsan Saleh). Expected to run from 26/09/2017 to 24/09/2021.

Based on your answers the University Ethics Committee grants its approval for your project to progress. Please be aware that if you make any significant changes to your project then you should complete this form again as further review may be required. If you have any queries please contact res.policy@ncl.ac.uk

Best wishes

Policy & Information Team, Newcastle University Research Office

res.policy@ncl.ac.uk

Appendix F Participant Information Sheet: School Managers

Newcastle University

Information Sheet for School Managers

Title of Study: <u>Stakeholders' Perceptions on the Impact of Private Schools on the Educational Process in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq</u>

Invitation and Brief Summary
Dear school manager, you are being invited to participate in a research. Your participation will be a huge contributor to the titled study. Before deciding whether you would like to participate, please have a read through the Information Sheet provided. This Information Sheet will explain the aim of the research and how your contribution will help, as well as information surrounding your data security and confidentiality. Allow yourself enough time to decide whether or not you would like to participate. Upon your decision, if you have decided to participate then please fill in the consent form handed out. Please be aware that you are welcome to withdraw your consent at any stage, without providing an explanation or receiving any penalties.

What is the aim of the research?
Throughout the past decade, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) has experienced an increase in the number of private schools, as well as a higher demand and interest in them. Nevertheless, despite their substantial increase, there is a lack of research and data looking into the situation of private schools in KRI. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the perception of stakeholders on the impact private schools have on the education process. The significance of this study lies in being one of the few and first researches examining private schools in Kurdistan.

What does taking part involve?
By participating, you will be taking part in an online interview. The interview will take around 30 minutes of your time.

What information will be collected and who will have access to the information collected?
Any personal information (e.g. your name or institution name) that could lead to your identification will not be recorded nor stored. The interview questions are not personal sensitive, they are opinion and experience-focused. Audio recording will be used during the interviews. The audio recording is only available to the researcher who will store the data on a personal encrypted secure disk. After the audio recordings are transcribed and translated to English by the researcher; the translation and transcription will be checked by another two PhD colleagues at UK University who will only listen to the anonymised version of the audio (all personal/identifiable information is removed).

Why have you been invited to participate?
Your invitation to this research is based on your possible knowledge and experiences with your position as a School Manager. All School Managers in Erbil were likely candidates. Your particular invite is randomised but still depends on your willingness to participate, accessibility and availability.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this research?
Participating in this study will open an opportunity for you to express your knowledge, experience and opinion on matters that concern the public in Kurdistan. Your response will aid in understanding and appreciating the situation of private schools in Kurdistan better.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part in this research?
There are no foreseen disadvantages identified by the researcher. If such disadvantages were to arise before/during/after the research process, then the researcher is prepared to take full responsibility for the consequences.

Has this study received Ethical Approval?
Yes, this study received its Ethical Approval from Newcastle University Ethics Committee

Who should you contact for further information relating to the research?
You may contact the researcher (Aram Saleh) directly from:

- Phone Number: +44 (0) 7448921348

- Email address: a.saleh@newcastle.ac.uk

Who should you contact to file a complaint?
You may contact the researcher's supervisor (Rene Koglbaeuer) directly from:

- Phone number: +44 (0) 191 208 8453

- Email address: rene.koglbauer@newcastle.ac.uk

Or you may contact the University Directly at: +44 (0) 0191 208 3333

21/04/2021

Appendix G Participant Information Sheet: Welfare Managers

Information Sheet for Welfare Managers

Title of Study: <u>Stakeholders' Perceptions on the Impact of Private Schools on the Educational Process in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq</u>

Invitation and Brief Summary

Dear Welfare Manager, you are being invited to participate in a research. Your participation will be a huge contributor to the titled study. Before deciding whether you would like to participate, please have a read through the Information Sheet provided. This Information Sheet will explain the aim of the research and how your contribution will help, as well as information surrounding your data security and confidentiality. Allow yourself enough time to decide whether or not you would like to participate. Upon your decision, if you have decided to participate then please fill in the consent form handed out. Please be aware that you are welcome to withdraw your consent at any stage, without providing an explanation or receiving any penalties.

What is the aim of the research?

Throughout the past decade, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) has experienced an increase in the number of private schools, as well as a higher demand and interest in them. Nevertheless, despite their substantial increase, there is a lack of research and data looking into the situation of private schools in KRI. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the perception of stakeholders on the impact private schools have on the education process. The significance of this study lies in being one of the few and first researches examining private schools in Kurdistan.

What does taking part involve?

By participating, you will be taking part in an online interview. The interview will take around 30 minutes of your time.

What information will be collected and who will have access to the information collected?

Any personal information (e.g. your name or institution name) that could lead to your identification will not be recorded nor stored. The interview questions are not personal sensitive, they are opinion and experience-focused. Audio recording will be used during the interviews. The audio recording is only available to the researcher who will store the data on a personal encrypted secure disk. After the audio recordings are transcribed and translated to English by the researcher; the translation and transcription will be checked by another two PhD colleagues at UK University who will only listen to the anonymised version of the audio (all personal/identifiable information is removed).

Why have you been invited to participate?
Your invitation to this research is based on your possible knowledge and experiences with your position as a Welfare Manager. All Welfare Managers in Erbil were likely candidates. Your particular invite is randomised but still depends on your willingness to participate, accessibility and availability.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this research?
Participating in this study will open an opportunity for you to express your knowledge, experience and opinion on matters that concern the public in Kurdistan. Your response will aid in understanding and appreciating the situation of private schools in Kurdistan better.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part in this research?
There are no foreseen disadvantages identified by the researcher. If such disadvantages were to arise before/during/after the research process, then the researcher is prepared to take full responsibility for the consequences.

Has this study received Ethical Approval?
Yes, this study received its Ethical Approval from Newcastle University Ethics Committee

Who should you contact for further information relating to the research?
You may contact the researcher (Aram Saleh) directly from:

- Phone Number: +44 (0) 7448921348

- Email address: a.saleh@newcastle.ac.uk

Who should you contact to file a complaint?
You may contact the researcher's supervisor (Rene Koglbaeuer) directly from:

- Phone number: +44 (0) 191 208 8453

- Email address: rene.koglbauer@newcastle.ac.uk

Or you may contact the University Directly at: +44 (0) 0191 208 3333

21/04/2021

Appendix H Participant Information Sheet: Teachers

Information Sheet for Teachers

Title of Study: <u>Stakeholders' Perceptions on the Impact of Private Schools on the Educational Process in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq</u>

Invitation and Brief Summary
Dear Teacher, you are being invited to participate in a research. Your participation will be a huge contributor to the titled study. Before deciding whether you would like to participate, please have a read through the Information Sheet provided. This Information Sheet will explain the aim of the research and how your contribution will help, as well as information surrounding your data security and confidentiality. Allow yourself enough time to decide whether or not you would like to participate. Upon your decision, if you have decided to participate then please fill in the consent form handed out. Please be aware that you are welcome to withdraw your consent at any stage, without providing an explanation or receiving any penalties.

What is the aim of the research?
Throughout the past decade, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) has experienced an increase in the number of private schools, as well as a higher demand and interest in them. Nevertheless, despite their substantial increase, there is a lack of research and data looking into the situation of private schools in KRI. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the perception of stakeholders on the impact private schools have on the education process. The significance of this study lies in being one of the few and first researches examining private schools in Kurdistan.

What does taking part involve?
By participating, you will be taking part in completing a questionnaire. The questionnaire will take around 10 minutes to complete.

What information will be collected and who will have access to the information collected?
Any personal information (e.g. your name or institution name) that could lead to your identification will not be recorded nor stored. The questionnaire questions are not personal sensitive, they are opinion and experience-focused. The data collected is only available to the researcher who will store the data on a personal encrypted secure disk.

Why have you been invited to participate?
Your invitation to this research is based on your possible knowledge and experiences with your position as a Teacher. All teachers in Erbil were likely candidates. Your particular invite is randomised but depends on your willingness to participate.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this research?
Participating in this study will open an opportunity for you to express your knowledge, experience and opinion on matters that concern the public in Kurdistan. Your response will aid in understanding and appreciating the situation of private schools in Kurdistan better.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part in this research?
There are no foreseen disadvantages identified by the researcher. If such disadvantages were to arise before/during/after the research process, then the researcher is prepared to take full responsibility for the consequences.

Has this study received Ethical Approval?
Yes, this study received its Ethical Approval from Newcastle University Ethics Committee

Who should you contact for further information relating to the research?
You may contact the researcher (Aram Saleh) directly from:

- Phone Number: +44 (0) 7448921348

- Email address: a.saleh@newcastle.ac.uk

Who should you contact to file a complaint?
You may contact the researcher's supervisor (Rene Koglbaeuer) directly from:

- Phone number: +44 (0) 191 208 8453

- Email address: rene.koglbauer@newcastle.ac.uk

Or you may contact the University Directly at: +44 (0) 0191 208 3333

21/04/2021

Information Sheet for Students

Title of Study: <u>Stakeholders' Perceptions on the Impact of Private Schools on the Educational Process in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq</u>

Invitation and Brief Summary

Dear Student, you are being invited to participate in a research. Your participation will be a huge contributor to the titled study. Before deciding whether you would like to participate, please have a read through the Information Sheet provided. This Information Sheet will explain the aim of the research and how your contribution will help, as well as information surrounding your data security and confidentiality. Allow yourself enough time to decide whether or not you would like to participate. Upon your decision, if you have decided to participate then please fill in the consent form handed out. Please be aware that you are welcome to withdraw your consent at any stage, without providing an explanation or receiving any penalties.

What is the aim of the research?

Throughout the past decade, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) has experienced an increase in the number of private schools, as well as a higher demand and interest in them. Nevertheless, despite their substantial increase, there is a lack of research and data looking into the situation of private schools in KRI. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the perception of stakeholders on the impact private schools have on the education process. The significance of this study lies in being one of the few and first researches examining private schools in Kurdistan.

What does taking part involve?

By participating, you will be taking part in completing a questionnaire. The questionnaire will take around 10 minutes to complete.

What information will be collected and who will have access to the information collected?

Any personal information (e.g. your name or institution name) that could lead to your identification will not be recorded nor stored. The questionnaire questions are not personal sensitive, they are opinion and experience-focused. The data collected is only available to the researcher who will store the data on a personal encrypted secure disk.

Why have you been invited to participate?
Your invitation to this research is based on your possible knowledge and experiences as a student. All students in Erbil were likely candidates. Your particular invite is randomised but depends on your willingness to participate.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this research?
Participating in this study will open an opportunity for you to express your knowledge, experience and opinion on matters that concern the public in Kurdistan. Your response will aid in understanding and appreciating the situation of private schools in Kurdistan better.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part in this research?
There are no foreseen disadvantages identified by the researcher. If such disadvantages were to arise before/during/after the research process, then the researcher is prepared to take full responsibility for the consequences.

