

# Service Quality of Public Preschool Education in Malaysia: Perceptions of Parents

## *Kualiti Perkhidmatan Pendidikan Prasekolah Kerajaan di Malaysia: Persepsi Ibu Bapa*

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**Abstract:** The increasing number of preschools in Malaysia is a good sign of education development in the country. However, certain issues have risen up when each of the preschools offer different types of benefits such as curriculum, ambience, quality of teachers and facilities that may lead to non-standardised quality of education. This study aims to explore the level of quality of public preschools in Malaysia from parents' perspectives. In Malaysia, there are four different government agencies providing the education that is (1) Jabatan Kemajuan Masyarakat or Community Development Department (local acronym is KEMAS) under Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, (2) Jabatan Perpaduan Negara or National Unity Department (local acronym is PERPADUAN) under the Ministry of National Unity and Social Integration, (3) Ministry of Education and (4) State Islamic Religion Department. Twelve parents who enrolled their children in public preschools were interviewed and the data were analyzed through content analysis. The result shows there are five main factors that constitute the quality of public preschool education in Malaysia, namely (1) school values, (2) school atmosphere, (3) health and wellbeing, (4) teachers and (5) facilities.

**Keyword:** Service quality, Public preschool, Education, Parents

**Abstrak:** Pertambahan jumlah prasekolah merupakan satu petanda yang baik kepada pembangunan pendidikan di Malaysia. Namun beberapa isu mula timbul apabila perbezaan jenis prasekolah ini menawarkan perkhidmatan yang berbeza seperti dari segi kurikulum, suasana pembelajaran, kualiti guru dan kemudahan-kemudahan pengajaran dan pembelajaran. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk melihat kualiti prasekolah yang disediakan oleh pihak kerajaan dari kaca mata ibubapa. Di Malaysia, terdapat empat agensi kerajaan yang menawarkan sistem pendidikan prasekolah iaitu (1) Jabatan Kemajuan Masyarakat (KEMAS), (2) Jabatan Perpaduan Negara (PERPADUAN), (3) Kementerian Pelajaran dan (4) Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri. Dua belas orang ibu bapa yang menghantar anak-anak mereka ke prasekolah kerajaan telah ditemubual. Data yang diterima dianalisa menggunakan 'content analysis'. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan terdapat lima faktor utama yang menyumbang kepada kualiti prasekolah iaitu (1) nilai-nilai sekolah, (2) persekitaran sekolah, (3) kesihatan dan kesejahteraan, (4) guru-guru dan (5) kemudahan-kemudahan.

**Kata kunci:** Kualiti perkhidmatan, Prasekolah kerajaan, Pendidikan, Ibubapa

## Introduction

Quality of preschool education is a crucial need in Malaysia as it is the first formal education for a child. There are many providers of preschool education either from public or private sectors offering different types of benefits. For public preschool providers, there are four different government agencies providing the education that is (1) *Jabatan Kemajuan Masyarakat* or Community Development Department (local acronym is *KEMAS*) under Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, (2) *Jabatan Perpaduan Negara* or National Unity Department (local acronym is *PERPADUAN*) under the Ministry of National Unity and Social Integration, (3) Ministry of Education (MOE) and (4) State Islamic Religion Department (SIRD). The quality of each type of preschools is monitored by the agencies providing the education. While for private preschools, the providers are given freedom to implement their own curriculum and manage the preschools in their own ways. Parents prefer the increasing number of various preschools as they will get more options to choose. However, some issues have arisen when each preschool offers different types of benefits such as curriculum, ambiance, quality of teachers and facilities that may lead to unstandardised quality of education. People may perceive the quality of public and private preschools both from the positive or negative sides (Coley, 2016). The issue is important as these preschools represent part of Malaysian education. Thus, the quality provided by each preschool provider can influence the perceptions of many stakeholders (Omar, Nazri et al., 2009).

Perceptions of the stakeholders of preschools in Malaysia are also varied. According to Yahaya and Ramli (2003), parents prefer to choose private preschools rather than public ones because private preschools have a better reputation. By advertising their extra advantages parents prefer to enrol their children in these types of preschools. Hewitt and Maloney (2000) mentioned Malaysian parents prefer their children to master the basic academic skills and other advanced knowledge rather than playing and socialising. In contrast, the public preschools such as *KEMAS* and *PERPADUAN*'s favours educating children to be confident in socialisation, to improve the standard of life and deliver beneficial knowledge and skills. The private preschools, however, concentrate more on academic skills such as reading, writing and numerical mastering rather than the social facets.

