

WET-NURSING KINSHIP: AN EXPLORATORY
PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY IN MALAYSIA FROM
THE QURANIC AND SUNNAH PERSPECTIVES

BY

MASHITAH BINTI ZAINOL ABIDIN

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the
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AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed
Knowledge and Human Sciences
International Islamic University Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The concept of wet nursing in Malaysia has evolved into a socially structured and institutionalized practice fraught with tremendous religious and legal implications. This study investigated the current situation of milk kinship, considering whether wet nurses and nurslings and their families continue or not these significant relationships. There is a dire shortage of “religious” interaction between milk kinship relatives even though Islam places great importance in family relationships. The relation was often in the name of exchanging legal documents such as birth certificate, and identification card. This raises questions as to how these connections will be documented; and sustained for future generations and whether the religious obligations of this *Sunnah* practice were being fulfilled correctly. The objectives of this study were to identify and analyse *al-Qur’ān* verses and *aḥādīth* on the Prophet Muḥammad’s, peace be upon him, ways of interacting with milk kinship; to explore the wet nurse phenomenon in Malaysia, to investigate how family ties between milk kinship were maintained; and to explain the implications of wet nursing practice in Malaysia. This study is significant for the literature on the maintenance of milk kinship. Moreover, this study is necessary not only in social policy terms (as a duty to prevent potential problems such as milk siblings marrying each other unknowingly), but also because it is closely related to the aims and obligations of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah*, particularly *ḥifz al-nasb*. It employed a qualitative approach by combining Islamic scholarly tradition with modern phenomenological research methods. Content and thematic analysis were used to examine relevant Qur’anic verses and *aḥādīth* on wet nursing to establish a strong religious foundation for understanding milk kinship. An exploratory phenomenological approach was employed to explore further the lived experiences of seven wet nurses and six birth mothers of the nursed children. Data was collected using a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews, to dig into their understanding of wet nursing, why wet nursing was an option people pursued and looked at how relationships were maintained as well as what precautions have been applied to prevent future problems, such as the risk of marriage between milk siblings. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the collected data which was transcribed verbatim. The study found that wet nurses and birth mothers had a basic understanding of milk kinship and its implications; and the formed milk relationships were largely transactional with little emotional connection. Wet nurses had generally limited contact with the families of whom they breastfed, often just on social media or phone calls via WhatsApp. The transactional relationships were only between wet nursed children and their milk mothers neglecting the milk mothers’ extended family who are the *mahram* of the wet nursed children. These findings have important outcomes beyond mere academic debates and affect both the Muslim community and policy makers. Rather than addressing the issue of milk kinship in general, this study answers a more specific question concerning the religious and legal parameters surrounding wet nursing that is necessary to understand of what it means to be connected by milk kinship with someone. This study sheds light on the requirement for broader education and tighter legislation so that milk kinship continues to be maintained appropriately based on the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muḥammad. The findings also set the stage for developing policies that conserve this relationship according to the spiritual and social obligations of Muslim society in Malaysia. The

study stresses the need for a fresh look into ethical and legal considerations of wet nursing rooted in Islamic law and tradition of Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him.



خلاصة البحث

لقد تطور مفهوم الرضاعة في ماليزيا إلى ممارسة اجتماعية ومؤسسية محفوفة بتداعيات دينية وقانونية هائلة. تتناول هذه الدراسة البحث عن الوضع الحالي للإخوة من الرضاعة، بالفحص عن استمرارية العلاقة بين المرضعات وأطفالهن الرضع وأسرهم. ثمة نقص حاد في التفاعل "الديني" بين الإخوة من الرضاعة على الرغم من اهتمام الإسلام للعلاقات الأسرية اهتماماً بالغاً. تقتصر هذه العلاقات غالباً على مجرد تبادل الوثائق القانونية مثل شهادة الميلاد وبطاقة الهوية فحسب. وهذا يثير تساؤلات حقيقية حول كيفية توثيق هذه الروابط، واستدامتها للأجيال القادمة، وما إذا كانت الالتزامات الدينية لممارسة هذه السنة يتم الوفاء بها بشكل صحيح. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد وتحليل الآيات القرآنية والأحاديث النبوية حول طرق تفاعل النبي ﷺ مع قضية الرضاع؛ واستكشاف ظاهرة المرضعات في ماليزيا والفحص عن كيفية الحفاظ على الروابط الأسرية بين الأطراف المرتبطة بعلاقة الرضاع المحرم؛ وشرح آثار ممارسة الرضاع في ماليزيا. إن هذه الدراسة ذات أهمية بالغة للأدبيات المتعلقة بصيانة علاقة الرضاع المحرم، كما أنها تعزز جانب السياسة الاجتماعية فحسب (بإثارة الوعي على ضرورة تجنب المشاكل المحتملة مثل الزواج بين الإخوة من الرضاعة دون علم)، للدراسة أيضاً علاقة وثيقة بأهداف والتزامات مقاصد الشريعة، وخاصة مقصد حفظ النسب. استخدم البحث أسلوب البحث النوعي بالجمع بين التراث العلمي الإسلامي وأساليب البحث الفينومولوجية الحديثة. كما استخدمت الباحثة التحليل الموضوعي والمحتوى لفحص الآيات القرآنية والأحاديث ذات الصلة بالرضاع لإنشاء أساس ديني قوي لفهم هذه القضية. أما المنهج الفينومولوجي فيستخدم للكشف عن تجارب حية لسبع مرضعات وست أمهات البيولوجية لأطفال الرضع. تم جمع تلك البيانات باستخدام سلسلة من المقابلات شبه للاستكشاف عن مدى فهمهم لقضية الرضاع، والعوامل وراء جعل الرضاع خياراً يسعى إليه الناس، وكيفية الحفاظ على العلاقات، وكذلك الاحتياطات المتخذة لمنع المشاكل المستقبلية، مثل خطر الزواج بين الأشقاء من الرضاعة. ثم استخدم التحليل الموضوعي لتحليل البيانات المجمعة التي تم نسخها حرفياً. وجدت الدراسة أن المرضعات والأمهات البيولوجية لديهن فهم أساسي جداً لقضية الرضاع وتداعياتها؛ وكانت علاقات الرضاع التي تم تشكيلها معاملة لدية إلى حد كبير مع القليل من الارتباط العاطفي. تبقى العلاقة بين المرضعات وأسر أطفال الرضع في نطاق محدود عامةً، وغالباً ما يتم الحفاظ عليها من خلال وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي أو المكالمات الهاتفية أو تطبيق الواتساب. وأما طبيعة العلاقة القائمة بينهم فمعاملة لدية إلى حد كبير، مع إهمال أسر أمهات الرضاعة وهم محرم أطفال المرضعات. ولقد تجاوزت نتائج هذا البحث مجال المناقشات الأكاديمية المجردة لتمتد آثارها إلى المجتمع

الإسلامي وصناع السياسات. بدلاً من معالجة قضية الرضاع بشكل عام، تجيب هذه الدراسة على سؤال أكثر تحديداً ذي علاقة بالمعايير الدينية والقانونية المحيطة بالرضاعة، والتي تعد ضرورية لفهم طبيعة الارتباط بشخص آخر خلال هذه العلاقة الفريدة، وهي علاقة القرابة بالرضاعة. تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على الحاجة إلى التعليم الأوسع والتشريعات الأكثر صرامة ليتم العناية على علاقة الرضاع المحرم بشكل صحيح بناءً على سنة نبينا محمد ﷺ. كما مهدت النتائج الطريق لتطوير سياسات تحافظ على هذه العلاقة بالالتزامات الروحية والاجتماعية للمجتمع المسلم في ماليزيا. تؤكد الدراسة على الحاجة إلى نظرة جديدة للاعتبارات الأخلاقية والقانونية للرضاع المتجدرة في الشريعة الإسلامية والهدي النبوي.



APPROVAL PAGE

The thesis of Mashitah Binti Zainol Abidin has been approved by the following:



Nazrah Binti Ahmad
Supervisor

Wan Mazwati Binti Wan Yusoff
Supervisor

Zunaidah Binti Mohd Marzuki
Internal Examiner

Abdoul Karim Toure
External Examiner

Amir Akramin Bin Shafie
Chairman

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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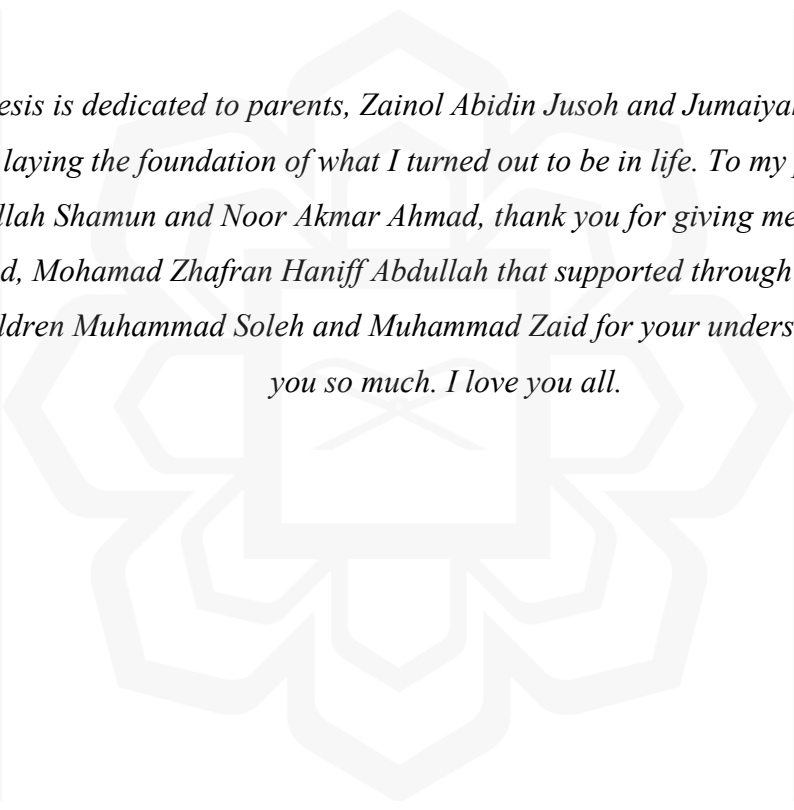
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This thesis is dedicated to parents, Zainol Abidin Jusoh and Jumaiyah Kardy, thank you for laying the foundation of what I turned out to be in life. To my parents-in law, Abdullah Shamun and Noor Akmar Ahmad, thank you for giving me hope. To my husband, Mohamad Zhafran Haniff Abdullah that supported through thick and thin, my children Muhammad Soleh and Muhammad Zaid for your understanding, thank you so much. I love you all.

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Law of Women Breastfeeding Adopted Children, (Federal Territories) Islamic Religious Affairs 2011 (Malaysia)



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Breastfeeding and wet nursing are a blessing to humankind out of the infinite Mercy and Wisdom of Allah. The practice of breastfeeding is significant for medical and socio-cultural reasons. It is widely accepted that breastfeeding has been recognized as the best source of infant nutrition for the first two years of a baby's life. This is because breastmilk contains almost all the vitamins, minerals, and other nutritional elements needed by the baby that cannot be provided by formula milk; as well as protecting the baby against diseases including gut and respiratory infections.¹ For humans, Spatz and Lessen propose giving infants human colostrum to build and maintain gut integrity.² Nolan et al. reported that secretory immunoglobulin A (IgA) and growth factors in human milk regulate gut barrier integrity and microbial colonization, protecting newborns from necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC), a life-threatening gastrointestinal illness.³ Furthermore, studies done by World Health Organization (WHO) showed that breastfeeding has reduced newborn babies' and toddlers' mortality rates.⁴ For these important health benefits, it necessitates the use of a wet nurse if the birth mother is unable to breastfeed for various reasons. Allah mentions the requirement for a wet nurse's service if there is no mother, or if the mother is unable to breastfeed. Allah said:

¹ Normadiyah Daud et al., "Benefits of Breast Milk for Health Care: Analysis from the Islamic Perspective," *Indian Journal of Public Health Research and Development* 10, no. 9 (2019): 1846–50, <https://doi.org/10.5958/0976-5506.2019.02723.2>; Diane L. Spatz and Rachele Lessen, "Risks of Not Breastfeeding," *International Lactation Consultant Association* (Morrisville, North Carolina, United States of America, 2011), <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22175106>; Lila S. Nolan, Olivia B. Parks, and Misty Good, "A Review of the Immunomodulating Components of Maternal Breast Milk and Protection against Necrotizing Enterocolitis," *Nutrients* 12, no. 1 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu12010014>.

² Spatz and Lessen, "Risks of Not Breastfeeding."

³ Nolan, Parks, and Good, "A Review of the Immunomodulating Components of Maternal Breast Milk and Protection against Necrotizing Enterocolitis."

⁴ World Health Organization, "Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding," 2003, <http://who.int/iris/bit-stream/10665/42590/1/9241562218.pdf>. Accessed 14 May 2021.

﴿ وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ تَسْرِضِعُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ مَا آتَيْتُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴾

Translation: And if you want to have your children wet-nursed, there will be no sin upon you so long as you pay what you give by honourable norms and be wary of Allah and know that Allah watches what you do.⁵

In Malaysia, exclusively breastfeeding mothers increased from 14.5% in 2006 to 47.1% in 2016, demonstrating the effectiveness of breastfeeding campaign. The first six months of life were spent exclusively breastfeeding in at least 70% of infants.⁶ Growing knowledge of the health advantages of breastfeeding has led to some Malaysian mothers voluntarily offering and requesting to give their breast milk, particularly for preterm newborns. Richard J. Schanler, Mohammad H Bawany et al., and Paulina Brahm & Verónica Valdés claimed that preterm newborns have too many obstacles to overcome to receive the finest nourishment possible to maintain their lives. These unfortunate babies are easy to get bacterial contamination and infections.⁷ Studies have found that mortality rates of preterm babies decreased with breast milk.⁸ Therefore, more breast milk supply from wet nurses is needed to ensure that preterm babies are given breast milk exclusively.

Since before the arrival of Islam, wet nursing has been practiced. Two wet nurses that the prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, personally suckled from were

⁵ Al-Baqarah, 2:233.

⁶ Ministry of Health Malaysia, “National Plan of Action for Nutrition of Malaysia III 2016–2025,” Putrajaya: National Coordinating Committee on Food and Nutrition (NCCFN), 2016, https://nutrition.moh.gov.my/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/NPANM_III.pdf. Accessed 21 November 2021.

⁷ Richard J. Schanler, “Outcomes of Human Milk-Fed Premature Infants,” *Seminars in Perinatology* 35, no. 1 (2011): 29–33, <https://doi.org/10.1053/j.semperi.2010.10.005>; Paulina Brahm and Verónica Valdés, “Benefits of Breastfeeding and Risks Associated with Not Breastfeeding,” *Chil Pediatr* 88, no. 1 (2017): 15–21; Mohammad H Bawany, Ahamed Milhan, and Aasim I Padela, “The Unbreakable Relationship. Are Muslims Aware of the Islamic Bioethical Perspectives on Human Breast Milk Banking?,” *Islamic Horizons* (Plainfield, New Jersey, United States of America, 2016), <https://www.medicineandislam.org/s/Husainarticle.pdf>.

⁸ Schanler, “Outcomes of Human Milk-Fed Premature Infants”; Syed Abdul Khaliq, “Syariah Compliant Milk Bank: The Need and Issues,” *International Journal of Human and Health Sciences (IJHHS)* 7, no. 70 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.31344/ijhhs.v7i70.511>; Fouzia Abdulaziz AlHreashy, “Non-Maternal Nursing in the Muslim Community: A Health Perspective Review,” *Journal of Clinical Neonatology* 7, no. 4 (2018): 191–97, https://doi.org/10.4103/jcn.jcn_55_18; Brahm and Valdés, “Benefits of Breastfeeding and Risks Associated with Not Breastfeeding.”

Thuwaybah (ثوية) and Ḥalīmah al-Sa‘diyyah (حليمة السعدية). Wet nurses are now in increasing demand resulting in increased public knowledge of the benefits of breastmilk for a baby’s physical, mental, and intellectual health and development as well as illness prevention. WHO and UNICEF emphasize the importance of breastmilk to reduce breastfeeding infants’ mortality by feeding them with mothers’ milk as early as birth up to 6 months of age and continues up to two years of age. This practice is mentioned in *al-Qur’ān* [2:233, 4:23, 22:2, 28:7, 28:12 31:14, 46:15, 65:6] whereby mothers are recommended to breastfeed their infants until they reach the age of 2 years old. *Al-Qur’ān* emphasizes the importance of giving breastmilk to newborn babies and toddlers and that the fathers are urged to find wet nurses for the babies if the mothers face difficulties breastfeeding the infant children. For mothers who failed to breastfeed their infants for whatever reasons, wet nursing is a much better option compared to formula milk. This way, the baby’s life is saved by providing necessary and sufficient nutrients for the baby’s growth which could prevent him or her from various health complications.

Al-Ṭabarī (الطبري) wrote in *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān*⁹ (جامع البيان) that when the mother cannot afford to breastfeed, her husband or family can find another woman to breastfeed her child. Hamka also agreed with this by explaining that the recruitment of a wet nurse might be due to whether the mother herself is still alive and married but unable to breastfeed her child, or the mother of the child herself is dying after giving birth. Hamka also mentioned one more factor contributing to the recruitment of wet nurses. He said that on the occasion of the death of the child’s father; and the child’s mother married someone else, then the responsibility of breastfeeding fell into the hands of the family of the child’s father. This necessitates the appointment of a wet nurse.¹⁰ Ibn ‘Āshūr, in his *tafsīr* book *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr* affirmed the wet nurses can be appointed when the mother faced difficulties or refused to breastfeed. The father’s is responsible to hire a wet nurse to provide the much-needed nutrition for his baby.¹¹ Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, in *Tafsīr al-Wasīṭ*, stated that Islamic jurisprudence permits wet nurse to nurse a child

⁹ Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Jurair Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān Al-Ta’wīl Ayyi Qur’ān Al-Ṭabarī*, ed. ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abd Al-Muḥsin, 1st ed. (Egypt: Dār Hajar, 2001). 241.

¹⁰ Abdulmalik Abdulkarim Amrullah Hamka, *Tafsīr Al-Azhar*, 1st ed. (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional Pte Ltd, 1990). Hamka. 563.

¹¹ Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir ibn ‘Āshūr. *Al-Taḥrīr wal-Tanwīr (Al-Tafsīr al-Majīd)*. (Tunis: Al-Dār al-Tunīsiyyah, 1984). 366.

when the mother is unable to do so due to illness, pregnancy, or financial hardship, provided the nurse is fairly compensated and the child's well-being was prioritized. Citing al-Baqarah 2:233, he emphasized Islam's commitment to compassion, child welfare, and moral responsibility.¹²

However, the recruitment of wet nurses was due to several other factors in line with technological advances and developments in the current world. In the Arabic tradition, the recruitment of a wet nurse was to prevent a child from being infected with diseases that were believed to come from the city area, which were easy to infect and spread among infants and children.¹³ The absence of a birth mother or a birth mother who resisted to breastfeeding was another factor for taking a wet nurse.¹⁴

With time, the need for wet nurses is becoming more widespread because many mothers of babies may need a long rest in bed after giving birth by C-section surgery or experience a lot of bleeding after delivery.¹⁵ The longer recovery time taken by the mother may cause an impact on the milk supply because of the lack of stimulation from breastfeeding the baby.¹⁶ In addition, the recruitment of wet nurses may be due to the constraints of mothers who are still studying and working away from their immediate

¹² Wahbah al-Zuhaylī ibn Muṣṭafā al-Zuhaylī, *Tafsīr Al-Wasīl*, 1st ed. (Damshik, Syria: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.).

¹³ Halimatus Saadiyah Mohamad Safir, Dhamirah Nursakinah Mohamad Safir, and Siti Fatimah Salleh, "Realiti Penyusuan Anak Susuan Pada Zaman Silam Dan Kontemporari: Kajian Tinjauan [The Reality of Wet-Nursing in the Past and Contemporary: A Review Study]," *International Social Science and Humanities Journal* 2, no. 2 (2019): 48–56. (Safir et. al., 2019a).

¹⁴ George Kent, "Wet Nursing in Emergencies," *World Nutrition* 9, no. 3 (2018): 314–23; Kelley L. Baumgartel, Larissa Sneeringer, and Susan M. Cohen, "From Royal Wet Nurses to Facebook: The Evolution of Breastmilk Sharing," *Breastfeeding Review: Professional Publication of the Nursing Mothers' Association of Australia* 24, no. 3 (2016): 25–32.

¹⁵ Desri Suryani et al., "Determinants Failure of Exclusive Breast Feeding on Health in the City Bengkulu," *Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat* 12, no. 2 (2017): 304–12, <https://doi.org/10.15294/kemas.v12i2.6890>; Vincenzo Zanardo et al., "Early Lactation Failure and Formula Adoption after Elective Caesarean Delivery: Cohort Study," *Archives of Disease in Childhood: Fetal and Neonatal Edition* 98, no. 1 (2012): F1–5, <https://doi.org/10.1136/archdischild-2011-301218>; Andrea Guala et al., "Skin-to-Skin Contact in Cesarean Birth and Duration of Breastfeeding: A Cohort Study," *The Scientific World Journal* 2017 (2017): 1–5, <https://doi.org/10.1155/2017/1940756>; Rana Chehab et al., "C-Section Delivery Is a Barrier to and Demographic-Maternal-Child Factors Have Mixed Effects on the Length of Exclusive Breastfeeding Under Nutrition Transition in Lebanon (P11-058-19)," *Current Developments in Nutrition* 3 (June 2019): nzz048.P11-058-19, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdn/nzz048.P11-058-19>.

¹⁶ Niran A. Al-Naqeeb et al., "The Introduction of Breast Milk Donation in a Muslim Country," *Journal of Human Lactation* 16, no. 4 (2000): 346–50, <https://doi.org/10.1177/089033440001600412>.

families.¹⁷ In addition, hospitals need breastmilk from wet nurses to be given to infants to save their lives and to reduce the incidence of ‘necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC)’ which most often occurs in premature infants.¹⁸ Necrotizing enterocolitis is a very severe gastrointestinal disease with mortality as high as 50% requiring surgery.¹⁹

However, the implication of giving breast milk to other people’s babies and children before two years of age is tremendous in Islam. Milk kinship will be established when conditions are met. This would mean that not only the mother-child relationship is formed but also milk siblings and families. Consequently, the child and the milk mother and her husband, parents, grandparents, offspring, siblings, uncles and aunts become *maḥram*. *Al-Qur’ān* has delineated the list of family relationships formed because of wet nursing that made marriage forbidden. Al-Qurṭubī (القرطبي) said that if a woman breastfed a child and when sufficient breastfeeding conditions were met, then it is forbidden for the woman to marry her breastfed child because she is considered the same as the mother of the child, the woman’s children become siblings of her breastfed child, the woman’s sisters become the aunts of her breastfed child. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: وَقَالَ سُؤَيْدٌ وَزُهَيْرٌ إِنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ - : «لَا تُحْرِمُ الْمَصَّةُ وَالْمَصَّتَانِ»²⁰

Translation: On the authority of ‘Ā’ishah, who said: The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: Suwayd and Zuhayr said that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: “One or two sucks do not make (marriage) forbidden.

¹⁷ Mohamad Safir, Mohamad Safir, and Salleh, “Realiti Penyusuan Anak Susuan Pada Zaman Silam Dan Kontemporari: Kajian Tinjauan [The Reality of Wet-Nursing in the Past and Contemporary: A Review Study]”; Maria Lorella Gianni et al., “Breastfeeding Difficulties and Risk for Early Breastfeeding Cessation,” *Nutrients* 11, no. 10 (2019): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu11102266>.

¹⁸ Kathyayini P. Gopalakrishna et al., “Maternal IgA Protects against the Development of Necrotizing Enterocolitis in Preterm Infants,” *Nature Medicine* 25, no. 7 (July 17, 2019): 1110–15, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-019-0480-9>. (Kathyayini et al., (2019); Allison Thomas Rose and Ravi Mangal Patel, “A Critical Analysis of Risk Factors for Necrotizing Enterocolitis,” *Seminars in Fetal and Neonatal Medicine* 23, no. 6 (December 2018): 374–79, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.siny.2018.07.005>.

¹⁹ Atul Malhotra et al., “Neonatal Morbidities of Fetal Growth Restriction: Pathophysiology and Impact,” *Frontiers in Endocrinology* 10, no. FEB (2019): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fendo.2019.00055>.

²⁰ Abū al-Ḥusīn Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushairī Al-Naisābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ed. Muḥammad Fu’ād ‘Abd Al-Bāqī, 2nd ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1955). 1073. *Ḥadīth* no. 1450. *Ibn al-Madīnī* grade this *ḥadīth* as authentic/*ṣaḥīḥ*. See: *Al-‘Ilal*, p83.

In the other *ḥadīth*,

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الْحَارِثِ، أَنَّ أُمَّ الْفَضْلِ، حَدَّثَتْ، أَنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ:
«لَا تُحْرِمُ الرَّضْعَةَ أَوْ الرَّضْعَانَ، أَوْ الْمَصَّةَ أَوْ الْمَصَّتَانَ»²¹

Translation: On the authority of ‘Abdullah ibn al-Ḥārith, that Umm al-Faḍl narrated that the Prophet of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: Being suckled once or twice, or one suckling or two, do not make marriage unlawful.

Muhammad Asad in translating *Sūrah al-Nisā*’ verse 23, “Forbidden to you are..... your milk-mothers and your milk-sisters;”²² The lineage of breastfeeding that is forbidden is as described by Sayyid Quṭub (سيد قطب): “And it is forbidden due to breastfeeding what is forbidden due to descent and marital relationship includes nine *maḥrams*²³ namely:

1. Wet nurse, as well as her parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents.
2. Wet nurse’ offspring, as well as their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. (A wet nursing child is a child breastfed by a husband’s wife during their marriage).
3. The wet nurse’s siblings, their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.
4. The wet nurse’s paternal and maternal aunts: The wet nurse’s sister is a maternal milk aunt, while the sister of the wet nurse’s husband is a paternal milk aunt.
5. The wet nurse’s mother, the lady who breastfed the wet nurse when she was a baby. To some extent, the same can be said for that wet nurse’s mother, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers (Wet nurse’s wet nurse).

²¹ Al-Naisābūrī. 1073. *Ḥadīth* no. 1450. *Muṣṭafā Abū al-Ghayṭ wa ‘Abdullah ibn Sulaymān wa Yāsar ibn Kamāl* grade this *ḥadīth* as authentic/*ṣaḥīḥ*. See: *Al-Badar al-Munīr fī Takhrīj al-Aḥādīth wa al-Athār al-Wāqī‘ah fī Sharḥ al-Kabīr*, p275-276.

²² Muhammad Asad, *The Message of The Quran Translated and Explained by Muhammad Asad* (Al-Andalus, Spain: Dar Al-Andlus Limited, 3 Library Ramp Gibraltar 1980, 2007), <http://arthursclassiconovels.com/arthurs/koran/koran-asad10.html>. 162.

²³ Sayyid Quṭb, *Tafsīr Fī Zilāl Al-Qur’an. Trans.*, ed. As‘ad Yasin, Abdul Aziz Salim Basyarahil, and Muchotob Hamzah, 4th ed. (Jakarta, Indonesia: Gema Insani Press, 2000). 226-227.

6. The wet-nursing child's spouse and former spouse. This prohibition applies to the spouse once the marriage is consummated - as in lineage.
7. The wet nurse's stepfather, or stepfathers, as well as the stepfather's milk child who was breastfed by the wet nurse.
8. The wet nurse's spouse and former spouse. The man who married the wet nurse's mother is the wet nurse's father.
9. Married to two wet nursing' sisters at the same time."

Muslim scholars have also explored numerous problems regarding milk kinship including the conditions for the establishment of milk kinship. Shāfi'ī and Hanbalī schools of jurisprudence have agreed that the children have to be breastfed up to five times for the milk kinship to be established.²⁴ Shāfi'ī and Hanbalī schools opined that breastmilk must reach a baby's stomach by direct suckling, using a cup or through the baby's nostrils at least five times with the right amount; Hanafī and Mālikī scholars made an *ijtihād* that breastmilk fed to a baby regardless of the amount, little or a lot, is enough to form a milk kinship.²⁵ The baby or nursling must be less than two years old. The majority of states in Malaysia practice the Shāfi'ī school which is one of the schools of *Ahlu al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* (أهل السنة والجماعة) in *fiqh* (فقه). While Ghaly discussed three pillars of wet nursing that must be met for milk kinship to be legal and binding.²⁶ The pillars are the mother, the milk, and the nursling. The identity of the wet nurse must be known and in the case of more than one wet nurse involved, all the wet nurses who gave more than five times full feeding will be considered as milk mothers.

Realizing the responsibility and desire to save baby's life in line with the *Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah* (مقاصد الشريعة), some hospitals set up milk banks such as Bonda

²⁴ Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad ibn Idris Al-Shāfi'ī, *Al-Umm*, 2nd ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār al-Fikr, 1990). Vol. 5. 28; Al-Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad Al-Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal*, ed. Shu'īb Al-Arnu'ūt and 'Ādil Murshid, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 2001). Vol.43. 343.

²⁵ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Al-Umm*. Vol. 5. 29; Abū Muḥammad 'Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ibn Qudāmah, *Al-Mughnī Li Ibnu Qudāmah*, ed. Ṭaha Al-Zainī et al., 1st ed. (Egypt: Maktabah Al-Qāhirah, 1969). 309-312; Mālik ibn Anas Ibn Mālik, *Al-Mudawwanah*, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1994). Vol. 2. 295-306; Abū Muḥammad Maḥmūd ibn Aḥmad ibn Mūsā ibn Aḥmad ibn Husīn Al-Ghītābī, *Al-Bināyah Sharḥ Al-Hidāyah*, ed. Ayman Ṣāliḥ Sha'bān, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār Al-Kutub Al-'Ālamiyyah, 2000). 256-279.

²⁶ Mohammed Ghaly, "Human Milk-Based Industry in the Muslim World: Religioethical Challenges," *Breastfeeding Medicine* 13, no. S1 (2018): S28–29, <https://doi.org/10.1089/bfm.2018.29081.mjg>.

Halimatussaadia Mother's Milk Centre in Kuantan, Malaysia, established by Sultan Ahmad Shah Medical Centre (SASMEC) @ IIUM and Adan Hospital in Kuwait. Both hospitals has taken the path to setting up a breastmilk sharing awareness initiative by explaining the implications of receiving and consuming such milk to all parties involved and those involved were introduced to each other.²⁷ Furthermore, breastmilk sharing not only can save lives but also can help the development of the baby's brain, and prevent obesity and other health complications from using formula milk; furthermore, the quality of the breastmilk is guaranteed.²⁸

In Malaysia, wet nursing is undeniably on the rise based on the researcher's observation from April 2021 until February 2022 on social media. Table 1.1 shows the popularity of breastmilk sharing on Facebook and Telegram. The most popular Facebook page recorded an increase in the number of likes and followers on one page and additions of members in 4 separate groups. Meanwhile, only one group in the telegram was found for Malaysian breastfed children which recorded a decrease in membership. However, a Facebook group *Mencari Anak Angkat* (MAA) has been deactivated while the *Mencari Anak Angkat* group has changed its name to *Mencari Anak Angkat Sabah*. Overall, this is of concern to all parties as there is no monitoring from the authorities for the widespread adoption of children and breastfeeding mothers on social media. In fact, until this date, Facebook groups have been created and are increasing day by day.

²⁷ Al-Naqeeb et al., "The Introduction of Breast Milk Donation in a Muslim Country"; Mohammed Ghaly, "Milk Banks Through the Lens of Muslim Scholars: One Text in Two Contexts," *Bioethics* 26, no. 3 (2012): 117–27, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8519.2010.01844.x>; Karleen D. Gribble, "Peer-to-Peer Milk Donors' and Recipients' Experiences and Perceptions of Donor Milk Banks," *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic, and Neonatal Nursing* 42, no. 4 (2013): 451–61, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1552-6909.12220>.

²⁸ Daud et al., "Benefits of Breast Milk for Health Care: Analysis from the Islamic Perspective."

Table 1.1 Breastmilk Sharing Pages on Facebook and Telegram

| Page Name | 2021 | | | | | | | | | | 2022 | Result |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|----------|
| | Month and No. of Followers | | | | | | | | | | Month | |
| | April | May | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | | |
| | Facebook | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mencari Anak Angkat dan Keluarga | 10,284 likes 10,536 followers | 10,612 likes 10,874 followers | 11,101 likes 11,386 followers | 11,206 likes 11,501 followers | 11,337 likes 11,647 followers | 11,384 likes 11,767 followers | 11,404 likes 11,839 followers | 11,514 likes 11,958 followers | 11,588 likes 12,037 followers | 11,729 likes 12,140 followers | | Increase |
| 💜 MENCARI ANAK | 4.6k members | 5.0k members | 6.0k members | 6.4k members | 6.6k members | 6.8k members | 7.0k members | 7.2k members | 7.3k members | 7.5k members | | Increase |
| Mencari Anak Angkat (MAA) | 14.3k members | 16.5k members | 22.6k members | 24.7k members | 26.4k members | 27.6k members | 28.0k members | 29.2k members | 29.6k members | Unavailable | | Increase |
| The Breastfeeding Advocates Network, | 150.3k members | 150.8k members | 151.2k members | 151.4k members | 151.9k members | 153.1k members | 153.1k members | 153.3k members | 154.2k members | 154.3k members | | Increase |
| | Telegram | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Anak Susuan Malaysia | 338 members | 341 members | 319 members | 303 members | 299 members | 293 members | 288 members | 275 members | 273 members | 272 members | | Decrease |

This means that the free sharing of breastmilk through social media platforms like Facebook and Telegram in Malaysia is common practice now. Problems may arise when the consequence of sharing breastmilk freely is not taken seriously by those involved. This is because Safir et al., found that the breastfed child and his or her milk mother had never met face-to-face.²⁹ The impact of this is they would not be able to recognize each other in the future. Our Islamic history informed us that our beloved Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, always glorified and honoured his wet nurses and milk siblings. Once Ḥalīmah came, mourning (شكاة) over the drought in her hometown, which caused hunger and starvation. To ease the suffering of Ḥalīmah, the Prophet, peace be upon him, presented 40 lambs and a camel as devoting himself to them after he was an adult.³⁰ Al-Waqīdī (الوقيدي) related that the Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, used to honour Thuwaybah and stay connected with her while she was in Mecca, and when he emigrated, he would send her clothing and company, and he was informed of her death in the year seven, coming from Khaybar (خيبر).³¹ More evidence about how the Prophet dealt with his milk kinship relatives is presented in section 3.3.3.

What is more, a grave problem may happen in the future³² when there are reports of milk siblings getting married to each other. This was because the family relationship was not maintained, and the milk siblings did not know each other. Later, when they happened to know they were milk siblings, they need to annul their marriage. This problem is demonstrated by the *ḥadīth* of the effects of *maḥram* marriage that needed to be annulled due to breastfeeding. The *ḥadīth* stated:

²⁹ Dhamirah Nursakinah Mohamad Safir, Halimatus Saadiah Mohamad Safir, and Siti Fatimah Salleh, “Pengendalian Dokumentasi Anak Susuan Dalam Kalangan Ibu Susuan,” *Malaysian Journal for Islamic Studies (MJIS)* 4, no. 2 (2020): 67–77, <http://mjis.2020.4.2.144>. (Safir et. al., 2020a).

³⁰ Abū al-‘Abdullah ibn Sa‘d ibn Munī‘ al-Hāshimī Ibn Sa‘d, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār Ṣādir, 1968). 113; Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Faraj ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad Al-Jūzi, *Al-Muntaẓam Fī Tārīkh Al-Mulūk Wa Al-Umam*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Atā and Mustafā ‘Abd Al-Qādir ‘Atā, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1992). Vol. 2. 264.

³¹ Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Faraj ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad Al-Jūzi, *Ṣifat Al-Ṣafwat*, ed. Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī, 1st ed. (Al-Qāhirah, Egypt: Dār Al-Ḥadīth, 2000). Vol. 1. 26.

³² From the researcher’s knowledge to date, there is one reported case. But it was a milk kinship couple that was ‘almost’ married only. Metro Ahad (3 April 2016). https://www.facebook.com/harianmetro/photos/a.10150127373897052/10154050609342052/?_rdr. Accessed 5 August 2022.

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو عَاصِمٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ جُرَيْجٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ أَبِي مُلَيْكَةَ، عَنْ عُقْبَةَ بْنِ الْحَارِثِ، وَحَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ جُرَيْجٍ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ ابْنَ أَبِي مُلَيْكَةَ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي عُقْبَةُ بْنُ الْحَارِثِ، أَوْ سَمِعْتُهُ مِنْهُ أَنَّهُ تَزَوَّجَ أُمَّ يَحْيَى بِنْتَ أَبِي إِهَابٍ، قَالَ: فَجَاءَتْ أُمَّةٌ سُودَاءُ، فَقَالَتْ: قَدْ أَرْضَعْتُكُمَا، فَذَكَرْتُ ذَلِكَ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَأَعْرَضَ عَنِّي، قَالَ: فَتَنَحَّيْتُ، فَذَكَرْتُ ذَلِكَ لَهُ، قَالَ: «وَكَيْفَ وَقَدْ زَعَمْتَ أَنْ قَدْ أَرْضَعْتُكُمَا» فَنَهَاهُ عَنْهَا³³

Translation: Abū ‘Āṣim narrated to us, on the authority of Ibn Jurayj, on the authority of Ibn Abī Mulaykah, on the authority of ‘Uqbah ibn al-Ḥarīth. ‘Alī ibn ‘Abdullah narrated to us, ‘Uqbah ibn al-Ḥarīth narrated to me, or I heard it from him, that he married Umm Yaḥyā, daughter of Abī Ihāb, and a woman came and said, “I have suckled both of you.” So, I asked the Prophet, peace be upon him, but he turned away from me. He said: "How (can you hesitate) while it has been said (that you are foster brothers and sisters)?" So, he forbade him from her.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In Malaysia, the only documented interaction between the breastfed child and the wet nurse has often been limited to the exchange of legal documents such as birth certificates and Malaysian identification cards. To date, there is limited information regarding any efforts by either party to preserve or strengthen the *maḥram* relationship or to maintain ongoing familial ties. In some cases, wet nurses have never met the children they breastfed and merely acted as milk suppliers.³⁴ Would the wet nurse and nursling know each other in the future? Would the milk siblings recognize one another? This raises the important question of whether maintaining a strong relationship between milk family members is a religious obligation.

The purpose of this research is to explore how the parties involved in milk kinship maintain their family ties by interviewing the participants who were the wet nurses and mothers of the nurslings. It is important to shed some light on this issue

³³ Abū ‘Abdullah Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, ed. A group of Islamic Scholars (Egypt: Maṭba‘ah al-Kubrā al-Amīriyyah, 2012). *Ḥadīth* no. 2659. This *ḥadīth* is authentic (*Ṣaḥīḥ*) and appears in both *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

³⁴ Mohamad Safir, Mohamad Safir, and Salleh, “Realiti Penyusuan Anak Susuan Pada Zaman Silam Dan Kontemporari: Kajian Tinjauan [The Reality of Wet-Nursing in the Past and Contemporary: A Review Study].”

because not only does Islam prohibit the severing of family ties but also to avoid a problem like incest if marriage between milk siblings took place for not knowing each other. This required urgent actions by the authority and the first step in providing the solution to this problem is to understand the phenomenon from the perspectives of those involved. This is also to fulfil the demands of the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* (مقاصد الشريعة) which is 'ḥifz al-nasb' (حفظ النسب).

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This present study attempts to make a humble but profound contribution in the field of *al-Qur'ān* and al-Sunnah as well as in *munākaḥāt* (مناكحات) as it directly addresses a notable gap in the existing academic literature, particularly on maintenance of milk kinship relationship according to the teachings of *al-Qur'ān* and al-Sunnah. Many research reveals that while many Muslim mothers in Malaysia have a basic understanding of wet-nursing's implications, especially regarding marriage prohibitions (*mahram*), but they lack understanding concerning more complex changes likes to namely who are considered milk relatives, rights and responsibilities of milk relatives, inheritance, the obligation of maintaining milk kinship relationship. Availability of literature on the maintenance of milk kinship relationship is imperative for the consumption of the Muslims who aspire to observe religious practices which are consistent with the Sunnah of the Prophet. As for the academic circle, this study is expected to be able to provide thoughts on useful scholarly references to further strengthen the Muslim's knowledge about the importance of observing the responsibilities of brotherhood as outlined by the *Sharī'ah*. This is to avoid any neglect of maintenance and responsibilities between members of milk families.

