

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP, PARENTAL INTENTION AND
BEHAVIOUR FOR PRIVATE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN
KLANG VALLEY: AN EXPLANATORY SEQUENTIAL
RESEARCH

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION
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PRIVATE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN KLANG VALLEY: AN EXPLANATORY
SEQUENTIAL RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

The study focuses on private education in Malaysia, an area with limited research. As the number of private schools increases, it is essential to delve into how private school leadership, along with external factors such as parental beliefs, contributes to shaping parents' intentions and behavior regarding private schooling. This study also explores the role of socioeconomic backgrounds in moderating these intentions and behaviours among Chinese vernacular school parents. Additionally, the study examines the alignment of these findings with the perspectives of private school leaders, who serve as frontline figures in navigating the challenges of this volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world. The research design involves a mixed-method approach, which consists of 2 phases. The first phase of the study employed a quantitative survey design to gather perceptions and opinions from parents of standard six students in Chinese vernacular schools in Klang Valley using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) questionnaire. Second phase of the study conducted qualitative interviews with private school principals to gain their perspectives on the quantitative findings and their roles as strategic leaders. Quantitative analysis of the data uncovered that parents exhibit a heightened degree of behavioral belief, influenced significantly by the leadership within the school. Meanwhile, their normative belief stands at a lower level, and their control belief is situated at a moderate level. All three beliefs significantly influenced parents' intentions and behaviours toward private schooling, with control belief having the strongest impact. Moreover, the study found that household income moderates the relationship between parents' intentions and behaviours in private schooling. In the qualitative findings, it was discovered that private school principals adeptly navigate a challenging and dynamic educational landscape with strategic acumen. Three major themes — "maintain," "improve," and "implement" — were identified as pivotal in enhancing parents'

inclination toward private schooling. These themes underscore the significance of upholding reputation, enhancing educational quality and facilities, and implementing innovative strategies to attract and retain students. The perspectives of these principals provide valuable insights into effective private school management, offering guidance for informed educational policy decisions. The study highlights that financial ability, as a component of control belief, strongly influences parents' intentions and behaviours. This suggests that the growth of private schools in urban areas may exacerbate social disparities and educational inequalities between affluent and underprivileged families. To tackle this issue, the Ministry of Education could contemplate incorporating the study's findings into the formulation of policies aimed at improving public schools. This might involve fostering collaborations through private-public partnerships and leveraging the entrepreneurial initiatives exhibited by strategic private school principals. In conclusion, the research yields comprehensive insights into private school strategic leadership and the role of private schools in Malaysia's education system. By comprehending the factors influencing parents' preferences and recognizing the impact of entrepreneurship in strategic leadership, policymakers can foster a more equitable, holistic, and sustainable educational ecosystem for all Malaysians.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini memberi tumpuan kepada pendidikan swasta di Malaysia, satu bidang yang masih mendapat perhatian terhad. Peningkatan bilangan sekolah swasta yang semakin bertambah dipercayai akan memperburuk jurang sosial, oleh itu, keperluan untuk memahami faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi niat dan tingkah laku ibu bapa terhadap penghantaran anak-anak mereka ke sekolah swasta menjadi semakin mendesak. Selain itu, kajian ini juga menyelidik kesan moderasi faktor sosioekonomi dalam hubungan antara niat dan tingkah laku ibu bapa terhadap pendidikan swasta di kalangan ibu bapa murid sekolah vernakular Cina. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan campuran yang terdiri daripada dua fasa. Fasa pertama menggunakan reka bentuk kajian kuantitatif untuk mengumpul pandangan dan pendapat di kalangan ibu bapa murid sekolah vernakular Cina di Lembah Klang dengan menggunakan soal selidik yang dicipta berdasarkan Teori Tingkah Laku Terancang. Sementara itu, fasa kedua melibatkan reka bentuk kajian kualitatif dengan menggunakan kaedah temu bual untuk menyelidik sejauh mana kesimpulan kuantitatif dalam fasa pertama selari dengan pandangan pengetua sekolah swasta sebagai pemimpin strategik yang memimpin sekolah dalam keadaan yang mencabar. Analisis kuantitatif data menunjukkan bahawa tahap kepercayaan tingkah laku ibu bapa yang dipengaruhi secara signifikan oleh kepimpinan di dalam sekolah adalah tinggi. Sementara itu, kepercayaan normatif berada pada tahap yang lebih rendah, dan kepercayaan kawalan berada pada tahap sederhana. Kesemua tiga kepercayaan itu secara signifikan mempengaruhi niat dan tingkah laku ibu bapa terhadap pendidikan swasta, dengan kepercayaan kawalan memberi impak yang paling kuat. Selain itu, kajian mendapati bahawa pendapatan isi rumah mempengaruhi hubungan antara niat dan tingkah laku ibu bapa dalam pendidikan swasta. Dalam penemuan kualitatif, didapati bahawa pengetua sekolah swasta mengendalikan sekolah dengan penuh kecekapan

strategik walaupun dalam persekitaran pendidikan yang mencabar dan dinamik ini. Tiga tema utama — "mengekalkan," "memperbaiki," dan "melaksanakan" — telah dikenal pasti oleh pengetua sekolah swasta pada fasa kualitatif sebagai unsur yang penting dalam meningkatkan kecenderungan ibu bapa terhadap pendidikan swasta. Tema-tema ini menekankan kepentingan mengekalkan reputasi, meningkatkan kualiti pendidikan dan kemudahan, serta melaksanakan strategi inovatif untuk menarik dan mengekalkan pelajar. Perspektif pengetua sekolah swasta ini memberikan pandangan yang berharga dalam pengurusan sekolah yang lebih berkesan. Selain itu, temuan kualitatif juga memberikan panduan kepada kerajaan dalam merangka dasar pendidikan. Kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa keupayaan kewangan, sebagai sebahagian daripada kepercayaan kawalan, memberi kesan yang paling signifikan terhadap niat dan tingkah laku ibu bapa. Ini menandakan bahawa pertumbuhan sekolah swasta di kawasan bandar berpotensi meningkatkan jurang sosial dan ketidakseimbangan pendidikan di antara keluarga kaya dan miskin. Untuk menangani isu ini, Kementerian Pendidikan boleh mempertimbangkan untuk mengintegrasikan penemuan kajian ini dalam proses pembentukan dasar yang bertujuan untuk meningkatkan sistem pendidikan awam. Antara langkah yang boleh diambil termasuklah meningkatkan kerjasama antara sektor awam dengan organisasi swasta, serta memanfaatkan inisiatif keusahawanan yang ditunjukkan oleh pengetua sekolah swasta sebagai pemimpin strategik. Secara kesimpulannya, kajian ini menyediakan pemahaman menyeluruh mengenai kepimpinan strategik sekolah swasta dan peranannya dalam sistem pendidikan Malaysia. Dengan memahami faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi pilihan ibu bapa serta mengiktiraf kesan keusahawanan dalam kepemimpinan strategik, pembuat dasar dapat membinakan ekosistem pendidikan yang lebih adil, holistik, dan lestari bagi semua rakyat Malaysia

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CHAT	:	Cultural-Historical Activity Theory
ETeMS	:	English for Teaching Mathematics and Science
IGCSE	:	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
JPNWP	:	<i>Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Wilaya Persekutuan</i>
LCE	:	Lower Certificate of Education
NKEA	:	National Key Economic Areas
NKRA	:	National Key Result Areas
PBSMR	:	Lower Secondary School Based Assessment
PISA	:	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPP	:	Public-Private Partnership
PT3	:	Lower Secondary Evaluation
SEM	:	Structural Equation Modelling
SJK	:	National-type School (<i>Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan</i>)
SJK(C)	:	<i>Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina)</i> Chinese Vernacular School
SK	:	National School (<i>Sekolah Kebangsaan</i>)
SPM	:	Malaysian Certificate of Education
SLT	:	Situational Leadership Theory
TPB	:	Theory of Planned Behaviour
UCSCAM	:	United Chinese School Committees Association of Malaysia
UEC	:	Unified Examination Certificate
UVP	:	Unique Value Proposition
VUCA	:	Volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous

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CHAPTER 1: CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In recent years, there has been a surge in the establishment of private schools in Malaysia. The increasing number of private schools in Malaysia has not only transformed the educational landscape but has also triggered important discussions about the choices parents make for their children's education. In this unique scenario, the importance of leadership in private schools becomes a key topic that sets them apart from their public school counterparts. This prompts a detailed exploration of educational leadership, parental decision-making, and the broader context of Malaysia's educational system. This chapter delves into the complexities of this educational scenario, encouraging readers to explore the subject through a carefully crafted introduction, a clear problem statement, and a thorough background.

Envision an educational landscape where the conventional distinctions between academia and business fade away, where academic foresight intertwines seamlessly with business acumen, and where school leaders skillfully navigate the dual challenges of promoting academic excellence and ensuring financial sustainability. In this distinctive context, school leaders are compelled to navigate strategically. The stage is set for an exploration that transcends the confines of traditional schooling, delving into the intricate interplay between private school leadership and the decisions parents make for their children's education.

Within this dynamic backdrop emerges a pivotal question: How does leadership within private schools shape the trajectory of private schools, and in turn, influence parents'

decisions when it comes to their children's education? The surge of private schools, although offering a myriad of choices, also poses potential pitfalls— issues of access, equity, and the potential amplification of educational disparities.

This chapter is not isolated; it's part of a bigger context. This context involves the ongoing changes in Malaysia's education, the complexities of private schools, and the rise of strategic and entrepreneurial leadership in education. Initially, the chapter gives a brief look at these factors, placing the study in the broader educational picture. Malaysia's education system is at a juncture where traditional approaches intersect with transformative changes. This dynamic setting lays the foundation for the exploration ahead.

With this foundation in place, the focus shifts to the core issue. The problem statement, shaped by critical educational issues, acts as the guide for the research. It directs attention to unexplored areas, prompting an exploration of the gaps fueling the investigation. This effort goes beyond academia, aiming to uncover insights that could influence educational policy and practice, guiding the path of educational leadership into new territories.

In the subsequent sections, the study progresses by unveiling the research objectives, framing the research questions that guide the exploration, and defining the study's scope, limitations, and operational definitions. As the narrative advances, the significance of this endeavor unfolds—a mission to unravel the intricate interaction between private school leadership and parental school choice. This aims to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the educational landscape.

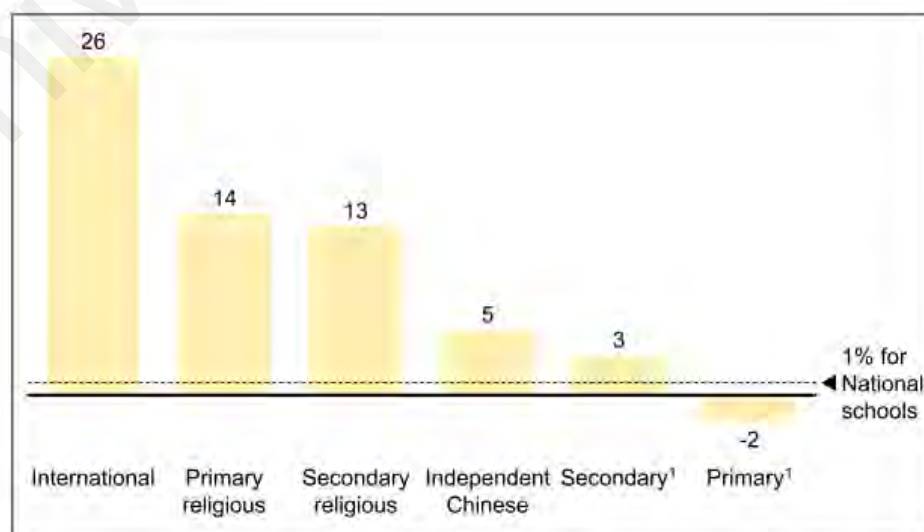
1.2 Background of The Study

In recent years, the educational landscape has witnessed a significant transformation marked by the proliferation of private schools. Across various regions, including low- and middle-income nations, the number of private schools has been on a steady rise (The World Bank, 2019; Joshi, 2020). This surge in private education institutions has led to a reevaluation of the educational paradigm, with implications for educational leadership, parental choices, and equity within the broader educational system.

As documented in The Malaysia Blueprint 2013-2025 (2013), various types of private schools have become available in the country. Remarkably, in recent years, despite the public sector's considerably larger population, the private sector's enrolment growth has exceeded that of the public sector (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013, p. 7-10). This trend highlights the increasing recognition among parents of alternative options beyond the traditional public school system.

Figure 1.1

Growth Rate of Enrolment in Private Schools by Type



Note: ¹Private secondary and primary schools following the national curriculum
SOURCE: Malaysia Educational Blueprint (2013-2025)

In 2019, approximately 214136 of students aged 7 to 17 were enrolled in private education compared to 184930 students in year 2018. The increment in the number of enrolments is getting more significant by year. In 2020, total students enrolled in private education increased to 220066. (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2018, 2019, 2020). On the other hand, the total enrolment of students age 7 to 17 to public schools is reduced from 4859720 in 2016 to 4730776 in 2020 (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020). The statistics somehow indicate that the increased enrolment in private education is one of the reasons that cause the descent of public school enrollment (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2017). As reported by the Malaysia Blue Print 2013-2025, while tracking the educational journey of the cohort of students who entered public schools in Year 1 of primary school in 2000, it was found that 11% of them switched from the public school system to private schools by the time they completed Form 5 in 2010. The demand for private education among Malaysians has led to a surge in the number of international and private schools across the country (Yaacob et al., 2015). This growth, including the rise of Chinese independent secondary schools and home schooling, has created a new market in the education industry.

Table 1.1

Number of Students Aged 7-17 Enrolled in Private Educational Institutions

Number of students aged 7-17 enrolled in private educational institutions	
2018	184930
2019	214136
2020	220066

The evolving educational landscape has cast a spotlight on private school leadership, particularly due to the distinctive nature of these institutions that encompasses both academic and business dimensions. This uniqueness has sparked considerable recent interest. School leaders in private educational organizations have a multifaceted role that includes daily management and leading the schools toward success. In today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world, private school leaders must also be pragmatic risk-takers and bear greater responsibility for ensuring sustainable and profitable school operations (Mishra, 2020). To improve marketing efforts and sustain school success, it is crucial for private school leaders to understand the psychological, emotional, and behavioural choices parents make when enrolling their children in private schools (Kasim et al., 2022; Potterton, 2020; Yaacob et al., 2015). Therefore, visionary leaders who inspire passion and motivation in teachers, staff, and students, and set the direction for the school are necessary for the success of private schools (Kasim et al., 2022).

In the Malaysian education system, public schools, or more specifically known as national schools, are funded by the government. However, private schools depend on tuition fee payments from parents for their revenue. As a result, private school principals bear a significant burden of responsibility to ensure academic excellence and financial viability (Mohd Kasim & Zakaria, 2019b). Overall, private school leaders face unique challenges compared to government-funded public schools and require strong leadership skills to ensure sustainable and profitable school operations, offering professional services and facilities to their fee-paying parents.

School leadership is one of the significant factors to the school performance (Ghavifekr & Ramzy, 2020). Besides, there is a general consensus among stakeholders in education

that a strong positive educational leadership is one of the determining factors of school effectiveness (Ghavifekr & Ramzy, 2020; Pihie et al., 2018). In order to operate highly effective schools, principals must be visionary and clear about their organization, staff, and organisation goals (Mohd Kasim & Zakaria, 2019b), this makes strategic leadership which embrace entrepreneurship a prevailing trend among private schools leaders who operate the school in highly competitive business world (Abdelgawad et al., 2013; Covin & Slevin, 2008; Kongjinda et al., 2020). Unlike public school principals who lead and manage with limited autonomy, especially in resource allocation, principals in private schools have greater responsibility to navigate the schools strategically to deal with more challenges such as funding and relationships with parents (Zakariah et al., 2023).

In the Malaysia, school performance is the utmost agenda in school organization to achieving the vision and mission as well as the objectives of the Ministry of Education (Mohd Kasim & Zakaria, 2019b). School performance is largely based on the leadership of school principal and management (Leithwood et al., 2008, 2020; Mohd Kasim & Zakaria, 2019b). Existing literature highlights a nuanced landscape within the realm of private schools. While certain private schools are in high demand and showcase commendable overall performance (Ashley & Engel, 2014; Hahn et al., 2018; Reimann et al., 2021), others face significant challenges (Kongjinda et al., 2020). These challenges have arisen due to the complex interplay of socio-economic shifts, dwindling birth rates, rising unemployment, and economic downturns (Kongjinda et al., 2020). Consequently, some private schools have experienced a decline in enrolment rates, as middle-class parents grapple with financial constraints that hinder their access to private education. In response, they opt for public schools offering free education (Kongjinda et al., 2020). The constrained supply-side financing has also impeded private schools' ability to invest in the enhancement of their facilities and equipment, which are pivotal for maintaining a

competitive edge in the 21st century educational landscape. This dual scenario underscores the intricate dynamics at play in the private school sector, with some thriving and others navigating formidable challenges in the midst of the evolving educational environment.

Operating within the dynamic and competitive landscape of the educational sector, private schools inherently function within an entrepreneurial context (Kongjinda et al., 2020). In this environment, private school principals play a crucial role in navigating challenges, seizing opportunities, and fostering innovation to ensure the sustainability and growth of their institutions. Recognizing private school principals as strategic leaders is imperative, given their responsibility for making critical decisions, setting a compelling vision, and adapting swiftly to changes (Zakariah et al., 2023). The entrepreneurial context necessitates strategic foresight, effective resource utilization, and a proactive approach to academic and financial challenges, underscoring the pivotal role of private school principals in steering educational institutions strategically (Kongjinda et al., 2020). This recognition contributes to the schools' resilience and long-term success.

In this competitive landscape, private schools must adopt new strategic leadership approaches that cater to parents' needs and preferences while fostering flexibility and innovativeness. Central to this transformation are school principals who exemplify strategic leadership qualities (Kunalan et al., 2022). Strategic leadership, focusing on formulating and implementing strategies to achieve long-term organizational goals, is vital in aligning the organization with its external environment and adapting strategically to changes, especially in response to market dynamics and evolving educational aspirations among parents (Zakariah et al., 2023). Research indicates that the strategic leadership practices of school principals significantly impact students' outcomes in secondary schools (Zakaria et al., 2021).

Given that private schools operate within the business realm, strategic entrepreneurship becomes a powerful tool for pursuing opportunities and navigating challenging environments (Tairas et al., 2016). This integrated approach acknowledges the dynamic intersection of education and business, reinforcing the importance of strategic leadership in shaping the future trajectory of private schools within the entrepreneurial context.

Additionally, several studies have emphasized that students' outcomes play a pivotal role in the decision-making process for school selection (Blake & Mestry, 2020; Jabbar et al., 2022; Joshi, 2020). Nevertheless, there is a dearth of studies exploring the intricate relationship between school leadership and the decision-making process in school choice.

Given the prevalence of private schools, the merits and downsides of private education are subjects of intense debate within academic and policy circles. Advocates contend that private schools serve as a valuable and efficient tool to enhance educational outcomes due to the belief of choice increase competitive and quality, it also complement in low-income contexts, where public systems often perform inadequately (Gruijters et al., 2021; Joshi, 2020). Critics highlight the potential adverse consequences of attracting high-performing students away from public schools, which raises concerns about equitable access to education and the fundamental right to free basic education, as outlined in various international agreements (Courtioux & Maury, 2020; Yaacob et al., 2015; Yoon et al., 2018). They also contend that the purported learning improvements associated with private schools could be inflated and might merely mirror the socioeconomically privileged composition of their student body (Courtioux & Maury, 2020; Joshi, 2020). Multiple studies underscore that, despite the positive impact that private schools might have on educational outcomes, they unavoidably contribute to heightened social segregation due to the substantial tuition fees that predominantly cater to economically

well-off families (Courtioux & Maury, 2020; Gottau, 2020; Henseke et al., 2021). Hence, the swift proliferation of private schools within Malaysia's educational landscape raises concerns about its potential to exacerbate social segregation. The challenge of ethnic segregation has deeply entrenched within Malaysia's national education system, largely attributed to the country's multi-ethnic composition. As underscored by Sua, (2010), enrolment choices have played a role in reinforcing the coexistence of alternative educational streams, represented by private and international schools, alongside the mainstream national education system, thereby contributing to the emergence of ethnic segregation. These alternative streams have evolved from being mere supplementary or complementary components to formidable competitors, challenging the traditional dominance of the mainstream national education system. Adding to this discourse, Kamaludin (2020) further validates the concerns by emphasizing that parental school choice not only poses a risk to national unity but also holds the potential to drive socio-economic polarization within society. Hence, in order to address and mitigate the intensification of social segregation, it becomes paramount to delve into the underlying reasons motivating parents to opt for private schooling.

While previous research has extensively discussed the advantages and drawbacks of the growing prevalence of private schooling, there remains a notable gap in understanding how leadership within private schools influences parents' intentions towards private education. Given the intricate dynamics of private schools, prior studies have explored strategic leadership in various contexts, including education. However, the specific influence of such leadership on parental choices regarding private schooling remains largely unexplored. This knowledge gap necessitates a thorough investigation into the intricate interplay between private school leadership and parents' intentions towards private schooling.

Besides, the reasons driving parents to send their children to private school dictate the growth and role of private schools in the Malaysian education system. Numerous studies have been conducted to examine factors affecting school choice, such as primary school selection, the school choice of specific ethnicities, and secondary school preferences (Kampulin, 2009; Lee, Diana Phooi-Yan et al., 2017; D. P. Lee & Ting, 2015; Siah et al., 2018; Ting & Lee, 2019). However, the majority of studies primarily concentrate on school choice within the national school system, leaving limited research on the factors influencing parents' intentions to choose private schools for their children. Given the proliferation of private schools, this study aims to delve into and address these intricate dynamics.

By uncovering the underlying drivers that influence parents' choices concerning private education, the influence of private school strategic leadership practices on parents' intentions to send their children to private school could be deduced. This study's objectives are twofold: firstly, by delving into the factors shaping parental school choice decisions, the study aspires to shed light on the role of private school strategic leadership in the field of education. Secondly, to provide insights that address the challenge of social segregation, guiding efforts to enhance equity, access, quality, efficiency, and unity within the education sector.

The research findings could provide valuable guidance to school leaders, helping them better manage their institutions by aligning their strategies with the preferences and needs of parents. Through a deeper understanding of how private school leadership impacts parents' decisions, school leaders can enhance their schools' attractiveness, improve effectiveness, and drive higher enrolment and retention rates. Overall, this study holds

the potential to bridge knowledge gaps, inform policy decisions, and guide effective practices in educational leadership.

1.3 Statement of The Problem

There have been hundreds of studies on school choice across the globe. In Western countries, school choice has been a major topic for discussion, contention, and action in academia, think tanks, and government at all levels (Rohde et al., 2019). According to Urquiola (2016), research indicates that moving students from public to private schools can enhance their academic achievement. While most studies have focused on academic outcomes such as test scores (Rohde et al., 2019), some have also explored factors like safety and parental satisfaction (Kisida & Wolf, 2015). In Malaysia, Lee and Ting (2017) found that Malaysian Chinese parents consider cultural and language factors when selecting a school for their children, which differs from research in Western countries (Ching et al., 2016; Siah et al., 2018). However, most of the studies adopted qualitative methods, where interviews were conducted to collect the parents' preferences when choosing for private school. The predicting effect of the identified factors have not been meticulously explored. In order to explore the factors influencing parent school choice intention and behaviour in a more structural and systematic manner, Lee, Ting and Lo (2017) have conducted research to study factors influencing Chinese parents' choice of primary school in Sarawak based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). Theory of Planned Behaviour is one of the most established theories to predict human behaviour (Ajzen, 2011; Sutter, 2014), and it has been proved its reliability in predicting parents' behaviour in school choice. In Lee, Ting and Lo research in 2017, it was found that perceived behavioural control has the strongest influence in the choice of primary school in Sarawak among Chinese parents. Moreover, TPB furnishes a comprehensive framework for a meticulous examination of the connections between human beliefs and

intention, as well as the subsequent link between intention and behavior. While intention serves as the precursor to human behavior, a revealing insight emerged from the informal online survey conducted by Blog.30 in 2018. It showcased a notable discrepancy between parents' intentions for private schooling and the actual scenario, implying the presence of additional moderating factors influencing the relationship between parents' intentions and behaviour. Examining this gap in understanding becomes imperative as the preceding study, while insightful to some extent, was informal. It hinted that parents' intentions might not necessarily align with their actual actions. Therefore, delving into this missing link is crucial to enhance our comprehension of the behavioral model parents adopt when making choices regarding private schools.

Nevertheless, the previous studies were focused on the parents' intention and behaviour at primary school level. Given Malaysia's diverse racial background and the growing number of private school options at the secondary level, making a choice for a secondary school can be quite perplexing. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the factors that influence private schooling at this level. Furthermore, in Malaysia most of the research on school choice focused on the change of medium of instruction in the national education system (Lee, & Ting 2017) but there are few empirical studies which focus on the factors influencing private schooling intention and behaviour. Additionally, it is important to recognize that the commercialization of knowledge is an ongoing process that requires continuous monitoring and adaptation. School leaders and managers must maintain vigilance and responsiveness to changes in the educational landscape, as well as evolving attitudes and expectations of parents. This is particularly crucial for private school leaders, as their schools rely on parents' tuition fees for sustainability. By doing so, private school leaders who demonstrate strategic leadership characteristics can effectively

position their schools for success in an increasingly competitive environment, while simultaneously addressing the evolving needs of their students and families.

Agasisti (2011) suggests the presence of private schools should improve the performance of all school types within a more dynamic and competitive educational market. This is underpinned by the aspiration of choice as a driver of quality which is consistent with DeAngelis (2017) who proposed that increase the degree of school choice that is available for families will increase quality of schools available to children. Levin (2002) has postulated that implementing school-choice policies will create a competitive environment amongst schools, whereby schools will be compelled to be more responsive and accountable to the needs and interests of parents and students by offering various programs that cater to different families. This competition is likely to enhance the effectiveness, productivity, and quality of school management, resulting in higher quality education (Thapa, 2013). Nonetheless, the assertion that the ability of private schools to enhance the overall quality of education across the entire education system has not been adequately scrutinized through empirical research has been made (Ashley & Engel, 2014). Urquiola (2016) draws a parallel conclusion, indicating that the outcomes of competition from private schools lack clarity. Similarly, Jabbar et al. (2022) contend that despite the aim of school-choice policies to promote competition among schools, the evidence affirming the positive effects of such policies on education and students' outcomes remains inconclusive. While research has shown that school choice has a small positive effect on student achievement through competition, the impact of this competition on student achievement varies depending on the type of school-choice policy and the demographic characteristics of the students (Jabbar et al., 2022). Thus, it is necessary to conduct further research to investigate how private schooling and school-

choice policies impact the role of school principals, the quality of education, and the overall education system in the long term.

Strategic and entrepreneurial leadership, which related to business sector, has become increasingly relevant in the education sector, particularly in the context of school choice (Covin & Slevin, 2008; Kunalan et al., 2022; Nzeneri, 2020). With an expanding number of educational options, parents are seeking institutions that offer high-quality education and innovative approaches to learning. Private schools, in particular, need to demonstrate strategic leadership to differentiate themselves from competitors and attract parents seeking novel educational experiences for their children. However, the proliferation of private schools also raises concerns about education equity and social segregation due to their self-selective nature, which skews the population of private school students towards more economically advantaged communities. Therefore, it is crucial to identify the key factors that influence parents' intentions and behaviors regarding private schooling, as well as the strategies that private schools employ to enhance parental intention and behavior during the school selection process.

The uniqueness of the education system in Malaysia is due to the existence of a plural society as a result of British colonialism. The earliest education system in the land of Malaya can be traced back to the 15th century. Back then formal education was a privilege of feudal societies, normal citizens were not provided with proper education. British colonisation brought in mass groups of workers from China and India immigrate to the land of Malaya and increased the demand for education opportunities. Under British divide and rule policy, there were no standardised education system, instead, each ethnicity developed their own vernacular schools and curriculums. Four types of schools with mediums of instruction in English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil were available during

British colonization (Centre for Public Policy Studies, 2016). Malaysia faced great challenges to build a single standardised education system due to the diverse ethnicity (Centre for Public Policy Studies, 2016). According to Razak Report (1956) private schools which established during the British colonial period were nationalized (Ahmad, 1998). All public schools adopt a common standardised curriculum and categorised as Standard and Standard-type school which later known as National (*Sekolah Kebangsaan*, SK) and National-type school (*Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan*, SJK) under Education Act 1961. National school used Malay as medium of instruction whereas National-type school used Chinese, Tamil as medium of instruction, where Malay and English are the compulsory subjects (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015). This ends up with Malaysia has a complex national education system which provides different types of public education. Since independence in 1957, national education system in Malaysia is controlled by the central government (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015). Even though National School and National-type school use different language as the medium of instruction, management procedures are standardised to ensure education equity. According to The World Bank, (2013) Malaysia's education system is among the most centralised in the world. Due to the educational reformation after Malaya gained independence in 1957, most of the parents enrolled their children into centralised and relatively homogenous public schools (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020). Therefore, school choice is rarely a hot topic in Malaysia educational research.

Selecting an appropriate and suitable educational path for children is a critical decision and constitutes a significant aspect of parental involvement in their children's education. The decision of school choice can be daunting due to its potential impact on children's lives. Kampulin (2009) suggests that every family across the globe has its own values, reasons, perceptions, and beliefs that inform their choice of school for their children.

Previous research has identified various factors that can influence parents' choice, including staff qualifications, school performance, medium of instruction, teacher interest, class size, and proximity (Ahmed et al., 2013; Naeem Ur Rehman et al., 2010; Anders et al., 2020; Diwakar, 2016). Notwithstanding various factors that parents consider when selecting a school for their children, the school's achievement or performance remains a primary concern (Andersen, 2008; Osth et al., 2013; Fack & Grenet, 2010; Tooley et al., 2011). This is because student performance is the most significant aspect of education. Therefore, a quality school remains the topmost priority for many parents. However, there are still several unexplored reasons that extend beyond student performance, such as school management and leadership, parental educational background, race, and religion (Dearden et al., 2011).

As mentioned above, Malaysia diverse cultural and ethnic landscape has provided a broad education choice to the parents, including vernacular school, Chinese Independent High School, National School and National-type School (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2012). The choices can be befuddling, especially with an array of private and international schools available in the country. Regarding educational choices, there has been a notable shift in the prevailing paradigm. Previously, parents tended to automatically enrol their children in public schools without question. However, the current trend reveals a more common occurrence where a growing number of parents are opting to send their children to private educational institutions. (Yaacob et al., 2014). The demand for private education has been relentless, as evidenced by the extensive waiting lists for admission into numerous popular international and private schools. (The Edge Financial Daily, 2021). As a result, school choice has become a major concern for parents, and this has also piqued the interest of private school leaders and marketers, especially in the field of strategic leadership.

The expansion of private education has led to concerns about educational equity as highlighted in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (2013). Private schools that follow the national curriculum have contributed to inequities as they achieve around 6% higher than public schools at the SPM level. Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (2013) pointed out that some of these achievement gaps may be due to the better learning environment in private schools and probable due to the self-selecting nature which skews the population of the private schools' students toward the more economically advantaged communities. One of the greater challenges in Malaysia's educational system is providing equitable access to quality education. The achievement gaps between rural and urban areas, as well as socioeconomic backgrounds, have not been eliminated (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015). Moreover, urban areas have a higher density of private educational institutions, which are managed and led by private institutions, compared to rural areas (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020), this may exacerbate the disparities among the urban and rural, as well as different socioeconomic backgrounds. This situation contradicts the aspiration of the Malaysian education system to promote unity among the multiracial community. Furthermore, it is worth noting that there is a small but increasing number of students who opt to leave the public education system and enroll in private schools. As a result, these students move beyond the immediate sphere of influence of the Ministry, which hampers efforts to foster unity (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015).

Studies in Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013) reported that although enrolment in private schools using the national curriculum currently accounts for only 1% of total student numbers, however, enrolment is increasing as average household income levels rise (Baum et al., 2018). Even though public schools and private schools using the

national curriculum offer the same curriculum and syllabus, the schools have many differences in nature. Apart from fee-paying, one of the fundamental differences between the public school and private school is private schools' leaders and management have the freedom and autonomy to better meet the needs of students and parents ('Abidin Muhriz et al., 2011).

Literature review show that the education quality in private schools is much better than public schools (Lim et al., 2013; Zuilkowski et al., 2018). As pointed out by Lim and Wan Jan (2013), private schools are usually associated with better quality. "Parents with children enrolled in private schools felt strongly that their investment was worthwhile and were quick to highlight the perceived superior quality and higher level of accountability compared to the government school system." (Lim & Wan Jan., 2013, p.8). According to Ashley and Engel (2014) private schools tended to have a better quality of services and teaching than public schools, in terms of higher levels of teacher presence and teaching activity as well as teaching approaches that are more likely to lead to improved learning outcomes and there was some evidence that pupils' learning outcomes were improved by attendance at fee-paying schools (Baum et al., 2018).

The key factor in school choice is the school qualities in terms of teaching, teacher attendance, school performance, large teacher to students' ratio and discipline (Holmes Erickson, 2017; Kumar & Choudhury, 2020). These positive qualities are closely related to the leadership and degree of autonomy in the school (Watkins et al., 2021). Autonomy means greater empowerment to the management and the school leaders. According to the World Bank Report (2013) autonomy in school allows for greater responsiveness to local needs. It also builds a stronger sense of belonging among teachers, administrators, parents, and students. Most countries whose confer significant autonomy to local

authorities and schools, students have better performance on international tests (The World Bank, 2013). In Malaysia over 65 percent of schools report that the teacher recruitment takes place at the national level, compared to just over 5 percent in South Korea (The World Bank, 2013). The report further points out that the key constraints to improving the quality of basic education are highly restricted levels of autonomy, low parental involvement, low accountability, and shortcomings in teacher recruitment and performance management (The World Bank, 2013). In line with the report of World Bank (2013), Malaysian literature advocating choice and competition is limited in Malaysia because central planning has been allowed to become the natural state of affairs when it comes to education in the country; but that this situation is changing.

Since private schools are operated by private enterprises, the management and recruitment are not as centralized as the public schools. Therefore, private schools' leaders and management are believed to have higher autonomy as compared to Malaysia public school in term of teacher recruitment, learning and curricular as well as performance management. Research showed that private schools principals have greater flexibility in personnel decisions, and their principals and teachers face stronger incentives to perform. (Hahn et al., 2018). Consequently, Hahn et al., (2018) also find that private high schools have better student outcomes than public high schools, this results suggest that leadership and management autonomy in personnel decisions explains the positive student outcomes in private schools.

New Strait Time reported that Education Ministry gets largest allocation of RM 50.4 billion in 2021 budgets. During the presentation of the 2021 Budget, Finance Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz stated that the allocation amounts to education sector up to 15.6 percent of the total government expenditure. The substantial

budget of RM800 million is aimed at creating a favorable learning environment and will be utilized for the maintenance and repair of government schools and government-aided schools (public schools). Despite the government's significant investments, TIMSS and PISA result indicated that there is a declination in learning outcomes while inputs to education were expanding and the size of the student population was falling. (The World Bank, 2013) Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013) reports that the largest achievement gaps in Malaysia are still those driven by socio-economic status.

Kumar and Choudhury (2020) found that the children from higher socioeconomic status families are more likely to attend private schools. Besides, Anders, Green, Henderson, & Henseke (2020) reported that family income is important as a predictor of sending a child to private school. Not only the wealthy families, according to Yaacob, Osman, & Bachok (2014) there are middle income parents with better educated background who would make every effort and ensure their children are enrolled in the best private school. This issue is worthy of attention because even the middle class is tightening their budget to send their children to private schools, and poor families in some developing countries are willing to pay in order to obtain better private education (Kumar & Choudhury, 2020). At this juncture, understanding the factors determining private school participation in Malaysia is imperative. Private schools have expensive tuition fees as compared to free public schools. Despite government huge effort and investment in ameliorating public schools, not to mention the ever-raising living cost, more people are now willing to pay a fortune for more expensive private education instead going for free public schools – there must be a reason.

The educational landscape is continuously evolving, posing a dilemma for parents who must navigate a myriad of educational choices. While parents desire the best for their

children, there is no universal solution for education as each child is distinct. Therefore, parents bear the responsibility of seeking the school that aligns with their child's individual needs and aspirations. Moreover, factors such as class size, teacher-to-student ratio, facilities, extracurricular activities, fees, and school culture also demand consideration in the decision-making process. (Yaacob et al., 2015). Parents are inclined to have their unique priorities when contemplating the most suitable school for their children. Nevertheless, it cannot be overlooked that parents also possess their individual perspectives regarding each school and reasons for their school selection. (Gottau, 2020). Perhaps, there are also parents who are puzzled in making their decision. Previous studies in Western countries have been identified many considerations of parents preferences in choosing school for their children (Carlson et al., 2013; Diwakar, 2016; Joshi, 2014; Yaacob et al., 2015) However, at present, literature on Asian parents' consideration particularly Malaysian parents' consideration are rather scarce. Ashley and Engel (2014) conducted a thorough review of 59 studies and found limited evidence to support or oppose the idea of private education having system-wide effects. Limited evidence is available concerning whether private schools enhance or compete with public school offerings, and the impact of competition on public school quality is a topic of debate. Similar to Ashley and Engel, Gottau (2020) also suggested that it remains unexplored whether school choice leads private schools to be more competitive, thereby encouraging innovation in public schools, or if it leads to the abandonment of public schools, negatively affecting the education system as a whole. Therefore, more research needs to be conducted in different contexts to fill in the academic gap.

Although many literatures have showed that private schools have better quality, study also revealed that many private schools are struggling to survive (Kongjinda et al., 2020). The school principal is the one who sets the direction and leads the school to success.

Understanding the determinants of private schooling can help the private school leaders to set a clearer goal to propel the school effectiveness through school culture and the teacher's organizational citizenship behaviour (Kongjinda et al., 2020).

Most studies on school choice predominantly concentrate on school quality, while the impact of school leadership, especially the strategies employed by school leaders to enhance the overall well-being and reputation of the school to attract parents, has received limited attention. Research indicates that the field of strategy has been largely overlooked within educational leadership literature (Carvalho et al., 2021).

Strategic leadership is more popular among private schools, given the greater financial risks they face. This aligns with the findings of Kunalan et al. (2022), which revealed that leaders in Malaysian schools with higher perceived risks demonstrate a proclivity for practicing educational strategic leadership at work (Kunalan et al., 2022). Studies conducted by Zakariah et al. highlight that strategic leadership practices of school leaders in Malaysia are at a high level and have positive and significant impacts on academic performance and the quality of education (Zakariah et al., 2023). They further propose the need for qualitative studies or mixed methods to support strategic leadership practiced by school leaders (Zakariah et al., 2023). The implications of these studies can be leveraged for present research endeavours.

Within the educational realm, a significant knowledge gap persists regarding how the intricate dynamics of strategic leadership influence parents' intentions and behaviours in considering private schooling. Moreover, the multifaceted impact of private schooling on the broader educational landscape, particularly in terms of education equity, remains inadequately explored. This study seeks to address these gaps by examining the

relationship between strategic leadership, parental choices in private schooling, and the wider implications for education equity.

In essence, the business nature of private schools, characterized by strategic leader with high autonomy and a marketing approach prioritizing parents' preferences, positions them as a popular choice in Malaysia. However, the surge in private schooling raises concerns about education equity. This study aims to explore the factors influencing parents' intentions and behaviours towards private schooling as well as moderating effect of socioeconomic within an inclusive educational setting. The objective is to connect the study's outcomes with practical applications for school leaders.

1.4 Purpose of The Study

This research aims to address the complexities of school choice in Malaysia, particularly in the context of private secondary education characterized by visionary strategic leadership. It focuses on understanding how parents' beliefs influence their intentions and behaviors regarding private schooling, taking into account the disparities between stated intentions and actual enrollment rates as shown in previous studies. Utilizing the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the study explores the factors influencing parents' private school choices in Klang Valley, categorizing beliefs into behavioral, normative, and control beliefs. Additionally, the study investigates the moderating effect of socioeconomic background on the relationship between parents' intentions and behaviors related to private schooling. Following this, the research meticulously investigates the influence of private school leadership and management on the overall well-being of the school. It delves into how these aspects, in turn, shape parents' perceptions of private schools, forming their behavioral beliefs.

The primary aim of this research is to enrich academic literature by elucidating the role of private schools within the Malaysian education system. The intention is to provide valuable insights for both private and public school management, fostering enhancements in overall school quality for the greater benefit of education as a whole. The research findings hold the potential to shed light on improving education equity. Furthermore, the objective is to assist school leaders by furnishing a comprehensive understanding of how parents' beliefs and intentions can be strategically leveraged in their leadership practices.

1.5 Research Objectives

This section outlines the research objectives of the study.

1. To determine the level of family income, occupational category, and educational level among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur.
2. To determine the level of behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur.
3. To determine the level of intention of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur.
4. To determine the level of behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur.
5. To analyse the influence of parents' behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief on their intention of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur.
6. To analyse the influence of parents' intention on their behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur.
7. To analyse family income as a moderator between parents' intention and their behaviour of private schooling among SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur.

8. To analyse parents' occupational category as a moderator between parents' intention and their behaviour of private schooling among SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur.
9. To analyse parents' educational level as a moderator between parents' intention and their behaviour of private schooling among SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur.
10. To corroborate the quantitative findings with the perceptions of school principals as strategic leaders when explaining parents' intention of private schooling

1.6 Research Questions

1. What is the level of family income, occupation category and educational levels among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?
2. What is the level of behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?
3. What is the level of intention of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?
4. What is the level of behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?
5. Are there any influences of parents' behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief on parents' intention of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?
6. Are there any influences of parents' intention on their behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?
7. Does family income moderate the relationship between parents' intention and their behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?
8. Does occupational category moderate the relationship between parents' intention and their behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?

9. Does educational level moderate the relationship between parents' intention and their behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?
10. To what extent do the quantitative findings corroborate with the perceptions of school principals as strategic leaders when explaining parents' intention of private schooling?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is fourfold. Firstly, it aims to address academic gaps by examining the factors influencing parents' intentions and behaviour toward private schooling systematically in the context of private schools. Previous studies have provided limited empirical findings on the factors influencing parents' decision-making in school choice within the context of private schools in Malaysia. Furthermore, while previous research has highlighted the importance and impact of strategic leadership on school achievement and effectiveness, the intricate relationship between strategic school leadership and school choice in the context of private schools, closely related to the field of business, is still lacking. Additionally, the research can provide novel insights to private and public school leaders regarding parents' preferences and the adaptability of strategic leadership in educational settings.

In terms of policy and educational reforms, the study aims to provide empirical findings to justify the initiative of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) programs. The Malaysian Ministry of Education has launched PPP programs to encourage private sector involvement in public education. The Trust School Program allows private sponsors to jointly manage schools with head teachers for a period of five years, while the School Adoption Program facilitates private sector adoption of schools for one to three years. These programs reflect the belief that private sector involvement can result in a different learning culture that enhances learning outcomes. Private schools have independent

management and a strategic leadership style that may influence parents' attitudes toward private schools and, in turn, affect their school choice. Therefore, exploring the factors that influence the intention and behaviour of private schooling can validate the effectiveness of the PPP programs launched by the Ministry of Education. Besides, the research aims to clarify the role of private schools in the Malaysian education system. By understanding the reasons why parents opt for private schools, policymakers can devise policies for educational reform to ensure education equity and accessibility for all.

In terms of practical significance, this research assesses the degree to which the factors that impact parents' intention and behaviour toward private schooling align with the role of school principals as strategic leaders, potentially increasing interest in private schooling among parents. By investigating the factors that influence parents' decisions to choose private schooling, this study can provide a framework for private and public school principals to enhance their management and operational systems. Furthermore, this research can offer private school principals a more in-depth understanding of parents' preferences when selecting a school, guiding them in meeting customer needs and requirements. By examining the determinants of private schooling, private school leaders can gain insight into the needs of their clients, allowing them to offer more customized and targeted services.

In terms of theoretical contribution, Goh and Dolnicar (2006) elicited the determinants of school choice using a mixed method based on TPB and found that all three components postulated in the TPB proved valuable in the school choice elicitation task. They further suggested that it would be interesting to use the elicited school choice determinants to conduct a quantitative follow-up to study how predictive each of these aspects is for actual school choice based on TPB (Goh & Dolnicar, 2006). Therefore, one of the significances

in this research is to fill the academic gap by examining the predictive effect of the identified variables in school choice using the framework of TPB. The findings of this study can contribute to and corroborate TPB in the field of educational leadership and private schooling. Furthermore, the research can contribute to the TPB model by testing the moderating effect of socioeconomic factors, which were not included in the original TPB model.

In summary, exploring research on parents' beliefs—factors influencing their intentions and behaviours toward private schooling—has the potential to provide comprehensive insights into the role of private schools. To triangulate these findings, the alignment of quantitative results is shared with private school principals, who serve as frontline leaders in their respective organizations. This approach helps illuminate the intricate relationship between school leadership and parent preferences, offering valuable guidance to school leaders and policymakers for initiating educational reforms and fostering equitable education. The significance of the study is both theoretical and practical as it adds to the use of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) in the educational field and extends its application to private schooling.

1.8 Scope and Limitations of Study

As mentioned in the subtopic of the background of the study, the proliferation of private schools operating in the business world has attracted the attention of scholars to strategic leadership and entrepreneurship in the context of education, which is more common in a business setting. Therefore, the research aims to understand the phenomenon of the growth of private schools by exploring the intricate relationship between private school strategic leadership and parents' intentions and behavior regarding private schooling.

To address the broad topic of private school choice and its intricate and dynamic relationships with private school strategic leadership, the research had to narrow down its scope, inevitably leading to some limitations in the study that could not be fully covered. To operationalize the concepts in the research and comprehensively study the phenomenon of the growth of private schools in Malaysia, the research adopted a mixed-method approach.

Ambitiously, the study aims to examine the correlation between strategic leadership and parents' beliefs, intentions, and behaviors quantitatively, while simultaneously exploring private school principals' empirical experiences in implementing strategic policies to enhance school effectiveness and overall well-being. However, due to realistic considerations and time constraints, not all aspects of the topic could be included in the current research. Therefore, the quantitative scope of the research will focus on factors influencing parents' intentions and behaviors regarding private schooling, while the qualitative scope will explore how strategic leadership in private schools affects and shapes parents' perceptions (behavioral beliefs) toward private schooling.

The aim of the quantitative phase in this study is to investigate the factors that influence parents' decision-making and actions when selecting private schooling for their children. In this research, the previously identified determinants of school choice have been systematically categorized into three beliefs, based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour. More specifically, the study delves into the beliefs and intentions of parents that play a role in influencing their actual behavior concerning private schooling. Additionally, to ascertain whether private schools complement or compete with the national school system, this study examines how socioeconomic background factors moderate the relationship between parents' intentions and their behavior when choosing private schools. The socioeconomic background factors considered in this study include family

income, parents' level of education, and parents' occupation category. However, it is important to note that this research does not encompass other socioeconomic factors, such as community safety and social support. By focusing on these specific aspects, the study contributes to a better understanding of the decision-making process of parents when selecting private schooling for their children. However, it is important to acknowledge that the scope of the study is limited to the examined factors and may not encompass the entirety of factors that could influence parental decision-making in the context of school choice.

Based on statistics from the Ministry of Education Malaysia in 2019, it was noted that there was a greater increase in enrolment rates in private secondary schools as compared to private primary schools. As such, this research will be specifically centered on private secondary schools. Furthermore, the study will be focused on well-established academic private secondary schools located in Klang Valley. It is important to note that the findings of this research cannot be generalized as a predictive factor for other types of private secondary schools in different regions of Malaysia, private learning centers, homeschooling environments, private religious schools, or private schools that offer specialized education. The scope of this research is limited to the specific private secondary schools that meet the aforementioned criteria.

In order to isolate the influence of curriculum as a factor in the decision to choose private education, this research focuses solely on the three independent variables of behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief. To achieve this objective, the context of the study is restricted to private secondary schools that offer the national curriculum. Other types of schools, such as international schools or Chinese Independent High Schools that offer alternative curricula, are not included in the scope of this research. For the purpose

of this study, the term "private school" refers to schools that are privately funded through fees paid by parents, and offer the national curriculum, which is identical to that of public schools. The primary difference between private and public schools lies in their leadership and management, as well as the requirement of tuition fees for attendance in private schools. As a result, international schools, religious schools, and Chinese Independent High Schools that offer alternative curricula are not relevant to this study, and the findings of this research cannot be used to predict factors associated with these types of schools.

Prior research has demonstrated that Chinese students represent a significant portion of the student population in private schools, as highlighted by studies conducted by Lee et al. (2017) and Siah et al. (2018). As a result, the sample for this research is drawn exclusively from the population of Chinese parents whose children attend National-type Chinese vernacular primary school (*Sekolah Rendah Jenish Kebangsaan (Cina)*, SJKC) in Kuala Lumpur. It is important to acknowledge that the findings of this study cannot be generalized to other populations of parents, such as other ethnic groups and those whose children attend National primary schools (*Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan SK*) or National-type Tamil vernacular primary schools (*Sekolah Rendah Jenish Kebangsaan (Tamil)*, SJKT). Since the sample for this research is limited to SJKC parents in Klang Valley, it is not possible to make conclusions about the attitudes and behaviours of parents from other school types in Malaysia. The quantitative phase of the research is intended to provide insights specifically related to the population of parents with children enrolled in SJKC schools in Klang Valley and should be interpreted within the context of this specific population.

In the qualitative phase of the study, the research primarily relies on the perceptions and experiences of private school principals. This reliance may introduce a subjective element

to the findings. Additionally, for the qualitative phase, private school principals were purposefully selected from established private schools within the Klang Valley region, based on specific criteria. It is important to note that this selection process may limit the generalizability of the results to a broader context.

To sum up, while offering a comprehensive approach to data collection and analysis, mixed-method research is not without limitations. One potential limitation is the challenge of effectively integrating qualitative and quantitative data. Combining different data collection methods, analysis techniques, and interpretations of findings can be complex and may require careful consideration. Additionally, conducting mixed-method research demands additional time, resources, and expertise compared to using a single method, which could limit the scope or depth of the study. Furthermore, biases and perspectives may influence the integration and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative data, potentially affecting the overall validity and reliability of the findings in mixed-method research. Generalizability can be another limitation, as the specific context, sample selection for quantitative and qualitative phase, or research design in such studies may hinder broad generalizations to larger populations or different settings.

1.9 Operation Definition

The purpose of the quantitative phase of this research is to examine the factors influencing parents' intentions and behaviours related to private schooling, utilizing the Theory of Planned Behaviour as the underlying framework. The findings from the quantitative phase were then analyzed and triangulated with the qualitative findings to determine the extent to which they align with the perceptions of school principals as strategic leaders in explaining parents' intention to choose private schooling. The study aims to provide

practical implications for strategic leaders in the private school industry, particularly in developing effective marketing strategies that align with parents' preferences and needs. Additionally, this study offers insights into the preferences and needs of Malaysian parents, which can inform policymakers on how to enhance the existing education system. To achieve these objectives, it is crucial to establish clear and concise operational definitions for the technical terms and measurements used during the quantitative data collection process. This section of the research paper will provide detailed explanations of these definitions to ensure a clear understanding of the methodology employed in the study.

1.9.1 Planned Behaviour

The concept of Planned Behaviour is a fundamental aspect of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, which explores human behaviour. As stated by Ajzen (2002), human behaviour is influenced by three primary considerations: behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs. Behavioural beliefs refer to one's beliefs about the possible consequences or other attributes of a behaviour. Normative beliefs, on the other hand, are beliefs about the normative expectations of other individuals, while control beliefs relate to one's beliefs about the presence of factors that may assist or hinder the performance of a behaviour.