Highlighting to the providers of private preschools, this study therefore is very significant since each provider has their own mission, expectations, orientation, priorities and abilities, which may lead to imbalance and unstandardised management and administration of preschool education (Hussin, 1996). The delivery of services differs markedly. As a service industry, the topic of quality cannot be denied and is always a benchmark for many people when it comes to

evaluation. In fact, the quality of education is a matter of building the nation's future (Hodges, 2015).

## Service Quality in Preschool Education

Quality in preschool education is widely discussed as it contributes to positive impacts on children (Cassidy et al., 2005b; Hill et al., 2015). Cassidy et al. (2005b) find the quality of care and education for young children contribute to critical impact of children's development. The children who attended higher quality early childhood centres show better academic outcomes, more positive student-teacher relationships, better behaviour and better social skills. The higher quality of child care is confirmed to have positive associations with cognitive development in children (Clarke-Stewart et al., 2002; NICHD, 2002; Barton & Smith 2015). NICHD (2002) reports on the importance of higher quality preschool education as a predictor of better pre-academic skills and language performance of children. Furthermore, according to Omar, Nazri et al. (2009), perceived service quality is the most important determinant of parents' satisfaction and this indicates either the preschool is preferred or not.

In measuring the quality of preschools, it is difficult to use only one indicator or even multiple quantitative indices. Preschool education comprises many elements, thus each has its own weigh of quality level that should be accomplished. Besides, the quality dimensions of preschool are viewed differently from different stakeholders. Many researchers have studied the quality of preschools based on structural (Early et al., 2006; Phillipsen et al., 1997) and process quality (Cryer et al., 1999; Howes, 1997; Scarr et al., 1994; Hirozaku et al. 2015).

## Structural quality and process quality in preschool education

The quality of preschool education is broadly defined as a broad range of characteristics of the preschool programmes, including structural features that are instituted through policies and regulations, and process features that children experience directly (Vandell & Wolfe, 2002; Lamb & Ahnert, 2006). Policymakers, administrators, parents and teachers use the term 'preschool quality' to describe a wide variety of characteristics of preschool programmes that are believed to be beneficial to children who attend (Mashburn, 2008). Some researchers use the term 'global quality' which is described as an overall view of child care programmes including both structural and process-oriented factors (Cassidy et al., 2005a).

Structural features are those aspects of programmes that have typically been targeted by regulation or financing and built from the aspects of the child care environment that are affected by a variety of

influences, such as government regulations, centre policies and economic climate (Phillipsen et al., 1997). Structural quality is measured through the indirect ways it contributes to preschool such as teacher-child ratios, class size, qualifications, experiences and compensation of teachers and staff (Early et al., 2006; Howes, 1997; Phillipsen et al., 2000; Fan, 2017). According to Phillipsen et al. (1997), state regulations mandate child-adult ratio, group sizes and education and training for teachers, centre policies determine features such as presence/absence of school-age programmes, wages of teachers and fees; while economic or environmental climate which is not affected by either state regulations or centre policies affects teacher turnover, enrolment, profits and surplus of the school. According to Hirozaku et al. (2015), professional development for preschool teachers can improve classroom quality. More intensive curricular approaches are needed for these improvements to translate into effects on children.

Process quality refers to the features of preschool programmes that children experience directly while they are enrolled in programmes, such as the ways teachers implement activities and lessons, the nature and quality of interactions between adults and children and between children and their peers, the quality of space and furnishings, the type of instruction, the room environment, the abundance of learning materials, the relationships with parents; and the health and safety routines (Cryer et al., 1999; Rao et al., 2003; Phillipsen et al., 1997; Bassok & Galdo, 2016).

### Measurement of preschool quality

The measurement of process quality in preschools relies on the systematic observations of a wide range of characteristics of the physical and social environments that children experience directly. The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (introduced in 1980) and its revised version ECERS-R, (Harms, Clifford & Cryer, 1998) have been most commonly used observational measures in studies of the quality of preschool environments (Cryer et al., 1999; Kalkan & Akman, 2009; Cassidy et al., 2005b; Scarr et al., 1994; Sheridan et al., 2009; Gordon et al. 2015). The ECERS-R assesses a number of quality dimensions within preschool environments, including: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interactions, Programme Structure, and Parents and Staff (Harms, Clifford & Cryer, 1998). Table 3.1 shows 43 items in seven sub scales of the ECERS-R.

