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By

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May, 2012

WHY MONTESSORI: A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

A Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Education

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the rationale parents have for placing their children in a Montessori School above all other means of education. A 26-question survey was administered utilizing quantitative and qualitative items that addressed placement reasons and perceptions of the quality of education children should receive. There are approximately 80 parents at The Innovative Montessori School located in Houston, out of which 36 responded. The results indicate that parents choose Montessori education due to the classroom structure and the curriculum, known as the Montessori Method. It was also noted the reason for continuing Montessori was because their children enjoyed learning and had positive self-perceptions of the learning environment present in a Montessori classroom.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Maria Montessori's work, the Montessori Method, is a structured way of educating a child within his/her own natural environment, and the teacher acts as a facilitator of learning while the student directs her/his learning through challenging pathways. Maria Montessori's research describes how children should learn in a naturalistic environment where they begin to learn how to respect their surroundings and become integrated individuals within the classroom. This also translates into a child's integration as an individual into society. The goal of education is to provide skills and knowledge and to help assimilate students into society as product individuals (Spring, 2011), and Montessori education directs children to become active participants in their surroundings through mutual respect and understanding of other individuals and the environment in which they are present. It is also encouraged for parents to continue this style of learning at home and to incorporate the Montessori philosophy into their daily lifestyle.

The Montessori Method emerged in Europe during an essentialist era where education was based on memorizing and reciting. During the essentialist era, the teacher was the focal point of the classroom, and the students were taught under a strict environment. Much of the world operated under an essentialism style of learning (Spring, 2011). During the time of Maria Montessori, many progressive scientists were already emerging with their works of innovative learning (Shortridge, 2007). However, when Maria Montessori visited America with her research, her ideas were not welcomed in education by many. "When Maria Montessori addressed two wildly enthusiastic

American audiences at Carnegie Hall in December 1913, she thrilled the parents in the audience, but sent a shock wave through the educational establishment” (Shortridge, 2007, p. 34).

Chapter II

Review of Literature

The Montessori philosophy takes on a holistic approach to learning in which the child is the focal point. “Montessori was the progenitor of revolutionary approach to education. She formulated an auto-education philosophy and methodology encompassing characteristics of rational cognitive development and organic holism that would stand the test of time and endure into the 21st century” (Shortridge, 2007, p.46). A Student is encouraged to guide his/her learning by postulating his/her own inquiry of knowledge through personal interests within a limited and structured environment. The child’s learning is fueled by his/her own scientific process of acquiring knowledge, and the teacher merely facilitates the learning process. This concept is described as discovery based learning, in which the child takes ownership of his or her knowledge, thus, becoming intrinsically motivated to learn. “The quality of children’s day-to-day involvement in academic activities is, in turn, the route to their long-term learning, socialization, and development in school” (Furrer & Skinner, 2003, p. 149).

Montessori education focuses on mastering skills appropriate to the child’s development instead of placing emphasis on grades derived from formal assessments. Acquisition of knowledge is allocated to a mastery approach for Montessori students rather than a performance approach. Non-Montessori students demonstrate skills when there are forms of extrinsic motivation, and performance approach rewards such as grades, report cards, and test performance, as opposed to Montessori students (Erwin, et al, 2010). Moreover, Montessori students report more intrinsic motivation and higher affect while engaging in academic activities than non-Montessori students (Rathunde &

Csikszentmihalyi, 2005); thus, “this behavior is associated with a psychological state of positive affect and persistence and tends to result in increased learning” (Ainley, Hidi, & Berndorff, 2002, p. 545).

One of the main constructs in a Montessori classroom that benefits a child’s individual differences is interest. Individual interest is associated with positive affect, thus, giving value to the engagement of tasks rather than the outcome (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Dr. Montessori stated that arousing a child’s interest was a key component in task completion (Montessori, 1995). “Montessori education encourages children to pursue issues that fascinate them, allowing more general learning to accrue through the pursuit of those individual interests” (Lillard, 2005, p. 115). Subsequently, the child learns mastery based skills more effectively through his/her own realm of interest. “Montessori education also capitalizes on interests that appear regularly at particular times in development” (Lillard, 2005, p. 31), which foster’s the child’s need to learn based on his /her own individualized perspective of interest throughout life as a continuous form of learning. Also, when children exhibit personal interests in the classroom, they indirectly teach one another, known as cooperative learning (Powell, 2008). “Social creativity stems from interactions between cognitive, conative, emotional, and environmental variables” (Mounchiroud & Bernoussi, 2008, p. 373). Subsequently, individual interest “is associated with a psychological state of positive affect and persistence and tends to result in increased learning” (Ainley, et. al., 2002, p. 545).

