



Factors influencing the purchase intention of new start-up K-12 education programs during COVID-19: A case study of Holistic Education Centre, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Article History

Received: 3 March 2023

Revised: 10 July 2023

Accepted: 14 August 2023

Published: 23 August 2023

Keywords

Awareness

Malaysia

Place

Promotion

Purchase intention

Services provided.

The spread of COVID-19 necessitated switching over to online classes. Several institutions modified their teaching schedules and introduced new learning platforms. However, the pandemic did not change the Holistic Education Centre (HEC) online business model, which is an after-school supplementary course services provider to K-12 students in Johor Bharu, Malaysia. The purpose of this study was to examine the factors like place, awareness, services, and promotion, that made a positive influence on the purchase intention of K-12 education students during the COVID-19 period. The study was based on the Theory of Reasoned Action as the underpinning theory. Convenience sampling technique using online surveys were used to collect data. Highly reliable questionnaires were adapted from previous studies. Primary data from a total of 361 samples was gathered by means of an online questionnaire. When the data was obtained, the statistical analysis was carried out using the regression analysis function in SPSS. According to the findings, only place did not play a significant role in determining purchase intention, however, awareness, services and promotion played an important role in purchase intention.

Contribution/Originality: This study supports the relationship between purchase intention and independent variables like place, awareness, services, and promotion. The K-12 education center's purchase intention was most influenced by their level of service.

1. INTRODUCTION

Holistic Education Centre (HEC) located in Seremban, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia, was founded in January 2020. It provides many after-school supplementary course services, such as day care services, tuition services, holiday programs, and soft skill courses for K-12 students, who are primary and secondary school students. In the early part of 2020, HEC attracted a good number of students to join the services. However, when the cases of COVID-19 increased, the number of students dropped rapidly. The revenues of HEC became inversely proportional to COVID-19 cases. From March 18, 2020, to May 12, 2020, the Malaysian government imposed the lockdown procedures, which were known as Malaysia Government Movement Control Order (MCO). The MCO banned outdoor activities and shut down all businesses except for a few essential ones. HEC was also not allowed to provide face-to-face services due to the MCO; as a result, HEC started to provide its services through online methods.

When MCO was lifted, HEC changed back to providing offline education services, but the number of new enrolment students in offline programs was nearly zero and the current student population also continued to deteriorate. On October 24, 2020, Malaysia conducted the Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) in Seremban, Negeri Sembilan.

On February 19, 2021, the Senior Education Department Minister, announced the after-school service providers could reopen on March 8, 2021 (NST, 2021); however, it was reported that there would still be partial closure of the pre-school and after-school services. Concurrently, 20% of preschool education and tuition centers announced their closure. Besides, although the government had agreed to resume the operation of tuition centers, the centers across the country followed the standard operating procedures (SOPs) formulated by the Ministry of Education.

According to these SOPs, the number of students at the tuition center would be reduced in each class. This was the impact of the epidemic on the economy and a cause for the rise in the unemployment rate since due to the pandemic tuition centers had lost up to 30% of their students (See Hua News, 2021).

Studies involving factors such as place, awareness, services, and promotion influencing purchase intention are scarce especially involving K-12 Education Centre in Malaysia. The absence of research studies related to the differences between factors influencing the purchase intention of new start-up K-12 education programmers before and during COVID-19 has created a research gap. Though the service quality of HEC remained the same during this period because it used the same operation strategy and marketing strategy before and during the pandemic, but the outcomes were totally different.

In order to help HEC gain back market share and increase revenue, the company adjusted and improved its services based on the needs of its customers. Some people might think that it is normal for the education businesses to drop during any pandemic because the economy was bad. However, many K-12 education businesses had overcome the pandemic challenges and gained market share during MCO. Therefore, HEC's understanding of the customers' preferences was very important. It was therefore worth exploring and finding a solution to enhance the quality of K-12 education services during the pandemic. Hence, this study implies providing help to HEC rediscover factors influencing the purchase intention in four aspects, such as place, awareness, services, and promotion.

