

## Human Capital Investment in Children: A Study of Household Child Education Expenditure in Uyo Metropolis

Friday Eyo Uko, PhD<sup>1</sup> & Benson Edet Ekpenyong, PhD<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1&2</sup>Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences

University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

togoly70@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>; ekpenyongbenson@gmail.com<sup>2</sup>

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### Abstract

*Traditional Human Capital Theory (HCT) views children as investments, focusing on how they can be transformed into productive members of society. The Economics of Human Development (EHD), an extension of HCT, aligns more closely with the Capability Approach (CA), which frames investment in children as a societal commitment to fostering their overall human development. This paper, therefore, examines intra-household inequality in children's human capital outcomes, with particular attention to the role of parental educational investment in explaining these disparities. The study employed a descriptive survey design, complemented by an inferential research approach, and utilized purposive random sampling to select 50 households within Uyo metropolis. Findings shows that education is globally recognized, across developed and developing nations, as a crucial investment in the future of children. While parents retain primary responsibility for shaping their children's educational paths, there is a critical need for government intervention in regulating educational content to align with national development goals.*

### 1. Introduction

Education is an important part of human capital formation for economic growth, and investment in education has important future value (Jiang, Liu, & Zhang, 2024). Human Capital Theory suggests that individuals and society derive economic benefits from investment in people. Furthermore, individuals acquire knowledge and skills through education, thereby enhancing the human capital required for engaging in economic activities (Becker & Tormes, 1986).



The literature relating to human capital distinguishes among several types and means of education. There is formalized education at primary, secondary, and higher levels; informal education at home and at work; on-the-job training and apprenticeship; and specialized vocational education at secondary and higher levels (Sweetland, 2016).

The education choices of the family are one of the most important reasons for the heterogeneity of individual education paths (Guo & Qu, 2022). From a micro-family perspective, parents, as the decision-makers in a typical family, can influence the amount and timing of their children's education investments based on family wealth and their expectations (Becker et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2022).

Cavounidis et al. (2020) emphasize that there are usually two different research perspectives on the impact of children's growth on consumption and investment decisions in families. One emphasizes skill formation based on the process of human capital accumulation. The other focuses on the income constraints and movement paths of economic consumption and investment. The optimal growth of children becomes possible through a rational allocation of investment.

In both developed and developing countries, education is associated with a higher probability of gaining a decent and better-paid job. Any obstacle to education, therefore, reduces individuals' future productivity and incurs a future cost. This is why education for all, especially universal primary education, features high among all development strategies, and the elimination of inequalities in education is one way of achieving it (Fotso et al., 2018).

For families, however, the level of income that can be invested in education is subject to a limited budget constraint. Usually, the household decides to maximize the utility of expenditures. At this point, the examination focuses on the optimal income distribution that maximizes individual utility rather than a separate human capital accumulation process. Thus, a proper understanding of the behavioural motivation, expected goals, and achievement mechanisms of family investment in children's education is of great value for formulating education policies from the perspective of individual families.

This paper focuses on intra-household inequality in children's human capital outcomes and studies the role played by parents' educational investment to explain this inequality. Do parents invest more in higher-ability children, exacerbating inequality in society, or do they compensate for endowment differences, acting as an equalising agent? What are the determinants of this decision? Do parents perceive some children to have higher returns to education than others? Do they care about inequality in children's final outcomes? Are these decisions affected by household resources? Given that the effects of public programmes targeting children are mediated by parents' behavioural responses, answers to these questions are fundamental for the design of policies aimed at improving child wellbeing and reducing inequalities. This is particularly true in developing countries, where social protection systems are less well established and families are the primary providers of material support to their children.



Giannola (2022), however, posits that parents' behaviour is informed by their preferences, resources, and perceptions of the process of human capital formation. However, identifying the separate role played by these factors in the demand equations for child human capital investment is challenging. The reason for this challenge is a twofold identification issue. First, input choices are consistent with many alternative specifications of preferences and beliefs, which are typically unobserved in survey data. Second, resource constraints might limit parents' ability to invest, breaking the link between observed outcomes and preferences. Nonetheless, understanding what determines these demand relationships is important when thinking about many policies and relevant for welfare analysis (Caplin & Martin, 2021).

## **2. Literature Review**

Household demand for children's education, like economic demand for goods and services, is determined by several factors. These include parents' income, socio-cultural background, children's health status and aptitude, as well as intergenerational inequalities, such as gender, ethnicity, urban-rural differences, income, and disability (Fotso et al., 2018).