The Montessori Method fosters individual differences within the structure of the curriculum because every child is regarded as a unique individual possessing unique interests and learning techniques. Freedom and autonomy allows the child to learn at

his/her individualized pace because “teachers enhance student motivation by following the child’s lead through monitoring each individual student’s interest” (Murray, 2001, p. 28). The teacher’s role in the classroom is to identify each child’s strengths and weaknesses and to build upon them to enhance cognitive growth which is interrelated with the child’s physical, social, and emotional development (Pickering, 1992). Individual interest is not necessarily focused on a single dimension, but rather it is based on a multidimensional platform of several interests (Ainley et al., 2002).

The notion of mastery based learning is apparent in the curriculum on a daily basis. A child is encouraged to master skills subjected to his/her unique individual structure. Each child is assessed based on his/her mastery of skills, rather than placement amongst his/her peers through standardized assessments. “The critical aspects of the Montessori philosophy are respect for the child, individualization of the program for that child, and the fostering of independence” (Pickering, 1992, p. 4); thus, the notion of individualized curriculum centering on the interest of each child allows the child to learn based on his/her own mastery of skills (Lillard, 2005).

Montessori education supports current theories of motivation, especially self-regulation of one’s learning. “Montessori children indicated a better understanding of the effort it takes to learn, and more often reported experiences that showed they were more self-directed than their peers in non-Montessori settings” (Erwin, Wash, & Mecca, 2010, p. 29). Normalization, focus on one’s attention, according to Dr. Montessori, is when a child’s interest is heightened, and he/she is able to concentrate for long periods of time and maintain focus on their tasks (Montessori, 1995). The central idea is to foster a child’s desire to learn through a facilitated and controlled environment, in which the child

directs his/her own learning through personal interests and engagement. The structure of learning in a Montessori classroom molds a self-regulated learner, because students seek out their own tasks for learning.

The Montessori Method cultivates self-regulation within its philosophical framework. Freedom and autonomy is a substantial part of the curriculum that emphasizes a child's needs and desires to obtain knowledge on their own rather than knowledge being instructed to them. According to Dr. Maria Montessori (1995), "real freedom, instead, is a consequence of development; it is the development of latent guides, aided by education." Children learn self-regulated principles and become self-governing throughout their lifetime because they learn necessary skills at an early stage in development. Development is continuous and shaped by a child's personal experiences; thus, allowing freedom as an integrated part of the curriculum cultivates a child's independence and strengthens his/her need to become a self-regulated learner. Subsequently, "positive results for Montessori children in ratings of self-regulation and academic performance affirm the effectiveness of Montessori classroom practice in fostering positive work habits and internal motivation" (Erwin et al., 2010).

A student in a Montessori classroom is a self-regulated learner because his/her personal interest guides him/her into normalization which attributes to constructive choices for learning activities and guidance for personalized learning (Lillard, 2005). "The Montessori contexts differed from the traditional contexts on these dimensions: students were provided at least two hours per day to exercise choice and self-regulation; none of the students perceived mandatory grades; student grouping was primarily based

on shared interests, not standardized tests; and students collaborated often with other students” (Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005, p. 364).

To foster interest and mold self-regulated learners, great emphasis is given to a Montessori classroom structure and materials, which is meant to provide an indirect approach to learning. “The Montessori classroom is organized in a way that naturally promotes cooperation rather than competition, and the appreciation of diversity and difference rather than a heightened interest in homogeneity” (Powell, 2001). The structure of the classroom is designed as a controlled setting to allow the child to explore the environment freely. “Children have special potentialities that enable them, through interaction with their environment, to achieve self-realization. They do this, first, by becoming one with their immediate environment. This unity enables them to achieve freedom within their world as adults” (Montessori, 1976, p. 75). In accordance with Dr. Montessori’s educational aims to help the child develop and adjust to environmental and social requirements of his/her culture, the orderliness of the classroom facilitates the child to self-adjust into a learning structure that is self-directed tangent to the child’s culture (Rambusch, 2010). Through classroom order and learning materials, students are directed into gaining a sense of respect for themselves, their peers, and their environment.