1.1. Research Objectives

1. To analyze the relationship between place and purchase intention towards choosing the K-12 education services.
2. To analyze the relationship between awareness and purchase intention towards choosing the K-12 education services.
3. To analyze the relationship between services provided and purchase intention towards choosing the K-12 education services.
4. To analyze the relationship between promotion and purchase intention towards choosing the K-12 education services.

1.2. Conceptual Framework

Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was adopted to understand and examine the objectives of this study. TRA was developed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) in 1975 and was published in a book named "Belief, Attitude, Intention, and Behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Since then, it has evolved into one of the most influential approaches to predict and analyze intent and behavior.

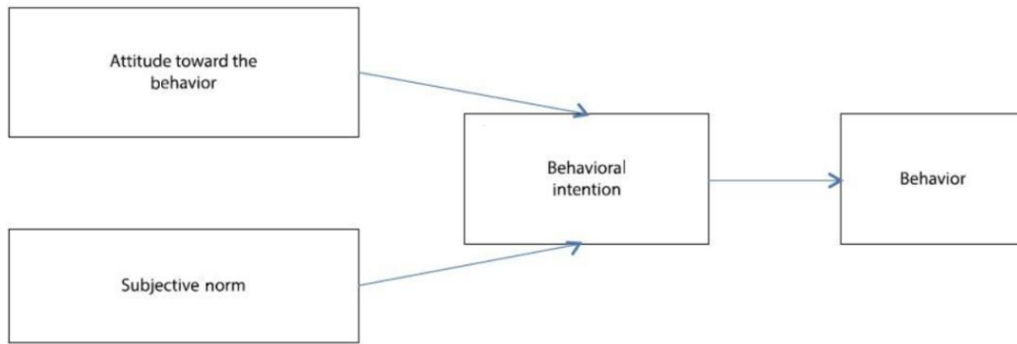


Figure 1. Theory of reasoned action.

Source: Fishbein and Ajzen (1975).

The popularity of TRA stems from its ease of application and ability to effectively distinguish substantive differences in behavior (Martin, 2019). The roots of the TRA are attitude towards behavior and subjective norm (Figure 1). Attitudes towards behavior evaluate the future performance of a person’s behavior with a negative or positive outcome, while subjective norms measure the expectation of others who want them to perform the behavior. These two components can determine the behavioral intention, which is the most proximal determinant of behavior. Intention represents how an individual plans and puts effort forth in order to achieve a behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977; Daniel, Hagger, & Hamilton, 2020).

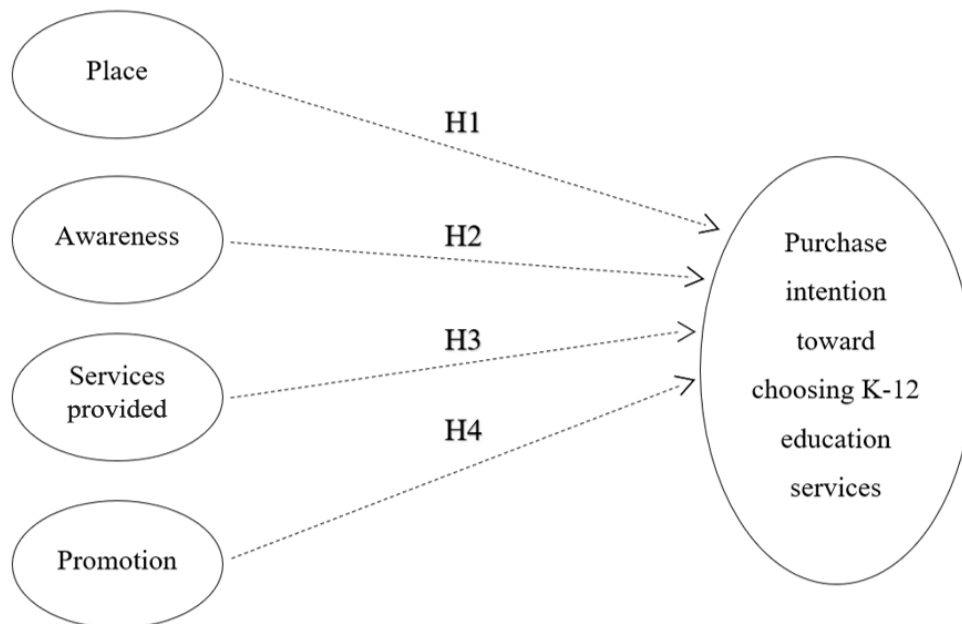


Figure 2. Research framework.

