INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Vol 14, Issue 8, (2024) E-ISSN: 2222-6990

An Insight into the Financial Challenges and Sustainability of Private Early Childhood Education Centres in Malaysia

Izawati Ngadni, Gurdip Kaur Saminder Singh

UNITAR International University

Email: drgurdipsaini@gmail.com

Corresponding Author Email: izawati@unitar.my

To Link this Article: http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i8/22257 DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i8/22257

Published Date: 15 August 2024

Abstract

The financial sustainability of early childhood education (ECE) centres in Malaysia is a critical concern since these institutions play a pivotal role in the developmental stages of young children. The increasing cost of governing businesses today has also significantly impacted the operations of educational institutions such as private early childhood centres in various ways. Early childhood operators are today facing numerous challenges that impact their ability to maintain financial stability. The ultimate purpose of this study was to unravel the complex web of challenges faced by operators of early childhood education (ECE) centres in Malaysia, with a deep focus on understanding their financial sustainability strategies. The research used a comprehensive qualitative approach to explore the challenges faced as well as capture rich insights on the strategies used by ECE operators, shedding light on informed strategies and policies that can strengthen the financial base of ECE centres.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education Operators, Financial Challenges, Financial Sustainability, Malaysia.

Introduction

Early childhood education plays a fundamental role in shaping young students' cognitive, emotional, and social development. Since the notion of equity, quality, and access in education was prompted in the Malaysian Education Blueprint (2015-2025), early childhood education operators have transformed their educational structures to include every aspect of quality including hiring qualified teachers, integrating technology in the classroom, providing state-of-the-art facilities and many more. However, as operators navigate multiple responsibilities to maintain educational excellence, they grapple with multiple financial challenges. With the dynamic transformation in the landscape of early childhood education (ECE) in Malaysia, the pursuit of financial sustainability has emerged as a major concern for early childhood education centre operators. As the demand for quality early childhood

education continues to grow, operators find themselves at the crossroads of providing high-quality services while ensuring their economic viability.
By gaining insight into the financial pressures faced by early childhood education centres, policymakers can develop targeted support to ensure the delivery of high-quality education. This research provides a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the sustainability of private early childhood education centres in Malaysia. The findings can lead to evidence-based policies that enhance the quality of early childhood education, ultimately benefiting Malaysian children and families. Financial stability is crucial, as it directly impacts the quality of education provided. Insufficient resources can impede curriculum development, teacher training, and the availability of essential learning materials. Moreover, financial challenges may result in the closure of centres, restricting access to this critical level of education. Ultimately, the research findings will inform strategies to elevate the quality of early childhood education, which is vital for children's development and has significant implications for the nation's human capital and social cohesion.

Review of Literature
Early childhood education (ECE) in Malaysia is evolving, influenced by various trends and issues that reflect broader societal changes and educational priorities. In Malaysia today, a newer model of business known as Edu-entrepreneurship has encouraged the development of more and more early childhood centres, bridging the gap in the current need for quality early education provision.

Current Trends in Early Childhood Education (ECE) centre operations in Malaysia
Aligning to the Conventions of Rights of the Child (UNITED NATIONS, 1989), the landscape of ECE in Malaysia has observed various changes not only from the perspectives of its policies but also from the dimensions of its curricula, facilities, and teachers. Today there is a growing recognition of the importance of a child's holistic development, addressing not only cognitive skills but also emotional, social, physical, and creative development. To be relevant and more child-focused, ECE centres are also highly encouraged to adopt play-based learning approaches, which emphasize experiential and interactive learning environments over traditional rote learning (MEB, 2013). Adhering to the aspirations in the MEB 2013-2025, ECE centres today are also encouraged to accommodate the multicultural and multilingual nature of Malaysian society in ECE curricula, promoting inclusivity and respect for diversity. Facilities in preschools are upgraded, teachers are sent for multiple trainings, and pedagogies are transformed to handle diverse learning needs, including inclusion of children with special needs into mainstream early childhood programs (Rahmatullah, 2021)

Apart from this, almost all ECE centres have adopted educational technology to enhance learning experiences which can include digital tools, interactive whiteboards, and educational software aimed at making learning more engaging. As a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, many ECE centres have also developed online resources and platforms for early childhood education, hence providing flexible learning opportunities for young children (UNICEF, 2023). To ensure that the quality of ECE remains relevant and current, ECE centre operators have also robustly increased their continuous professional development that provides teachers with modern pedagogical skills and knowledge (Mustafa & Hashim, 2022; Rahmatullah, 2021). As teacher quality seems to be a concern for every parent in selecting their child's preschool, various efforts to raise the qualifications and standards of ECE educators have been created through certification and accreditation programs just to ensure the preschool stays marketable in the ECE business.

Issues of Early Childhood Education (ECE) operations in Malaysia

The early childhood education (ECE) landscape in Malaysia, as stated above, is marked by a growing demand for high-quality education services, reflecting the increasing recognition of the important role that early learning plays in shaping a child's developmental trajectory. However, amidst these demands and expectations, ECE centre operators face tremendous sustainability challenges beginning from ensuring quality, increasing enrolment rates, teacher quality and workforce issues, regulatory and policy compliance challenges, the need for better infrastructure and resources, and above all the complex and challenging funding and financial sustainability.

Sustainability in Early Childhood Education

The sustainability of early childhood educational institutions has always been under constant pressure, and the financial challenges operators face have always posed a major threat to the continuity and quality of early childhood education in Malaysia (Ridza (2021), resulting in many ECE centres to closures or bankruptcies (Bing et al., 2021).

Financial sustainability

One of the main issues faced by ECE centres in Malaysia is related to the increased operational costs associated with the provision of quality education and care. These costs include but are not limited to staff salaries, facility maintenance, educational resources, technological advances, and regulatory compliance expenses. Balancing these operational demands while simultaneously offering quality affordable and accessible services to parents creates a delicate financial balance that requires exploration (Kong, 2023).

Furthermore, the diversity of funding models, fee structures, and financial support mechanisms adds additional complexity to the financial sustainability puzzle. Operators must navigate these intricacies to maintain their fiscal health while ensuring their services remain inclusive and equitable for a broad spectrum of families.

