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Determinants of Parental School Selection for Early Childhood Education: A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Approach

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Abstract

Choosing the most suitable education for their children is often challenging for parents due to the many factors that must be considered. The desire to find the ideal kindergarten is complicated by the need to meet various criteria, leading to confusion and difficulty in decision-making. This study addresses this complexity by employing Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to simplify selection. Focusing on TKIT Al Farabi, the research validates a hypothesised model comprising ten critical factors: location, accreditation, facilities, fees, curriculum, religious education, teacher competence, extracurricular activities, school order and cleanliness, and alumni achievements. Data were collected from 154 parents through a structured questionnaire and analysed using SPSS software. The CFA results confirmed five dominant factors: school excellence, teacher professionalism, education costs, social development, and language development, collectively explaining 60.9% of the total variance. The study demonstrates that the CFA method effectively aids parents in making quick and accurate decisions regarding early childhood education. The findings also emphasise the significance of academic and non-academic attributes in school selection, suggesting that educational institutions should adopt more holistic curricula. These results have substantial implications for policymakers and educational administrators, underscoring the need for integrated programs that align with the diverse expectations of parents. Despite the study's valuable insights, further research in diverse settings is recommended to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Introduction

Parents' selection of appropriate educational institutions is a critical decision that significantly impacts children's developmental trajectory and prospects. As the demand for high-quality education intensifies globally, parents are increasingly faced with choosing schools that align with their children's values, expectations, and specific needs (Dalimunthe et al., 2023; Yuliza et al., 2022). This decision-making process is particularly complex in early childhood education, where the foundational nature of learning experiences necessitates careful consideration of various factors (Astuti et al., 2021; Sitanggang et al., 2023). The proliferation of diverse educational options and varying levels of school quality exacerbate the complexity of school selection, making it a pressing issue for parents and educators (Herman, 2023; Ekawati et al., 2022). Consequently, understanding the factors influencing school selection is essential for parents, educational institutions, and policymakers.

Numerous studies have explored the factors that parents consider when selecting schools for their children, identifying a range of influences that include location, school facilities, tuition fees, and the quality of educators (Sari & Simatupang, 2019; Widayanti, 2020; Kale et al., 2022). For instance, proximity to home and the surrounding environment often play a significant role, as parents prioritise convenience and the safety of their children (Liani & Napitupulu, 2019; Murdopo, 2013). Additionally, school infrastructure and available facilities are frequently cited

as critical factors, reflecting parents' desire for well-equipped educational environments that can foster optimal learning outcomes (Widayanti, 2020; Astuti et al., 2021). Other studies have highlighted the importance of a school's reputation, including its accreditation status, as a proxy for educational quality and institutional reliability (Thoyyibah et al., 2022; Kristiani, 2016).

Research has also underscored the significance of financial considerations in the school selection process, with tuition fees being a primary concern for many parents (Zakiyah et al., 2023; Rakhmanita, 2012). The cost of education is often weighed against the perceived benefits, such as the curriculum quality and the teaching staff's competence (Murdopo, 2013; Tangkilisan et al., 2014). Furthermore, studies have shown that religious education is pivotal for some families, particularly those prioritising moral and spiritual development and academic achievement (Akbar & Hidayati, 2023; Mu'ammalah & Reza, 2022). The alignment of a school's curriculum with the family's religious beliefs can be a decisive factor in school selection, especially in communities where religion is a central aspect of daily life (Widayanti, 2020).

In addition to the factors above, parents also consider the quality of extracurricular activities, as these programs are seen as essential for the holistic development of children (Kale et al., 2022; Sudiantini et al., 2023). Extracurricular offerings can enhance students' social skills, creativity, and physical health, complementing the formal curriculum (Mu'ammalah & Reza, 2022; Rahmawati, 2016). Another critical aspect is the school's academic track record and alumni's success, which indicate the institution's effectiveness in preparing students for future educational and career endeavours (Bagchi, 2019; Yaacob et al., 2015). This emphasis on outcomes reflects parents' aspirations for their children's long-term success and underscores the importance of educational quality in the school selection process (Sariantini et al., 2023).

Teacher competence is another critical factor influencing parents' decisions, as effective educators are essential for delivering high-quality instruction and fostering a positive learning environment (Tangkilisan et al., 2014; Perwita & Widuri, 2023). Parents often assess schools based on the qualifications and experience of their teaching staff, with the expectation that competent teachers will provide personalised attention and support to their children (Mu'ammalah & Reza, 2022; Rahmawati, 2016). Additionally, school cleanliness and orderliness are frequently mentioned as essential criteria, reflecting concerns about the physical environment in which children spend significant amounts of time (Liani & Napitupulu, 2019; Sariantini et al., 2023). These factors collectively contribute to parents' perceptions of a school's ability to offer a safe, nurturing, and effective educational experience (Mu'ammalah & Reza, 2022).

Before further research, more in-depth information was obtained regarding the indicators representing the factors studied in previous research. The studies summarised in Table 1 reveal a broad range of selection factors parents consider, including price, promotion, location, facilities, and educator quality. The variety of factors identified across these studies indicates that there is no single framework or set of criteria universally applied by parents when selecting schools. This variability highlights the importance of context-specific research in identifying the most relevant factors for particular populations or regions. The comprehensive review in the table underscores the complexity of the decision-making process and the need for a more systematic approach to understanding and validating these factors through methods such as Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).

