



## e-Journal of Media & Society

### The Perception of Parents Toward Quality of Child Centre in Malaysia

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#### ABSTRACT

*Child care center is the care and supervision of a child or multiple children at a time, whose ages range from six weeks to thirteen years old. Child care is the action or skill of looking after children by a day-care center, babysitter, nannies, teachers or other providers. This discuss the features which are predictive of child care quality in improving laws and policies of child care protection in Malaysia. Firstly, this prove the importance of high quality child care towards the children development. The cases of children maltreatments happening around the country are alarming. A recent case involves a child who was severely burnt due to the negligence of the child care provider. For instance, the victim was awarded RM 403 018.74 as compensation (Wahid, 2016). These are just one example of the cases which were reported. It is believed that there are more cases that go unreported due to various reasons. This studies on the importance of having high quality child care in ensuring the good growth of the children is discussed.*

*Keynote : child care, quality, age, policies*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Many childcare centres in Malaysia double as kindergartens or playschools, accepting children from two (or even younger) to six years old. Also known as daycare or nursery, these centre provide a place where children are cared for in safe and stimulating surroundings. The number of children attending a childcare centre varies, depending on the number of qualified staff and the space required to accommodate the children in comfort. Standards are variable and it will very much be up to you to do your own research about important factors such as staff qualification, carer-to-child ratio, food safety and hygiene. (BabyCenter, 2019). Research shows also that only high quality provision can deliver well-being and appropriate development to young children. As an increasing number of mothers are in the workforce and most children ages 3 and older now attend a child care facility on a regular basis, it has become critical that young children from all backgrounds should have access to high-quality child care and early education. (John Bennett,2018).

Nowadays, there are probably a lot of busy parents. For examples, there are many parents in Malaysia that have one or maybe even two jobs in a row, attending classes for further education or other responsibilities that require them to find child care centre. Nowadays, there are many good and well known childcare centre or nursery in Malaysia that provide a good early learning centre for child such as Newlife Childcare centre, Step and Smile conductive education centre, Cutie Cottage Baby and Childcare centre. For many children, an early learning centre is their first experienced in a purposefully structured setting with teachers and other groups of children. It's an opportunity for them to share, follow instructions, interact with other children and soak up the tools they need to succeed in the future. (Sariah Meagle,2019).

Early learning centers are more than simply places that take care of your child while you're at work or school, they give children the tools to succeed in the future. For many reasons, most of the parents in Malaysia still not put their trust on child care center. This is because some of the parents cannot pay the fees that have been charged by some of the childcare center in Malaysia due to their small salary that their gained every months. Other than that, there are some important reasons your child should attend an early learning center such as early child care promotes emotional and social development, children learn to take care of themselves and others, early learning

centers offer structure and fun, encourage a child's curiosity and others. Collaboration with parents is critical in determining the best learning path for each child. Updated reports on activities and progress should be readily available for parent review. If a parents is active and engaged in the process, the child's learning experience is greatly enhanced. There are big difference between a day care and an early learning center. Choose wisely. (Shahria Absar,2019).

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

In Malaysia nowadays, most parents especially those from urban area are both involve in the work force, therefore, the demand for childcare centers to look for their children is keep on increased (Press school Malaysia,2015). Most parents in Malaysia choose to send their children to the childcare during the weekdays. But most of childcare workers in our country total of 13,700 or 80.19% of them, did not have the minimum qualification for the job. The lack of qualified childcare workers contributed to the lack of registered childcare centers in the country (Dr.Wan Azizah,2018). Rising demand also cause the lack of registered childcare centers in Malaysia (Madam Liew Sau Pheng,2007). This cause a small numbers of the parent afraid to send their children to the childcare. For example, Ezzaty Abdullah, 28 says she had an experience which is the childcare workers did not keep the children hygiene and cause her children sick in long term.

### **RESEARCH QUESTION**

- What is the level of anxiety towards child care center?
- What is the level perceptions of qualities service towards child care centre?

### **OBJECTIVE QUESTION**

- To identify the level of anxiety towards child care center.
- To identify the level of perceptions of qualities service towards child care centre.

## **THE QUALITY OF CHILD CARE CENTERS**

A number of studies have documented parents attention to quality of child care when selecting a care arrangement for their child. Structural features most often cited in studies of parental priorities/preferences for care are provider education, training, and experience, and the child adult ratio of child care programs. A mixed-methods study of economically and ethnically diverse working mothers, which used ratings, rankings and conjoint analysis to parental preference for care found the education of a caregiver to be among the top three priorities of parents across methods (Rose and Elicker, 2008). Likewise found that parents place a high value on child's provider experience and specialized training in child development. Low income parents value for a low child adult ratio in child care arrangements has also been highlighted in studies about parental priorities in selecting a child care arrangement by Shlay (2010).

