

**Association between Knowledge, Attitude, and
Intention to Report Child Abuse among Early
Childcare Providers in Kelantan and Cross-cultural
Adaptation of its Instrument.**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

2-PL IRT	2-parameter logistic item response theory
adj. OR	Adjusted odds ratio
CARIS	The Child Abuse Report Intention Scale
CDD	Community Development Department
CFA	Confirmatory factor analysis
CFI	Comparative fit index
CI	Confidence Interval
df	Degree of freedom
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
ECECAQ	Early Childhood Educator Child Abuse Questionnaire
ECPs	Early Childcare providers
EPV	Event Per Variable
FL	Factor loadings
IBM	International Business Machines
ICC	Item characteristic curves
IIC	Item information curves
IRT	Item response Theory
KEMAS	<i>Jabatan Kemajuan Masyarakat</i>
MI	Modification index
MLR	Robust Maximum likelihood
MLR	Robust Maximum likelihood

OR	Odds ratio
PERMATA	Early Childhood Care and Education Course
RMP	Royal Malaysian Police
RMSEA	Root mean square error of approximation
SD	Standard deviation
SPM	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (High School Certificate)
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SR	Standardized residuals
SRMR	Standardized root mean square
TABIKA	Taman Bimbingan Kanak-kanak
TASKA	Taman Asuhan Kanak-kanakk
TLI	Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)
TRAS	Teacher Reaporting Attitude Scale
TRF	test response function
WHO	World Health Organization

LIST OF SYMBOLS

$>$	More than
$<$	Less than
\geq	More than or equal to
\leq	Less than or equal to
$=$	Equal to
α	Alpha
β	Beta
n	Number of populations
d	Precision
χ^2	Chi-square
$\%$	Percentage
P	Proportion
Z	Z statistic for a level of confidence (1.96)

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ABSTRAK

Perkaitan antara Pengetahuan, Sikap, dan Niat untuk Melaporkan Kes Penderaan Kanak-Kanak Dikalangan Pendidik Awal Kanak-Kanak di Kelantan dan Adaptasi Budaya kepada Borang Soal Selidiknyanya.

Latar belakang: Penderaan kanak-kanak sering terjadi dikalangan kanak-kanak yang lebih muda. Namun begitu, kebanyakan kes penderaan ini tidak sampai ke pengetahuan pihak berkuasa. Menurut laporan daripada Polis Di Raja Malaysia, kurang daripada 1% kes penderaan kanak-kanak dilaporkan oleh pendidik awal kanak-kanak yang bekerja di bawah Jabatan Kemajuan Masyarakat (KEMAS) disebalik peningkatan kes saban tahun. Didapati, kajian faktor yang berkaitan dengan niat untuk melaporkan kes penderaan kanak-kanak dikalangan mereka adalah terhad. Bagi kajian ini, penyesuaian silang budaya bagi borang Soal Selidik Penderaan Kanak-Kanak Dikalangan Pendidik Awal Kanak-Kanak (ECECAQ) telah dilakukan pada fasa pertama sementara, borang soal selidik ECECAQ versi Bahasa Malaysia digunakan pada fasa kedua kajian.

Objektif: Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengadaptasi, menterjemah dan mengesahkan borang Soal Selidik ECECAQ; menentukan tahap pengetahuan dan sikap mengenai penderaan kanak-kanak dan pelaporannya dikalangan pendidik awal kanak-kanak di Kelantan; menentukan peratusan pendidik awal kanak-kanak di Kelantan yang mempunyai niat untuk melaporkan kes penderaan kanak-kanak; dan menentukan hubungkait antara faktor demografi, pengetahuan, dan sikap tentang penderaan kanak-kanak serta niat untuk melaporkan kes penderaan kanak-kanak dikalangan pendidik awal kanak-kanak di Kelantan.

Kaedah: Kajian ini dilakukan dalam dua fasa yang melibatkan pendidik awal kanak-kanak yang bekerja di prasekolah yang berdaftar dengan KEMAS negeri Kelantan dari bulan November 2018 hingga Disember 2020. Fasa pertama kajian ini adalah untuk mengadaptasi, menterjemah dan mengesahkan borang soal selidik ECECAQ mengikut garis panduan yang telah ditetapkan. Seramai 218 responden yang bekerja di prasekolah di daerah Kota Bharu dan Tumpat mengambil bahagian dalam fasa ini. Borang soal selidik ECECAQ mengandungi enam bahagian iaitu (1) latar belakang responden; (2) pengalaman dalam melaporkan kes penderaan kanak-kanak; (3) latar belakang pendidikan dan latihan mengenai penderaan kanak-kanak; (4) sikap terhadap penderaan kanak-kanak dan pelaporannya; (5) pengetahuan mengenai penderaan kanak-kanak dan pelaporannya; dan (6) situasi mengenai penderaan kanak-kanak. Bahagian sikap diukur menggunakan skala lima mata Likert dari skala 5 (sangat setuju) hingga skala 1 (sangat tidak bersetuju). Pernyataan berbentuk negatif direkod secara terbalik supaya skor yang tinggi menggambarkan sikap yang baik manakala skor yang rendah menggambarkan sebaliknya. Bahagian ini dianalisis dengan analisis faktor pengesahan (CFA) menggunakan kaedah anggaran kemungkinan maksimum yang kuat. Bahagian pengetahuan pula mempunyai dua pilihan jawapan iaitu ‘betul’ dan ‘salah’. Setiap jawapan yang betul diberikan markah ‘1’ manakala jawapan yang salah diberikan markah ‘0’. Bahagian ini dianalisis dengan analisis teori respons item logistik 2-parameter (2-PL IRT). Terdapat empat situasi yang menggambarkan penderaan kanak-kanak dan mempunyai enam pilihan jawapan bagi setiap situasi. Jika responden menjawab untuk ‘melaporkan kepada pihak berkuasa’ pada salah satu daripada, mereka dianggap sebagai mempunyai niat untuk melaporkan kes penderaan kanak-kanak manakala jika mereka menjawab sebaliknya, mereka dianggap sebagai tidak mempunyai niat untuk melaporkannya. Fasa kedua kajian ini adalah kajian

keratan rentas di mana ia dijalankan dikalangan pendidik awal kanak-kanak yang bekerja di lapan daerah lain di Kelantan. Ia dijalankan untuk menjawab objektif kedua hingga ke empat. Seramai 457 respondent telah mengambil bahagian di dalam fasa ini. Data dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan borang soal selidik ECECAQ versi Bahasa Malaysia. Data dianalisa menggunakan analisa deskriptif, analisa faktor pengesahan (CFA), analisa 2 parameter logistik teori respons item (2-PL IRT), dan analisa logistik.

