

Understanding Parent Behavioural Intention in Childcare Service: The Effect of Perceived Trust and Emotional Satisfaction

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.60016/majcafe.v31.12>

Abstract

Early childhood education and care services for children under four have become an essential societal concern in recent decades. Childcare services that are both affordable and of high quality may help to reconcile work and family life, promoting labour market participation and gender equality. Notably, there have been instances where childcare centres have failed to meet the government's minimum service requirements. As a result, the objective of this study is to determine the impact of perceived trust and emotional satisfaction on parent behavioural intentions in childcare services. The research framework on perceived trust and emotional satisfaction in childcare services was established utilising the Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) theory and Expectancy Confirmation Theory (ECT). This study selected a purposive sampling technique through the distribution of questionnaires to childcare providers. The study managed to collect responses from 364 respondents which were analysed using the Partial Least Square (PLS) Structural Equation Modelling approach. The result showed that perceived trust and emotional satisfaction were supported with behavioural intention. Apart from that, the mediation role of emotional satisfaction significantly impacted perceived trust and intention. Finally, the study concluded with the implication of the study theoretically and practically

Keywords: behavioural intention, childcare service, emotional satisfaction, perceived trust, stimulus organism response



1.0 Introduction

In general, women stay at home to care for their children while men are breadwinners for the family institution. However, to keep pace with high living costs and the rapid demand in lifestyle, it is routine for families to have dual incomes. The number of children is another obstacle for the reason women join the workforce (Ismail & Sulaiman, 2014). Education attainment has largely impacted the increase in women entering the workforce (Mahpul & Abdullah, 2011). The growth in the number of women in the workforce has caused many to seek for support from childcare centre during their working hours (Bakar & Abdullah, 2013; Foong, Veloo, Dhamotharan, & Loh, 2018). In the late 1970s, the purpose of establishing childcare centres was mainly to cater to the demand of women in the workforce. Through childcare centres, prioritizing children's development and growth have gained interest and made a substantial difference to the society (Felfe & Lalive, 2018). From the Malaysian perspective, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes are offered by both two types of institutions, known as:

- i. Childcare centre or nurseries or (also known as *TASKA*)
In accordance with ECCE, childcare can be referred to as the arrangement of care for children from newborn to the age of four. Generally, education programs offered by the childcare centres start from newborns up to the age of four years. It was were established in the late 1970s, with the purpose of catering to the women labour force. Nowadays, childcare serves another function - fostering the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social development of children (Foong et al., 2018). Childcare centres in Malaysia fall under four categories:
 - a. Government owned childcare centres or Community based centres
 - b. Workplace childcare centre
 - c. Institution based childcare centre
 - d. Home based childcare centre
- ii. Preschool or kindergartens (also known as *Prasekolah*, *TABIKA* or *TADIK*)
Preschool education in Malaysia developed since the 1950s and was institutionalized into national education through the Educational Act 1996 (Malaysia The Commissioner of Law



Revision, 2012). The increased number of preschools in Malaysia since 1970s until now, is the sign of the growing awareness of various stakeholders, and the importance of ECCE. In 2002, the Act was amended to enable the implementation of compulsory education at primary school level. The provision of preschool education in Malaysia is monitored by the Government and complemented by the private sector. Government operated preschools are run by Ministry of Education (MOE), KEMAS, and PERPADUAN, which cover children from age five to six.

The number of childcare centres in Malaysia has been steadily mounting and is projected to continue to increase in the future (OECD, 2021, p. 62; Yi, Md Isa, Noor, & Mohd Nor, 2021). This scenario is aligned over the years in Malaysia with the growing number of women who are joining the paid labour force (Omar, Abu, Sapuan, Aziz, & Nazri, 2010). Family institutions in Malaysia are strengthened with the growth of the childcare market. Indeed, as announced in the 2019 Malaysia Budget, there is a financial aid of RM10 million by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) for workplace childcare establishment at Government agencies to lessen parental concerns on child safety. On top of that, the Government has put forward childcare policy and extended the facilities and services to ensure the demand for parent and children needs are adhered to.