Therefore, the overarching problem is comprehensively understanding and addressing the financial challenges faced by operators of early childhood education centres in Malaysia. By identifying these challenges, we aim to contribute to the development of strategies, policies, and targeted interventions that can strengthen the financial base of ECE centres, ultimately protecting the continuity and quality of early childhood education for the benefit of the nation's youngest students (Saari, 2022; Tee, 2023).

Purpose of Research

From rising operating costs to the complexity of fee structures and funding models, the financial landscape of ECE centres in Malaysia is full of intricacies that require thorough exploration (Kong, 2023). This study therefore aims to shed light on the intricacies of financial sustainability in the Malaysian early childhood education context, recognizing the important role played by operators. By identifying and analysing the challenges faced by operators, this study strives to not only uncover obstacles that hinder financial stability but also to pave the way for informed strategies and policies that can strengthen the financial base of ECE centres. In doing so, this study intends to contribute to the wider discourse on the sustainable future of early childhood education in Malaysia, highlighting the important role that financial stability plays in fostering a learning environment that nurtures and enriches the nation's youngest learners.

Research Question

This study is designed based on the following research questions which aligns with the study's research purpose.
RQ1: What are the main financial challenges faced by ECE centre operators in Malaysia?
RQ2: What strategies do ECE operators apply to maintain financial sustainability?

Significance of Study

Research into the financial sustainability challenges faced by operators of early childhood education (ECE) centres in Malaysia is particularly important because of its potential impact on various stakeholders and the wider education landscape. The findings of this study are expected to contribute significantly to both academic knowledge and practical applications, fostering positive developments in the field of early childhood education.

Understanding the financial status of these centres holds significance for various key stakeholders. For policymakers, the insights derived from this study will offer crucial data to shape effective policies and regulations that bolster the growth and stability of the early childhood education sector. By pinpointing the specific financial hurdles encountered by these centers, policymakers can allocate resources, implement tailored support initiatives, and cultivate a more supportive environment for early childhood education.

For operators of private early childhood education centres, this research can provide valuable perspectives on the financial framework of the industry. By grasping the common challenges faced by peers, operators can identify areas for enhancement, devise strategies to enhance financial sustainability and advocate for policies that benefit their operations.

This research also contributes to a deeper understanding of the factors impacting the availability and quality of early childhood education. This knowledge empowers parents to make informed decisions about childcare choices and advocate for policies that prioritize early childhood development. Furthermore, it enlightens the community on the significance of supporting private early childhood education centers as crucial contributors to children's growth and community welfare.

Ultimately, finding from this research has the potential to significantly influence the early childhood education landscape in Malaysia by furnishing evidence-based information that drives positive transformation and enhances the development of young children.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative research design to gain an in-depth understanding of the financial challenges faced and strategies for financial sustainability by operators of ECE centres in Malaysia. A qualitative approach allowed for a detailed exploration of the experiences of operators and the factors that influenced the financial sustainability of these centres. This qualitative research used an exploratory approach to understand the financial challenges faced by Early Childhood Education (ECE) centre operators in Malaysia. Exploratory research enables in-depth exploration of complex phenomena, providing insight into previously unexplored areas (George, 2023).

Participants

Since this study concerned operational costs and financial sustainability, the researchers have therefore purposely chosen 3 sets of participants. The first set came from those who own ECE centres and are fully responsible for the overall administration and operations including managing financial resources and expenses, making decisions, and overseeing the day-to-day operations. The second set of participants were the centre administrators who oversee various aspects of early childhood education centre operations, including finance, human resources, compliance, and marketing was also selected as participants for this study to further enhance the findings. The third set of participants were members of organizations that represent ECE operators in Malaysia, such as the Malaysia Kindergarten Association (MKA), and ECCE council were also involved. In total six participants were purposely selected to provide in-depth information related to this study.

Data Collection Method

Data was collected using a semi-structured interview guide. In a qualitative study, in-person interviews can be useful for gathering in-depth data from specific groups or individuals, allowing clarification of any question and ensuring a better response rate (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Conducting interviews with key stakeholders such as ECE centre owners and administrators, and the ministry officials or early childhood development experts allowed the researchers for deeper exploration on the participants' experiences and perspectives. This method provided rich qualitative data and fostered a more nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with financial sustainability. Furthermore, exploring ECE centres that have achieved financial sustainability also provided valuable information for this study. Examining their strategies, funding models and operational practices through case studies offers practical examples and best practices for other ECE operators to emulate.

Data Analysis

Content analysis was employed to evaluate the data gathered from the interviews. Krippendorff (1980), describes content analysis as a "research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context" (p. 21). The process was conducted in several stages. Initially, interviews were conducted online and face-to-face. The data collected were then transcribed verbatim. Subsequently, significant codes were extracted from the transcripts to pinpoint key ideas. Finally, these codes were analysed to develop overarching themes. Based on the content analysis, twelve themes emerged which are discussed below.

Result and Discussion

The results from the content analysis conducted have contributed several themes which will be discussed under each research question.

Research Question 1

What are the main financial challenges faced by ECE centre operators and administrators in Malaysia?

High Operating Costs

Running an ECE centre requires a large financial investment in facilities, utilities, educational resources, and staff salaries. The cost of rent or real estate can be very high, especially in urban areas where the demand for quality childcare is higher.

> “For strategic areas, the cost of renting premises in residential areas for corner lot houses can reach RM 2500 and above while for commercial building rentals can reach RM 3500 for one lot”.

> “The four-fold increase in OPR recorded since last year has been one of the reasons why landlords have increased rents to tenants where it is somewhat burdensome for premises tenants”.

It is well understood that the primary revenue source for children's education centres comes from the monthly and annual fees collected upon each child's enrolment. If enrolment rates decline while rental fees or building costs rise, this leads to an increase in operating expenses relative to the reduced income.

The rate of increase in electricity and water bill tariffs also affects and challenges the financial sustainability of the Early Childhood Education Centre. Private education centres usually provide air-conditioned classrooms for the comfort of children's learning environments. The increase in electricity tariffs to some extent has an impact on the financial stability of the education centre.

> “The hot weather causes every early childhood education centre to optimize the use of air conditioners to provide comfort not only to the children but also to the teachers and workers involved”.

In addition, the cost of Furniture and Equipment, learning equipment where the process of buying and maintaining furniture, play equipment, teaching aids, and educational materials such as computers and technology is usually renewed as needed and is usually carried out at least once a year. This maintenance cost is taken from the registration and annual fees.