Keputusan: Borang soal selidik ECECAQ versi Bahasa Malaysia mempunyai keperluan konsistensi dalaman dengan nilai Raykov's rho 0.672 – 0.878 untuk bahagian sikap. Terdapat empat factor hasil daripada analisa faktor pengesahan (CFA) iaitu *percepsi*, *gejala*, *sokongan*, dan *tanggungjawab*. Model adalah kuat pada kelima-lima index kesesuaian ($\chi^2 = 58.7$ (48) $P = 0.138$; SRMR = 0.044; RMSEA = 0.0433; CFI = 0.986; TLI = 0.981). Faktor pemuatan pula adalah antara 0.414 hingga 0.869. Bahagian pengetahuan pula mempunyai keperluan konsistensi dalaman dengan nilai Cronbach's alpha 0.65. Secara amnya, soalan di bahagian pengetahuan mempunyai tahap kesukaran dan tahap diskriminasi yang memuaskan. Namun, daripada Analisa 2-PL IRT, terdapat empat soalan yang mempunyai tahap kesesuaian yang rendah iaitu K2, K4, K5c, dan K8. Meskipun begitu, soalan-soalan ini tidak dibuang kerana mempunyai tahap kesukaran dan diskriminasi yang memuaskan. Secara keseluruhan, bahagian pengetahuan mempunyai tahap kesesuaian yang baik pada margin dua arah dengan nisbah standad residual dari 1.34 hingga 3.25. Model tersebut juga mempunyai satu dimensi. Fasa kedua kajian mendapati secara amnya, 41.6% responden mempunyai niat untuk melaporkan kes penderaan kanak-kanak. Ia berkait dengan tahap pengetahuan mengenai penderaan (OR 1.179, 95% CI: 1.066, 1.302, p -value 0.01). Responden mempunyai tahap pengetahuan umum yang baik

berbanding pengetahuan tentang pelaporan dan undang-undang mengenai penderaan kanak-kanak. K14 adalah soalan yang paling banyak dijawab salah. 80% respondent belum menghadiri latihan mengenai penderaan kanak-kanak. Walau bagaimanapun, kira-kira 80% daripada responden mempunyai kurang kesedaran terhadap tanggungjawab untuk melaporkan kes penderaan dan lebih daripada 50% bersetuju bahawa ibu bapa bebas mendisiplin anak mereka dengan apa cara sekalipun.

Kesimpulan: Kajian ini menghasilkan alat yang tepat dan dipercayai untuk mengukur tahap pengetahuan dan sikap pendidik awal kanak-kanak terhadap penderaan kanak-kanak dan pelaporannya serta niat mereka untuk melaporkan kes penderaan. Penemuan dari kajian ini juga menekankan kepentingan untuk menghasilkan modul latihan berdasarkan teori dan bersepadu untuk pendidik awal kanak-kanak tidak mengira agensi untuk meningkatkan pemahaman dan kesedaran untuk melaporkan kes penderaan kanak-kanak.

KATA KUNCI: Penderaan kanak-kanak, pendidik awal kanak-kanak, pengetahuan, sikap, niat untuk melaporkan.

ABSTRACT

Association between Knowledge, Attitude, and Intention to Report Child Abuse among Early Childcare Providers in Kelantan and Cross-cultural Adaptation of its Instrument.

Background: Younger children are often the victim of child abuse. However, most of the cases were not reported. According to the statistics from the Royal Malaysia Police Department, less than 1% of child abuse cases were reported by early childcare providers (ECPs) working in preschools under the Community Development Department (CDD) despite the increasing trend of child abuse every year. However, studies looking into this matter were limited. For this study, a cross-cultural adaptation of the Early Childhood Educators Child Abuse Questionnaire (ECECAQ) was done in the first phase while the Malay-validated ECECAQ was used in the second phase of the study.

Objectives: This study aims to adapt, translate and validate the ECECAQ; to determine the level of knowledge and attitude of child abuse among ECPs in Kelantan; to determine the proportion of intention to report child abuse among ECPs in Kelantan; and to determine the association between demographic factors, knowledge, and attitude of child abuse with the intention to report among ECPs in Kelantan.

Methods: This study was conducted in two phases. It involved ECPs working in preschools registered with the CDD in Kelantan from November 2018 till December 2020. The first phase was a cross-cultural adaptation of the ECECAQ to fulfill the first objective. The ECECAQ underwent a translation and validation processes following an established

guideline. 218 respondents working in preschools in Kota Bharu and Tumpat districts participated in this phase of the study. The ECECAQ contains six sections namely (1) demographic profile; (2) reporting experience; (3) education and training experience; (4); attitude; (5) knowledge; and (6) vignettes. The attitude sections were scaled using a 5-point Likert scale ranges from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). Negatively phrases items were reverse coded so that a higher score represented good attitude and a lower score meant otherwise. This section was analyzed with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using robust maximum likelihood estimation method. The dichotomous knowledge section was scored with '1' and '0' point. Every correct response was given '1' and an incorrect response '0'. This section was analyzed with 2-parameter logistic item response theory (2-PL IRT) analysis. There were four vignettes with six response options. Intention to report was considered by the response 'yes' to 'report to authority' in at least one of the vignettes. In the second phase of the study, a cross-sectional study was conducted among early childcare providers in Kelantan to fulfill the rest of the objectives. 457 ECPs from the remaining eight districts in Kelantan participated. Data were collected using a self-administered Malay-validated version of the ECECAQ. Data were analyzed using simple and multiple logistic analyses for the second phase.

