

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PARENTS' INTENTION IN BRINGING THEIR CHILD TO THE AUDIOLOGIST

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to examine the relationship between attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control towards parents' intention in sending their child to the audiologist. A sample of 76 parents with hearing impaired child all over the Peninsular of Malaysia was involved in this research. A set of questionnaires was used for data collection. The theory of planned behavioral (TPB) was able to explain the link between human intention and their behavior. In this study, the researcher looked at parents' behavior in bringing their child to Audiologist. In order to achieve this a set of questionnaires was adapted from Jusoh (2011) and was administered to a group of parents with hearing loss (HL) children. The result showed that there were correlations between *attitude*, *subjective norms* as well as *perceived behavioral control* and parents' intention in sending their child to the audiologist. However, there was no correlation between intentions and behavior towards the same intention.

KEYWORDS: attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, behavior, intention, TPB, parents, hearing impaired children.

INTRODUCTION

Every parent wants the best for their child and every child has their own special ability and uniqueness. Some of them are normal physically and mentally, however, some of them may need special health care. The latter often receive a variety of services from early intervention (EI) to other medical services. These services include occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), audiology, and speech-language pathology (SLP) (Margaret, Lisa, Chiarello & Kim Nixon-Criston, 2012).

Early detection and intervention are important particularly for a child with hearing disability. Amlani (2015) reported that high prevalence of hearing loss among children was important for early detection and intervention. Therefore, parents play an important role in order to make sure their child get early detection and intervention. Based on Joint Committee of Infant Hearing (JCIH) (2007), a child's hearing problem needs to be detected as early as 3 months and treated as early as 6 months old. A recent study reported that the language delays and the difficulty to acquire normal language often associated with children with hearing loss (Quittner, Barker, Cruz, Snell, Grimley & Botteri, 2010). The language delays and difficulty to acquire normal language may have contributed to elevation of stress level and

negative attitudes of parents towards their child with hearing loss. Stress and negative attitudes are generally seen as factors that cause a communication barrier between parents and child. According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Figure 1), people intend to behave in ways that allow them to obtain favourable outcomes and meet the expectations of others (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). This theory is also able to predict behaviour or action of human especially in decision-making.