Table 1. Summary of Factors Influencing Parents' Decision to Choose a Kindergarten School in Previous Studies

No	Previous Researcher	Selection Factors
1	(Rakhmanita, 2012)	Price, promotion, places, and facilities
2	(Murdopo, 2013)	School condition, finances, and location
3	(Boking et al., 2013)	Parent's socioeconomic background, location, teachers, school status, environment, condition, cost
4	(Tangkilisan et al., 2014)	Price, promotion, facilities, process, product, and educators

5	(Yaacob et al., 2015)	Parents' income level, school syllabus, school facilities/environment, achievement, location, distance
6	(Kristiani, 2016)	Promotion, services, products (graduates/alumni), fees, and accreditation status
7	(Liani & Napitupulu, 2019)	School location and environment, physical facilities, vision and mission, religious portion, educator profile, curriculum, activities, cleanliness, academic skills, alumni
8	(Zakiyah et al., 2023)	Promotion, fees, service products, facilities and infrastructure, syllabus, teacher quality, health protocols
9	(Perwita & Widuri, 2023)	Background or social status, income level, syllabus, environment/facilities, performance, location, educators
10	(Akbar & Hidayati, 2023)	Location, distance, vision and mission, family support, religious studies portion
11	(Widayanti, 2020)	Location, costs, religious education, vision and mission, physical facilities, teacher profiles
12	(Kale et al., 2022)	Cost, location, environment, facilities, achievement, curriculum, vision, distance
13	(Sudiantini et al., 2023)	Curriculum, infrastructure, tuition policies, staff, leadership, achievements, community image, location, environment
14	(Mu'ammalah & Reza, 2022)	Location, facilities, vision, religious education, educator profile, curriculum, activities, cleanliness, academic skills, alumni
15	(Prastika et al., 2022)	Location, tuition fees, entrance fees, facilities
16	(Lohan et al., 2020)	Quality of education, reputation, infrastructure, fees, location
17	(Myint, 2019)	Profile, quality of education, infrastructure, other factors (outing program, transportation, health, cleanliness, happiness)
18	(Namraksa & Kraiwanit, 2023)	Courses, management reputation, location, digital age adaptation
19	(Maryanigsih et al., 2021)	Accreditation, infrastructure, tuition fees, curriculum, number of teachers, number of students
20	(Astuti et al., 2021)	Location, tuition fees, admission fees, class capacity, teacher-student ratio, accreditation, special needs, facilities
21	(Bagchi, 2019)	Social status, cost, syllabus, environment/facilities, achievement, quality, proximity
22	(Rahmawati, 2016)	Location, facilities, vision, religious portion, educator profile, curriculum, activities, cleanliness, academic skills, alumni
23	(Sari & Simatupang, 2019)	Religious education, cleanliness, order, vision compatibility, distance, activities, staff, curriculum, environment, graduates

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is particularly suited for this study as it allows researchers to validate the structure of relationships between observed variables and their underlying latent constructs based on theoretical expectations derived from previous studies (Wichern, 2014; Hoyle, 2012). This method is essential in cases where the researcher has hypothesised factors that require empirical verification, making it a robust tool for confirming the relevance and weight of each factor in school selection (Hair, 2010; Kline, 2011). The variability in indicators used across the studies summarised in Table 1 underscores the necessity of an affirmative approach to distil and validate the most critical factors. The CFA will help address inconsistencies in the literature by providing empirical evidence on the relative importance of these factors, thereby offering a more coherent and reliable framework for understanding parents' decision-making processes.

This study addresses these gaps by utilising Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to systematically evaluate and confirm the key factors influencing parents' decisions when selecting early childhood education institutions. By applying CFA, this research seeks to provide a more robust and nuanced understanding of the relative importance of various school selection criteria, thereby offering valuable insights for parents and educational policymakers. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by clarifying

the hierarchical structure of these factors and offering empirical evidence that can inform decision-making processes. Ultimately, this research will assist parents in making more informed and effective school choices while guiding educational institutions in enhancing their offerings to meet families' needs and expectations better.

Methods

This study employs a quantitative research approach utilising Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to validate the factors influencing parents' selection of kindergarten schools at TKIT Al Farabi. CFA is an advanced multivariate statistical method designed to test whether the data fit a hypothesised measurement model, thereby confirming the underlying structure of the observed variables (Lumbantobing & Susiana, 2023). Unlike Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), which is used to identify potential underlying factor structures without prior hypotheses, CFA is beneficial for testing hypotheses derived from theory or previous research. The primary objective of this study is to confirm the main factors that influence parents' school selection, which include ten key factors such as location, accreditation, facilities, fees, curriculum, religious education, teacher competence, extracurricular activities, school order and cleanliness, and alums achievements.