Ajzen (2002) further explains that behavioural beliefs can create a positive or negative attitude towards a particular behaviour. If individuals believe that a behaviour will result in a positive outcome, they are more likely to develop a favorable attitude towards that behaviour. Conversely, if they perceive the behaviour as leading to negative consequences, an unfavorable attitude will be developed. Normative beliefs, on the other hand, result in perceived social pressure or subjective norms, which measure how people

perceive social trends and the extent to which they comply with them. The control beliefs relate to the perceived ease or difficulty of performing a behaviour, leading to perceived behavioural control. In combination, attitude towards behaviour, subjective norm, and perception of behavioural control contribute to the formation of a behavioural intention. Intention is considered the immediate antecedent of behaviour, as individuals are more likely to act on their intentions when the opportunity arises.

In the mixed-method design of this study, the quantitative phase focuses on operationalizing the three beliefs (i.e., behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs) to measure the level of parents' beliefs regarding private schooling. By establishing clear operational definitions, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the methodology employed to examine the factors influencing parents' intentions and behaviours towards private schooling. The Theory of Planned Behavior serves as the guiding framework in this investigation.

(a) Behavioural Belief

In this study behavioural beliefs are measured in two dimensions, attitude toward behaviour and outcome evaluation. Attitude toward behaviour measure the parents' overall perception on the quality of private school leadership and management in terms of managing the teachers' quality, creating positive school culture as well as managing resources for better physical infrastructure. Outcome evaluation, on the other side, measures the parents' perception on the capability of the private school leadership and management to produce certain outcomes, for example better discipline, better academic and co-curriculum performances.

(b) Normative Belief

Normative beliefs consist of two dimensions, which are subjective norm and motivation to comply. Subjective norm is the parents' perceived social trends. It measures the level of parents' beliefs on the current social perception of enrolling children into private schools. Next, motivation to comply measures the degree of the parents' motivation to comply with the perceived social trend of sending children to private schools.

(c) Control Belief

The perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour is the control beliefs. There are two dimensions in the control beliefs, perceived behavioural control, and perceived facilitation. Perceived behavioural control measures the parents' perceived capability of enrolling their children to private schools in terms of financial, mental readiness, available resources, etc. Next in order, perceived facilitation measures parents' perceived assistance, familiarity, and support from their family and environment.

(d) Intention

The combination of the beliefs mentioned above gives rise to the formation of the intention that leads to actual behaviour. In this research, the term "intention" refers to the level of parents' inclination or eagerness to enroll their children in private schools. The degree of parents' readiness to make advance plans for sending their children to private schools, such as collecting information, making financial arrangements, arranging transportation, etc., is measured by intention.

(e) The behaviour of private schooling

The behaviour of private schooling refers to the specific actions taken by parents to actively engage in the private school selection process, such as attending private school

information days, open houses, educational fairs, registering their child for private school entrance exams, sitting for the entrance exams, applying for admission, registering, and enrolling their child in private schools.

1.9.2 Role of School Principals as Strategic Leaders in Enhancing Parents' Intention towards Private Schooling

For the purposes of this study, the role of school principals as strategic leaders pertains to their actions and strategies aimed at fostering and augmenting parental intention towards private schooling within an entrepreneurial framework. Drawing upon Samimi et al. (2022), the functions of strategic leadership delineate the specific actions and strategies undertaken by school principals. Given that private schools operate within complex and dynamic business environments, innovation, a pivotal element of entrepreneurial leadership, is also incorporated. The role of school principals as strategic leaders can be summarized by the following actions and strategies:

a) Making Strategic Decisions:

- School principals as strategic leaders make decisions that have important implications for school-level outcome and shape the overall direction and goals of the private school (Wowak et al., 2017).
- Decisions related to curriculum development, educational programs, and long-term planning are crucial in influencing parents' intentions toward private schooling.

b) Engaging with External Stakeholders:

- Principals represent the image of the school to external parties; they actively interact with external stakeholders, including parents who have the potential to influence the school, to understand their needs and expectations (Samimi et al., 2022).
- Building positive relationships with parents through effective communication and involvement in school activities.

c) Performing Human Resource Management Activities:

- Recruiting, evaluating, compensating, developing, and retaining qualified teachers and staff to ensure a high standard of education (Samimi et al., 2022).
- Creating a positive work environment by establishing teachers' compensation, which influences teachers' behavior and reflects positively on the school's image, thereby shaping parents' perceptions (Ridge et al., 2015).

d) Motivating and Influencing:

- Unify, motivate, and encourage school staffs to pursue a strategic vision as well as shape organizational culture (Samimi et al., 2022).
- Using motivational strategies to encourage active participation and engagement within the school community.

e) Managing Information:

- Direct and allocate the organization's attention by choosing to frame, distribute, and withhold information based on various interests (Samimi et al., 2022).
- Gather, process, and utilize information from both internal and external environments to make decisions, influencing the school's access to information and its integration and distribution throughout the institution (Samimi et al., 2022).

f) Overseeing Operations and Administration:

- Set conditions to support learning processes (Hannah & Lester, 2009), and put procedures in place to monitor other organizational members (Wowak et al., 2015).
- Shape reporting relationships, procedures, and controls for the implementation of strategies, adaptation to changing environments, and school performance (Sine, Mitsuhashi, & Kirsch, 2006), while simultaneously implementing administrative policies that contribute to the overall effectiveness of the school.

g) Managing Social and Ethical Issues:

- Accountable for major ethical scandals and a variety of outcomes related to social or ethical issues, which holds important implications for stakeholders, school reputation, and performance.
- Addressing social and ethical concerns within the school community.

h) Managing Conflicting Demands:

- Managing conflicts and disagreements, which can lead to significant group decision-making tendencies that influence school performance (Georgakakis et al., 2015; Zhu, 2014).
- Balancing conflicting demands such as academic standards, financial considerations, and parents' expectations.

The quantitative findings of this research can serve as a valuable guide for private school principals who have taken on the role of strategic leaders. As the leaders of their respective institutions, these principals play a critical role in shaping the perceptions and attitudes of parents towards private schooling. The insights gained from the quantitative analysis can help them to develop effective strategies aimed at improving parents' intentions to enroll their children in private schools. By leveraging the key findings of this study, private school principals can work towards enhancing the overall appeal of private schooling and addressing the concerns and challenges faced by parents in this regard. Ultimately, this can contribute to the growth and success of private schools and pave the way for a more prosperous and thriving education sector.

1.10 Summary

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the research, including the rationale for conducting the study, research problem and the objectives and research questions to be addressed. The chapter also outlines the scope and limitations of the research, as well as defining key terms to ensure clarity and understanding. By presenting this background information, the reader is provided with a comprehensive understanding of the research problem and the reasons for conducting the study. In the subsequent chapter, a detailed

review of relevant literature will be presented, which will help to contextualize the study and provide a foundation for the research.

Universiti Malaya

CHAPTER 2: CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the literature related to the current study. To provide a better understanding of the context of the research, the first subtopic describes Malaysia's educational background. The phenomenon of private schooling is subsequently discussed to support the background of the research, followed by a review of entrepreneurial leadership in private schools to provide insight into how it contributes to their growth. Furthermore, this chapter reviews previous studies on the factors influencing school choice, systematically categorizing them under different beliefs guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior. The purpose of this review is to identify the key factors that influence parents' decisions to choose private schools for their children. Lastly, the chapter addresses the theories that contribute to the formation of the theoretical framework of this research. The conceptual framework is then explained subsequently, outlining the research's main objectives and research questions. Overall, this chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the literature related to the current study, providing readers with a strong foundation to understand the research context, theories, and conceptual framework.

2.2 Education in Malaysia

Education system in Malaysia has undergone a series revolution before and after the country gained independence in 1957 (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013). The education system has its roots in a history that pre-dates the formation of Malaysia. In the sultanates of the *tanah melayu*, members of royalty, aristocracy and wealthy merchants were usually educated within the palace, courts, or private institutes at their

own expenses to educate their progenies the functions they going to inherit in their later life (Muhriz, Abudullah & Wan Jan, 2011). After the introduction of Islam to the peninsula, educational institutions were established to focus on religious teachings. Over time, these Islamic schools transformed into school systems that have persisted till today, catering to the Muslim community. In the pre-independence era, the diverse communities in Malaya influenced school selection, with factors like ethnicity, language, and religion dominating the choices made by parents (Muhriz et al., 2011).

The earliest public schools were set up and managed by the British colonial government. Penang Free School, established in 1816, stands as the first government-run English language school, while the inaugural Malay language public school was founded in 1855 (Sivalingam, 2020). Additionally, Christian associations like St John's Institution and Convent Bukit Nanas established missionary schools. Although these schools were eventually taken over by the federal government, many were initially classified as English national schools before transitioning to the Malay medium of instruction and integrating into the national education system. Some of these older institutions, along with others, are informally referred to as elite schools due to their historical significance and notable alumni (Muhriz et al., 2011).

Alongside of the establishment of English public school, Islamic school and missionary school, vernacular schools were also established by the immigrant communities to cater for the education of their children. Chinese and Tamil were the medium languages in these schools (Sivalingam, 2020). Today, these schools are incorporated to the national school system and are termed as National-type schools (*Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan, SJK*) which still using their mother tongue as medium of instruction (Muhriz et al., 2011).

After the Federation of Malaya gained independence, there was a strong aspiration to promote national unity within a society that had previously defined itself based on ethnic and religious affiliations (Muhriz et al., 2011). Several proposals and reports contributed to the development of Malaysia's national education system. One of the significant reports was the Barnes Committee's 1950 report, which comprised both Malay and European members. The committee recommended the replacement of all primary schools with a single type of primary school to foster a sense of common nationality (UNESCO, 2015). However, this proposal received considerable criticism from the Chinese community, who argued that it would erode the cultural identity of each race. In response, the British colonial administration commissioned the Fenn-Wu Report, which presented recommendations from the Chinese perspective. The Fenn-Wu Report managed to preserve vernacular schools in Malaysia up to the present day (Sivalingam, 2020).

The suggestions of the Barnes Report were temporarily implemented through the Education Ordinance 1952, which was later replaced by the Education Act 1961. The enactment of the Education Act 1961 was largely based on another report known as the Razak Report (1956). The Razak Report aimed to find a compromise between the recommendations of the Barnes Report and the Fenn-Wu Report, preserving the national unity agenda while allowing vernacular schools to continue operating (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013). Subsequently, The Rahman Talib Report (1960) was produced, providing a review of the implementation of the Razak Report and offering recommendations for further improvements. Over time, the combination, incorporation, compromise, and amendment of these various reports have shaped government policies since Malaysia's independence (Muhriz et al., 2011).

Among the proposals, the Razak Report (1956) is the National-type schools, English, Chinese and Tamil as the language of instruction being proposed. After the formation of Malaysia in 1963, education in Malaysia was subjected to several more pieces of legislation, following the same themes set out in the Education Act 1961. The Education Act 1996 stated that “Nothing in this Act can be interpreted as prohibiting the institution of new private schools”. In another way, the Education Act 1996 is protecting the private school, to be exact, school choice in Malaysia. (Muhriz et al., 2011). Alongside, the policy of developing human capital in the Education Development Master Plan (2006-2010) focused on the effort to provide more educational options to parents and students under the Ninth Malaysia Plan (Abd. Razak Awang & Azizi 2014). As a result, Malaysia offers a wide array of school choices, including National schools, National-type schools under the national education system, as well as private educational institutions such as Islamic schools, private schools, international schools, and homeschools. This diverse range of options has contributed to the development of current research.

2.2.1 National School System

Malaysia has a comprehensive public school system that spans from preschool to university. However, the current study specifically focuses on the secondary school level. Therefore, Chapter 2 will primarily concentrate on secondary schools, and other education levels will not be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Public schools, also known as government schools (used interchangeably in this study), are schools in Malaysia that are centrally managed by the Ministry of Education. At the secondary school level, there is a convergence of students from different types of primary schools into a standardized school format. These secondary schools, known as

National secondary schools (*Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan* or SMK), conduct their instruction in Malay language. SMKs account for 88% of total secondary school enrollments (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013).

The year 1958 marked the introduction of Malay language as the medium of instruction in secondary education. Initially, Bahasa Melayu medium secondary classes were established as annexes in English secondary schools, which eventually developed into National secondary schools. Following Malaysia's independence, some missionary English schools and Chinese secondary schools were gradually transformed into National-type secondary schools (*Sekolah Menengah Jenis Kebangsaan*, SMJK). These schools became fully or partially assisted by the government. Private Chinese schools that agreed to adhere to the national education policy are categorized as government-aided schools, also known as Conforming schools. Currently, the support provided to schools is generally similar across different types of schools. However, specific categories of support are determined based on a school's status as either a government or government-aided school. Government schools are established and fully maintained by the Ministry on public land, while government-aided schools are situated on private land and receive direct financial assistance from the Ministry. Government-aided schools include various types such as National-type, mission, conforming Chinese, and religious schools.

Across both public and private schools, there is a combined enrollment of 2.3 million students in lower and upper secondary schools in Malaysia. The majority of these students, approximately 96%, are enrolled in public schools, with 93% attending National secondary schools, SMK. However, within the SMK category, there are various school programs available for students to choose from.

The SMK format offers various options for secondary education, with regular SMKs being the most common, representing 88% of total secondary school enrollment. Other options within this format include Fully Residential Schools (SBP), technical/vocational schools, and National Religious Secondary Schools (SMKA), accounting for 2%, 2%, and 1% of total secondary school enrollment, respectively.

Apart from the SMK format, students also have access to other public school options. These options include government-aided religious schools (SABK) at the secondary level and special education schools, collectively making up 3% of total secondary school enrollment.

Among private secondary schools, independent Chinese schools represent the largest segment, accounting for 3% of total secondary enrollments. The remaining private-sector options, including international schools, religious schools, private schools that follow the national curriculum, and special education schools, collectively constitute approximately 1% of total secondary enrollment.

Secondary education comprises lower secondary and upper secondary education. The lower secondary level covers a duration of three years. Education at this level is general in nature and most of the schools conducting classes at this level are academic-based schools. In 2013, government announced to replace Lower Certificate of Education (LCE) evaluation system with new evaluation, *Penilaian Berasaskan Sekolah Menengah Rendah* (PBSMR) or Lower Secondary School Based Assessment. PBSMR system is a holistic assessment which evaluates the students from the aspects of cognitive, psychometric, and affective. At the end of the third year at the lower secondary level, students will be required to sit for a public examination known as

Pentaksiran Tingkatan 3 (PT3) or Lower Secondary Evaluation. PT3 is not a terminal examination, it is more of a diagnostic evaluation instead. Therefore, all students will be automatically promoted to the upper secondary level for another two years to complete 11 years of free education. However, the Lower Secondary Evaluation (PT3) was abolished in 2022 and replaced with a school-based assessment called *Ujian Akhir Sesi Akademik*, after a two-year hiatus of PT3 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The secondary education system in Malaysia provides students with the opportunity to choose their educational pathway at different stages, predominantly during the transition from lower secondary to upper secondary schools. These pathways include academic, technical, vocational, religious, sports, or arts streams. After two years of upper secondary education, students sit for the public common examination *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia*, SPM also known as the Malaysian Certificate of Education. (UNESCO, 2015)

Despite the availability of various educational pathways, Malaysia maintains a centralized public education system. As outlined in the Malaysia Constitution, education falls under the jurisdiction of the Federal government. The implementation of the 1961 Education Act resulted in the establishment of a National Education System characterized by a common language, standardized school curriculum, uniform public examinations, consistent teaching service scheme, and centralized funding (Lee, 2006).

The centralized education system ensures equitable education for all; however, due to its centralized management, bureaucratic challenges emerge, diminishing the effectiveness of government schools in responding to dynamic market preferences. The planning and implementation of a single reform can be a lengthy process, and public school leaders have limited autonomy to navigate in this volatile, uncertain, complex,

and ambiguous (VUCA) world. Private schools that offer the national curriculum address these limitations as their leaders possess higher autonomy, enabling them to respond promptly and strategically to the rapidly changing market demands.

Despite their potential to complement public schools, not all families can afford private education due to the typically high costs involved. The impact of private schools on public schools, whether complementary or competitive, remains inconclusive. The diversity within the centralized public school system primarily pertains to educational pathways rather than fostering visionary, creative and innovative leadership and management conducive to a positive school climate.

Recognizing this gap, this research aims to delve deeper into the landscape of private secondary education in Malaysia. This exploration seeks to uncover insights into the dynamics between private and public education, shedding light on the potential impacts and intricacies of these systems within the Malaysian context.

2.2.2 Private School System

The private school system, which has been operational in Malaysia for almost 40 years, began as an effort by Malaysian education providers to expand and enhance the learning opportunities available for Malaysian families who could afford to send their children to these institutions. To send their children to private schools, parents are required to pay full fees including application and registration fees, tuition fees and fees for co-curricular activities.

There are 4 types of private education institutions in Malaysia at secondary level, namely international schools, religious schools, independent Chinese school, and private school which use national school syllabus.

International schools in Malaysia refer to primary and secondary educational institutions that follow international curricula, such as British, American, Australian, Canadian, or International Baccalaureate programs. These schools typically hire teachers from abroad. As of 2020, the enrollment data indicates that 38,703 Malaysian students have opted for private education and are attending international schools across the country (Ministry of Education, 2020).

To ensure that Malaysian students attending international schools maintain a sense of national identity, the Ministry of Education mandates the teaching of Bahasa Malaysia as part of the curriculum. Additionally, international schools have been identified as one of the subsectors under the National Key Economic Areas (NKEA) aimed at driving the economic growth of the nation (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013).

Secondary religious schools have approximately 7% enrollment of private school students with over 38 schools nationwide in recorded in year 2020. (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020) These schools focus intensively on Islamic education alongside with national curriculum. In contrast to other private schools, religious schools are also more affordable as most of them usually founded by individuals, companies, or Islamic organisation and are usually run as non-profits organisation. (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013)

Independent Chinese schools constitute the most significant constituent of private education alternatives in Malaysia, with an approximate total of 80,048 students, accounting for 55.3% of the total enrolment in the private sector as of the year 2020. This statistic indicates that there are 60 Independent Chinese schools presently functioning in Malaysia, serving a large number of students seeking private education opportunities (Ministry of Education, 2020). Each of these schools is managed by an independently appointed Board of Trustees, working in collaboration with the school leadership. Funding for these schools is derived from tuition fees and charitable donations. Chinese language serves as the primary medium of instruction in these schools, following a curriculum developed by The United Chinese School Committees Association of Malaysia (UCSCAM), also known as Dong Jiao Zong. The curriculum is benchmarked against educational systems in Taiwan and England. Students in these schools are prepared for the Unified Examination Certificate (UEC), which is a standardized examination. Additionally, some schools also prepare their students for the SPM (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013).

Private schools refer to 132 educational institutions, comprising 67 primary and 65 secondary schools, which adhere to the National Curriculum and provide instruction in the six core subjects specified by the 1996 Education Act. Approximately 10% of Malaysian students attending private schools are enrolled in this category of schools, making it the third largest type in the market (Ministry of Education, 2020). Since the main objective of this research is to identify the role of strategic leadership in enhancing parental intention and behaviour towards private schooling, the focus of the present study will be on private schools that offer the national curriculum. This choice of context aims to factor out the influences of preferred curriculum and maintain a consistent framework for the investigation.

2.3 Private Schooling

Private schooling refers to the action of the parents choosing, enrolling, and sending their children to fee paying private schools. Malaysia has a uniquely diverse education system due to multi-racial population. Ong and colleagues (2014) highlighted that the presence of diverse schooling options in Malaysia emphasizes the intricate nature of the country's educational system. Not only is there no one-language school system, but there is a multi-category and multi-tiered school system. However, as argued by Gryzelius (2014) Malaysian education system provides ample choice for parents and students is a false appearance. There is ostensibly a greater choice, yet most of the highly performance reputed public schools are highly competitive and can only be accessed by the elites. Most of the average and poor families in truth do not have much choice other than enrolling their children to the public schools in their catchment area (Gryzelius, 2014). On the other hand, the majority of non-vernacular private schools are expensive and targeted exclusively to well-off families, this kind of school charges fees that put them well out of reach for average families. The statement is consistent with the research findings. Numerous researchers have found that parents who send their children to private school are generally come from higher socio-economic status (Anders et al., 2020).

In Malaysia, fee-paying private secondary schools offering the national curriculum do not differ in terms of curriculum from public schools. Both types of schools have students who sit for the SPM examination and acquire the same qualification. However, the reasons behind the popularity of private schools are still unclear. It could be due to the highly bureaucratic in the public school system, better quality of management and

leadership in private schools, or simply the preference of families with a higher socioeconomic status.

Multiple studies have consistently demonstrated that private schools have a tendency to attract families with higher socioeconomic status and financial resources (Baum et al., 2018; Hofflinger et al., 2020; Jheng et al., 2022). Due to the involvement of monetary contribution, income level becomes an important factor that affects parents' choice of children's education (Rehman et al., 2010). However, it is worth noting that the trend is changing, and there is an increasing number of middle-income parents with higher education backgrounds who strive to enroll their children in private schools (Blake & Mestry, 2020). Research by Dearden et al. (2011) has shown that families with higher household incomes are more likely to enroll their children in private schools. In addition, Dronkers & Avram (2012) have identified a growing trend among middle-income families with higher levels of education to opt for private schools for their children. Studies have also indicated that families from privileged backgrounds tend to select schools based on their perceived quality, and private schools are often regarded as institutions of high quality (Hofflinger et al., 2020). As a result, private schooling and competition may not necessarily benefit less fortunate students, leading to perpetuation or exacerbation of socioeconomic divisions within the education system (Hofflinger et al., 2020). Parents' level of education and occupational prestige also emerge as crucial factors in selecting private schools (Anders et al., 2020; Catt & Rhinesmith, 2016; Iqbal, 2012; Kumar & Choudhury, 2020; Pelt et al., 2007; Yaacob et al., 2014). These studies suggest that families with high socioeconomic status, specifically higher income, higher levels of education and professional status are more likely to enroll their children in private schools. These findings underscore the role of socioeconomic status in school choice and imply that private schools may exacerbate

existing inequalities in the education system. The significant effect of family socioeconomic on private school choice has prompted the research to study the moderating effect of the socioeconomic factors, namely family income, parents' educational background and parents' occupational background between the parents' intention and their actual behaviour of private schooling.

In Malaysia, cultural diversity is a crucial factor to consider when examining the educational system. Recent research conducted by Faas et al. (2018) has highlighted the potential benefits of attending schools with a culturally diverse population, including the development of an understanding of different cultural perspectives and beliefs among peers. According to Kamaludin (2020), school choice in Malaysia is proposed to promote national unity, especially when students from diverse ethnic backgrounds attend the same institution. However, Ting and Lee (2019) and Kamaludin (2020) caution that school choice based on ethnicity and social groups could lead to socioeconomic polarization in society. Despite these challenges, effective school leadership can play a crucial role in establishing a culturally inclusive environment. Devine (2013), Johnson and Fuller (2014), and Faas et al. (2018) have noted the importance of leadership provided by principals, teachers, and school boards in creating a respectful and inclusive school environment. By promoting cultural diversity and inclusivity, schools can work towards preventing socioeconomic polarization and fostering respect for cultural differences.

However, there is an ongoing debate regarding the nature of the relationship between private and public schools, with contrasting opinions on whether it is competitive or complementary. The complementary perspective argues that private schools serve as a supplement to the insufficient provision of public schools. On the other hand, the

competing view suggests that private schools overlap with and compete against public schools, leading to a transfer of students from the public sector to the private sector, thus exacerbating social inequalities (Ashley & Engel, 2014).

Yoon, Lubienski, and Lee (2018) suggested that the disparity in school choice is closely linked to the unequal distribution of capital and wealth throughout Vancouver city. According to their study, individuals who opt out of under-subscribed public schools tend to reside in neighborhoods with relatively higher capital resources compared to those who choose to stay in their assigned schools. On the other hand, those who enroll in over-subscribed private elite schools in wealthy areas usually come from neighborhoods with above-average levels of capital. The finding corroborated the view that high-quality private schools are attracting students from the public school sector, leading to an increasing level of segregation. A similar situation is also occurring in Malaysia, as reported in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, where 11% of the 2010 cohort switched from the public school system to private schools. Kamaludin (2020) highlighted that parental choice of private schools has the potential to contribute to socioeconomic polarization in Malaysia's multicultural society.

Only a small number of studies exhibit complementarity relationship between private and government school provision. Oketch et al.'s (2010) study in Kenya which found that private schools operate in informal slum settlements due to inadequate access to government provision, is an example that demonstrates a complementary relationship. Similarly, Andrabi et al. (2008) conclude that private schools in villages enhance the overall enrolment, providing proof that increasing enrolments in the private sector are not necessarily a source of decrease in enrolment by public schools (Ashley & Engel, 2014).

Pal, (2009) suggested that the competition relationship between private school and government school is insignificant. This was attributed to the lack of genuine competition between private and public schools, as the latter enjoyed secure funding, resulting in less motivation to compete on quality (Ashley & Engel, 2014). However, Andrabi et al.'s (2009) study seems to contradict Pal's (2009) conclusion, as they found that market competition led to improvements in the quality of all types of schools in rural Pakistan.

In remote rural India, Harma & Rose (2012) discovered findings that directly challenge the assumption that competition benefits overall education outcomes, particularly in terms of equity. Their study revealed some significant unintended consequences of market competition between private and public schools. Private schools did not show any positive effect in enhancing the quality of public schools and were found to discriminate against the poorest households by diverting them to lower-quality public schools, as the existence of private schools indirectly encouraged those who could afford the fees to abandon public schools (Ashley & Engel, 2014).

Private school leadership is an additional factor that can play a significant role in understanding the role of private schools in Malaysia's education system. Such leadership can impact the quality of education, overall school environment, and the decision-making process of parents when choosing between private and public schools. Therefore, in the next subtopics, in addition to discussing the factors that influence parents' behaviour towards private schooling, we will also examine the role of private school leadership in promoting and sustaining the quality of education in Malaysia's private schools. This will provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that

contribute to the parents' decision-making process when it comes to choosing between private and public schools in Malaysia's multicultural society.

2.4 Leadership in Private School

Private schools navigate a challenging landscape, juggling financial sustainability and academic excellence, with parents as their key stakeholders. The absence of a specific leadership model for private schools has resulted in a fragmented literature, presenting challenges in integrating findings across studies (Beri & Shu'aibu, 2018; Pihie et al., 2018; Mermer et al., 2022). Leadership in education draws inspiration from various disciplines, resulting in a diverse array of leadership styles. Hallinger and Leithwood's influential work underscores the significant impact of school leadership on different outcomes (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1994, 1996; Hallinger, 2011, 2013, 2018; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2019; Leithwood et al., 2006).

Within this landscape, the concept of strategic leadership emerges as a broad and encompassing term, signifying leadership at the highest organizational levels. Samimi et al., (2022) define strategic leadership as the functions performed by top-level individuals, including CEOs, TMT members, Directors, and General Managers, with the intention of having strategic consequences for the organization. These functions involve making strategic decisions, engaging with external stakeholders, managing human resources, motivating and influencing, managing information, overseeing operations, managing social and ethical issues, and handling conflicting demands.

Strategic leadership, being a broad and comprehensive concept, encapsulates various leadership characteristics. Notably, entrepreneurial leadership shares significant overlap with the characteristics of strategic leadership (Abdelgawad et al., 2013; Covin

& Slevin, 2008; Hayter et al., 2018; Simsek et al., 2015). Entrepreneurial leadership, emphasizing innovation, creativity, and effective resource utilization (Kasim, 2021; Kasim et al., 2022; Mohd Kasim & Zakaria, 2019a, 2019b; Sandybayev, 2019), can be seen as a subset of strategic leadership. This implies that when we discuss private school leadership, we are inherently delving into the realm of strategic leadership, with entrepreneurial leadership serving as a specialized dimension within this broader framework.

Research underscores the positive influence of strategic leadership on the competitive advantage of private educational institutions, reflecting its pivotal role in this context (Tairas et al., 2016). As private schools operate within a competitive market, strategic leadership becomes indispensable for their survival and growth. The growth of private schooling has led to an increased focus on entrepreneurial leadership as well, given its significance in navigating challenges and fostering innovation (Basson & Mestry, 2019; OECD, 2017; Brauckmann et al., 2019; Mermer et al., 2022).

To enhance our understanding of private school leadership, particularly in the context of strategic leadership, we delve into entrepreneurial leadership as a specialized aspect within this broader framework. Entrepreneurial leadership, with its emphasis on creativity, innovation, and effective resource management, becomes a key component in private school leadership. The exceptional marketing skills of entrepreneurial private school leaders, understanding and catering to parents' preferences, gain prominence within the strategic leadership discourse (Kongjinda et al., 2020).

In conclusion, private school leadership is inherently strategic, with characteristics of entrepreneurial leadership contributing to its effectiveness. Understanding the

multifaceted role of private school leaders within the broader scope of strategic leadership is essential for navigating the intricate challenges of the private school environment (Beri & Shu'aibu, 2018; Pihie et al., 2018; Mermer et al., 2022).

2.5 Factors Influencing Parents' Private Schooling Behaviour

Previous research has identified several factors which will influence the decision of the parents who send their children to private schools. The various parameters on which parents take their final decision are proximity, quality education, peer group, curriculum, learning activity, teacher quality, exposure given to a child, achievements of the school, school's goodwill, curriculum and co-curriculum activity, techno-based learning, healthy environment, etc. (Abdulkadiroğlu et al., 2020; Blundell Richard; Dearden Lorraine; Sibiet Luke, 2010; Diwakar, 2016; Holmes Erickson, 2017; Joshi, 2014; Rowe & Lubienski, 2017; Schneider & Buckley, 2002).

According to the study by Bedaso Merga & Shobisso Sofamo (2020), crucial factors influencing parents' selection of private schools include their perceptions of school quality, school expenses, and teacher performance. Moreover, practical considerations such as household monthly income, proximity to the school, and the number of children in the family significantly influence the likelihood of parents choosing a private school for their child, as indicated in the research by Potterton (2020) and Rowe & Lubienski (2017).

Kampulin (2009) on the other hand, has identified six major considerations of parents in choosing school for their children. They are convenience, school's reputation, teachers' reputation, influence of relatives and/or friends, personal experience, and language related. The six considerations identified by Kampulin (2009) can be organised

systematically according to Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). According to Ajzen (1991) human behaviour is affected by their beliefs and in turn form their attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norms as well as perceived behavioural control. School management, leadership, school culture and reputation are the perceptions which will form the attitude of the parents toward the school when making choice, whereas influence of society, relatives and friends are the subjective norm factors that influencing the parent decision. Convenience, financial ability, personal experience and language related factors describing to which extent the parents could control their behaviour and thus influence their behaviour of private schooling.

In an effort to review the literature in a more systematic way, the identified determinants of private school choice will be categorized into the three beliefs as proposed by the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), namely behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief. The rationale of adopting the framework of TPB to classify the identified factors will be explained further in the subtopic of theoretical framework.

2.5.1 Behaviour Belief

School leadership and management have a considerable impact on the school culture, teacher satisfaction, performance, and overall school quality (Drysdale et al., 2016). Principals play a critical role in schools, encompassing various leadership roles, including managerial, political, instructional, institutional, human resource, and symbolic roles (Hallinger, 2013). These roles indirectly affect the learning environment by influencing teachers, structures, and processes in the school over time (Aydin, 2013; Bellibas & Liu, 2018; Harris, 2015). Numerous empirical studies have demonstrated the significance of school principals' leadership styles in explaining the success of

school processes and outcomes (Day et al., 2016; Heffernan, 2018; Jacobson, 2011). Among the available studies, much of the evidence-based research directs attention to the influence of transformative, transactional, instructional, and distributed leadership styles (Bellibas & Liu, 2018; Harris, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2008). Numerous researchers have established links between leadership and school success (Day et al., 2016; Sammons et al., 2014; Ustinoff-brumbelow, 2019). Research has indicated that instructional school leaders play an active role in conducting classroom observations and providing direct instruction to ensure effective teaching and learning within their schools. Their focus on instructional leadership is closely connected to organizational management, as these principals impact the school's overall quality through their influence on school staff and structures (Bellibas & Liu, 2018; Ghavifekr & Ramzy, 2020). As leaders, they are responsible for recruiting, assigning, and retaining high-quality teachers, as well as ensuring their continuous professional development. Studies have further revealed that student learning improves when principals prioritize organizational management, facilitating teachers' access to support and utilizing school resources for instructional enhancement (Ustinoff-brumbelow, 2019). However, the leadership approach, particularly the entrepreneurial leadership style, plays a pivotal role in motivating employees to exceed their expected performance. When the organization embraces and supports the entrepreneurial leadership style, it can lead to enhanced overall organizational performance (Imran & Aldaas, 2020).

The following subtopics will review the factors influencing parents' school choice which are classified under parents' behaviour belief on the school leaders and private schooling.

(a) School Climate & Culture

School management plays a crucial role in improving the performance of the students by monitoring the school culture and climate (Koundyannan et al., 2020). School culture and climate influence every aspect of the school function effectiveness (Koundyannan et al., 2020). School culture and climate, as embraced by all stakeholders, contribute to the sustained achievement of objectives (Lewis, Asberry, DeJarnett & King, 2016). Schools that foster a professional learning community among teachers by promoting a positive school culture and climate experience continued improvement in student achievement (Gong & Subramaniam, 2020; Miller, 2018). Thus, effective leadership must play a direct and indirect role in shaping the school's cultural and climate conditions for ongoing improvement. In this process, school leadership acts as a mediator in shaping school culture and climate (Bellibas & Liu, 2018; Koundyannan et al., 2020).

The study by Koundyannan et al. (2020) emphasized that both school climate and school culture significantly contribute to school effectiveness. While these two constructs are often used interchangeably, they do have fundamental differences. School climate is commonly defined as the "quality and character of school life," encompassing individuals' experiences in the school, including learning and building relationships, while also reflecting the collective beliefs and attitudes within the school (School Climate Council, 2007, p. 5). It represents the overall experience or "feel" of the school, transcending individual experiences.

On the other hand, school culture is defined as the shared values, rules, belief patterns, teaching and learning approaches, behaviors, and relationships among individuals within or across the school (Kane et al., 2016). Culture encompasses the school's norms, unwritten rules, traditions, and expectations, influencing how people dress and interact

with each other. Culture is deeply ingrained in a school and may only be transformed over time through systematic changes in the school's climate (Kane et al., 2016).

Numerous research studies have consistently demonstrated the significant and direct influence of school leadership on various school processes (Hallinger, 2013). These processes encompass a wide range of components, including teachers' instructional practices, curriculum quality, school climate, and school culture, all of which have indirect effects on learning outcomes (Bellibas & Liu, 2018). Key components of school processes have been identified to play crucial roles in the daily functioning of schools. These components involve fostering teacher collaboration, discipline and subject mastery, addressing student differences and development, and establishing an orderly learning environment. These factors collectively shape the overall educational experience within schools (Bellibas & Liu, 2018).

Researchers have consistently emphasized the importance of school leadership in shaping the school climate (Amedome, 2018). School climate is a broad concept that encompasses the quality and character of school life, reflecting people's experiences within the school, including norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures (Beth et al., 2014). Studies have indicated that the type of leadership style adopted by principals significantly influences the school climate (Tajasom et al., 2013). Among these studies, Mendel et al. (2002) found that a collaborative leadership style has more positive effects on the school climate compared to a directive leadership approach, highlighting the effectiveness of distributed leadership in establishing a positive school environment. However, Bellibas and Liu (2018) presented evidence that the implementation of both distributed and instructional leadership by principals is crucial in creating a positive school

environment characterized by mutual respect and trust, which is considered the most important component for school effectiveness and success. These findings are consistent with previous studies that underscore the indispensable role of principals in establishing a positive school climate (Agustina et al., 2020; Amedome, 2018; Bellibas & Liu, 2018; Tajasom et al., 2013).

According to Kalkan et al. (2020), there is a significant correlation between leadership styles, school culture, and organizational image. The study found that the leadership style of school principals is a significant predictor of school culture, and school culture is a significant predictor of organizational image. School culture mediates the relationship between leadership styles and organizational image. The research suggests that the leadership style of the principal has a positive impact on the organization's members and helps to build a strong school culture. Effective leadership and school culture both contribute positively to the organizational image of the educational institution.

Recent studies on school reform have highlighted the importance of embracing inclusive and collaborative school management approaches. Consequently, school leaders are urged to delve deeper into the school environment, adopt a fresh outlook on events, engage teachers in the process of school improvement, and implement consensus-building practices within the organization (Utash, 2017). Bellibas and Liu (2018) argued that leadership appeared as the most important factor to establish respect in school. Their findings suggest that irrespective of school characteristics, such as location, scale, and socioeconomic status, as well as principal characteristics, including gender, educational level, experience, and employment status, principals play a fundamental role in establishing a positive school climate. They achieve this by

fostering staff respect and ensuring teachers' collegial work, responsibility, and accountability towards implementing the best instructional practices and facilitating student learning. Moreover, principals engage staff, parents, and students in decision-making processes, promoting a sense of involvement and ownership within the school community.

Parents' perception of their children's schools can have far-reaching effects. Their perceptions may influence how parents engage with the school, and even parents' school choice (Beth et al., 2014). School climate is associated with a host of important student outcomes, including attendance, discipline problems, mental health, and academic achievement which is closely related to parents' perceptions and attitudes about the school (Shakeel & DeAngelis, 2018). Many parents decide where to live and send their children to school, based on their perceptions of school climate (Beth et al., 2014). Research found that more than a quarter of parents moved to their current neighborhood for the school (Grady & Bielick, 2010). Conversely, negative perceptions of climate are associated with parents' decisions to withdraw students from schools (Beth et al., 2014). A negative school climate can have detrimental effects on student learning in the short term and may also increase the likelihood of students engaging in criminal behavior as adults. School-related crimes can range from bullying to physical assaults, which may result in depression and difficulty adjusting to negative environments later in life (Shakeel & DeAngelis, 2018). Furthermore, research has shown that public school environments tend to contribute to an increased fear of crime among students compared to private schools. In contrast, private schools are associated with an improved school climate, leading to reduced student misbehavior and fear of physical abuse when compared to public schools (Shakeel & DeAngelis, 2018; Lleras, 2008). Given the increasing prevalence of school choice for instance private school,

international school and Chinese Independent High School, school leaders must understand and be able to assess parents' views of school climate to attract and retain students.

(b) Accountability and teacher quality

Parents indifferent the cost and send their children to private school which provide the same curriculum mainly is because paying fees made private schools more accountable (Davies & Davies, 2014). Autonomy is an important characteristic of private school. Davies (2014) argued that private schools management use resources efficiently because their autonomy gives them freedom to make efficient choices in response to market pressures. Similarly, Hahn, Wang & Yang, (2018) also found that private high schools have better student outcomes than public high schools. The results suggest that autonomy in management decisions explains the positive student outcomes in private schools. Schirmer's (2010) conducted research in South Africa and found that parents felt payment of fees made private schools is more accountable to them. Private schools are perceived as having higher accountability and that was the major advantage of private schools over government subsidised public schools (Potterton, 2020).

Researchers point out that the majority of private school teachers were unqualified or under-qualified as compared to government-aided public school. (Ohba, 2012; Kremer & Muralidharan, 2008; Schirmer 2010; Aslam & Kingdon, 2011) Due to this reason, untrained teachers in private school exerted greater effort to compensate their qualification resulting in higher accountability toward parents. (Andrabi et al. 2008)

Ashley and Engel (2014) meticulously reviewed numerous literatures and found that levels of teaching activity are significantly higher in private compared with public

schools. The above finding is consistent with the study by Muralidharam and Kremer (2006) in India, their study concluded that there is more teaching activity in private schools compared to public schools, fewer instances of multi-grade teaching, and a significantly higher amount of interaction time between teachers and students.

Aslam and Kingdon (2011) used cross-sectional study in Pakistan and found that how teachers spend their time in class had a more significant effect on learning outcomes than the more observable teacher characteristics of certification and experience. This rebuts the thinking that certified government teachers always have an advantage over untrained teachers. Teachers' success lay in adopting a teaching methodology that encouraged learning, alongside an interactive approach during lessons. (Ashley & Engel, 2014) Moreover, private school teachers' salaries are largely come from the fees paid by the parents, in order to secure their job, private school teachers tend to be more accountable and responsible. Andrabi et al. (2008) Tooley, Bao, Dixon, and Merrifield (2011) similarly conclude that rates of absence are generally higher among government versus private school teachers. Teacher engagement is often seen as an important criterion by parents. Parents preferred private school due to their ability to ensure some learning is occurring. (Härmä, 2009)

In a cross-countries research conducted by Bloom, Lemos, Sadun, and Reenen (2014), the focus was on principal accountability and leadership. On average, private schools scored the highest across countries (Bloom et al., 2014). A new discovery from the study was that schools with autonomy also showed significantly higher management scores. However, Bloom et al., (2014) clarify that the better performance is not solely attributed to autonomy, but rather to how autonomy is utilized. Principals who demonstrate strong accountability and exercise effective leadership through a coherent

long-term strategy for the school appear to be two key factors responsible for a significant portion of the superior management performance observed in such schools

The primary goal of school principals and teachers is to provide a high-quality educational experience for students to achieve their potential in life. Researchers have identified that the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement is the quality of teacher (Ustinoff-brumbelow, 2019). Inspiring and highly informed teachers possess the skillset to accomplish the mission of serving the social, emotional, academic, and developmental needs of students. Principals may serve a pivotal role in helping teachers accomplish their mission by providing the structure needed to support student success (Ustinoff-brumbelow, 2019).

Research finding by Ustinoff-brumbelow (2019) also points out that investments made by principals to provide teacher training and support increases teacher effectiveness and improves the quality of schools. Furthermore Rohde et al., (2019) discovered that the second most frequently cited reason as a Top 3 reason in parental school choice is teacher quality. This finding suggests that when parents acting as school shoppers tend to value relevant teacher quality and school outcome. (Rohde et al., 2019).

(c) *Facilities and Infrastructure*

Generally private school has more extensive physical infrastructure and facilities as compared to the government school, which enable greater access to technology, offered additional language classes as well as a whole range of other academic and non-academic activities drama, music, art, and foreign languages that widen and enhance their educational experience (Bedaso Merga & Shobisso Sofamo, 2020).

The quality of education largely depends on the educational institution's environment, and school facilities can also impact students' learning progress. Private schools often expand by constructing new buildings or facilities tailored to support instructional needs (Rehman et al., 2010). Parents often choose private schools over public schools because of the school environment and facilities they offer. Private schools are preferred due to their superior education environment and better facilities, which are considered more conducive compared to those in public schools. Parents believe that modern and well-maintained facilities not only enhance the schools' reputation but also create an optimal learning environment for their children (Figlio et al., 1997; Yaacob et al., 2014).

Evans & Cleghorn (2014) reported that parents found that the private school has well-known high standards, and ample resources, classrooms are cheerfully decorated by the teachers, this created a cheerfully and conducive learning environment for the students. In contrast, the study by Iqbal (2012) indicated that public schools have large, spacious and according to standard school buildings whereas private schools do not have large spacious buildings with small classrooms. He further concluded that the smaller classroom in private school enables teachers to pay individual attention to students and homework is assigned and checked regularly.

(d) School Quality and Performance

In the selection of private schools, school quality and performance always serve as the benchmark. School quality and examination results of schools are key features guiding parents' school choices (Bosetti, 2004; Jackson & Bisset, 2014). Kampulin (2009) noted similar findings in Malaysia, highlighting that school quality is a priority for parents when selecting any type of school.

School quality is an inclusive term, it representing the school image, and the values the school embracing. Beavis (2004) pin down reasons for the selection of a private or public school, one factor stood out: the extent to which the school embraced traditional values. School quality does not solely rely on the values it embraces, it relies heavily on its performance and achievement as well. School performance is one of the influencing factors that will affect parents' decision in choosing private schools. The parents agreed that school academic performances contributed to the school reputation which is going to attract them in selecting the school. The school academic performance was important for the parents as they put a trust in the school to ensure the children's future education. (Yaacob et al., 2014)

School quality and performance are indiscerptible, researchers proposed that school quality is generally viewed as one of the most important considerations while making school choice (Abdulkadiroğlu et al., 2020; OECD, 2012; Osth et al., 2013; Tooley et al., 2011b). R. Singh and Sarkar (2012) also find perceptions of quality teaching to be the driver of decisions to send children to private schools in India. Their study robustly demonstrates that parental aspirations, including educational attainment and future occupation, were key factors driving the increased demand for private schooling. (R. Singh & Sarkar, 2012).

Examination results are also frequently seen as a key marker of performance. Ashley and Engel (2014) argued that private schools scored better on examinations as a main reason for the parents enrolling their children. One of the prominent explanations frequently given to account for better performance in private schools is that they generally deploy better teaching practices.(Ashley & Engel, 2014). Singh (2013) found

similar findings that teachers in private schools in rural areas are more likely to have adopted pedagogies and teaching styles that lead to improved student outcomes. Research found that children enrolled in private schools significantly outperform children enrolled in the public schools despite much greater teacher salary expenditures in the latter.(Tooley et al., 2011) This is because sometimes activity is equated with level of teacher 'effort', as in Kingdon and Banerji (2009) study in Uttar Pradesh, they noted that government school teacher self-report spending about 75% of their school time teaching whereas private school teacher spend 90%. A similar conclusion is reached by Oketch, Mutisya, Ngware, and Ezeh, (2014) in Kenya, they proposed that perceptions of teacher and/or school performance, were the central reason for transfers into private schools from public or other private schools. In Malaysia, there exists an equity gap between private schools following the national curriculum and public schools, as the former tend to achieve approximately 6% higher scores in the *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) examination. While a portion of this achievement gap may be attributed to a more favorable learning environment (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013).

Furthermore, school performance is closely linked to school improvement efforts (Sammons et al., 2014). Scholars and educators have explored the benefits of entrepreneurial approaches to improve schools, viewing entrepreneurial leadership as a mindset and lifestyle rather than solely focused on establishing new businesses (Akmaliah et al., 2014). Thus, entrepreneurial characteristics and strategies can be applied to enhance all aspects of education, particularly school leadership, by influencing individuals' behaviors and task performance. Therefore, school principals must develop and embody entrepreneurial leadership qualities to enhance school effectiveness and facilitate the process of school innovation (Pihie et al., 2018).

School innovativeness consists of three main components: the ability to explore new educational opportunities, the propensity to take action and exploit those opportunities, and the transformative impact of implemented innovations on school performance (Eyal & Inbar, 2003). By incorporating entrepreneurial features into school organizations, they can succeed in providing an effective teaching and learning environment. Additionally, entrepreneurial leadership competencies enable school leaders to navigate the complexities and constraints of the educational landscape, including rapid changes, limited resources, and various factors influencing school performance, while preparing learners for a highly competitive future (Eyal & Inbar, 2003; Helvacı & Özkaya, 2020; Pontoh et al., 2021; Thomassen et al., 2020). These competencies empower school leaders to foster significant changes and innovations in private schools by looking beyond the current status and creating new opportunities for improvement (Akmaliah et al., 2014).

Research findings underscore the significant impact of school leaders' creativity in implementing innovative practices, such as cultivating strong relationships between the school and parents (Athanasoula-Reppa, Makri-Botsari, Kounenou & Psycharis, 2010). Moreover, the leadership style of school principals plays a crucial role in promoting organizational creativity and innovativeness (Akmaliah et al., 2014). Eyal and Kark (2004) established a connection between school principals' leadership style and entrepreneurial strategies in elementary schools, confirming the hypothesized relationship between transformational leadership and entrepreneurial strategies. Additionally, school leaders exhibit varying degrees of entrepreneurial characteristics, such as proactivity and innovativeness, when addressing daily challenges (Akmaliah et

al., 2014). These qualities significantly contribute to enhancing school quality and shaping parents' perceptions of private schooling.

(e) Discipline

Policymakers, educators, parents, and school children nationwide understand that for schools to provide safe and positive learning environments, there must be rules that govern student conduct (Fabelo et al., 2011). Poor school discipline will inevitably affect students' overall well-being in school. While researchers studying school choice have shown that some parents do value discipline when choosing schools (Golann et al., 2019). Research also found that firm discipline in school is the major reason parents opt private school (Evans & Cleghorn, 2014). Shakeel and DeAngelis (2018) reported that principals in private schools are much less likely to report the presence of strict school safety practices than their public-school counterparts. They concluded that private schools may offer a school environment that is more suitable for long-term success due to the lower likelihood of crime-related incidences at private school campuses. Similarly, Beavis (2004) discovered that the most common reasons given for changing from a government-aided school to private school included the view that there is better discipline in private schools. This is supported by Goh and Dolnicar (2006) who found that poor school discipline is one of the reasons why parents avoid certain schools.

Shakeel & DeAngelis (2018) further point out that private schools also experience less physical bullying, lower rates of disciplinary problems, and increased school safety than public schools. In addition, research showed that parents who actively involved in school choice significantly reduces the likelihood that students commit crimes as adults

and become pregnant as teenagers while increasing the likelihood of graduating from high school (Shakeel & DeAngelis, 2018).

School discipline affect a wide range of school activities (Golann et al., 2019). In the research of Shakeel and DeAngelis (2018) found that a lower percentage of private school teachers than public school teachers reported interference in teaching because of student misbehaviour and student tardiness and skipping class. They further reported that fewer private school students than public school students were involved in gangsterism. In addition, a lower percentage of private school students than public school students reported seeing hate-related graffiti at their schools. Thus, Shakeel and DeAngelis (2018) concluded that private school has more advantages in terms of school discipline.

(f) Teacher Student Ratio

There are several reasons behind parents' decision to choose private schools over public schools. Many private schools include more individualized attention for students, smaller classes, as well as higher levels of interaction between the school and parents due to lower teacher to student's ratio. Parents wants their children to get individual attention and it is possible in private school where at primary stage the class size is maintained around 15-20 students on an average. (Diwakar, 2016) These are corroborated by other studies of primary and secondary aged children across rural and urban India. R. Singh & Sarkar (2012) adopted mixed methods to study private schooling in Andhra Pradesh and find that most private school teachers regularly checked the homework of children, which was determined to play a significant role in learning. This was partly aided by the prevalence lower teacher to student's ratio in private schools, enabling teachers to offer more individual attention to the students than

in public schools (Ashley & Engel, 2014). Muralidharam and Kremer (2006) also reported the same, by using quantitative observational methods, they noted that teacher student's ratio is significantly lower in private school compared to government school. Similar picture emerges in Africa, in Hartwig (2013) study of 56 villages in Tanzania, he discovered that private secondary schools on average have a teacher to student's ratio of 1:33 and public schools had a teacher to student's ratio of 1:48. Schirmer (2010) concluded the same in South Africa. A mixed-method study was adopted to study government and private school across six districts and found that teacher student's ratio ranged from 1:11 to 1:24 in private schools and 1:27 to 1:32 in public schools. Beavis (2004) and Rehman et al., (2010) affirmed that private school offer relatively smaller classes size and more individual attention as compared to government school is one of the factor parents choose private school over government school.

Above are the factors which are categorised under the behaviour belief which will lead to favourable or unfavourable attitude of parents toward private schooling in turn influence the parents' intention and behaviour of private schooling. The next subtopic will discuss the subsequent belief which is normative belief.

2.5.2 Normative Belief

According to (Ajzen, 1991), normative belief is human perception on subjective norm, which is the social factor that predict human behaviour, it refers to the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behaviour.

People around to some extent will influence the decision process. Kampulin (2009) studies the determinants that affect Malay parents in choosing primary school and found that most of the parents are influenced by their relatives and friends when it coming to

make a school choice (Kampulin, 2009). Similarly Goh and Dolnicar (2006) also argued that friends and relatives are perceived as the two most important reference groups influencing parental school choice.