Results: The Malay-validated ECECAQ had a good internal consistency reliability with Raykov's rho value ranging from 0.672 – 0.878 for the attitude section. There was a four-factor model discovered from CFA namely *perception*, *symptoms*, *support*, and *responsibility*. The model fit on all five of fit indices ($\chi^2 = 58.7 (48) P = 0.138$; SRMR = 0.044; RMSEA = 0.033; CFI = 0.986; TLI = 0.981). Factor loadings ranged from 0.414 to 0.869. Knowledge section also had a good internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha

value of 0.65. Generally, items in the knowledge section had an acceptable difficulty and discrimination index. However, from the 2-PL IRT analysis, there were four items that did not fit the chi-square goodness-of-fit test namely K2, K4, K5c and K8. Nonetheless, they were kept because they have acceptable difficulty and discrimination index. As a whole, the knowledge section fits on two-way margins with the ratio of the standardized residual between 1.34 to 3.25, The model was unidimensional with $P \geq 0.05$. In phase two, 41.6% of the respondents have the intention to report child abuse. Knowledge was found to be associated with the intention to report Kelantan (OR 1.179, 95% CI: 1.066, 1.302, p -value 0.01). The respondents did well in general knowledge of child abuse compared to reporting or legal knowledge of child abuse. The question with the least correct answer was K14 which was about important criteria to report child abuse. 80% of respondents have not received any training on child abuse. About 80% of respondents had a poor attitude towards responsibility to report while more than 50% agree with the rights of parents to inflict corporal punishment towards their children.

Conclusions: This study provides valid and reliable tools to measure knowledge and attitude of ECPs towards child abuse and its reporting as well as their intention to report child abuse. Findings from this study emphasized the need for a theory-based training module for ECPs regardless of agencies to improve understanding and awareness of reporting child abuse.

Keywords: Child abuse, validation, early childhood educators, intention to report

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of child abuse

Child abuse refers to all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development, or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (World Health Organization, 1999).

Children are suffering from a hidden epidemic of child abuse. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in four adults were physically abused as children (World Health Organization, 2017). Worldwide, around one billion children aged two -17 years old were estimated to suffer from one form of violence in the past years (Hillis *et al.*, 2016). Child abuse is a widespread phenomenon across the globe in which, 23% of children reported that they suffered from physical abuse in the past year, 36% from emotional abuse, 16% from physical neglect, and that 18% of girls and 8% of boys suffered from sexual abuse (World Health Organization, 2017).

It is no exception for Malaysia as well. There is an increasing trend of child abuse since the 1990s. In 2000, there were only 934 cases compared to 3257 cases in 2010. The most common type of abuse is neglect followed by sexual. In 2010, an average of nine children daily were reported to be the victims of some sort of abuse in Malaysia (Choo, Walsh, Marret, *et al.*, 2013). These increments were associated with the increasing need for care and protection. According to a report by the Department

of Social Welfare, there was a 14% increment in the number of children in need of care and protection in 2014 and 2016, from 4295 to 4982. Of these, 50 percent or one in two cases were perpetrated by parents (Department of Social Welfare, 2016). Most of the cases were reported by medical doctors in government hospitals, followed by the public, and family members.

In Malaysia, studies related to child abuse were mostly done on a small scale confined to a local institution ten years back with the majority looked into medical record of hospitalized patients (Nathan and Hwang, 1981; Cheah *et al.*, 1994; Kasim, Shafie and Cheah, 1994; Kasim, Cheah and Shafie, 1995; Nooraudah *et al.*, 2004; Hong *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, it did not give a prevalence rate and the report was biased towards the most severe form of abuse. However, lately, there were a few population-based studies done (Choo *et al.*, 2011; Kumaraswamy and Othman, 2011a; Chan *et al.*, 2013; Ahmed *et al.*, 2015) with only one looking into the educator's perspective (Choo, Walsh, Marret, *et al.*, 2013).

Back in the 1990s, a study done among paramedic trainees found that 6.8% of respondents admitted having been sexually abused in their childhood. 71.4% of the perpetrators were someone closed to the respondent (Singh, Yiing and Nurani, 1996). Almost 20 years later, a cross-sectional study among secondary school children aged 16 years old found that emotional and physical abuse was common. More than 20% of the respondents were exposed to more than one type of abuse with 3 % of the respondents experienced all four types of abuse namely; neglect, physical, sexual, emotional abuse (Choo *et al.*, 2011). A study among 10-12 years old children also reported that three quarters of them experienced at least one form of abuse, with physical abuse by parents being the most common (Ahmed *et al.*, 2015).

Issues of child abuse should not be taken lightly as it brings serious immediate and long-term repercussion into one's life. They can face serious injury and may lead to death. Every year, about 41 000 children under 15 years old became victims of homicide (World Health Organization, 2017). However, it is possible that more death attributed to abuse go unreported due to missed classification of the cause of death by other causes (World Health Organization, 2017). A survived child can have a long-term consequence. As an adult, those who were abused or neglected as a child were at a higher risk of being a victim of violence or perpetrating violence. They were also at a higher risk of depression, obesity, have high risk sexual behaviors and unintended pregnancy, as well as the harmful use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs (World Health Organization, 2014, 2017).

1.2 Current initiative in child abuse prevention in Malaysia

The Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development (MWFCDD) oversees the child abuse prevention and intervention initiatives. The initiatives include: -

1. Established and coordinate a committee on child protection as required by the Child Act 2001. The committee consists of a social welfare officer, a medical officer, a police officer, and a representative from the public. This committee serves as an advisory body to advise the Ministry on child protection.
2. Established a National Child Protection Policy. This policy came into force in 2009, calling for the engagement and dedication of parents and guardians to protect children from all forms of harm, including sexual abuse.
3. Build the Child Activity Centers to provide high-risk children (children vulnerable for abuse) with activities. Seminars, lectures, workshops and

interventions in the form of counselling, sports and motivational talks are part of the activities at this center.