However, according to Gordon et al. (2015), there are some conflicts with the scale developers' expectations in terms of whether markers that they attached to higher response categories represented higher quality empirically. They suggest that policymakers should carefully consider whether measures designed for specific purposes are appropriate for other high-stakes

uses.

### Methodology and Data Analysis

This study was conducted in Klang Valley area and twelve parents were interviewed. Three of them enrolled their children in *PERPADUAN* preschools. Another three were parents who had enrolled their children in *KEMAS* preschools. Interviews also were conducted with three parents of MOE preschools' students as well as three parents from *SIRD* preschools. Seven of them were female and five were males. They were between thirty-five and fifty years of age. Five parents were housewives while the remainder worked in administrative or manufacturing positions. The majority of the respondents earned around RM1500 per month. They were asked about the contributing factors to service quality in preschool education from parents' perspectives.

The data were analysed using content analysis by focusing on the themes of quality elements that the parents perceived.

**Table 1. Themes of Quality Elements**

QUALITY ASPECT	ELEMENT IN PRESCHOOL	PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS
Quality of teaching and learning	Curriculum implementation	<i>"I perceive quality in preschool when most of the students in the class are able to master 3Rs skills very well."</i> (Parent, <i>PERPADUAN</i> preschool)
		<i>"Before I select a preschool for my child, I asked some friends that had previously enrolled their children there regarding their children's achievement in 3Rs."</i> (Parent, <i>SIRD</i> preschool)
		<i>"I would be satisfied when teachers manage to teach and complete the workbook syllabus at the end of the year."</i> (Parent, <i>KEMAS</i> preschool)
		<i>"The completed syllabus in Malay language, English language and Mathematics is the sign of teacher's quality performance in managing time in the school"</i> (Parent, <i>MOE</i> preschool)

QUALITY ASPECT	ELEMENT IN PRESCHOOL	PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS	QUALITY ASPECT	ELEMENT IN PRESCHOOL	PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS
	Emphasis on English language	<p><i>“English language is essential at preschool level as it is a good time to develop the interest of students on the language. I just want my child will not be left behind just because he is not good in English.” (Parent, PERPADUAN preschool)</i></p> <p><i>“I believe students can learn English very well when teachers communicate 100 per cent in English language during the lesson and be creative to make it an interesting subject.” (Parent, MOE preschool)</i></p>	Quality of Teachers	Teachers’ personality	<p><i>“When selecting my child’s preschool, I look at the appearance and the way the teacher behaves and interacts with parents and kids. Teacher’s personality influences much on children’s behaviour and emotion” (Parent, KEMAS preschool).</i></p> <p><i>“Teachers with good attitude and hardworking could give big influence on students’ behaviour and achievement.” (Parent, PERPADUAN preschool)</i></p>
	Balance in academic approach	<p><i>“I believe, if the religious education is emphasized, the children will grow as a good person” (Parent, MOE preschool)</i></p> <p><i>“The emphasis on religious education in this school is the quality of school that I seek for.” (Parent, SIRD preschool)</i></p> <p><i>“Balanced learning and playing activities are important. A school cannot just concentrate only on academics as this will affect the child’s emotion and intellectual.” (Parent, SIRD preschool)</i></p> <p><i>“Balance between academics and social activities are important. I don’t want my child to excel only on academics, I also want him to be happy and fulfilled with joyful moments in school with friends.” (Parent, KEMAS preschool)</i></p>		Teachers’ academic qualification	<p><i>“When I know that the teacher is a degree or diploma holder especially in early childhood education, I am more confident that she could perform her job as preschool teacher very well.” (Parent, MOE preschool)</i></p> <p><i>“Teachers with high academic qualification are well prepared as they learned from the basics until the implementation of education for the children.” (Parent, KEMAS preschool)</i></p> <p><i>“I think teachers who studied at diploma or degree levels on early childhood education could get clearer picture on what should be delivered in preschool because they learnt courses in detail.” (Parent, MOE preschool)</i></p> <p><i>“I believe teachers who are well educated could encourage these young children to be ambitious to learn until at the highest level.”</i></p>