Figure 2 presents the conceptual framework based on TRA, adapted for this research. It clearly shows the proposed relationships between variables, and was used as a guiding principle for this research. This framework depicts four factors (place, awareness, services provided, and promotion) that were investigated in order to check the significant relationship of purchase intention towards choosing K–12 education services. These four factors have been successfully proven in previous research to affect the purchase intentions of students and parents (Joseph, 2010; Veloutsou, Lewis, & Paton, 2004; Wei-Loon & Saring, 2012).

1.3. Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were developed for the study from the research framework (Figure 2) and to be tested.

H₁: Place is significantly related to purchase intention towards choosing the K-12 education services.

H₂: Awareness is significantly related to purchase intention towards choosing the K-12 education services.

H₃: Services provided is significantly related to purchase intention towards choosing the K-12 education services.

H₄: Promotion is significantly related to purchase intention towards choosing the K-12 education services.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Place

Place is one of the components of the marketing mix. A good place can stimulate customers to keep spending in a product or a service. The place of business highly influences the behavior of customers, and it is one of the most important factors in explaining the customers' decisions in K-12 education centers (Ibrahim & Yunus, 2017). Many parents and students consider such K-12 education centers that are located close to their school or home (Arjun, 2020). Moreover, the quality of facilities also make a direct impact on students' academic outcomes (Weerasinghe & Fernando, 2018). K-12 education centers are different from K-12 schools. The school focuses on students' overall development, such as academic performance, personality, social skills, extracurricular activities, soft skills, and so on (MOE, 2013). Thus, the facilities of a school have to fulfil the different needs of the students, such as a sports center, canteen, multipurpose hall, music room, library, and so on. Normally, the educational quality of a school is directly proportional to the quality of the school environment. However, K-12 education centers are mainly focused on a particular development, especially the academic performance of students. Therefore, the K-12 education centers basically focuses on the learning facilities, especially the classroom.

Overall, a good place with suitable location and good facilities can create a good learning environment for students.

2.2. Awareness

Due to the number of K-12 schools constantly growing, the options available to students are becoming increasingly diverse. This industry has become competitive, so parents and students are more analytical and rational when choosing a K-12 education center (The Star, 2012). In this situation, most parents and students prefer a K-12 education center with a good reputation. The awareness and reputation of a K-12 education center are important factors that can affect the purchase intention of parents or students. Managing the company's reputation is one of the priority tasks of an education company because it helps the company accrue stability and financial benefits (Beneke, 2011). On the other hand, the awards received by the education center and the qualifications of teachers are also two sources for creating awareness. Parents choose the education center that has received high awards and the ones whose teachers have high qualifications, even if they are higher than the market requirement (Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2020).

2.3. Services Provided

According to the research done by the University of Technology Malaysia, a healthy study environment will improve the students' learning efficiency (Waleed, Othman, & Yusuf, 2015). The K-12 education centers can provide a better study environment because they are popular in small classes, so it is easier for the teacher to manage the discipline of the class, get the attention of students, and receive feedback from teachers on the spot. Hence, the service quality of the K-12 education center is really important. The K-12 education has to ensure the result of the student maintains or improves after joining the specific class. As a result, a good K-12 education teacher must be skilled in both teaching and exam techniques. To improve the quality of services in the education industry, the focus is not only on the teacher; rather, it should include the whole company, the learning environment, and the company culture (Tania, 2016).