> “The increase in the price of goods has some effect. Ensuring the quality of education by providing a perfect physical learning environment in early childhood education centers requires continuous maintenance”.

> “Consistent maintenance is important to ensure that we provide quality facilities and learning environments that attract parents and children to enroll in our education centres”.

However, the high usage and active play can lead to wear and tear of facilities and equipment. Regular maintenance, repairs, and replacements are necessary to keep facilities in good condition and extend their lifespan. In addition, facilities need to be accessible and inclusive for children with diverse abilities and needs. To meet market requirements and demand for inclusivity in early childhood education centres, operators need to ensure that facilities are designed and maintained to accommodate children with disabilities or special needs that require additional resources and expertise. Limited financial resources may constrain the ability of early childhood education centres to invest in facility maintenance. Balancing the need for maintenance with other operational expenses can be challenging, particularly for centres operating on tight budgets.

For Staffing Costs, recruiting and retaining qualified teachers and caregivers is essential to maintain the quality of education and care services in ECE centres. Attracting and retaining skilled educators requires competitive compensation. However, competitive salary and benefits packages are often required to attract skilled staff which can also strain central budgets.

> “Early Childhood Education Centre operators need to comply with the minimum wage scale for teachers and caregivers in kindergartens and daycares which is RM 1500. The payment of this minimum wage is necessary considering the high cost of living”.

According to Industry Advisors and External Assessors of the Early Childhood Education Program, the enforcement of minimum wage regulations can disproportionately burden kindergarten and nursery operators, given that their primary source of income stems solely from children's fee payments. ECE practitioners often face limited career growth and relatively low remuneration. Attracting and retaining skilled educators while managing costs is a delicate balance (Aziz et al., 2021).

Managing the logistics of an ECE centre such as transportation, supplies, and maintenance—requires financial resources. Ensuring smooth operations within budget constraints is an ongoing struggle. Furthermore, meeting the social and educational needs of young children necessitates investment in trained staff, appropriate learning materials, and engaging activities. These investments impact the financial viability of ECE centres (Rahmatullah et al., 2021).

Table 1
Other Operating Cost

Participants	The Operating Cost: main financial challenges faced by ECE center operators and administrators
1	Regular Maintenance: Keeping the premises clean, well-maintained, and in good repair. Repairs: Fixing any wear and tear, plumbing issues, or structural problems.
2	Health and Hygiene: Cleaning Supplies: Costs for cleaning products, disinfectants, and toiletries. Health Protocols: Implementing health and hygiene practices, including handwashing stations and sanitization.
3	Security and Surveillance: Security Personnel: If applicable, hire security staff. CCTV Systems: Installation and maintenance of surveillance cameras for safety.
4	Outdoor Spaces: Playgrounds: Designing, constructing, and maintaining outdoor play areas. Landscaping: Costs related to greenery, gardening, and outdoor aesthetics.
5	Administrative Costs: Licensing and Permits: Fees for operating licenses, health permits, and compliance. Insurance: Coverage for liability, property damage, and accidents. Record Keeping: Expenses related to administrative staff, software, and documentation.
6	Transportation: School Van: If the center provides transportation, costs for van, drivers, and fuel.

In conclusion, ensuring a safe and conducive environment has involved a significant financial commitment. ECE centre operators must carefully manage these costs while prioritizing the well-being and development of young learners. Running a childcare center involves various financial factors. These encompass costs related to facilities, utilities, staff salaries, educational resources, and administrative expenses. Balancing these costs while maintaining quality care can be challenging (Chin et al, 2021).

Marketing and Competition

With an increasing number of ECE centres competing for enrolment, marketing, and advertising expenses are essential to attract parents and guardians. Differentiating the centre from competitors through branding, programs, and facilities can incur additional costs. In the bustling landscape of ECE centres, where little learners embark on their educational journey, marketing, and competition play a pivotal role.

Table 2
Marketing and Competition

Participants	The Marketing and Promoting Cost: main financial challenges faced by ECE center operators and administrators
1	For Attracting Parents and Guardians to enroll their child at our ECE centre: Marketing Expenses: ECE centers need to allocate resources for advertising campaigns, promotional materials, and outreach efforts. Online Presence: Maintaining a website, social media profiles, and online listings to showcase the center's offerings. Open Day and Events: Hosting events to engage with prospective parents and showcase the center's environment.
2	For branding and differentiation: Branding: Establishing a unique identity for the center. This includes creating a memorable logo, defining core values, and crafting a compelling narrative. Programs and Curriculum: Highlighting innovative teaching methods, enrichment programs, and extracurricular activities. Facilities: Showcasing well-designed classrooms, play areas, and safety features. Testimonials and Reviews: Leveraging positive feedback from current parents to build trust.
3	Implications Costs to be borne by ECE operators include investment to develop a strong brand where effective marketing materials require an initial investment. Additionally, ongoing expenses for regularly updating content, monitoring online presence, and participating in community events are also worth noting.
4	In adapting to trends, ECE centers must be constantly updated on educational trends and technologies to offer specialized programs such as STEM and so on to attract families. Providing additional programs is also a financial challenge to provide resources quality teaching aids and skilled teaching staff.

In conclusion, while marketing and differentiation entail considerable expenses, it remains crucial to capture the attention of parents and guardians, alongside that of children. This ensures that early childhood education centres maintain their competitive edge and cultivate parental trust to meet evolving market demands. ECE centres must effectively balance financial sustainability with the delivery of outstanding educational and care services for children (Harini et al, 2023).

In today's competitive environment, Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres must strategically market their services to stand out and attract parents and guardians. With numerous options available to families, ECE centres must differentiate themselves and communicate their unique value propositions effectively. Strategic marketing efforts enable

ECE centres to showcase their strengths, whether it's their curriculum, facilities, staff qualifications, or educational philosophy (Modestino et al., 2021).

Fee Collection and Cashflow Management

For critical aspects of fee collection and cash flow management for early childhood education (ECE) centres. The following considerations are important to maintain financial stability and ensure the smooth operation of the ECE Centre.