Giannola (2022) observed that, as in standard models of human capital investments, parents derive utility from their children's human capital outcomes. This dependence of the utility function on child human capital can be explained by parents' altruism or by the belief that children may become a source of support in old age.

Becker's (1960) theory of child quantity and quality suggests that family size is a key cost factor when realizing a child's potential, and that the cost per child increases when the number of children is large. Empirical studies, which often use indicators such as educational attainment or health status, demonstrate that family size has a significant negative effect (Chen, 2017; Kugler & Kumar, 2017), especially in relation to the number of children (Smith, 1996). The more children there are in a family, the fewer resources are allocated to each child, thereby limiting their opportunities (Hong et al., 2022).

In addition to family size, several other factors influence educational investment within the household. These include family socioeconomic status (Løken, 2010; Bae & Wickrama, 2015), the child's innate abilities or endowments (Fioroni, 2017), the level of parental involvement (Deng et al., 2016), and the child's gender (Quadli, 2019). Families must invest substantial resources (both material and emotional) into their children's education. However, the strain of raising a large family often overwhelms the resources available for this purpose.

Most studies examining the relationship between aging and educational investment have been conducted at the macro level, focusing primarily on how population policies affect economic growth, labor productivity, and human capital development (Chojnicki & Rabesandratana, 2018; Bucci & Prettnner, 2020; Liu & Yang,

2021). Few studies have systematically analyzed the micro-level mechanisms through which population aging affects households as crucial agents of human capital investment.

In many developed countries, well-established social security and education systems have replaced micro-family decision-making in providing both old-age services and educational support (Liu et al., 2020). These systems are further supported by cultural norms that do not emphasize familial obligations for elder care. As such, foreign literature often neglects the effects of aging on educational investments at the household level (Li, 2016).

In contrast, families in developing contexts often age before attaining prosperity and must fill the gap between social security mechanisms and aging-related needs. Consequently, families face intergenerational negotiations, competition, compromise, and cooperation when deciding how to allocate resources for education and elder care (Leopold & Raab, 2013).

Economic theory highlights two primary links between health and education. First, poor health can lead to lower educational attainment. Second, certain third factors, such as poverty or environmental deprivation, may affect both health and education simultaneously (Fotso et al., 2018). Poor health, especially during early childhood, can negatively impact human capital accumulation. This occurs because illness may limit school attendance and learning or alter anticipated life expectancy (Cutler & Lleras-Muney, 2012). A child's disability may reduce physical and cognitive capabilities, lead to additional illnesses, reduce school attendance, limit learning outcomes, and ultimately result in lower educational attainment.

In addition to the morbidity effect of a child's disability on their school results, which may be called 'direct', an 'indirect' effect may also be observed. The disability may alter the 'subjective' or 'objective' return expected from education. The 'subjective' expected return is the internal or external return of education as modelled by their parents' beliefs about what a child with disabilities can accomplish at school or in the labour market. The 'objective' expected return is the parents' objective reasoning about the profitability of their child's education, given the state of the labour market. If the labour market displays strong discrimination against people with disabilities (Baldwin & Choe, 2014), or if the type or severity of the child's disability is such that they are unlikely to obtain a job, the 'objective' expected return will be low. If, as Becker (1962) claims, the expected return on investment in human capital is the main determining factor in the amount of that investment, then one would expect the parents of children with disabilities to reduce the investment made in their education, particularly if household resources are strained. Ultimately, the child's disability will lead to a reduction in educational attainment.

A set of third factors or family antecedents may also simultaneously affect a child's disability status and school attainment. These factors may be either observable or

unobservable. The observable factors include household income, parents' educational attainment, or social status. A rich parent can invest more in both the education and health of their child (Case et al., 2005; Cutler & Lleras-Muney, 2008). A poor parent is more likely to have children with disabilities, because they invest less in their offspring's health, and to have less-educated children, because they invest less in their education.

The unobservable factors that may affect both health and educational attainment in a child include notably their genetic features or endowments (Cutler & Lleras-Muney, 2008). A child's genetic inheritance may thus be responsible for certain mental or physical illnesses and also poor school results. Other unobservable factors in the family environment may also affect both education and disability status. For example, a noisy, dangerous, or unlit family environment may underlie certain forms of disability and also be unfavourable for accumulating educational capital. Parents' preferences for investing in human capital could also affect simultaneously disability status and education outcomes.

