

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTION

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative research was to conduct a descriptive phenomenological study to explore, understand, and describe the experiences of parenting among Muslim single father. To understand the phenomenon within its context, the researcher focused on the three research questions:(1) What do single fathers understand about parenting? (2) What is the experience of parenting among single fathers? and (3) How is the relationship between single fathers and their children?

To understand the phenomenon under investigation, it was researched within its context and utilized a variety of data sources. Three themes have emerged from the findings of this research. First, single fathers understanding on parenting. There are three-sub-themes emerged from this theme which are (1) Provider and Protector, (2) Supportive and Involved Father and (3) Educator. Second theme is Fathers Experience on Parenting. Five sub-themes had been found which are (1) Dealing with Grief Related to Loss, (2) Adapting to Parenting Role as Single Father, (3) Managing Challenges, (4) Stressors of Single Father and (5) Coping Strategies. The third theme is the relationship between single fathers and their children which include two sub-themes. (1) Authoritative Parenting Style and (2) Communicating with Children.

The previous chapter has explained and discussed the themes and sub-themes from this research. This chapter summarizes the main ideas emerging from the research and identifies the theoretical and practical contribution of this research. Followed by an overview of this research conclusion and key findings derived from this research.

Finally, this chapter presents the implications of the research and recommendations for further research

5.2 Discussion of Research Findings

This section aims to provide a discussion on the phenomenon under investigation. It also discusses and compares the findings of this research from previous research. It begins with a brief overview on the understanding of single fathers on parenting which include the discussion on how the fathers define parenting as well as their role and responsibilities, the experience of parenting among single father which explore the experience related to grief and loss, single fathers' adjustment to additional role, the challenges, stressors faced by single father and single fathers coping strategies.

The main frame of this section provides a structure for a comprehensive inquiry focusing on what and how the participants have experienced, learned and understand about parenting and how it effects their life as well as their relationship with their children. The discussions are based on Baumrind's Four Parenting Style Theory and Parent Development Theory. This research theoretical framework and the review of the related studies were blended with relevant emergent master themes and subthemes that have been illustrated from the participants' voices earlier in this chapter.

The main purpose of this research was to conduct a descriptive phenomenological study to explore, understand, and describe the experience Muslim single fathers in parenting. The interviews were analysed, and themes and subthemes were developed. The findings have been categorized into three main sections begins with research question one: what do single fathers understand about parenting? Research question 2: what is the experience of parenting among single fathers? And research question 3: How is the relationship between single fathers and their children?

Similarities and differences between the prior studies and the emergent themes are discussed and described in this section.

5.2.1 Discussion on Findings from Research Question 1

The results derived from the research question one revealed one theme which is fathers understanding on parenting. In the present study, participants had described their understanding on parenting through the definition of parenting as well as the role and responsibilities of the parent. Three sub-themes that had emerged which are: (1) provider and protector, (2) supportive and involved father and (3) educator. These data were gained from the description of experience of single fathers in parenting.

Provider and Protector- Based on the findings both participants had perceived that parenting can be views in the perspective of role of the parent itself specifically for the purpose of this study, parenting in the perspective of single fathers. Findings shows that, participant 1 and 2 view the role as the provider and protector for their children. According to the findings, the role of provider is to provide for the essential needs of the children. This finding is aligned with Tift (2020) who had stated that the role of the provider refers to a father's ability to provide for his family members especially in the aspect of financial. Traditionally, the role and responsibilities of father is views as the primary breadwinner to provide for his family's essential needs (Neale & Davies, 2016). Wall and Arnold (2007) also identified a father as the sole provider for the family where he become the source of income that provide the family with daily necessities. For example, the food on the table, clothes to wear and a safe place to stay. While, Waldfogel, Craigie, & Brooks-Gunn (2010) had stated that parenting is the process of providing care for the children through financial means.

