

Challenges of Educating Adolescents in Muslim Families at Putrajaya

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Abstract

Parents today face various challenges in educating their adolescents. This is because adolescents are much influenced by their environment and peers, resulting in them being trapped in various social problems such as free mixing, porn addiction, smoking, truancy, loafing, gangsterism and vandalism. Hence, the purpose of this research is to identify the challenges faced by parents in educating their adolescents in the family. This research is designed as a survey study using questionnaire as research instrument on 384 respondents selected by purposive sampling of parents who have adolescents, in Putrajaya. Data was analysed by descriptive statistical technique using SPSS version 22. Research results find that research respondents face challenges in educating their adolescents due to the factors of peers, parents' busyness with work, family financial problems, current technology and cyber media, as well as the characteristics of generation Z. The implications for this research provides knowledge to help parents on current challenges in educating their adolescents, so that they are able to deal wisely with adolescent social issues and problems. This research also contributes knowledge to relevant authorities involved such as National Board for Population Planning and Family Development (or LPPKN), Department of Social Welfare (or JKM) and Department for Islamic Development of Malaysia (or JAKIM) in order to more effectively manage parenting and adolescent development programs.

Keywords: Challenges, Parents, Adolescents, Family, Education

Introduction

A research relating to parenting skills and adolescents is increasingly being done by scholars such as Derani (2004) studied parents' perception of factors for the current moral decline of Muslim adolescents in Alor Star, Kedah, such as the family institution, lack of religious education and appreciation, influence of environment, peer influence or pressure and mass media influence. Kamaruzaman et al (2015) studied the relationship between the dimension of adolescent parenting behaviour and psychological well-being of parents in Hulu Langat District, Selangor State. Ismuni et al (2012) studied the relationship between parenting attachment and the identity status of Muslim adolescents. A study by Rawi et al (2017) showed that parental communication and parenting style influence adolescent deviant behaviour in Pahang. Studies by Komin & Sapian (2010); Kaharuddin & Malek (2014) found a relationship between parental behaviour and religious education with adolescent students' morals. In short, even though there are past research or studies associating parenting behaviour with adolescents, they do not focus on parenting challenges faced in educating adolescents in urban areas. Putrajaya, as an administrative centre of the Malaysian government equipped with the best educational and infrastructural facilities, should rightly have an exemplary society to be proud of as an example to other communities and a depiction of Malaysian society in the eyes of the world.

According to al-'Aqqad (1973), a family is a small social group comprising of a father, mother and their offspring. It is a microcosm of a community with all the usual characteristics such as diversity of qualities, different individual functions and is an institution of mutual or common interests. It can also be understood as a group of people living in one household, having blood relationship and marriage ties, sharing birth experience of family members, mutually interacting, and having respective roles, creating and maintaining a culture and enhancing the physical, mental, emotional and social development of each family member (Duvall & Miller, 1986). A good family is founded on good relations and harmonious living between husband and wife, and with other family members (Osman, 1988). The aspect which needs to be emphasised in the family context is about the functions of the family as the first school to build personality, character, values, skills and individual attitude of children since birth (Ismail, 2007). The reason is that parents are directly involved in determining the direction, harmony and success of a family (Azizi et al., 2010).

Nonetheless, parenting aspects are hotly debated at all levels of society as a result of worsening social problems involving the adolescent generation, making the family institution face enormous stress, and requiring certain solutions to address them ('Ulwan, 2015). Social problems involving adolescents need to be overcome immediately as the strength and weakness of a race very much depends on youth as the pillar and successor to the continuity of development and well-being of a country (al-Banna, 2003). Therefore, parenting skills are really needed in educating adolescents today. However, some challenges cause difficulty for parents to apply parenting skills on their adolescents in the family. Among the challenges are peer factor (Darusalam, 2003), parents' busyness with work (Hamid, 2007), financial problems (Mannes et al., 2005), entertainment and threats to the mind through using current technology and cyber media (Sulung & Abdullah, 2010) as well as characteristics of the Z generation (Steinberg, 1993; Rogers, 1981).