Furthermore, the study aims to provide an accurate and comprehensive depiction of wet-nursing practices to relevant authorities regarding the prevalence of wet-nursing and the existing informal as well as almost non-existent documentation practices among birth parents and wet nurses. The evidence gathered in this study strongly supports the recommendation for formal, systematic documentation of milk kinship by relevant authorities to prevent marriage between milk siblings and ensure legal transparency. This study is significant for guiding religious and governmental bodies like the Islamic Religious Council of every state in Malaysia and Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia

(JAKIM) in enforcing improved practices through clear legal approaches and policies especially policy related to the responsibility to maintain the family lineage between breastfeeding children and breastfeeding families according to the tradition of the Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him.

The successful breastfeeding campaign by the relevant organizations results in the resumption of wet nursing and the free sharing of breastmilk introduce new problems, such as proper documentation and health and personality issues of the wet nurses. The findings of this research provide crucial evidence for the religious authority to explore the traditional Islamic jurisprudence to make new *ijtihād* that can be reconciled with these contemporary realities, ensuring that health benefits are pursued without compromising religious principles. It informs the relevant authority in crafting policies that are sensitive to Muslim parents' needs and address milk kinship concerns, thereby preventing mental health struggles and family tensions. This policy will provide a starting point in the enactment of appropriate laws to the community and individuals who wish to seek the services of wet nurses and milk banks.

Furthermore, the insight gained from this research is indispensable for designing effective and targeted awareness campaigns and educational programs. By understanding *what* mothers know and *where* their knowledge gaps lie, educators can develop content that directly addresses misconceptions and provides comprehensive information on the legal implications of wet nursing and the sunnah practices in maintaining milk kinship relationship. This ensures that educational efforts are relevant, culturally sensitive, and impactful. In summary, this research on the maintenance of milk kinship relationships is not merely an academic exercise; it is a vital tool for ensuring religious compliance, safeguarding family integrity, informing public policy, and promoting social harmony in Muslim communities, especially in the face of evolving modern practices.

1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on wet nursing in the Muslim world have gained prominence presently. Google Scholar search using the keywords “wet nurse” AND “Islam” yielded 840 published research reports from the year 2000 to 2009: and 1940 articles from the year 2010 to

2021. Google Scholar search engine located 3490 published research reports on 17th August 2021. This online database searches on publications that mentioned the words “wet nurse” AND “Malaysia” yielded 660 publications of which only 10 articles were directly related to wet nursing and breast milk sharing. The 10 articles were written by a total of 31 authors of which one article was co-authored by 3 researchers. Three research groups contributed to the remaining papers. The year 2018 saw the publication of the first piece, and 2019 saw the publication of the others. This first search’s outcome indicated that additional research is necessary to fully comprehend this phenomenon in Malaysia.

Literature on wet nursing in the Muslim world discovered six major themes which were named the history of wet nursing; wet nursing from an Islamic perspective; milk bank and milk donation; documentation of wet nursing; mothers’ knowledge and attitude on wet nursing and milk donation; and fathers’ roles in wet nursing. Wet nursing from an Islamic perspective elucidated the meanings of wet nursing and requirements for the establishment of milk kinship, and a specific section on wet nurses and milk donors was also elaborated. Historical studies revealed that breastfeeding and wet nursing were a tradition practiced by the Arabs before the advent of Islam where parents and immediate families would seek good wet nurses from the rural areas to breastfeed their infant children. Almost all literature on wet nursing in the Muslim world discussed the legality and implications of wet nursing in Islam. The highlights of the literature were on the establishment of milk kinship when the conditions are met; the requirements to be a wet nurse; the characteristics of the wet nurses from aspects of physical, intellectual, and spiritual health; and the amount, mode, and time of payment for the service provided by the wet nurse.

A review of the 10 articles on wet nursing in Malaysia found that wet nurses or non-biological mothers who breastfeed the child can be from friends, colleagues, relatives, or strangers.³⁵ Since some of the breast milk sharing was done using an online

³⁵ Zilal Saari et al., “Wet Nursing: A Historical Review and Its Ideal Characteristics,” *PERINTIS E-Journal* 6, no. 1 (2016): 1–13; Abdul Mu’iz Mohd Tamyas and Mohd. Norhusairi Mat Hussin, “Pelaksanaan Kad Radha’ah Sebagai Alternatif Penjagaan Nasab Keturunan Dan Anak Susuan Oleh Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor [Implementation of Radha’ah’s Card as Alternative Care of Nasab and Babies with Breastfeeding by Selangor Islamic Religious Department],” *Kanun: Jurnal Undang-Undang Malaysia* 32, no. 2 (2020): 195–222, [https://doi.org/10.37052/kanun.32\(2\)no2](https://doi.org/10.37052/kanun.32(2)no2); Ahmad Sanusi Azmi, “Parallel Framework of Muḥammad and Moses’s Story: An Analysis of the Narratives of Ḥalimah Al-Sa’diyyah,” *Al-Banjari: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 17, no. 1 (2018): 1–12,

platform by total strangers, it raised a legitimate concern about maintaining the milk kinship to avoid possible grave problems in the future. A group of researchers from Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin and Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia made a comparative analysis between wet-nursing practices during the time of the Prophets and the present times.³⁶ They found differences in factors for using wet nursing services and how the match between wet nurse and nursling were done. This raised an issue of documentation of the present practice. To better understand this issue, they conducted another qualitative study to find out how the documentation was done by both the mothers of the children and the wet nurses.³⁷ This study found no proper documentation was made by both parties. This led to another published article by the same authors.³⁸ This article proposed to develop an official wet nursing database in Terengganu to document all wet nursing and milk sharing using an e-application called “e-Anak Susu” (e-AS) that can be conveniently accessed via smartphones. Another concerned group of researchers realized the possible negative consequences of breast milk-sharing

<https://doi.org/10.18592/al-banjari.v17i1.1922>; Dhamirah Nursakinah Mohamad Safir et al., “Intervensi Pengurusan Dokumentasi Anak Susuan Ke Arah Mewujudkan Masyarakat Sejahtera,” *International Social Science and Humanities Journal* 2, no. 4 (2019): 47–53; Salasiah Hanin Hamjah et al., “A Quantitative Study on Muslim Milk Mother’s Understanding Towards the Islamic Concept of Wet Nursing,” *Research Square*, 2021, 1–18, [https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-221588/v1%0ALicense](https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-221588/v1%0ALicense;); Norsyamlina Che Abdul Rahim, Salasiah Hanin Hamjah, Latifah Abdul Majid, et al., “A Cross-Sectional Study on The Practice of Wet Nursing among Muslim Mothers,” *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth* 21, no. 68 (2021): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-021-03551-9>; Normadiah Daud et al., “The Implementation of Shariah Compliant Human Milk Bank for Premature Infants in Malaysia,” *Journal of Critical Reviews* 7, no. 16 (2020): 1007–12, <https://doi.org/10.31838/jcr.07.16.129>; Normadiah Daud et al., “The Views of Fuqaha on the Permissibility and Prohibition of Milk Bank,” *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 7, no. 4 (2017): 223–31, <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v7-i4/2801>; Daud et al., “Benefits of Breast Milk for Health Care: Analysis from the Islamic Perspective”; Nursyazwani Ahmad Nazri and Siti Mariam Muda, “The Concept of Human Milk Donation and Milk Kinship in Islam,” *International Journal of Care Scholars* 3, no. 1 (2020): 41–44, <https://journals.iium.edu.my/ijcs/index.php/ijcs/article/view/134>.

³⁶ Mohamad Safir, Mohamad Safir, and Salleh, “Realiti Penyusuan Anak Susuan Pada Zaman Silam Dan Kontemporari: Kajian Tinjauan [The Reality of Wet-Nursing in the Past and Contemporary: A Review Study].” Safir et. al., 2019a; Jihad Saleh Mohammed Mhanna and Lilly Suzana Shamsu, “أحكام الرضاع: دراسة فقهية حديثة [The Ruling of Milk Kinship in Islamic Jurisprudence: Studi in Legal and Prophetic Tradition],” *Journal of Islamic Social Sciences and Humanities* 23, no. 1 (2020): 332–57.

³⁷ Mohamad Safir, Mohamad Safir, and Salleh, “Pengendalian Dokumentasi Anak Susuan Dalam Kalangan Ibu Susuan.” Safir et. al., 2020a.

³⁸ Mohamad Safir et al., “Intervensi Pengurusan Dokumentasi Anak Susuan Ke Arah Mewujudkan Masyarakat Sejahtera.” (Safir et. al., 2019b).

practices, especially between strangers without proper documentation.³⁹ Therefore, they suggested a framework for online milk sharing.

Zilal Saari and her co-researchers conducted historical research and content analysis to trace the historical development of wet nursing in various societies to come up with criteria to guide wet nursing practices in Malaysia.⁴⁰ Similarly, Noraida, Nor Roshidah, and Hans reviewed milk sharing practices in various countries to propose a milk bank in an Islamic setting.⁴¹ While Nurshazwani and Siti Maryam clarified the concept of milk kinship in Islam by doing a critical analysis on sources by renowned Muslim scholars to guide the setting up of human milk banks.⁴² In 2018, Zanariah et al. conducted a cross-sectional study to find out the level of Muslims' understanding regarding Islamic rulings on wet nursing and nursing.⁴³ From 400 respondents, 57% of them agreed that it is prohibited to marry milk siblings. This means the alarming 172 respondents did not know the rulings on this. Only 27.5% of The Islamic community was uncertain about the limits of awrah between children and milk kinship siblings. Meanwhile, 44.5% of Muslim communities demonstrated no understanding of the inheritance in milk parents' estates.⁴⁴

A more recent study was conducted to discover the understanding of wet nurses on the concept of wet nursing in Islam. This quantitative study was done in Selangor in 2019 to collect data from 100 women who had been wet nursing 237 other women's babies.⁴⁵ The majority of the respondents understood the Islamic law on wet nursing

³⁹ Dhamirah Nursakinah Mohamad Safir, Siti Fatimah Salleh, and Halimatus Saadiah Mohamad Safir, "Keperluan Dokumentasi Penyusuan Anak Susuan Dalam Kalangan Masyarakat Di Malaysia," *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)* 5, no. 2 (2020): 13–20, <https://doi.org/10.47405/mjssh.v5i2.366>. (Safir et. al., 2020b); Ahmad Mun'im, "Intensitas Penyusuan Dalam Larangan Perkawinan Sesusuan (Analisis Pasal 39 Ayat 3 Kompilasi Hukum Islam)," *Al-Ahwal: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 9, no. 2 (July 31, 2017): 229, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ahwal.2016.09208>.

⁴⁰ Saari et al., "Wet Nursing: A Historical Review and Its Ideal Characteristics."

⁴¹ Noraida Ramli, Nor Roshidah Ibrahim, and Van Rostenberghe Hans, "Human Milk Banks - The Benefits and Issues in an Islamic Setting," *Eastern Journal of Medicine* 15, no. 4 (2010): 163–67.

⁴² Ahmad Nazri and Muda, "The Concept of Human Milk Donation and Milk Kinship in Islam."

⁴³ Zanariah Dimon et al., "Hukum-Hukum Penyusuan Terhadap Anak Susuan: Kajian Kesedaran Masyarakat Islam Di Selangor [Ruling Towards Breastfeeding in Islam: Study on Awareness of Muslim Community in Selangor]," *Journal of Muwafaqat* 1, no. 1 (2018): 71–83, <http://journal.kuis.edu.my/muwafaqat>.

⁴⁴ Dimon et al.

⁴⁵ Hamjah et al., "A Quantitative Study on Muslim Milk Mother's Understanding Towards the Islamic Concept of Wet Nursing."

regarding marriage, conditions, and methods of feeding. However, there was still a big gap in understanding of family lineage, guardianship, and inheritance involving milk kinship. The same team of researchers also published another article on the practices of wet nursing to find out factors for wet nursing and the frequency of giving milk to the nurslings.⁴⁶ The study found that the women agreed to wet nursing because they had extra milk; to help sick mothers who could not breastfeed; a small percentage acknowledged that breastfeeding was their source of income.

The findings from the reviewed articles on wet nursing revealed a gap in the literature regarding the lived experiences of wet nurses and the child's mother and how the relationship between wet nurses and breastfed children is maintained. The first finding showed that no research has been done specifically on the effects of milk kinship relationships in Malaysia. Based on the literature review, this study aims to explore the lived experiences of wet nurses and birth mothers; and how the family relationship is maintained not only with the wet nurses and their children but also with all extended family members both from the mother's and father's side. According to the law of maintaining the lineage of breastfeeding from *al-Qur'ān* and al-Sunnah, the established milk kinship is not only with the breastfeeding mothers but also with all the extended family members on the lineage from both the milk mother's and milk father's side.

This research attempted to investigate how the wet nurses and the nursing children strengthened family bonding, mother towards children, and the children towards the milk parents, and how the child's parents educate their child on his or her relationship with his or her milk parents and milk families. The findings of previous studies showed that no policy was designed to bridge the relationship gap between breastfeeding mothers and breastfed children. Little is known on the relationship maintenance between breastfeeding mothers and their milk children after they have grown up as adults.

⁴⁶ Norsyamliana Che Abdul Rahim, Salasiah Hanin Hamjah, Latifah Abdul Majid, et al., "A Cross-Sectional Study on The Practice of Wet Nursing among Muslim Mothers," *Research Square*, 2021, 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-41843/v1>.

The literature review revealed the following gaps:

- Highlights on the widespread breastmilk sharing without proper documentation to bring awareness of the gravity of this problem so that steps to resolve the issue will be taken urgently.
- The Muslim public's knowledge of wet nursing, milk bank, and documentation since the existing studies were done in limited settings only.
- Father's roles and responsibilities in the implementation of wet nursing especially on his responsibility to pay and choose the most suitable wet nurse.
- Effective documentation of wet nursing practices to trace milk family kinship to avoid unnecessary future problems by investigating what has been done in other Muslim countries.
- Guidelines for wet nursing practices to inform parents who wish to use the wet nursing services on choosing the best wet nurse for their children in terms of the characteristics of the wet nurse, the implications of wet nursing especially on Islamic rulings, the process involved between the involved parties, the documentation which is endorsed by the court of law; and suggestions and advice on strengthening the bond on milk kinship.
- Examining the lived experiences of wet nursing practices to further informed decisions to be made about the policy and practice in wet nursing from the Islamic perspective.
- The establishment of Islamic milk banks that comply with Islamic rulings on wet nursing and the promotion of milk donation as a vital means to decrease premature babies' mortality rates which is in line with *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* (مقاصد الشريعة).

However, this present study aimed to investigate the lived experiences of wet nurses and the birth mothers on factors for being and using a wet nurse and how the relationship between the milk families was maintained and strengthened guided by an in-depth analysis of Prophet Muḥammad's, peace be upon him, the implication of wet nursing practice in Malaysia.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research was to seek the answers to these questions:

1. What do *al-Qur'ān* and *aḥādīth* inform about the position of a milk mother and Prophet Muḥammad's, peace be upon him, treatments towards his milk kinship family?
2. How and why the participants chose wet nursing services in Malaysia?
3. How do wet nurses, nursing children, and the children's families maintain family ties?
4. What are the implications of wet nursing practice in Malaysia?

1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify and analyze *al-Qur'ān* verses and *aḥādīth* on the position of a milk mother and Prophet Muḥammad's, peace be upon him, ways of interacting with milk kinship.
2. To explore the wet nursing phenomenon in Malaysia.
3. To investigate how family ties between milk kinship are maintained.
4. To explain the implications of wet nursing practice in Malaysia.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used qualitative research methods. The first method was a method of interpreting *al-Qur'ān* verses using thematic study of *Qur'anic* verses related to wet nursing. The interpretation of *al-Qur'ān* verses was substantiated by arguments from great scholars of *al-Qur'ān* exegesis such as al-Ṭabarī (الطبري), al-Qurtubī (القرطبي), Ibn 'Āshūr (ابن عاشور), Wahbah al-Zuhaylī (وهبة الزحيلي), and Hamka. Apart from that, the researcher listed all the *aḥādīth* related to wet nursing from the sources available in the *Maktabah Shāmilah* application under the *Kutub al-Sunnah* section before analyzing them.

This study also employed the exploratory phenomenological method, with the dual goals of providing a networked framework of theoretical constructs that aid in identifying the pattern and themes of milk kinship maintenance behaviour and advancing propositions for organizations and experts who aspire to mitigate the neglect of milk kinship maintenance. Engaging with the participants to understand the factors of seeking and providing breast milk, identified how they maintained milk kinship relations and social bonding, and how they ensure that problems will not happen in the future.

A qualitative study was chosen because it enabled the researcher to gain a better understanding of the milk kinship maintenance behavior phenomenon at the individual level. A qualitative method allowed the researcher to ask a variety of questions to increase comprehension of a specific topic.⁴⁷ This study provided a wealth of information and explanations that would be impossible to obtain by a quantitative approach. A qualitative technique allowed the researcher to synthesize the core of lived experiences from participants (wet nurses and biological mothers) in such a manner that participants' thoughts, feelings, and stories increased the understanding of milk kinship maintenance behavior.

A collection of best practices linked with a phenomenological approach to research and inquiry cemented the researcher's decision to choose phenomenology as the preferred technique of qualitative study.⁴⁸ Engaging the lived experiences of wet nurses and birth mothers provided a fundamental grasp of human behavior in sustaining milk kinship. Using a phenomenological approach to inquiry, the researcher collected empirical data from individuals who had experienced milk kinship maintenance to create a composite account of the core of the experience for all participants.

Furthermore, a phenomenological approach allowed the researcher to suspend judgment about what is real until the findings corroborated on a more certain basis, as well as employed content analysis, which provided an elemental understanding of how and what participants experienced concerning maintaining milk kinship behavior.

⁴⁷ Carol M. Roberts, *The Dissertation Journey: A Practical and Comprehensive Guide to Planning, Writing, and Defending Your Dissertation*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, California, United States of America: Corwin Press, 2010). 142-144.

⁴⁸ John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (London, United Kingdom: Sage Publications, 2016). 13.

Before conducting participant interviews, the researcher journaled her ideas on the issue of divorce, lifestyle, observation on Islamic obligations, methods of bringing up children, way of communication, body languages, and appearances, which allowed her to frame her prejudices, prejudgments, and assumptions about the darker side of familial behavior such as domestic abuse, substance abuse, rivalry among siblings and relatives, property dispute between siblings and relatives. As a result, the researcher avoided unwittingly influencing data gathering and analysis. It also allowed the researcher to make preconceived notions known before engaging with the individuals.

The phenomenological method is a type of qualitative inquiry that places an emphasis on the lived and experiential components of a given construct, or how the phenomena were felt at the time it occurred as opposed to what was thought about it or the meaning that was afterward assigned to it. Because of this, phenomenology was frequently referred to as studying “pre-reflective” experience. It was a study strategy that worked well for examining the experience and process of creativity, as opposed to the creative person or the creative result. The process and experience of creativity are two elements of creativity that have not been sufficiently researched up to this point.⁴⁹

The researcher comprehended what it was like to experience milk kinship maintenance behavior by using a phenomenological research design and inquiry. The use of phenomenology as a qualitative research design approach allowed the researcher to go beyond individual viewpoints and appreciate the complexities of those perspectives from a holistic perspective. This insight aided the researcher in including the deep and nuanced meanings of the shared experiences of those engaged to effectively capture the substance of experiences and challenge easy generalization.

1.7.1 Sampling Method

Sampling was vital because it was the act of selecting persons for research in such a way that they were representative of the wider pool of individuals from whom they were chosen.⁵⁰ The credibility of research was dependent on the quality of the techniques

⁴⁹ Barnab Nelson, “Research: Phenomenology,” in *Encyclopedia of Creativity* (Elsevier Academic Press, 2011). 299-303.

⁵⁰ Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 64.

employed to choose the sample.⁵¹ To locate and select applicants for the study, purposive sampling was used.⁵²

Purposive sampling was a chosen strategy since it assured that all persons surveyed reflected people who have experienced the phenomenon and may actively inform knowledge of the study topic.⁵³ Snowball sampling was used since the selected participants could generate leads to other people who could contribute information-rich, micro-level narratives of their experiences with wet nursing and milk kinship maintenance behavior in various circumstances.⁵⁴

1.7.2 Participants Selection

The researcher was mainly interested in better understanding milk kinship maintenance behaviors and evaluating them through the lens of *al-Qur'ān* and al-Sunnah. The study kept in mind that human behavior is non-linear and that numerous antecedents were frequently used to prompt an individual to participate in milk kinship maintenance activity. It focused on individual contributors' milk kinship maintenance behavior that captured lived experiences in various categories such as why wet nurses chose to breastfeed other people's children, why the birth mothers sought wet nurses' service to breastfeed their children, and how birth mothers and milk mothers fully understand milk kinship proved most beneficial in developing an integrated framework with significant practical implications within various settings.

Thirteen participants were chosen using the snowballing method. Researcher started by posting the advertisement into social media Facebook seeking volunteer participants among wet nurses and biological mothers. In the meantime, the researcher also asked any friends and relatives to interview an initial participant who was to known member of the community and then ask that person for other potential participants. Six birth mothers and seven wet nurses were chosen for this research. The researcher

⁵¹ Roberts, *The Dissertation Journey: A Practical and Comprehensive Guide to Planning, Writing, and Defending Your Dissertation*. 141-165.

⁵² Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 76.

⁵³ Creswell and Poth. 128.

⁵⁴ Roberts, *The Dissertation Journey: A Practical and Comprehensive Guide to Planning, Writing, and Defending Your Dissertation*; Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*.

collected information from thirteen individual contributors which increased the likelihood of effectively capturing descriptive behavioral nuances and increased the likelihood of providing practical interpretations of those behaviors.

1.7.3 Research Procedures

Before data collection, semi-structured interview questions consistent with the research questions were developed. To guarantee application and relevance, two experts in phenomenology study were consulted to check a) linguistic precision, b) parsimony, c) relevance of pertinent questions, and d) reading ease. Furthermore, the experts' tasks were to verify that the questions were either a) redundant, b) irrelevant, c) leading, d) too long, or e) challenging. The appendix contains several open-ended interview questions which were used to collect data.

The experts were an Assistant Professor from the sociology department AHAS, KIRKHS, and a researcher from the Ministry of Education (MOE). The experts were important because the researcher recognized that alternative perspectives on the relevancy, reliability, and validity of the questions increased the likelihood of successfully capturing the essence of lived experiences⁵⁵ and ascertaining responses that add value to the literature associated with milk kinship maintenance behavior.

1.7.4 Research Ethical Consideration

This approach was carried out under the following ethics:

1) Determination of the Study's Site

The study was carried out in Malaysia by the researcher. After obtaining permission from the practitioners, the precise name of the location was given.

2) Techniques of Sampling

⁵⁵ Roberts, *The Dissertation Journey: A Practical and Comprehensive Guide to Planning, Writing, and Defending Your Dissertation*. 141-165.

Participants were selected at first from on a list supplied by an informant and through social media, after that through snowballing method.

3) Consent Request from the Participator

After using the purposive technique to discover respondents, the researcher sought their agreement in person, by email, phone call, or any video-communication service. The respondents were informed about the study's objective and importance, as well as the data-gathering method.

4) Interview Question Development

The questions were developed based on an individual's experience with milk kinship behavior maintenance. Two phenomenology specialists were engaged to ensure applicability and relevance by checking a) linguistic precision, b) parsimony, c) relevance of pertinent questions, and d) reading ease, all in keeping with the study's goal and being validated by two experts. The researcher asked questions depending on the replies to prior questions in semi-structured interviews.

5) Recording Device Utilization

An audio-visual recorder was utilized throughout the observation and interview sessions to boost the research's dependability. The tape was then transcribed verbatim. Verbatim transcription is a word-for-word transcription that includes filler words like "um" and "uh," which might show respondents' true sentiments or responses while answering questions.

6) Reliability and Validity

The idea of validity refers to the link between research results and the phenomena studied by the researcher. Every hypothesis and conclusion were the researcher's creation.⁵⁶ As a result, the transcription of the obtained data was delivered to the responder following transcription. The validity of the textual transcription and the audio was assessed by the responder. This procedure was necessary to ensure no misunderstandings while reporting the data.

⁵⁶ Joseph A Maxwell, *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach* (California, USA: Sage Publications, 1996). 73-86.

1.8 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

1.8.1 Data Collection

1. *Al-Qur'ān* and *al-Aḥādīth*

The researcher identified *al-Qur'ān* verses using the search terms “wet nurse, *ibu susuan*, ‘*al-murdi*’ (المرضع), ‘*al-murdi ah*’ (المرضعة)” and “*raḍā*’ (رضاع)” and referred to the explanation from tafsir Hamka, al-Ṭabarī (الطبري), and al-Qurtubī (القرطبي) Māturīdī (الماتريدي), Wahbah al-Zuhaylī (وهبة الزحيلي) and Tafsīr al-Wasīṭ (الوسيط). The same keyword search was used to identify relevant *aḥādīth* which suit the topics in from *Maktabah Shāmilah* application under the *Kutub al-Sunnah* section related to breastfeeding and wet nursing.

2. Semi-structured Interview

Face-to-face interviews are the best data-collecting strategy for phenomenological research.⁵⁷ But, in a pandemic situation, online interviews can also be employed where facial and gestures can be the indicators for phenomenological study. Both face-to-face and online interviews were used in this research to collect data. The participant’s rights, the researcher’s purpose, and contact details were explained in the Informed Consent Form, which the participants were asked to read and sign before the interviews. The researcher explained the interview procedure to the participant prior to the interview and mentioned that the interview might happen at a site the participant chooses or a place that is mutually agreed upon. The researcher told the participants that the session was videotaped with two digital recorders. Two digital recorders were used solely to reduce the risks associated with technological issues.

The researcher recorded the conversations which were transcribed verbatim to prepare them for further content analysis. The participants were told by the researcher that the recordings would be deleted after the study and that they would get a final copy of the transcriptions to confirm accuracy. Additionally, participants were granted the freedom to exit the process at any time before, during, or following the interview.

⁵⁷ Thomas Groenewald, “A Phenomenological Research Design Illustrated,” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 3, no. 1 (2004): 42–55, <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690400300104>.

When data collection began, face-to-face interactions were preferred because it allowed the researcher to ask open-ended, broad, and targeted questions that elicit comprehension and the core of the key phenomena in the study.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the researcher thematized the inquiry to capture the micro-level viewpoints of persons who had personally engaged in and/or experienced milk kinship maintenance. It was also worth mentioning that face-to-face interviews allowed for more accurate observation and analysis of body language and other ambient clues to better understand how and when to pursue a specific line of inquiry. Face-to-face interviews were also beneficial because they provided the researcher with real-time information on when a change in direction was required to elicit information that proved more promising in identifying and clarifying the collected empirical and/or anecdotal material associated with milk kinship maintenance behavior. The researcher interviewed seven participants face-to-face and four participants by online interviews.

1.8.2 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the method of discovering patterns by describing, organizing, classifying, and perceiving interconnections between the classified data, which includes⁵⁹: 1. sensing themes, 2. constant comparison, 3. recursiveness, 4. inductive and deductive rationale, and 5. interpretation to generate meaning.⁶⁰

a. Content Analysis

The process of systematically scrutinizing data from documents such as text, literature, and religious scriptures to interpret and understand communication and messages is known as content analysis. The researcher's role is to build the meaning of and in texts by drawing reproducible and accurate inferences from them⁶¹. All literature reviewed

⁵⁸ Maxwell, *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. 187-188.

⁵⁹ Wan Mazwati Wan Yusoff, "Doing Qualitative Data Analysis," in *(PowerPoint Presentation, Research Webinar Series, CED Young Researchers' Club (YRC), Office of Research & Extension Service (ORS), College of Education, Mindanao State University)* (Philippines, 2021). (Wan Mazwati, 2021)

⁶⁰ Wan Yusoff.

⁶¹ Roberts, *The Dissertation Journey: A Practical and Comprehensive Guide to Planning, Writing, and Defending Your Dissertation*. 99.

from primary data which was *al-Qur'ān* and al-Sunnah was analyzed using independent contemplative thinking (*ijtihād*) and substantiated by *tafāsīr* of prominent scholars. According to al-Alwāni, contemplative thinking on revelation is “reciting it, reviewing it, dwelling on its meanings in an attempt to know all the possible meanings it contains, an allowing one’s thought to wander freely and unhampered through it in order to arrive the hidden meanings that Allah reveals to certain people of intellect and understanding”.⁶² The patterns and key phrases were used to classify the analyzed content specifically related to the rights and obligations of milk family members towards one another. Most importantly analysis of data from al-Sunnah focused on how Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, interacted with and treated his milk mothers and siblings to inform his sunnah in maintaining and strengthening milk kinship.⁶³

b. Thematic Analysis

The semi-structured interview data was transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically. The researcher aimed to describe personal experiences concerning milk kinship maintenance behavior in this phenomenological analysis and representation, develop a list of significant statements, constantly categorize those statements, compose textural (what) and structural (how) descriptions, and extend the prescribed method of phenomenological analysis to include an interpretative inquiry to clarify the “why’s” that lead to milk kinship maintenance behavior. Through such analysis and portrayal, the researcher was able to grasp the core of the experiences, which was the concluding component of the phenomenological investigation.

Thematic analysis was conducted by thoroughly reading all the transcribed data and identifying recurring keywords and patterns such as documentation, understanding, maintenance, inheritance, *‘Umrah* and *Hajj*, and extended family relationships. These themes were systematically coded and grouped to reflect core aspects of milk kinship maintenance, enabling the researcher to capture the essence of the participants lived experiences.

⁶² Jabir Taha Al-Alwani and Imad al-Din Khalil, *The Quran and the Sunnah: Time Space Factor* (Herndon, Virginia: IIIT, 1991). 14.

⁶³ Wan Yusoff, “Doing Qualitative Data Analysis.”

Validity and Reliability

Data triangulation was used in the study, which means multiple data sources were taken,⁶⁴ and conducted one last transcript assessment to confirm that the acquired material was correctly classified and aligned with the developing patterns and themes. A comparison with the literature verified the study's findings.⁶⁵ As previously stated, the researcher also used member verification to reduce the likelihood of incorrect interpretation and to boost the study's trustworthiness. After all the material was transcribed, the study was examined, the acquired data was interpreted, and member checking took place after that. Participants were given the chance to correct incorrect interpretations, offer more information, and validate dependability. Finally, member checking allowed the researcher to work with participants in such a manner that there was enhanced trust that the reported material was dependable, reliable, authentic and conveyed the core of each individual's actual experiences.

Member checking,⁶⁶ also known as responder validation, was a vital qualitative approach that assisted the researcher in improving the study's credibility, correctness, transferability, and validity. The researcher made a good effort to establish a favorable connection with respondents to obtain their opinions on the legitimacy and interpretation of the data.⁶⁷ Member checking allowed the study participant to correct mistakes and contest researcher interpretations, allowing the participant to add more information or clarify earlier phraseology and helps prevent the presentation of misleading material as credible. While member checks were not perfect, they do greatly reduce the likelihood of inaccurate data interpretation and mistakes. Overall, member verification enabled the researcher to do the necessary due diligence with participants, which contributed to producing reliable and authentic information.

⁶⁴ Wan Yusoff.

⁶⁵ Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 341.

⁶⁶ Creswell and Poth. 46.

⁶⁷ Creswell and Poth. 208.

1.9 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

1. This study focused on defining the perspective of Muslim-Malaysians on wet nursing, classifying the practitioners' perceptions and practices in wet nursing, and recognizing the reasons Malaysians chose wet nursing services and their perceptions towards wet nursing kinship.
2. This study did not interview biological fathers and wet nurses' husbands because of time and resource constraints.
3. Interviews were conducted among wet nurses and mothers. The researcher conducted interviews in Malaysia.
4. Seven wet nurses and six mothers were selected.

1.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter had discussed the background of the study, the problem statement, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, a brief literature review and research methodology employed. The impetus for conducting this study was the growing number of women offered to supply their breastmilk and mothers requested breastmilk from total strangers online.

The first concern that came to mind was the knowledge of these women, wet nurses and birth mothers, on the implications of wet nursing. Since they were strangers, how did they stay connected in milk kinship relationship. The literature on maintaining milk kinship is wanting. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate the lived experiences of wet nurses and birth mothers in milk kinship maintenance. Specifically, this study attempted to discover guidance from *al-Qur'ān* and *aḥādīth* regarding milk kinship maintenance; the factors influencing wet nurses and birth mothers to share and request breast milk respectively and the strategies used by wet nurses and birth mothers to strengthen milk kinship relationship.

To achieve the objectives of this study, qualitative methods were employed. Content analysis was used to identify and analyse Qur'anic verses and relevant *aḥādīth* to seek directions on wet nursing and the maintaining of the formed milk kinship. In addition to investigating perspectives from *al-Qur'ān* and *aḥādīth*, contemporary

religious views were examined. Data from *al-Qur'ān* and *aḥādīth* were analysed and interpreted using *tafsīr bil ma'thur* and thematic analysis.

A phenomenological approach was employed to gain deeper understanding of the lived experience of wet nurses and birth mothers in providing and seeking wet nursing services. The focus was on collecting rich descriptive data on the understanding of wet nursing and its implications, factors for sharing and seeking breast milk and their experiences in strengthening the milk kinship bond. The data collected from 13 participants using in-depth interviews was transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically. These interviews provided personal accounts highlighting the emotional and practical aspects of maintaining milk kinship. Exploring the situating of these personal narratives within broader social and historical contexts, several recurring themes and patterns emerged, showing how religious teachings and personal experiences continue to sustain and honour milk kinship.

While the study is limited by its focus on a single region and the exclusion of certain family members, it effectively addressed several misconceptions and opens avenues for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

WET NURSING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Wet nursing, the practice of breastfeeding another woman's child, is a primordial tradition. *Al-Qur'ān* recorded how the wife of the Pharaoh was looking for a wet nurse to breastfeed Prophet Mūsā [28:7-13] [20:38-39]. Many wet nurses had tried to breastfeed Prophet Mūsā, but he refused until his mother came to Āsiyah's palace to breastfeed him. He then received his mother's milk. Wet nursing is also an ancient tradition of the Arabs where those who lived in town would look for wet nurses to breastfeed their newborn babies until the newborn reached a certain age. The historical record of the birth of Prophet Muḥammad and his childhood informed that a group of women from *Banī Sa'ad* went looking for babies to nurse around Mecca. The women of *Banī Sa'ad* were known for being professional wet nurses, that is, they received payments for wet nursing. Ḥalīmah al-Sa'diyah was one of those women who went looking for a foster child. She brought home the Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, with an anticipation that she would be receiving the lowest payment (at that time) since the Prophet was an orphan.¹

The verse of *al-Qur'ān* regarding the prohibition of marrying his wet nurse was revealed when the non-believers in Mecca were gossiping about the Prophet's marriage to Zaynab who was divorced by Zayd ibn Ḥārithah. According to the culture of the Arab non-believers, an adopted son was considered the same as a biological son. Therefore, this verse was revealed to inform Muslim men which women they were prohibited to marry. One of those women was his wet nurse and his milk sisters. This verse was further substantiated by other verses and some authentic *aḥādīth*, indicating that wet nursing established milk kinship which prohibited marriage between milk siblings. To get a clear understanding of wet nursing kinship in Islam, this chapter first elucidated the world history of wet nursing and the factors that contributed to the supply and

¹ Muḥammad ibn Sa'd ibn Manī' al-Hāshimī al-Baṣri Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir 'Aṭā, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmiyyah, 1990). 87.

demand for wet nursing services. Subsequent discussion was on wet nursing from the Islamic perspective and its implications.

2.2 HISTORY OF WET NURSING

Breastfeeding holds significance not only as a health practice but also as a spiritual duty within various religious groups. Certain customs may necessitate the use of a wet nurse to breastfeed an infant if the mother is unable to do so. Since 3000 BC, wet nursing has been a widely accepted practice throughout numerous civilizations, according to historical documents.² When their mothers were unable to breastfeed, newborns were nursed by grandparents, aunts, cousins, or neighbours before the development of infant formula milk.³ This was done out of the responsibility to protect the children's health and life. However, in some cultures, wet nursing was a noble and prestigious profession that opened the door for socioeconomic and geographical mobility for poor and rural women.⁴ For example, women in medieval Europe received handsome payments for wet nursing, almost comparable to wages received by men.⁵ Furthermore, in the 16th century, the Spanish monarchy paid substantial amounts of cash and household goods for services rendered by wet nurses.⁶ In addition, wet nurses received other benefits

² Natalie Rosen, "Wet-Nursing," in *Encyclopedia of Evolutionary Psychological Science* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021), 8503–7, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-19650-3_2258.

³ Hadijah Ally Mbwana, "Exclusive Breastfeeding: Mothers' Awareness and Healthcare Providers' Practices During Antenatal Visits in Mvomero, Tanzania" (Massey University, Auckland, New Zealand, 2012), <https://mro.massey.ac.nz/handle/10179/3863>.

⁴ Janet Golden, "From Wet Nurse Directory to Milk Bank: The Delivery of Human Milk in Boston, 1909–1927," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 62, no. 4 (1988): 589–605, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44443092>.

⁵ Emilie L Bergmann, "Milking the Poor: Wet-Nursing and the Sexual Economy of Early Modern Spain. In Lacarra Lanz, E. (Ed.). Marriage and Sexuality in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia. Hispanic Issues: Part 2," no. July (2021); Isidro Dubert and Luisa Mu, "Gender, Work, and Family Economies: Wet Nurses in Rural Galicia (1850–1900)," 2023, 147–64, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793322000164>.

⁶ Blanca Espina-jerez et al., "Wet Nurse or Milk Bank? Evolution in the Model of Human Lactation: New Challenges for the Islamic Population," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 9742 (2022): 1–16, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19159742>; Bergmann, "Milking the Poor: Wet-Nursing and the Sexual Economy of Early Modern Spain. In Lacarra Lanz, E. (Ed.). Marriage and Sexuality in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia. Hispanic Issues: Part 2"; Dubert and Mu, "Gender, Work, and Family Economies: Wet Nurses in Rural Galicia (1850–1900)."

such as jobs at the palaces for their husbands, sons, and relatives, annual pensions, and dowries to ensure the wet nurses could live comfortable lives.⁷

Historical reports also inform that myths and folklore often play a significant role in influencing the practice of seeking a wet nurse. These myths can shape perceptions about breastfeeding, maternal health, and infant care, leading families to seek the services of a wet nurse. Some people believe that there are myths suggesting that if a child is not breastfed, they will be exposed to the danger of “Labartu,” a female demon. Thus, they make sure the child gets the mother’s milk from the wet nurse with the additional recitation of incantations to protect them all (child, mother, and wet nurse).⁸ Ancient Egypt also believed that wet nurses were equally like goddesses of fertility.⁹

A wet nurse may be hired because of several misconceptions regarding the calibre of a mother’s breast milk. Certain meals or activities are thought to contaminate a mother’s milk, rendering it unfit for a newborn, in certain cultures. Such myths can prompt families to seek a wet nurse who they believed had “better” or “purer” milk. Zilal et al. (2016) found that drinking alcohol ruins a breast feeder’s body and soul and taints the milk they produce, hence forbids wet nurses from drinking it.¹⁰

Myths related to maternal health and breastfeeding can also drive the decision to hire a wet nurse. For example, some myths suggest that breastfeeding can deplete a mother’s strength or lead to various health problems. These beliefs may cause families to employ a wet nurse to protect the mother’s health. Campbell highlighted how myths about maternal health and breastfeeding were a sloppy process that ruined a woman’s breast form.¹¹

⁷ Bergmann, “Milking the Poor: Wet-Nursing and the Sexual Economy of Early Modern Spain. In Lacarra Lanz, E. (Ed.). *Marriage and Sexuality in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*. Hispanic Issues: Part 2”; Baumgartel, Sneeringer, and Cohen, “From Royal Wet Nurses to Facebook: The Evolution of Breastmilk Sharing”; Balkrishan Shivram, “Nurslings, Milk and Moral Development: A Case Study of Imperial Mughal,” *Asian Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities* 2, no. 2 (2013): 541–47.

⁸ Valerie A. Fildes, *Breasts, Bottles and Babies: A History of Infant Feeding* (California, USA: Edinburgh University Press, 1986). 1-13.

⁹ Fildes. 1-13.

¹⁰ Saari et al., “Wet Nursing: A Historical Review and Its Ideal Characteristics.”

¹¹ Linda Campbell, “Wet-Nurses in Early Modern England: Some Evidence from the Townshend Archive,” *Medical History* 33 (1989): 360–70, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0025727300049607>.