The role of the teacher is to facilitate learning rather than instructing; therefore, a desk for the teacher at the front of the room is eliminated. The absence of a single-person desk in sequential lines takes the authoritative teaching structure out of learning. Instead, the classroom is replaced with circular desks that encourage a sense of community and equality. “Teachers model effective communication skills in their classrooms when they accept the students’ message and do not criticize or judge” (Drake, 2008). The teacher

builds the curriculum stating the end point, and the child has freewill to facilitate his/her own learning indicating self-determined levels of challenge in order to arrive at the stated end point. The teacher merely facilitates the direction of ideas into formulated thoughts. This does not mean there is a lack of structure present in the classroom; this simply indicates that the teacher draws out a lesson plan, and the student acts as catalyst to challenges presented in his/her given environment.

Through active learning and engagement in mastery-based activities during the early stages of development, a child not only becomes a self-regulated learner acting within the norms of reality, but also accepts challenges to new ideas at the same time (Murry, 2011). The child's independence to self-regulated learning enables him/her to build on newer challenges in the environment that include problem solving skills for complex scenarios. "Montessori education builds on the premises that competence begets confidence, which in turn inspires children to tackle subsequent challenges" (Murry, 2011, p. 28).

By placing value on respect for individuals and the environment in early childhood development curriculum, a child learns crucial skills needed for proper integration into society and the work force as a self-regulated individual who can utilize these skills and innovative methods of achieving his/her goals. During group activities, the teacher is included in the circle with her students. He/she is on the same level of learning as his/her students while guiding class discussions and individual ideas. The teacher uses a multi-dimensional approach, referred to as synergy, which is implemented within numerous parts of the curriculum as a means of incorporating multiple subject matters. "Synergy refers to the interaction of elements that, when combined, produce a

total effect greater than the sum of the individual elements” (Coe, 1998). A Montessori classroom automatically harbors ideas of multi-dimensional learning, and it accepts and nurtures diverse interests. Teachers are trained to encourage personal interest by using every opportunity in the class as a learning lesson through materials and dialogue. Every child is given an opportunity to freely express his/her strengths in a well prepared environment (Drake, 2008). “When adults provide clear limits but set children free within those boundaries, and sensitively respond to children’s needs while maintaining high expectations, children show high levels of maturity, achievement, empathy, and other desirable characteristics” Lillard, 2005, p. 32).

Chapter III

Purpose

The purpose of the current study is to investigate the rationale parents have for placing their children in a Montessori school above all other means of education. Maria Montessori's research describes how a child should learn in a naturalistic environment in order to respect their surroundings and become integrated individuals within the classroom and society. Current research in education indicates Montessori education is more suited for students than traditional schooling (Lillard, 2005); thus, the premise of the research is to understand the justifications of parents' choices for Montessori as a means of education for their children. The current study's aims to distinguish reasons parents give for selecting Montessori education for their children.

Chapter IV

Methodology

Recruitment

The current study was conducted at a Montessori School located in Houston, Texas. They offer early childhood education (ages 18 months to 6 years). The school operates as an authentic Montessori School and is accredited by the American Montessori Society (AMS). All of the teachers and administrators are fully trained and certified in Montessori education. Recruitment began by notifying parents of the study and research goals via email sent by the director of the school. They were informed that a survey would be placed in their child's daily folder, and they could volunteer their opinions by completing the survey. The surveys were administered anonymously, and to insure confidentiality, an envelope was included for parents to seal their completed responses. Eighty parents were requested to participate, of which thirty six responded.

