

## The Development of Knowledge Leadership Model in Malay Families

Jamiah Manap\*, Siti Fardaniah Abdul Aziz, Aizan Sofia Amin, Norul Huda Sarnon & Ezarina Zakaria

School of Psychology and Human Development, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

### ABSTRACT

Knowledge leadership is pertinent for human capital development and nation building. Family as a pillar of the society should play a pivotal role in developing a knowledge society or the culture of knowledge in the Malay society. Thus, this qualitative research was done by using a grounded theory approach to develop a model on knowledge leadership in the Malay families. The primary data were collected through in-depth elite interviews with the award winner of the national exemplary mother or *Ibu Mithālī* and the children of *Ibu Mithālī*. Document analysis and observations were also done as a part of data collection methods. The data were then analyzed using thematic analysis. Finally, it was developed into a model of knowledge leadership in the *Ibu Mithālī's* family. The model of knowledge leadership in family composed of three themes: learning excitement, teaching excitement and knowledge empowerment. Learning excitement encompasses one's attitude and excitement in searching for knowledge. Teaching excitement comprises of one's excitement in sharing her/his knowledge with the family and society. Knowledge empowerment incorporates one's effort in supporting and empowering the culture of learning in the family and society. Therefore, the model of knowledge leadership in the family displayed by *Ibu Mithālī* and her family can be used as a catalyst for human empowerment and nation building. This model thus serves as an important aspect of self-development amongst women to promote betterment via knowledge leadership in their family, organization and society.

Keywords: Knowledge leadership, educational psychology, parenting, family empowerment, successful Malay

### INTRODUCTION

Education is the core element in human development (Langgullung, 2008) and it is the process of transforming men to become good persons through knowledge (Khurshid, 2001) from God and from the society (Ibn Khaldun, 1993). It is also a common set of beliefs, values, norms and, understanding transmitted from the old to the new generations (Langgullung, 2008). Education from Western perspectives is defined as a process for the betterment of the people such as achieving, producing civilized and knowledgeable people, managing knowledge for better living, and preparing people to carry their responsibilities (Abdul Fatah, 2007). This is aligned with the purpose of education which is to achieve closeness to God (Al-Ghazali, 1988), and to improve human behaviour (Ibn Khaldun, 1993).

Children are entrusted by *Allāh* to every parent (Ekram & Mohamad, 2007). Meanwhile, family is the best place to support and develop one's mental health, emotion, intellectual capability, school performance and self-esteem (Posse & Melgosa, 2001). The relationship pattern between parents and children will influence the children's interactions with their peers from childhood to the adolescence stage (Engels, Decovic, & Meeus, 2002).

Knowledge leadership is the core element of family survival in the dynamic and challenging world. Each society has its own culture of learning. Unfortunately, it was reported social problems among Malays had raised

\*Corresponding author: [jamiah@ukm.edu.my](mailto:jamiah@ukm.edu.my)  
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the statistics especially among teenagers who ran away from home (Harian Metro, 11 Mac, 2015). This problem demonstrated the needs to explore the positive knowledge culture among Malays. Hence, there is a need to understand knowledge culture among Malay families as the major population in Malaysia. To date, *Ibu Mithali* is a national award given by the Yayasan Dakwah Malaysia (YADIM) to mothers as a recognition of excellence in nurturing their children. To date, YADIM had awarded 11 mothers as *Ibu Mithali* since 1981 until 2016. Thus, this research aims to develop a special model on knowledge leadership in Malay Families using the national parenting benchmark.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used the grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) approach in the qualitative analysis. Data were collected using semi structured interviews with four *Ibu Mithālī*(s) and their eight children, document analysis on notes and books about *Ibu Mithālī*, and continuous observations along the process of the data collection. Some of the books were, *Ibu Mithali ke-2* and *Biografi Pemenang Anugerah Ibu Mithali*. The data were then analyzed using the thematic analysis (Aronson, 2012) approach to understand and develop the model of knowledge leadership in families. At the beginning,, 273 codes emerged during open coding. The codes then were merged into 63 mutually exclusive codes. In axial coding, the codes fell into 10 categories and three dominant themes. In selective coding, the codes and categories were intertwined with the previous theory and finally, the model of knowledge leadership in the family emerged from the data.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data analysis resulted in four levels of abstraction. At level 1, the codes indicated concepts that emerged directly from the data. The data were then categorized into 9 categories at level 2. Meanwhile, the categories were divided into three main themes of knowledge leadership.

TABLE 1  
Summary on Knowledge Leadership in the Family.

Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
1. Knowledge interest 2. Knowledge is important for her children 3. Knowledge as valuable inheritance	Value Knowledge	Learning excitement (one's attitude and excitement in searching for beneficial knowledge)	Knowledge Leadership
4. Recites the Al-Quran 5. Read books, newspapers and magazines	Reading		
6. Sincere Love to learn 7. Self-learning 8. Adult learning 9. Learn from teachers 10. Learn from husband 11. Learn through listening 12. Learn life's skill 13. Primary education 14. Religious education 15. Learn from mother -in -law 16. Lifelong learning	Learning Passion		
17. Primary school teacher 18. Headmistress 19. Gives lecture 20. Trainer 21. Al-Qurān teacher 22. Open religious school	Teaching Profession	Teaching excitement (one's excitement in sharing her/his knowledge with the family and society).	
23. Teach neighbours 24. Teach her children 25. Passion in teaching 26. Teach cooking skills 27. Teach tailoring skills	Knowledge Sharing		
28. Quick feedbacks 29. Gives rational knowledge (?) 30. Shows the right behaviour	Family Coaching		

31. Gives guideline 32. Tells stories, news and poems 33. Controls desires 34. Death remembrance 35. Gives examples 36. Tells joke 37. Body language			
38. Religious education 39. Sends to Qur’ān teacher 40. Learn in religious school 41. Non-formal education 42. Formal education 43. Tertiary education 44. Supervises school attendance 45. Encourages joining School activities 46. Best school	Proper Education	Knowledge empowerment  (one’s effort in supporting and empowering the culture of learning in the family and society)	
47. Family learning gathering 48. Lifelong learning 49. Learning guidance 50. Reasoning 51. Knowledge practice 52. Intellectual discourse 53. Opportunity to learn at maximum level 54. Learning freedom 55. Learning motivation	Family Learning Habit		
56. Positive minded people 57. Learning facility 58. Continuous pray 59. Mutual love 60. Positive learning environment 61. Health care 62. Brain food 63. Financial Support	Learning support		

**The Model of Knowledge Leadership in the Family.** The model of knowledge leadership (Figure 1) in the family consists of three dominant elements: Learning excitement, teaching excitement and knowledge empowerment. Using these three elements, the leader creates a learning culture in the family and empowers the family via knowledge and wisdom.

Figure 1  
The Model of Knowledge Leadership in Family



*Learning Excitement*

Learning excitement (Figure 2) refers to the leaders’ attitudes and excitement in searching for knowledge. They valued knowledge, enjoy reading and continuously learning. As a result, they became knowledgeable persons.

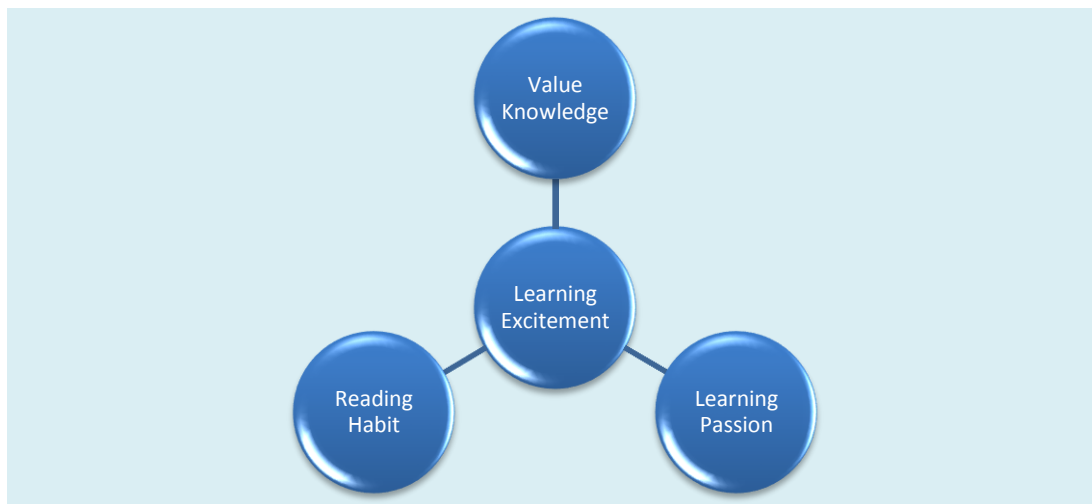
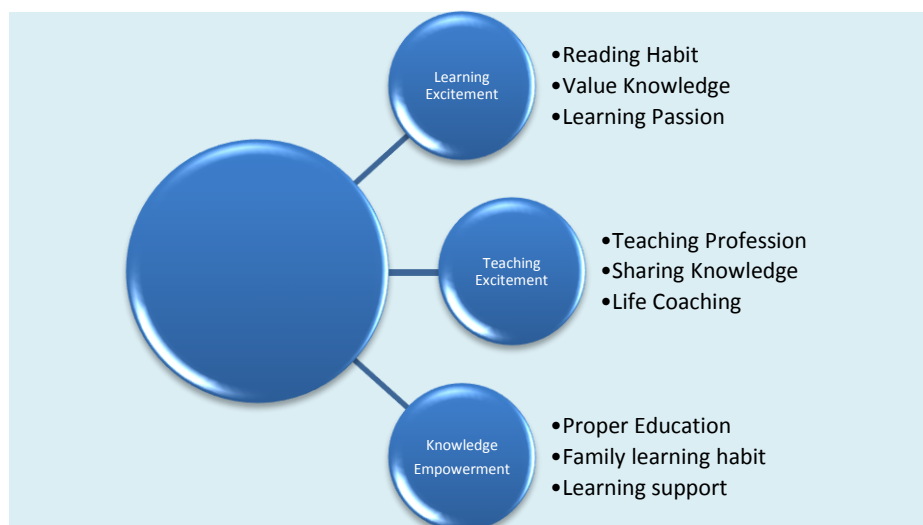