Superstitions and folklore about breastfeeding and wet nursing are also influential. Some communities hold superstitions about the dangers of breastfeeding during certain times or conditions, prompting the use of wet nurses as a precautionary measure. Moran & Gilad (2007) examines how Islamic civilizations were replete in myths and folklore, such as the belief that milk, in addition to its alleged bodily benefits, imparted moral and mental qualities to infants.¹²

In some societies, myths about the benefits of having a wet nurse, such as enhancing the child's social standing or ensuring better care, have perpetuated the tradition. Giladi (2010) discusses how historical myths, and social beliefs have shaped the practice of wet nursing in different cultures. The researcher discovered in early Arab-Muslim communities, several myths and traditions about wet nurses similar to those found in ancient Near Eastern cultures about the narrations of Prophet Muḥammad's birth.¹³

These studies collectively illustrate how various myths about breast milk quality, maternal health, infant development, superstitions, and social status contribute to the practice of wet nursing. Understanding these myth-driven factors provides insight into the cultural and historical context that shapes breastfeeding and infant care practices in different societies.

Taboos surrounding breastfeeding and maternal practices can significantly influence the decision to seek the services of a wet nurse as well. These taboos, which may specify the conditions under which a woman may or may not breastfeed her infant, might have their roots in cultural, religious, or societal beliefs. Some cultures have strong taboos around postpartum behaviours, such as the inability to breastfeed for a predetermined amount of time after giving birth. These taboos may arise from beliefs about maternal impurity or the need for the mother to recover before feeding the child. The typical waiting period for mothers to start nursing their newborn children is four

¹² Lia Moran and Jacob Gilad, "From Folklore to Scientific Evidence: Breast-Feeding and Wet-Nursing in Islam and the Case of Non-Puerperal Lactation.," *International Journal of Biomedical Science: IJBS* 3, no. 4 (2007): 251–57, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23675050><http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=PMC3614654>.

¹³ Avner Giladi, "Liminal Craft, Exceptional Law: Preliminary Notes on Midwives in Medieval Islamic Writings," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42, no. 2 (2010): 185–202, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743810000012>.

days, while the maximum seldom surpasses nine days. This waiting duration varies depending on the tribe. Both English and French authors of the seventeenth century displayed the same type of taboo about colostrum in their writings, which had been passed down to them from the Greek and Roman periods.¹⁴ As a result, families might seek a wet nurse to ensure the infant is fed during this period.

Sex taboos can also dictate the need for a wet nurse in some countries. In Aberdeen, women in the upper third of society had more children at younger intervals than their poorer, breastfeeding (and maybe abstaining) neighbours. This is due to extensive wet nursing and taboos against having sex while nursing. Giladi (2022) found that nursing women observed the taboo on sexual activity during the complete breastfeeding time, and it made sense for males of high rank to engage in polygamous marriages. This factor led mothers to seek wet nurses to avoid this polygamy excuse for husbands.¹⁵ Thus, taboos influenced the decision to seek a wet nurse. This illustrates how various taboos shape breastfeeding practices and the employment of wet nurses, providing insight into the complex interplay between cultural, religious, and social factors in infant care.

In Japan between the 10th and 14th centuries, wet nursing was the easiest way to achieve prestige and social, and political power because wet nurses were responsible for nurturing future kings as well as future kings' advisors and warriors.¹⁶ The intimate relationship between a wet nurse and the imperial prince she breastfed opened the door to wealth and political power not only for herself but also for her immediate relatives. The wet nurses of the imperial princes usually came from well-educated families who worked as lower-ranked officials at the imperial court.¹⁷ Similarly, wet nursing in the imperial household of the Mughals in India provided opportunities for wet nurses to gain wealth and political power since they had easy access to the throne. The wet nurses

¹⁴ Ian G. Wickes, "A History of Infant Feeding: Part I. Primitive Peoples: Ancient Works: Renaissance Writers," *Archives of Disease in Childhood* 28, no. 138 (1953): 151–58.

¹⁵ Avner Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses: Medieval Islamic Views on Breastfeeding and Their Social Implications* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2022), https://www.google.com.my/books/edition/Infants_Parents_and_Wet_Nurses/ax1nEAAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0.

¹⁶ Thomas D. Conlan, "Thicker Than Blood: The Social and Political Significance of Wet Nurses in Japan, 950-1330," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 20005, 159–205.

¹⁷ Conlan.

for the princes and princesses were selected from the households of senior officials of the imperial palace.¹⁸

In contrast, in Roman society, wet nursing was regulated by contracts and laws. The contracts spelled out the terms and conditions of the wet nursing services, including the duration and the agreed payment for the services.¹⁹ Since wet nursing was a profession, the Romans detailed requirements for a qualified wet nurse, including the quality of her breast milk; skills in soothing infants; practices of specific physical exercises and movements to promote the smooth flow of breast milk; physical health; and being between the ages of 25 to 35 years.²⁰ Bradley stated there was a divide in Rome between women from higher and lower social classes. The children of the upper class were usually nursed by lower-class wet nurses, who were frequently slaves or impoverished mothers. As they nursed the children and provided nourishment for them until they were weaned off breast milk, these wet nurses were regarded as “members” of the family. Some wet nurses who were slaves gained their freedom once they reached the time set by the upper-class family.²¹

In the United States of America, the history of wet nursing can be traced back to the time of race-based slavery. Black slave women were forced to breastfeed their white owners’ children and abandoned their own children.²² Wet nursing by slaves was also practiced in Brazil.²³

In Arabic tradition, wet nursing was a common custom that had been practiced long before the arrival of Islam. In urban areas, children were given to nursing mothers who came from the villages to be nursed and raised until they reached a certain age.²⁴

¹⁸ Balkrishan Shivram, “Nurslings, Milk and Moral Development: A Case Study of Imperial Mughal.”

¹⁹ Balkrishan Shivram.

²⁰ Moran and Gilad, “From Folklore to Scientific Evidence: Breast-Feeding and Wet-Nursing in Islam and the Case of Non-Puerperal Lactation.”

²¹ Keith R. Bradley, “Wet-Nursing at Rome: A Study in Social Relations,” in *The Family in Ancient Rome: New Perspective*, ed. Beryl Rawson, 1st ed. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1987), 201–29,

https://www.google.com.my/books/edition/The_Family_in_Ancient_Rome/85Gdul_43DEC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=Wet-Nursing+at+Rome:+A+Study+in+Social+Relations+in+The+Family+in+Ancient+Rome&pg=PA201&printsec=frontcover.

²² Fildes, *Breasts, Bottles and Babies: A History of Infant Feeding*.

²³ Ghaly, “Milk Banks Through the Lens of Muslim Scholars: One Text in Two Contexts.”

²⁴ Baumgartel, Sneeringer, and Cohen, “From Royal Wet Nurses to Facebook: The Evolution of Breastmilk Sharing.”

In the story of the Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, he was nursed by his mother Amīnah and then given to Thuwaybah, a servant of his uncle Abū Lahab. After that, he was given to Ḥalīmah al-Sa‘diyāh from the *Banī Sa‘ad* lineage to be nursed and cared for in Ḥalīmah’s hometown.²⁵ This was because it was also a source of income for the people in the mountainous areas.²⁶ The rural areas provided a safe and guarded surrounding not only from unclean physical environment but most importantly from degrading moral behavior of town dwellers. Moreover, people from rural area spoke the purest Arabic language. Living in rural area was important for language preservation as well as defense against the town’s detrimental environment.²⁷ Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, resided in the peaceful village of *Banī Sa‘ad*, where he received and experienced numerous blessings. He even learned techniques to herd goats along with additional animal-related capabilities.²⁸

Royal wet nurses can also be found in history. In Ancient Egypt, class differences were visible as royal families employed carefully selected and highly respected wet nurses. Poorer households, on the other hand, were dependent on alternative milk if the mother died or was unable to breastfeed, milk from cows, camels, goats, or sheep. The narrative of Moses being wet-nursed in Pharaoh’s royal palace in Egypt was also mentioned in *al-Qur’ān*:

²⁵ Muṣṭafā Al-Saqā, Ibrāhīm Al-Abyāri, and ‘Abd al-Ḥafīz Al-Shalbī, eds., *Al-Sīrah Al-Nabawīyyah Li-Ibnu Hishām*, 2nd ed. (Egypt: Sharikat Wa Maṭba‘ah Al-Bābī Al-Ḥalbī Wa-Aulādihi, n.d.). 150.

²⁶ Ibn Sa‘d, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, 1968. 87-115; Abū ‘Abdullah Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Bāqī ibn Yūsuf ibn Aḥmad ibn Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Muḥammad Al-Zarqānī, *Sharḥ Al-Zarqānī ‘Alā Al-Mawāhib Al-Laduniyyah Bi Al-Miniḥ Al-Muḥammadiyyah*, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār Al-Kutub Al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1996). Vol. 1. 267. Most of the women who live in the villages or mountains take wages as breastfeeders for the children of Mecca residents. They go down to the city of Mecca twice a year, in the spring and autumn, to nurse the baby. The babies are said to be carried in their clothes until the feeding is finished. *Al-Zarqānī* indicates three signs: Firstly, there are among those who breastfeed in the city of Mecca by direct breastfeeding and some are brought back to the mountain where the *Banī Sa‘ad* live to be wet nursed and raised. Secondly, the custom of the *Quraysh* Arabs to breastfeed their own children is a disgrace. So, they are more inclined to hire wet nurses to replace breastfeeding. Thirdly, for those babies who are brought back to their hometown to be wet nursed, it will make them more productive and have a more eloquent language in the village compared to life in the city.

²⁷ Al-Zarqānī, *Sharḥ Al-Zarqānī ‘Alā Al-Mawāhib Al-Laduniyyah Bi Al-Miniḥ Al-Muḥammadiyyah*. Vol. 1. 267.

²⁸ Badrah Uyuni, “The Rasulullah’s Way of Business: As the Best Example for Student,” *Jurnal Bina Ummat: Membina Dan Membentengi Ummat* 4, no. 1 (July 25, 2021): 121–37, <https://doi.org/10.38214/jurnalbinaummatstidnatsir.v4i1.102>. 124-125

﴿ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ ۖ فَإِذَا خِفْتِ عَلَيْهِ فَأَلْقِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ وَلَا تَخَافِي وَلَا تَحْزَنِي ۗ إِنَّا رَادُّوهُ إِلَيْكِ وَجَاعِلُوهُ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٧﴾ فَأَلْتَقَطَهُ ءَالُ فِرْعَوْنَ لِيَكُونَ لَهُمْ عَدُوًّا وَحَزَنًا ۗ إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا كَانُوا خَاطِئِينَ ﴿٨﴾ وَقَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ فِرْعَوْنَ قُرَّتْ عَيْنِي لِي وَلَكَ ۗ لَا تَقْتُلُوهُ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَنْفَعَنَا أَوْ نَتَّخِذَهُ وَلَدًا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٩﴾ ﴾

Translation: And We inspired to the mother of Moses, “Suckle him; but when you fear for him, cast him into the river and do not fear and do not grieve. Indeed, We will return him to you and make him [one] of the messengers. [7] And the family of Pharaoh picked him up [out of the river] so that he would become to them an enemy and a [cause of] grief. Indeed, Pharaoh and Haman and their soldiers were deliberate sinners [8] And the wife of Pharaoh said, “[He will be] a comfort of the eye for me and you. Do not kill him; perhaps he may benefit us, or we may adopt him as a son.” And they perceived not. [9]²⁹

These verses described how Allah gave Moses’ mother the idea to put the baby in a chest and let it floated on the river, sparing him from the Pharaoh’s decreed mass execution. When Pharaoh’s wife Āsiyah found the casket containing Moses, she was enthralled by the infant. Moved by compassion, she decided to protect him and provided him sanctuary within the royal palace. Despite her efforts to find a suitable wet nurse for Moses, none of the women she summoned could successfully feed him.³⁰ The narrative led to Moses being reunited with his biological mother, who was able to nurse him under the guise of a wet nurse, which can be concluded that she became Pharaoh’s adopted son’s royal wet nurse.

In France, many royal wet nurses became well-established in the renowned King’s palace. For instance, Louis XIV had eight different wet nurses, whereas his great-grandson, Louis XV, had just one throughout his infancy. Marie-Madeleine Mercier successfully nursed him for nearly two years.³¹ The wet nurse had been transferred to the imperial court, after which she was generously treated and rewarded well after being examined by imperial physicians. Their social standing occasionally deteriorated, and they sometimes received an aristocratic identity after their service period. This means that wet nurses were not just get paid for performing their duties.

²⁹ Al-Qasas, verse 7-9.

³⁰ Azmi, “Parallel Framework of Muḥammad and Moses’s Story: An Analysis of the Narratives of Ḥalīmah Al-Sa’diyyah.”

³¹ Gal Ventura, “From Sanctity to Promiscuity: The Wet Nurse,” in *Maternal Breast-Feeding and Its Substitutes in Nineteenth-Century French Art* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2018). 204-205.

They also were given outstanding accommodation, adequate supplies of food and clothing, and an improved position in society.

Wet nurses were traditionally exclusively used in Turkish culture whenever biological mothers were incapable of providing breast milk to their children.³² According to Thorley's study, the traditional practice of providing and exchanging breast milk among females continued until the twenty-first century. Some households maintained shared breastfeeding practices within their extended families or communities of acquaintances.³³ One respondent, recounted by Thorley, was brought up in a typical Muslim family compound in the northern part of India, where there were eight or ten maids with children and breastfeeding mothers. The co-feeding happens frequently both within and between generations. It was seen as humiliating for somebody to let a baby cry when there was someone capable of feeding them, emphasizing the relevance of traditions and customs in the practices of wet nursing.³⁴

Within Islamic teachings, breastfeeding is highly valued during the initial two years of a child's life, and if a mother is incapable of breastfeeding, a wet nurse is deemed an acceptable substitute. Avner Giladi underscored the societal and religious significance of breastfeeding when examining the involvement of wet nurses in medieval Islamic society.³⁵ Bensaïd stressed the religious belief as an essential natural right and discussed breastfeeding as a fundamental Islamic human right.³⁶ They illustrated how breastfeeding, far from being a mere biological act, is deeply embedded in the social, Islamic tradition, and ethical fabric of Muslim societies.

Cultural beliefs and traditions significantly influence the acceptance and practice of wet nursing. Wet nursing is a long-standing custom derived from group childrearing methods in several cultures. The employment of wet nurses may be encouraged by the notion that nursing together may establish strong social and

³² Müge Yılmaz et al., "Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices About Wet-Nursing and Human Milk Banking in Kayseri, Turkey," *Erciyes Medical Journal* 40, no. 4 (2018): 204–9, <https://doi.org/10.5152/etd.2018.18080>.

³³ Virginia Thorley, "Mothers' Experiences of Sharing Breastfeeding or Breastmilk, Part 2: The Early 21st Century," *Nursing Reports* 2, no. 1 (2011): 2, <https://doi.org/10.4081/nursrep.2012.e2>.

³⁴ Thorley.

³⁵ Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses: Medieval Islamic Views on Breastfeeding and Their Social Implications*.

³⁶ Benaouda Bensaïd, "Breastfeeding as a Fundamental Islamic Human Right," *Journal of Religion and Health* 60, no. 1 (2021): 362–73, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-019-00835-5>.

community relationships. Thorley and Bensaid explained how cultural norms and historical practices shape attitudes toward wet nursing and breastfeeding.³⁷ The studies highlighted the importance of understanding these cultural and historical contexts to fully appreciate the complex and varied attitudes toward breastfeeding and wet nursing in different societies.

The choice to employ a wet nurse might also arise from a significant trust in the health advantages of breast milk. If a mother cannot breastfeed her child, she might choose to use a wet nurse because of the strong belief in the superior benefits of breast milk as a form of nourishment, especially in societies where this belief is widespread. Bensaid and El-Khuffash & Unger have highlighted how attitudes toward nutrition and health play a significant role in influencing breastfeeding practices.³⁸ Both perspectives highlight the importance of understanding these attitudes to effectively promote healthy nursing practices that align with both cultural values and modern health standards.

From the review of literature on the history of wet nursing, it can be concluded that the choice to use a wet nurse's services is largely impacted by beliefs and traditions, which include social, cultural, religious, and health-related factors. When taken as a whole, these illustrations show the range of ways that personal, societal, and spiritual beliefs affect wet nursing practices and the complex interplay between these elements and infant care. By understanding these belief-driven factors, we gain insight into the reasons behind the continued use of wet nurses in various societies.

Nevertheless, the development of infant formula milk in the mid-nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century contributed to a decrease in the demand for wet nurses. Baumgartel et al. discovered in the research they conducted that the market for wet nurses among wealthy women transformed throughout the twentieth century.³⁹ However, Golden claimed that infants born prematurely or those who have difficulties consuming milk from livestock or formula require breastmilk for optimal development.

³⁷ Thorley, "Mothers' Experiences of Sharing Breastfeeding or Breastmilk, Part 2: The Early 21st Century." Bensaid, "Breastfeeding as a Fundamental Islamic Human Right."

³⁸ Bensaid, "Breastfeeding as a Fundamental Islamic Human Right"; Afif El-Khuffash and Sharon Unger, "The Concept of Milk Kinship in Islam: Issues Raised When Offering Preterm Infants of Muslim Families Honor Human Milk," *Journal of Human Lactation* 28, no. 2 (2012): 125–27, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0890334411434803>.

³⁹ Baumgartel, Sneeringer, and Cohen, "From Royal Wet Nurses to Facebook: The Evolution of Breastmilk Sharing."

Homeless mothers could earn a living by nursing working-class women's children.⁴⁰ With the increase in milk substitutes implemented along with premature casualties, the donation of breast milk has become extensively researched for its capacity to help reduce newborn mortality rates.⁴¹ Social and economic difficulties have drawn attention to the differences between both wealthy and impoverished families, with higher-income households employing wet nurses for convenience and status and less prosperous ones resorting to using different methods of nourishment out of need.

2.3 FACTORS FOR SEEKING WET NURSE

Understanding the motivations for recruiting wet nurses is important for understanding the complexity of psychological, cultural, and economic factors that drive wet nurse recruitment. This section concentrated on multiple explanations for why wet nursing became popular and continued to be practiced throughout different communities in the world. These factors differ from economic needs and socioeconomic differences to cultural traditions and health concerns. They also included personal and familial connections, social concepts and myths. By delving into every single one of the above components, one acquired an improved comprehension of the various reasons for wet nursing and its long-lasting significance in numerous societies. Economic variables, socioeconomic influences, the importance placed on accomplishing the two-year nursing period, stress caused by motherhood, successful wet nursing campaigns, awareness of the nutritional value of breast milk, customs, and traditions, relationships of close companionship and family between the mothers and wet nurses, the impact of prolonged nursing on reproduction, beliefs, myths, taboos, preterm babies, charity and support in times of need, and the difficulties of having many children were among the factors examined. Each of these factors contributed to a unique contribution to the profession of wet nursing, demonstrating the broad range of facets embedded in this nurturing practice.

⁴⁰ Golden, "From Wet Nurse Directory to Milk Bank: The Delivery of Human Milk in Boston, 1909-1927."

⁴¹ Baumgartel, Sneeringer, and Cohen, "From Royal Wet Nurses to Facebook: The Evolution of Breastmilk Sharing."

1. Economic

Financial considerations determine whether or not to hire a wet nurse who could meet a child's needs. The hiring of a wet nurse was frequently influenced by financial situation and household circumstances. According to Baumslag and Michels, hiring a wet nurse represented achieving financial success. They discovered that the remuneration for a wet nurse was appropriate, which frequently included additional benefits such as supplies of food. This arrangement not only provided necessary sustenance for the children but also perpetuated the financial independence of the wet nurse.⁴²

Golden suggested that economic and social advantages had an important influence on the employment of wet nurses to provide nursing care for infants who survived despite their mothers' demise during childbirth. Families with adequate resources might be able to employ a wet nurse to guarantee that the infant obtains appropriate nourishment. At precisely the same time, those with fewer resources may be challenged to find a suitable solution.⁴³ This economic disparity often dictated whether an infant received the care of a wet nurse or had to rely on less ideal alternatives, such as artificial feeding methods.

Suryani also affirmed that for working mothers, delegating the responsibility of breastfeeding to another person or another woman significantly eased their job and daily routine. This arrangement allowed them to better balance their professional commitments with their role as a parent. However, this convenience came at a cost, as these mothers had to pay the wet nurse for her services. This financial expenditure could be burdensome and add to the overall economic strain on the family.⁴⁴ Despite the benefits of alleviating the immediate pressures of breastfeeding, the financial

⁴² Naomi Baumslag and Dia L. Michels, *Milk, Money, and Madness: The Culture and Politics of Breastfeeding* (London, United Kingdom: Bergin & Garvey, 1995), <https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.1997.24.2.464>. 39.

⁴³ Janet Golden, *A Social History of Wet Nursing in America: From Breast to Bottle*, 1st ed. (Columbus, Ohio, United States: Ohio State University Press, 2001), https://www.google.com.my/books/edition/A_Social_History_of_Wet_Nursing_in_Ameri/ncYJPOd3dHkC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=rich&pg=PA44&printsec=frontcover.

⁴⁴ Suryani, "Rada'ah Dalam Perspektif Filosofis, Normatif, Yuridis, Psikologis, Sosiologis, Ekonomis," *Jurnal Ilmiah Syi'ar* 17, no. 2 (2017): 93–102.

implications of hiring a wet nurse represented a significant consideration for working mothers.

2. Focus on Fulfilling Exclusive Breastfeeding

A remarkable contributing factor was the increasing acceptance of the health advantages associated with exclusive breastfeeding, driven by recommendations from healthcare organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO) and the National Breastfeeding Policy in Malaysia. These advocacy organizations recommended that breast milk should be the exclusive source of nourishment and antibodies for newborns, guaranteeing that they develop the immune systems to maximize their healthy development and abilities from birth to six months of age and even beyond.⁴⁵

If mothers are unable to breastfeed themselves, they are more inclined to look for techniques that would make sure their children obtain the numerous advantages of nursing, such as a decreased likelihood of infections, allergy symptoms, and chronic illnesses. Mothers' demand for exclusive breastfeeding of their children has led to a development in the practice of employing wet nurses, as reported by Salleh et al. and Mohamad Safir et al.⁴⁶ Abdul Rahman et al. additionally discovered that some wet nurses were motivated because they viewed that it was their obligation to make certain that every infant consumes milk through breastfeeding exclusively. Since the first two years of a baby's life are essential for physical as well as psychological development, numerous mothers were interested in cooperating with wet nurses to provide breastmilk for that period.⁴⁷

This indicated the success of an exclusive breastfeeding campaign to share knowledge of the benefits of breast milk for a baby development, which had a

⁴⁵ World Health Organization, "Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding." Accessed on 14 May 2021. World Health Organization, "WHA Global Nutrition Targets 2025: Wasting Policy Brief," 2017, http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/globaltargets_wasting_policybrief.pdf. Ministry of Health, "National Breastfeeding Policy and Action Plan 2015-2020. Malaysia: Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate," 2015.

⁴⁶ Siti Fatimah Salleh, Solehuddin Bin Zakaria, and Lukman Abdul Mutalib, "Shariah-Compliant of Nursing Child Documentation Model Building," *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology* 17, no. 9 (2020): 3040–48; Mohamad Safir, Mohamad Safir, and Salleh, "Pengendalian Dokumentasi Anak Susuan Dalam Kalangan Ibu Susuan."

⁴⁷ Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses: Medieval Islamic Views on Breastfeeding and Their Social Implications*.

significant impact on the general population.⁴⁸ Mothers who were having trouble feeding their babies chose to hire wet nurses because of their conviction that breast milk was the sole type of milk that worked better than any other. Rather than using formula milk or animal's milk, they resorted to wet nurses whenever they found themselves unable to breastfeed.⁴⁹

World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) is an international campaign that was established in 1992 through the World Alliance for Nursing Action to increase the general understanding of maternal-related problems and to encourage breastfeeding. The worldwide marketing code for breast milk replacements, women's employment, and healthcare systems were among these campaigns.⁵⁰ The 2016 World Breastfeeding Week objectives, which stressed supporting wider development goals and promoting breastfeeding, were based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. This was acknowledged by a resolution adopted by the World Health Assembly in 2018.⁵¹ Due to growing public knowledge of the many benefits of breast milk versus formula or animal milk, there is a greater demand for work opportunities for wet nurses. WBW has since expanded to become an annual event.⁵²

The campaign has been enhanced as a breastfeeding promotion strategy by the World Health Assembly's 2018 decision-making, which recognized WBW. To make sure that their infants were getting nutrients from breast milk, many mothers who found it difficult to breastfeed their children resorted to wet nurses or other options.⁵³

⁴⁸ Iain Richard Williamson and Safiya Mahomed Sacranie, "Nourishing Body and Spirit: Exploring British Muslim Mothers' Constructions and Experiences of Breastfeeding," *Diversity and Equality in Health and Care* 9, no. 2 (2012): 113–23.

⁴⁹ Salleh, Zakaria, and Mutalib, "Shariah-Compliant of Nursing Child Documentation Model Building."

⁵⁰ World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), "World Breastfeeding Week (WBW)," 2016, <https://waba.org.my/wbw/#:~:text=The Annual Campaign&text=WBW was started in 1992,1-7 August every year.>

⁵¹ World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA).

⁵² World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA).

⁵³ Luciana Alves Moreira et al., "Apoios à Mulher/Nutriz Nas Peças Publicitárias Da Semana Mundial Da Amamentação [Support to Woman/Nourisher in the Advertising Pieces of the World Breastfeeding Week]," *Revista Brasileira de Enfermagem* 70, no. 1 (February 2017): 61–70, <https://doi.org/10.1590/0034-7167-2016-0376>; Sara Moukarzel et al., "Real-Time Twitter Interactions During World Breastfeeding Week: A Case Study and Social Network Analysis," ed. Marco Cremonini, *PLOS ONE* 16, no. 3 (March 29, 2021): e0249302, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0249302>.

Campaigns to promote breastfeeding that drew inspiration from UNICEF and WHO standards were essential to demonstrate this point. One important way to help children's growth and health is to breastfeed them. Slogans like "breastfeeding is best" and World Health Organization guidelines endorsing breastfeeding for young children have been effective in bolstering public trust.⁵⁴

WHO and UNICEF, two major international organizations, provided extensive guidance and suggestions that ensured the policy was based on widely accepted standards and considerable research, hence facilitating the formation of Malaysia's national breastfeeding policy.⁵⁵ Some SDGs can only be achieved by breastfeeding, and these encourage global initiatives to create a healthier and more balanced world.⁵⁶

In addition, Malaysia made significant progress in 2022 with the establishment of the Bonda Halimatussaadia Milk Center, the nation's first Shariah-compliant milk bank.⁵⁷ Queen Tunku Hajah Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah officiated the opening of the facility at the Sultan Ahmad Shah Health Centre, International Islamic University of Malaysia (SASMEC@IIUM). Increasing community awareness and demand for wet nurses is the goal.⁵⁸ The successful publicity campaign for this project benefitted the community as a whole, and the Malaysia Book of Records recognized it as the country's top milk bank that complies with *Shari'ah*.⁵⁹

3. Mother's Mental Stress

Mothers' emotional state could influence the difficulties in breastfeeding, which may encourage them to start looking for wet nurses. Depressive disorders following delivery

⁵⁴ Williamson and Sacranie, "Nourishing Body and Spirit: Exploring British Muslim Mothers' Constructions and Experiences of Breastfeeding."

⁵⁵ Ministry of Health, "National Breastfeeding Policy and Action Plan 2015-2020. Malaysia: Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate."

⁵⁶ Ministry of Health.

⁵⁷ BERNAMA, "Pusat Susu Bonda Halimatussadia 'Bank Susu' Patuh Syariah," BH Online, 2022, <https://www.bharian.com.my/berita/nasional/2022/07/980523/pusat-susu-bonda-halimatussadia-bank-susu-patuh-syariah>.

⁵⁸ SASMEC IIUM, "Halimatussaadia Mother's Milk Centre," Sultan Ahmad Shah Medical Centre @ IIUM, 2020, <https://sasmec.iium.edu.my/v1/index.php/hmmc>.

⁵⁹ Mohd. Fadhli Mohd. Sulaiman, "Pusat Susu Bonda Halimatussadia Diiktiraf Malaysia Book of Record," Utusan Malaysia, 2023, <https://www.utusan.com.my/nasional/2023/09/pusat-susu-bonda-halimatussadia-diiktiraf-malaysia-book-of-record/>.

can be brought on by stress, and other psychological issues can also make it challenging for a woman to breastfeed successfully. Many women may be overwhelmed by the responsibilities of contemporary life in addition to the additional challenges of raising children that make breastfeeding problematic. Some expecting mothers seek the assistance of wet nurses to ensure that their children receive medical attention and nourishment while they attend to their own psychological and emotional health due to stress.⁶⁰

According to Mohamad Safir et al., among the common problems that women faced were managing stressful situations, which may result in a decrease in the stimulation of the production of milk.⁶¹ Golden pointed out that a mother's capability to breastfeed may be hindered by circumstances like discomfort, anxiety, and turmoil in her emotions. This "disappointment reflex," caused the fluctuations in hormones which impacted the steady supply of breast milk, which would increase demand for wet nurses.⁶²

Fernández-Tuñas et al. additionally clarified that newborns at increased risk could be placed in danger when mothers who delivered newborns first encounter reduced production of milk caused by stress and accompanying pathophysiological disease processes.⁶³ Because of this, wet nurses are employed as a temporary solution for providing breastmilk until the mother can generate enough on her own.⁶⁴

Two mental health disorders that might make it challenging for a mother to breastfeed are anxiety and postpartum depression. These illnesses may result in a decrease in milk production or increase the stress and difficulty of breastfeeding, leading families to look for wet nurses. Kendall-Tackett's (2007) research suggests that

⁶⁰ María del Carmen Fernández-Tuñas et al., "Effects of Maternal Stress on Breast Milk Production and the Microbiota of Very Premature Infants," *Nutrients* 15, no. 18 (2023): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu15184006>.

⁶¹ Mohamad Safir, Mohamad Safir, and Salleh, "Realiti Penyusuan Anak Susuan Pada Zaman Silam Dan Kontemporari: Kajian Tinjauan [The Reality of Wet-Nursing in the Past and Contemporary: A Review Study]."

⁶² Golden, *A Social History of Wet Nursing in America: From Breast to Bottle*. 19.

⁶³ Fernández-Tuñas et al., "Effects of Maternal Stress on Breast Milk Production and the Microbiota of Very Premature Infants."

⁶⁴ Faria Azad et al., "Breastfeeding Support through Wet Nursing during Nutritional Emergency: A Cross Sectional Study from Rohingya Refugee Camps in Bangladesh," *PLoS ONE* 14, no. 10 (2019): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0222980>.

wet nursing may be a feasible substitute in cases when a mother's mental health significantly influences her breastfeeding behaviour.⁶⁵

According to Riordan and Wambach, postpartum depression, also known as PPD, has been demonstrated to be more prevalent in new mothers who had high levels of stress in their lives and received little support from other people, particularly their spouses or partners.⁶⁶ The mother's ability to provide sufficient breast milk was additionally impacted by this disease, in addition to her psychological well-being. A vicious cycle of stress and worry was made worse by the absence of supporting connections, further impeding milk production. Wet nurses became increasingly necessary as these mothers tried to nourish their infants.

4. Maternal Debility (Sickness, Health Problem)

The mother's debility had been a significant factor in the decision to engage a wet nurse. Due to several kinds of medical and psychological problems, women with this health condition frequently discover it challenging to provide their babies with sufficient amount of breast milk.

Many mothers encountered that they were unable to continue producing milk after giving birth to their first child. Because they were concerned that the baby would go hungry because the mother was unable to produce breast milk, they decided to hire a wet nurse in a forced circumstance.⁶⁷ Sometimes, one reason why wet nurses were an option was because of the death of mothers during or after childbirth.⁶⁸

Serious health problems such as chronic diseases, postpartum difficulties, or dietary deficits can also lead to maternal debility. Wet nurses offered a vital substitute for moms who were either too sick to breastfeed or physically incapable of producing

⁶⁵ Kathleen Kendall-Tackett, "A New Paradigm for Depression in New Mothers: The Central Role of Inflammation and How Breastfeeding and Anti-Inflammatory Treatments Protect Maternal Mental Health," *International Breastfeeding Journal* 2 (2007): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1186/1746-4358-2-6>.

⁶⁶ Jan Riordan and Karen Wambach, *Breastfeeding and Human Lactation*, 4th ed. (Sudbury, Massachusetts USA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2010), https://www.google.com.my/books/edition/Breastfeeding_and_Human_Lactation/eNHQA7VZLvcC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PP1&printsec=frontcover. 539-540.

⁶⁷ Baumslag and Michels, *Milk, Money, and Madness: The Culture and Politics of Breastfeeding*. 39.

⁶⁸ Yilmaz et al., "Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices About Wet-Nursing and Human Milk Banking in Kayseri, Turkey." 204-209.

enough breast milk. Baumslag and Michels (1995) stated that the necessity to guarantee newborns received enough nourishment when the mothers were unable to do so for health reasons was the driving force for opting to wet nursing services both in the past and present times.⁶⁹

Similarly, Giladi (2022) said that wet nurses might take over to give the babies the attention and nourishment they need when mothers have common health problems that make it difficult for them to breastfeed successfully.⁷⁰ According to Che Abdul Rahim et al. and Abdul Rahman et al., a large number of mothers had the same issue, necessitating the assistance of other women to nurse their infants.⁷¹

Complications such as infections, major blood loss, or surgical recovery after caesarean sections might leave mothers too weak to breastfeed their newborns. Wet nurses might attend to the baby's nutritional needs while the mother heals. The postpartum period was important for both the mother and the child. Research by Thulier and Mercer highlighted the necessity for wet nurses in cases when breastfeeding effectiveness was impacted by postpartum health concerns.⁷²

Maternal debility has historically served as the primary defense for the use of wet nurses, particularly in areas where mothers and children have limited access to healthcare services. According to Thorley (2008), wet nursing was a common method used in many cultures to manage the challenges associated with maternal debility. This was to ensure that infants received the right nutrition and care when the mothers were suffering.⁷³

Mothers who were suffering from serious nutritional deficiencies or anemia might discover it was challenging to generate sufficient amount of breast milk. Wet nurses, who were more nutritious and well-fed, could provide the baby with the

⁶⁹ Baumslag and Michels, *Milk, Money, and Madness: The Culture and Politics of Breastfeeding*. 39, 43-46.

⁷⁰ Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses: Medieval Islamic Views on Breastfeeding and Their Social Implications*. 54.

⁷¹ Che Abdul Rahim, Hamjah, Abdul Majid, et al., "A Cross-Sectional Study on The Practice of Wet Nursing among Muslim Mothers."

⁷² Diane Thulier and Judith Mercer, "Variables Associated with Breastfeeding Duration," *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing* 38, no. 3 (May 2009): 259-68, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1552-6909.2009.01021.x>.

⁷³ Virginia Thorley, "Sharing Breastmilk: Wet Nursing, Cross-Feeding, and Milk Donations," *Breastfeeding Review* 16, no. 1 (2008): 25-29.

nourishment necessary in countries where mother nutrition was severely restricted. Horta and Victora's (2013) study addressed the essential connection between maternal nutrition and breastfeeding effectiveness and underscored the need for wet nurses when mothers are fragile.⁷⁴

Maternal debility encompassed an assortment of illnesses and psychological disorders that could compromise the capacity of a mother to breastfeed her child. When considered as a whole, the above examples demonstrated just how important it is for mothers to look for wet nurses to control maternal debility and preserve their babies' well-being and health.

5. Mother Goes to Work or Study

When mothers have to return to work or pursue further education, it might be tough to continue breastfeeding their children. This was one of the reasons that using a wet nurse became required. Women found it so difficult to maintain a breastfeeding routine after returning to work. Because their jobs sometimes forced them to spend long hours away from their babies, mothers had to figure out new ways to feed them. According to Thorley (2008), a lot of working women used the community midwives' services as intermediaries to find wet nurses who could provide the necessary nursing care.⁷⁵ The reliance on community midwives underscored the critical role these professionals played in supporting maternal and infant care. This arrangement reflected a practical solution for working women who needed to ensure their infants received adequate nourishment while managing their work responsibilities.

Wet nurses were also required for mothers enrolled in training programs or educational institutions to further study. Because study takes considerable effort and time, they might be unable to breastfeed regularly. In such a scenario, a wet nurse would be needed to ensure the baby's nutritional demands are satisfied. A study conducted in 2019 by Mohamad Safir et al. examined how nursing practices and the use of alternative

⁷⁴ Bernado L. Horta and Cesar G. Victora, "Long-Term Health Effects of Breastfeeding: A Systematic Review," *World Health Organization*. 129, no. 8–9 (n.d.): 293–98, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18198630>.

⁷⁵ Thorley, "Sharing Breastmilk: Wet Nursing, Cross-Feeding, and Milk Donations."

food are affected by educational responsibilities.⁷⁶ The study probably clarified mother's decision-making processes and their capacity to adapt or modify alternate feeding techniques while considering wet nursing as a possibility.

In addition to handling the care of their children, modern women often frequently have to balance their jobs and education. Mothers could carry out their responsibilities to provide their children's nourishment without sacrificing their obligations thanks to the useful replacement that wet nurses offered. The difficulties mothers confront by balancing work and education were brought to light by Whitley's research, which also emphasized the necessity to support nursing habits.⁷⁷ Time restrictions, a lack of support, and elevated stress levels are just a few of the major barriers that this dual position might pose to continuing breastfeeding habits.

For mothers balancing childcare, education, and employment, time management is essential. Wet nurses offered a workable solution by ensuring that infants are consistently nursed even when their mothers are not. Avner Giladi discussed the benefits of wet nursing, including how it may support mothers who are employed or enrolled in school.⁷⁸ By providing a practical replacement for caring for newborns, wet nursing allows wives to focus on their schooling or careers while ensuring their infants receive enough nourishment, thereby minimizing their workload. This viewpoint emphasizes how important flexible caregiving options are for assisting women who have jobs working and attending school.

Al-Barr showed that the majority of parents with advanced degrees and specialized training desired to breastfeed the children they raised, however, they encountered challenges due to having to work outside the home to improve their socioeconomic standing. The extra time at work often left minimal opportunities for expressing and storing breast milk, leading to the choice of a wet nurse as a practical

⁷⁶ Mohamad Safir, Mohamad Safir, and Salleh, "Realiti Penyusuan Anak Susuan Pada Zaman Silam Dan Kontemporari: Kajian Tinjauan [The Reality of Wet-Nursing in the Past and Contemporary: A Review Study]."

⁷⁷ Margaret D Whitley, "Work, Race and Breastfeeding: A Quantitative Study of Mothers in the United States" (University of California, Irvine, 2021), <https://escholarship.org/content/qt16k569wt/qt16k569wt.pdf>.

⁷⁸ Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses: Medieval Islamic Views on Breastfeeding and Their Social Implications*. 65.

solution.⁷⁹ Based on Suryani, expressing breast milk for storage requires taking additional time during working hours. The choosing of a wet nurse took place because of this time and job restrictions.⁸⁰

Mohamad Safir et al. found that the easiest way for working women to meet their children's supply and demand was to use the breast milk intake of the wet nurse.⁸¹ Thorley said that to obtain wet nurses, working women frequently employed the local midwives' services as intermediaries.⁸² Specifically, the need to return to work or pursue educational goals was a significant factor in seeking a wet nurse. These reviewed studies collectively illustrate how professional and academic commitments impacted breastfeeding practices and underscored the practical role of wet nurses in supporting working and studying mothers. By providing consistent and reliable breastfeeding support, wet nurses helped ensure the health and well-being of infants while allowing mothers to meet their career and educational objectives.

6. Death of Mother

When the mother passed away, who else could provide breast milk? Wet nursing was the primary choice in these circumstances, in addition to formula feeding.⁸³ It is critical to take care of the baby's physical and emotional health in the case that the mother passes away. Wet nurses are essential in giving the orphaned child loving care and breast milk during this trying time. According to Baumslag and Michels, in situations where the mother passes away and the child is left without a primary caregiver, wet nurses are indispensable for sustaining the baby's health and development. It becomes critical to meet the infant's physical and emotional requirements as soon as the mother

⁷⁹ Ali Muhammad Al-Barr, *Buku Pintar Kehamilan, Kelahiran, Penyusuan & Pendidikan*, ed. Salahuddin Ayub LL.M and Drs. Sawaluddin Dalimunthe, 2nd ed. (Johor Bahru, Malaysia: Perniagaan Jahabersa, 2012). 168-169.

