

THE LINEAGE OF AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILD IN MALAYSIA: LESSONS LEARNED FROM LITERATURE

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Abstract

An illegitimate child is a child born outside of a legal marriage. In Islam, although this child was born out of wedlock, this child still has an identity. According to Islam also, an illegitimate child in terms of lineage can be traced to the mother as well as the mother's family side only and can't be traced to the biological father at all. The Birth and Death Registration Act 1957 (Act 299) in Malaysia requires every child born to be registered regardless of the child's status whether the child is legitimate or not. From the past until now, issues related to the lineage of an illegitimate child have been explored by many classical and contemporary Islamic scholars in various perspective of discussions. Yet, there are still loopholes in this area as not many studies done to highlight the lessons learned from the previous literatures. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the lessons learned from literature related to the lineage of an illegitimate child in Malaysia. This study uses a qualitative approach via inductive method in analysing the literature related to the lineage of an illegitimate child in Malaysia. The data in this study involves secondary sources such as journals and conferences articles, books, thesis and other materials related to the study issue. Hence, this study proves that there are some important lessons that need to be pondered in the issue of the lineage of an illegitimate child in Malaysia. This study urges the stakeholders involved to be more proactive in dealing with the issues and problems arise related to the lineage of an illegitimate child in Malaysia.

Keywords: Lineage, Illegitimate Child, Legitimacy, Family Law.

Introduction

The recognition of the status of a child born whether considered as a legitimate or illegitimate child is dependent on the existence of a marriage bond between the mother and the father of the child itself. Marriage is the main reason for the status, and this also affects the right of the child in matters of lineage (Noor, 2018). Illegitimate children hold a significant place in the Malaysian context due to historical, legal, cultural and social factors. Understanding the significance of illegitimate children in Malaysia involves exploring their legal status, societal attitudes, challenges they face, and efforts to address their rights and well-being.

Historically, illegitimate children in Malaysia were often subject to legal disadvantages, especially in terms of inheritance and citizenship rights. The legal system's recognition of these children has evolved over time, with legal reforms aimed at providing them with more equitable rights. The significance lies in the ongoing efforts to ensure that all children, regardless of their parentage, have access to fundamental rights such as education, healthcare, inheritance and citizenship. The significance of illegitimate children also encompasses societal attitudes and stigma. In traditional societies, children born outside of legal marriages might face social stigma and discrimination due to cultural and religious norms that prioritize traditional family structures. However, societal attitudes are changing, and there's a growing recognition of the need to challenge stereotypes and promote inclusivity.

Throughout history, matters pertaining to the ancestry of illegitimate children have been the subject of examination by numerous classical and modern Islamic scholars, spanning a spectrum of perspectives. However, it remains evident that certain gaps exist within this domain, as there has been a limited focus on elucidating the insights derived from prior scholarly works. Consequently, this research endeavours to analyse the lessons learned from literature related to the lineage of an illegitimate child in Malaysia.

Literature Review

In general, there are vast literatures conducted by previous researchers related to the lineage of an illegitimate child in the context of Malaysia. Most of these studies are more concerned about legal aspect, *fatwa*, Shariah, civil law, court cases, status, rights and protections related to an illegitimate child in Malaysia. Overall, the literatures are mostly based on some critical themes related to illegitimate children in Malaysia, namely; legal rights, social stigma, family dynamics, education and more.

The study of Muda et al. (2011) attempts to examine the extent of the availability of legal provisions related to determination of lineage legitimacy under Islamic family law in Malaysia, while emphasizing the importance of taking into account the development of science, particularly the application of biological details via *deoxyribonucleic acid* (DNA) as a concrete mechanism of lineage legitimacy. This study explains the discussion of Islamic jurisprudence scholars regarding the use of the method or doctrine of *al-Walad lil firasy* and examines whether there is a need to re-evaluate the legal provisions related to lineage legitimacy as used currently in Malaysia. The results of the study prove that there is a need for verification through DNA in proving the lineage legitimacy of a child and it should be clearly stated in the provisions of Islamic family law in Malaysia. Mohd Subri et al. (2013) has studied on the illegitimate child naming issue according to shariah, legal and social perspectives. The findings indicate that even if a marriage considered valid according to religion and culture, it is still considered invalid according to law if it's not registered under law.