Registered childcare centres in Malaysia have increased to 4903 in 2019 as reported by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM, 2020). Correspondingly, most countries are concerned in providing good education to children at an early age (Azhari, Qamaruzaman, Bajunid, & Hassan, 2015) and parents are selective in choosing quality childcare for the childrens' benefit (Halim, Hasan, Marzuki, & Jais, 2014; Omar, Nazri, Abu, & Omar, 2009). Difficulty in choosing quality and reliable childcare with limited economic resources and less availability in the area have caused parents to turn a blind eye on this matter without considering the future impact to their children (Halim et al., 2014). In fact, there is demand from parents to place their children at affordable and good quality childcare (Ismail & Hanafi, 2015). However, there are issues arising from childcare services related to injuries or deaths at childcare centres (Abdul Mutalib, Nik Saleh, & Masod, 2018; Cheah & Yuen, 2016). Maintaining a close relationship between child carer and parents would lessen the risks involved as both parties understand their expectations and perception



of service (Hanafi, 2015). Notably, there are cases of childcare centres that failed in delivering the standard requirement services as ruled by the Government, such as non-experienced child carers, non-registered centres, and lack of facilities (Basir & Awang, 2021; Shah, 2018). These have caused anxiety to parents with regard to child safety. In assessing the factor of parent behavioural intention, the childcare provider should not focus solely on the angle of service, but also consider the impact of trust, satisfaction and other determinants in modelling to consumer behaviour.

In recent decades, early childhood education and care services for children under 4 have become a matter of serious public concern. Affordable and good-quality day care services may improve the reconciliation of work and family life and thus foster labour market participation and gender equality. Past studies suggest that the quality of childcare would impact cognitive skills, language, school readiness, social and emotional development, and resiliency to life stress especially during the first four years (Burchinal et al., 2016; Melhuish et al., 2015). In conjunction with the issues discussed above, the objective of this study is to identify the understanding on parent behavioural intention in childcare services with the effect of perceived trust and emotional satisfaction. The research framework applied the Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) Theory and Expectancy Confirmation Theory (ECT) by suggesting the perceived trust and emotional satisfaction. The SOR Theory by Mehrabian and Russel (1974) and ECT by Oliver (1980) were adopted as the theoretical framework for the study.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Stimulus Organisation Response (SOR) Theory

The formation of the SOR Theory involves three stages starting from the sequential of stimulus (S) which refers to external factors of the individual inner state. Organism (O) is the psychological process that intervenes the stimulus to the final behavioural response (R). Simply said, the relationship between stimulus and responsive behaviour is mediated by the intervention of the internal responses of the organism (Bigne, Chatzipanagiotou, & Ruiz, 2020; Vieira, 2013). In brief, the SOR framework gives limelight on the mediating role of organism on the relationship between the stimulus and response (Jacoby, 2002). This theory is widely applied in studies of consumer



behaviour (Chen & Yao, 2018; Islam & Rahman, 2017; Kamboj, Sarmah, Gupta, & Dwivedi, 2018; Kim, Lee, & Jung, 2020). Precedingly, Mehrabian and Russell's model had been chosen to evaluate the interrelation of environment stimuli as a predictor to emotion outlook and resulting in consumer behaviour response in a variety of sectors, for example in retailing, namely hotels, flea markets, fashion stores and electronic items to name a few (Emir et al., 2016; Gil & Jacob, 2018; Goi, Kalidas, & Zeeshan, 2014; Hyun & Kang, 2014; Lin & Liang, 2011; Villiers, Visnena, & Phiri, 2018). The theory agrees to the interrelationship of these three stages as the basis of consumer behaviour. Adaptation of the SOR Theory is varied within service industries and Daunt and Harris (2012) found that there are significant differences across service environments.

2.2 Expected Confirmation Theory (ECT)

Expectancy Confirmation Theory (ECT) is a favoured approach for consumer behaviour studies (Oliver, 1980; Rahi & Ghani, 2019). Initially, ECT was developed by Oliver (1980) with the aim of explaining customers' pre-purchase behaviours (expectations), and their post purchase behaviour (perceived performance). ECT was widely used to demonstrate intention in many products or services for understanding what are the customer expectations and requirements, such as in the area of tourism (Polites, Williams, Karahanna, & Seligman, 2012), information technology (Lin, Wu, Hsu, & Chou, 2012), banking (Tsai, Chien, & Tsai, 2014), and education (Shahijan, Rezaei, & Amin, 2015). With its competencies and judgements, ECT is able to fulfil the needs of the study in measuring satisfaction (Hassan, 2014). Emotional aspects co-exist with cognitive systems to generate satisfaction (Ladhari, Souiden, & Dufour, 2017). Cognitive judgement made by customers refers to the emotional satisfaction that they felt towards the service quality evaluation, and the emotional satisfaction role as a mediator in the study of an optometry clinic, which agreed that there was a significant impact on behavioural intention (Ladhari et al., 2017).

