What is FAMILY?
Family is not an IMPORTANT thing, it is Everything
FAMILY ECOLOGY AND PARENTING

CREDIT: 3 (3+0)

GROUP 1: MONDAY 10-12; WEDNESDAY 9-10

BKFEM 2

FEM 3109
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Course Synopsis

This course covers the family as a system, family life course, internal dynamic family and parenting. Challenges and issues according to developmental stages will be discussed.
Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Explain about ecology, life cycle and family dynamics, and parenting (C2)
2. Elaborate on the issues and challenges of family and parenting in accordance with stages of human development (A3, LL)
3. Analyse the factors influencing family life and parenting (C4, CTPS)
## Course Evaluation

(i) **Overall course assignments** 45.00 %
- Assignment 1 10.00 %
- Assignment 2 20.00 %
- Quiz / SCL 15.00 %

(ii) **Mid-term Examination** 15.00%

(i) + (ii) 60.00 %

(iii) **Final Examination** 40.00%

**Overall Sum** 100.00%
# UNDERSTANDING FAMILY: MEANING, TREND, FORM AND FUNCTION

## Introduction

## Unit Objectives

1.1 The Meaning of Marriage and Family

1.1.1 Definition of Marriage and Family

1.2 Family as an Ecosystem

1.3 Forms and Functions of Family

1.4 Marriage Trend and Family Life

## Unit Summary

## References

## Exercises
References


RIGHT OR WRONG

- Family is the basic unit of society.
- To live with a ‘family’, human-beings need to marry.
- The functions of family are the same for all the families in the world.
- 50% of the marriages in Malaysia end in divorce.
- Single families are the most common family structure in Malaysia.
FACTS

- Decreasing total fertility rate (TFR)
- Decreasing death rate
- Life expectancy of men and women are rising → more senior citizens
- Smaller family size
- Increasing number of divorces
- Divorce in early marriages are on the rise

WHY?
What has happened …

- At the macro level – economic advancement and development raised the standard of living (socio-economy)
- Results in demographic transition
- Causes transitional changes in specific traditional gender roles of women
### Kamus Dewan Edisi Keempat

Nakah (perkahwinan) adalah ikatan yang sah antara lelaki dan perempuan menjadi suami isteri.

*(Marriage is the legal bonding between man and woman as husband and wife)*

### Merriam Webster Dictionary

The state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law.

### Experts in family studies

Shehan and Kammeyer (1997) defined marriage as the personal commitment and law between two individuals, while Strong, DeVault, Sayat and Cohen (2001) defined marriage as the legal unification of man and woman, of which they are united sexually, cooperate economically, give birth or adopt children.
According to the Islamic law, marriage is an agreement that legalises the association between a man and a woman that are unrelated and creates the rights and responsibilities between both of them (Mat Saad, 2002).

Agreement to unite man and woman for the purpose of legalising sexual intercourse, with the aim of achieving long-lasting happiness in accordance with the guidelines as set by the Islamic law *(syarak)*. Islam also emphasizes the factor of continuation of offspring among the main objectives of marriage.
• Kamus Dewan: Family are “those who have a relationship with each other by descent and all those who are related from marriage”.

• National Population and Family Development Board (LPPKN) adopted the definition of family as a group of individuals who are related through blood ties or by marriage or legitimate adoption. Family is formed through marriage or registration between man and woman, and comprises children and extended family members.

• In Islam, family is a special structure in which members have blood ties or marital relationship, of which includes elements of mutual relations as outlined in religion, law and upheld by each member (Hammudah, 1977).
The researchers of the West also proposed the meaning of family in various aspects:

- Burgess and Locke (1953) considered family as a group of people who have blood relations, or adopted, live as a household, interact and communicate with each other through their respective roles as husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, siblings, where they create and maintain a common culture.

- United States Census Bureau (2015) stated that family is a unit consisting of two or more members who blood relations, marriage, or adoption or cohabiting.

- Olson and DeFrain (2000) defined family as two or more members who are committed to each other, share intimacy, resource, responsibilities in decision-making and values.
Why are there so many definitions?

• Relationships – biological vs adoption
• Legislation – marriage?
• Function – Main? Supporting?