Whereas, Hasan et al. (2013) and Ismail (2013) have successfully scrutinized the issue of the lineage of an illegitimate child in accordance with Shariah and current legislation. Hassan et al. (2013) discusses significant and important issues related to the position of an illegitimate child as decided in the Shariah Court with reference to the provisions of shariah and civil law. After examining several judgments in the Shariah Court involving cases related to many illegitimate children, it was found

that the Shariah Court has two approaches in cases involving the application for the recognition of an illegitimate child, which is either denying or allowing the application for the legalisation of an illegitimate child. Ismail (2013) looks at Malaysia's Islamic Family Law and how it affects the status of an illegitimate child in the family, particularly when determining on a child's name and inheritance issues. This study revealed that a child must be born as a consequence of a genuine marriage in the eyes of the religion and the Islamic family law of the state in order to be accepted as a legitimate child by the present Muslim community in Malaysia.

Some scholars provide insights into the issue of illegitimate children in Malaysia. Wan Ibrahim (2013) discusses the categories of illegitimate children according to Islamic law, including children born as a result of rape, children born before reaching 6 months of pregnancy, and children born before marriage. Allerton (2017) focuses on the experiences of children born to migrants in Sabah, East Malaysia, highlighting their status as 'impossible children' and the ways in which their illegality and exclusion manifest. Bakar (2017) explores the problems faced by illegitimate children among Muslims in Malaysia, including legal and registration issues, and emphasizes the need to preserve the rights of these children based on Islamic justice.

Besides, Ahmad & Md Dahlan (2017) have analysed other issues of illegitimate children in Malaysia like welfare and pregnancy. The latter was conducted specifically at Kubang Pasu district in Kedah, Malaysia. According to them, the implementation of the welfare of Muslim children out of wedlock is still less than satisfactory even though this matter was clearly provided in both shariah and civil law. The researchers try to find out the extent to which aspects of the welfare of Muslim children out of wedlock are implemented according to the perspective of Shariah and legal provisions in Malaysia. The results of this study found that the authorities, especially the Ministry of Family and Community Development Malaysia, Social Welfare Department, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

have played an important role in looking after the welfare of children out of wedlock. Other than, it was also revealed that young teenagers who become pregnant and give birth to illegitimate children have expressed their anxiety about how to save the child from becoming known to the public. The researchers try to determine the extent of acceptance of teenagers' pregnancy outside marriage. The study showed that teenagers and their family members can accept their illegitimate children and are ready to look after the child. Nevertheless, teenagers and family members who are unable to care for the child have different perspectives on illegitimate child care, which has led them to send the kids to a host home.

Islam clearly prohibits its followers from engaging in any behavior that approaches adultery, let alone being involved in adultery itself. One of the main reasons for falling into adultery is the influence of social media, promiscuous social interactions, and a lack of religious education from parents. These factors contribute to young people easily engaging in premarital sexual relationships, leading to the birth of illegitimate children, which is prevalent in today's society (Ahmad & Dahlan, 2017). The problem of illegitimate children worsens with the emergence of various moral crises, such as immoral behaviour, drug abuse, easy access to explicit content, peer influence, promiscuity, inappropriate public behaviour and more (Rashid & Hamid, 2014a). The uncontrolled culture of adultery has led to the birth of illegitimate children, which has given rise to issues related to the status and rights of these children (al-Bakri, 2017). Legally, illegitimate children are those born without a valid marital bond between their parents or less than six months after their parents' marriage. Such children cannot be legitimized by their fathers, nor can their fathers marry their mothers' sisters. They also have no rights to inherit property. In reality, these children remain blameless, and it is their parents who bear the sin (Kamaruddin, 2002).