From an ECT perspective, emotional satisfaction concern as customer's judgement outcome from the product or service performance to the expectation performance (Oliver, 1980). Undoubtedly, every customer has their own expectations of what they feel. This implies a process by which customers reach their intentions. Consumers first develop an expectation of a specific product or service prior to purchase. Second, they accept and use that product or service,



and subsequently, they develop opinions according to performance. Thirdly, they assess its perceived performance comparing this with their original expectations and determine the extent to which their expectation is confirmed. Then, based on the confirmation level, they have a specific level of satisfaction, which then determines repurchase intention. Finally, satisfied consumers form a repurchase intention, while dissatisfied users discontinue subsequent use. Satisfaction is viewed as the key to building and retaining a loyal base of long-term customers (Bhattacharjee, 2001). Oliver (1980) proposes the premise of expectations, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions, by stating that customers may be satisfied if the product or service exceeds their expectations, which passes through their confirmatory filters.

2.3 Hypotheses Development

2.3.1 Relationship of Perceived Trust and Emotional Satisfaction

In a normal situation of service marketing, customer's decisions are derived from their confidence before voicing their satisfaction with the service experience. Emotional satisfaction refers to satisfaction with a service provider is both an evaluative and an emotion-based response that includes interest, enjoyment, surprise, anger and shame, of services encountered (Ladhari, Souiden, & Dufour, 2017). For the purpose of this study, it covers customers' emotional feelings that develop favourable responses to the childcare service. Examples of several empirical studies have proved that customer's trust is developed through confidence, dignity, and commitment of the service provider based on the service delivered (Chang et al., 2013; Fang et al., 2014; Kundu & Datta, 2015). In addition, the outcome of the service given is unknown as there are many credible judgements attached to it and confuses customers in differentiating the service performance (Alrubaiee & Alkaa'ida, 2011; Bitner & Wang, 2014). Berry and Parasuraman (2004) asserted that because of this issue, customer's trust is essentially needed in the marketing of services. In determining the level of satisfaction, studies from different service contexts found that the outcome of service experience is derived from customer trust (Al-Ansi, Olya, & Han, 2019; Kassim & Abdullah, 2010; Kaveh, 2012). This led to the formulation of the hypothesis as:

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between perceived trust and emotional satisfaction.



2.3.2 Relationship of Emotional Satisfaction and Behavioural Intention

Offering excellent service with greater value, satisfying customers and becoming the market leader in the industry are amongst the aims of most service providers (Minh & Huu, 2016). Customer relationship marketing by being empathetic to customers' needs and attracting new potential customers are the skills required for modern businesses to embrace the customer-oriented market in today's perspective (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012). It was argued by Brady, Robertson, and Cronin (2001) that customers' behavioural intention is directly affected by the level of satisfaction that the customers experience during the service encounter and driven by emotive judgement. Concurrently, in the service setting business, Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996) acknowledged that satisfying customers with the service experienced would lead to a favourable behaviour intention and they will continue with the same provider. Furthermore, certain behaviours are affirmed to the possibility of being engaged. In this study, behavioural intention is defined as customer receptiveness and intention to engage with the childcare service for their children. Dissatisfied consumers will have unfavourable behaviours, albeit with the service offered. In the early years, Zeithaml et al. (1996) identified two dimensions to measure behavioural intention – favourable and unfavourable. Positive word-of-mouth, repurchase intention and staying loyal are the indicators for favourable intention (Fang et al., 2014; Kitapci, Akdogan, & Dortyol, 2014; Riadh Ladhari, Souiden, & Ladhari, 2011), while unfavourable behavioural intention tends to spread from negative word-of-mouth and negative experiences to other customers (Bijmolt, Huizingh, & Krawczyk, 2014; Wu, 2013), and switching to competitors (Han, Kim, & Hyun, 2011). Hence, it was agreed that the second hypothesis is as follows:

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between emotional satisfaction and behavioural intention.

