



Mitigating Parental Negligence: Enhancing Legal Safeguards in Malaysian Family Law Children's Lives: Unveiling Parental Responsibilities under Malaysian Law

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Abstract. Within the context of Malaysian Family Law, these concerns are particularly relevant. Malaysia, being a diverse nation with a growing emphasis on child protection, has also witnessed distressing incidents resulting from parental negligence. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to examine the issue of parental responsibility and negligence in the context of Malaysian Family Law. This study aims to identify the public's perception of parental responsibility under statutory law and the factors which lead to parental negligence. This study also into the existing legal provisions, examines relevant court cases, and explores the scholarly discussions surrounding this topic. By doing so, we hope to gain insights into the effectiveness of Malaysian Family Law in curbing parental negligence. The authors will also discuss the relevant measures which should be taken to overcome parental negligence from a legal standpoint. By undertaking this comprehensive examination of Malaysian Family Law, our research intends to contribute to the ongoing conversation on parental responsibility and child protection. We aim to raise awareness among parents, caregivers, legal professionals, and policy-makers about the crucial need for caution, care, and concern when looking after young children.

Keywords: Parental, negligence, children, safety, responsibilities.

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Every year, we hear about heartbreaking stories of young children in Malaysia losing their lives in terrible accidents caused by the carelessness of their parents or caregivers. These incidents serve as a strong reminder that parents need to be more cautious, responsible, and attentive when it comes to the safety and well-being of their little ones.

One example of the tragic consequences of parental negligence is child abuse. Despite the laws in Malaysia that are meant to protect children, there are cases where parents or caregivers fail to provide the care and protection their children need. This can involve physical violence, emotional abuse, or neglect, and it results in the loss of innocent lives. These cases show just how important it is for parents to be vigilant and fulfil their duty of care towards their children.

Another area where parental negligence can have devastating consequences is child endangerment. This means that parents have a responsibility to keep their children safe, even in everyday situations. For example, leaving a young child alone in a car, especially in hot weather, can lead to heatstroke or accidental suffocation. Such incidents highlight the need for parents to be alert and responsible, taking necessary precautions and avoiding situations that could put their children in danger.

Pursuant to the Malaysian National Child Protection Policy (*Dasar Perlindungan Kanak-kanak Malaysia*)¹ child protection is not limited

¹ Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat, '*Dasar Perlindungan Kanak-Kanak Negara*' (*Portal Rasmi JKM*, 2 August 2016)

to mere physical care for the child. Equally important is the overall emotional, mental, and cognitive development of the child. With a tender and unadulterated state of mind, children do not possess the necessary conscience to make sound judgments with regards to their own interests and the interest of the people around them. In other words, they cannot distinguish between a sense of right and wrong. Left to their own devices, they may instead make poorly-informed choices which ultimately lead to detrimental consequences for themselves and their community. This is evident in a recent Cambridge study which found that ‘crime-prone’ youths have a tendency to commit crimes because they lack a moral code which conforms to existing laws and have an impulsive character². Who else has a greater responsibility and influence in shaping the moral code of children, none other than their parents?

Furthermore, children also lack the capacity to adequately protect themselves from external forces which seek to harm them or influence their mentality. Such forces may take a criminal, or sexual form. As such, parental negligence of their children may also include ignoring the welfare of children, without causing direct physical harm.

<https://www.jkm.gov.my/jkm/index.php?r=portal/left&id=TIFwUVczN0RLQ3VIRDFqRTFmVENuZz09> accessed 4 June 2023.

² Olof Wikstrom, ‘Morality prevents crime’ (*University of Cambridge Research News*, 25 June 2012) <<https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/morality-prevents-crime>> accessed 4 June 2023.

2 Literature Review

Various researches had been conducted by scholars and researchers on parental responsibility and negligence in the context of Malaysian Family Law.