Alavi et al. (2012), in their study on teenage pregnancies out of wedlock, found that family plays a crucial role in shaping the character and psychological well-being of adolescents. Their research focused on parental

behaviour and the experiences of six teenagers who became pregnant out of wedlock. The study revealed that teenage pregnancies often resulted from a lack of close family relationships, the influence of the living environment, peer pressure, and exposure to unhealthy sexual activities on the internet, which led to pregnancies out of wedlock. According to Muda et al. (2017), moral decay issues such as teenage pregnancies can be addressed through emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is a skill that enables individuals to better manage their lives.

Various factors contribute to the increase in cases of teenage pregnancies. According to Siong & Tharshini (2020), among the contributing factors identified are weak family relationships, the development of information technology that facilitates access to negative influences, peer pressure, as well as low socio-economic status and education levels. The primary factor stems from family conditions. In addition to providing financial support to the family and managing the household, parents are also responsible for providing their children with proper religious education (Rashid & Hamid, 2014b). According to a study conducted by Omar et al. (2010) on 102 pregnant teenagers, there is a connection between teenage pregnancies and unsupervised after-school activities. Teenagers are seen as less likely to share their joys and sorrows and their feelings with their families due to broken families, a lack of communication between parents and children, and insufficient monitoring of social media by family members (Hasbullah, 2016).

Family should be the place where teenagers can express their feelings about the challenges they face from an early age. This is because family members should be the most trusted individuals compared to peers. However, according to a study by Subhi et al. (2012), all respondents, aged 14 to 18, stated that they did not receive sufficient affection from their parents and did not have close relationships with their siblings. The lack of affection and support from the family, especially parents, leads many teenagers to trust their peers more and eventually fall into social problems.

In addition to family, peers exert a significant influence. Peer relationships are a primary factor affecting adolescents' involvement in sexual relationships (Mohammad & Ishak, 2014). It is widely known that the adolescent phase is marked by confusion, sadness, and conflicts. Therefore, it is crucial for adults, such as parents, teachers, and community members, to closely monitor their development to prevent them from engaging in negative activities. Adolescents can be easily influenced and may neglect their studies if not properly guided and given attention.

A study by Abg Ghafar (2010) on pregnant teenagers in Taman Sri Puteri, Kuala Lumpur, found that the main reason for engaging in intimate relationships was to seek love, attention, happiness, and security from their partners. Consequently, some teenagers emulate the actions of their peers, even if they are wrong, to gain acceptance within their social group (Sabran, 2003). Media also contributes to this issue. Mass media significantly influences the younger generation, especially students and teenagers. Television is a popular and essential broadcasting tool in Malaysia, found in nearly every household (Bernam, 2009). Malaysia offers many free television channels for the entire population, in addition to paid television channels and internet streaming platforms. Apart from educational programs that shape public perception, there are countless entertainment shows aired on these channels. Indirectly, these shows have had a negative influence on moral values, leading to emotional and psychosocial instability among teenagers through the entertainment they consume.

The borderless world we live in today encourages teenagers to spend more time with technology. The advancement of technology has made it easier for teenagers to access explicit and pornographic material, contributing to the increasing number of teenagers becoming pregnant out of wedlock and cases of infant abandonment. Research conducted by Alavi et al. (2012) showed that their study participants and acquaintances with similar interests obtained explicit and pornographic material from websites. With just a smartphone equipped with internet access, teenagers can

access any information, including explicit material, which ultimately leads to a phenomenon of free sex.

The phenomenon of free sex has contributed to the issue of teenage pregnancies, resulting in the birth of illegitimate children. This has led to an increase in cases of infant abandonment, adolescent and infant health problems, financial issues, and conflicts within family institutions (Siong & Tharshini, 2020). This alarming phenomenon concerns individuals, families, communities, and the nation as it undermines efforts to build an ethical nation and people with strong identities. Temporary solutions have been implemented through the establishment of shelters such as the Nur Hati Welfare Organization in Ampang, Selangor (Kasnoon, 2020), and baby hatches by the OrphanCare Welfare and Management Organization (Salleh et al., 2018; OrphanCare, 2023). These centres aim to prevent infant abandonment and provide a better future for illegitimate children by ensuring they have the opportunity to receive love and the right to continue their lives like any other children.

