

A Supportive Social Environment Conducive to Learning is A Key Consideration for Parents when Choosing A Nature School in Klaten

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to identify the factors considered by parents in choosing nature schools. The uniqueness of the study lies in exploring parents' interest specifically in nature-based education and focusing solely on nature schools. *Methodology:* This study uses a quantitative method with a descriptive approach. The population consists of 70 parents from three nature schools in Klaten Regency, and a sample of 60 parents was selected using proportional random sampling. Data were collected through direct questionnaire distribution and analyzed using descriptive data analysis with SPSS 25. *Results:* The results show that the factor with the highest average score is the social environment that supports the learning atmosphere, with an average score of 3.65. This indicates that positive interactions between teachers and children as well as among students are highly prioritized by parents. Meanwhile, the factor with the lowest score is accessibility and location (2.90), showing that ease of access is not a major consideration when choosing a nature school. *Applications/Originality/Value:* This study highlights parents' priorities in selecting nature schools and provides new insight by focusing exclusively on nature-based early childhood education settings. The findings can serve as a reference for nature schools to strengthen the social environment that supports learning, as this is the most influential factor for parents. The study also offers value for policymakers and educators by identifying which aspects are most critical in promoting and improving nature school quality.

Keywords: Parental decisions, Social environment, Learning atmosphere, Nature school.

Introduction Section

Education is an individual's effort to develop their potential in both academic and non-academic fields. The academic field relates to knowledge of teaching materials. The non-academic field relates to creativity that can develop children's interests and talents. Both complement each other to form competent individuals. This statement is reinforced by the definition of education contained in Law Number 20 of 2003, Article 1, Number 1, concerning the National Education System ([Indonesia, 2003](#)), education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed by themselves, the community, the nation, and the state. Education needs to be implemented properly and equally throughout Indonesia to support the future of the nation. To have a bright future for the nation, educated individuals are needed. According to [Makkawaru \(2019\)](#), education plays a role in shaping the character of each individual. Character is the key to individual success. Education that aims to shape character can be carried out from an early age, which can determine a child's nature or character in adulthood ([Sakinah et al., 2022](#)). From the above statement, it can be said that the main foundation of education lies in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) because character building from an early age can help children prepare for the next level of education.

Considering that PAUD is the main foundation of education, choosing a PAUD requires careful consideration so that children can achieve the best education. Currently, PAUD has a variety of learning approaches that parents can choose from according to their children's needs. Each PAUD institution can implement different educational models. There are PAUDs that use a conventional approach with classroom learning, while others are center-based, emphasizing play experiences in specific areas. Some PAUD institutions adopt the Montessori method, which emphasizes children's independence and freedom in choosing activities. In addition, there are religious-based PAUDs that add reinforcement of values and worship habits in daily activities, as well as inclusive PAUDs that integrate children with special needs with other children through learning adjustments. One option that is currently growing in popularity is nature-based PAUD or nature schools, which utilize the surrounding environment as the main source of learning, so that children spend a lot of time outdoors, exploring nature, gardening, and learning through direct experience. With so many different approaches available, parents can choose the PAUD that best suits their child's development.

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In this modern era, urban communities live in environments with small yards and a lack of plants and animals around their homes. As a result, many children have never seen a chicken, banana tree, or other animals in person. This has encouraged parents to choose schools that emphasize children's direct experiences in nature, namely nature schools. According to (Ningrum et al., 2019), the first nature school was established in 1998 in Ciganjur by Lendo, which then spread throughout Indonesia. Thus, in 2011, the Nusantara Nature School Network (JSAN) was formed to provide space for nature schools throughout Indonesia. According to (Pasawa Ilham, 2024), in 2011 there were approximately 57 nature schools that joined the Nusantara Nature School Network (JSAN). In 2024, there are more than 200 nature schools that have joined the Nusantara Nature School Network (JSAN) and are spread throughout Indonesia. Comparing the period from 2011 to 2024, there has been a significant increase in the number of nature schools in Indonesia, which reflects the growing interest of parents in nature-based education.