In Abd Hamid, Ahmad and Tahir's article³, they focused upon exploring parental responsibilities and effective parenting practices to prevent children from being the victims of paedophiles from a sociological perspective. To determine the effectiveness of the parenting techniques used by parents in Malaysia, surveys had been undertaken. According to the statistical results, Malaysian parents' current parenting techniques can be regarded as effective and pertinent, although they only reflect one aspect of parental duty. They came to the conclusion that parents should be given complete responsibility for protecting and respecting the privacy of their children because they are the ones most capable of doing so. Parental neglect may result in various criminal issues including kidnapping, molestation, and paedophilia.

Shukor and Supaat in their research paper⁴ highlight parental responsibility in curbing social problems associated with sex. As the child's closest relative, parents have a duty to take precautions to protect kids

³ Siti Fathanah Hamid, Yarina Ahmad, Nor Suziwana Tahir, "Protecting Children from Strangers: Parental Responsibility to Prevent Paedophilia in Malaysia" (2020) 9 *International Journal for Studies on Children, Women, Elderly and Disabled* 55.

⁴ Syahirah Abdul Shukor, Dina Imam Supaat, "Legal Appraisal of Sex Education in Malaysian Schools" (2018) 3 *International Journal of Law, Government, and Communication* 2.

from damage when they get sex education. It is important to respect parents' rights to decide what is best and worst for their children, especially when it comes to sensitive topics like sex education and how it is taught.

Malek in her article⁵ focuses on the laws that apply to Muslims in Malaysia that relate to family concerns as well as Islamic law. Her research indicates that men are given a variety of obligations, particularly when serving as the family's head. This entails paying maintenance to the wife and children as well as taking on guardianship of the kids. As guardian, the father will be first obligated to safeguard the interests and well-being of the kids, including their ability to consent to marriage. She came to the conclusion that the Islamic family law in Malaysia does not explicitly address parental rights and obligations.

Rashid, Alias and Sulaiman⁶ in their article stated that the primary reason parents fail to instil family values in their children is that they fail to manage quality time with them owing to their obsession with making a living. Eid, Nori and Zin⁷ arrived at the same findings that parents did not treat or raise their girls according to Islamic beliefs and principles because they were physically and emotionally separated from them due to a busy work schedule, a disagreement, a divorce, or neglect.

⁵Normi Abdul Malek, "The Family Institution and Its Governing Laws in Malaysia as a Vanguard in Protecting the Society from Social Ailments: A Shari'ah Perspective" (2016) 24 *IUMLJ* 397.

⁶Nur Aidah Rashid, Bity Salwana Alias, Siti Sa'adah Sulaiman, "Parental Attitude as Constraint to Family Values?" (2020) 17 *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology* 919.

⁷Iyad Eid, Abdulwahed Jalal Nori, Najibah bt Mohd Zin, "Understanding Teenage Pregnancy Out of Wedlock within the Structure of the Malay Family" (2022) 4 *IJOHS* 27.

Manja, Mohamad, Ismail and Yusof⁸ also mentioned parental neglect, which occurs if parents repeatedly ignore their kids for no apparent reason. The negative consequences of parental neglect on a kid are numerous and will have a significant impact on that child's adulthood. These consequences include depression, stress disorders, and issues with their future relationships, even when they have their own children.

It is also relevant to examine the relation between parental negligence and the level of religiosity among parents. In the context of a conservatively religious society such as that of Malaysia, one would expect that parents will have a great depth of knowledge on their responsibilities over their children, at least in accordance with religious scripture. However, the contrary is true. Shukor⁹ stated in her findings that although the responsibilities of a parent are provided in the Quran and Sunnah, there is still a need to educate parents on such responsibilities. Additionally, there is a need for Malaysian policymakers to properly identify parental responsibilities at the national policy making stage.

Suzana, Roslina and Najibah in their article¹⁰ discuss the current state of shared parenting in Malaysia following a divorce and the viability of implementing the concept under Malaysia's dual legal systems.

⁸ Syazwani Aniyah Manja and others, "COVID-19: The investigation on the emotional parental burnout during movement control order in Malaysia" (2020) 7 *European Journal of Molecular & Clinical Medicine* 4912.