2.3.3 Relationship of Perceived Trust and Behavioural Intention

From a relationship marketing perspective, maintaining and enhancing a strong relationship with customers and service providers require the element of perceived trust. Perceived trust reflect a willingness to be vulnerable, based on positive expectations. It is recognised that customers form trust with regards confidence,



reliability, and integrity of the services they encounter (Kim, Chung, & Lee, 2011; Kundu & Datta, 2015). In terms of this study, it enables customers to believe that childcare providers have adequate ability to protect and provide useful services to the children under their care. Formation of purchase intention stems from the trust and attitude of customers towards the positive response of product or service (Limbu, Wolf, & Lunsford, 2012). Diverse studies in other areas concluded that the relationship of perceived trust is relevant to behavioural intention (Adiwijaya, Kaihatu, Nugroho, & Kartika, 2017; Alan & Kabadayi, 2014; Chiu, Bool, & Chiu, 2017; Limbu et al., 2012). Customers develop trust and shape their attitude which affects their intention significantly (Limbu et al., 2012). They trust and feel secure through observation and interaction with the service provider and turn up to their positive behavioural intention. Similarly, it was agreed that first-time parents would seek from other experienced parents before making a decision on childcare services (Hamid, Ahmad, Shaari, & Saidin, 2019). Hence, the following hypothesis was composed.

H3: There is a significant positive relationship between perceived trust and behavioural intention.

2.3.4 The Mediating Role of Emotional Satisfaction on the Relationship of Perceived Trust and Behavioural Intention

Customers are likely to feel satisfied in completing the transaction process if they trust the service offered and have repurchase intention in the future (Chang & Polonsky, 2012). Word-of-mouth intention and customer credibility are able to impact customer satisfaction and vice versa (Liang, Choi, & Joppe, 2018; Ruswanti, Eff, & Kusumawati, 2020). Consumer trust is essential in determining consumer behaviour intention (Muda, Mohd, & Hassan, 2016). Mehrabian and Russel (1974) agreed that organism is the internal process between stimuli or external and final reaction or response. Customers would positively trust, satisfy and have intention to use the service in the future. In fact, by highlighting on these two important factors, the customer behavioural intention will be maximized. Childcare provider need to be relevant and striving to provide superior service to satisfy parents in order to remain competitive and sustainable in the market (Nimako, 2012). Parents' satisfaction may be driven by parents' accurate evaluation of factors, such as location, hours, cost, or other program features, that find to be important



elements in measuring emotional satisfaction of parents toward childcare services (Bassok, Markowitz, Player, & Zagardo, 2018). In between emotions and behavioural intentions, satisfaction is depicted as a mediator of the model (Walsh, Shiu, Hassan, Michaelidou, & Beatty, 2011). Furthermore, it has been determined that satisfaction is created within the service experienced, and continues to lead customer intentions (Chang & Wang, 2011; Murti, Deshpande, & Srivastava, 2013). Based on this notion, it seems that the emotional satisfaction does not entirely pre-eminence the importance of the existing relationship between perceived trust and behavioural intention as this variable should be included to better understand the customer behavioural intention. Consequently, the inclusion of emotional satisfaction in this study as a mediator has a substantial impact in measuring behavioural intention (Riadh Ladhari et al., 2011). Therefore, the proposed hypothesis is:

H4: Emotional satisfaction mediates the relationship of perceived trust and behavioural intention

3.0 Methodology

The unit of analysis adopted in this study was parents who have experience in sending their children to childcare centres. In others word, the sample covered customers who acted as parents and send their children aged four years and below to childcare centres. The data was collected through four regions in Peninsular Malaysia namely Northern Region, Central Region, Southern Region, and Eastern Region. In collecting the data for this study, questionnaires were designed and distributed to respondents. To lower sample attrition, as discussed by Thomas et al. (2012), seven hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed to respondents. The names of respondents were kept confidential and anonymous. Out of the 750 questionnaires, 554 were returned. Of this, 190 were found to be non-usable due to incomplete, non-childcare users and straight line. Having dropped 190 questionnaires, a total of 364 were valid for subsequent analysis. 364 surveys is acceptable, as according to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009), a sample of 350 is sufficient to depict a large population. With a total of 364 respondents, non-probability focus on purposive sampling was determined based on the quality of data gathered, reliability and knowing the competency of the respondents (Tongco, 2007). This is in line with consumer behaviour studies which



employed purposive sampling (Amin & Nasharuddin, 2013; Izogo & Ogba, 2015; Rachbini, 2018; Ruswanti et al., 2020).

