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Abstract

The significance of transforming cities and human settlements to be inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable, as emphasized by Sustainable Development Goal 11, cannot be overstated. Given the family's recognized status as the fundamental unit of modern societies and its central focus in welfare policies worldwide, it is imperative to examine the role of families in achieving the SDGs. Understanding how families contribute to social progress and development goals within the framework of the SDGs is crucial for devising effective pathways that align with existing public policy instruments. To address the objectives of SDG 11, this study aimed to investigate the contributions of families to local social development. Qualitative research was conducted for the doctoral thesis of one of the authors, involving 31 millennial women respondents residing in Malaysia. Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, a web-based written interview was conducted using Google Forms (Docs) from May to July 2021. The study shed light on the vital roles played by families, as revealed through the respondents' feedback. The findings demonstrated their significant contributions to the development of local society, encompassing social participation, monetary philanthropy, knowledge sharing, environmental support, and the practice of ethical values and morality. In line with the emphasis of SDG 11, it is crucial for the local government to engage all stakeholders, including family members, in the transformation of cities and human settlements to achieve inclusivity, safety, resilience, and sustainability.

Keywords: Environmental Support, Families, Idea and Knowledge Sharing, Local Society Development, Monetary Philanthropy, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

Families Driving Local Societal Advancement in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a global framework of social progress indicators. Their purpose is to establish comprehensive goals for sustainable social advancement across 17 categories and 169 targets by 2030, with a commitment to leave no one behind. The SDGs encompass environmental preservation, peace-building, and sustainable economic growth, requiring collaboration at both national and international levels. They apply universally to all countries, irrespective of their economic status, and entail

targets for social services, public investment, and other areas to achieve the desired outcomes. Notably, SDG 11 focuses on transforming cities and human settlements into inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable environments.

Recognizing the pivotal role of families as the natural and fundamental units of modern societies, it is essential to highlight their contribution to the SDG framework's social progress and development goals. Understanding this contribution is key to identifying effective approaches that align with existing public policies. As emphasized by former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in a 2010 report:

"While the family is appreciated at the international level, it is not prioritized in development efforts. The contribution of families to the achievement of development goals remains largely overlooked. Yet, the stability and cohesiveness of communities and societies largely rely on the strength of families. In fact, the achievement of development goals depends on empowering families to contribute effectively. Policies focused on improving family well-being undoubtedly benefit development." (Report of the United Nations Secretary-General, 2010, A/66/62–E/2011/4, p. 4)

In terms of local social development, community members play a crucial role and take ownership of their actions. They actively participate as key agents in the community development process. A community represents a group of individuals residing in a specific geographical location, sharing common physical surroundings and fundamental living conditions. Various types of communities exist, ranging from villages to rural and urban areas. Families, as the fundamental units of society, bear the primary responsibility for the care and nurturing of their members, guiding children and adults to become productive and well-adjusted individuals. This responsibility encompasses meeting basic needs, transmitting social values, and fulfilling multifaceted roles. Moreover, communities are interconnected through a broader network of social interactions. Children are born into families and communities, where they embark on a lifelong journey of learning and development towards adulthood.

The Primary Objective of This Study

Driven by a strong commitment to supporting SDG 11, this study aims to delve into the realm of family well-being, specifically from the perspective of millennial women in Malaysia. Through exploring the unique insights provided by Malaysian millennial women, the study seeks to uncover the invaluable contributions that families make towards local social development. This perspective highlights the significance of Malaysian families in fostering the growth and prosperity of local society becomes increasingly apparent.

Methodological Approach

To fulfill the objectives of this study, qualitative research was conducted as part of the doctoral degree program of one of the authors. This qualitative research study employs in-depth interviews conducted through telephone conversations and open-ended questions using Google Form. Additionally, non-participatory observations were conducted on Facebook and WhatsApp social media platforms. The study involved 31 millennial informants, aged 20 to 39, and was conducted from May to July 2021, amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. The research utilises the snowball sampling technique and is framed within the context of structural-functional theory.