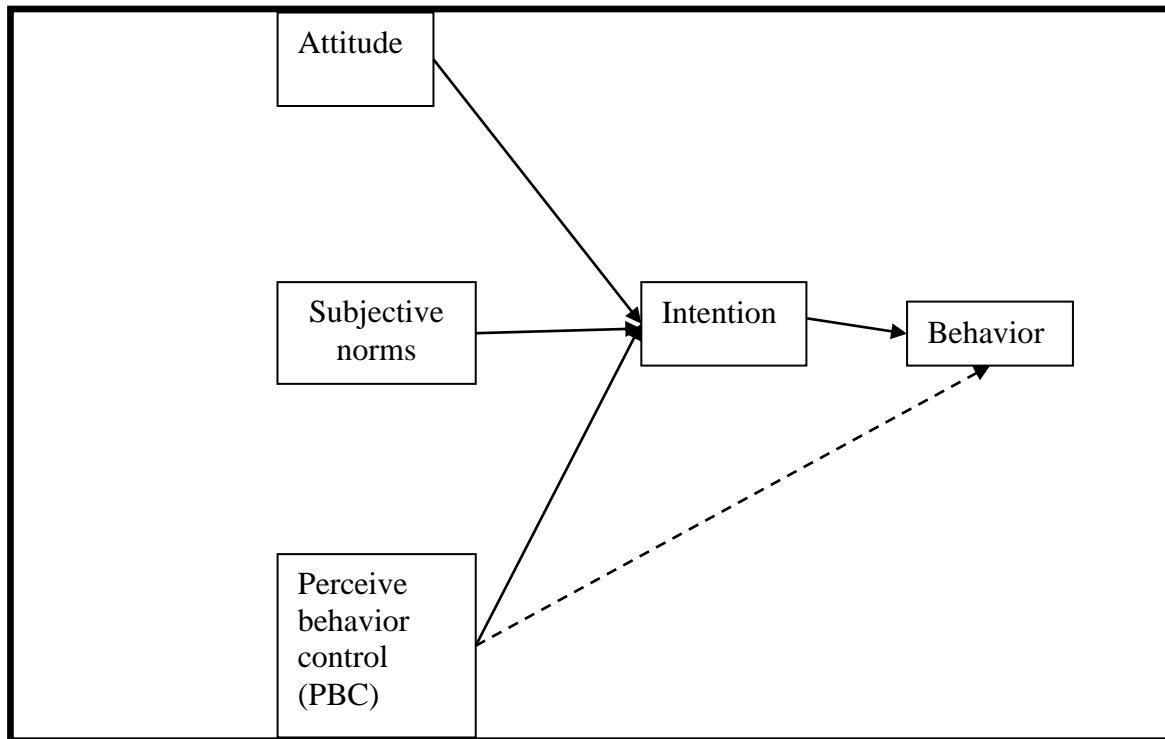


Figure 1 Theory of Planned Behavioral (TPB) (Ajzen, 2002)

The TPB terms and definitions

Attitude, subjective norms and perceived behaviour are the important keywords in TPB, therefore it is important to look at their definitions first.

Attitude produces either positive or negative inclinations towards a certain behavior. As many behaviors pose difficulties of execution that may limit volitional control, perceived behavioral control (PBC) is also hypothesized to exert direct influence on behavior (broken arrow, Figure 1) (Ajzen, 2002). Besides that, intentions are assumed to capture the motivational factors that influence a behavior. They are indications of how hard people are willing to try, of how much of an effort they are planning to exert, in order to perform the behavior. As a general rule, the stronger the intention to engage in a behavior, the

more likely should be its performance. It should be clear, however, a behavioral intention can find expression in behavior only if the behavior in question is under volitional control (Ajzen, 1991).

Subjective norms are also assumed to be a function of beliefs that specific individuals approve or disapprove of performing the behavior. An individual will intend to perform a certain behavior when he/she perceives that their partners think he/she should. This is assessed by asking respondents to judge how likely it is that most people who are important to them would approve or disapprove of their performing a given behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). This factor is important and more influential to behavior. (Burak et al., 2013; Han, et al., 2010). A person's subjective norms are also influenced by their motivations to please another person (Celuch et al., 2011).

Perceived behavioral control refers to the degree in which an individual feels that performance or non-performance of the behavior in question is under his or her volitional control. The individual may have total control when there are no constraints of any type in adopting a reticular behavior. At the opposite extreme, there may be a total lack of control if adoption of a given behavior requires opportunities such as resources or skills which may be lacking (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

Therefore, this TPB theory will be applied in this study as to investigate the factors that may influence parents' intention in bringing their child to audiologist. All the three mentioned factors; attitude, subjective and normative control; will be examined and the data will be analyzed as to see the correlation between three of them towards the intention.

METHODS

This section describes the procedures involved in this study. Briefly, after the approval from the IIUM Research Ethics Committee, the questionnaire (Jusoh, 2012) was adapted and validated. This questionnaire was distributed at hearing aid companies, hospitals and organizations with Audiological services. This study started in October 2016 until May 2017. The participations were voluntary and with informed-consent

The questionnaire

The questionnaire was adapted from Jusoh (2011): "Parents' intention in sending their child to Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)". It consists of six parts (with 43 questions) which were: demographic data (Part A); attitude (Part B); subjective norm (Part C); perceived behavioral control (Part D); intention behavioral (Part E); behavioral (Part F). The adaptation was made to cater for parents with hearing impaired children.

Likert-scales were used to measure the items in the questionnaire, for Parts A to D the scales were 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Undecided; 4=Agree; and 5=Strongly agree. While for Part E the Likert-scale was with different options: 1=Strongly false; 2= False; 3= Not sure; 4= True; 5= Strongly True and for Part F, the scale which consists of 1= Never; 2= Rarely; 3= Sometimes; 4= always; 5= Frequently.