The objectives of the study were duly explained to the childcare operators to obtain their consent. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to parents at the respective centres upon consent given by the childcare providers. The set of survey questionnaire consisted of three major sections that examined demographic profile (Section A), emotional satisfaction and perceived trust (Section B), and customer behavioural intentions (Section C). The nominal scale was used in Section A, while the 5-point Likert Scale was used in Sections B and C. Before the actual data collection took place, a pre-test and pilot test were executed. The hypotheses were tested through the Partial Least Square (PLS) based on Structural Equation Modelling. Bootstrapping 5000 was run using the Smart PLS 3.2.9 software in an attempt to assess the significant level of loading, weights and path coefficients (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015).

4.0 Findings

The Harman Single Factor test was performed through the Exploratory Factor Analysis with the method of loading for all items to examine the variation in the data using SPSS version 23.0. The results of this study revealed that the first factor contributed for 33.201% of the variance, whereby the threshold exhibited the Common Method Variance cut-off point of 50% (Fuller, Simmering, Atinc, Atinc, & Babin, 2016; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Lee, 2003). The multivariate skewness and kurtosis using the software available as follows: https://webpower.psychstat.org/models/kurtosis/results.php?url=ee5f0f273787c3ef2b8918e304491afd_ The result reflected that the present study data (collected survey data) was not multivariate normal. Mardia's multivariate skewness ($\beta = 3.304$, $p < 0.01$) and Mardia's multivariate kurtosis ($\beta = 21.083$, $p < 0.01$) showed the result, thus continued to use the Smart PLS which is a non-parametric analysis software due to multivariate normality issues. In two steps the PLS-SEM path model was analysed and interpreted, namely the measurement model and structural model (Hair, Hult, et al., 2014). In the beginning it started with the measurement model, alternately known as the outer model, to ascertain the validity and reliability between constructs.

In the next step, the structural model or typically known as the inner model was studied to test the relationship of constructs.



Secondarily, the structural model took place with the aim to test the hypotheses relationship and determine the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2) and prediction of relevance (Q^2). Out of 364 respondents, the female respondents outnumbered the male respondents, with a percentage of 67.6% majoring at the age of 30-39 years and experiencing 4-6 years of parenting.

4.1 The Measurement Model

Previous literatures suggested to perform a two-step approach in order to test the hypothesis (Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & Kuppelwieser, 2014). The reliability and validity are performed in the convergent validity and discriminant validity. The convergent validity is confirmed once the loading and average variance extract (AVE) values surpass the threshold value of 0.5 and the composite reliability is higher than 0.7 (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019). As illustrated in Table 1, the loading values were in the range of 0.510 – 0.917, AVE in between 0.550 – 0.793, and the composite reliability 0.893 – 0.939 fulfilled the requirements proposed by Hair, Risher, et al. (2019). Thus, no issues in the convergent validity were highlighted.

Table 1 : Result of Convergent Validity

Constructs	Items	Loading	Convergent Reliability	Average Variance Explained	Cronbach Alpha
Behavioural Intention (BI)	BI1	0.728	0.893	0.550	0.859
	BI3	0.712			
	BI4	0.820			
	BI5	0.870			
	BI6	0.832			
	BI7	0.659			
	BI9	0.510			
Emotional Satisfaction (ES)	ES1	0.844	0.939	0.793	0.913
	ES2	0.894			
	ES3	0.917			
	ES4	0.905			
Perceived Trust (PT)	PT1	0.853	0.894	0.680	0.843
	PT2	0.879			
	PT3	0.755			
	PT4	0.805			

Deleted items: BI11; BI8; BI12; BI2; BI13; BI14; BI10



The purpose of discriminant validity is to ensure the construct is truly distinct from other constructs (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). Table 2 shows the measuring of other constructs loaded that are greater than the correspondent cross loadings and it fulfilled the requirement of 0.5-0.7 (Hair et al., 2014). As illustrated in Figure 1, the output of data analysis is to have clear understanding.

Table 2 : Cross Loading Items

Items	Behavioural Intention (BI)	Emotional Satisfaction (ES)	Perceived Trust (PT)
BI1	0.728	0.402	0.475
BI3	0.712	0.456	0.411
BI4	0.820	0.505	0.496
BI5	0.870	0.543	0.520
BI6	0.832	0.496	0.524
BI7	0.659	0.359	0.390
BI9	0.510	0.292	0.275
ES1	0.532	0.844	0.440
ES2	0.471	0.894	0.422
ES3	0.553	0.917	0.494
ES4	0.566	0.905	0.482
PT1	0.547	0.426	0.853
PT2	0.565	0.469	0.879
PT3	0.374	0.334	0.755
PT4	0.482	0.461	0.805