Has this study received Ethical Approval?
Yes, this study received its Ethical Approval from Newcastle University Ethics Committee

Who should you contact for further information relating to the research?
You may contact the researcher (Aram Saleh) directly from:

- Phone Number: +44 (0) 7448921348

- Email address: a.saleh@newcastle.ac.uk

Who should you contact to file a complaint?
You may contact the researcher's supervisor (Rene Koglbaeuer) directly from:

- Phone number: +44 (0) 191 208 8453

- Email address: rene.koglbauer@newcastle.ac.uk

Or you may contact the University Directly at: +44 (0) 0191 208 3333

21/04/2021

Appendix J Consent Form: School Managers

Consent Form for School Managers

Title of Study: <u>Stakeholders' Perceptions on the Impact of Private Schools on the Educational Process in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq</u>

Thank you for your interest in taking part in this research. Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research study. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form.

		Please initial box to confirm consent
1.	I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated 21/04/2021 for the above study, I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and I have had any questions answered satisfactorily.	
2.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. I understand that if I decide to withdraw, any data that I have provided up to that point will be omitted.	
3.	I consent to the processing of my anonymous personal information for the purposes of this research study, as described in the information sheet dated 21/04/2021.	
4.	I consent to my anonymised research data being stored and used by others for future research.	
5.	I understand that my research data may be published as a report.	
6.	I understand that my anonymised research data may be looked at by individuals from Newcastle University, where it is relevant to my taking part in this research.	
7.	I consent to being audio recorded and understand that the recordings will be stored in an anonymised safe encrypted disk by the researcher and destroyed immediately after transcription and translation have been checked. I understand that being audio recorded is optional and therefore not necessary for my participation in this research.	
8.	I agree to take part in this research project.	

Participant

…………………… …………………… ……………………
Name of participant *Signature* *Date*

Researcher

.....................…… …………………… ……………..………
Name of researcher *Signature* *Date*

Date 21/04/2021

Appendix K Consent Form: Welfare Managers

Consent Form for Welfare Managers

Newcastle University

Title of Study: Stakeholders' Perceptions on the Impact of Private Schools on the Educational Process in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Thank you for your interest in taking part in this research. Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research study. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form.

		Please initial box to confirm consent
1.	I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated 21/04/2021 for the above study, I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and I have had any questions answered satisfactorily.	
2.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. I understand that if I decide to withdraw, any data that I have provided up to that point will be omitted.	
3.	I consent to the processing of my anonymous personal information for the purposes of this research study, as described in the information sheet dated 21/04/2021.	
4.	I consent to my anonymised research data being stored and used by others for future research.	
5.	I understand that my research data may be published as a report.	
6.	I understand that my anonymised research data may be looked at by individuals from Newcastle University, where it is relevant to my taking part in this research.	
7.	I consent to being audio recorded and understand that the recordings will be stored in an anonymised safe encrypted disk by the researcher and destroyed immediately after transcription and translation have been checked. I understand that being audio recorded is optional and therefore not necessary for my participation in this research.	
8.	I agree to take part in this research project.	
	Participant …………………… …………………… …………………… *Name of participant* *Signature* *Date*	
	Researcher ....…… …………………… …………….…..……… *Name of researcher* *Signature* *Date*	

Date 21/04/2021

Appendix L Consent Form: Teachers

Consent Form for Teachers

Title of Study: Stakeholders' Perceptions on the Impact of Private Schools on the Educational Process in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Thank you for your interest in taking part in this research. Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research study. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form.

		Please initial box to confirm consent
1.	I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated 21/04/2021 for the above study, I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and I have had any questions answered satisfactorily.	
2.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. I understand that if I decide to withdraw, any data that I have provided up to that point will be omitted.	
3.	I consent to the processing of my anonymous personal information for the purposes of this research study, as described in the information sheet dated 21/04/2021.	
4.	I consent to my anonymised research data being stored and used by others for future research.	
5.	I understand that my research data may be published as a report.	
6.	I understand that my research data may be looked at by individuals from Newcastle University where it is relevant to my taking part in this research.	
7.	I agree to take part in this research project.	
	Participant …………………… …………………… …………………… *Name of participant* *Signature* *Date*
	Researcher ....……. …………………… …………………… *Name of researcher* *Signature* *Date*

Date 21/04/2021

Appendix M Consent Form: Students

Consent Form for Students

Title of Study: Stakeholders' Perceptions on the Impact of Private Schools on the Educational Process in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Thank you for your interest in taking part in this research. Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research study. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form.

		Please initial box to confirm consent
1.	I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated 21/04/2021 for the above study, I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and I have had any questions answered satisfactorily.	
2.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. I understand that if I decide to withdraw, any data that I have provided up to that point will be omitted.	
3.	I consent to the processing of my anonymous personal information for the purposes of this research study, as described in the information sheet dated 21/04/2021.	
4.	I consent to my anonymised research data being stored and used by others for future research.	
5.	I understand that my research data may be published as a report.	
6.	I understand that my research data may be looked at by individuals from Newcastle University where it is relevant to my taking part in this research.	
7.	I agree to take part in this research project.	
	Participant …………………… …………………… …………………… *Name of participant* *Signature* *Date*	
	Researcher ....……. …………………… ……………..……… *Name of researcher* *Signature* *Date*	

Date 21/04/2021

Appendix N Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

I am a PhD student in Education and Communication. I am at the stage of collecting data for my research, which will investigate The Impact of Private Schools on The Educational Process in Kurdistan region of Iraq. I consider that collecting information from teachers will enrich this research.

I would highly appreciate it if you could assist me in my research by spending some time answering these questions in this questionnaire. In order to get highly reliable scientific research outcomes, I will be grateful if you could answer the questions with credibility.

Finally, I would like to assure you that any data collected will be treated with all anonymity and remain confidential; any answers provided will only be used for academic purposes.

Yours faithfully,

Aram Saleh

Title: The Impact of Private School on Educational Process in Kurdistan of Iraq

Put a tick ✓ for your answer.

For open questions, please answer in short.

Section one:

Personal information:

Name of school…………………. Teaching subject ……………….

Qualification level........................ Trained or un-trained ……………….………
Age…………………………….

How many years have you been a teacher?

☐ 1-10 years

☐ 11-20 years

☐ 21-30 years

☐ 31-40 years

What type of school do you teach in?

☐ Private school

☐ State school

If you teach at a private school, how many years of teaching experience in a private school do you have?

☐ 1-4 years

☐ 5-8 years

☐ 9-12 years

☐ 13-16 years

☐ Above 16 years

Section two:

2.1 Quality of education (you may tick more than one)

1- Which teaching methods do you follow in classroom lessons?

☐ Lecture method

☐ Participatory method

☐ Student-centric method

☐ Group work method

☐ Seminar method

☐ Presentational method

☐ Developing questions

☐ Conducting discussion

☐ Completing written assignments

☐ Others not mentioned.

2- What teaching aids are available for your teaching lessons?

☐ Multi-media

☐ Text books

☐ Black board

☐ Smart board

☐ Audio aids

☐ Others not mentioned ………………………….

    3- How do you assess students in your classroom?

☐ Summative assessment

☐ Formative assessment

☐ Recall question

☐ Rote-based assessment

☐ Class tests

☐ Home assignment

☐ Others not mentioned

    4- Are you satisfied with the curriculum at your school?

☐ Very satisfied

☐ Satisfied

☐ Partially satisfied

☐ Not satisfied

    5- How would you rate the quality of teaching at your school?

☐ Excellent

☐ Good

☐ Alright

☐ Poor

☐ Very poor

What are the reasons behind your decision?

……………………………………………………………………………………………..

6- When considering your job, what makes it stressful and exhausting?

………………………………………………………………………………

2.2 The rationale behind choosing between Private and State schools

Reasons for choosing private schools.

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Getting higher exam results is the reason for choosing private schools.				
2.	Curriculum Content is the reason for choosing private schools.				
3.	Controlled discipline is the reason for choosing private schools.				
4.	Learning environment is the reason for choosing private schools.				
5.	Education system is the reason for choosing private schools				
6.	Availability of subject specialized teachers is the reason for choosing private schools.				

Reasons for choosing state schools.

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Getting higher exam results is the reason for choosing state schools.				
2.	Curriculum Content is the reason for choosing state schools.				
3.	Controlled discipline is the reason for choosing state schools.				
4.	Learning environment is the reason for choosing state schools.				
5.	Education system is the reason for choosing state schools				
6.	Availability of subject specialized teachers is the reason for choosing state schools.				

2.3- The positive and negative impacts

What are the Positive impacts of private schools?

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	More attention (more one-to-one teaching) is one of the positive impacts of private school.				

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2.	More help with homework and test practice) is one of the positive impacts of private school.				
3.	More interesting materials and forms of study) is one of the positive impacts of private school.				
4.	More competition among students) is one of the positive impacts of private school.				

What are the Negative impacts of private schools?

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Social class division is one of the negative impacts of private schools.				
2.	Financial pressure on the student's family is one of the negative impacts of private schools.				
3.	Unsustainability (Can close at any time) is one of the negative impacts of private schools.				
4.	Strict form of education is one of the negative impacts of private schools.				

✓ Please tick the box that reflects your opinion of the statement.

NO.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Private school establishments are essential in ensuring the educational process of learners who face challenges posed by state school establishments				
2.	Private schools play a significant role in enabling students' achievement of high scores and securing admission to the most reputable higher education establishments				
3.	Private schools provide education for all social classes				
4.	Private schools promote inequality in education				
5.	There are different gender ratios in private schools.				
6.	Private schools support educational process				

And please give a reason for your decision to NO.6: …………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

• Would you like to add any more comments that we have not discussed yet?

……

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

<div align="right">Thank you.</div>

Appendix O Teachers' Questionnaire (Kurdish)

<div dir="rtl">

راپرسی مامۆستایان :

مامۆستای خۆشەویست ,

من قوتابی دکتۆرام لە بواری کۆمەڵناسی پەروەردە. من لە قۆناغی کۆکردنەوەی داتام بۆ تویژینەوەکەم وە تویژینەوەکەم لەسەر کاریگەری قوتا بخانەی تایبەتە لەسەر پرۆسەی فێرکردن لە هەرێمی کوردستانی عیراق. لەو باوەرەدام کە کۆکردنەوەی زانیاری لە مامۆستایان تویژینەوەکەم دەوڵەمەنتر دەکات.

زۆر سوپاستان دەکەم کە ئەگەر بتوانن یارمەتیم بدەن لە رێگای تەرخان کردنی چەند خولەکێک لە کاتان بۆ وەڵام دانەوەی پرسیارەکانی ئەو راپرسیە . لە پێناو بەدەست هێنانی ئە نجامێکی باوەرپێکراو و جێگا متمانە , زۆر سوپاستان دەکەم کە ئەگەر بتوانن بە شێوەیەکی راشکراوانە وەڵامی پرسیارەکان بدەنەوە.