Research argued that most parents did not visit schools prior to enrolment – most of the information came through conversations with other parents. The perception of ‘private schools as better quality’ is informed informally, often through parents’ informal social networks; such sources play a significant but often under-recognised role in informing users in their choice of school. (Ashley & Engel, 2014)

In a research in Indiana private schools, researchers found that parents overwhelmingly view their social networks as the most trusted source for learning about their new private school, with 50 percent citing friends or relatives and 26 percent citing church as their most trusted source for school information (Catt & Rhinesmith, 2016). The findings is congruent with the findings of Goh and Dolcinar (2006) who found that the identification of the church community as an important reference group, which includes church friends and the pastor, suggesting that normative influence can have a major impact on school choice decisions. (Goh & Dolnicar, 2006)

On the other hand, decision making theory suggests that an individual would normally place a higher value on the option that peers are choosing. (Beresford & Sloper, 2008) Therefore, others parents’ school option may have an effect on parent school choice. (Booth, 2017; Melanie Nind, 2005) Booth (2017) concluded that view of professional, children opinion and staff in educational settings may also impact on parent decision making process.

In Malaysia context, the primary social influences on their school choice come from friends and education personnel in preschools and schools (Ting & Lee, 2019). In the research of Ting and Lee (2019), they discovered that the indigenous parents tend to be more subject to social pressure in making school choices than the Chinese and Malay parents, who mostly enroll their children in Chinese- and Malay-medium primary schools, respectively.

Despite many literatures argue that parents choose school based largely on academic criteria, Schneider, Teske, Marschall, and Schools (2000) suggestion is somewhat contradictory. They suggested that not all parents would choose schools according to academic criteria. Students' social composition in the school is found to be one of the parents' concerns. Other than student's achievement, infrastructure, discipline, extracurricular activities, religious matters, the opportunity to interact with a certain peer groups was also highlighted. (Figlio et al., 1997). Private school seen to be has higher peer quality than public school, otherwise no student would be willing to pay to attend a private school. (Epple & Romano, 1998). Epple and Romano (1998) further argued that students' achievement depends on own ability and on peers' abilities. (Epple & Romano, 1998) Therefore the peer groups or the social classes in the school will also affect parent school choice. Rowe & Lubienski (2017) discovered that parents tend to select schools primarily based on socio-demographic characteristics, resulting in increased social segregation, and undermining the potential for school choice to bring about improvements in quality.

Another interesting finding also shows how social trends shape parents' school choice. In the research carried out by Abdulkadri~glu, Pathak, Schellenberg and Walters in 2020 discovered that parents have a preference for schools that enroll high-achieving

peers, and these schools demonstrate greater improvements in student outcomes in both the short and long term. Interestingly, parents' preferences are not influenced by school effectiveness or academic match quality, once the quality of peers is taken into account (Abdulkadiroğlu et al., 2020). In essence, parents' school choices are influenced by social trends within affluent social classes.

The next subtopic will be discussing the subsequent belief in TPB which is control belief.

2.5.3 Control Belief

(a) Personal Experience

Perceived behaviour control refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour and it is assumed to reflect past experience as well as anticipated barriers and obstacles. Early studies by Kampulin (2009) found that parents are influenced by their personal experience when making school choice for their children. In Australia and United Kingdom if one of their parents once attended private school their children are more likely to attend private school. (Dearden et al., 2011) This supported that past experience may affect parent decision when making school choice for their children.

Beresford and Sloper (2008) suggested that according to heuristic theory, people may choose according to familiarity and recognition. When one of the options or attributes is familiar and recognised by the decision maker, they have higher tendency to choose the recognised option. (Beresford & Sloper, 2008) Therefore Booth (2017) proposed that if a parent know someone who works in the particular school, it may be considered a more valued choice or if a particular school has students of the same races,

background or specific need, they may experience recognition and relate to that option more.

(b) Government Policy

Goh and Dolnicar (2006) study identified the role of government in restricting and allocation of schools to local residential areas as another perceived difficulty faced by parents in attempting to select a school outside of their suburbs. This will prompt the parents to choose private schools which less restrictions applied. Furthermore, the inconsistency and frequent changes in educational policies have also deterred parents. For instance, the sudden abolishment of centralized examinations such as UPSR and PT3, without proper contingency plans to assess students' strengths and determine the subjects they would take upon entering upper secondary school (Povera, Solhi, 2022), has raised concerns and undermined parents' confidence in the standard of the public school system (Latif, 2022). Moreover, political factors, such as the frequent changes in the Minister of Education since 2018, have resulted in inconsistent policies, severely eroding parents' confidence in the public school system. Additionally, the policy flip-flops, especially regarding the teaching of English, have persisted and undermined parents' confidence. Nationalist critics who express concerns about the potential decline of the Malay language have long targeted the promotion of English, have prompt the parents to opt for private schools (Mayberry, 2015).

(c) Affordable Price

Literatures show that most of the parents who send their children to private school come from higher socioeconomic level. Parents felt capable of paying fees and enrolling their children in the school of their choice. (Lee, et al., 2017) Conversely, approximately one third of public school parents said they would change to a private school if the fees

were no more than for public schools, suggesting that if private education were more affordable the drift away from public schools would continue. (Beavis, 2004)

Similarly, the burden of school costs also found as a central issue in parents' school choice decisions in Kenya (Zuilkowski et al., 2018). Costs of schooling were identified as the number-one reason that many children were not enrolled in school in Kenya. In their study (Zuilkowski et al., 2018), school fees were the second most common reason given by parents as their reason for choosing a school.

(d) Dissatisfaction over Government School/Public school

The closely related issue of dissatisfaction with public schools has also been identified as a significant factor driving the demand for and enrollment in private schooling. Parents who express dissatisfaction with government schools often choose to send their children to private schools. (Yaacob et al., 2014). The more likely government schools are perceived as incapable of providing quality services, the more likely parents were to place their children in private schools (Thapa, 2013). The private school system has become a viable alternative to the public school system for a growing number of Malaysian parents who are financially capable. This is mainly due to the perception that public schools are overcrowded and provide less personalized education (Dixon & Tooley, 2012). As a result, parents are increasingly turning to private schools as a preferred option for their children's education (Latha, 2015). These were supported by the studies in India, Srivastava (2008) finds that all parents interviewed viewed private schools as offering their children better quality education than government schools, with the main deficiencies in the government school is said to be poor attitudes and work practices of teachers which including irregular attendance and poor discipline. The findings were consistent with Baird (2009) who proposed that parents who choose

private school are due to dissatisfaction with government. He further suggests that dissatisfaction extends beyond concerns over poor infrastructure or unprofessional work practice of teacher such as high rates absenteeism.

Parents in India are now 'voting with their feet' by opting for private school and choosing quality (Johnson & Bowles, 2010). The people believed the government was incapable of providing quality education hence they are more likely to place their children in private schools. (Ashley & Engel, 2014)

(e) Convenient and Proximity

When considering school choices, the location of the school is frequently discussed in literature. Goldring and Rowley (2006) emphasize the importance of convenience as a key factor parents take into account when selecting a school. This is because most schools do not offer transportation services, thus making convenience an essential aspect that encompasses factors such as distance to and from the school and transportation options.

Parents generally prefer schools which are located near to their house or workplace. This is supported by Evans & Cleghorn (2014) who discovered that 46.5% stated that the fact the school is located close to where they live is important; another 60.3% stated that the school is close to where they work, again suggesting location is an important factor in school choice. On the other hand, Kampulin (2009) found that convenience was given top priority in choosing primary school for the children. Additionally, for working-class parents, the location of the school is an important consideration, whether it is in close proximity to their residence or workplace. This is to ensure a balance between these two aspects. (Ching, Jasmy, & Rahman, 2016; E. B. Goldring & Phillips,

2008) Goh and Dolnicar (2006) also noted that parents are avoiding certain school because of far distance of school and transport difficulties.

(f) Medium of Instruction

The language policy journey in Malaysia education has been a tumultuous one of reversal and re-reversal. ETeMS or English for Teaching Mathematics and Science was introduced in Malaysia in 2002 to enhance the English language skills of Malaysian learners. The move was controversial as it has mooted much debate as non-proficient learners especially the rural students who less exposed to English environment were said to have been affected by this regulation as they are said their Mathematics and Science score have deteriorated since the two subjects were taught in English. Following the dispute over ETeMS, in 2010, the Malaysian government decided to revert to teaching Mathematics and Science in the national language, beginning 2012. (Nor et al., 2011)

Decisions on language-in-education policy bring impact to various stakeholders – the politicians of the ruling party, linguists, parents and most importantly the students. (Nor et al., 2011) The reposition of Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of instruction for Science and Mathematics has created a chaos and was not fully implemented since 2012 because some of the urban national schools and private schools still teaching Mathematics and Science in English. Medium of instruction for Science and Mathematics is ambiguous. Indirectly, there is a dual language system in teaching Science and Mathematics -- National school majorly using Bahasa Malaysia, whereas private schools using English. This posed a great tendency for the urban parents who prefer English as the medium of instruction to send their children to private school.

Literatures shows that parents are willing to travel or pay for transport to ensure their children are access to a well-resourced and well-governed English medium school. (Evans & Cleghorn, 2014)

The choice of medium of instruction significantly influences the teaching and learning process. In Tanzania, Babaci-Wilhite (2010) discovered that despite not understanding English, most parents favored English-medium schools over Kiswahili-medium public schools. The parents perceived English as an academic language that could enhance their children's learning abilities and future opportunities. Similarly, in Hong Kong, parents believed that an English-medium education would provide their children with better access to higher education and well-paying jobs. They resisted the implementation of Chinese as the default medium of instruction after Hong Kong's return to China in September 1998 (Tsui et al., 1999). However, in South Africa, Evans and Cleghorn's (2014) survey yielded contrasting results, showing that more parents preferred schools that offered English and Afrikaans over English-medium schools.

In Malaysia, selection of schools, particularly concerning the medium of instruction, holds significant importance in relation to cultural identity. The selection of a primary school significantly impacts a child's cultural identity, prompting most parents to prioritize schools that offer cultural enrichment and preservation aligned with their respective race and culture. Extensive research reveals that Chinese parents, in particular, display a preference for Chinese vernacular schools, aiming to uphold their Chinese cultural heritage and identity (D. P. Lee et al., 2017; D. P. Lee & Ting, 2015; Ting & Lee, 2019). Conversely, Malay parents exhibit a greater inclination toward national primary schools, emphasizing the preservation of their cultural identity within a broader national context (Kampulin, 2009; D. P. Lee et al., 2017). It is worth noting

that similar patterns of preference are also observed among Chinese parents when it comes to selecting secondary schools. They often opt for Chinese Independent High Schools, which advocate for the preservation of Chinese culture and utilize Mandarin as the primary medium of instruction for most subjects. (Siah et al., 2018).

School choice is a multifaceted process, in addition to the medium of instruction, cultural and religious factors also exert a significant influence on parents' motivation when selecting schools for their children (Kamaludin, 2020). It is crucial to recognize that parental school choice has the potential to contribute to socio-economic polarization within society. Therefore, it is essential to thoroughly examine the key factors that influence parents' intentions and behaviours towards private schools, as this could potentially exacerbate social segregation.

2.6 Review of Theories for Building the Theoretical Framework

Theory is a generalized statement of abstractions or ideas that asserts, explains, or predicts relationships or connections between or among phenomena (Kivunja, 2018). According to Glanz (2008), theory brings together ideas, interrelated concepts, definitions, and propositions that explain or predict events or situations by specifying relations among variables in a general statement. The ideas, concepts, and themes constitute a deep and broad base of knowledge in the discipline – which constitutes the theory. These ideas, concepts, and themes together comprise the theory, enabling an explanation of the meaning, nature, relationships, and challenges asserted or predicted to be associated with a phenomenon in an educational or social sciences context. The application of those attributes of the theory allows for an understanding of the

phenomenon and the ability to act more systematically, including predicting outcomes (Kivunja, 2018).

Kerlinger and Lee (2000, p.11) define theory as a set of interrelated constructs, definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena. Kerlinger and Lee (2000) further explain that a theory could tell us three things, which are (1) a theory is a set of propositions consisting of defined and interrelated constructs, (2) a theory sets out the interrelations among a set of variables (constructs), and in so doing, presents a systematic view of the phenomena described by the variables, and (3) a theory explains phenomena; it does so by specifying which variables are related to which variables and how they are related, thus enabling the researcher to predict from certain variables to certain other variables.

A theoretical framework comprises the theories expressed by experts in the fields related to research, which the researcher draws upon to provide a structure for the data analysis and interpretation of results. In other words, the theoretical framework is a structure that summarizes concepts and theories, which develop and synthesize from previously tested and published knowledge to provide the researcher a solid theoretical background or basis for data analysis and interpretation of the meaning contained in the research data (Kivunja, 2018).

2.6.1 Human Decision-Making and Behaviour Theories

The aim of the current research is to investigate parents' intentions and behaviours regarding private schooling in Kuala Lumpur, and specifically, the influence of private school leadership on these intentions and behaviours. Private schooling behaviour is a

complex social phenomenon that involves human decision-making and behaviour. Therefore, this topic explores various theories related to human behaviour, and decision-making process to enhance our understanding of parents' intentions and behaviours towards private schooling. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), Cultural-Historical Activity theory (CHAT), Rational Choice Theory and Social Cognitive Theory are among the theories frequently used to explain human behaviour and decision-making (Blake & Mestry, 2020).

2.6.1.1 Cultural-Historical Activity theory

Cultural-Historical Activity theory (CHAT) originated from the work of Lev Vygotsky. It is a theory that emphasizes the role of social and cultural factors in shaping human behaviour and development. CHAT views human activity as inseparable from the sociocultural context in which it occurs. It posits that individuals develop through their participation in social and cultural activities, and these activities are influenced by historical and cultural factors (Nikolay & Aleksander, 2018). The theory emphasizes the interplay between individuals and their environment, emphasizing the importance of social interaction, language, and cultural tools in shaping cognitive processes and learning. According to the Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) model, participants in an activity are referred to as subjects, and they are driven by their motivation to achieve an object or goal. This object can represent the purpose of the activity, the subjects' reasons for participating, or the tangible outcomes they obtain (Engestrom, 2001). When it comes to parents making decisions about school choice, they are considered the subjects in this model, with school choice being the object of their activity. The way parents interpret this object is influenced by the social practices and contexts they find themselves in. Tools, in the context of this theory, are cognitive or material resources that are shared socially and are utilized by subjects to achieve

their objectives. In the context of school choice, these tools encompass various factors that may influence each parent's decision. Each individual involved in the activity will have a unique perspective and interpretation based on their cultural and historical background within the social context. (Blake & Mestry, 2020).

2.6.1.2 Rationale Choice Theory

Rational choice theory states that most action are carefully planned (Rafael, 2013). This theory suggests that individuals make decisions by weighing the costs and benefits of different options and choosing the one that maximizes their utility (Ogu, 2013). In the context of school choice, parents are seen as rational decision-makers who evaluate various schools based on factors such as academic performance, proximity, extracurricular activities, facilities, and reputation before selecting the school that best meets their preferences and expectations. This theory suggests that parents are informed choosers who maximum utilise information to make sound decision. Rational choice theory proposes that parents make decisions from clear value preferences based on calculations of the costs, pros and cons, pragmatic evaluation and probabilities of success of various options; that they can demand accountability from local schools and teachers; and that they are responsible to pursue the best interests of their children. (Fuller et al., 1996; Goldthorpe, 1996; Bosetti, 1998; Hatcher, 1998). Parents who choose to stay in the assigned public school can be active choosers or non-choosers. However, parents who practice private schooling must be active choosers.

Nonetheless, there is research suggesting that the decision-making process for parents is more intricate than solely being based on individual rational calculations regarding the economic benefits of their educational choices for their children. After thoroughly reviewing numerous sources, Booth (2017) discovered that parental decision-making

is influenced by social processes tied to factors such as social class, social networks, and social relationships. When parents make choices regarding their children's education, they draw upon their personal values and subjective educational goals, as well as information obtained from others within their social and professional circles. The accessibility of relevant and valuable information about school options can be limited for parents whose networks lack such resources, affecting their ability to make informed decisions. Disparities in information accessibility were observed between families from higher socio-economic backgrounds and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Lalvani, 2012). Parents from higher socio-economic families had greater access to information about school choices and more opportunities to engage in discussions with professionals, thereby enabling them to favorably place their children in desired educational settings (Booth, 2017).

Schools have a significant impact on children, and one of the most crucial ways parents engage in their children's education is by selecting the school they attend (Goldring & Phillips, 2008). In recent times, more parents have been able to exercise explicit school choice due to increased availability of information on various school options. Parents who are well-informed and actively participate in choosing a school for their children often possess distinct characteristics compared to non-choosers. Research on school choice indicates that parents who actively engage in the selection process differ from non-choosers in five key aspects: demographics, satisfaction with their children's previous school, parental involvement, educational priorities, and social networks (Goldring & Rowley, 2006).

Choosers tend to have higher levels of education and family income, and there are differences in terms of race between choosers and non-choosers. Choosers also express

lower satisfaction with their children's education before actively engaging in school choice. Furthermore, parents who participate in school choice are more involved in their children's education, and they prioritize educational aspects linked to academic outcomes, such as student achievement. Additionally, choosers are more likely to have social networks that facilitate their involvement in the school choice process (Goldring & Rowley, 2006).

In the current research, this theory can be employed to elucidate the connection between practical evaluation and parental intention to enroll their children in private schools. According to rational choice theory, parents exhibit pragmatism, and their decision-making is influenced by realistic considerations, impacting their inclination toward private schooling.

2.6.1.3 Theory of Planned Behaviour

The theory of planned behaviour, introduced by Ajzen in 1988 and 1991, has emerged as one of the most influential theories in studying human action (Ajzen, 2001). Essentially, the theory posits that human behaviour is guided by three considerations: beliefs about the likely consequences or attributes of the behaviour (behavioural beliefs), beliefs about the normative expectations of others (normative beliefs), and beliefs about the presence of factors that may facilitate or hinder the behaviour (control beliefs). These beliefs collectively influence a person's attitude towards behaviour, their perceived social pressure or subjective norm, and their perceived behavioural control, which refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour. The combination of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control leads to the formation of behavioural intention. Ultimately, when individuals have a sufficient level of actual control over their behaviour, they are expected to carry out their

intentions when the opportunity arises. Intention is thus considered the immediate precursor to behaviour. However, since some behaviours may present challenges that limit volitional control, it is useful to also consider perceived behavioural control in addition to intention. If people accurately judge the difficulty of a behaviour, their perception of behavioural control can serve as a proxy for actual control and contribute to predicting the behaviour in question (Ajzen, 1991).

The Theory of Planned Behaviour offers a robust framework for elucidating the relationship between variables influencing parents' behavior in private schooling within the current study. It provides insights into factors affecting parental intentions regarding private schooling, encompassing three perspectives: social context, parents' perception of private schools, and volitional control over behavior.

2.6.1.4 Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory focuses on the reciprocal interaction between individuals, their environment, and their behaviour (Bandura Albert, 1975). It emphasizes the role of cognitive processes in shaping behaviour. According to social cognitive theory, individuals learn and acquire new behaviours through a process called observational learning or modeling. This learning occurs by observing and imitating the behaviours of others, particularly those who are seen as role models or have higher social status. By observing, individuals acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that shape their behavior. In this research, parents' beliefs about private schooling can be influenced by observing the characteristics of private school leaders and the outcomes they witness in schools, as well as the individuals within their social context. These beliefs, in turn, can influence parents' intentions and behaviours in choosing schools.

2.6.2 Leadership Models and Theories

School models of leadership are heavily influenced by business models within business management, and also informed by the disciplines of philosophy, economics, and psychology (Murphy & Johnson, 2011, p. 131). Leadership is a confusing concept in that it is an ambiguous term used to describe a crucial position but loaded with varying understandings of what it encompasses depending on the context. Leadership has a ‘pre-eminence or extraordinary usefulness’ or is someone who guides, governs or is head of an organization (Pye, 2005). Business models have gone through “the many so-called “fads” in leadership from a managerial top-down style to more transformational styles focused on softer skills such as communication, conflict resolution, empowerment, and employee motivation (Johnson & Murphy, 2011, p. 133). Educational leadership has followed along with these influences, moving from leadership as management to a variety of models such as transactional, transformational, distributed leadership and instructional leadership. Through the influence of these different models, aspects of leadership that leaders were encouraged to develop included the ability to build collaborative teams, motivate staff with a vision and mission, demonstrate emotional intelligence, empower, and inspire staff (Kelly, 2016).

Philip Hallinger and Kenneth Leithwood are highly regarded experts in the field of school leadership, having authored numerous publications that examine the impact of school leadership on student learning and leadership development (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1994, 1996; Hallinger, 2011, 2013, 2018; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2019; Leithwood et al., 2006). Their research has greatly contributed to our understanding of the crucial role that school leadership plays in shaping school environments, boosting staff morale, improving instructional

effectiveness, and enhancing student outcomes. Hallinger and Leithwood (1994) found that there is a consensus among researchers that school leadership has a significant impact on a range of outcomes, including staff and student performance. Additionally, several studies have suggested that increased control over staffing, budgets, and operational matters can have a positive effect on student and school performance (Leithwood and Riehl, 2003; Dinham et al., 2011). As a result, school leaders are increasingly expected to be accountable for a broader range of outcomes, such as academic performance, resource acquisition, community partnerships, and financial management (Starr, 2012; Heck and Hallinger, 2014; Gong & Subramaniam, 2020).

Furthermore, research has shown that private schools often use resources efficiently due to their autonomy, which allows them to make effective decisions in response to market pressures (Davies & Davies, 2014). In the present research context, private school leaders shoulder the dual responsibility of serving as strategic leaders, making crucial decisions that profoundly influence the school, and exemplifying entrepreneurial leadership. They collaborate effectively, motivate and inspire teachers, manage resources, and cultivate positive school cultures to establish robust reputations among parents

Theories related to school leadership are also brought forward to relate how principal play a role in shaping parents' perception on private schooling as principal leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the school culture and driving organizational changes that ultimately lead to a more effective learning environment (Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2007; Cravens et al., 2012). Parents' perception on school is mainly based on the school image and reputation, thus principal leadership which play an important role in building positive image of the school might be an important factor

that affects parents' behaviour of private schooling. This is corroborated by the research conducted by Mermer et al. (2022), which establishes that school image was perceived as the most influential predictor of "parental loyalty" to private school.

Additionally, theories related to school leadership are utilized to explain how external factors, such as information regarding market preferences, parents, communities, dynamic social trends, and economic environments, impact private school leaders.

2.6.2.1 Strategic Leadership

Strategic leadership, at its core, involves individuals at the top echelons of an organization performing functions with strategic consequences (Samimi et al., 2022). Kunalan et al. (2022) outline eight crucial functions within this definition, ranging from making strategic decisions to managing social and ethical issues. This multifaceted role reflects the complex nature of leadership in the strategic domain.

Boal and Hooijberg (2001) emphasize the essence of strategic leadership lying in the capacity to learn, change, and exercise managerial wisdom. Their perspective underscores the creation of meaning and purpose for the organization, focusing on individuals with overall responsibility for the entire organization. The temporal dimension is brought into focus, where the past, present, and future coalesce, reaffirming core values and identity.

Adding to this, Boal (2004) conceptualizes strategic leadership as a series of decisions and activities shaping an organization's structural, human, and social capital. It involves navigating environmental turbulence, providing a vision, and crafting a roadmap for

organizational evolution and innovation. This definition highlights the dynamic and forward-thinking nature of strategic leadership.

Denis, Lamothe, and Langley (2001) contribute to this understanding by characterizing strategic leadership as a dynamic and collective phenomenon with an influence extending beyond organizational boundaries. This perspective positions strategic leadership as a force transcending specific organizational contexts, emphasizing its broader impact.

Elenkov, Judge, and Wright (2005) define strategic leadership as a process involving forming a vision, communicating it, motivating followers, and engaging in strategy-supportive exchanges. Their focus on vision, communication, and motivation aligns with the proactive role that strategic leaders play in shaping the direction of their organizations.

Finkelstein, Hambrick, and Cannella (1996) offer a perspective rooted in strategic choice, highlighting executives with overall organizational responsibility. This viewpoint emphasizes how these leaders, through their characteristics and actions, profoundly influence organizational outcomes.

The relevance of strategic leadership extends to educational settings, as acknowledged by Nur Diyana Zakariah et al. (2024). They emphasize the forward-looking aspect, where school leaders utilize their capabilities to achieve the vision and mission of an institution, emphasizing the strategic formulation of strategies and change management.

Further, the ESLP (Educational Strategic Leadership) model, proposed by Kunalan et al., (2022) guided by Davies and Davies (2006), positions strategic leadership as a vital component for effective school management. This model integrates individual characteristics and organizational capabilities, reinforcing the idea that strategic leadership contributes significantly to school effectiveness and safety.

As educational landscapes evolve, strategic leadership becomes imperative, requiring intentional decision-making. Davies and Davies (2006) assert that leaders must be deliberate and thoughtful, employing a multifaceted approach, recognizing the importance of collaboration and evidence-based decision-making.

Briefly, strategic leadership encompasses a range of functions and attributes that collectively contribute to the success of an organization. Whether in a business or educational context, strategic leaders navigate uncertainties, shape organizational identity, and ensure a forward-looking, innovative approach to achieve long-term goals.

Connecting this to the realm of private secondary schools in Malaysia, the present research acknowledges the distinctive challenges faced by these institutions, primarily centered around balancing academic excellence and financial sustainability. In this context, the strategic leadership practices of school principals and assistant principals become paramount.

Parents, as key stakeholders, perceive private schools through the lens of strategic leadership. How leaders navigate the complex landscape of academic pursuits while ensuring financial viability directly impacts parents' perceptions. The dynamic nature

of strategic leadership, as discussed by various scholars, resonates with the evolving expectations and demands placed on private schools.

The existing research, notably by Kunalan et al. (2022), offers insights into strategic leadership practices in diverse educational settings globally, including high-risk schools. However, the current gap lies in understanding the nuanced challenges faced by leaders in Malaysian private secondary schools and the subsequent impact on parental perception.

This study aims to fill this void by delving into the specific context of private secondary schools in Malaysia. By empirically evaluating strategic leadership practices, the research strives to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these practices influence school effectiveness and, consequently, parental perception. The findings of this study will not only contribute to the literature but will also offer practical implications for school leaders and policymakers, shaping the narrative of private secondary education in Malaysia.

2.6.2.2 Entrepreneurial Leadership Theories

Entrepreneurial leadership is leadership associate with entrepreneurial behaviours which includes proactiveness in optimizing risk, creativity, and innovation in finding an opportunity (Stevenson, 1999). Generally, entrepreneurial leadership is used to classify leaders who are able to achieve the targeted goal by using proactive entrepreneurial behaviour and creativity. Moreover, entrepreneurial leadership also entails assuming the responsibility of managing and adapting to dynamic environments for the benefit of an organization, while motivating the team toward a common goal using personal and communicative skills (Hisrich & Kearney, 2017;

Kasim et al., 2022; Stevenson, 2000). In short, entrepreneurial leadership is composed of eight main components which are proactive, innovation, creative, risk taking, strategy, motivational, personal, and communicative competence.

However, there are various of definitions for the construct of entrepreneurial leadership. Many researchers have compared and contrast leadership and entrepreneurship and defined entrepreneurship as a type of leadership in challenging and complex contexts (Harrison & Burnard, 2016; Harrison et al., 2018; Neves & Brito, 2020; Nor-Aishah et al., 2020; Thomassen et al., 2020). Some researchers have considered the differences between entrepreneurship and leadership and highlighted that entrepreneurial leadership is the competencies that enable leaders to behave as entrepreneurs (Stevenson, 2000). Integrating leadership and entrepreneurship, defined entrepreneurial leadership as the process of engaging teams to grow and develop, identify, and take advantage of the opportunity to gain competitive advantage by consistently having and communicating vision with the team (Timmons, 1978). Practicing entrepreneurial competencies enable leaders to have one common goal, dealing with the challenges and crises of current organizational settings and ultimately improving the effectiveness of the leaders. The idea of entrepreneurial leadership is to establish better quality management improvement (Kasim et al., 2022).

The concept of entrepreneurial leadership always associate with the competency of leader to deal with challenges in the scenario of creating of new businesses as well as addressing the competitive environment (Harrison & Burnard, 2016; Hisrich & Kearney, 2017; Stevenson, 2000; Timmons, 1978). According to Mohd Kasim and Zakaria (2019), entrepreneurial leadership is comprised of four dimensions: creativity, proactivity, innovation, and risk-taking. These dimensions play a defining

role in entrepreneurial leadership (Hisrich & Kearney, 2017; Mohd Kasim & Zakaria, 2019b; Stevenson, 2000). Firstly, the focus on innovation sets entrepreneurial leaders apart from others. They actively seek creative solutions to challenges, fostering a culture of ingenuity within the organization. Secondly, entrepreneurial leaders assess creative factors that drive their decision-making and implementation of entrepreneurial strategies in various tasks and roles. Thirdly, the proactivity of entrepreneurial leaders influences and inspires their teams to work collaboratively towards a shared vision, creating an environment conducive to growth and success. Lastly, entrepreneurial leaders skilfully embrace risk-taking as they work towards accomplishing the organization's vision and mission. They weigh potential outcomes carefully, making informed decisions that drive progress. These four dimensions are integral components that empower leaders to proactively develop effective strategies for organizational management (Kasim et al., 2022).

Despite the various definitions of entrepreneurial leadership, there has been a relative consensus among researchers on the distinctive competencies that motivate and enable entrepreneurial leaders to lead an organization successfully (Bagheri & Harrison, 2020; Hisrich & Kearney, 2017; Kasim et al., 2022; Mohd Kasim & Zakaria, 2019; Pontoh et al., 2021; Sandybayev, 2019; Thornberry, 2006). These competencies are a combination of personal characteristics, skills and knowledge that have long-lasting and influential effects on entrepreneurial leaders' organizational performance (Dahiru et al., 2016; Hisrich & Kearney, 2017; Kasim et al., 2022; Mohd Kasim & Zakaria, 2019b; Pihie et al., 2014, 2018; Pontoh et al., 2021).

Schedlinsky et al. (2018) suggested that entrepreneurship can be integrated into traditional leadership theories, offering a more innovative approach to leadership

practices that focus on social influence and innovation to shape organizational performance. While traditional leadership models, such as transformational, charismatic, and transactional leadership, have been studied extensively, entrepreneurial leadership emphasizes innovation and social influence to transform organizational performance (Kasim et al., 2022). Harrison and Burnard (2016) distinguish between leadership and entrepreneurial leadership, where the former focuses on social influence on employees within an organization, while the latter involves using the behaviours and characteristics of an entrepreneur to identify opportunities for innovative transformation.

Thornberry (2006) presented four dimensions of entrepreneurial leadership, which he referred to as miners, explorers, integrators, and accelerators. According to Thornberry, these dimensions interact with and influence each other both internally and externally. The miner dimension focuses on the methods used by leaders to fulfill their duties. Leaders are required to seek and exploit opportunities while managing their organizations in the explorer dimension, which involves identifying and communicating with stakeholders and encouraging them to remain involved in managing their organizations. The accelerator dimension involves stimulating followers' creativity and innovation, while the integrator dimension refers to the leader's role in assisting followers in implementing the organization's vision.

According to Okudan and Rzasa's research in 2006 on the entrepreneurial leadership model, they identified several dimensions. In their study focusing on project-based entrepreneurial leadership education, they found five key dimensions: autonomy, innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness, and competitive aggressiveness. Entrepreneurial leadership, as described by the researchers, involves facing

challenges related to managing a growing enterprise, identifying and pursuing opportunities, and effectively communicating a vision. The autonomy dimension relates to an individual's ability to independently drive an idea or vision to completion. The innovativeness dimension is characterized by a willingness to explore new ideas and engage in experimentation that could lead to the development of innovative products. Proactiveness refers to the proactive behaviour of anticipating and addressing future problems, needs, or changes. On the other hand, competitive aggressiveness involves direct and assertive challenges to competitors. Lastly, risk-taking is an integral aspect of entrepreneurial behaviour, where individuals display a commitment to venture into new opportunities despite the inherent risks and uncertainties (Okudan & Rzasa, 2006).

Kuratko & Hoskinson (2018) conducted research on entrepreneurial leadership and identified three key dimensions: innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness. According to their study, entrepreneurial leadership involves a process of envisioning, driving change, and fostering creation. It requires dedicating energy and passion to generating and implementing innovative ideas and creative solutions. Innovativeness lies at the core of entrepreneurial behavior, as it involves leveraging resources and developing new capabilities to pursue novel opportunities. Risk-taking entails a commitment to venturing into new opportunities and being open to the idea of initiating a new venture. Lastly, proactiveness reflects a dynamic approach to work, encompassing behaviors such as taking charge and actively shaping outcomes.

Based on the aforementioned dimensions of entrepreneurial leadership, it is concluded that there are several dimensions that constitute entrepreneurial leadership. These dimensions include innovation, proactivity, creativity, risk-taking, vision, strategy,

autonomy, competitive aggressiveness, ownership, communication, motivation, personality, and opportunities.

According to Kasim et al. (2022), the use of entrepreneurial leadership in improving school performance is not widely adopted in the educational field. While some studies suggest that entrepreneurial leadership is more applicable to business settings than schools, Amriani and colleagues (2020) identified four dominant leadership models, including spiritual, transformational, learning, and entrepreneurial leadership, that are essential for effective school management. This suggests that there is potential for entrepreneurial leadership to be utilized in educational settings.

The research of Pihie, Bagheri and Asimiran (2014) contributes to the limited literature on entrepreneurial leadership in educational settings. They examined the entrepreneurial characteristics of school principals from the perspectives of secondary teachers in Malaysia, using Thornberry's (2006) entrepreneur model as their framework. The study revealed that entrepreneurial leadership is a multi-dimensional construct, comprising five distinct leadership behaviours: general entrepreneurial behaviour, explorer behaviour, miner behaviour, accelerator behaviour, and integrator behaviour. General entrepreneurial behaviour encompasses practices such as finding innovative solutions, demonstrating an entrepreneurial mindset, and actively listening to others. Explorer behaviour involves motivating teachers to think creatively, advocating new educational ideas, and selecting the right individuals to capture opportunities for school improvement. Miner behaviour is seen in principals who analyze workflows and support teachers in making changes and improvements. Accelerator behaviour includes encouraging teachers to learn new skills, motivating them to think innovatively, and making course corrections when needed. Integrator

behaviour involves sharing information, encouraging school improvement suggestions, implementing strategies, and supporting new educational initiatives. This study offers valuable insights into the entrepreneurial leadership traits of school principals and contributes to a deeper understanding of effective leadership in educational contexts.

Similarly, the study of Mohd Kasim and Zakaria (2019) also highlights the implementation of entrepreneurial leadership practices by school leaders. They emphasize the importance of creating a clear vision and mission, instilling responsibility, adopting new strategies, and effectively utilizing resources. Proactivity is crucial for exploring opportunities and accepting entrusted responsibilities, while problems should be addressed as opportunities for growth. Being innovative and prioritizing the interests of the school, organization, community, and nation is essential. Lastly, the study underlines the significance of taking calculated risks despite potential consequences. Overall, their research provides valuable insights for school leaders to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset and drive positive change in educational institutions.

Other research also shown that effective school leaders have the ability to transform their organization by setting clear goals and objectives, communicating a compelling vision and mission, and creating a sense of responsibility among staff to implement changes in personnel and organizational culture (Cansoy & Parlar, 2018). School leaders can also enhance school performance by adopting new strategies that mobilize energy and fully utilize resources (Kasim et al., 2022), which are characteristics commonly associated with entrepreneurial leadership. Thus, it is essential for school leaders to adopt an entrepreneurial mindset to achieve outstanding school

performance. By embracing an entrepreneurial approach, school leaders can cultivate a culture of innovation, take calculated risks, and adapt to changing circumstances. This necessitates them to be proactive, visionary, and resilient in the face of challenges. (Thomassen et al., 2020). By leveraging these entrepreneurial characteristics, school leaders can transform their organizations and achieve greater success.

To sum up, the key characteristics of entrepreneurial leadership in a school organizational context include proactiveness in optimizing risk, creativity, and innovation in finding an opportunity, managing changes in a dynamic organization, and developing a vision and mission that inspires the organization to create an objective that needs to be achieved.

However, the study of Pihie et al. (2014) also brings attention to specific aspects of principals' behavior that were removed from their analysis due to their low loadings on factors. These items included principals' efforts in challenging school rules and bureaucracy, promoting creativity and innovation among school members, exploring innovative ways to utilize school resources, fostering an innovative culture, and encouraging entrepreneurial thinking and risk-taking. The deletion of these items suggests that the effectiveness of entrepreneurial leadership may be limited in centralised public education systems. This finding aligns with Eyal and Inbar's (2003) research, which revealed that under centralised education systems, like that of Malaysia, principals face constraints and lack the freedom to implement innovative ideas or take risks to achieve educational goals.

As a result, this research aims to bridge a significant research gap by delving into the role of entrepreneurial leadership within the context of private schools. The higher autonomy and reduced government bureaucracy inherent in private schools may create a conducive environment for fostering entrepreneurship and innovation.

In the aforementioned subtopic, the inevitability of strategic leadership in private school contexts is highlighted. This leadership approach, focusing on individuals at the top echelons of an organization, is critical as the strategic decisions made by school leaders directly impact overall school performance. To comprehensively grasp the intricate leadership dynamics within private schools, situated in the dynamic nexus of academic and financial considerations, it is imperative to explore the interconnection between strategic leadership and entrepreneurial contexts. The connection between strategic leadership and entrepreneurial contexts has proven fruitful, shedding light on the dynamics of constraints, challenges, characteristics, and key elements within entrepreneurial settings (Simsek et al., 2015). This research seeks to not only advance our understanding of strategic leadership effects but also deepen insights into organizational behaviour and outcomes in entrepreneurial contexts.

While the effects of strategic leadership in entrepreneurial contexts differ significantly from those observed in larger firms, recognizing the influential role of leaders in new and emerging ventures is crucial. In these settings, leaders, often central to the firm's strategic, tactical, and operating core, play a pronounced role (Simsek et al., 2015; Daily et al., 2002). This dynamic becomes evident as these ventures, characterized by fewer hierarchical levels, drive growth through innovations such as new product introductions, unique business models, and niche-focused competitive strategies.

Entrepreneurial studies have explored a spectrum of contexts, including new ventures, small firms, family firms, and both large and established settings (Zahra & Covin, 1995). This area shares common ground with leadership research, incorporating themes such as leadership vision, social influence, and navigating risk, uncertainty, and ambiguity (Cogliser & Brigham, 2004; Daily et al., 2002; Vecchio, 2003). Vecchio's (2003) observation that constructs used in entrepreneurship align with mainstream leadership theory underscores the interconnected nature of entrepreneurship and leadership within specific contexts. However, the field faces challenges in consistently identifying patterns of context-specific results, emphasizing the need for further exploration.

Fundamental questions about strategic leadership and leaders in entrepreneurial contexts have been posed, highlighting the specific contexts where strategic leadership and leaders operate, defining who qualifies as a strategic leader in entrepreneurial contexts, and outlining the activities that characterize strategic leaders in these settings (Simsek et al., 2015; Finkelstein et al., 2009; Gartner, 1988; Cogliser & Brigham, 2004).

Synthesizing these insights justifies the exploration of strategic leadership in private schools, positioned as a nexus of strategic leadership and entrepreneurial contexts (Simsek et al., 2015). Private schools, with their distinctive characteristics and challenges, share similarities with entrepreneurial ventures in their dynamic and innovative nature. Understanding strategic leadership in private schools not only contributes to educational leadership literature but also draws insights from entrepreneurial contexts, providing a holistic understanding of leadership effects in diverse organizational settings (Simsek et al., 2015). Examining strategic leadership

in private schools becomes pivotal for enriching the broader literature on strategic leadership and educational leadership, offering valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of leadership within the educational sector.

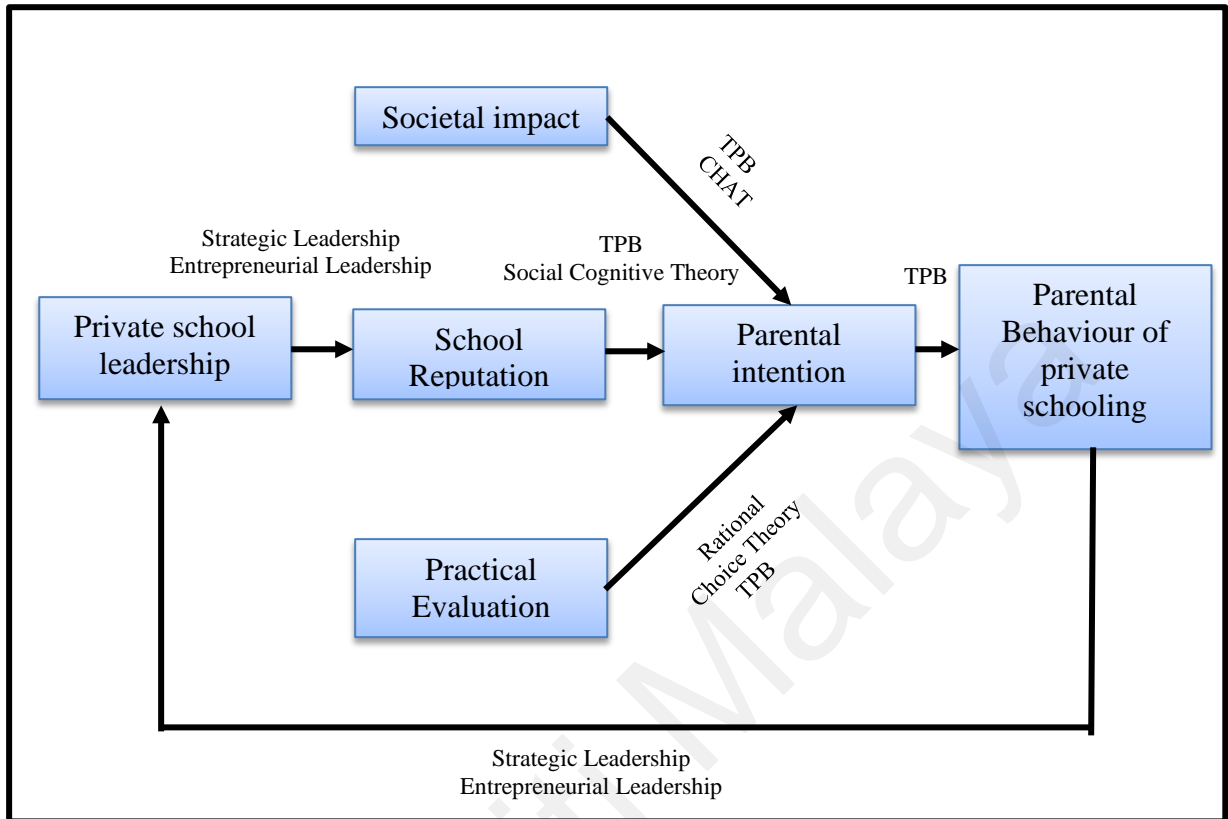
2.6.3 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is a logically developed and connected set of concepts and premises which developed from one or more theories that a researcher creates to scaffold a study. Concepts and theories are defined to provide the grounding of the research, by uniting them through logical connections, and relate these concepts to the study that is being carried out, a coherent theoretical framework can be built. In short, a theoretical framework is a reflection of the work the researcher engages in to use a theory in a given study (Varpio et al., 2020).

Several theories have been reviewed to establish the foundation, logic, and structure of the current research. These theories serve as frameworks for comprehending the underlying processes and factors that influence parents' decision-making when choosing schools for their children, particularly within the context of leadership in private schools. Figure 2.1 shows the theoretical framework of this study.

Figure 2.1

Theoretical framework



Note: TPB Theory of Planned Behaviour
CHAT Cultural-Historical Activity theory

The current research positions private schools as a central nexus bridging academic and business aspects. Addressing the dual challenges of academic excellence and financial sustainability necessitates a thorough understanding of parents' perceptions regarding private schools. This understanding is crucial as parental choices significantly contribute to the growth of private schools in Malaysia. As highlighted in the preceding section, the key disparity between private and public schools predominantly revolves around leadership.

Building upon the established link between strategic and entrepreneurial leadership with school performance and effectiveness (Kasim et al., 2022; Kongjinda et al., 2020; Kunalan et al., 2022; Mohd Kasim & Zakaria, 2019b; Nzeneri, 2020; Pihie et al., 2018;

Zakariah et al., 2023), effective school leaders play a transformative role. They achieve this by establishing clear goals and objectives, communicating a compelling vision and mission, and instilling a sense of responsibility among staff for implementing changes in personnel and organizational culture (Cansoy & Parlar, 2018). The adoption of new strategies that mobilize energy and optimize resources, characteristics often associated with strategic and entrepreneurial leadership, further enhances school performance (Kasim et al., 2022).

This positive school reputation significantly shapes parents' perceptions of private schools. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) posits that human intention and behaviour are influenced by perceptions and attitudes toward a specific behaviour. Social cognitive theory underscores the connection between school reputation and parents' intention to opt for private schooling, emphasizing the role of observational learning. Observing the performance of private schools, parents form intentions that subsequently drive their behaviour towards choosing private schooling.

Additionally, Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) and TPB emphasize the impact of the social context on human intention and behaviour. The social context in which individuals are situated, influenced by social trends, plays a pivotal role in shaping behaviour. Rational choice theory contributes by suggesting that human behaviour is influenced by practical factors. Individuals thoroughly evaluate pros and cons, making rational choices that align with their practical considerations. TPB extends this by stating that perceived control over behaviour, encompassing practical factors hindering or facilitating the behaviour, further shapes human intention and behaviour.

Finally, TPB posits that human intention serves as the antecedent to behaviour. However, the actual manifestation of intention in behaviour is contingent upon the volitional control over the behaviour. This nuanced understanding provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for investigating the intricate interplay between leadership, and factors affecting parental decision-making in the context of private schools.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

Among the various theories reviewed in the previous subtopic, it has been determined that the Theory of Planned Behaviour offers a solid framework for collecting and analyzing data in the quantitative phase of the study. Therefore, the conceptual framework is operationalized according to the framework of TPB for the current study, as it provides a comprehensive model and framework that allows for the identification of causal mechanisms in school choice. By applying such a theoretical context, the investigation gains a structured approach, acknowledging that parental decision-making is a complex process influenced by various factors and the interplay among different elements that constitute the social construct of being a parent.

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was created to study factors that influence decision making (Ajzen, 1991b), it has been utilised in many studies to examine decision-making processes, including information communication (Cheung et al., 2017), nutrition (Whitaker et al., 2016), leisure choice (Ajzen, 1988).

Furthermore, TPB has been well-tested in the educational domain and is used to study factors that influence students' intention to graduate (Sutter, 2014), electronic learning

(Chu & Chen, 2016; Presley, 2004) and school choice (Goh & Dolnicar, 2006). Especially, TPB has been extensively used in studies on choice in educational institutions. For example, results have shown that behaviour belief is the best predictor of school choice in Australia, on the other hand, control belief is the best predictor when comes to choosing primary school in Malaysia. (Goh & Dolnicar, 2006; Lee et al., 2017). Goh and Dolnicar (2006) proposed that most of the school choice studies have identified mostly attitudinal reasons (behavioural belief). The elicited reason within the three categories of TPB known to be predictive of human behaviour in their research are: behavioural belief 57%, normative belief 25%, and perceived behavioural control 18%. Thus, it can be concluded that using the TPB framework led to more school choice reasons across a broader range of behavioural constructs. Goh and Dolnicar (2006) further concluded that all three components postulated in the TPB proved valuable in the school choice elicitation task.

The context of school choice is intricate and calls for a comprehensive framework to systematically analyse all relevant factors. Although Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) establishes the connection between social influence and human behaviour, it is not well-suited for this purpose, as it does not provide a comprehensive model to investigate the factors influencing parental intention and behaviour regarding private schooling. The subtopic on Rational Choice Theory indicates that decision-making in school choice is not solely based on rational considerations of pros and cons. Instead, it is a social process influenced by factors such as social class, social networks, and social relationships.

On the other hand, social cognitive theory proposes a reciprocal interaction between individuals, their environment, and their behaviour, suggesting that behaviour can be

learned through observation and modelling. While this theory provides insight into learned behaviour, such as the decision-making process involved in choosing private schooling, it is insufficient to fully explain the complexities of this process. Private school choice encompasses various factors that go beyond the scope of social cognitive theory. Affective aspects, personal values, educational philosophies, and other subjective factors come into play when making a school choice.

Therefore, considering the limitations of all the relevant theories and the comprehensive nature of school choice, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) has been selected as the most appropriate framework for the quantitative data collection and analysis in this study. TPB allows for a more inclusive model and framework that considers the complexity of decision-making in the context of school choice, incorporating not only cognitive factors but also subjective and affective aspects.

According to Ajzen (2006), the theory of planned behaviour stated that human action is guided by three types of considerations: behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs and control belief. In combination, behavioural beliefs produce a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the behaviour; normative beliefs result in perceived social pressure; and control beliefs give rise to perceived behavioural control. As aggregated, attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norm, and perception of behavioural control led to the formation of a behavioural intention. In general, the more favorable the attitude and subjective norm, and the greater the perceived control, the stronger the person's intention to perform the behaviour in question. These three considerations influence an individual's intention for performing a given behaviour. This provides a framework to this research to relate the parents' beliefs and their intention of private schooling.

In the current research context, behavioural belief refers to perceptions of parents regarding private schooling. As discussed earlier, variety of leadership theories and models such as transactional, transformative, distributed leadership, instructional leadership, strategic leadership and entrepreneurial leadership have similar core practices which are 1) setting direction, 2) developing people, 3) redesigning the organization and 4) managing the instructional program. (Leithwood et al, 2006; Harrison & Burnard, 2016) which will eventually create a school image to the public. Strategic leadership and entrepreneurial leadership which emphasize on setting and communicating vision and mission, dealing with challenges and crisis strategically in competitive environment, optimizing opportunity in risk, creativity and innovation is more closely related to this study as private school has higher autonomy and it is a business organisation in the educational context (Kongjinda et al., 2020; Neves & Brito, 2020; Pontoh et al., 2021). In conclusion, parents' behavioural belief lies within the school principal leadership. On the other hand, the social context and environment the parents live in will collectively form the parents' normative belief. Lastly, the perceived facilities and control on performing the behaviour of private schooling will shape the control belief.

The immediate precursor of behaviours is assumed to be intention because individuals are likely to act on their intentions when given a sufficient degree of actual control over the behaviours. However, the execution of the behaviours may not always match the behavioural intention due to various obstacles that limit volitional control. Therefore, in addition to intention, perceived behavioural control should also be considered. As Ajzen (2006) notes, "Perceived behavioural control can serve as a proxy for actual control and contribute to the prediction of the behaviours in question."

As discussed in the previous chapter, parents' interest in certain schools may not necessarily translate into actual school choice. In other words, although parents may intend to enrol their children in private schools, they may not actually do so. Based on the TPB framework, the relationship between private school choice intention and behaviour can be explained by both intention and perceived control over actual behaviour. Perceived control is determined by factors such as financial ability, familiarity with the school, and access to information. Previous research has shown that parents with prestigious occupations and higher education levels have greater knowledge and access to private schooling. Rather than repeatedly examining the moderating effect of perceived control over actual behaviour, this study utilizes the TPB framework to investigate how socioeconomic status moderates the relationship between parents' intention and their actual behaviour in choosing private schooling. By taking socioeconomic status into account, this study aims to gain a better understanding of the factors that influence parents' decision-making in choosing private schooling.

Previous studies show that TPB provides a cohesive framework to identify the variables and also data collection and comparisons of findings as compared to the other theories presented. Especially the TPB has become popular among evaluation researchers and consequently serves as an overarching assessment framework in several recent impact studies (von Graevenitz, Harhoff & Weber, 2010; Müller, 2011; Solesvik, Westhead, Kolvereid & Matlay, 2012; Neves & Brito, 2020). The role of strategic leaders entrepreneurial leadership has been proposed as a key element in which entrepreneurs can maintain their competitiveness when faced with dynamic and changing environments (Harrison & Burnard, 2016). Although the existence of private school in Malaysia is not something new, however the growth of private schools in recent years indicates that the educational market share is gradually changing ('Abidin Muhriz et

al., 2011). Given the dynamic nature of the current environment, the TPB framework is considered to be the most appropriate overarching framework for studying human behaviour, particularly in the context of this study.