In the study of economics, investing in children's education is a form of consumption that generates future returns (Lin, 2019; Aina & Sonedda, 2022). Parents are often faced with allocation decisions between self-consumption and investment in their children's education. Consumption and investment constrain and influence each other, intending to obtain future income returns to provide higher consumption capacity (Wang & Cheng, 2021). Zhu & Yu (2023) verified that education expenditure significantly attenuates the subjective well-being of Chinese households. This is due to a decline in consumption. Education will have a crowding-out effect on self-consumption (Wang, 2021). Therefore, parents in families will have a balance between consumption and education investment, and their investments in education are influenced by their willingness to consume.

The growth of children's abilities through education brings a strong sense of happiness and fulfillment to parents. Under the influence of traditional culture, the younger generation rewards their parents with a transfer payment of future income. Self-satisfaction is an emotional utility. The progress of children makes parents feel proud and honoured, thus generating happiness. This increases parents' favouritism and altruism, and transfer payments directly increase parents' lifetime budget constraints. Therefore, altruistic and exchange motives reflect that children's growth has a dual value of consumption and investment for parents (Yuan, 2021). Although children grow faster because of the increase in education expenditures, the limited income of most families cannot fully meet the needs of their children's growth. Especially in underdeveloped areas with low-income families, the income is more used for basic consumption in life. Thus, as parents choose their children's education, it must be accompanied by a trade-off in self-satisfaction. This phenomenon is also used to explain the lower intergenerational mobility and higher persistence of education levels (Jiang et al., 2024).

High-income families can invest more in education (Rizk & Owusu-Afriyie, 2014; Chi & Qian, 2016), while low-income families have to meet their survival needs. An increase in investment also reduces the incentive to consume. In a complete financial market, borrowing funds is no longer difficult, and individuals can make optimal consumption and investment choices based on their lifetime budgets rather than their current income (Caucutt & Lochner, 2020). Under this assumption, individuals can freely make their decisions and achieve higher utility, consumption, and other goals. Becker et al. (2018) highlight the importance of the theory of family behaviour for intergenerational inequality in education. He analyzed the important impact of intergenerational relationships on the process of human capital accumulation. Parents' investment is influenced by budget constraints, altruistic factors, children's endowments, consumption, and so on. The level of human capital will experience intergenerational convergence, and income inequality will continue to exist.

Jiang et al. (2024) used the continuous-time utility model to demonstrate the independent characteristics of consumption and education investment, as well as the principle of decision incompatibility in the decision-making process of the utility maximization problem. A three-phase logarithmic utility model was established to obtain the intertemporal decision-making path of a family. The analysis showed that the investment allocation ratio between the two phases depends on the expected and discounted level of the offspring's abilities, while the total investment level is related to parental altruism. When parents, with foresight, factor in prospective transfer payments from progeny, the optimal decision is to maximize their children's ultimate human capital within a given total investment. Education investment not only squeezes out consumption but also promotes consumption in various periods due to future transfer payments. The decision-making process of three typical growth stages indicates that as offspring mature and their human capital increases, parents' willingness to invest in education decreases while self-consumption escalates. The study provides a new perspective and theoretical basis for studying household education expenditure, motivation, and related policy formulation.

Gerard and Ngangue (2014) studied the determinants of children's health resources for human capital accumulation on a sample of children living in Cameroon using data from the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS-III). Using the ordinary least squares (OLS) estimation technique, the study found that the employment status of the mother is significant compared with growth indices of children. Age explains the nutritional status of long- and short-term children's growth. Vaccination is significantly related to the nutritional status of children, with a positive impact on the long term. The level of maternal education positively influences the growth index in the short term. Community infrastructures such as water, electricity, and toilets are significant and positive in relation to the growth indices of children in the long term. Recommendations for economic policy suggest: (i) the improvement in health conditions using public and

private investments in health infrastructures, (ii) the continuation of the vaccination program, and (iii) the advancement in medical and scientific knowledge in order to promote health capital of children for human capital accumulation.