According to Mowder (2005) six primary characteristics of parent had been constructed under the Parent Development Theory which include general welfare and protector. This characteristic is formed on the basis of Maslow's hierarchy of needs where physiological needs are view as the strongest needs human being have. These needs include physical survival and biological maintenance which is align with role of a father as a provider. This role as a provider is also coherent with the Islamic perspective that views a man as the provider to his family as stated in Surah An-Nisa verse 34 where Allah SWT had mentioned about the role of a men is to provide the spouse which include the children financially. Research also found that the term provider does not only limit to financial, but also in the aspect of providing care, attention, nurturance and education. Which will further discussed below.

Moreover, a father also plays a role as the protector for the family. A protector refers to the ability of father to provide protection to the family members from any dangers that can threatened and cause harm to the family (Higham & Davies, 2012). Findings had found that, both participants believe that it is their role and responsibility to protect their children from harm both physically and mentally. Breiner, Ford and Gadsden (2016) had stated that father does not only protect the children from danger physically but also in the aspect of emotional and mental as well. Moreover, ensuring the safety of the children is the fundamental responsibilities of a father. This is because children need to be cared for in a way that promoted their ability to thrive and ensures their survival and protection from injury, physical and sexual maltreatment as well as bullying that can cause mental and emotional distress to children (Breiner et al, 2016). This is because, children typically lack the individual resources required to avoid danger. Rather, young children rely on their parents or caretaker whether it is inside

the home, to act on their behalf to protect their safety and healthy development (Institute of Medicine and National Research, 2015),

Similarly, according to Islamic perspective, it had been found that, Islam views father's role as the protector of the family. This is proven through the story of Prophet Muhammad SAW in safeguarding and protecting his children as described in hadith and history books (Abadzah, 2007). To conclude, many research had identify that being the provider and protector towards children is one of the roles of a father. This is coherent with the finding of this research where both participants stated that their role as a single father is to provide and protect their children.

Supportive and Involved Father- According to the finding, the researcher had found that single fathers which are the participants had illustrated that parenting involve father's role to be supportive and involve with their children. Supportive and involved fathers can be view in the perspective of father and child bonding which include involvement of father in the children's life which include responsivity of the father as well as sensitivity towards the children. Mowder (2005) refers bonding as an affection, love and regard parent feel and display towards their children. Meanwhile, sensitivity and responsibility refer to the ability of the parent to discern what the child is communicating and matches response to the child's needs. Many research had studied on the concept of bonding in parenting as it help in the establishment of an emotional relationship between mother and child. In spite of women's dominance in taking care of the emotional responsibility of children, there is increasing evidence that fathers can also be nurturing, affectionate, responsive and active with their children (Doucet, 2004).

In regard to single father itself, studies had found that single father had more awareness in providing their children with support and had more involvement in their children's life that led to bonding between the father and children. Evidence of this was

found in Doucet's (2004) study where single fathers admitted to becoming a different kind of father as a result of being on their own with their children. Furthermore, a study had found that single fathers perceive their role with the qualities of care giving, nurturing, good listening and being supportive (Cable, 2017).

The single father emphasizes the needs of involving themselves with their children due to the transition from being a father to a single father (Naidoo, 2014). Single fathers form a bond with children through direct physical interaction or by spending quality time with their children. From this interaction, single father is able to communicate and identify the children's emotional needs and able to respond affectively (Jessee & Adamsons, 2018). In summary, findings of this study had shown that the role of single fathers to involve and supportive towards their children does not only help to create a healthy relationship and good environment but also help in the psychological development of the children.

Educator- Based on the finding of this study, both participants perceive their role as the educator to their children in the aspect of academic and religion. Hale (2008) stated that education including educating, guiding and teaching is the parental transmission of information in order to inform children. Further example of education encompasses activities such as advising, being a role model, counseling, preparing and showing by example (Mowder, 2005). According to Ornstein and Levine (2003) the family is the most important agent in the early socialization and education of children. It is suggested that parents have the ability to increase knowledge and understanding of their children by teaching, giving the children the opportunity to explore their environment. Newson (1976) pointed out that parents are also educators of values and attitude and socialization practices. For instance, parents have the ability to emphasize obedience and conformity or independent learning and self-directed thinking.