Table 3

Fees and Cashflow Management

Participants	Fees and Cashflow Management: main financial challenges faced by ECE center operators and administrators
1	Almost all the ECE center's revenue is derived from fees collected on behalf of registered children. Monitoring fee payments and dealing with any delays promptly is key to financial stability.
2	collecting fees in full on time is essential to maintaining cash flow. ECE administrators must have a clear fee collection policy, be firm with parents, and consistently follow up with parents who pay late fees.
3	As is known, the financial resources of the ECE center are made up of three factors, namely registration and monthly fees, fee collection, and revenue that covers the cost of each child. Achieving a balance between these factors is essential for sound fiscal management. Effective fee collection contributes directly to revenue, which in turn covers operating costs. Parents' late payment of fees may affect the financial sustainability of the ECE centre.

Managing cash flow can be challenging, especially when parents are late paying fees or defaulting on payments altogether. ECE center operators need to implement effective fee collection systems and financial planning strategies to ensure a stable revenue stream. In summary, ECE center operators must proactively manage fee collection, maintain full enrollment, and ensure timely revenue to sustain their centers. By doing so, they can provide quality care while navigating financial challenges (Bassok et al., 2021).

Economic Uncertainty

Economic fluctuations can impact parents' ability to afford ECE services. During economic downturns, families may prioritize spending on essentials, leading to decreased enrolment or increased demand for financial assistance programs, further straining the centre’s finances.

Table 4
Economic Uncertainty

Participants	Economic Uncertainty: main financial challenges faced by ECE center operators and administrators
1	During economic downturns, families may face these financial constraints resulting in Parents possibly prioritizing spending on essential needs such as food, housing, and health care over ECE services. As a result, ECE centers may experience decreased enrollment, leading to reduced revenue.
2	ECE centers must rely on consistent enrollment and timely collection of fees. Economic uncertainty disrupts this stability. ECE centers need to adapt by reviewing budgets, exploring cost-saving measures and partnering with community resources to remain relevant and competitive.
3	Parents might choose to enroll their children in ECE centers that offer lower fees. Competitive pricing is essential and balancing affordability and sustainability is a challenge where ECE Centers must justify fees while emphasizing quality and value.

Economic uncertainty poses a major challenge for Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres because it directly affects families' financial stability and, in turn, their ability to afford ECE services. During economic downturns or fluctuations, households will also face financial constraints and may need to reassess their spending priorities. As a result, they may prioritize essential expenses such as housing, food, and healthcare and choose to send their children to ECE centres that offer lower fees (Hahn, 2023).

In such challenging economic conditions, ECE centres must navigate a delicate balance between maintaining the quality of their services, ensuring financial sustainability, and supporting families facing financial difficulties. This may require implementing cost-saving measures, exploring alternative income streams, and supporting government support or funding to reduce the impact of economic uncertainty on both families and the center itself. Additionally, maintaining open communication with parents and fostering a supportive community environment can help address concerns and adapt to evolving economic conditions while continuing to prioritize the well-being and development of the children in their care (Tan, 2020).

Franchise Business: Financial Sustainability Challenges

Franchise businesses offer a proven model for success, but financial sustainability can still be a challenge for franchisees, especially in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) sector. Here are some of the main obstacles that franchisees may face:

Table 5
Franchise Business: Financial Sustainability Challenges

Participants	Franchise Business: Financial Sustainability Challenges for Franchisees
1	**High Initial Investment**: Franchise fees, monthly royalties, and construction costs associated with setting up an ECE center can be significant. Getting financing and managing initial debt can be a major financial hurdle, especially for new entrepreneurs. **Marketing and Enrollment Challenges**: Standing out in the competitive ECE market can be difficult where Franchisees may need to invest in additional marketing efforts beyond those provided by the franchisor to attract new student enrollments and maintain healthy enrollment rates.
2	**Balancing Franchise Fees and Royalties**: Franchise fees and ongoing royalties paid to franchisors can eat up a significant portion of the center's revenue. Franchisees need to carefully analyze these costs and ensure they are generating enough revenue to cover business operations while remaining competitive in the local market.
3	**Maintain Quality Standards**: Franchisees must adhere to quality standards established by the franchisor for curriculum, staff, and facilities. While this ensures consistency across brands, it can also lead to increased operating costs for materials, staff training, or equipment that meet specific franchise needs. Staffing is a major expense in any ECE centre. Competitive wages and benefits are important for attracting and retaining qualified teachers and staff, but they can also put pressure on franchisees' budgets, especially in regions with high labor costs.
4	**Limited Control over Fees:** Franchise agreements often specify tuition fee structures that restrict the franchisee's ability to adjust prices independently. This can limit flexibility in responding to local market conditions or competitors' pricing strategies.

Opening a franchise business requires a large upfront investment, often comprising three main expenses which are Franchise Fees that must be paid to the franchisor for the right to operate under their brand, Ongoing Royalties where a percentage of the center's revenue, must be paid to the franchisor who indirectly reduce profits. Finally, there are construction costs, which can involve renovating existing space or even building a completely new facility. Obtaining financing for these costs, whether through loans, personal savings, or a combination of the two, can be a major hurdle, especially for new entrepreneurs entering the ECE space for the first time. Careful financial planning is essential. This involves thoroughly researching the franchise opportunity, understanding the complete financial picture, and creating a realistic budget that not only considers start-up costs but also ongoing operating expenses. Without careful planning and a clear understanding of the financial commitments involved, initial debt burdens can quickly become a barrier to long-term success.

Franchise fees and royalties are double-edged swords for ECE franchisees. On the one hand, this payment provides access to a proven brand name, established curriculum, and ongoing support from the franchisor. However, it contributes to a significant ongoing financial burden. The franchise fee can be a fixed amount paid upfront and must be paid each time the franchise agreement is renewed. while the royalty is usually a percentage of the central revenue that is levied on the amount of each enrolled student. This means that as registrations increase and revenue increases, will be directly proportional to the amount paid to the franchisor.

The allure of a franchise for an ECE operator lies in its strong brand identity and established operating model. However, maintaining this brand consistency comes at a cost. Franchise agreements usually mandate compliance with specific quality standards across three key areas: curriculum, qualification, and quality of staff and facilities provided to ensure a uniform and high-quality learning experience for children in all franchise locations, which can also translate into higher operating expenses (Starbird et al, 2021).