The study of Embi & Ismail (2017) discusses the causes, implications, and resolutions related to illegitimate births, particularly in the state of Penang. Various issues are explored, including matters concerning lineage, financial support, guardianship, custody, and estate management, all in the context of public policy in Penang. Despite existing public policies and laws aimed at controlling this issue, the rising statistics of illegitimate births raise questions about their effectiveness, especially regarding the impact on the social development of the community, particularly among the youth. This study calls for a review of existing public policies and laws to better address the needs of illegitimate children and ensure the proper social development of the Malaysian Muslim community, particularly in Penang.

Also, Hamid (2021) focuses on a *maqasid al-Shariah* approach to contemporary Islamic jurisprudence regarding the family in the Malaysian context, with a special reference to the illegitimate child issue. This suggests a shift towards a more holistic and ethical understanding of family law. Mutalib et al. (2021) delves into the issue of confirming the status of

children according to practices in the Shariah courts in Malaysia and its relationship with the perspectives of established schools of Islamic jurisprudence. This indicates an exploration of the compatibility of traditional Islamic jurisprudence with contemporary family law issues. Hashim et al. (2021) explores the determination of legitimacy through the principles of Islamic evidence law. This implies an examination of the legal processes and criteria for establishing the legitimacy of children in Islamic law. Nasrullah & Hilmi (2021) analyse the position of illegitimate children in Malaysian and international judicial systems. This suggests a comparative study of how Malaysia's legal system addresses this issue in a global context.

Moreover, Muhammad et al. (2021) investigate public perceptions and legal status regarding illegitimate children, indicating an examination of societal attitudes and the legal framework surrounding these children. Hishamuddin & Yusof (2021) examine the legality of baby hatches in Malaysia from both a legal and Shariah perspective. This highlights the legal and ethical considerations related to baby hatches as a response to issues related to illegitimate children. Mahd Nor (2021) discusses the phenomenon of illegitimate children among Muslims in Malaysia, particularly in the context of a conference presentation. This suggests a broader societal awareness and discussion of the issue.

Current researchers like Rispalman & Shukri (2022), Halim & Desa (2022), Warman (2022) as well as Nadzri (2023) have also examined various issues of illegitimate children in Malaysia. Rispalman & Shukri (2022) focus on the protection of illegitimate children from the perspective of *maqasid al-Shariah*. This implies an examination of how Islamic legal objectives can guide the protection and rights of these children. Halim & Desa (2022) analyse the achievements of *hifz al-Nasl* (protection of lineage) concerning Shariah criminal offenses, using the Fuzzy Delphi method. This suggests a quantitative and methodological approach to understanding the legal protection of lineage. Warman (2022) conducts a comparative study of *fatwa* (Islamic legal rulings) from different Islamic authorities regarding the

status of children born out of illicit sexual relations. This highlights variations in interpretations and rulings within the Islamic world. Finally, Nadzri (2023) explores the perspectives of the Department of State Mufti of Perlis regarding the lineage of illegitimate children from a *Maqasid al-Shariah* perspective. This implies an investigation into how religious authorities view this issue within the framework of Islamic legal objectives.

In summary, the research findings from the previous scholars works collectively provide a comprehensive view of the various dimensions of the issue of illegitimate children in Malaysia. These studies offer valuable insights into the legal, ethical, social, and religious considerations surrounding this complex topic. They emphasize the need for a holistic approach that respects the rights and dignity of illegitimate children, aligns with Islamic principles and reflects the evolving societal attitudes and legal frameworks in Malaysia. The inclusion of *maqasid al-Shariah* principles in some studies suggests a growing emphasis on ethical and holistic approaches to contemporary family law issues.

Methodology

This study adapts a qualitative research design. A qualitative approach is a research method studying a phenomenon or situation in a real or natural context as it uses a non-statistical inquiry method (Chua, 2006). In this study, the researcher has explored the literature related to the research issue; the lineage of an illegitimate children in Malaysia. The literature was analysed inductively according to certain themes to obtain study results. The strategy of the inductive method emphasizes the state of social reality where every knowledge produced is through data collection, data analysis and the formation of general conclusions (Md Nawi & Che Daud, 2018). Overall, the researcher has followed all of these three steps; first, collected the literature, second, analysed the literature and third, formed a general conclusion. The general conclusions in this study consist of the lessons that can be learned from the findings of the analysis.