Validity and Reliability of the questionnaire

The validity of the questionnaire was checked using both face and content validations. During the process, the questionnaire was distributed to a group of volunteers. During this session, they answered the questionnaire and stated whether the items can be comprehended in terms of its structures

and meanings. 28 participants were involved. The aim of this pilot study is to ensure the adapted questionnaires was based on TPB and to avoid sampling bias. The responses from these informants were then analyzed (From parts B through F; Part A: the demographic section was excluded) using Cronbach Alpha. The overall reliability was 0.74, while the reliability for Parts B until F were 0.85, 0.90, 0.73, 0.61, and 0.40 respectively. Given the value of the overall reliability; this questionnaire was considered acceptable.

During the content validity process; the questionnaire was distributed to five key persons which comprised a linguist, two (2) audiologists and two (2) speech-language pathologists to evaluate and check the content whether the items in this questionnaire were able to be understood by the participants later on.

Administering the questionnaire

As this study involved parents with hearing-impaired children under the age of 18 years old, the categorical data have been used to identify the relationship between the four variables (*attitudes, subjective norms and perceive behavioral control*) and parents' intention in sending the child to audiologist. Subjects were asked to complete a set of questionnaires regarding their attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavior control, intention and behavior related to their action in sending their child to audiologist.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Relationship between attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioral and the parents' intention

This research aimed to analyze the relationship between these variables: attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavior control with the intention of parents who brought their children to seek for Audiological treatment. These relationships were investigated using Spearman rho. There was a positive correlation between these variables and the parents' intention as illustrated in Figure 2. While the correlation between these variables (*attitude, subjective norm, perceive behavioral*) and *the intention* were $r=0.586$, $r=0.668$ and $r=0.608$ respectively.

Based on the correlation score, the correlation between *attitude* and *the intention* was moderate, while the correlation between both the *subjective norms* as well as *perceived behavioral control* and *the intention* were good. The correlation was significant at 0.01 (2-tailed). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there were significant correlations between attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral toward parents' intention in sending their child to audiologist. Therefore, it can be concluded in this study that the parents' attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral play important roles in determining whether they would bring the child to seek Audiological treatment or not.

This somewhat showed awareness among the parents to send the child to audiologist. According to Duncan (2009) most of the parents had their own motivation when seeing their child being able to hear and had some improvement from the treatment. According to Rochelle (2010), a child who was diagnosed with hearing impairment not only affects the parents but also affects the entire member of their family. The level of stress can increase among parents with hearing impaired children what more if their children have some developmental problem as well (Rosli, 2015). So, spouse (either the husband or

wife) and surrounding people also played important role to support the parents with hearing impaired children. The support enable them to become more confident in helping their child to get the right intervention.