4. Provide therapy and counselling for abused victims and their family with the help of psychologist and counsellors appointed from various agencies.
5. Established Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) team in most of the hospitals to handle cases of child abuse effectively. It is a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary team that consist of medical staff (emergency physicians and staff, pediatricians, gynecologist, forensic pathologist, nurses, and medical social workers), social welfare officers, and police officers (Ghani, Rosman and Muhamad, 2019).
6. Developed Nur Hotline 15999 to assist victims of abuse regardless of age for advice and help in reporting the case. Three years after that, in 2010 a 'Childline' was established mainly to address child abuse.
7. Organized various advocacy programs along with other agencies and non-governmental organization to tackle family-oriented issues.

1.3 Mandatory reporting and its legal issues in Malaysia

In Malaysia, early childcare providers (ECPs) are mandated by law to report cases of child abuse as stated in section 29 in the Child Act 2001 (Child Act, 2001). However, there is no specific training on child abuse either before service or during service. Thus, it translated into a low rate of reporting. At present, there was no study looking into reporting behavior of ECPs. However, a study in Selangor conducted among primary school teachers has found only 3.2% of them had ever reported child abuse case while

approximately 5.2% failed to report suspected cases of child abuse (Choo, Walsh, Marret, *et al.*, 2013).

In this country, liable authorities handling cases of child abuse are police officers and child protectors from the Department of Social Welfare. These authorities were appointed by law and have legal power in which, they could issue an Interim Protection Order (IPO) to protect the child. If these officers are satisfied on reasonable grounds that the child requires care and protection, they may take the child for a temporary custody unless they believe that the proceeding concerning the child is not in the best interest of the child or if the proceeding will be taken up by another person (Child Act, 2001).

According to the Child Act 2001, child protectors are the head director, deputy director general, and division director for the Department of Social Welfare, the state director of social welfare, and any appointed social welfare officers under section 8 of the Act (Child Act, 2001). Hence, any child who is deemed in need of care and protection, for any reasons, should be reported to them.

Pertaining to the reporting procedure, anyone in this country can report cases of child abuse or even suspected cases of child abuse. They shall not be liable by law even if the evidence is not substantiated. However, there are three groups of people that are mandated by law to report such cases. They are medical officers, family members, and childcare providers. If they failed to do so, they have committed an offense and if convicted, they are subjected to a fine not exceeding five thousand ringgit or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or both (Child Act, 2001).

1.4 Issues related to reporting of child abuse to the authorities

Among countries where childcare providers are mandated to report child abuse, there were barriers faced by them. The most cited reasons were lack of knowledge about signs of abuse and reporting systems, fear of social repercussions, and risk of being sued by parents (Manuela W.A. Schols, De Ruiter and Öry, 2013). There was also personality characteristic that influences reporting of child abuse such as personal attitude towards reporting, their belief, confidence in the system, as well as internal and external supports for reporting (Choo, Walsh, Marret, *et al.*, 2013). There were also problems with definitions of child abuse (Maureen C Kenny, 2001b, 2001a; Christian and Neglect, 2015). The legal definition used by a certain country or county in a country like America might be different from the definition used by the WHO or the administrative definition locally (Christian and Neglect, 2015; Gelles, 2017). Definition of child abuse also varies across cultures and over time (Gelles, 2017). This creates confusion to the mandated reporters where reporting is concern.

Dinehart and Kenny (2015) has found that despite the majority (82.5%) of childcare providers have had training on child abuse and reporting, only 12% of them ever made a report to the authority and of those, 66.7% of them only made one report while 4.4% failed to report a suspected case of abuse. The ECPs have pointed that the training lacked in best practices to handle an abused child, lacked in information on indicators of child abuse, and lacked in information on the legal aspect of child abuse (Dinehart and Kenny, 2015).

This situation is also similar in the east. In Taiwan, the majority of kindergarten teachers received training related to child abuse. 53 % had received pre-service training and 42 % received in-service training. However, only 3% of kindergarten

teachers reported suspected cases of child abuse, while 11 % failed to do so despite mandatory requirement by law. 74.2 % of them felt uncertain about the evidence while others lacked faith in the legal authority (21.2 %) (Feng, Huang and Wang, 2010).

1.5 Theory of planned behavior

The Theory of planned behavior (TPB) is one of the theories used to explain or predict human behavior through the level of beliefs. It is an extension from the Theory of Reasoned Action by Martin Fishbein and by Icek Ajzen in the 1960s. TPB explains that any action taken, or certain behavior of an individual is based on their intention to perform and or perceived behavioral control (PBC) over the task in which, PBC can directly initiate a behavior without the intention given one have a good opportunity and enough resources. Meanwhile, the intention to perform is determined by the attitude, subjective norms, as well as perceived behavioral control. These three constructs reflect various types of beliefs (Icek, 1991; Steinmetz *et al.*, 2016). They are particularly helpful in identifying the determinants of behavior because each act as a hinge point in efforts to adopt or modify interventions.

Attitude is the ECPs evaluation of the subject/matter in hand either favorable or non-favorable. It is influenced by behavioral beliefs and evaluation of the behavioral outcome. In this case, if the ECPs believe that the abused child would suffer a short-term or a long-term effect, they will most likely report the case as they thought it will help the child. A study in Taiwan has found that attitude is an important factor to initiate the report of a suspected case of child abuse (Feng, Huang and Wang, 2010). On contrary, undergraduates in the School of Education at University of Pennsylvania found no association between attitude and intention to report (Greytak, 2009).

Subjective norm is perceived as a social pressure to act or behave in a certain way. It is formed by normative beliefs and motivation to comply to it. In this case, personality traits or values, as well as socio-cultural beliefs influenced one's decision. It also serves as a motivation to report to comply or not with the expectation (Icek, 1991). A study done among Taiwanese kindergarten teachers found that subjective norm is not associated with the intention to report a suspected case of child abuse (Feng, Huang and Wang, 2010). On a contrary, Christodoulou, Abakoumkin and Tseliou (2019) found intention to report is greatly depending on social pressure, that is subjective norms (Christodoulou, Abakoumkin and Tseliou, 2019). Even if one does not have the intention to report, but with enough social pressure, will be reported. This is in contrast to a study done by Greytak (2009) in which, subjective norms or social pressure did not associate with the intention to report (Greytak, 2009).