Notably, the utilisation of Google Forms (Docs) as a platform for conducting web-based written interviews was an innovative aspect of this research, as highlighted by (Opara et al., 2021). By leveraging this underutilized tool, the study was able to gather rich and insightful

responses from the participants. Furthermore, a qualitative expert validated the research instruments, ensuring their reliability and credibility. Throughout the analysis process, continuous discussions among the researchers were held, with each member contributing their distinct expertise to enhance the overall credibility of the findings. The study also incorporated the recommended approach of abstraction and interpretation during the analysis, as proposed by (Lindgren et al., 2020). This iterative process involved meticulous revisions, comprehensive discussions on codes and categories, and an unwavering commitment to ensuring the credibility and rigor of the study's outcomes.

Unveiling the Findings and Facilitating Discussion
Through a comprehensive analysis of the respondents' feedback, this study culminated in a profound understanding of the multifaceted contributions made by families towards local social development. These contributions were classified into five distinctive aspects, as depicted in Figure 1, serving as a visual representation of the profound impact of families on their local communities.

1. Social Participation: Families play an active and integral role in social participation, embodying the spirit of community engagement. By actively involving themselves in various community-driven activities, family members strengthen social bonds, reduce isolation, and enhance the overall well-being of the society they belong to. Their unwavering dedication to community efforts serves as a testament to their commitment to fostering a vibrant and interconnected social fabric.

2. Philanthropic Endeavors: The families of the respondents demonstrated a deep-rooted philanthropic spirit, making significant monetary contributions to charitable organizations and actively supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs. These acts of generosity not only address immediate social needs but also contribute to economic equality and overall societal well-being. Practices such as zakat, based on Islamic principles, underscores the families' commitment to promoting economic prosperity and equitable income distribution. Such philanthropic initiatives form crucial pillars in maintaining societal harmony and propelling sustainable development.

3. Knowledge Sharing: Families assume a vital role as repositories and transmitters of knowledge, facilitating the intellectual and social progress of individuals and the wider community. By fostering a thirst for knowledge, promoting education, and encouraging continuous learning, families empower individuals to make meaningful contributions to local society. This exchange of knowledge, facilitated within the familial context, not only benefits individuals but also contributes to the collective advancement and development of the community as a whole.

4. Environmental Stewardship: Recognizing the significance of sustainability for present and future generations, families actively engage in environmental support. The respondents acknowledged the importance of environmental conservation and embraced sustainable practices within their households. By actively undertaking initiatives such as waste reduction, energy conservation, and responsible consumption, families become instrumental in promoting environmental consciousness and contributing to the broader objective of achieving sustainability within their local communities.

5. Ethical and Moral Values: Families play an integral role in nurturing and cultivating ethical and moral values within individuals. By instilling principles of integrity, compassion, respect, and social responsibility within the family unit, families contribute to the development of

individuals who embody these values in their actions and interactions. This cultivation of ethical and moral values leads to a more cohesive and harmonious local society, fostering a nurturing environment for the growth and well-being of all community members.