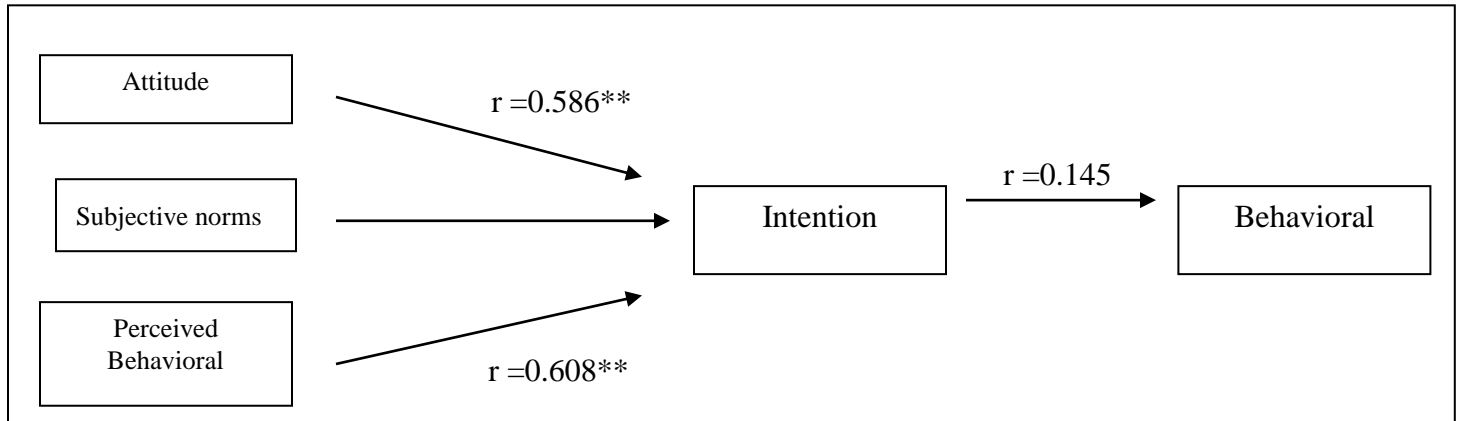


Figure 2: The correlation results between the variables (*attitude, subjective norm, perceive behavioral*) and the parents' intention to bring their child to audiologist.

Result in this study also suggested that the parents who send their child to audiologist had critically analyzed available information about audiologist's treatment before deciding to send their child. Furthermore, the intent to engage in a given behavior has been successfully used by researchers (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2008) to predict an individual's actual engagement in a variety of health related behaviors. Hence, it is undeniable that human cannot change one's attitude, however, in TBP theory there were other factors that can influence one's action such as perceived behavioral control and subjective norms.

CONCLUSION

From the current study, it was found that factors like attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control were the factors that influenced parents' intention in bringing their child to seek Audiological treatment. It is also important to note that there are also other factors that may influence the parents' intention to bring their children to audiologists, such as financial and social variables. Future studies may look at how significant these factors can contribute to the parents' intention.

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APPENDICES

Table 1 Adaption of the questionnaire

Original Items (Parents' intention in sending their child to Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP))		Changes Questions (Factors associated to parents' intention in bringing their child to the audiologist)	
Part B:	4)Merujuk anak saya untuk mendapatkan rawatan/terapi daripada Patologis Pertuturan-Bahasa memberi banyak kelebihan.	Part B:	4)Terdapat banyak kelebihan apabila saya menghantar anak saya untuk mendapat rawatan pendengaran daripada Audiologist
	5) Merujuk anak saya kepada Patologis Pertuturan-Bahasa adalah dengan kerelaan hati saya		5)Merujuk anak saya kepada Audiologis adalah dengan kerelaan hati
	6) Merujuk anak saya kepada Patologis Pertuturan-Bahasa adalah perkara mensiasikan.		6)Saya merasakan usaha saya untuk merujuk anak saya kepada Audiologis adalah perkara yang sia-sia.
	7)Merujuk anak saya kepada Patologis Pertuturan-Bahasa adalah sesuatu tindakan yang bagus.		7) Saya merasakan usaha saya untuk merujuk anak saya kepada Audiologis adalah satu tindakan yang bagus
	8) Dengan merujuk anak saya kepada Patologis Pertuturan-Bahasa, saya telah melakukan sesuatu yang amat berguna untuk anak saya		8)Saya merasakan usaha saya untuk merujuk anak saya kepada Audiologis adalah sesuatu yang amat berguna untuk anak saya.
	9)Dengan merujuk anak saya kepada Patologis Pertuturan-Bahasa, saya mungkin dapat mengesan masalah-masalah lain yang dihadapi oleh anak saya dengan lebih awal.		9)Saya mungkin dapat mengesan masalah-masalah lain yang dihadapi oleh anak saya dengan lebih awal apabila merujuk anak saya kepada Audiologis.
	10) Saya amat risau jika anak saya membesar dengan mempunyai masalah bahasa dan pertuturan		10) Saya amat risau jika anak saya membesar dengan mempunyai masalah pendengaran.
	11) Dengan merujuk anak saya kepada Patologis Pertuturan-Bahasa, anak saya boleh menerima latihan dan terapi dengan lebih kerap		11) Anak saya boleh mendapatkan latihan dan terapi dengan lebih kerap setelah dirujuk kepada Audiologis.

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure 2: Summary of coefficient correlation (r value) using Spearman's rho