Discussion and Findings

Based on the literature review analysis, it was found that there are nine important themes related to the previous researches of the lineage of an illegitimate child in Malaysia, namely; legal reforms and rights recognition, social stigma and discrimination, family dynamics and support systems, education and opportunities, citizenship and nationality issues, cultural and religious considerations, advocacy efforts and policy reforms, psychological well-being and identity, and gender implications.

Scholars have examined the evolution of legal reforms in Malaysia that aim to grant improved rights to illegitimate children, including inheritance, citizenship, and access to social benefits. These reforms are seen as crucial steps toward ensuring equal treatment and protection for all children, regardless of their parentage. Moreover, past researches also highlighted the historical and societal challenges faced by illegitimate children due to social stigma and discrimination. Studies showed that these children and their families often experience negative attitudes, exclusion, and unequal treatment within communities, schools, and workplaces. In term of family dynamics and support systems, the literature delved into the complexities of family dynamics involving illegitimate children. Researchers explored the varying degrees of family acceptance, emotional support, and financial stability that these children experience. Single parents and unmarried couples raising illegitimate children have encountered unique challenges. Also, scholarly works discussed the educational opportunities available to illegitimate children in Malaysia. Research pointed to efforts to ensure equal access to quality education and vocational training, which can contribute to breaking the cycle of disadvantage and promoting social mobility.

Besides, the literature often addressed citizenship and nationality concerns for illegitimate children, particularly when paternity is unclear or undocumented. Scholars examined legal provisions and policies that affect the acquisition of citizenship, and the potential challenges faced by children without clear lineage records. Apart from, researchers also analysed how

cultural and religious beliefs impact the treatment of illegitimate children. They explored the intersection of traditional norms with modern legal principles, as well as efforts to promote intercultural dialogue and inclusivity.

In recent years also, significant attention has been directed towards addressing the rights and challenges faced by illegitimate children. Advocacy groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and governmental initiatives have played a pivotal role in raising awareness about this issue. These efforts have been instrumental in shedding light on the unique circumstances and needs of these children. One crucial aspect highlighted in the literature is the ongoing need for policy reforms to better serve the interests and well-being of illegitimate children. These reforms are seen as essential to ensuring that these children receive the support and protection, they require to lead fulfilling lives. Policy changes can help establish legal frameworks that grant these children their rightful status and access to resources.

Psychological well-being and identity formation are also significant areas of concern when it comes to illegitimate children. Researchers have delved into the psychological aspects of their lives, including self-esteem, identity formation, and mental health. It has been underscored that creating supportive environments is paramount in fostering a positive sense of self in these children. When they are given the necessary emotional support and care, they are more likely to develop a strong and resilient sense of identity.

Furthermore, the gendered implications of illegitimacy have been explored in the literature. Studies have examined how the societal perception of illegitimacy affects women, particularly single mothers. These women often face numerous challenges and stigmatization due to their circumstances. Understanding and addressing these gender-specific issues are not only crucial for improving the lives of illegitimate children but also for advancing women's rights and empowerment. By addressing the

challenges faced by single mothers, societies can take a step towards gender equality and women’s well-being.

To sum up, the literature on illegitimate children emphasizes the importance of advocacy efforts, ongoing policy reforms, psychological well-being, and gender considerations. These aspects collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with addressing the rights and well-being of illegitimate children in society. By continuing to focus on these areas, future researchers can work towards a more inclusive and equitable future for all children, regardless of their birth circumstances.