Participants

Individuals self-reported race, marital status, and income. The following demographics are not representative of the school overall; they only represent the 36 participants who responded to the study. Out of the participants who responded, 56% of the individuals self-reported as white, 6% reported Black or African American, 6% reported Hispanic or Latino, 19% reported Asian, and 11% reported as two or more races. One respondent choose not to disclose his/her race. Eighty-six percent reported their marital status as married, while 14% were single or divorced. Fifty-six percent of the participants who indicated their marital status as married also reported a combined income of over \$90,000.

Procedure

Before surveys were administered, the teachers were given background information regarding the research and its purpose in case parents felt more comfortable contacting them rather than the investigator. Parents were first contacted by the director of the school regarding the research via inter-school email. Parents were informed of the upcoming survey that would be placed in their child's daily folder, and they were encouraged to participate. They were also informed it was on a voluntary basis, and their non-participation would not affect them negatively in any way. Parents were allowed to take the survey with them in order to complete it in the comfort of their homes. They were allotted sufficient time to complete the surveys. After two weeks, another email was sent via inter-school email, to remind parents to return the survey. Parents were given an envelope to enclose their responses to insure confidentiality.

Instrument

Montessori's theoretical framework was considered for the development of the instrument that was utilized in this study, which resulted in the establishment of the following categories for measure: overall quality of education, independent learning and self-regulation, classroom structure and materials, curriculum, self-efficacy and enjoyment, and teacher's role in learning. The categories of these constructs were then structured into a survey (see Appendix A).

These categories led to a 26-question self-reported survey that was administered. It consisted of qualitative and quantitative measures with 24 closed-ended measures and 2 open-ended measures. Three demographic questions were asked to capture race, marital

status, and combined income of the families. Seven of the 24 quantitative questions pertained to gathering information regarding their search for Montessori education and the general reasons for why they choose Montessori as their final choice. Fourteen of the 24 quantitative measures were based on a nominal scale of “yes” or “no.” For example, one of the questions was, “I choose Montessori because it has the potential to motivate my child to learn”, in which a parent selected either “yes” or “no.” Question 10 asked parents to select statements based on an ordinal measurement scale; however, many parents misread the question, and ultimately, it was not considered in the results. Question 12 asked parents to select all applicable responses to the most important way instruction is provided by a teacher that helped them make a decision for Montessori education.

Analysis

Due to a small sample size, the quantitative data were analyzed contingent upon percentages of the responses as indicated for each question. The percentages of each response were then analyzed based on the categories of constructs which were established prior to the analysis. The qualitative data were grouped into the established categories as well. The open-ended responses were not considered as a single response, but rather they were viewed as a multi-faceted response placed in the established categories. If a parent responded with multiple categorical constructs to the open-ended question, they were grouped with multiple categories respectfully.

Chapter V

Results

The results of the current study highlight the parents' initial rationale for deciding on Montessori education. All of the results indicated are based on the categories that were established prior to the study. The categories that were established that were considered for the results are: overall quality of education, independent learning and self-regulation, classroom structure and materials, curriculum, self-efficacy and enjoyment, and teacher's role in learning.

Parents were first asked if they considered other means of education besides Montessori. The responses indicated that 36% of parents did not look into other alternative choices other than Montessori. For parents who did look into other means of education as an alternative to Montessori, they considered private Christian schools (33%), private charter schools (8%), magnet schools (4%), and other forms of private education such as international schools, dual language schools, and Waldorf schools (25%). Eight percent of parents considered at least three choices including Montessori. Besides attending Montessori, 28% of the students who were currently enrolled attended another form of public school prior to Montessori education.

School choice stems from parents' expectations of providing high quality education for their children based on their own values and preferences (Bosetti & Pyryt, 2007). Thirty-three percent of parents conducted personal research on the various forms of education available for their child, 19% had friends or relatives who recommended Montessori, 11% saw an advertisement on the web, 6% of parents were educated in Montessori, and 3% of parents were recommended to Montessori through a school counselor. Participants who indicated "other" (11%) either worked at a Montessori school

or learned about it through a university setting. “It is assumed that parents have the knowledge, agency, and capacity to select schools that provide a learning environment for their children that will enable them to excel and flourish” (Bosetti & Pyryt, 2007, p. 93).