The research was conducted through several systematic steps. Initially, an exploratory study was conducted to identify the potential factors influencing school selection. The identified factors were then conceptualised into a hypothesised measurement model, which served as the basis for the CFA. The study sample consisted of 154 parents or guardians of students at TKIT Al Farabi, selected through purposive sampling. This method was chosen to ensure that participants met specific inclusion criteria, such as being a parent or guardian of a current or former student at the school, being cooperative, and being willing to participate in the study. Exclusion criteria included psychological or mental disorders that could affect the study's results. Table 2 details the distribution of the study sample across different classes at TKIT Al Farabi:

Table 2. Total number of research respondents

Class	Total of Parents/Guardians
TK A1	16
TK A2	16
TK A3	16
TK A4	16
TK B1	18
TK B2	18
TK B3	18
TK B4	18
TK B5	18
Total	**154**

Subsequently, data was collected using a structured questionnaire to capture parents' preferences and priorities in school selection. The questionnaire was validated by expert judgment to ensure content validity, with the final version containing 22 items representing the ten identified factors.

The study utilised SPSS software version 25.0 for data analysis, specifically for conducting the CFA. The questionnaire employed in this study used a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). A four-point scale was used to avoid central tendency bias, forcing respondents to express a clear preference. Each item on the questionnaire was subjected to validity testing using Pearson's Product-Moment correlation, where items were deemed valid if the correlation coefficient (r) exceeded the critical value for $\alpha = 0.05$. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with the overall reliability coefficient calculated at 0.919, indicating high internal consistency among the items (Ghozali, 2016).

Data were collected via a self-administered questionnaire distributed to 154 parents or guardians at TKIT Al Farabi. The questionnaire items were carefully designed to measure ten factors influencing school selection. The collected data underwent standardisation to ensure that all responses were comparable, followed by **Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)** to confirm the factor structure. The CFA process began with the **Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity**, both of which were conducted to determine the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis. A KMO value greater than 0.6 and a significant Bartlett's test (p < 0.05) indicated that the data were suitable for CFA. Subsequently, the communalities for each item were examined to assess the proportion of variance accounted for by the extracted factors. Items with low communalities (less than 0.5) were considered for removal as they did not contribute significantly to the factor structure.

The eigenvalues and total variance explained by the factors were then analysed to assess the adequacy of the factor solution, with factors being retained if their eigenvalue was more significant than 1.0, following the **Kaiser criterion**. Following this, the initial component matrix was examined to identify the loadings of each item on the extracted factors, and a varimax rotation was applied to achieve a more transparent and interpretable factor structure. Items with loadings greater than 0.5 on a single factor were considered strong indicators of that factor. Finally, the **component transformation matrix** was analysed to confirm that the rotation had not distorted the factor structure, ensuring the final solution remained robust.

Both validity and reliability tests were rigorously conducted to ensure the robustness of the findings. The instrument's validity was confirmed through expert judgment and Pearson's Product-Moment correlation analysis, with items not meeting the validity threshold excluded. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, with a final coefficient of 0.919, indicating high reliability. The validity and reliability measures ensured that the instrument accurately captured the underlying constructs, thereby supporting the credibility of the study's conclusions (Sekaran, 2003; Ghozali, 2016).

The CFA results indicated that the hypothesised model was a good fit for the data, with all factors showing significant loadings on their respective constructs. The commonalities for most items were above the threshold of 0.5, indicating that the factors accounted for a substantial portion of the variance in each item. The total variance explained by the model was significant, suggesting that the factors identified were comprehensive and representative of the underlying dimensions influencing school selection. The rotated component matrix provided a transparent and interpretable factor structure, with all items loading significantly on their respective factors. These findings support the validity of the hypothesised model and provide strong evidence for the main factors influencing parents' decisions in selecting a kindergarten for their children at TKIT Al Farabi.

Result

This section analyses the factors influencing parents' selection of kindergarten schools, specifically at TKIT Al Farabi. The study considers ten sub-variables: location and environment, accreditation, infrastructure (facilities), tuition fees, curriculum, religious education, teacher competence, extracurricular activities, school order and cleanliness, and achievements and alumni. The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) method used SPSS software to analyse these factors. Factor analysis is a statistical technique that groups variables based on their dominance within the study. The results of this analysis can also be utilised to prioritise variables based on their rankings. The stages of factor analysis include:

KMO and Bartlett's Test

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's tests were conducted to assess the suitability of the variables for factor analysis. The KMO test measures sample adequacy, with a significance value below 0.05, indicating that the data is suitable for further analysis. The KMO value obtained was 0.887, which exceeds the minimum threshold of 0.5, indicating that the sample size is adequate for further analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity showed a significance level of 0.000, suggesting

that the correlations among the variables are sufficiently robust to justify proceeding with factor analysis. Below are the results of the KMO and Bartlett's Test conducted in this study:

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0,887
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	154,968
	Sig.	0,000

Based on the results presented in Table 3, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test confirms that all items are in a valid condition. The obtained KMO value is 0.887, which exceeds the minimum threshold of 0.5, indicating that the sample size is adequate for further analysis. Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity results, as shown in Table 1, reveal a significance level of 0.000 below the 0.05 threshold. This suggests that the correlations among the variables are sufficiently robust to justify proceeding with factor analysis.

Measures of Sampling Adequacy (MSA)

The Measures of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) test assessed each variable's partial suitability and calculated the correlation values between indicators. As shown in Table 4, all variables have MSA values above 0.5, indicating that they are appropriate for further analysis without excluding any variables.