لە کۆتاییدا , دەمەوێ بۆتان دووپات بکەمەوە کە هەموو ئەو زانیاری و داتایانەی کەوا کۆدەکرێتەوە کاری لەسەر دەکرێت بێ ناساندنی کەسەکان و بە شێوەیەکی نهێنی دەمینێتەوە ؛ وە هەموو ئەو وەڵامانەی کەوا بەرێزتان پێشکەشی دەکەن تەنها بۆ مەبەستی ئەکادیمی بەکاردەهێنریت.

دڵسۆزتان ,

م. ئارام احسان صالح

ناونیشان : کاریگەری قوتا بخانەی تایبەت لەسەر پرۆسەی فێرکردن لە هەرێمی کوردستانی عیراق

تکایەت نیشانەی ✓ بەکاربهێنە بۆ وەڵامەکانتان.

بۆ پرسیارە کراوەکان تکایە بە کورتی وەڵام بدەوە.

بەشی یەکەم:

ناوی قوتا بخانە .... بابەتی وانە وتتنەوەکەت..................

ئاستی ئەکادیمیت..................... مەشق پێکراوی یان نا ....

تەمەن ....

چەند ساڵە مامۆستایت ؟

☐ 1-10 ساڵ

☐ 11-20 ساڵ

☐ 21-30 ساڵ

</div>

□ 31-40 ساڵ

لە چ جۆرە قوتابخانەیەك مامۆستای ؟

□ قوتابخانەی تایبەت

□ قوتابخانەی حکوومی

ئەگەر لە قوتابخانەی تایبەت مامۆستای , ساڵانی خزمەتت چەندە لە قوتابخانەی تایبەت وەكو مامۆستا ؟

□ 1-4 ساڵ

□ 5-8 ساڵ

□ 9-12 ساڵ

□ 13-16 ساڵ

□ زیاتر لە 16 ساڵ

بەشی دووەم:

2.1 کوالێتی فێرکردن (دەتوانی لە هەڵبژاردەیەك زیاتر هەڵبژێریت)

1- ڕێگاکانی وانە ووتنەوە(گرتە تدریس) کە پەیڕەوی دەکەیت لە ناو پۆڵدا چ جۆرێکە ؟

□ شێوازی وانە بێژی (گريقة المحاضره)

□ بەرێگای بەشداری کردنی قوتابی

□ بە پشت بەستن بە قوتابی

□ بە شێوەی کارکردن بەگروپ

□ بە شێوەی سیمینار

□ بە شێوەی نمایش کردن(پرزنتەیشن)

□ شێوازی پرسیار کردن

□ شێوازی گفت و گۆ کردن

□ شێوازی نوسینی ڕاپۆرت

□ شێوازیکی تر کە لەسەرەوە باس نەکراوە

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2- ئەو ئامرازە فێرکاریانەی چین کە بەردەستە بۆ بەرێزتان لە کاتی وانە پراکتیکیەکان؟

☐ ئامرازی جۆراو جۆر

☐ کتێب یان مەنهەجی نووسارو

☐ تەختەرەش نووسینەوەی سەر دیوار

☐ سمارت بۆرد(ئامرازی زیرەك)

☐ بەکارهێنانی ئامرازی دەنگی

☐ ئامرازی تر کە لەسەرەوە باس نەکراوە ....

3- بە چ شێوەیەك قوتابیەکانت هەڵدەسەنگێنی؟

☐ هەڵسەنگاندنی کۆتایی (سەری ساڵ)

☐ هەڵسەنگاندنی مانگانە

☐ بە شێوازی پرسیار کردن لەناو پۆل

☐ هەڵسەنگاندن بە شێوازی دەرخ کردن(شەفەیی)

☐ تاقی کردنەوە بە چەند قۆناغێك

☐ ئەرکی ماڵەوە

☐ شێوازی تر کە باس نەکراوە

4- ئایا بەرێزتان رازیین لەسەر مەهەجی قوتا بخانەکەتان؟

☐ زۆر رازیم

☐ رازیم

☐ تارادەیەك رازییم

☐ رازی نیم

5- چلۆن کوالێتی وانە ووتنەوە لە قوتا بخانەکەتان هەڵدەسەنگێنن؟

☐ نایاب

☐ باش

298

□خراپ نیه

□لاوازه

□زۆر لاوازه

هۆکاری ئەم بڕیارەت چییه؟

....

....

6- لە کاتی بیرکردنەوە لە کارەکەت , چ شتێک وا دەکات کە کارەکەت زەحمەت و ماندووکەر بیت؟

....

....

2.2 بنەما سەرەکییەکانی هەڵبژاردن لە نێوان قوتا بخانەی تایبەت و حکوومی؟

هۆکارەکانی هەڵبژاردنی قوتا بخانەی تایبەت.

بە توندی پشتگیری ناکەم	پشتگیری ناکەم	پشتگیری دەکەم	بە توندی پشتگیری دەکەم	بابەت	ز
				یەکێک لە هۆکارەکانی هەڵبژاردنی قوتا بخانەی تایبەت لەلایەن قوتابیانی پۆلی 12 بەدەست هێنانی ئەنجامی(نمرەی) باشە لە تاقی کردنەوەی کۆتایی ساڵ.	1
				ناوەڕۆکی مەنهەجەکانی قوتا بخانە هۆکارە بۆ هەڵبژاردنی قوتا بخانەی تایبەت	2
				رێککارە توندەکانی قوتا بخانە هۆکارە بۆ هەڵبژاردنی قوتا بخانەی تایبەت	3
				ژینگەی فێرکردن قوتا بخانە هۆکارە بۆ هەڵبژاردنی قوتا بخانەی تایبەت	4

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				بابەت	ز
				سیستەمی فێرکردن هۆکارە بۆ هەڵبژاردنی قوتا بخانەی تایبەت	5
				بوونی مامۆستای باش و پسپۆر هۆکارە بۆ هەڵبژاردنی قوتا بخانەی تایبەت	6

هۆکاری هەڵبژاردنی قوتا بخانەی حکوومی

به توندی پشتگیری ناکەم	پشتگیری ناکەم	پشتگیری دەکەم	به توندی پشتگیری دەکەم	بابەت	ز
				بەدەست هێنانی ئەنجامی بەرزتر لەتاقیکردنەوەی کۆتایی ساڵ هۆکارێکە بۆ هەڵبژاردنی قوتا بخانەی حکوومی	1
				ناوەڕۆکی مەنهەجی قوتا بخانەی حکوومی هۆکارە بۆ هەڵبژاردنی قوتا بخانەی حکوومی	2
				ڕێککارە توندەکانی قوتا بخانە هۆکارە بۆ هەڵبژاردنی قوتا بخانەی حکوومی	3
				ژینگەی فێرکردن قوتا بخانە هۆکارە بۆ هەڵبژاردنی قوتا بخانەی حکوومی	4
				سیستەمی فێرکردن هۆکارە بۆ هەڵبژاردنی قوتا بخانەی حکوومی	5
				بوونی مامۆستای باش و پسپۆر هۆکارە بۆ هەڵبژاردنی قوتا بخانەی حکوومی	6

2.3-کاریگەری ئەرێنی و ئەرێنی

کاریگەرییەکانی ئەرێنی قوتا بخانەی تایبەت چیە؟

به توندی پشتگیری ناکهم	پشتگیری ناکهم	پشتگیری دهکهم	به توندی پشتگیری دهکهم	بابهت	ز
				گرنگی پێدانی زیاتر (لهسهر ئاستی تاکه کهسی) یهکێکه له کاریگهریه ئهرێنییهکانی قوتا بخانهی تایبهت.	1
				زیاتر یارمهتیدان لهسهر ئاستی جێبهجێکردنی ئهرکی ماڵ و تاقی کردنهوهکان یهکێکه له کاریگهره ئهرێنییهکان.	2
				ئامراز و شێوهزهکانی خوێندن(سهرج راکێشتره) یهکێکه له کاریگهره ئهرێنییهکان.	3
				بوونی ململانێی زیاتر نێوان قوتابیان یهکێکه له کاریگهره ئهرێنییهکانی قوتا بخانهی تایبهت	4

کاریگهریه ئهرێنییهکانی قوتا بخانهی تایبهت چییه؟

به توندی پشتگیری ناکهم	پشتگیری ناکهم	پشتگیری دهکهم	به توندی پشتگیری دهکهم	بابهت	ز
				دابهشکردنو جیاوازی چینهکۆمهڵایهتییهکان یهکێگه له کاریگهریه ئهرێنییهکانی قوتا بخانهی تایبهت.	1
				فشار له بواری دارایی لهسهر داهاتی خێزان یهکێگه له کاریگهریه ئهرێنییهکانی قوتا بخانهی تایبهت.	2

				بەردەوام نەبوون(قوتا بخانەی تایبەت لە هەر ساتێک بێت لەوانەیە تووشی داخستن بێت) یەکێگە لە کاریگەریە نەرێنیەکانی قوتا بخانەی تایبەت.	3
				شێوازی توند بۆ فێرکردن یەکێگە لە کاریگەریە نەرێنیەکانی قوتا بخانەی تایبەت.	4

تکایە نیشانەی ✓ بەرامبەر وەڵامەکانتان لە چوارگۆشەی دیاری کراو .

بە توندی پشتگیری ناکەم	پشتگیری ناکەم	پشتگیری دەکەم	بە توندی پشتگیری دەکەم	بابەت	ز
				قوتا بخانەی تایبەت گرنگە وەبیارمەتی دەریکە بۆ بەردەوام بوونی پرۆسەی خوێندن بۆ ئەوقوتابیانەی کەگرفتی فێربوونیان هەیەلە قوتا بخانەی حکوومی	1
				قوتا بخانەی تایبەت رۆڵی گرنگ دەبینن بە ئەوەی قوتابیان بتوانن نمرەی بەرز بەدەست بهێنن تا بتنوانن لە خوێندنی ئاستن بەرز وەدریگێرن	2
				قوتا بخانەی تایبەت خوێندن بەردەستە دەکات یاخود پیشکەش دەکات بۆ هەموو چینەکانی کۆمەڵگا.	3
				قوتا بخانەی تایبەت دەبێتە هۆی نایەکسانی لە خوێندن	4
				بوونی جیاوازی لە نێوان ژماری هەردوو رەگەز لە قوتا بخانەی تایبەت	5

				قوتا بخانەی تایبەت پاڵپشتە بۆ	6
				پرۆسەی خوێندن	

تکایە هۆکاری بڕیاردانت بۆ ژمارە 6 مان بۆ باس بکە : ....

....

....

2.4 ئایا هەڵوێستت چیە بەرامبەر قوتا بخانەی تایبەت لە هەرێمی کوردستان

....

هیچ شتێک هەیە کە خۆت دەتەوێ باسی بکەیت کە ئێمه باسمان نەکردبێت؟

....

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....

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زۆر سوپاس

Appendix P Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

The information collected in this questionnaire will enrich this research by finding out student's opinions about:

- The quality of education
- Resource availability
- Reasons for choosing between private and state schools.