Perceived behavioral control (PBC) is self-confidence in order to execute a task with ease or difficulty. It is influenced by control beliefs and perceived power that they have. Those who believe that they can execute a task easily and believe that they have external support will more likely to perform a certain behavior. Feng et al found that PBC significantly influences the intention to report (Feng, Huang and Wang, 2010) while, Greytak (2009) found otherwise.

In this study, in order for the early childcare providers to reveal or report a suspected case of child abuse, they are supposed to believe that reporting it will prove beneficial for the child and the family (attitude), surrounding individual think that they should disclose the case (subjective norm), and that they believe they have control over reporting (PBC).

Figure 1.1 showed factors that influenced the intention to report and reporting behavior. Intention to report can be influenced by three domains which are attitude, the subjective norms as well as PBC in which, the PBC can also directly leads to performing the behavior. Behavioral beliefs and their evaluation of that behavior will shape certain attitudes. In the meantime, cultural beliefs and motivation to comply with the belief influenced subjective norms. Meanwhile, one's perception of control and perceived power support formed PBC. The three domains are also influenced by other external factors such as personal background, personality traits, and individual differences.

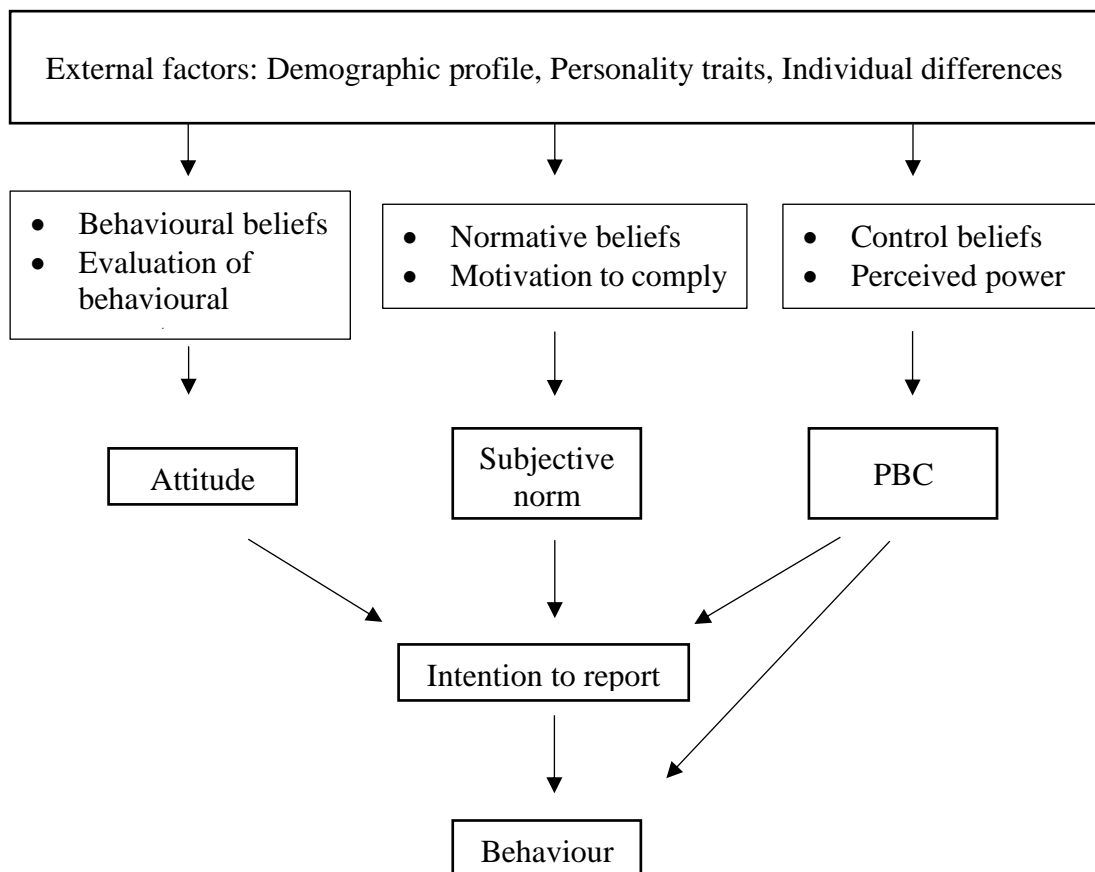


Figure 1.1: Theory of Planned Behavior.

1.6 Attitude towards reporting and intention to report child abuse to authorities

Most of the ECPs believed that it was their professional responsibility to report child abuse to the authorities (Feng, Huang and Wang, 2010; Dinehart and Kenny, 2015; I Bibou-Nakou and Markos, 2017). On contrary, Manuela W A Schols, De Ruiter and Öry (2013) in their study found not all teachers accept that they are responsible for acting on these signs and intend to report suspected cases of child abuse to local authorities (Manuela W A Schols, De Ruiter and Öry, 2013). Similarly, in America, despite being more at ease with the obligation to report, more than 60 % of the ECPs preferred to report to the school administrator before reporting to the authority (Dinehart and Kenny, 2015). In this case, it may reduce the possibility of reporting a case to the authority because the administrator might have a different idea on that matter.

The ECPs also felt overwhelmed by the complexity surrounding the issues of child abuse and its reporting procedure and it affects their intention to report (Feng, Huang and Wang, 2010; I Bibou-Nakou and Markos, 2017). In Taiwan, half of the respondents believed that they would be in trouble by reporting cases of child abuse due to complexity of reporting procedure (Feng, Huang and Wang, 2010). Among reasons of failure to report among teachers were fear of making an inaccurate report (Maureen C Kenny, 2001b; Bunting, Lazenbatt and Wallace, 2010), support for corporal punishment as a form of physical discipline (Feng, Huang and Wang, 2010; Ni and Hesketh, 2015) and destroy a good relationship between schools and child's family (I Bibou-Nakou and Markos, 2017).