Studies suggest parental choices in school selection stem from their personal values and habits (Bosetti & Pyryt, 2007). The current study indicates parents chose Montessori education based on many factors of selection such as quality, curriculum, class structure, and teacher involvement. In a study conducted by Courtney A. Bell (2009), results indicated parents chose a school based on a holistic approach, which catered to their child’s overall quality of development personally and academically.

Categories were established in order to capture reasons why parents chose Montessori education for their children. The following results describe categorical constructs that were considered in this study. Parents listed multiple explanations for selecting Montessori education, thus indicating a holistic approach for their rationale rather than a single point of view.

Overall Quality of Education

Responses from parents indicated that they view Montessori as a holistic approach that highlights their child’s full potential in terms of overall quality of education. All of the parents who responded to the survey indicated on the quantitative measure that the overall quality of education was a deciding factor for Montessori education. This highlights that parents do not have a single agenda for selecting quality education for their children, but rather a list of factors influence their choices. Freedom of school choice indicates parents look for education that possesses competition, quality,

and selection (Robert, 2010). Furthermore, Peter Robert (2010) states parents who have a high socioeconomic status prefer to select schools as a consumer market based on its quality of teaching and the programs it offers. Self-reported responses indicate that a majority of the parents have a high socioeconomic status, thus, selecting a school based on a market value allows parents to choose a high quality program as a means for education for their child (Robert, 2010). School choice, if operated as a market demand, offers different choices of education based on high quality.

Only 17% of parents mentioned overall quality on the qualitative measurement. However, on the other hand, parents gave a list of reasons for their rationale in choosing Montessori education for their child.

Independent Learning and Self-Regulation

Although, parents gave multiple reasons for their decision, a child's ability for self-regulated learning and independence was the most accepted reason parents chose Montessori education above all other means of education. Independence and self-regulated learning is a central framework of Maria Montessori's theoretical work in Montessori education. The entire curriculum and its components are formulated to mold a child into a self-regulated learner who guides his or her own structured learning.

On the categorical construct for self-regulated learning, 47% percent of parents indicated on the qualitative measurement that their child's independence of learning and personal independence within the structured classroom was the primary reason for choosing Montessori education. One parent stated in the open-ended question, "We chose a Montessori school because our first child loves independent learning at his own pace.

The idea of selecting a ‘work’ you are interested in, and working on a project at your own pace was very compelling to us.”

Ninety-two percent of parents reported Montessori education had the potential to motivate their children on the quantitative measure for self-regulated learning, independent learning. When parents were asked to select all applicable reasons from a list of choices (Question 12), 78% indicated independent learning as one of them.

Classroom Structure and Materials

Montessori education offers a unique perspective of learning that is different from traditional schools. The absence of desks, authoritarian learning, formal assessments, and a set curricular expectation are a few of the many philosophies that differ from traditional schools. Parents indicate the classroom structure is a major contributor in their rationale for selecting Montessori education. All of the parents who participated in the survey indicated they chose Montessori because it had an excellent learning environment. A parent states in the open-ended question, while deciding on Montessori education for their child, they were “looking for highest quality education to build a solid foundation for my child's education. I also wanted a learning environment that recognized my child's individual abilities and could provide motivation accordingly.”

In the quantitative data, 97% of parents indicated they chose Montessori because their child should have access to the learning materials and resources that help them learn and 97% indicated their child would have access if they chose Montessori education. Having adequate materials in the classroom is an important factor for Montessori curriculum. It allows the child to guide his/her learning by selecting his/her own learning materials with freedom of movement within the classroom (Lillard, 2005). Fifty-three

percent of parents indicated an orderly classroom was one of the reasons from the list in Question 12 (See Appendix A).

Curriculum

The curriculum incorporates multiple constructs of The Montessori Method's theoretical framework. It establishes the child as the focal point in learning, and it centers learning based on personal student interest development. The end point is stated and the child formulates his/her thoughts based on the end point. Therefore, the curriculum must include concepts of self-regulation, interest, mastery-based learning, and interest development. Forty-four percent indicated curriculum as one of the rationales for school selection. The curriculum is structured based on the idea that children learn best through their individual preference, and if given the freedom to choose their learning methods, they excel in mastery based learning (Montessori, 1995) because it serves as a prerequisite to independent learning. Sixty-four percent of the parents indicated they chose Montessori education because of the program it offered their child.