The data collected in this questionnaire will be used to as part of a PhD research in The Impact of Private Schools on The Educational Process in Kurdistan region of Iraq.

I would highly appreciate it if you could aid me by spending no longer that 10 minutes in completing this questionnaire. Your participation is considered voluntary and you may feel free to withdraw at any stage of the process.

Finally, I would like to assure you that any data collected will be treated with all anonymity and remain confidential; any answers provided will only be used for academic purposes.

Title: The Impact of Private School on Educational Process in Kurdistan of Iraq

Students' Questionnaire (hard copies)

No need to write your name.

Put a tick ✓ for your answer.

Section one

General information

   1- **Name of school:** …………………………………….

   2- Type of school:

☐ State school

☐ Private school

   3- Gender:

☐ Female

☐ Male

   4- My age is _____ years.

   5- Place of birth:

☐ City

☐ Village

☐ Town

   6- What type of residence do you live in?

☐ Ownership

☐ Rent

☐ Government flat

☐ Other

7- How many bedrooms are in your residence?

Number of bedrooms

8- Do you have your own separate room?

☐ Yes

☐ No

9- Does your family home have a study?

☐ Yes

☐ No

10- Which of the following items do you have at your home? Please tick the appropriate box.

Mobile phone		Computer/Laptop	Car		Bicycle	Motorcycle
0	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐
1	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐
2	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐
3	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐
4+	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐

11- How many brothers and sisters do you have?

Brothers

Sisters

12- Do you have a part-time job?

☐ Always

☐ Often

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

13- If yes, why are you working after class?

☐ To pay school fee

☐ To obtain school equipment

☐ Family needs

☐ Life requirements

☐ Other

14- What does your father do as a job?

15- What does your mother do as a job?

16- What is the educational level of your father?

☐ Uneducated

☐ Elementary school

☐ High school

☐ University

☐ Postgraduate

☐ Other

17- What is the educational level of your mother?

☐ Uneducated

☐ Elementary school

☐ High school

☐ University

☐ Postgraduate

☐ Other

Section two

2.1 Questions about school experiences

Dear Student, please tell us how much you agree with the following statements. There is no right or wrong answer, everything is based on your opinion.

NO.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school has attractive building and decor.				

2.	The school provides a safe environment				
3.	The school is easy to travel to				
4.	The school provides safe transportation for its students.				
5.	The school has electric lights and fans inside the classrooms				
6.	The school provides you with specific lunch times				
7.	The school has indoor games				
8.	The reputation of the school is excellent				
9.	The school has strict uniform code				
10.	The school prepares you for university				

2.Questions about school curriculum

NO.	Question	Yes	No
1.	Does your school follow the national curriculum?		
2.	Does your school follow the country's traditions?		
3.	Does your extra curriculum include outdoor learning?		
4.	Is there a balance between 'traditional' education and extra curriculum activities?		

3. Questions about quality of education.

NO.	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The teaching aids used by the teachers are helpful.				
2.	The teachers use the advanced technology means to deliver the knowledge for students, such as computer, smart board, projector.				
3.	The school has enough computer service available for education				
4.	The school has a library service available for student for education				
5.	The school has laboratories for Sciences				
6.	The school has internet services				

4. Learning Environment

NO.	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The school provides safe and orderly environment for learning				
2.	The school has a small number of students in each class				
3.	Class size at our school is appropriate for effective learning				

4.	The Classrooms are placed in a suitable environment (e.g. enough lights, comfortable tables, nice carpet and air conditioners).				
5.	Teachers are friendly and sincere with students.				
6.	Teachers form a motivated environment for learning.				

5. Assessment and Feedback

1. The teachers give students 1:1 feedback.

☐ Always

☐ Often

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

2. The teachers set students regular homework.

☐ Always

☐ Often

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

6. Teacher's Education

NO.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and learning activities to help students learn				
2.	Teachers have high expectations of their students				
3.	The teachers are doing a good job of teaching.				

7- Reasons your parent selected this school for you.

My family selected this school for me because of these reasons.

NO.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The reason for choosing this school is to understand the subjects better				
2.	The reason for choosing this school is the different curriculums they have				
3.	The main reason for choosing this school is because students imitate their friends				
4.	Availability of subject specialized teachers is the reason for choosing this schools.				
5.	The reason for choosing this school is to get good exam results				

6.	The reason for choosing this school is to get a university entrance				
7.	The reason for choosing this school is the different levels of quality of teaching				
8.	The reason for choosing this school is different number of students in each class				
9.	The reason for choosing this school is the difference in teacher-student relationships				

8. What encouraged you to choose your type of school?

☐ Teacher

☐ Friends

☐ Parent

☐ All of the mentioned

☐ None of the mentioned

9.Impact of private schools

1. If you are in a private school, do you think that private schools effect your family budgets?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Appendix Q Students' Questionnaire (Kurdish)

ئەو زانیاریانەی کەوا کۆکراوەتەوە لەم ڕاپرسیە دەوڵەمەنتر دەبێت بە زانینی بیرو بۆچوونی قوتابیان لەسەر :

- کوالیتی فێرکردن.

- بەردەستە بوونی بابەت و سەرچاوەکان.

- هۆکارەکانی هەڵبژاردنی نێوان قوتابخانەی تایبەت و حکوومی.

ئەو داتـا و زانیارییـانەی کەوا کۆدەکرێتەوە لەم ڕاپرسیە دەبێتە بەڵگەنامە بۆ نامەی دکتورا لە کاریگەری قوتابخانەی تایبەت لەسەر پڕۆسەی خوێندن لە هەرێمی کوردستانی عیراق.

زۆر سوپاستان دەکەم ئەگەر بتوانن کەمتر لە 10 خولەك لەکاتتان تەرخان بکەن بۆ وەڵامدانەوەی ئەوڕا پرسیە.

لە کۆتاییدا , دەمەوێ ئەوەتا ن بۆ دووپات بکەمەوە کەوا ئەو داتایانە کۆدەکرێتەوە لەم ڕاپرسیە بێ ئەوەی ناسنامەی خاوەنەکەی ئاشکرا بکرێت و بە شێوەیەکی شاراوەیی دەمینێتەوە , وەڵامەکانیش بەکار دێت تەنها بۆ مەبەستی ئەکادیمی.

ناونیشان : کاریگەری قوتابخانەی تایبەت لەسەر پڕۆسەی خوێندن لەهەریمی کوردستانی عیراق.

ڕاپرسی قوتابیان

پێویست ناکات ناوی خوت بنووسی

نیشانەی ✓ بۆ وەڵامدانەوەکانتان دابنی

بەشی یەکەم

زانیاری گشتی

1- ناوی قوتابخانە...

2- جۆری قوتبخانە

☐ قوتابخانەی حکوومی

☐ قوتابخانەی تایبەت

3- ڕەگەز

☐ مێ

☐ نێر

4- تەمەن.........ساڵ

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5- شوێنی له دایك بوون :

☐ شار

☐گوند

☐ شارۆجکه

6- جۆری ئەو خانوەی که تیایدا دەژین ؟

☐ موڵك

☐کرێ

☐ شوقەی حکوومی

☐ جۆری تر

7- ژمارەی ژوورەکانی خانووەکەتان چەندە ؟

ژوور ....

8- ئایا ژووری تایبەت بەخۆت هەیه له ماڵەوە؟ ؟

☐ بەڵێ

☐ نەخێر

9- ئایا له ماڵەکەتان ژووری تایبەت بۆخوەندن هەیه؟

☐ بەڵێ

☐ نەخێر

10- کام لەم ئامرازانەی خوارەوە له ماڵەوەتان هەیه؟ تکایه خانەی مەبەست نیشان بکه.

ماتۆرسیکل	پایسکل	ئۆتۆمۆبیل	کۆمپیوتەر/لاپ تۆپ	مۆبایل	
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	0
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	1
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	2
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	3

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11- چەند خوشك و برات هەیە ؟

خوشك ....

برا ....

12- ئایا هیچ جۆرە كارێك دەكەیت ئەگەر بە شێوەیەكی لاوەكیش بێت ؟

☐ بەبەردەوامی

☐ زۆربەی كاتەكان

☐ هەندێ جار

☐ كەم جار

☐هیچ كاتیك

13- ئەگەر وەلامەكەت بەلێ بوو , بۆ دوای قوتابخانە كار دەكەیت ؟

☐ بۆ ئەوەی خەرجیەكانی قوتابخانە دەستەبەر بكەم ؟

☐ بۆ دەست كەوتنی كەرەستەكانی قوتابخانە

☐ بۆ دەست كەوتنی پێداویستی خێزان

☐ پێداویستی ژیان

☐ هی تر

14- باوكت كاری رۆژانەی چیە ؟

....

15- دایكت كاری رۆژانەی چیە ؟

....

16- ئاستی خوێندنی باوك

☐ نەخوێندەوار

☐ خوێندنی سەرەتایی

☐ خوێندنی ئامادەیی

☐ پەیمانگی

☐ زانکۆ

☐ خوێندنی بالأ

☐ هی تر

17- ئاستی خوێندنی دایک

☐ نەخوێندەوار

☐ خوێندنی سەرەتایی

☐ خوێندنی ئامادەیی

☐ پەیمانگی

☐ زانکۆ

☐ خوێندنی بالأ

☐ هی تر

پرسیار لە شارەزایی قوتابخانە

قوتابی خۆشەویست , تکایە رەزامەندی خۆتان بۆمان دیاری بکە لەسەر ئەم زاراوەنەی خوارەوە. هیچ وەلامێکی راست و هەلّەی تێدا نیە , بەلکو پشت دەبەستێت بە بیرو بۆچونی خۆت .