These quality standards can manifest in several ways. Franchisees may be required to use specific curriculum materials developed by the franchisor, although alternative sources may be more cost-effective. Staff training programs may be mandatory and follow a franchisor-defined curriculum, potentially limiting flexibility in tailoring training to local needs or staff development priorities. Additionally, the franchise agreement may enforce specific requirements for facilities and equipment. This may involve using playground furniture or equipment that meets the franchisor's specifications, even if there are cheaper options. While these standardized materials and programs ensure brand consistency, they can also lead to increased costs compared to independent centres that have more flexibility in sourcing curriculum materials, training staff, and equipping their facilities. Franchisees should carefully evaluate the cost implications of these quality standards and weigh them against the benefits of brand recognition and established operating procedures before entering into a franchise agreement (Dýrfjörð et al., 2024).

The franchise agreement has specified a certain tuition fee structure, or they may impose a limit on how much the franchisee can adjust the price. This inflexibility can be a problem based on local market conditions which may vary. In regions with high costs of living, franchisees may be limited from setting fees high enough to cover operating costs and remain competitive with other childcare and education centre options. Second, competitors' pricing strategies can shift quickly. If a local daycare centre suddenly offers a large discount, franchisees with limited pricing flexibility may find it difficult to respond and maintain their student numbers where parents may be more budget-conscious, potentially leading to decreased enrolment and financial hardship.

Franchises are always walking on a financial tightrope. They need to generate enough revenue to cover not only these ongoing costs but also all operational expenses, such as staff salaries, supplies, and marketing. At the same time, they must remain competitive on tuition fees in their local market. If the fee is set too high to account for the cost of the franchise, parents can choose an alternative option. This balancing act requires careful cost-benefit analysis. Franchisees need to carefully assess their centre’s revenue stream based on local market conditions and the tuition fees they can realistically charge. They should then compare these revenue projections with the total franchise fees and royalties to ensure sufficient profits to cover operating expenses and debt obligations. Only through thorough analysis can franchisees determine whether the franchise model offers a viable path toward financial sustainability in their niche market (Yi et al., 2022).

RQ2:
What strategies do ECE operators apply to maintain financial sustainability?

Cost Control Strategies and Financial Management Practices for Malaysian ECE Centres
Maintaining a stable financial flow requires careful attention to the cost of operating expenses. ECE operators in Malaysia can achieve significant cost savings through strategic cost control measures. The first step is a thorough review of all operating costs, from rent and utilities to supplies and staff salaries. Identifying areas that have room for improvement is important. Here are some specific strategies to consider:

Table 6
Cost Control Strategies and Financial Management Practices for Malaysian ECE Centers

Participants	Cost Control Strategies for Malaysian ECE Centers
1	**Contract Renegotiation**: Operators should not be afraid to review existing contracts with landlords, suppliers, and service providers. Research current market rates and leverage your center's good position to negotiate more favorable terms. Even small adjustments in rent, utility bills or bulk order discounts can add up to significant savings over time.
2	**Embrace Efficiency**: Energy-saving measures such as switching to LED lighting, using natural light and ventilation when possible, and implementing appliance power management settings can significantly reduce utility costs. Analyzing staffing needs and implementing efficient scheduling practices can optimize labor costs without compromising the quality of education and care.
3	**Resourcefulness is Key**: Explore alternative solutions for everyday needs by considering using online resources for lesson plans and educational materials instead of buying expensive pre-made kits. Encourage parents to donate toys and equipment that have been used but are still in good condition to reduce the need for replacement teaching aids such as play equipment and learning facilities. By fostering a smart environment, ECE operators can effectively manage costs without sacrificing educational experience for children.

Financial management is the foundation of any successful ECE centre in Malaysia. Effective practices ensure that centres operate within their capacity and allocate resources wisely to deliver quality care and education.

Maintaining accurate financial records is an important first step. This includes carefully tracking all income streams, such as tuition fees, government grants, and fundraising initiatives. On the expense side, record all operating costs, from staff salaries and utilities to equipment supplies and maintenance. Using accounting software or an organized spreadsheet can streamline this process and provide valuable insight.

Developing a detailed budget is important. This budget should forecast income and expenses for a specific period, usually a year. Periodically reviewing and comparing actual finances to the budget allows for proactive adjustments and ensures the centre stays on track financially. Identifying areas where spending consistently exceeds budgeted amounts requires investigation and potential cost-saving measures.

Exploring fundraising opportunities can further strengthen the centre's financial health. Organizing community events or charity drives can generate additional income. Partnering with local businesses for sponsorships or partnering with parent associations on fundraising initiatives is one additional way to gain financial support.

By implementing these cost control strategies and financial management practices, Malaysian ECE operators get a clear picture of their financial situation. This transparency allows them to make informed decisions, efficient allocation of resources, and ultimately, contribute to the long-term sustainability of the centre (Indrawati et al., 2021).

Increase Revenue Streams

Financial sustainability for Malaysian ECE centres cannot only be implemented through cost control alone. Expanding revenue streams is equally important. Here are some key strategies to consider:

Table 7
Increase revenue streams

Participants	Increase revenue streams
1	**Serving Working Parents:** Offer extended hours or after-school programs to meet the needs of working parents. This can be especially attractive for families with dual-income households or those with non-standard work schedules. By providing a safe and controlled environment after school, ECE centers can fill the void of busy families and at the same time generate additional income.
2	**Enrichment and Engagement:** Consider offering enrichment classes that go beyond the core curriculum. This can include music, art, foreign language lessons, or physical activity programs. These classes can attract new students looking for a more well-rounded educational experience and provide an additional revenue stream.
2	**Strategic Tuition Adjustment:** Although raising tuition fees can be one way to increase revenue, ECE operators need to conduct thorough market research to ensure competitiveness. Consider offering a tiered pricing structure based on program options or enrolment period. This allows parents flexibility while still generating additional income.
3	**Partnership for Growth:** Partnering with local businesses or organizations to offer education and childcare subsidies or discounts to their employees can be a win-win situation. This provides valuable benefits to employees, strengthens community ties for the ECE center, and attracts new students, ultimately leading to increased revenue.

By implementing this combination of strategies, Malaysian ECE operators can create a more diversified revenue portfolio, reduce reliance on a single source of income, and be able to increase and ensure long-term financial stability (Harini et.al, 2023).