In conclusion, TPB has been widely studied, expanded, and questioned in various social science fields, which has led to significant interest among researchers. The seminal 1991 article by Ajzen alone has garnered over 60,000 citations (Tornikoski & Maalaoui, 2019). Notably, TPB allows researchers to investigate the relative importance of various factors that underlie decision-making processes. The reasons for adopting TPB as the research framework for quantitative phase are summarized in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2

Reasons of adopting Theory of Planned Behaviour as the research framework for quantitative phase

- Provide an inclusive framework to uncover causal mechanism of a behaviour.
- Is an established theory to study decision-making process.
- Is an established theory to predict human intention and behaviour.
- Well-tested in the educational domain.
- Able to categorise the elicited factors of private schooling into three independent variables systematically.

The theoretical framework, as depicted in Figure 2.1, serves as the foundation for the entire mixed-method research, encompassing both quantitative (survey) and qualitative (interview) phases. The conceptual framework, illustrated in Figure 2.4, is utilized to operationalize the framework, guiding the data collection and analysis process.

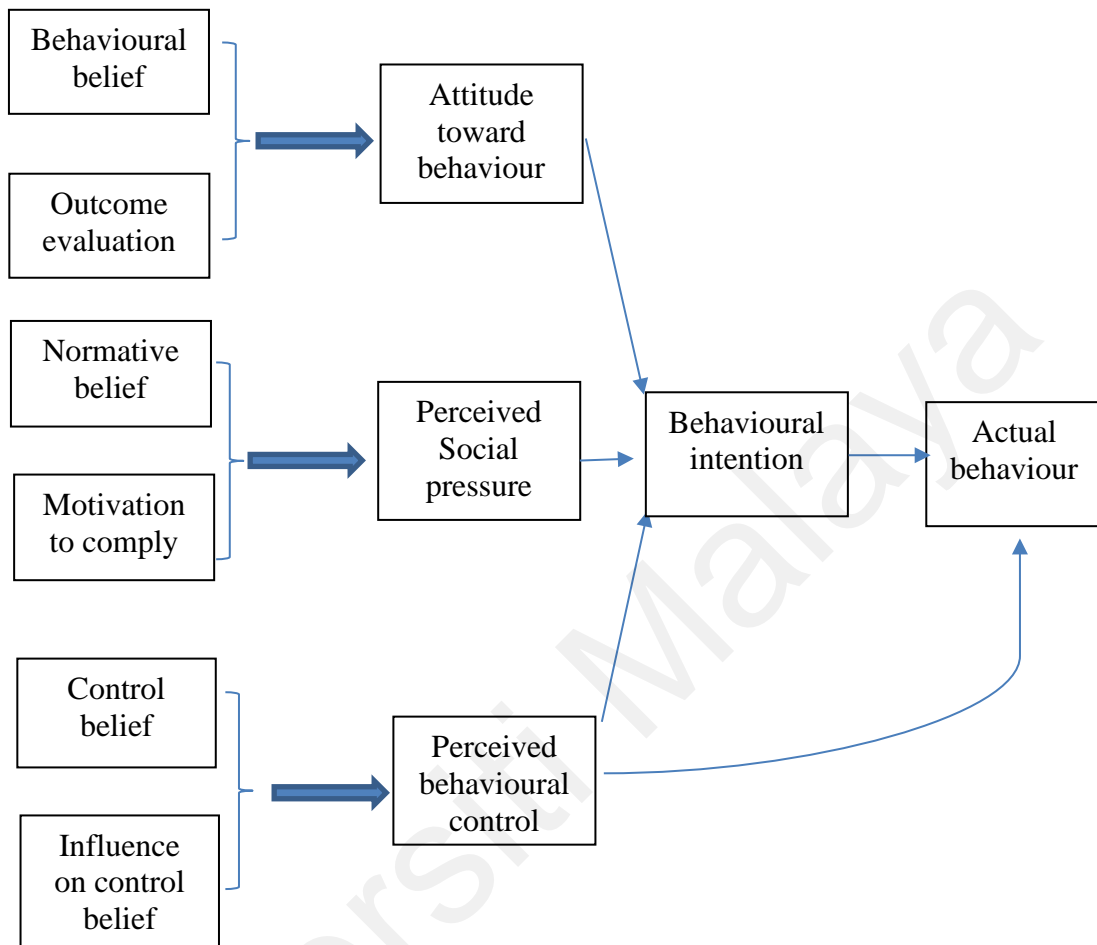
The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) framework was conceptualized and operationalized for collecting and analysing data during the quantitative phase. This involved conducting a quantitative survey to identify the factors influencing parental

intention and behaviour regarding private schooling. In conjunction with the quantitative survey, a qualitative interview approach was employed, specifically aimed at corroborating the quantitative findings by capturing the perceptions of school principals as strategic leaders. These interviews provided valuable insights into the factors influencing parents' intentions in choosing private schooling within the entrepreneurial context.

By incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the research aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of parental decisions regarding private schooling, enriched by the perspectives of school principals as strategic leaders in an entrepreneurial context. Figure 2.3 illustrates the TPB framework, which serves as the foundation for the conceptual framework.

Figure 2.3

Theory of Planned Behaviour



A conceptual framework is a written or visual representation of an expected relationship between variables. The conceptual framework of the current research is constructed based on the TPB. According to the literature reviewed, many factors have been identified contributed to the private schooling behaviours, however, there is not a single cohesive framework to relate all the factors in an orderly manner. Thus, in the current research TPB is adopted to systematically identify the independent variables, moderating factors, and dependent variable. The independent variables are factors influencing parents' school choice elicited in the previous research. Those factors are

systematically classified into three beliefs based on the TPB, which are behavioural beliefs, normative belief, and control belief. Parents private schooling intention is the dependent variable of the research which is influenced by the beliefs (independent variables). Intention is the precedent of the behaviour of private schooling, thus, the relationship between intention and the behaviour of private schooling is another set of independent and dependent variables. Lastly, research showed that having intention to perform a certain behaviour might not result in actual behaviour (Ajzen, 2002). TPB proposed that the perceived control over performing the behaviour is the moderator between intention and the actual behaviour.

Previous research suggests that parents from higher socioeconomic backgrounds, including those who are highly educated and/or have better-paid jobs, tend to prioritize school quality and academic reasons when deciding on their children's education. As a result, they often choose to enroll their children in reputable private schools (Jheng et al., 2022). It is evident that these factors impact perceived control, as postulated in the planned behaviour theory (Ajzen, 2020). Rather than examining the moderating effect of perceived control (control belief) over actual behaviour repeatedly, this study specifically seeks to investigate how the socioeconomic status moderates the relationship between parents' intention and their behaviour of private schooling. By including socioeconomic status as the moderators, this research aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of the factors that inform parents' decision-making in choosing private schooling.

Guided by the TPB theoretical framework, a conceptual framework is constructed to provide a systematic and cohesive structure to answer the research questions. As discussed in the previous subtopic, most of the families who send their children to

private schools come from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Consequently, the first step of the research is to identify the parents who send their child to private school. By identifying the demographic background of parents who send their children to private school, the first research questions which examine the parent socioeconomic background could be answered. The moderating effect of the socioeconomic factors between intention and the behaviour of private schooling are then analysed to answer the research question 7 to 9.

Parents' beliefs are independent variables which influence the parents' intention and sequentially their behaviour of private schooling. In an attempt to examine the relationship between parents' beliefs, parents private schooling intention and subsequently parent behaviour of private schooling, the three construct of parents' beliefs are represented by the measurable dimensions which are:

1. Behavioural belief

- a) Attitude toward behaviour refers to the parents' overall perception of the quality of private school as the result of school leadership and management.
- b) Outcome evaluation refers to the parents' perception of the capability of the private school leadership and management to produce certain outcomes.

2. Normative Belief

- a) Perceived social norm refers to the parents' perceived social norm of private schooling.
- b) Motivation to comply refers to the parents' motivation to comply to the perceived social trend of private schooling.

3. Control Belief

- a) Perceived control refers to the parents' perceived capability and readiness to enroll their children to private school.
- b) Perceived facilities refer to the parents' perceived assistance, familiarity, support, and convenience to enroll their children to private school.

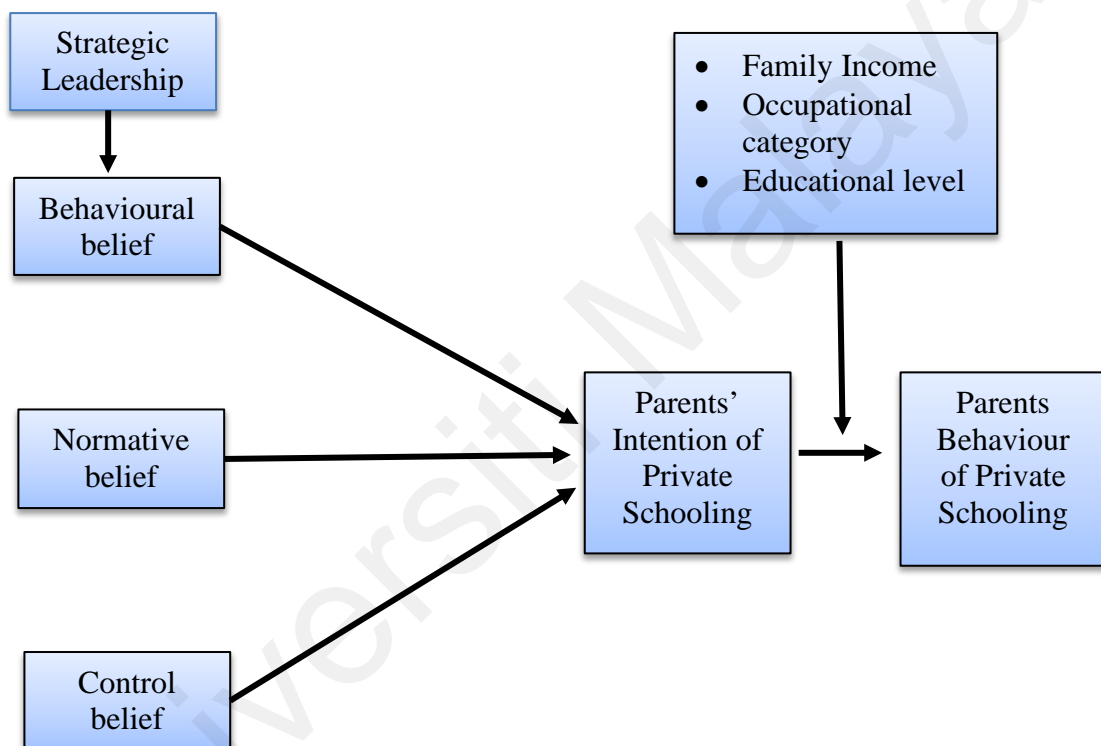
Intention measured the degree of parents' willingness in making pre-planning to send their children to private schools. According to TPB, favorable attitudes and social influences toward private school will lead to stronger intention to choose private school. However, the actual behaviour of choosing private schools may be encouraged or restricted by perceived ease or difficulties in performing such behaviour. The previous chapter discussed that most of the parents who send their children to private schools have higher socioeconomic status. Therefore, in this research the moderator effect of socioeconomic factors between intention and actual behaviour is analysed. By adapting TPB the complicated parents' decision-making process can be explored and analysed.

This conceptual framework could offer insights into research questions 2-6, which investigate the level and predictive strength of the factors influencing private schooling. By examining the behavioral beliefs of parents, the impact of private school leadership on shaping their positive perception of private schooling can be assessed. This provides valuable insights to address the polarized debate about the potential and actual contribution of strategic leadership in private schools within the entrepreneurial context in the field of education. The findings from the quantitative phase are further supported and strengthened by the qualitative phase, where the perceptions of school principals as strategic leaders are gauged to explain parents' intentions for choosing private schooling. This triangulation of data helps to provide a comprehensive understanding

of the factors influencing parental decisions in favor of private schooling and addresses the last research question effectively. The conceptual framework shown in Figure 2.4 systematically sets out the independent variables, dependent variables and the moderators that underpin the quantitative phase of the research.

Figure 2.4

Conceptual framework



2.8 Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the development of the education system in Malaysia, followed by school leadership, particularly in private schools. Then, the chapter offers a comprehensive and systematic review of relevant literature related to private school choice based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) framework. Subsequently, the theories contributing to the construction of the theoretical framework are discussed. TPB is examined in detail as it informs the data collection and data

analysis for the quantitative phase. Lastly, the chapter justifies the adoption of the TPB framework to build the conceptual framework for the current research, establishing a solid foundation for the research methodology and analysis in subsequent chapters.

Universiti Malaya

CHAPTER 3: CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as a crucial foundation for the research approach adopted in this study by presenting the epistemological and ontological positions that inform the rationale behind it. By exploring the underpinning philosophies of the research design, we gain a deeper understanding of its potential limitations, enabling us to make informed decisions about how to best address the research questions and objectives at hand. Additionally, this chapter provides a detailed description of the research instrument, population, sampling method, and data analysis employed, further enhancing the transparency and rigor of the study. Overall, this chapter sets the stage for the rest of the research and establishes the necessary framework for interpreting and understanding the findings.

3.2 Philosophical Worldview

Worldview is an essential component of the research process and constitutes a fundamental set of beliefs that shape the researcher's approach to the study. As Creswell (2014) asserts, worldview can be described as a general philosophical orientation and paradigm about the world and research that a researcher brings to their study. These worldviews play a critical role in shaping the research process, as they shape the researcher's assumptions, values, and beliefs about the nature of reality, human beings, and the nature of knowledge.

Furthermore, the researcher's worldview is a crucial factor that can significantly impact the research approaches adopted. As Creswell (2014) notes, the particular beliefs held

by researchers can influence the research design and methodology, including the type of data that is collected, the research methods used, and the interpretation of the findings. Therefore, it is essential for researchers to reflect on their worldview and how it might influence their research process.

One particular worldview that has gained popularity in recent years is pragmatism, which Creswell (2014) explains as an approach that considers thought as an instrument or tool for problem-solving and action. This worldview is not concerned with describing, representing, or mirroring reality but instead focuses on practical applications. Researchers who hold this worldview emphasize the research problem and utilize all available approaches to gain a deep understanding of the issue. As a result, pragmatism is often seen as the philosophical underpinning for mixed methods studies, which employ a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches to derive knowledge about a particular problem.

In addition, pragmatism has been associated with several influential philosophers, including Peirce, James, Mead, Dewey, Murphy, Patton, and Rorty. These thinkers have emphasized the importance of the practical application of knowledge, rather than a strict adherence to any particular method or approach. In this way, pragmatism emphasizes the importance of adapting to the needs of the problem at hand, rather than forcing it to fit within a predetermined theoretical framework.

Overall, the importance of worldviews and their impact on the research process cannot be overstated. By understanding the role that worldviews play in shaping the research process, researchers can develop a more nuanced understanding of the research problem and utilize a more comprehensive range of approaches to generate new knowledge.

With the rapid expansion of private schools, there is a pressing need to investigate the factors that drive parents' decision-making process when it comes to choosing private schools for their children. Previous research has shown that parents with higher socioeconomic status, including those who are highly educated and have better-paying jobs, tend to prioritize school quality or academic reasons and opt for reputable private schools (Jheng et al., 2022). However, this trend could lead to social segregation, which presents a significant challenge for the education system in Malaysia.

To illuminate the role of private schools in relation to the strategic leadership demonstrated by their principals within the distinct entrepreneurial context of Malaysia's education system, this research adopts a pragmatic approach. This approach involves utilizing a mixed-method design to effectively address the research questions. While understanding the factors influencing parents' decisions to send their children to private schools is crucial, it is not sufficient to solve the problem. Instead, the findings of this study need to be relevant and applicable to school principals and policymakers, who can then utilize the practical implications to improve the intention of parents in selecting schools.

Therefore, the research approach adopted in this study takes a pragmatic stance, acknowledging that thought is an instrument or tool for problem-solving and action, and that all research approaches can be utilized to understand and solve a particular research problem (Creswell, 2014). The pragmatic mixed-method approach aims to gather insights from both parents and private school leaders, offering a nuanced understanding of how strategic leadership within the entrepreneurial context of private schools influences parental intentions and behaviors regarding private schooling. The

comprehensive insights obtained from both the quantitative and qualitative phases empower policymakers to utilize this knowledge in mitigating social segregation between public and private schools. The findings aim to offer valuable insights for private school leaders and policymakers, guiding policy recommendations to enhance public school competitiveness and quality while attracting more students, ultimately working towards mitigating social segregation in the education system.

3.3 Research Design

As discussed in the previous subtopic, the research has taken a pragmatic stance towards addressing a particular problem. The utilization of both qualitative and quantitative methods allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the issue and identification of possible solutions. To achieve this, the research design for this study is a mixed method: explanatory sequential design. The explanatory design is a mixed methods design in which the researcher begins by conducting a quantitative phase and follows up on specific results with a second phase (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The second qualitative phase is implemented to explain the initial results in more depth and to corroborate the quantitative findings. This focus on explaining results is reflected in the design name.

According to Creswell, Plano Clark, et al. (2003), the explanatory design is a research approach that utilizes a qualitative strand to provide an explanation for initial quantitative findings. This design is particularly useful when the researcher needs qualitative data to elucidate significant or insignificant quantitative results, outlier or surprising results, or positive-performing exemplars (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Additionally, this design can be applied when the researcher intends to classify

participants into different groups based on quantitative outcomes and follow up with each group via qualitative research. Alternatively, quantitative results pertaining to participant characteristics can be utilized to guide the purposeful selection of participants for subsequent qualitative research (Creswell, Plano Clark, et al., 2003). This research lays the groundwork for the proposition that private school principals should be viewed as strategic leaders guiding the school within an entrepreneurial context. Building upon this foundation, the statistical results obtained from the initial phase of the quantitative study which examine the factors influencing parents' intention and behaviour for private schooling are presented to private school leaders to ascertain how these findings corroborate with the perceptions of school principals as strategic leaders when explaining parents' intention of private schooling.

The explanatory design consists of two phases. During the first step, the quantitative strand is designed and implemented, involving the collection and analysis of quantitative data. In the second step, the connection to the second phase is established by identifying specific quantitative results that require further explanation. These results are then utilized to guide the development of the qualitative strand, including the formulation of qualitative research questions, purposeful sampling procedures, and data collection protocols. The qualitative phase is thus dependent on the quantitative results. In the next step, the qualitative phase is executed through the collection and analysis of qualitative data. Finally, the interpretation of the extent and ways in which the qualitative results shed light on the quantitative results and contribute to the overall understanding of the study's purpose is carried out.

To be specific, the first step of this research involves designing and implementing a quantitative strand that utilizes a survey design to examine the factors that influence

parents' intention and behaviour towards private schooling. Subsequently, the quantitative results were analyzed using descriptive analysis and structural equation modelling techniques. Qualitative research question was then formulated and refined to address the study's purpose, specifically: "To what extent do the quantitative findings corroborate with the perceptions of school principals as strategic leaders when explaining parents' intention of private schooling?" Next, a focus group of private school principals was selected using the purposeful sampling method to provide additional insights into the qualitative research questions. Finally, the extent and manner in which the qualitative results provide an explanation and valuable insight into the quantitative results were discussed.

The first phase of the quantitative research was designed to investigate the correlation between parental beliefs, intentions, and their behaviour regarding enrolling their children in private school, as well as the moderating effect of socioeconomic background on parents' behaviour of private schooling. Previous research has identified several factors that affect parents' school choice, such as academic performance, school reputation, social trends, and peer effects (Diwakar, 2016; Dixon & Humble, 2017; Rowe & Lubienski, 2017; Schneider & Buckley, 2002). However, the significance of each factor that affects parents' behaviours regarding private schooling remains unknown. Additionally, most previous research lacks a systematic framework for studying the significance of each determinant. Therefore, the quantitative phase of this research adapts the Theory of Planned Behaviour by classifying the determinants into different types of beliefs and determining the predictive effect of each belief (Ajzen, 1991).

The primary objective of this research is to illuminate the role of private schools in Malaysia's education system concerning the distinct strategic leadership demonstrated by private school leaders within an entrepreneurial context. The study aims to achieve this by explaining the growth of private schooling through an examination of the factors that influence parents' intention and behaviour towards it. To achieve this, the research adopted a quantitative approach in its first phase, classifying the factors into three variables: behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief. The study tested the predictive effect of each variable on parents' intention and behaviour towards private schooling, utilizing numeric measures to collect data on parents' beliefs. The data was then analyzed using evidence and rational considerations to inform the second phase of the qualitative research. By doing so, the role of strategic leadership in private schools entrepreneurial context can be highlighted, and the phenomenon of private schooling growth can be thoroughly explained.

In the first phase the research, to establish the relationship between parental beliefs, intentions, and behaviour towards private schooling, a non-experimental quantitative approach was employed. Specifically, a questionnaire was used to collect information from parents, allowing the study to gain a better understanding of the factors that influence their decision-making processes when it comes to choosing private schooling for their children. By examining these variables, the study seeks to provide insights into the phenomenon of private schooling growth and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence parents' intention and behaviour of private schooling.

In the second phase of the qualitative approach, the quantitative findings were presented to the private school principals to gauge the degree to which these findings align with

their perspective on strategic entrepreneurial leadership. The primary objective of this phase is to determine to what extent do the quantitative findings corroborate with the perceptions of school principals as strategic leaders when explaining parents' intention of private schooling.

This study primarily adopts a quantitative approach, focusing on the pivotal factors, specifically parental beliefs, that influence parental intentions and behaviours towards private schooling. The emphasis on these factors aims to offer insights into the growth of private schools in Malaysia. Analysing the moderating role of socioeconomic factors in the relationship between parents' intentions and behaviours regarding private schooling can shed light on the role of private schools in the Malaysian education system and whether they contribute to social segregation.

Given the unique position of private schools at the intersection of academia and business, it becomes crucial to explore the fundamental differences in school leadership between private and public schools. This exploration enhances our understanding of the popularity of private schooling, particularly from the perspective of school leaders. Therefore, the quantitative phase takes precedence as the primary focus, while the qualitative phase serves as a complementary aspect to ensure a more comprehensive and nuanced exploration in this research.

In summary, this research adopts an explanatory sequential approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to address the research topic comprehensively. The initial quantitative phase involves a non-experimental survey, gathering demographic and numerical data through a questionnaire to explain and predict parents'

intentions and behavior towards private schooling. These insights then inform the research question for the second phase. In this subsequent phase, private school principals are purposively selected for interviews, allowing the collection of qualitative data for further analysis. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative methods enhances the overall understanding of the research topic, offering valuable insights into the role of strategic leadership within private schools entrepreneurial context and the growth of private schooling.

3.4 Population of the Study

As this is a mixed-methods research project that includes two distinct phases, the study population is divided into two sections to better address the population relevant to each phase of the research

3.4.1 Population for The Quantitative Phase

The initial phase of this study aims to investigate the determinants that influence parents' intentions and behaviours towards enrolling their children in private schools. Quantitative data was collected from parents of Standard 6 students in SJK(C) located in Klang Valley. Klang Valley was selected as the research location out of all regions in Malaysia. This decision was based on the fact that the Klang Valley region has the highest density of established private schools in Malaysia. According to the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2020), out of the 65 private academic secondary schools in Malaysia, 21 are located in the Klang Valley. Therefore, the percentage of private schools in the Klang Valley is significantly greater than that of other states. Furthermore, Kuala Lumpur the capital of Malaysia located within Klang Valley, the findings from this metropolitan area will be more representative of the overall private schooling landscape. Although the Klang Valley encompasses Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, and

certain regions in Selangor, there is no official delineation of its boundaries. It is commonly understood as an urban conglomeration centered in the federal territories of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya, extending to adjacent cities and towns in Selangor. The robust transportation network in the Klang Valley facilitates a substantial flow of people. However, precisely defining its boundaries and accurately estimating its population present challenges for research endeavors. Given these complexities, this study opts to utilize Kuala Lumpur as a representative proxy for the Klang Valley for the quantitative phase of the research due to its well-defined territorial limits compared to the broader Klang Valley region. Moreover, Kuala Lumpur encompasses a significant portion of the Klang Valley area.

Hence, the population for the quantitative phase for this research is the standard six National Type Chinese primary school (*Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Cina, SJKC*) students' parents in Kuala Lumpur. According to Kuala Lumpur Federal Territory Education Department (2021), in year 2021, government primary schools in Kuala Lumpur is 191 in total. There are 134 *Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan (SK)*, 42 *Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Cina (SJKC)* and 15 *Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Tamil (SJKT)* respectively.

Table 3.1*Numbers of National Schools in Kuala Lumpur*

Type of national primary school	Numbers of school
<i>Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan (SK)</i>	134
<i>Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Cina (SJKC)</i>	42
<i>Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Tamil (SJKT)</i>	25
Total	191

The standard six students' parents from the 42 SJKC in Kuala Lumpur is the population of the study because research found that Chinese society are gradually turning their attention to private schools (Siah et al., 2018). Besides, more Chinese is residing in the urban area (Sua, 2010) which has the highest density of private school. Meanwhile for private schools, ethnic Chinese recorded the highest number of the total student population, with 65.88 per cent in 2020 (New Strait Time, Nov 11, 2020). This study only targeted standard six parents because research showed that many Chinese parents will opt out from the public school system in the transition of primary to secondary school (Kamaludin, 2020).

3.4.2 Population for The Qualitative Phase

In qualitative research, the focus is not on generalizing findings to a population, but on conducting a thorough investigation of a specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). In the present study, the second phase of qualitative research aims to explore the extent to which the findings from the quantitative research align with and support the role of private school principals as strategic leaders who manage the school within an entrepreneurial context, particularly in explaining parents' intentions and behaviors

regarding private schooling. Therefore, the population for this study was limited to private school principals in the Klang Valley region. This decision was based on several factors. Firstly, the Klang Valley region is known to have a high concentration of established private schools, as supported by data from the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2020). According to the data, out of the 65 private academic secondary schools in Malaysia, 21 are located in the Klang Valley. This indicates that the Klang Valley region not only represents a significant proportion of private schools in Malaysia but also attracts a substantial number of parents who choose private schooling for their children compared to other states. Furthermore, the Klang Valley is home to a large number of well-established private schools, which contribute to the overall ecosystem of private schools in Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur, the largest metropolitan area and the capital of Malaysia, is situated within the Klang Valley. This city serves as the educational hub and plays a leading role in shaping the private school landscape in Malaysia. By focusing on private school principals in the Klang Valley, the study can gain valuable insights into the experiences, perspectives, and practices of individuals who are at the forefront of private education in Malaysia. This targeted approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the strategic leadership dynamics within the region's private school ecosystem, thereby contributing to the broader knowledge and improvement of private schooling in Malaysia.

3.5 Sample of Study and Sampling Method

The current research design comprises a mixed-methods approach, with both qualitative and quantitative phases. As such, it is crucial to adopt a systematic and organized approach when dividing the population and sampling methods for each phase of the study. In line with this, it is important to discuss the sampling methods for each

phase of the research separately, to ensure that the data collected is appropriate and relevant to the specific research question at hand. Accordingly, this division of sampling methods in each subtopic allows for a more thorough examination of the data and provides a more robust and reliable interpretation of the research findings.

3.5.1 Sample of Study and Sampling Method of Quantitative Phase

Sampling involves gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data from a subset of the target population in a research study (Rovai, Baker & Ponton, 2014). Before determining the sample size, several factors must be considered during the study's design phase. Salant and Dillman (1994) identified four key factors that influence the size of the sample: (1) the acceptable level of sampling error; (2) the size of the population; (3) the variability of the population in relation to the characteristics of interest; and (4) the smallest subgroup within the sample requiring estimates.

Cohen's (1988) statistical power analysis is commonly used to estimate the required sample size. Cohen considers not only the significance level (p value) and effect magnitude but also takes into account factors like population effect size and statistical power when studying phenomena. For regression analysis, Cohen (1992) proposes effect size indices of $f^2 = .02, .15,$ and $.35$ for small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively. A medium effect size is generally preferred as it represents an average size of observed effects across various fields.

The statistical power of a test is the probability of correctly rejecting the null hypothesis for a specific alternative hypothesis (Cohen, 1988). In most teaching studies, the level of significance (α) is set at $.05$. Cohen's suggestion (1988) recommends using α

= .05, power = .80, and effect size = .15. Following this recommendation, a sample size of $n = 76$ would be the most efficient for a regression analysis with three predictors.

Nevertheless, Cohen's sample size determination is often used to determine sample size for an unknown population size. If the population size of the research can be estimated, Krejcie and Morgan (1970) proposed a table with a list of proposed sample size which is applicable to any defined population, however, as the population increases the sample size increases at a diminishing rate and remains relatively constant at slightly more than 380 cases.

The exact population size of the research is unknown, according to Malaysia Educational Statistic there are 6953 standard five students enrolled into SJKC in Kuala Lumpur in year 2020. By assuming that there is not dropout and no new enrolment to in year 2021, there would be 6953 standard six students enrolled in SJKC in Kuala Lumpur. Assuming that there are no orphans, no siblings, or twins among the standard six students, there would be 6953 families and the estimation of the population in this study would be 6953 parents. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) for the population size of 7000, the sample size would be 364.

In addition, according to Creswell (2012), as a rough estimation, educational research needs approximately 350 sample sizes for a survey study. Kerlinger (1986) showed several components that determine the sample size for the sample, the subject, the score, and the quality and economic situation of the research population. He assumed that there was no clear answer to normalizing the sample size, although he insisted that a high sampling rate helps to reduce sampling errors relative to the chosen system, then

a researcher should boldly strive to use a sample as accurately as one would expect in the population.

Moreover, to conduct the Structural equation model analysis using AMOS software, a minimum of 100 samples were needed. Kalaiarasi (2019) suggested that it is difficult to develop generalized guidelines regarding sample size requirements for SEM. Despite this, various rules-of-thumb have been advanced, including a minimum sample size of 100 or 200, and 10 - 15 cases per variable. In this study there are 5 variables, which are three independent variables: behaviour belief, normative belief, and control belief and two dependent variables which are intention and actual behaviour of private schooling with a total of 33 items in it. By applying the rule of 10 cases per variable, 330 sample size is needed for the SEM analysis. Besides, Bryne (2009), Kline (2005), and Hair et al., (2010) asserted that the application of SEM analysis generally needs a bigger sample size associated with multivariate methods since several statistical algorithms which are not integrated in SEM programs are unpredictable with a small sample size. Furthermore, Tabachnick and Fidell (2012) also suggested a basic guideline that encourages researchers to receive a lower limit of 300 samples for factor analysis.

To ensure adequate representation of the target population and minimize sampling error and missing data, a total of 420 questionnaires were sent to parents of Standard 6 students in SJK(C) schools located in Kuala Lumpur, using a stratified random sampling technique. This method involves dividing the population into subgroups or strata based on specific characteristics. In this study, the population of SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur was stratified into three groups, which corresponded to the three District Education Offices in the area, namely PPW Bangsa Pudu, PPW Sentul, and

PPW Keramat. Samples were randomly selected from each PPW (stratum) to ensure geographic representation from each area was included.

Since the exact number of Standard 6 students in each school was unknown, samples were selected from larger-scale SJK(C) schools with 1000-2000 students to ensure proportional representation in the total population. A total of 20 SJK(C) schools in Kuala Lumpur met this criterion, with 10 located in PPW Bangsa Pudu, 4 in PPW Keramat, and 6 in PPW Sentul. Therefore, 3 larger-scale schools were randomly selected from PPW Bangsa Pudu, 1 from PPW Keramat, and 2 from PPW Sentul. To ensure a fair and unbiased sampling process, 70 questionnaires were administered to parents of Standard 6 students in each selected school via Google Form links, randomly sent by the school administrators. This stratified random sampling technique aimed to secure a representative sample of the target population and mitigate potential sources of bias.

Table 3.2

Stratified Sampling Method

District Education Office	Number of schools fulfil the selection criterion	Schools	Number of Samples
PPW Bangsa Pudu	10	A	70
		B	70
		C	70
PPW Keramat	4	D	70
PPW Sentul	6	E	70
		F	70
Total		6	420

To gather data from targeted standard six students' parents, Google Forms questionnaires were utilized. The students were not involved in the process as the forms were directly sent to their parents through the selected school. This process was facilitated by the school's teachers or administrator who randomly sent the Google Form link with 70 parents from the standard six class in each school.

The initial question in the demographic section of the questionnaire relates to parental role. This question helps to ensure that the respondent is either the father or mother of a Standard 6 student in an SJKC school. As school choice is a complex social process that involves family decision-making, it is assumed that either parent could be the decision maker. To prevent duplication of data, a briefing will be provided to the teachers or school administrators to explain that each family should only complete the questionnaire once, even if they have more than one child in Standard 6.

One week after distributing the questionnaires to parents through the selected schools, a total of 396 responses were collected via Google Form. Upon collating the data, it was found that only 377 sets of questionnaires were complete and suitable for data analysis. Thus, the final sample size for the study was 377 parents.

3.5.2 Sample of Study and Sampling Method of Qualitative Phase

Traditionally, explanatory sequential mixed methods research employs the same participants for both the quantitative and qualitative components (Creswell, 2014). However, in the current study, the qualitative phase aims to explore to what extent the quantitative results support the perception of private school principals as strategic leaders in explaining the parental intention and behaviour of private schooling. Consequently, a distinct set of participants will be recruited for the qualitative phase,

specifically private school principals in the Klang Valley. This decision was made to ensure that the qualitative inquiry provides additional insight into the research topic, rather than simply reiterating or confirming the quantitative findings.

A purposeful sampling method was employed for the qualitative phase of this study to intentionally select individuals and sites that could deepen our understanding of the central phenomenon of private schooling. The selection criterion was based on participants' potential to provide information-rich data. Private school principals overseeing institutions with more than 500 students and exhibiting a history of implementing strategic leadership strategies within an entrepreneurial context were selected as participants. This criterion ensured that the selected principals had firsthand experience in fostering a conducive and favourable learning environment through strategic leadership practices within entrepreneurial context. Additionally, principals who demonstrated a deep understanding of the private schooling context in the Klang Valley region were specifically chosen as participants. This criterion was essential in ensuring that the insights provided by the participants were specific and relevant to the region's private school ecosystem, thereby aligning with the research focus on the Klang Valley.

Furthermore, the criterion of managing schools with a higher number of students served as an indicator of the schools' performance and attractiveness to parents. The rationale behind this criterion was that a larger student population signifies a greater number of parents willing to invest in their children's education. This suggests that these schools have certain characteristics or criteria that enhance parents' intention to choose private schooling.

By specifically targeting principals of schools with more than 500 students, the study aimed to include participants with experience managing larger educational institutions. These principals may have implemented strategies and practices that successfully attracted a significant number of parents, making them valuable sources of insights into fostering parental intention for private schooling. Including principals who manage schools with larger student populations provided a broader perspective on the strategies employed by these schools to effectively meet the needs and preferences of parents. Their experiences and perspectives shed light on the specific criteria and practices that contribute to enhancing parents' intention to choose private schooling. After careful consideration, three private school principals were selected from a pool of 21 private schools in the Klang Valley to participate in the study.

Overall, the purposeful sampling methods employed in this study aimed to capture the experiences and practices of principals who have successfully attracted parents to choose private schooling. This approach ensured the collection of valuable insights into the factors influencing parents' intentions, contributing to a better understanding of how strategic school leaders can enhance their schools' appeal and effectively meet the needs of parents within the entrepreneurial private school landscape.

3.6 Instrument of the Study

It is essential to discuss the instruments used in both quantitative and qualitative phases separately because they serve different purposes and require different instruments. In quantitative research, standardized instruments such as surveys or questionnaires are often used to collect numerical data that can be analyzed statistically. In contrast, qualitative research aims to explore complex phenomena and requires more open-ended

and flexible data collection methods, such as interviews or observations. Therefore, in current research, the instruments are discussed separately for each phase of the study ensures that each research approach's unique requirements are met, and the data collected is appropriate for the research question and objectives.

3.6.1 Instrument for Quantitative Phase

The quantitative phase of the study utilized a non-experimental survey research design, which required a specific instrument to collect data that would answer the research questions. To accomplish this, the researcher developed a questionnaire titled "Survey of Parents Beliefs in Private Schooling" following the framework suggested by the author of Theory of Planned Behaviour, Icek Azjen (2013). The TPB theory is widely recognized and utilized to predict human behaviour in various contexts. In 2013, the author of TPB, Icek Azjen, published a sample to guide researchers in constructing questionnaires that are tailored to specific contexts. The questionnaire for this research was developed based on the guidelines provided by the author of TPB in "Constructing A Theory of Planned Behaviour Questionnaire" (Ajzen, 2013). There are three sections in the questionnaire: Section A demography, Section B Parents' Belief and intention and Section C Parents' Behaviour. (Appendix A)

3.6.1.1 Section A: Demography

Section A of the questionnaire is designed to gather demographic data from the participants. It includes 8 items: parental role, age, ethnicity, marital status, nationality, household income, occupation, and highest education level. Of these, household income and parents' highest educational level are considered ordinal data, while the other items are nominal data. The demographic information obtained from

Section A provides important background context for the study and can help researchers better understand the characteristics of the sample population

The criteria for sample selection in this study include ethnicity, marital status, and nationality. Specifically, the study only included married Chinese parents who are Malaysian citizens. This is to ensure that other factors, such as nationality and family structure, do not confound the parent behaviour in private schooling. Additionally, one of the research objectives is to determine the moderating effect of parents' socioeconomic background on their behaviour of private schooling. Therefore, the demography section includes household income, parents' highest education level, and occupation. By collecting this information, the study can explore the moderating effect of these socioeconomic factors on the relationship between parents' intention and parents' behaviour towards private schooling, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms driving parental decision-making

3.6.1.2 Section B: Parents' Belief and Intention

The Likert scale is a unidimensional, summative design approach to scaling, named after its originator, psychologist Rensis Likert (Rovai et al., 2014). It consists of a fixed-choice response format to a series of equal-weight statements regarding attitudes, opinions and/or experiences. The set of statements act together to provide a coherent measurement of the construct. Individual statements that use this format are known as Likert items. Section B is developed to measure 4 constructs, which are of parents' behavioural belief, normative belief, control belief and intention. There are a total number of 26 items in Section B. Each item consists of a statement, the respondents have to select either "strongly disagree", "disagree", "agree", or "strongly agree" to indicate to what extent they agree/disagree with the statements. 4-points

(even number) Likert scale is applied to avoid neutral opinion. The statements are all positive to avoid double negation and confusion. In order to measure the level of parents' belief and intention, 4 points Likert scale is used. Respondents who select "Strongly disagree" will be given 1 point, "disagree" 2 points, "agree" 3 points, and "strongly agree" 4 points. The higher the score indicates the higher the level of belief and intention. All Likert items in Section B collect ordinal data, the score values simply express an order of magnitude with no constant interval between units.

Section B is aimed to collect data of the parents' beliefs (independent variable) and intention in private schooling (dependent variable). According to Ajzen (1991) behavioural belief, normative belief and control belief of the behaviour are precursor of the intention and the actual behaviour. Hence, the first construct, behavioural belief consists of 8 items which are developed to measure parents' attitude towards private schooling and their evaluation of the outcomes of private schooling as a result of school management and leadership. The second construct normative belief has 4 items to measure the motivation to comply to the perceived social trend where the parents situated in. The third construct, control belief, consists of 7 items measuring dimension of the perceived behavioural control, and perceived facilitation in sending their children to private school. The last construct, which is made up of 7 items collects data on the parents' intention on private schooling, this construct gauges the degree of parents' willingness to make plans to send their children to private schools.

3.6.1.3 Section C: Parents' Behaviour of Private Schooling

Section C is the final section of the questionnaire and is designed to collect data on parents' behaviour regarding private schooling. This section contains seven items, each of which consists of a statement that collects nominal data. Respondents must

select either "Yes" or "No" to indicate their behaviour with regard to private schooling. In order to analyse parents' behaviour in private schooling as the dependent variable in Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), binary coding was used to convert the categorical data into ordinal data. For every "Yes" answer, respondents were awarded one point, while "No" answers were awarded zero points. A higher score indicates a higher level of behaviour with regard to private schooling.

Table 3.3

Questionnaire Structure

Section	Aspect	Number of items	Type of data
A	Demographic background	8	Nominal and ordinal
B	Parents' Beliefs and Intention	26	Ordinal
C	Parents' private schooling behaviour	7	Nominal

Table 3.3

Constructs and Dimensions in Section B

Construct	Dimension	Number of items
Behavioural belief	Attitude toward behaviour	3
	Outcome evaluation	5
Normative belief	Motivation to comply	4
Control belief	Perceived control	4
	Perceived facilities	3
Intention		7

3.6.2 Instrument for Qualitative Phase

The qualitative phase aimed to determine how the quantitative findings align with the perceptions of private school principals as strategic leaders when explaining parents' intention and behaviour for private schooling. Selected private school principals were interviewed to gather their opinions and assess the congruence with the quantitative results regarding parents' intention and behavior in choosing private schooling. Through this triangulation of data, the factors influencing parents' intentions and behaviors from the perspective of strategic leaders within the challenging and entrepreneurial private school landscape were identified. Additionally, this phase sought to provide a deeper understanding of the practical implications of the quantitative results and gain insights into entrepreneurial strategies for enhancing private school enrollment, all from the perspective of strategic leaders.

In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were used as the research instrument. The interviews were conducted face-to-face or via Zoom, depending on the availability of the private school principals. The semi-structured interview consists of 5 major interview questions, along with improvised and follow-up questions developed based on the interviewees' answers to provide further clarification.

1. To what extent do the research findings align with your real-life experiences/observations as a strategic leader in private school?
2. As a strategic leader, what are the most challenging aspects of the school, and how do you strategically deal with these challenges?
3. As a strategic leader, what improvements do you believe the school can make in general to better enhance parents' intention and behavior towards private schooling?

4. Can you discuss any specific strategies or initiatives that you plan to implement to attract more parents to enroll their children in private schools from the perspective of strategic leader?
5. As a strategic leader, are there any practices or policies that you plan to revoke or modify to address the concerns highlighted in my research and attract more parents to choose private schooling for their children?

3.7 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument for Quantitative Phase

Validity can be considered the core of any form of assessment and test. A valid assessment or test is deemed to be trustworthy and accurate (Bruin, 2011). Validity involves evaluative judgments made about the inferences drawn from assessment results or test scores, determining whether correct interpretations are made. These evaluative judgements need to be correct and reflective of the truth (Bruin, 2011). Validity discussed in this section refers to the validity of measurement. Specifically, it refers to the relative correctness of a measurement. In other words, it evaluates how well an instrument measures a construct and refers to the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretations of test scores (Rovai et al., 2014).

On the other hand, a test is deemed as reliable when it can be replicated by a number of different researchers under stable conditions, with consistent results over time. (Bruin, 2011) Furthermore, reliability is seen as the degree to which a test is free from measurement errors, since the more measurement errors occur the less reliable the test (Bruin, 2011).

3.7.1 Validity of the Instrument for Quantitative Phase

The instrument deployed in the quantitative phase was developed according to the guidelines provided by the author of the Theory of Planned Behavior, Icek Ajzen. Nevertheless, as suggested by Icek Ajzen, there is no standard TPB questionnaire. Therefore, he recommended that items designed to directly assess the theory's constructs must be validated prior to the construction of the final questionnaire (Ajzen, 2013).

Content validity is based on the extent to which a measurement reflects the specific intended domain of content based on the professional expertise of experts in the field (Rovai et al., 2014). In order to ensure the self-developed questionnaire which going to be deployed in this study able to yield valid and reliable result, the questionnaire was sent for content validation by the experts from Faculty of Education, University Malay (Appendix B & C). Both experts had certified that they have reviewed and validated the questionnaire. Minor adjustments have been made in accordance with the experts' suggestion to refine the questionnaire.

Table 3.4

Comparison between Original Item and Revised Item

No.	Original item	Revised item
Section B		
1	Private school educators are more responsible and accountable in their profession.	Private school principals and teachers are more accountable in their profession.
2	Private schools have more extensive physical infrastructure and facilities.	Private school principals manage resources better to have more extensive school facilities.
3	Private schools have better school culture and could provide a more	Private school principals are able to create better school

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| | conducive learning environment for students. | culture to provide a more conducive learning environment for students. |
| 4 | Private schools have better academic and/or co-curriculum performance. | Private school principals and teachers enable students to have better academic performance.

Private school principals and teachers enable students to have better co-curriculum performance. |
| 16 | I understand the system and the development of private school education. | I understand the development system of private school education. |
| 18 | I am confident that I am able to assist and support my child in his/her learning in private school. | I am confident that I am able to support my child in his/her learning in private school. |
| 19 | It is easy for me to access and obtain information regarding private schools. | It is easy for me to communicate with private school management. |
| 21 | Private school is near to my house/workplace. | Private school is near to my house or workplace. |
| 22 | I will read news, search, and collect information regarding education in private school. | I will gather information regarding education in private schools. |
| 24 | I am willing to attend private school education fair/info day/open day. | I am willing to attend private school activities. |

Section C

1	I applied/enrolled my child for private schooling.	I applied for private schooling for my child
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The original instruments consist of 28 items in Section B, after reviewed by the experts, some wordings of the items were changed, and two items were added to avoid double barrel. The first amended instrument consists of 30 items in Section B. However, after conducting model fit for the measurement model using AMOS SEM, 4 items were deleted to ensure the proposed model is fit with the data. Therefore, the second revised instrument which consists of 8 demography items in Section A, 26 items in Section B, and 7 items in Section C was used for final data analysis.

3.7.2 Reliability of the Instrument for Quantitative Phase

The first revised instrument was used to conduct a pilot test in SJKC Sam Tet in Perak which has similar characteristics with the targeted population to test its reliability and internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha of each dimension in Section B is tested, the reports are as followed:

Table 3.5

Parental Beliefs and Intention Reliability Test

Construct	Pilot test N=30		Data collection N=377	
	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Behaviour Belief	.873	8	.902	8
Normative Belief	.905	7	.865	4
Control Belief	.870	8	.868	7
Intention	.957	7	.949	7

The results show that for the construct of behaviour belief, the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient is .873, which is higher than 0.7, this reliability value is satisfactory, and no item needs to be deleted from the instrument. For the construct of normative belief, the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient is .905, which is higher than 0.7, this reliability value is satisfactory, and no item needs to be deleted from this dimension. The result in Table 3.6 shows that for the construct of control belief the reliability value is satisfactory as Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient is .870, which is higher than 0.7. This indicates that the items are reliable, and no items need to be deleted from this dimension. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for the construct of intention is .957. Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient higher than .95 indicates that some of the items were overlapping and redundancy in data. From the item-total statistics, the item “I will try to register my child for private school entrance exam” has the highest Corrected Item-Total Correlation which is .915. If the item “I will try to register my child for private school entrance exam” is removed, the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient will be reduced to .945, which is lower than .95. Nevertheless, some scholars have inferred some acceptable justifications by prudently considering several factors with regards to the Cronbach alpha reliability value. According to Zaker & Nostraitinia (2021), in the course of the interpretation of a reliability analysis result by a researcher, there is a need to consider certain factors for example the nature of test for the determination of cut-off points or minimum acceptable values. In fact, it is deduced that the application of general guidelines might differ for certain kinds of tests. Thus, the acceptability of reliability value would solely be dependent on the test’s nature as well as the data's configuration. Some of these factors would involve the determination as to if such test items measure cognitive issues or if they are used in assessing the ability of learners or perhaps in measuring psychological constructs as is applied in this research (Bonett & Wright, 2015). Furthermore, according to the crude

criterion by Best and Kahn (2006), the coefficients for the above constructs which is above .90 can be deemed as a strong relationship existing between the targeted variable, which is actually a plus for the researcher, hence it is not affected by random factors despite its very high value (Bonett & Wright, 2015; Tan, 2009). Therefore, the item with high Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient in the construct of intention will not be deleted from the instrument.

Table 3.6 also shows the Cronbach alpha reliability value of the instrument after the actual data collection. In order to achieve the model fit in measurement model, 3 items and 1 item from normative belief and control belief were deleted respectively. All the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for behavioural belief, normative belief and control belief are higher than 0.7, and the reliability value is satisfactory.

3.8 Trustworthiness of Qualitative Phase

The trustworthiness of the qualitative phase of the study can be established through several key methods: validity, reliability, credibility, transferability, and dependability.

Firstly, validity plays a critical role in ensuring that the interview questions are relevant and aligned with the research objectives. Conducting face-to-face semi-structured interviews allows for the inclusion of improvised and follow-up questions, which refine and clarify the inquiries, ensuring they accurately capture the necessary information for the study.

Secondly, reliability is vital in achieving consistency and repeatability in the interview process. Improving the clarity and lack of ambiguity in the questions, coupled with

standardized interview conduct, boosts the reliability of the study. Emphasizing two-way communication also allows participants to seek clarifications during the interview, reducing potential misunderstanding and increasing the reliability of the findings.

Thirdly, credibility is essential in assuring that the interview instrument accurately captures participants' perspectives and experiences. By employing member checking, participants have the opportunity to review and validate their responses, preventing misinterpretation and ensuring the data collected genuinely reflects their views.

Subsequently, transferability ensures that the findings can be applied to other similar contexts or populations. Detailed descriptions of the research setting, participant characteristics, and the semi-structured question framework enhance transferability, enabling readers to assess the relevance of the findings in various situations.

Lastly, dependability plays a crucial role in ensuring a consistent and well-documented data collection and analysis process. Maintaining meticulous records of the interview process, transcribing verbatim transcripts, and documenting any modifications made during the study enhances dependability, ensuring the findings are reliable and trustworthy.

By addressing these aspects, the trustworthiness of the qualitative phase of the research is strengthened, allowing for the extraction of valuable insights from participants. As a result, the overall credibility and validity of the study's findings are enhanced.

3.9 Research procedure and data collection

This research study comprises two major phases: a quantitative phase and a qualitative phase. Prior to commencing the research, the research problems and variables were identified, and a conceptual framework was established to organise the correlation of each variable for the quantitative phase. Research objectives and questions were then tailored to align with the conceptual framework, and a comprehensive literature review was conducted to corroborate the rationale of the research.

The next phase involved the collection and analysis of data for the quantitative component. In order to obtain permission to conduct the research, the researcher underwent proposal defense before receiving approval from the University of Malaya. Following this, the researcher sought permission from the Ministry of Education to collect data from SJKC schools in the state of Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, as well as from Jabatan Pendidikan Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur (JPWPKL) in Kuala Lumpur. Finally, the researcher obtained consent from the school management to distribute questionnaires in the form of Google Forms to parents of standard six students. The quantitative data was then analysed to inform the qualitative component of the study.

The next phase of the study involved collecting and analyzing data for the qualitative component. First, the data gathered in the quantitative phase was carefully analyzed and summarized. Based on the insights gained from this analysis, an additional research question and a set of interview questions were crafted for the qualitative phase. These questions aimed to deepen our understanding of the role that private school principals play as entrepreneurial leaders in promoting parents' intention and behaviour towards private schooling.

The qualitative phase data collection process began with official emails requesting interviews with private school principals in the Klang Valley. The selected principals, who managed schools with a significant student population, were approached through professional channels, providing them with comprehensive information about the research objectives, methodology, and expected outcomes. Their consent to participate was obtained, and privacy concerns were addressed to assure confidentiality throughout the process. Written consent was obtained through a consent form outlining their rights as participants.

Semi-structured interviews were then conducted to gather the principals' insights, and the data was analyzed using thematic analysis. This approach allowed for a deeper exploration of the alignment between the quantitative results and the perspectives of private school principals, enriching the understanding of their role as strategic leaders in influencing parents' intentions and behavior towards private schooling.

The final phase of the research study involved discussion and conclusion. The findings from both the quantitative and qualitative phases were used to answer the research questions and to compare and contrast the results with previous study to gain a more detailed and sophisticated understanding of private schooling intention and behaviour. Additionally, the alignment of the quantitative results with the perspectives of private school principals was examined. Perspectives that were not captured in the quantitative phase were discussed to further enrich the understanding of the role of private school principals as strategic leaders in enhancing parents' intentions and behaviour towards private schooling. Ultimately, the research findings were presented and disseminated for publication.