ز	بابەت	بە توندی پشتگیری دەکەم	پشتگیری دەکەم	پشتگیری ناکەم	بە توندی پشتگیری ناکەم
1	بنایەی قوتابخانەکەت دیکۆری جوان و سەرنج راکێشی هەیە				
2	قوتابخانەکەت ژینگەیەکی ئەمینی (پاریزراوی)هەیە				

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				هاتوو چۆ کردن بۆ قوتا بخانه زۆر ئاسانه	3
				بەردەستە کردنی ئامرازەکانی هاتوو چۆ کردن لە لایەن قوتا بخانه بۆ قوتابیان	4
				لە ناو پۆلەکانی قوتا بخانه گلۆپ و پانکه و هۆکارەکانی فێنک کردنەوه هەیه	5
				کاتی دیاری کراو هەیه بۆ نان خواردن که لە لایەن قوتا بخانه دیاری کراو بێت	6
				لە ناو قوتا بخانەکەت هۆڵی یاری کردن هەیه	7
				ناوبانگی قوتا بخانه لە ئاستێکی باشه	8
				قوتا بخانەکەتان بنەمایەکی یەکگرتووی توندی هەیه؟ بۆنموونه جلوبەرگی تایبەت بەقوتا بخانەکت	9
				قوتا بخانەکەتان ئامادەت دەکات بۆ زانکۆ ؟	10

2- پرسیار سەبارەت به مەنهەجی قوتا بخانه

نەخیر	بەڵێ	پرسیار	ز
		ئایا قوتا بخانەکەتان هەمان مەنهەجی نیشتمانی بەکاردەهێنێت (مەنهەجی وەزارەتی پەروردە)	1

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				بابەت	ژ
				قوتابخانەکەتان هەمان کلتوری وڵات بەکاردەهێنێتو پەیرەودەکا؟	2
				ئایاقوتابخانەکەتان گرنگی بە مەنهەجەکانی تری خوێندنی تایبەت بەخۆت بۆ فێربون دەدات بۆنموونەوەک ئارت مۆزیقا وەرزش	3
				ئایا هیچ هاوسەنگیەک هەیە لە نێوان فێربوونی "ناوپۆلو" و چالاکی دەرەوەی پۆل؟ بۆ نموونە رۆزی ئالا	4

3- پرسیار لەسەر کوالێتی فێرکردن

بە توندی پشتگیری ناکەم	پشتگیری ناکەم	پشتگیری دەکەم	بە توندی پشتگیری دەکەم	بابەت	ژ
				ئامرازەکانی فێرکردن کە لەلایەن مامۆستایان بەکارده هێندرێت زۆر بە سوودە ویارمەتی دەرە	1
				مامۆستایان ئامرازی تەکنەلۆجیای پێشکەوتوو بەکاردەهێنن بۆ گەیاندنی زانیاری بۆ قوتابیان , وەکو کۆمپیوتەر و شاشەی نمایش کردن و ئامرازە زیرەکەکان	2
				قوتابخانە خزمەت گوزاری بواری کۆمپیوتەر باش پێشکەش دەکات بۆ فێربوون (کۆمپیوتەرەهەیە)	3
				لە قوتابخانەکەمان کتێب خانە هەیە	4

به توندی پشتگیری ناکهم	پشتگیری ناکهم	پشتگیری دهکهم	به توندی پشتگیری دهکهم	بابهت	ز
				تاقی کردنهوه (تاقیگه) زانستیهکانمان ههیه	5
				قوتا بخانهکهمان ئهنتهرنێتی ههیه	6

4- ژینگهی خوێندن

به توندی پشتگیری ناکهم	پشتگیری ناکهم	پشتگیری دهکهم	به توندی پشتگیری دهکهم	بابهت	ز
				قوتا بخانه ژینگهیهکی باش و رێکخراوی دروست کردووه بۆ فێربوون	1
				ژمارهی قوتابیانی پۆل له قوتا بخانهکهتاندا کهمه لهههر پۆلێکدا	2
				قهبارهی پۆلهکانی قوتا بخانه گونجاوه بۆ فێربوونێکی کاریگهر	3
				هۆکارهکانی ژینگهی فێربوو له ناو پۆلدا گونجاوه(رووناکی باش, تهختهکانی دانیشن گونجاوه, رایهخ لهناو پۆلهکاندا ههیه, ئامرازهکانی گهرم کردن و فێنك کردنهوه)	4
				مامۆستایهکان رووخۆش و هاورێ یانهن لهگهل قوتابیان	5
				مامۆستایان ژینگهیهکی کاریگهر دروست دهکهن بۆ فێربوون	6

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5- هەڵسەنگاندن و کاردانەوەکان(فید باك)

1- مامۆستا هەموکات یەکەبەیەکە فیدباك دەدات به قوتابیان

☐ بەبەردەوامی

☐ لە زۆربەی کاتەکاندا

☐ هەندێجار

☐ کەم جار

☐ هیچ جار

2- مامۆستایان ئەرکەکانی ماڵەوە بۆ قوتابیان تەرخان دەکەن به شێوەیەکی رێك و پێك

☐ بەبەردەوامی

☐ لە زۆربەی کاتەکاندا

☐ هەندێجار

☐ کەم جار

☐ هیچ جار

6- چۆنیەتی فێرکردنی قوتابی له لایەن مامۆستایان

ز	بابەت	به توندی پشتگیری دەکەم	پشتگیری دەکەم	پشتگیری ناکەم	به توندی پشتگیری ناکەم
1	مامۆستایان پلان و ستراتیژیەت و چالاکی جۆراو جۆر بەکاردەهێنن بۆ یارمەتی دانی قوتابیان بۆ فێربوون				
2	مامۆستایان پێشبینی بەرزیان هەیه بەرامبەر به قوتابیان				
3	مامۆستایان کارەکانی ناو پۆل به باشترین شێوە ئە نجام دەدەن				

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7- هۆکاری هەڵبژاردنی ئەو قوتابخانەی بۆ تۆ لە لایەن دایک و باوکەکانتانەوە.

دایک و باوکم ئەو قوتابخانەیان بۆ هەڵبژاردووە لەبەر ئەم هۆکارەکانی خوارەوە.

بە توندی پشتگیری ناکەم	پشتگیری ناکەم	پشتگیری دەکەم	بە توندی پشتگیری دەکەم	بابەت	ژ
				هۆکاری هەڵبژاردنی ئەم قوتابخانەیەبۆ باشتر تێگەیشتنی بابەتەکانە	1
				هۆکاری هەڵبژاردنی ئەم قوتابخانەیە جیاوازی مەنهەجی خوێندنە(ئەوبابەتانەی کەدەخوێندرین)	2
				یەکێك لە هۆکارە سەرەکییەکانی هەڵبژاردنی ئەوقوتابخانەیە بریتییە لە چاولێکردنی برادەران بۆ یەکتر	3
				بوونی تەواوی میلاکی مامۆستایان بۆ چەند بابەتێکی دیاری کراو هۆکارە بۆ هەڵبژاردنی ئەم قوتابخانەیە	4
				هۆکارێك بۆ هەڵبژاردنی ئەم قوتابخانەیە بەدەست هێنانی ئەنجامی باشە	5
				هۆکارێك بۆ هەڵبژاردنی ئەم قوتابخانەیە چوونە زانکۆیە	6
				جیاوازی کوالێتی فێرکردن یەکێکە لە هۆکارەکانی هەڵبژاردنی ئەم قوتابخانەیە	7

				هۆکاری هەڵبژاردنی ئەم قوتابخانەیە جیاوازی ژمارەی قوتابیانی ناو یەك پۆلە	8
				هۆکاریکی تر بۆ هەڵبژاردنی ئەم قوتابخانەیە پەیوەندیەکانی نێوان مامۆستا و قوتابییانە	9

– چ شتێك پاڵنەر بووە بۆ هەڵبژاردنی جۆری قوتابخانەکەت؟

☐ مامۆستا

☐ برادەران

☐ دایك و باوك

☐ ئەوانەی سەرەوە گشتی

☐ هیچ یەك لەمانە

کاریگەری قوتا بخانەی تایبەت

9- ئەگەر لە قوتا بخانەی تایبەتیت، ئایا هەست دەکەیت کە قوتا بخانەی تایبەت کاریگەری هەیە لەسەر داهات و بوودجەی خێزانەکەتان؟

☐ بەڵێ

☐ نەخێر

هیچ شتێك هەیە کە خۆت دەتەوێ باسی بکەیت کە ئێمە باسمان نەکردبێت؟

زۆرسوپاس

Appendix R School Managers' Interview Questions

Interviews with 6 School Managers

Title: The Impact of Private School on Educational Process in Kurdistan of Iraq

Dear School Manager,

My name is Aram Saleh, and I am a current PhD student at Newcastle University in the UK. I am conducting research on 'The Impact of Private School on Educational Process in Kurdistan of Iraq' and as a part of my study I am collecting data from students, teachers, school managers and welfare managers.

Your participation in this research will be highly appreciated as your responses will help in the completion of this research. I can assure you that all participant details will be kept confidential and anonymous, and all responses and information will be used for academic purposes only.

The expected interview time is around 30 minutes, and you are free to withdraw from the research at any stage of the interview process as your participation is considered voluntary. I respect that you might be busy or unavailable at the arranged time of the interview date. Therefore, feel free to notify me of any changes to your availability by any of the following communication instruments:

- Phone Number: +44 (0) 7448921348 (WhatsApp or Viber):
- Email address: a.saleh@newcastle.ac.uk

I look forward to seeing you.

Yours faithfully

Aram Saleh

Date and time of interview: ………………….   Name of school: ……………………

Type of school: ……………………..   Qualification Level: ………………….

Number of teachers: ………………………Teacher qualification (majority): ……..

Number of students: ………………….Boys: …………..   Girls: ……………….

Total number of students in each class (Approximately): ……………….

Key Question One: How does the school get financial support?

- Does the school get financial support from the government? How much is it annually?
- Is the government involved in paying for teaching aids: books, uniforms, sports club and school meals etc.?
- (If Private school) How much is tuition fee annually and what does it include?
- Do you think that your school has a higher or a lower fee structure compared to other schools and why?

Key Question Two: Who runs and controls the school?

Key Question Three: How can students and teachers get an admission at your school?

- How is the geographical area of the students house an important part of the admission policies?
- What type of students and teachers are you looking for?
- Do the students sit an exam to get admission at the school?

Key Question Four: Which curriculum is your school following?

- Could you list all the subjects the students are taking at your school?
- What is an extra subject curriculum that is available at your school but not the other schools?
- What other languages does your school teach?
- Is the school curriculum a decision of the school board at your school? Who makes decision about school curriculum at your school?
- Do year 12 students take the same exams that the education ministry has put in place?

Key Question Five: How important are teacher's expectations of student's results at your school?

- Do you offer individualized learning and differentiated instruction and what do these things look like?
- Are the teachers' salary at your school different from the other schools?
- How are teachers' attendance and absences at your school?

Key Question Six: What criteria do parents use to select this school and how does it differ from other schools?

- In what way does this choice depend on socio-economic factors?
- How often do you arrange schedule meetings with student's parents annually?

Key Question Seven: How well does the school prepare students for college or post-high school life?

- How is the class size (number of students) at your school appropriate for effective learning?
- What are your class sizes and student-to-teacher ratios approximately?

Would you like to add any more comments that we have not discussed yet?

Appendix S School Managers' Interview Questions (Kurdish)

چاوپێکەوتن لەگەڵ 6 بەڕێوەبەری قوتابخانە

ناونیشان : کاریگەری قوتابخانەی تایبەت لەسەر پرۆسەی خوێندن لە کوردستانی عیراق

بەروار و کاتی چاوپێکەوتن : .... ناوی قوتابخانە ....

جۆری قوتابخانە .... ئاستی خوێندن ....

ژمارەی مامۆستا............... ئاستی خوێندنی مامۆستایان(زۆرینە)...............

ژمارەی قوتابیان............... کوڕ........... کچ........

ڕێژەی ژمارەی قوتابیان لە هەر پۆلێک (بە نزیکی) :...............