Strategies to Optimize Enrolment and Attendance in Malaysian ECE Centers
A steady flow of students is essential to the financial stability of any ECE centre. Among several strategies that can be used by Malaysian ECE operators to optimize registration and attendance is to spread the word as one of the marketing strategies. By developing an effective marketing strategy to showcase the uniqueness and advantages of the program offered. As mentioned in Harini et al., (2023), ECE centre operators should use online platforms, social media, and local community events to reach out to prospective parents. Consider testimonials from parents who are satisfied with the educational services offered that can highlight the centre's strengths, such as qualified staff, enrichment programs, or a nurturing environment. Additionally, offering incentives for existing families to spread the word with discounts for sibling enrolment programs or referrals that reward parents for recommending the centre can encourage them to become brand ambassadors. Positive word-of-mouth marketing is a powerful tool for attracting new students (Jacob et al., 2022).

The following is a strategy that can be used by early childhood education centre operators to increase enrolment.

Table 8
Optimize Enrolment and Attendance

Participants	Optimize Enrolment and Attendance
1	**Spread News and information to the community:** Operators need to develop an effective marketing strategy to showcase the center's unique offer to potential parents. Online platforms such as social media and getting involved in local community events are among the steps to connect with prospective parents.
2	**Loyalty Rewards:** School operators can consider offering incentives for existing families to attract other parents to enroll their children by providing discounts for sibling enrollment programs or referrals that reward parents for recommending the center where this measure can encourage them to be school ambassadors.
3	**Conduct market research to understand the specific needs of families in the surrounding area.** School operators need to constantly observe and obtain the latest information on the latest demands and trends in early childhood education to develop and offer programs that meet the needs of parents and children.
4	**Attendance Tracking System:** Every school should implement an attendance tracking system to monitor student attendance. Regular communication with parents about the importance of consistent attendance not only helps identify potential issues but also reinforces the value of a structured learning environment. By working with parents, ECE centers can minimize the disruption caused by irregular attendance and ensure that students get the most out of the programs offered.

Conducting market research to understand the specific needs of families in the surrounding area, trends and demands can help develop programs that meet these needs, such as offering flexible schedules for working parents or incorporating cultural elements that resonate with the community by demonstrating a commitment to community well-being, centres ECE can appeal to families looking for a personalized and relevant educational experience for their children (Kong, 2023).

Implementing an attendance tracking system to monitor student attendance is a strategy that needs to be considered. Regular communication with parents about the importance of consistent attendance not only helps identify potential issues but also reinforces the value of a structured learning environment. By working with parents, ECE centres can minimize the disruption caused by irregular attendance and ensure that students get the most out of the programs offered.

By focusing on these strategies, ECE operators in Malaysia can create a welcoming and engaging environment that can attract new students and encourage consistent attendance, ultimately leading to a sustainable and thriving centre.

Exploring Grants and Subsidies for Malaysian ECE Centers
The Malaysian government recognizes the important role of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in nurturing the next generation. To support ECE operators, various grant and subsidy programs may be available. Taking advantage of this financial assistance can significantly improve the financial sustainability of a centre (Slicker et al, 2023).

P1: Early childhood education centre operators can obtain information from the government and education department websites about the grants and subsidies that are offered. In addition, attending specific workshops or conferences can provide information on ECE funding opportunities.

ECE operators should conduct thorough research by visiting government websites and education departments often provide detailed information on grants and subsidies on offer. Attending workshops or conferences that focus on ECE funding opportunities can also be beneficial to gaining information on eligibility criteria and the application process. This effort can ensure that the educational centre meets the requirements by submitting a strong application.

Grants and subsidies can be used for various purposes, such as infrastructure development, staff training, or curriculum enhancement. Using these funds effectively can lead to better facilities, a more qualified workforce, and ultimately, a more enriching learning environment for children. By actively seeking and securing government support, Malaysian ECE operators can reduce their financial burden and ensure they have the resources they need to deliver high-quality education and care.

Collaboration
Malaysia's ECE landscape can greatly benefit from collaboration between operators. By working together, centres can not only share valuable knowledge and resources but also explore cost-saving opportunities and improve their overall effectiveness.

Networking with other ECE operators fosters a sense of community and enables the exchange of best practices. The sharing of successful teaching methods, curriculum ideas, and even administrative strategies can benefit all participating centres. Additionally, collaborating on professional development workshops or training sessions can provide staff with access to a wider range of learning opportunities at a potentially lower cost.

Collaboration can go beyond knowledge sharing. Joint marketing initiatives can be a powerful tool to reach a wider audience and attract new students. Sharing advertising campaigns or participating in community events together allows centres to leverage each other's strengths and maximize their marketing impact.

Purchasing bulk supplies is another area where collaboration shines. By pooling their needs, several ECE centres can negotiate better deals with suppliers, leading to significant cost savings for everyone involved. This collaborative approach to procurement ensures that all centres have access to high-quality resources at more affordable prices.

Ultimately, collaboration between Malaysian ECE operators fosters a spirit of innovation and mutual success. By working together, centres can overcome challenges, improve their programs, and ultimately provide a more enriching and sustainable learning environment for the children they serve.

Achieving financial sustainability in Malaysia's ECE centre world is not just about the bottom line. While good financial management is important, it goes hand in hand with a commitment to providing high-quality care and education services. This focus on quality is a win-win for both the children and the centre’s financial stability. By offering a nurturing and stimulating environment with qualified staff and engaging programs, ECE centres can attract and retain student numbers, leading to a stable enrolment base. This, in turn, translates into consistent revenue streams that can drive long-term sustainability (Dedeoğlu et al., 2021).

However, remaining stagnant is not an option. To remain relevant and meet the evolving needs of parents and children, Malaysian ECE operators must be proactive. Staying alert about the latest trends and regulations in the ECE sector is important. This knowledge allows continuous adaptation of programs and services to be implemented whether they incorporate new educational approaches, embrace technological advances, or respond to changing parental preferences. Continuous improvement ensures that the centre remains competitive and provides the best learning experience for its students.

By implementing a combination of financial literacy and commitment to quality education, Malaysian ECE operators can navigate the path toward financial sustainability. This not only secures the future of their business but also ensures that they continue to play an important role in nurturing the next generation of Malaysians.