Presently, the issue of lack of parenting skills needs to be given focus in order to overcome problems and cases involving adolescents in Malaysia. The role of parents is perceived as providing the solution for adolescents, but parents today still need guidance on

the correct parenting methods and skills. This is because many of the cases and issues in the family are related to negative parental behaviour, such as a case in Bangi town on the 30th January 2014, in which a father slashed his seven-year old daughter to death (Farik, 2014). In addition, cases of child abuse by parents also occurred, such as a case at Butterworth, in which, a mother is believed to have abused and beaten her seven month old baby boy causing bruises to his body and eyes (Mohamad, 2021). Besides that, there are fathers who fail to control their lust leading to them committing incest or sexual abuse on their own children (Kasim et al., 1995). Cases of bad parental personality can lead to physical and sexual abuse of their own children, something inappropriate in the society of Malaysia. This problem needs to be overcome immediately in order that fathers and mothers no longer behave badly toward their own children, and realise the importance of being good parents, as well as strive to protect and guide them toward well-being. Such cases prove that the issue of parenting skills in the family needs serious attention today in order to ensure the safety of children.

In addition, the issue of parents not giving due importance to the aspect of children's education was detected through a case study on secondary school student dropout. The study outlined some negative attitudes of parents or family toward their youngsters' education. This includes parents who lack awareness of the importance of education for their youngsters and those who are less concerned about it (Ishak et al., 2005). Besides that, there are parents who prefer their teenagers to work instead of continuing school. Most students who drop out from school and are poor achievers come from families which are less supportive of their education and do less monitoring of their adolescents' progress (Mohamad et al., 2009). Even though parents may be busy with their career, they should make an effort to know the physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of their youngsters. But there is still a minority of parents who pass their responsibility to educate and guide their youngsters solely onto the school (Besharat et al., 2011). The consequence of this lack of knowledge is that parents are inclined toward raising their youngsters by a permissive parenting style such as giving full freedom without control, ending up with giving even less attention leading to anti-social behaviour in their youngsters (Mitchell, 1989; Angelo et al., 1995). This causes adolescents to prefer sharing their problems with peers whom they perceive to be more understanding (Ali, 2007). In addition, the influence of advancements in science and technology has exposed adolescents to various mixed positive and negative information, and pornography, leading some of them to spend more time surfing the internet rather than interacting with their families and friends (Condry, 1989). Ultimately, in today's society, media and peers have replaced relations between parents and their young (Mowlana, 1997).

Therefore, it is very important today to focus on research regarding the challenges to realising parenting skills in order to prepare parents who are more proactive in educating their adolescents and concerned about the current situation of adolescents. Hence, this research is conducted to answer the question, namely, what are the challenges for parents in applying parenting skills toward their adolescents in the family at Putrajaya? Further, the objective of this article is to identify these challenges faced by parents in educating their adolescents in the family at Putrajaya.

Methodology

This is a quantitative research using survey study design with purposive sampling of 384 Muslim parents who have adolescents aged between 10 to 19 years and reside in Putrajaya. Most respondent parents involved in answering this survey work in the government sector

80.5% (309 persons) and the number of respondent mothers (62.8%, 241 persons), exceed respondent fathers. Putrajaya was selected as research location because it is the administrative centre of the Malaysia government with the majority of working parents originating from various states in Malaysia. The main instrument used in this research for gathering data is the questionnaire form. The questionnaire is divided into six main sections, but this article only discusses one section, namely, on the challenges in applying parenting skills to adolescents in the family. Thus, seven questionnaire items were constructed based on a literature review concerning challenges identified as the causes for respondent parents' difficulty in applying parenting skills to educate their adolescents. The questionnaire items were validated using content analysis by two experts in the field of family and research, namely Associate Professor Dr. Ahmad Munawar Ismail and Dr. Jamiah Manap from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). Further, the researcher conducted a pilot study on 30 participants of mothers and fathers who participated in a family program organized by the Putrajaya Corporation (PPj) to obtain the reliability of the questionnaire instrument of this study, and the result showed value of *alpha cronbach (a)* = 0.826 (Table 1).