In Islamic perspective, Muslim father is also emphasized on playing an important role of being the educator the spouse and the children. Allah SWT had mentioned in the noble Quran, ‘O you who believe, save yourselves and your families from torments of Hell, whose fuel is humankind and stones’ (At-Tahrim 66:6). Based on this verse it can be view that to save your family is through educating them about the faith, the value and the practice of Islam (Kutty, 2023). Moreover, Prophet Muhammad pbuh had narrated through a hadith. ‘There is no gift a father gives to his children more virtuous than good education’ (Tirmidhi Hadith No. 4977). This had shown that Islam put a great value on education towards children, and it is the parent role to educate their children.

In Malay culture, educating children are seen as the primary role of a mother. While father’s primary role is the breadwinner of the family. However, father also is viewed as an educator but in the disciplinarian context. This is because Malay culture often perceive father as a strict figure compared to mother who educate with gentleness and care (Chen, Wu & Yeh, 2015). Nevertheless, the findings of this study, found that single father had engage in educating children in both through nurturance and care as well as through discipline.

5.2.2 Discussion on Findings from Research Question 2

The results derived from the research two which is the exploration of Muslim single father’s experience in parenting revealed five sub-themes which are (1) dealing with grief related to loss, (2) adapting to parenting role as single father, (3) managing challenges, (4) Stressors of single father and lastly (5) coping strategies.

Dealing with grief related to loss- Findings found that both participants perceive the loss of their wives as something that is very hard and difficult for them to

go through. The loss also affects their children psychological well-being tremendously. However. Both participants realized that it is normal for them to feel sad, and instead of avoiding it, they embrace and increase their engagement and interaction with their children positively in order to help them process the grief in a good way. Nadeau (2001) stated that grief is a natural and expected reaction to the loss of a loved one, it is both an individual and a family experience. A loss can affect the family's functioning and dynamics because the family, an integrated system of relationships, is changed forever and its members are required to reorganize.

Good family functioning, which is characterized by open communication, expression of feelings and thoughts and cohesion among family members help to facilitates adaptive adjustment to the loss (Delalibera, Presa, Coelho, Barbosa & Franco, 2015). Shapiro (2001) explained that the grieving experience can be enhanced or impaired by the openness of communication and level of cohesion among family members. Hence, good family functioning during the grieving process is important for the psychological well-being of family members.

Study found that single fathers identify their grief related experience as difficult and hard. This is because, single father does not only have to deal with their own emotion but also their children's psychological well-being after the loss of their mother. Single fathers are also expected to provide most of the emotional support and sustenance of their children and will have to overcome feelings of inadequacy, guilt, anxiety, grief or loneliness that accompany any other major transitions (Naidoo,2014). Findings of the study found that single fathers household deal with grief related to loss of wife through positive interaction where they engage in open. communication, and expression of feelings related to the loss. This practice had helped single fathers and their children to be able to go through grief positively.

Adapting to Role of Parenting as Single Father- The loss of a wife is without a doubt had caused a critical shift in the role and responsibilities of the father. This is because, couple often divided their role to both the husband and wife. However, being a single father means that both roles in parenting are expected to be implement by the father. Based on the findings, both participants describe their life as hard and difficult after the loss of their wife. This is because of the adaptation phase where they need to adjust to new additional role and responsibilities. Research found that single parent often complains of having to shoulder all responsibilities alone. The burden of sole responsibility for children is especially difficult (Weiss, 1979).

The partnership of marriage also serves to divide familial labor. Following the death of spouse, the single father is left with unfamiliar tasks to be accomplished in addition to accustomed ones (Osterweis, Solomon, & Green, 1984). For most men, the loss of a wife means the loss of the partner who had taken responsibility for child care and home management. This sudden change of role and responsibilities does not only cause single father to question their capability but also act as a stressor toward single father. However, study found that despite the seemingly negative impact on single fathers, this additional role also contributed to positive effect on single fathers' motivation to give the best to their children. As sole parenting provides them with opportunities to venture on the nurturing, caring and loving part of parenting. Finding of this study had found that participants find the adjustment towards additional role is quite challenging for them to properly adapt especially at the early stage of single parenting.