The quality of the services of the companies basically depends on the intention of the chairman because they are the ones who promote a quality service spirit, and they also have a high level of accountability. The education companies need to implement reliable evaluation methods to monitor the quality of their services (OECD, 2020). According to Amillia (2022), the method to improve the quality of services is the main problem of company management. The high-quality services can help the company obtain competitive advantages and customer loyalty.

2.4. Promotion

Promotion is very ancient because people have always tried to improve their profitability since business activities have existed. Promotion is one of the components of the marketing mix. The stereotype of a promotion is a discount on the price of the services or products, wherein price is one of the important matters for parents or students to consider when joining the class. In fact, promotion does not only focus on lowering the price of products; it is also the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large (AMA, 2020).

In this advanced internet era, more and more K-12 education players have shifted their priorities from traditional marketing strategies to digital marketing strategies. More and more companies have developed their online business instead of only doing offline business (MCMC, 2009) which will increase the number of internet users. However, it is important to balance the usage of both offline and online marketing, as both can have cross-effects. In other words, physical store marketing activities can have an impact on online store sales and vice versa, since the promotion of an online shop can enhance the sales of physical shops (Antun, 2014).

According to The Sun Daily (2020), Malaysians spent 4.2 hours per day on the internet during the pandemic compared to 3.7 hours prior to it. Furthermore, during the pandemic, Malaysian adults' average daily time spent watching Over-the-top (OTT) platforms, also known as streaming media service, increased to 7 hours 7 minutes from 5 hours 36 minutes before the pandemic (The Malaysian Reserve, 2020). Therefore, marketers can look at this as an opportunity to advertise on OTT. On the other hand, many businesses had started to advertise and promote their products or services via video or streaming during the pandemic. The customers were more comfortable receiving the content of the advertising because it was delivered with some interesting and valuable information (Rang & Chan-Olmsted, 2020).

2.5. Purchases Intention

Intention is a person's desire to take action towards achieving their goal. In other words, intention can determine the action of the people. When people have a strong intention to perform the behavior, the probability of them doing so is high (Vahidreza, Akbariyeh, & Tahmasebifard, 2015). The element of intention is therefore the reason to affect the purchase intention of people when they wish to consume particular products or services (Aiyun, Yang, & Iqbal, 2018). Purchase intention can also be described as the preference of customers to buy the products and services. According to the theory of reasoned action, the purchase intention can be changed by the attitudes and subjective norms of customers. Furthermore, purchase intention is related to customer attitudes and perceptions.

Furthermore, when the products or services meet the expectations of customers, their purchasing intentions increase. It will lead the customers to further explore the company's products and services (Rowlan, 2019). Many businesses consider increasing customer purchase intention to be one of their most important tasks. Although it is difficult and costly, the purchase intention is one of the most significant tools for creating competitor advantages. Furthermore, the strong purchase intention can help the company build profitable relationships with customers and attract new customers. Finally, the company must constantly improve the quality of its products and services in order to maintain or increase the purchasing intentions of its customers (Sohail, 2015).

3. METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a quantitative research design to study the correlation between the variables. A convenience sampling technique was employed for this study which helped to draw samples of parents from around Johor Bahru, Malaysia. The survey was conducted using online questionnaire where links were sent to the respondents using a messaging application. The questionnaires were adopted from previous research with a total of 36 questions, with most questions measured by using a 7-point Likert scales. A total of 362 sets of questionnaires were collected for this study. Out of this number collected, one questionnaire was found invalid and eliminated. Thus, the final questionnaire data that was analyzed contained 361 sets, which met the sample size requirement for this research. The data was analyzed with three methods: descriptive analysis, reliability testing, and inferential analysis using the SPSS software.