Chi and Qian (2016), using 2007 and 2011 data from the Urban Household Education Surveys in China, provided new evidence on the education expenditure level, the ratio of expenditure to household income, and inequality in this expenditure. The study further elucidated changes in China's household education expenditure and explored factors associated with such changes. From the analysis, the following findings were observed: First, education expenditure incurred outside the school significantly contributes to increasing household education expenditure. Second, compulsory education programs are effective in curbing in-school education expenditure; however, they do not prevent the rapidly increasing education investment outside school. Third, education expenditure disproportionately increases with family income. In other words, a larger share of the income earned by lower-income families is spent on children's education compared to higher-income families.

Cho (2005) investigated the effects of an educational subsidy program in Mexico, the PROGRESA, on investment in children's human capital. The study developed a dynamic behavioral model that determines a household's investment in children's human capital and presents factors that may reduce education levels. The model implies that when parents use children's earnings as a source of household income, the presence of credit constraints causes parents' investment in children's human capital to be sub-optimal, where the returns to schooling exceed the returns to capital. Educational subsidies such as the PROGRESA may increase human capital investment by relieving credit constraints. Further, the researcher calibrated the model and quantified the effects of the subsidies by household size and ability of children. It was found that the subsidies increase children's years of schooling and enrollment rate, which increase human capital accumulation by 12%. Findings suggested that the effects of subsidies are greater for children from larger families who might be more borrowing constrained. Furthermore, educational subsidies conditional on schooling are more effective than alternative policy methods such as monetary transfer without conditioning or a low-interest loan.

Fors and Linskog (2022) investigated within-family inequalities in human capital accumulation in India. Indicators of the children's current stock of human capital and of investment into their continued human capital accumulation were analyzed, distinguishing between time investments and pecuniary investment into school quality. The study employed a within-family model using sibship fixed effects, and found mostly negative birth order effects; that is, earlier-born children are better off. However, for time investments there is a tendency toward more positive birth order effects, especially in poor and large families. This suggests that the opportunity cost of child time matters; in poor and large families the older, more productive siblings often need to

work. The most plausible explanation for negative birth order effects in general is resource dilution at an early age. Older siblings were only children at an early age, and therefore benefited from more parental resources.

Lu and Hua (2023) introduced a multi-agent simulation approach to observe micro-households' educational investment choices under the dual pressures of retirement and childcare. This measure captures households' investment choices and provides a decision basis for given households. Using data from the China Family Panel Study for 2014, 2016, and 2018, the study explored the impact of these dual pressures on household educational expenditures and their differences across urban and rural areas, household aging, and income samples. Further, the study simulated the micro-households' investment choices under these dual pressures to observe that these pressures reduce investments in educational human capital in these “sandwich-like” households. The simulation results suggest that households with high childcare stress invest more in education than those with a high retirement burden. Moreover, income growth can mitigate the dual stress “crowding-out” effect on education, which is most pronounced in low-income, high childcare-stress households.

Aina and Sonedda (2022) studied the impact of one more year of a child's education on household (non-durable) consumption. The researchers exploited an exogenous shock generated by a university reform in Italy in the early 2000s and found that families responded in a way that is consistent with education as a production good. The higher child's education produced household positive, permanent income innovations. Hence, family non-durable consumption increased. Findings suggested that education can be an insurance device against adverse permanent income shocks. The 2001 reform not only positively affected offspring's years of schooling, but it also had a positive effect to boost household consumption.

Hoop et al. (2017) presented a simple model to describe the possible channels through which programs that increase the economic capacity of poor women can have cascading effects on children's participation in school. Based on a cluster-randomized trial, the authors examined how a program providing capital and training to women in poor rural communities in Nicaragua affected children. Children in beneficiary households are more likely to attend school one year after the end of the intervention. An increase in women's influence on household decisions appears to contribute to the program's beneficial effect on school attendance.

Giannola (2022) studied the role played by parents' educational investment to explain intra-household inequality and its determinants in child human capital in the developing world. To mitigate the identification problem posed by observational data, the author designed a survey experiment with poor households in India and developed new theory-driven survey measures based on hypothetical scenarios that allowed for separately identifying parents' beliefs about the human capital production function and their preferences for inequality in children's outcomes, as well as studying the role of

household resources. It was found that investment decisions are driven by efficiency considerations rather than inequality concerns over children's final outcomes. Because parents perceive investment to be 12 percent more productive for the higher-ability child, they allocate 10 percent more educational inputs to this child. Resources are important, as constrained parents select more unequal allocations. Counterfactual simulations indicated that policy interventions can have important intra-household distributional impacts through parents' behavioural responses.