In light of these profound findings, it is evident that Malaysian families possess a remarkable capacity to contribute to local social development. Their active involvement in social participation, philanthropy, knowledge sharing, environmental stewardship, and the promotion of ethical and moral values serves as a catalyst for the growth and prosperity of their local societies. Recognizing the transformative potential of families, it is essential for stakeholders, including the local government, to acknowledge, appreciate, and engage families as key agents in the pursuit of SDG 11. By harnessing the collective strengths and efforts of families, local governments can create inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and human settlements, paving the way for thriving and prosperous communities.
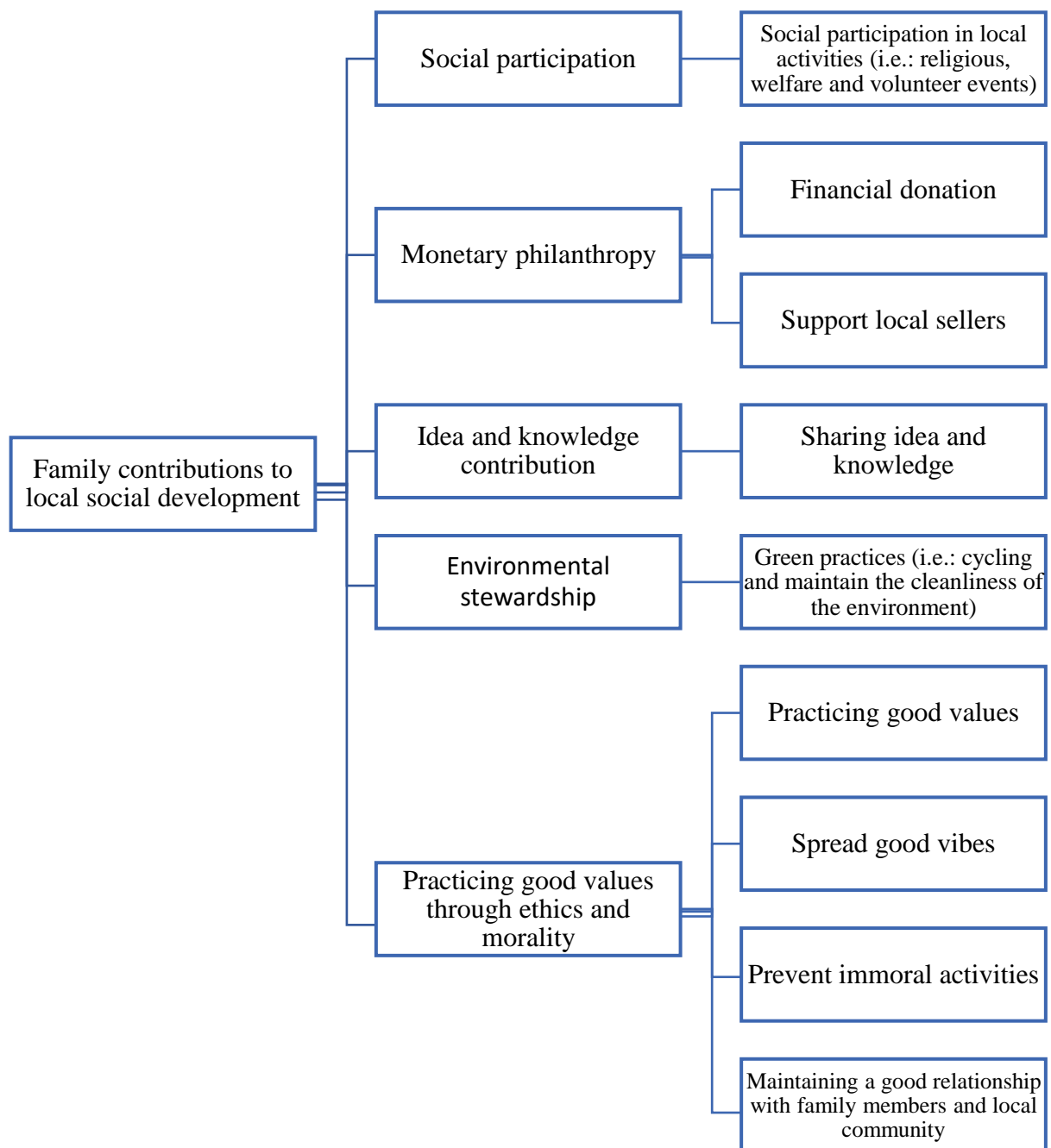
Figure 1: Family Contributions to Local Social Development

The Profound Impact of Social Participation
Drawing from the insightful feedback provided by the respondents, it becomes evident that social participation stands as the cornerstone of families' contributions to local social development. Their engagement in various activities, such as religious gatherings, welfare initiatives, and volunteer events, underscores the transformative power of their involvement. The respondents highlighted the following sentiments