Table 4. Measures of Sampling Adequacy (MSA)

No	Factor-Factors	MSA Value	Information
1	Close distance from home to school	0,896[a]	Worthy
2	Transport facilities are available	0,920[a]	Worthy
3	Accreditation is based on content standards	0,875[a]	Worthy
4	Accreditation is based on process standards	0,878[a]	Worthy
5	School facilities are complete	0,914[a]	Worthy
6	Playground facilities are complete	0,898[a]	Worthy
7	School fees are comparable to school quality	0,892[a]	Worthy
8	Fees are affordable	0,905[a]	Worthy
9	Curriculum integrated with religion	0,904[a]	Worthy
10	Independent curriculum	0,895[a]	Worthy
11	Islamic education is balanced	0,912[a]	Worthy
12	Character education is balanced	0,883[a]	Worthy
13	Good professional competence	0,872[a]	Worthy
14	Social competence is good	0,912[a]	Worthy
15	There is complete traditional dance learning	0,870[a]	Worthy
16	The implementation of career counselling is complete	0,816[a]	Worthy
17	Healthy school	0,902[a]	Worthy
18	Orderly school	0,886[a]	Worthy
19	Child Friendly School (SRA)	0,862[a]	Worthy
20	Religious and moral values development is good	0,910[a]	Worthy
21	Language development is good	0,779[a]	Worthy
22	Social development is good	0,505[a]	Worthy

Based on Table 4, the Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) for each variable is above 0.5. According to Santoso (2006), an MSA value of at least 0.5 is required for the variables to be suitable for further analysis. Therefore, all the variables studied significantly correlate with consumer purchasing decisions and meet the MSA criteria, allowing them to be analysed further without excluding any variables.

Communalities

Communalities were analysed to determine how well each factor explains the variance of a variable based on its communality value. A commonality value greater than 0.5 indicates that the factor can sufficiently explain the variables in the study. For example, the variable "close distance from home to school" has a communality value of 0.711, accounting for 71% of the variance in parents' decisions when selecting a kindergarten. Other variables, such as transportation facilities, accreditation, school facilities, costs, curriculum, and various

developmental aspects, also show communality values greater than 0.5, indicating they play a significant role in explaining the variance in school selection. The higher the communality values, the better the research explanation.

Table 5. Communalities

No	Factor-Factors	Initial	Extraction
1	Close distance from home to school	1.000	0,711
2	Transport facilities are available	1.000	0,695
3	Accreditation is based on content standards	1.000	0,559
4	Accreditation is based on process standards	1.000	0,722
5	School facilities are complete	1.000	0,507
6	Playground facilities are complete	1.000	0,613
7	School fees are comparable to school quality	1.000	0,665
8	Fees are affordable	1.000	0,517
9	Curriculum integrated with religion	1.000	0,631
10	Independent curriculum	1.000	0,637
11	Islamic education is balanced	1.000	0,650
12	Character education is balanced	1.000	0,515
13	Good professional competence	1.000	0,586
14	Social competence is good	1.000	0,587
15	There is complete traditional dance learning	1.000	0,692
16	The implementation of career counselling is complete	1.000	0,677
17	Healthy school	1.000	0,648
18	Orderly school	1.000	0,662
19	Child Friendly School (SRA)	1.000	0,577
20	Religious and moral values development is good	1.000	0,608
21	Language development is good	1.000	0,721
22	Social development is good	1.000	0,609

Factor analysis results show that the variable "distance from home to school" has a communality value of 0.711, meaning it accounts for 71% of the variance in parents' decisions when selecting a kindergarten. Other variables, such as transportation facilities, accreditation, school facilities, costs, curriculum, and various developmental aspects, also exhibit communality values greater than 0.5, suggesting they play a significant role in explaining the variance in school selection. When identifying the dominant factors influencing parents' choice of TK IT Al Farabbi kindergarten, eigenvalues greater than one were deemed significant. This analysis highlights that distance, transportation, accreditation, language, social, and moral development are crucial in parents' decision-making process.

Total Variance Explained

The eigenvalues indicate the number of factors formed and reflect the percentage of total variance that these factors can explain. The results show that one factor was formed with an eigenvalue greater than 1, explaining 37.631% of the total variance. A second factor also has an eigenvalue greater than 1, explaining an additional 7.383% of the variance. When combining factors 1 and 2, the total variance explained increases to 45.014%. These findings suggest that one factor alone is sufficient to capture the diversity of the initial variables.

Table 6. 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	8,279	37,631	37,631	8,279	37,631	37,631	4,206	19,120	19,120
2	1,624	7,383	45,014	1,624	7,383	45,014	3,208	14,580	33,701
3	1,397	6,349	51,363	1,397	6,349	51,363	2,623	11,923	45,623
4	1,067	4,850	56,213	1,067	4,850	56,213	2,065	9,388	55,011
5	1,021	4,642	60,855	1,021	4,642	60,855	1,286	5,844	60,855
6	,954	4,338	65,193						
7	,915	4,158	69,351						
8	,840	3,817	73,168						

9	,802	3,645	76,813
10	,730	3,317	80,129
11	,587	2,669	82,799
12	,526	2,392	85,191
13	,488	2,217	87,407
14	,457	2,077	89,485
15	,431	1,959	91,444
16	,362	1,644	93,088
17	,333	1,513	94,601
18	,279	1,267	95,869
19	,255	1,161	97,029
20	,245	1,114	98,144
21	,227	1,033	99,176
22	,181	,824	100,000

The analysis of the 22 indicators identified five factors based on eigenvalues greater than 1. Component 1, with an eigenvalue of 8.279, accounts for 37.631% of the variance, followed by Component 2 (eigenvalue of 1.624, explaining 7.383% of the variance), Component 3 (eigenvalue of 1.379, explaining 6.349% of the variance), Component 4 (eigenvalue of 1.067, explaining 4.850% of the variance), and Component 5 (eigenvalue of 1.021, explaining 4.642% of the variance). Collectively, these five factors account for 60.855% of the total variance. The sum of all eigenvalues equals 22, signifying the relative importance of each factor, with only those above one contributing to the total explained variance.