## **PROCESS ORIENTED FEATURES OF QUALITY**

According to Rose and Elicker (2008), Multiple aspects of process oriented quality have been identified in literature as being of interest to parents. These aspects include health and safety, emotional tone of the care environment and quality of the caregiver child relationship, structured activities to support children's development, and a positive, trusting relationship between the provider and the parent.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

According to Shlay (2010), found that regardless of racer ethnicity, parents consistent prioritized health and safety over other quality features when selecting a preferred care arrangement. He stated that safety to be an important consideration, but not the highest priority. The importance of health and safety to parents had been highlighted in qualitative studies of racially and ethnically diverse mothers in entry level jobs and employed mothers of young children by Henly and Lyons (2000).

## **QUALITY OF THE CAREGIVER CHILD RELATIONSHIP**

According to Ispa (1998) quality of the caregiver child relationship climate to parents has also been found in multiple studies. Specific quality features related to emotional climate include provider affect, provider-child interactions, and interactions among children in classroom. The majority of parental preference for care or their definitions of high quality care related to emotional tone focus on effect of the provider.

Specifically, multiple studies have found provider warmth to be important to parents. In three studies using different methodologist (ratings, rankings, and conjoint analysis) provider warmth was the most important criteria in choosing a provider. Other researchers have found the provider child relationship or emotional tone of the care settings to be important to parents as well. Cryer and Burchinal (1997) stated examined parents ratings of specific criteria and found positive interactions in the care setting more broadly to be important dimension of high quality care.

### **POSITIVE, TRUSTING PARENT PROVIDER RELATIONSHIP**

According to Mensing and colleagues (2000) found trust of caregivers to be a preeminent criterion for child care selection, with trust being required before other features are considered. Similarly, Weber and Grobe (2011) found that parents who were either currently receiving a subsidy or had recently exited the subsidy program ranked trust as the most important reason for selecting the providers currently caring for their children. Leech and colleagues (2006), using qualitative and quantitative interviews, respectively found parents to value open communication and a sense of partnership between themselves and their early education providers. Likewise, through focus groups with low income parents documented parents endorsement of regular communication, flexibility, opportunities for parents involvement, and provider support of the family as indicators of high quality care. Despite the rich literature on family engagement in early care and educations setting, few studies have directly asked parents about the importance of the family-provider relationship in seeking a care arrangement.

### **RESEARCH METHADODOLOGY**

This study shows the quality of child care centre to identify the perception of parents toward quality of child centre in Malaysia. The study involving 536 respondents selected through parents from different ages and marital status. A survey and structured questionnaire were used for data collection. The data were keyed in and analyzed in a table (Ridzuan, Ridzuan and Ridzuan, 2018). In order to collect data, the method used will be focusing on questionnaire that has been conducted through online survey. The survey was divided into part A, B and C. Part A will be focusing on demography of the respondents which are sex, age, occupation, marital status, ethnicity and state. In part A, the respondents were asked about some general

questions regarding the perception of parents toward quality of child centre in Malaysia to know the opinion of the respondents. In part B, the researcher will focus on the questions that will answer the questions which the the level of anxiety toward child care centre and for part C it focus about perceptions of qualities service towards child care centre. As for the data analysis, the data will be analyzed in quantitative form. Quantitative data is any data that is in numerical form such as statistics, percentages and mathematical terms. The researcher analyses the data with the aid of statistics and hopes the numbers will give an unbiased result that can be generalized to some larger population. Quantitative method is suitable to be used for our research because the researcher wanted to find out the perceptions of qualities service toward child care centre (Abdul Rauf Ridzuan et al., 2015). Once all the data is collected, the data that has been identified will be presented in the form of a table.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### a) DEMOGRAPHY

The demography of the sample is discussed in terms of five characteristics: sex, age, ethnicity, occupation, marital status and state.

**Table 1: Distribution of demography of users (n=536)**

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	224	58.2
Female	312	41.8
Age		
20-25	97	18.1
26-30	116	21.6
31-35	179	33.4
36-40	93	17.4
41 and above	51	9.5
Ethnicity		
Malay	353	65.9
Chinese	76	14.2
Indian	69	12.9
Other	38	7.1

Occupation		
Working at private sector	166	31
Working at government sector	124	23.1
House wife		27.8
Others	149	18.1
	97	
Marital status		
Single father		
Single mother	62	11.6
Married	77	14.4
Divorced	352	65.7
	45	8.4
State		
Northern region		
Central region	136	25.4
Southern region	68	12.7
East coast	136	25.4
Sabah	67	12.5
Sarawak	56	10.4
	73	13.6
I believe with childcare center in Malaysia		
Yes	511	95.3
No	25	4.7
I believe workers at the childcare center have qualification at least diploma in early childhood education		
Yes	493	92.0
No	43	8.0
I believe workers at childcare center must provide a daily report to parents about daily activities, eating and behavior		
Yes	517	96.5
No	19	3.5
I believe workers should have a foster discussion of potential child issues with parents		
Yes	522	97.4
No	14	2.6

Table 1 above shows the profile of respondents from demography of the users. Based from the findings, most of the respondents who answered the questionnaires are male (58.2%), aged between 31-35 (33.4%), Malay ethnic (65.9%) and occupation working

at private sector (31%). Most of the respondents also are from Northern and southern region (25.4%).