Managing Challenges- Many research had study on the experience of single father and comes with a finding that single fathers faced various challenges throughout their parenting journey. Based on this study, several challenges that single father has to

face are emotional management for both single father and their children, health management and financial management. Children who went through grief often perceive as emotionally vulnerable and fragile. Hence, it is the responsibility of the father to help them cope with their emotion. However, single father may feel unable to meet their children's demands for attention and understanding. Thus, the single father can be vulnerable to overload and emotional exhaustion (Weiss, 1979). Yopp and Rosenstein (2012) found that single fathers who lost their wives due to death, appear to believe that one of the challenges that they have to face is to help their children adjusting to their mothers' death while confronting their own grief and adapting to other challenges of fatherhood.

Moreover, studies found that many single fathers identify financial management as their challenge. This is due to the increase in role demand which include financial provision Bronte-Tinkew et al., 2010). Meanwhile, Olsen, Oliffe, Brussoni and Creighton (2013) stated that financial restraints are one of the main challenges that had been identified in the available research. A study also found that, single father who face with sudden death of wife view financial as a challenge due to the increase in financial burden due to the loss of secondary breadwinner which is the wife (Stack & Meredith, 2018). The loss of partner, cause the single father to take on the role as the sole breadwinner to the family. However, Olsen at al (2013) add that while fathers identify financial restraints as a challenge, they note that keeping their children safe despite their financial struggle makes them feel like a good provider.

Health management can also be a challenge for single father who has children with medical issues. In general, the literature has delineated a myriad of challenges face by single father due to children's medical condition. Parents may experience challenges, including financial stress, role strains, separations, adjustment to the various

components of the medical system, interruptions in daily routines and plans for the future, and the general uncertainty with regard to the child's prognosis. All of these possible experiences may lead directly and indirectly to anxiety, depression, post-traumatic-stress, hopelessness, and feelings of loss of control (Brown, Wiener, Kupst, Brennan, Behrman, Compas, David Elkin, Faiclough, Friebert, Katz, Kazak, Madan-Swain, Mansfield, Mullins, Noll, Petenaude, Phipps, Sahler, Soukes & Zetler, 2008).

Stressors of Single Father- Lazarus (1966) had defined stress as a relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised as personally significant and as taxing or exceeding resources for coping. The source of stress often refers to as stimulus or stressor. Study had found that single father had face many types of stressors in their parenting role towards their children. Many studies found that single father's struggle in balancing the responsibilities between children and career as the primary stressors which is coherent with the finding of this study where both participant describes their stressors in two aspect which are in dealing with their children's attitude and balancing responsibilities.

Research findings detail the struggles single father experience when they are raising their children alone, indicating that single fathers are responsible for meeting all of child's need alone, causing the increased of stress (Wight, Chau & Aratani, 2011). These needs include childcare, household chores and dealing with children temperament (Ceglowski, Shears & Furman, 2010). Another study also found that single father feel stress out due to the need of meeting all of their children's needs alone, make decisions, setting rules, maintaining appointments and employment.

These role demands may cause role strain, which occurs when fathers have to complete all caring and household tasks with no help from the mother. Ceglowski et al. (2010) found that, in their research, fathers with full custody reported higher levels of

role strain because of the need to balance employment, child caring independently, and family issues. Furthermore, employment and education were two common factors associated with a father's involvement with their children (Rienks, Wadsworth, Markman, Einhorn, & Etter, 2014).