⁹ Syahirah Abdul Shukor, '*Tanggungjawab Ibu Bapa Dalam Melindungi Kanak-Kanak Menurut Undang-Undang Malaysia*' (2016) 4 *Malaysian Journal of Syariah and Law*.

¹⁰ Suzana A, Roslina CS, Najibah MZ, "Application of Shared Parenting in Malaysia: Appraising the Australian Experience" (2017) 25 *Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities* 299.

They concluded that shared parenting functions best when parents are cooperative, child-focused and flexible, have come to an agreement without legal assistance, and have exercised their obligations jointly and cooperatively before their separation, in addition to taking an active caregiving role. If parents cooperate well and have little dispute when it comes to matters involving their children, the welfare of the children are well protected. By creating a suitable parenting plan, policymakers can handle concerns relating to post-divorce parenting arrangements in a serious manner by putting the needs of the children above those of the parents. Moreover, they concluded that Malaysian law does not specifically address shared parenting, especially when it comes to equal parental responsibilities. Only child custody issues are covered by the law, and one of its provisions mentions parents' legal custody of their children.

Adzim, Saifullah and Mohd in their article¹¹ discuss the idea of shared parenting as an "evolution" of joint custody in their paper in addition to talking about the potential advantages and difficulties of putting the concept into practice in Shariah Courts. The importance of shared parenting is emphasised as the best and equitable method to achieve a child's best interests while also fostering amicable relationships and understanding amongst separated families, as a conclusion.

¹¹ Faiz Adzim Fadhil, Ainan Husnaa Saifullah, Azizah Mohd, "Shared Parenting vs Sole Custody in Malaysian Shariah Courts: Lessons From Covid-19" (International Seminar on Syariah and Law 2020, October 2020) <<https://insla.usim.edu.my/index.php/e proceeding/article/view/84/93>> accessed 6 June 2023.

Salamah, Luth, Sulistyarini and Puspitawati stated in their paper¹² that in the context of Indonesian marriage law, the effects of divorce have been controlled such that the father is still required to uphold his child's maintenance obligations, albeit the father is frequently inattentive despite there having been a judge's judgement that has permanent legal force. They advocate for the establishment of an agency that will oversee and carry out court orders in order to protect children's civil rights in family law cases where their parents are careless in doing so. In addition, they can also monitor the enforcement of children's civil rights in general. This is pertinent experience which may be imported into the context of curbing parental negligence in Malaysia.

3 Current Position of the Law on the Responsibilities of Parents Towards Their Children

The current position of the law on responsibilities of parents towards their children can be seen in several statutes, which include the Child Act 2001, the Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act 1976, as well as Education Act 1996. Part 5 of the Child Act 2001 provides for the procedures for dealing with children who are in need of care and protection. It includes provisions for the assessment, placement, and care of children who are deemed to be in need of protection. According to an article from the Sun daily, the number of reported child abuse and neglect cases in Malaysia has been on the rise since 2019, with approximately

¹² Umma Salamah and others, 'Ratio Legis Establishment of Execution and Supervisory Institutions Fulfilment of Child Rights in Family Law Due to Divorce' (2023) 3 *Jurnal Multidisiplin Madani* 260.

1,000 children affected each year¹³. Children can experience abuse and neglect at the hands of their caregivers or individuals known to them for various reasons. Some reasons may be relatively harmless, such as struggles in managing a child's hyperactivity or difficulties arising from the child's disabilities. Others, however, stem from malicious or harmful intentions, including ill-will towards the child. Financial challenges can also contribute to such situations.

The question that can be asked from all of these is what exactly are the responsibilities of parents towards their children. The concept of parental responsibility in legal matters is not a new concept and has gained more prominence in family governance policies and legislation today. The laws regarding parental responsibility have a substantial historical foundation in both the United Kingdom and the United States. Considering the increasing number of women entering the workforce in Malaysia and the rising divorce rates in the country, the challenges of educating and raising children for parents have become increasingly difficult in the current times.¹⁴ Parental negligence is one of the most prominent cases that can be seen in Malaysia. Parental negligence refers to the failure of parents to fulfil their duties and responsibilities in a manner that aligns with the standard of a reasonable and careful parent. Dr.