4. RESEARCH RESULT

The research results revealed interesting information as presented in [Table 1](#). Starting from the respondents' age groups, it is found that the highest and second-highest ones are the same in number, which are 21–30 years and 31–40 years respectively, having 137 respondents together, which is 78% of the total respondents. The third highest is the 41–50 years age group (74 respondents), which is 20.5%, and the minority is 51–60 respondents (12 people), which is 3.6%. As for the race of the respondents. Malaysia is home to a variety of races, including Chinese, Malay, Indian, and others. However, only three races responded to the questionnaire. The Chinese have the highest number (281 respondents, or 77.8%), followed by Malay (56 respondents, or 15.5%), and Indians (24 respondents, or 6.6%). On the religion of the respondents, it was found that they practice four religions: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam. The majority of the respondents' followed Buddhism (60.9%) (220 respondents), followed by Islam and Christianity as the second- and third-highest with 18% (65 respondents) and 16.9% (61 respondents), respectively. Hinduism is the minority religion, accounting for only 4.2% (15 respondents). Of the marital status, a majority of respondents were married (87.5%; 316 respondents) followed by divorced /separated (10.2%; 37 respondents) and widowed (2.2%; 8 respondents).

There were seven categories in the education level of respondents, which are: primary school, secondary school, diploma, degree, professional certification, master's, and PhD. The majority of respondents (44%, or 159 respondents) have a college diploma. The second highest respondents are from secondary schools, at 23% (83 respondents), followed by third highest in diploma (16.6%; 60 respondents), fourth highest in master (9.4%; 34 respondents), fifth highest in primary school (4.2%; 15 respondents), and sixth highest in professional certification (1.7%; 6 respondents), and final the minority in PhD (1.1%; 4 respondents). In the employment status, it was found that 57.1% (206 respondents) are full-time employees, 26.9% (97 respondents) are self-employed, 10.8% (39 respondents) are part-time employees, and 5.3% (19 respondents) are not employed.

There are six categories of monthly income for respondents: a majority of respondents' monthly income is RM4,000–RM5,999 (26.9%; 97 respondents). The second highest respondents' monthly income is RM6,000– RM 7999 (22.7%; 82 respondents); the third highest income category is RM2,000–RM3,999 (21.6%; 76 respondents); the fourth highest is under RM1,999 (12.7%; 46 respondents) followed by the categories of above RM9,000 (9.1%; 33 respondents) and RM8,000—RM8,000–RM 8999 (6.9%; 25). The number of children also varied among the respondents from 1 to 5. The highest number of respondents' children is 3 (34.9%;126 respondents); the second highest number is 1 child (31.6%; 114 respondents); the third and the fourth highest categories has 2 children (24.9% 90 respondents) and 4 children (6.1%; 22 respondents) respectively, followed by the lowest having five children (2.5%; 9 respondents).

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents (n=361)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
21 - 30	137	38.0
31 - 40	137	38.0
41 - 50	74	20.5
51 - 60	13	3.6
Race		
Chinese	281	77.8
Indian	24	6.6
Malay	56	15.5
Religion		
Buddhism	220	60.9
Christianity	61	16.9
Hinduism	15	4.2
Islam	65	18.0
Marital status		
Divorced / Separated	37	10.2
Married	316	87.5
Widowed	8	2.2
Education		
Degree	159	44.0
Diploma	60	16.6
Master	34	9.4
PhD	4	1.1
Primary school	15	4.2
Professional certification	6	1.7
Secondary school	83	23.0
Occupation		
Employed, working less than 39 hours per week	39	10.8
Employed, working more than 40 hours per week	206	57.1
Not employed	19	5.3
Self-employed	97	26.9
Monthly income		
under (RM)1,999	46	12.7%
RM2,000–RM3,999	76	21.6%
RM4,000–RRM5,999	97	26.9%
RM6,000–RRM7,999	82	22.7%
RM8,000–RRM8,999	25	6.9%
above RM9,000	33	9.1%
No of children		
1	114	31.6
2	90	24.9
3	126	34.9
4	22	6.1
5	9	2.5
Budget for education services		
Above RM1,000	35	9.7
below RM199	38	10.5
RM200 - RM 399	81	22.4
RM400 - RM599	75	20.8
RM600 - RM799	104	28.8
RM800 - RM999	28	7.8
Sources attracted to join the education services		
Digital marketing (FB, Intra, WeChat and Search Engine)	96	26.6
Newspaper and magazine	14	3.9
Offline marketing (Booth, Flyer and Banner)	25	6.9
Referral	67	18.6
Word of mouth	169	44.1