3.10 Ethical concern

During the research process, several ethical considerations were carefully considered. In the quantitative phase of the study, a survey design was employed to collect data through questionnaires distributed to respondents. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, and only data from consenting respondents was included in the research. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and individuals had the right to withdraw from the research at any time without any adverse consequences.

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of participants, the risks of the research were clearly explained in the consent form. Participants were informed that they might experience discomfort or distress while thinking about their experiences and that they had the right to withdraw from the research if they felt uncomfortable. If respondents had any concerns or needed to provide feedback, they could contact the researcher without hesitation. The anonymity of participants was ensured to maintain confidentiality, and all data collected was treated with strict confidentiality. The researcher was the only individual with access to the data, and it will not be made public unless required by law.

For the qualitative phase, only private school principals who expressed a willingness to participate were included in the research. To protect their privacy, the names of the private schools and the identities of the principals were kept anonymous. Additionally, any identifiable data collected during the research process will be destroyed one year after the research is published. During the interviews, a sensitive and open environment was created for the principals to freely express their views. Privacy and confidentiality were strictly maintained by securely storing and anonymizing the collected data. Any concerns that arose were regularly monitored and addressed to ensure a positive

research experience. Respecting privacy-built trust and facilitated open discussions, while confidentiality protected the principals' identities and prevented harm. By upholding these principles, the research process adhered to ethical standards and safeguarded the participants' rights and well-being.

3.11 Data Analysis

After completing the data collection for the quantitative phase, the data was entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Descriptive analysis was conducted on the demographic background of the respondents, which included frequency, percentage, mode, mean, and median. To ensure the validity of the results, only married Chinese parents and Malaysian citizens were included in the analysis, with marital status, race, and nationality serving as filters to exclude any possible confounding variables.

In order to answer the first research question, which pertained to the demographic characteristics of the study population, a detailed analysis was conducted on three specific items, namely item 6, item 7, and item 8, contained in the demographic section of the survey questionnaire. More specifically, the aforementioned items were focused on parents' highest educational level, monthly household income, and occupation category, respectively. To achieve this aim, a thorough descriptive analysis was employed, utilizing SPSS software, which enabled the calculation of various statistical measures, such as frequency, percentage, mode, mean, and median. The utilization of such a rigorous and analytical approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the demographic profile of the study participants.

To address research questions 2, 3, and 4, an analysis of items in Section B was performed using SPSS. The analysis involved a descriptive examination of parents' beliefs and intentions level, with the frequency, mode, mean, and median being used as the measures of central tendency. This approach enabled us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the distribution of parents' beliefs and intentions in relation to private schooling. Additionally, this provided an opportunity to explore any patterns or trends in parents' responses and to identify potential outliers that may have influenced the results.

In order to address research questions 5 and 6, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was utilized as a statistical technique to investigate the relationship between parental beliefs and intentions towards private schooling, as well as the correlation between parents' intentions and their behaviour of private schooling. To perform this analysis, the AMOS software was used as it is widely recognized as a reliable tool for SEM analysis. The SEM analysis allowed for a comprehensive examination of the complex relationships among the various factors that affect parents' decision-making process regarding private schooling, and provided a deeper understanding of the factors that influence parents' behaviour towards private schooling.

To determine the moderating effect of socioeconomic factors on the relationship between parents' intention and behaviour towards private schooling, a multigroup analysis in AMOS was employed to address research questions 7-9. The analysis aimed to examine the conditional relationship between the predictors (parents' intention) and outcome variable (parents' behaviour towards private schooling) based on the levels of moderators (socioeconomic factors). The use of this statistical technique allowed for the identification of potential differences in the effect of parents' intention on behaviour

towards private schooling among different subgroups of parents. The results of the multigroup analysis were then utilized to provide insights into how socioeconomic factors play a role in shaping the decision-making process of parents when considering private schooling as an option for their children.

To comprehensively address the tenth research question, a qualitative approach was adopted to provide a deep understanding of the role of private school principals as strategic leaders in enhancing parents' intention and behaviour towards private schooling. The qualitative phase involved the use of semi-structured interviews, which allowed for an in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences, opinions, and beliefs regarding private schooling. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using cross-sectional thematic analysis, which is a widely recognized approach for analyzing qualitative data. Thematic analysis is a multi-step process that starts with organizing and transcribing the data. The next step is to explore the data and conduct preliminary exploratory analysis to gain a general understanding of the data, memo ideas, and think about how to organize the data. The coding process follows, which involves segmenting and labelling the text to generate descriptions and broad themes in the data. Once the coding of the entire text is complete, all the code words are listed, and similar codes are grouped together, while redundant codes are identified and removed. This process of reducing the list of codes helps to identify several themes. Themes are similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea in the database. The thematic analysis was performed using Atlas.ti, a powerful software program that facilitated the coding and organization of the data, as well as the identification of recurring themes and patterns. The results of the qualitative phase were triangulated with the findings of the quantitative phase to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the research topic.

Table 3.6*Research Questions and Type of Analysis*

Research Questions	Method	Type of Analysis
What is the level of family income, occupation category and educational levels among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?	SPSS	Descriptive analysis - Frequency, percentage
What is the level of behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief in private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?	SPSS	Descriptive analysis - Frequency, percentage and mean, mode, median
What is the level of intention in private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?	SPSS	Descriptive analysis - Frequency, percentage and mean, mode, median
What is the level of private schooling behaviour among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?	SPSS	Descriptive analysis - Frequency, percentage and mean
Are there any influence of parents' behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief on parents' intention in private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?	AMOS SEM	Structural Model Analysis
Are there any influences of parents' intention on their behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?	AMOS SEM	Structural Model Analysis
Does family income moderate between parents' intention and their behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?	AMOS SEM	Multiple group analysis

Does occupational category moderate between parents' intention and their behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?	AMOS SEM	Multiple group analysis
Does educational level moderate between parents' intention and their behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?	AMOS SEM	Multiple group analysis
To what extent can the quantitative findings support the role of the school principals as strategic leader to improve the intention of private schooling among parents?	Atlas ti	Thematic analysis

3.12 Summary of Chapter

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the methodology employed, which is a mixed-method explanatory sequential design. The chapter begins by presenting the philosophical worldview, followed by research approach and design, along with a detailed rationale for the chosen research method. The sample size and the instruments utilized in the study are clearly presented, with a thorough discussion of the validity and reliability of the instruments employed. Furthermore, the chapter outlines the research procedure, including ethical considerations, and data analysis methods used to analyze the collected data. The rigor and trustworthiness of the study are enhanced by the utilization of a robust methodology and a transparent research process, which increases the credibility and dependability of the research findings. Overall, this chapter provides a comprehensive and systematic approach to the research design, data collection, and analysis, ensuring that the research objectives are met, and the research questions are addressed.

CHAPTER 4: CHAPTER 4

RESULT

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study conducted. The quantitative data collected for the first phase of the research was analyzed using various statistical techniques through SPSS version 21 and AMOS version 24. Initially, a descriptive analysis was presented to explain the demographic background of the respondents. Next, descriptive analyses were conducted, including tests for frequency, mean, and percentage, to answer research questions 1 to 4. To answer research questions 5 and 6, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to examine the influence of the proposed model. Next, multi-group analysis of the moderating effect of socioeconomic background was conducted to answer research questions 7 to 9. Lastly, to address the final research question, thematic analysis using Atlas ti was employed.

4.2 Respondents' demography background

Demographic background is the first part of the questionnaire that respondents need to complete. The demographic part is important in obtaining information about the background of the study subject. Descriptive analysis is used to describe and give an idea the characteristics of the respondents' demographic background. Besides, the findings from the demographic background are used to answer the first research question. Family structure, race and nationality are used as a filter to filter out demographic characteristics which might possibly affect the parents' beliefs and intention. Therefore, all respondents involved in the analysis are from nuclear family, Chinese and Malaysian. The following subtopics present the descriptive analysis of each of the demographic characteristics.

4.2.1 Parental Role

The total number of parents involved in this study is 377 respondents. Out of 377 respondents, statistics presented in Table 4.1 showed that as many as 92.3% of the respondents are mothers, and 7.7% are fathers.

Table 4.1

Distribution of Respondents According to Parental Role

Parental Role	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Father	29	7.7
Mother	348	92.3
Total	377	100

4.2.2 Parents' Age

Table 4.2 shows the age groups of the respondents. Most of the respondents are from the age group of 31-40, which made up 52.3% of the respondents, followed by the age group of 41-50, which consist of 35.8% of the respondents. There are 23 parents who are younger than 30 years old, and 21 parents in the range of 51-60 years old. Only 1 parent from the respondents is older than 60 years old.

Table 4.2*Distribution of Respondents According to Age Groups*

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<30	23	6.1
31-40	197	52.3
41-50	135	35.8
51-60	21	5.6
>60	1	0.3
Total	377	100

4.2.3 Parents' Highest Educational Level

Parents' educational background is considered to be a crucial variable in a student's education. Siddiqui (2017) reported that parents who have attended formal education for a higher number of years have a positive relationship with their children's enrollment in private schools. Therefore, it is essential to obtain information about the highest educational levels of both parents in the respondents' families. To simplify the analysis, the educational categories were classified into three levels. Respondents with a secondary or primary education level are classified as having a low educational level, while those with a Form 6, college, diploma, matriculation, or equivalent level are classified as having a middle educational level. Respondents who are undergraduate or postgraduate are considered to have a high educational level.

Generally, mothers' educational level is higher than father's educational levels. Mothers who have at least form 6, college matriculation or equivalent level qualification (middle educational level) has the highest percentage which is 41.1%,

whereas most of the fathers (45.36%) only completed secondary level (low educational level). In addition, the percentage of mothers who attended universities is also higher than fathers. Overall, mothers who are at a high educational level make up of 27.6% of the samples. Mothers who are undergraduates and postgraduates are 21.5% and 6.1% respectively compared to fathers who are undergraduate 19.9% and postgraduate 5.0%.

Table 4.3

Parents' Highest Educational Level

Parental Role		Father		Mother	
Parents' highest educational level	Educational level	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary school	Low	19	5.0	5	1.3
Secondary school		171	45.5	113	30.0
Form 6/ College/ Matriculation or equivalent	Middle	93	24.7	155	41.1
Undergraduate	High	75	19.9	81	21.5
Postgraduate		19	5.0	23	6.1
Total		377	100.0	377	100.0

4.2.4 Monthly Household Income

Anders et al., (2020) reported that family income is important as a predictor of sending a child to private school. Therefore, the monthly household income level of the respondents has to be analysed. The data collected through the questionnaires is categorical. Initially in the questionnaire the four categories of family income are determined according to total family income in the range of RM5000, namely below

RM5000, RM5001-RM10000, RM10000-RM15000 and above RM15000. However, according to Department of Statistics Malaysia (2019), Kuala Lumpur as the capital in Malaysia, recorded the median income with RM10,549. Since the population of the study are parents in Kuala Lumpur, to better reflect the family income level, the four initial categories are grouped into three levels using the Kuala Lumpur median household income as the benchmark. The three levels are low, moderate, and high family income. Family income below RM5000 is considered as low family income, RM5001-RM10000 and RM10001-RM15000 are considered as middle family income, whereas families with more than RM15000 household income are considered as high-income families.

Families who have moderate family income ranges from RM5 000 - RM15 000 record the highest number which is 232 (61.5%). Low household income families record the second lowest which is 73 (19.4%). Families which have a high household income are slightly lesser than low household income which is 72 out of 377 (19.1%). Table 4.4 presents the overall economic background of the respondents, moderating effect of the monthly household income between the relationship of intention and behaviour of private schooling will be discussed in subtopic of 4.9.

Table 4.4*Monthly Household Income*

Household income (RM)	Income level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
< 5 000	Low	73	19.4
5 000 – 10 000	Middle	232	61.5
10 000 – 15 000			
> 15 000	High	72	19.1
Total		377	100.0

4.2.5 Occupational Category

According to Malaysia Standard Classification of Occupation (Ministry of Human Resource, 2021), occupations in Malaysia can be generally categorised into 10 major groups, according the concept of job and skills. Skill is defined as the ability to carry out the tasks and duties of a given job (Ministry of Human Resource, 2021). There are 4 levels of skills, and the levels of skill are operationally defined according to the educational level. First skill level corresponds to primary educational level, second skill level corresponds to secondary or post-secondary education, third skill level corresponds to tertiary education leading to an award not equivalent to a first degree, and the last skill level refers to tertiary education leading to a university degree or postgraduate degree (Ministry of Human Resource, 2021).

The occupation of category of both parents are analysed. Statistics shows that of father' occupations are mainly from major group 1, manager or business owner (46.4%) and major group 2, professionals (17.5%) which require higher skill level. On the other hand, major group 1, manager or business owner (30.5%), major group 2, professionals

(22.5%) and major group 4, clerical support workers (23.3%), record the highest number for mother occupation category.

Apart from the 10 major groups, the occupation categories also can be classified into two groups according to the organisation hierarchy, the hierarchy includes managerial roles and non-managerial roles (Wijebandara et al., 2019). People who take up the managerial role are personnel who are responsible for undertaking management functions in the organization such as planning, policy making, supervision, leadership etc. On the other hand, non-managerial employees are employees who do not have any management role but are responsible for executing or carrying out individual jobs or functions for the organization (Ministry of Human Resource, 2021). In this study, major group 1 business owners and major group 2 professional who shoulder higher level of responsibilities in decision making, planning, supervision etc. are classified as managerial personnel. Contrarily, non-managerial employees consist of major group 3-10 who are responsible for executing or carrying out individual jobs or functions for the organization. Both father and mother record the higher percentage of managerial work, which is 63.9% and 53.1% respectively, whereas father non-managerial employee consist of 36.1%, and mother non-managerial employee made up of 46.9%. The occupational categories of the respondents are summarised in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5*Parents' Occupation Category*

Parental role Occupation category	Father		Mother	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Managers/Business Owner (Major group 1)	175	46.6	115	30.5
Professionals (Major group 2)	66	17.5	85	22.5
Technicians and Associate Professionals (Major group 3)	32	8.5	9	2.4
Clerical Support Workers (Major group 4)	13	3.4	88	23.3
Service and Sales Workers (Major group 5)	46	12.2	43	11.4
Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, Livestock and Fishery Workers (Major group 6)	23	6.1	4	1.1
Craft and Related Trades Workers (Major group 7)	8	2.1	7	1.9
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers (Major group 8)	5	1.3	2	0.5
Elementary Occupations (Major group 9)	9	2.4	23	6.1
Armed Forces (Major group 10)	0	0.0	1	0.3
Total	377	100.0	377	100.0
Managerial personnel	241	63.9	200	53.1
Non-managerial employee	136	36.1	177	46.9
Total	377	100.0	377	100.0

4.2.6 Summary of Level of Family Income, Occupational Category and Educational Levels

The precedent subtopics presented the educational levels, family income and occupational category of the respondents. The descriptive analysis can be used to answer the first research question: What is the level of family income, occupation category and educational levels among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur? Table 4.6 simplified and summarized the analysis of parents' level of family income, occupational category, and education levels to give an overview of demographic background of the respondents. There are 377 valid responses (N=377), which means there are 377 nucleus families involved in the data analysis. Since both parents in a family might have different educational levels and occupational categories, therefore the fathers' and mothers' occupation categories and educational levels will be analysed separately. From Table 4.6, it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents come from middle-class families. Specifically, 61.5% of families reported a monthly household income ranging from RM5000 to RM15000. Furthermore, 59.2% of the respondents (considering both father and mother in the same family as separate individuals, totaling 754 individuals) have completed post-secondary education. Additionally, most of the respondents fall into the manager work category, with 63.9% of fathers and 53.1% of mothers working in managerial positions.

Table 4.6*Respondents' Demographic Background*

Demographic	Level	Frequency	Percentage	
Background			(%)	
	Low	73	19.4	
Family income	Middle	232	61.5	
	High	72	19.1	
Total	N=377	377	100.0	
	Low	190	50.4	
Father	Middle	93	24.7	
	High	94	24.9	
Total	N=377	377	100.0	
	Low	118	31.3	
Educational level	Mother	Moderate	155	41.1
		High	104	27.6
Total	N=377	377	100.0	
	Managerial personnel	241	63.9	
Father	Non-managerial employee	136	36.1	
Total	N=377	377	100.0	
	Managerial personnel	200	53.1	
Mother	Non-managerial employee	177	46.9	
Total	N=377	377	100.0	

4.3 Level of Beliefs

This subtopic is aimed to answer the research question 2: “What is the level of behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief in private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?” Parents’ beliefs are collected through 19 items in the questionnaire titled “Survey of Parents’ Beliefs in Private Schooling”. 8 items measuring behavioural belief, normative belief and control belief are measured by 4 items and 7 items respectively. The items are measured using a 4-point Likert scale, where a low score indicates a low level of belief, and a higher score represents a high level of belief. The score for each item is totaled to give an overall score for the respective belief. These scores are then processed and analyzed using SPSS software. However, since each belief is measured using a different number of items, the total score for each belief will not be the same. The level of each belief will be discussed in detail in subtopic 4.3.1 to 4.3.3.

4.3.1 Level of Behavioural Belief

In the context of this study, behavioural belief pertains to the perceptions that parents hold regarding private school leadership and management and its impact on the overall quality and performance of private schools. The measurement of behavioural belief was obtained through the use of 8 items, which were designed to capture the different facets of parents' attitudes towards private schools.

Descriptive statistics were employed to report on the distribution of scores for behavioural belief. Specifically, the maximum score for behavioural belief was 32, while the minimum score was 8, based on a sample size of 377. The level of behavioural belief was calculated by aggregating the total score for each respondent, which enabled a categorization of the levels of behavioural belief into distinct categories.

It is worth noting that the level of behavioural belief is an important indicator of parents' attitudes towards private schooling. A high level of behavioural belief implies a favorable perception of private schools, while a low level of behavioural belief suggests an unfavorable attitude towards private schooling.

To facilitate the interpretation of the findings related to behavioural belief, Table 4.7 has been included as a guideline to provide an overview of the different levels of behavioural belief and their corresponding score ranges. The score ranges are calculated by dividing the maximum score into three categories.

Table 4.7

Score Level of Parents' Behavioural Belief

Level of Behavioural Belief	Behavioural Belief Score
Low	8-15
Medium	16-24
High	25-32

The mean score for the behavioural belief construct is 25.16, with a median score of 25.00 and mode of 24.00. The standard deviation is 4.678, indicating that the scores are moderately dispersed around the mean. This suggests that a majority of the respondents have a high level of behavioural belief towards private schools. The descriptive statistics also reveal that the 25th percentile is 22.00, the 50th percentile is 25.00, and the 75th percentile is 29.00. This indicates that 50% of the respondents fall within the range of 22 to 29 on the behavioural belief scale. The results are presented in Table 4.8, which summarizes the level of behavioural belief among the respondents.

Table 4.8*Parents' Behavioural Belief Level*

Descriptive statistics	Behavioural Belief Score
Mean	25.16
Median	25.00
Mode	24.00
Standard Deviation	4.678
Minimum	8.00
Maximum	32.00
Percentile	
25 th	22.00
50 th	25.00
75 th	29.00

4.3.2 Level of Normative Belief

Normative belief is defined as the extent to which parents perceive the social trend and their willingness to conform to it. This construct is measured using four items in the questionnaire, and all 377 respondents provided valid responses without any missing data. The descriptive statistics reveal that the minimum score for the level of normative belief is 4, while the maximum score is 16. To better understand the distribution of responses, the level of normative belief is categorized into three categories based on the total score. Specifically, Table 4.9 provides an overview of the different levels of normative belief and their corresponding scores. It is worth noting that these scores are important as they reflect the parents' perceived social pressure and their motivation to comply with the perceived social trend.

Table 4.9*Score Level of Parents' Normative Belief*

Level of Normative Belief	Normative Belief Score
Low	4-8
Medium	9-12
High	13-16

The mean normative belief score is 7.72, with a median score of 7.00 and a mode of 5.00, indicating that the majority of respondents had a low level of normative belief. The standard deviation of 3.022 suggests that there was considerable variability in the normative belief scores among the respondents. The 25th percentile is 5.00, whereas the 75th percentile is 9.00, meaning that 50% of the respondents fall within the range of 5.00 to 9.00, within the range of low level of normative belief. For a detailed overview of the descriptive statistics of normative belief, please refer to Table 4.10.

Table 4.10*Parents' Normative Belief Level*

Descriptive statistics	Normative belief score
Mean	7.72
Median	7.00
Mode	5.00
Standard Deviation	3.022
Minimum	4.00
Maximum	16.00

Percentile	
25 th	5.00
50 th	7.00
75 th	9.00

4.3.3 Level of Control Belief

The level of control belief refers to the extent to which parents perceive the difficulty or ease in performing the behaviour of enrolling their child in a private school. This construct is measured by 7 items. A higher score on the control belief scale indicates that parents perceive greater ease in enrolling their child in a private school, while a lower score implies that parents find it more difficult to perform this behaviour. The minimum score for control belief is 7, while the maximum score is 28, with a mean score of 18.78, median score of 19.00, mode of 20.00, and a standard deviation of 4.162. The level of control belief is calculated and categorized into three levels using the total score, with Table 4.11 summarizing the levels of control belief and their respective scores.

Table 4.11

Score Level of Parents' Control Belief

Level of Control Belief	Control Belief Score
Low	7-13
Medium	14-20
High	21-28

Table 4.12 presents the descriptive analysis of the level of control belief. The mean score for control belief is 18.52 with a standard deviation of 4.749. The median score

is 18.00 and the mode is 21.00. The 25th percentile is 15.00, the 50th percentile is 18.00, and the 75th percentile is 22. These results indicate that 50% of the respondents scored between 15-22 in control belief. Therefore, most of the respondents have a medium level of control belief. A higher score in control belief implies that parents perceive the facilities for private schooling to be more accessible, whereas a lower score indicates that parents recognize that performing the behaviour of private schooling is difficult.

Table 4.12

Parents' Control Belief Level

Descriptive statistics	Control belief score
Mean	18.52
Median	18.00
Mode	21.00
Standard Deviation	4.749
Minimum	7.00
Maximum	28.00
Percentile	
25 th	15.00
50 th	18.00
75 th	22.00

4.3.4 Summary of Parents' Belief levels

The descriptive analysis presented in subtopics 4.3.1 to 4.3.3 provides valuable insights that answer research question 2, which asks, "What is the level of behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief in private schooling among SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?" Based on the results, it can be inferred that the majority of the respondents held a high level of behavioural belief, which suggests that they have a

favorable perception of private schools which are closely related to private school leadership and management. Moreover, the data revealed a low level of normative belief among the respondents, indicating that parents do not feel compelled to conform to the social trend of private schooling. The level of control belief, measured by seven items, was found to be at a medium level among the respondents. This suggests that while they recognize the difficulties in sending their children to private schools, they also perceive a certain level of facilities that make the process manageable. Overall, the data indicates that SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur hold a generally positive attitude towards private schooling, despite it not being a prevailing social trend. Additionally, the data suggests that these parents feel moderately confident in their ability to send their children to private schools.

4.4 Level of Intention

Intention is a critical aspect of human behaviour as it represents the individual's motivation to perform an action or behaviour. In the context of this study, intention refers to the SJK(C) parents' motivation or planning to enroll their children in private schools. High levels of intention suggest that parents have a strong desire and willingness to enroll their children in private schools. Conversely, low levels of intention indicate a lack of interest or motivation in pursuing private schooling for their children.

To assess the level of intention among SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur, the study utilized seven items to measure the construct. The level of intention was then calculated by dividing the total score into three categories. The minimum score for the level of intention was 7, while the maximum score was 28. Table 4.13 provides a breakdown of the level of intention and their respective scores.

Table 4.13*Score Level of Parents' Intention*

Level of Intention	Intention Score
Low	7-13
Medium	14-21
High	22-28

Table 4.14 presents a summary of the descriptive analysis of the level of intention. The mean score for the level of intention is 18.43, with a standard deviation of 6.299. The median score for the level of intention is 19.00, while the mode is 21.00. The percentile data reveals that 50% of the respondents scored between 14 to 23, indicating that the majority of the participants held a medium level of intention regarding private schooling. These findings provide valuable insights into the parents' motivation to enroll their children in private schools and can be used to answer the research question: "What is the level of intention in private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?"

Table 4.14*Parents' Intention Level*

Descriptive statistics	Intention score
Mean	18.43
Median	19.00
Mode	21.00
Standard Deviation	6.299
Minimum	7.00

Maximum	28.00
<hr/>	
Percentile	
25 th	14.00
50 th	19.00
75 th	23.00
<hr/>	

4.5 Level of Behaviour of Private Schooling

Behaviour of private schooling refers to the self-report activities that have been done by the parents related to private schooling, including attended private schools' educational fairs, attended private school open days and info days, children already sat for entrance exam, registered for entrance exam or already registered and enrolled into private school. High level of behaviour of private schooling signifies those parents already engaged in the behaviour of private schooling, whereas low level of behaviour of private schooling signifies that the parents have not perform any activities or behaviour related to private schooling. This subtopic is intended to answer the fourth research question: "What is the level of private schooling behaviour among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?". There are 7 items measuring the level of actual behaviour. Behaviour of private schooling is nominal data, in order to analyse the result using SEM, binary coding was used to convert categorical data into ordinal data. If the parents performed the activities related to private schooling behaviour, they will be awarded 1 point, if they did not perform the perform the activities, no point will be awarded. The lower the score, the lower the level of behaviour of private schooling. The level of actual behaviour is calculated and categorised using the total score. The minimum score for level of intention is 0, and the maximum score is 7. Table 4.15 represents the level of behaviour of private schooling and their respective score.

Table 4.15*Score Level of Parents' Actual Behaviour*

Level of Actual Behaviour	Actual Behaviour Score
Low	0-1
Medium	2-4
High	5-7

The frequency analysis of the level of actual behaviour related to private schooling is presented in Table 4.16. Out of the 377 SJK(C) parents who participated in the study, a considerable number of 228 did not engage or almost did not involve in any form of activities related to private schooling. This finding suggests that the vast majority of the respondents have a low level of behaviour related to private schooling, indicating that they have not taken any significant steps towards enrolling their children in private schools.

However, it is also noteworthy that 48 respondents were involved in some form of activities related to private schooling, while 101 respondents were actively involved in activities related to private schooling. This implies that approximately 26.8% of parents have a high level of behaviour related to private schooling, indicating that they are actively engaged in private schooling activities. Specifically, these parents have taken steps to enrol their children into private schools, such as attending private school educational fairs, open days, and info days, having their children sit for entrance exams, and registering or enrolling their children into private schools.

It is essential to recognize that this finding suggests that a considerable proportion of SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur are open to the idea of private school and actively participated in the activities related to private schooling.

Table 4.16

Parents' Behaviour of Private Schooling

Actual Behaviour score	Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0-1	Low	228	60.5
2-4	Moderate	48	12.7
5-7	High	101	26.8
Total		377	100.0

4.6 Confirmatory Factory Analysis

In recent years, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) has become a popular technique used by researchers in various disciplines due to its ability to assess latent variables and test causal relationships between them (Chua, 2021). Therefore, in this study, SEM was employed to validate the research model and investigate the relationships between the variables of interest. Additionally, SEM was selected because it enables the assessment of moderators, which are crucial in explaining the variations in the relationships between the variables.

To analyse the data, AMOS was chosen as the data analysis tool due to its user-friendly interface and its ability to handle complex models with numerous variables and relationships (Chua, 2021). AMOS provides a wide range of features, such as path analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and latent growth curve modelling, that allow

for a thorough examination of the relationships between the variables in the model. Hence, AMOS is an ideal tool for conducting the SEM analysis in this study.

To evaluate the validity and reliability of the proposed model, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted, providing quantitative measures for assessment (Chua, 2021). CFA utilized the maximum likelihood estimation method to evaluate the reliability and validity of the measurement model, which are critical components in the evaluation of a measurement model.

Reliability in research refers to the instrument's ability to produce consistent results when used repeatedly (Chua, 2021). To provide evidence of reliability, researchers often use two measures: Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) (Chua, 2021). Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency, and an acceptable value typically falls within the range of .65 to .95 (Chua, 2021). Similarly, composite reliability assesses the internal consistency of constructs, and a value of .70 or higher is considered acceptable (Chua, 2021). Additionally, factor loadings can be used to calculate reliability, where significant loadings at the 0.01 level indicate reliability.

Validity, on the other hand, is the credibility of the research (Chua, 2021). It measures the degree to which an instrument effectively measures what it intends to measure (Chua, 2021). To assess the validity of the measurement model, two types of validity were examined: content validity and construct validity.

Content validity was conducted to ensure the consistency between the measurement items and the existing literature. All measurement items of the instrument in this research were developed based on the sample provided by Icek Ajzen (2013) who is

the author of Theory of Planned behaviour (TPB). However, as suggested by Icek Azjen, items designed to directly assess the theory's constructs must be validated prior to construction of the final questionnaire (Ajzen, 2013.) Therefore, content validity was done by inviting two experienced professionals to comment on the the measurement items in the survey instrument and conducted a pilot test to validate the instrument. The comments from the professionals, the revised items, and pilot test result were reported in subtopic 3.6.1 Validity of the Instrument.

Construct validity tests how well a concept or behaviour has been translated into an operational reality (Chua, 2021). It comprises of convergent and discriminant validity (Chua, 2021). Convergent validity measures the degree to which two measures that theoretically should be related, are in fact related. In contrast, discriminant validity is demonstrated by evidence that measures of constructs that theoretically should not be highly related to each other are, in fact, not found to be highly correlated to each other (Stephanie, 2015).

Four measures were used to measure convergent validity, which are Cronbach's alpha, item loadings, average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR). Convergent validity is adequate if Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.70, factor loadings are greater than 0.50, average variance extracted (AVE) is greater than 0.50 and composite reliability is greater than 0.60 (Hutkemri, 2022; Chua, 2021).

The result of CFA which included the all the items is presented in Table 4.17. The initial CFA results revealed that factor loading of 4 items were less than 0.5 and did not fulfil the convergent validity. Table 4.17 shows that the factor loading of 3 items from the construct of normative belief are below 0.5. The 3 items are S1, S2 and S3, and their

respective factor loadings are 0.38, 0.41, 0.36. Besides, item C8 from the construct of control belief also shows a low factor loading, which is 0.22.

Table 4.17

Initial Results of CFA (included all items in the instrument)

Latent variables and their items	Factor Loading	Cronbach's alpha	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability (CR)
<i>Behavioural belief</i>				
B1	.71***			
B2	.62***			
B3	.82***			
B4	.81***	.902	.540	.902
B5	.76***			
B6	.56***			
B7	.79***			
B8	.76***			
<i>Normative Belief</i>				
S1	.38***			
S2	.41***			
S3	.36***	.849	.437	.826
S4	.56***			
S5	.82***			
S6	.91***			
S7	.90***			
<i>Control Belief</i>		.842	.447	.857

C1	.69***
C2	.67***
C3	.78***
C4	.84***
C5	.69***
C6	.72***
C7	.54***
C8	.22***

Intention

I1	.68***			
I2	.76***			
I3	.70***			
I4	.83***	.949	.654	.929
I5	.91***			
I6	.86***			
I7	.90***			

Actual Behaviour

AB1	.80***			
AB2	.82***			
AB3	.89***			
AB4	.93***	.952	.732	.950
AB5	.91***			
AB6	.87***			
AB7	.76***			

In order to increase the convergent validity of the constructs and the model fit of proposed model, 3 items from the construct of normative belief and 1 item from the construct of control belief were removed from the proposed model.

After some items were deleted, all the Cronbach's alpha, factor loading, average variance extracted, (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) values of this research are within the acceptable value, except for the AVE of control belief is 0.492 which is slightly below the acceptable level 0.5. However, the slightly lower AVE is still acceptable as the composite reliability is 0.87. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), if AVE is less than 0.5, but composite reliability is higher than 0.6, the convergent validity of the construct is still adequate (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

In a nutshell, the result of CFA suggests that all the constructs had met the convergent validity criteria. Table 4.18 shows the factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, AVE, and CR of latent variables of this study after the items which have low factor loading were deleted. The result of the CFA, summarized in Table 4.18, indicates that the instrument was able to yield relatively reliable and valid results.

Table 4.18*Final Results of CFA (after items with low factor loading were deleted)*

Latent variables and their items	Factor Loading	Cronbach's alpha	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability (CR)
<i>Behavioural belief</i>				
B1	.72***			
B2	.63***			
B3	.81***			
B4	.81***	.902	.540	.903
B5	.76***			
B6	.57***			
B7	.79***			
B8	.77***			
<i>Normative Belief</i>				
S4	.54***			
S5	.82***	.865	.658	.881
S6	.93***			
S7	.90***			
<i>Control Belief</i>				
C1	.65***			
C2	.63***			
C3	.75***	.868	.492	.870
C4	.85***			
C5	.71***			

C6	.74***			
C7	.55***			
<hr/>				
<i>Intention</i>				
I1	.73***			
I2	.80***			
I3	.76***			
I4	.87***	.949	.723	.948
I5	.94***			
I6	.90***			
I7	.93***			
<hr/>				
<i>Actual</i>				
<i>Behaviour</i>				
AB1	.79***			
AB2	.80***			
AB3	.88***	.952	.722	.947
AB4	.95***			
AB5	.94***			
AB6	.85***			
AB7	.82***			

Note: *** significant at $p < .001$.

4.7 Measurement Model

Before conducting SEM analysis, it is essential to perform a Measurement Model or Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to ensure that the indicators accurately represent the constructs being measured (Chua, 2021). To assess whether the model fits the data, several fit indices were used, including the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Chi-Square/Degree of Freedom Ratio (CMIN/df).

The Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) is used to evaluate the fit of the model to the data, and a value close to 1.0 indicates a good fit (Chua, 2021). Adjusted Goodness of Fit (AGFI) is similar to GFI but takes into account the degrees of freedom in the model (Byrne, 2016). Both GFI and AGFI range from 0 to 1, with values closer to 1 indicating a better fit. RMSEA is a "badness of fit" index, where lower values indicate a better fit, and values below 0.08 are considered acceptable (Zainuddin Awang, 2012; Chua, 2021). A value of 0.05 is considered indicative of good fit, 0.05 to 0.08 as an adequate fit, and 0.08 to 0.10 as mediocre fit (Chua, 2021).

The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) measures the degree to which the data fit the hypothesized model compared to a baseline model, and values greater than 0.90 indicate a good fit, while a value of 1.00 indicates a perfect fit (Chua, 2021; Awang, 2012). CFI is less affected by sample size (Chua, 2021). CMIN/df values in the range of 0 to 2 indicate a good fit, and values between 2 to 3 are considered acceptable (Chua, 2021).

The Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) is another relative fit index, and $TLI > 0.90$ is considered a good fit (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). The Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) or

TLI was developed to address the sample size dependency of the Normed Fit Index (Cangur & Ercan, 2015). Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI) is another relative fit index, and values above 0.90 are indicative of a good fit (Newsom, 2020). All these fit indices range from approximately 0 to 1.0, with values above 0.90 considered indicative of good fitting models (Newsom, 2020). Table 4.19 summarizes the acceptable range of the model fitness indices.

Table 4.19

Model Fitness Indices

Name of Index	Level of Acceptance	Remarks
Chisq	$P > 0.05$	Sensitive to sample size >200
GFI	> 0.90	GFI = 0.95 is a good fit
AGFI	> 0.90	AGFI = 0.95 is a good fit
RMSEA	< 0.08	Range 0.05-0.1 is acceptable
CFI	> 0.90	CFI = 0.95 is a good fit
Chisq/df	< 5.0	The value should be less than 5.0.
IFI	> 0.90	IFI = 0.95 is a good fit
TLI	> 0.90	TLI = 0.95 is a good fit

Source: Awang (2012); Byrne (2016); Chua (2021)

The measurement model which consists of five constructs, namely behavioural belief, normative belief, control belief, intention, and actual behaviour is analysed using AMOS. Model fitness indices were examined to ensure the fitness of the model. At first, the five constructs were measured by 37 observable variables (items). Each of the

construct consists of different numbers of observable variables, behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief have 8, 7 and 8 items respectively, while intention and behaviour of private schooling both measured by 7 items.

The initial results revealed that the measurement model did not fit the data satisfactorily. As per the discussion in subtopic 4.6 Confirmatory Factor Analysis, items with low factor loading will affect the convergent validity as well as model fit. In order to improve the model fit, 4 items which have factor loading less than 0.5 were deleted. 3 items from the construct of normative belief and 1 item from the construct of control belief were deleted in order to increase the model fitness. According to Hutkemri (2022) maximum items can be removed from the measurement model is 20%. 20% of 37 items is 7.4 items, therefore, 4 items removed from the measurement model is acceptable. In addition, to improve model fit, a refinement procedure was employed. Model modification procedure was conducted using AMOS. Some of the parameters of measurement errors of measurement model control belief, intention and actual behaviour are connected because AMOS was detected that in facts the relationship between the measurement errors occurred. The measurement model was checked and refined repeatedly until all goodness-of-fit measures of the model achieved the recommended values. Table 4.20 below presents the original number of items from the proposed model and the final number of items of each construct after the model fitness of the proposed model is achieved.

Table 4.20*Number of Items Deleted from The Measurement Model*

Constructs	Initial numbers of item	Numbers of item deleted	Final numbers of item
Control Belief	8	0	8
Normative Belief	7	3	4
Control Belief	8	1	7
Intention	7	0	7
Actual Behaviour	7	0	7
Total	37	4	33

The measurement model results indicated that the model fit the data pretty well, which are $CMIN/df = 2.2369$, $CFI = 0.943$, $TLI = 0.937$ and $RMSEA = 0.057$. Even though the values for GFI and AGFI do not exceed 0.9 (the threshold value), they still met the requirement suggested by Baumgartner and Homburg (1995), and Doll, Xia, and Torkzadeh (1994), they proposed that the value is acceptable if above 0.8. Furthermore, the other 5 model fitness indices are sufficient to ascertain the model is a good fit. This is substantiated by (Chua, 2021), he stated that in measuring the goodness of fit index of a model, if three of the measurement indexes presented are achieved then the model is considered fit. The result of the goodness-of-fit measures is presented in Table 4.21, and the final measurement model which consists of 33 observable variables (item) is present in Figure 4.1.

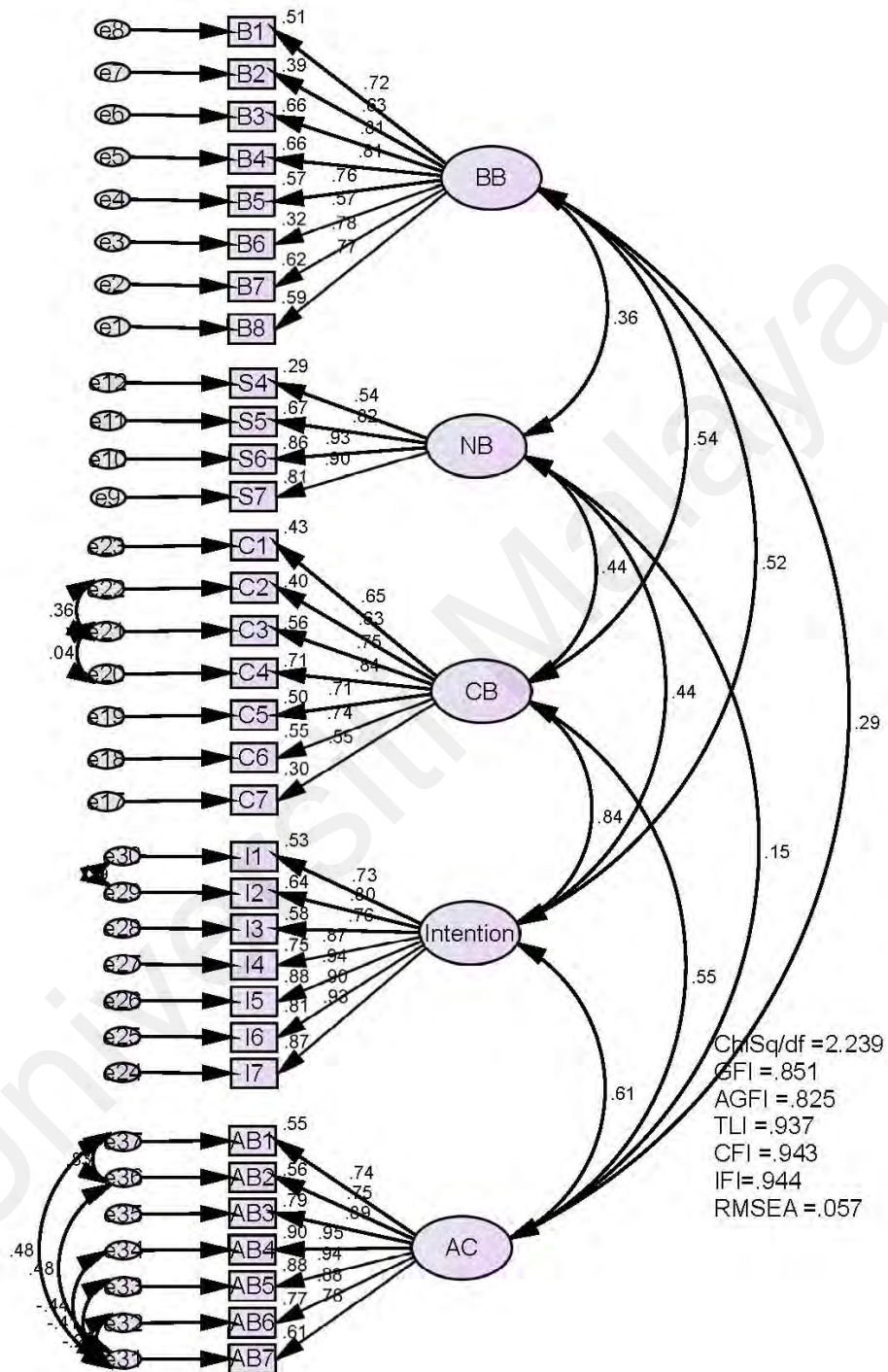
Table 4.21*Goodness of Fit Indices*

Fitness Indices	Acceptable Value	Measurement Model Value
ChiSq/df	< 5.0	2.239
CFI	> 0.90	0.943
TLI	> 0.90	0.937
GFI	> 0.90	0.851
AGFI	> 0.90	0.825
IFI	> 0.90	0.944
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.057

Source: Awang (2012); Byrne (2016); Chua (2021)

Figure 4.1

Measurement Model



*BB: Behavioural belief, NB: Normative Belief, CB: Control Belief, AC: Actual Behaviour

4.7.1 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity refers to the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs. According to Brown (2006), discriminant validity involves relationship between a particular latent construct and other constructs of a similar nature (Brown, 2006). Discriminant validity can be assessed through two methods: (1) the correlation coefficient between all constructs is not exceeded 0.90 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), or Average Variance Extracted, AVE for each construct exceeding 0.50 and greater than power two correlation values (r^2) between constructs (Hair et al., 2010). Correlation coefficient, $r \geq .90$ indicates high correlation between two constructs and thus violates the discriminant validity. To determine discriminant validity, AVE for two constructs has to compare against the squared correlation between the two constructs. The construct is deemed as valid if the AVE for the two factors is greater than their r^2 .

Table 4.22
Inter-Correlations among Constructs

Construct	Construct	Correlation coefficient	p-value
Behavioural Belief (BB)	↔ Normative Belief (NB)	.356	***
Behavioural Belief (BB)	↔ Control Belief (CB)	.542	***
Behavioural Belief (BB)	↔ Intention (I)	.517	***
Behavioural Belief (BB)	↔ Actual Behaviour (AB)	.289	***
Normative Belief (NB)	↔ Control Belief (CB)	.439	***
Normative Belief (NB)	↔ Intention (I)	.445	***
Normative Belief (NB)	↔ Actual Behaviour (AB)	.146	0.008
Control Belief (CB)	↔ Intention (I)	.844	***
Control Belief (CB)	↔ Actual Behaviour (AB)	.584	***
Intention (I)	↔ Actual Behaviour (AB)	.611	***

Table 4.23*Average Variance Extracted and Squared Correlation Coefficients*

Construct	BB	NB	CB	I	AB
Behavioural Belief (BB)	0.540				
Normative Belief (NB)	0.127	0.658			
Control Belief (CB)	0.294	0.193	0.492		
Intention (I)	0.326	0.198	0.712	0.723	
Actual Behaviour (AB)	0.084	0.021	0.300	0.373	0.722

Figure 4.1 and Table 4.22 shows that the correlation between each construct is less than 0.90, which means there are distinctive differences between the constructs and the discriminant validity is acceptable (Fornell and Larcker, 1981, Hair et al., 2010). In addition, Table 4.23 shows the AVE for each construct greater than 0.50 and all construct validity values are more than the square root of the value of the correlation between constructs except the correlation between control belief and intention ($r^2=0.712$; AVE=0.492). However, the discriminant validity of the proposed model is still established and acceptable because the correlation coefficient (r) between constructs does not exceed 0.90 and the AVE is very close to 0.50.

4.8 Structural Model Analysis

Structural model analysis aims to assess the accuracy of the proposed model and look at the influence of variables in the proposed model as a whole (multiple regression) and individually (individual path). Findings of structural model are used to answer research questions 5 and 6.

5. Are there any influences of parents' behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief on parents' intention in private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?
6. Are there any influences of parents' intention on their behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?

The structural model analysis section will analyze the proposed model in three aspects namely (1) overall model fit, (2) influence between construct (individual path/regression weight) and contribution overall (coefficient of determination, R^2); and (3) proposed model construct effects.

4.8.1 Model Fit for Structural Model

The overall model fit refers to the fitness of the structural model to the actual influence of the model (regression model) on endogenous variables. The overall fitness of the model indicates whether the structural model can be accepted or vice versa. The fitness measurement of the structural model is similar to the fitness of measurement model which already discuss in subtopic 4.5.

The exogenous variables in the structural models are behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief, while the endogenous variable is the intention of private schooling. The intention of private schooling will then be the second set of the exogenous variable affecting the endogenous variable which is actual behaviour of private schooling.

Table 4.24 presents the fitness indices of the structural model in the study. There are 5 fitness indices values observed to meet the threshold value, which are relative Chi-sq (2.6), CFI (0.926), TLI (0.919), IFI (0.926) and RMSEA (0.065). That structural model is acceptable without the need for verification or review. The findings show that as a whole the exogeneous variables have effects and influence on endogenous variables or in other words the proposed model has an impact on parents' intention of private schooling and parents' behaviour of private schooling. The final model fits data collected from the population of the study meaning that the model can be applied to population of the study to predict the parents' intention and behaviour of private schooling.

Table 4.24

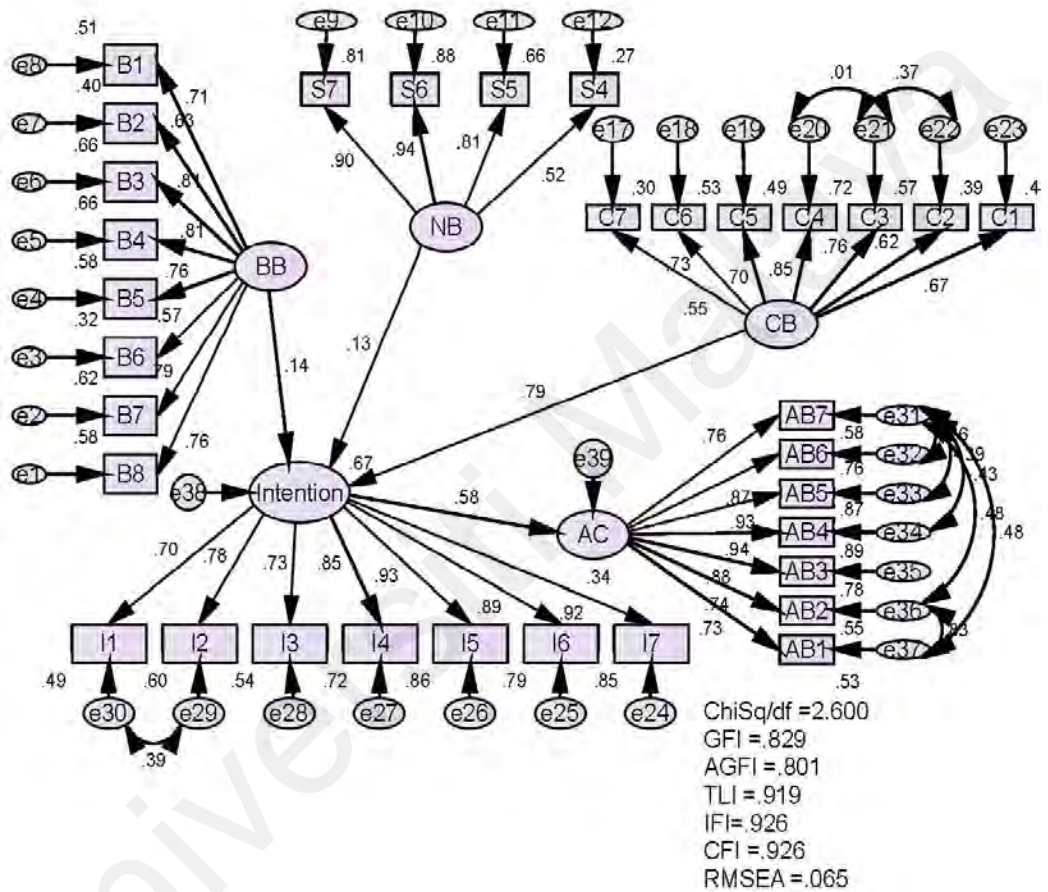
Structural Model Fitness Indices

Fitness Indices	Acceptable Value	Structural Model Value
ChiSq/df	< 5.0	2.6
CFI	> 0.90	0.926
TLI	> 0.90	0.919
GFI	> 0.90	0.829
AGFI	> 0.90	0.801
IFI	> 0.90	0.926
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.065

Source: Awang (2012); Byrne (2016); Chua (2021)

Figure 4.2

Structural Model



*BB: Behavioural belief, NB: Normative Belief, CB: Control Belief, AC: Actual Behaviour

4.8.2 Effect of The Structural Model

The structural model assessed the overall predictability of the TPB to explain parents' intention of private schooling based on their behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief.

The structural model (Figure 4.2) shows that behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief contributed 67% collectively to the parent private schooling intention. Parent private schooling intention which sequentially contribute 34% to parent actual behaviour of private schooling. In other words, 34% of the parents' behaviour of private schooling is due to their intention shaped by the three set of beliefs (exogeneous variables) which contribute 67% to the intention.

All three beliefs have significant influence on intention, (p -value < 0.05), intention also shows significant influence on behaviour of private schooling. Table 4.25 shows that control belief exerts the most significant influence on parents' intention of private schooling ($\beta = 0.79$; $p < 0.001$), meaning that every one-unit increment in standard deviation of control belief, standard deviation of parents' intention of private schooling will increase by 0.79 units and vice versa. The findings also show that the influence of behavioural belief and normative belief on intention are almost the same which are 0.14 and 0.13 respectively ($p < 0.05$). This means that an increase of one unit of standard deviation in behavioural belief and normative belief will result in 0.14 and 0.13 units increment of standard deviation in parents' intention of private schooling respectively. In a nutshell, control belief affects the parents' intention of private schooling the most as it exert the highest influence on parents' intention ($\beta = 0.79$; $p < 0.001$). On the other hand, the influence of behaviour belief and normative belief on parents' intention of

private schooling are significant but relatively low as compared to the influence of control belief.

Table 4.25

The Influence of Parents' Beliefs on Parents' Intention

Construct	B	SE	Beta	CR	P
Behavioural Belief	0.22	0.07	0.14	3.28	0.001
Normative Belief	0.15	0.05	0.13	3.13	0.001
Control Belief	1.05	0.08	0.79	13.40	0.000

Note: R= 0.819; R²= 0.67

B= Unstandardized Estimates; SE= Standard Error; Beta= Standardized Estimates; CR= Coefficient Ratio; p= Significant value

Intention is the precedent of the actual behaviour of private schooling. Table 4.26 shows the influence of intention on behaviour of private schooling. It shows that every one-unit increment in standard deviation of intention, standard deviation of parents' behaviour of private schooling will increase by 0.58 units and vice versa.