¹³ Farah Natasya, 'Alarming developments in child abuse' *The Sun Daily* (Kuala Lumpur, 10 January 2023) <<https://www.thesundaily.my/home/alarming-developments-in-child-abuse-BC10470573>> accessed 31 May 2023.

¹⁴ Syahirah Abdul Shukor, 'Tanggungjawab Ibu Bapa Dalam Melindungi Kanak-Kanak Menurut Undang-Undang Malaysia' (2016) 4 *Malaysian Journal of Syariah and Law*.

Norhayati Mohd Noor, a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, argued that simply punishing the perpetrators in child neglect cases would not effectively address the underlying problem. She also suggested the implementation of a procedure to thoroughly investigate child neglect cases. She emphasised that it is important to recognize that these cases frequently stem from financial difficulties and a lack of accessible childcare options.¹⁵

In *R v Sheppard*,¹⁶ Lord Denning said that to neglect a child is to omit to act, fail to provide adequately for its needs; and in the context of Section 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933, its physical needs rather than its spiritual, educational, moral or emotional needs.

According to Section 31(1)(a) of Child Act 2001, this section provides that any person who, being a person having the care of a child abuses, neglects, abandons, or exposes the child or acts negligently in a manner likely to cause him physical or emotional injury or causes or permits him to be so abused, neglected, abandoned or exposed, commits an offence and shall on conviction be liable to a fine up to RM50,000 or jailed up to 20 years or both. The stance in Malaysia regarding child neglect is unambiguous. If a parent possesses the means to provide sufficient food, clothing, medical or dental care, and overall care for their child but fails to do so, then he is in violation of Section 31 of Child Act

¹⁵ 'Rethink punishment for 'unintentional' child neglect cases' *The Star* (Kuala Lumpur, 27 January 2023) <<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2023/01/27/rethink-punishment-for-039unintentional039-child-neglect-cases-say-experts#:~:text=Under%20this%20section%2C%20it%20is,to%2020%20years%20or%20both>> accessed 1 May 2023.

¹⁶ [1981] AC 394.

2001.¹⁷ The definition of ‘neglect a child’ is explained in Section 31(4) of the Act, which provides failing to provide essential necessities for a child, such as food, clothing, medical care, accommodation, or proper care, despite having the means to do so, constitutes neglect that can result in physical and emotional harm to the child.

It is also important to note that parents have a duty, both legally and morally, to maintain their children. In addition to the obligation to support their children, the law also imposes punishments for neglecting this duty. Provisions regarding parental responsibility as well as duty to maintain children are also included in Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act 1976 (‘LRA’). This could be seen in Section 87 and from Section 92 to Section 102. Section 92 of LRA explicitly states that parents are obligated to provide for the financial needs of their children. In *Leow Kooi Wah v Ng Kok Seng Philip*¹⁸, both parents are responsible for financially supporting their children based on their respective financial capacities. Section 94 of the Act also provides parental responsibility towards maintenance for children. This section states that unless stated otherwise in an agreement or court order, parents are responsible for the maintenance and support of their children. This includes providing reasonable accommodation, clothing, food and education according to their financial capacity. Hence, the court has the authority to order the person responsible for child maintenance to use their income from specific property, in whole or in part, for the benefit of the child.

¹⁷ Jal Zabdi Mohd Yusoff, Sridevi Thambapillay, ‘Neglecting Child Neglect: Selected Legal Issues Encountered in Malaysia’ (The 2007 ALIN Conference).

¹⁸ [1995] 1 MLJ 582.