⁸⁰ Suryani, "Rada'ah Dalam Perspektif Filosofis, Normatif, Yuridis, Psikologis, Sosiologis, Ekonomis."

⁸¹ Mohamad Safir, Mohamad Safir, and Salleh, "Realiti Penyusuan Anak Susuan Pada Zaman Silam Dan Kontemporari: Kajian Tinjauan [The Reality of Wet-Nursing in the Past and Contemporary: A Review Study]."

⁸² Thorley, "Sharing Breastmilk: Wet Nursing, Cross-Feeding, and Milk Donations."

⁸³ Baumgartel, Sneeringer, and Cohen, "From Royal Wet Nurses to Facebook: The Evolution of Breastmilk Sharing."

passes. In addition to giving newborns the vital nutrition they need, breastfeeding helps the babies to build deep emotional attachments and support relationships.⁸⁴

Wet nursing has long been a standard practice in cultures with high rates of mother death or newborn orphanages brought about by a variety of situations. Wet nurses were essential in providing care and survival for the orphaned. According to Giladi, the employment of wet nurses was frequently governed by cultural customs and conventions to maintain the continuation of baby care in the case of a mother's death.⁸⁵

7. Prolonged Nursing Decreases Fertility

Most mothers understand that long periods of lactation can cause a fertility decrease. Some suggested to employ wet nurses to avoid infertility.⁸⁶ When a mother solely breastfeeds, she may experience lactational amenorrhea, a normal form of postpartum infertility. Due to this illness, there is a decreased chance of conception since it delays the onset of menstrual periods and ovulation. Wet nursing can be used strategically to reduce the breastfeeding load on the mother and potentially shorten the period of lactational amenorrhea, thereby restoring fertility sooner. Can et al., Moran and Gilad, and Zilal et al. found that lactational amenorrhea plays a vital role in naturally spacing out births. The frequency and duration of breastfeeding sessions were identified as influential factors.⁸⁷ Research done by Can et al., Moran and Gilad, and Saari et al. highlighted the important role of lactational amenorrhea in natural birth spacing, and its effectiveness depends on how often and how long breastfeeding sessions occur.

Therefore, extended breastfeeding might hinder the desire for larger family sizes in societies where high fertility rates are valued. Wet nursing served to help the mother regain her fertility, while also meeting the infant's nutritional requirements. Avner

⁸⁴ Baumslag and Michels, *Milk, Money, and Madness: The Culture and Politics of Breastfeeding*. 43, 53, 142.

⁸⁵ Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses: Medieval Islamic Views on Breastfeeding and Their Social Implications*. 113.

⁸⁶ Campbell, "Wet-Nurses in Early Modern England: Some Evidence from the Townshend Archive."

⁸⁷ Hafize Ozturk Can et al., "Women's Views on Wet Nursing and Milk Siblinghood: An Example from Turkey," *Breastfeeding Medicine* 9, no. 10 (2014): 559–60, <https://doi.org/10.1089/bfm.2014.0031>; Moran and Gilad, "From Folklore to Scientific Evidence: Breast-Feeding and Wet-Nursing in Islam and the Case of Non-Puerperal Lactation."; Saari et al., "Wet Nursing: A Historical Review and Its Ideal Characteristics." Saari et al.

Giladi discussed how the practice of hiring wet nurses to enhance a woman's reproductive capacity could be driven by cultural norms and economic necessities.⁸⁸

While fertility is a primary concern, it remains crucial to prioritize the health and nutrition of the baby. Utilizing a wet nurse can assist the mother in decreasing her breastfeeding duties to enhance her fertility, while ensuring the infant receives the essential breast milk necessary for their growth. Kendall-Tackett emphasized the benefits of utilizing wet nursing to maintain infant nutrition and manage maternal fertility.⁸⁹ The research conducted by Kendall-Tackett demonstrated the twofold advantages of wet nursing, illustrating how it fulfils the infant's dietary requirements and promotes the mother's reproductive health. Wet nursing played an essential part in traditional and modern societies where the health of both mothers and children is interconnected, by safeguarding the well-being of both mother and child. This comprehension emphasizes the significance of wet nursing as a custom that promotes comprehensive health outcomes for families.

The need to manage fertility effectively while ensuring infant nutrition is a significant factor in seeking the services of a wet nurse. This review of literature illustrates how prolonged nursing impacts fertility and how wet nursing provides a practical solution for balancing reproductive health and childcare. Families might improve family planning and birth spacing while safeguarding the health of their infants by hiring wet nurses.

8. Having Prematurity Baby

It was tough giving birth to a premature baby in some circumstances. But this was also a dilemma among mothers as premature newborn care sometimes called for special feeding protocols, leading them to choose wet nurses for their babies to ensure they received full breast milk.⁹⁰ Breastfeeding could be especially challenging for premature

⁸⁸ Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses: Medieval Islamic Views on Breastfeeding and Their Social Implications*. 184.

⁸⁹ Kendall-Tackett, "A New Paradigm for Depression in New Mothers: The Central Role of Inflammation and How Breastfeeding and Anti-Inflammatory Treatments Protect Maternal Mental Health."

⁹⁰ Yilmaz et al., "Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices About Wet-Nursing and Human Milk Banking in Kayseri, Turkey."

newborns because of their special dietary demands and medical vulnerabilities resulting from their early birth.

To maintain their growth, premature newborns needed to be fed more often and consumed a higher concentration of certain nutrients than full-term babies. A wet nurse could provide the required nourishment when mothers could not meet these demands, either because of low milk supply or other issues. Abdul Rahman et al. emphasized the need for human milk as the best milk, full of nutrients, and a growth agent in preterm newborn feeding, highlighting the role of wet nurses in assisting mothers who did not have enough milk or no milk at all.⁹¹ Mohamad Safir et al. also stressed that there were cases of babies' intestines bursting due to the consumption of milk other than the mother's milk.⁹²

Creating and sustaining a milk supply could be extremely difficult for mothers of pre-term babies. Breastfeeding difficulties might arise from the strain of having a preterm baby, as well as possible medical issues for the mother and the child. Using a wet nurse in these situations guaranteed that the preterm baby received the benefits of human milk without putting further strain on the mother. AlHreashy discussed the possible involvement of wet nurses and the obstacles faced by mothers of pre-term babies while trying to breastfeed their children. AlHreashy then highlighted that high-risk babies such as those with very low birth weight and premature babies could not be breastfed using direct breastfeeding and their mothers were unable to supply their own milk.⁹³

The unique problems of caring for premature newborns made hiring wet nurses a practical and often necessary decision. These instances all demonstrated the critical role that wet nurses played in giving preterm babies the nutrition and care that they required. By caring for the nutritional requirements, health issues, and special feeding techniques of these delicate neonates, wet nurses played a critical role in promoting

⁹¹ Rafidah Abdul Rahman, Najah Nadiyah Amran, and Latifah Abdul Majid, "Faktor Penyesuaan Anak Orang Lain & Amalan Pendokumentasian Dalam Masyarakat Kelantan: Satu Kajian Kes," *Tinta Artikulasi Membina Ummah* 8, no. 2 (2022): 1–14.

⁹² Mohamad Safir, Mohamad Safir, and Salleh, "Realiti Penyesuaan Anak Susuan Pada Zaman Silam Dan Kontemporari: Kajian Tinjauan [The Reality of Wet-Nursing in the Past and Contemporary: A Review Study]."

⁹³ AlHreashy, "Non-Maternal Nursing in the Muslim Community: A Health Perspective Review."

their growth and general well-being. Also, they provided their parents with a much-needed break.

9. Charity and Supporting Those in Need

Wet nurses have long been used in various cultures for humanitarian relief and emergency care. Families whose biological mothers were unable to breastfeed because of illness, death, or other circumstances frequently found support from their communities. It was common to view providing a wet nurse as a humanitarian gesture that helped needy parents and babies.

Studies showed that wet nursing was a form of social support, where wealthier or more fortunate women offered their milk to those less fortunate. Thorley emphasized that wet nursing serves two main purposes: it can be an occupation where women are paid for their services, or it can be an act of charity where women offer their milk out of compassion and support for those in need.⁹⁴ In the 20th century, some families employed wet nurses not out of necessity but to help impoverished women as a form of family charity. James McMath, an Edinburgh physician, once issued the slogan “nowadays do it, save the poorer” to support the employment of wet nurses to aid them.⁹⁵ These results emphasized the professional and altruistic elements of wet nursing, where the baby’s welfare was prioritized over a reciprocal service exchange.

In times of crisis, such as famines, wars, or natural disasters, wet nurses were often needed. Stress, hunger, or relocation may have prevented many mothers from nursing at these times. A study by Azad et al. highlighted the role of wet nurses in emergency settings and the importance of community support with infant and young child feeding in emergencies (IYCF-E) program.⁹⁶ This showed that in emergency settings, wet nurses might be in hand in supporting the demand of needing mothers.

⁹⁴ Thorley, “Mothers’ Experiences of Sharing Breastfeeding or Breastmilk, Part 2: The Early 21st Century.”

⁹⁵ Robert E Tyson, “The Population of Aberdeenshire, 1695-1755: A New Approach,” *Northern Scotland* 6, no. 1 (185AD): 113–31.

⁹⁶ Azad et al., “Breastfeeding Support through Wet Nursing during Nutritional Emergency: A Cross Sectional Study from Rohingya Refugee Camps in Bangladesh.”

Numerous medical and humanitarian groups promoted and supported the use of wet nurses in areas with high infant death rates or where breastfeeding support was vitally required. To make sure that newborns who were in danger received the care they needed, these organizations frequently started programs to identify and train wet nurses. To conveniently get breast milk for infants in need, the World Health Organization (WHO) also supplied recommendations for wet nurses in emergency and humanitarian circumstances which have been disseminated worldwide as a guideline.⁹⁷

Wet nursing was considered a kind and considerate practice in several societies, with strong roots in religious and cultural customs. Giving breast milk to someone else's newborn, for instance, was regarded as a good gesture and promoted the idea of "milk kinship" in Islamic society. The findings of Hamjah et al. indicated that the practices of breastfeeding within Muslim communities were consistent with Islamic principles mentioned in *al-Qur'ān*, specifically aiming to fulfil *Sharī'ah* (*Maqāsid al-Shar'iyyah*) objectives, including the preservation of lineage (*ḥifz al-nasl*).⁹⁸

Wet nurse usage remains prevalent in contemporary settings, particularly in regions with high rates of maternal mortality or financial challenges. Through social media, wet nursing arrangements are easily accessible and actively sought after to ensure extended breastfeeding, as indicated by various studies. Several research papers, including those by Gribble, Salleh et al., Baumgartel et al., and Perrin et al., examined the modern practices of recruiting and exchanging breast milk in wet nursing.⁹⁹ Their work sheds light on the ongoing relevance of wet nursing in contemporary society, while also pointing to the new challenges and opportunities that arise from its evolving practices.

Wet nurses were employed mostly for charitable and emergency purposes. The reported cases showed how wet nursing functioned as a crucial safety mechanism for newborns, providing them with food and comfort at critical times. Through charitable

⁹⁷ World Health Organization, "Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding."

⁹⁸ Hamjah et al., "A Quantitative Study on Muslim Milk Mother's Understanding Towards the Islamic Concept of Wet Nursing."

⁹⁹ Gribble, "Peer-to-Peer Milk Donors' and Recipients' Experiences and Perceptions of Donor Milk Banks"; Salleh, Zakaria, and Mutalib, "Shariah-Compliant of Nursing Child Documentation Model Building"; Baumgartel, Sneeringer, and Cohen, "From Royal Wet Nurses to Facebook: The Evolution of Breastmilk Sharing"; Maryanne Tigchelaar Perrin et al., "A Mixed-Methods Observational Study of Human Milk Sharing Communities on Facebook," *Breastfeeding Medicine* 9, no. 3 (2014): 128–34, <https://doi.org/10.1089/bfm.2013.0114>.

endeavours and neighbourhood initiatives, wet nurses played an essential role in protecting the health and welfare of infants and helping families go through difficult circumstances.

10. Having Many Children

One thing to consider is hiring a multiple-child wet nurse, especially for mothers who have given birth to twin, triple, or quadruple babies. Because of the duties involved in caring for several babies and early toddlers, breastfeeding can be challenging for parents of multiple children. In this situation, the support of a wet nurse is often necessary.

Mothers of many children often face difficulties in adhering to a breastfeeding schedule for each child because of the extreme physical and psychological strain they bear. A mother's ability to adequately breastfeed her infants and produce enough milk may be impacted by the fatigue associated with parenting several children. Fildes suggested that the physical needs of multiple children may require hiring a wet nurse.¹⁰⁰ Nursing for several children at the same time or one after the other can put a lot of physical stress on a mother's body, showing that having a large family might require the help of a wet nurse.

Following multiple pregnancies, a mother's physical well-being and overall health may be impacted, causing challenges with breastfeeding. For support during this period, a wet nurse can help in caring for the baby while the mother prioritizes her recovery. The process of giving birth was a time of great change, and breastfeeding caused fewer disruptions than having multiple children.¹⁰¹ In some societies, it is traditional to have a large family, and the utilization of wet nurses is recognized to offer care. Wet nurses are often considered as part of the extended family because they offer the necessary care and support. Giladi explores the cultural traditions related to wet

¹⁰⁰ Valerie Fildes, "The Culture and Biology of Breastfeeding: An Historical Review of Western Europe," in *Breastfeeding: Biocultural Perspective*, ed. Patricia Stuart-Macadam and Kathy A. Dettwyler, 1st ed. (New York: Walter de Gruyter Inc, 1995), 101–26.

¹⁰¹ Campbell, "Wet-Nurses in Early Modern England: Some Evidence from the Townshend Archive."

nursing in large households.¹⁰² Giladi's analysis also sheds light on the intricate relationships that developed between wet nurses and the families they served.

Families with multiple children may consider the expense of hiring a wet nurse. Ensuring that each child receives proper care and feeding can be costly. However, wet nurses can provide a cost-effective solution. Fildes (1986) discussed the economic effects of hiring wet nurses in large household.¹⁰³ The challenges families face in managing the expenses of raising children were illustrated. Engaging wet nurses can offer a cost-effective solution to ensure adequate nourishment and attention, particularly for larger families who may find it unaffordable to employ multiple caregivers or manage the needs of several children.

The decision to enlist a wet nurse is largely impacted by the size of a parent's family. These examples underscore the unique challenges faced by mothers with large families and emphasize the essential function that wet nurses serve in providing the necessary nursing support. Wet nurses aid mothers in handling their family responsibilities and help promote the health and wellness of infants by addressing the physical, emotional, and financial requirements of caring for multiple children.

11. To Form *Mahram* Relationship

Another factor for choosing a wet nurse is to ease the interaction between an adopted child with foster parents. If the foster parents are not *mahram* of the child, problems may arise when the child reaches puberty. The solution to this problem is to form a *mahram* relationship between the foster child by giving the child to be nursed by mother or sisters of the foster parents. A study reported that one of the main reasons behind choosing a wet nurse is clearly to establish a *mahram* bond between the adopted child and the adoptive mother and her family. Nursing the adoptive child creates a *mahram* attachment that helps to ease regular family interactions. For example, Sahlah bint Suhayl, who nursed Salim, her adopted adult son, to make him her *mahram*, therefore enabling him to remain with her free from worries about improper contacts. Apart from that, the researcher also discovered that women who induced lactation to nurse Hasan

¹⁰² Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses: Medieval Islamic Views on Breastfeeding and Their Social Implications*. 29, 120.

¹⁰³ Fildes, *Breasts, Bottles and Babies: A History of Infant Feeding*.

al-Basri without past pregnancy show how milk kinship may be formed to produce an adopted child as *mahram*.¹⁰⁴

Adoptive parents also seek induced lactation to make their adopted children *mahram* under Islamic law. This enables unlimited relationships inside the family, much like those of biological children. Mothers who induce lactation (that is, those who boost milk production even if they have not given birth) are mostly driven by the want to establish a valid *mahram* bond with the adopted child.¹⁰⁵ Aiming to legally and spiritually include the adopted kid into the family through a *mahram* relationship, induced lactation consists in hormone stimulation and breast stimulation to create milk.

Muslim adoptive women go through the difficult induced lactation procedure to build a *mahram* attachment with their adopted children. This approach is crucial to guarantee that the kid grows to be a legal part of the family thus allowing free interactions. The process of induced lactation is fraught with internal challenges (emotional, physical, and psychological) and external challenges (lack of proper guidance, societal stigma). The determination to establish a *mahram* relationship through breastfeeding drives the adoptive mothers to overcome these challenges.¹⁰⁶ This factor illustrates that in Islamic tradition, the practice of breastfeeding, whether through natural or induced lactation, is deeply connected to the religious and social aim of integrating adopted children into the family as *mahram*, thereby ensuring a secure and harmonious family environment.

2.4 JURISPRUDENCE OF WET NURSING

In Islam, wet nursing is considered a noble profession that fosters friendly relations between relatives and even strangers, while also establishes *mahram* relationship and

¹⁰⁴ Cited in Rafidah Abdul Rahman, Najah Nadiah Amran, and Latifah Abdul Majid, “[Wet Nursing Practice in Islamic History] Penyusunan Anak Orang Lain Dalam Sejarah Islam,” *Jurnal Islam Dan Masyarakat Kontemporari* 23, no. 1 (April 30, 2022): 95–103, <https://doi.org/10.37231/jimk.2022.23.1.647>.

¹⁰⁵ Zilal Saari & Siti Suhaila Ihwani Siti Mariam Ali, “Cabaran Menjayakan Penyusunan Cetusan Bagi Pemahraman Anak Angkat Dalam Kalangan Ibu Angkat Muslim Di Lembah Klang,” *Jurnal ‘Ulwan* 6, no. 2 (2021): 93–117.

¹⁰⁶ Zilal Saari and Farahwahida Mohd Yusof, “Induced Lactation by Adoptive Mothers: A Case Study,” *Jurnal Teknologi (Sciences and Engineering)* 68, no. 1 (2014): 123–32, <https://doi.org/10.11113/jt.v68.2894>.

earning numerous rewards from Allah. The significance of wet nurses is emphasized in *al-Qur'ān*, particularly in situations where a mother is unable to breastfeed her child. In such cases, the father is responsible for finding a wet nurse to breastfeed the baby, with appropriate compensation. Furthermore, if a divorce occurs, a wet nurse serves as a substitute mother to guarantee that the child gets sufficient nourishment. *Al-Qur'ān* also states that wet nurses become akin to blood relatives, making marriages between them and their nursed children forbidden. Consequently, wet nurses are highly esteemed in Islam for their role in providing essential nutrients, strengthening the child's body, and protecting against diseases like Necrotizing Enterocolitis (NEC), the condition that causes the death of intestinal tissue which can also cause a hole in the intestinal and a very severe gastrointestinal disease with mortality as high as 50% requiring surgery.¹⁰⁷

2.4.1 Conditions for the Establishment of Milk Kinship

As discussed in the previous chapter, wet nurses are women who breastfeed other people's children. According to Islamic jurisprudential rulings, milk kinship between the breastfed child and the wet nurse and her family members will be established when three conditions are met. The three conditions are the identity of the wet nurse, methods and the amount of feeding, and the age of the child.

a) Identity of Wet Nurse

The *fuqahā'* put 3 conditions for the wet nurse to be valid as a wet nurse who will be *mahram*:

¹⁰⁷ Atul Malhotra et al., "Neonatal Morbidities of Fetal Growth Restriction: Pathophysiology and Impact," *Frontiers in Endocrinology* 10, no. FEB (2019): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fendo.2019.00055>.

i- Female Human¹⁰⁸

The wet nurse must be a woman, as the act of breastfeeding establishes a *maḥram* (non-marriageable kinship) relationship. Imām al-Shāfi‘ī does not recognize men as wet nurses, reasoning that, even if a man could produce milk and breastfeed a girl, it would not invalidate a subsequent marriage because men, by nature, do not have breasts or milk, and thus *maḥram* relationships do not arise from such situations.

Animals are not considered *maḥram* since *maḥram* relationships are based on the honour and dignity inherent to human kinship. The issue of *khunsā* (intersex individuals) is debated among Islamic scholars. Ḥanafī and Ḥanbalī scholars do not apply *maḥram* laws to *khunsā* individuals, while Mālikī scholars argue it is forbidden for them to marry or be married. The preferred opinion, according to the Shāfi‘ī school, is to refrain from making a decision until the individual’s gender is clear. The *maḥram* relationship applies if the individual is recognized as a woman; if the individual is recognized as a man, the *maḥram* relationship does not apply.

ii- Known Identity¹⁰⁹

The identity of the wet nurse must be known. When an infant in a community gets nursed without knowing who his wet nurse is, and he marries his wet nurse without realizing that she was his wet nurse, the marriage is considered lawful since the wet nurse’s identity must be undeniable.

iii- The Milk Substance itself.¹¹⁰

If it is known that the wet nurse does not have breast milk, then there is no *maḥram* relationship between the wet nurse and the child. Only the wet nurse herself can confirm whether she has milk in her breasts or not. This is because the main condition for being

¹⁰⁸ ‘Abdullah ibn Maḥmūd ibn Mawdūd Al-Mawsilī, *Al-Ikhtiyār Li-Ta‘lil Al-Mukhtār* (Al-Qāhirah, Egypt: Matba‘ah al-Ḥalbi, 1937). Vol. 3. 119-120; Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Ibn Rusyd, *Bidāyah Al-Mujtahid Wa Nihāyah Al-Muqtaṣid* (Al-Qāhirah, Egypt: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2004). Vol. 2. 64-63; Abū Zakariyyā Maḥyā Al-Dīn Yaḥyā ibn Sharif Al-Nawawī, *Rawḍah Al-Ṭālibīn Wa ‘Umdah Al-Muḥtāṭ*, ed. Zuhayr Al-Shāwsh, 3rd ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Al-Maktabah al-Islāmī, 1991). Vol. 1. 74-75.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Abdullah ‘Abd al-Mun‘am ‘ Abd al-Latīf Al-Aṣṣilī, *Al-Raḍā‘ Al-Maḥram Fī Al-Fiqh Al-Islāmī* (Al-Qāhirah, Egypt: Dār Ibn al-Jūzī, 2005). 130.

¹¹⁰ Al-Mawsilī, *Al-Ikhtiyār Li-Ta‘lil Al-Mukhtār*. 119.

a *maḥram* is that the milk must reach the stomach. If there is no milk, there is no *maḥram*.

b) Methods of Feeding

Yūsuf al-Qardāwi has determined direct feeding as the sole method of feeding to establish milk kinship. Bottle feeding, nasal feeding, and ear feeding do not create a *maḥram* relationship between the wet nurse and the child. He follows the view of ibn Ḥazm, the Zāhiriyyah scholars, and the Ḥanafī school¹¹¹ which hold that these methods are inconsistent with the intent of *al-Qur'ān* and al-Sunnah. According to this perspective, the term *radā'ah* mentioned in *al-Qur'ān* exclusively refers to traditional direct breastfeeding and does not encompass other feeding methods.

Wahbah Zuhaili, a Syrian scholar disagreed with ibn Ḥazm's ruling because of the *ijtihād* in *fiqh*, namely milk must be reached in the baby's stomach, was not taken into account by ibn Ḥazm.¹¹² Drawing upon the concept of "*sadd al-zarā'i*," which signifies that all actions that lead to harm and evil must be prevented, the majority of scholars, including those of al-Shāfi'ī, al-Mālikī, and al-Ḥanbalī, the taking of milk by a wet nurse through methods other than direct breastfeeding establishes a *maḥram* relationship. This is based on the following *ḥadīth* used by al-Mālikī:¹¹³

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو نُعَيْمٍ، حَدَّثَنَا زَكَرِيَّا، عَنْ عَامِرٍ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ النَّعْمَانَ بْنَ بَشِيرٍ، يَقُولُ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: «الْحَلَالُ بَيِّنٌ، وَالْحَرَامُ بَيِّنٌ، وَبَيْنَهُمَا مُشَبَّهَاتٌ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ، فَمَنْ اتَّقَى الْمُشَبَّهَاتِ اسْتَبْرَأَ لِدِينِهِ وَعِرْضِهِ، وَمَنْ وَقَعَ فِي الشُّبُهَاتِ كَرَّاعٍ يَرَعَى حَوْلَ الْحِمَى، يُوشِكُ أَنْ يُوْشَكَ، أَلَا وَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ مَلِكٍ حِمَى، أَلَا إِنَّ حِمَى اللَّهِ فِي أَرْضِهِ مَحَارِمُهُ، أَلَا وَإِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً: إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ.»

Translation: Abu Nu'aym narrated to us, Zakariyyā narrated to us, on the authority of 'Āmir, who said: On the authority of al-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr, who said: I heard Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying: That which is lawful is clear and that which is unlawful is clear, and between

¹¹¹ Al-Aṣṭīlī, *Al-Radā' al-Maḥram Fī Al-Fiqh Al-Islāmī*. 46-51.

¹¹² Wahbah Zuhaili, *Konsep Darurat Dalam Hukum Islam* (Jakarta, Indonesia: Gaya Media Pratama, 1997). 13-15.

¹¹³ Ibn Muḥammad Sālim al-Majlisī al-Shanqayṭī, Muḥammad, *Lawāmi' al-Durari fī Hatki Astāri al-Mukhtaṣar*. ed. Dār al-Riḍwān. 1st ed. Vol.7. (Nouakchott, Mauritania: Dār al-Riḍwān, 2010). 660.

the two of them are doubtful matters about which many people do not know. Thus, he who avoids doubtful matters clears himself in regard to his religion and his honour, but he who falls into doubtful matters [eventually] falls into that which is unlawful, like the shepherd who pastures around a sanctuary, all but grazing therein. Truly every king has a sanctuary, and truly Allah's sanctuary is His prohibitions. Truly in the body there is a morsel of flesh, which, if it be whole, all the body is whole, and which, if it is diseased, all of [the body] is diseased. Truly, it is the heart.¹¹⁴

The preferred view is that of Wahbah Zuhaili and the other three schools (the majority).

c) Age of Infant and Amount of Feeding

There is no dispute among scholars about the age of the infant at the time of feeding. Majority of the scholars from various schools of jurisprudence agreed that the child must be below two years old for the milk kinship to be established between the wet nurse and the child. But as for the amount of feeding, there are differences of opinion which can be classed into 3 groups.

The first group asserts milk kinship or *mahram* relation is established regardless of the amount of breast milk; either a little or a lot. This is the view of the majority of scholars including scholars from Ḥanafī and Ḥanābilah school; some of the companions including 'Alī, ibn Mas'ūd, ibn 'Abbās, and ibn 'Umar; and some of the *fuqahā'* from the Mālikī school, al-Auzā'ī, al-Lays ibn Sa'ad, and al-Thūr. Their ruling is based on the following verse from *al-Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth*:

﴿وَأُمَّهَاتُكُمُ اللَّاتِي أَرْضَعْنَكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُم مِّنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ﴾

Translation: Your wet nurses who nursed you, your milk siblings (*Sūrah al-Nisā'*, 4:23).

This verse shows the prohibition is valid if a person was being wet nursed even only once.¹¹⁵

And also:

¹¹⁴ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*. 20. *Ḥadīth* no. 52. *Al-Dārimī* grade this *ḥadīth* as authentic/*ṣaḥīḥ*. See: *Sunan al-Dārimī*, p1647.

¹¹⁵ Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shaltūt and Muḥammad 'Alī Al-Sāyis, *Muqāranah Al-Mazāhib Fī Al-Fiqh* (Al-Qāhirah, Egypt: Maṭba'ah Muḥammad 'Alī Ṣabīḥ wa Aulādihi, 1953). 66.

حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا لَيْثٌ، وَحَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ رُمْحٍ، أَخْبَرَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ يَزِيدَ بْنِ أَبِي حَبِيبٍ، عَنْ عِرَاكِ، عَنْ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، أَنَّهَا أَخْبَرَتْهُ: أَنَّ عَمَّهَا مِنَ الرِّضَاعَةِ يُسَمَّى أَفْلَحَ. اسْتَأْذَنَ عَلَيْهَا فَحَجَبَتْهُ، فَأَخْبَرَتْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. فَقَالَ لَهَا: «لَا تَحْتَجِي مِنْهُ، فَإِنَّهُ يَحْرُمُ مِنَ الرِّضَاعَةِ مَا يَحْرُمُ مِنَ النَّسَبِ»

Translation: Qutaybah ibn Sa'īd narrated to us, Layth narrated to us, and Muḥammad ibn Rumḥ narrated to us, al-Layth informed us, from Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb, from 'Irāk, from 'Urwah, from 'Ā'ishah, that she informed him: Her paternal uncle from breastfeeding was called Aflaḥ. He asked her permission to see him, but she prevented him, so she informed the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. He said to her: "Do not veil yourself from him, for what is forbidden by breastfeeding is forbidden by lineage."¹¹⁶

This *ḥadīth* shows that there is no specific number requirement for *maḥram* establishment. Thus, little or much, it was also counted as breastfeeding, provided that it reaches the stomach from the mouth.

Subul al-Salām defines breastfeeding as the process by which breast milk reaches the infant's stomach through the mouth. There is a consensus (*ijmā'*) among scholars that this constitutes legitimate breastfeeding, based on the revealed ruling from Allah concerning the establishment of *maḥram* relationships through breastfeeding. This is expressed in the juristic principle:

وُجِدَ اسْمُهُ وَجِدَ حُكْمُهُ

Translation: If there is breastfeeding, then there is a ruling¹¹⁷

The second group rules that three times breastfeeding establishes *maḥram* relations. This is the view of Abī 'Abid, Abī Thūr, ibn al-Munzir and Aḥmad; some of the companions such as *Zaid ibn Thabit*; and some of the *fuqahā'* of Abū Thūr including Dāwud al-Zāhir and his followers except ibn Ḥazm. This view is based on the evidence from several *aḥādīth*.

One *ḥadīth* narrated by 'Ā'ishah, the Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, said,

¹¹⁶ Al-Naisābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. 1070. Ḥadīth no. 1445 (9). Mālik grade this *ḥadīth* as authentic/*ṣaḥīḥ*. See: *Al-Muwatta'*, p372. See also *ḥadīth* no. 1441 (1), 1444 (2), 1445 (3), 1445 (4), 1445 (6), 1445 (7), 1445 (8), and 1445 (10) in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, which brings a similar theme.

¹¹⁷ *Al-San'āni*. Subul al-Salām. 310.

حَدَّثَنِي زُهَيْرُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ، حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، وَحَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مُنَمَّرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، وَحَدَّثَنَا سُؤَيْدُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا مُعْتَمِرُ بْنُ سُلَيْمَانَ، كِلَاهُمَا عَنْ أَيُّوبَ، عَنْ ابْنِ أَبِي مُلَيْكَةَ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الزُّبَيْرِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: - وَقَالَ سُؤَيْدٌ وَزُهَيْرٌ إِنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ - : «لَا تُحْرِمُ الْمَصَّةَ وَالْمَصَّتَانِ»

Translation: Zuhayr ibn Ḥarb narrated to me, Ismā‘īl ibn Ibrāhīm narrated to us, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Numayr narrated to us, Ismā‘īl narrated to us, Suwayd ibn Sa‘id narrated to us, Mu‘tamir ibn Sulayman narrated to us, both of them on the authority of Ayyūb, on the authority of Ibn Abī Mulaykah, on the authority of ‘Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr, on the authority of ‘Ā’ishah, who said: The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: - Suwayd and Zuhayr said that the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: “One suckling or two do not make (marriage) unlawful.”¹¹⁸

Another *ḥadīth* narrated by Umm al-Faḍl,

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ يَحْيَى، وَعَمَرُ بْنُ النَّاقِدِ، وَإِسْحَاقُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، كُلُّهُمْ عَنِ الْمُعْتَمِرِ، وَاللَّفْظُ لِيَحْيَى، أَخْبَرَنَا الْمُعْتَمِرُ بْنُ سُلَيْمَانَ، عَنْ أَيُّوبَ، يُحَدِّثُ عَنْ أَبِي الْخَلِيلِ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الْحَارِثِ، عَنْ أُمِّ الْفَضْلِ، قَالَتْ: دَخَلَ أَعْرَابِيٌّ عَلَى نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، وَهُوَ فِي بَيْتِي، فَقَالَ: يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ، إِنِّي كَانَتْ لِي امْرَأَةٌ، فَتَزَوَّجْتُ عَلَيْهَا أُخْرَى، فَزَعَمَتِ امْرَأَتِي الْأُولَى أَنَّهَا أَرْضَعَتِ امْرَأَتِي الْخُدَّتَى رَضْعَةً أَوْ رَضْعَتَيْنِ، فَقَالَ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «لَا تُحْرِمُ الْإِمْلَاجَةَ وَالْإِمْلَاجَتَانِ»، قَالَ عَمَرُ فِي رِوَايَتِهِ: عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الْحَارِثِ بْنِ نَوْفَلٍ

Translation: Yaḥyā ibn Yaḥyā, ‘Amrū al-Nāqīd, and Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm narrated to us, all on the authority of al-Mu‘tamir, and the wording is Yaḥyā’s. Al-Mu‘tamir ibn Sulaymān informed us, on the authority of Ayyūb, narrating on the authority of Abū al-Khalīl, on the authority of ‘Abdullah ibn al-Ḥarīth, on the authority of Umm al-Faḍl, who said: An Arab (*badwīn*) entered upon the Prophet of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, while he was in my house, and he said: O Prophet of Allah, I had a wife, then I married another woman. My first wife claimed that she had breastfed my new wife once or twice. The Prophet of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: “One or two suckling’s do not make (the marriage) forbidden.” ‘Amrū said in his narration: On the authority of ‘Abdullah ibn al-Ḥarīth ibn Nawfal.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Al-Naisābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. 1073. Ḥadīth no. 1450. *Ibn al-Madīnī* grade this *ḥadīth* as authentic/*ṣaḥīḥ*. See: *Al-‘Ital*, p83.

¹¹⁹ Al-Naisābūrī. 1075. *Al-Tabrīzī* grade this *ḥadīth* as authentic/*ṣaḥīḥ*. See: *Mishkāṭ al-Maṣābīḥ*, p946.

These *ḥadīth* indicate that one or two sucks is not counted, but if it is three, it is a *maḥram* because of breastfeeding.

The third group argues that five breastfeeding are sufficient to create milk kinship. This view is supported by the Shāfi'ī school; some of the companions such as ibn al-Zubayr and 'Ā'ishah; some of the *Tabi'īn* including Sa'īd ibn al-Musib and Taus; and some of the *fuqahā'* including Aḥmad and Ishaq. The evidence for this ruling is based on *ḥadīth* in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*:

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ يَحْيَى، قَالَ: قَرَأْتُ عَلَى مَالِكٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ، عَنْ عَمْرَةَ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ: "كَانَ فِيْمَا أُنْزِلَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ: عَشْرُ رَضَعَاتٍ مَعْلُومَاتٍ يُحْرَمْنَ، ثُمَّ نُسِخْنَ، بِخَمْسٍ مَعْلُومَاتٍ، فَتَوَفَّى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، وَهَنَّ فِيْمَا يُفْرَأُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ

Translation: Yaḥyā bin Yaḥyā narrated to us: I read to Mālik, on the authority of 'Abdullah bin Abī Bakr, on the authority of 'Amrah. Mother of the believers 'Ā'ishah, Allah be pleased with her, reported that it had been revealed in *al-Qur'ān* that ten clear suckling make the marriage unlawful, then it was abrogated (and substituted) by five suckling and Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him, died and it was before that time (found) in *al-Qur'ān* (and recited by the Muslims).¹²⁰

There are other *aḥādīth* supporting this *ḥadīth*.¹²¹ All of them clearly show that *maḥram* relation takes place after five sucks, which was originally 10 sucks, but has been reduced to only five.¹²² This displays that the number of *aḥādīth* following the *aḥādīth* is mostly saying that it was 5, so it was stronger to be used as a basis than the other opinions.

¹²⁰ Al-Naisābūrī. 1075. Ḥadīth no. 1452. *Al-Tabrīzī* grade this *ḥadīth* as authentic/*ṣaḥīḥ*. See: *Mishkāt Al-Maṣābīh*, p122.

¹²¹ Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Qazawaynī Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, ed. Shu'īb Al-Arnu'ūt et al., 1st ed. (Damshik, Syria: Dār al-Risālah al-'Ālamiyyah, 2009). 642. Ḥadīth no. 1942. Malik Ibn Anas, *Al-Muwatta'*, ed. Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār Ihyā' Al-Turāth Al-'Arabī, 1985). 608. Ḥadīth no. 17. Abū Dawūd Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath al-Azdī Al-Sajastānī, *Sunan Abī Dawūd*, ed. Shu'īb Al-Arnu'ūt and Muḥammad Kāmil Qurrah Balalī, 1st ed. (Dār Al-Risālah Al-'Ālamiyyah, 2009). 406.

¹²² Al-Mawardī. Al-Hawi Al-Kabīr 14/421.

2.4.2 Witness in Shāfi'ī School

In Malaysia, where the Shāfi'ī school of thought is the dominant Islamic legal tradition, the principles of Shāfi'ī jurisprudence regarding witnesses are widely observed in both personal and legal matters. This includes the practice of documenting financial transactions, marriage contracts, and matters related to family law, such as breastfeeding and the establishment of milk kinship (*al-raqā'a*).

As in the broader Shāfi'ī tradition, Malaysian Islamic law derives its rulings on the necessity of witnesses from *al-Qur'ān* and al-Sunnah. Allah mentioned in *al-Qur'ān*:

﴿وَأَسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ ۖ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ مِمَّن تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى ۚ وَلَا يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا ۚ وَلَا تَسْأَمُوا أَنْ تَكْتُبُوهُ صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَبِيرًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلِهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ أَفْضَلُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَأَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوا ۗ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا ۗ وَأَشْهِدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ ۚ وَلَا يُضَارَّ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ ۚ وَإِنْ تَفَعَّلُوا فَإِنَّهُ فَسُوقٌ بِكُمْ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۗ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ۝﴾

Translation: And bring to witness two witnesses from among your men. And if there are not two men [available], then a man and two women from those whom you accept as witnesses - so that if one of them [i.e., the women] errs, then the other can remind her. And let not the witnesses refuse when they are called upon. And do not be [too] weary to write it, whether it is small or large, for its [specified] term. That is more just in the sight of Allah and stronger as evidence and more likely to prevent doubt between you, except when it is an immediate transaction which you conduct among yourselves. For [then] there is no blame upon you if you do not write it. And take witnesses when you conclude a contract. Let no scribe be harmed or any witness. For if you do so, indeed, it is [grave] disobedience in you. And fear Allah. And Allah teaches you. And Allah is Knowing of all things (Al-Baqarah 2:282).

This verse is particularly pivotal in shaping the understanding of the importance of witnesses in legal transactions. This verse is interpreted within the Shāfi'ī framework to ensure justice, prevent disputes, and maintain the integrity of legal and social contracts.¹²³

¹²³ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Al-Umm*. 88.

Shāfi‘ī stated in his book *al-Umm* that the witnesses for a transaction are two fair, mature, independent men. However, women are allowed in things that are not allowed for men other than *mahram* or husband, such as *nifās*, birth, and breastfeeding. He insisted that forever two women are a substitute for a man. This is because Allah Almighty allows their testimony in religion, He will make two women instead of one man. Therefore, Shāfi‘ī allowed the witnessing of breastfeeding with a man with two women or four women on the condition that they are fair, mature and independent.¹²⁴

However, in certain cases, Shāfi‘ī said that if there are not enough 4 female witnesses who confirm breastfeeding between a man and a woman, it is better not to marry than to marry a person who is forbidden to marry due to breastfeeding. Based on the ‘Uqbah *ḥadīth*:

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو عَاصِمٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ جُرَيْجٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ أَبِي مُلَيْكَةَ، عَنْ عُقْبَةَ بْنِ الْحَارِثِ، وَحَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ جُرَيْجٍ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ ابْنَ أَبِي مُلَيْكَةَ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي عُقْبَةُ بْنُ الْحَارِثِ، أَوْ سَمِعْتُهُ مِنْهُ أَنَّهُ تَزَوَّجَ أُمَّ يَحْيَى بِنْتَ أَبِي إِهَابٍ، قَالَ: فَجَاءَتْ أُمَّةٌ سَوْدَاءٌ، فَقَالَتْ: قَدْ أَرْضَعْتُكُمَا، فَذَكَرْتُ ذَلِكَ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَأَعْرَضَ عَنِّي، قَالَ: فَتَنَحَيْتُ، فَذَكَرْتُ ذَلِكَ لَهُ، قَالَ: « وَكَيْفَ وَقَدْ زَعَمْتَ أَنَّ قَدْ أَرْضَعْتُكُمَا » فَنَهَاهُ عَنْهَا.