Culture, religion, law, customs
FAMILY AS AN ECOSYSTEM
• Ecology is a word derived from the Greek word ‘oikos' or house.

• Family ecological perspective (aka family ecosystem) is based on the theory of human ecology.

• Ecological perspective examines individuals (and families) in the context of person-in-environment.

• Interaction and transaction occurs between the individual family members and the family itself with the environment.
Source: Internet
Family as an ecosystem …

• As an ecosystem, each component of the family plays an important role in ensuring the goals of the family are achieved, which is to lead a quality life in a quality environment.

• Interconnection and interaction among family members with the external system is to ensure that the family can function properly and its members can live in peace.

• The processes and dynamics that occurs within the family is very important.
- Fahey, Keilthy and Polek (2012) classified the types of family by focusing on whom the child lives with.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Married parents (biological)</th>
<th>Single mother / father (divorced / separated)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting parents (biological)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Married parents (stepparents)</td>
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<td>Cohabiting parents (stepparents)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single mother / father (divorced / separated)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mother / father without marriage</td>
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<td>Mother / father widow / widower</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Types or Forms of Families

The types or forms of the family can be categorized according to the structures and relationship between the members.

1. **Families without children** refer to married couples who do not have biological children and did not adopt children to raise.

2. **Single parent families** consist of a mother or father with a child or more children. Single parent families are formed due to divorce, separation or death of a mother or father.

3. **Nuclear families** or **basic families** consist of a mother, a father and their children.

4. **Family-of-origin** or **family of orientation** is a family in which a person was born and raised.

5. **Family of procreation** is built by a family through marriage.
• **Extended family** includes nuclear family and members of extended family, such as parents and relatives.

• **Blended family** refers to individuals who remarry a different partner, and one or both of them have children from previous marriages and also their current marriage.

• **Stepfamily** refers to families consisting of a parent who has children from the previous marriage.

• **Binuclear family** is formed when families split due to divorce. It produces two nuclear families, which is maternal nuclear family that is headed by mothers and paternal nuclear family headed by fathers.
• Polygamous family = a family unit with a spouse who has more than one married partner at a time.
  - Men who have more than one wife = polygyny family (Africa / Asia / Islam)
  - Women who have more than one husband = polyandry family (due to land / property / sex ratio)

• Patriarchal family is a family in which father acts as the head of the family who has absolute power over other members of the family.

• Matriarchal family is a family in which mother acts as the head of the family who has absolute power over other members of the family.
Types / Other Forms?

- Cohabitation?
- Same-sex couples?
Functions of Family

1. Intimacy of relationship
2. Economic cooperation
3. Reproduction and socialisation
4. Source of offspring continuation
5. Defining role and social status
Trends in marriage and family life

1. Postponement of the age of first marriage
2. Age difference between the couple getting smaller
3. TFR decline, shrinking family size
4. Divorce cases increased
5. Number of single parent households increased
6. Various family structures rising
7. Number of single persons increased
8. Number of senior citizens increased, life expectancy increased
9. The existence of the sandwich generation, boomerang, or the empty nest that does not exist
**Temporary – Voluntary**

- A single person or once married previously, postpone marriage but does not reject the idea of getting married at a later time.

**Temporary – Not voluntary**

- A single person who is still searching for a partner or a lack of interest for time being but eventually becomes active in searching for a partner.

**Stable – Voluntary**

- Individuals who choose to remain single and reject the idea of getting married. Examples of this group includes certain religious followers of groups that advocates life without marriage.

**Stable – Not voluntary**

- A single person or once married previously that has a desire to get married, have not met their partner, but is stable and able to accept singlehood status as a way of living.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>YOU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The most appropriate age for you to get married</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Your ideal number of children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Married women are better suited to stay at home to care for children and manage the household, and not working</td>
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<td>It is more suitable to live with own parents / in-laws during early marriages, and not rent due to unstable economy</td>
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<td>Are you prepared to take care of aging parents?</td>
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<td>Is it OK for women of higher earning to marry men who earn lesser than them?</td>
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<td>Is it OK for a man that is much younger than the woman to marry her? – If it is OK, how young?</td>
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<td>Is it OK for you to marry a partner that was arranged by family?</td>
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<td>Men can become “househusbands” – do you agree?</td>
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