Table 1
Reliability Analysis of Research Measurement Instrument

No.	Instrument	<i>Alpha value (a)</i>	Level of reliability
1.	Challenges of educating adolescents in the family	0.826	Good

Source: 2018 Questionnaire

As the *alpha cronbach* value for variable exceeds 0.6, this research instrument has good consistency and reliability and is acceptable (Sekaran, 2003). This questionnaire uses 4-point Likert scale, namely strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), agree (3) and strongly agree (4). Data from research results was analysed using descriptive technique using SPSS (*Statistical Package for Sosial Sciences*) version 22. The analysis process involves descriptive statistical methods and is presented through frequency (F), percentage (%) and mean value in highlighting the results of the study. The use of such methods is appropriate to answer the questions and objectives of the targeted study.

Findings And Discussion

This section is to identify challenges faced by respondent parents in applying parenting skills to their adolescents in the family. Table 2 shows seven items identified as challenges to parents in educating their adolescents. Research findings show that the item with the highest mean value is "I view current communication technology as a challenge to educating my adolescent" (mean=3.41), "I agree that current entertainment influences my adolescent's lifestyle" (mean=3.28), "I admit that being busy at work reduces time spent together with my adolescent" (mean=3.16), "I admit financial problem becomes a challenge to educating my adolescent" (mean=3.03), "I feel my adolescent does not listen so much to me (a little stubborn)" (mean=2.68) and "I feel my adolescent is not so responsible (irresponsible)" (mean=2.66). And the item with the lowest mean score is "I can't control my adolescent's mixing with friends outside the home" (mean=2.23).

Table 2
Challenges in Educating Adolescents in the Family

Statement	Percentage (%) & Frequency (N)				Mean
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1 I view current communication technology as a challenge to educating my adolescent.	0% (0)	2.3% (9)	53.9% (207)	43.8% (168)	3.41
2 I agree that current entertainment influences my adolescent's lifestyle.	0.5% (2)	10.2% (39)	50.5% (194)	38.8% (149)	3.28
3 I admit that being busy at work reduces time spent together with my adolescent.	2.1% (8)	14.3% (55)	49.5% (190)	34.1% (131)	3.16
4 I admit that financial problems become a challenge to educate my adolescent.	2.6% (10)	18.2% (70)	52.6% (202)	26.6% (102)	3.03
5 I feel my adolescent does not listen so much to me.	12.5% (48)	25.5% (98)	43.8% (168)	18.2% (70)	2.68
6 I feel my adolescent is not so responsible.	9.1% (35)	31% (119)	44.8% (172)	15.1% (58)	2.66
7 I can't control my adolescent's mixing with friends outside the home.	6.0% (23)	34.4% (132)	36.7% (141)	22.9% (88)	2.23

Source: 2018 Questionnaire

Research results show that the main challenge for respondent parents in applying parenting skills to educate adolescents in the family is the current communication technology (mean=3.41), reaching 97.7%, (or 375 persons). This finding is in line with the writings of Hashim & Mohamad (2000) that among the challenges parents must face in educating adolescents today is the influence of technology such as internet, satellite television, gadgets, hand phone, both printed and electronic mass media, and cyber media. At times, parents are unaware of the bad influence at home through television programs which show yellow culture and usually modern Western immorality opposed to Islamic values, through songs on radio and internet content (Hamid, 2007). Malek & Kamil (2010) expressed support for this view that technology and social media give clear negative implications to adolescents, such as lack of face-to-face communication skills, time wasted with social media and neglect of responsibility, exposure to fake information or wrong facts, leakage of personal information

as well as exposure to defamation, fraud and cyber bullying. This is also in line with research findings by Sulung & Abdullah (2010) and Zainal (2009) which found that adolescents today are more interested in entertainment such as watching television, listening to radio and surfing internet rather than communicate face-to-face or talk with parents and family members. The frequent use of these gadgets restrict social development to interact with surrounding society making the adolescents individualistic. Hence, monitoring and educating adolescents by their parents need to be streamlined so that technological facilities and progress are not misunderstood by adolescents. Rather, technology is a strong weapon or tool which should be used to develop adolescents toward a meaningful and quality direction.