Translation: Abū ‘Āshim narrated to us, on the authority of Ibn Jurayḥ, on the authority of Ibn Abī Mulaykah, on the authority of ‘Uqbah ibn al-Ḥarīth. ‘Ali ibn ‘Abdullah narrated to us, Yaḥyā ibn Sa‘id narrated to us, on the authority of Ibn Jurayḥ, who said: I heard Ibn Abī Mulaykah say: ‘Uqbah ibn al-Ḥarīth narrated to me, or I heard it from him, that he married Umm Yaḥyā bint Abī Ihāb. He said: Then came a black slave girl, she said: I suckled you both. Then he went to the Prophet, peace be upon him, but he turned his face aside. ‘Uqbah further said, "I went to the other side and told the Prophet, peace be upon him, about it he said: "How could you (continue with this marriage) when this has been said? So, the Prophet, peace be upon him, ordered him to divorce her."¹²⁵

Shāfi‘ī said that a woman’s testimony can cause separation between husband and wife. But this parting is an act of leaving him not as a formal judgment.¹²⁶

In Malaysia, the influence of Shāfi‘ī jurisprudence is evident in the enforcement of *Sharī‘ah* law through state religious authorities. Matters of marriage, divorce, and

¹²⁴ Al-Shāfi‘ī. 36-38.

¹²⁵ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī. Ḥadīth* no. 2659.

¹²⁶ Al-Shāfi‘ī, *Al-Umm*. 36-38.

familial relations are governed by state Islamic laws, which adhere closely to Shāfi‘ī principles. The requirement for witnesses in marriage, for example, is strictly observed. According to the Malaysian Islamic Family Law Enactments, marriage contracts must be witnessed by at least two male witnesses who are of sound mind and have attained the age of puberty, in line with Shāfi‘ī jurisprudence.¹²⁷

This requirement is also extended to the documentation of milk kinship. When a breastfeeding relationship is intended to establish a *mahram* (unmarriageable kinship) status between a child and the wet nurse’s biological children, proper documentation and witnesses are required to verify the relationship. This practice is crucial in ensuring that milk kinship is recognized legally, which has implications for marriage eligibility under Islamic law.¹²⁸

The issue of milk kinship is particularly significant in Malaysia, where the establishment of *Shari‘ah*-compliant milk banks has been considered. In line with Shāfi‘ī jurisprudence, Malaysian Islamic scholars advocate for a stringent approach to documenting breastfeeding that leads to milk kinship. The guidelines proposed include the requirement of witnesses at various stages of the process, from the donation and receipt of breast milk to the actual breastfeeding of the child.¹²⁹

In practical terms, this means that the process of milk donation and reception in a milk bank setting must be carefully recorded, with the presence of witnesses to ensure that the milk kinship is accurately documented. This practice is seen as a necessary precaution to prevent any future legal disputes regarding familial relationships and marriage eligibility under Islamic law.

¹²⁷ Islamic Family Law (Federal Territory) Act 1984 (Act 303), Malaysia.

¹²⁸ Salleh, Zakaria, and Mutalib, “Shariah-Compliant of Nursing Child Documentation Model Building.” Che Abdul Rahim, Hamjah, Abdul Majid, et al., “A Cross-Sectional Study on The Practice of Wet Nursing among Muslim Mothers.”

¹²⁹ Daud et al., “The Views of Fuqaha on the Permissibility and Prohibition of Milk Bank.” Salleh, Zakaria, and Mutalib, “Shariah-Compliant of Nursing Child Documentation Model Building.” Mashitah Zainol Abidin and Wan Mazwati Wan Yusoff, “A Critical Need for Breastmilk Collection Centres for High-Risk Premature Babies,” *Al-Burhān Journal of Qur’ān and Sunnah Studies* 7, no. 2 (2023): 47–59, <https://journals.iium.edu.my/al-burhan/index.php/al-burhan/article/view/310/175>.

2.4.3 Contemporary Fatwas Regarding Wet Nursing

The typical purpose of fatwas issued in wet nursing is to give instructions for the conditions surrounding the practice of wet nursing and what is permissible. Here are some common issues addressed in Islamic fatwas regarding wet nursing:

a. Permissibility of Wet Nursing

Fatwas may be issued to determine the permissibility of wet nursing in specific situations, such as when the biological mother is unable to nurse the child or when an emergency happens.¹³⁰

- The 97th Fatwa Committee of the National Council for Malaysian Islamic Religious Affairs, which held its meeting from 15th to 17th December 2011, deliberated on the Law of Establishing Milk Banks and decided as a result of the following discussion: “The Muzakarah also decided that to meet the needs of premature babies who require treatment, as well as **mothers who have a shortage of milk or have chronic/contagious diseases and are unable to nurse**, mothers needed to donate their breast milk voluntarily to **babies in need** and for the donor and baby’s family to know each other.¹³¹

b. Limitations of Wet Nursing

Fatwas may also address limitations on the duration of wet nursing, such as the maximum number of feedings allowed and the maximum age at which a child may be nursed.

- *Majma’ Fiqh Islamiy* rules that one of the children’s rights in Islam is securing the child’s right to be breastfed for **two full years**. This means that it is the

¹³⁰ S Datuk Dr. Zulkifli Mohamad al-Bakri, Mufti Office of Federal Territory, Wilayah Persekutuan, Malaysia. <https://muftiwp.gov.my/artikel/bayan-linnas/1138-bayan-linnas-siri-70-isu-berkenaan-ibu-susuan-pelbagai-hukum-kad-atau-sijil-susuan> (Accessed on 12/2/2023). Fatwa Committee, Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS). (2017) <https://www.muis.gov.sg/officeofthemufti/Fatwa/Milk-Bank---English> (Accessed on 12/2/2023).

¹³¹ Jabatan Kemajuan Islam. "Kompilasi Pandangan Hukum Muzakarah Jawatankuasa Fatwa Majlis Kebangsaan Bagi Hal Ehwal Ugama Islam Malaysia." Cet. Ke-5. Putrajaya: JAKIM (2015). 124.

parents' or guardian's obligation to fulfil the child's right to get breast milk even if the milk is from a wet nurse until the age of two years.

- The 97th Fatwa Committee of the Federal Territories for Malaysian Islamic Religious Affairs, which held its meeting from 15th to 17th December 2011, deliberated on The Law of Women Breastfeeding Adopted Children, decided the following: "After examining the evidence, arguments, and views presented, the Muzakarah emphasized that Islam encourages every mother who gives birth to breastfeed their babies with breast milk **until they reach the age of two** if they can do so. However, Islam also allows women who did not give birth but adopted a child, to breastfeed the child with the help of medical treatment.¹³²

c. Relationships Created by Wet Nursing

Fatwas may also address the relationships created by wet nursing, such as the prohibition on marrying the child or the biological children of the wet nurse, as well as the social and legal obligations that arise from this relationship.

- The Irsyad Fatwa Series 667th Mufti of Federal Territory's Office, deliberated on The Ruling on Marriage Between Consanguineous Siblings and The Status of Children: "Couples who are married and have children, but it has just been discovered that they are milk siblings, then their marriage must be referred to the court for dissolution of marriage. While the children resulting from the relationship can be bred (descended) to their father."¹³³ This shows that marriage between milk sibling is prohibited; and the marriage must be nullified immediately. However, based on the experts' consensus, the genealogy of the children born of the marriage may be traced back to their father.

¹³² Al-Hafiz Bin Ishak, Mufti of Federal Territory's Office. "The Ruling on Marriage Between Consanguineous Siblings and The Status of Children." 2022. <https://muftiwp.gov.my/en/artikel/irsyad-fatwa/irsyad-fatwa-umum-cat/5124-irsyad-fatwa-siri-ke-667-hukum-perkahwinan-saudara-susuan-dan-status-anak> (Accessed on 14/2/2022).

¹³³ Jabatan Kemajuan Islam. "Kompilasi Pandangan Hukum Muzakarah Jawatankuasa Fatwa Majlis Kebangsaan Bagi Hal Ehwal Ugama Islam Malaysia." Cet. Ke-5. Putrajaya: JAKIM (2015). 233

d. Obligation to Spend on a Wet Nurse

Fatwas may also discuss whether there is an obligation to financially support a breastfeeding mother.

- Fatwas may also discuss whether there is an obligation to financially support a breastfeeding mother. The 30th Fatwa of the *Dār`irah al-Iftā` al-`Ām*, provided by His Eminence Dr. Nūḥ `Alī Salmān, states that while an infant is not required to provide for the mother who breastfed him, it is encouraged as an act of reciprocating kindness. The *Sharī`ah* does not make breastfeeding a reason for obligatory spending or inheritance, as doing so might discourage women from breastfeeding, which could be detrimental to the child. The effect of breastfeeding is limited to prohibiting marriage and related matters, such as seclusion.¹³⁴

e. Use of hormones for wet nursing

- From October 13 to 15, 2011, the 96th Muzakarah (Conference) of the Fatwa Committee of the National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs Malaysia discussed the decision to allow women to breastfeed adopted children. They concluded that a woman doesn't need to be pregnant or married to breastfeed. This view is based on the majority of Islamic scholars from the Ḥanafī, Shāfi`ī, and Ḥanbalī traditions. The committee agreed it's allowed for women who've reached puberty (whether married or not) to use hormone treatments or medicine to stimulate milk production, as long as the substances are safe and clean (i.e., not harmful or impure). However, this ruling does not extend to people who were born male and later transitioned to female.¹³⁵

It is important to note that fatwas in Malaysia are different from state to state depending on the Religious Council of the state. Therefore, not all fatwas are binding

¹³⁴ Dr. Nūḥ `Alī Salmān, "30th Fatwā: Is It Obligatory to Spend on A Breastfeeding Mother?" (*Dār`irah al-Iftā` al-`Ām*, Jordan, 2012), <https://www.aliftaa.jo/encyclopedia/2424/-div-alignjustify-هل-الإنسان-مطالب-شرعاً-بالإنفاق-على-الأم>. Accessed on 10/09/2024.

¹³⁵ Jabatan Kemajuan Islam, *Kompilasi Pandangan Hukum Muzakarah Jawatankuasa Fatwa Majlis Kebangsaan Bagi Hal Ehwal Ugama Islam Malaysia*, 5th ed. (Putrajaya: JAKIM, 2015). 233-235.

legal rulings and may vary based on the interpretation of the individual scholar or mufti. Even though some fatwas are considered as *Sharī'ah* laws, but some of the laws are not enforced. In some cases, fatwas may also be subject to revision or revision based on new information or changing circumstances.

2.4.4 Significance of Wet Nursing Documentation

Since wet nursing has a direct influence on *mahram* connections, lineage (*nasab*), and the fulfilment of social and religious responsibilities, the documentation is a must and heavily valued for the systematic filing data especially in Islamic societies. Islamic law explained that wet nursing creates a *mahram* bond that prevents certain people from ever getting married. It is essential to accurately record these ties in order to avoid unintentional marriage between people who are related by milk kinship. The likelihood of breaking these relation ties rises in the absence of accurate records, which might have ethical and legal ramifications. Salleh (2015) stated that may be fixed with the right paperwork, policies, and government oversight.¹³⁶ Some research, Mohamad Safir et al., (2019a)¹³⁷ and Mohamad Safir et al., (2020a)¹³⁸ exposed the truth about the inadequate records of nursing and sharing of breast milk that are taking place in society. Several writers claimed that wet nursing certification and the establishment of e-infant breastfeeding may effectively handle this issue. According to Mohamad Safir et al., (2020b), documentation management education must be put into place.¹³⁹ Research by Mohamad Safir et al., (2019b) showed that effective lineage (*nasab*) identification requires a solid database.¹⁴⁰ The good compiling and systematic data in the database can show that Islam cares about genealogy not just by name.

¹³⁶ Siti Fatimah Salleh, Normadiyah Daud, and Saadan Man, “Amalan Pengambilan Ibu Susuan: Satu Kajian Sorotan Terhadap Dokumentasi Bukti Penyusuan,” *Journal of Fatwa Management and Research*, no. 4 (2015): 113–34.

¹³⁷ Mohamad Safir et al., “Intervensi Pengurusan Dokumentasi Anak Susuan Ke Arah Mewujudkan Masyarakat Sejahtera.”

¹³⁸ Mohamad Safir, Salleh, and Mohamad Safir, “Keperluan Dokumentasi Penyusuan Anak Susuan Dalam Kalangan Masyarakat Di Malaysia.”

¹³⁹ Mohamad Safir, Mohamad Safir, and Salleh, “Pengendalian Dokumentasi Anak Susuan Dalam Kalangan Ibu Susuan.”

¹⁴⁰ Mohamad Safir, Mohamad Safir, and Salleh, “Realiti Penyusuan Anak Susuan Pada Zaman Silam Dan Kontemporari: Kajian Tinjauan [The Reality of Wet-Nursing in the Past and Contemporary: A Review Study].”

Wet nursing paperwork is also necessary to guarantee the correct identification of ancestry, which is a crucial component of Islamic society that influences marriage, inheritance, and social standing. Additional familial links that are formed via breastfeeding must be properly acknowledged and documented. The authenticity of genealogy is maintained by proper documentation, which also helps to avoid conflicts and guarantees that all connections are recognized in compliance with Islamic law. In this regard, Mohammed Safir et al., (2020a)¹⁴¹ also proposed that other states might model themselves after the implementation of MyRadhaah by the Selangor Islamic Religious Council.

Wet nursing documentation also involves social and legal responsibilities. Keeping official documentation offers proof that can be used in court cases, such as inheritance cases or marriage proposals, where the bonds formed because of nursing could require confirmation. Making sure that all pertinent relations are legally acknowledged is crucial, and this responsibility is particularly crucial in communities where oral traditions alone may not be sufficient in legal situations. Salleh et al., (2015) mentioned that with the “*sadd al-zarā’i*” technique, an article also included information for effective documentation, such as the National Registry Office’s or other connected institution’s engagement.¹⁴² Daud et al., (2020a) studies suggested that the State Islamic Religious Council’s and the Ministry of Health Malaysia’s certifications can serve as points of reference for those donating and receiving milk.¹⁴³

Wet nursing documentation has become increasingly important in modern settings, as highlighted by health and safety reasons. Important data, like screening results, medical histories, and consent forms, can be included in proper records to safeguard both the wet nurse and the nursing children. An example of how this health screening may be done through sharing breastmilk is by Adan Hospital, Kuwait, one of the hospitals in an Islamic nation, which shares breastmilk. They screen for HIV I and II, Hepatitis B and C, HTLV I, CMV, and syphilis.¹⁴⁴ By preventing the spread of illness

¹⁴¹ Mohamad Safir, Salleh, and Mohamad Safir, “Keperluan Dokumentasi Penyusuan Anak Susuan Dalam Kalangan Masyarakat Di Malaysia.”

¹⁴² Salleh, Daud, and Man, “Amalan Pengambilan Ibu Susuan: Satu Kajian Sorotan Terhadap Dokumentasi Bukti Penyusuan.”

¹⁴³ Mohamad Safir, Salleh, and Mohamad Safir, “Keperluan Dokumentasi Penyusuan Anak Susuan Dalam Kalangan Masyarakat Di Malaysia.”

¹⁴⁴ Al-Naqeeb et al., “The Introduction of Breast Milk Donation in a Muslim Country.”

and guaranteeing that the wet nurse can offer enough nourishment, this paperwork addresses health issues related to the wet nursing arrangement.

The importance of the documentation process is further highlighted by the participation of governmental and religious organizations. Wet nurses and nursing families can benefit from the reliable record-keeping and direction that centralized databases and certificates can give. One example of such a system is the Selangor Islamic Religious Council's using MyRadhaah database and card.¹⁴⁵ This provides a disciplined strategy to monitoring these interactions by ensuring that wet nursing practices comply with both national and Islamic law.

Additionally, by describing connections explicitly and averting misconceptions throughout communities, thorough documentation of wet nursing promotes social solidarity. With the use of technology and organized documentation, it assists in the preservation of cultural activities that have their roots in Islamic traditions while also modifying them to meet modern requirements. Mohamad Safir (2020) et.al, supported that with the light of long-distance adoption and scientific and technological advancement, the administration of breastfeeding documentation is becoming increasingly important.¹⁴⁶ Documentation has an instructional function in bringing wet nursing's consequences to light and promoting appropriate behaviors that conform to social and religious norms.

To summarize, the wet nursing documentation is important stems from its potential to preserve Islamic law, safeguard social and family ties, guarantee health and safety, as well as offer a structured database for religious and governmental supervision. It is essential to preserve the integrity of wet nursing practices in line with the Islamic foundation, law, contemporary culture, acting as a pillar for social and cultural peace as the administrative needed.

¹⁴⁵ Mohd Tamyas and Mat Hussin, "Pelaksanaan Kad Radha'ah Sebagai Alternatif Penjagaan Nasab Keturunan Dan Anak Susuan Oleh Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor [Implementation of Radha'ah's Card as Alternative Care of Nasab and Babies with Breastfeeding by Selangor Islamic Religious Department]."

¹⁴⁶ Mohamad Safir, Salleh, and Mohamad Safir, "Keperluan Dokumentasi Penyusuan Anak Susuan Dalam Kalangan Masyarakat Di Malaysia."

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter explored the complex field of wet nursing and the various ways that Islamic jurisprudence views it. Wet nursing is a highly esteemed practice in Islamic tradition, with roots in both historical and modern contexts. In addition to giving babies the vital nutrition they need when their biological mothers are unable to nurse, it also strengthens familial ties and a feeling of community.

Through the exploration of various factors influencing the recruitment of wet nurses, we have uncovered how economic needs, cultural traditions, and health concerns intertwine to shape this practice. From economic constraints and personal connections to the influence of customs and myths, each element contributes to the enduring significance of wet nursing across different societies.

In examining the implications of wet nursing, the researcher sees its profound impact on Islamic family law and social structure. The concept of milk kinship (*raḍāʿa*) is more than just a matter of physical nourishment; it establishes significant legal and social relationships. Wet nurses are accorded a special status in Islam, with their role extending beyond mere caretaking to include the prevention of consanguineous marriages and the earning of spiritual rewards.

The conditions required to establish milk kinship such as identity of the wet nurse, methods of feeding, and the age of the child; reflect a meticulous approach to ensuring that this practice adheres to Islamic principles. The varied scholarly opinions on the amount of feeding required highlight the richness of Islamic jurisprudential debate and the care with which scholars have approached these issues.

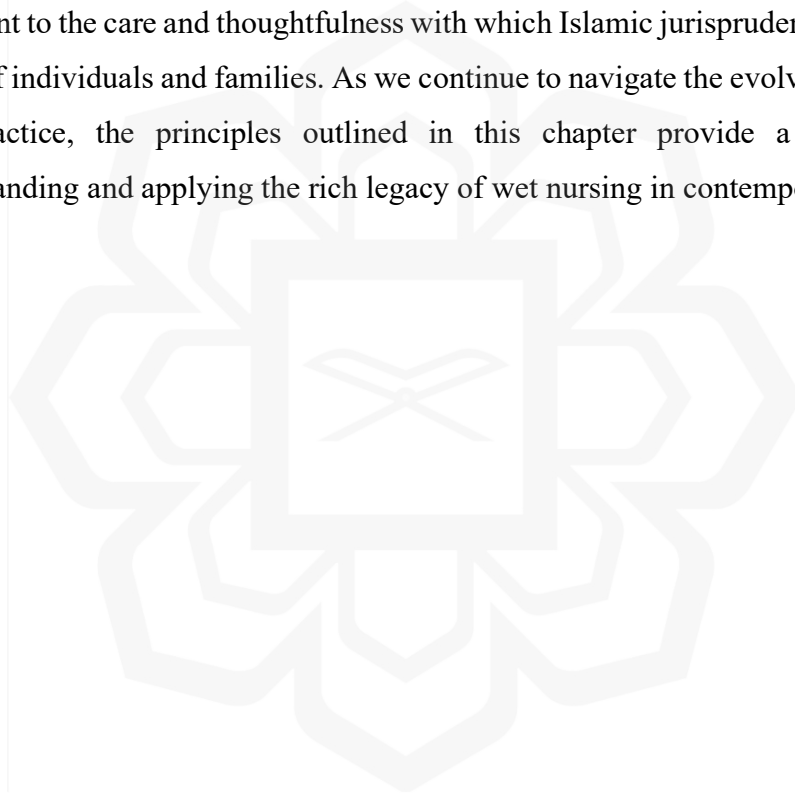
Furthermore, the role of witnesses in the Shāfiʿī school of thought, particularly in Malaysia, underscores the importance of documentation and verification in maintaining the integrity of legal and familial relationships. There must be at least two men as witness or one man with two women or four women. The principles guiding witnesses, derived from *al-Qurʿān* and al-Sunnah, ensure that transactions and relationships are conducted fairly and transparently.

Fatwas play a pivotal role in clarifying and guiding the practice of wet nursing, addressing issues of permissibility, limitations, and the relationships it creates. While fatwas provide valuable guidance, their application can vary based on local

interpretations and circumstances, reflecting the dynamic nature of Islamic legal practice.

Wet nursing documentation plays an important role in tracking and tracing milk kinship in addition to preserving the lineage. The need for documentation should be emphasized by all those involved in wet nursing practices. Furthermore, with a good database, there is no longer a problem of incest marriages among milk kinship and facilitates civilization progress as society becomes more structured in documentation.

In conclusion, the practice of wet nursing, deeply embedded in Islamic tradition, reveals a complex interplay of religious, social, and legal dimensions. It serves as a testament to the care and thoughtfulness with which Islamic jurisprudence addresses the needs of individuals and families. As we continue to navigate the evolving landscape of this practice, the principles outlined in this chapter provide a foundation for understanding and applying the rich legacy of wet nursing in contemporary contexts.



CHAPTER THREE

WET NURSING KINSHIP

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The significance of wet nursing kinship in Islamic social and familial structures is deeply rooted in religious texts and the traditions of Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him. This chapter provides insights and guidance from *al- Qur'ān* and al-Sunnah on the proper interactions between milk kinship *maḥram* relatives. It is dedicated to uncovering the complex aspects of wet nursing kinship, beginning with a detailed examination of its definition and its importance within Islamic tradition and jurisprudence. Examining the Qur'anic viewpoint on wet nursing relatives will be the main topic, especially stressing on verses that clarify the responsibilities related with this practice.

To comprehend how the Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him dealt with familial bonds formed via nursing, this research investigated *aḥādīth* literature. These results offer pertinent, relevant useful models and precedents for modern reference and practical guidance. The discussion also includes a study of the Prophet's wet nurses, stressing their major responsibilities and continuous impact on his life from birth to his demise.

Finally, this chapter discussed the researcher's analysis on the meaning ingrained in the wet nursing familial practice. The benefits and strong social, ethical, and emotional bonds fostered by wet nursing among the Muslim community were highlighted in this last part of the chapter. By means of analyzing these components, the chapter aims to provide a thorough understanding of wet nursing kinship and its spiritual roots from the Islamic perspective and its current relevance in modern Muslim countries.

3.2 WET NURSING KINSHIP

Milk kinship, also known as wet nursing kinship, holds a significant position in the hierarchy of kinship, following right after the *mahram* relationship (which includes parents, grandparents, and siblings) and non-*mahram* relationships (such as cousins).¹⁴⁷

Wet nursing implies the establishment of the brotherhood of breastfeeding; and all Islamic scholars agree with the establishment of the *mahram* relationship due to breastfeeding. They only disagree with non-essential minute details of wet nursing principles. According to the opinion of al-Shāfi‘ī, it is known that if a child is breastfed by a woman for five breastfeedings within a period of two years, then the child becomes a blood relative of the breastfeeding family because they are categorized as breastfed sons and daughters of the breastfeeding mother. If a child is breastfed by a wet nurse, then it is forbidden for him to marry the offspring of the wet nurse, because they are considered as milk siblings. Likewise, the wet nurse, it is forbidden for her to marry her breastfed son. This was agreed upon in the *ḥadīth*, “What is forbidden from breastfeeding is what is forbidden from lineage.”¹⁴⁸

Al-Shāfi‘ī also said in his book that Allah prohibits marrying milk mothers and milk siblings including the extended family relatives. This prohibition conveys two meanings, one of which is that when Allah mentions the prohibition of marrying milk mothers and her extended family relatives, He places them in the position same with the position of biological mothers. The other is that when Allah mentions that a man is prohibited to marry his own milk mothers and sisters, He places them in the prohibition of biological mothers.¹⁴⁹ This shows that the prohibition of marrying the milk mother, and the milk sisters positioned their relationships the same as the relationship due to genealogy.

But does the husband of the wet nurse become the father of the baby? This is a matter on which the *fuqahā’*, classical and contemporary, and most scholars, from

¹⁴⁷ ‘Abd Al-Rahman Hazāzī, Ṣāliḥ Fāḍil. “مقاصد الشريعة في صلة الأرحام والواقع المعاصر دراسة شرعية تحليلية”, MA thesis, (IIUM, 2011). 42-47

¹⁴⁸ Muslim Bin Al-Ḥajjāj Abū Al-Ḥasan Al-Qushairī Al-Naisābūrī. *Al-Musnad Al-Mukhtaṣar Binaqli Al-‘Adl ilā Rasūl` (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim)*. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ Al-Turāth Al-‘Arabī. Muḥammad Fu’ād ‘Abd Al-Bāqī (ed.). 2nd. Vol. 1431H. 1070. Ḥadīth no. 1445 (9). See also ḥadīth no. 1441 (1), 1444 (2), 1445 (3), 1445 (4), 1445 (6), 1445 (7), 1445 (8), and 1445 (10) in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, which brings a similar theme.

¹⁴⁹ Sūrah Al-Nisā’, 4:23.

among the companions, *tābi 'īn*, and imams of the four madhhabs, differ in opinion, but the majority view that breastfeeding makes the wet nurse's husband the father of the baby, because he is the one who allowed his wife's milk to be given. Therefore, all the children of this husband are siblings, the same as the baby who is breastfed by his wet nursed wife, including the children of the wet nurse's husband from other wives who did not breastfeed him. Their evidence in that regard is informed by a *ḥadīth* narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim: “‘Ā'ishah, Allah be pleased with her, reported that her foster-uncle whose name was Aflah sought permission from her (to enter the house) but she observed her veil from him, and informed Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him, who said to her: “Do not observe veil from him for he is a *maḥram* (one with whom marriage cannot be contracted) on account of breastfeeding as one is *maḥram* on account of lineage”.¹⁵⁰ Another argument used is a narration reported in *Muwatta'* by Imam Mālik. He reported that “Yahya related to me (Imam Mālik ibn Anas) from Malik from Ibn Shihab from Amr ibn ash-Sharid that Abdullah ibn Abbas was asked whether, if a man had two wives, and one of them nursed a slave-boy, and the other had nursed a slave-girl, could the slave-boy marry the slave-girl. He said, “No. The husband is the same.”¹⁵¹

If there is full breastfeeding, a *maḥram* relationship is established as shown in the diagram below. When a baby is breastfed, a *maḥram* relationship is formed with the wet nurse's extended family (if the child is breastfed by many wet nurses), then all wet nurses' extended family. For both male and female breastfed children, they are *maḥram* to the wet nurse and her husband, the siblings of the wet nurse and the siblings of her husband, the offspring of the wet nurse and the offspring of her husband from his other wives, the offspring of the milk siblings, the parents and grandparents (and upward lineage) of the wet nurse and her husband, and the uncles and aunts of the wet nurse and the uncles and aunts of her husband. Figure 3.1 illustrates the *maḥram* relationship between a child and the wet nurse's extended family members. In Islam, maintaining family relationship is a religious obligation. Since milk kinship is a *maḥram* relationship

¹⁵⁰ Muslim Bin Al-Hajjāj Abū Al-Ḥasan Al-Qushairī Al-Naisābūrī. *Al-Musnad Al-Mukhtaṣar Binaqli Al-'Adl ilā Rasūl* ` (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim). Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' Al-Turāth Al-'Arabī. Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd Al-Bāqī (ed.). 2nd. Vol. 1431H. 1070. Ḥadīth no. 1445 (9). See also ḥadīth no. 1441 (1), 1444 (2), 1445 (3), 1445 (4), 1445 (6), 1445 (7), 1445 (8), and 1445 (10) in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, which brings a similar theme.

¹⁵¹ Malik bin Anas. *Al-Muwatta' of Imam Malik ibn Anas: The first formulation of Islamic law*. Book 30, *ḥadīth* no. 5. 244.

the same as blood relationship, therefore, maintaining the relationship is considered as religious obligation.



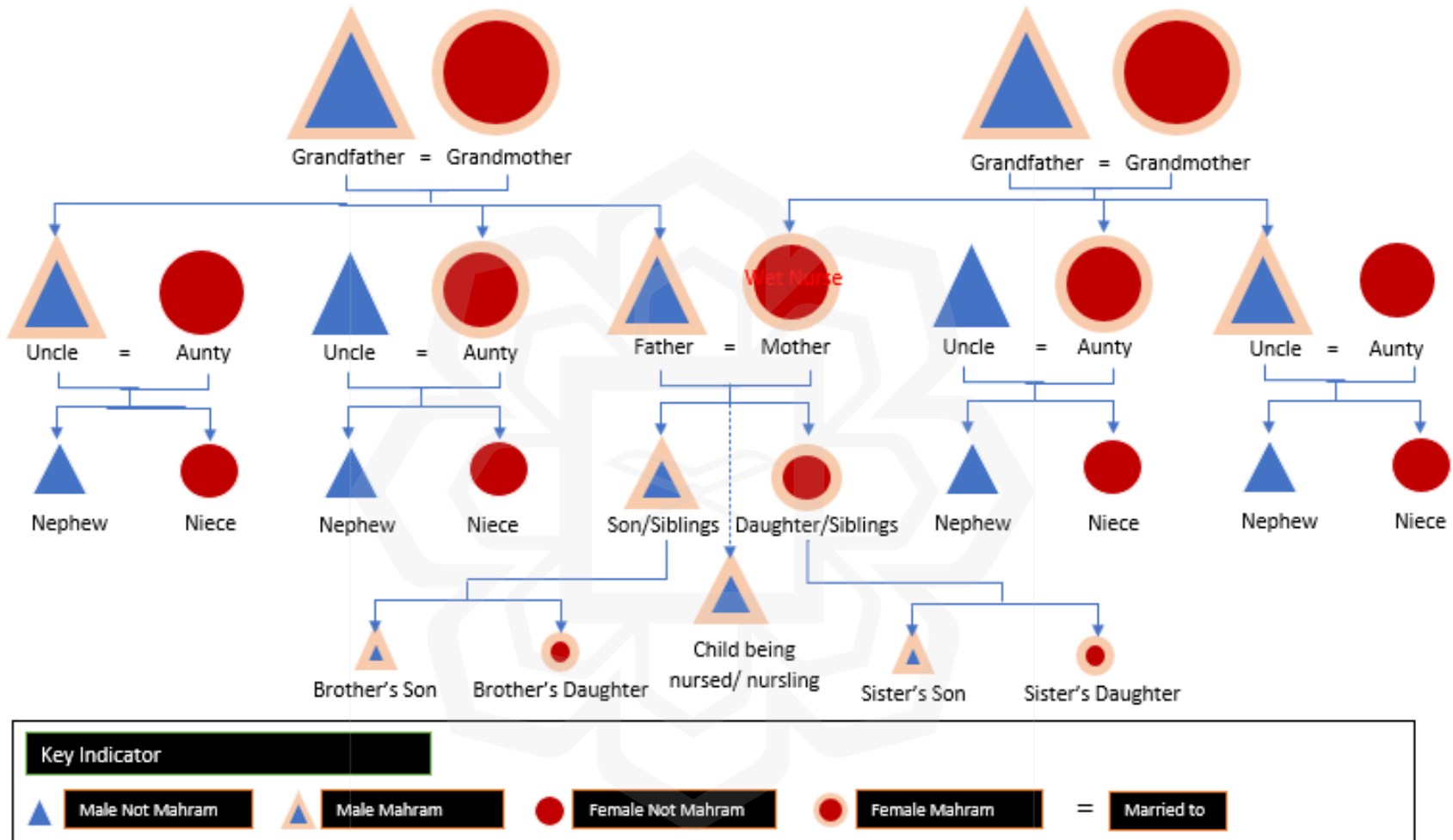


Figure 3.1 Milk Kinship Establishment

3.3 MAINTAINING WET NURSING KINSHIP

In Islamic tradition, wet nursing kinship holds significant importance due to its impact on social and familial relationships. Maintaining milk kinship is the hardest because of the misunderstanding of who are involved in the milk kinship as well as the difficulty in prioritizing the most important rank of kinship (*ṣilah ar-rahim*). It is difficult to maintain all kinship (*ṣilah ar-rahim*) relationship all the time, but we can emulate the attitude and actions of Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him as conveyed through the *aḥādīth* discussed in the previous chapter and the books of Islamic history (*sīrah*). It should be noted, however, that it is necessary and compulsory to trace the lines of relationship due to breastfeeding as the Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, has clearly stated and declared his breastfeeding brothers and sisters among his companions.

It can be said that extended families resulting from breastfeeding require careful maintenance from the point of records and documentation because it is very difficult to verify *maḥram* relationship, let alone today where most breastfeeding mothers only share milk without any records and proper documentation. This may pose a future problem of accidental and unintentional marriage between milk brothers and milk sisters; we seek refuge in Allah (*na' ūzubillāh*).

3.3.1 The Terminologies of Milk Kinship

Milk kinship is a cultural concept present in diverse societies, denoting the interpersonal and familial connections established through breastfeeding rather than genetic ties. Different terms exist for wet nurses within the Muslim community worldwide, including in Arabic nations, Asian regions, the Western world, and other places. Within Islam, priority is given to the Arabic language as the primary language of consideration.

The word “*raḍā'ah*” (رَضَاعَةٌ) is derived from the Arabic verb “*raḍa'a*” (رَضِعَ), which conjugates as “*yaḍi'u*” (يَرْضَعُ), “*riḍā'atan*” (رِضَاعَةٌ), “*raḍ'an*” (رَضُعًا), “*raḍā'an*” (رَضَاعًا), or “*riḍā'an*” (رِضَاعًا). The verb “*raḍa'a*” means “to breastfeed.” The person who breastfeeds is called “*murḍi*” (مُرْضِعٌ) or “*murḍi'ah*” (مَرْضِعَةٌ) with additional alphabet ‘mim’ before the word. The one being breastfed is referred to as “*marḍū*”

(مَرْضُوع).²¹⁹ For example, the phrase “*raḍa‘a al-ṭiflu ummuhu*” (رَضَعَ الطِّفْلُ أُمَّهُ) means “the child suckled his mother” in the past tense. In the present tense, “*yarḍa‘u al-ṭiflu ummuhu*” (يَرْضَعُ الطِّفْلُ أُمَّهُ) means “the child is suckling his mother” or “the child is breastfeeding.” The phrase “*Akhi fī al-raḍā‘ah*” (أَخِي فِي الرِّضَاعَةِ) means “my brother through breastfeeding” or “my milk-brother.”²²⁰ While, for “*al-ikhwah fī al- raḍā‘*” (الإخوة فِي الرِّضَاعِ) refers to the milk siblings.

In Arabic, a wet nurse is called “*murḍi‘*” (مُرْضِع) or “*murḍi‘ah*” (مَرْضِعَةٌ) or “*ẓi‘run*” (ظَنْر). When referring to the Prophet Muḥammad’s wet nurse, she is called “*murḍi‘at al-Nabī*” (مَرْضِعَةُ النَّبِيِّ) or “*Ummu Rasūlullah*” (أُمُّ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ) or “*ẓi‘run al-Nabī*”, where “*murḍi‘at al-Nabī*” specifically means “the Prophet’s wet nurse,” and “*Ummu Rasūlullah*” means “the mother of the Messenger of Allah.”²²¹

In Malaysia, wet nurse has been used for ‘ibu susu’. Ibu means mother and susu means milk. The combination of the two words is *ibu susu* or *ibu susuan* which means wet nurse. In Malaysian culture, milk mother is commonly practiced among ordinary people. It is rare that we hear the sultan’s son or the king’s son being breastfed by a court maid. Wet nurses are often called *ibu, emak, mama* or *ummi*.²²²

In English, wet nurse sometimes called nurse maid,²²³ nursing mother,²²⁴ hired breast feeder,²²⁵ or mercenary nurse.²²⁶ In Rome, wet nurse is referred to as *nutrix*.²²⁷ While, the wet nurse’s nursing child is often called ‘nursing-child’. Dry nursing is the exact opposite of wet nursing, which refers to the practice of feeding babies with foods

²¹⁹ Al-Din Muḥammad ibn Mukrim ibn ‘Alī Abū al-Faḍl Jamāl Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-‘Arab*, 3rd ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār Ṣādir, 1994).

²²⁰ Ibn Manẓūr. 127.

²²¹ Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Suwailim Abū Shuhbah, *Al-Sīrah Al-Nabawīyyah ‘ala Ḍū’ Al-Qur‘ān Wa Al-Sunnah*, 8th ed. (Damshik, Syria: Dār al-Qalam, 2011). 192. Al-Ṭabarī Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr, *Tafsīr Al-Ṭabarī Jāmi‘ Al-Bayān*, ed. ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abd Al-Muḥsin Al-Turkī, 1st ed. (Dār Hajir, 2001). 181 and 389. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-‘Arab*. Vol. 4. 142. Ibn Sa‘d, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, 1990. Vol. 1. 92.

²²² Ummi derived from an Arabic word means my mother with additional alphabet ‘ya’ in the end.

²²³ Albert Sydney Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*, ed. Margaret Deuter Albert Sydney Hornby (Oxford University Press, 2015). 1045.

²²⁴ Hornby.

²²⁵ Valerie A. Fildes, “The English Wet-Nurse and Her Role in Infant Care 1538–1800,” *Medical History* 32, no. 2 (1988): 142–73, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0025727300047979>.

²²⁶ Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses: Medieval Islamic Views on Breastfeeding and Their Social Implications*.

²²⁷ Bradley, “Wet-Nursing at Rome: A Study in Social Relations.”

like flour, bread, or cereals that have been cooked into soup. Aristocrats and certain gentry first popularized the phrase “dry nursing,”²²⁸ which refers to a semi-liquid concoction, in the last several decades of the seventeenth century to mid eighteenth century.²²⁹ While, the word Daye, Taye, or milk-grandma²³⁰ were words used for the wet nurse who was the concubine who breastfed the Sultan’s children in old Turkish tradition.

3.3.2 The Position of Wet Nursing Kinship in *al-Qur’ān*

The position of a wet nurse is the same as the birth mother. Several verses of *al-Qur’ān* mention the position of a wet nurse and the formed wet nursing kinship. In surah *al-Baqarah* verse 233, Allah says that a wet nurse is a substitute mother who provided her service with a payment, and it is the obligation of the father to pay the wet nurse.

﴿ وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُنِيَمَ الرِّضَاعَةَ ۗ وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ لَا تُكَلَّفُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۗ لَا تُضَارَّ وَالِدَةٌ بِوَالِدِهَا وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ لَهُ بِوَالِدِهِ ۗ وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ ۗ فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِّنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا ۗ وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ تَسْرِضِعُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ مِمَّا أُتِيْتُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ ﴾

Translation: Mothers may nurse [i.e., breastfeed] their children for two complete years for whoever wishes to complete the nursing [period]. Upon the father is their [i.e., the mothers’] provision and their clothing according to what is acceptable. No person is charged with more than his capacity. No mother should be harmed through her child, and no father through his child. And upon the [father’s] heir is [a duty] like that [of the father]. And if they both desire weaning through mutual consent from both of them and consultation, there is no blame upon either of them. And if you wish to have your children nursed by a substitute, there is no blame upon you as long as you give payment according to what is acceptable.²³¹

²²⁸ Baumslag and Michels, *Milk, Money, and Madness: The Culture and Politics of Breastfeeding*. 50.

²²⁹ Fildes, “The Culture and Biology of Breastfeeding: An Historical Review of Western Europe.”

²³⁰ Eren Akcicek, *Wet-Nursing in Turkish*, ed. Anne sütün ve sütannelik [Breast milk and Wet-nursing] (Izmir, Turkey: Dilan Matbaası [Dilan Printing Office], 2011). 109-115.

²³¹ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:233.