Fotso et al. (2018), using the DHS-MICS 2011 data of Cameroon, contributed to the literature by providing new robust estimates of the effect of child disability on education in a developing country context. The study controlled for unobserved heterogeneity within the households by using a 'true' sibling fixed-effect model and also accounts for the severity of disability. The results showed that moderate and severe disabilities reduce the probability that a child attends school and diminish school progress.

The reviewed literatures indicate that demand for children's education hinges on many factors and varies from one household to another. It is evident that parents' preference, resource constraint, expected returns on investment in education, sociocultural factors, children's health status and endowment, besides children's sex, have been identified as major determinants in demand for children's education. However, the extent to which these factors influence demand for children's education in Uyo metropolis is yet to be ascertained. This gap in knowledge informed the present study.

### **3. Methodology**

This study adopted a descriptive survey design, which is usually linked with an inferential research approach. A descriptive study is concerned with finding out the *what*, *where*, and *how* of a phenomenon. The descriptive research design was chosen because it allows for the collection of quantitative data, which can be analyzed quantitatively using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Furthermore, since the research seeks to describe and compare information, the use of a survey research method is justified. Survey research is also described as a popular research strategy since it creates an opportunity to collect and analyze both qualitative and quantitative data. The adoption of a quantitative and descriptive survey research approach for this study implies that data would be collected from respondents and analyzed based on the research objectives.

The research population consisted of all households in Uyo Metropolis. Uyo Metropolis comprises urban and semi-urban settlements and includes four local government areas with varying households of heterogeneous characteristics. A purposeful random sampling technique was used to select 50 households across Uyo Metropolis. A questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The

questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A contained demographic information of respondents, while Section B contained information on variables of the study measured on a 4-point rating scale: Strongly Agree (SA) – 4 points; Agree (A) – 3 points; Disagree (D) – 2 points; and Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1 point. There were 8 items in Section B addressing various determinants of children's education.

Data obtained were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics used were means and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while the inferential statistics employed were correlation and ANOVA to test the hypotheses at a 95% confidence interval. The SPSS statistical package was used for data estimation.

#### **IV. Data Analysis and Discussion**

**Table 4.1: Demographic information of respondents**

	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Occupation</b>		
Business person	5	10
Civil servant	20	40
Artisan	10	20
Politician	5	10
Transporter	10	20
<b>Residence</b>		
Oron road	5	10
Abak road	6	12
Ikot Ekpene road	10	20
Aka road	9	18
Barracks road	8	16
Nwaniba road	5	10
Shelter Afrique	3	6
Stadium road	4	8
<b>Apartment currently occupied</b>		
Bungalow	<b>25</b>	<b>50</b>
Duplex	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>
Detached bungalow	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>
Storey building	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>



**Ownership status of occupied apartment**

Rented 23 46

Built by me 27 54

**Income range**

N100,000-150,000 5 10

150,000-200,000 12 24

200,000-250,000 8 16

250,000-300,000 10 20

400,000-500,000 10 20

500,000+ 5 10

**No. of children**

1-5 35 70

5-10 12 24

10+ 3 6

**Percentage income on education**

10-15 15 30

15-20 20 40

20-25 10 20

**25-30 5 10**

Demographic information of respondents shows different characteristics of respondents in terms of area of residence, occupation, income range, ownership structure of place of residents among others.

#### 4. Data analysis

**Table 4.2: Mean response of determinants of demand of children**

	SA	A	D	SD	mean	SD
The demand for children education is determined by skill acquisition for capital accumulation	34	16	0	0	3.68	0.47
Demand for children education is necessary to act as insurance for the future	31	14	5	0	3.52	0.67
Parents socio-economic status can influence demand for children education	35	9	5	1	3.56	0.76
Parents cultural background and belief system can be reason for the demand of children education	26	23	1	0	3.50	0.54
Children's aptitude can influence the extent of family demand for children education	29	15	6	0	3.46	0.70
Family income size could be a determining factor in demand for children's education	36	16	2	0	3.60	0.57
Children health status can determine the extent of parents' investment in their education	<b>31</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3.60</b>	<b>0.53</b>
The sex of a child can determine how much is invested on children education	30	16	4	0	3.56	0.64

The mean ranges from 1-4. The mean of 3.5-4.00 indicates strongly agreed; 2.5-3.40 indicates agreed; 1.5-2.40 indicates disagreed while 1-1.49 indicates strongly disagreed.