Figure 2  
Learning Excitement in Knowledge Leadership

*Value Knowledge*

Knowledge leaders knew the importance of knowledge and gave high priorities to knowledge empowerment in their families. Research revealed *Ibu Mithālī(s)* upheld and valued knowledge very highly. The love and realization on the importance of knowledge to the family brought significant changes on how they valued life. They were always eager to learn and pass on the knowledge to other people. They encouraged their children to attain education as much as they could. This was also the reason *Ibu Mithālī(s)* positioned their children’s education as the top priority in the family budget.



To an *ibu Mithali’s family*, (Hajjah Esah and Tuan Haji Sulaiman) stated knowledge and children's education were very important and had always been their first priority. (Noor Aziah, 2011b).

An *ibu Mithali* stated she would always prioritize this matter (knowledge) above all. (Dr. Ahmad, Dentist, Madam Ayot’s son).

Another *ibu Mithali* said she did not want her children to become ignorant... (Ustaz Ashraf, Lecturer, Madam Kalsum’s son).

A 9<sup>th</sup> *Ibu Mithali* said , without knowledge... it was even more difficult to get jobs if they grew-up without knowledge. (Madam Esah, the 9th *Ibu Mithālī*).

### *Reading Habit*

Reading is the door of knowledge. Thus, the leader of knowledge opened it with love and enthusiasm. Reading became their habit to acquire knowledge. They enjoyed reading and collecting many reading materials. The family members could see their passion of reading, and usually bought more books for their children. Reading became their therapy, while the provider of the reading materials became their friend. In Ibu Mithālī's family, reading became the mother's habit since childhood and perhaps until her last breath. Nothing could stop them to read. They recited the Al-Quran everyday either directly from the text or through their memorization. They took each opportunity to read books, magazines, newspapers and any beneficial reading materials. They carefully digested the contents of their reading materials which they explained enlightened the meaning of life and the soul.

My mother, she (would) read the Al-Qur'ān non-stop. Even until now, she continuously read the Al-Qur'ān. She is now more than 90 years old. This Fasting Month, she completed reading the whole Al-Qur'ān two times.

(Madam. Nik Mastura, Former Educational Officer, Madam Wan Mas's daughter).

The one Makcik practises for years are the 7 chapters: Sūrah as-Sajdah, Sūrah Yāsīn, Duhā, al-Wāqiaah, al-Ḥadīd and al-Mulk. Can say (I) could memorize it. When people read, we can (check). From after Maghrib to Ishā' always open the ḥadīth to read... revise... becomes our practice.

(Madam Awiah, the 10th Ibu Mithālī).

Her (reading) interest was discovered by her husband and then he presented a book titled "Tun Fatimah, Malay Heroine". She reads it three times, and would continue to read it until the spirit of Tun Fatimah was channelled into her soul (Faridah, 2011).

When asked about her favourite books, she said: The one Tok Ayoh loved to buy... history... books in the shelf.

(Madam Wan Mas, the 2nd Ibu Mithālī).

### *Learning Passion*

The thirst of knowledge inspired the knowledge leader to learn continuously. They took every chance to learn even though they were usually very busy in handling their life. They enjoyed learning and getting new knowledge and understanding. They were willing to sacrifice their time, money and energy to learn. Learning was their hobby. Thus, they enjoyed learning even though they had to pay a substantial amount for it.

*Ibu Mithālīs* never ending interest towards knowledge had further encouraged them to seek learning experiences. Since childhood, *Ibu Mithālīs* viewed the learning process with full enthusiasm. They declared to continuously seek for knowledge until the end of their life. This noble act fitted exquisitely with Islamic teachings that encouraged Muslims to learn from the cradle to the grave. They did not feel embarrass to learn from anybody, at any time and at any place.

I am very fond of learning ever since childhood and even now.

(Madam Wan Mas, the 2nd *Ibu Mithālī*).

(I) Love to study and learn... I would go early in the morning... at dawn went to Tok Guru's house, accompanied by traditional lamp... I would learn Al-Qur'ān, berzanji... and returned home at 7... took shower... had a little breakfast... gone to school again... in the past the school started at 8.00 am... (she would) stay there for six years... (until she) passed standard six...

(Madam Wan Mas, the 2nd *Ibu Mithālī*).

She did not receive any formal education at school except the Al-Qur'ān when she was young, and later she joined the adult classes at an old age. The knowledge gained through reading, in the Jawi script, then the Rumi, and the skills to write and read in both scripts were acquired through self-learning.

(Nik Safiah, 2011a).

Mother Enjah and Madam Esah Din had never attended school because they missed the opportunity. Regardless, they learned to read and write by themselves.

(Nik Safiah, 2011a).

The sewing skill was learned from the neighbours, who sympathized with the difficulties of the family (Hajjah Maimon).  
(Mastura, 2011)

Her husband became her teacher who taught her to read the Roman script.  
(Mastura, 2011).