Strategic Partnership and the Challenges

In the ever-competitive Malaysian Early Childhood Education (ECE) landscape, merging education centres under one brand can be one of the strategic steps to achieve financial stability and improve the overall educational experience. Here are some of the potential benefits:

Table 9
Strategic Partnership

Participants	The benefit of strategic partnership
1	**Financial Advantages:** Consolidation allows for the consolidation of resources such as administrative staff, utilities, and supplies. Buying school supplies in bulk can also reduce costs. **Economies of scale**: Sharing of infrastructure and administrative overhead across larger centers can lead to increased efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Larger centers can weather financial fluctuations more easily than smaller ones.
2	**Operational Advantages** **Enhanced program offerings**: A merged center can combine resources to offer a wider variety of programs and activities for children while potentially attracting more students. **Sharing expertise**: Staff from all centers can share best practices and effective teaching methods, leading to an enriched learning environment for children. **Enhanced staff development**: Combined centers can pool resources for training and staff development opportunities, which benefit all employees, children, and parents. **Increased visibility and reputation**: A larger center can establish a stronger presence in the community, can compete, and has the potential to attract more students and improve its reputation.

The strategic partnership between educational centres under one brand enables significant cost savings. By combining existing resources, can help streamline administrative structures such as human resource management, accounting, marketing, curriculum, and so on. Economies of scale can also be streamlined with the implementation of shared infrastructure and administrative overhead across the centre to reduce operating expenses per student, leading to more efficient and financially sustainable operations. Furthermore, larger centres are better prepared to weather financial fluctuations. With a broader income base, financial stability in the long term can be managed to face unexpected economic downturns.

Merging centres isn't just about the bottom line. It can also lead to enriching learning environments that are more effective for children. By combining resources, all centres can offer a wider range of programs and activities, catering to a wider range of interests and learning styles to meet the demands of parents and the needs of children. This diversity can increase student enrolment while fostering a more vibrant learning community. The merger also allows staff from all centres to share their expertise and best practices while leading to a more innovative curriculum. Additionally, larger centres have the resources to invest in staff development opportunities, fostering continuous learning and improvement among educators, ultimately benefiting the quality of care and education-provided success (Frederiksen et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the merger into a larger early childhood education centre brand has a stronger presence in the community. This increased visibility can lead to a wider pool of potential students and a more established reputation for child excellence. Parents looking for high-quality ECE options are more likely to consider centres with a proven track record of diverse offerings. A successful merger could position the new entity as a leader in the ECE landscape, attracting students and qualified staff who want to be part of a thriving educational institution.

However, some challenges must be acknowledged for amalgamating several early childhood education centres under one brand.

1. **Difficulty of integration**: Combining two different cultures and management styles can be a challenge where it requires careful planning and communication between operators.
2. **Location considerations**: Incorporating geographically distant centres requires a practical strategy for a transparent and effective monitoring process.
3. **Loss of individual identity**: Smaller centres may lose their unique character or focus on mergers and rebranding.

Careful planning, open communication, and a focus on maintaining quality care are essential to the success of this merger. By carefully considering these factors, Malaysian ECE operators can leverage mergers as a strategic tool to achieve financial sustainability and provide exceptional educational experiences for children enrolled in their educational centres.

Financial Sustainability Strategy for Franchisees in the ECE Sector

The decision to start a franchise business in the ECE field should not be taken lightly. Before signing a franchise agreement, it is important to make a comprehensive arrangement for financial management, risk, and so on. This process is an important road map to financial sustainability and helps avoid possible business failure.

Table 10
Financial Sustainability Strategy for Franchisees

Participants	Financial Sustainability Strategy for Franchisees
1	**Thorough Due Diligence**: Prospective franchisees should conduct a comprehensive financial analysis of the franchise opportunity and research the local market to understand the break-even point and potential revenue streams. **Cost Control Measures**: Implementing efficient operational practices, smart procurement, and optimizing staff schedules can help manage expenses. **Negotiating Favourable Terms**: Negotiations with the franchisor can be attempted on the terms of the franchise fee and the royalty structure can help alleviate some of the financial burden.
2	**Staying Informed about the ECE Market**: Keeping up to date with trends, demands, and regulations in the ECE sector allows franchisees to adapt their programs and services to meet the evolving needs of parents and children. **Focus on Quality and Customer Service**: Competing by providing exceptional care and education is key to maintaining and increasing student numbers and indirectly generating positive word-of-mouth recommendations from parents. **Building a Strong Community Presence**: Developing and building strong relationships with parents, schools and local community organizations can help attract new students and create a positive reputation.

At its core, a comprehensive financial analysis of the franchise business needs to be done where prospective Franchisees need to carefully examine the franchisor's financial disclosures, understand the initial investment required, and project the potential revenue streams of their centre. This analysis should also consider ongoing operating expenses, including staff salaries, rent payments, and costs of curriculum materials or equipment mandated by the franchisor. By creating a realistic financial model, franchisees can determine the break-even point, which is the point where their centre's revenue covers all its expenses.

In addition, researching the local market in which the franchise will operate is important by involving an understanding of the area's demographics, existing competitors, and the fees offered for similar services. Researching the local competition allows potential franchisees to assess their potential market share and identify any unique selling propositions they might leverage to stand out.

By combining a comprehensive financial analysis of the franchise opportunity with in-depth research on the local market, franchisees will understand the financial realities they will face. This knowledge empowers them to make informed decisions about the viability of a franchise model in their specific location, ensuring they enter the venture with realistic expectations and a clear path toward achieving financial sustainability in the competitive world of Early Childhood Education (Frederiksen et al., 2021).

While the financial aspects of running an ECE franchise business are important, long-term success also depends on staying aligned with the broader ECE landscape. Franchisees who are proactive in this regard can create centres that thrive and can attract and retain student numbers. Franchisees need to be alert to trends, changing demands from parents, and any regulatory changes in the ECE sector. This allows franchisees to adapt their programs and services accordingly and ensure their centres remain relevant and competitive in meeting the ever-changing needs of children and families.

Furthermore, franchisees can build a strong reputation in the community. Satisfied parents will indirectly become advocates and marketing agents by sharing positive word-of-mouth feedback, which can bring in new students. Furthermore, cultivating strong relationships with local schools and community organizations can build goodwill and be a strategic advantage where these Relationships can be leveraged to increase visibility, host collaborative events, and ultimately attract a wider pool of potential students. By combining a focus on financial sustainability with adaptability, exceptional service, and strong community involvement, franchisees in the ECE sector can create a winning formula for long-term success (Frederiksen et al., 2021).

