

## **Knowledge, Attitude and Practice: An Investigation into the Challenges to Effective Parenting among Malay-Muslim Fathers in Singapore**

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**Abstract :** Fathers who positively involve themselves in their children's lives will have had a constructive influence on the latter's social, behavioural, and psychological development. This paper will share the preliminary findings of an ongoing research project which investigates Singaporean fathers from the nation's minority Malay-Muslim community who commit the reverse, that is, it intends to study the reasons behind these fathers' non-involvement during the period of their children's developing years be it through absence, disinterest or ignorance. For instance, children from homes with absentee fathers are more likely to develop deficiencies in attitude and conduct. A father's negative show of parental skills can also cause setbacks in the child's education, economic instability in the latter's future family life, as well as the likelihood of an ensuing intergenerational transmission of criminal behaviour. In the context of the minority Singaporean Malay-Muslim community, the need to investigate the challenges faced by fathers from the ethnic group in carrying out their parental roles arose due to the perceptible rise in statistics reflecting delinquency among its youths. This has resulted in other associated issues such as teenage pregnancies (and the subsequent cyclical patterns of divorce and single motherhood), over-representation in the data for drug offences, and under-representation in statistics reflecting academic achievement. While other factors are known to be involved, these negative outcomes have also been attributed to the lack of fatherly guidance in the affected Malay families. This still-ongoing research project is being carried out in two phases: The first by means of secondary research as well as exploratory data collection via roundtable and focus group discussions with fathers from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. This sets the way for the second phase in which a survey will be undertaken, followed by a series of in-depth face-to-face interviews. The research findings will then be translated into intervention initiatives to overcome the identified challenges. Based on the results collated from Phase 1 of the research, this paper will share a 'first look' on the challenges to effective parenting faced by Malay-Muslim fathers in Singapore specifically those relating to the socio-cultural domains of attitude, knowledge, and practice.

**Keywords :** Malay fathers, socio-cultural domains, attitude, knowledge, practice

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