Non-Formal Education: The Hadīth (prophetic tradition) class was carried out at home with her husband and children.  
(Madam Awiah nomination form, YADIM, 24 May 2010).

She learned through listening... for the purpose of education, she listened very attentively... “I studied in the mosque and incidentally during the time I was in the mosque... Tok Guru was also teaching there (in the mosque)... and my mom was at home... one day someone asked the same questions at home in Sungai Buluh... my mom (was able to) answer the questions... exactly the same what Tok Guru had taught previously in the mosque just as I heard before”.  
(Ustaz Ashraf, Lecturer, Madam Kalsum’s son).

Knitting, I learned it from my mother in law...  
(Madam Esah, the 9th *Ibu Mithālī*)

Madam Kalsum (The 8th *Ibu Mithālī*) received education in standard six at Sekolah Melayu and religious education in standard three.  
(Noor Aziah, 2011a).

She (Madam Wan Mas) studied the Al-Qur’ān in the evening. At night, she often attended lectures on prayers held in the neighbour’s house next door.  
(Nik Safiah & Rokiah, 2004).

She (Madam Maimon) learned at the mosque. There was one religious teacher who graduated from al-Azhar University... he taught for free such as giving free sermons at the *pondok* school for the elderly who did not know how to recite the Al-Qur’ān and did not know how to pray... she was the only child... and the youngest girl (in the class)  
(Madam. Azizah, Former Headmaster, the late Madam Maimon’s daughter)

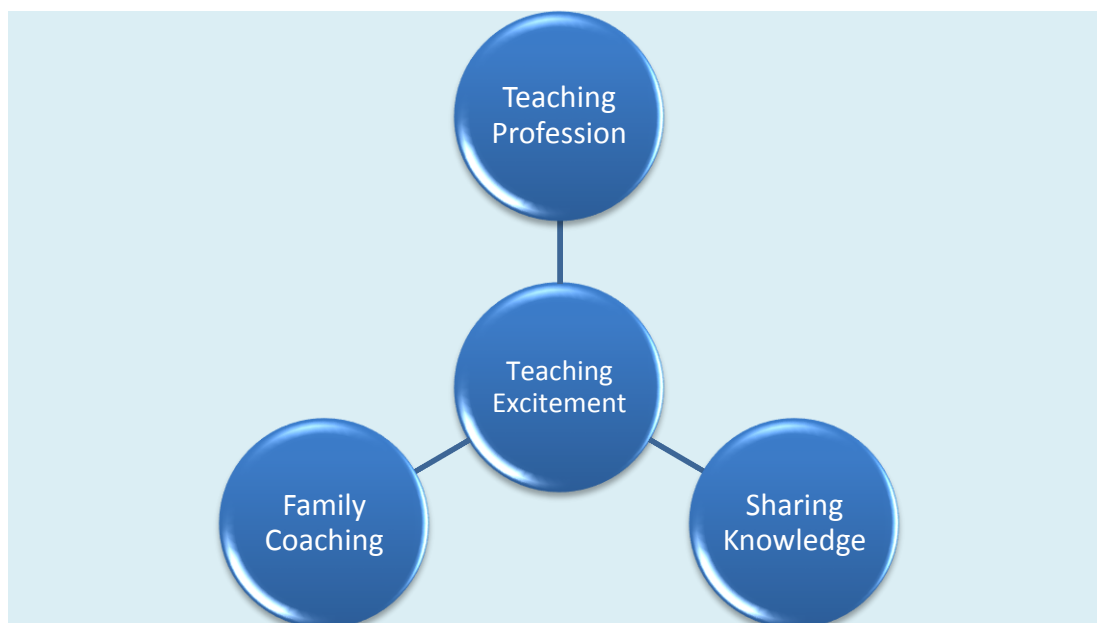
She learned from \*Informal educators at Atok’s (grandparent) residence.  
(Madam. Rosilah, Teacher, Madam Esah’s daughter).

Would always attend religious classes at the mosque and musholla nearby.  
(Madam Awiah nomination form, YADIM, 24 May 2011).

### *Teaching Excitement*

Teaching excitement (Figure 3) refers to the leader’s excitement in sharing his/her knowledge with his/her family and community. They fully utilized their knowledge to overcome ignorance in their family and society. They opened the people’s eyes on the importance of knowledge for human survival in the world and hereafter.

Figure 3



Teaching Excitement in Knowledge Leadership

### *Teaching Profession*

The leader of knowledge usually loved the teaching profession either formal or non-formal. They took all opportunity to teach others without expecting any rewards. They sacrificed their time, money and energy to teach others. However, they did not feel it as a burden because they loved the process of teaching and wanted others to be like them or to be better than them.

Most of the *Ibu Mithālī*(s) enjoyed the teaching profession. As a teacher, they taught with love and dedication. They were like the sunshine, which shone the students' heart with knowledge and wisdom. They did not aim for big salaries/income. They just wanted to pour their pond of knowledge to benefit their students/audience.