A child has the right to receive maintenance from his parents until they reach the age of 18. In cases where the child has a physical or mental disability, the obligation to provide maintenance continues until the disability ceases or the child reaches 18, whichever comes later¹⁹. This issue can be seen in the case of *Ching Seng Woah v Lim Shook Lin*²⁰. In this case, the Court held that the involuntary financial dependence of a child of the marriage for the purpose of pursuing or completing tertiary education came within the exception of physical or mental disability under Section 95 of the LRA so as to entitle the child to maintenance beyond the age of 18 years old.

Another legislation that is regarding the welfare of the children is the Education Act 1996. Section 29A(2) of Education Act 1996 outlines the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child gets primary education. This section provides that every parent who is a Malaysian citizen residing in Malaysia shall ensure that if his child has attained the age of six years on the first day of January of the current school year, that child must be enrolled as a pupil in a primary school in that year and remain a pupil in a primary school for the duration of the compulsory education. Nonetheless, based on this provision, the law only stated that it is only compulsory for parents to enrol their children in primary school. Education expert, Dr Anuar Ahmad, urged the government to revise and amend Section 29A of Education Act 1996 to enforce compulsory schooling until Form Five or secondary education.²¹ He also mentioned

¹⁹ Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce Act 1976, s 95

²⁰ [1997] 1 MLJ 109

²¹ Dhesegaan Bala Krishnan, 'Make secondary education obligatory' *New Straits Times* (Kuala Lumpur, 11 August 2022)

that when the law was enacted 30 years ago, the limited availability of secondary schools in rural areas and the interior parts of Sabah and Sarawak, made the government to face obstacles in enforcing compulsory secondary education. However, with the significant improvement in infrastructure across the country, there is now no reason for not implementing compulsory secondary education.

4 Discussion

The International Consensus On Parental Negligence And Malaysia's Future Actions

To better safeguard children from neglect, it is crucial for decision-makers, legal professionals, and other interested parties to collaborate in order to evaluate the current system, pinpoint problem areas, and put the required reforms into place. These ideas should be investigated further and customised to the unique circumstances of Malaysia. They serve as good beginning points for an overhaul of the nation's child protection policies. This can be done by drawing comparisons with foreign legislations, agencies as well as international frameworks and protocols.

International Frameworks

In terms of international frameworks, children's rights and safeguards are outlined in the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**, an international agreement. Despite the UNCRC's

<<https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2022/08/821297/make-secondary-education-obligatory#:~:text=Education%20expert%20Dr%20Anuar%20Ahmad,the%20fundamental%20rights%20of%20children.>> accessed 1 May 2023.

omission of the word "parental negligence," it discusses the idea of parental responsibility in general and the role of parents or legal guardians to guarantee the welfare and development of the child. Malaysia can benefit greatly from the advice provided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) when it comes to dealing with parental negligence²².

Malaysia can implement a number of initiatives from the UNRC, starting with **Article 3(2)** of the UNCRC which discusses the responsibility of the state. The UNCRC emphasises the state's involvement in helping parents and other legal guardians perform their obligations to children by giving them the necessary support and assistance. Malaysia can make sure that governmental institutions and organisations are set up to provide parents with the tools they need, as well as counselling and support, especially if they are at risk of shirking their parenting responsibilities. For instance, teen parents, single low-income parents, and immigrant workers. Collaboration with non-governmental organisations like the **Dignity for Children Foundation**, which seeks to provide essentials and education for urban poor and neglected children, can help achieve this.²³

In addition, **article 12 (1) of the UNCRC** emphasises the value of respecting children's perspectives in accordance with their age and maturity and involving them in decisions that impact them by giving kids

²² United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (OHCHR, 1990).

