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A. Abashah, M. F. A. Yaziz, S. U. Naiemah, M. A. A. Pozin, and A. Z. Rozali



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# Parents Satisfaction Towards the Childcare Service Centre: Does Babysitter's Matter?

A Abashah<sup>1,a)</sup>, M F A Yaziz<sup>2</sup>, S U Naiemah<sup>1</sup>, M A A Pozin<sup>1</sup> and A Z Rozali<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*School of Business Innovation and Technopreneurship, Universiti Malaysia Perlis, Perlis, Malaysia.*

<sup>2</sup>*Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Business, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Kelantan, Malaysia.*

Corresponding author: <sup>a)</sup>aidanazima@unimap.edu.my

**Abstract.** Customer satisfaction is of the utmost importance for a company to improve its management, service and quality. The aim of this research study is therefore to investigate what are the critical factors in the satisfaction of the parent with childcare services. By using the questionnaire survey, a quantitative approach was used. The questionnaires consist of 21 questions, including the profile of the respondents. The data collected was analysed using the SPSS software and the findings show a positive significant relationship between each of the variables that are babysitter's factors (babysitter's qualification with  $r=0.506$  and  $p<0.01$ , babysitter's behaviour with  $r=0.506$  and  $p<0.01$  and babysitter's practice with  $r=0.303$  and  $p<0.01$ ) towards the satisfaction of the parent. The analysis of reliability, descriptive, correlation and regression were included in the running of the data. Therefore, on the basis of the research findings, the researcher suggests that the childcare centre should continuously improve its services, particularly in terms of qualification, behaviour and practice of babysitters.

## INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction today is very important elements for a company, particularly for service sectors, to improve its business performance. In this case of childcare services, the parents are their customers instead of a baby or children whom they have served directly.

The Social Welfare department has defined the age for nursery or kindergartens that have been served from the baby up to the age of six before standard one in elementary schools. Early childhood is the most vulnerable time in a child's life when children experience the fastest development in brain or mental health that is affected during their first years of life by the surrounding environment. It is therefore imperative and important to be concerned about educational issues in order to ensure the successful development of children. Parents, as clients, will generally choose the focus of childcare centre administration that meets their fulfilment and pre-requisites on explicit factors in early learning situations, such as the instructive quality, cost and comfort of childcare centre administration.

More parents are currently starting to worry about their selection of the childcare centre. Moreover, parents are willing to spend more time and money in assessing the best services available from the childcare centre and choosing the best ones for their children. This study therefore seeks to explore the elements that can influence the satisfaction of the parent towards the childcare centre. In this study, the aim is to explore the essential elements that can affect the satisfaction of the parent towards the childcare centre based on babysitter's or educator's elements.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Parents Satisfaction

Parent or customer satisfaction is defined as a fundamental concept related to early childcare service centre and it is a high list of priorities for families especially for parents due to the hectic pace of modern life that places a very

unique demands of those needing service. In addition, parents' satisfaction levels are socially constructed, that is, they are influenced by personal characteristics, experiences and the environment.

In services setting, customer satisfaction mainly depends on the process of service delivery a fact that highlights the important role of the front-line employees [1]. With regards to this research study in childcare service centre, it can be demonstrated by the relationship between babysitter's and parents. A key driver of achieving parent's satisfaction is considered to be from the babysitter's domain such qualification, behaviour and practice.

Previous study done by L. Mitchell [2] was explain that the parent's satisfaction are essentials where parents expressed a very high level of satisfaction with their child's education in childcare centre. Furthermore, when most parents had discussions with their babysitter's or educator especially on their kid's interests, learning, and behaviour. Therefore, it can benefit their kid's development in childcare centre. Based on the same research finding also claimed that the most common reason for parents to choose a childcare centre was the quality of the babysitter's or teacher's itself compared to other reason such as affordability and opening hours and recommendations from another parents.