So the first school in Kelantan... Tok We was the teacher. Tok We had a cousin... named Nik Halimah... so he taught together with her.

(Madam Wan Mas, the 2nd *Ibu Mithālī*).

Hajjah Zabedah's career began as a trainee teacher at the Malay Girls School in Kajang. In 1935, at sixteen years old, she was selected to join the Malacca Women's College and attended the teacher training course for two years.

(Jawiah, 2011).

In 1937, she was assigned to teach at the Beranang Malay School, Selangor. A year later, she was assigned to the Setapak Girl's School. Thirteen (13) years later, she was sent to the Kampong Baru Girl's School, Kuala Lumpur, as a headmistress until her retirement.

(Jawiah, 2011).

After receiving the title for *Ibu Mithālī* award in 1994, her life (Madam Maimon) changed from a house wife to 'motivator', who was always invited to give lectures especially on child education.

(Mastura, 2011).

Provided guidance to poor students at the Madrasah Tahfiz Al-Qur'ān an-Nuur Kesang Laut.

(Madam Awiah nomination form, YADIM, 24 May 2010).

I was in a school in Cambodia, where there were about 100 students. There were four siblings. Upon completing their studies, they became certified ḥāfiz (could memorize the whole Qur'ān) teachers. I asked them to open Tahfiz school. There were six girls and ten boys there. They were still studying. Later, they would become teachers there.

(Madam Awiah, the 10th *Ibu Mithālī*).

### *Sharing Knowledge*

Knowledge leader loved to share their knowledge with their society. Their spirit of wisdom and altruism motivated them to ensure others would benefit from their knowledge. Thus, they loved to share their knowledge for societal well-being because they did not want others to remain in the darkness of ignorance.

A Muslim who fully understood Islam, would reap benefit from it and those who taught others were likened to a fertile soil that absorbed rainwater and brought forth abundance of vegetables and grass (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: 79). *Ibu Mithālī* could be closely associated to be part of this simile. *Ibu Mithali* taught their friends and society in non-formal settings. They taught others on living skills and religion in order to close the gap between and among families and the community.

She was involved in an illiterate class... she brought back knowledge to her villagers, taught them sewing... weaving... all elderly women too would come... she also taught cooking...  
(Madam. Nik Mastura, Former Educational Officer, Madam Wan Mas's daughter).

She gave training on sewing and cooking. The students' mothers were also invited to her house for sewing and cooking courses.  
(Nik Safiah, 2011c)  
When the government launched the campaign to eradicate illiteracy, together with other teachers, she would volunteer to conduct adult classes.  
(Nik Safiah, 2011c).

She was never stingy with knowledge. She was always willing to share her knowledge with others.  
(Dr. Ahmad, Dentist, the late Madam Ayot's son).

She shared her knowledge... She was never stingy when it came to the sharing of knowledge...  
(Dr. Aminah, Medical Doctor, the late Madam Maimon's daughter).

Though illiterate in the beginning, Ibu Enjah improved herself, and through extraordinary abilities, emerged as a fiery political orator, with contents. She also constantly educated the young leaders so that UMNO's struggle could prevail.  
(Nik Safiah, 2011a).

### *Family Coaching*

The leader of knowledge utilised their vast knowledge and experiences to coach their family members especially their children for life betterment. They coached them with knowledge and virtues for positive attitudes and behaviour. They had strong attachment with their family members. Thus, they understood their family members and coached them at any moment with suitable approaches.

All Ibu Mithalis had strong relationship with their family members. They understood the nature of their children and tailored their approaches of coaching according to each child's uniqueness. They gave quick advice, requested them to think, exhibited the right behaviour and gave clear guidelines. Besides, they applied various methods of teaching to coach their children, such as using jokes, storytelling, news, poems, and body language.

"If we are involved in a quarrel... She advised us because it was something she opposed to (us fighting)... Her exact words were, God hates people who fight with each other... "  
(Madam. Rosilah, Teacher, Madam Esah's daughter).

In learning on how to read the Al-Qur'ān, Makcik would teach them. Not one of the children was sent to the Al-Qur'ān class.  
(Madam Awiah, the 10th *Ibu Mithālī*).

Made sure they emptied the plate, so it would not be a waste. She always talked of the difficulties to even get rice during the Japanese occupation.  
(Dr. Ahmad, Dentist, Late Madam Ayot's son).

Through advice, stories, news, poems and etc. She would always relate examples on good virtues.  
(Dr. Ahmad, Dentist, the late Madam Ayot's son).

She always told us about the Prophet (PBUH), His companions...



(Dr. Aminah, Medical Doctor, the late Madam Maimon's daughter).

Sometimes she showed examples in real life to relate to the story of the Prophet's (PBUH) companions...  
(Mrs. Azizah, Former Headmaster, the late Madam Maimon's daughter).

With all of the advices, stories, news, poems and etc... She would always relate them with good virtues. She told traditional folklores such as Pak Kadok, Pak Pandir, Si Tanggang, Siti Zubaidah and other stories. Old folk stories... She stressed on what happened to the people with negative virtues such as tyranny, laziness and boastfulness.