Research results also finds that respondent parents agree that current entertainment influences adolescent's lifestyle (mean=3.28), reaching 89.3% (or 343 persons), is a challenge to educate adolescents in the family. This is in line with research findings by Yusoff et al., (2010) which explained that television stations nowadays broadcast more negative reality TV programs and extreme entertainment which can alter the real identity of adolescents to a substitute identity as a result of being influenced by their idols. In addition, soft pornography is also indirectly promoted through media by displaying various actions with negative and sensual elements, such as through erotic dances to the viewers (Tamuri & Ismail, 2002), especially in Hollywood, Bollywood and Hallyu (Korean) entertainment. The content of films or songs from foreign artistes with violent, obscene and immoral elements bring these unhealthy symptoms to adolescents leading to moral decadence when adolescents are easily driven to attempt violent actions and sensual scenes that they viewed. Hence, advancement achieved in the world without borders, which should be used to obtain scientific knowledge or useful information, is misused by adolescents through viewing materials with negative elements as well as pornography so as to damage their morals (Winoto, 2013).

In addition, research analysis shows the item "I admit that being busy at work reduces time spent together with my adolescent" (mean=3.16) is a challenge in applying parenting skills to adolescents with the percentage of those who agree and strongly agree reaching 83.6% (321 persons). This finding is in line with the writings of Hamid (2007) which explained that parents' busyness working from morning to evening limits their time spent with their young so that two-way communication and discussions sessions are reduced. In this matter, parents need to be wise in finding leisure or vacation time to be with their young because this affects their emotions, feelings and behaviour. Women who are house wives spend more time with their young and are able to monitor their total development. In contrast, working women or who work outside the home, have very limited time and thus, less ability to monitor and control their young due to work busyness and fatigue (Hashim & Mohamad, 2000). They have to bear a heavy workload at the workplace, so they do not have sufficient time to care for and educate their young at the same time. Hence, women need various individual support, especially from their spouses, in order to fulfill their responsibilities in a balanced and effective manner (Mustari & Basiron, 2014).

Research results also show respondent parents agree that financial problems become a challenge in educating adolescents (mean=3.03), reaching 79.2% (or 304 persons). This finding is in line with the writings of Rosman & Mokhtar (2006) and Suaidi (1994) which explained that adolescent deviant behaviour and involvement in social problems is caused by parents' low income status. Mannes et al., (2005) added that adolescents from low income families are twice as likely to behave negatively compared to other adolescents. This is due

to hardships in life suffered by some families which cause adolescents to be neglected and fall prey to drug abuse and free mixing leading to moral decay (Baba, 2010).

Although research analysis shows the item "I can't control my adolescent's mixing with his friends outside the home" (mean=2.23) obtained the lowest mean value, respondent parents do not deny that friends pose a challenge in applying parenting skills to their adolescents with the percentage of those who agree and strongly agree reaching 59.6% (229 persons). This finding is supported by Ali (2007) and Ismail (2003) who explained that at times, friends or peers have more influence than family. If the peers are good, then the adolescent will become good. If they are not, then this will have a bad effect on the adolescent and may adversely affect his academic achievement and involve him in social ills, especially adolescents who lack family love and monitoring. Othman et al., (2016) stated that parents who do not give enough love and attention make their adolescent incline towards consulting friends and peers, instead of the family, in making decisions. This is also explained by Yusoff et al., (2010) that adolescents turn to peers to confide their problems because they feel more comfortable with friends of the same age and understanding and who share the same basic knowledge and level of thinking, compared to family. Adolescent's dependence on peers causes parents to worry about how their adolescent's attitude will develop and about his safety. Therefore, parents need to know who are his peers and get to know them to ensure that he is always in a good environment.