"To be involved in community efforts, community cooperation, recycling, or through contribution" (Lam, Female, Chinese, Married).
"Charity work" (Fenfang, Female, Chinese, Married).
"Join the local activities held" (Huiyin, Female, Chinese, Married).
"Through involvement in NGOs and charity" (Fatimah, Female, Malay, Married).
"Through donations and volunteer assistance" (Cathalina, Female, Kadazan, Married).
"Being a good example as well as participate in community-related activities and offer help whenever needed" (Alia, Female, Malay, Married).
"Involve in social activities" (Rohani, Female, Malay, Married).
"By volunteering in NGOs and taking up leadership roles in community associations" (Laila, Female, Malay, Married).
"Community cooperation " (Kasimah, Female, Malay, Married).
The concept of social participation, as defined by Dehi and Shahboulaghi (2020) and Richard et al (2013), revolves around an individual's engagement in activities that foster connections with others within society or the community. According to Munford et al (2010) and Baker et al (2018), the essence of social participation lies in the interpersonal interactions it facilitates. Recent research by Löfgren et al (2021) affirms the significance of social participation, characterising it as a person's involvement in activities that foster connections with others or the broader society. Levasseur et al (2010) further expound on social participation, describing it as an opportunity for individuals to actively engage in social life. Moreover, Piskur et al. (2014) and Levasseur et al. (2010) shed light on the various levels of engagement within social participation, encompassing being with others, engaging in conversations, preparing for joint activities without direct communication, collaborating in activities, and offering assistance to others and society.

Townsend et al (2021) delve deeper into the significance of individual motivation in promoting social participation, emphasising its pivotal role in driving engagement. Simultaneously, Munford et al (2010); Baker et al (2018) highlight the compelling findings of prior studies, illustrating the positive correlation between social participation, reduced social isolation, and improved overall health and well-being. Noteworthy studies, such as that conducted by Ejiri et al (2019), have demonstrated the transformative power of participation in activities, fostering social contact and community cohesion. Additionally, Nyman, Josephsson, and Isaksson (2012, 2014) have revealed the inherent value of everyday activities that involve others, extend assistance, and evoke a sense of collective purpose.
Through their active social participation, families in Malaysia are instrumental in nurturing vibrant communities, fostering interpersonal connections, and enhancing the overall well-being of society. The collective impact of their contributions is profound, resonating far beyond the immediate scope of their actions. By promoting social cohesion and inclusivity, families forge the path toward a more compassionate, resilient, and prosperous local society.

Empowering Change through Monetary Philanthropy
In addition to the profound impact of social participation, the respondents in this study shed light on another significant contribution made by their families monetary philanthropy. Through financial donations, their family members exemplify a remarkable commitment to bettering society. The respondents expressed their perspectives on this aspect:
"Donations" (Chen, Female, Chinese, Married).
"Through donations and volunteer assistance" (Cathalina, Female, Kadazan, Married).
"Spread kindness to the neighborhood, give support in any good cause and make some donations to the needy" (Sarah, Female, Malay, Married).
"By giving back to the community in every way possible (financial, service, etc)" (Alia, Female, Malay, Married).
"Spread kindness, donate" (Melissa, Female, Malay, Married).
"Always help other people and give donation" (Safura, Female, Malay, Married).
Philanthropy, as defined by Hassan et al (2018), encompasses voluntary efforts aimed at enhancing people's well-being. It represents a personal act dedicated to the public's benefit or any willingly offered contribution made for the greater good, as highlighted by Schuyt, Smit, and Bekkers (2013) and Payton (1988). During times of economic crisis and heightened social competitiveness, philanthropy assumes an even more critical role in justifying power disparities and promoting societal harmony (Smith & Stevens, 2010; Zahra et al., 2009). A common manifestation of philanthropic behavior is monetary donations, as observed by (Schuyt et al., 2013; Payton, 1988). According to Hassan et al (2018), such behavior encompasses the giving of financial resources, time, and other valuable assets to charitable organisations.
Furthermore, Muliadi (2020) emphasizes that sustainable economic development, rooted in Islamic principles, extends beyond economic variables and encompasses social, moral, material, and spiritual aspects. It becomes intricately linked to the improvement of people's living standards. Zakat, the charitable giving performed by the respondents' families, serves as a vital instrument for human development and sustainable economic growth. Through zakat and other social programs, Islam promotes economic equality and safeguards the rights of the impoverished. When implemented effectively, these efforts assist Muslims in escaping poverty and attaining the goals outlined by the shariah, including sustaining life, nurturing future generations, developing intellectual capacity, preserving faith, and enjoying the fruits of individual efforts through rightful ownership. Within the Islamic economic system, which aims to foster economic well-being, global brotherhood, and fair income distribution, zakat assumes a paramount role.