²³ Wong S, 'About us- About Dignity' (*Dignity For Children Foundation*, 2023) <<https://dignityforchildren.org/about-dignity/about-us>> accessed 3 June 2023.

the chance to have their say in legal or decision-making processes that affect their well-being.²⁴ Malaysia can work to involve kids in issues of parental carelessness. Because of Malaysia's collectivist culture and taboos, children's comments about their basic needs—or lack thereof—are not taken into consideration. Therefore, giving those affected an avenue to reach out will go a long way towards resolving Malaysia's parental neglect problem. The Malaysian government should resurrect and invest more money in programmes like the **Cafe@Teen** project and the **Talian Nur hotline** to give these kids a hassle-free and secure place to share their concerns.²⁵

In light of Malaysia's distinctive cultural and legal environment, it is critical to align the country's legal system, policies, and practises with the UNCRC's ideals. The UNCRC's principles must be translated into practical steps that safeguard children against parental neglect, and this requires cooperation among government agencies, child rights organisations, civil society, and children themselves.

5 Foreign Agencies

The Child Protective Services (CPS) of the United States are a good example for Malaysia to follow in terms of agencies. Investigating allegations of child abuse and neglect falls under the purview of CPS

²⁴ United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (OHCHR, 1990).

²⁵ Hairul M, 'Center for Teenagers Cafe@Teen' (*MyGOV*, 2021) <<https://malaysia.gov.my/portal/content/28922>> accessed 3 June 2023.

agencies in the US. In order to ensure child safety, deliver necessary services, and, when necessary, remove children from hazardous situations, they collaborate closely with law enforcement, medical professionals, and social workers.

In order to inform the public about child abuse and neglect as well as the value of reporting concerns, the United States emphasises public awareness campaigns. **The Child Welfare Information Gateway** is a project that was developed in cooperation by the **US Department of Health and Human Services, the Administration for Children and Families, and the Children's Bureau of America**. With this initiative, the general public is likely to be made aware of issues involving neglected children and how it can assist. This is accomplished by aggressively publicising the cause through advertisements and by hosting weekly podcasts addressing the most recent problems and developments in juvenile care.²⁶ Similar campaigns to increase understanding, inform the populace, and encourage a shared obligation to safeguard children from parental neglect can be supported in Malaysia. In addition to that, the website also offers resources in Spanish to accommodate the needs of the immigrant-Mexican communities around the United States. Malaysia can use a variety of media, including national television, radio shows, school awareness campaigns, and exhibitions, to take steps to raise public awareness of issues related to parental negligence. Bahasa

²⁶ Holloway H, 'Public Awareness and Creating Supportive Communities' (*Child Welfare Information Gateway*, 2019) <<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/communities/>> accessed 3 June 2023.

Melayu can be utilised as the delivery language in Malaysia, which has the added benefit of preventing language barriers and providing inclusive and all-encompassing support to the country's various ethnic groups.

Foreign Legislations: Proposals for Malaysia

Malaysia can learn a lot from the **United Kingdom's Children Act of 1989** regarding how to handle parental negligence. The training and credentials of professionals working in child protection, like social workers and guardians ad litem, are highly valued in the United Kingdom. This is stated in the aforementioned Act's **Regulation 2.113**, which outlines the requirements for a qualified child care worker. To be eligible to work as a child care provider, a social worker must meet a number of requirements that are spelt out in the act. Having sufficient patience and crowd control abilities, for instance. This guarantees the safety of the affected children.

By adding provisions to the **Child Act 2001** that specify the necessary characteristics and prerequisite education for a child care social worker, Malaysia can concentrate on improving the training and credentials of professionals working in the field of child protection. Any applicants would then be subject to review by organisations like the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia. The absence of any criminal history and fluency in your mother tongue, English, and Bahasa Malaysia are two examples of prerequisite requirements. Qualifications for becoming a child care social worker may also include passing an aptitude test and completing required coursework. This is to make sure they have the

knowledge and abilities needed to recognise and deal with parental neglect cases effectively to give affected children the most support possible.

To fit Malaysia's legal and cultural context, it is critical to modify and contextualise these lessons from the United Kingdom's Children's Act 1989. To ensure the successful implementation of child protection measures and adequately address parental neglect, consultation and collaboration among relevant stakeholders, including government organisations, legal experts, child protection organisations, and community representatives, are essential.