Back home in Selangor, less than half of primary school teachers supported legislation of mandatory reporting for teachers. This shows that almost half of the respondents were not ready to shoulder the responsibility. However, if it was to be mandated, the majority (86.7 %) of them would report such cases (Choo, Walsh, Marret, *et al.*, 2013).

Support from school administrators and colleagues are important factors in determining succession in reporting child abuse case. This is because having an open discussion with colleagues about a suspected case of abuse is associated with greater intention to report (Goebbels *et al.*, 2008). According to Integrated Change Model, attitude acts as a motivation that determines intention to report cases of child abuse and it is influenced by perceived support that one received (de Vries *et al.*, 2005). Feng, Huang and Wang, 2010 also reported that intention to report is greatly influenced by the reporter's attitude and their perceived behavioral control (PBC) whereby, PBC is perceived confidence in executing an action (Feng, Huang and Wang, 2010).

1.7 Knowledge related to child abuse

1.7.1 Knowledge on signs and symptoms

In a study done among teachers in Miami Date County, America, mean knowledge of sexual abuse was higher than physical abuse and neglect among educators (14.5 % vs 10.5 % and 14.5 % vs 8.5 %) (Kenny, 2004). This illustrates inconsistent knowledge of child abuse. There was also a similar finding in a study conducted at Kanpur City,

India. More than half of the respondents had good knowledge of signs and symptoms of child abuse (Ramesh *et al.*, 2017).

A study has found correct knowledge of abuse may not correlate with the awareness of signs and symptoms of abuse (Dinehart and Kenny, 2015). It may be because, among educators who have had some training, they felt less aware of the signs and symptoms of child abuse, as they have been informed about the complexity of this issue (Kenny, 2004).

Knowledge is associated with confidence level and it will determine the action of reporting. In Malaysia, more than half of the respondent (69.3 %) in Selangor had low confidence in detecting signs and symptoms of abuse and the majority rate themselves as not having adequate knowledge on signs and symptoms of child abuse (Choo, Walsh, Marret, *et al.*, 2013). While in the East, the lack of knowledge among kindergarten teachers hinders decision-making for further actions as the decision-making are far beyond their cognitive and practical levels (Feng, Huang and Wang, 2010).

In Netherland, a qualitative study looking at how educators handle child abuse cases has highlighted that the respondents lacked knowledge on the baseline rate of child abuse. Respondents indicated that practical knowledge related to child abuse is important due to lack of attention given to the issue in their education system, as well as of lack of practice on communication skills (Manuela W.A. Schols, De Ruiter and Öry, 2013).

1.7.2 Knowledge on reporting procedure

Reporting procedures of child abuse are different depending on the setting but generally, any suspected case of abuse should be reported directly to the authority. However, many educators believed that the report should be done by the school administrator (Dinehart and Kenny, 2015). This may be contributed by the lack of training on reporting procedures including information on the requirements of reporting.

Most of the studies found that teachers or childcare providers received little training on reporting procedure in their practice (Alvarez *et al.*, 2004; Kenny, 2004; Choo, Walsh, Marret, *et al.*, 2013). Out of 34% of childcare providers and educators who stated that child abuse was covered in pre-service training, only 23% felt it was adequately addressed, 43% felt minimally addressed, 35% felt inadequately addressed (Kenny, 2004). Moreover, only 3 % of the respondents reported that they were aware of their school's procedures for reporting child abuse (Kenny, 2004). In Selangor, the majority of primary school teachers had poor knowledge on the policy of reporting child abuse in which 87.9% thought that the Ministry of Education had a policy in this matter, while 69.3% thought that there was a guideline for them (Choo, Walsh, Marret, *et al.*, 2013).

1.7.3 Knowledge of legal aspect related to child abuse.

Despite having adequate training, teachers and childcare providers have low knowledge of the legal aspect of child abuse (Kenny, 2004; Feng, Huang and Wang, 2010; Dinehart and Kenny, 2015; I Bibou-Nakou and Markos, 2017). Feng, Huang

and Wang, in their study in 2010 found the majority (65 – 92%) of kindergarten teachers in Taiwan answered law-related questions incorrectly. These teachers who were unaware of legal matters surrounding this issue tend to feel dissatisfied with their responsibility to report and thus, affecting their compliance to report (Kenny, 2004).

A study conducted in the Northern Ireland found that despite having good intention to report suspected child abuse case, the respondents have fear of legal charges that reflected lack of knowledge in this aspects (Lazenbatt and Freeman, 2006). While in Australia, legislative knowledge of child abuse was significantly predicted by factors like training, attitude, and past reporting history (Walsh *et al.*, 2012).

1.8 Other factors that influence the intention to report

There are a few characteristics of childcare providers that have been studied pertaining to reporting of child abuse. For example, age, gender, race, working experience, training, history of reporting as well as education level.

It was found that age of childcare providers does not influence the intention to report child abuse (Walsh *et al.*, 2008) while gender does (Goebbels *et al.*, 2008; Walsh *et al.*, 2008). A local study has found that race did not associate with the intention to report child abuse (Choo, Walsh, Marret, *et al.*, 2013). Nevertheless, cultural norms for certain race or society could influence one's belief and forms an attitude either positive or negative towards reporting of abuse. In Taiwan for example (Chinese population), cultural traditions play a great influence in the decision to report child abuse because children were supposed to be obedient to the parents while corporal punishment was a part of the disciplining method used (Feng, Huang and Wang, 2010).

Pertaining to working experience, Walsh et al. (2008) reported that those with longer working duration or experience tend to report a suspected case of child abuse (Walsh *et al.*, 2008) compared to those with shorter working duration. However, a study conducted among school counselors in the United States found otherwise (Sikes, Remley Jr and Hays, 2010). Meanwhile, childcare providers with higher education level were found to lodge more report than those with lower education level (Goebbels *et al.*, 2008). Locally, a study conducted among primary school teacher found that those with tertiary education level but been working fewer than 10 years had a higher intention to report child abuse (Choo, Walsh, Chinna, *et al.*, 2013). This indicates that education level and working experience influences the decision-making process.

