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Can parents choose the best schools for their children?

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Abstract

One of Lewis Solmon's research interests is whether parents can choose the best schools for their children. This paper shows how economic principles predict parents would do a better job choosing schools for their children than do experts in government agencies. Three types of empirical research relevant to the hypothesis are reviewed: surveys showing parents rate schools the same as experts (showing they have sufficient information to choose correctly); surveys showing most parents choose schools on the basis of their perceived academic quality (showing they are choosing in the child's best long-term interests); and data showing student academic achievement gains are higher in schools of choice than in traditional public schools. We conclude that Solmon's belief that parents can choose the best schools for their children is corroborated by economic theory and empirical research.



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