(Dr. Ahmad, Dentist, the late Madam Ayot's son).

Psychologically, she would nag, "if your siblings are successful, and you're not, what will happen to you when I'm dead?"

(Dr. Aminah, Medical Doctor, the late Madam Maimon's daughter).

What happened to other people must be taken as a lesson to us. She liked to give examples and related them to real life situations around us.

From the behaviour aspects, sometimes she would give advice... and sometimes she would tease us, made fun of us, while at other times she would be very angry, it all depended on the situations.

(Madam Azizah, Former Headmaster, the late Madam Maimon's daughter).

She would appear not to be angry at me, but we could tell from her face... We just knew it...We could see it from her facial expressions...

(Madam Azizah, Former Headmaster, the late Madam Maimon's daughter).

### *Knowledge Empowerment*

Knowledge empowerment (Figure 4) refers to the leaders' effort to empower others especially their family to acquire knowledge at the optimum level. They made sure their followers had proper education especially from the educational and religious institutions. They also created learning habit among the family members and provided continuous learning support to inculcate knowledge culture in the family.

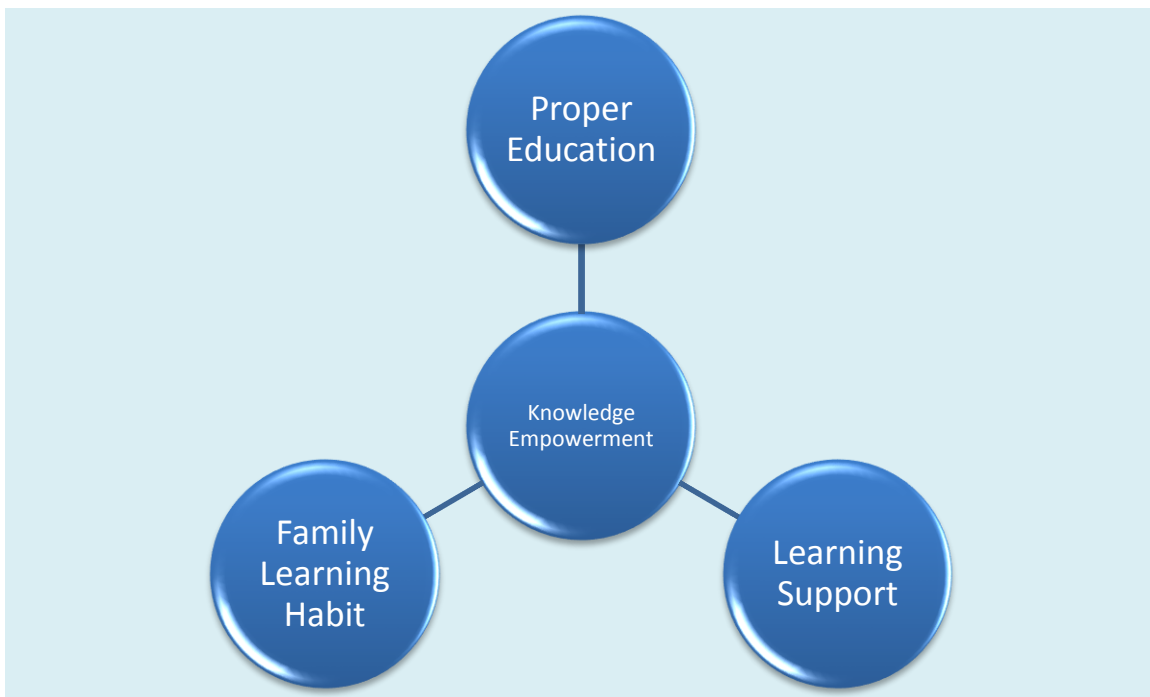


Figure 4  
Knowledge Empowerment in Knowledge Leadership

### *Proper Education*

The leaders of knowledge provided proper education to their family members. They sent their family members especially their children to trusted educational institutions either for formal or non-formal education. They instilled in their family members the importance and the benefits of knowledge. Even though they were knowledgeable, they believed there are many people out there who are more knowledgeable and skilful in certain areas than them. Thus, they sent their family members to the best institutions and gave full support to the institutions to educate their children.

*Ibu Mithālī*(s) sent their children to the best schools for academic purposes. Most of them sent their children to either Malay, English or Arabic oriented government schools. They supervised the children academic progress and encouraged them to join school activities. Besides formal education, they sent their children to other institutions in the society to learn religion, self-defence or any other knowledge as an added value. They also encouraged the children to pursue their degree either in Malaysia or abroad.

She made sure we went to the best school.  
(Dr. Ahmad, Dentist, the late Madam Ayot's son).

She sent the children to a boarding school which was far from the village, very far away... I was sent to Sekolah Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur... travelled with my mother by train...  
(Ustaz Ashraf, Lecturer, Madam Kalsum's son).

So, my brothers went for religious studies at the mosque... they did not receive formal religious education at school.  
(Ustaz Ashraf, Lecturer, Madam Kalsum's son).