Based on the survey, majority of the respondents (95.3%) believe with childcare center in Malaysia while only (4.7%) disagree. Other than that, most of the respondents (92%) said that they believe workers at the childcare center have qualification at least diploma in early childhood education. Next, (96.5%) respondents believe workers at childcare center must provide a daily report to parents about daily activities, eating and behavior while the other (3.5%) respondents said the opposite. Last but not least, majority of the respondents (97.4%) believe workers should have a foster discussion of potential child issues with parents while only (2.6%) disagree.

**Table 2. Level of anxiety toward child care centre**

<b>Stereotypes</b>	<b>Mean</b>
I believe that the outdoor play area are not safe for children to play	2.98
I believe that childcare center didn't have a first aid kit	2.07
I believe childcare center didn't give me daily updates about my children	2.44
I believe that childcare center not accessible for me to reach	2.33
I didn't put 100% of my trust toward my childcare givers of my children	3.40
I believe that childcare center didn't provides enough comfort to the children	2.45
I believe that the workers didn't monitor the safety of the children at child care center	2.25
I believe that childcare center didn't put safety issue as their main priority	2.20
Overall	2.52

### b) Level of anxiety toward child care centre

In terms of the level of anxiety towards child care center, table 2 shows that respondent didn't put 100% of my trust toward my childcare givers of my children with the highest mean (M=3.40) and followed by respondents believe that the outdoor play area are not safe for children to play with the mean (M=2.98). Thirdly, with the mean (M=2.45) show that they believe that childcare center didn't provides enough comfort to the children. In the other hand, the respondents believe childcare center didn't give me daily updates about my children with the mean (M=2.44). Next, on the aspect of the respondent believe that childcare center not accessible for me to reach (M=2.33). Also, in the aspect of they believe that the workers didn't monitor the safety of the children at child care center the mean was (M=2.25) while the mean for they believe that childcare center didn't put safety issue as their main priority was (M=2.20). Lastly, with less mean of respondents believe that childcare center didn't have a first aid kit are (M=2.07)

**Table 3. Perceptions of Qualities Service Towards Child Care Centre**

Quality Services	Mean
I believe that the video feed at the childcare center can help in child development	3.44
I believe the workers always provide healthy food to my children	3.20
I believe that hygiene is the first priority as a parents before sent our children to the childcare center	3.47
I believe that the number of children in each group are limited	3.21
I believe that childcare center make schedule to ensure the children have enough physical activity, rest and playtime	3.37
I believe that childcare center organize an activities that allow children to learn new things about the world and explore their interests	3.24
I believe that childcare center keep the records of children progress and interests	3.04

I believe child care center workers have the professional qualification of being teacher, directors and office personnel	3.41
Overall	3.29

In terms of the level perceptions of qualities service towards child care centre, table 3 shows that respondent believe that hygiene is the first priority as a parents before sent our children to the childcare center highest mean (M=3.47) and followed by they believe that the video feed at the childcare center can help in child development with the mean (M=3.44). Thirdly, with the mean (M=3.41) show that respondent believe child care center workers have the professional qualification of being teacher, directors and office personnel. In the other hand, the respondents believe that childcare center make schedule to ensure the children have enough physical activity, rest and playtime with the mean (M=3.37). Next, on the aspect they believe that childcare center organize an activities that allow children to learn new things about the world and explore their interests with the mean (M=3.24). Also, they believe that the number of children in each group are limited the mean was (M=3.21) while the meanfor respondent believe the workers always provide healthy food to my children was (M=3.20). Next, believe that childcare center keep the records of children progress and interests was (M=3.04).

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, firstly, the result from the level anxiety toward child care centre proven that parents didn't put 100% of their trust toward their childcare givers (M= 3.40) and the result also show that the parents believe that the outdoor play area are not safe for children to play ( M= 2.98). Overall the result from the survey show on level of anxiety toward child care center shows ( M= 2.52) which means that parents had markedly lower rates of depression and experienced less financial hardship over the long term, and simply knowing the parents of other children increased the level of trust parents had in the institution. Thereafter, the result from the perceptions of qualities service towards child care center proven that parents believe child care center workers have the professional qualification of being teacher, directors and office personnel ( M= 3.47) and the result also shows that the parents believe that the

video feed at the childcare center can help in child development (M=3.44). Overall, the result from the survey show on perceptions of qualities service towards child care center proven that parents believe why quality is important in child care because the society, children, families, employers, communities, and the nation as a whole benefit from high quality child care. Fostering a healthy, successful, future workforce is essential to everyone's well-being.

**Table 4. Descriptive statistics of The Quality of Child Care Centres Is The Priority of Parents in Malaysia**

Stereotypes	Mean
Level of anxiety toward child care centre	2.52
Perceptions of qualities service towards child care center	3.29

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