According to *Ibn Sahl*, the word ‘substitute’ in the verse describes a wet nurse who supplies milk or nursing a child when her mother is not able to do so herself. Emphasizing that no individual should be burdened above their capacity as demonstrated by the verse, “no person is charged with more than his capacity,” the verse notes the place of the wet nurse as a substitute for the mother.²³² Moreover, the verse emphasizes the importance of mutual consent and consultation between the parents in deciding for weaning as it claims that neither the mother nor the father should experience damage via their child. The payment for the wet nurse is the responsibility of the father or his heirs, as it is part of the father’s duty to provide *nafaqah* (financial support) for his child.²³³ Making sure the infant gets milk from the mother or from a wet nurse is a fundamental component of *nafaqah*. If the father had made it as an agreement, it will debt until the wet nurse receive her payment. If the father failed to do so, the payment must be made by the father’s lineage that includes his child when he or she grow up, to pay the father’s the debt to the wet nurse. Those who fear Allah know that debt is the obligation that they must pay.

The position of a wet nurse as equal to birth mother is further strengthened by the Qur’anic verse 23 from *Sūrah al-Nisā’*. It says that a man is prohibited to marry his wet nurse and his milk siblings.

﴿ حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ وَعَمَّاتُكُمْ وَخَالَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُ الْأَخِ وَبَنَاتُ الْأُخْتِ وَأُمَّهَاتُكُمُ اللَّاتِي أَرْضَعْنَكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُم مِّنَ الرَّضْعَةِ وَأُمَّهُت نِسَائِكُمْ وَرَبِّبَاتُكُمُ اللَّاتِي فِي حُجُورِكُمْ مِّن نِّسَائِكُمُ اللَّاتِي دَخَلْتُم بِهِنَّ فَإِن لَّمْ يَكُونُوا دَخَلْتُم بِهِنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَخَالَاتُ أَبْنَائِكُمُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ أَصْلَابِكُمْ وَأَن تَجْمَعُوا بَيْنَ الْأُخْتَيْنِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ ۗ ﴾

Translation: Prohibited to you [for marriage] are your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your father’s sisters, your mother’s sisters, your brother’s daughters, your sister’s daughters, your [milk] mothers who nursed you, your sisters through nursing, your wives’ mothers, and your step-daughters under your guardianship [born] of your wives unto whom you have gone in. But if you have not gone in unto them, there is no sin upon you. And [also prohibited are] the wives of your sons who are from

²³² Ibrāhīm ibn al-Sirri Ibn Sahl, *Ma’ānī Al-Qur’ān Wai’rābihi*, ed. ‘Abd al-Jalīl ‘Abduhu Shalbī, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: ‘Ālim al-Kutub, 1988). Vol. 1. 312.

²³³ Ibn Sahl. Vol. 1. 313.

your [own] loins, and that you take [in marriage] two sisters simultaneously, except for what has already occurred.²³⁴

In this verse, the prohibition of marrying milk mother is including the milk mother's extended family. All her children are known as milk siblings; and the milk kinship relationship is eternal; the familial bond cannot be broken. It means the wet nurses and her whole families including extended families are bonded by milk kinship. The prohibition of marriage with those connected by nursing including the wet nurse's biological offspring (who are regarded as siblings to the nursling), emphasizes the position of the wet nurse in this verse. The nursling and the extended family of the wet nurse including her parents, siblings, and grandparents, develop a bond of *maḥram* (non-marriageable kin) which was discussed in earlier chapter.

Al-Ṭabarī explained that the verse implies the prohibition of marrying one's mothers and other specified relatives, even though Allah did not explicitly mention "marriage" in the verse. The context of the prohibitions makes this clear. All individuals listed by Allah as forbidden for marriage in this verse are universally agreed upon, with no dispute regarding this prohibition. This includes siblings who are nursed together and the mothers of one's wives.²³⁵

Ṭanṭawī said that the wet nurse is every woman who breastfed you, as well as every woman who is related to that wet nurse by motherhood, whether through lineage or through fosterage, wet nursing. Same goes to foster siblings is one who you and he or she met on the same breast. So, it was an honor to this wet nurse that she be treated like a real mother, and that everyone who met at the breast of one woman be treated like brothers in terms of honor and the prohibition of marriage between them.²³⁶ This means all relation related to the wet nurse establishes a milk kinship which forbids marriage and treating wet nurses like real mothers.

Another verse mentioned about the obligation of the father to find a wet nurse for his child which implies the position of a wet nurse in a family.

²³⁴ Sūrah al-Nisā', 4:23.

²³⁵ Abū Ja'far Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr, *Tafsīr Al-Ṭabarī Jāmi' Al-Bayān*. Vol. 8. 143.

²³⁶ Muḥammad Sayyid Ṭanṭawī, *Al-Tafsīr Al-Wasīṭ Lil-Qur'ān Al-Karīm*, 1st ed. (Al-Qāhirah, Egypt: Dār Nahḍah Miṣr lil-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashar wa al-Tauzī', al-Fajālah, 1998). Vol. 3. 103.

﴿ أَسْكِنُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ سَكَنْتُمْ مِنْ وُجْدِكُمْ وَلَا تُضَارَّهُنَّ لِتُضَيِّقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ ۚ وَإِنْ كُنَّ أُولَاتٍ حَمِلًا فَأَنْفِقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ ۚ فَإِنْ أَرْضَعْنَ لَكُمْ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ ۗ وَأَتَمَّرُوا لَكُمْ بِمَعْرُوفٍ ۗ وَإِنْ تَعَاَسَرْتُمْ فَمَسْئُورٌ لَهَا ۚ أُخْرَىٰ ﴾

Translation: Lodge them [in a section] where you dwell out of your means and do not harm them in order to oppress them. And if they should be pregnant, then spend on them until they give birth. And if they breastfeed for you, then give them their payment and confer among yourselves in the acceptable way; but if you are in discord, then there may breastfeed for him [i.e., the father] another woman.²³⁷

In this verse, the position of the wet nurse is directly acknowledged in the context of family and divorce matters. The verse offers direction on how to treat divorced women, especially those who are pregnant or nursing children; it also notes that should a mother nurse a child for the father, she should be paid her proper compensation. This remuneration for nursing emphasizes the position of the wet nurse's part in the raising of the children.²³⁸

Analogously, the wet nurse in this verse is like a caretaker whose job transcends simple meetings of a fundamental need; her services are not only required but also legally recognized and paid for, therefore expressing the importance of her contribution. The verse underlines that a wet nurse's job is not only incidental but also a vital part of the child's upbringing, like being a necessary, acknowledged member of the early life care team. One would employ a trustworthy professional to look after anything precious. If needed, the verse allowing the appointment of another wet nurse emphasizes, even more, the significance of this position, much as making sure that important chores are carried out by someone equally qualified should the first plan go apart.

Moreover, while attending to the father's urgent obligations toward the wet nurse, it establishes a standard for the respect and value given to the wet nurse. One may argue that the wet-nursed children have moral obligation towards their wet nurse even when they grow up, considering the larger Islamic fundamental of *ihsān* (doing good), which includes all individuals who have offered care and compassion. Like with

²³⁷ Sūrah al-Talāq, 65:6.

²³⁸ Ibn Qudāmah, *Al-Mughnī Li Ibnu Qudāmah*. Vol. 8. 72-73. Taqī al-Dīn Abū al-'Abbād Aḥamad ibn 'Abd al-Ḥalīm ibn 'Abd al-Salām ibn 'Abdullah ibn Abī al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Fatāwā Al-Kubrā Li-Ibn Taymiyyah*, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1987). Vol. 3. 377.

their birth parents, this might entail respecting the wet nurse, supporting her, and keeping relations with her.

The text essentially emphasizes the importance of the wet nurse during the years, which can be taken to mean that the link formed by nursing should be valued and appreciated all through the life of the persons engaged. Al-Taḥāwī said that the right of the wet nurse was due to the one being breastfed; by her breastfeeding him until she became a mother to him and until what came from her to him became a reason for his life.²³⁹

Furthermore, *al-Qur'ān* also mentions a strong emotional bond between a child and the nursing mother in *Sūrah al-Ḥajj* verse 2.

﴿يَوْمَ تَرَوْهَا تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّا أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَرَىٰ وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكَرَىٰ وَلَٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ ﴿٢﴾﴾

Translation: On the Day you see it every nursing mother will be distracted from that [child] she was nursing, and every pregnant woman will abort her pregnancy, and you will see the people [appearing] intoxicated while they are not intoxicated; but the punishment of Allah is severe.²⁴⁰

Although the verse mostly addresses all mothers tending to their infants, it also subtly incorporates wet nurses as they also engage in nursing. The verse emphasizes the great anxiety and turmoil of the Day of Judgment, in which the seriousness of the event will overwhelm and divert even a nursing mother or wet nurse, often closely bonded to the child she is breastfeeding.²⁴¹ This verse emphasizes that, in the Hereafter, the position and responsibility of wet nurses are acknowledged alongside biological mothers, therefore reflecting the great link produced by breastfeeding.

Since the position of a wet nurse is the same as the birth mother, therefore all Muslims are responsible to care for their milk mothers. The word 'wālidayn (parents) in *al-Qur'ān Sūrah Luqmān* verse 14 includes the wet nurse.

﴿وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهَنَا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفِصْلُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَىٰ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٤﴾﴾

²³⁹ Ṭantāwī, *Al-Tafsīr Al-Wasīṭ Lil-Qur'ān Al-Karīm*. Vol. 3. 103.

²⁴⁰ *Sūrah al-Ḥajj*, 22:2.

²⁴¹ Ibn Sahl, *Ma'ānī Al-Qur'ān Wai'rābihi*. Vol.3. 409-410.

Translation: And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination.²⁴²

This verse emphasizes the mother's increasing frailty and the need for the two-year weaning phase, and it stresses her great work and sacrifice throughout pregnancy and the early years of a child's existence.²⁴³ Although the verse mostly centers on the biological mother, it also subtly notes the important part a wet nurse might contribute to the weaning process.

The allusion to "weaning" over two years points to the caring and care needed during this period, a task that may fall to a wet nurse should the biological mother be unable or decide not to breastfeed the child herself. The command to "be grateful to Me and to your parents" extends to those who provide early care and nurturing, including wet nurses.²⁴⁴ When a wet nurse is present, her contribution to the child's well-being throughout these crucial formative years extends the parental care. The wet nurse is not specifically mentioned in the verse, but her position fits the more general responsibility of care stressed in it.

The main lesson in this verse is the idea of *ihsān*, or doing good, which customarily relates to parents.²⁴⁵ But in the framework of wet nursing, *ihsān* logically also refers to the wet nurse, who falls within the larger category of "parents" in *al-Qur'ān*. Therefore, the obligation to show goodness and care to one's wet nurse is implicit in the verse, just as it is for one's biological parents. This responsibility becomes more important when the wet nurse has been vital in the child's upbringing during the weaning stage, therefore showing her deserved place inside the family system. Another verse further emphasized the obligation to care for the parents including the wet nurses. *Al-Qur'ān Sūrah al-Aḥqāf* verse 15 says.

﴿وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا ۚ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا ۖ وَحَمَلُهُ وَفُصِّلَهُ تَلَثُونَ ۗ شَهْرًا ۚ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ ۖ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً ۚ قَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ

²⁴² Sūrah Luqmān, 31:14.

²⁴³ Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'īl ibn 'Umar Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, ed. Sāmī ibn Muḥammad Al-Salāmah, 2nd ed. (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dār al-Ṭayyibah lil-nashar wa al-Tawzī', 1999). Vol. 7. 279.

²⁴⁴ Ibn Kathīr. 279.

²⁴⁵ Abū Mansūr al-Māturīdī, *Tafsīr Al-Māturīdī*. Vol. 8. 303.

عَلَىٰ وَعَلَىٰ وُلْدَيْهِ وَأَنۢ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْلِحۡ لِي فِي ذُرِّيَّتِي ۗ إِنِّي تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ
 الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

Translation: And We have enjoined upon man, to his parents, good treatment. His mother carried him with hardship and gave birth to him with hardship, and his gestation and weaning [period] is thirty months. [He grows] until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to work righteousness of which You will approve and make righteous for me my offspring. Indeed, I have repented to You, and indeed, I am of the Muslims."²⁴⁶

This verse highlighted again that one has an obligation towards his/her parents because of the suffering borne by the mother during pregnancy, birth and weaning phase.²⁴⁷ This verse emphasized the roles of thankfulness, devotion as well as care directed towards parents. Even more importantly, when one thinks of the role of a wet nurse, someone who provides life giving care (the breastmilk which same as giving life by blood) in early stages, Allah is telling us “Be kind to both your parents”, then surely wet nurse would be considered there as well for giving her life sustaining breast milk. *Ibn Taymiyyah* (may Allah have mercy on him) said, “With regard to parents, there is no *shar‘ī* text (sic) that indicates that we are obliged to honor and respect their brothers or sisters or maternal aunts etcetera in the same way as our obligation towards them. This also includes wet nurses who look after the child at an important stage of his/her life”.²⁴⁸ It is that bond between nursing the child and wet nurses as well, which weaves a lifelong connection of care and respect for those who take on the burden to do so certainly echoes principles of charity/kindness already within this verse.

These verses mentioned wet nurse in general, not even one that specifically discusses wet nursing kinship except *Sūrah al-Nisā’* verse 23 which outlines women who a man cannot marry. Regarding verse 23 from surah *al-Isra’* on the word parent (*wālidayn*), Allah says:

²⁴⁶ Sūrah al-Ahqāf, 46:15.

²⁴⁷ Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr, *Tafsīr Al-Ṭabarī Jāmi‘ Al-Bayān*. Vol. 21. 137.

²⁴⁸ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Fatāwā Al-Kubrā Li-Ibn Taymiyyah*. Vol. 3. 372.

﴿ وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ﴾

Translation: And your Lord has decreed that you worship not except Him, and to parents, good treatment.²⁴⁹

This verse explains the theme to be kind to parents. Hamka interpreted that the word “*wālidayn*” includes breastfeeding parents as well.²⁵⁰

Likewise, Allah also said:

﴿ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ﴾

Translation: And be careful of your duty towards Allah in whom you claim (your rights) of one another, and towards the wombs (that bare you).²⁵¹

In this verse, the wet nurse and her families are also included in the meaning of ‘*al-arḥam*’ and must be treated like our own parents and relatives. A *ḥadīth* explains that it is obligatory to know relatives formed by wet nursing which will be discussed later.

There is no reference in *al-Qur’ān* about rights and duties towards milk mother and milk kinship relatives or even there is no mentioning of specific responsibilities associated with it. However, since *al-Qur’ān* raised the position of milk mother to be equal to birth mother, therefore it can be inferred that the Qur’anic guidance on treatment of parents applies also to wet nurses.

From the Qur’anic perspective, sustaining family bonds and honoring relatives is a responsibility of every Muslim man and woman. This means that it is forbidden to cut family relationships, including milk family relationship. Milk mother and her extended family members should be treated with kindness, compassion and respect to sustain the familial bond. The fact that Islam prohibited marriage between a Muslim and his/her milk-kins demonstrated indirectly the significant position of wet nursing

²⁴⁹ Sūrah al-Isrā’, 17:23.

²⁵⁰ Abdulmalik Abdulkarim Amrullah Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 1st ed. (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional Pte Ltd, 1990). Hamka. Vol. 6. 4066-4033.

²⁵¹ Sūrah al-Nisā’, 4:1.

kinship; and value that Islam gives to the act of providing life sustaining nourishment for babies.

There are several principles in *al-Qur'ān* that impact family ties which apply to milk kinship. While these verses mainly speak of blood relations, it can be applied for milk kinship as Islam positions milk kinship similar to blood lineage. If the blood families must be cared for with respect, the same goes to milk kinship. The importance of treating relatives with kindness is emphasized in *al-Qur'ān*, where Allah commands worshippers to worship Him alone and to treat their parents, relatives, orphans, the needy, and neighbours with compassion and generosity. Allah says in *al-Qur'ān*:

﴿وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا ۚ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ
وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَن كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا ﴿٣٦﴾﴾

Translation: Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbours, the neighbours farther away, the companion at your side, the traveller, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful.²⁵²

The word '*ihsān*' mentioned in the above verses, which means the act of goodness towards parents and others. *Ihsān* is derived from the Arabic root word '*ḥasana*' which means goodness, beauty and excellence. *Ihsān* is an overarching concept which comprises all good deeds done for others. The act of goodness includes interacting with others in the highest ethical standard, performing duties to the best of the ability to please Allah, contributing the best to others including the environment, observing the obligations such servant and vicegerent of Allah, etc. Performing goodness includes selfless acts of employing knowledge, position, wealth, time, and energy for the benefit of others. In the context of doing good to parents, including milk mothers encompasses treating them with kindness and compassion, maintaining strong bond, employing whatever we have etc. for the benefit of our parents for the sake of Allah.

²⁵² *Al-Nisā'* 4:36.

In Islam, the duty to maintain family ties also includes individuals who are regarded as part of the extended family through milk kinship. Another verse from *al-Qur'ān* emphasizes the importance of upholding family connections, instructing believers to fulfil the obligations to their relatives, the impoverished, and travellers, while also advising against extravagant spending. *Al-Qur'ān* mentions:

﴿وَأَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا ﴿٢٦﴾﴾

And give the relative his right, and [also] the poor and the traveller, and do not spend wastefully (*Al-Isrā'* 17:26).

The obligation to uphold relationships and honor the rights of kin applies to those linked through milk kinship, as these ties are acknowledged in Islamic law and societal traditions. Just as blood relatives are entitled to their rights, so too are milk relatives, before the needy and travelers. The rights of milk relatives are not exactly the same as the rights of blood relatives. Further information on the rights of milk relatives is beyond the scope of this study and can be assessed elsewhere.

Islamic law prioritizes maintaining the family unit, ethical conduct, and societal harmony. According to *Sharī'ah*, milk kinship is considered equivalent to blood relations in terms of limitations on marriage and social associations, and thus demands the same level of reverence, boundaries, and obligations as biological relatives. This principle is derived from the general guidance in *al-Qur'ān* regarding family ties, even if the specific verses on milk kinship are not explicitly stated.

In brief, even though *al-Qur'ān* does not explicitly address how to navigate milk kinship connections, the overarching principles of upholding family ties and showing respect to relatives can be applied by analogy to milk kinship and extended families. *Al-Qur'ān*'s prohibition of marriage between individuals related through milk kinship emphasizes its importance, indicating that milk kinship should be respected in a manner similar to blood relationships. Furthermore, al-Sunnah in the subsequent section offers specific instances of how the Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, acknowledged and treated milk kinship, further reinforcing this interpretation.

3.3.3 *Aḥādīth* on How Prophet Muḥammad Peace Be Upon Him Dealt with Wet Nursing Kinship

There are many *aḥādīth* on how Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, dealt with relationship with milk kinship relatives. All *aḥādīth* included in this section are from *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and translated into English. Additional related *aḥādīth* were also included. These relevant *aḥādīth* were analysed according to the needs of the study. The following are the results of the initial search for *aḥādīth*:

a. Ḥamzah's Daughter

حَدَّثَنَا مُسْلِمُ بْنُ أَبِرَاهِيمَ، حَدَّثَنَا هَمَّامٌ، حَدَّثَنَا قَتَادَةُ، عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ، عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ
رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا، قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي بِنْتِ حَمَزَةَ: « لَا تَحِلُّ لِي، يَحْرُمُ
مِنَ الرَّضَاعِ مَا يَحْرُمُ مِنَ النَّسَبِ، هِيَ بِنْتُ أُخِي مِنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ »

Translation: Muslim ibn Ibrāhīm narrated to us, Hammām narrated to us, Qatādah narrated to us, narrated by Jābir ibn Zayd, narrated by Ibn ‘Abbās, may God be pleased with them both, who said: The Prophet, peace be upon him, may God bless him and grant him peace, said about Ḥamzah’s daughter: “She is not permissible for me. What is forbidden by breastfeeding is forbidden by lineage. She is my brother’s daughter by wet nursing.”²⁵³

It can be concluded by this *ḥadīth* that Muslims are to recognize the offspring of the nursing siblings as the same as nieces and nephews by lineage. Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, accentuated that the daughter of Ḥamzah was his niece (milk niece). This is because Ḥamzah and Prophet Muḥammad were breastfed by the same wet nurse, thus Hamzah was his milk brother despite the rank as an uncle. So, it can be deduced that his milk niece was his own cousin.

²⁵³ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*. See also ḥadīth no. 4005 and 4815 in *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* and ḥadīth no. 1446, 1447, and 1448 in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, which brings a similar theme.

b. Abū Salamah's Daughter

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ عُقَيْلٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ: أَنَّ عُرْوَةَ بِنَ الرَّبِيعِ، أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّ زَيْنَبَ بِنْتَ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ، أَخْبَرَتْهُ أَنَّ أُمَّ حَبِيبَةَ، قَالَتْ: قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، انكِحْ أُخْتِي بِنْتَ أَبِي سُفْيَانَ، قَالَ: « وَتُحِبِّينَ؟ » قُلْتُ: نَعَمْ، لَسْتُ لَكَ بِمُحْلِيَّةٍ، وَأَحَبُّ مَنْ شَارَكَنِي فِي خَيْرِ أُخْتِي، فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: « إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَا يَحِلُّ لِي », قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، فَوَاللَّهِ إِنَّا لَنَتَحَدَّثُ أَنَّكَ تُرِيدُ أَنْ تَنْكِحَ دُرَّةَ بِنْتَ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ، قَالَ: « بِنْتُ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ », فَقُلْتُ: نَعَمْ، قَالَ: « فَوَاللَّهِ لَوْ لَمْ تَكُنْ فِي حَجْرِي مَا حَلَّتْ لِي، إِنَّمَا لِابْنَتِهِ أُخِي مِنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ، أَرْضَعْتَنِي وَأَبَا سَلَمَةَ نُؤَيَّبُهُ، فَلَا تَعْرِضُنْ عَلَيَّ بَنَاتِكُنَّ وَلَا أُخَوَاتِكُنَّ »

Translation: ‘Abdullah bin Yūsuf narrated to us, al-Layth narrated to us, from ‘Uqayl, from Ibn Shihāb: ‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr informed him that Zaynab bint Abī Salamah informed him that Umm Ḥabībah said: I said, O Messenger of Allah, marry my sister, the daughter of Abī Sufiyān. He said: “And do you love that?” I said: Yes, for even now I am not your only wife; and the most beloved person to share the good with me is my sister. The Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: “That is not permissible for me (i.e., to be married to two sisters at a time).” I said: O Messenger of Allah, by Allah, we have heard that you want to marry Durrah bint Abī Salamah. He said: “The daughter of Umm Salamah.” I said: Yes. He said: “By Allah, even if she were not my stepdaughter, she would not be lawful for me to marry, for she is my milk brother’s daughter, Thuwaybah breastfed me and Abū Salamah, so do not present your daughters nor your sisters to me.”²⁵⁴

This *ḥadīth* conveys three important messages which are to know and recognize milk nieces; to inform milk kinship relationships; and the prohibition of marriage among milk siblings. This means that Prophet Muḥammad was aware of who his milk siblings were including his milk siblings’ lineage. This can be achieved because of the close contact that they had between milk kinship relatives. The Prophet also informed that he had the milk kinship relation with the daughter of Abū Salamah,²⁵⁵ Durrah was his niece (milk niece). This is because Abū Salamah was his wet nursing sibling because of being breastfed by Thuwaybah. Therefore, this *ḥadīth* informed Muslims to never severed the ties of milk kinship, always be updated on the lineage of the milk kinship

²⁵⁴ Al-Bukhārī. 1961. Ḥadīth no. 4813. See also ḥadīth no. 4817, 4818, 4831, and 5057 in Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī and ḥadīth no. 1071, and 1073 in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, which brings a similar theme.

²⁵⁵ Abū Salamah is ‘Abdullah Bin ‘Abd Al-Asad Al-Makhzūmī.

relatives; and to inform others about our milk kinship relatives to prevent future problems.

c. ‘Ā’ishah’s Milk Uncle

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، أَخْبَرَنَا مَالِكٌ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، عَنْ عُرْوَةَ بْنِ الزُّبَيْرِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، أَنَّ أَفْلَحَ، أَخَا أَبِي الْمُعَيْسِ جَاءَ يَسْتَأْذِنُ عَلَيْهَا، وَهُوَ عَمُّهَا مِنَ الرِّضَاعَةِ، بَعْدَ أَنْ نَزَلَ الْحِجَابُ، فَأَبَيْتُ أَنْ آدَنَ لَهُ، فَلَمَّا جَاءَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَخْبَرْتُهُ بِالَّذِي صَنَعْتُ « فَأَمَرَنِي أَنْ آدَنَ لَهُ »

Translation: ‘Abdullah ibn Yūsuf narrated to us, Mālik narrated to us, from Ibn Shihāb, from ‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr, from ‘Ā’ishah, that Aflah, the brother of Abū al-Qu‘ays, came asking permission to enter upon her after the Verse of *al-Hijāb* (the use of veils by women) was revealed, but I refused to give him permission. When the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace came, I told him what I had done, and he ordered me to give him permission.²⁵⁶

This *ḥadīth* guides the Muslims to honor the milk kinship uncle and relatives by receiving them to enter our houses as an honored guest. Furthermore, this *ḥadīth* showed the practice of visiting relatives including milk kinship relatives.

And also:

حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا لَيْثٌ، وَحَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ رُمْحٍ، أَخْبَرَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ يَزِيدَ بْنِ أَبِي حَبِيبٍ، عَنْ عِرَاكِ، عَنْ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، أَنَّهَا أَخْبَرَتْهُ: أَنَّ عَمَّهُ مِنَ الرِّضَاعَةِ يُسَمَّى أَفْلَحَ. اسْتَأْذَنَ عَلَيْهَا فَحَجَبَتْهُ، فَأَخْبَرَتْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. فَقَالَ لَهَا: « لَا تَحْجِبِي مِنْهُ، فَإِنَّهُ يَحْرُمُ مِنَ الرِّضَاعَةِ مَا يَحْرُمُ مِنَ النَّسَبِ »

Translation: Qutaybah ibn Sa‘īd narrated to us, Layth narrated to us, and Muḥammad ibn Rumḥ narrated to us, al-Layth informed us, from Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb, from ‘Irāk, from ‘Urwah, from ‘Ā’ishah, that she informed him: Her paternal uncle from breastfeeding was called Aflah. He asked her permission to see him, but she prevented him, so she informed the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. He said to her: “Do not veil yourself from him for he is *maḥram*

²⁵⁶ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*. 1960. Ḥadīth no. 4811. See also ḥadīth no. 2503, 264, 2646, 4518, 4815, 4821, and 4941 in *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*. and ḥadīth no. 1071, and 1073 in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, which brings a similar theme.

(one with whom marriage cannot be contracted), for what is forbidden by breastfeeding is forbidden by lineage.”²⁵⁷

This *ḥadīth* is similar to the above *ḥadīth* reported in *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*. The messages delivered by these two *aḥādīth* are the prohibition of marriage between a man and his milk kinship relatives; honoring the milk uncle of the wife; and visiting the milk kinship relatives; and the permission of unveiling in front of milk kinship relatives.

d. ‘Ā’ishah’s Milk Brother

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْوَلِيدِ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنِ الْأَشْعَثِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ مَسْرُوقٍ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ
اللَّهُ عَنْهَا: أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا وَعِنْدَهَا رَجُلٌ، فَكَأَنَّهُ تَغَيَّرَ وَجْهُهُ،
كَأَنَّهُ كَرِهَ ذَلِكَ، فَقَالَتْ: إِنَّهُ أَخِي، فَقَالَ: « انظُرْ مَنْ إِخْوَانُكَ، فَإِنَّمَا الرِّضَاعَةُ مِنَ
الْمِجَاعَةِ »

Translation: Abū al-Walīd narrated to us, Shu‘bah narrated to us, from al-Ash‘ath, from his father, from Masrūq, from ‘Ā’ishah, Allah be pleased with her: The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, entered upon her while a man was sitting with her. Signs of answer seemed to appear on his face as if he disliked that. She said: He is my family (nursling), so he said: “Be sure as to who is your foster brother, for foster suckling relationship is established only when milk is the only food of the child.”²⁵⁸

It can be understood from this *ḥadīth* that another condition for the *maḥram* relationship to occur is when the child only drank breast milk from the wet nurse as the only source of nourishment which indicated that the child should be very young (before two years old). Additionally, this *ḥadīth* conveys that ‘Ā’ishah was well informed of her milk family relatives indicating proper sharing of information about relatives among family members and societies. It also informs the close-knit family relationship where information was easily shared. Moreover, continuous visitation ensures that milk family relationships will not be broken. In a nutshell, this *ḥadīth* emphasizes knowing who one’s milk kinship relatives are; strengthening milk kinship relationship by

²⁵⁷ Al-Naisābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. 1070. Ḥadīth no. 1445 (9). See also ḥadīth no. 1441 (1), 1444 (2), 1445 (3), 1445 (4), 1445 (6), 1445 (7), 1445 (8), and 1445 (10) in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, which brings a similar theme.

²⁵⁸ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*. 170. Ḥadīth no. 2647. See also ḥadīth no. 5102 in *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* and ḥadīth no. 320, and 1445 in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, which brings a similar theme.

visitation; and the condition for milk kinship to be established (breast milk is the exclusive nourishment received by the child).

e. Ḥaḥṣah's Milk Uncle

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، أَخْبَرَنَا مَالِكٌ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ، عَنْ عَمْرَةَ ابْنَةِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، أَنَّ عَائِشَةَ - زَوْجَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - أَخْبَرَتْهَا: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ عِنْدَهَا، وَأَنَّهَا سَمِعَتْ صَوْتَ إِنْسَانٍ يَسْتَأْذِنُ فِي بَيْتِ حَفْصَةَ، فَقُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، هَذَا رَجُلٌ يَسْتَأْذِنُ فِي بَيْتِكَ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: « أَرَأَاهُ فَلَانًا - لِعَمِّ حَفْصَةَ مِنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ - الرَّضَاعَةُ تُحَرِّمُ مَا تُحَرِّمُ الْوَلَادَةُ »

Translation: ‘Abdullah ibn Yūsuf narrated to us, Mālik narrated to us, from ‘Abdullah ibn Abī Bakr, from ‘Amra bint ‘Abd al-Rahmān, that ‘Ā’ishah - the wife of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace - informed her: The Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, was with her and she heard somebody asking permission to enter Ḥaḥṣah, so I said: O Messenger of Allah, this man is asking permission to enter your house. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: “I think he is so-and-so (Ḥaḥṣah’s paternal uncle through breastfeeding) What is rendered illegal because of blood relations, is also rendered illegal because of the corresponding breastfeeding-relations.”²⁵⁹

This *ḥadīth* informs that not only Ḥaḥṣah knew her milk uncle, but the Prophet also was well informed that the person was Ḥaḥṣah’s milk uncle. This means that the spouse should also be informed about who were the relatives of his wives, including the milk kinship relatives. This *ḥadīth* provides further evidence of the practice of visitation to strengthen milk family relationship.

f. Ummu Salamah's Milk Brother

حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا لَيْثٌ، ح وَحَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ رُمْحٍ، أَخْبَرَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ أَبِي الزُّبَيْرِ، عَنْ جَابِرٍ، أَنَّ أُمَّ سَلَمَةَ، اسْتَأْذَنَتْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي الْحِجَامَةِ « فَأَمَرَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَبَا طَيْبَةَ أَنْ يَحْجُمَهَا » قَالَ: حَسِبْتُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: كَانَ أَحَاها مِنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ، أَوْ غُلَامًا لَمْ يَحْتَلِمَ

²⁵⁹ Al-Bukhārī. 82. Ḥadīth no. 3105. See also ḥadīth no. 2646, and 5099 in Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī and ḥadīth no. 1441 in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, which brings a similar theme.

Translation: Qutaybah ibn Sa‘īd narrated to us, Layth narrated to us, and Muḥammad ibn Rumḥ narrated to us, al-Layth informed us, from Abū al-Zubayr, from Jābir, that Umm Salamah asked the permission of the Messenger of Allah may Allah bless him and grant him peace, for getting herself cupped. “The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, commanded Abū Ṭaybah to cup her.” The transmitter said: I think he was her brother through breastfeeding, or... A boy who has not reached puberty’.²⁶⁰

It can be deduced from this *ḥadīth* that milk brother is considered the same as blood brother, thus a Muslim women can remove her veil in the presence of milk brother. This *ḥadīth* also informs that cupping treatment should be done by *mahram* relatives.

Recognizing the social and legal ramifications of milk kinship, the Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, treated it with the same gravity and reverence as blood relatives. The Prophet underscored the proscription of marriage between people linked by milk kinship, therefore highlighting the notion that such connections had equal sanctity to those established by biological ties. Treating milk siblings and wet nurses with dignity and taking their position in the family unit into account are all duties and rights that the prophet recognized as resulting from these connections. By means of his deeds and teachings, the Prophet set a clear standard for the Muslim community, therefore guaranteeing that milk kinship is respected in a manner that maintained family integrity and communal peace.

3.3.4 Historical Reports on Prophet Muḥammad Treatment Towards His Milk Relatives

The Prophet’s Lifelong Gratitude Toward His Wet Nurse Thuwaybah

The narration in *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, highlights the lifelong gratitude and care that the Prophet Muḥammad showed toward his milk relatives. Thuwaybah, Abū Lahab’s slave who later freed her, breastfed the Prophet when he was still in his infancy. Notwithstanding her status as a slave, the Prophet was never to forget his wet nurse. Indeed, throughout his life in Mecca, the Prophet stayed in contact with Thuwaybah, and his wife Khadijah respected her position as the Prophet’s wet nurse and offered to

²⁶⁰ Al-Bukhārī. 1730. Ḥadīth no. 2206.

buy her freedom from Abū Lahab, which he refused. After the migration of the Prophet to Madīnah, Abū Lahab later set Thuwaybah free. Indeed, the Prophet did stay in touch with Thuwaybah, sending gifts and clothes to her until she died in the seventh year after the Hijrah. This story also points out how even a small act of mercy, Thuwaybah being set free, did not go in vain.²⁶¹ The above incident underscored the deep moral values of thankfulness, graciousness, and keeping relationships intact that the Prophet exhibited in every sphere of his life, especially those who were related to him through milk-kinship.

The Prophet's Continued Care for Thuwaybah and Inquiry About Her Surviving Relatives

Another parallel version is found in *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, where, years after his migration to Madīnah, the Prophet Muḥammad continued to show his care and interest in Thuwaybah. Out of gratitude to her, the Prophet would send presents, gifts, and pieces of clothes to her and would regularly inquire about her well-being. When he received the news of her death, he asked about her relatives who were left behind, and he was told that no one was left behind from them.²⁶² This is a perfect example of the deep sense of responsibility and respect he holds for people related to him through milk kinship, reinforcing that such bonds need to be maintained throughout one's life.

Helping Ḥalīmah - A Model of Compassion and Gratitude

The treatment which Prophet Muḥammad extended towards his milk mother, Ḥalīmah, was indicative of a profound sense of care, gratitude, and responsibility he felt towards persons who had looked after him when he was young. Now that he had entered manhood and married Khadījah, the Prophet would not forget Ḥalīmah's kindness. She had come to him once in Mecca during hard times when the drought had scorched the land, and the animals were dying. He did not waste any time trying to help her. The Prophet told Khadījah, who gave Ḥalīmah forty sheep and a camel so that she would

²⁶¹ Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, 1990. 113.

²⁶² Ibn Sa'd. Vol. 1. 87.

have enough provision to return to her family.²⁶³ The act stands as a testimony to the mercy of the Prophet, not only in terms of relations of blood but also of milk affinity, revealing his deep sense of *ihsān*.

The Prophet's Reverence and Honour for His Wet Nurse

There are other narrations from *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* which illustrated the high degree of respect and dignity that the Prophet Muḥammad showed towards his wet nurse. When Ḥalīmah asked permission to visit him, the Prophet called her “my mother, my mother” affectionately and kept on showing her the highest respect by spreading his cloak so she might sit upon it.²⁶⁴ This is a gesture to demonstrate that he is very grateful and thankful for the way she brought him up as a young boy and will always treat her like his birth mother.

The Prophet's Recognition and Honour of His Foster Sister al-Shayma'

There is a narration in the Prophetic biography (*sīrah nabawiyyah*) narrated by *Ibn Hisham*.²⁶⁵ It is an account about the Prophet Muḥammad during one of his military expeditions where he encountered his milk sister, al-Shayma', after she had been taken captive with her people. She then presented herself to him as his sister through suckling. She reminded the Prophet of an incident during her childhood when, as a child, she had once been bitten on the back by him. The Prophet remembered this and started showing her all respect, spreading his cloak for her to sit upon. He gave her a choice: to stay with him or go back home. She chose to go back, and the Prophet sent her back with a handsome gift to her people. It is also remembered that he gave her two slaves whose descendants remained among her people. This story again illustrates how the Prophet treated those who had a relation of milk fraternity with him in a manner befitting respect and love, and how generous and just he was.

²⁶³ Ibn Sa'd. Vol. 1. 113.

²⁶⁴ Ibn Sa'd. Vol. 1. 114.

²⁶⁵ Al-Saqā, Al-Abyāri, and Al-Shalbī, *Al-Sīrah Al-Nabawiyyah Li-Ibnu Hishām*. 458.

The Prophet's Compassion and Generosity Toward His Foster Family from Hawāzin

Narration spotlights that Prophet Muḥammad attributed great respect to his milk relatives, and a deep sense of loyalty towards the people who had taken care of him in his early years. The Hawāzin delegation at al-Ji'ranah was reminded by the Prophet's milk uncle, Abū Tharwān, of their long-standing connection with him through his paternal and maternal aunts, wet nurses, and foster care. He mentioned the character of the Prophet and how the Prophet had been excellent since he was a child until he attained manhood. They asked the Prophet to show leniency and be easy, bringing up the relation between them. To this request, the Prophet responded with his generosity and equitable division. He divided captives between the delegation to allow them to choose either for their money or for the family members. The Prophet ultimately sent the captives that were related to him and the *Banī 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib* and after taking the consent of Muhajirīn and Anṣār he arranged the remaining captives to be released.²⁶⁶ This event symbolizes the Prophet's emphasis on relationships, mercy, and consideration he showed for maintaining ties with people who were related to him both by blood and milk-kinship.

3.4 PROPHET'S WET NURSES AND MILK KINSHIP

In the book of sīrah "*Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah*" by al-Baihaqī, it was said that 10 people (refer to figure 3.6 for the names of the wet nurses) had breastfed the Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, including his mother.²⁶⁷ The first Prophet's wet nurse, Thuwaybah, was a slave woman to Abī Lahab. She breastfed the Prophet Muḥammad 7 days after his birth, was freed later by Abī Lahab. As mentioned in the book, Thuwaybah also had a child named Masrūḥ. Masrūḥ then became the Prophet's brother (milk kinship) together the other three wet-nursed children, Ḥamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, and Abū Salamah.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁶ Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, 1990. Vol. 1. 114-115.

²⁶⁷ Aḥmad ibn al-Husīn ibn 'Alī ibn Mūsa al-Khusraujirdī al-Khurāsānī Al-Baihaqī, *Dalā'il Al-Nubuwwah Wa Ma'rifaḥ Ahwāl Ṣāhib Al-Sharī'ah*, ed. Dr. 'Abd al-Mu'ṭī Qal'ajī, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1988). 131.

²⁶⁸ Al-Baihaqī. 131-149 and 184.