Conclusion

Operators and administrators of Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres in Malaysia face various financial challenges that significantly impact the sustainability and quality of their services. High operational costs, including expenses related to facilities, personnel, compliance, and marketing, put a heavy burden on central finances. Additionally, economic uncertainty, regulatory compliance, and competition add to these challenges, requiring operators to navigate a complex landscape while maintaining financial viability.

Efforts to address these challenges require strategic financial management, including budgeting, cost control measures, and revenue diversification strategies. Collaboration with stakeholders, such as parents, staff, government agencies, and community organizations, is essential to gain support, share resources, and support sector-wide solutions. In addition, investment in staff training, infrastructure maintenance, and innovation can increase operational efficiency and service quality, thus increasing the overall sustainability of the ECE centre.

Despite the financial challenges they face, operators and administrators of ECE centres in Malaysia remain resilient and committed to providing high-quality early childhood education and care. By proactively addressing financial challenges, fostering collaboration, and embracing innovation, they can weather uncertain times and continue to positively impact the development and well-being of children in Malaysia.

References

Bakar, A. Y. A. (2023). Fulfilling the Aspirations of Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025: Issues and Challenges. Journal for ReAttach Therapy and Developmental Diversities, 6(6s), 13–17.

Aziz, N. A. A., Zakaria, N. H., Hashim, E., Mohamad Rasli, R., Saari, E. M., Mustafa, M. C., & Yassin, S. M. (2021). Issues in Operating Childcare Centers in Malaysia. International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education, 10(3), 993-1000. Greening, N. (2019). Phenomenological Research Methodology. Scientific Research Journal (SCIRJ), 88-92.

Bassok, D., Doromal, J. B., Michie, M., & Wong, V. (2021). The effects of financial incentives on teacher turnover in early childhood settings: Experimental evidence from Virginia. Working Paper.

Chin, T. H., Bing, C. Y., Dhamotharan, M., & Che Mustafa, M. (2021). Issues and Challenges in Early Childhood Care and Education Centre Registration Process: What the Operators Say?. Southeast Asia Early Childhood, 10, 53-62.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches. Sage Publications.

Dedeoglu, S., Şahankaya-Adar, A., & Sırali, Y. (2021). Supporting women's employment through institutional collaboration on early childhood care and education.

Dyrfjoro, K., Magnusdottir, B. R., & Bjarnadottir, V. S. (2024). Principals' financial and pedagogical challenges when choosing programs and educational materials: the scope of the private education industry for preschools. Education Inquiry, 15(1), 47-62.

Saari E. M., Aziz, N. A. A., Rasli, R. M., Mustafa, M. C., & Yassin, S. M., (2022) Early Childhood Education of Children with Special Needs in Malaysia: A Focus on Current Issues, Challenges, and Solutions. World Journal of English Language. Vol. 12, No. 2; 2022, Special Issue

Frederiksen, N. (2021). Configuration, collaboration and complexity in strategic partnerships: An institutional inquiry conducted from the inside of a strategic partnership in Danish construction.

George, T. (2023). Exploratory research: Definition, guide, & examples. Scirbbr.

Hahn, R. A., & Barnett, W. S. (2023). Early childhood education: Health, equity, and economics. Annual review of public health, 44, 75-92.

Hamid, S. A., Awang, M., Shokory, S. M., Omar, J., & Mustafa, M. C. (2020). Managing early childhood care and education: A comparison of government and private childcare centres in Malaysia. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 10(11), 1032-1041.

Harini, H., Wahyuningtyas, D. P., Sutrisno, S., Wanof, M. I., & Ausat, A. M. A. (2023). Marketing strategy for Early Childhood Education (ECE) schools in the digital age. Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, 7(3), 2742-2758.

Harini, H., Wahyuningtyas, D. P., Sutrisno, S., Wanof, M. I., & Ausat, A. M. A. (2023). Marketing strategy for Early Childhood Education (ECE) schools in the digital age. Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, 7(3), 2742-2758.
https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/exploratory-research/

Indrawati, R., Ragamustari, S. K., & Wijaya, M. E. (2021). Best Practice in early childhood development financial governance: A case study in Indonesia villages. Jurnal Pendidikan Usia Dini, 15(2), 319-341.

Jacob, S., & Olakunle, F. J. (2022). Assessment of Community Based Early Childhood Care Centers in Improving Enrolment and Quality Learning in Nigeria. European Journal of Education and Pedagogy, 3(2), 159-163.

Kong, K. (2023). Early Childhood Education in Malaysia. In International Handbook on Education in South East Asia (pp. 1-32). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.

Kong, K. (2023). Early childhood education in Malaysia. In International Handbook on Education in South East Asia (pp. 1-32). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.

Modestino, A. S., Ladge, J. J., Swartz, A., & Lincoln, A. (2021). Childcare is a business issue. Harvard Business Review.

Mustafa, N. A. & Hashim, H. (2022). Malaysian preschool teachers' quality teaching vis-a-vis their professional development, qualifications and experience. International Journal of Advanced Research in Education and Society, 4 (1), 131-137.

Ridza, N. S. M., Ahmad, Y., & Vadeveloo, T. (2021). Early Childhood Care and Education Development in Malaysia: Early Recognition and Way Forward. International Conference on Public Policy and Social Science.

Rahmatullah, B., Muhamad Rawai, N., Mohamad Samuri, S., & Md Yassin, S. (2021). Overview of early childhood care and education in Malaysia. Hungarian Educational Research Journal, 11(4), 396-412.

Slicker, G., Hustedt, J. T., & Stoffers, M. (2023). Participation of early care and education centers in the child care subsidy system: A statewide mixed methods investigation. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 65, 317-331.

Starbird, G. R. E. G., Wilson, F. I. O. N. A., & Hachemi, E. H. (2021). The promise of social sector franchising. Stanford Social Innovation Review Spring, 2021, 42-9.

Tan, H. H. (2020). Effect of Environmental Uncertainties on The Relationship of Entrepreneurial Orientation and Business Success: Child Care Centres in Malaysia. International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices, 3 (10), 30-42.

Tee, M. Y. (2023). Overview of Education in Malaysia. In International Handbook on Education in South East Asia (pp. 1-25). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.

Yi, L. X., Md Isa, F., Noor, S., & Mohd Nor, L. (2022). Factors influencing entrepreneurial team (ET) performance in education and childcare franchise: case of Malaysia. Management Research Review, 45(8), 1001-1018.