> Other than financial donations and zakat, one respondent in the study mentioned the support of local sellers. She expressed her viewpoint as follows
>
> "We try to support any small business owner as much as we can" (Salamah, Female, Malay, Married).

In today's world, businesses play a crucial role in a nation's economic success. Bllaca (2015) indicates that the number of businesses can serve as an indicator of a country's economic growth. However, modern enterprises face various challenges that impede their ability to generate goods and services effectively. To address this, increasing collaboration between businesses and local governments can create a network that proves tremendously

advantageous to the economy. Localisation does not imply isolation; rather, it involves supporting locally owned businesses that utilise local resources sustainably, provide fair wages to local employees, and primarily serve the local community. It signifies a shift of control from corporate boardrooms to the community itself. When money is spent locally, it circulates within the local economy, fostering increased economic activity, higher wages, and a broader tax base. The extent of growth hinges on the amount of money circulated within the community. Consequently, spending money locally becomes a catalyst for economic progress. Through their unwavering commitment to monetary philanthropy, families in Malaysia wield the power to ignite transformative change. By making financial contributions, supporting local businesses, and upholding the principles of fairness and social responsibility, they contribute to the collective prosperity of their communities. Their philanthropic endeavors embody a vision of a more equitable and compassionate society, where the well-being of all is uplifted.

Igniting Transformation through Idea and Knowledge Sharing

In addition to the remarkable contributions of social participation and monetary philanthropy, this study uncovers yet another form of impact made by the respondents' family members idea and knowledge sharing. The respondents vividly described this contribution:

"Exchange of knowledge and thoughts" (Huiyin, Female, Chinese, Married).
"Sharing with close friends" (Melissa, Female, Malay, Married).
"Communicate and share problems with family members" (Cathalina, Female, Kadazan, Married).
"To share with loved ones and those in need" (Sarah, Female, Malay, Married).

It is crucial to recognise that knowledge holds little value unless it is applied, translated into tangible outcomes, and shared with others. Mestika et al (2022) define knowledge sharing behavior as the exchange of information, experiences, ideas, and skills with individuals or organisations. Several studies (e.g., Fang et al., 2013; Andreeva & Kianto, 2012; Desouza, 2003; Nonaka & Srivastava, 2002; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) emphasize that knowledge sharing is an inherently social process. Furthermore, Fauzi (2019) highlights that the purpose behind sharing knowledge reflects an individual's eagerness to disseminate knowledge to others, stemming from their relationships and interactions with people, a manifestation of their behavior.

Moreover, Zhao et al (2016); Cormican et al (2021) note that knowledge sharing self-efficacy fuels the motivation to share information. Ergün et al (2018) emphasize that knowledge sharing self-efficacy serves as a behavioral control variable that helps individuals overcome challenges associated with information sharing in learning environments. Bao and Han (2019); Zhang et al (2017) assert that knowledge sharing self-efficacy serves as an indicator of information sharing behavior, and its absence can impede knowledge sharing.

Recent studies by Rahman and Reynolds (2016) highlight that the enjoyment derived from assisting others is a significant factor influencing the intention to share knowledge. Lai and Chen (2011) previously defined the pleasure of helping others as the act of experiencing the intrinsic joy associated with sharing one's knowledge with others. The enthusiasm for assisting others transforms into a genuine desire to enhance the well-being of individuals beyond oneself. Okyere-Kwakye (2011) emphasizes that altruism persuades individuals to

share their skills with others, as they engage in challenging and rewarding problem-solving endeavors.