About the respondents' budgets for education services, the highest number of respondents belonged to the category of RM600–RM799 (28.8%; 104 respondents); the second-highest number is RM200– RM399 (22.4%; 81 respondents); the third highest number is RM400–RM599 (20.8%; 75 respondents), followed by respondents below RM199 (10.5%; 38 respondents); above RM1,000 (9.7%; 35 respondents), and RM800–RM999 (7.8%; 28 respondents). The highest number of sources that attract respondents to join the education services is word of mouth (44.1%; 169); the second-highest is digital marketing (26.6%;96 respondents), the third-highest is referral (18.6%; 67 respondents), followed by offline marketing (6.9%; 25 respondents) and newspaper and magazine (3.9%; 14 respondents).

4.1. Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 2 presents the Multiple Regression Analysis showing R square value as 0.692. It means the independent variables such as place, awareness, services and promotion can explain 69.2% of the variation in dependent variable.

Table 2. R square for the independent variables and dependent variable.

Model summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
1	0.692 ^a	0.478	0.472	0.747

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant), Promotional, Services, Awareness, Place.
 b. Dependent Variable: Intention.

Table 3 presents the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing the F ratio as 81.602 and the significance at 0. In the Multiple Regression Analysis, the regression variance was 46% (182.002 / 380.505) which can be explained but the residual variance of 54% (198.503 / 380.505) of the variance cannot be explained.

Table 3. ANOVA.

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	182.002	4	45.501	81.602	0.000 ^b
	Residual	198.503	356	0.558		
	Total	380.505	360			

Note: a. Dependent variable: Intention.
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Promotional, Services, Awareness, Place.

Based on Table 4, the place's beta is -0.18 less than 0.1, the t-value is -0.354 less than 1.96, the p-value is 0.724, and it is more than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, the place is not significant with the purchase intention. The awareness and services are both significant because the beta, t-value, and p-value are fulfilling the significant requirements of beta > 0.1, t-value > 1.96, and p-value > 0.05 respectively.

Table 4. Multiple regression analysis.

Coefficients									
Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% confidence interval for B		Hypothesis testing (Beta > 0.1, t-value > 1.96, P-value > 0.05)
		B	Std. error	Beta			Lower bound	Upper bound	
1	(Constant)	0.881	0.269		3.278	0.001	0.352	1.409	
	Place	-0.019	0.053	-0.018	-0.354	0.724	-0.122	0.085	Not supported
	Awareness	0.287	0.043	0.317	6.630	0.000	0.202	0.372	Supported
	Services	0.469	0.054	0.426	8.761	0.000	0.364	0.574	Supported
	Promotion	0.111	0.043	0.114	2.559	0.011	0.026	0.195	Supported

Note: Dependent Variable: Intention

Hence, these two independent variables, awareness and services, have a significant positive relationship with the purchase intention. Lastly, the promotion is also significant for the purchase intention. Its beta value is 0.114 more than 0.1, its t-value is 2.559 more than 1.96, and its p-value is 0.011 more than the alpha value of 0.05, so promotional marketing has a significant positive relationship with purchase intention. Overall, the service was found with the best standardized coefficients compared to the other three independent variables. When the services' unit increases by one unit, the purchase intention of the respondents will also increase on average by 0.469. The following formula is the equation of the regression:

$$\text{Purchase intention} = 0.881 + 0.281 (\text{awareness}) + 0.469 (\text{services}) + 0.111 (\text{promotional}).$$

5. DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to analyze the relationship between four factors (place, awareness, services, and promotion) and purchase intention towards choosing K-12 education services. Based on the result, a detailed interpretation and further discussion was conducted.

H₁: Place is significantly related to purchase intention towards choosing the K-12 education services.

According to the results, the place is not significantly related to the purchase intention. The place is one of the most important business resources in the K-12 education business, but not during the pandemic. To clarify, this study focused on the factors influencing the purchase intention during the pandemic, not in a normal situation. The parents were seen worried about sending their children to school and also to other educational institutions (The Star, 2021). Furthermore, the parents were looking for education services that could be conducted online, so the location was not emphasized. Hence, the place was not significant in relation to the purchase intention during the pandemic. HEC had to develop the online classes during the pandemic to gain customers.