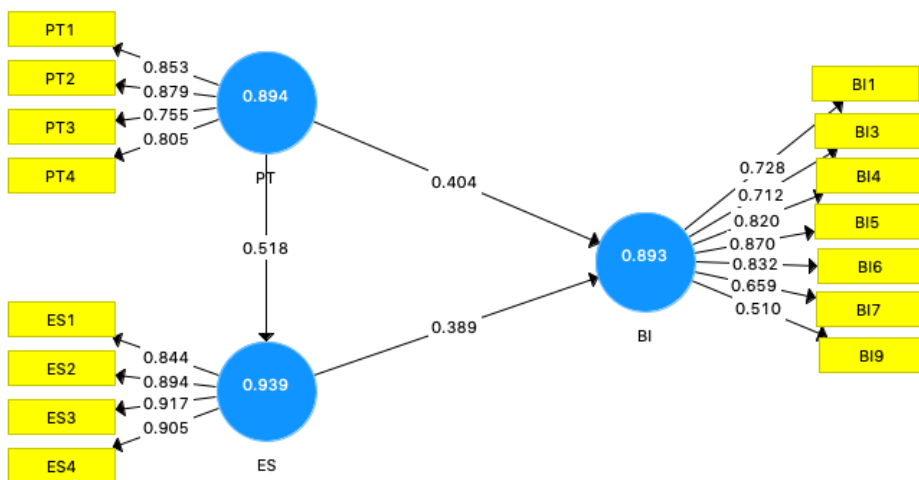


Figure 1 : Modeling of Output



In line with Henseler et al. (2015), discriminant validity can be assessed through the Multitrait and Multimethod Matrix, namely the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). Using the HTMT criterion, if the values are greater than HTMT value of 0.85 (Kline, 2011) or 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015), this indicates there was a problem with the discriminant validity. In this study, the HTMT reflects within the appropriate values as given in Table 3. Diamantopoulos and Sigua (2006) claimed that the VIF must be lower than 3.3 and thus, suggesting a non-issue of collinearity as constructs of ES and PT had a value at 1.366 respectively.

Table 3 : Discriminant Validity – HTMT

Constructs	Behavioural Intention (BI)	Emotional Satisfaction (ES)	Perceived Trust (PT)
BI			
ES	0.667		
PT	0.696	0.582	

4.2 The Structural Model

The hypotheses developed for this study were tested by running a bootstrapping procedure with a resample of 5,000 as suggested by (Hair et al., 2014; Ramayah, Cheah, Chuah, Ting, & Memon, 2018). Table 4 depicts Beta value, t value, p values and the decision made. From the analysis, all developed hypotheses were supported. The study found that perceived trust (PT) was positively related to emotional satisfaction (ES) (H1: $\beta = 0.518$, $t = 11.336$, $p < 0.01$), emotional satisfaction (ES) with behavioural intention (BI) (H2: $\beta = 0.389$, $t = 9.585$, $p < 0.01$), and perceived trust (PT) on behavioural intention (BI) (H3: $\beta = 0.404$, $t = 9.218$, $p < 0.01$). Hence, H1 to H3 were supported. Meanwhile, the study found that emotional satisfaction mediates perceived trust (PT) and behavioural intention (BI) (H4: $\beta = 0.201$, $t = 6.547$, $p < 0.01$, $LL = 0.146$, $UL = 0.268$). The result of R^2 , f^2 and Q^2 are as given in Table 4.



Table 4 : Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Beta (β)	t Value	p Value	LL	UL	VIF	R^2	f^2	Decision
H1:PT->ES	0.518	11.336	0.000	0.421	0.601	1.000	0.268	0.366	Supported
H2:ES->BI	0.389	9.585	0.000	0.306	0.467	1.366	0.477	0.212	Supported
H3:PT->BI	0.404	9.218	0.000	0.314	0.489	1.366		0.229	Supported
H4:PT->ES->BI	0.201	6.547	0.000	0.146	0.268				Supported

According to Kock (2015), when using the full collinearity analysis, if the value for the variance inflated factor (VIF) is higher than 3.3, this indicates that the study suffers from the common method variance issue. Since the VIF values of the study were lower than 3.3 as revealed in Table 4, it was confirmed that multicollinearity was not a serious issue for the study. To test the hypothesis of the study, a bootstrapping technique with a resampling of 5000 was applied as proposed by Hair, Sartedt, and Ringle (2019). Concurrently, R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50 and 0.25 can be considered substantial, moderate and weak respectively (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011; Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). This suggests that the exogenous variables in this study, namely perceived trust and emotional satisfaction, explain the R^2 value of 26.8% variance in endogenous, emotional satisfaction and 47.7% variance explained in behavioural intention. Based on the statistical report by Cohen (1988), an effect size of 0.02 is considered small, 0.15 is moderate, and a value above 0.35 can be considered as high. In Table 4, the effect size of (f^2) shows that H1 had a large effect size, whereas H2 and H3 showed a medium effect size.