QUALITY ASPECT	ELEMENT IN PRESCHOOL	PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS	QUALITY ASPECT	ELEMENT IN PRESCHOOL	PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS
		<i>(Parent, PERPADUAN preschool)</i>			<i>because that would be scary for them.” (Parent, PERPADUAN preschool)</i>
	Trained teachers	<p><i>“I believe teachers with long-term teaching experience know the best approach to use with different types of students’ behaviour.” (Parent, KEMAS preschool)</i></p> <p><i>“I don’t want to make the wrong choice in selecting a preschool. When my friends told me the teacher at this preschool was experienced and owned skills to approach and handle young students, I have no doubt to choose the school.” (Parent, MOE preschool)</i></p> <p><i>“In my opinion, teachers with long term experience own good skills in understanding the children’s psychology” (Parent, PERPADUAN preschool)</i></p>		Safe environment	<p><i>“It is important for schools to be surrounded by fences and has security guards to assure the safety of students.” (Parent, MOE preschool)</i></p> <p><i>“For me, teachers play important roles to ensure the students are safe. Teachers should do safety cautions such as lock the gates during class time and do not simply allow strangers to enter the school.” (Parent, PERPADUAN preschool)</i></p> <p><i>“There are still public preschools that do not have fences surrounding. I don’t think it is safe enough for students to play outside as they are exposed to external environment and strangers.” (Parent, KEMAS preschool)</i></p>
Quality of Environment	School atmosphere	<p><i>“I believe parents evaluate a preschool based on its attractiveness and cheerfulness. It also psychologically could encourage kids to love going to school.” (Parent, KEMAS preschool)</i></p> <p><i>“In my opinion, the cheerful environment of school could mirror the character of the teachers that love children. It is really true with this preschool.” (Parent, PERPADUAN preschool)</i></p> <p><i>“Preschool is the first educational place for children. It should be attractive and does not look too serious</i></p>	Quality of facilities and equipment	Suitability and adequacy	<p><i>“I hope that the school exposes my kid with technology as we don’t have even one computer at home. I recognise the knowledge is important.” (Parent, SIRD preschool)</i></p> <p><i>“I’m glad the kids are learning using the computer at school. Frankly speaking, I’m afraid to operate a computer because I’m not familiar with it.” (Parent, KEMAS preschool)</i></p> <p><i>“Learning by using technological facilities is a must in preschool.</i></p>

QUALITY ASPECT	ELEMENT IN PRESCHOOL	PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS
		<i>It shouldn't be treated as strange thing anymore."</i> (Parent, MOE preschool)

## Result and Discussion

This research identified a few main factors that constitute the quality of public preschool education in Malaysia as discussed below.

### School values

The school values are the elements in education fostered to enhance the values and advantages of a preschool. In this study, the school values are explained by the implementation of English language, the emphasis of Islamic education and the exposure to multicultural integration among students. These three important elements were confirmed as the quality contributors in preschools. In Malaysian preschools, at least one of these elements becomes the core values of one preschool.

#### *i. Emphasis on English language*

The perceptions of stakeholders on public preschools in Malaysia showed English language as essential in providing quality. To date, there is still no specific plan put by the government to enhance the English language implementation in public preschools except the short courses or trainings on English language for teachers. Indeed, the teachers in preschools from the four government agencies (MOE, KEMAS, PERPADUAN and SIRD) teach the language regardless of their ability in English proficiency. A preschool institution even though is an important part in Malaysian education; the effort on strengthening English language is still not heavily emphasised like in primary, secondary or tertiary levels. 'Emphasis on English language' is an emerged element in factors of Malaysian preschool service quality of this research. Most probably this element is not emphasised in other literatures as it is not an issue for countries that use English as their main language.

#### *ii. Islamic education*

The research showed parents in Malaysia preferred preschools that emphasised on Islamic education in the hope of inculcating particular religious values in their young ages as mentioned by Borhan (2004). The factor in Islamic education as part of quality factors is related to Dahari and Ya's (2011) study that confirms the significance of religious value in shaping good moral and attitude of the children.

With the fact that religious education is increasingly demanded in preschools nowadays, the government has to prepare proper and systematic Islamic

education learning and teachers are seemed to hold an important role (Marzuki, 2008). Besides the basic foundation, the contemplative structure is also helpful to develop the students' spiritual domain. In short, the teachers have to implement the contemplation method in six preschool components: language and communication, cognitive development, spiritual and moral, social emotional development, physical development; and creativity and aesthetics in order provide a strong understanding towards religion in everyday life (Rahman et al., 2012).