From the sixth child to the youngest sibling... all were educated at the religious school... except for my younger sister, the eighth child... the rest studied at the religious school even though they did not work in the religious field upon completion of the study...  
(Ustaz Ashraf, Lecturer, Madam Kalsum's son).

From the educational aspect, she gave everything... from the eldest brother to the sixth sister ... fifth child... all were English educated...  
(Ustaz Ashraf, Lecturer, Madam Kalsum's son).

The children would always be reminded of the importance of education. She made sure the children attended school every day, and truancy would not be tolerated.  
(Dr. Ahmad, Dentist, the late Madam Ayot's son).

I joined many competitions... Firdaus too... I was involved in "the call for prayer competition... speech... and etc.  
(Ustaz Ashraf, Lecturer, Madam Kalsum's son).

### *Family Learning Habit*

The knowledge leaders cultivated a learning culture in the family. They created positive learning habit as a family tradition. They encouraged their family members to undertake long-life learning and continuously upgraded their knowledge like the knowledge leaders themselves.. They made learning as an enjoyment and fruitful activities, until everybody began to love it..

*Ibu Mithālī*(s) created family learning habit via family learning programs such as study groups, mathematics exercises and weekly religious discussions. They engaged the children in intellectual discourse and to come up with reasons for each argument. They motivated the children to use their faculty of thinking and used their knowledge for the benefit of others. They gave the freedom of learning and encouraged them to learn for the sake of God.

Although she was not able to read and write, it had never prevented Hajjah Esah to educate and encourage children to learn. At night, when the children sat together for homework or studying, she would accompany them while preparing and baking the cakes.  
(Noor Aziah, 2011b).

Every night... the children would gather... to prepare for school work. Nik Omar became the group leader and taught them to revise schoolwork. Before they began with the schoolwork, he would make it a routine for the children to recite the multiplication formulae or tables.  
(Nik Safiah & Rokiah, 2004).

She was always opened to opposing ideas and lively discussions on the related issues.  
(Dr. Ahmad, Dentist, the late Madam Ayot's son).

She gave her opinions and asked us to think about them and it's up to us to take up the next action.  
(Dr. Ahmad, Dentist, the late Madam Ayot's son).

If she disagreed with our actions, she would tell us and gave her opinion or her reasons.  
(Dr. Ahmad, Dentist, the late Madam Ayot's son).

Our mother respected and listened to our opinions and she would never force us. For example, when we applied for the courses we liked, she did not object to it. It's the same with education. So did other matters too. It meant we had our own rights...  
(Dr. Aminah, Medical Doctor, the late Madam Maimon's daughter).

We would listen to her nagging and anger...and we would always remember it. After all she would inform us the reasons behind the nagging and anger...  
(Mrs. Nik Mastura, Former Educational Officer, Madam Wan Mas's daughter).

There were so many rooms. I could do anything I like, whether to study at the desk or reading the books lying in bed... she would not mind. As long as I did what I was supposed to do.  
(Dr. Aminah, Medical Doctor, the late Madam Maimon's daughter).

She (Hajjah Zabedah) set the time for playing and learning.  
(Jawiah, 2011).

Some liked to sit while studying, and some loved to lie prone...  
(Ustaz Ashraf, Lecturer, Madam Kalsum's son).

She (Hajjah Zabedah) would always pray and encouraged the children to continue their studies to as high as possible.

The most important thing was the children were given education according to their own abilities.  
(Dr. Ahmad, Dentist, the late Madam Ayot's son).

I would observe them, and at night I would ensure they did the revision. Of course there were differences in the level of knowledge but the key point was everybody must be educated and they were eager to learn too, as long as they wished to learn, even until the end of the world.  
(Madam Awiah, the 10th *Ibu Mithālī*).

### *Learning Support*

The knowledge leaders provided learning support to their family members to boost the culture of learning. They continuously motivated the family members to learn, built positive learning environment at home, surrounded their family members with positive minded people, provided learning facilities and gave financial support. They focused concern on other factors which might affect the learning process such as good healthy food, peaceful mind and healthy body.

*Ibu Mithālī(s)* committedly provided learning support to their children. The commitment began before marriage by choosing a smart husband as the father to their children. They surrounded the children with positive people, created mutual love, provided 'food' for the brain, and took good care of their children's health. They always prayed for their children and motivated them for academic success. They also provided learning materials and all learning facilities within their ability.

Strong family institutions helped tremendously. Fathers, grandparents, and the neighbours played their roles, besides guidance from the teachers, and not forgetting the peers.  
(Madam Alang Kamariah, the 8th *Ibu Mithālī*).

Her husband, Tuan Haji Ismail (Madam Kalsum's husband, the 8th *'Ibu Mithālī'*) utilized most of the time to influence the children to love knowledge. The effect could be seen to this day, the children grew up as adults who appreciated the culture of mutual love, and respect for knowledge.  
(Noor Aziah, 2011a)

The friends who came to the house were good friends because of the mother's strict control...  
(Ustaz Ashraf, Lecturer, Madam Kalsum's son).

The dining table was also substituted as a place to study... as it was big...  
(Ustaz Ashraf, Lecturer, Madam Kalsum's son).