The scree plot shown below visualises the number of factors. The method involves identifying component points with eigenvalues greater than 1. Five component points have eigenvalues greater than 1, concluding that five factors are formed.
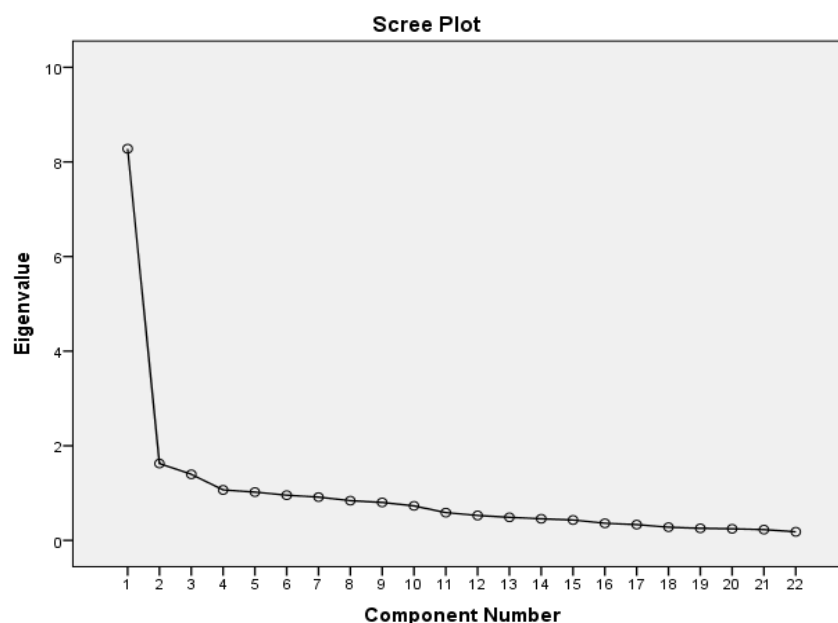

Figure1. Scree Plot

The scree plot illustrates that the line sharply declines from the first factor to the second factor (components numbers 1 to 2). From the second to the fifth factor, the line continues to decline, though less sharply. Beyond the fifth factor, from the sixth to the twenty-second, the line's slope decreases further as the eigenvalues drop below one on the Y-axis. This indicates that the five factors are most effective in summarising the 22 variables influencing respondents' attitudes toward choosing TKIT Al Farabi school.

Component matrix

After identifying the five factors, Table 7 presents the distribution of the 22 variables across these factors. The values in the table represent factor loadings, indicating the correlation between

each variable and Factors 1 and 2. For example, the variable "close distance from home to school" strongly correlates with Factor 1, with a value of 0.667, indicating that this variable is a significant component of this factor. Other variables, such as "available transportation facilities" and "accreditation based on process standards," also show strong correlations, underscoring their importance within their respective factors. For detailed information, refer to Table 7 below:

Table 7. Component Matrix

No	Factor-Factors	1	2	3	4	5
1	Close distance from home to school	**.667**	-.363	-.047	.299	-.209
2	Transport facilities are available	**.727**	.128	.002	.172	-.348
3	Accreditation is based on content standards	**.627**	-.362	-.142	-.060	-.107
4	Accreditation is based on process standards	**.777**	-.238	-.241	-.008	.054
5	School facilities are complete	**.688**	-.067	.056	-.091	.131
6	Playground facilities are complete	**.615**	.211	.238	-.358	.072
7	School fees are comparable to school quality	**.625**	-.212	.097	-.444	.149
8	Fees are affordable	**.549**	-.082	-.068	-.068	-.017
9	Curriculum integrated with religion	**.664**	-.428	.032	.022	.073
10	Independent curriculum	**.674**	.195	-.279	-.217	.142
11	Islamic education is balanced	**.692**	.024	.186	.244	-.275
12	Character education is balanced	**.633**	-.094	-.007	-.063	.042
13	Good professional competence	**.596**	.349	-.223	-.153	.190
14	Social competence is good	**.647**	.179	-.349	.103	.059
15	There is complete traditional dance learning	**.542**	.480	-.322	.102	-.233
16	The implementation of career counselling is complete	**.444**	.362	-.267	.307	.428
17	Healthy school	**.714**	.129	.165	-.231	-.204
18	Orderly school	**.698**	.244	.233	.051	-.243
19	Child Friendly School (SRA)	**.458**	-.160	.357	-.082	.328
20	Religious and moral values development is good	**.608**	-.356	.166	.282	.063
21	Language development is good	.347	.175	.413	**.458**	.436
22	Social development is good	.171	**.429**	.613	-.065	-.127

Based on the component matrix in Table 7, the findings can be summarised as follows:

The variable "distance from home to school" (Factor 1) strongly correlates with Factor 1, with a value of 0.667, indicating that it is a significant component of this factor. Similarly, the variable "available transportation facilities" (Factor 2) has an even stronger correlation of 0.727 with Factor 1, further emphasising its importance within this factor. Additionally, "accreditation based on content standards" (Factor 3) and "accreditation based on process standards" (Factor 4) show correlations of 0.627 and 0.777 with Factor 1, respectively, highlighting their substantial contributions to this factor.