Parker and Wang (2013) found that 46% of the fathers in their study felt they did not spend enough time with their children because of their work schedules. Research also notes that employed fathers and those who have a higher education tend to be more involved with their children (Lawson, 2012). Fathers note that working can adversely affect the amount of time they can spend with their children (Waldfogel et al., 2010). Hence, the struggle of dealing with juggling the role of nurturer and breadwinner can cause higher levels of stress and negatively affect parenting abilities (Wade et al., 2011).

Coping Strategies of Single Father- Based on the findings, participant 1 and 2 had engage with three types of coping strategies which had help them in managing their stressors which include the element of physical, social and spirirual. Coping strategies are behavioural and cognitive tactics used to manage crises, conditions and demands that are appraised as distressing. Duncan (1994) stated that there are three types of coping strategies which include physical support, social support and spiritual support. Physical support refers to one's personal resources. Yau and Li-Tsang (1999) suggest four basic components of personal resources which are financial, education, health and psychological resources. They also stated that educational resources facilitate individual's problem-solving skill. While psychological resources include personality characteristics and self-esteem. Financial resources refer to the financial capability of the family. Health on the other refers to family members physical health.

According to Coyne and Delongis (1986), social support can be defined as individuals, groups, or institutions that provide assistance to help other individuals

overcome stresses that strain a person's resources. Researchers have identified several major areas of social support which are financial, emotional, educational, material, formal, and informal. Social support plays a crucial role in helping single father with childcare and to provide financial and psychological support. Patulny (2012) stated that social support also includes someone to confide in and someone to provide support during a time of crisis. Moreover, Ostberg and Hagekill (2013) mentioned in their research that supportive services and the relationships fathers have with other adults are helpful in assisting fathers in the parenting process. As the research concludes that social support is useful in helping single fathers raises their children.

Furthermore, it is found that the single father's interpersonal relationship with other individuals can impact how the fathers interact and deal with their children. For example, study had identified that social support as a key to help fathers as it may provide emotional support to the father, Emotional support is seen as an important helper for fathers as it help to minimize the levels of stress single fathers experience which is more concerning for single fathers with minimal support (McCubbin & Figley, 2014).

Though many research had proven the positive impact of social support in coping with stress for single fathers, some study also found that some single fathers had decrease their time for social activities such as meeting with friends as they believe that they need to spend more time with their friends (Lemay et al., 2010). Nevertheless, while it is important for single fathers to increase their quality time with their children, it is fairly important for fathers to spend time socializing with friends as it provides social support for single father which will also help them in to take care of their children and lessening the amount of time spend with friend can lead to additional stress to the

family. Thus, social support is important to help single parent deal with stress (Wade et al., 2011).

Religion is one of the primary predictors of emotional adjustment. However, it is difficult to define spirituality as it holds subjective meaning for each individual. Pargament (1997) describes spirituality in various ways which include faith in humanity, ethical behavior, concern for others or interaction in relation to a greater being. He added that it is an individual's personal way of life in which a person strives to find meaning and significance. According to Fiadzo and Osei (2018) many people find spiritual support in the form of prayer, literature, participation in religious activities, joining organizations or attending religious services. Moreover, they added that study found that faith and religious coping methods are the most frequently reported coping strategies among parents while others use religious reframing as a way to view any events or circumstances in a more positive and meaningful way. Consequently, by changing the perspective, it helps parents to find the events more manageable and help to lessen the stress.

According to Pargament (1997) research reveals that individuals appear to involve themselves with religion to a greater extent in more stressful situations than in less stressful moment of their lives. Furthermore, he stated that there are three different approaches used by individual to control in religious coping which are self-directed approach which places more coping responsibility on the individual's ability and resources compared to reliance on God, next is deferring approach where he describes as individual's action of passively putting responsibility onto God. The last approach is collaborative approach which is associated with greater sense of self-esteem, personal control and a lower sense of control by chance.