The increase in parental interest in nature schools is inseparable from the emergence of a trend of *green parenting* and lifestyle among young parents. *Green parenting* is a parenting style that prioritizes concern for the surrounding environment (Dharmastuti et al., 2025). This trend has emerged as a sign that public awareness of the environment is increasing. Parents who practice *green parenting* tend to choose schools for their children that are connected to nature, such as nature schools. According to Keller, nature schools are schools that pay more attention to children's development in learning, especially in the natural environment (Justicia et al., 2022). From what is known, nature schools are educational institutions that utilize the surrounding nature as a place of learning, teaching materials, and learning objects. With the concept of nature schools, children are able to gain direct experience from the surrounding natural environment and relate the lessons and application of knowledge they have learned to their lives. The learning activities carried out by children in nature include farming, outbound activities, exploration of the natural environment, and so on, which encourage children to not only learn in classrooms, but also to learn in harmony with the outdoors. This is because learning at nature schools brings children closer to nature through direct activities in the open air. The application of *green parenting* by parents can enable preschool children to learn about values related to the environment (Husain, 2025). Parents who are interested in enrolling their children in nature schools need time to think in order to make the right decision.

Parents play a major role as decision makers who determine the direction of a child's education. Therefore, parents need to consider their decisions carefully to avoid making mistakes that will have a negative impact on the quality of their child's education. Children may feel uncomfortable, unmotivated, or even stressed if their learning environment does not support their developmental needs. Conversely, the right decision regarding school selection will have a positive impact on a child's education. According to Chew (2010), the factors that influence their choice of school are excellent service, a social environment that supports learning, excellent classroom infrastructure, and the quality of teachers. The Location Theory in (Khasbulloh, 2020) states that location influences the existence of various businesses or activities. Thus, the location of a school is also one of the factors that can influence the community in choosing an educational institution. Meanwhile, (Amri et al. 2021) states that cost is one of the factors that influence a person's decision in choosing an educational institution. Research conducted by (Syah et al., 2025) states that accreditation is a consideration in choosing a school because accreditation status reflects educational standards in schools, so schools with good accreditation can increase parents' trust in the quality of the school.

Based on these opinions, the researchers determined that they would take seven factors as a reference for what parents need to consider when choosing a nature school, namely: excellent service; a social environment that supports the learning atmosphere; excellent classroom infrastructure; accreditation; accessibility and location; cost; and the quality of educators. First, excellent service in education is a form of service provided by educational institutions, whether by teachers, principals, administrative staff, or other support staff, which is carried out professionally, friendly, quickly, and with high quality, so that it is able to meet or even exceed the expectations of students and parents. This service is not only limited to academic aspects but also includes non-academic services such as administration, counseling, school facilities, communication with parents, and a conducive learning environment. Excellent service is part of efforts to improve the overall quality of education.

Second, a supportive social environment for learning includes all forms of interaction, relationships, and social conditions that are formed between students, educators, educational staff, and the community surrounding the school that influence the learning process and outcomes. The learning environment for children must be free from things that cause them to become easily stressed (Latief, 2023). Therefore, there needs to be an environment that supports learning so that children do not become stressed. Third, excellent classroom infrastructure, all physical resources and learning support facilities in the classroom that are optimally designed and provided to create a comfortable, safe, effective, and supportive learning environment for active student involvement. Facilities are not only physical spaces, but also other aspects such as teaching materials, technological infrastructure, and an environment that supports children's social and emotional development (Najmah et al., 2025).