Table 4.26

The Influence of Intention on Parents' Behaviour of Private Schooling

Construct	B	SE	Beta	CR	P
Intention	0.22	0.20	0.58	11.19	0.001

Note: R= 0.583; R²= 0.34

B= Unstandardized Estimates; SE= Standard Error; Beta= Standardized Estimates; CR= Coefficient Ratio; p= Significant value

4.8.3 Direct and indirect effect of the structural model

This session will discuss the direct effect, indirect effect of the structural model on parents' actual behaviour of private schooling. The value of standard beta coefficient (β) in Figure 4.2 are the values for the effect between constructs. Direct effect is value

β at the path between the exogenous construct and endogenous construct. On the other hand, indirect effect of the exogenous construct on endogenous construct is calculated by multiplying the value β in between the paths of the exogenous constructs and mediating construct and the value β in between the path of mediating construct and endogenous construct. Since the structural model has 3 exogenous constructs which exerting indirect effect on the parents' behaviour of private schooling, the total indirect effect of the structural model is obtained by adding the indirect effect of all the exogenous construct on the endogenous construct. In this study, the total indirect effect is the sum of the indirect effects of behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief on the parents' behaviour of private schooling. While the total effect of the model is obtained by adding the direct effect of intention on parents' behaviour of private schooling and the total indirect effects of the beliefs on parents' behaviour of private schooling.

Table 4.27 presents the findings on the indirect effects of control belief, behavioural belief, and normative belief on behaviour related to private schooling. The results show that control belief had the strongest indirect effect on private schooling behaviour ($\beta=0.46$), followed by behavioural belief and normative belief, which had values of 0.08 and 0.07, respectively. This implies that parents with a high level of control belief are more likely to opt for private schooling for their children. This finding suggests that when parents have a high level of control belief, they are more likely to engage in private schooling behaviour.

Furthermore, the total indirect effect of the three exogenous variables on parents' actual behaviour of private schooling is 0.61. This result indicates that when parents have high levels of behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief, there is a higher

possibility of the parent's behaviour of private schooling. In other words, the cumulative effect of the three exogenous variables on parents' actual behaviour of private schooling is greater than the individual indirect effect of each exogenous variable. These findings suggest that interventions that target all three exogenous variables may be more effective in promoting private schooling behaviour among parents.

On the other hand, the direct effect of intention on parents' behaviour of private schooling is 0.58. Both the indirect effect and direct effect of the structural model are considered high and influence the parents' behaviour of private schooling largely. Nevertheless, it is found that the total indirect effect of the behavioural belief, normative belief and control belief on actual behaviour is higher ($\beta = 0.61$) than direct effect of intention on parents' actual behaviour ($\beta = 0.58$). Meaning to say that the influence on the behaviour of private schooling is greater when the intention is formed due to three exogenous variables which are behavioural belief, normative belief and control belief compared to the intention itself. When the intention is propelled by the three beliefs, the parents are more likely to perform the behaviour of private schooling.

Table 4.27

The Effect of Each Constructs on Behaviour of Private Schooling

Indirect effect in between constructs	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
Behavioural belief → actual behaviour	-	0.08	0.08
Normative belief → actual behaviour	-	0.07	0.07
Control belief → actual behaviour	-	0.46	0.46
Total indirect effect			0.61
Direct effect in between constructs			
Intention → actual behaviour	0.58	-	0.58

4.9 Multi-group analysis of moderating effect of socioeconomic background

Multigroup analysis was performed to investigate the moderating effect of socioeconomic factors on the relationship between parents' intention and behaviour regarding private schooling. Moderators are typically categorical variables, and in structural equation modeling (SEM), a test of the moderator is carried out using multigroup analysis. This involves dividing the data into groups based on the moderator.

The study aimed to explore why parents' intention to enroll their children in private schools may not necessarily translate into behaviour of private schooling. Previous research has also shown a strong association between attending private schools and social class or family income (Anders et al., 2020; Burgess et al., 2020). Additionally, the extended Theory of Planned Behaviour, proposed by Icek Azjen (2014), suggests that perceived behavioural control moderates the relationship between intention and behaviour. Financial considerations are a critical aspect of perceived behavioural control. Since socioeconomic background can significantly impact a family's financial ability, knowledge, and access to information about private schooling, it was essential to evaluate the moderating effect of socioeconomic factors individually instead of repeating the moderating effect of perceived behavioural control.

Therefore, multigroup analysis in SEM AMOS was employed to examine the moderating effect of socioeconomic background on the relationship between parents' intention and behaviour regarding private schooling. This approach was also used to address research questions 7, 8, and 9.

7. Does family income moderate between parents' intention and their behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?
8. Does occupational category moderate between parents' intention and their behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?
9. Does educational level moderate between parents' intention and their behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?

The subsequent subtopic will be discussing the moderator effect of family income, occupational category and educational level between parents' intention and parents' behaviour of private schooling.

4.9.1 Moderating effect of family income

Research question 7 intends to investigate does family income moderates between parents' intention and their behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur. In order to test the moderating effect, it is hypothesized that family income moderates the relationship between parents' intention and parents' actual behaviour of private schooling. The data collected through the questionnaires is categorical. The four categories of family income are determined according to total family income range <RM5000, RM5001-RM10000, RM10000-RM15000 and >RM15000. To ease the analysis of the moderator effect of family income, the four categories of family income are grouped under three levels, which are low, medium, and high. Monthly household income below RM5000 is considered as low family income, RM5001-RM15000 are considered as medium family income, whereas

families with more than RM15000 household income are considered as high-income families.

SEM AMOS multiple group analysis shows unconstrained and constrained model (structural model) are statically significant different, $p < 0.05$. In the constrained model (structural weight model) we assumed the relationships between intention and actual behaviour are the same between low, moderate, and high household income. However, the unconstrained model (proposed model) is significantly different from constrained model (structural weight). This means that there is a significant difference between low, medium, and high household income in the relationship of intention and actual behaviour. High and medium household income show the stronger relationship between intention and actual behaviour which is 0.61. The relationship between intention and actual behaviour of private schooling is significantly lower for low-income families which is 0.48. Therefore, it can be concluded that household income moderates the relationship between intention and actual behaviour of private schooling, whereby families with higher family income are more likely to perform the actual behaviour of private schooling. The standardised regression weight of low, medium, and high family income between the relationship of intention and actual behaviour of private schooling are summarized in Table 4.28.

Table 4.28

Multiple-group Analysis: Monthly Household Income

	B	SE	Beta	CR	P
Low family income	0.16	0.04	0.48	4.03	0.000
Moderate family income	0.22	0.03	0.61	8.56	0.000
High family income	0.24	0.05	0.61	4.79	0.000

Note: $R = 0.608$; $R^2 = 0.37$

B= Unstandardized Estimates; SE= Standard Error; Beta= Standardized Estimates; CR= Coefficient Ratio; p= Significant value

4.9.2 Moderating effect of parents' highest education level

Research question 8 is aimed to find out whether parents' highest education level moderates the relationship between intention and the behaviour of private schooling. Both parents in a family might have different educational levels, thus in this section the moderating effect of parents' highest education level between the relationship of intention and actual behaviour of private schooling will be analysed separately according to father's highest education level and mother's highest education level. Samples who have secondary or lower education level will be considered as low education level, meanwhile, Form 6, college, diploma matriculation and equivalent level are considered as moderate education level. Samples who are undergraduate or postgraduate are considered as high educational level.

SEM AMOS multiple group analysis shows that unconstrained and constrained model (structural weight) for fathers' education levels is not statically significant, $p=0.336$. In constrained model (structural weight model) we assumed the relationships between intention and actual behaviour are the same between low, moderate, and high fathers' highest education level. Since unconstrained model (proposed model) is not significantly different from constrained model, which mean the relationship between intention and actual behaviour of private schooling between high, moderate, and low fathers' education level is the same. The relationships between intention and actual behaviour for low, moderate, and high fathers' education level is summarized in Table 4.29.

Table 4.29*Multiple-group Analysis: Highest Educational Level*

	B	SE	Beta	CR	P
Father's educational level					
Low	0.20	0.03	0.55	7.04	0.000
Moderate	0.25	0.04	0.67	6.27	0.000
High	0.22	0.04	0.63	5.56	0.000
Mother's educational level					
Low	0.20	0.04	0.56	5.50	0.000
Moderate	0.27	0.03	0.64	7.90	0.000
High	0.20	0.03	0.64	5.92	0.000

Note:

B= Unstandardized Estimates; SE= Standard Error; Beta= Standardized Estimates; CR= Coefficient Ratio; p= Significant value

In the constrained model (structural weight model) we assumed the relationships between intention and actual behaviour are the same between low, moderate, and high mothers' education level. Multiple group analysis for mothers' highest education level shows that unconstrained and constrained model (structural weight) are not statically significant, $p=0.602$. That is, there is no significant difference between the constrained model (structural weight) and proposed model (unconstrained model). In short, there is insufficient evidence to confirm the moderating effect of mothers' education level between the relationship of intention and the actual behaviour of private schooling. The relationships between intention and actual behaviour for low, moderate, and high mothers' education level is summarized in Table 4.29.

4.9.3 Moderating effect of parents' occupational category

Research question 9 is aimed to find out whether parents' occupation category moderates the relationship between intention and actual behaviour. Both parents in a family might have different occupation categories, thus in this section the moderating effect of parents' occupation category between the relationship of intention and actual behaviour of private schooling will be analysed separately according to father's and mother's occupational categories.

For fathers' occupation groups, SEM AMOS multiple group analysis shows that unconstrained and constrained model (structural weight) are not statically significant, $p=0.830$. Similarly, for mothers' occupation groups, multiple group analysis also shows that unconstrained and constrained model (structural weight) are not statically significant, $p=0.750$.

In the constrained model (structural weight model) we assumed the relationships between intention and actual behaviour are the same between all the occupation groups. Since unconstrained model (proposed model) is not significantly different from constrained model, which means the relationships between intention and actual behaviour of private schooling between both occupation groups are the same. In other words, the different skill levels and responsibility levels of the occupation categories do not make a difference between the relationship between parents' intention and their actual behaviour of private schooling. The relationships between intention and actual behaviour for different occupation groups are summarized in Table 4.30.

Table 4.30*Multiple-group Analysis: Occupational Group*

	B	SE	Beta	CR	P
Father's occupation group					
Manager	0.22	0.03	0.60	8.61	0.000
Non-managerial worker	0.22	0.03	0.61	6.82	0.000
Mother's occupation group					
Manager	0.24	0.03	0.61	8.66	0.000
Non-managerial worker	0.20	0.03	0.57	7.44	0.000

Note:

B= Unstandardized Estimates; SE= Standard Error; Beta= Standardized Estimates; CR= Coefficient Ratio; p= Significant value

4.9.4 Summary of the moderating effect of socioeconomic background

The result of the multigroup analysis moderating effect of socioeconomic background on parents' actual behaviour of private schooling can be used to answer research question 7 to 9. Out of the 3 aspects of socioeconomic background, it is found that only family income moderates the relationship between intention and behaviour of private schooling, whereby families with higher family income are more likely to perform the behaviour of private schooling. Nevertheless, parents' educational levels and occupational categories do not show significant moderating effects between parents' intention and their actual behaviour of private schooling.

4.10 Thematic Analysis

Research Question 10 aims to investigate the extent to which the quantitative data collected in the first phase of the research can provide evidence to support the notion that school principals, as strategic leaders in the entrepreneurial context, can significantly enhance parents' inclination towards private schooling. The second phase of the research, which involves qualitative methods, seeks to triangulate the findings of

the first phase with the perspectives of private school principals to determine the level of alignment between the quantitative data and the principals' views on the role of strategic leaders in explaining parental intention and behaviour toward private schooling.

The qualitative phase of the research aims to explore practical considerations that arise when leading a private school, which may not have been captured in the quantitative phase. These include, but are not limited to, the challenges faced by school principals in implementing innovative initiatives strategically to promote private schooling. By delving deeper into these practical considerations, the qualitative phase of the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of strategic leadership on parents' decisions to enroll their children in private schools.

The research question 10 is addressed using the thematic analysis, which is a widely used qualitative research method that enables the identification and examination of patterns, themes, and meanings within a qualitative dataset. This method involves a systematic and in-depth exploration of the data to uncover themes and patterns that are relevant to the research question or topic (Creswell, 2014).

The process of thematic analysis generally involves several stages, including becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, identifying themes, reviewing and refining themes, and finally reporting the findings. The approach can be both deductive, based on pre-existing theoretical frameworks, or inductive, allowing themes to emerge from the data (Creswell, 2014). Thematic analysis is a flexible and versatile research method that can be applied to different research questions and data types. It provides

insights into the experiences, attitudes, and perceptions of individuals or groups and can uncover new or unexpected insights (Creswell, 2014).

The findings of the qualitative analysis are presented in Table 4.31, summarizing the challenges faced by the school and the strategies adopted to increase parental intention and behavior towards private schooling. The strategies findings are summarized based on the role of strategic leadership in the entrepreneurial context as outlined in Chapter 1, subtopic 1.9, operational definitions.

Table 4.31

Summary of Interview Findings

Principals	School A	School B	School C
Alignment with quantitative findings	Agree, especially considering that parents hold high behavioral beliefs.	Agree with most of the findings. However, disagree with the suggestion that parents will withdraw due to control beliefs, particularly financial problems, as the school primarily serves affluent families	Agree, especially considering that parents hold high behavioral beliefs.
Challenges	Withdrawal due to financial reason	Quality of teacher	Lack of facilities
	Physical learning hiatus due to Covid-19	Inelastic supply of graduates	Congestion
Strategic Decision	Support learning	Promotion of the holistic education	Distinguish ourselves from government schools by offering alternative approaches,

			especially in math and science education
	Embed co-curricular activities into school timetable.	Character building education	Character building education
	Online Microsoft Team learning	Customize strategic plans based on the demographics within the community where the school is located.	Offers multiple curricula strategically incorporated into a unified timetable
		Focus on 21 st century skills	Recruit only native English-speaking teachers
			Focus on 21 st century skills
Engaging External Stakeholder	Inviting parents to join co-curricular activities.	Maintain consistent communication with parents regarding the school's vision and mission.	Engage parents using Microsoft Education.
Human Resource Management	Continuous professional development for staff	Staff further study benefit	Adhere to rigorous standards in teacher recruitment process
			Encourage teachers to pursue postgraduate studies
Motivating & Influencing	Encourage the academic team to organize sessions with parents	Cultivating positive school culture	Positive school climate

Managing Information	Receptive, use parents feedback as a mode for school improvement.	Keep records of each student's talents/potential achievements and communicate with parents about them	Utilizing word-of-mouth to promote the school
	Utilizing word-of-mouth to promote the school	Utilizing word-of-mouth to promote the school	
Overseeing Operations & Administration	Quality of the teaching and learning proficient	Implement own assessment system instead of relying on government End of Term Assessments (Ujian Akhir Sesi Akademik)	Maintaining academic standards
	School facilities and infrastructures		Respond to and adapt rapidly to changes in educational policies
Managing Social & Ethical Issues	Parents' awareness program	Managing crises resulting from the new government assessment system	Planning to introduce bus service to alleviate congestion issues
Managing Conflicting Demands	Balancing teaching and learning qualities with parents' expectations.	Managing parents' expectation	Balancing competitive tuition fees with excellence in teaching and learning
		Balancing budget	
Innovative initiatives	International learning opportunities.	Global community learning	Speech and drama classes taught by professional coaches
	Trial week	Future-path learning	Enhance the appeal of co-curricular activities by organizing competitions to

	engage student interest
Parents' webinar	Microsoft Education, students attend both virtual and physical class

Overall, the perceptions of private school principals aligned with the findings from the quantitative phase, confirming the factors influencing parents' intention and behaviour towards private schooling. Additionally, the qualitative data revealed private school leaders portraying strategic leaderships as they perform the functions of strategic leaders within the entrepreneurial context. These functions including strategic decision, engaging external stakeholders, human resource management, motivating and influencing, managing information, overseeing operations and administration, managing social and ethical issues, managing conflicting demands and innovative initiatives.

The thematic analysis utilized in this research is inductive, deriving themes from the strategies employed and functions performed by private school principals. Three distinct sub-themes emerged: maintenance, improvement, and implementation. These sub-themes offer valuable insights into the approaches employed by strategic private school leaders to foster parents' inclination and behaviour towards private schooling. They play a vital role in capturing crucial aspects of the data and providing a structured framework for analysis and reporting.

School principals have demonstrated their strategic leadership through these three primary themes, all with the common goal of enhancing parents' intention and behaviour regarding private schooling. These themes form a cyclical process, ensuring continuous improvement in private schools, making them more attractive and reliable options for parents seeking quality education for their children. The cyclical nature of this process ensures that private school leaders remain proactive in addressing the evolving needs of parents and students, thereby enhancing the overall educational experience and reputation of private schools within the entrepreneurial context.

In this research context, maintain refers to the ongoing efforts made by the school principal to preserve the established policies, direction, and unique characteristics of the school that are deemed valuable in enhancing parents' intention and behaviour towards private schooling. This includes ensuring that these policies, direction, and characteristics are consistently implemented and maintained to provide a high-quality education that meets the expected standards. The ultimate goal of maintenance is to foster a positive perception among parents towards the school, thereby promoting their confidence in it as a reliable and desirable educational option.

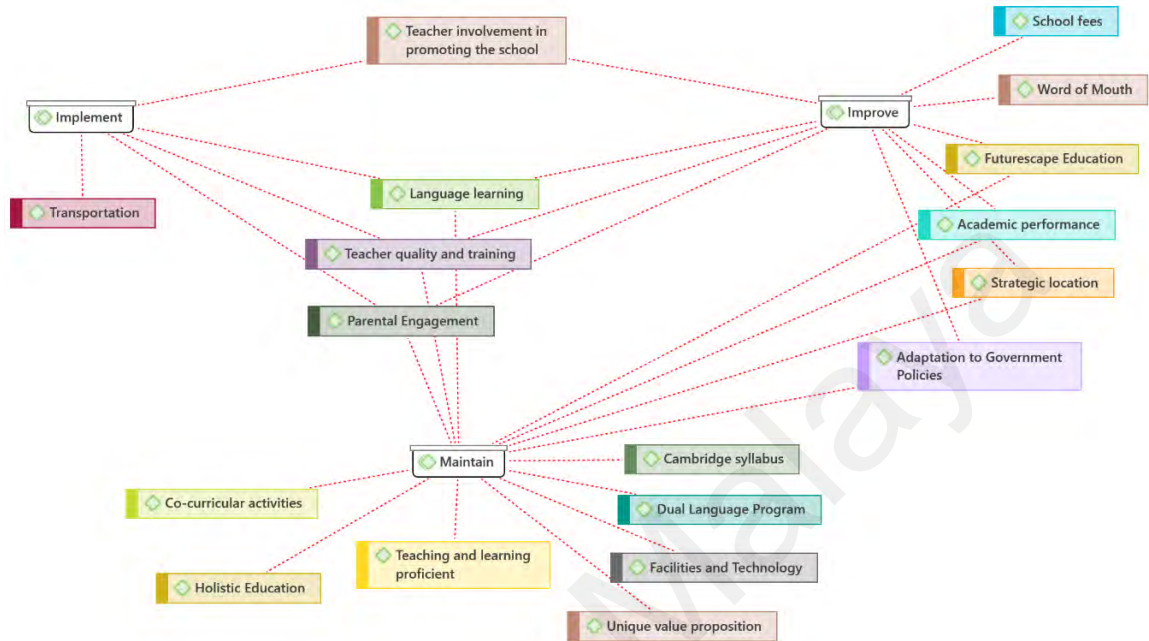
Improve, on the other hand, refers to the deliberate actions taken by the school principal to enhance the school's policies, direction, and unique characteristics to further enhance parents' intention and behaviour towards private schooling. This involves identifying the most critical areas that require improvement and taking targeted measures to address them. The ultimate goal of improvement is to strengthen the school's reputation, thereby increasing parents' confidence in it as a reliable and desirable educational option. It is worth noting that improve and maintain are complementary activities that work together to ensure the long-term success of the private school.

In the context of this research, 'implement' refers to the process of planning and executing specific policies or strategies in the future that have not been done before, aimed at addressing critical areas identified for improvement. These policies and strategies are designed to enhance the school's policies, direction, and unique characteristics, thereby further strengthening parents' intention and behaviour towards private schooling. The successful implementation of these policies and strategies is crucial to achieving the desired outcomes and ensuring the long-term success of the school.

The private school principals act as strategic leaders, navigating their schools within dynamic entrepreneurial environments. The three themes of 'maintain,' 'improve,' and 'implement' form a cohesive and cyclical process that strengthens private schools and underscores the importance of strategic leadership within entrepreneurial contexts. This continuous cycle illustrates the commitment of private school principals as strategic leaders to adapt, innovate, and enhance educational quality in response to evolving needs and challenges. The implications of the qualitative findings will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5. Figure 4.3 shows cyclic from between the three identified themes.

Figure 4.3

Thematic analysis



4.10.1 Maintain

Private schools require consistent maintenance to ensure they remain an attractive alternative to public education. In the context of the entrepreneurial education landscape, the private school principal plays a critical role in identifying and prioritizing areas that require maintenance to enhance parental intention and behavior towards private schooling. A cross-sectional thematic analysis was conducted to identify key themes that emerged from the interview data, with the theme of "maintain" being a critical area of focus. The identified codes under this theme include academic performance, adaptation to government policies, Cambridge syllabus, co-curricular activities, dual language program, facilities and learning technology, futurescape education, holistic education, language learning, parental engagement, strategic location, teacher quality and training, teaching and learning proficient, and unique value

proposition. These areas require constant attention and maintenance to ensure that the private school is providing the best possible educational experience to its students, meeting the needs of parents and stakeholders, and remaining competitive in the education sector.

The findings from the cross-sectional analysis revealed a consensus among all the principals regarding the maintenance codes that are frequently referenced. These codes, along with their respective definitions and quotations provided by the principals, are presented in Table 4.32, highlighting the common codes and concerns within the maintenance theme.

Table 4.32

“Maintain” Codes: Definition and Quotation

Codes	Definition	Quotation
Academic performance	Academic performance refers to a student's level of achievement in their academic studies, including but not limited to SPM and IGCSE. (International General Certificate of Secondary Education)	All the while, parents think that private school is good. In fact, we try to maintain our standard of SPM. Right. Like, for example, our SPM result. Last year one, 24% of our students actually get straight A's. We are talking about straight As. And about half of our candidate get at least five As and then 36% gets seven A's and above. So, our result has always been really, really good. And our GPS (<i>grade purata sekolah</i>) we are among the top three in our Petaling Perdana District. So, we have to work very hard, teachers work very hard to maintain that standard.

Adaptation to government policies	Adaptation to government policies refers to the school's proactive measures to adjust its policies, programs, and operations in response to changes in government regulations or policies. This involves identifying potential challenges and opportunities, assessing the school's strengths and weaknesses, and developing effective strategies to remain competitive and achieve its goals.	We have to be mindful of what is going on. When they remove UPSR, do you have something to offer? I know we have Cambridge checkpoint, right? Where they remove PT3, you have something to offer them now.
Cambridge syllabus	The Cambridge syllabus is an additional curriculum offered by private schools that includes the checkpoint and IGCSE exams. This provides students with a broader perspective and an opportunity to view the world from a different paradigm.	The good thing about Cambridge is more hands-on and the books are more colourful, and it inject more fun. So, we were doing both and I mean, we like it, because we want our kids to have the best of both worlds. You know, we want them to go deep, but at the same time, we want them to you know, enjoy learning.
Co-curricular activities	Co-curricular activities refer to extracurricular activities that complement academic learning, such as clubs, sports, music, and community service, providing students with holistic development opportunities.	We also mimic, while we are mimicking government schools, co-curricular activities like for example, we offer uniform bodies we offer clubs and societies, we offer, sports and games, just like the same structure has government schools, but we make sure that all these co-curricular activities are embedded in the school timetable. That

		means our co-curricular activities are not done after school hours or on Saturday.
Dual Language Program	In the context of this research, the dual language program refers to private schools that offer instruction in science and mathematics subjects in English, as opposed to the predominant use of Malay language (<i>Bahasa Melayu</i>) in government schools. This program is a government initiative that promotes bilingualism and provides greater flexibility in language instruction.	Right from primary, maths and science, we were doing like Cambridge and national, but then of course, that changing to Bahasa didn't really work out. All the time we were actually doing maths and science in English, we never change. They have the dual language program, right.
Facilities and learning technology	Facilities and learning technology refer to the resources, equipment, and tools that support student learning and educational activities. Facilities may include physical spaces such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and sports fields, while learning technology may include digital tools and resources such as online platforms, software, and educational apps.	So let's say swimming pool, for example. So that could be one of the things that will be a value added to the facilities that are in private school. So that has to be maintained. So that when parents came, like for example, let's say during our Open Day, we bring the parents around and they see oh, you have swimming pool so that that could be one thing. And our swimming pool is indoor. So that could that was even enhanced parents' behaviour.

Futurescape education	Futurescape education is an approach that focuses on preparing students for the rapidly changing and uncertain future by developing skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and adaptability. This approach also includes a focus on emerging technologies and trends that may impact the future of work and society, as well as providing guidance to students on their tertiary education and career paths.	We call it future pathways. That means we help students especially on the older age form 3, form 4 and form 5, some guidance on the career and university matters. That's the unique value proposition which need to be maintained.
Holistic education	Holistic education focuses on developing the whole person, including intellectual, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual aspects, with an aim to prepare individuals for positive contributions to society.	So, in this as a private schools compared to government schools, we should not be a very strong curriculum focused and we will need to use a lot of elements, a lot of solutions to supplement our curriculum. So, it means to form the entire part of holistic education. It could be comprised from curriculum and something that is unwritten This is what we have been doing.
Language learning	Language learning refers to additional support provided to students who may struggle with a particular language, with the aim of	I think the fifth aspect is our school to be able to offer and maintain Language Learning Support Program, so that parents will see that okay, I'm worried that my son or my daughter is not able to speak in English or Malay

	improving their proficiency in that language. This support may include extra classes, tutoring, or other resources designed to enhance language skills.	proficiently, but I'm not worried because this school has it.
Parental engagement	Parental engagement involves actively involving parents in their child's education to create a collaborative relationship between parents and the school. This includes communicating regularly with parents, inviting them to participate in school events and activities, and exposing them to the school's programs and initiatives to create awareness and support their child's academic progress and well-being.	But the same time what needs to be maintained is the school leaders of the private schools and of course with a consensus of support from the parents. We all need to be at the same goal that results or grades should not be the sole determining factor of the child.
Strategic location	The strategic location of a school refers to its convenient location, typically in a central area of town that is easily accessible to students from various residential areas.	And then of course the convenience. That's why we are here, we are still here, because this is a very good location. It's like central. We have kids from Shah Alam side, Kota Kemuning, we also have from Puchong side, PJ and, of course Subang Jaya is very big. Location that is one of the reasons why we are here, even though so congested.

Teaching quality and training	Teacher quality and training refers to the level of expertise, knowledge, and skills possessed by educators, and the ongoing training and professional development opportunities available to them.	From the way we interview our teachers, right, from the way we did our recruitment of teachers, very strict, very stressed on teachers' qualities.
Teaching and learning proficient	Teaching and learning proficiency refer to the ability of teachers to effectively deliver lessons, and of students to grasp and apply new concepts and skills, leading to improved academic outcomes.	I think I can say number one is the quality of the teaching and learning proficient. Teaching and learning proficient because, you know, in order for us to enhance parents' intention and behaviour to continue sending your kids to our school to continue or to enrol the kids to, to our school is I think that the first one is quality of teaching and learning proficient. Because at the end of the day, they pay for the tuition fees, they want to see some quality, not some quality, but the quality in the teaching and learning proficient.
Unique value proposition	Unique Value Proposition (UVP) refers to the distinct advantage or benefit that a school offers to its students, setting it apart from other schools and providing a compelling reason for parents and students to choose it over other options.	Then number six, the UVP the unique value proposition that a particular school should have. For example, my school belongs to a network of 65 schools around the world. Therefore, we have a special program called international learning opportunities for students that allows the students to engage with people of different races of different nationalities, different languages that they speak of

different particular locations. So, if we maintain this which we are currently doing at the moment, we get, because you know, like, recommendation through word of mouth is very powerful.

4.10.2 Improve

According to the principals, certain aspects of private schools need to be maintained, while others need improvement. The principal of the school has specified a few items from the "Maintain" list that have been examined through a cross-sectional thematic analysis to determine key areas for improvement. The analysis identified several significant areas for improvement, such as academic performance, adapting to government policies, futurescape education, language learning, parental engagement, strategic location, and teacher quality and training. Additionally the principal also identified specific areas that require improvement, which are not in the "Maintain" list such as word of mouth, school fees, and teacher involvement in promoting the school. These findings underscore the importance of addressing these areas to improve the overall performance of the school and enhance its reputation among potential parents. Table 4.33 presents the relevant codes and their respective definitions, along with the principal's quotes that highlight the significance of improving these areas to further enhance the school's reputation and attract more parents to consider private schooling for their children.

Table 4.33

"Improve" Codes: Definition and Quotation

Codes	Definition	Quotation
Academic performance	Academic performance refers to a student's	As I mentioned about examination SPM etc, although

level of achievement in their academic studies, including but not limited to SPM and IGCSE.

we are promoting holistic education, but at the same time, we need to bear in mind that by the end of the day by the end of form five, they will be sitting SPM. That will still be the passport for students to go somewhere else. And that will be still something that the parents will be looking at what is the SPM result. So other than selling holistic education etc. the school is also essential to have a good record of academic performance records.

Adaptation to government policies

Adaptation to government policies refers to the school's proactive measures to adjust its policies, programs, and operations in response to changes in government regulations or policies. This involves identifying potential challenges and opportunities, assessing the school's strengths and weaknesses, and developing effective strategies to remain competitive and achieve its goals.

The first thing is the supply of our school graduates quite inelastic, in a way that whenever, let's say there are some changes in our policy or in the curriculum or maybe the requirements. Sometimes it's not easy to adjust back or improve because when a student enrolls or let's say they enrol is standard 1, it will take up to 10 to 11 years until they graduate. So that means we have to be very cautious in everything we are doing. Because if we damage them one of the years is going to bring forward until the end. That's mean it's not like a normal business model where your product you can improve anytime you want, or you want to retract any products. For us once the students enrol in, we have to stay committed this batch of students for at least 10-11 years. That's mean any changes when we make, we have

to be careful on the impact when they come out.

Futurescape education	Futurescape education is an approach that focuses on preparing students for the rapidly changing and uncertain future by developing skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and adaptability. This approach also includes a focus on emerging technologies and trends that may impact the future of work and society, as well as providing guidance to students on their tertiary education and career paths.	Now most of the people are complaining that the curriculum is more on syllabus, you know, knowledge is one thing but the skills, how you execute your knowledge. These are the things that they're looking for. And when they enrol in this school, will they have a better access to the market, that's mean when they are in here when they learning will they be exposed to the society, the local community, the global community, in terms of you know, something as simple as maybe a community service or something as large as launching a project in the local area for example, and whether this exposure of the students will be noted by key market leaders or what so these are the some of the things that parents will look into, especially in the city area. You want to see how we equip the children to make sure they can survive in a rapidly evolving future.
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Language learning	Language learning refers to additional support provided to students who may struggle with a particular language, with the aim of improving their proficiency in that language. This support may include extra	One of the demand or one of the need areas that the school and the parents are always looking for is the improvement in terms of the <i>Bahasa Melayu</i> . So as a private school, being a private school, we are supposed to have good quality of teachers, providing high quality of education cetera. But in Malaysia, we cannot deny that
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	<p>classes, tutoring, or other resources designed to enhance language skills.</p>	<p><i>Bahasa Melayu</i> it is the ruler by the end of the day. Because if the students fail in BM, that's the end of the story, as a Malaysian. So, here's something that our community here is actually quite paying attention to the it.</p>
<p>Parental engagement</p>	<p>Parental engagement involves actively involving parents in their child's education to create a collaborative relationship between parents and the school. This includes communicating regularly with parents, inviting them to participate in school events and activities, and exposing them to the school's programs and initiatives to create awareness and support their child's academic progress and well-being.</p>	<p>There should be some awareness. There should be some initiatives to educate the society like okay, this is what we do, and why we do it. Because most of the time I think private schools focus so much on getting more students, but they do not have the initiative to actually share things with parents to make the parents aware.</p>
<p>School fee</p>	<p>School fees refer to the amount of money charged by educational institutions for tuition, materials, and services provided to students. Private schools may offer discounts to remain competitive.</p>	<p>Fees a bit difficult because cost of living also great right. We need to pay our teachers. School fees will definitely go up. But we try our best not to increase our fee every year. Because we have to make it competitive. Yeah, it has to remain competitive and affordable. So, it is always a struggle.</p>
<p>Strategic location</p>	<p>The strategic location of a school refers to its</p>	<p>We plan to, actually we plan to move to a bigger campus, but</p>

	convenient location, typically in a central area of town that is easily accessible to students from various residential areas.	because of location, we are still here. Parents are very happy with our location.
Teacher involvement in promoting the school	Teacher involvement in promoting the school in the context of private schools refers to the active participation of teachers in promoting and marketing the school to potential parents and students. As staff of a business entity, teachers are expected to respond promptly and effectively to parents' queries and concerns regarding the school.	But if there's one thing that we want to if there's one thing that I could do to ensure that, you know, we attract more parents is for, you know, for more teachers to instead of just the school leaders to talk to the parents, more teachers will volunteer to hold the session with parents.
Teaching quality and training	Teacher quality and training refers to the level of expertise, knowledge, and skills possessed by educators, and the ongoing training and professional development opportunities available to them.	For we right now, there's only one, quality of teacher. Because private schools do not have the privilege like government school they have a bank of teachers, but private schools, we need to depend on who can apply and what we have and what we can offer. So, if we if we offer peanuts, we get monkeys. This is the private schools' challenge. So the main improvement in here and also is always a big challenge is to ensure that teachers are fully equipped to deliver what Mr. Leong has just said, not only curriculum, not only content not only knowledge, but how do we how

does the teachers themselves, they have the mindset first, then only they expose the students to those skills, because if the teacher they themselves, they do not believe in those skills. We cannot expect these teachers to execute the classrooms.

Word of mouth	Word-of-mouth refers to the communication between parents, either in-person or online, sharing their positive or negative experiences and opinions about a particular private school. It is a form of informal advertising that can influence other parents' decisions on whether to enroll their children in the same school or not.	Yes, is through word of mouth through all these aspects that are maintained. Of course, our parents would recommend the other their friends to come.
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4.10.3 Implement

Strategic leadership is a crucial factor in the success of private schools, especially in implementing strategies to enhance parental intention and behaviour towards private schooling. While "maintain" and "improve" are essential themes, the theme of "implement" is equally important, as it involves concrete actions that the school's strategic leader plans to execute in the future to enhance the school's performance and reputation within the dynamic entrepreneurial context.

In the present study, the analysis identified key areas for implementation, including parental engagement, language learning, teacher involvement in promoting the school, teacher quality and training, and transportation. These areas represent potential opportunities for the strategic leader to enhance the school's value proposition and distinguish it from competitors.

To achieve successful implementation, the strategic leader must have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the needs and preferences of parents. The leader must also possess the skills to develop and implement innovative solutions that align with the school's vision and goals. Furthermore, the strategic leader must continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented strategies and make adjustments as necessary. By doing so, the leader can maintain the school's competitive edge and enhance the parents' intention and behaviour towards private schooling. Table 4.34 showcases the pertinent codes and their definitions, as well as the principal's quotes emphasizing the importance of implementing initiatives in these areas to bolster the school's reputation and entice more parents to opt for private schooling for their children.

Table 4.34

“Implement” Codes: Definition and Quotation

Codes	Definition	Quotation
Language learning	Language learning refers to additional support provided to students who may struggle with a particular language,	There should be like an additional mechanism to support children who are struggling in their learning. For example, you mentioned that you also did the research in SJKC. Right? So, we

	with the aim of improving their proficiency in that language. This support may include extra classes, tutoring, or other resources designed to enhance language skills.	have a lot of students, especially Form 1 students who came from SJKC school. Some of them are not very strong in English and Malay proficiency. I think we can have more learning support for them.
Parental engagement	Parental engagement involves actively involving parents in their child's education to create a collaborative relationship between parents and the school. This includes communicating regularly with parents, inviting them to participate in school events and activities, and exposing them to the school's programs and initiatives to create awareness and support their child's academic progress and well-being.	I would say this is something that we will build in occasionally basis by end of this month. It will be a weekly basis. So, it means whatever feedback or comments that teachers will be given to the parent, the comments cannot be only directed in terms of academic, but it could be the holistic part of the child.
Teacher involvement in promoting the school	Teacher involvement in promoting the school in the context of private schools refers to the active participation of teachers in promoting and marketing the school to potential parents and students. As staff of a business entity, teachers are expected to respond	Because most of the time if you look at all the other private schools, the ones that always talk, that always reaching out to potential parents will be principal. So, I would like to involve my academic team in the process as well so that they are aware, we are a school, we have the purpose to educate children, but at the same time, we are private school, therefore, we also

	promptly and effectively to parents' queries and concerns regarding the school.	run a business. So, what we do affect our business. So, if we are not able to provide quality of teaching and learning proficient, if you don't have enough facilities if you don't act fast enough to respond to parents' queries, this will be effective in the long run. This will affect us in the long run, in terms of student enrolment, in terms of student customer satisfaction to our service.
Teaching quality and training	Teacher quality and training refers to the level of expertise, knowledge, and skills possessed by educators, and the ongoing training and professional development opportunities available to them.	I think any private school should have and should provide continuous professional development for their own staff. This is to ensure that number one is number one, exist. Number one is the quality of teaching and learning proficient, right? So, in order for you to have quality teaching and learning proficient is for the school to be able to offer continuous professional development for their staff, especially the academy staff.
Transportation	Transportation refers to the means of conveyance provided by the private school to increase convenience and reduce congestion in the school area.	It's in our plan. At the moment one of the problems, we are facing is actually congestion. Because our campus is not very big. So, one the plans that we have is actually having our own buses.

4.11 Summary of Findings

This section presents the summary of the findings of the study according to the research question. Table 4.35 presents the research questions and the corresponding findings.

Table 4.35

Summary of Findings

Research Question	Finding
1. What is the level of family income, occupation category and educational levels among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?	<p>Level of family income: middle</p> <p>Percentage of middle income family: 61.5%</p> <p>Occupation category: Managerial personnel</p> <p>Percentage of Managerial personnel Father: 63.9% Mother: 53.1%</p> <p>Educational Level: Middle-Low</p> <p>Percentage of father educational level: Low: 55.5% Percentage of mother educational level: Middle: 41.1%</p>
2. What is the level of behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief in private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?	<p>Behavioural belief: High</p> <p>Maximum score: 32.00 Minimum score: 8.00 Mean: 25.16 Median: 25.00 Mode: 24.00 Standard deviation: 4.68</p> <p>Normative belief: Low</p> <p>Maximum score: 16.00 Minimum score: 4.00</p>

Mean: 7.72
Median: 7.00
Mode: 5.00
Standard deviation: 3.02

Control belief: Medium

Maximum score: 28.00
Minimum score: 7.00
Mean: 18.52
Median: 18.00
Mode: 21.00
Standard deviation: 4.75

3. What is the level of intention in private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?

Intention: Medium

Maximum score: 28.00
Minimum score: 7.00
Mean: 18.43
Median: 19.00
Mode: 21.00
Standard deviation: 6.30

4. What is the level of private schooling behaviour among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?

Actual behaviour: Low

Percentage of low level of behaviour of private schooling: 60.5%

5. Are there any influences of parents' behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief on parents' intention in private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur?

Influence of behavioural belief on intention: $\beta = 0.14$ ($p < 0.05$)

Influence of normative belief on intention: $\beta = 0.13$ ($p < 0.05$)

Influence of control belief on intention: $\beta = 0.79$ ($p < 0.001$)

Contribution of behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief on intention: 67%

Structural model contribution: 34%

6. Are there any influences of parents' intention on their behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur? **Influence of intention on behaviour of private schooling: $\beta = 0.58$ ($p < 0.001$)**
7. Does family income moderate between parents' intention and their behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur? Unconstrained and constrained model (structural weight model) **are statically significant different, $p < 0.05$**
High and medium household income show the stronger relationship between intention and actual behaviour which is 0.61.
Low household income shows a weaker relationship between intention and actual behaviour of private schooling which is 0.48.
8. Does occupational category moderate between parents' intention and their behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur? Unconstrained and constrained model (structural weight model) for fathers' and mothers' occupational category **are not statically significant,**
Father, $p = 0.830$
Mother, $p = 0.750$
9. Does educational level moderate between parents' intention and their behaviour of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur? Unconstrained and constrained model (structural weight model) for fathers' and mothers' educational level **are not statically significant,**
Father, $p = 0.336$
Mother, $p = 0.602$
10. To what extent do the quantitative findings corroborate with the perceptions of school principals
The strategies employed by the principals reflect their role as strategic leaders within the education system, operating within a dynamic entrepreneurial context. From these strategies, three primary themes emerged to enhance parents' intention

as strategic leaders when explaining parents' intention of private schooling?

and behavior regarding private schooling: "maintain," "improve," and "implement." Together, these themes form a cyclical process that underscores strategic leadership within this dynamic educational context. Furthermore, their perceptions align with the findings from the quantitative phase, affirming the determinants of parents' intention and behavior towards private schooling.

4.12 Conclusion

Chapter 4 presents the results of the research questions. The respondents are from middle-class families and have a relatively higher level of behavioural belief, compared to control belief, while normative belief is relatively lower. The measurement model and structural model fulfill most of the criteria of the goodness-of-fit, indicating that the proposed model fits well with the actual data. Furthermore, the structural model shows that all three beliefs influence parents' intention of private schooling significantly, specifically influence of control belief on parents' intention of private schooling is the strongest, followed by behavioural belief, with normative belief showing the least influence on parents' intention. Additionally, the findings show that intention is positively related to behaviour of private schooling, and the relationship between intention and behaviour is moderated by family income, but not by parents' education level and occupation category. Finally, the study reveals that private school principals affirmed that their perceptions corroborated with the quantitative findings. Moreover, the strategies employed by private school principals have revealed three key themes showcasing their strategic leadership in improving parental intention and behavior towards private schooling: "maintain," "improve," and "implement."

CHAPTER 5: CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the results and findings of the study, including a comparison with the results of other studies in the same field. The chapter begins by presenting a summary of the study and recapping the main points of the previous chapters. The focus then shifts to the findings, which provide insights into parents' attitudes toward private schooling (behavioural belief), and its influence on private schooling intentions. In addition, this chapter provides an in-depth discussion of how normative beliefs and perceived behavioural control (control belief) influence parents' intentions to choose private schooling. The relationship between parents' intentions and behaviour is also examined, along with the moderating effect of socioeconomic background.

To gain a deeper understanding of the role of private school principals as strategic leaders, the study triangulated quantitative and qualitative findings. The implications of the study, particularly with regard to the exacerbation of social segregation in the Malaysian education system, are discussed.

The significance of the findings for school leaders, especially private school principals and policymakers, is also explored. The chapter proposes suggestions based on the research questions and provides recommendations for future research. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings and their implications.

5.2 Summary of Study

The rise of private educational institutions at the primary and secondary school levels has caught the attention of educators and policymakers as it raises concerns about potential threats to social integration. Studies have shown that affluent families in Malaysia are more inclined to send their children to private schools, thereby exacerbating social and racial segregation. Interestingly, private schools often offer a curriculum that is similar to public schools despite charging fees, yet parents are still willing to pay for their children's attendance. In addition to serving as educational institutions, private schools also operate as business entities, with their leadership and management distinguishing them from public school counterparts. However, this distinction also contributes to social segregation. To enhance the national education system and promote social equity, policymakers must identify the factors that influence parents' intention and behaviour to send their children to private schools. Therefore, the aim of this research is twofold: first, to investigate the factors that influence parents' intention and behaviour to enroll their children in private schools, and secondly, to deduce the potential implications of these factors on social segregation. The research also seeks to understand how private school principals perceive these quantitative findings and how the findings corroborate with their perceptions as strategic leaders. To achieve these objectives, a mixed-method explanatory sequential research design was employed for this research. The first phase utilized quantitative methods and employed the framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviour to understand the factors that influence parents' decision-making processes. The second phase adopted qualitative methods to gauge the perspectives of private school principals and how the findings corroborated their perceptions as strategic leaders within the dynamic entrepreneurial context.

The first phase of the research aims to investigate the correlation between parental beliefs (factors), intentions, and the behaviour to enroll their children in private schools, as well as the moderating effect of socioeconomic factors on this decision. The study tested the influence of each belief (factor) on parents' intentions and behaviour regarding private schooling. Numeric measures were utilized to collect data on parents' beliefs, and the phenomenon of the growth of private schooling was explained through evidence-based and rational considerations. Specifically, a quantitative non-experimental survey research design were employed in this phase of the study, with a questionnaire serving as the instrument for data collection and analysis to explain and predict the phenomena of interest.

Behaviour of private schooling is a complex matter and cannot be explained using a single variable, hence multivariate method was used. In this instance, SEM approach was adopted because it allowed researchers to examine multiple relationships (Hair et al., 2010). According to Bryan (2010), SEM is like a combination of path analysis, and multiple regression.

Klang Valley was chosen as the research location because it boasts the highest density of established private schools, and Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia, serves as the center of the Klang Valley. The standard six students' parents from the 42 SJKC in Kuala Lumpur is the population of the quantitative phase of the study because research showed that many Chinese parents will opt out from the public school system in the transition of primary to secondary school (Kamaludin, 2020). Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 420 samples from the three strata proportionally, according to the three District Education Offices (PPW) to ensure the geographic representation from each PPW is included.

To collect the require data to answer the research questions, the researcher developed a questionnaire titled: Survey of Parents Belief in Private Schooling according to the framework suggested by the author of Theory of Planned Behaviour, Icek Azjen (2013). There are three sections in the questionnaire: Section A demography, Section B Parents' Belief and intention and Section C Parents' Behaviour.

The questionnaires in Google Form were sent through the selected school to the targeted standard six students' parents directly without involving the students. With the help of the school administrator or school teachers, the Google Form link will be administered randomly to 70 standard six parents in each school. One week after the questionnaires were sent to the parents through the selected schools, 396 responses were collected in the Google Form. After collating the data, only 377 out of a total of 396 sets of questionnaires are complete and suitable to be used in data analysis. This means that the total sample size of the study was 377 parents.

Upon completion of data collection, the data was entered into SPSS for analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, mode, mean, and median were employed to analyze demographic data and levels of beliefs and intentions to address research questions 1-4. To answer research questions 5 and 6, SEM was utilized with the aid of AMOS software to examine the relationship between parental beliefs and their intention to enroll their children in private schools, as well as the correlation between their intention and behaviour of private schooling. Furthermore, AMOS multigroup analyses were conducted to investigate the moderation effect of socioeconomic factors on the relationship between parental intention and behaviour of private schooling for research questions 7-9. Finally, to address the last research question, Atlas ti was utilized for thematic analysis.

5.2.1 Key Findings

According to the demographic analysis, it was found that most of the samples are from white collar middle class families, with medium-low educational level and medium level income. The parents' behavioural belief level is high, meaning that parents have positive attitude toward private schooling. The positive attitude is shaped by the behavioural belief whereby the parents believe that private school leaders are able to manage the school resources efficiently and cultivate better school climate which result in better school performance. Nevertheless, the normative belief level is low, signifying that parents do not recognize that there is a social trend of private schooling in their social circle and therefore do not have the compulsion to comply with the social trend. On the other hand, parents have a medium level of control belief. Control belief refers to the perceived behavioural control, meaning how hard or easy the parents perceived that they able to perform the behaviour of private schooling. Their perception might be influenced by their financial capability, proximity of the school, availability of transportation and accessibility to adequate information regarding private schooling. Medium level of control belief implies that parent's volitional control over the behaviour of private schooling is moderate. They might have adequate access of private schooling information however the high tuition fees or location of the private schools might impose constraints to the parents to send their children to private schools.

The result of SEM shows that the measurement model and structural model fulfilled most of the criteria of the goodness-of-fit to ascertain the model is a good fit, it indicates that the final model fit data collected from the population of the study. In other words, the model can be applied to the population of the study to predict the behaviour of private schooling. Furthermore, structural models show that the three beliefs influence

the parents' intention significantly, especially control belief. It is found that the influence of control belief on parents' intention of private schooling is the strongest, followed by behavioural belief, and normative belief shows the least influence on parents' intention. Consequently, parents' intention also influences the behaviour of private schooling significantly. Multigroup analysis shows that family income moderates the relationship between intention and actual behaviour, whereby families with higher family income are more likely to perform the behaviour of private schooling. Nevertheless, parents' educational levels and occupational categories do not show significant moderating effects between parents' intention and their actual behaviour of private schooling. The research findings indicate that the quantitative results are consistent with the perceptions of school principals, who effectively fulfill the role of strategic leadership. Furthermore, they exhibit entrepreneurial traits as private schools operate within a dynamic business context. Three themes emerged from the strategies they employed to enhance parental intention and behavior regarding private schooling. Private school principals prioritize efforts to "maintain," "improve," and "implement" measures that encourage parents to consider and choose private schooling for their children.

5.3 Discussion

5.3.1 Parents' Socioeconomic Background

One of the major issues which propel the researcher to embark on this study was the increasing middle class families residing in the urban area sending their children into private schools (Anders et al., 2020). This phenomenon might pose a threat to education equity and social segregation as the parents who send their children to private school might have some socioeconomic advantages (Fairlie & Cruz, 2006). Therefore, the socioeconomic background of the parents is worth discussing.

The time background and the research location may give some clues of the socioeconomic background of the population. The research location of this study was in the Klang Valley, which is highly urbanized, and the capital of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, is located within it. Generally, the capital of a country is the most developed and affluent region. Despite the strike of COVID-19 pandemic followed with national wide lock down in year 2020, Kuala Lumpur remained the second-largest economy in 2021, with an RM218.2 billion value added and a 0.8 per cent growth (2020: -7.4%)(Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2022). However, despite the efforts made to revive the economy through various policies and programs, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a severe impact on Malaysia's economy. The number of hardcore poor families in Kuala Lumpur has surged by almost 270% in just two years, according to data from the Federal Territories Ministry (Wahab, 2022). In 2019, there were only 1,048 hardcore poor families, but in 2021, this number increased dramatically to 3,865 (Wahab, 2022). A poor household is defined as one earning less than RM2,208 per month, while the hardcore poor earns less than RM1,169 monthly. Kuala Lumpur had the highest numbers in both categories among the Federal Territories, with 4,051 poor households and 3,865 hardcore poor households (Wahab, 2022). Moreover, the number of poor families also saw a significant increase of 41% during the same period, rising from 2,871 in 2019 to 4,051 in the previous year.

Furthermore, during the pandemic the unemployment rate in 2021 increased slightly by 0.1 percentage point to record 4.6 per cent as the battle against the pandemic. Year-on-year basis, the number of unemployed persons went up by 3.1 per cent or equivalent to twenty two thousand recording seven hundred thirty three thousand unemployed persons in year 2021 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2022). Building upon this foundational background information, the discussion will delve

further into the socioeconomic background of the parents. Subsequent subtopics will explore household income, occupation categories, and education levels in greater detail.