Limitations Faced During the Conception of the Report

The authors encountered a number of difficulties while producing this report which prevented them from fully fulfilling their key goals. These hurdles include time restrictions, a lack of resources, technological issues, or unforeseen roadblocks. Despite these obstacles, they made every effort to come up with workarounds and other strategies in order to guarantee development and produce a thorough report.

The authors carefully prioritised their duties and concentrated on the important components that were essential for the report in order to overcome time restrictions. To maximise the time they had, they efficiently distributed their resources and organised their process. As a result, they were able to handle the report's most important aspects and make sure that the crucial details were covered.

Time restrictions were a major obstacle to the authors while writing the report, especially when analysing the large quantity of data that had been gathered through research and polls. The authors had to make difficult judgements about how to prioritise the analytical process due to the short time they had. As a result, they might not have been able to investigate the data as thoroughly or all of the potential perspectives and insights that a more thorough study would have permitted. This limitation obviously had an impact on the report's comprehensiveness because they were unable to give an in-depth analysis of all the data. Despite this constraint, they utilised the time efficiently by concentrating on the most important conclusions and major trends that were shown by the data. The authors made sure that the important aspects of the report were appropriately substantiated and that their interpretations were supported by reliable data. Even if a more thorough investigation would have given the report greater depth and subtlety, the authors think the conclusions and suggestions made nonetheless provide insightful information about the problem at issue.

The impact of cultural and environmental influences on the respondents' perceptions was another important restriction they observed in their study. Because the respondents were Malaysians, their cultural norms, beliefs, and social environment influenced their opinions and comprehension of parental negligence. This localised viewpoint might not always be appropriate or useful in other communities or cultural contexts. Varied cultures may have very varied ideas on what constitutes parental neglect based on their parenting styles, expectations, and cul-

tural standards. As a result, while the knowledge gleaned from the Malaysian respondents was useful in their particular setting, it's possible that it cannot be generally or immediately applied to other cultural situations. When interpreting the results and using them to guide policies and actions in other countries, it is essential to identify and take into account these cultural differences.

Finally, because of the sensitive nature of the subject, social bias provided a significant constraint to the study since respondents could have been reluctant to voice their genuine views on parental neglect. It might be difficult to discuss or confess cases of child neglect publicly due to the stigma attached to it. When analysing the results, it was essential to acknowledge this social bias in order to take into account the possibility that respondents' opinions may have been swayed by society norms and the desire to preserve a good reputation, despite the guarantee of anonymity.

While the authors acknowledge that these difficulties may to some extent have had an influence on the study's ultimate result, they are satisfied that their dedication and determination have allowed them to produce a report that offers worthwhile insights and suggestions within the limits. The authors are aware of the areas in which they might have done better, and they have done everything they can to lessen the negative effects these difficulties will have on the report's overall calibre.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

In conclusion, it is clear that parents play an important role in parental responsibility. However, most parents admit they do not perform their parental responsibilities as well. To date, there are five statutes in Malaysia governing parental responsibilities over their children. They include Child Act 2001, Children Act 1989, Education Act 1996, Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act 1976 and Rules of Court 2012. However, there is no significant difference between the definition of parental responsibility and parental duty according to existing statutes in Malaysia.

While Malaysia has made efforts to safeguard the welfare of families, improvements are still needed. The Islamic family law doesn't explicitly codify and address parental rights and obligations. Collaboration among individuals, parents, authorities, and society is crucial to mitigate societal issues. By fulfilling their obligations according to Islamic teachings and the law, a better future for Malaysia can be envisioned. To enhance understanding, future work should include visualising data and involving more respondents to participate in surveys. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of Malaysians' perspectives on this topic.

Despite the fact that the article only looks at legal options for dealing with the problem of parental negligence, there are a lot of other

factors that affect the situation at hand. According to the data obtained for the paper, legal options are not a silver bullet to the issue of parental negligence given the complex and multidimensional nature of the factors which contribute to this problem. Instead, a variety of additional approaches and actions should be implemented to stop parental negligence. As a result, appropriate authorities should adopt many strategies to address this problem at its source in addition to the offered legal answers.

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