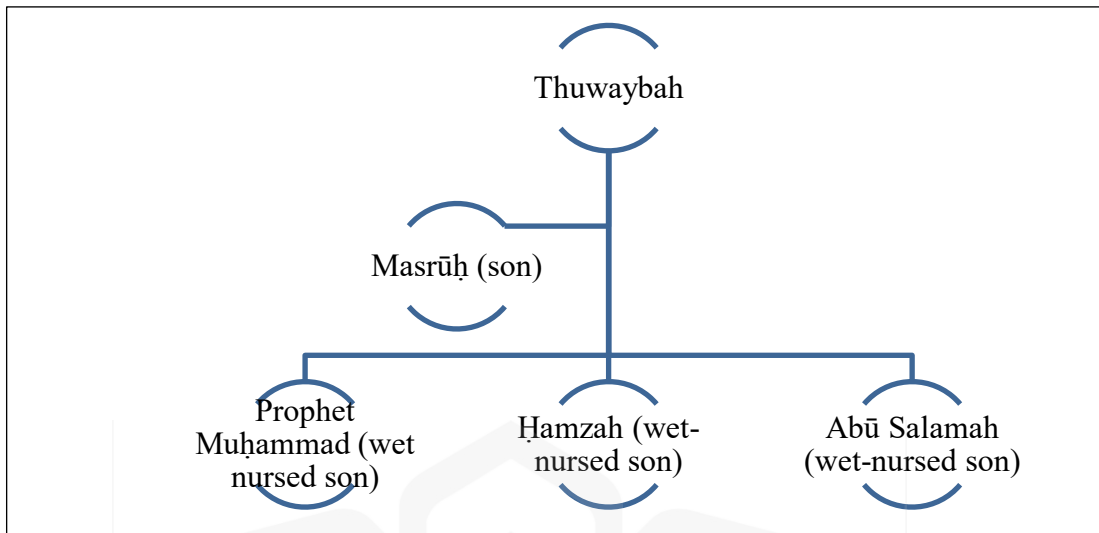


Figure 3.2 Thuwaybah Lineage²⁶⁹

Second wet nurse, Ḥalīmah bint Abī Dhu'ayb 'Abdillah ibn al-Ḥarīth or famous with name Ḥalīmah al-Sa'diyah,²⁷⁰ from the *Banī Sa'ad* also breastfed the Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him. Ḥalīmah's husband was named al-Ḥarīth ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza.²⁷¹ Ḥalīmah's father was Abū Dhu'ayb. Her children were 'Abdullah ibn al-

²⁶⁹ Derived from Zainol Abidin and Wan Yusoff, "A Critical Need for Breastmilk Collection Centres for High-Risk Premature Babies."

²⁷⁰ Abū al-Ḥasan Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī ibn Abī Bakr ibn Sulaymān Al-Haythamī, *Majma'a Al-Zawāidi Wa Manba'a Al-Fawāid*, ed. Ḥisam al-Dīn Al-Qudṣī (Al-Qāhirah, Egypt: Maktabah al-Qudṣī al-Qāhirah, 1994). Vol. 9. 259. Her full name was Ḥalīmah Bint Abī Dhu'ayb 'Abdillah Ibn Al-Ḥarīth Ibn Ḥayyān. Sulaymān Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Ayyūb Ibn Muṭṭir Al-Lakhamī Al-Shāmī Abū Al-Qāsim Al-Ṭabrānī, *Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabīr*, ed. Ḥamdī Ibn 'Abd Al-Majīd Al-Salafī, 2nd ed. (Al-Qāhirah, Egypt: Maktabah Ibn Taimiyyah, 1994). Vol. 24. 212. This Sunnah book mentioned that her full name was Ḥalīmah Bint Abī Dhu'aīb 'Abdullah Ibn Al-Ḥarīth Ibn Ḥibbān Ibn Sa'd Ibn Bakr Ibn Hawāzin. While, the other Sunnah book mentioned her name was Ḥalīmah Bint Kabshah Bint Abī Dhu'aīb Al-Qaṭawiyah in Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn 'Alī ibn 'Āsim ibn Zādhān al-Aṣbahānī al-Khāzin Ibn al-Muqrī', *Al-Rukhṣah Fī Taqḥīl Al-Yad*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Al-Ḥadād, 1st ed. (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dār Al-'Āshimāh, 2010). 74. No. 14. There is also name Ḥalīmah Bint Kabshah Bint Abī Dhu'aīb 'Abdullah Ibn Al-Ḥarīth Ibn Shajnah Ibn Jābir Ibn Rizām Ibn Nāṣirah Ibn Sa'd Ibn Bakr Ibn Hawāzin Ibn Maṣūr Ibn 'Ikrimah Ibn Ḥaṣfah Ibn Qays 'Aylān Ibn Muḍar in Sunnah book, Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusīn Al-Bayhaqī, *Sha'b Al-Īmān*, ed. 'Abd al-'Ulā 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Ḥāmid, 1st ed. (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Maktabah Al-Rushd, 2003). Vol. 2. 514. No. 1325.

²⁷¹ Al-Baihaqī, *Dalā'il Al-Nubuwwah Wa Ma'rifah Aḥwāl Ṣāhib Al-Sharī'ah*. 132. Prophet's milk father full name was Al-Ḥarīth Ibn 'Abd Al-'Uzza Ibn Rifā'ah Ibn Mallān Ibn Nāṣirah Ibn Sa'd Ibn Bakr Ibn Hawāzin.

Ḥarīth ibn ‘Abd al-‘Uzza, Anīsah bint al-Ḥarīth ibn ‘Abd al-‘Uzza, and Khuzafah bint al-Ḥarīth ibn ‘Abd al-‘Uzza (it said to be named al-Shaymā’). Her husband and three children became the Prophet’s milk relatives (his milk father, brothers, and sisters).²⁷² Furthermore, Ḥalīmah also wet nursed Abū Sufiyān ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abd Muṭṭalib. As such, Ḥamzah despite the rank of his uncle in blood relation, was also classified as the Prophet’s milk brother. Al-Shaybānī added Salmā bint Abū Dhu’ayb as Ḥalīmah’s sister, who was regarded as the Prophet’s maternal aunt through wet nursing.²⁷³ Ḥalīmah al-Sa‘diyāh and her husband, al-Ḥarīth ibn ‘Abd al-‘Uzza lived in mountain.

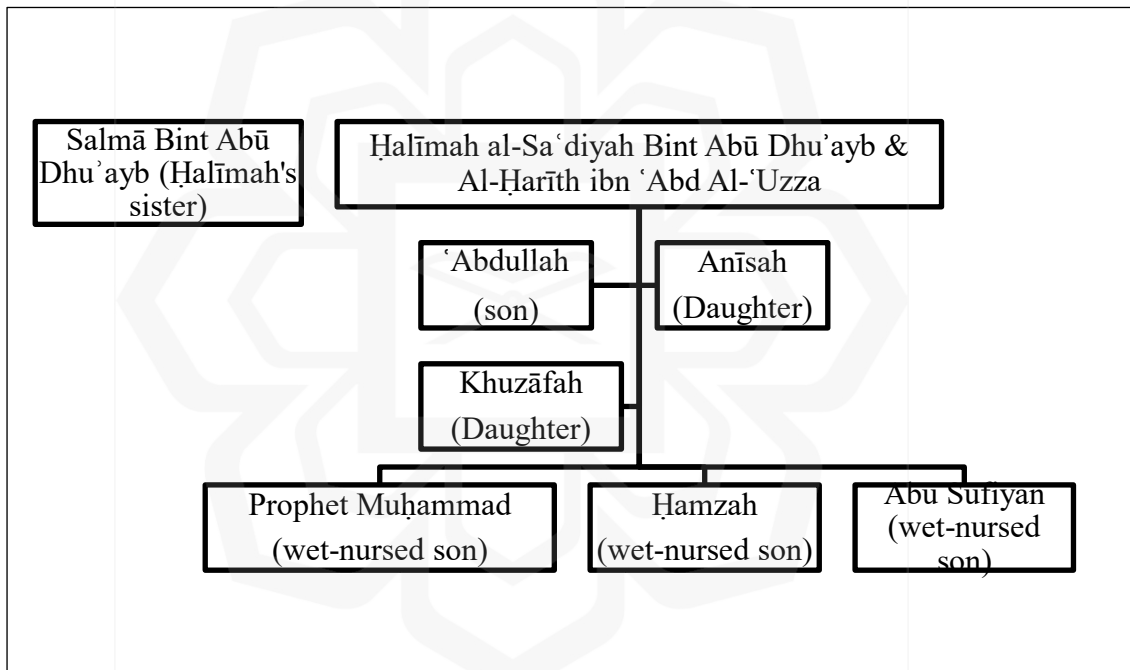


Figure 3.3 Ḥalīmah Lineage²⁷⁴

²⁷² Al-Baihaqī. 131-148, 183 & 184.

²⁷³ Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Abī al-Karam Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Karīm ibn ‘Abd al-Wāhid Al-Shaybānī, *Asad Al-Ghābah Fī Ma’rifat Al-Ṣaḥābah*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad Mu’awwiḍ and ‘Ādil Aḥmad ‘Abd Al-Mawjūd, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1994).

²⁷⁴ Derived from Zainol Abidin and Wan Yusoff, “A Critical Need for Breastmilk Collection Centres for High-Risk Premature Babies.”

From the Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib side, as seen in section 3.3.3(a) regarding the *ahādīth* on how the Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, dealt with milk kinship, it is evident that milk kinship prohibited marriage between him and the children of his milk siblings. Ḥamzah was one of the sons of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and Hālah bint Wahb ibn ‘Abd Manāf ibn Zuhrah ibn Kilāb (هالة بنت وهب بن عبد مناف بن زهرة بن كلاب).²⁷⁵ Although Ḥamzah was technically the Prophet’s uncle, he was also his elder brother through nursing. He had two wives: Salmā bint ‘Umays ibn Ma‘ad ibn Taym ibn Mālik ibn Qahāfah ibn Khath‘am (سلمى بنت عميس بن معد بن تميم بن مالك بن قحافة بن خثعم)²⁷⁶ and Khawlah bint Qays ibn Qahd ibn Qays ibn Tha‘labah ibn ‘Ubayd ibn Tha‘labah ibn Ghanam ibn Mālik ibn al-Nujār (خولة بنت قيس بن قهد بن قيس بن ثعلبة بن عبيد بن ثعلبة بن غنم بن مالك بن النجار).²⁷⁷ This means that Ḥamzah’s wives would be considered the Prophet’s brother’s wives other than his aunts, and Ḥamzah’s children would be considered the Prophet’s milk nieces and nephews but also his cousins by genealogy.

To provide a fairer in description of Ḥamzah’s family tree, this study found that Ḥamzah had five children and they were: Umāmah, ‘Umārah, Fāṭimah, Amatullah and Ya‘lā. There were also mentioned that Ḥamzah had more than five children, with the addition of two names: ‘Ā’ishah and Salmā. However, there is no supporting evidence for this claim apart from these two books.²⁷⁸

In *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, it is stated that Umāmah was the daughter of Ḥamzah, and her mother was Salmā bint ‘Umays ibn Ma‘ad ibn Taym ibn Mālik ibn Qahāfah ibn Khath‘am.²⁷⁹ The author of the book also highlighted that Umāmah was also known as ‘Amārah Bint Ḥamzah.²⁸⁰ Only Umāmah was born from the marriage of Ḥamzah and Salmā. The rest, the other children were the result of marriage to Khawlah.

In Sunnah’s book by al-Ṭabrānī, *al-Mu‘jam Al-Kabīr*, Book 24, it is mentioned that Ḥamzah’s daughter was Fāṭimah, often called Umm al-Faḍl (أُمُّ الْفَضْلِ),²⁸¹ and some

²⁷⁵ Al-Naisābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Vol. 4. 1934. Ḥadīth No. 2489.

²⁷⁶ Ibn Sa‘d, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, 1990. Vol. 8. 39.

²⁷⁷ Ibn Sa‘d. Vol. 8. 327.

²⁷⁸ Muḥammad Ibn ‘Alī Ibn Ādam Ibn Mūsā Al-Itiyūbī Al-Wallawī, ed., *Al-Baḥr Al-Muḥīṭ Al-Thajāj Fī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Imām Muslim Bin Al-Ḥujāj*, 1st ed. (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dār Ibn Al-Jūzī, 2019). Vol. 25. 602. Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ādam ibn Mūsā al-Itiyūbī Al-Wallawī, *Sharḥ Sunan Al-Nasā’ī*, 1st ed. (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dār Al-Ma‘ārij Al-Dawliyyah, 2014). Vol. 2. 673.

²⁷⁹ Ibn Sa‘d, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, 1990. Vol. 8. 39.

²⁸⁰ Ibn Sa‘d. Vol. 8. 125.

²⁸¹ Al-Ṭabrānī, *Al-Mu‘jam Al-Kabīr*. Book 24. 353.

sources say her name was Umāmah or ‘Amārah.²⁸² This claims were supported by many others as well.²⁸³ Ibn Ḥajar Al-‘Asqalānī, in his explanation of the *ḥadīth* on the chapter regarding silk for women in his book, *Fatḥh al-Bārī*, also mentions the name Fāṭimah bint Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib.²⁸⁴ However, in another Sunnah book, it is mentioned that Fāṭimah was also known as Umm Hānī’.²⁸⁵ The name Fāṭimah bint Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib was included among the al-Fawāṭim (الفواطم) mentioned in many books. The al-Fawāṭim included Fāṭimah bint Rasūlullah, Fāṭimah bint Asad ibn Hāshim (the mother of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib), and Fāṭimah bint Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib.²⁸⁶ Another Fāṭimah was the wife of ‘Aqīl ibn Abī Ṭālib.²⁸⁷

Amatullah bint Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib (أُمَّةُ اللَّهِ بِنْتُ حَمَزَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ) also known as Umm al-Faḍl (the same nickname as Fāṭimah as there were many claims of Ḥamzah’s children). Some sources suggested that Amatullah was another name for Umāmah. It was possibly that she was her sister. If she was someone else, then perhaps she might have died young, as she was not mentioned in genealogical records, so she was briefly included in this discussion.²⁸⁸

²⁸² Badru al-Din Abū Muḥammad Maḥmūd Ibn Aḥmad Al-‘Ainī, *Umdat Al-Qārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār al-Fikr, 1970). Vol. 2. 710. See also Abū al-Qāsim Khalafu ibn ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Mas‘ūd Ibn Bashkuwāl Al-Khazraji, *Ghawāmiḍ Al-Asmā’ Al-Mubhamāt Al-Wāqī‘ah Fī Mutūn Al-Aḥādīth Al-Musnadah*, ed. ‘Azzu al-Dīn ‘Alī Al-Sayyid and Muḥammad Kamāl Al-Dīn, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1987). Vol. 17. 264.

²⁸³ Abū al-Fatḥh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusīn ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Barīdah Al-Mūṣilī Al-Azdī, *Asmā’ Man Ya‘rifu Bikunniyyatihi*, ed. Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Iqbāl, 1st ed. (India: Al-Dār Al-Salafīyah, 1989). 68. No. 164. Abū Na‘īm Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ishāq ibn Mūsā ibn Mahrān Al-Aṣbahānī, *Ma‘rifah Al-Ṣaḥābah*, ed. ‘Ādil ibn Yūsuf Al-‘Azāzī, 1st ed. (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dār Al-Waṭan Lilnasyar, 1998). Vol.6. 3409.

²⁸⁴ Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥajar Al-‘Asqalānī, *Fatḥh Al-Bārī Bi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1379). Vol. 10. 297.

²⁸⁵ Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Al-Ghinā Ibn ‘Alī Ibn Bashār Ibn Marwān Al-Azdī, *Al-Ghawāmiḍ Wa Al-Mubhamāt Fi Al-Ḥadīth Al-Nabawī*, ed. Ḥamzah Abū Al-Fatḥh Ibn Ḥusīn Qāsim Muḥammad Al-Na‘īmī, 1st ed. (Dār Al-Manārah, 2000). 175. No. 61.

²⁸⁶ Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Azharī Abū Mansūr, *Tahdhīb Al-Lughah*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Iwaḍ Mar‘ib, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 2001). Vol. 13. 254. Al-Azdī, *Al-Ghawāmiḍ Wa Al-Mubhamāt Fi Al-Ḥadīth Al-Nabawī*. Vol. 1. 428-430.

²⁸⁷ Abū Aḥmad Muḥammad ‘Abdullah Al-‘Azāmī Al-Ḍiyā’, *Al-Jāmi‘ Al-Kāmil Fī Al-Ḥadīth Al-Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Shāmil Al-Murattab ‘Alā Abwāb Al-Fiqh*, 1st ed. (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dār Al-Salām Lilnashar Wa Al-Tauzī’, 2016). Vol. 12. 81. Al-‘Asqalānī, *Fatḥh Al-Bārī Bi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*. Vol. 10. 298.

²⁸⁸ Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah Fī Tamyīz Al-Ṣaḥābah*, ed. ‘Ādil Aḥmad ‘Abd Al-Mawjūd and ‘Alī Muḥammad Mu‘awwiḍ, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1994). Vol. 8. 41. Al-Wallawī, *Al-Baḥr Al-Muḥīṭ Al-Thajāj Fī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Imām Muslim Bin Al-Hujāj*. Vol. 25. 602.

Ya‘lā ibn Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib was one of Ḥamzah’s sons who was mentioned in historical records. None of Ḥamzah’s other children had descendants except for Ya‘lā, who had five sons: ‘Amārah, al-Faḍl, al-Zubayr, ‘Aqīl, and Muḥammad,²⁸⁹ all of whom died without leaving children. As a result, Ḥamzah’s lineage did not continue.²⁹⁰

This indicates that the lineage of both Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, and Ḥamzah was prohibited for marriage to each other due to their milk kinship, as they were both wet nursed by Thuwaybah and Ḥalīmah al-Sa‘diyah and extended to their lineage as well.

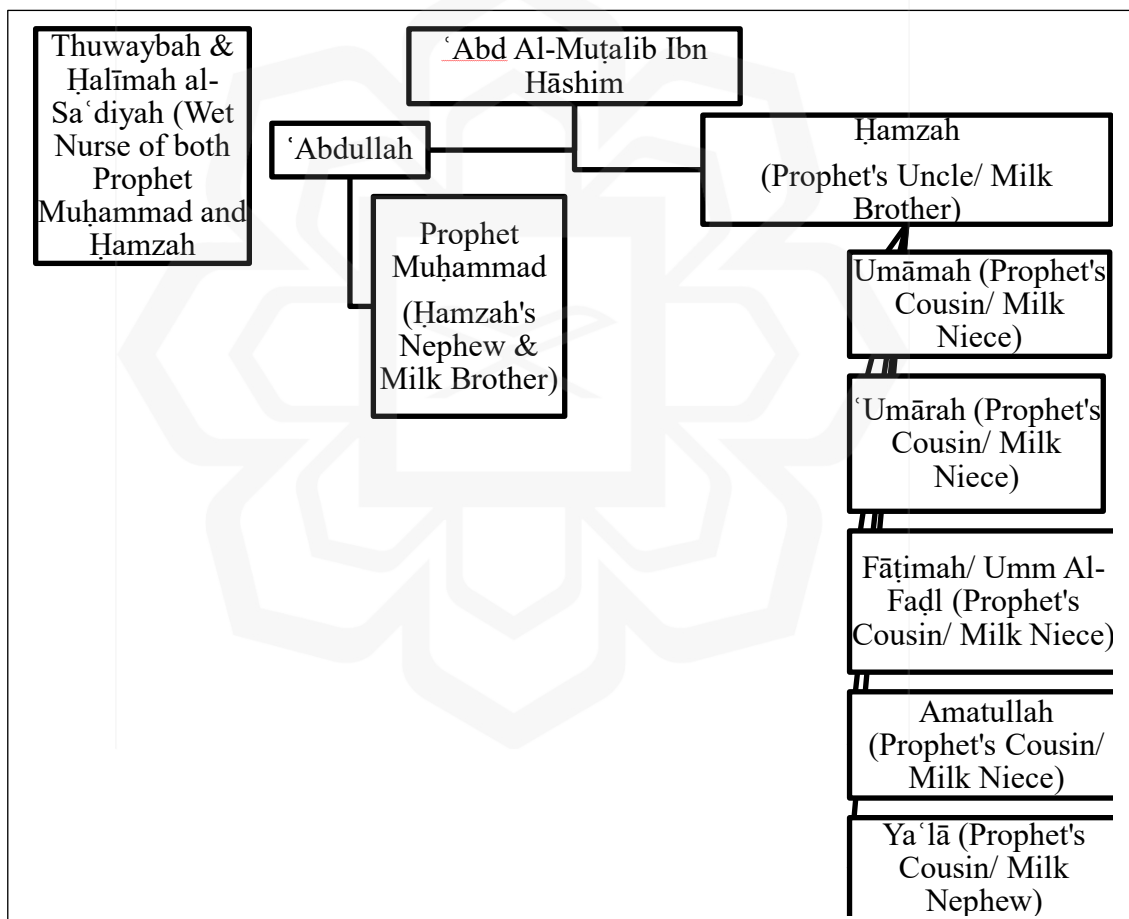


Figure 3.4 Milk kinship between Ḥamzah and Prophet Muḥammad

²⁸⁹ Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah Fī Tamyīz Al-Ṣaḥābah*. Vol. 6. 546.

²⁹⁰ Abū Al-Ḥasan ‘Alī Ibn Abī Al-Karīm Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd Al-Karīm Ibn ‘Abd Al-Qāhid Al-Shaybānī, *Asad Al-Ghābah Fī Ma‘rifah Al-Ṣaḥābah*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad Mu‘awwiḍ and ‘Ādil Aḥmad ‘Abd Al-Mawjūd, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār Al-Kutub Al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1994). Vol. 5. 487. No. 5649. Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah Fī Tamyīz Al-Ṣaḥābah*. Vol. 6. 246.

Abū Sufiyān (أبو سفيان بن الحارث بن عبد المطلب) was the Prophet's cousin and milk brother under the wet nursing lineage of Ḥalimah al-Sa'diyah. His was also known as al-Mughīrah (المغيرة).²⁹¹

His father al-Ḥārith, was the son of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib and his wife, Samrā bint Jundub ibn Hujayr ibn Ri'ab ibn Ḥabīb ibn Suwā'ah ibn 'Āmir ibn Ṣa'sa'ah ibn Mu'āwiyah.²⁹² Abū Sufiyān's mother was Ghaziyyah bint Qays ibn Ṭarīf ibn 'Abd al-'Uzzā ibn 'Āmirah ibn 'Amīrah ibn Wadī'ah ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Fahr (غزية بنت قيس بن طريف بن عبد العزى بن عامرة بن عميرة بن وديعة بن الحارث بن فهر).²⁹³

Abū Sufiyān's wives were Jumānah bint Abī Ṭālib, Faqmah bint Hamām, Umm 'Amrū bint al-Muqawwim and Umm Walad. Their full names were: Jumānah bint Abī Ṭālib ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim ibn 'Abd Manāf ibn Qussā (جمانة بنت أبي طالب بن عبد المطلب بن هاشم بن عبد مناف بن قصي),²⁹⁴ Faqmah bint Hamām ibn al-Arqam al-Asadiyyah (فقمة بنت همام بن الأرقم الأسدية)²⁹⁵ or Faghmah bint Hamām ibn al-Afqam ibn Abī 'Amrū ibn Zuwaylim ibn Ja'il ibn Dahmān ibn Naṣr ibn Mu'āwiyah (فغمة بنت همام بن الأفقم بن أبي عمرو بن طويل بن جعيل بن دهمان بن نصر بن معاوية),²⁹⁶ Umm 'Amr bint al-Muqawwim ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (أم عمرو بنت المقوم بن عبد المطلب),²⁹⁷ and Umm Walad.²⁹⁸

Abū Sufiyān's children were: Ja'far ibn Abī Sufiyān (Jumānah's son), 'Abdullah ibn Abī Sufiyān (Faqmah's son)²⁹⁹, 'Ātikah bint Abī Sufiyān (the daughter of Umm 'Amrū and the wife of Mu'attib bin Abī Lahab),³⁰⁰ Ḥumaydah bint Abī Sufiyān.³⁰¹ and Ḥafṣah (Jumānah's daughter), Umayyah (Umm Walad's daughter) and Umm Kulthūm.³⁰²

²⁹¹ Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, 1990. Vol. 4. 36.

²⁹² Al-Saqā, Al-Abyārī, and Al-Shalbī, *Al-Sīrah Al-Nabawiyyah Li-Ibnu Hishām*. Vol. 1. 100.

²⁹³ Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, 1990. Vol. 4. 33-35.

²⁹⁴ Ibn Sa'd. Vol. 4. 37.

²⁹⁵ Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah Fī Tamyīz Al-Ṣaḥābah*. Vol. 4. 101.

²⁹⁶ Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, 1990. Vol. 4. 37.

²⁹⁷ Ibn Sa'd. Vol. 8. 40.

²⁹⁸ Ibn Sa'd. Vol. 4. 37-49.

²⁹⁹ It is said that 'Abdullah is Abū al-Hayyāj in Ibn Sa'd. Vol.4. 37.

³⁰⁰ Shihāb Al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakar ibn 'Abd al-Malik Al-Qaṣṭalānī al-Qutaibī al-Misrī Abū al-Abbās, *Al-Mawāhib Al-Laduniyyah Bil-Minḥ Al-Muhammadiyyah*, 1st ed. (Al-Qāhirah, Egypt: Al-Maktabah al-Taufiqiyyah, 2010). Vol. 1. 374. Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, 1990. Vol. 8. 40.

³⁰¹ Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, 1990. Vol. 4. 45. Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, 1968. Vol. 5. 318.

³⁰² Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, 1990. Vol. 4. 37-49.

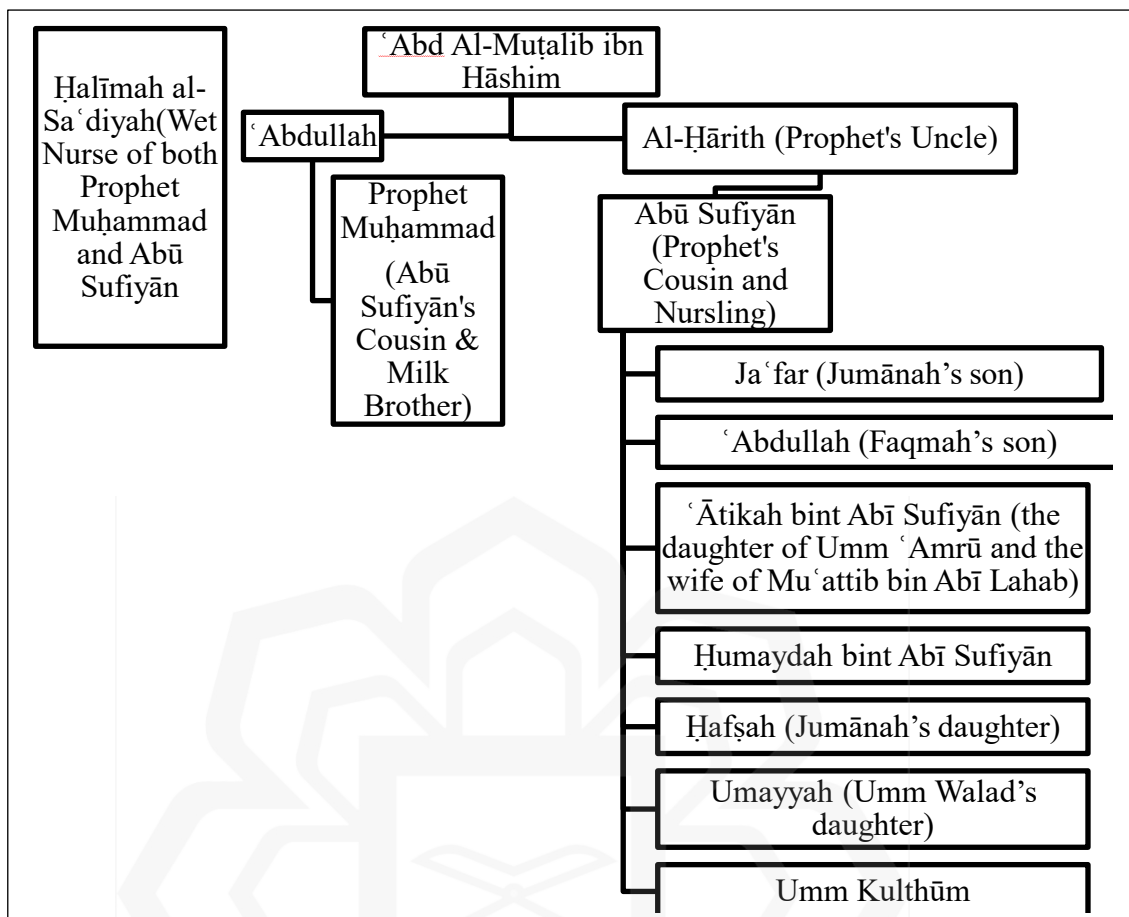


Figure 3.5 Milk kinship between Abū Sufiyān and Prophet Muḥammad

Abū Sufiyān was friendly with the Prophet, peace be upon him, even at first, he became hostile to him and satirized him. The Prophet met him, may God bless him and grant him peace, in al-Abwa and Abū Sufiyān converted to Islam before he entered Mecca.³⁰³

³⁰³ Al-Zarqānī, *Sharḥ Al-Zarqāni 'Alā Al-Mawāhib Al-Laduniyyah Bi Al-Miniḥ Al-Muḥammadiyyah*. Vol. 3. 400.

Other women who were said to have breastfed the Prophet³⁰⁴ were from *Banī Sa'd* besides Ḥalīmah bint Abī Dhu'aīb,³⁰⁵ Khawlah bint al-Mundhir,³⁰⁶ Umm Aiman,³⁰⁷ Umm Farwah, and three women from *Banī Sulaym*.³⁰⁸

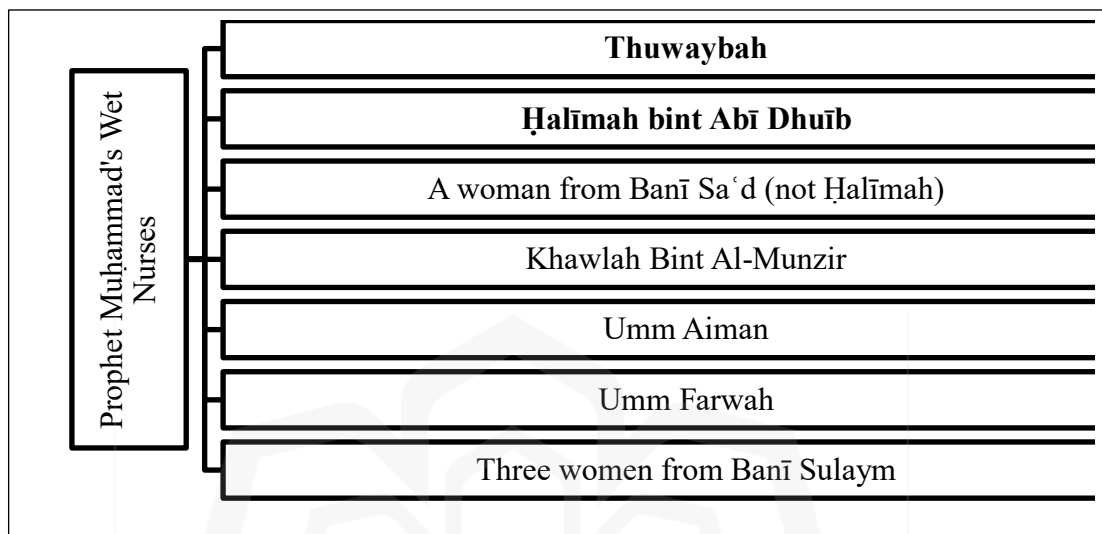


Figure 3.6 Prophet's Wet Nurses³⁰⁹

However, only Ḥalīmah al-Sa'diyah and Thuwaybah were mentioned in other books of Islamic history (*sīrah*) such as book by *al-Zarqānī*, *al-Jūziyyah*, and *Shihāb al-Dīn*, as his wet nurses, perhaps because they had breastfed longer. Thus, the bond of milk kinship was established.³¹⁰

³⁰⁴ Zainol Abidin and Wan Yusoff, "A Critical Need for Breastmilk Collection Centres for High-Risk Premature Babies."

³⁰⁵ Other woman from Banī Sa'd are she is not Ḥalīmah. Al-Baihaqī, *Dalāil Al-Nubuwwah Wa Ma'rifah Ahwāl Šāhib Al-Sharī'ah*. 131.

³⁰⁶ She was Umm Burdah al-Anṣāriyyah: Some historians mentioned that she breastfed the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, and the correct view is that she breastfed his son Ibrahim, as Ibn Sa'ad mentioned. Al-Baihaqī. 131.

³⁰⁷ It was known that she was one of caregiver, not as wet nurse. Al-Baihaqī. 131.

³⁰⁸ Al-Qurtūbī said: The Prophet, may God's prayers and Peace Be Upon Him, passed by three women from Banī Sulaym, and they breastfed him. Al-Baihaqī. 131.

³⁰⁹ Derived from Zainol Abidin and Wan Yusoff, "A Critical Need for Breastmilk Collection Centres for High-Risk Premature Babies."

³¹⁰ Al-Zarqānī, *Sharḥ Al-Zarqānī 'Alā Al-Mawāhib Al-Laduniyyah Bi Al-Miniḥ Al-Muḥammadiyyah*; Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Ayyūb ibn Sa'd Shamsu al-Dīn ibn al-Qayyim Al-Jūziyyah, *Zād Al-Ma'ād Fī Hudā Khayr Al-'Ibād*, 27th ed. (Beirut, Lubnan: Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 1994); Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakar ibn 'Abd al-Malik Al-Qastālānī al-Qutaibī al-Misrī Abū al-Abbās, *Al-Mawāhib Al-Laduniyyah Bil-Miniḥ Al-Muḥammadiyyah*.

3.5 RESPONSIBILITIES BORNE OF MILK KINSHIP

From the Qur'anic verses mentioned in the above section, it can be concluded that *al-Qur'an* positions milk mother as equal to birth mother. Therefore, it is the obligation of those being breastfed by the wet nurses to care for them; to treat them with kindness; help them in their times of need; and to do good for them. This Qur'anic injunction is further supported by many authentic *aḥādīth* (*ṣaḥīḥ aḥādīth*). These *aḥādīth* demonstrated how to do good to and to care for wet nurses and her relatives. To summarize from the *aḥādīth*, Muslims are enjoined to know their wet nursing relatives and be updated on the lineage of milk kinship relatives; to inform others of the *maḥram* relationship formed by wet nursing; to honor wet nursing relatives; and to maintain the relationship by constant visitation. Moreover, historical records demonstrated the honor, respect, gratitude, care, compassion, generosity, and compassion given by Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, towards his milk mothers and milk relatives.

The prophetic tradition of looking after milk kinship relationships has stretched far into history. For example, Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, took care of his milk mother Ḥalīmah which conveys that milk mothers and milk relatives should be taken care for.³¹¹ However, this practice has been largely forgotten in modern society. The Sunnah of the Prophet conveyed that assisting milk kinship relatives, including milk sons and daughters as well as milk siblings, is the manifestation of milk kinship relationship maintenance.³¹² But it is frequently ignored nowadays.

The Prophet, peace be upon him, was well informed about his wives' milk kinship relatives. Therefore, in contemporary times, it is important to have well-kept records and documents if milk kinship relationship is to be maintained. If detailed records were kept, it will facilitate reducing the relationship gap between a person and his/her milk family relatives in the future. The lack of comprehensive records may be considered as equal to breaking this familial bond. Extensive systematic documentation, including family trees or better family record keeping at a national as well as household level, can help future generations to continue milk kinship relationships for all time to

³¹¹ Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, 1990. Vol. 1. 92. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'Arab*. 406.

³¹² Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, 1990. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'Arab*. See also previous 3.3.3 *Ḥadīth* on How Prophet Muḥammad, Peace Be Upon Him, Deals with Relationship with Milk Kinship. Al-Saqā, Al-Abyāri, and Al-Shalbī, *Al-Sīrah Al-Nabawiyyah Li-Ibnu Hishām*. Vol. 2. 458

come. Also, frequent visiting and caring for one's milk kinship relatives should be a common practice in Muslim society to strengthen family ties. Encouraging frequent contact and mutual support among milk kinship families will revive the Sunnah of the Prophet and traditional values associated with these relationships.

Indeed, Islamic teachings provide detailed guidelines and prohibitions within milk kinship, such as the position of milk mothers and the prohibition of marriage between milk siblings and relatives. These regulations are designed to preserve the sanctity of milk kinship relationships. Yet there is a need for increased awareness of this practice, currently lacking in modern day society, as they are not generally found to be emphasized. This leads to the possibility of accidental sinning. However, it should be noted that the wet nurse is not responsible to provide financial support for her milk sons and daughters; the milk sons and daughters have no right to inherit her wealth and properties; she cannot be a witness in the court of law for or against her milk sons and daughters.

3.6 THE WISDOM OF WET NURSING KINGHIP

Wet nursing establishes mahram relationship between a person and his/her wet nurses and their husbands and relatives. This means that, the consensus by the Muslim scholars, wet nursing siblings and relatives are allowed to spend time together and mingle freely within the *Sharī'ah* boundaries; and to accompany each other to perform hajj and umrah or to go on long travel together.³¹³ However, there are disagreements among scholars on the rights on inheritance, financial maintenance, forfeiting of properties because of stealing from wet nursing relatives; paying penalties for punishment for slander; and paying zakat for the milk mother and milk relatives.³¹⁴ Majority of scholars agreed on inheritance, financial maintenance, and being a witness. A person is not required to bear responsibility on providing financial support for his wet nurse who breastfed him,

³¹³ Jamāl Al-Din, Muḥammad Ṭāhir Bin 'Alī Al-Ṣadīqī. *Majma' Bahār Al-Anwār Fī Gharāib Al-Tanzīl Wa Lataif Al-Akhbar*. Maṭba' Majlis Dāirah Al-Ma'ārif Al-'Uthmaniyyah. 3rd Ed., Vol. 4, 1968. 353. Al-Isnawī, Jamāl Al-Dīn 'Abd Al-Raḥim, *Al-Muhimmāt fī Sharḥi Al-Rauḍah Wa Al-Rāfi'ī*. Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm. 1st Ed., Vol. 5, 2009. 313.

³¹⁴ Al-Isnawī, Jamāl Al-Dīn 'Abd Al-Raḥim, *Al-Muhimmāt fī Sharḥi Al-Rauḍah Wa Al-Rāfi'ī*. Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm. 1st Ed., Vol. 5, 2009. 102. Ibid: Vol. 9, 531-532.

but instead a person is supposed to give charity with kindness as manifestation of gratitude for providing him life sustaining nourishment.³¹⁵

One of the best aspects of *Sharī'ah* is that milk sons and daughters do not inherit the wealth and properties of their wet nurses. If they could inherit, a mother would have refrained from wet nursing a child to prevent the child from inheriting her wealth and vice versa. Likewise with alimony, alimony is not obligatory for wet nurses and milk fathers. This is the advantage of wet nursing that does not burden anyone to wet nurse someone else's child.

Even though financial maintenance is not required, a wage can be given according to the father's ability to the breastfeeding mothers³¹⁶ as Allah says in *al-Qur'ān*:

﴿ فَإِنْ أَرْضَعْنَ لَكُمْ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ ﴾

Translation: And if they breastfeed for you, then give them their payment.³¹⁷

In addition, there other advantages of wet nursing such as to provide the essential nourishment to save the lives of premature babies; help mothers who have insufficient supply of breast milk but opt to provide exclusive breast milk for their babies; assist mothers who have to go to work or further their studies; fulfil the rights of every baby to have breast milk when his/her own mother is unable to breastfeed because of sicknesses or the death of the mother; and to help adoptive parents to form a *maḥram* relationship with their adoptive sons and daughters.

³¹⁵ Mufti Samahah Dr. Nūh 'Ali Salman, موسوعة الفقهاء السابقين (Encyclopedia of Former Jurists). Fatwa No. 2424. 2012. <https://www.aliftaa.jo/Question3.aspx?QuestionId=2424#.Yz5AmXZBzIU> Accessed on 6/10/2022.

³¹⁶ Muhammad Asad. The Message of The Quran translated and explained by Muhammad Asad. Vol. 1. Spain: Dar Al-Andalus, n.d. 797.

³¹⁷ Sūrah al-Ṭalaq: 6.

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter explained that maintaining wet nursing kinship in both traditional and contemporary contexts involves a blend of recognition, documentation, and social practices. From the analysis of Islamic history, it can be concluded that the recognition and identification of milk kinship was usually based on oral testimony and community acknowledgment. Elders or family members would attest to breastfeeding relationships, and the community would accept these relationships as valid without formal records. The social fabric of traditional societies incorporated these kinship bonds seamlessly, with families honoring and respecting these relationships based on mutual understanding.

Furthermore, this chapter highlighted that the Sunnah of keeping all involved informed about their milk relatives and their lineage. In modern times when strangers supply their breast milk to babies who live far away, formal documentation has become increasingly important, especially in legal and social contexts. This documentation may include certificates or official records that indicate the breastfeeding relationship, often provided by medical professionals or community leaders. These formal records help to establish and substantiate milk kinship in a manner that aligns with contemporary legal frameworks. In some cases, legal declarations might be necessary to formalize milk kinship for purposes such as marriage prohibitions or inheritance rights. Healthcare providers may also keep records of breastfeeding relationships, which can be crucial for health-related decisions or legal issues.

Additionally, this chapter exposed the Prophetic Sunnah on dealing with milk family relatives. Recognizing milk siblings and maintaining respectful and supportive relationships are key aspects of integrating wet nursing kinship into everyday life. Families are encouraged to acknowledge these relationships by ensuring that milk siblings and their extended kin are treated with the same respect and consideration as biological siblings. This includes integrating them into family events and gatherings, celebrating familial milestones, and observing the social obligations associated with milk kinship. Social obligations between milk siblings and their families often mirror those of biological kin, encompassing responsibilities such as providing support during times of need and participating in familial duties. Families must also navigate marriage

and family planning decisions while respecting the boundaries established by milk kinship rules.