5.3.1.1 Household income

Based on the Household Income Estimates and Incidence of Poverty Report, Malaysia, 2020, a considerable number of households experienced a decline in income, leading to a shift of many households from higher income groups to lower ones. In 2020, there was a notable increase of 12.5% in households with an income less than RM2,500. Additionally, 20.0% of households from the M40 group, with an income between RM4,850 and RM10,959, moved to the B40 group. The COVID-19 pandemic also impacted households in the T20 group, where 12.8% of this group shifted to the M40 group. As a result of larger percentage decreases in income for the B40 and M40 households compared to the T20 group, the income distribution for the B40 and M40 declined to 15.9% (compared to 16.0% in 2019) and 36.9% (compared to 37.2% in 2019), respectively. Meanwhile, the T20 group saw an increase in income share, reaching 47.2%, up by 0.4 percentage points from 2019. Overall, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted household incomes and reshaped the structure of household groups (Mahidin, 2021). In response to this situation, both the federal and state governments, along with other relevant parties, play a crucial role in mitigating the impact of the pandemic and working towards the recovery of household income and the country's economy (Mahidin, 2021).

The data of this study is collected in the first quarter of 2022. Economy reviving programmes to counter the effect of COVID-19 pandemic have commenced and somehow started to take effect. When analysing the findings, taking the time background and location of the research into account is crucial, as the monthly

household income of the population to some extent might be affected by the big environment.

The study found that the SJK(C) parents household income distribution was low 19.4%, medium 61.5% and high 19.1%. The findings are somewhat inconsistent to Malaysia household income classification which is bottom 40% (B40), middle 40% (M40) and top 20% (T20). The findings also are not compatible with the context of research environment during the pandemic which expecting 20 percent of households from the M40 group with income between RM4,850 and RM10,959 has moved to the B40 group. One of the reasons for the incompatibility might be due to the population of the study. The population of the study is parents of students from SJK(C) which composed mainly of Chinese families. In 2019, ethnic Chinese households had the highest mean monthly household income in Malaysia, at around 9.9 thousand Malaysian ringgit (Hirschmann, 2022). Besides, there was a considerable difference in urban and rural household incomes in Malaysia, with urban household income being around 3.6 thousand ringgits more than rural households (Hirschmann, 2022). This was largely due to the fact that wages in urban areas had to keep up with the higher cost of living there. This thus impacted the average monthly incomes of the largely rural-based Bumiputera and the largely urban-based ethnic Chinese (Hirschmann, 2022). This is supported by the research Arshad and Ghani (2015) who proposed that wage differentials in Malaysia are significantly explained by age, marital status, gender, ethnicity, occupational types and geographical locations. In addition, household income is considered sensitive personal data. Even though all data collected in the research will be kept confidential, respondents may not feel comfortable disclosing their private and sensitive personal data, which could potentially affect the accuracy of survey responses. Moreover, the range for low

monthly household income in the questionnaire is RM5000 or below, while the range for middle income is between RM5001 to RM15000. The disproportionate representation of the two income categories might also impact the findings.

5.3.1.2 Occupational category

Klang Valley does not have clear and official boundaries; therefore, the discussion will be based on data from Kuala Lumpur. In 2021, the services sector contributed 90 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Kuala Lumpur. The services sector is underpinned by the wholesale & retail trade, finance & insurance, and information & communication subsectors. The rest of the 10 percent of the GDP mainly is contributed by the manufacturing sector (2.7%) , buoyed by the electrical, electronic, and optical products and oils and fats from vegetables and animals and food processing subsectors and construction sector (5.5%) consisting building and civil engineering subsectors (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2022). From the sectors contributing to the Kuala Lumpur GDP, can foresee that most of the parents of SJKC are from white-collar jobs.

The classification of occupational category can be confusing and ambiguous, as it can be classified according to different parameters such as skill level, responsibility level and sector. In addition, both parents in a family might have different occupational categories, in order to give a greater insight the occupational category will be analysed from different classification parameters.

From the perspective of skill level, the top 3 occupational categories for father in descending order are managers & business owners (46.6%), professional (17.5%) and service and sales workers (12.2%). On the other hand, for mothers, the top 3

occupational categories in descending order are managers & business owners (30.5%), clerical support workers (23.3%) and professionals (22.5%). Kuala Lumpur as the business hub in Malaysia, it is not surprise that the occupational category of managers & business owners has the highest percentage among the SJK(C) parents. The findings somehow reflect that most of the SJK(C) parents are from higher to middle class families as the category of manager & business owners made up the largest portion among both parents. In addition, Kuala Lumpur is one of the major financial centers in Malaysia with many large corporates which requires a lot of professionals. This scenario is also reflected in the findings as the percentage of professionals among the SJK(C) parents is the top 3 of the occupational categories. The sector of services which include wholesale & retail trade, finance & insurance, and information & communication subsectors made up the largest GDP in Kuala Lumpur in year 2021, this huge sector also reflected in the findings of the study, whereby the service and sales workers made up 12.2% and 11.4% of the SJKC father and mother respectively. Clerical support workers are a common occupational category which is required in many economy sectors, it is also the second highest category (23.3%) among the SJKC mothers. Kuala Lumpur is a metropolitan area, less people are involved in the agriculture industry, therefore the percentage of skilled agricultural, forestry, livestock and fishery workers is relatively lower. Other than that, plant machine operators and assemblers and armed forces are also one of the occupational categories with low percentage.

In terms of the nature of the occupation which classify occupations into managerial and non-managerial workers, managerial occupations surpass non-managerial occupations in both parents. Managerial occupation made up of 63.9 percent and 53.1 percent for father and mother respectively, whereas non-managerial workers made up

of 36.1 percent and 46.9 percent among the father and mother of SJKC parents respectively.

The data was collected in March 2022 when most of the economic activities started to reoperate. Although Department of Statistics Malaysia (2022) pointed out that there was a declination of employment rate in year 2021 and shift in labour market during the pandemic, the study could not capture the underlying variables which might affect the result of the study. The result shows that business owners & managers recorded the higher percentage of the occupational categories. There might be a change of career path from other profession to small business owner in the year of 2021 to 2022 as Department of Statistics Malaysia reported that the own-account workers which consist of small business such as small retailers; hawkers; sellers in market and stalls; as well as smallholders, were increased in year 2022. The result of the study only reveals the composition of occupational category of SJK(C) parents at that time the data were collected, underlying variables which cause the fluidity in labour market and switch the occupational categories were not taking into account.

Another limitations of the finding is according to Department of Statistics Malaysia (2022), housework or family responsibilities is a main reason of outside labour force with a contribution share of 42.2 per cent and this was followed by schooling or training category with 40.0 per cent. Nevertheless, while collecting demographic data, the questionnaire did not include housewife or unemployed in the occupational category as housewife is not an official occupation. However, this may affect the accuracy of the findings as not all families both parents are working.

In a nutshell, occupational categories can be very diverse and ambiguous depending on the classification method. To sum up, most of the SJKC parents are middle class white collar as managers & business owners, professional, clerical support workers and service & sales workers appeared as the top occupational categories.

5.3.1.3 Educational level

Similar with the situation of occupational categories, both parents in the family might have different level of education, thus the result was generated by analysing the educational level of both parents. Both parents have different distribution in highest education level. Generally, mothers' educational level is higher than fathers' educational levels.

Before Malaysia gained independence, it lacked a national education system, relying instead on the support of philanthropists, religious institutions, and ethnic communities through mission schools (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013). Consequently, more than half of the population had never received formal education, resulting in a relatively low adult literacy rate of 52% at the time of independence. The young nation faced the challenge of providing universal access to education for all children and fostering unity among the diverse races to achieve the vision of becoming a developed nation.

Since 1957, Malaysia's education system has undergone remarkable progress. The significant transformation is evident in the near-universal primary and lower secondary enrolment, with a respectable enrolment rate of 80% at the upper secondary level. Over the past five and a half decades, access to education has been dramatically improved beyond recognition.

Malaysia has achieved notable success in various aspects over the past 50 years. The adult literacy rate in 2010 for individuals aged 15 and above stood at an impressive 92%. Primary school enrolment has reached near-universal levels, with a significant reduction in primary school dropouts. The most notable improvement is seen in upper secondary enrolment (Form 4 and 5), which has almost doubled, increasing from 45% in the 1980s to 81% in 2020, not considering private schools. When private school enrolment is taken into account, these rates are even higher (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020). While these enrolment rates surpass those of many developing countries, they are still lower than those of high-performing education systems like Singapore and South Korea (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013).

The significant progress mentioned above is reflected in the study's findings, where approximately half of the parents of SJK(C) students attended post-secondary education (father 49.6%, mother 68.7%). Most SJK(C) parents belong to the age groups of 31-40 and 41-50, indicating that they were beneficiaries of the education development during the era of the National Development Policy (1991 - 2000). During the last decade of the 20th century, there were significant changes in the education system due to the rapid development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the era of globalization. In response to the demands of globalization and the information and technology era, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad launched Vision 2020 in 1991, aiming to propel Malaysia towards becoming a developed nation by 2020. Subsequently, the Education Ministry outlined an education system aligned with this vision, leading to the amendment of education legislation to address current needs. For instance, the Education Act 1961 was replaced with the Education Act 1996, which allowed for the establishment of more private higher education institutes.

To systematically develop higher education, various acts were formulated, and existing acts were amended. These include the National Council on Higher Education Act 1996, Universities and College Act (Amendment) 1996, National Accreditation Board Act 1996, and National Higher Education Fund Corporation Act 1996. These acts facilitated the growth of higher education, granting more financial and management autonomy to public universities, ensuring the quality of private higher education programs, and importantly, providing student loans and funds to increase access to higher education (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013). One of the major initiatives during that period to achieve the 2020 aspiration was the expansion of access to higher education by establishing more public universities, college universities, matriculation colleges, community colleges, private colleges and universities, and branch campuses of overseas universities (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013).

Although the discoveries were echoed with the educational development over the years, the findings might not 100 per cent reflect the truth, because one of the limitations of the research is the respondents of the research do not include illiterate respondents. The minimum level of education available for selection in the questionnaire is primary school, this is because to read and understand the questionnaires requires certain extend of language literacy.

To sum up, majority of the SJKC parents have post-secondary education level. This may be due to Klang Valley has the highest density of higher education institutions. The opportunity to further study after secondary education has greatly increased due to the development of Malaysia education system and the accessibility of tertiary education in urban regions.

5.3.2 Level of Behavioural Belief, Normative Belief and Control Belief

The study incorporates several exogenous variables, including behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief, which are deemed highly effective in predicting human behaviour according to Ajzen's (1991b) Theory of Planned Behaviour. The theory suggests that these variables play a crucial role in shaping an individual's intention to engage in a particular behaviour. By examining the level of each belief and analyzing the relationship between these beliefs and intentions, the study seeks to scrutinize the factors that influence parents' intention and behaviour regarding private schooling.

Behavioural belief refers to how parents perceive the ability of private school principals to manage and improve the quality and atmosphere of the school, as well as steer it in the right direction. By assessing the level of behavioural belief, we can understand parents' overall perceptions of private schooling.

Normative belief, on the other hand, pertains to how parents perceive the social norms surrounding private schooling and their motivation to conform to those norms. In simpler terms, it is about how parents think others around them view private schools and how that influences their own decision-making.

Lastly, control belief refers to the perceived ease or difficulty parents associate with sending their children to private school. This relates to the perceived obstacles or facilitators that may impact their ability to choose private schooling for their children.

As per Icek Azjen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour, an individual's behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief play a pivotal role in shaping their intention and behaviour towards private schooling. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate the

potential implications of the varying levels of each belief on the intention and behaviour of parents towards private schooling.

5.3.2.1 Level of Behavioural Belief

This study is conducted in the context of private schools which offer national curriculum. The fundamental difference between this private school with public school is private school is fee-charging private institution and has high autonomous in management. Therefore, the difference perceptions parents possess toward private school and public school is mainly due to the leadership and management of the school leaders, as studies has pointed out that school climate, school effectiveness and school performance are greatly correlate to the leadership style of the school (Kongjinda et al., 2020; Marks & Printy, 2003; Mohd Kasim & Zakaria, 2019b).

The level of behavioural belief is calculated and categorised using the total score. High level of behavioural belief indicates that parents have favourable perception on private school, contrarily, low level of behavioural belief represents unfavourable attitude toward private schooling. According to the analysis result in Chapter 4, most of the SJKC parents have high levels of behavioural belief, meaning to say that most of the parents have positive perceptions on the principal of private school, and having favorable attitude toward private schooling. In plain English, SJKC parents presume that principals in private schools manage the school in a more satisfactory way and have a pleasing attitude toward private schooling.

Based on the research findings, it was discovered that nearly half of the respondents did not participate in any private schooling activities, such as info days, open days, or private school educational fairs. This indicates that most parents in SJKC have limited

direct interaction with private school principals. It is possible that the positive perceptions and attitudes of parents towards private school management stem from the competitive and challenging environment in which private schools operate. The turbulence inherent in managing private schools often cultivates entrepreneurial traits in principals as they serve as strategic leaders.

Parents' expectations regarding private school principals' strategic leadership, coupled with entrepreneurial traits, underscore the significance of school leadership capable of driving significant developments, capitalizing on opportunities, and embracing innovative approaches to bring about positive change. As George Boggs (2016) highlighted, strong and creative leadership is crucial, but it's equally essential for an entrepreneurial culture to permeate educational institutions. According to Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (1999), entrepreneurial leaders play a pivotal role in developing schools as learning organizations, and entrepreneurship inventories will be indispensable leadership tools for schools in the future. Furthermore, as noted by Helvacı and Özkaya (2020), private schools distinguish themselves from public schools through their management structure, which emphasizes cooperation, teamwork, and co-development. These traits align with the focus of our current study on the role of strategic leaders, in conjunction with entrepreneurial attributes. Effective leaders capable of bridging the gap between teachers and school management, while demonstrating strategic and entrepreneurial leadership traits that meet societal needs, are essential.

In schools, just like any other organization, private school principals who serve as managers or administrators must enhance school success, keep pace with innovations, changes, and social developments, assess existing opportunities, and demonstrate

effective leadership behaviors to navigate challenges and ensure a harmonious working environment for teachers (Helvacı & Özkaya, 2020). In the 21st century, school leaders are expected to lead effectively in rapidly changing social, educational, and organizational contexts. Helvacı & Özkaya's (2020) research revealed that entrepreneurial leadership behaviors of school administrators significantly impact organizational culture. The study also identified significant relationships between leadership styles, school culture, and organizational image, where the leadership style of school principals significantly predicted school culture, and school culture significantly predicted organizational image (Kalkan et al., 2020). School culture acts as a mediator between leadership styles and organizational image, as it facilitates the realization of leadership styles' role in shaping an organizational image. The research by Kalkan et al. (2020) suggests that leadership exhibited by the principal positively affects the organization's members and contributes to the development of a strong school culture, while both leadership and school culture positively influence the educational institution's organizational image (Kalkan et al., 2020). Consequently, it can be inferred that the positive perception of private schools among SJKC parents is attributed to the leadership of the private school principals.

In this study, behavioral belief refers to parents' perceptions and attitudes toward private schooling, which are influenced by the strategic leadership with entrepreneurial traits of private school leaders. Private secondary schools in Malaysia are self-financed through student fees, while adhering to government regulations applicable to all schools (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2015). Government involvement is absent in matters such as teacher recruitment, student enrollment, and student incentives. As a result, private schools have complete autonomy in their management and teacher hiring processes (Kumar & Choudhury, 2020). Entrepreneurial leadership, recognized as vital

for addressing contemporary organizational challenges, is increasingly employed to enhance school performance, particularly in private schools reliant on self-funding (Pontoh et al., 2021; Sandybayev, 2019). Current research supports this notion, demonstrating that private school principals, serving as strategic leaders in navigating complex business contexts, exhibit entrepreneurial traits.

Within private institutions, school leaders must adopt a market-oriented approach due to their operational and managerial responsibilities. Heightened competition among schools stems from the demands of education consumers (parents) and users (students) for improved value and outcomes. The present study aligns with Kongjinda et al.'s (2020) findings, suggesting that the environment in which private school leaders operate demands and fosters entrepreneurial leadership. This is evidenced by the high level of behavioural belief, signifying parents' perceptions towards private schooling.

Additionally, research findings from a larger study encompassing 61 school leaders across 16 countries and five continents, exploring the "Nature of School Leadership" by Miller (2018), reveal that successful school leaders must adopt entrepreneurial skills and behaviors, including teamwork, environmental awareness, responsiveness to market forces, opportunity identification, risk-taking, innovation, shrewdness, pragmatism, and business thinking, to effectively lead their schools. These findings are consistent with the results of this study, wherein parents exhibit a higher level of behavioral belief toward private schooling. This heightened level of behavioral belief suggests that parents acknowledge and value the impact of private school strategic leadership, characterized by entrepreneurial traits, in fostering a more positive and fulfilling schooling experience.

School leaders worldwide are facing the need to rethink and reshape their approach to school leadership due to the ever-evolving socio-political, economic, technological, and cultural landscapes. These changes bring forth a complexity of demands and expectations associated with the practice of school leadership. According to Miller's (2018) findings, national governments in both developing and developed countries recognize school leadership as one of the most critical factors influencing the success or failure of schools. Consequently, school leaders play a pivotal role in enhancing school efficiency (Brauckmann & Pashiardis, 2020; Kongjinda et al., 2020; Miller, 2018). Empirical studies have also established the significant impact of school principals' leadership styles on the success of school processes and outcomes (Day et al., 2016; Heffernan, 2018; Jacobson, 2011). Numerous researchers have established links between leadership and school success (Day et al., 2016; Sammons et al., 2014; Ustinoff-brumbelow, 2019), and the success of the schools eventually leave a promising image to the education consumer which is the parents. As custodians and drivers of social and economic change in society, the role of the school leader continues to evolve. Miller (2018) further argued that pressures and demands forced school leaders to be more reflective, relational, contextual, socially, and environmentally aware and entrepreneurial. These are in accordance with the high level of behavioural belief of SJK(C) parents where they believe that private school leaders are capable of improving school level effectiveness and efficiency in term of managing the teachers, and resources. The present finding also support Bellibas and Liu (2018) study which concluded that the school processes include multifaceted components related to the teachers' teaching practices, curriculum quality, school climate and school culture, through which principals influence indirectly. Yaacob, Osman and Bachok (2015), also concluded that teacher quality and school performance which largely affected by school leadership are factors which motivate the parents to choose for private school.

In addition to school climate, processes, effectiveness, and performance, the entrepreneurial trait of strategic leadership also plays a vital role in the marketing or promotion of schools (Oplatka, 2007). Private school leaders are aware of the necessity to compete for survival and success, leading them to employ appropriate and effective techniques to engage with the community, including students, prospective students, parents, businesses, and other stakeholders. These actions are consistent with the function of a strategic leader (Samimi et al., 2022). According to Miller's (2018) findings, private school leaders are incorporating marketing terms and principles into their practices, adopting a "business" lexicon. Marketing strategies are routinely deployed, as evidenced by Miller's study, which reveals that private school leaders utilize various factors such as teachers' qualifications and experience, the school's safety record, physical environment, location, participation in community events, pastoral record, and examination results as part of their marketing efforts. This argument is supported by the perspective of private school principals in qualitative phase of the research. Furthermore, this perspective is reinforced by the high level of behavioral belief among parents, who exhibit a positive attitude toward private schooling and believe that it will bring about positive consequences for their children.

At the same time, private school leaders became immersed in employing social media to produce convincing narratives and documentation to promote their schools, (Miller, 2018; Reimann et al., 2020), as being creative and innovative are components of entrepreneurial leadership (Akmaliah et al., 2014; Wibowo & Saptono, 2018). This will undoubtedly increase the publicity of the school. Findings show that 54.6 per cent of SJK(C) parents did not engage in any private schooling activities, yet the majority of SJKC have high level of behavioural belief toward private schooling. Meaning that the

marketing strategies employed by the strategic private school leaders effectively leave a good image to the parents. Miller (2018) supports the idea that schools employ well-established marketing strategies to present themselves in an appealing manner, often showcasing their achievements and activities to the community. This not only serves to inform the community about school happenings but also fosters continued support through goodwill gestures, such as organizing carnivals, food fairs, and sports activities.

In order to lead their schools to success, school leaders must exhibit entrepreneurial skills and behaviors, including teamwork and environmental awareness (Miller, 2018). Previous research has consistently demonstrated the significant and direct impact of school leadership on various school processes (Hallinger, 2013). These processes encompass aspects of schools' daily life, such as teaching staff cooperation, discipline, subject matter acquisition, attention to student differences and development, and the creation of an orderly learning environment (Bellibas & Liu, 2018).

Previous research consistently supports the findings of the current study regarding factors influencing families' preferences for private schools. Kumar & Choudhury (2020) suggest that families prefer private schools that have high teacher attendance, employ local teachers, and encourage better parental participation in activities like parent-teacher associations or meetings. According to Ustinoff-brumbelow (2019), teachers who are inspiring and knowledgeable possess the skills required to address students' social, emotional, academic, and developmental needs. Ustinoff-brumbelow further suggests that principals play a crucial role in supporting teachers to accomplish this mission by establishing the necessary structure for student success. Furthermore, Ustinoff-brumbelow's (2019) research indicates that investments made by principals in

teacher training and support enhance teacher effectiveness and improve overall school quality. Additionally, Rohde et al. (2019) discovered that one of the top three reasons for parental school choice is teacher quality, suggesting that parents highly value the relevant qualifications and abilities of the teachers and the outcomes of the school (Rohde et al., 2019). The high level of behavioral belief expressed by parents may be attributed to their perception that private school principals are more adept at supporting and managing teachers to ensure high teacher attendance and qualities, which aligns with the findings of previous research. Consequently, the high level of behavioural belief also indicates that SJK(C) parents believe that private school principals are capable of raising not only the teachers' quality but the school quality.

There is a growing awareness of the disparities among schools, with a recognition of the significance of receiving a quality education, as it opens doors to higher education opportunities and better job prospects (Bin et al., 2011; Davies & Davies, 2014; DeAngelis, 2019; Ghavifekr & Ramzy, 2020; Joshi, 2014; Kumar, 2018). Recent empirical studies have examined the impact of private schooling on students' learning outcomes (Bin et al., 2011; Davies & Davies, 2014; DeAngelis, 2019; Ghavifekr & Ramzy, 2020; Joshi, 2014; Kumar, 2018). DeAngelis (2019) analyzed Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) scores of 63 countries from 2000 to 2012 and found that an increased share of private schooling in the overall schooling system led to improved PISA scores worldwide. Specifically, a one percent increase in private school enrolment was associated with a 1.4% increase in math scores and a 1.1% increase in reading scores. This finding aligns with the results of Goh & Dolnicar (2006), who discovered that academic performance is one of the most crucial factors in parents' school choice preferences.

In India, Singh (2015) conducted a study in Andhra Pradesh and found that an increase in the share of private schools resulted in a significant and substantial improvement in English learning in rural areas. Parents perceived private schools to offer better quality education compared to government and government-aided schools, which motivated them to invest in sending their children to private schools (Glazerman & Dotter, 2017; Erickson, 2017; Kumar & Choudhury, 2020; Yaacob et al., 2014, 2015).

The topic of private schooling is a global concern, particularly in India, where the 75th National Sample Survey (NSS) data on education (2017-18) revealed that 35% of parents preferred private schools because they believed they offered better education (Kumar & Choudhury, 2020). Davies (2014) argued that private school management utilizes resources efficiently due to their autonomy, which allows them to make effective choices in response to market pressures. Similarly, Hahn, Wang & Yang (2018) found that private high schools achieved better student outcomes than public high schools, attributing the positive results to the autonomy in management decisions.

However, in the same study, Davies (2014) presented contradictory findings. He reported that there is no supporting evidence for the notion that financial autonomy in private schools allows for flexibility in resource usage to enhance academic achievement. Previous research has also reached a similar conclusion, stating that resources allocated per student have minimal or no impact on academic achievement in public schools (Feinstein & Symons, 1999; Hanushek, 2003). Grubb (2009) proposed that these results could be attributed to resources being necessary but not sufficient for achieving higher levels of academic attainment. Despite some contradictory findings, most of the research supported that private schools have better quality in terms of academic performance and overall quality, and this notion is supported by the result

found in this research, whereby SJK(C) parents have high behavioural belief and positive attitude toward private schooling and this high level of behavioural belief is closely related to the strategic leadership and the entrepreneurial traits demonstrated by the private school principal as the school culture, teachers' quality, performance and quality of school is significantly affected by school leadership and management. (Drysdale et al., 2016). In addition, the high level of behavioral level is also consistent with the qualitative findings, where private school principals proposed that the most important factor in enhancing parents' intention and behavior towards private schooling is maintaining and improving school quality. This includes, but is not limited to, teacher qualifications, teaching and learning proficiency, and infrastructure and facilities.

5.3.2.2 Level of Normative Belief

From the research finding in Chapter 4, SJK(C) parents showed a low level of normative belief. Normative belief in this study refer to the parents' perceived social trend of private schooling within their social group and the motivation to comply with the trend. In other words, parents' do not reckon that within their social groups private schooling is a prevailing trend, and therefore they also do not have the urge to comply with "non-existence" private schooling trend.

Even though Klang Valley has the highest density of private schools, apparently, the density of public schools is still far beyond that. According to the statistics, there are only 65 private secondary schools compare to 2440 public secondary schools nationwide (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020). The market of private schooling is relatively small compared to public school; therefore, it is not surprise that the normative level of SJK(C) parents is low since enrolling into public schools is still the mainstream.

Research has indicated that parents often utilize two types of networks to make decisions regarding their children's education in the school choice marketplace. The first type of network is called the interpersonal network, which involves gathering information from people in their neighbourhood and other social circles. The second type of network is the formal network, which relies on publicly available information such as brochures, pamphlets, public meetings, published test scores of schools, and school and district websites (Bennett et al., 2010).

Schneider, Teske, Rock, & Marschall (1997) found that interpersonal networks are efficient means of gathering information, making them essential when parents are considering new school options for their children. The most common ways parents obtain information about schools and school choices are through "word of mouth" and "talking to others" (Ting & Lee, 2019). However, the method of acquiring information about schools may differ among different groups of people. For instance, Schneider and colleagues (1997) observed that income levels and education levels of parents often lead to stratification in social networks, implying that individuals with higher status have access to more efficient sources of school information. Given that parents who tend to choose private schools are often from higher-income social groups, they are more likely to have broader interpersonal networks (Bennett et al., 2010). In contrast, the study shows that most of the SJK(C) parents are working middle class, less than 20 per cent of the parents belongs to the higher socioeconomic status, hence it is not surprising that most of the SJK(C) parents in Kuala Lumpur did not think that private schooling is a social trend within their social group. Moreover, there are 24 private primary schools in Klang Valley, probably the more privilege and affluent

families are not studying in public SJKC school and already enrolled into private school in primary level.

Formal networks, which involve obtaining information from publicly available sources, are another means for parents to gather information to make informed decisions about their children's education. Numerous studies have shown that parents often possess limited knowledge about their children's schools or the various school options available to them (Schneider et al., 2000). In fact, one report argues that “few parents of any social class appear willing to acquire the information necessary to make active and informed educational choices” (Ascher, Fruchter, & Berne, 1996). As argued by Miller (2018) entrepreneurial school leaders use well-established marketing strategies to promote their school, thus, information about private school are widely available, but if the parents are not exposed to private schooling in their social circle, they might not have the interest to actively seek for the private schools’ information (Bennett et al., 2010). For example, if a parent is not exposed to private school in his or her social group at the first place, he or she would not develop the interest toward private schooling, not to mention actively attend private school educational fair.

In contrast, research conducted by Ting and Lee (2019) to determine primary school choice showed that the parents’ choice of primary school for their children was influenced by people around them. These people included friends (28%) which had the greatest influence, followed by nanny, teachers, and principals (24%), family (17%), lastly colleagues (14%) and others. The research by Ting and Lee (2019) showed that normative belief is one of the major factors influencing school choice in primary level. However, when the school choice involves monetary decision, the socioeconomic status of the parents play a major role. This is supported by Naeem Ur

and Rehman et al., (2010) study which revealed that, due to the involvement of monetary contribution, income level becomes an important factor which affects the parents' choice of children education. Besides, this notion also testified by Yaacob, Osman and Bachok, (2015), who proposed that parents make the decision based on social background. All the parents in Malaysia regardless of social classes, inevitably have to choose a primary school for their children, contrarily, private schools are optional and always involve the families which have higher income level. Therefore, the result of the study is inconsistent with the study by Ting and Lee (2019) who suggested that parents have high normative level, because choosing a public primary school does not involve monetary consideration, thus the influence of social norm will be relatively higher when excluding the financial factor. Furthermore, due the different of social classes, the degree of parents exposed to private schooling information through interpersonal network is unequal. This explains the low level of normative belief among SJK(C) parents who mainly come from middle class families. In addition, Ting and Lee (2019) argued that the influence of word-of-mouth recommendations on school choices can be seen from the reliance on informal sources of information, especially among the indigenous families in Malaysia. In contrast, Chinese parents made their own decisions based on the academic reputation of schools (Ting & Lee, 2019). The argument of Ting and Lee (2019) is in line with the result of this research, where SJK(C) parents which made up mostly Chinese ethnic group shows high level of behavioural belief and low level of normative belief. To sum up, SJK(C) parents are more likely affected by the reputation of the schools instead of their social groups.

Moreover, Bussell's (2000) study in Cleveland revealed that middle-class parents were more inclined to verify the information they received by visiting schools and

engaging with teachers. This finding was reinforced by Ting & Lee's (2019) research, which indicated that some middle-class mothers also visited schools before finalizing their school choice decision. Additionally, Schneider and Buckley (2002) identified a link between the frequency of internet searches for school attributes and parental school choice. Middle- and upper-socioeconomic class parents tend to access up-to-date information about different schools through their social networks, allowing them to compare and make informed choices. Conversely, parents with lower incomes are often unaware of school choice options as they are less likely to receive school information through their social networks (Schneider & Buckley, 2002). The present study agrees relatively well with the past studies as the SJK(C) parents who mainly from the middle-class families are not likely influenced by the social groups and tend to search up information by their own, thus, showing low level of normative belief.

Conversely, the perspective of private school principals from the qualitative phase of the study does not support the notion that SJK(C) parents have a low level of normative belief, as their primary source of referrals was through word-of-mouth. This suggests that normative belief among parents who choose private schools is high. This finding is consistent with a study by E. B. Goldring and Phillips, (2008) which suggests that higher status individuals have better networks that can act as more efficient sources of information about schools. As parents who enroll their children in private schools typically come from privileged families, the normative belief among their social circles may be high, in contrast to the sample of this study, which mostly comprises middle-class families.

5.3.2.3 Level of Control Belief

In present study, control belief refers to the parents' perception regarding the presence or absence of requisite resources and opportunities for performing the behaviour in question, meaning to say how hard or easy the parent's perceived to send their children to private schools. High level of control belief indicates that parents have high confidence in sending their children to private school, contrarily, low level of control belief imply that parents have low confidence of private schooling and found private schooling is hard to be executed due to some objective constraints or difficulties.

The result in Chapter 4 showed that SJK(C) parents have medium level of control belief. Sending children to private school is not a simple decision, instead parents have to take many factors into consideration, for instance access to private schooling information, proximity to private schools, family support and financial support, etc.

Since the Private & International School Fair (PISF) started in Kuala Lumpur in 2012 which later expanded to Penang, Johor, access to private schools' information is getting more convenient to the parents. Private & International School fairs were organised for the sole purpose of bringing together schools and parents in a convenient location to enable parents to find the right school for their children and for schools to educate parents about their offerings. On top of that, almost all private schools will have open days and info days annually. Furthermore, in this era of advanced information, all information is at our fingertips, thus accessibility to the information of private school should not be a big issue to the parents. Control belief measures the perceived ease and difficulties of performing the behaviour. Although parents can access private schools' information at ease, they still need to take transportation, financial support, and family support into account. This explains why SJK(C) parents

have moderate level of control belief; private schools' information is widely availability, nevertheless transportation, financial and family support might be the perceived difficulties.

Other than accessibility to adequate information regarding private school, control belief encompasses many aspects of practical and realistic considerations, such as, financial ability, proximity, transportation convenience, familiarity to private school, language, family support. The confidence level of each of the consideration might vary greatly among the families, as proximity and transportation convenience are greatly affected by the location of private school relative to the parents' residence. In the literature, school proximity is the leading reason for parental school choice (Hofflinger et al., 2020; Joshi, 2014; Ting & Lee, 2019). This implies that the school proximity will greatly affect the level of control belief. Since the samples of the study come from different areas around the Klang Valley, the school proximity of each individual varies. Thus, the moderate level of control belief among SJK(C) parents may be due to the average score of each of the independent considerations. For instance, a parent might have high confidence level in financial ability but staying far from private school or vice versa.

Despite existing literature shedding light on potential factors influencing moderate levels of control belief, previous research conducted by Yaacob, Osman, and Bachok (2015) indicates that parents base their decisions on income level, social background, as well as the distance and location of private schools when choosing to enroll their children in them. It is evident from the literature that most parents who send their children to private schools belong to higher socioeconomic backgrounds, feeling financially capable of affording the fees and selecting the school of their preference

(Lee et al., 2017). Conversely, about one-third of public school parents expressed a willingness to switch to a private school if the fees were equivalent to or lower than those of public schools (Beavis, 2014), indicating that the cost of private schooling significantly influences parental decisions. The level of control belief is strongly linked to parents' confidence in their financial ability to afford private schooling. Whether in Malaysia or other countries, the cost of education is a major concern. In Kenya, Zuilkowski and colleagues (2018) found that the burden of school costs is a central factor influencing parents' school choice decisions, with school fees identified as the second most common reason for choosing a particular school in their study (Zuilkowski et al., 2018). In the present study, most of the SJK(C) parents are from middle class families, hence, it is not surprising that the level of control belief is moderate, as they are not the most affluent and privileged families. On the other hand, the moderate level of control belief might suggest that in order to get better quality education, some of the middle-class families have done appropriate financial planning, thus they are confident with their financial capability. This suggestion is in line with the study by Yaacob, Osman, & Bachok (2014) who argued that not only the wealthy families, there are middle income parents with better educated background who would make every effort and ensure their children are enrolled in the best private school.

Previous research emphasizes the importance of convenience as a priority for parents when selecting a school for their children. The location of the school is consistently mentioned in the literature as a crucial factor in school choice decisions. Goldring and Rowley (2006) point out that parents consider the school's location to be convenient, especially when transportation to and from the school is not provided. Proximity to home and workplace is a common consideration, with Goh & Dolnicar (2006) finding

that close proximity to home was the most frequently stated reason for school choice. Control belief plays a role in parents' decision-making, with factors such as distance from home, transportation difficulties, government regulations, cost of private schools, long waiting lists, limited places, lack of information, transport cost, distance from work, safety concerns, and special needs being taken into account (Goh & Dolnicar, 2006).

Parents generally prefer schools located close to their residence or workplace, as evidenced by Evans & Cleghorn (2014) and Kampulin (2009). Working-class parents, in particular, consider the location of their child's school in relation to their daily obligations (Ching, Jasmy, & Rahman, 2016; E. B. Goldring & Phillips, 2008). Distance and transportation difficulties are significant factors influencing parents' choices, with some parents avoiding schools that are far away due to logistical challenges (Goh & Dolnicar, 2006). Additionally, Kumar & Choudhury (2020) highlight that the convenience of location is the second most cited reason for choosing private schools (22%). Moreover, Bennett et al. (2010) note that those who prioritize location are often those who lack the resources to sustain daily transportation to and from a distant school. Although Klang Valley has the highest density of private schools in Malaysia, but its density is still very low compared to public school, on account of its scale ratio to public school. There are only 21 private schools in Klang Valley, families of SJK(C) parents can be greatly distributed, thus, proximity to private schools and transportation convenience could vary greatly among SJK(C) parents. This might be one of the reasons contributing to the moderate level of control belief.

Beresford and Sloper (2008) pointed out that according to heuristic theory, people may choose according to familiarity and recognition. When one of the options or attributes is familiar and recognised by the decision maker, they can have a higher tendency to choose the recognised option. Therefore, familiarity is one of the important indicators to measure control belief. The present study shows that most of the SJK(C) parents are not alumni of private schools, this may cause low familiarity to private schooling and lower the control belief level on average. Despite that, in this digital age, information about private schooling is widely available, specifically with the use of the internet, all the information is at our fingertips. The ease of access to private schooling might in turn increase the level of control belief on average.

To sum up, middle-class families may view finances as a hindrance to enrolling their children in private schools without adequate financial preparation. Combining factors such as financial capacity, easy access to information, and the varying proximity and convenience of private schools, which can significantly differ in distance from the respondents' residence, leads to a moderate level of perceived control.

5.3.3 Level of Intention

According to Ajzen (1991), the level of behavioural belief, normative belief and control belief which discussed earlier will affect the intention of performing the behaviour of private schooling. Ajzen (1991) elaborated that behavioural beliefs produce a favourable or unfavorable attitude toward the behaviour. In other words, if parents believe that private schooling will lead to a positive consequence to their kids and families, they will develop favourable attitude toward private schooling. On the contrary, if parents believe that private schooling will lead to a negative consequence,

unfavourable attitudes will be developed. Normative beliefs result in perceived social pressure or subjective norms, it measures how parents think about the social trend and the degree of compliance to the trend of private schooling. The perceived ease or difficulty of private schooling is the control belief. It gives rise to perceived behavioural control. In combination, attitude toward behaviour, subjective norm, and perception of behavioural control led to the formation of behavioural intention. Intention is deemed to be the immediate antecedent of behaviour as people are likely to carry out their intentions when the opportunity arises. From the result in Chapter 4, it was found that most SJK(C) parents have moderate level of intention, meaning to say that SJK(C) parents are neither interested nor phlegmatic in the matter of private schooling. The moderate intention level indicated SJK(C) parents are kind of neutral on the subject of private schooling, they might have the intention to attend private school educational fair, open days and info days, but do not have the intention to make solid planning and arrangement for private schooling.

In this study, the level of intention is presupposed to collectively contributed by combination of behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief. According to the result of the study, moderate intention level is presumed to be the summation of the high behavioural belief level, low normative belief level and moderate control belief level. Lee, Ting, and Lo (2017) adopted the framework of TPB to investigate the factors influencing Chinese parents' choice of primary schools in Sarawak, Malaysia. They noticed that the Chinese parents who have high intention of choosing primary Chinese school were influenced by the social norms, favourable attitudes towards Chinese-medium schools and felt more capable of enrolling their children in these schools (Lee et al., 2017). This finding is in some way consistent with the result of the study. The moderate level of the intention might be jointly influenced by the high level of

behavioural belief, low level of normative belief and medium level of control belief. However, the correlation of the levels of each belief to intention will be analysed in the next subtopic to give a bigger picture with respect to the subject of private schooling.

5.3.4 Level of Behaviour of Private Schooling

Behaviour of private schooling is measured through the self-report activities related to private schooling done by the parents, for example enrolled their children into private school, registered for entrance exam, attended private school open day and info day, etc. The level of behaviour of private schooling is measured by the level of participation in private schooling activities. The result from Chapter 4 showed that SJK(C) most of the parents have low level of the behaviour of private schooling. However, when the scale ratio of private schools is taken into account, the actual behaviour of private schooling is relatively high. Even though majority of the SJK(C) parents do not perform the behaviour of private schooling, there were still 26.8 percent of the SJK(C) parents were actively practicing the behaviour of private schooling. There are 2440 public secondary schools offering national syllabus compared to 65 private secondary schools which offer national syllabus nationwide. (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020). In comparison, the scale of secondary private schools which offer national syllabus is far smaller than the corresponding public school. The number of private secondary schools is just 2.6 percent out of the secondary schools which offer national syllabus nationwide. Since the scale of private schools is far smaller than public school, 26.8 percent of SJK(C) parents performing the behaviour of private schooling is considered high in ratio. To be specific, there are more than one-fourth ($1/4$) of SJK(C) parents were involved in private schooling where the secondary private school just took up one-thirty-seven ($1/37$) of the overall secondary schools which provide national syllabus.

To sum up, SJK(C) parents' behaviour of private schooling is low statistically, but when taking the scale of public school and private school into account, the level of SJK(C) parents' behaviour of private schooling is significantly high.

5.3.5 The Effect of Behavioural Belief, Normative Belief and Control Belief on Parents' Intention and Actual Behaviour of Private Schooling

The result of the study shows that there are significant effect of behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief on parents' intention of private schooling, and the three beliefs collectively contributed 67% to the parent private schooling intention. The result shows that the exogeneous variables predict the parents' intention effectively as it contributes 67% of the variance in parents' intention to perform the behaviour of private schooling compared to 44% of the variance in Chinese parents' intentions to choose Chinese medium school in the study carried out by Lee et al., (2017). Both of the studies also concurred that control belief influences the parents' intention the most. This finding is confirmed by Ajzen Icek (1991) as he suggested that control belief is not only a motivator of certain behaviour, but it also represents people's actual control over the behaviour. The high tuition fees of private school inevitably impose constraints on parent actual control over the behaviour of private schooling (Catt & Rhinesmith, 2016). The study results show that parents are having high level of behavioural belief, however the influence of behavioural belief is only $\beta=0.14$ compared to control belief $\beta=0.79$. This indicates that the cost of private school deters the parent from private schooling even though they have positive attitude toward private schooling and believe that private schooling will yield better outcome for their children. The high level of behavioural belief but low influence of behavioural belief on parents' intention of private schooling suggests that parents has positive perception on the strategic leadership in private school as well as its independent management which result in

overall high quality of private school (Kongjinda et al., 2020; Mohd Kasim & Zakaria, 2019b), however the cost of private schooling discourage parents from performing the actual behaviour. This notion is supported by the result which showed that the indirect effects of control belief on behaviour of private schooling was the strongest effect found in the final model ($\beta=0.46$) compared to behavioural belief and normative belief which is 0.08 and 0.07 respectively. In a nutshell, even though parents have positive attitude toward private schooling, the major factor which influences the parents' intention and behaviour of private schooling is still the actual control over the behaviour. Meaning to say that when the realistic factors for instance financial resources are not fulfilled, the parents are unlikely to enroll their children to private school. This is supported by the findings of Anders et al., (2020) who proposed that due to the high and rising fees required to send a child to private school, the parent school choice is entirely connected with financial resources. Ahmed et al. (2013) conducted a study in Pakistan to explore the reasons behind parents' choices of sending their children to private schools in rural areas of Punjab, despite the availability of free public schools. The study identified five key factors that influenced the decision to opt for private schools. These determinants included the socioeconomic status of the household, the school's accessibility, the cost of schooling, parents' perceptions of school quality, and their perceptions of available employment opportunities in the region. The findings are compatible with the study whereby the control belief which includes school accessibility, cost of schooling and parents' socioeconomic status which indirectly affect their control over performing the behaviour of private schooling exert the strongest influence on the intention as well as behaviour of private schooling. Furthermore the study by Ahmed et al., (2013) also suggested that parents' perceptions played an important role in school choice, in particular, their perceptions of school quality as key determinants of private school choice. The above finding is inconsistent with the current study, as the key determinant

of private school choice among the SJKC parent is control belief ($\beta=0.79$ direct effect on parents' intention, $\beta=0.46$ indirect effect on parent behaviour of private schooling) compared to parents' perception of school quality ($\beta=0.14$ direct effect on parents' intention, $\beta=0.08$ indirect effect on parent behaviour of private schooling).

Although not the strongest factor, behavioural belief and normative also influence the parents' intention significantly. The findings also show that the influence of behavioural belief and normative belief on intention are almost the same, which are $\beta=0.14$, $\beta=0.13$ respectively. The increase of behavioural belief and normative belief level will increase the parents' private schooling intention. Specifically, when the parents' have a positive attitude toward the private school management and leadership, their intention of private schooling increases. Nevertheless, when parents perceived that people around them are sending their children to private school, their intention of private schooling also increased. The indirect effect of behavioural belief and normative belief are also almost the same, which are $\beta=0.08$ and $\beta=0.07$ respectively. The direct effect of behavioural belief and normative belief on parents' intention of private schooling is higher compared to their indirect effect on the actual behaviour of private schooling. This indicates that even behavioural belief and normative belief contribute to the intention of private schooling, the intention might not reflect in the actual behaviour of private schooling. The relationship between parents' intention and actual behaviour is moderated by the socioeconomic status which will be discussed in following subtopic.

The structural model is proven to be true in the analysis. The result of the studies shows that the findings conform with the framework of TPB, whereby all the three dimensions postulated by the TPB (behavioural belief, normative belief and control belief) provides

better insight into school choice than eliciting factors in a less structured manner. According to the theory of planned behaviour, individuals are more likely to act on their behavioural intentions, and report intentions aligned with their attitude (behavioural belief) and subjective norm (normative belief), when their perceived behavioural control (control belief) is high (Hagger et al., 2022).

Goh & Dolnicar (2006) used the same theory to elicit choice determining factors of choosing primary schools in Australia and came to a same conclusion whereby TPB provide better understanding of school choice than less coordinated manner. In conclusion, parents' behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief have positive influence on parents' intention of private schooling, especially control belief. It is found that control belief has the strongest influence on parents' private schooling intention.

The discussion above presents the comparison of the effect of parental belief as well as the collective effects and contributions of the parental beliefs on parents' intention and behaviour of private schooling. The individual effect of control belief, behavioural belief, and normative belief will be discussed separately in the subtopics below.

5.3.5.1 Effect of Control belief

From the analysis result in Chapter 4, it shows that the three exogenous variables, which are behavioural belief, normative belief and control belief have an impact on parents' intention of private schooling. To put it in another way, parents' private schooling intention increases with the level of parents' behavioural, normative or control beliefs. Out of the three variables, control belief exerts the most significant influence on parents' intention of private schooling. Meaning to say that perceived

ease; including financial support, proximity, family support is the parents' greater motivator of private schooling. Transportation convenience, familiarity, and financial strength increase the parents' confidence in sending their children into private school which involve a substantial fee; thus, when the level of control belief increases parents' intention of private schooling increases the most. The result is agreed by the study of Goh & Dolnicar (2006), they found that main factors affecting school choice in Australia are proximity of school and academic performance. As highlight in the finding, control belief which included proximity of school has the greatest influence on parents' intention of private schooling. This finding is in line with the study conducted by Lee and colleagues (2017). They found that perceived behavioural control has the strongest influence on primary school choice which is the extent to which parents felt capable of paying fees and enrolling their children in the school of their choice. The present study result suggests that the parents who have financial ability positively correlate to the intention to perform the behaviour of private schooling. This finding is agreed by Bedaso Merga & Shobisso Sofamo (2020) who scrutinize the factors which motivate the parents to educate their children in private schools. They found that cost of schooling was negatively related with private school enrolment. It expressed that increases in cost of schooling decreased the probability to enroll in private school. Therefore, it can be concluded that cost of schooling is a major consideration and affects the parents' intention of private schooling significantly. This notion is further substantiated by Anders et al., (2020), they discovered that due to the high and rising fees required to send a child to private school, the behaviour of private schooling is greatly affected by the financial resources.

Anders et al., (2020), further discovered that each minute of additional travel time to the nearest outstanding state school is associated with a 0.2 percentage point higher probability of attending a private school. Therefore, it can be concluded that geographical proximity which is also one of the aspect of control belief influences the behaviour of private schooling. Various studies have reached a consensus that location and transportation are among the primary factors that significantly influence parents' school selection for their children (Diwakar, 2016; Kumar & Choudhury, 2020; Lee, Diana et al., 2017; Siah et al., 2018; Yaacob et al., 2014, 2015). These studies have consistently shown that most parents prefer schools that are conveniently situated nearby, thus eliminating the inconvenience of transportation. Yaacob and colleagues (2015) emphasized that the popularity or unpopularity of certain schools can be attributed, to some extent, to the strategic location of the area, making location convenience an important consideration for parents when choosing a school. However, it is worth noting that some middle-class families may prioritize schools with superior quality and facilities, even if those schools are not located in their immediate neighborhood (Yaacob et al., 2014). Despite such differences in preferences, the current study's findings align with previous research, indicating that location and distance (control belief) play a major role in influencing parents' school choice.

Control belief encompasses a large of extent of variables, including factors which perceived as ease or hinder to perform the action of private schooling. Early studies by Kampulin (2009) found that parents are influenced by their personal experience when making school choice for their children. In Australia and United Kingdom if one of their parents once attended private school their children are more likely to attend private school (Dearden et al., 2011). This supported that past experience may

affect parent decision when making school choice for their children, which is consistent with the study finding where having past experience in private schooling meaning have greater familiarity with private schooling, therefore the high level of control belief is more likely to influence the parents' private schooling intention.

5.3.5.2 Effect of Behavioural Belief

Drawing upon the points mentioned above, it can be inferred that although factors such as location and distance may not always be the primary considerations, the quality of a school (as a behavioural belief) does significantly impact parents' intention to enroll their children in private schools. Various studies have supported this claim, including the work of Ajzen (2020) who argued that a high level of behavioural belief leads to a high level of intention. Other researchers, such as Phillips and colleagues (2012), Li and Hung (2009), and Goh & Dolnicar (2006), have also highlighted academic performance as a significant motivator for parents to choose private schools. This is supported by the consensus of researchers like Yaacob et al. (2014), Van Pelt et al. (2007), and Yi & Chen (2013) who have emphasized the importance of academic performance, teachers' dedication, qualifications, positive learning environments, and students' performance in influencing school choice. Lindbom (2010) found a statistically significant relationship between pupils' academic performance and the proportion of students attending private schools. On the other hand, Rehman et al. (2010) highlighted reasons why Pakistani parents opt for private schools over public schools, including concerns about the qualifications of teachers, lack of teacher interest, ineffective teaching methods, and disciplinary issues in public schools. Similarly, Diwakar's (2016) study found that parents' final decision on school choice was based on parameters such as quality education, curriculum, activity-based learning, teacher competency, exposure given to a child, school

achievements, goodwill, scholastic and co-scholastic activities, sports provision, techno-based learning, and a healthy environment which are the major components of behavioural belief. In a nutshell, most previous studies share the similar findings with the present study which emphasize on school overall wellbeing which heavily affected by the school leadership is the important elements of behavioural belief which exert influence on the choice of private school.

The present findings is consistent with the study result by Siah and colleagues (2018) which investigate the factors affecting Malaysian Chinese parents school choices. They revealed that teacher quality is perceived as the most important, followed by chances of learning Chinese culture, school facilities, chances of learning Mandarin, academic achievement, school fees, multicultural setting, direct enrollment, location, and friends' influence. These factors can be categorized into the three beliefs systematically except for learning Chinese culture, learning of Mandarin and multicultural setting. Teacher quality, school facilities, academic achievement, direct enrollment which related to the school management are attributes of behavioural belief, whereas school fees and location are control belief's attributes; friends' influence on the other hand is the subjective norm which is normative belief. Hence, the present findings which suggest behavioural belief, normative belief and control belief have influences on behavioural intention are supported by the previous study which involved the similar population, Malaysian Chinese parents.

Study by Lee, Ting, and Lo (2017) who examined factors that influence Chinese parents' choice of medium in primary schools in Sarawak, Malaysia using the TPB found that positive attitudes towards Chinese schools (behavioural belief) also predicted choice for Chinese-medium schools. They suggest that parents who wanted

their children to learn Mandarin and Mathematics and to have a Chinese cultural appreciation chose Chinese-medium schools. Since the context of the study is different, the positive attitude toward Chinese vernacular school in Sarawak cannot identify with the context of the present study. The main attributes of Chinese vernacular school are the medium of instruction and Chinese cultural appreciation, however in present study the main elements of private school are the highly independent management and entrepreneurial leadership due to its business nature. Although both findings suggest that behavioural belief influences the parents' intention and behaviour of school choice, the reasons vary greatly due to the different context and the implications of the findings also different.