Other variables, such as "complete school facilities" (Factor 5) with a correlation of 0.688 and "complete playground facilities" (Factor 6) with a correlation of 0.615, are also identified as critical components of Factor 1. The variables "school fees proportional to school quality" (Factor 7) and "affordable costs" (Factor 8) have correlations of 0.625 and 0.549 with Factor 1, respectively, which are sufficiently robust to include them in this factor. Furthermore, "curriculum integrated with religion" (Factor 9) and "independent curriculum" (Factor 10), with correlations of 0.664 and 0.674, respectively, are critical components of Factor 1.

"Balanced character education" (Factor 12) with a correlation of 0.633 and "good social competence" (Factor 14) with a correlation of 0.647 also significantly contribute to Factor 1. While the correlations for "professional competence" (Factor 13) at 0.596 and "traditional dance learning" (Factor 15) at 0.542 are slightly lower, they are still considered components of Factor 1.

Moreover, the variable "healthy school" (Factor 17) shows a strong correlation of 0.714 with Factor 1, indicating its importance, as does "orderly school" (Factor 18) with a correlation of 0.698. Some variables, such as "child-friendly school" (Factor 19) and "good language

development" (Factor 21), both with a correlation of 0.458, exhibit moderate correlations, suggesting that they may be better suited to other factors.

The factor loading values indicate that "accreditation based on process standards" correlates highly with Factor 1, implying that Factor 4 is effectively integrated into Factor 1. The initial factor analysis in Table 5 did not provide a precise distribution of variables, necessitating a factor rotation process for enhanced clarity. Table 6 presents the distribution of variables across 22 factors, with the correlation between each variable and its respective factor determining its fit. Variables with high correlations are assigned to the appropriate factors.

Rotated Component Matrix

The rotated component matrix illustrates how the extracted variables are distributed among the factors after rotation based on their factor loading coefficients. Rotation is performed to simplify the interpretation of the factors, and as a result, the factor loading coefficients may change. Variables with factor loadings of ≥ 0.5 are considered to have a solid contribution to the corresponding factor and do not need to be removed. For example, after rotation, the variable "close distance from home to school" has a factor loading of 0.819 on Factor 1, indicating its significant contribution to this factor (Santoso, 2015).

Table 8. Rotated Component Matrix

Groupings	Factor-Factors	School Excellence	Teacher professionalism	Education costs	Good social development	Good language development
1	Close distance from home to school	**.819**	.149	.055	.107	.065
	Transport facilities are available	**.549**	.403	.047	.478	-.015
	Accreditation is based on content standards	**.641**	.176	.324	-.008	-.112
	Accreditation is based on process standards	**.640**	.411	.376	-.044	.019
	Fees are affordable	**.385**	.264	.296	.105	-.004
	Curriculum integrated with religion	**.669**	.080	.399	-.021	.131
	Islamic education is balanced	**.582**	.226	.063	.486	.139
	Character education is balanced	**.427**	.270	.370	.132	.078
	The development of religious and moral values is good	**.676**	.027	.191	.077	.327
2	Independent curriculum	.211	**.629**	.436	.077	-.022
	Good professional competence	.073	**.655**	.357	.136	.074
	Kompetensi sosial bagus	.348	**.663**	.141	.054	.061
	There is complete traditional dance learning	.180	**.725**	-.069	.341	-.110
	The implementation of career counselling is complete	.068	**.681**	.026	-.069	.450
3	School facilities are complete	.405	.284	**.460**	.155	.161
	Playground facilities are complete	.097	.266	**.593**	.419	.073
	School fees are comparable to school quality	.318	.119	**.736**	.087	-.029
	Child Friendly School (SRA)	.238	-.045	**.504**	.113	.389
4	Healthy school	.341	.286	.433	**.508**	-.070
	Orderly school	.369	.317	.194	**.615**	.099
	Social development is good	-.183	-.070	.131	**.710**	.222
5	Language development is good	.123	.113	.046	.209	**.804**

The following section discusses the distribution of items across the identified factors:

Factor rotation analysis revealed significant changes in correlation values, which are crucial in accurately categorising variables within their respective factors. For instance, prior to rotation, the correlation value for available transportation facilities was 0.727 (very high), which decreased to 0.549 (moderate) post-rotation, confirming its alignment with Factor 1. Similarly, accreditation based on content standards had a correlation value of 0.627 (high) before rotation,

which slightly increased to 0.641 (high) after rotation, still aligning with Factor 1. The accreditation based on process standards initially showed a correlation of 0.777 (very high) before rotation, which decreased to 0.640 (high) after rotation but remained within Factor 1.