Forty-four percent indicated curriculum in the qualitative measure. A parent stated, "I believe it is a very structured program which I like. There is freedom of individual choice in learning and yet is very disciplined." When a child discovers a concept, he/she owns the acquired knowledge, known as Discovery Learning in the Montessori curriculum (Lillard, 2005) , thus building on the child's self-efficacy, self-regulated learning, and interest development. In one parent's case, he/she makes a comparison between his/her non-Montessori child and his/her Montessori child, "My son in a non-Montessori school was learning to [count to] 10 sitting at a table, the girl here learns to count by playing games in the yard."

Self-Efficacy

When asked if parents chose Montessori education because they felt it gave their child a sense of pride, 19% indicated “yes.” Building on the child’s self-pride of learning is encouraged in a Montessori classroom, which is tangential to building a self-regulated learner. Fostering interest development in a Montessori classroom builds a child’s enjoyment and encourages learning through interest development. Ninety-four percent of parents indicated on the quantitative measure that a teacher should make learning enjoyable.

Moreover, when asked what is the most important way instruction should be provided by the teacher that helped parents reach a decision for Montessori education, half of the parents selected enjoyment as one of the important reasons, and 81% selected a child’s self-perception as important in Question 12 (see Appendix A). On the other hand, only a quarter of the parents indicated enjoyment and self-efficacy on the qualitative data.

Teachers

Teachers are an important part of the classroom environment. Only certified and accredited teachers may teach a Montessori classroom. They are required to continue training through workshops and professional development programs designed specifically to address various domains in the Montessori philosophy. Ninety-four percent of parents indicated they chose Montessori education because the teachers were enthusiastic, 94% said a teacher should make learning enjoyable for students, and 97% indicated they chose Montessori because teachers exhibit care for their child’s full potential. A teacher is required to be nurturing towards the acquisition of children’s knowledge by facilitating

their learning through their individual needs (Montessori, 1995); therefore, a teacher must bring in enjoyment of learning as a part of her teaching methods. Forty -seven percent of parents selected teachers' training as one of the listed choices in Question 12.

Other

It is important to mention other indications of choice for Montessori on the qualitative part of the instrument. Although these individuals gave quantified responses for choosing Montessori school, 17% of the parents initially did not have a preconceived reason for taking Montessori education into consideration or were Montessori students/teachers and knew everything about Montessori school. For example, one parent stated, I “was interested in [the] Montessori system. Vicinity [was close] to work location and home.” An example of a response for a parent who was a Montessori student himself/herself is “I attended Montessori myself. It provided me with an ideal environment to learn.”

Chapter VI

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the rationale a parent makes when selecting quality education offered through the Montessori Method above other means. Parents have choices in public schooling and various types of private schooling; however, they chose Montessori education as a means to educate their child. Parents view the Montessori Method as a holistic approach to education that can benefit their child by providing high quality education. According to the responses from parents who participated, they believed Montessori offered an overall high quality of education to help their child reach optimal potential developmentally and academically through interest and independence. According to Dr. Maria Montessori (1995), early childhood is the most critical and sensitive learning period in an individual's life, because the brain acts like a sponge absorbing all detail, and it must be fostered correctly in order to reach full human potential. She further states, with that potential, a child will become a self-regulated learner who seeks out his/her own knowledge.

Parents offered multiple rationales for their choice in selecting Montessori education for their child. One parent lists her reasons for choosing Montessori education: “(1) Positive reports heard from other parents; (2) Maria Montessori's philosophy about education tapping into a child's potential early; (3) organization; (4) independence that is promoted in each child ; (5) the method of teaching so simple, so infectious, teaching a love of learning. The philosophical framework of Montessori education is an interrelated and interdependent philosophy of education because each factor within the Montessori Method is equally important as the next. Independent learning, individualized lesson

planning, classroom structure, learning materials, orderliness of the classroom, freedom, respect, and teacher's role in the classroom all rely on each component to deliver high quality education that is student-centered. Empirical research on motivation points to Montessori education as an indication of high quality education (Lillard, 2005) that delivers a holistic approach to learning.