Parent satisfaction is an important element of the larger equation of families needing professional support in caring for and educating their children. Furthermore, the research has claimed that childcare is a vital element for kids and families regardless of social standing. At the same time, the rate of enrolment in childcare service centre has been on the rise due to qualifications of preschool teacher's behaviour and practise [3].

### **Babysitter's Qualification**

Based on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report, has define Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) qualification as qualifications indicate the recognised level and types of knowledge, skills and competencies among ECEC staff have received. In addition, the formal education in ECEC refers to the level and type of education that ECEC staff pursue to acquire such knowledge, skills and competencies to work in the sector. Thus, the professional development provides should provide an opportunity in the sector to update or enhance their practices through in-service training, continuous education or professional training.

A research done by N. Datta Gupta et al. [4] in investigating the effects of type of childhood care towards the children's academic achievement reveals that presence of qualified staff which are babysitter's or teacher's able to increase a demand of centre-based day care. In addition, the researcher is suggested to investigate further on education level and qualifications among the babysitter's and teachers. Moreover, A. Pantouvakis et al. [1] believed that teachers perceive parents with higher education levels as more competent compared to those are not.

In brief, the qualified babysitter's often to provide better quality of childcare centre by producing a better kid's outcomes in terms of spiritual, socially and academic intelligent. Therefore, babysitter's with lower levels of general childcare education should work alongside with those who are highly qualified as a continuous improvement.

### **Babysitter's Behaviour**

In the same report of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also revealed that the important of behaviour of those who work in early child education centre (ECEC) matters and are related to their education and training. It has been showed that the behaviour among babysitter's or teacher in early childcare centre are one the significant element should be considered by childcare owner in improving their services.

In another study also claimed that the observed behaviour of lower-qualified staff turned out to be positively influenced by working alongside highly trained staff [5]. Meanwhile, another researcher has concluded the seven domains of quality in childcare including positive structural attributes; safe, clean, physical environment; adequate instructional resources; sound instruction; teacher attributes and behaviour [3].

In the different research by A. Pantouvakis et al. [1] has confirmed that employee job satisfaction has an important influence on customer satisfaction. Therefore, satisfied employees tend to be more productive, provide better services to customers and significantly able to boom the business profitability. Complementary to this, developing the professional attitude and behaviour of employees is an important indicator of a worker's satisfaction attitude and behaviour.

### **Babysitter's Practice**

One of the essentials elements that in influencing the parent's satisfaction towards the childcare service is babysitter's practice. Researcher claimed that an area that can improve pedagogical practices of childcare is a staff

that includes supporting staff's competence to communicate and interact with children in a shared and sustainable manner [6]. Therefore, by having the best interaction between babysitter's and children will led to children early education performance. However, the babysitter's or teachers have a different need while practitioners have another different background, Thus, an effective training method should suit with these differences between babysitter's or teachers and practitioners.

Parents also view the training on babysitter's or teacher practice as highly important where teachers or babysitters able to be a role model in good social and emotional skills, protecting children from harm and ensure a safe environment. Furthermore, one of the researcher has investigate how the ideal of equity in education is being challenged through practices connected to parent and school relationships through parental involvement in school that can influence the parents' satisfaction [7]. Fig. 1 shows the research framework of this project.

Therefore:

H1: A positive significant relationship is exist between babysitter's qualification and parents' satisfaction.

H2: A positive significant relationship is exist between babysitter's behaviour and parents' satisfaction.

H3: A positive significant relationship is exist between babysitter's practice and parents' satisfaction.

