

Private public school similarities and differences education essay



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This research paper focuses on the similarities and differences of private and public school education. It deciphers several truths and realities associated with these two systems. Risks and benefits along with teacher's credentials in private and public schools are discussed in detail. Another factor brought to light is the positive role played by ample resources in the betterment of private sector and the loss it has incurred to public sector education system.

Introduction

Parents always face this query whether they should choose a private school or public schools. They want best for their children and it is a normal perception that private schools are way better than public schools in terms of quality and academic excellence. Although problems exist in both the sectors but due to ample resources in private system of education, these problems can be minimized and their adverse impact can be reduced as compared to public sector. Despite the positive and negative similarities and differences in private and public schools, these adequate resources in private sector impels people to believe that private education is a better option.

Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international study launched by OECD. This program aims to evaluate education system across the globe (Anonymous, PISA). Their studies have repeatedly shown that private school students perform better than students from public schools. The research conducted by PISA has reported that this is due to the socio economic backgrounds of these students. However the growing popularity of private sector schools cannot be denied but other than the

shortage of funds many other factors turn down the reputation of public schools. Some of these factors are discussed below.

Bullying in Private Public Schools

Bullying is a psychological concept that includes acts of meanness, threats and physical assaults (Nan). This is a common phenomenon in our schools but many studies have reported that public school students are more prone to bullying than private school students. Majority private schools invest in anti-bullying programs to further minimize the number of such incidents. The state laws also cover these issues but in public schools it is difficult to implement such policies because of lack of qualified staff. These laws against bullying do not cover the private schools so normally each private school has to make its own policy against this subject. At private schools there are more teachers per students and this makes it easier to detect such problematic situations (Roddy). In addition to that private schools have better facilities, resources and ample time to focus on these issues.

Risk and Benefits in Public and Private Schools

Public schools are free of cost and they are open to all students. Even a minor who cannot afford the basic necessities of life can give their child education through these institutes. On the other hand each private school has its distinctive admission procedure and higher tuition fee, so they only entertain students from higher or above average economic background. Private schools normally set high standards and provide better services to train students to excel in future. So they are normally high achievers as compared to public school students. They are more likely to complete a

bachelor's or advanced degree by their mid-20s. This is also evident from the data given below.

Table 1

Academic excellence comparison in private and public schools (2000)

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Adapted from: " United States of America." Private Schools: A Brief Portrait

Council of American Private Education, 2012. [http://www. capenet. org/benefits. html](http://www.capenet.org/benefits.html)

Why do people prefer private schools over public schools? Other than the difference in the quality of education another factor is the safety of the students. This is a major risk factor associated with public schooling.

Although this dilemma is also present in private schools but the situation is much better there as shown in the chart below:

Table 2

Comparison of Safety Issues in Private and Public Schools

Percentage of teachers who perceive certain issues as serious problems in their schools

Public

Private

use of alcohol

7

3

drug abuse

6

2

Percentage of teachers in 2007-08 who reported that a student...

Public

Private

threatened them with injury

8. 1

2. 6

physically attacked them

4. 3

1. 9

Percentage of students, age 12-18, who in 2009 reported...

Public

Private

having experienced criminal victimization at school

4. 1

1. 8

fearing being attacked or harmed at school

4. 4

1. 9

seeing hate-related graffiti at school

30. 7

11. 8

that they avoided certain places in school for fear of their own safety

4. 2

1. 8

that gangs were present in school

22. 0

2, 3

Adapted from: “ United States of America.” Private Schools: A Brief Portrait

Council of American Private Education, 2012. [http://www. capenet. org/benefits. html](http://www.capenet.org/benefits.html)

These statistics clearly indicate the gap between public and private schools in context of safety. It is extremely important for students to have a safer environment for healthy learning and development. The concerned parents will never opt a school where the safety of their child is at risk and in case of

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any doubt they would definitely turn towards private school if it is affordable for them.

Classes Size in Private and Public School

Ideally class size should be small because this affects the learning behavior. A single teacher can only handle a certain number of students at one time. Many reports and studies have shown that reduction in class size has resulted in higher performance of students (Reese). Although many other factors are also important and this could not be named as a major factor that enhances learning but it is still an important aspect. As public schools are open for everyone so they have normally overly crowded classes. These large sized classes hinder learning of individuals. The mental level and capacity is different of each student and teacher should have abundant time to focus on every student.

This is not the case in private schools as there are small sized classes and teachers focus on individual students and they do not feel isolated. The issue is that private schools charge more so they are in a better position to provide better facilities and equipment. This could also be taken the other way round considering the fact that as the fee structure in private schools is not affordable for most of the parents so they have to turn towards public schools and this over burdens the public sector.

Special Need Students

Many psychological, physical, emotional and behavioral disorders lead to difficulty in learning and problems of concentration in special need students (Walford). These special need students require extra services and better

facilities to improve their condition so they could also enjoy a normal, healthy lifestyle. Although most states have special laws regarding these special students to provide them quality education for free. But in spite of all these state and federal laws there have been complaints about the system in the publicly owned special schools. Many parents have been reported who were forced to go private to provide their child with special needs a quality lifestyle. The number of publicly owned special schools is declining because they lack appropriate facilities to educate and help students with special needs. Special education requires qualified staff and therapists and advanced training systems but mostly public schools fail to provide these services. Another drawback of the public special schools is that the parents cannot choose. The admission is a quite complex procedure and only the state decides that in which school will a certain student will get enrolled. This limits their choice and so they would definitely go for a private school of their own choice.

Teachers Credentials in Private and Public Schools

Just like parents teachers are also followed by difficulty of choosing between private and public schools. This field is a competitive one as there is more number of teachers than the jobs available. The public school teachers need to be certified by the state to hold the position in the school but this is not the case in private school system. Each private school working independently of state follows its own hiring procedure. A few private schools do not demand teacher certification from the state as their governing body has not imposed such restrictions.

The pay structure is also a difference between private and public schools. The state laws mostly define the pay structure and all schools have to follow them. The public schools funding comes from taxes and they often have to go through major cuts in the pay structure. This demotivates the staff working in the public schools. On the contrary the source of funding in private schools is the private parties and so they rarely face a lack of funds. The tuition fees are so high that private schools somehow manage to keep their teaching staff satisfied but they never compromise on competence and efficiency.

Conclusion

So on the whole private and public schools are working on the same grounds as they are both following the state laws and regulations to an extent but the level of autonomy that both sectors face separates their paths in the education sector. Mostly private schools are working independently and are self-reliant to make changes in the system. In contrast to private schools, public schools lack this opportunity and are dependent on government funding. Thus, they are part of a bureaucratic structure and lack competitive skills. This enhances the gap between public and private schooling and hence create inequality in the society.