Chapter VII

Limitations and Future Study

A limitation to the current study is that it was conducted at one facility; therefore, it does not have a variety of opinions from other parents in different demographic areas. These data capture only one particular community, and they do not elaborate on other communities. As a result, generalizability of these data is not feasible.

Suggestions for further research include obtaining a larger sample to include multiple campuses to capture perceptions from a variety of individuals from different backgrounds. A larger sample size would better reflect the range of parental opinions for choosing Montessori education for their child.

Chapter VIII

Implications of Study

The current study contributes to our understanding of why parents select Montessori education for their children. There are other types of schools available that focus on a wide variety of educational emphases. Parents are free to choose their child's education based on their own personal beliefs and values, and the current study allows us to begin to understand the rationale behind those parents who selected Montessori education.

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Appendix A

Why Montessori?

1. Status:
 - Married
 - Single
 - Divorced
 - Widowed

2. What is your family's annual combined income:
 - 30,000 – 44,999
 - 45,000 – 59,999
 - 60,000 – 74,999
 - 75,000 – 89,999
 - 90,000+

3. Please indicate your race:
 - White
 - Black or African-American
 - Hispanic or Latino
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - Asian
 - American Indian/Alaskan Indian
 - Two or more Races

4. How many children do you have? _____

5. Are all your children educated in Montessori? Yes or No

6. Did your child attend any form of public schooling other than Montessori? Yes

or No

7. Did you consider other forms of private schooling, other than Montessori, as well? If so, which ones?
 - Homeschooling
 - Private catholic school
 - Charter schools
 - Magnet schools
 - Other _____

8. Please briefly describe how you came to the conclusion to choose Montessori for your child (What were the factors that helped you decide):

9. Do you plan on placing your child in Montessori education beyond early childhood?
If so, why?

If no, then why not?

10. Of the following, choose the top 5 of what is important in choosing your child's education – Rate 1-5

(One is the most important out of all five choices):

- A welcoming, friendly administration
- Teachers' attitudes about curriculum and instruction
- How the Curriculum was presented
- Teacher's dedication to instruction
- Classroom organization
- Location of school
- Relevance of curriculum to daily life
- Preparing child for future skills
- Incorporation of curriculum in one instruction
- Separation of curriculum in different sessions
- Grades
- Assessing your child for learning disabilities
- Progress based on grading
- Progress based on developmental level
- Cost

11. How did you find out about the Montessori Method?
- Relative/Friend
 - Personal Research
 - I attended Montessori myself
 - Advertisements/Websites/Internet
 - School counselors/specialists
 - Other: _____
12. What is most important in the way instruction is provided by the teacher that helped you make a decision for Montessori Education (circle all that apply):
- Teachers' enthusiasm
 - Teachers' continuous training outside the classroom
 - Orderly classroom
 - Relevant materials incorporated in instruction
 - Periodic testing on child's acquired knowledge
 - External rewards
 - Child's positive self-perception of self, environment, and others
 - Assessing child for learning disabilities that could hinder learning
 - Enjoyment

Answer Yes or No for the following reasons of why you initially choose Montessori education:

13. I choose Montessori because my child should receive high quality teaching at his/her school.

Yes No

14. I choose Montessori because teachers know what my child can do and what he/she needs to learn.

Yes No

15. I choose Montessori because it has expectations of what children will learn.

Yes No

16. I choose Montessori because teachers are enthusiastic in their teaching.

Yes No

17. I choose Montessori because of the learning programs offered at my child's Montessori School.

Yes No

18. I choose Montessori because my child's teachers should make learning interesting and enjoyable.

Yes No

19. I choose Montessori because teachers exhibit care for my child to develop to their full potential.

Yes No

20. I choose Montessori because it has an excellent learning environment.

Yes No

21. I choose Montessori because it has the potential to motivate my child to learn.

Yes No

22. I choose Montessori because me child's teachers should provide help and support when it is needed.

Yes No

23. I choose Montessori because my child has access to quality materials and resources that help learn.

Yes No

24. I choose Montessori because my child would receive support for any special needs he/she had.

Yes No

25. I choose Montessori because my child would have materials and resources for their learning.

Yes No

26. I choose Montessori because I thought it encouraged my child to have a sense of pride in their achievement.

Yes No