In Factor 2, focusing on teacher professionalism, the independent curriculum had a correlation value of 0.674 (high) before rotation, slightly dropping to 0.629 (moderate) after rotation. After rotation, professional competence improved from 0.596 (mild) to 0.655 (high). The correlation for traditional dance learning increased from 0.542 (moderate) to 0.725 (high) after rotation, reinforcing its placement in Factor 2. Factor 3, which deals with educational costs and facilities, showed that the correlation for complete school facilities started at 0.688 (high) before rotation but decreased to 0.460 (fair) after rotation. However, it remained in the same group. School fees, initially with a correlation of 0.625 (high), improved to 0.736 (high) post-rotation, further solidifying its categorisation under Factor 3.

In Factor 4, focusing on social development, healthy schools initially had a correlation of 0.714 (very high) before rotation, which decreased to 0.508 (fair) post-rotation. In contrast, the variable of good social development significantly improved from 0.429 (fair) to 0.710 (high) after rotation, ensuring its alignment with Factor 4. Finally, in Factor 5, the correlation for language development showed a substantial increase from 0.458 (fair) before rotation to 0.804 (very high) after rotation, aligning with Factor 5.

Factor rotation effectively distributes items into the appropriate factors, resulting in clarified distribution and better interpretation of the study's results. For example, the variable concerning the distance from home to school, initially placed in Factor 1, remained in the same group after rotation. These changes in correlation values after factor rotation underscore the effectiveness of the process in refining groupings, leading to more accurate and interpretable results.

Loading factor (Component matrix)

The Component Transformation Matrix is the final step in determining the factors. It displays the magnitude of correlation values among the formed factors. Values above 0.5 indicate that the dimension or sub-variable measured by the factor is part of the formed component. The diagonal values in the table show that all components have values above 0.5, confirming that the five factors (components) are correctly formed with strong correlations.

In conclusion, the factors identified in this study demonstrate a significant potential to influence parents' decisions in selecting a kindergarten, as their attitudes directly impact their willingness to choose Al Farabi Kindergarten.

Table 9. Loading factor

No	Old Factor	Correlation	New Factors Form	Loading factor variabel
1	Close distance from home to school	0,819	School Excellence	**0.667**
2	Transport facilities are available	0,676		
3	Accreditation is based on content standards	0,669		
4	Accreditation is based on process standards	0,641		
5	School facilities are complete	0,640'		
6	Playground facilities are complete	0,582		
7	School fees are comparable to school quality	0,549		
8	Fees are affordable	0,427		
9	Curriculum integrated with religion	0,385		
10	Independent curriculum	0,725	Teacher professionalism	**0.727**
11	Islamic education is balanced	0,681		
12	Character education is balanced	0,663		
13	Good professional competence	0,655		
14	Social competence is good	0,629		
15	There is complete traditional dance learning	0,736	Education costs	**0.627**
16	The implementation of career counselling is complete	0,593		
17	Healthy school	0,504		
18	Orderly school	0,460'		
19	Child Friendly School (SRA)	0,710'	Good social development	**0.777**
20	Religious and moral values development is good	0,615		

21	Language development is good	0,508		
22	Social development is good	0,804	Good language development	**0.688**

Component Transformation Matrix

The final factor analysis calculated the loading factor for each variable used in this study. A loading factor value greater than 0.5 indicates that the factor strongly influences parents' decisions regarding kindergarten selection. The higher the loading factor, the more significant the variable's contribution to the factor. For instance, variables such as "independent curriculum" and "traditional dance learning" had loading factors of 0.727 and 0.736, respectively, indicating their strong influence on the corresponding factors (Santoso, 2015). Refer to Table 10 below for more details:

Table 10. Component Transformation Matrix

Component	1	2	3	4	5
1	**.638**	**.503**	.461	.322	.153
2	-.610	**.577**	-.173	**.502**	.109
3	-.072	-.623	.210	**.605**	.443
4	.361	.075	-.747	-.025	**.553**
5	-.292	.139	.395	-.526	**.680**

Table 10 illustrates the component values for factors 1 through 5, indicating that a factor component value greater than 0.50 signifies the inclusion of the dimension or sub-variable in the formed component. The values above the diagonal suggest that the five components exhibit strong correlations, negating the need for further factor analysis. The table reveals that components 1 through 5 have values exceeding 0.50, confirming that the dimensions or sub-variables belong to their respective components. If a measurement variable shows values ≥ 0.50 across two factors, factor analysis must be repeated with varimax or another suitable rotation method until no measurement variable shares values ≥ 0.50 across multiple factors. The diagonal values in the table confirm that each component is appropriately formed, with strong correlations, as demonstrated by the values for components 1 (0.638 and 0.503), 2 (0.577 and 0.502), 3 (0.605), 4 (0.553), and 5 (0.680).

The factors identified in this study demonstrate significant potential to influence parents' decisions in selecting a kindergarten, as their attitudes directly impact their willingness to choose TK Al Farabi. Therefore, this study successfully identifies the key factors parents consider when choosing a school for their children.