The fourth is accreditation, which is an assessment of the quality of an educational institution by an authorized body that aims to determine the eligibility and quality of the institution in providing educational services. There are two types of quality assurance in education for each school, namely internal quality assurance and external quality assurance (K. Amri et al., 2022). Internal quality assurance is carried out by the school itself through self-evaluation, while external quality assurance is carried out through accreditation. The better the accreditation results of a school, the better the quality of the school. Schools with good accreditation are more sought after by the community. The fifth factor is accessibility and

location, which refers to the ease with which students, parents, or the community can reach an educational institution in terms of distance, travel time, road conditions, and availability of transportation. Meanwhile, location refers to the geographical location of the school or educational institution, which also affects the comfort, safety, and effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

Sixth is cost, which is a reference in determining whether the facilities and services provided are appropriate or not. As in the study by (Tjay et al., 2025), if parents feel that the cost of education is affordable, transparent, and commensurate with the quality of education provided, then the stronger the parents' decision to choose that school will be. Seventh is the quality of educators. Educators are graduates who are relevant to their field, namely graduates from the Early Childhood Education Teacher Education Program (PG-PAUD) and are also certified. According to (Fiyul et al., 2025), the quality of educators is not only determined by training after becoming a teacher, but also before becoming a teacher. Therefore, the government must also improve the early childhood education teacher education curriculum in higher education. Quality educators will produce quality students.

There are several studies related to school selection for children, namely the first by (Liani et al., 2019) entitled "Factors Affecting Parents' Decisions in Choosing Kindergarten Education Institutions". The second by (Thoyyibah et al., n. d.) entitled "Analysis of Factors Considered by Parents in Choosing Schools". The third study was conducted by (Mu'ammalah et al., 2022) entitled "Survey of Factors Affecting Parents of Students in Choosing Kindergartens in RW 01 Kertajaya, Surabaya." The fourth study was conducted by (Kurniawan (2023) entitled "Parents' Considerations in Choosing Kindergartens." A number of these studies have examined the factors that influence parents' choice of school, but most focus on the context of public schools. These studies generally highlight cost, teacher quality, and accreditation as dominant factors. However, studies that focus on examining the factors that influence parents' decisions in choosing nature schools are still limited, especially through a quantitative approach. Previous studies discussing nature schools have focused more on the curriculum approach, pedagogical benefits, or child character development, rather than on parents' considerations in the process of choosing a nature school. Therefore, the author is interested in research that is more centered on nature schools. For this reason, the author has chosen to conduct research that focuses more on nature schools. This study focuses on the considerations underlying parents' decisions in choosing nature schools for early childhood. Its uniqueness lies in exploring parents' interest in nature-based education and focusing solely on nature schools.

Method

This research uses a quantitative method with a descriptive approach. Data collection was conducted using direct questionnaire distribution. The population of this study consisted of 70 parents of children attending nature schools located in Klaten Regency, namely KB TK Alam Aqila, Sekolah Alam Ulil Albab, and Sanggar Alam Aulia. The sample size in this study was determined using the Slovin formula with a margin of error of 5%, resulting in a sample size of 60 respondents, who were then selected using proportional random sampling. From these three schools, a sample of 60 parents was taken from KB TK Alam Aqila with 33 parents, Sekolah Alam Ulil Albab with 18 parents, and Sanggar Alam Aulia with 9 parents.

Data collection was conducted by distributing questionnaires directly by researchers at KB TK Alam Aqila, Sekolah Alam Ulil Albab, and Sanggar Alam Aulia with the assistance of the school principals. The collected data will be analyzed using SPSS 25. Before conducting the research, the research instrument was tested by distributing questionnaires to 10 respondents outside the sample from KB TK Alam Aqila with 7 parents, Sekolah Alam Ulil Albab with 2 parents, and Sanggar Alam Aulia with 1 parent. The instrument was developed by the author based on existing theories. The instrument consists of 20 statement items with 7 factors. First, the factor of excellent service (X1) with 3 statement items. Second, the factor of a social environment that supports the learning atmosphere (X2) with 2 statement items. Third, the factor of excellent classroom infrastructure (X3) with 3 statement items. Fourth, the school accreditation factor (X4) with 1 statement item. Fifth, the accessibility and location factor (X5) with 3 statement items. Sixth, the cost factor (X6) with 3 statement items. Seventh, the educator quality factor (X7) with 5 statement items.