H₂: Awareness is significantly related to purchase intention towards choosing the K-12 education services.

The results of the study show that awareness is significantly related to purchase intention, which means when awareness is high, purchase intention will also be high. Besides that, awareness is the second-highest contributor ($B = 0.287$) to purchase intention compared to other independent variables. K-12 education is a service industry, so raising awareness is an important foundation to attract customers. When the parents put their children in the K-12 education center, their confidence towards the center is at a certain level. The awareness helps to make customers feel comfortable and familiar with a business (Muhammad, 2013). Furthermore, the education center focuses on the consistency with which customers consume, with the goal of increasing customer loyalty and recall towards the business. Hence, HEC should conduct the marketing plan, a free trial online class, and a free talk in order to increase awareness in Seremban.

H₃: Services provided are significantly related to purchase intention towards choosing the K-12 education services.

The results show the services provided are significantly related to purchase intention, which means when the services provided are high, the purchase intention will also be high. Besides that, the services provided made the largest contribution ($B = 0.469$) to the purchase intention compared to other independent variables. For the researcher, the result of services provided was expected because K-12 education center was a service-provider company, so the services should be the most important thing. The majority of respondents in this study were Chinese, and the Asian Chinese believed that education can give their children a good future. Many of them spent a lot of money securing their children's right to the best education. The parents let their children join the K-12 education center to ensure their children could receive extra education through the extracurricular lessons and tuition classes (BBC, 2013). Therefore, the HEC tried to always improve the teaching quality and enhance the teacher's skills to help the children achieve good results.

H₄: Promotion is significantly related to purchase intention towards choosing the K-12 education services.

The results show the promotion was significantly related to purchase intention, which means when the promotion is high, the purchase intention will also be high. Besides that, the promotion was the third-highest

contributor ($B = 0.11$) to the purchase intention compared to other independent variables. In this research, the promotion did not focus on discounting the price of products, but on a set of activities that help the organization reach its target customers. HEC can consider doing the online trial streaming teaching class to attract customers. This can connect the relationship with the customers and build brand awareness for HEC. The sales of HEC might increase rapidly after the pandemic. Also, the free online trial class can attract customers to join the premium class (Rang & Chan-Olmsted, 2020).

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings of this study support the hypothesis that independent variables such as place, awareness, services, and promotion have significant relationships with intention to purchase. The significance of the service in relation to the other criteria that contributed to the purchase intention of the K-12 education center was the highest. The HEC will benefit from the findings of this study. The findings will assist the HEC in understanding the causes and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides, the HEC will also get an effective solution to solve the problem it faced during the pandemic. It is because this research analyzed the factors influencing the purchase intentions of customers during the pandemic. Thus, it would help the HEC understand the current situation and problem.

Besides, this research paper would also benefit the other researchers who are doing similar work, such as the impact of education on business during the pandemic. Finally, because this research field is not widely known, it can provide readers with a better understanding of the K-12 education industry. This research would provide the readers with a clear understanding and perception of the impact of the pandemic on the HEC. It is also hoped that the audience would get to know the current situation and issues that the HEC had faced during the pandemic and understand the impact of those issues or problems. The research faced certain limitations as well. Firstly, this research was only applied to the condition of one K-12 education center, which is HEC, and the sampling was also only done in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. As a result, the research findings may not represent all K-12 education centers in Malaysia due to a lack of generalization to the Malaysian K-12 education market. As a result, it is suggested that this research be expanded to other K-12 education centers and that the sampling be distributed to other states.

Funding: This research is supported by INTI International University, Malaysia (Grant number: T&E2506).

Institutional Review Board Statement: The Ethical Committee of the University of Hertfordshire, United Kingdom has granted approval for this study on 12 February 2021 (Ref. No. 04900).

Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Authors' Contributions: All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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