Every time when (my) children were about to take any examination or test, regardless if they were married or not, they would never miss to call their mother to seek for her blessing.... (nonetheless whether upon request or not) the mother would always pray for their success...  
(Dr. Aminah, Medical Doctor, the late Madam Maimon's daughter).

She hugged... kissed...  
(Madam. Azizah, Former Headmaster, the late Madam Maimon's daughter).

Mother's compassion with children is natural... although they had all grown up, I would still kiss them. That is my way of showing true love.  
(Madam Awiah, the 10th *'Ibu Mithālī'*).

During my time, drug was uncommon...  
(Mrs. Rosilah, Teacher, Madam Esah's daughter).

Mother liked to tidy up and to ensure the house cleanliness.  
(Mr. Khairul, Government Officer, Madam Alang Kamariah's son).

Clean... even though the house was small...  
(Madam Azizah, Former Headmaster, the late Madam Maimon's daughter).

Whenever we were sick or down with fever, she took good care and stayed with us.  
(Dr. Ahmad, Dentist, the late Madam Ayot's son).

Nik Amrah still remembered his mother would feed him his favourite bread when he was down with fever. As she patted the head of the sick child, Wan Mas would give bread and supplication for the healing process.  
(Nik Safiah & Rokiah, 2004).

Breast-feeding was the factor and the reason the children rarely fell sick, i.e. because mother's milk contains immunization.  
(Ustaz Ashraf, Lecturer, Madam Kalsum's son).

Their (Madam Ayot's family) daily diet was very simple, consisted of rice served with fish and shoots from the wood,  
(Siti Rogayah, 2011).

Asam pedas, thick curry gravy Northern style, and the one with spicy condiments, salted fish, any type of fish, vegetables, all would be served...  
(Ustaz Ashraf, Lecturer, Madam Kalsum's son).

The dishes were mainly fresh fish most of the time, but sometimes there would also be chicken with meat... and food was sufficient... these included fruits as well...  
(Mrs. Nik Mastura, Former Educational Officer, Madam Wan Mas's daughter).

His mother would normally cook fish and vegetables, and meat only occasional.  
(Nik Safiah & Rokiah, 2004)

She ensured the books, the school uniforms... and the food at school were sufficient.  
(Dr. Ahmad, Dentist, the late Madam Ayot's son).

We would sacrifice everything even to the extent of pawning something... sacrificed everything... sent them to the best schools .... We bought them the study equipment .... sent to further study at Bukit Bintang High School, Kuala Lumpur.

(Ustaz Ashraf, Lecturer, Madam Kalsum's son).

They would never hesitate to sell the land or pawn gold to send the children to school.

(Noor Aziah, 2011b).

## RESEARCH IMPLICATION

This research revealed knowledge leadership is very important in any successful family; where, the children were very successful in their life and therefore their mothers were awarded as *Ibu Mithali*. The research also revealed, the essence of a successful family is typically led by knowledge leadership through the mothers. Mothers should lead the knowledge development by showing the excitement in teaching, excitement in learning, and empowering the knowledge. This is because mothers play a vital role as the closest person to children that can raise their children with lots of love. Unfortunately, people have forgotten the importance of appreciating knowledge especially in raising their children. This is caused by many factors, such as the demographic changes that show the changing role of women from fulltime housewives to fulltime working mothers. As a result, both parents are exhausted after working and have forgotten to cultivate the excitement of knowledge in their family. Hence, the research findings hope to increase awareness among the society especially in cultivating meaningful parenting styles in order to have a successful family. Hence, it is not impossible to cultivate knowledge leaderships among Malays and with that perhaps many of the current the social problems will decrease.

## CONCLUSION

Knowledge leadership in this research is defined as the leaders' ability to influence their family members to cultivate beneficial knowledge culture in the family. Successful knowledge leadership has at least three essential qualities: learning excitement or the passion for learning, teaching excitement or the passion for teaching, and learning empowerment or the passion to support the learning activities.

Knowledge leadership is a must in the modern family to survive in the challenging world. Family as the basis of educational institution requires knowledge to adapt with the dramatic changes and unpredictable life scenarios. The leadership begins with positive role model especially from the parents and older siblings in the family. However, sometimes the leadership may emerge from the youngest family member. And, most of the time, each family member leads each other in cultivating the knowledge culture. In other words, any member of the family has the potential to bring out the family from the pain of ignorance to knowledge and wisdom.

*Ibu Mithali* is a special brand of family brilliance. They modelled on how the knowledge leadership functioned in the family and empowered the family members to succeed despite their hardships, especially at the beginning of the family journey. The excitements of learning pour the valley of beneficial knowledge to the thinking faculty, which then transforms the mother's attitudes and behaviour. As a result, they become wise persons. Their wisdom of teaching excitement and knowledge empowerment inspires others to dig together the valuable assets in the ocean of knowledge and present it to the society. Today, the children follow *Ibu Mithali(s)* footsteps and become the leaders of knowledge in their own family and society. Thus, the excellent tradition of knowledge leadership was transmitted from one generation to another.

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