Next, a validity test was conducted with an r table of 0.632. If the calculated r is less than the r table, the statement item can be declared invalid. The results of the validity test showed that there were 4 invalid statement items. The invalid items were revised. Next, an instrument reliability test was conducted to ensure that each item was reliable. The test was conducted with characteristics similar to the target population. The reliability test used Cronbach's Alpha approach with SPSS. The instrument was declared reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value was > 0.60 . From the reliability test table below, the research instrument can be declared reliable because the Cronbach's Alpha value is > 0.60 , namely 0.943.

Table 1. Reliability Test

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.945	0.943	20

Results

The instrument testing proved to be valid and reliable, so the instrument can be used for research. The next step was to distribute the questionnaire directly and tabulate the respondents' answers. The collected data was then recapitulated using Microsoft Excel and the scores were calculated based on a 1-4 rating scale. The data obtained was then processed using descriptive analysis techniques to obtain the average value of each factor. The average value was used to determine the level of consideration of each factor in parents' decisions in choosing a nature school.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Each Factor

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
X1 MEAN	60	193	227	639	3.55	.569
X2 MEAN	60	213	225	438	3.65	.606
X3 MEAN	60	197	210	606	3.37	.568
X4 MEAN	60	187	187	187	3.12	.783
X5 MEAN	60	164	183	522	2.90	1.035
X6 MEAN	60	190	216	605	3.36	.633
X7 MEAN	60	170	223	977	3.26	.687
Valid N (listwise)	60					

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis of Each Item

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Min	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
X1.1	60	164	227	219	3.65	.685
X1.2	60	164	227	227	3.78	.555
X1.3	60	164	227	193	3.22	.958
X2.1	60	164	227	225	3.75	.654
X2.2	60	164	227	213	3.55	.699
X3.1	60	164	227	210	3.50	.624
X3.2	60	164	227	199	3.32	.651
X3.3	60	164	227	197	3.28	.761
X4.1	60	164	227	187	3.12	.783
X5.1	60	164	227	183	3.05	1,141
X5.2	60	164	227	164	2.73	1,087
X5.3	60	164	227	175	2.92	1,046
X6.1	60	164	227	216	3.60	.643
X6.2	60	164	227	190	3.17	.806

X6.3	60	164	227	199	3.32	.813
X7.1	60	164	227	184	3.07	.821
X7.2	60	164	227	193	3.22	.885
X7.3	60	164	227	170	2.83	.905
X7.4	60	164	227	207	3.45	.872
X7.5	60	164	227	223	3.72	.715
Valid N (listwise)	60					

Based on the results of descriptive analysis, the average scores for each factor are as follows:

1. X1, namely Excellent Service, which has an average value of **3.55**, shows that most parents consider the cost of nature school to be quite affordable.
2. X2, namely a social environment that supports learning, has an average score of 3.65
3. X3, Excellent Classroom Infrastructure, has an average score of 3.37
4. X4, Accreditation, has an average score of 3.12
5. X5, Accessibility and Location, has an average score of 2.90
6. X6, Cost factors, has an average score of 3.36
7. X7, which is the quality of educators, has an average score of 3.26

Based on the results of descriptive analysis, it is known that of all the factors that have the highest average value in considering the decision to choose a nature school, the factor is the social environment that supports the learning atmosphere with an average value of 3.65. There are two statement items in this factor. Item X2.1 concerns parents choosing nature schools by considering the good relationship between teachers and children. Item X2.1 has an average score of 3.75. Item X2.2 concerns parents choosing nature schools by considering the existence of good relationships between children. Item X2.2 has an average score of 3.55. Thus, item X2.1 has a higher average score than item X2.2.

However, when looking at all the statement items, it turns out that the highest average score is found in item X1.2, with an average score of 3.78, which concerns parents considering the teaching and learning process that can develop children's abilities and skills. Item X1.2 is in the superior service factor. However, overall, the social environment factor remains the factor with the highest average score because the average score of a factor is determined by the combined average scores of the items within it.

The factor with the lowest average score was accessibility and location, with an average score of 2.90. This factor consisted of three items. Item X5.1 contained considerations regarding the location of schools that were easily accessible from the respondents' residences. Item X5.2 contained considerations regarding the location of schools that were located next to roads because they were easily accessible by various means of transportation. For example, when picking up children, one can use a car or motorcycle. Item X5.3 contains considerations regarding the location of the school having safe and convenient road access. For example, such as passing through road which does not turn and avoids traffic jams. Of the three items on , the accessibility and location factor had the lowest average value, namely item X5.2 with an average value of 2.73..