Despite the fact that parents have a high level of behavioural belief, it is interesting to note that from the quantitative findings the influence of this belief on their intention and behaviour towards private schooling is relatively lower when compared to the influence of control belief. Although parents generally have a positive perception and favourable attitude towards private schooling, it appears that control belief factors such as financial ability, familiarity, convenience, and proximity have a stronger influence on their intention to enrol their children in private schools. This finding is noteworthy because it suggests that although parents may hold a positive perception towards private schooling, their practical considerations regarding their ability to afford and access private schools ultimately play a more significant role in predicting their intention and behaviour of private schooling. This highlights the importance of addressing practical concerns such as financial accessibility and proximity to private schools, in addition to promoting the benefits of private schooling, in order to effectively encourage and enhance parents' intention and behaviour of private schooling. However, when the quantitative findings were presented to private school

principals, a contradictory perspective was discovered. The principals emphasized that upholding the quality and performance of the school is more important than lowering the school price. As private schools operate as business institutions, they require sufficient capital to run their operations, leaving little room to compromise on school fees. Instead, they focus on emphasizing their unique value proposition and strive to maintain high-quality education to distinguish themselves from free public schools. These findings demonstrate the entrepreneurial traits of private school principals, who acknowledge the parents' financial ability is the largest constraint of private schooling but are adept at identifying their strengths and taking calculated risks to maintain and enhance their school's quality and value. Rather than solely relying on statistical evidence, they exhibit the characteristics of strategic leaders by strategically navigating the competitive business world and making informed decisions to meet the needs of parents and students.

5.3.5.3 Effect of Normative Belief

In the study conducted by Lee et al., (2017), they suggested that subjective norms had little influence on school choice which is congruent with the result of the present study. In the present study, normative belief has the lowest impact on the intention and behaviour of private schooling. Nevertheless, in another study of Lee and Ting (2019) examining determinants of primary school choice in Malaysia discovered that social influence is one of the major factors on their school choice. These influences come from friends and education personnel in preschools and schools. They further highlight that the Indigenous parents tend to be more subject to social pressure in making school choices than the Chinese and Malay parents, who mostly enroll their children in Chinese- and Malay-medium primary schools, respectively. This

discovery is similar with the result of present finding, whereby the private schooling behaviour of Chinese SJKC parents are less affected by the normative belief.

Although Kampulin (2009) and Goh and Dolnicar (2006) argued that parents are mainly influenced by their relatives and friends, who are considered the two most important reference groups affecting parental school choice, the present findings indicate that normative beliefs have a lower impact on parents' intentions and behaviour regarding private schooling.

According to research, it is common for parents not to visit schools before enrolling their children, and instead rely on information obtained through conversations with other parents. Informal social networks play a significant role in shaping parents' perception of private schools as higher quality (Ashley & Engel, 2014), which decision-making theory suggests may influence their choice of school (Beresford & Sloper, 2008). Booth (2017) also found that parents' decision-making process may be influenced by the views of professionals, children, and staff in educational settings. Additionally, social trends have been shown to shape parents' school choice, with parents in affluent social classes preferring schools that enrol high-achieving peers (Abdulkadiroglu, Pathak, Schellenberg, & Walters, 2020).

Interestingly, the present findings are in line with these previous studies, suggesting that although normative beliefs have the least impact on parents' intention and behaviour regarding private schooling, they still exert a significant influence. In other words, while parents may be influenced by multiple factors such as behavioural belief and control belief when choosing a school for their children, their beliefs about what is socially acceptable or desirable can also shape their intention and behaviour of

private schooling. However, the qualitative findings reveal contrasting results. All of the private school principals unanimously agreed that normative belief is the most important factor influencing private schooling. In fact, word-of-mouth is their most powerful marketing tool, as most of their customers (parents) are introduced by satisfied existing customers (parents). This explains why they prioritize maintaining and improving their existing policies because their schools are already in a good place and attract a significant number of customers (parents) through word of mouth.

5.3.6 Effect of Intention on Behaviour of Private Schooling

According to the structural model analysis, parents' intention shows significant positive influence on behaviour of private schooling. When the level of intention increases, the level of behaviour of private schooling increases as well. To be specific, the analysis shows that the direct effect of parent private schooling intention on parent behaviour of private schooling is 58%. This is supported by the TPB which proposed by Ajzen (1991). He suggested that intention is the antecedent of actual behaviour, when given a sufficient degree of actual control over the behaviour, people are expected to carry out their intentions when the opportunity arises.

The is corroborated by the findings of Lee et al., (2017), they found that strong influence of control belief on intention indicates that the choice of primary school puts school choice in Malaysia in the category of behaviours that are not under volitional control. Meaning to say that control belief is the primary factor that influences intentions, such as financial ability, proximity to school, and such factors also affecting the feasibility to execute the behaviour. They further pointed out that when parents have adequate resources and perceived capability to perform primary school choice, intention is positively related to primary school choice (Lee et al., 2017). Research in

the field of e-learning also showed that intention positively related to the actual behaviour, whereby intention enhanced the time for using e-learning technology (Chu & Chen, 2016).

It is found also that the total indirect effect of the behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief on behaviour of private schooling is higher ($\beta = 0.61$) than direct effect of intention on parents' actual behaviour ($\beta = 0.58$). Behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief contributed 67% collectively to the parent private schooling intention. Meaning to say that there are some other reasons which affect the intention of parents' behaviour of private schooling which are not included in the study. The higher indirect effect of the behavioural belief, normative belief and control belief on actual behaviour implies that when intention is propelled by these three beliefs, parents are more likely to perform the behaviour of private schooling. This finding is substantiated by the study of Goh & Dolnicar, (2006) who proposed that using all dimensions postulated by the TPB (behavioural belief, normative belief and control belief) provides better insight into school choice than eliciting factors in a less structured manner.

The structural model shows that behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief contributed 67% collectively to the parent private schooling intention. Parent private schooling intention which sequentially contribute 34% to parent behaviour of private schooling. In other words, 34% of the parents' behaviour of private schooling is due to their intention shaped by the three set of beliefs (exogeneous variables) which contribute 67% to the intention. The result corroborated and confirmed that the TPB framework can predict human behaviour effectively. The present study did not examine the mediating effect of intention, as the TPB framework has already established the

mediating role of intention between beliefs and behaviour. Therefore, it is unsurprising that a positive correlation exists between parents' intentions and their behaviors regarding private schooling.

In conclusion, intention mediates the relationship between parental belief and their behavior regarding private schooling, thus supporting the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The study elucidates the predictive influence of various factors on parents' behavior concerning private schooling, addressing the primary research problem. These factors have implications for the role of private schools within the Malaysian education system. While parents generally hold a positive attitude towards private schools, this sentiment alone does not significantly drive private schooling behavior. Instead, the perceived control over the decision to enroll in private schooling emerges as a strong predictor of parents' intention and subsequent behavior.

5.3.7 Moderating effect of Socioeconomic Background

The previous subtopics have already confirmed the structural model and demonstrated that the behavioural belief, normative belief, and control belief significantly contribute to SJK(C) parents' decision to choose private schooling. However, there might be additional factors that influence parents' decision which were not included in the structural model.

The results presented in Chapter 4 indicate that the model accounts for 38% of parents' decision to opt for private schooling. This suggests that, apart from parental beliefs and intentions, there are other variables that may also affect parents' actual decision to choose private schooling. Specifically, the direct effect of intention on actual behavior is $\beta=0.58$, and the collective indirect effect of parental beliefs is $\beta=0.61$. This indicates

that, beyond intention and parental beliefs, there are other factors at play that might influence parents' decision.

The intention, as an antecedent of actual behavior, may not fully reflect in the actual decision of SJK(C) parents to choose private schooling. It is likely that there are moderating factors that come into play between parents' intentions and their actual behavior in choosing private schooling. These moderating factors might influence the way parents translate their intentions into action regarding private schooling.

Hofflinger et al., (2020) conducted a study and found that parents of low socioeconomic status are more likely to prioritize proximity when choosing a school for their children, while parents of high socioeconomic status tend to prioritize quality and religious education. This suggests that socioeconomic status plays a moderating role in school choice. Jheng et al., (2022) analyzed 22 studies conducted between 1983 and 2020 and found that parents with higher education levels and family incomes are more likely to send their high-achieving children to schools with better quality, even if they are located farther away. Given adequate information and resources, parents from higher socioeconomic backgrounds may be more likely to use tactics such as residential choice, which involves moving to a neighborhood with a quality school, in order to gain an advantage in school admissions (Burgess et al., 2020). Therefore, socioeconomic status is an important factor to consider when examining parental school choice (Jheng et al., 2022).

Previous studies conducted by Anders, Francis Green, Morag Henderson, and Golo Henseke (2020) have suggested that parents with higher occupational status, family income, and education level are more inclined to choose private schools for their

children compared to those with lower levels in these factors. The financial aspect plays a crucial role in parents' decision-making process regarding their children's education (Rehman et al., 2010). However, the current educational landscape shows an increasing number of middle-income parents with higher levels of education who are making considerable efforts to ensure their children's enrollment in private schools. Avram and Dronkers (2012) have supported this observation, asserting that families with higher education and occupational prestige are more likely to opt for private schools over public ones. This finding aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which emphasizes perceived behavioral control as a factor affected by socioeconomic status that moderates the relationship between intention and actual behavior. According to Ajzen (1991, 2002), behavioral execution relies on both motivation (intention) and ability (behavioral control). The degree of behavioral control significantly influences behavior, especially when the individual is highly motivated. Hence, perceived behavioral control and intention interact to affect behavioral achievement. In this study, the focus is on examining the moderating effect of perceived behavioral control based on socioeconomic status. The varying socioeconomic backgrounds significantly impact the financial capability to choose private schooling as a behavior (Hofflinger et al., 2020; Yaacob et al., 2015). This finding supports other research indicating that parents' preferences are influenced by their socioeconomic backgrounds, specifically their income and education level. Parents with higher income and education tend to possess more knowledge about schools and educational systems, granting them greater control over enrolling their children in private schools (Rehman et al., 2010; Van Pelt, Allison, & Allison, 2007). Moreover, middle- and upper-class parents are more likely to access updated information on schools through their social networks, enabling them to make more informed choices (Schneider & Buckley, 2002). Booth (2017) also found that parents

from higher socioeconomic families tend to be more informed about school choice and advocate for their child's placement in specific educational settings. Similarly, Australian studies have established a link between attending private schools and social background, including family household income, parental education, and occupation (Dearden et al., 2011). In contrast, the present study indicates that only family income moderates the relationship between parental intention and the actual behavior of enrolling children in private schools.

Multiple group analysis of the study shows that household income moderates the relationship between intention and actual behaviour of private schooling, whereby families with higher family income are more likely to perform the actual behaviour of private schooling. The findings again verified the findings of the structural model which suggested that control belief which involve financial confidence as the strongest predictor of parents' private schooling intention. Choosing a private school is not merely a school choice as it involves a tremendous amount of money to support a child in private school. Similarly, in Australia and United Kingdom also found that families with higher household incomes are more likely to send their children to private schools (Dearden et al., 2011). Hence, it is not surprising that financial advantage will increase the likelihood of private schooling among the SJK(C) parents.

Furthermore, Anders, Francis Green, Morag Henderson and Golo Henseke (2020) suggested that parents who have high occupational status, higher family income and education level are more likely to choose a private school compared with those with lower levels of occupational, family income and education level. Naeem Ur and colleagues (2010) have the similar conclusion, stated that the higher status of parent's occupational prestige always associates with the higher chance of selecting private

school over public school for their children. In contrast, the present finding shows that the occupation category does not show significant moderating effect on the relationship between parental intention and their actual behaviour of private schooling. That is to say parents' occupational prestige does not increase the chance of selecting private school over public school for their children, parents with elementary occupation also does not decrease their chance of private schooling. There is a vast diversity of occupations available nowadays, especially in this ever-changing era, the landscape of occupation is evolving and changing quickly, many new occupations are emerging, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The job scope and required skills set of the occupation become more complicated and ambiguous. Therefore to classify the vast occupations into few categories for multi-group analysis is a great challenge. Since the classification of occupational category is arbitrary, the findings might vary when the classification varies. Besides, the time background of the research may also affect the findings. The data was collected in 2022, when the country was hit badly by the economic crisis due to the pandemic and some international factors. Many people change their career path when the world hit by the pandemic (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2022). Many people lost their job or suffering pay cut (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2022); thus a prestige job might not guarantee a good pay. By taking these external factors into account, these are not surprising that the occupational category does not moderate the relationship between parent intention and their actual behaviour of private schooling.

Pelt, Allison, & Allison (2007) found that parents' level of education become the reasons in selecting the private school for their children. This is supported by Avram & Dronkers (2012), who argued that more and more middle-income parents with higher educated background who would make every effort and ensure their children

are admitted in private schools. Similarly, Siddiqui (2017) also found that parents' higher number of years in attending formal education has a positive relation with children's enrolment in private schools. The study of Arshad & Ghani (2015) suggested that education in Malaysia continues to pay high returns, meaning that higher educational level will result in higher level of income. As educational level is positively related to income level, educational level is expected to have the same moderating effect as family income. Contrarily, the finding from the multi-group analysis found that educational level does not have a moderating effect between the parents' intention and parents' behaviour of private schooling. This may be due to the wage differentials in Malaysia are significantly explained by age, marital status, gender, ethnicity, occupational types and geographical locations (Arshad & Ghani, 2015). Local research conducted by Siah and colleagues (2018) suggested that school choice is not relevant to the educational level of parents. This suggestion is consistent with the present findings where different parental educational levels do not show any differences in their private schooling behaviour. Due to the flourishing development of higher education in Malaysia during the 90s', most of the SJK(C) parents in the highly urbanised Kuala Lumpur are highly educated. More than 60 per cent of the parents completed tertiary education, only a handful of them did not complete secondary educational level. Due to the imbalance ratio of high and low level of education of the respondents, no significant difference in the behaviour of private schooling was found between the highly educated parents compared to the lower education level parents in the multi-group analysis. In addition, respondents who were willing to take part in the questionnaire are mostly to be educated and literate, because to understand and respond to the questionnaire require certain level of proficiency in language. This may skew the samples of the research to the group of parents who are more educated. This notion is supported by Tolonen and colleagues (2005) who found

that in most populations, non-respondents were more likely to be single, less well educated, and had poorer lifestyles than respondents. They highlighted that the socioeconomic of respondents and non-respondents differed fairly consistently across 27 populations over the world (Tolonen et al., 2005). Hence, the estimators of population trends based on respondent data are likely to be biased.

In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that family income moderates the relationship between parental intention and the actual enrollment in private schooling, with higher-income families exhibiting a greater likelihood of enrolling their children in private institutions. However, parental educational levels and occupational categories do not significantly moderate this relationship. This observation indirectly suggests that the proliferation of private schools may exacerbate social segregation, as affluent individuals prefer private education due to its perceived advantages.

Given the self-selection nature of private school enrolment, families with greater resources are more likely to choose private schools, which they perceive as offering higher quality education. Consequently, private schools attract more advantaged students, leaving less advantaged students in public schools. This addresses a central concern motivating this research—whether private schools compete with or complement public schools.

Furthermore, qualitative insights from private school principals shed light on how they strategically and innovatively lead their institutions to thrive in the dynamic and competitive business environment. These findings offer implications for policymakers in Malaysia on how to enhance the education system by leveraging the strengths of private schools, particularly through entrepreneurial strategic leadership.

5.3.8 The Role of Private School Principal as Strategic Leader

To explore the extent to which quantitative findings align with the perspectives of private school principals, the gist of the result was presented to several private school principals. According to the quantitative findings, parents have a strong positive perception of private schooling, with high levels of behavioural belief, but surprisingly low impact on parents' intention and behaviour of private schooling. On the other hand, other factors such as control belief - including financial ability - have a greater impact on their intention and behaviour toward private schooling. This suggests that although parents hold favorable attitudes toward private schooling, they face practical constraints such as school fees and convenience that deter them from enrolling their children in private schools.

Private school principals generally agree with the finding that parents have high levels of behavioural belief about private schooling based on their observations and experiences. However, one principal disputed the notion that control belief was the strongest predictor of parents' intention and behaviour toward private schooling. The principal asserted that, based on their experience, financial constraints were not a factor in any withdrawals from the school, emphasizing that such decisions were driven solely by internal factors. One of the principals stated, "Whoever parents or whoever child withdraw from this school has zero, nothing related to financial, is because of the internal factors same goes to my previous school." This observation aligns with findings from Jheng et al. (2022), indicating that parents with higher socioeconomic status, particularly those with advanced education levels, have the means to secure the best educational opportunities for their children.

In contrast, another principal agreed that financial stability is one of the reasons for withdrawal, but also noted that the good reputation and high quality of the school attracted more parents to enroll their children into private schools.

"We also have some withdrawals as well, and these mostly for financial reasons because as the child gets older, fees will get more expensive. So, if we maintain these which we are currently doing at the moment, we get recommendation through word of mouth which is very powerful. So that's when we start to receive a lot more parents to come for private education in our school."

Once again, the viewpoint expressed by the principal contradicts the results of the quantitative research. During the interviews, all the principals agreed that the main source of customers (parents) is through word-of-mouth recommendations, which conflicts with the research findings which suggests that parents' have low level of normative belief and the impact of normative belief on parents' intention and behaviour of private schooling is the lowest among the three beliefs. Meaning that the parents' are less influenced by the perceived social trend of private schooling. The principals claimed that the majority of students enroll in their schools because of their excellent reputation, which is maintained through hard work to uphold high standards of quality and unique value propositions that sets them apart from other schools. By maintaining these standards, the schools are able to attract new students through positive word-of-mouth recommendations from satisfied parents, leading to an influx of new students. As one of the principals stated, "Our parents would recommend our school to their friends through word of mouth based on the aspects that we maintain."

The influence of normative belief on parents' intention and behaviour was not highlighted in the quantitative findings due to its low level and minimal impact compared to the other two variables, behavioural belief and control belief. In fact, control belief exerts the strongest influence on parents' intention and behaviour towards private schooling. However, upon consulting with principals, it was discovered that they prioritize behavioural belief over control belief. The qualitative analysis identified three themes - "maintain," "improve," and "implement" - focused on enhancing parents' behavioural belief. Based on the principals' observations, maintaining high standards of teaching and learning is paramount for ensuring school quality and effectively leveraging the most impactful marketing strategy—word-of-mouth. While only 19% of the population comprises families with high socioeconomic status, word-of-mouth recommendations within their social circles wield significant influence. This notion is supported by research conducted by Rowe and Lubienski (2017), which highlights that affluent and actively involved decision-makers typically select schools based on their socio-demographic attributes. Moreover, while only around 26% of parents exhibit a high level of behaviour in private schooling, this is relatively high considering the ratio of public and private schools. Despite private schools having a smaller proportion in the secondary school market, about a quarter of SJKC parents actively engage in private schooling behaviour, leading to intense competition to enrol in the desired private school.

Private schooling is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon that requires a comprehensive approach to understand. One perspective that is crucial to consider is that of the private school principal, who takes on the role of a strategic leader and works on the frontline. To gain a better understanding of private schooling phenomena, a

mixed-method research design was employed. Strategic private school principals operating within dynamic entrepreneurial contexts recognize that prioritizing school quality (behavioral belief) proves more effective than implementing discounts or reducing prices. This is because word-of-mouth within social circles of high socioeconomic status holds significant sway, serving as the most potent marketing tool. This perspective aligns with findings from a study by Gottau (2020), which suggests that individuals from middle and high socioeconomic backgrounds often rely on their social networks or family members for guidance in decision-making processes. In this context, the role of strategic leadership is crucial to driving the success of private schools. Furthermore, the utilization of a mixed-method research design facilitated a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing parents' intention and behaviour of private schooling and provided valuable insights into the real-world experiences of private school principals. This approach enabled the researchers to triangulate both quantitative and qualitative data, leading to a more nuanced understanding of the complex phenomenon of private schooling

As previously discussed, the quantitative research findings underscore the significant impact of control beliefs, particularly financial ability and convenience, on parents' intention and behavior regarding private schooling. Despite this insight, the principals opted against lowering school fees or providing additional discounts to enhance enrollment rates. While they recognized the importance of addressing tuition costs, operational constraints such as staff salaries, rental expenses, and utility bills presented challenges in implementing such measures. Instead, the principals directed their efforts towards augmenting the school's value proposition to attract and retain students, emphasizing the entrepreneurial trait inherent in strategic school leadership. This approach aligns with the assertion made by Kongjinda et al. (2020), which emphasizes

the increasing challenges encountered by private schools as they navigate the dynamic business landscape, ultimately impacting their competitive capabilities and survival prospects.

In the highly competitive private school market, it is crucial for principals to strike a balance between financial considerations, maintaining quality standards, and providing unique value propositions to attract and retain customers. The qualitative findings highlight that private school principals who adopt strategic leadership role tend to focus on three key themes: "maintain," "improve," and "implement" strategies that enhance parents' intention and behaviour of choosing private schooling.

Despite the challenges faced by private school principals, they have exhibited entrepreneurial traits by innovating and adding value to their schools. This is supported by research conducted by Miller (2018) on the "Nature of School Leadership," which included 61 school leaders from 16 countries across five continents. The study found that to lead their schools to success, principals need to acquire and demonstrate entrepreneurial skills and behaviours such as teamwork, environmental awareness, responsiveness to market forces, opportunity spotting, risk-taking, innovation, shrewdness, expediency, pragmatism, and business thinking. These traits and behaviours enable principals to address the realistic considerations and challenges that arise in the management of private schools.

The qualitative research findings suggest that students' enrollment in private schools is primarily driven by the high quality and standards of education that these schools offer. This finding is consistent with the results of quantitative research, which also suggests that parents tend to have a higher level of behavioural belief, meaning that parents have

positive perceptions toward the effectiveness of private schooling. This indicates that parents recognize and value the entrepreneurial trait of strategic leadership among private school principals in creating a positive educational experience. Miller's (2018) study also highlights the importance of private school leaders employing marketing strategies such as emphasizing teachers' qualifications and experience, safety records, physical appearance, location, community involvement, pastoral care, and academic results. The private school principals in this study also concurred with these marketing strategies.

According to research conducted by Miller (2018) and Reimann et al. (2020), private school leaders have adopted a strategy of using social media to craft compelling narratives and documentation to promote their schools. This aligns with the entrepreneurial traits exhibited by strategic leaders, which emphasize creativity and innovation. (Akmaliah et al., 2014; Wibowo & Saptono, 2018). Additionally, the private school principals themselves mentioned that their marketing strategies revolve around promoting holistic education, strong parental engagement, and occasional social media posts. These qualitative findings are consistent with the research indicating that private school leaders are using innovative ways such as social media as a tool for promoting their schools.

Ustinoff-brumbelow (2019) research indicates that investments made by principals to provide teacher training and support increase teacher effectiveness and improve school quality. Additionally, Rohde et al., (2019) found that parents frequently cite teacher quality as one of the top three reasons in their school choice decision-making process. This suggests that parents value relevant teacher quality and school outcomes when making decisions about their child's education. These findings are supported by the

high level of behavioural belief observed among parents, who perceive private school principals to be better at supporting and managing teachers to ensure high attendance and quality. These results are consistent with the qualitative research findings that highlight the role of private school principals as strategic leaders. As one principal stated, "Continuous professional development for staff, especially teachers, is crucial for quality teaching and learning." Private school principals also agreed that inspiring and highly informed teachers possess the skillset necessary to meet the social, emotional, academic, and developmental needs of students. One principal emphasized that teachers must have a 21st-century skillset and mindset to effectively expose students to these skills. As the principal stated, "If teachers themselves do not believe in these skills, we cannot expect them to execute them in the classroom."

Furthermore, according to Kumar & Choudhury (2020) research, families prefer private schools that have better parental participation in parent-teacher associations or meetings. Qualitative findings also support this idea, as private school principals stated that parent engagement meetings and webinars can promote parents' intention and behaviour towards private schooling.

As strategic leaders, private school principals stress that marketing skills are very important, and those are the fields which need to be improved and implement specific strategies to proactively expose private schooling to parents. These include parents awareness webinar and involvement of teacher in promoting the school should be implemented which aim to inform and educate parents about the benefits of private schooling. This approach is supported by Miller (2018), who argues that effective school leaders utilize well-established marketing strategies to promote their schools, a key role of strategic leadership. However, it is important to note that if parents are not

exposed to private schooling in their social circles, they may not have the interest to actively seek out information about private schools (Bennett et al., 2010). Therefore, by using awareness webinars and involving teachers in promoting the school, private school principals can increase parental awareness and interest in private schooling, ultimately leading to increased enrollment.

It is worth noting that factors such as financial ability, familiarity, convenience, and proximity have consistently emerged as strong predictors of parents' intention to enroll their children in private schools, according to several studies (Anders et al., 2020; Andersen, 2008; Hofflinger et al., 2020; Siddiqui, 2017). Private school principals recognize the importance of keeping school fees competitive and affordable. Some principals who demonstrate entrepreneurial trait in their strategic leadership have even taken the initiative to address issues such as traffic congestion by implementing their own buses, as one principal pointed out, "One of the problems we are currently facing is congestion because our campus is not very big. One of our plans is to have our own buses to address this issue." This highlights the importance of private school principals being proactive and implementing strategies to improve the quality and convenience of their schools.

The private school principals place significant emphasis on continuous maintenance, improvement, and implementation of strategies to enhance their schools. These three major themes, "maintain," "improve," and "implement," form a cohesive cycle that upholds the standard of private schools and sets them apart from public schools. Through these efforts, private schools can attract more parents and maintain their competitive edge.

The theme of "maintain" generally refers to the concept of preserving or upholding something in a particular state or condition. In the context of education and schools, maintenance encompasses various aspects of strategic leadership roles, such as upholding a high standard of education quality, fostering a positive school culture, ensuring effective communication channels between stakeholders, and preserving the physical infrastructure of the school (Ustinoff-Brumbelow, 2019). It involves continuous efforts and strategies to sustain the desired state or condition over time.

The "improve" theme underscores the imperative for private schools to consistently pursue enhanced quality and distinctive value propositions to distinguish themselves in the competitive market. This entails investing in teacher training and support to enhance teacher effectiveness and overall school quality, as highlighted by private school principals. This notion finds support in the research conducted by Ustinoff-Brumbelow (2019), who proposed that principals of private schools provided significantly more training and support to teachers in various areas, including effective reading strategies, data collection and management, and data interpretation and utilization.

The "implement" theme emphasizes the importance of actively promoting private schooling to parents through various marketing strategies, such as awareness webinars and involving teachers in promoting the school. This is in line with the concept of entrepreneurial trait of strategic leadership, as private school leaders use well-established marketing strategies to promote their schools, as noted by Miller's (2018) research.

By consistently maintaining established policies, direction, and unique characteristics, private schools demonstrate their dedication to upholding essential education values

and principles. This dedication lays the foundation for the cyclical process, which allows schools to build upon their strengths while remaining steadfast in their mission to deliver quality education to students. Moreover, the deliberate efforts to improve and implement targeted policies and strategies signify a proactive approach to enhancing educational offerings and addressing emerging issues. These improvements not only elevate the overall quality of education provided but also foster an environment of continuous learning and growth within the school community.

Nevertheless, according to the quantitative research findings, control beliefs such as financial ability, convenience, and accessibility were identified as having the most significant influence on parents' intention and behaviour towards private schooling. However, it is worth noting that there was no evidence to suggest that the private school principal is planning to revoke or abandon any current policies or plans. This highlights the importance of maintaining and continuously improving existing strategies and initiatives while also exploring new and innovative ways to enhance the private school experience for parents and students. By embracing a strategic entrepreneurial approach, the private school principal can proactively identify and implement new initiatives to overcome the control beliefs that may deter parents from considering private schooling. This proactive stance can lead to increased enrollment and a strengthened reputation for the school. The implementation of this cyclical approach underscores the role of private school principals as strategic leaders who skillfully balance school quality and financial sustainability. By continually progressing through this cycle, these schools can generate increased revenue from tuition fees while simultaneously ensuring a superior educational experience for their students. This dynamic process demonstrates the entrepreneurial characteristics of private school leaders, enabling them to adeptly navigate the challenges of the business world. This is supported by research from

Kongjinda et al. (2020), highlighting the significance of entrepreneurial traits in private school leadership. Given the turbulence of the business world, it is critical for private schools to maintain a competitive edge and strive for long-term success. By embracing this cyclic approach, private school leaders can proactively enhance their schools' quality, attract more parents, and foster a positive reputation in the education landscape. This cycle of continuous improvement serves as a testament to the strategic leadership within the entrepreneurial private education system, and it has the potential to benefit the Malaysia education system at large by promoting ongoing education policies on access, equity, quality, efficiency, and unity

Overall, private school principals exemplified the role of strategic leaders with entrepreneurial characteristics, actively pursuing opportunities and implementing innovative strategies to uphold school quality, enhance parental engagement, and promote their institutions. These findings are consistent with research conducted by Mermer et al. (2022), which revealed that various marketing tactics related to products and services, school employees, physical facilities, and pricing directly and indirectly impact school image and parental loyalty. Particularly, the school image and marketing tactics focusing on school employees were identified as the most influential predictors of parental loyalty.

5.4 Implication of the Study

The primary objective of this research is to identify the determinants of private schooling. Understanding what parents are willing to pay for can help policymakers ensure ongoing education policies prioritize access, equity, quality, efficiency, and unity, thereby creating a more conducive environment for education to thrive. In addition, understanding parents' preferences enables both public and private school

management to improve their existing management and operational systems to attract more students and increase literacy rates among Malaysians. Holding on to this proposition, this session is going to discuss the practical implications as well as theoretical implication of the study.

5.4.1 Practical Implications

Understanding parents' preferences when choosing schools for their children is crucial for understanding how competition-driven choice influences school quality and student sorting. Prior studies have suggested that the presence of private schools can enhance the performance of all school types within a more dynamic and competitive educational market (Agasisti, 2011). This concept is based on the belief that choice acts as a catalyst for quality improvement, as proposed by DeAngelis (2017), who argued that increased school choice for families would lead to better educational options for children. However, the actual impact of private schools on the overall quality of the education system has not been thoroughly examined through empirical research (Ashley & Engel, 2014).

Furthermore, Lindbon (2010) has put forth a pessimistic view of competition, suggesting that private schools may attract high-achieving students, leaving the weaker ones in public schools. This segregation is often associated with ethnic divisions. On the contrary, a more optimistic perspective argues that competition from private schools benefits everyone, including public schools, as it motivates them to improve their efficiency. Therefore, exploring the reasons behind parents' choices of fee-charging private schools over free public schools that offer the same curriculum carries significant implications for the education system.

The findings of the present study suggest that the control belief which involve financial ability, family support, location and distance, familiarity and access to sufficient information are found to be the greatest predictor of intention of private schooling. Normative belief and behaviour belief which involves the attributes of the school, including school quality, school effectiveness, academic performance, teacher quality, school climate, school discipline and facilities are found to be the important indicators as well. Additionally, SJK(C) shows the highest level of behavioural belief as compared to normative belief and control belief. Meaning to say that most of the parents have positive attitude toward private schooling. They believe that private schools have better management and leadership which will result in the increase of school quality in all aspects. Yet, sending their children to private school costs a fortune, even the SJK(C) parents have high level of behavioural belief, control belief which involve financial ability still appear as the strongest predictor of parents' intention of private schooling. Besides, family income also has a moderating effect between the relationship of intention and actual behaviour of private schooling. Apparently, financial ability is the major concern despite the parents showing the propensity of private schooling. Even though parents have a positive attitude toward private schooling (high behavioural belief), financial ability appears to be the biggest hindrance.

The high level of behavioural belief imply that entrepreneurial characteristics portray private schools strategic leaders have significant relationships between with school culture, and hence affect the school overall wellbeing and the organizational image and reputation (Kalkan et al., 2020). Due to the attributions of private school, parents show positive attitudes toward private schooling. These findings enhance our understanding of what parents appreciate about private schooling. The high level of behavioral belief suggests that parents value the entrepreneurial traits within the strategic leadership role

and the high autonomy management of private schools. This is believed to lead to better school effectiveness, higher teacher quality and accountability, a positive learning environment, improved discipline, and better academic and co-curricular performance. The implication is consistent with the qualitative findings, whereby the private school principal agreed that parents' have high level of behavioural belief, and their primary source of enrolment come from the recommendation of parents due to their schools' high quality and standard. The findings also congruent with the suggestion of Reimann and colleagues (2021) where public school leaders are more limited in their actions, while private school principals are more autonomous and are better able to make a match between a school's orientation and families' ideas (Reimann et al., 2021).

Consequently, good reputation of private school is more likely to benefit from competition because a good reputation may increase the demand for spots at that school and may enable the school to select "desirable" students. This explains the recent growth of private schooling in Malaysia. Despite the growth rate of private schools surpassing that of public schools, private schools still remain relatively small in scale. The influence of behavioural belief and normative belief among higher socioeconomic families contributes significantly to the intention and behavior of choosing private schooling. Meaning that limited numbers of private schools are desired by a great amount of SJK(C) parents. This may lead to greater competition among private schools as well as between private schools and public schools. This notion is substantiated by qualitative findings, as none of the private school principals interviewed expressed any intention to reduce their school fees or offer any discounts, even though financial ability (control belief) has been identified as the strongest predictor of parents' intention to enroll their children in private schools. This is likely due to the limited number of private schools, which allows them to be selective in their student enrollment process,

often targeting families from more privileged backgrounds who can afford their fees. As a result, private school principals may feel little pressure to lower fees, instead focusing on maintaining their reputation for high-quality education and catering to families who are able to pay.

At the same time, family income is found to be the moderator between private schooling intention and actual behaviour of private schooling. More affluent families have a higher probability to choose private school. In other words, private schooling is favouring wealthy families due to its tremendous cost. The high demands of private school enable the limited private schools to select the “desirable” students, this will further benefit the private schools as they able to select the better students to maintain the school academic performance. Competition will result in improved school management effectiveness, productivity, and service, leading to higher quality education. However, private schooling may intensify social segregation and privileges the higher and middle classes who have the economic, social, and cultural capital to use the education market as a strategy to reproduce their social class and secure their relative advantage, social advancement, and mobility. Moreover, most of the private schools are found in urban areas, the growth of private schools in long term unavoidably will lead to greater social segregation between the urban and rural areas. This finding is similar with the study conducted by Lindbom (2010). He found that when parents are free to choose, those privileged families who have more access to the private or independent schools may have added somewhat to the much more significant effect of increasing residential segregation in Sweden. Study by Hofflinger et al., (2020) also show similar result. They proposed that only advantaged families choose schools based on their quality, and therefore school choice and competition policies

may offer a limited benefit for disadvantaged pupils, possibly maintaining or reinforcing socioeconomic segregation in the education system.

In summary, the research findings reveal that one of the causes of the recent popularity of private schooling is the positive attributes of private schools, which closely relate to the entrepreneurial characteristics portrayed by private school strategic leaders. The findings provide a better understanding of the role of private schools in the Malaysian education system and point out the practical implications of private schooling, including its impact on the Malaysian national education system and social segregation.

In light of the potential threat of social segregation, the Malaysia Blueprint 2013-2025 highlights the role of the private sector in contributing to the education system's goals. While the private sector cannot replace the public system, it can complement and enhance public initiatives, leading to greater efficiency in service delivery. The National Key Result Areas (NKRA) recognize that well-executed public-private partnerships (PPP) can not only improve service delivery but also provide additional financing for the education sector, leading to expanded access and improved learning outcomes.

The inclusion of the private sector in the education system can foster innovation and dynamic leadership styles, exemplified by strategic leadership within an entrepreneurial framework. This approach may prove especially effective for groups that are currently underserved by traditional methods. As part of this effort, the Ministry is piloting a model called Trust Schools, in partnership with Yayasan AMIR as the private partner. This initiative aims to introduce private sector-led innovations in public schools' curriculum, teaching and learning, and overall school management. By

leveraging such partnerships, the education system can uphold its policies on access, equity, quality, efficiency, and unity. Overall, the Malaysia Blueprint 2013-2025 recognizes the potential of private sector involvement to supplement and enhance the education system, ultimately contributing to the achievement of its aspirations and objectives.

This research provides compelling evidence and further reinforces the Ministry of Education's initiative to have a total of 90 Trust Schools operational nationwide by 2020. This expansion aims to involve a more diverse range of school sponsors, including private businesses, community organizations, and alumni bodies, as well as a broader variety of schools.

The Ministry envisions significant potential in expanding the trust school network to include underperforming schools (Band 6 or 7, or those with declining student outcomes), schools catering to specific needs such as indigenous and other minority groups, students with special needs, and schools in rural or under-enrolled areas.

By delving into parents' preferences for private schooling and examining the role of strategic leadership within the dynamic entrepreneurial private education system, the findings of this research provide valuable insights to inform and support the Ministry's efforts in enhancing the education landscape. The implementation of the Trust Schools model reflects a forward-looking approach to address diverse educational needs and further improve the overall quality and inclusivity of the education system in Malaysia, prioritizing access, equity, quality, efficiency, and unity.

Additionally, as outlined in Malaysia Blueprint 2013-2025, there is a vision for all schools to have operational decision-making powers in the future, encompassing budget allocation and curriculum implementation. This shift towards school-based management will be accompanied by a stronger emphasis on accountability for school principals. Specifically, principals will have full authority over decisions related to the per capita grant (PCG) usage and the design of the school timetable.

The research findings on private schooling in the current study serve as a noteworthy example for the national school system, highlighting the practicality and effectiveness of implementing high autonomy and entrepreneurship strategically in educational institutions. This demonstrates the potential benefits of entrusting schools with greater independence and authority in managing their affairs, ultimately fostering a more efficient and innovative education system prioritizing access, equity, quality, efficiency, and unity.

In addition, the research findings provide valuable evidence for both private and public school leaders regarding parents' preferences. To maintain competitiveness, school leaders can bolster school quality and strategically guide the institution by incorporating entrepreneurial traits like creativity, innovation, risk-taking, and proactive approaches into their conventional leadership strategies. This progressive shift in leadership will ultimately benefit the Malaysian community, elevating the overall quality of education and ensuring equitable access, high standards, efficiency, and unity for all Malaysians.

5.4.2 Theoretical Implications

In addition to its practical implications, this research holds significant theoretical implications. The quantitative phase of the study not only corroborated the Theory of Planned Behaviour but also confirmed its predictability in the field of private schooling. Moreover, the study's quantitative phase provided support for the Extended Theory of Planned Behaviour framework by affirming that household income, a factor influencing perceived behavioural control, moderates the relationship between parents' intentions and their behavior towards private schooling. Furthermore, the present study includes private school leadership as a major indicator of behavioural belief. The data collected align well with the structural model, confirming that the research findings, based on the framework of the TBP are generalizable to the population.

5.5 Suggestions from the Study

The strong behavioral belief among SJK(C) parents indicates their appreciation for the significant autonomy and entrepreneurial qualities demonstrated by private school leaders. These leaders excel in aligning the school's ethos with the values cherished by families. Private school is an educational as well as business institution, therefore the principals of private schools have better understanding of the needs of the parents, who are the educational consumer. Less bureaucracy and higher flexibility in terms of admission are the benefits of private schools. School management can be more flexible when it is not centralised. As pointed out by UNESCO, government provision of education is failing the expectations and needs of citizens in many countries. Even allowing for variation among countries and individual schools, low-cost private schools appear to be achieving greater levels of quality provision than public schools (UNESCO, 2015). In this sense, the Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) is a good

initiative taken by the Ministry of Education. PPP, which allows more private sector involvement into public education should be continued and scaled up to involve more public schools. Trust School and School Adoption Program are among the programs under the PPP initiative. The Trust School Program permits schools to be conjointly managed and lead by private sponsor partners and head teacher for a period of five years. Involving private sector which is more innovative and has more autonomy in their leadership and management style may result in different school culture that enhance learning outcome and hence increase the entire school quality. On the other hand, the School Adoption Program provides a structured integrated approach to facilitate the private sectors to adopt schools for a period of one to three years. These programs could help to incorporate entrepreneurial leadership characteristics into the public school and enhance the public school quality. When both the private school and public school have similar attributes and qualities, parents regardless of social classes would have wider school choices and have equal chance to enroll to good quality schools. It can possibly reduce social segregation and enhance education equity.

School choice is viewed as a means to introduce competition in the education system (Gryzelius, 2014). The Malaysian education system appears to offer various choices for parents and students due to its diverse options based on ethnicity, language, and religion. However, beyond these aspects, there is limited room for additional preferences, such as different teaching approaches, extracurricular activities, or school qualities. Furthermore, if parents are not interested in enrolling their child in a vernacular or religious school, the available alternatives become restricted. Aside from the government school in the family's residential area, national intake government boarding schools and national/international curriculum private schools are among the

limited options. However, both of these options have significant limitations. National intake boarding schools have limited places and intense competition for enrolment.

As the present study's findings reveal, private schools tend to be expensive, making them accessible only to well-off families. While private schools are perceived to provide high-quality education, excellent facilities, a better learning environment, and favorable teacher-student ratios, household income moderates the intention and actual behavior of parents in choosing private schooling. This means that the fees charged by private schools make them unaffordable for even average-earning households. Typically, private schools are dominated by wealthier families, leaving those from underprivileged backgrounds with limited options, mainly public education. To ensure that every student can benefit from market-based solutions in education, flexible school funding can be achieved through a school voucher program. School voucher programs, implemented in many countries, provide students, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, with the opportunity to access better quality education. These programs offer flexible funding arrangements where a designated amount can be used by students to attend either public or accredited private schools. Voucher programs play a crucial role in promoting education equity and ensuring school choice, even for underprivileged students.

Therefore, policy makers can consider the feasibility of school voucher programmes which allow the underprivileged family to attend private schools which are perceived to have better quality. This program can reduce the social segregation and increase the competition among the private schools as well as public schools. When more and more students were being drawn to private schools, public schools had no option but to increase their competitiveness. The implementation of voucher program could possibly

reduce social segregation and increase the quality and competitiveness of Malaysia education system as a whole. However, more research needs to be conducted to examine the feasibility of the voucher program in Malaysia. Besides, the independent school model in Sweden appears as an alternative to voucher program. Independent schools defray their operating expenses through government funding but are managed by the private sector. The introduction of public financing of independent schools led to a significant expansion of the number of independent schools and of the proportion of pupils attending them. In conclusion, there are many school models around the world which can harvest the benefits of private school at the same time reduce social segregation. Policy makers in Malaysia may refer to the successful model and incorporate the most suitable model in Malaysia which can fulfil the needs of multiracial and multicultural society in Malaysia. Therefore, policymakers and educators should work towards addressing these practical concerns to promote access to private education for all families, regardless of their financial situation or geographic location. This would help ensure that parents are able to make informed decisions based on their beliefs and values, rather than being limited by practical constraints.

The high level of behavioural belief suggests that SJK(C) parents appreciate the attributes of private schools, which can provide a better learning environment for their children. Understanding parents' preferences could provide guidance for both private and public school leaders to set clearer management directions for future development. Hence, school leaders should be informed of parents' preferences and strengthen their existing advantages to meet parents' expectations. Strategic integration of entrepreneurial traits across all types of schools is essential for fostering a positive school culture, fostering an encouraging climate, reducing bureaucracy, fostering innovation, enhancing teacher quality and parental engagement, and implementing

strategic policies to ensure school effectiveness and overall quality improvement. Particularly for private school leaders, given that the revenue of such schools is dependent solely on fees paid by parents, it is crucial to understand parental preferences and employ effective marketing strategies to maintain competitiveness.

5.6 Suggestions for Future Research

The primary goal of this study was to determine the factors affecting parents' intention and behaviour of private schooling. In order to investigate the question in a structural manner, present study adopted the framework of Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). The factors elicited in the previous studies were systematically categorized into three dimensions, which are behavioural belief, normative belief and control belief. The findings of the research provide evidence that the model of TPB give better insight in understanding parents' behaviour of private schooling. In spite of the used well-articulated and comprehensive framework, some of the factors which do not fit in any of the dimensions of the framework were excluded from the study. There are many factors suggested by the local researchers which might affect the parents' preference due to the unique multicultural background in Malaysia were not included. Among the factors are religion, medium of instruction, opportunity of learning Mandarin and Chinese culture and curriculum. In order to narrow down the scope of the research, the present study only focus on private schools which offer national curriculum. International school, Chinese Independent High School and religious schools which made up the large portion of private education institution were not included in the present study. The main objective of the study is to distinguish the fee-charging private school from the public school which offer the same national curriculum. Therefore, the factor of curriculum was kept constant in the present study. Nevertheless, many local studies found that languages, religion and medium of instructions are the major concern

in school choice (Lee, Diana Phooi-Yan et al., 2017; Siah et al., 2018; Yaacob et al., 2015). Other than in Malaysia, international studies also found that racial stratification exists in some charter schools where most of them are dominated by White students (Bifulco & Ladd, 2007), hence, ethnicity which will affect the religion and preferred medium of instruction is fairly salient in the study of school choice. The school choice factors among Malaysian Chinese parents are likely to be more complex, given the country's intricate historical background. Education holds not only the purpose of learning but also serves as a means to preserve Chinese culture and values for most Malaysian Chinese families (Siah, Ong, Tan, & Sim, 2015). As a result, selecting a school that aligns with their cultural beliefs while considering other practical aspects can be a challenging task for many parents, particularly within the Chinese community in Malaysia (Siah et al., 2018). The research by Ting & Lee (2019) further reinforces this idea, indicating that the ethnic composition of the school plays a significant role in parents' decision-making process when it comes to school choice.

Therefore, future research aiming to examine the determinant of private schooling which involve the same Chinese population can include the cultural and language factors into consideration. Furthermore, even though Chinese population make up the larger population in private education institution, the issue of school choice is not merely face by the Chinese parents. In future research, the population of the research can be expanded to all ethnicity in Malaysia, because the behaviour private schooling is not exclusive to the Chinese community. As Malaysia is a multiracial country and Malaysia government is always concerned with racial segregation and wishes to promote racial harmony and nation unity through educational institutions, diversity in the study population can lead to a fairer conclusion, as focus on a single ethnicity might lead to biased assumption. Especially ethnic segregation has become a deep-seated

problem in Malaysia's education system. As education is an important socialising agent, continuing ethnic segregation is a cause for concern that impedes ethnic interaction and potentially manifests itself in an ethnically polarised society. Therefore, the future research can be scale up and expand the study population to the entire Malaysia population in order to understand the preferences of all the ethnics.

Besides, medium of instruction for Science and Mathematics also found to be one of the factors of private schooling in previous studies (Ting & Lee, 2019). The reposition of Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of instruction for Science and Mathematics has created a chaos and was not fully implemented since 2012 because some of the urban public schools and private schools still teaching Mathematics and Science in English. Medium of instruction for Science and Mathematics is ambiguous. Indirectly, there is a dual language system in teaching Science and Mathematics – most of the public school majorly using Bahasa Malaysia, whereas private schools using English. This posed a great tendency for the urban parents who prefer English as the medium of instruction to send their children to private school. This is supported by the qualitative findings where dual language program is one of the selling points of private school. Literatures shows that parents are willing to travel or pay for transport to ensure their children are access to a well-resourced and well-governed English medium school (Evans & Cleghorn, 2014). For this reason, it is suggested that future research include the medium of instruction as one of the determinants of private schooling.

As mentioned previously, international school, Chinese Independent High School and religious schools which made up the large portion of private education institution were not included in the present study in order to keep the curriculum offered as a constant variable. Still these school remain the largest portion and has the highest growth rate in

private education sector (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013). Thus, future research can deploy international school, Chinese Independent High School or religious schools as the context of the school choice research.

Control belief was found to be the strongest predictor of parents' private schooling intention, yet control belief encompasses many realistic aspects which is not under volitional control. The most mentioned factors in previous studies are proximity and financial ability (Anders et al., 2020; Hofflinger et al., 2020; Joshi, 2014), however which aspect exert the most influence on parents' private schooling intention is still remain unknown. Hence, it is recommended that upcoming studies explore the factors that have the greatest impact on control belief by conducting qualitative interviews with parents.

Another frequently discussed factor of private schooling which is not included in the present research due to the limitations of the research framework is the dissatisfaction over the previous school. Studies showed that some parents may choose schools in an attempt to increase their satisfaction with their children's schools. For example, parents might choose a school—public or private—because they are dissatisfied with their child's previous school. Thus, in a sense, they are choosing away from a certain school or school type in hopes that they might be more satisfied with an alternative to their current situation (Bennett et al., 2010). Nevertheless, the extent to which parent dissatisfaction affects the behaviour of private schooling is less understood. Hence, future research can investigate the relationship between the satisfaction level of parents on previous school with the behaviour of private schooling.

The current research employed a mixed-method explanatory sequential approach. Its primary objective was to elucidate the role of private schools in the Malaysian education system, achieved through quantitative examination of factors influencing parental intention and behavior towards private schooling. By discerning parental values, the study aims to gain deeper insights into the role of private schools in Malaysia. To further enrich our understanding of private school growth, qualitative perspectives from school principals were also examined to complement the quantitative data. While leadership in private schools has received relatively less attention, this research lays the groundwork for future endeavors to quantitatively study entrepreneurial leadership and develop a comprehensive model applicable to both private and public educational institutions.

Lastly, as mentioned in the previous section, the effect and implication of the implementation of PPP should be examined and reviewed as this policy incorporating private sector into public school, the effectiveness of the leadership style in these schools has to be determined. Besides, the feasibility of voucher school program and independent school in Malaysia should be the focus of future research in the field of education equity, as voucher school program and independent school have been proven feasible in many other countries.

5.7 Conclusion

This study set out to determine the factors influencing parents' intention and behaviour of private schooling among the Chinese vernacular school parents in Kuala Lumpur. The uniqueness of this study exists in the fact that the growth of private education surpasses the public school, although the numbers of public schools are very much larger. This raises the concern of social segregation as the fee-charging nature of private

schools is predominated by the privilege families. Therefore it is crucial to determine the factors which will predict the parents' intention and behaviour to send their children to private schools which offer the same national curriculum as the free public school. Other than fee-charging, the fundamental difference which distinguishes private school from public school is the leadership and management of private school. Hence it is vital to find out how the attributes of private schools affect the behaviour of private schooling. The study utilized a mixed-method explanatory sequential research design. The first phase of this study utilized a quantitative survey design to collect perceptions and opinions from parents of SJK(C). To facilitate a more in-depth and organized examination of the issue, the Theory of Planned Behaviour was adopted as the research framework. A total of 377 responses were collected and analyzed using SEM. The subsequent phase of the study involved a qualitative approach that entailed interviewing private school principals. This aimed to determine the extent to which the research findings were consistent with their perspectives and supported their role as strategic leaders.

The study found that SJK(C) parents have a high level of behavioural belief, which means the parents are having positive attitude toward private schooling due to the attributes of private school. Findings show that all three variables; behavioural belief, normative belief and control belief influence the parents' intention of private schooling significantly. Specifically, control belief appeared as the strongest predictor of parents' intention of private schooling. Besides, the study also found that family income has moderating effect in the relationship between parents' intention and actual behaviour of private schooling. Meaning that family income is the major concern of private schooling.

The qualitative phase of the research captures realistic considerations that cannot be measured by the quantitative phase and provides a more comprehensive perspective on understanding the phenomenon of private schooling in Kuala Lumpur. The private school strategic leaders demonstrate the traits of an entrepreneurial leader through three themes: maintain, improve, and implement, forming a cohesive cycle to enhance parents' intention and behaviour towards private schooling. An intriguing discovery emerged from the research: although control beliefs exert the greatest influence, private school principals, in their role as strategic leaders with entrepreneurial traits, must navigate a delicate equilibrium between cost and quality. Rather than resorting to price reduction, these leaders employ innovation and creativity to enhance the school's value proposition, thereby enticing parents capable of affording the tuition fees. Overall, the qualitative phase of the research sheds light on important insights into private schooling in Kuala Lumpur, offering a more nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by private school leaders. The identification of major themes can serve as a useful guide for private school leaders in enhancing their marketing strategies and improving the quality of education provided to their students.

The findings imply that the growth of private schools might inevitably intensify social segregation as they often target well-off families. Thus, the study supports the Ministry of Education's notion to allow more involvement of the private sector in public schools. By incorporating entrepreneurial characteristics strategically into public schools, it may enhance the overall quality of public education. When the quality of both public and private schools is balanced, the existence of private schools can be a good complement to the national education system, ensuring access, equity, quality, efficiency, and unity for all instead of exacerbating social segregation.

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