By embracing the power of idea and knowledge sharing, the families in this study become catalysts for transformation. Through their willingness to exchange insights, communicate challenges, and empower others with knowledge, they foster a culture of learning, growth, and collaboration. Their contributions inspire a collective pursuit of progress, where ideas flourish, barriers dissolve, and society evolves toward a brighter future.

Environmental Stewardship: Families' Contributions to a Sustainable Future
Families in this study not only actively participate socially, engage in monetary philanthropy, and share ideas and knowledge but also demonstrate their commitment to society through environmental stewardship. They embrace green practices and proactively involve themselves in activities that promote recycling and maintaining a clean environment. Examples shared by respondents include:

"Reuse, reduce, and recycle" (Lam, Female, Chinese, Married)

"Recycle and grow our own vegetables" (Chen, Female, Chinese, Married)

"Apply recycling and maintain cleanliness around our house and nearby areas" (Li Hua, Female, Chinese, Married)

"Donating unwanted clothes and recycling plastic bottles" (Wawa, Female, Malay, Married)

"In my house, we follow the principles of reduce, reuse, and recycle. We have a dedicated recycle box and separate food waste from recyclable items" (Qalida, Female, Malay, Married)

"Recycle and reuse materials" (Melissa, Female, Malay, Married)

The environment plays a vital role in sustaining all forms of life, providing essential resources for human development, and contributing to overall well-being. Access to a healthy and conducive environment is recognized as a fundamental human right (Palilingan et al., 2018). However, humanity's relationship with nature is currently facing significant challenges. Climate change, as emphasized by Chan et al. (2022), has become one of the most contentious global environmental issues of the 21st century. Overuse of resources, greenhouse gas emissions, pollution, and the loss of biodiversity pose severe threats to our survival and quality of life (Edwin & Muthu, 2021).

In Malaysia, similar to numerous other nations, waste generation is influenced by several factors, such as urban migration, affluence, and rapid development (Chan et al., 2022). To address these challenges, UNESCO emphasizes the importance of environmental education, particularly in poorer nations, as a means to enhance environmental awareness (Singhirunnusorn, Donlakorn, & Kaewhanin, 2017; Unesco et al., 2018). Environmental education bridges the knowledge gap between different age groups, especially regarding waste management, sustainability, and segregation (Singhirunnusorn, Donlakorn, & Kaewhanin, 2017; Unesco et al., 2018). As noted by Hayes and Ostrom (2005), the active participation of local communities is vital for effective and equitable conservation, particularly in situations where official enforcement may be lacking (Norris, Michalski, & Gibbs, 2018). Local engagement becomes even more critical in ensuring proper management of natural resources, often serving as the only pathway to achieve it (Norris, Michalski, & Gibbs, 2018; Cinner et al., 2012).

Practicing Good Values (Ethics and Morality)
Practicing good values such as ethics and morality is the final contribution made by the respondents' family. Practicing good values, spreading good vibes, preventing immoral

activities, and maintaining a good relationship with family members and the local community are among their practices. They narrated

"Be a good individual and always help the community" (Siti, Female, Malay, Married)

"Make time for family activities" (Cathalina, Female, Kadazan, Married)

"Being a good example as well as participate in community-related activities and offer help whenever needed" (Shima, Female, Malay, Married)

"Offer guidance on how to greet and collaborate with the community, showcasing the integrity instilled within oneself by the family" (Emma, Female, Malay, Married)

"A developed community begins from individual family developments. We should teach our children correct and good moral values because community social issues are usually due to family issues and also peer influences. So by teaching my family good moral values, this will contribute towards a harmonious and developed community" (Hanisah, Female, Malay, Married)

"Helping each other in needs becoming a better person and better citizen charity and volunteer" (Yuhainis, Female, Malay, Married)

   "Be a good law abiding citizen" (Amalina, Female, Malay, Married)
   "Comply with the law" (Rozlinda, Female, Malay, Married)