Discussion

This study was conducted to identify the factors that significantly influence parents' decisions when selecting early childhood education institutions, particularly TKIT Al Farabi, using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Previous research has highlighted the complexity of school selection, noting that parents consider various factors, including school excellence, teacher professionalism, and education costs (Setyariza et al., 2024; Krismawintari, 2016). Developing children's social and language skills has also been emphasised as critical in early childhood education (Khadijah & Zahraini, 2021; Madyawati, 2017). Despite these insights, a detailed examination of how these factors interrelate and influence parental choices has been lacking, which this study seeks to address by applying CFA to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors involved.

The findings of this study indicate that five critical factors, school excellence, teacher professionalism, education costs, good social development, and good language development, play a crucial role in parents' school selection decisions. Among these, good social development was identified as the most dominant factor, with a factor loading of 0.777, suggesting its paramount importance in parental decision-making. Unexpectedly, the emphasis on teacher professionalism also emerged as a significant determinant, with a loading factor of 0.727,

reflecting parents' value of holistic education that extends beyond academic achievements. The analysis also revealed that school excellence and education costs, traditionally considered primary factors, are still relevant but are complemented by social and language development concerns. These results highlight the multifaceted nature of parental decision-making in the context of early childhood education.

The results of this study are consistent with previous findings, particularly those that emphasise the importance of school excellence and teacher quality in school selection (Herman, 2023; Alexandro et al., 2021). However, the dominance of social development as a deciding factor contrasts with earlier studies that prioritised academic achievement and school reputation (Fenty & Bintoro, 2018; Depdikbud RI, 1993). This shift suggests a changing parental perspective, where the development of social competencies is increasingly seen as essential for children's future success. Moreover, the study confirms that education costs remain a significant consideration, aligning with findings that financial aspects are critical in parental decision-making (Susanto & Rahma, 2023; Fiandi & Junaidi, 2022). The unity and divergence with previous research underscore the evolving priorities of parents in the context of early childhood education.

Contradictions with earlier studies also emerged, particularly regarding the weight given to teacher professionalism. While previous research primarily linked teacher quality to academic outcomes (Setyariza et al., 2024; Haryani et al., 2024), this study finds that parents equally value teachers' ability to nurture social and emotional development in their children. This broader interpretation of teacher professionalism reflects a holistic approach to education that goes beyond traditional academic metrics (Fitri & Na'imah, 2020; Mohrman et al., 1994). The findings also suggest that integrating non-academic skills into the curriculum is becoming a critical factor in parental choice, which was less emphasised in prior research. These results indicate a nuanced understanding of educational quality among parents, highlighting the increasing importance of comprehensive child development.

The emphasis on good social development as a primary factor can be attributed to the growing recognition of early social interactions' role in children's overall development. Studies have shown that children who develop strong social skills early on are better equipped to navigate complex social environments and achieve long-term success (Idad, 2016; Hurlock, 1978). This study's significant factor loading for social development reinforces that parents are increasingly aware of the importance of a supportive and interactive school environment. However, it is important to interpret these findings cautiously, as the focus on social development may vary depending on cultural and socioeconomic contexts (Khadijah & Zahraini, 2021; Syuhud, 2019). Therefore, while the results are significant, they should be considered within broader regional and demographic differences.

Similarly, the high loading factor for language development underscores the critical role of communication skills in early childhood education. Language development is foundational to children's cognitive and social growth, influencing their ability to succeed academically and socially (Riyanti, 2020; Kurnia, 2019). The findings suggest that parents prioritise schools that offer robust language programs, recognising the long-term benefits of early language acquisition. This focus on language skills aligns with educational theories that advocate for early and intensive language instruction to enhance overall educational outcomes (Madyawati, 2017; Miranti & Putri, 2021). However, the importance placed on language development also requires careful interpretation, as it may reflect specific parental expectations and educational goals rather than a universal trend.

The implications of these findings are significant for educational institutions and policymakers. The prominence of social and language development as critical factors in school

selection indicates a need for schools to adopt more holistic and integrated curricula that address academic and non-academic competencies. This approach would meet the evolving demands of parents and align with global educational trends that emphasise the development of well-rounded individuals (Sit, 2017; Nurhayati et al., 2019). For TKIT Al Farabi and similar institutions, these insights suggest opportunities to enhance their programs by focusing on the comprehensive development of students, which could lead to improved satisfaction among parents and better educational outcomes for students. Ultimately, these findings contribute to a broader understanding of the factors influencing school selection and highlight the need for a more nuanced approach to early childhood education.

Conclusion

This study aimed to simplify parents' decision-making in selecting suitable early childhood education using the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) method. The analysis revealed that five key factors significantly influence parental choices: school excellence, teacher professionalism, education costs, social development, and language development. These factors collectively explain over 60% of the variability in the data, with school excellence and teacher professionalism emerging as the dominant considerations. The findings indicate that parents prioritise a combination of academic and non-academic attributes, suggesting that schools should adopt more holistic and integrated curricula to meet these diverse expectations. The implications of these findings are substantial for both educational institutions and policymakers. The emphasis on social and language development underscores the necessity for schools to offer programs that address not only academic excellence but also the broader developmental needs of children. This aligns with global educational trends that advocate for cultivating well-rounded individuals, potentially leading to greater parental satisfaction and improved student outcomes. Despite these insights, the study's limitations include its specific geographic focus and reliance on CFA, which may not fully capture the complexity of parental decision-making. Future research should explore these factors in diverse settings and employ mixed-method approaches to deepen understanding and enhance the relevance of educational programs.

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