پرسیاری سەرەکی یەکەم : چۆن قوتابخانە پاڵپشتی دارایی دەکرێت؟

- ئایە قوتابخانە کەت پاڵپشتی دارایی دەکرێت لە لایەن حکوومەت؟ ساڵانە چەندە ؟

- حکوومەت بەشداره لە لە پێدانی تێچوونی هۆکارەکانی فێرکردن: کتێب و جل و بەرگی فەرمی و لا یەنی وەرزشی و خواردنی

  قوتابیان .....هتد؟

- (ئەگەر قوتابخانەکە تایبەتە) رسوماتی ساڵانەی قوتابخانە چەندە و چ دەگرێتەوە؟

- لەو بروایە دای کە هەیکەلیەتی دانی رسوماتی قوتابخانەکەت لە بەرزترین یان نزمترین ئاستدا بە بەراورد لەگەڵ

  قوتابخانەکانی تر و بۆچی؟

پرسیاری سەرەکی دووەم : کێ قوتابخانەکەت بەڕێوە دەبات و بریار بەدەستە؟

پرسیاری سەرەکی سێیەم : چۆن مامۆستا و قوتابییەکان دەتوانن لە قوتابخانەکەتان وەربگیرین (قبوڵ وەرگرن)؟

- لە دوای چ جۆره مامۆستا و قوتابی دەگەرێیت ؟

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- شوێنی جوگرافی قوتابیان واتا دوورو نزیکی ماڵی قوتابیان تاچەند رەچاودەکرێت بۆوەرگرتنی رەزامەندی (قبوڵ)لە

قوتا بخانەکەتان

- قوتابیەکان تاقی دەکرێنەوە بۆ ئەوەی لە قوتا بخانەکەتان قبوڵ بکرێن؟

پرسیاری سەرەکی چوارەم : قوتا بخانەکەتان چ جۆرە مەنهەجێک پەیرەو دەکات ؟

- دەتوانی ئەو بابەتانەی لە قوتا بخانەکەتان دەخوێنرێت بژمێری ؟

- چ جۆرە مەنهەجێکی خوێندن لە قوتا بخانەکەتان هەیە و لە قوتا بخانەکانی تر نیه ؟

- چەند چۆرە زمان لە قوتا بخانەکەتان دەخوێنرێت ؟

- هەڵبژاردنی جۆری مەنهەجی دیراسی قوتا بخانەکەتان بە بریاری ئە نجوومەنی بەرێوەبردنی قوتا بخانەکەتانه ؟ کێ

خاوەن بریاری مەنهەجی دیراسیه لە قوتا بخانەکەتان ؟

- ئایاقوتابیانی پۆلی 12 هەمان تاقیکردنەوە ئە نجام دەدەن کەلەلایەن وەزارەتی پەروەردە دانراوە؟چ

جۆرەتاقیکردنەوەیەك دەکەن؟

پرسیاری سەرەکی پێنجەم : گرنگی پێشبینی پێشوەختەی مامۆستایان چیه بۆ ئە نجامی قوتابیانی قوتا بخانەکەتان ؟

- ئایا فێرکردنی تاکەکەسی و جۆرارو جۆر پێشکەش دەکەن ؟ جۆرەکانیان چۆنن؟

- مووچەی مامۆستایانی قوتا بخانەکەتان جیاوازه لەگەڵ مووچەی مامۆستایانی قوتا بخانەکانی تر؟

- ئامادەبوون و ئامادەنەبوونی مامۆستایانی قوتا بخانەکەتان بۆ دوامی فەرمی بە چ شێوەیەکە؟

پرسیاری سەرەکی شەشەم: ئەو بەهایانە چین کە وا دەکات دایك و باوکان ئەو قوتا بخانەیه هەڵبژێرن و چ جیاوازی هەیه لەگەڵ

قوتا بخانەکانی تر ؟

- بە چ شێوەیەك ئەو هەڵبژاردنه پشت دەبەستێت بە هۆکاره کۆمەڵایەتیەکان و ئابووریەکان؟

- ساڵانە چەند جار کۆبوونەوه دەکرێت لەگەڵ دایك و باوکانی قوتابیان ؟

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پرسیاری سەرەکی حەوتەم : چۆن قوتا بخانەکەت قوتابیان ئامادەدەکات بۆ خوێندنی زانکۆ یاخود کۆلێژ؟

- چۆن ژمارەی قوتابیان لەیەك پۆلدا دەگونجێنرێت لەگەڵ فێرکردنێکی کاریگەر؟

- ژمارەی قوتابیانی لە یەك پۆلدا چەندە و ڕێژەی قوتابیان بۆ یەك مامۆستا چەندە ؟

ئایا دەتەدوێت هیچ تێبینیەك یان خاڵێك هەیە بینووسیت کە لە سەرەوە باسمان نەکردبێت؟

Appendix T Welfare Managers' Interview Questions

Title: The Impact of Private School on Educational Process in Kurdistan of Iraq

Dear Welfare manager,

My name is Aram Saleh, and I am a current PhD student at Newcastle University in the UK. I am conducting research on 'The Impact of Private School on Educational Process in Kurdistan of Iraq' and as a part of my study I am collecting data from students, teachers, school managers and welfare managers.

Your participation in this research will be highly appreciated as your responses will help in the completion of this research. I can assure you that all participant details will be kept confidential and anonymous, and all responses and information will be used for academic purposes only.

The expected interview time is around 30 minutes, and you are free to withdraw from the research at any stage of the interview process as your participation is considered voluntary. I respect that you might be busy or unavailable at the arranged time of the interview date. Therefore, feel free to notify me of any changes to your availability by any of the following communication instruments:

- Phone Number: +44 (0) 7448921348 (WhatsApp or Viber):
- Email address: a.saleh@newcastle.ac.uk

I look forward to seeing you.

Yours faithfully

Aram Saleh

Date and time of interview:

Name of school………………………. Type of school………………………

1. How do you perceive the increase in the number of private schools in Kurdistan?
2. According to your idea, what is the rationale behind the students' and their parent's preference for choosing private schools or state schools in Kurdistan?
3. How do you preserve the quality of state and private schools in Kurdistan?
4. What do you think about the positive and the negative impacts of private and state schools on the educational process?
5. What are the socio-economic statues of the families at your school in general?
6. Do you think private school provides service for all social classes? Why?
7. Do you think that private schools become a financial burden for Kurdish families? Why?
8. How private school provision is a key contributor to make education unequal?
9. What is the link between the type of school and the different student-teacher relationships that it leads to? E.g. are the relationships more relaxed in one type of school than the other?
10. How is the choice between private and state schools have an impact on student's exam results?
11. What are the relationships between school and other parts of the social structure?
12. How does your school provide traditional values of society to your students?

Would you like to add any more comments that we have not discussed yet?

Appendix U Welfare Managers' Interview Questions (Kurdish)

چاوپێکەوتن لەگەڵ تویژەری کۆمەڵایەتی

ناونیشان : کاریگەری قوتابخانەی تایبەت لەسەر پرۆسەی خوێندن لە کوردستانی عیراق

بەروار و کاتی چاوپێکەوتن :

ناوی قوتابخانە .... جۆری قوتابخانە ....

1- چۆن دەروانیتە زۆربوونی ژمارەی قوتابخانەی تایبەت لە کوردستان ؟ بەرای تۆ هۆکارەکانی

زۆربوونی ژمارەی قوتابخانەی تایبەت چین ؟

2- بە گوێرەی هزر و بیری خۆت , چ بنەمایەکی مەنتقی هەیە لە دوای رِوو کردن و هەڵبژاردنی قوتابخانەی تایبەت یان

قوتابخانەی حکومی لەلایەن دایکان و باوکان و قوتابیان ؟ واتا لەسەرچ بنەمایەك جۆری قوتابخانە هەڵدەبژێرن؟

3- تا چ راددەیەك کوالتی خوێندن لە قوتابخانەی حکومی رۆڵ دەبینێت بۆ زیاتر دروستکردنی دەرفەتی هەڵبژاردنوو رِوو کردن

بۆ قوتابخانەی تایبەت؟

4- بە رای بەڕێزتان کاریگەری نێگەتیڤ و پۆزەتیڤی(سلبی و ایجابی) قوتابخانەی تایبەت و حکوومی چیە لەسەر پرۆسەی

خوێندن لەکوردستان؟

5- ئاستی کۆمەڵایەتی و ئابووری خانەوادەی (خێزانی)قوتابیان لە قوتابخانەکەتان لە چ ئاستێکە بەشێوەیەکی گشتی؟

6- لەو بروایەدای کە قوتابخانەی تایبەت بەردەستە وە خزمەتەکانی پێشکەش بە هەموو چینە کۆمەڵایەتیەکان دەکات

لەکوردستان؟ بۆچی؟

7- ئایا لەو باوەرِەدای کە قوتابخانەی تایبەت بۆتە بارگرانی لە لایەنی دارایی بۆ سەر خانەواده و خێزانە کوردیەکان؟ بۆچی؟

8- چۆن زیاد بوونی ژمارەی قوتابخانەی تایبەت بۆتە هۆکاری سەرەکی کە فێرکردن شێوازیکی یەکسانی نەبێت /نایەکسانی

لە پەروەردە و فێرکردن؟

9- پەیوەندی چییە لە نێوان جۆری قوتابخانەو وە پەیوەندییە جیا جیاکانی نێوان قوتابی و مامۆستا ؛ بۆ نموونە پەیوەندی

نێوانیان پتەوترە لە قوتابخانەیەك بۆ قوتابخانەیەكی تر؟

10- چۆن هەڵبژاردنی قوتابخانەی تایبەت و حکوومی کاریگەری دەبیت لەسەر ئەنجامی تاقی کردنەوەی قوتابیان؟

11- چۆن دەروانیتە پەیوەندی نێوان قوتابخانەی تایبەت و بونیادی کۆمەڵایەتی ؛ یاخود سیستەمی قوتابخانەی تایبەت و

سیستەمەکانی تری کۆمەڵگە؟

12- چۆن قوتابخانەی تایبەت بەها کۆمەڵایەتیەکان (کەلتورو دابونەریت)پێشکەش بە قوتابیان دەکات ؟

ئایا دەتەویت هیچ خاڵیکی تر ئاماژە پێبکەیت کە باسمان نەکردبیت لەسەرەوە؟

زۆرسوپاس.

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Appendix V Age of Students

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Mean
Age	17	10	6.7	
	18	113	75.3	18.11
	19	27	18.0	
	Total	150	100.0	

Appendix W Descriptive Statistics for the Number of Students (Grades 10–12) at Each School and Class

Schools	Total Number of Students	Number of Students in a class
S1	613	45
S2	980	52
S3	625	43
P1	342	20-22
P2	306	22
P3	263	17

Appendix X Annual Tuition Fees

All private schools mentioned in this research commented that the tuition fee changes each year. The price given in the table is the average price the schools require. 1000 Iraqi Dinars is equivalent to 0.51 Pound Sterling and 0.68 US Dollars. (The prices of ع.د, $ and £ fluctuate).

