



**MARKET ANALYSIS:
FACTORS INFLUENCING PARENTS' CHOICE FOR
CHILDCARE CENTRE**

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to identify factors influencing parents' choice for a childcare centre. A total of 113 respondents consisting of parents currently sending their child to a childcare centre, parents has the desire to send, parents has no intention to send their child to a childcare centre and parents living in the Stampin Tengah/Green Height, BDC and Tabuan Laru areas. The respondents were asked to answer 47 questions, which covered the respondents' profiles, factors influencing parents' choice for a childcare centre, the significance of childcare, parents' expectation of a childcare centre and parents' awareness on early child development programs. The study found out that parents were influenced by the standards of cleanliness at the childcare centres followed by the quality of service provided. Parents at these areas expected their children to be happy while at the centre and hoping the childcare centres have strict rules about general cleanliness and services. Finally, parents wanted to be involved in the childcare's education plan and development programs and frequently updated on their child development.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Of The Study

Fast development in the urban areas has changed the workforce's landscape. Good education and high cost of living are part of the reasons in the increased of women's involvement in the workforce. As a result, most working parents have little choices but to send their children to a childcare centre. According to the Minister of Women, Family and Community Development, Dato' Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil (2007), female labor-force participation rate increased from 44.8 per cent in 2000 to 46.1 percent in 2006. The role of working women is more challenging than housewives as they are forced to allocate time between family and work. The rise in the number of workingwomen had an impact on the growth and proliferation of day care-centre and children's nurseries.

The importance of early education has also influenced in the rising demand for childcare centres and preschools. Day care or childcare is care of a child during the day by a person other than the child's parents or legal guardians, typically someone outside of the child's immediate family. Childcare is provided in nurseries by child-minders caring for children in their homes. (Wikipedia, 2008 p.1).

According to Dato's Seri Sharizat Jalil (2007), in Malaysia there is only 1831 childcare centre registered with the ministry handling 34,100 children. The demand of government's preschools classes rose from 1,231 in year 2002 to 5,907 in year 2007 (Statistics-Ministry of Education, 2008). This is partly due to the increase

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Quoting the President of Registered Baby-Sitters Association of Malaysia (PPBM), *Norsheila Abdullah*, compared to 10 years ago, baby-sitting is not regarded as a professional carrier of which contributes to human development. It was only in the past few years that the baby-sitting and child services industry became more important. (NST, 2008). Presently there are only 1,831 childcare centres that are registered with the Ministry, handling a total of 34,100 children. This indicates that many more children may not receive quality care as they are either sent to unregistered childcare centres or child minders based at home. Most childcare centres' owner may not also be able to fully understand parents' expectation and what parents want from their centre. Therefore, this study has reviewed the following literatures:

In a study of childcare services, by focusing on pre-purchase choices, ethics and service encounter were the key choice factors nominated, and were significantly higher than all other choice factors. The difficulty experienced by the childcare consumer as they try to predict future service outcomes. It appears that previous exposure to a negative service experience does not necessarily equate to better decision-making the next time around. Convenience and location were next and price and competition were rated the lowest of the choice factors suggesting that in most cases, price and attractive promotional offers of childcare centres contribute little to the consumer's purchase decision. Understandably, most parents would not trade off the safety and well-being of their children for the sake of a few dollars