Studies found that spiritual strategies such as using religion to explain the event, seeking spiritual support and collaborating with God were found to be more helpful compared to other strategies (Pargemant, 1997). According to Koenig (1999), a study found that people with stronger faith are less likely to suffer from mental health issue, live healthier lifestyle, have stronger immune system and have stronger sense of well-being and life satisfaction compared to non-religious individuals. This study had proven that religious people are able to cope better with major stressful events than those who lack the comfort of personal faith. This finding had shown that spiritual support plays important role in the family's ability to manage stress, especially when facing with severe situations (Fiadzo & Osei, 2018).

Based on the interview, the participants had implemented all these three types of coping strategies which include physical support, social support and spiritual support. Both participants emphasize heavily on the importance of social and spiritual support in the process of coping with their stressors. This is because they believe that social support that comes from their surrounding environment had positively impact their ability to cope with stress as a single father. Since both participants are Muslim, they have more tendency to cope with their issues related to parenting by using spiritual means or religious coping strategies.

Single Fathers Relationship with Children

Research supports the notion that the father-child relationship is important because it encompasses emotional support (Jackson et al., 2013), financial support (Bronte-Tinkew et al., 2010), and physical support to the child (Haire & McGeorge, 2012). Flood (2012) adds that fathers contribute to their children's social well-being. To determine single fathers' relationship with children, two sub-themes had been

determined. First is the parenting style of single fathers which both implement Authoritative Parenting Style and second, communicating with children. Based on this study, it had been determined that both participants implement Authoritative Parenting Style.

According to Baumrind (1966), there are four types of parenting style that had been found through years of research. These parenting style includes Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive and Neglectful Parenting Style. These parenting style has their own characteristics based on the interaction between parent and child and it had been found to affect children's psychological development and well-being. he determinants of parenting style can be identify though the aspect of demandingness and responsiveness of the parent towards their children.

Studies had found that many single fathers had practice Authoritative Parenting Style as their parenting strategies. For example, in a study by Alexeevich and Alexandrovna (2018) found that Authoritative Parenting Style is the most frequent parenting style used by single fathers in Russia. Cable (2017) also found that majority of single fathers participated in the research had applied Authoritative Parenting Style in dealing with their children.

Baumrind (1966) described the authoritative parents as a parent who try to direct the child's activities in a rational, issue-oriented manner. She encourages verbal give and take, shares with their child reasoning behind their policy, and solicits their objections when they refuse to conform. Authoritative parenting Style has high demandingness towards their children in the way they control their child's behavior by setting rules. However, they also have high responsiveness in which they recognize their child's individual interests and allow them for sense of autonomy as the parent give them opportunities to present their reason and values.

Sanvictores and Mendez (2022) stated that authoritative parenting style parent develops a close, nurturing relationship with their children. This is due to the parent practice of providing guideline for their expectations and explain their reasons associated with disciplinary actions. Disciplinary methods are often used as a way of support instead of punishment. Consequently, authoritative parenting results in children who are confident, responsible and has the ability to self-regulate (Masud, Ahmad, Cho & Fakhir, 2019). Furthermore, Morris, Silk, Steinberg, Myers and Robinson (2007) found that children who are raised with Authoritative Parenting Style manage their negative emotions more effectively, which contribute to better social outcomes and emotional health. Since these parents also encourage independence, it helps to increase children's self-esteem.

According to Runcan, Constantieanu, Ielies and Popa (2012) communication between parent and children is done on three levels which are logical, verbal that consist of word, tone, volume and speed of speech which non-verbal level is related to facial expression, position, movement, clothing and others. The research found that parents who have high score in communication with their own children stated that effective communication comes from being an active listener, using good words while responding, encourage children to talk and express emotions and feelings and lastly using a calming tone. The study clearly highlighted the importance of communication between parents and children in the process of interacting and transmitting values and guidance to their children.

Based on the finding of this study, both participants applied Authoritative Parenting Style and various communication level such as verbal and non-verbal to interact with their children. Consequently, both participants reported that they have a very close relationship with their children. In summary, parenting style and effective

communication is important in developing a good, trusting and comfortable relationship between single fathers and their children

5.3 Implications of The Study.

The findings of the study can be interpreted as a reflection of the foundation of parenting for single fathers. Thus, the implications of the research findings are discussed in several areas.