#### *iii. Encouragement on multicultural integration*

The other unique element of preschool quality that was derived from the research was the multicultural integration. Through the results, preschool educators in Malaysia are seemed to cope with the demands of a multicultural population. This situation indicates the need for multicultural inputs in the preschool curriculum which includes the philosophy, aims and objectives, content, activities and assessment that should be carried out by the preschool educators (Hashim et al., 2010).

In public preschools, the focus on unity and multicultural integrations are not strongly emphasised except for PERPADUAN preschools. The lack of focus might be because of the imbalance proportion of students from different backgrounds in the preschools. All SIRD students are Malays and Muslims. Majority of students in KEMAS and MOE preschools are Malays. PERPADUAN is the only government department that conditioned its preschools to have various cultural and religious backgrounds of students. Despite that, the researcher believed the introduction and exposure of Malaysian multicultural society is still important even if the students in one class belong to only one particular background. It is important for students to be aware and understand the variety of cultural backgrounds and the sensitivity of each culture (Hashim et al., 2010).

Furthermore, preschool teachers need to be equipped with the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes to promote multicultural education. Government efforts such as reviewing teacher training programmes as well as enhancing teachers' openness, self-reflective abilities, commitment to social justice and positive intercultural experiences are essential in order to make sure the teachers gain deeper understandings (Phoon et al., 2012).

The multiracial integration is an important preschool quality element in Malaysian context due to its significant roles of a harmonious society.

### Environmental safety and school ambience

The research discovered that the factor of school atmosphere was another strong factor contributing to preschool service quality. In addition to the importance of lesson planning, the spatial arrangements or physical environment is equally important. Based on the findings, the selection of Malaysia's public preschool

buildings and locations is a crucial matter. The differences of building structures lead to dissimilar quality of services provided to the students. This study is supported by Moore (2010) a researcher that introduced the Children's Physical Environments Rating Scale (CPERS). CPERS is used to assess the quality of the physical environment of early childhood education. Moore (2010) concurs that the quality of preschools is related to the quality of the designed physical environment. In this study, the environmental safety and school location are the most highlighted issues.

This article also addressed different structures of buildings in public preschools lead to dissimilar quality services. For instance, preschools that are located on the lower ground of low-cost apartments, shared community halls and old buildings cause safety issues. As the government agencies possessed or rented dissimilar types of buildings and premises, some preschools were seemed as not conforming to the preschool standard. The Malaysian Blueprint focuses mainly on schools provided by MOE including the preschools. Based on the observations, some *PERPADUAN*, *KEMAS* and *SIRD* preschools were not suitable and safe enough to run the preschool education. Thus, this leads to the different service quality of preschool education provided by the government.

### Health and positive wellbeing practices

Health and safety routines in preschool education were clearly discussed as part of important element in preschool service quality (Espinosa, 2002; Phillipsen et al., 1997). As guided by the Ministry of Health Malaysia, all preschools and child care centres must meet the standard of health practices. Based on the researcher's observations, the majority of the preschools complied with the guidelines. Healthy and nutritious food, clean toilets and education on health practices are the basic important aspects to be emphasised in preschools.

In assuring the students' well being, this study addressed teaching students to love and avoiding the use of rude words or actions were essential. This type of psychological strategy could shape a child to be well-behaved as loving and caring are the most important needs in children's life (Abu, 2007). Most of the teachers were kind and clearly understood their roles as teachers. However, the stressful work in managing preschools and dealing with parents and school leaders also might lead to negative behaviour of teachers. This is supported by Ambotang and Hashim (2010) that look at the relationship between work environment and stress among preschool teachers in Malaysia.

Therefore, teachers' emotions and satisfactions in work are important to create a positive environment of learning. This issue relates to job engagement that is also highlighted in this study.

### Teachers

This study identified significant influence of teachers in developing quality of preschool education. They are the implementers of curriculum, planners of teaching and learning activities and role models for students. The academic qualifications, experience, trainings attended, personality and job engagement are the impactful factors that lead to quality of Malaysia's public preschools.