Values serve as fundamental principles that underpin what individuals deem important in every aspect of their lives, encompassing both personal and public spheres. As Haste (2018) suggests, values determine one's priorities when making decisions and what they strive for in their personal growth. As they stem from consciousness and conscience, values always play a role throughout the entire social process, from inception to internalisation and culmination. Humans and societies coexist with shared ideals, and in nearly all societies, higher values are recognised as crucial indicators of societal continuity and well-being. These values hold significance across all domains in the value hierarchy, such as justice, which holds relevance in areas like the economy, politics, and family. Thus, the hierarchy of values must work collaboratively for the betterment of society as a whole.

Ethics and morality encompass the principles and behaviors related to causing or preventing intentional harm to others, as well as safeguarding and assisting them. These terms are also used in the context of upholding personal values, especially when these values align with the prevailing cultural norms, such as trustworthiness, honesty, loyalty, or justice. Values stem from ethical and moral judgments; however, it is important to note that not all values are derived solely from ethics and morals.

Conclusion

The findings of this study not only emphasize but underscore the vital and indispensable roles that families play in nurturing and fostering the development of local society. The extensive contributions of families, as revealed through the analysis, are indeed substantial and far-reaching, encompassing diverse aspects that are crucial for the progress and well-being of communities. These contributions manifest through active social participation, philanthropic endeavors, knowledge sharing, environmental support, and the cultivation of ethical and moral values.

First and foremost, the study highlights the significant role of families in social participation, which forms the cornerstone of community engagement and cohesion. Family members actively involve themselves in a myriad of activities, such as community efforts, religious endeavors, welfare and volunteer events, and local initiatives. By setting an exemplary standard and actively participating in these community-related endeavors, families effectively promote social connections, reduce social isolation, and enhance the overall health and well-being of the society. This underscores the importance of families in creating a vibrant and interconnected social fabric.

Moreover, families contribute to the development of local society through their philanthropic efforts, particularly in terms of monetary contributions. The respondents revealed instances of families making financial donations to charitable organisations and supporting local businesses and sellers. Such philanthropic endeavors not only address immediate social needs but also promote economic equality and well-being. For instance, the act of zakat, a form of monetary donation rooted in Islamic principles, highlights the commitment of families to promoting economic well-being and fair income distribution. These philanthropic initiatives serve as crucial pillars in maintaining societal peace and fostering sustainable development.

Furthermore, families play a significant role in knowledge sharing, serving as vital repositories and transmitters of ideas, information, and expertise. The exchange of knowledge within families contributes to the development and growth of individuals and the wider community. By instilling a thirst for knowledge, promoting education, and encouraging continuous learning, families empower individuals to make meaningful contributions to local society. This knowledge-sharing aspect not only benefits individuals but also contributes to the overall intellectual and social progress of the community.

In addition to their social and philanthropic contributions, families also actively engage in environmental support, recognising the importance of sustainability for the well-being of present and future generations. The respondents acknowledged the significance of environmental conservation and sustainable practices, with families undertaking initiatives such as waste reduction, energy conservation, and responsible consumption. Through their actions, families play a crucial role in promoting environmental consciousness and contributing to the broader goal of achieving sustainability within their local communities. Last but not least, families contribute to the development of local society by nurturing and cultivating ethical and moral values. By instilling principles of integrity, compassion, respect, and social responsibility within the family unit, families shape individuals who are well-adjusted and conscientious members of society. These values, imparted within the familial context, guide individuals' actions and behaviors, leading to a more cohesive and harmonious local society.

In light of these profound contributions, it becomes imperative for local governments to recognize and engage all stakeholders, including family members, in the collective pursuit of SDG 11. Transforming cities and human settlements into inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable environments necessitates a holistic approach that incorporates the strengths and efforts of families. By actively involving families in the planning and implementation of sustainable development initiatives, local governments can harness the potential of families as agents of positive change, leading to the creation of thriving and sustainable local societies.

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