5.3.1 Single Fathers

The findings of this study are expected to be valuable for single fathers, family members and individuals to understand the significance knowledge and to promote awareness related to single fathers experience in parenting. Based on the outcomes of this study, single fathers or family members can identify few ways to cope with their struggles in parenting

5.3.2 Counselor

This research reflects the experience of single fathers which is seldomly portrayed in Malaysian context. Through this study, counselor can further understand about the difficulties and hardship that the single -father gone through in the proses of managing and being a parent to their children. Furthermore, it also helps the counselors to have deeper understanding on various coping strategies that a single father can apply to cope with their challenges and stressors. Therefore, it is the counselor's role to provide single fathers with support through counselling session and support group. Counselors also required to use counselling techniques and skills to help single fathers identify their strength and coping strategies that suitable for them.

5.3.3 Organization, Authorities and Policymaker

In Malaysia, single fathers are view as minority group. This is because single parent family in Malaysia are mostly dominated by single mothers. Thus, less focus and attention been given to single fathers. Not only on the academic research but also in policymaker and resources. For example, it had been found that. There are no resources in the aspect of financial and support system provided to single fathers compared to single mothers. In recent study, it had been found that the numbers of single fathers had been increasing whether through separation by divorce or through the death of wife.

Thus, is important for organization and authorities and policymaker to pay more attention to single fathers as there are also an important part of the society and community and providing them with access to resources is also necessary. Hence, the researcher expects that through the finding of this study, it will help NGOs, LPPKN and other organization and authorities to have a better understanding of the experience of single fathers which consequently help them to come out with programs or any kind of services that can provide support to single fathers.

5.4 Contribution of the Study

Findings of this study had contributed to an additional knowledge and research material on parenting experience among single fathers. This is beneficial to individuals, family members, community and organizations as study on single fathers in Malaysia is limited and not largely investigated and studied. Therefore, the results of this study add to knowledge and references about marriages from experiential view.

5.5 Limitation of the Study

Overall, the objectives of this study were achieved. However, study faced limitations in terms of time, the number of participants, scope and others. Hence, the researcher summarizes the research limitations that the researcher faces as follow:

First, the number of participants limited to only two participants. This is due to the difficulties in identifying single fathers whose wife had passed away and are still not remarried. Most single father in Malaysia become single father through divorce. And for those who lose their wife, they tend to get married not long after their wife passed away. Due to lack of participants, the findings of the study could not be generated for all single father's population in Malaysia. Second, the study only covered single father by the death of spouse, not by divorce. Hence, the study results may not applicable to single fathers who are separated by divorce and may implement co-parenting.

Lastly, in the context of data trustworthiness, although the researcher endeavors to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. However, participants tend to choose what they want to share, thus, interviewing a third person such as their children need to be considered to get a different perspective in order to increase data validation.

5.6 Recommendation

The research provides few suggestions to help future research improve the study on single fathers. First, it is suggested for researcher to increase the number of participants to obtain a more enrich and saturated data from various participants. For example, future researchers may include the children as participants in order to grasp an in depth and better understanding on the experience of single fathers in parenting through the perspectives of the child.

Furthermore, the researcher also suggested for future researcher to include single fathers who are co-parenting with their divorced wife as participants. By doing so, researcher can produce a study on comparison between the experience of these two types of single fathers. Lastly, it is suggested for future research to apply mixed method study to gain more accurate and thorough findings.

5.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative research was to conduct a descriptive phenomenology study to explore, understand and describe the experiences Muslim single fathers on parenting. In order to develop the finding of this study, the study had been conducted within its context and the data has been collected from single fathers who had lost their spouse by death. This research has revealed three research objectives which are to explore single fathers' understanding on parenting, to understand the experiences of parenting among single fathers and to identify the relationship between single fathers and their children. Under these research objectives, three themes and 10 sub-themes had emerged and all of the findings had been concluded.