In regard to past reporting experience, a study in the south island, New Zealand found that those who ever reported cases of child abuse was having a higher intention to report future cases (Rodriguez, 2002). Bryant and Baldwin, (2010) reported that those who had good reporting experience were more likely to make future report compare to those who had a bad experience (Bryant and Baldwin, 2010) because after all, these experiences shaped their attitude towards reporting.

Feng et al. (2012) found that, the intention to report is significantly different between regions in Taiwan after controlling for knowledge in particular to in-service training compared to those who did not have the training (Feng *et al.*, 2012). This shows that having training during their service would increase knowledge of the childcare providers and thus influences their intention to report.

1.9 Questionnaires related to child abuse knowledge, attitude and reporting practice

There are five instruments measuring knowledge, attitude and reporting practice for those working in the education sector that we looked into (Goebbels *et al.*, 2008; Feng, Huang and Wang, 2010; Choo, Walsh, Chinna, *et al.*, 2013; Dinehart and Kenny, 2015; Toros and Tiirik, 2016).

Toros and Tiirik (2016), in their study in Estonia used questionnaire to measure preschool teachers' perceptions and experiences related to children in need in the context of abuse. The questionnaire includes questions about demographics, the meaning of a child in need, experience with children in need, perceived awareness of regulation and procedures for reporting a child in need, and challenges in identifying/reporting the child in need. It also has five vignettes of children in need namely on; (1) primary school-aged begging child; (2), possible pedophile case; (3) parents working abroad and children living home alone; (4) child with bruises; and (5) intoxicated mother with a preschool-aged child. Results from this questionnaire may give a better understanding of teachers' perceptions and experiences in handling children in need. However, the questionnaire is in Estonian language and is too simple, it might not capture the current objective on knowledge, attitude, and intention to report child abuse (Toros and Tiirik, 2016)

In Taiwan, a study modified 'The Child Abuse Report Intention Scale' (CARIS) used for the nurse to study factors associated with reporting child abuse among kindergarten teachers. It consists of six sections: demographic information, past experiences of reporting child abuse, and adequacy of pre-service and in-service professional training; and five individual scales: (1) intention to report; (2) attitudes;

(3) subjective norms; (4) perceived behavioral controls; and (5) knowledge. It also has a scale to measure intention to report child abuse. Though it has good internal consistency (0.67 – 0.90) for all subscales (intention to report, attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control) and may measure intended objectives, it was developed in Chinese. The research team has a limited understanding of the language. Therefore, not using it for the current study (Feng, Huang and Wang, 2010).

Primary school teachers' reporting behavior concerning child abuse and neglect in Queensland, Australia was studied using a self-administered questionnaire. The Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Questionnaire had a good internal consistency of each multi-item construct (the Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.66 to 0.89). It consists of 11 parts on; (1) attitude towards reporting and not reporting of suspected cases; (2) social and school environment influences; (3) self-efficacy; (4) intension and specific future plan on reporting suspected cases; (5) confidence to detect indicators and warning signs; (6) specific future plans on detecting indicators and warning signs; (7) previous experience with reporting; (8) experience and opinion about training; (9) characteristic of the school; (10) knowledge of reporting procedure; (11) personal background. The questionnaire was able to measure reporting attitude quite extensively, but the questions were made in a setting where training was mandated, and child protection system was in place. It did not fit our population where training of child abuse was not mandated and unable to measure intention to report (Goebbels *et al.*, 2008).

Locally, study related to child abuse among educators was done by Choo, Walsh, Chinna, *et al.* (2013) in Selangor. This study translates and validates a questionnaire developed by Walsh *et al.* used to measure reporting attitude for child sexual abuse among teachers. The Malay Validated version (Teachers' Reporting

Attitude Scale or TRAS) has good factor loading for all constructs with Cronbach alpha ranging from 0.66 – 0.81. It has eight items in four constructs namely, commitment, value, concern, and confidence. The questionnaire may study the complexity of the teacher's attitude towards reporting child abuse and is scaled by using five-point Likert scale. However, it was not able to measure other influencing factors such as education and training as well as general knowledge and intention to report child abuse (Choo, Walsh, Chinna, *et al.*, 2013).

A study looking into early childcare provider's knowledge and attitude towards child abuse in Florida was done using a questionnaire developed by Dinehart and Kenny (2015). The 'Early Childhood Educator Child Abuse Questionnaire' (ECECAQ) has good factor loading values for attitude section (awareness of signs, 0.82 and belief on reporting, 0.73). The questionnaire consists of six sections including sections on (1) demographic information; (2) child abuse reporting experience; (3) education and training; (4) 12 items on attitude on child abuse; (5) 19 items on child abuse knowledge; (6) four vignettes testing respondents' action upon facing child abuse cases. This instrument was able to measure knowledge of and attitude towards child abuse and its reporting generally included the respondent's intention to report cases of abuse (Dinehart and Kenny, 2015). Even though it was made in a setting where training is mandatory, the items were not specifically rate the training that they received.

Based on the availability of the required information, we have decided to choose ECECAQ questionnaire to measure knowledge and attitude of child abuse and its reporting, as well as intention to report child abuse. However, this questionnaire needs to be adapted into Malaysian culture to achieve semantic equivalence to the

original papers' population. A summary of available instruments is shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Summary of available instruments related to child abuse.