Lessons learned in literature hold significant importance for both researchers and society as a whole. By that, some potential lessons that might be learned from the lineage of an illegitimate are summarised in Table 1 as follow:

Table 1: Summary of Lessons Learned from Literature

No.	Aspect	Lessons Learned from Literature
1.	Legal Reforms and Rights Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legal reforms have improved the rights of illegitimate children in terms of inheritance, citizenship, and access to social benefits. - These reforms signify progress towards ensuring equal legal recognition and protection for all children, regardless of parentage.
2.	Societal Attitudes and Stigma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Illegitimate children historically faced societal stigma and discrimination due to cultural and religious norms. - Literature indicates that attitudes are shifting towards empathy, inclusivity, and understanding, challenging stereotypes

and stigma.

3. Family Dynamics and Support Systems
 - Family acceptance plays a pivotal role in the well-being of illegitimate children.
 - Research underscores the importance of support networks and familial understanding in providing a nurturing environment for these children.
4. Educational Opportunities
 - Literature points to disparities in educational opportunities, highlighting the need for policies that ensure equal access to quality education.
 - Providing equal educational chances for illegitimate children can contribute to breaking cycles of disadvantage and promoting social mobility.
5. Cultural and Religious Factors
 - Cultural and religious beliefs can impact the treatment of illegitimate children.
 - Lessons from literature emphasize the significance of promoting cultural sensitivity, tolerance, and interfaith dialogue within society.
6. Advocacy Efforts and Policy Reforms
 - Advocacy groups and NGOs raise awareness about the challenges faced by illegitimate children and advocate for policy reforms.
 - Literature underscores the importance of continuous advocacy to drive policy changes that protect the rights and well-being of these children.
7. Psychosocial Well-being and Identity
 - Illegitimate children may experience unique challenges in terms of self-esteem

and identity formation.

- The literature emphasizes the importance of promoting their psychological well-being and providing a positive environment for growth.

8. Gender Implications

- The experiences of single mothers and women raising illegitimate children intersect with broader gender-related challenges.

- Lessons learned underscore the need for empowering women and ensuring their rights within the context of raising illegitimate children.

Source: Author's Own

The exploration of the lineage of illegitimate children in Malaysia through the lens of literature reveals a nuanced and evolving landscape. Legal reforms have emerged as pivotal milestones, heralding increased rights for illegitimate children in areas of inheritance, citizenship, and access to social benefits. These reforms embody a significant step towards achieving equitable legal recognition for all children, regardless of their parentage, fostering a more just societal framework.

Historically, societal attitudes and stigma have cast shadows on the lives of illegitimate children due to cultural and religious norms. However, the literature shows that these attitudes are gradually shifting, unveiling a more empathetic and inclusive narrative. This evolving perspective challenges stereotypes and discrimination, signaling the potential for a more understanding and compassionate society.

Family dynamics emerge as a central force in shaping the well-being of illegitimate children. The literature underlines the critical role of familial acceptance and support networks in nurturing a conducive environment for these children's growth and development. Simultaneously, educational

opportunities stand as a bridge towards breaking cycles of disadvantage and promoting social mobility. Highlighting the disparities in educational access, the literature underscores the importance of policies ensuring equal chances for all.

Cultural and religious influences remain pivotal, both in terms of impacting the treatment of illegitimate children and in advocating for cultural sensitivity, tolerance, and interfaith dialogue. Advocacy groups and NGOs contribute significantly to raising awareness about the challenges faced by these children, catalysing policy reforms for their protection and well-being. Nurturing the psychological well-being and identity of illegitimate children is paramount, given the unique challenges they may encounter. Moreover, gender implications intersect with this discourse, as the experiences of women, particularly single mothers, navigating the journey of raising illegitimate children intersect with broader gender-related challenges. The lessons underscore the necessity of empowering women within this context, ensuring their rights and dignity are upheld.

In sum, the lessons derived from literature illuminate the multifaceted landscape surrounding the lineage of illegitimate children in Malaysia. By acknowledging legal progress, changing societal attitudes, fostering supportive family dynamics, equalizing educational opportunities, advocating for cultural understanding, and addressing gender dynamics, strides can be made toward fostering an inclusive and equitable environment for all children, irrespective of their parentage. Furthermore, future investigations into the field of illegitimate children in Malaysia present a multitude of promising paths that have the potential to substantially influence policy, shape societal viewpoints, and enhance the welfare of these children.