Conclusion

Research results find that respondents face challenges in realizing parenting skills to educate their adolescents in the family due to the factors of peers, busyness at work, financial problems, technology and cyber media as well as characteristics of generation Z. Therefore, the majority among parents show that the main challenge in this issue is the current communication technology (mean=3.41) such as internet, satellite television, gadgets, hand phone, both printed and electronic mass media, and cyber media. With the advent of technology, can facilitate business, connect with each other and supply information of a global nature. However, technology also sometimes invites danger when children spend too much time playing games, difficult to communicate directly and prone to liberal thinking, atheism, pluralism and so on. Then technology becomes a challenge to today's teenagers and parents need to take steps to solve it through strengthening the knowledge of parenting skills.

The implication of this research gives parents knowledge regarding current challenges in the context of educating adolescents so that parents can deal with adolescent social issues and problems by streamlining knowledge of parenting skills. Further, having sufficient parenting skills to deal with challenges of educating today's adolescents will bring harmony to Muslim families and ultimately form a prosperous Muslim society. This research also contributes knowledge to relevant authorities such as LPPKN, JKM and JAKIM as well as NGOs relating to better management of programs to develop parenting, family and adolescents.

This research proposes that further research be conducted relating to parenting skills according to the Islamic perspective in order that Muslim parents know the best method of educating their adolescents according to the recommendations in al-Quran and al-Hadith toward creating family well-being as shown in the following diagram:

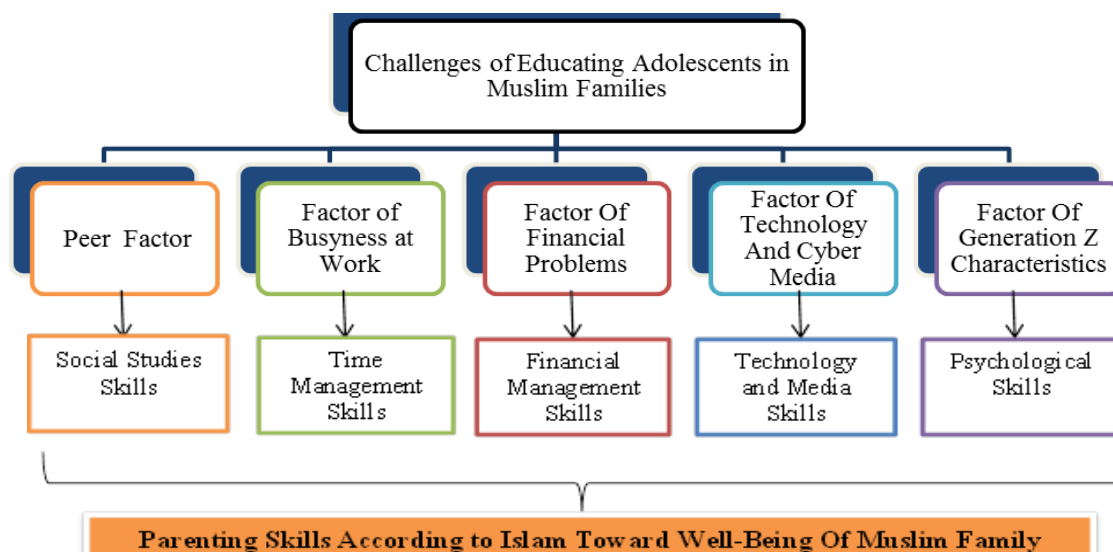


Figure 1 Challenges of Educating Adolescents in Muslim Families

Source: 'Ulwan (2015)

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