From the table above, there is very strong agreement among respondents that the demand for children's education is determined by skill acquisition for capital accumulation. The mean of 3.52 indicates a very strong agreement that the demand for children's education is also undertaken as a form of insurance for the future. Furthermore, the mean of 3.56 reflects a strong consensus that parents' socio-economic status can influence the demand for children's education. With a mean of 3.50, there is strong agreement that parents' cultural background and belief system can be a reason for the demand for children's education.

However, the mean of 3.46 indicates agreement, though slightly lower, that children's aptitude or endowment is a determining factor in the demand for education. In addition, the mean of 3.56 suggests very strong agreement that family income size could be a significant factor influencing the demand for children's education. Likewise, the mean of 3.60 shows a very strong agreement that children's health status can determine the extent of parents' investment in their education. Finally, the mean of 3.56 indicates strong agreement that the sex of a child can influence how much is invested in their education.

**Correlation matrix of the determinants of demand for children education**

	Skill	insu	socst	cubk	Apt.	FaI	CHS	Sex	EdD
skill	1								0.666
insu		1							0.528
socs			1						0.644
t									
cub				1					0.544
k									
Apt.					1				0.708
FaI						1			0.166
CH							1		0.177
S									
Sex								1	0.567
Ed	0.666	0.528	0.644	0.544	0.708	0.166	0.177	0.567	1
D									

Source: *author's computation*



The correlation matrix as presented above shows a high positive and significant relationship between demand for education and skill acquisition. This implies that parents' interest in educating their wards is to ensure they acquire skills for future living. The relationship between demand for education as insurance for the future is also moderately positive and significant, indicating that parents invest in their children's education as a form of security against old age.

Furthermore, there is a high positive and significant relationship between parental socioeconomic status and demand for education, suggesting that socioeconomic background is a major determinant in educational investment. Cultural background is found to relate positively and moderately significantly with demand for education, implying that the belief system of parents may influence their willingness to invest in their children's education.

Children's aptitude or endowment shows a very high positive and significant relationship with demand for education. Parents may choose to invest more in children who show high intellectual potential compared to those with lower aptitude. However, family income demonstrates a very weak positive but non-significant relationship with demand for education. This suggests that although financial resources are a factor, they may not be significantly decisive, as even low-income families may prioritize education over consumption as a form of long-term investment.

Similarly, children's health status exhibits a very weak and non-significant relationship with demand for education. This implies that disabilities or health conditions may not necessarily deter parents from educating their children. In terms of sex of the child, a moderately positive and significant relationship exists with demand for education, meaning that the choice to educate a male or female child may influence investment decisions.

It should be acknowledged that while a range of factors influence the demand for a child's education, the final decision rests with individual family preferences. Although all determinants show positive relationships with demand for education, only children's aptitude and sex were found to significantly affect it. This suggests that regardless of parental socioeconomic status, cultural background, or income level, if a child is not perceived to be endowed or to possess aptitude, the perceived need for their education may be low.

Moreover, in some cultures, there is a preference for educating male children over female children. Regardless of such belief systems, the aptitude or potential of a child (regardless of gender), should be a determining factor in educational investment. Ultimately, every family bears the sole responsibility of determining their preferences in accumulating human capital through education. Even in systems where education is made completely free and compulsory, parental decision remains the key ingredient in determining the demand for education.

## 5. Summary and conclusion

Education has been considered an investment in the future of children in both developed and developing nations of the world. The importance of education as a tool for human capital accumulation has been re-emphasized in almost all global declarations for development. Be that as it may, the responsibility of educating children rests with the parents, and this decision has been found to be influenced by various factors such as parental preference for male or female child education, family resource constraints, beliefs about education, and the socioeconomic and cultural background of parents, among others.

While some parents may be interested in their children's education to improve their skills for capital accumulation, others may invest in their children's education as a form of insurance for old age. Whatever may constitute individual family decisions regarding their children's education, it should be noted that quality education is the foundation of societal development. Recognizing this fact implies that collective effort by both parents and state actors in educating children should be a *sine qua non* for determining what should constitute the basis of education in any society.

However, this ultimately boils down to identifying the societal needs of the people and aligning those needs with an educational programme that ensures the attainment of development goals relevant to the general population. While it remains the responsibility of parents to determine what they want for their children, there is a crucial need for government to guide educational content in a way that supports the realization of the nation's broader developmental objectives.

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