The first critical area of research center's on the tangible consequences of recent legal reforms. These reforms have aimed to enhance the rights and status of illegitimate children, particularly in terms of inheritance, citizenship, and social benefits. Investigating their real-world impact can unveil whether these changes translate into substantial

improvements in the lives of illegitimate children and their families. Understanding the practical implications of these legal adjustments is vital for shaping future policies and interventions.

Secondly, in our increasingly digitalized world, the role of technology in establishing the lineage of illegitimate children is of paramount importance. Research in this area should delve into the potential of digital identity and record-keeping systems to document and safeguard the legal rights and heritage of these children. Leveraging technology effectively can alleviate bureaucratic hurdles and contribute to more robust legal protections. Thirdly, the experiences and voices of illegitimate children themselves remain an underexplored terrain. Understanding their unique perspectives on societal attitudes, legal recognition, and self-identity is crucial. Exploring how they navigate their distinctive family backgrounds provides essential insights into their resilience and needs.

Besides, comparative studies, both within Malaysia and across nations with varying legal and societal contexts, are indispensable for identifying best practices. Such research can shed light on what legal reforms and social support systems are most effective in promoting the rights and well-being of illegitimate children. Thus, illegitimate children often bear the brunt of societal stigma and discrimination, which can have lasting psychological effects. Research should delve deeper into their psychological well-being and mental health. Identifying the long-term consequences of stigma and discrimination is vital, as is pinpointing effective interventions to support their mental health and resilience.

Next, recognizing the intersection of factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic status with illegitimacy is essential. These intersections create unique challenges and opportunities for specific groups of illegitimate children. Research should explore how these factors interplay and how policies can be tailored to address their distinct needs. Besides that, an examination of the historical context of illegitimacy in Malaysia can provide valuable insights into the evolution of societal norms and legal

frameworks. Understanding the historical trajectory of change is crucial for contextualizing contemporary issues and reforms.

The legal and social aspects of parental rights and responsibilities, especially in cases involving undisclosed fathers, require in-depth investigation. Finding equitable solutions that safeguard the interests of all parties involved is an imperative. Also, assessing the effectiveness of educational programs and skills development initiatives aimed at empowering illegitimate children is paramount. Understanding how these programs contribute to their long-term prospects and social integration can inform future educational policies. Apart from, future research focusing on impact of technology on advocacy is also highly encouraged. As technology and social media continue to shape advocacy efforts, exploring their role in raising awareness, mobilizing support, and driving policy changes is vital. Harnessing the potential of online platforms can be a game-changer in promoting the rights of illegitimate children.

Last but not least, investigating healthcare disparities faced by illegitimate children, including access to services and insurance coverage, is essential. Identifying barriers and devising solutions to ensure their health and well-being are fundamental aspects of research in this area. Other than, the intricate interplay between civil law and Islamic law (Shariah) in cases involving illegitimate children necessitates thorough examination. Understanding how these legal systems coexist and the challenges and opportunities they present for the lineage and rights of these children is imperative.

In summary, future research in the lineage of illegitimate children in Malaysia holds immense promise. By addressing these areas, researchers can contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by illegitimate children and their families. This knowledge can serve as a compass, guiding the development of policies, legal reforms, and societal attitudes to create a more equitable and inclusive environment for all children, irrespective of their parentage.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, the insights gleaned from the body of literature shed light on the complex and diverse terrain that surrounds the experiences of illegitimate children in Malaysia. These insights underscore the importance of recognizing the advancements in legal frameworks, shifts in societal perspectives, the cultivation of nurturing family relationships, ensuring equitable access to education, promoting cultural sensitivity and acceptance, and addressing gender-related aspects. Collectively, these measures can contribute significantly to creating a more inclusive and fairer environment for all children, regardless of their familial background. This study has explored the areas of research, considering evolving legal and societal perspectives, emerging trends, and potential gaps in the existing literature. Indeed, future research in the realm of illegitimate children in Malaysia offers an array of promising avenues that can significantly impact policy, social perspectives, and the well-being of these children.

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