Instrument	Target population	Objective	Items	Limitation	Internal consistency reliability	References
Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Questionnaire	Primary school teachers	reporting behavior in relation to child abuse and neglect	1) attitude towards reporting and not reporting of suspected cases; (2) social and school environment influences; (3) self-efficacy; (4) intension and specific future plan on reporting suspected cases; (5) confidence to detect indicators and warning signs; (6) specific future plans on detecting indicators and warning signs; (7) previous experience with reporting; (8) experience and opinion about training; (9) characteristic of school; (10) knowledge of reporting procedure; (11) personal background.	Made in a setting where reporting was mandatory and child protection system was well established. Unable to measure intention to report.	0.66-0.89	(Goebbels <i>et al.</i> , 2008)
The Child Abuse Report Intention Scale (CARIS)	Kindergarten teachers	Factors associated with reporting child abuse among kindergarten teachers	Demographic information, past experiences of reporting child abuse, and adequacy of pre-service and in-service professional training; and five individual scales: (1) intention to report; (2) attitudes; (3) subjective norms; (4) perceived behavioral controls; and (5) knowledge	In Mandarin. Limited understanding of Mandarin among research team.	0.67 – 0.90	(Feng, Huang and Wang, 2010)
Teacher's reporting attitude scale (TRAS)	School teachers	Reporting attitude towards child abuse	Eight items in four constructs namely, commitment, value, concern, and confidence.	Not able to measure other influencing factors	0.66–0.81	(Choo, Walsh, Chinna, <i>et al.</i> , 2013)

Table 1.2: Continued.

Instrument	Target population	Objective	Items	Limitation	Internal consistency reliability	References
Early childhood educator's child abuse questionnaire (ECACAQ)	Childcare providers and educators	knowledge and attitude towards child abuse and its reporting, and intention to report child abuse	(1) demographic information; (2) child abuse reporting experience; (3) education and training; (3) 12 items on attitude regarding child abuse; (4) 19 items on child abuse knowledge; (6) four vignettes testing intention to report	-	0.82-0.73 (attitude)	(Dinehart and Kenny, 2015)
Not mentioned	Preschool teachers	Perceptions and experiences related to children in need in the context of abuse	Demographics, meaning of a child in need, experience with children in need, perceived awareness of regulation, procedures for reporting a child in need, challenges in identifying/reporting the child in need, and five vignettes of children in need.	In Estonian language. Too simple. Might not capture current objective on knowledge, attitude and intention to report child abuse	Not mentioned	(Toros and Tiirik, 2016)

1.10 Cross-cultural adaptation process

In translating a questionnaire that originally came from a different country and has a different language and culture, a few things must be considered. Firstly, the ability of the questions to measure what it is intended to measure in the target population. Secondly, the ability of the target population to understand the questions. A direct translation of the original version into the targeted language will not ensure the same validity as the original version. Therefore, to maintain content validity, a cross-cultural adaptation must be done (Beaton *et al.*, 2000). It is to ensure the results are comparable to other studies.

Cross cultural adaption is an alternative for instrument development when faced with a few limitations such as time constrain and lack of funding because it requires fewer steps to build an effective instrument (Tuthill *et al.*, 2014). Tuthill has written in her paper that cross-cultural adaptation has semantic equivalence to the source language in which, it may capture the cultural meaning of each item. However, to date, there is no standardized guidelines on how to adapt instruments in another setting but there is an agreement among experts that a direct translation and use of an instrument that was developed in other cultural setting is inappropriate (Herdman, Fox-Rushby and Badia, 1998; Wang, Lee and Fetzer, 2006).

Each culture has a different value and that impedes the validity of certain measuring tools. For example, methods of child discipline are taken differently by a different culture (Lansford, 2010). In East Asia, it is considered normal (Tang, 2006; Lansford *et al.*, 2010; Kumaraswamy and Othman, 2011a). However, in other continents, the practice of corporal punishment was equivocal. In Sweden for example,

after the ban of corporal punishment, parents resorted to a non-physical discipline method while the community were more vigilant on this matter (Zolotor and Puzia, 2010; Ellonen *et al.*, 2015).

Pertaining to the practice of reporting child abuse, the outcome depends on the sensitivity and awareness of the community. In this study, although the childcare providers aware of abuse, but if they don't have enough motivation or courage to lodge a report, the abuse would not be reported. The courage and motivation are depending on how the community perceived the impact of the report towards the children and the family (Choo, Walsh, Marret, *et al.*, 2013; Jeremiah, Quinn and Alexis, 2017). Therefore, adaptation of instruments from a different culture is important to make the instrument reliable and valid to be used in the target population.

1.11 Early childhood education in Malaysia

In Malaysia, most of the children aged two to six years old were sent to nursery, kindergarten. or preschools by their parents. This might be due to the increasing awareness of the importance of early childhood education. In 2015, 833 892 children aged three to six years old enrolled in preschools (government, state, and private preschools). This number comprises of 2.7 % of the Malaysian population. Of that, 26.3 % enrolled in KEMAS preschools (Ministry of Women Family and Community Development, 2016).

KEMAS or a short form of 'Jabatan Kemajuan Masyarakat' is a division under the Ministry of Rural Development. KEMAS will be referred to as the Community Development Department (CDD) herewith. The CDD has four programs namely, early childhood education, life skill education, community development, and training and

professional development. Under the early childhood education program, The CDD has two types of facilities focusing on human capital development. They are *TASKA* (Taman Asuhan Kanak-Kanak or nursery) and *TABIKA* (Taman Bimbingan Kanak-kanak or Kindergarten). *TASKA* caters to children aged two to four while *TABIKA* caters to children aged five to six (Community Development Department, 2020). Both will be referred to as preschool herewith.

The childcare provider is called '*Pemaju Masyarakat*' in Malay. They will be referred to as early childcare providers (ECPs) herewith. There is a limited number of enrolments per year for preschools under the CDD. The ratio for ECP and children in *TASKA* is 1 ECPs for every five to six children. Number of children per class ranging from 10 to 30 depending on the internal area of the facility (3.5 meter² per child). In *TABIKA*, the maximum number of children in a class is 25 (Department of Social Welfare, 2016).

1.11.1 Academic requirement for ECPs recruitment

Applicants have to be a Malaysian citizen to apply for the ECP position and have to meet the following academic qualification (Community Development Department, 2020).

1. Diploma recognized by the Government from local institutions of higher learning or equivalent recognized qualifications (priority to candidates who have a Diploma in Early Childhood Education); or
2. Malaysian High School Certificate or equivalent qualifications recognized by the government; and