Thus, the research framework as below:

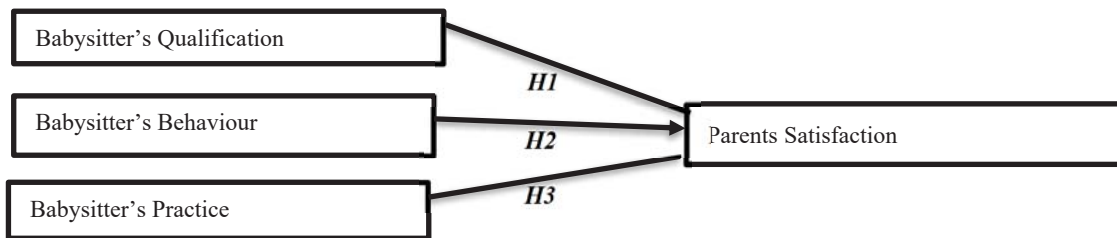


FIGURE 1. The Research Framework

## METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research method is applied to understand the parent's satisfaction based on the babysitter's factors; babysitter's qualification; babysitter's behaviour and babysitter's practice. The 313 individuals are participating in the survey questionnaire as the respondents. A survey questionnaire is consisting of 21 total number of questions including the respondents profiling in Part A with three separated parts. Both of Part B and Part C are measured by using the 5-point Likert scale to measure the babysitter's qualification, babysitter's behaviour, babysitter's practice and parent's satisfaction.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Reliability Analysis

The validity of the survey has determined by using value of Cronbach's Alpha to compute the reliability and inner consistency of the respond that gathered from the respondents. Cronbach's alpha reliability factor is more often in the range of 0 to 1. Subsequently, the coefficient really has no lower limit. Cronbach alpha value rules are as in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Cronbach's  $\alpha$ -Value Rules.

$\alpha$ Value	Remarks
$\alpha > 0.90$	Excellent
$\alpha > 0.80$	Good
$\alpha > 0.70$	Acceptable
$\alpha > 0.60$	Questionable
$\alpha > 0.50$	Poor
$\alpha > 0.50$	Unacceptable

Thus, the reliability analysis for each variable are as below in Table 2. The alpha value for dependent variable; parent's satisfaction (4 items) is excellent with  $\alpha$ -value=0.924 and babysitter's behaviour (4 items) is good where  $\alpha$ -value=0.836. Another variable is babysitter's qualification (4 items) and babysitter's practices (3 items) are acceptable with  $\alpha$ -value=0.710 and  $\alpha$ -value=0.757 respectively.

**TABLE 2.** Reliability Analysis

Variable	Instrument	Number of Items	Alpha Value	Remarks
Babysitters Qualification	The babysitters hold a bachelor degree is more reliable.	4	0.710	Acceptable
	The babysitters must well trained.			
	Babysitters shall have working experience with kids.			
	Babysitters should able to adapt with program that fit children needs.			
Babysitters Behaviour	Babysitter's response to kids in a warm and patient manner.	4	0.836	Good
	Avoid physical punishment or severe methods towards kids.			
	Willing to help kids in solving their problems.			
	The good behaviour of babysitters encourages my kids to go to childcare.			
Babysitters Practise	Babysitters is a good model of healthy habits.	3	0.757	Acceptable
	Babysitters teach kids to manage healthy practises.			
	Babysitters are taking indoor and outdoor preventive action towards hazard.			
Parents Satisfaction	I am satisfied with childcare services.	4	0.924	Excellent
	I am satisfied with babysitter's qualification.			
	I am satisfied with babysitter's behaviour.			
	I am satisfied with babysitter's practices.			

### Respondent Profile

Among 313 respondents has participated in survey conducted, 189 (124%) are female compared to male, 124 (39.6%) respondents (Table 3). Based on the data, majority of the respondents are SPM and diploma holders with 102 (32.6%) each followed by Bachelor degree about 88 (28.1%) respondents and the rest are all 7 (2.2%) with master's degree, PhD and others separately.

In addition, 154 (49.2%) are in age range of 21 to 30 years old, 105 (33.5%) in range 31 to 40 years old. 44 (14.1%) in range 41 to 50 years old and only 10 (3.2%) are below than 20 years old. In terms of race, Chinese are the majority respondents with 178 (56.9%), the second lower is Malay 87 (27.8%) and followed by Indian 48 (15.3%) respondents.