#### *i. Teachers' academic qualification and training*

It is undeniable that the quality of preschool education depended on the teachers' academic qualifications and trainings they attended (Siraj-Blatchford and Manni, 2006; Abdullah, 2002; Clarke-Stewart et al., 2002; Dora, 2006; Yamamoto and Li, 2012). The value of preschool education in Malaysia nowadays is increased when the teachers own higher academic qualification. Most of private preschools in Malaysia employed teachers with at least a diploma in early childhood education, which becomes a competitive advantage for them. Public preschools however, are still left behind in hiring high-educated teachers as majority of them are *SPM* holders. Only MOE preschools conditioned their teachers to hold at least a diploma degree.

In order to meet the parents' requirements, preschool teachers must equip themselves with appropriate professional qualifications and the right skills. The finding in this study supported by Abdullah et al. (2011) that confirm the teaching efficacy of degree holders is higher than non-degree holders. Currently the number of public preschool teachers with at least diploma degrees is very small. This study found that the professionalism development of teachers should become part of the priorities in preschool education. By offering distance learning and tutorial services, teachers would get the opportunity to develop their profession as professional preschool teachers.

According to Honig and Hirallal (1998), among (1) academic level (2) years in service and (3) training, training in early childhood education and child development is crucially implicated in ensuring more positive interactions of teachers with preschoolers. Training that involves many aspects are significant whether teachers are providing positive emotional inputs such as smiling, conversing, reading, singing, role playing, questioning, modeling, and expanding language. Therefore, teachers with more training are far more likely to enrich the children's childcare experience with positive language interactions.

#### *ii. Job engagement*

This study revealed that the quality of services in preschool education could be achieved when the teachers were engaged with the job; i.e. clearly understood the mission of the schools and their responsibility as teachers; and possess high interest of

the work. A teachers' engagement could be seen through their connections with students. Since the nature of the job is educating the children, a close relationship between teachers and students could encourage teaching and learning process. According to Ahmad and Sahak (2009), academic achievement and student behaviour are influenced by the quality of the teacher and student relationship. The more the teachers connect or communicate with their students, the more likely they are to be able to help students learn quickly. Having the freedom to shape the future and to contribute to students is rated as the highest motivation for teachers.

Therefore, when teachers are given trust to apply their teaching skills, empowered to make decision at school level and clearly understood their roles and responsibility; they may contribute to quality performance. Indirectly, the quality service in education will increase.

### Facilities

Quality facilities in preschool education are able to improve children's cognitive, social and emotional development (Stankovic et al., 2006). MOE preschools, *PERPADUAN* preschools, *KEMAS* preschool and *SIRD* preschools were occupied with different quality of facilities and depended on the financial provision the government agencies received.

#### *i. Teaching and learning materials and school infrastructures*

The tangibles and resources for teaching and learning contributed to the quality of education (Jusoh et al., 2004; Sohail & Shaikh, 2004; Joseph et al., 2005; Jain et al., 2011). Through this research, it is found that Malaysian public preschools are still lagging behind in terms of providing adequate and up-to-date teaching and learning materials. The most obvious needs in preschools nowadays are the technological assistance, specifically the use of computer and Internet in teaching and learning process. Due to the big influence of technology in education, Malaysian government should think of providing at least one computer and Internet access so that the children will be exposed to more fun interactive learning.

The types of government agencies also contribute to the issue of school infrastructures. For instance, *SIRD*, an organisation that stands under state government earn limited funds as it is not funded by the federal government. Hence, it highly depends on Selangor Alms Giving Centre, which is a centre that collects alms from Muslims in Selangor. The study also identified that MOE preschools are better equipped compared to *PERPADUAN* and *KEMAS* preschools. This can be assumed due to the specific focus of MOE on education in terms of buildings and facilities in comparison to the other two agencies. The availability and suitability of the facilities become a crucial issue in Malaysian public preschools. As supported by Stankovic

et al. (2006) the conditions of structure and space such as comfort, good illumination, non-slippery floor faces and usage of warm colours can be correlated to positive results on children.

### Conclusion

As a conclusion, different types of government agencies contribute to different quality of preschool education (Farah Laili Muda Ismail, 2013). The government should relook at these agencies to provide balance quality of preschool education. Aspects such as human resources, facilities, environment and school ambience are important to be highlighted.

This study should also be extended to investigate the quality of private preschool education so that a clearer picture of preschool education in Malaysia can be seen. Thus, a comprehensive model can be suggested to improve the quality of early childhood education in Malaysia as a whole.

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