Discussion

The results show that the factor with the highest average score in parents' decision to choose a nature school is the social environment that supports the learning atmosphere, with a score of 3.65. This indicates that parents prioritize positive social interactions in early childhood education environments. The statement about the good relationship between teachers and children (X2.1) obtained a higher average score of 3.75 compared to the relationship between children (X2.2), which obtained a score of 3.55. This confirms that the role of teachers as educators is very important in the eyes of parents. Teachers are not only educators, but also facilitators, companions, and substitutes for parents at school who provide comfort for children. A positive relationship between teachers and children can create a positive learning atmosphere. This is relevant to the results of research [by \(Hilda, 2023\)](#), which states that in close relationships, teachers are able to create a safe classroom atmosphere where children feel listened to, valued, and actively involved in the learning process. Through positive relationships between teachers and children, it can help children become confident, independent individuals who are able to interact well in social environments. Research from [\(Habsy et al., 2023\)](#) states that a positive learning

environment also allows for healthy social interaction. Collaboration between children and teachers is an important component of effective education. Relationships between fellow students also influence the social environment that supports the learning atmosphere because having friends can make children excited to learn. This is in line with research from (Hidayah et al., 2024), which states that students will feel comfortable, enthusiastic, and supported when there is good interaction with teachers and peers. Therefore, parents view the quality of social relationships at Sekolah Alam as a major factor in their decision-making.

Of all the items, the statement with the highest average score was item X1.2 with a score of 3.78, which relates to teaching and learning activities that develop children's abilities and skills. This shows that parents also pay attention to the quality of the learning process. In nature schools, the learning process is carried out through direct experience, enabling children to learn many things. This is in line with the results of research by (Nopiana, 2025), which states that children will be actively involved in exploring the environment, showing increased observation, sensitivity to living things, and understanding of basic ecological principles. Children will become more courageous in trying new things. Thus, Sekolah Alam is considered to provide a more meaningful learning experience than conventional learning.

The factor with the lowest average score was accessibility and location, with an average score of 2.90. This shows that ease of access to school is not a major consideration for most parents. This finding suggests that parents tend to be willing to travel longer distances as long as the school can guarantee good quality education and a good social environment. The results of the study by (Rosha et al., 2017) show that school location does not influence the decision to choose a school. This means that school location is not a factor for parents in their decision to choose a school. Parents prefer good quality schools even if they are far away.

Conclusion

The main consideration in choosing a nature school is the social environment factor that supports the learning atmosphere, with a score of 3.65. The second is the superior service factor, with a score of 3.55. Third, the factor of excellent classroom infrastructure with an average score of 3.37. Fourth, the factor of cost with a score of 3.36. Fifth, the factor of educator quality with an average score of 3.26. Sixth, the factor of accreditation with a score of 3.12. Finally, the factor of accessibility and location with a score of 2.90. Thus, it can be concluded that parents' decision to choose Sekolah Alam is mostly driven by considerations of the social environment that supports the learning atmosphere, namely positive interactions between teachers and children and among peers. The last factor considered by parents in choosing Sekolah Alam is accessibility and location.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, it is recommended that nature schools continue to strengthen the social environment that supports the learning atmosphere, particularly by improving the quality of interactions between teachers and children and among students, while also improving the quality of services, infrastructure, and educator competencies so that nature-based learning experiences are optimised. Schools also need to conduct regular evaluations of parent satisfaction and socialise the advantages of nature-based education more intensively. Meanwhile, parents are advised to continue to be actively involved in their children's education, build good communication with the school, and consider various important factors such as the quality of educators, school services, and the suitability of the learning environment to their children's needs, so that the decision to choose a nature school truly supports their children's overall development. For further research, it is recommended to expand the population coverage and consider additional variables and make comparisons with non-nature school early childhood education units in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture.

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