Furthermore, in terms of marital status, 244 (78.0%) are married while the rest with single 54 (17.3%), divorced 7 (2.2%), widowed 5 (1.6%) and separated 3 (1.0%) status. Lastly, for number of kids, about half of the respondents are having only 1 kid with majority 153 (48.9%), 130 (41.5%) respondents with 2 kids, 25 (8.0%) with 3 kids followed by 5 (1.6%) respondents with 4 kids and more.

**TABLE 3.** Respondent Profile

	<b>Items</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Gender	Male	124	39.6
	Female	189	60.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>100</b>
Education Level	SPM	102	32.6
	Diploma	102	32.6
	Bachelor Degree	88	28.1
	Master Degree	7	2.2
	PhD	7	2.2
	Others	7	2.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>100</b>
Age Group	Below 20 years old	10	3.2
	21 – 30 years old	154	49.2
	31 – 40 years old	105	33.5
	41 – 50 years old	44	14.1
	51 and above	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>100</b>
Race	Malay	87	27.8
	Chinese	178	56.9
	Indian	48	15.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>100</b>
Marital Status	Single	54	17.3
	Married	244	78.0
	Divorced	7	2.2
	Widowed	5	1.6
	Separated	3	1.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>100</b>
Number of Kids	1	153	48.9
	2	130	41.5
	3	25	8.0
	4 and above	5	1.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>100</b>

### Descriptive Analysis

Table 4 shows a mean range between 4.066 to 4.134 with standard deviation 0.722 and 0.551 for babysitter's practice and babysitter's behaviour respectively. While babysitter's qualification is (mean=4.099, standard deviation=0.524) and (mean=4.114, standard deviation= 0.463) for parent's satisfaction.

**TABLE 4.** Descriptive Analysis

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Babysitter's Qualification	313	4.099	0.524
Babysitter's Behaviour	313	4.134	0.551
Babysitter's Practice	313	4.066	0.722
Parents Satisfaction	313	4.114	0.463

### Pearson Correlation Analysis

The purpose of the Pearson correlation was to measure the p-value between independent variables; babysitter's qualification, babysitter's behaviour, babysitter's practice and dependent variables; parent's satisfaction.

**TABLE 5.** Pearson Correlation Analysis

		BQ	BB	BP	PS
Babysitter's Qualification (BQ)	Pearson Correlation	1	.407**	.104	.506**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.065	.000
	N	313	313	313	313
Babysitter's Behaviour (BB)	Pearson Correlation	.407**	1	.368**	.506**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	313	313	313	313
Babysitters Practice (BP)	Pearson Correlation	.104	.368**	1	.303**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.065	.000		.000
	N	313	313	313	313
Parent's Satisfaction (PS)	Pearson Correlation	.506**	.506**	.303**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	313	313	313	313

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 exhibits the positive relationship between parent's satisfaction with babysitter's qualification ( $r=0.506$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), babysitter's behaviour ( $r=0.506$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and babysitter's practice ( $r=0.303$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

### Regression Analysis

Table 6 indicates the R-value is 0.62, thus displaying a moderate relationship between each variable. While the R square value of 0.384 means that 38.4% of the total variation of the parent's satisfaction had been contributed by independent variables. Moreover, the adjusted R-square is 0.378, thus, it can be concluded that 37.8% of the variation from the dependent variable is being attributed from the independent variables.

**TABLE 6.** Linear Regression

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.620 <sup>a</sup>	.384	.378	.36499
a. Predictors: (Constant), MeanBP, MeanBQ, MeanBB				
c. Dependent Variables; Parent's Satisfaction				

Meanwhile, the result from multiple regression analysis as shown in Table 7 indicates that all the independent variables; babysitter's qualification, babysitter's behaviour, babysitter's practice has a significant relationship with dependent variable; parent's satisfaction where the significant values or p-value of the variables are less than 0.01 with positive relationship. In addition, Standardized coefficients  $\beta$ -value of babysitter's qualification, babysitter's behaviour, babysitter's practice is 0.368, 0.299 and 0.155 respectively.