5.0 Discussion

The study focuses on understanding the impact of parent behavioural intention on perceived trust, perceived risk and emotion satisfaction with regard to childcare selection. The first hypothesis emphasizes on parents' perceived trust and emotional satisfaction as stressed in H1. It was known that trust and satisfaction are interrelated in consumer behaviour studies (Alrubaiee & Alkaa'ida, 2011; Chang et al., 2013). To earn the parents' trust is important for a childcare provider as it gradually will be shown through the satisfaction and influence on their decision behaviour (Hamid et al., 2019). When parents trust the service, gradually positive remarks on the service will disperse. In creating trust towards their childcare centres, service providers must satisfy customers with their service offering. When a parent trusts the



childcare centre to care for their children, this will directly influence his or her satisfaction towards the centre. When satisfaction that meets expectations over time increases, it will generate trust. Naturally, customers express trust in childcare experiences that tend to demonstrate satisfaction (Scopelliti & Musatti, 2013). Therefore, it would seem that trust is requisite in developing and sustaining long term relationships between both parties (Chen & Chang, 2013).

For H2, parents' emotional satisfaction has a positive influence on behavioural intention, which is empirically supported. Studies by Prayag, Hosany, and Odeh (2013); Ali (2016) and Abu Bakar and Ilkan (2016) support this result. The parents' emotional satisfaction that was strongly influenced by the parents' emotions would affect the behavioural intention. Indeed, it was commonly applied for behavioural intention starts from fully satisfied customers with the services they experienced. The childcare services are at their best to accommodate the parents' needs (Amin & Nasharuddin, 2013). Based on the data analysis, there was an effect between emotional satisfaction and behavioural intention for childcare already enrolled in was found. This demonstrates that when satisfaction levels among customers increase, so does their level of behavioural intention. It has been suggested by Liang and Zhang (2012) that service providers should emphasize their efforts in building and strengthening the relationship between themselves and their customers. Collecting feedback on services provided can assist the service provider in better understanding their customers' needs and grievances, and help to build closer relationships (Bijmolt et al., 2014).

As for H3, perceived trust has a relationship with behavioural intention of parents in determining the childcare service was supported. This indicates that perceived trust plays an important role in shaping consumer behaviour and behavioural intention. On the other side, it can be said that if the parent feels the children are safe at the childcare centre, they are willing to recommend or repeat in the future (Drugli & Undheim, 2012). Based on the results conducted on the respondents answer, there is a positive relationship between the perceived trust and the parent behavioural intention in the childcare service (Jamaludin & Mohamad, 2018; Sandseter & Sando, 2016). Customers leave their children from a young age in goods hand in good childcare services, with the expectation that they will be safe appropriately nurtured. It is advisable for the customer to get involved and stay updated with activities relating to child development at the centre. The main



consideration for customers to trust childcare services relates to the promise in delivering a service for the customer's benefit and needs. This indicator is perceived to be the most influential aspect on customers, since such promises allow customers to perceive the integrity, commitment, and priorities of the centres. If the services match customer standards, the customer will not hesitate to recommend the service to others (Wang, Ngamsiriudom, & Hsieh, 2015).

In this study, perceived trust, and behavioural intention as developed in H4 was found to be mediated by emotional satisfaction. The importance of the role of satisfaction is vital to form perceived trust and later impact on behavioural intention (Hosany & Prayag, 2013; Yap, Ramayah, & Shahidan, 2012). In the scenario of this study, parent intention to identify the childcare centre are based on trust and satisfaction gained upon the service they rendered (Hamid et al., 2019; Omar et al., 2010). Understanding this, emotional satisfaction deeply connects with customer emotions - especially mothers who are very close with their children. Fulfilling satisfaction should become the main focus for every childcare centre to gain a competitive advantage in the market (Mokhlis & Mokhtar, 2019). Customers feel comfortable when the childcare centre able to deliver services with the efficiency and effectiveness, and appreciate the safety which resulted to parents have confidence to leave their children at the childcare centres (Yusof & Ismail, 2018).