Tuition fees of the schools annually[1]			
S1	N/A	P1	5 million Iraqi Dinars[2]
S2	N/A	P2	7 million Iraqi Dinars
S3	N/A	P3	12 million Iraqi Dinar

Appendix Y Teaching Practices/Methods Used by Teachers by School Type

Items	State %	Private %	χ2	Df	Φc
Lecture method	100.0	100			
Participatory method	19.0	66.7	14.101	2	.579**
Student-centric method	14.3	47.6	5.459	1	.361*
Group work method	23.8	61.9	6.222	1	.385**
Seminar method	0.0	33.3	9.882	2	.485**
Presentational method	0.0	57.1	16.800	1	.632**
Developing questions	52.4	66.7	.889	1	.146
Conducting discussion	14.3	42.9	4.200	1	.316*
Completing written Assignments	57.1	76.2	1.714	1	.202
Others not mentioned	61.9	57.1	2.107	2	.224

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$. Source: Teachers' questionnaire data collected for this research.

Appendix Z Assessment Methods by School Type from Teachers' Responses

Items	State	Private	x^2	Df	Φc
Summative assessment	100.0%	100.00%			
Formative assessment	57.1%	85.7%	4.200	1	.316*
Recall question	81.0%	85.7%	.171	1	.064
Rote-based assessment	71.4%	61.9%	.429	1	.101
Class tests	76.2%	90.5%	1.543	1	.192
Home assignment	33.3%	81.0%	9.722	1	.481**
Others	19.0%	42.9%	2.785	1	.258

*: $p < 0.05$ **: $p < 0.01$

Appendix AA 1:1 Feedback Frequency Rating from Students' Responses

Statement	School Type	Mean Response	Mann-Whitney U	Z-score
The teachers give 1:1 feedback	State	2.59	351.000**	-9.364
	Private	4.46		

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

Appendix BB School Resources by Type of School from Students' Responses

Statement	School Type	Mean Response	Mann-Whitney U	Z-score
The teachers use advanced technology to deliver knowledge to students, such as smart boards, and projectors.	State	1.24	220.500**	-10.366
	Private	3.52		
The school has enough computer services available for education.	State	1.20	.000**	-11.038
	Private	3.62		
The school has a library service available for students for education.	State	1.65	507.500**	-8.968
	Private	3.21		
The school has laboratories for sciences.	State	1.11	67.000**	-10.930
	Private	3.29		
The school has internet services.	State	1.07	2444.000	-1.469
	Private	1.15		

Note: Likert scale used: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree and 4 = strongly agree.

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$. Source: Students' questionnaire data collected for this research.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.868	5

Appendix CC Students' Perception of Teachers and Teaching Approaches

Statement	School Type	Mean Response	Mann-Whitney U	Z-score
Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and learning activities to help students learn	State	2.08	1093.500**	-6.872
	Private	3.00		
Teachers have high expectations of their students	State	2.89	2272.500*	-2.287
	Private	3.12		
The teachers are doing a good job of teaching	State	2.99	2534.000	-1.234
	Private	3.07		
Teachers are friendly and sincere with students.	State	2.99	2626.500	-.598
	Private	2.92		
Teachers form a motivating environment for learning.	State	2.65	2336.500*	-1.980
	Private	2.89		
The teaching aids used by teachers are helpful	State	2.00		
	Private	3.61	765.500*	-8.072

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$. Source: Students' questionnaire data collected for this research.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.802	6

Appendix DD Students' Perception of Learning Environment by School Type

Statement	School Type	Mean Response	Mann-Whitney U	Z-score
The school provides safe and orderly environment for learning	State	3.18	2508.000	-1.199
	Private	3.27		
The school has a small number of students in each class	State	2.03	883.000**	-7.465
	Private	3.07		
Class size at our school is appropriate for effective learning	State	2.03	1018.000**	-7.128
	Private	3.12		
The classrooms are placed in a suitable environment (e.g., enough lights, comfortable tables, nice carpet, and air conditioners).	State	1.80	710.500**	-8.056
	Private	3.01		

$* p < 0.05$ $** p < 0.01$. Source: Students' questionnaire data collected for this research.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.720	4

Appendix EE Gender Ratio Difference in Private Schools

There are different gender ratios in private schools
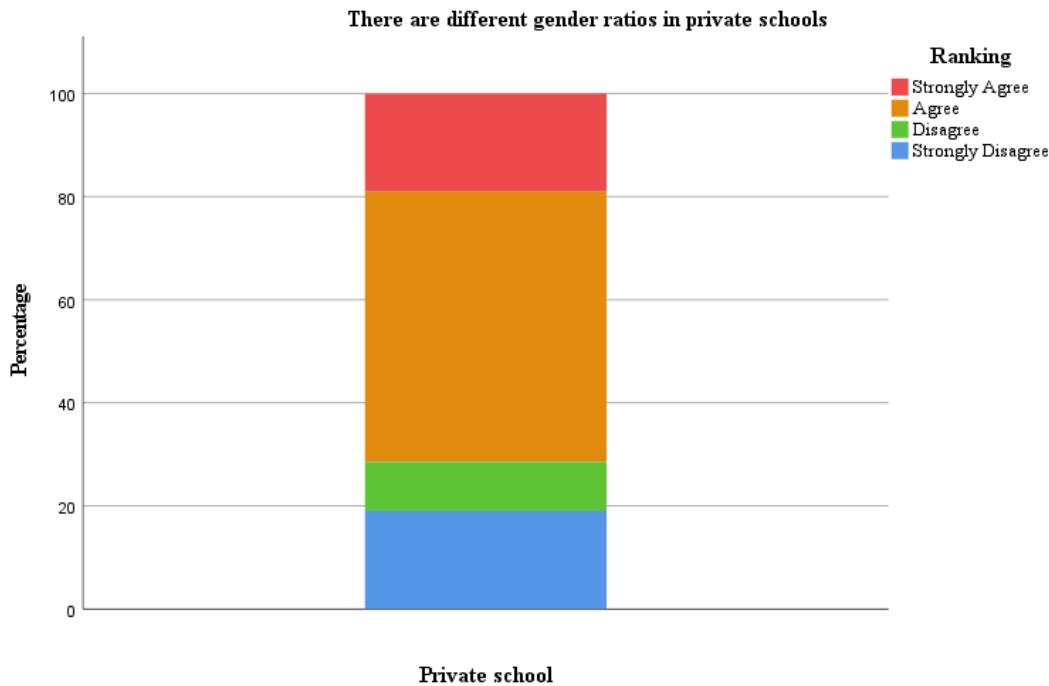
Appendix FF Factor Analysis

Communalities	Initial	Extraction
How many bedrooms are in your residence?	1.000	.643
Do you have your own separate room?	1.000	.602
Does your family home have a study room?	1.000	.501
How many mobile phones does your household own?	1.000	.565
How many computer/Laptops does your household own?	1.000	.535
How many cars does your household own?	1.000	.639
How many bicycles does your household own	1.000	.796
How many motorcycles does your household own?	1.000	.540
Res	1.000	.631

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.908	32.307	32.307	2.908	32.307	32.307	2.449	27.206	27.206
2	1.489	16.544	48.851	1.489	16.544	48.851	1.751	19.456	46.662
3	1.058	11.750	60.601	1.058	11.750	60.601	1.255	13.939	60.601
4	.932	10.350	70.952						
5	.714	7.934	78.886						
6	.615	6.838	85.724						
7	.524	5.817	91.541						
8	.398	4.418	95.959						
9	.364	4.041	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix[a]

	Component		
	1	2	3
How many bedrooms are in your residence?	.784		
How many cars does your household own?	.730	.326	
Res	.701		
How many computer/Laptops does your household own?	.656		
Do you have your own separate room?	.624	-.454	
Does your family home have a study room?	.496		.495
How many mobile phones does your household own?		.729	
How many motorcycles does your household own?	-.354	.518	.383
How many bicycles does your household own		.493	-.712

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

[a] 3 components extracted

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component		
	1	2	3
How many bedrooms are in your residence?	.758		
How many cars does your household own?	.736		
How many computer/Laptops does your household own?	.728		
Does your family home have a study room?	.592		-.378
How many motorcycles does your household own?		-.734	
Do you have your own separate room?	.351	.682	
Res	.404	.665	
How many mobile phones does your household own?	.403	-.455	.442
How many bicycles does your household own			.887

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation[a]

[a] Rotation converged in 5 iterations

Component Transformation Matrix

Component	1	2	3
1	.853	.502	.145
2	.325	-.727	.605
3	.409	-.469	-.783

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation

Factor Analysis

Communalities	Initial	Extraction
How many bedrooms are in your residence?	1.000	.624
Do you have your own separate room?	1.000	.596
Does your family home have a study room?	1.000	.256
How many mobile phones does your household own?	1.000	.564
How many computer/Laptops does your household own?	1.000	.478
How many cars does your household own?	1.000	.639
How many bicycles does your household own	1.000	.289
How many motorcycles does your household own?	1.000	.394
Res	1.000	.557

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.908	32.307	32.307	2.908	32.307	32.307	2.738	30.420	30.420
2	1.489	16.544	48.851	1.489	16.544	48.851	1.659	18.430	48.851
3	1.058	11.750	60.601						
4	.932	10.350	70.952						
5	.714	7.934	78.886						
6	.615	6.838	85.724						
7	.524	5.817	91.541						
8	.398	4.418	95.959						
9	.364	4.041	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Component Matrix[a]

	Component	
	1	2
How many bedrooms are in your residence?	.784	
How many cars does your household own?	.730	.326
Res	.701	
How many computer/Laptops does your household own?	.656	
Do you have your own separate room?	.624	-.454
Does your family home have a study room?	.496	
How many mobile phones does your household own?		.729
How many motorcycles does your household own?	-.354	.518
How many bicycles does your household own		.493

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

[a] 2 components extracted

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component	
	1	2
Res	.747	
Do you have your own separate room?	.742	
How many bedrooms are in your residence?	.700	.367
How many cars does your household own?	.572	.558
How many computer/Laptops does your household own?	.541	.431
How many motorcycles does your household own?	-.511	.363
Does your family home have a study room?	.501	
How many mobile phones does your household own?		.746
How many bicycles does your household own		.537

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation[a]

[a] Rotation converged in 3 iterations

Component Transformation Matrix

Component	1	2
1	.938	.346
2	-.346	.938

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation

Crosstabs. Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
How many motorcycles does your household own? * Type of School	150	100.0%	0	0.0%	150	100.0%

How many motorcycles does your household own? * Type of School Crosstabulation

Count

How many motorcycles does your household own?	Type of School		Total
	State	Private	
0	61	70	131
1	10	2	12
2	4	2	6
3	0	1	1
Total	75	75	150