**TABLE 7.** Multiple Regression

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	1.339	.202		6.616	.000
MeanBQ	.325	.043	.368	7.527	.000
MeanBB	.251	.044	.299	5.705	.000
MeanBP	.100	.031	.155	3.229	.001

Therefore, based on the previous analysis:

H1: A positive significant relationship is exist between babysitter's qualification and parents' satisfaction.

The relationship between babysitter's qualification and parent's satisfaction shows a positive significant relationship with Pearson correlation  $r=0.506$  and  $p<0.01$  at the significant level of 0.01. Meanwhile, the regression analysis in Table 7 shown a positive relationship of  $\beta$ -value= $0.368$  of babysitter's qualification and 0.00 for the significant result.

H2: A positive significant relationship is exist between babysitter's behaviour and parents' satisfaction.

The relationship between babysitter's behaviour and parent's satisfaction shows a positive significant relationship with Pearson correlation  $r=0.506$  and  $p<0.01$  at the significant level of 0.01. Meanwhile, the regression analysis in Table 7 shown a positive relationship of  $\beta$ -value= $0.299$  of babysitter's behaviour and 0.00 for the significant result.

H3: A positive significant relationship is exist between babysitter's practice and parents' satisfaction.

The relationship between babysitter's practice and parent's satisfaction shows a positive significant relationship with Pearson correlation  $r=0.303$  and  $p<0.01$  at the significant level of 0.01. Meanwhile, the regression analysis in Table 7 shown a positive relationship of  $\beta$ -value= $0.155$  of babysitter's practice and 0.01 for the significant result.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the research was to investigate and understand the research framework with regards to understand the parent's satisfaction towards childcare service centre by looking at babysitter's qualification, behavior and practice. Based on the analysis, the current research finding was confirmed a very significant relationship between babysitter's qualification and parent's satisfaction. The results have a similarity with previous research finding by L. Mitchell [2], the quality of educators is a very essential for parents in deciding the best childcare centre for their kids.

Furthermore, the same theme of finding appeared in J. Li-Fen et al. [3] and P. Summons [5] with regards to the relationship between babysitter's behaviour towards parent's satisfaction. In addition, the attitude and positive behaviours among babysitter's or childcare educators is the best role model for kids and indirectly will influence the childcare behaviour. It was approved by the current research finding was confirmed a positive significant relationship between babysitter's behaviour and parent's satisfaction.

The present research also discovered that a positive significant relationship was confirmed between babysitter's practice and parent's satisfaction. Moreover, teaching objectives and related practices are mainly linked to the learning and educational process where the role of educator's or babysitter's in childcare are important. Thus, teaching practices aimed at the arrangement of relational procedures and encourage the social improvement of kids as the advancement of helpful abilities [6-7].

This research study may have some limitations where the method of this research was questionnaire survey technique. The implementation of this questionnaire survey technique as an instrument was totally depends on the voluntary cooperation of the participants. In addition, the survey questionnaires were exposed to the few challenging factors which are understanding the questions, bias and prejudices of the respondents. Hence, one could not guarantee the highest point of accuracy of the responses. In future, the qualitative instrument such as an interview can be apply in order the get more accurate response from the respondents and for the purpose to avoid the factors exposed.

The outcomes of this research reveal a positive significant relationship for three's hypothesis that reflects to parent's satisfaction towards childcare service center. Therefore, the finding of this research offers a value added in order to enhance the childcare business performance by improving the parent's satisfaction through babysitter's elements of babysitter's qualification, behavior and practice. Furthermore, the finding can be used by childcare owner to do an improvement towards their quality specifically in babysitters or teacher matter to meet the needs of parents.

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