6.0 Implication of Study

In term of theoretical implication, the SOR and ECT theories were applied as an underpinning research framework, in an effort to induce individual internal states or feelings as reactionary outcomes. They refer to dimensions within individual organisms namely perceived trust, and factors that drive individual internal responses (behavioural intention). ECT relates to emotional satisfaction, and behavioural intention. Therefore the formulation of the four hypotheses from the research framework provided an empirical basis from which to evaluate the contributions of academic principles. This study contributes to existing behavioural intention research. This study is built upon an integration between SOR Theory and ECT. The theoretical underpinnings are encapsulated in the present study to elucidate customer expectations as outcomes of a multi-alignment of perceived trust, and emotional satisfaction on behavioural intentions. Previous



studies rely solely on one theory, and this has led many scholars to focus in depth on SOR theory (Aggarwal & Rahul, 2017; Alsaggaf, Lu, & Li, 2019; Hendellyn & Bernarto, 2019; Villiers et al., 2018). Scholars interested in ECT have again focused solely on this theory, such as Abu Seman, Rashid, Ramin, and Ahmad (2019), Kumar, Israel, and Malik (2018), Shahijan et al. (2015) and Lin, Wu, Hsu, and Chou, (2012). Li et al. (2020) explore a combination of SOR Theory and ECT in shopping trend among Chinese women, but with no focus on childcare services. Hence, the presented model in this study claims a contribution to further developing the behavioural intentions concept for the antecedents of childcare service usage, by expanding the research framework for this customer perspective.

With regards to practical implication, the present study aims to understand perceived trust and emotional satisfaction in respect to the childcare experience on parent behavioural intentions. Emphasis on the providers in providing favourable experiences to the children will induce more positive word-of-mouth to the parents as well as increase future intention of patronage. By focusing on experience, service facilities offered, and marketing strategies, childcare providers may attract more customers to visit. Apart from that, the childcare centre should foster more parent involvement in the childcare activities which will help them to hear and see the needs of children. As in nature, the children would express their feelings through action or body gestures (Herndon, Bailey, Shewark, Denham, & Bassett, 2013; Housman, 2017). There is a dearth of literature and empirical studies on investigating parents' intention with childcare service, however massive studies have been conducted on the parents and school relationship; and this relationship has been found to be consistently positive. Hence, this study constitutes a strong signal to marketers to develop strategies that promote more parents' intention in childcare service. This will stimulate intention responses among customers. Lacking physical environments and safety controls, inexperienced child carers, and failure to adhere to regulatory guidelines may lead to undesired outcomes for customers and their children. Childcare providers essentially need to identify their shortcomings, and verify the perception of their service, in order to make changes that will support the sustainability and competitiveness of the childcare service in the market.



7.0 Conclusion

The childcare industry has received good support from the Government and receives promising demand in the market. As such, this has created intense competition among providers. Various marketing strategies developed to win customer loyalty has made the industry boom. In light of this, this study manages to contribute to the market knowledge by providing insights into aspects of quality which are deemed to be most sought after across many service industries. This study suggests ways to improve lacking aspects of service quality, with criteria to enhance trust and satisfaction. From that basis, customer behavioural intention can be acknowledged and improved upon. This study has also contributed numerous significant results for childcare services in Malaysia, specifically concerning service marketing and consumer behaviour theories. This study strongly emphasises the importance of the impact of perceived trust, and emotional satisfaction in the hope of achieving more effective marketing strategies, which could be implemented in order to create positive behavioural intentions among customers.

Moreover, the insights provided in this study can benefit policy making. By realising the importance of childcare service quality perception, regulators could consider developing a measure to accurately evaluate centres' performance. Such a scale could capture quality dimensions of the centres, in order to provide knowledge and understanding for customers to make informed choices in the future. This would encourage more intensive training for childcare providers. This aspect is desperately needed, and exceedingly important, because there are still cases of maltreatment of children happening in childcare centres throughout the country. In conclusion, by integrating perspectives from relationship marketing and service marketing theories, this study has offered theoretical and practical insights into how parties involved in the childcare industry can apply them for strategic decision making. Most importantly, all of these research findings will assist them in formulating and implementing effective marketing strategies, in order to boost their profit margins, to cope with the intense competition, and to sustain in the industry.

Acknowledgements

This research received no specific grant from the public, commercial, or not-for-profit funding agencies.



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