Factor Analysis

Communalities	Initial	Extraction
How many bedrooms are in your residence?	1.000	.634
Do you have your own separate room?	1.000	.615
Does your family home have a study room?	1.000	.282
How many mobile phones does your household own?	1.000	.634
How many computer/Laptops does your household own?	1.000	.470
How many cars does your household own?	1.000	.627
How many bicycles does your household own	1.000	.426
Res	1.000	.502

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

<div align="center">Total Variance Explained</div>

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.824	35.304	35.304	2.824	35.304	35.304	2.712	33.898	33.898
2	1.366	17.073	52.378	1.366	17.073	52.378	1.478	18.479	52.378
3	1.010	12.623	65.000						
4	.859	10.732	75.732						
5	.629	7.859	83.591						
6	.532	6.650	90.241						
7	.412	5.148	95.389						
8	.369	4.611	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Component Matrix[a]

	Component	
	1	2
How many bedrooms are in your residence?	.796	
How many cars does your household own?	.760	
How many computer/Laptops does your household own?	.679	
Res	.671	
Do you have your own separate room?	.596	-.509
Does your family home have a study room?	.494	
How many mobile phones does your household own?		.766
How many bicycles does your household own		.610

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

[a] 2 components extracted

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component	
	1	2
How many bedrooms are in your residence?	.761	
Do you have your own separate room?	.714	-.324
Res	.708	
How many cars does your household own?	.668	.425
How many computer/Laptops does your household own?	.627	
Does your family home have a study room?	.529	
How many mobile phones does your household own?		.796
How many bicycles does your household own		.650

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation[a]

[a] Rotation converged in 3 iterations

Component Transformation Matrix

Component	1	2
1	.961	.278
2	-.278	.961

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation

Appendix GG Logistic Regression Analysis

Case Processing Summary

Unweighted Cases[a]		N	Percent
Selected Cases	Included in Analysis	145	96.7
	Missing Cases	5	3.3
	Total	150	100.0
Unselected Cases		0	.0
	Total	150	100.0

[a] If weight is in effect, see classification table for the total number of cases

Dependent Variable Encoding

Original Value	Internal Value
State	0
Private	1

Categorical Variables Codings

		Frequency	Parameter coding (1)
Gender	Female	73	.000
	Male	72	1.000

Block 0: Beginning Block

Classification Table[a,b]

		Predicted			
			Type of School		Percentage
Observed			State	Private	Correct
Step 0	Type of School	State	0	71	.0
		Private	0	74	100.0
	Overall Percentage				51.0

[a] Constant is included in the model.

[b] The cut value is .500

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 0	Constant	.041	.166	.062	1	.803	1.042

Variables not in the Equation

			Score	df	Sig.
Step Variables 0		The reason for choosing this school is to understand the subjects better	40.831	1	.000
		The reason for choosing this school is the different curriculums they have	41.581	1	.000
		The main reason for choosing this school is because students imitate their friends	.220	1	.639
		Availability of subject specialised teachers is the reason for choosing this school	41.037	1	.000
		The reason for choosing this school is to get good exam results	41.619	1	.000
		The reason for choosing this school is to get a university entrance	31.254	1	.000
		The reason for choosing this school is different number of students in each class	39.721	1	.000
		The reason for choosing this school is the difference in teacher-student relationships	44.425	1	.000
		Age	7.173	1	.007
		Gender(1)	.061	1	.805
		What is the educational level of your father?	.320	1	.572
		What is the educational level of your mother?	.040	1	.841
		REGR factor score 1 for analysis 1	63.577	1	.000
		REGR factor score 2 for analysis 1	11.222	1	.001
Overall Statistics			110.601	14	.000

Block 1: Method = Enter

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	168.672	14	.000
	Block	168.672	14	.000
	Model	168.672	14	.000

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	32.278[a]	.688	.917

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 9 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Classification Table

			Predicted		
Observed			Type of School		Percentage
			State	Private	Correct
Step 1	Type of School	State	69	2	97.2
		Private	4	70	94.6
	Overall Percentage				95.9

a. The cut value is .500

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	The reason for choosing this school is to understand the subjects better	.921	.682	1.823	1	.177	2.512
	The reason for choosing this school is the different curriculums they have	2.136	.855	6.245	1	.012	8.464

The main reason for choosing this school is because students imitate their friends	-.124	.647	.037	1	.848	.883
Availability of subject specialised teachers is the reason for choosing this school	.336	.660	.259	1	.611	1.400
The reason for choosing this school is to get good exam results	2.014	.808	6.212	1	.013	7.495
The reason for choosing this school is to get a university entrance	1.597	.796	4.028	1	.045	4.940
The reason for choosing this school is different number of students in each class	2.357	.887	7.055	1	.008	10.559
The reason for choosing this school is the difference in teacher-student relationships	.994	.857	1.347	1	.246	2.703
Age	.787	1.072	.539	1	.463	2.196
Gender (1)	2.200	1.498	2.157	1	.142	9.028

What is the educational level of your father?	.024	.052	.202	1	.653	1.024
What is the educational level of your mother?	-.046	.106	.184	1	.668	.955
REGR factor score 1 for analysis 1	2.106	.813	6.717	1	.010	8.216
REGR factor score 2 for analysis 1	1.734	.765	5.138	1	.023	5.661
Constant	-41.187	22.901	3.235	1	.072	.000

Logistic Regression

Case Processing Summary

Unweighted Cases[a]		N	Percent
Selected Cases	Included in Analysis	145	96.7
	Missing Cases	5	3.3
	Total	150	100.0
Unselected Cases		0	.0
Total		150	100.0

[a] If weight is in effect, see classification table for the total number of cases

Dependent Variable Encoding

Original Value   Internal Value

State	0
Private	1

Categorical Variables Codings

		Frequency	Parameter coding (1)
Gender	Female	73	.000
	Male	72	1.000

Block 0: Beginning Block

Classification Table[a,b]

	Observed		Predicted		
			Type of School		Percentage
			State	Private	Correct
Step 0	Type of School	State	0	71	.0
		Private	0	74	100.0
	Overall Percentage				51.0

[a] Constant is included in the model

[b] The cut value is .500

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 0	Constant	.041	.166	.062	1	.803	1.042

Variables not in the Equation

			Score	df	Sig.
Step 0	Variables	The reason for choosing this school is to understand the subjects better	40.831	1	.000
		The reason for choosing this school is the different curriculums they have	41.581	1	.000
		The main reason for choosing this school is because students imitate their friends	.220	1	.639
		Availability of subject specialised teachers is the reason for choosing this schools	41.037	1	.000
		The reason for choosing this school is to get good exam results	41.619	1	.000
		The reason for choosing this school is to get a university entrance	31.254	1	.000
		The reason for choosing this school is different number of students in each class	39.721	1	.000
		The reason for choosing this school is the difference in teacher-student relationships	44.425	1	.000
		Age	7.173	1	.007
		Gender (1)	.061	1	.805

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	What is the educational level of your father?	.320	1	.572
	What is the educational level of your mother?	.040	1	.841
	Res	22.320	1	.000
	How many bedrooms are in your residence?	41.031	1	.000
Overall Statistics		105.992	14	.000

Block 1: Method = Enter

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	157.668	14	.000
	Block	157.668	14	.000
	Model	157.668	14	.000

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	43.283[a]	.663	.884

[a] Estimation terminated at iteration number 8 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001

Classification Table

	Observed		Predicted		
			Type of School		Percentage Correct
			State	Private	
Step 1	Type of School	State	69	2	97.2
		Private	4	70	94.6
	Overall Percentage				95.9

a. The cut value is .500

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	The reason for choosing this school is to understand the subjects better	1.221	.610	4.004	1	.045	3.392
	The reason for choosing this school is the different curriculums they have	1.924	.729	6.972	1	.008	6.851
	The main reason for choosing this school is because students imitate their friends	.138	.490	.080	1	.778	1.148
	Availability of subject specialized teachers is the reason for choosing this school	.650	.570	1.301	1	.254	1.915

The reason for choosing this school is to get good exam results	2.168	.704	9.473	1	.002	8.738
The reason for choosing this school is to get a university entrance	1.061	.552	3.698	1	.054	2.890
The reason for choosing this school is different number of students in each class	2.167	.833	6.774	1	.009	8.732
The reason for choosing this school is the difference in teacher-student relationships	.225	.539	.175	1	.676	1.253
Age	.642	.921	.485	1	.486	1.900
Gender (1)	1.845	1.200	2.364	1	.124	6.329
What is the educational level of your father?	.019	.044	.191	1	.662	1.019
What is the educational level of your mother?	-.010	.079	.017	1	.897	.990
Res	.107	.928	.013	1	.908	1.113
How many bedrooms are in your residence?	1.465	.688	4.533	1	.033	4.329
Constant	-42.805	19.679	4.731	1	.030	.000

Appendix HH Pearson Correlation Test

		REGR factor score 1 for analysis 1	REGR factor score 2 for analysis 1	wealthsum	Res
REGR factor score 1 for analysis 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.000	.656**	.708**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		1.000	.000	.000
	N	147	147	147	147
REGR factor score 2 for analysis 1	Pearson Correlation	.000	1	.654**	-.031
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000		.000	.706
	N	147	147	147	147
wealthsum	Pearson Correlation	.656**	.654**	1	.225**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.006
	N	147	147	147	147
Res	Pearson Correlation	.708**	-.031	.225**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.706	.006	
	N	147	147	147	147

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Appendix II Example of Thematic Analysis

Example piece of Thematic analysis of qualitative data (the examples and lists are non-exhaustive)

Selected examples of quotes + highlighted key words	→	Key code identified in entire data set	→	Sub-themes	→	Theme

'The methods used in our class are quite old. It also means the same way of learning is delivered every day, causing the rise of boredom and the loss of learning motivation'. (S3 Chemistry teacher)

Codes related to quote: old teaching methods, repeated (lack of variety), negative side effects.

- Old teaching methods
- Repeated (lack of variety)
- Negative side effects

Old teaching methods

'I do not remember the last time we received new teaching aids'. (S2 English Language teacher)

Codes related to quote: lack of new aids

- Lack of teaching aids
- Damage to aids due to overuse
- Lack of new aids
- Lack of technology

Lack of teaching aids

, 'We feel exhausted, because the number of students is very large' (S1 mathematics teacher)

Codes related to the quote: higher number of students in class, teacher exhaustion

- High number of students in class
- Teacher exhaustion
- Hard to help everyone

High number of students in class

'There is a lack of teachers in our school. Every year we hear rumours that more staff members will be employed to cover the shortage, but nothing happens' (S3 welfare manager)

Codes related to quote: lack of teachers, reduction in employment

- Lack of teachers
- Covering other subjects
- Reduction in employment
- Lack of salary
- Loss of motivation

Teaching quality

Theme: Quality of education

1. Becoming familiar with the data → 2. Generating initial codes → 3. Searching for themes → 4. Reviewing themes

→ 5. Defining and naming themes → 6. Producing the report

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