This chapter emphasized guidance from *al-Qur'ān*, al-Sunnah, and historical records to deal with wet nursing kinship in communities where wet nursing kinship relationships are integrated into daily practices. The expression of milk kinship relationship can include participating in cultural and religious ceremonies and passing down knowledge about its significance to younger generations. It can be difficult to find a balance between upholding customary rituals and complying with modern legal and social frameworks, as it requires adjustment while upholding cultural reverence.

Ultimately, maintaining wet nursing kinship in practice necessitates a combination of respecting traditional customs and accommodating contemporary requirements. Recognizing and recording these connections aids in preserving the familial and societal bonds formed through breastfeeding, ensuring that these significant kinship ties continue to receive respect and appreciation in both traditional and modern settings.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PRACTICE OF PROVIDING AND SEEKING WET NURSING SERVICES IN MALAYSIA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter four provides an explication of the practice of providing and seeking wet nursing services among Malaysian Muslims. This chapter serves as a foundational backdrop to the intricate dynamics and multifaceted aspects surrounding wet nursing within this cultural context. To begin, it furnishes essential demographic data about both wet nurses and biological mothers involved in these arrangements, shedding light on the individuals who play pivotal roles in this practice.

In addition, chapter four explores the key factors that impact wet nurses' decision to provide their services as well as the reasons why biological mothers sought the service. These variables include many different aspects, such as cultural, family, and personal aspects.

This chapter also provides insightful information about the viewpoints and conceptions of wet nurses and biological mothers regarding wet nursing. It explores their important facets, including the nature of wet nursing, how these services are documented, the question of compensation or salaries, the methods used to find nursing children, the different breastfeeding techniques used, and the ages of the children participating in these arrangements. By examining these components, chapter four provides a foundation upon which to understand the intricate world of wet nursing among Malaysian Muslims.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF WET NURSES AND BIOLOGICAL MOTHERS

This part of the discussion presented the participants' demographic composition. Data was collected between September 2022 and October 2023 through a combination of in-person and virtual interviews, involving twelve Malaysian women, including both biological mothers and wet nurses. The participants were selected based on the study's

criteria, including the fact that the wet nurses had experienced nursing babies or the biological mother who had sought the wet nurse's services for the babies. Demographic data shall be presented for wet nurses and biological mothers. The data disclosed the participants' age, level of education, income, and place of living, with an age range spanning from 22 to 52 years old. Concerning qualifications, the Lower Certificate of Education (SRP—Sijil Rendah Pelajaran) was held by just one wet nurse participant. A majority comprising ten out of twelve participants holding a bachelor's level. In addition, a master's degree was obtained by one biological mother. The participants' income levels displayed variation, ranging from RM2,000 to RM9,999, with the majority falling within this range. Notably, one participant who served as both a wet nurse and a biological mother reported an income exceeding RM10,000. Regarding their places of residence, the majority of both wet nurses and biological mothers lived in Selangor and Perak (4 participants in each state), while the remaining participants were from Kedah (2 participants), Pulau Pinang (1 participant), and Kuala Lumpur (1 participant). This geographic diversity reflects regional variations in cultural influences on wet nursing practices. With respect to marital status, most of the participants (11 participants) were married and only one was divorced. The demographic information provided has enabled an understanding of individuals and their social background, which was particularly important for analyzing perceptions and experiences relating to breastfeeding. In the following section, all detailed information was discussed.

Table 4.1 Demographic Data

| Participant | Age | Educational Qualifications | Income (RM) | Residence | Marital Status |
|--------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| WN1 | 23 | Bachelor | 2,000-5,000 | Pulau Pinang | Married |
| WN2 | 35 | Bachelor | 5,000 | Kedah | Married |
| WN3 | 44 | Bachelor | 2,000-5,000 | Perak | Married |
| WN4 | 34 | Bachelor | 5,000 and above | Selangor | Married |
| WN5 | 65 | SRP | 10,000 | Perak | Married |
| WN6 | 49 | Bachelor | None | Selangor | Married |
| WN7/BM6 | 48 | Bachelor | 10,000 | Selangor | Married |
| BM1 | 23 | Bachelor | 1,800 | Kedah | Divorced |
| BM2 | 38 | Bachelor | None | Selangor | Married |
| BM3 | 52 | Bachelor | 10,000 | Perak | Married |
| BM4 | 37 | Bachelor | 5,000 | Perak | Married |
| BM5 | 34 | Master | 5,000 | Kuala Lumpur | Married |

4.3 WET NURSING EXPERIENCES OF THE WET NURSES

The lived experiences of the wet nurses were explored and analyzed from multiple dimensions. This was done to get a glimpse of what was happening in Malaysia regarding wet nursing services offered by wet nurses through the experiences of the participants in this study. Firstly, this section presents the understanding of the wet nurses on the concept of wet nursing and its impact from the Islamic perspective. It was significant to assess their understanding for their practices will be founded on this understanding. Secondly, the wet nurses' understanding of the importance of documentation and records is presented. The purpose of delving into their understanding of documentation was to uncover their practices to ensure that they had

the evidence for wet nursing for future reference by all stakeholders. Thirdly, factors influencing the decision to be a wet nurse are presented. Wet nurses had various reasons why do they offered to share their breast milk or to breast feed other women's babies. The reasons mostly depended on personal, family dynamic or society's demands. Finally, this study presents the recruitment methods used by wet nurses to get babies; the feeding method; and the age and duration of breast milk feeding.

In conclusion, the reasons that drive wet nurses to pursue wet nursing opportunities were influenced by the complex interaction of cultural beliefs, personal requirements, and family backing. Grasping these motivations provides a better understanding of the intricate mechanisms involved in wet nursing within the Malaysian Muslim community.

4.3.1 Understanding of Wet Nursing

A wide range of variables influenced the practice of wet nursing, from the way in which wet nurses documented their services and their expectations for remuneration or compensation, to how they viewed their position and the notion of milk kinship. Wet nurses' understanding of their work might differ depending on personal, familial, and other reasons. Frequently, this involved nursing to foster and nurture kinship and familial ties. Wet nursing service documentation ranged from thorough record-keeping too little to non-existent paperwork. Different wet nurses have different compensation policies; some gave their services without charge, while others demanded payment. In addition, social media, acquaintances, and family connections may be used to find newborns for wet nurses. Together, these varied components added to the complex world of wet nursing, highlighting the variety and complexity of dynamics and reasons that support this age-old practice.

4.3.1.1 Understanding of Wet Nursing by Wet Nurses

The wet nurses' responses provided data indicating that their comprehension of the concepts of breastfeeding and milk kinship was quite elementary. Although their definitions differed, they all gave an idea of how wet nurses perceived their function and methods. The definition of wet nursing, as expressed by the wet nurses themselves,

was the practice of nursing someone else's baby, as opposed to their own biological child. They stated that wet nursing meant "...breastfeeding other people's children..." (WN1-WN7/BM6). Some of them mentioned that they must not be their biological children; "... doesn't mean... we gave birth to the child..." (WN1), "a child who is not a biological child," (WN3-WN4), and "apart from the biological mother" (WN7). This means all of them agreed that wet nursing involves breastfeeding other women's babies.

Although there were variations in the requirements to qualify as "wet nursing," such as the number of times a whole breastfeeding session exceeded three or five, the underlying concept remained the same (WN3, WN4, & WN7). Furthermore, responses indicated that the wet nurses were aware that the religious component of wet nursing was impacted by Islamic teachings. They believed wet nursing must fulfil the condition, "...fulfilment of... condition, the condition... More than 5 times...full breastfeeding ha... Okay" (WN3) and "If it's just once, it doesn't count. If in Islam..." (WN7). These specific answers showed that some wet nurses believed wet nursing practices must abide by Islamic rules.

Even though they were aware of the conditions set by Islam on the establishment of wet nursing kinship, however some of them lacked knowledge about the consequences of wet nursing. When asked about the permissibility of marriage between milk siblings, WN3 said that it is permissible but not advisable to marry milk siblings, "like cousins...it is not nice to marry cousins". Whereas WN7/BM6 was not sure about the marriage between milk siblings. Table 4.2 provides a summary of wet nurses' understanding of the definition of wet nursing

Table 4.2 Summary of Wet Nurse's Understanding of Wet Nursing's Definition

| Wet Nurse | Understanding of Wet Nursing |
|-----------|---|
| WN1 | A person who breastfeeds others' children and builds a relationship. |
| WN2 | A mother who provides her milk to another child. Fulfilling the concept of wet nursing requires more than five instances of breastfeeding. |
| WN3 | A woman willing to breastfeed someone else's child, either directly or through expressed milk. The concept is fulfilled with more than five instances of breastfeeding. |
| WN4 | A person who breastfeeding a child who is not biologically hers, with the requirement of more than three or five instances of full breastfeeding. |
| WN5 | A woman who breastfeeds other people's children, distinct from her biological offspring. |
| WN6 | A woman providing milk to a child who is not her own. |
| WN7/BM6 | A woman can be considered a wet nurse if she breastfeeds a child under two years old multiple times based on Islamic guidelines. |

In conclusion, the development of milk kinship/*maḥram* connections was impacted by the participants' extremely minimal knowledge of wet nursing. This demonstrated a lack of knowledge about the key conditions, including the age of the child, the frequency of full breastfeeding, the need for consent from all relevant parties (the biological mother, the father, the wet nurse, and the wet nurse's husband; each required consent and evidence), and the necessity of appropriate documentation, record-keeping, and reliable witnesses. Comprehending these perspectives was necessary to appreciate the practices of wet nursing and its significance across many cultural contexts. These results laid the groundwork for further investigations into the meaning and function of milk kinship and wet nurses in countries where the practice of wet nursing is still prevalent.

4.3.1.2 Understanding of Documentation of Wet Nursing Services

There was a variation in the participants' comprehension of documentation of wet nursing and milk kinship. Some wet nurses had limited records of milk expression and distribution, while others had no documentation at all. All wet nurse participants had no detailed documentation regarding their wet nursing services.

There was no record at all to document the formation of milk kinship, or the methods used to provide the breast milk for WN1, WN2, WN4, WN5, WN6, and WN7/BM6. This implied that the wet nurses in question did not actively participate in strengthening the bond of milk kinship or keeping official records about it. This may also convey that their main attention was on the actual practice of wet nursing and the bonds they developed with the children they looked after. In response to the enquiry, some of them revealed their documenting practices.

One participant stated that *"Nothing's being documented. It just... Use your mouth. It's just the way it was"* (WN1). WN1 expressed a basic understanding of the documentation of wet nursing services, highlighting a preference for verbal communication over formal documentation. While WN5 simply stated that documenting wet nursing services was considered not normal, *"There is nothing. It's normal"* (WN5).

However, one wet nurse, WN6, provided a unique perspective. While WN6 did express some awareness about the importance of documentation, she had not actively recorded such information. In her statement, she inquired, *"It... just to make sure he is our nursing baby, right? Another record, what record?"* (WN6). This reflection highlighted a level of uncertainty regarding the need for records and the specific purpose they would serve in the context of wet nursing and milk kinship. This response underscored the diverse understandings and practices among wet nurses, with some questioning the necessity of formal documentation while still valuing the act of wet nursing itself.

In contrast, WN3 demonstrated a somewhat different approach. While not extensively documented her wet nursing service, WN3 kept records related to milk expression and distribution. This suggested a level of awareness and documentation of the milk-sharing process. Although not elaborated, these records might reflect an

understanding of the importance of tracking milk distribution for various purposes, such as managing milk supply and ensuring the needs of the nurslings were met. She expressed what she usually did to record her practices. She said,

“Usually every milk I expressed, I already have a budget... in each feeding, the amount the baby wanted to have, three... three ounces depending on the child’s demand. So, every time the milk was expressed, I would write how much, how much, the amount, and mmm... that means the amount that I distributed to the children each time. So, there I will know that the child has drunk how many times... how many times, right? So, that was the method I used. That means I recorded every time, every time I gave out breast milk supplies, I would record the amount of...ounces of milk that I distributed. Umm... that’s fine, ma’am, that’s what I used to do” (WN3).

WN3’s statement underscored her commitment to ensuring that the babies under her care met the condition of receiving full breastfeeding of five times. Table 4.3 presents a summary of the documentation done by the wet nurses to record their current practices in wet nursing.

Table 4.3 Summary of Documentation of Milk Kinship Current Practices

| Wet Nurse | Documentation of Milk Kinship Current Practices |
|----------------------------------|---|
| WN1, WN2, WN4, WN5, WN6, WN7/BM6 | No documentation |
| WN3 | Only recorded milk expression and distribution |

From the analysis of the data, it can be concluded that the participants did not understand the need to document wet nursing and milk kinship. Only WN3 kept minimal documentation focusing only on structured documentation of the amount of breast milk and the times the breast milk was collected. However, it was notable that most participants did not seem to fully grasp the concept of milk kinship documentation. It was concerning that many of them did not take adequate precautions or engage in systematic documentation of their wet nursing activities. While WN3’s efforts in tracking milk expression and distribution were commendable, it still fell short of what was needed for comprehensive documentation of wet nursing practices and milk kinship. This highlighted a potential gap in understanding and awareness among the

participants regarding the importance of thorough documentation in the context of wet nursing and milk kinship.

4.3.1.3 Understanding about Payments or Wages of Wet Nursing’s Services

The wet nurse participants mentioned that they had not received any remuneration or wages for the wet nursing services at all. Most of them answered the question on payment in negation. They simply said, “None” (WN1, WN2, WN3, WN5, WN6, WN7/BM6). However, as a form of appreciation, WN4 indicated the possibility of accepting gifts or charity by saying “There is none. (Shaking her head). ... Of course, you can give... just give... But... if, for the intention of giving charity... Maybe from that point of view... that’s the only way we can do it” (WN4). WN7/BM6 clarified that no compensation was provided by the biological mother for breastfeeding her baby. She said, “... not... like, like that. She, she... me, she never said that, if she did give anything to me and she said “Ah, it’s because I’m wet nursing her child”” (WN7/BM6). She said “not”, which indicated that she received gifts but not as payment for the wet nursing services.

However, in this study, the majority of respondents did not take any payment and viewed it as donations, indicating that most wet nurses did not see it as a career but as a charitable act and a means to avoid milk wastage. May Allah bless their noble intentions. Nevertheless, wet nurses need to be aware that they may be entitled to receive payments for their wet nursing services. Table 4.4 shows that no wet nurse received any payment from the birth parents.

Table 4.4 Summary of Payments or Wages for Wet Nursing’s Services

| Wet Nurse | Payment or Wages Received |
|----------------------------------|---|
| WN1, WN2, WN3, WN5, WN6, WN7/BM6 | None |
| WN4 | No specific payment, but may receive gifts or charity |

4.3.2 Factors for Choosing to be Wet Nurses

Several personal, family, and friendship factors came into play when deciding to become a wet nurse. The importance of keeping a close family relationship, friendships, and the willingness to help others were revealed after analyzing the data regarding why wet nursing was chosen. Based on interviews conducted with a total of seven participants, WN1-WN7/BM6, this study found various reasons why individuals chose to become wet nurses.

4.3.2.1 Cultivating Relationships and Kinship

Both WN1 and WN2 wet nursed the same baby, who was the adopted child of WN1's cousin and the adopted child of WN2's niece. WN1 and WN2 indicated their strong desire to establish close family relations with their cousin's adopted child and niece as a key factor in deciding whether they wanted to become a wet nurse. They said that it was important to keep the family ties so that the child will grow up not as an outsider of the family. WN1 stated, "...So, we want... um, that relationship we desire... for her not to feel... um, like a stranger. So, I took her child, she asked me to breastfeed the child. So, she, her daughter, and that member of her family... um... there is a relationship, kin to... a kin's grandfather..." (WN1). WN2 also viewed wet nursing as an opportunity to form milk kinship and strengthen mutual affection. They recognized the significance of supporting a mother who was not the biological parent of the child, fostering meaningful relationships based on shared experiences. "I want to share that kinship... so that there is... um... what? Ha! Closeness! Yes. The milk kinship... um... acknowledged...", WN2 eloquently expressed her perspective.

Practical considerations, coupled with a desire not to waste excess breast milk, played a pivotal role in WN3's transition to wet nursing. Same as other wet nurses (WN4 and WN5), they acknowledged having more milk than what their babies needed and felt a responsibility to share it with those in need. This act of charity not only addressed the issue of milk wastage but also provided an opportunity for new relationships to develop through mutual exchange. WN3 explained, "I suddenly contemplated becoming a breastfeeding mother when I... um... realized that I had

surplus expressed milk beyond my baby's requirements... sharing it made more sense than wasting it. Additionally, it allowed me to establish new connections..." (WN3).

4.3.2.2 Friendship and Family Support

For WN6, the most crucial factor influencing her decision to become a wet nurse was friendship. She simply wanted to help a friend who was facing challenges with insufficient breast milk, showcasing the strength of their bond and their willingness to support one another. WN6 summed it up concisely, stating, "*Erm... Friendship, for friendship's sake. Help a friend because she has no breast milk.*" (WN6). Another participant, WN4, felt a sense of calling and gratitude due to the abundance of milk. She recognized the importance of sharing her milk with babies whose mothers couldn't provide enough nourishment. The surplus milk acted as a safeguard, ensuring that children in need of supplementary nourishment would have it readily available. WN4's motivation was to support her sister's child and younger brother's child, and she expressed as follows: "*... I may be blessed with ... milk... a lot of milk, so... feeling... called to wet nursing, share that milk with... a baby whose... like... mother can't provide enough milk...*" (WN4). The same goes for a participant who lived with the same nationality overseas, a Malaysian who was married to a Korean facing a situation similar to her. As a friend who wanted to help her friend who had insufficient breast milk, she supplied her breast milk for her friend's son. WN5 recounted their experiences, stating, "*At that moment, I gave birth to my first child... Because I ... breastfed my child and I had an excess supply of breast milk, but there is an advantage to that milk, while my friend... on the other hand, her milk is less... meaning... not much milk. So, at that time, I gave my friend's son a lot of milk...*" (WN5). Their deep desire to assist a friend, a sister, and a younger brother's babies who were not receiving sufficient milk motivated them to become wet nurses.

4.3.2.3 Excessive Breast Milk and Preventing Wastage

The presence of an excessive supply of breast milk and a desire to prevent wastage influenced several participants, including WN3, WN4, and WN5 to wet nurse. For example, WN3, who had acknowledged having more milk than her child needed in her

statement “*the reason for wet nursing is there, the milk beyond the child’s needs*”. WN3 considered wet nursing to be a means of using the surplus breast milk efficiently and preventing it from being wasted. WN4 also said that she was “*blessed to have a lot of milk,*” which inspired her to share her abundance with the infants who needed it most so as not to waste it. In the case of WN5, having the same cultural ties and a similar marriage to a Korean overseas played a role. She recognized the advantage of having a surplus milk supply “*... there is an advantage of surplus milk, while his mother... on the other hand, her milk is less...*”. Compared to their friends, WN3, WN4, and WN5 were blessed with excessive supplies of breast milk, so they decided to share to prevent wastage and at the same time to support fellow friends with low milk production. In tackling the issue of excessive breast milk and possible waste through wet nursing, these participants had taken part in demonstrating their commitment to the effective use of resources and assistance for those in need.

4.3.2.4 Hospitalization of Biological Mother Because of Sickness

In the last instance, WN7/BM6 decided that she would become a wet nurse due to an urgent family matter. When her sister-in-law underwent an emergency appendectomy shortly after giving birth, WN7/BM6 stepped in to temporarily breastfeed her newborn nephew. The action of wet nursing was the result of an immediate response to the difficult situation. This was a testament to the importance of family support in times of need. WN7/BM6 shared, “*... my brother-in-law asked for help because... his wife at the time... had an emergency operation...*” (WN7/BM6).

The comments of those participants in this study provided insights into their motivations, influenced by a wide range of factors that contributed to their decisions to pursue the selfless act of being a wet nurse. Understanding the main reasons for their decisions gave us valuable insights into the complexities of individual, family, and religious factors that were part of wet nursing practice.

Table 4.5 Summary of Factors of Wet Nurses Choosing to Wet Nursing

| Wet Nurse | Factors for Sharing Breastmilk |
|-----------|--|
| WN1 | Creating family bonds and preventing the child from being an outsider. Ensuring the child feels integrated within the family. |
| WN2 | Help support a non-biological mother to wet nursing her adopted child. Fostering milk kinship and mutual affection. |
| WN3 | Preventing milk wastage. Through the act of sharing, share with those in need and form new relationships. |
| WN4 | Feeling called to help those in need. Sharing surplus milk with those in need. |
| WN5 | Cultural ties and supporting fellow friends. Addressing the friend's low milk production |
| WN6 | Friendship and support. Helping a friend facing insufficient breast milk |
| WN7/BM6 | Responding to a family emergency and providing temporary breastfeeding assistance to a sister-in-law recovering from an appendectomy. Supporting family members in times of need. |

4.3.3 Recruitment of Nursing Child

Several participants in wet nursing shared common themes regarding the source of their wet-nursing babies and the nature of their relationships with these babies.

For WN1 and WN2, the source of their wet-nursing babies was family. WN1 informed that, "*My cousin asked me*" (WN1), she then became a wet nurse to her

cousin's adopted child. While WN2 wet nursed her niece's adopted child. In both cases, the familial bond was at the core of their decision, as they aimed to create a strong family connection and to ensure the adopted children were fully integrated within their respective families. WN4, like WN1 and WN2, received a request and she also offered to wet nurse the children of family members, specifically her niece and nephew. Here WN4 conveyed that "*...other siblings also have babies, and they need..... breastmilk..., they don't have enough breastmilk, or for whatever reason... then there was a request, also I offered to wet nurse...*". This showed that the familial relationship drove WN4 to share her surplus milk within the family circle to provide support for her close relatives, either upon their request or she offered it to them.

WN3, on the other hand, recruited wet nursing opportunities from various sources, including social media and workplace groups. She stated, "*I get through... .. WhatsApp. I... did ... post in breastfeeding groups, and I... also opened ... and shared information in ... small groups at that time.*" This conversation highlighted that she was actively seeking a child to wet nurse easily by posting advertisements in various places (social media and WhatsApp application). Interestingly, the child she wet nursed was essentially an outsider, being the grandchildren of working colleagues.

In the case of WN5, her wet nursed child was the child of her housemate. While not a direct family member, this scenario underscores the importance of supporting friends within the context of shared living arrangements. WN6's recruitment for wet nursing was grounded in friendship. "*My friend asked to wet nurse her child*" said WN6. This indicated that she became a wet nurse at the request of her best friend, who sought assistance in wet nursing her child. The strong friendship bond was at the forefront of this decision. Lastly, WN7/BM6, like WN1, WN2, and WN4, wet nursed her own nephew at the request of her brother-in-law. She said, "*No intention, no plan, but... my brother-in-law asked for help because... his wife at the time... having an emergency operation.*" WN7/BM6 helped her nephew but the situation was indeed an emergency.

Overall, there were a variety of ways the wet nurses recruited their wet nursing children. Several factors, such as family bonds, friendship, milk waste prevention, and the desire to provide support and nourishment for those in need, influenced the decision to wet nurse other people's children. The analysis deepens the personal experiences and

motivations of the wet nurses, providing a more complete understanding of the wet nursing process, by including these conversational excerpts.

Table 4.6 The Recruitment of Wet Nursing Children and the Relationships Involved

| Wet Nurse | Source of Wet Nursing Child | Relationship with Child |
|------------------|--|---|
| WN1 | Family | Cousin's adopted child |
| WN2 | Family | Niece's adopted child |
| WN3 | Various sources (social media, workplace groups) | Outsider – the grandchild of working colleagues |
| WN4 | Family | Nieces and nephews |
| WN5 | Housemate's friend | Friend's child |
| WN6 | Being asked by best friend | Friend's child |
| WN7/BM6 | Family | Nephew |

4.3.4 Feeding Method

The wet nursing methods employed by participants can be categorized into three main groups based on their approach to breastfeeding and nourishing the children they cared for.

Firstly, there was a group of wet nurses, who preferred “direct breastfeeding without bottles”. WN2, WN5, and WN7/BM6 exclusively engaged in direct breastfeeding without using bottles. They exclusively engaged in direct breastfeeding by offering their nipples to the child's mouth and emphasizing not using bottles. This approach allowed for a close bond and direct nourishment from the breast.

In contrast, some wet nurses, such as WN1, WN3, and WN4, opted for the method of “indirect breastfeeding through bottles.” They used expressed breast milk and provided it to the wet nursing child using milk containers and small bottles. This method granted them control over the quantity of milk delivered, ensuring sufficient

nourishment. It also provided a level of control over the quantity of milk consumed, typically involving approximately five bottles per full feed. WN1 emphasized the importance of breastfeeding the child directly before they turned one year old, aiming to establish a strong bond as a breastfed child. Lastly, WN6 fell into the category of “both direct breastfeeding and indirect through bottles.” This wet nurse demonstrated flexibility in her approach to feeding the infant by utilizing a combination of direct breastfeeding and providing frozen breast milk.

These categories represented the variety of ways used by wet nurses to feed and tend to the children entrusted to them; depending on the particular requirements and conditions of each case, these methods included both direct and indirect breastfeeding techniques. While some wet nurses preferred direct breastfeeding without the use of bottles, others chose indirect feeding using extracted milk and bottles.

Table 4.7 Feeding Methods Employed by Wet Nurses

| Breastfeeding Method | Wet Nurse |
|--|-------------------|
| Direct breastfeeding | WN2, WN5, WN7/BM6 |
| Indirect through bottles | WN1, WN3, WN4 |
| Both direct breastfeeding and indirect through bottles | WN6 |

4.3.5 Age of Wet Nursing Child and Duration of Wet Nursing

The time for starting and the duration of wet nursing differed from one participant to another and demonstrated a diverse range of experiences and practices. The data revealed that most of the wet nurses breastfed the infants right after birth. However, the duration of wet nursing fell into two categories.

In the first category, the infants were wet nursed from birth to just a few weeks old. For example, WN5 began to wet nursing another woman’s baby in 1980. She breastfed the infant from the time the baby was born until the early months of the child’s life. Similarly, WN6 started her wet nursing responsibilities as soon as the baby was born in 2016, making sure the newborn had the nutrition she needed from the beginning. This also applies to WN7/BM6, who began wet nursing the baby in 2017 at the age of

just 1-2 weeks old, indicating a dedication to giving essential breast milk throughout the early phases of infancy.

In the second category, the infants were wet nursed right after birth until an extended period, even after the first year of life. The wet nursing experience that WN2 had between 2020 and 2021 was one such instance. She wet nursed the baby from the second day of life until he no longer wanted to be nursed. Specifically, she breastfed the child until the child was two years old. In both 2017 and 2021, WN4 began breastfeeding immediately after the infant was born, demonstrating a comparable lengthy time of wet nursing and dedication to supplying sustenance for a significant period of the child's early life.

Only WN1 gave the baby five bottles, feedings of breast milk which is the minimum requirement to form a *mahram* relationship. These distinct categories also shed light on the varying age at which infants were breastfed by wet nurses. Some wet nurses provided breast milk right from birth until the first few weeks of the infants' life, while others continued wet nursing well into the children's second year of life. These varied starting periods for wet nursing illustrate the individual decisions and circumstances surrounding the practice. A deeper understanding of the context and experiences related to wet nursing can be gained by investigating a range of years and child ages.

Table 4.8 Wet Nursing Initiation Timelines and Child Age

| Wet Nurse | Year of Wet Nursing Initiation | Child Age |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| WN1 | 2020 | Before 1 year old—only 5 feedings |
| WN2 | 2020 to 2021 | From the second day born until the baby no longer wants to nurse (practically until 2 years old) |
| WN3 | 2015 to 2016 and 2020 | Less than 1 year old until around 1 year and 5/6 months old (first nursing baby) and more than 1 year old until around 1 year and 9/10 months old (second nursing baby) |
| WN4 | 2017 and 2021 | After birth (both nursing children) - nursed many babies |
| WN5 | 1980 | From birth to a few months |
| WN6 | 2016 | From birth |
| WN7/BM6 | 2017 | 1-2 weeks old |

4.4 EXPERIENCES OF BIOLOGICAL MOTHERS SEEKING WET NURSES

This section exposes the experiences of biological mothers seeking wet nursing services. It begins with the exposition of how they understand the concept of wet nursing and the need to document wet nursing practices. This section further delved into the motivations and factors that prompted biological mothers to initiate wet nursing arrangements. Understanding these factors sheds light on the multifaceted nature of this practice among Malaysian Muslims.

Biological mothers embarked on the journey of seeking wet nurse services for various reasons. These motivations could encompass cultural beliefs, familial dynamics, and individual needs. Some biological mothers sought wet nurse assistance due to challenges with breastfeeding or the temporary unavailability of breast milk.

These difficulties might stem from factors such as maternal health issues, insufficient milk production, working, or the desire to maintain a modest or “*awrāt*” status within the family.

In addition, to ensure that their babies receive exclusive breast milk, some biological mothers may choose to use wet nursing services, thereby avoiding the use of artificial or formula milk. The importance of breastfeeding in cultural contexts highlighted by such a commitment to provide breast milk benefits for their babies, even when faced with obstacles.

Furthermore, biological parents may have facilitated the enlistment of wet nursing from a range of sources, including familial connections, friends, and online communities. Various factors, for example, the availability of ‘qualified’ candidates and high levels of confidence and familiarity amongst all parties involved, have also been considered in decision-making on recruitment channels.

In essence, the factors guiding biological mothers to seek wet nursing services reflected the intricate interplay of cultural values, individual needs, and familial support systems. Such motivation led to a deeper understanding of the complex processes underpinning wet nursing in the Malaysian Muslim community.

4.4.1 Biological Mothers’ Understanding of Wet Nursing

Different views on wet nursing were shared by biological mothers, each of them offered a different point of view. BM1 and BM2 emphasized the nurturing aspect of wet nursing. BM1 viewed wet nursing as a way to connect an adopted child with the family, highlighting its role in building familial bonds. She stated that, “*The wet nurse who... who wet nursing, breastfeeds the baby... who... is taken... as an adopted child... to... what do you call it... to... connect... the relationship... between mother and... family and... that child...*” (BM1). Similarly, the explanation given by BM2, “*The wet nurse is the mother who... who gives... her milk, to our child, to... another child, who is not her biological child... of course she was not her biological child...*” (BM2). She defined a wet nurse as a non-biological mother providing milk to another child, focusing on the caregiving and nurturing aspects of the role.

BM3 and BM5 shared common understanding, defining a wet nurse as a mother who breastfed children who were not biologically related to her. Both underscored the act of breastfeeding and the selflessness of providing nourishment to children without a genetic link in their statements, “*Mother who wet nursing people’s children....*” (BM3) and “*A nursing mother is a mother... not a biological mother. But, give milk to her suckling*” (BM5). BM4’s perspective stood alone, “*Wet nurse is another mother... who... wet nursing our child*” (BM4), emphasizing the biological distinction between the wet nurse and the child being breastfed. According to BM4, wet nursing involves breastfeeding someone else’s child, highlighting the unique nature of this practice.

Lastly, WN7/BM6 introduced a religious dimension, stating, “*Other people... other than the biological mother ... The child, our son is... under the age of... 2 years old if we follow Islam. Under 2 years old and erm... How many times he is full eh? 3 times, I guess? 3 times full, like that. So, it was considered a breastfeeding mother. If it’s not like that one, it doesn’t count. If in Islam....*” (WN7/BM6). She said that a woman could be considered a wet nurse if she breastfed a child under two years old multiple times based on Islamic guidelines. This definition tied wet nursing to specific religious practices, emphasizing its importance within certain cultural contexts. All biological mothers understood the implication, that is the prohibition of marriage between milk family members except BM4. She believed that only milk siblings are prohibited to marry by saying “*only milk siblings cannot marry...not including brothers/sisters of wet nurse and son/daughters of milk siblings*”.

In summary, biological mothers’ understandings of wet nursing ranged from nurturing familial connections to highlighting the act of breastfeeding and its selfless nature, with some interpretations considering the religious and cultural significance of wet nursing. These diverse perspectives reflected the multifaceted nature of wet nursing, influenced by cultural, personal, and religious factors.

Table 4.9 Understanding of Wet Nursing among Biological Mothers

| Biological Mother | Understanding of Wet Nurse |
|-------------------|--|
| BM1 | A wet nurse breastfeeds an adopted child to connect them with the family. |
| BM2 | A wet nurse is a non-biological mother who provides milk to another child. |
| BM3 | A wet nurse is a mother who breastfeeds children not her own. |
| BM4 | A wet nurse breastfeeds a child conceived by someone else. |
| BM5 | A nursing mother gives milk to a child, not her biological offspring. |
| WN7/BM6 | A woman can be considered a wet nurse if she breastfeeds a child under two years old multiple times based on Islamic guidelines. |

4.4.2 Biological Mothers' Understanding of Documentation

Understanding the perspective of biological mothers regarding wet nursing and milk kinship revealed common themes and variations. In all cases, the biological mothers admitted to having no formal documentation of milk kinship. This absence of documentation was a shared characteristic among all the participants, suggesting that the practice of keeping written records regarding wet nursing and milk kinship might not have been prevalent among them.

For the additional information collected, BM1 stood out as the sole participant who mentioned introducing the child to the extended family as a form of recognition. This informal approach involved integrating the child into the extended family unit, though it did not involve any written record. BM3 said, "...*Still didn't do it*" and "*It's good to write like a letter, right? Make a letter... ha, the wet nurse has a signature. She also signed. Then, keep the letter. Er for... for... the future, long term to come. Prepare*

the name, mother's name, sibling's name, lineage of the person...". She acknowledged the importance of documenting milk kinship but did not specify any actual documentation practices. This recognition suggested a potential openness to such practices if deemed necessary. Conversely, BM4 believed that knowing the background of the family was sufficient, suggesting that formal documentation might not have been considered necessary within their context. This viewpoint highlighted the diverse beliefs regarding what constituted adequate acknowledgment of milk kinship. BM5's practice of obtaining consent from both families underscored the significance of mutual understanding and agreement in wet nursing arrangements, as stated in her statement "*Consent from both families*" (BM5), even without formal documentation.

In summary, the perspectives of these biological mothers regarding the documentation of milk kinship in wet nursing arrangements revealed both commonalities in the absence of formal records and diversity in their approaches to recognition and understanding within their respective contexts.

Table 4.10 Documentation of Milk Kinship Current Practices

| Biological Mother | Documentation of Milk Kinship | Additional info |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| BM1 | No documentation | Introduced the child to the extended family |
| BM2 | | None |
| BM3 | | Knew it was important to document |
| BM4 | | Knew the background of the family was enough |
| BM5 | | Consent from both families |
| WN7/BM6 | | None |

4.4.3 Understanding about Payments or Wages for Wet Nursing Services

The perspectives on compensation among these biological mothers revealed a spectrum of practices and attitudes.

BM1 and BM5 both expressed that they did not give any form of payment or wages for the wet nursing services. Their motivations appeared to be more altruistic or based on mutual support and trust rather than financial gain, although BM5 gave a token of appreciation for sharing the breast milk. On the other hand, BM2 mentioned a unique situation where, when asked for payment, the wet nurse requested breast milk storage containers instead, stating, *“She just said if you want to share too, as far as sharing... breastmilk storage container... that’s it”* (BM2). This exchange reflected a pragmatic approach to compensation, with a focus on the practical needs of a wet nurse.

BM3 emphasized the exchange of gifts on other occasions as a form of recognition and appreciation for wet nursing services when she said, *“We have given gifts. If we meet once in a while, we still give gifts. Exchange like Raya goodies, we also visit each other. Share ... gifts like that... You have to give something, right...”* (BM3). This practice suggested that, in her view, the act of wet nursing was embedded within a broader culture of gift-giving and reciprocal gestures. BM4 revealed a more transactional perspective, indicating that she sometimes provided wages in addition to other forms of compensation, such as coffee money and tools for pumping breast milk. She informed in her own words that, *“... Sometimes... I have to give wages as well... people say more than... coffee money... because of aa taking care, helps in preparing breastmilk... and also tools for pumping breastmilk”* (BM4). Her approach reflected a willingness to offer financial remuneration for the assistance and care provided by the wet nurse.

WN7/BM6 presented an interesting viewpoint in her statement, *“... Not directly. Like... nothing, nothing for nothing. But... I think... indeed... it becomes a culture when people have helped us... we... we will... people say... give... it’s okay, right. ... That is... That is a ... more to... what? It’s manners. Manners... instead of wages. Because I never intended to pay wages. But... to me.... more to... manners. When people help us, we have to... help them back. Ha, like that”*. WN7/BM6 emphasized the importance of manners and cultural norms over direct wages. She saw compensation as a matter of etiquette and reciprocity, where people who had received help should express their gratitude by giving it back in some form, even if not explicitly intended as wages.

In summary, the participants’ attitudes toward compensation for wet nursing services varied, with some prioritizing practical needs, others emphasizing cultural

norms and reciprocity, and a few adopting a more transactional approach involving direct payment or wages. These diverse perspectives highlighted the complexity of compensation practices within the context of wet nursing.

Table 4.11 Payments or Wages for Wet Nursing's Services

| Biological Mother | Payment or Wages Received | Additional Information |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| BM1 | None | Introduced child to extended family |
| BM2 | None (requested breastmilk storage containers when asked for payment) | - |
| BM3 | Only exchange gifts on other occasions | Mentioned gifts given during occasions like Raya |
| BM4 | Provides wages, coffee money, and tools for pumping breastmilk | Described manners and cultural norms over direct wages |
| BM5 | None | Gives a token of appreciation |
| WN7/BM6 | None directly emphasizes cultural norms and manners | Views compensation as a matter of etiquette and reciprocity |

4.4.4 Factors for Seeking Wet Nursing Services

Biological mothers seek wet nursing services for a variety of reasons, each motivated by unique circumstances and desires.

BM1, for instance, chose to engage a wet nurse to foster a family bond between the adopted child and herself. She intended to create a *maḥram* relationship between her adopted child and her husband. She informed that, "...I want to share... that my husband and father become *maḥram*.... there is... there is no limit, huh, making a relationship,

to make sure there is no limit to 'awrāt" (BM1). In contrast, driven by a strong desire to provide breast milk exclusively for her child, BM2 turned into a wet nurse due to a temporary drop in her breastmilk supply during working hours. She informed her concerns by stating *"Because my breastmilk dropped at that time. That was on my working time, right? Breastmilk dropped. After that, we... want to give breastmilk completely to the child, right? So, I look for milk... a wet nurse..."*.

Similarly, BM3's decision stemmed from inadequate hydration and an inability to produce sufficient breastmilk, coupled with a deep-seated commitment to providing only breastmilk and avoiding any artificial or formula milk for her child. She claimed, *"I'm looking for the services of... wet nurse because... I... don't drink enough water, right? So, there is no breastmilk. I pumped and pumped, but no breastmilk. So, pity the baby, that's what caused... we look for any woman who can wet nurse our child. So that our children get human's natural milk. Ha, not artificial milk or powdered milk"*.

Likewise, BM4 sought wet nursing services because of her inability to breastfeed, and a firm resolve to ensure that her child received nothing but breastmilk. BM5's factor was to fulfil the full breastfeeding period until six months and to commit to extended breastfeeding with the assistance of a wet nurse, ensuring her child received breastmilk for two years. She illustrated her intentions in the following words, *"... because I want to provide... full breastfeeding period for my child for at least six months. But thank God I was able to do it for two years, by... using a wet nurse's services and my breastmilk too"* (BM5).

In the case of WN7/BM6, the decision was driven by multiple factors, including having an infant less than a month old, a desire for exclusive breastfeeding, and the necessity for additional breastmilk due to having twin infants and insufficient milk production to cover both. She relayed her reasons for seeking wet nurse by saying *"First of all because my children were... less than a month old.... and... I... want my children to... drink... breast milk completely... Meaning, if possible, I don't want to mix with formula milk. So, and, I don't have breast milk, I don't have enough to provide... at that time... my babies were twins, right? So, it's not enough to provide... for... two babies. ... So, it just so happened that my friend... also had... extra milk, that's why she... breastfed my babies and gave the frozen one too."* (WN7/BM6).

These diverse factors illustrated the complex and multifaceted considerations that influenced biological mothers in their choice to seek wet nursing services. Most of them were because of the inability to breastfeed their children themselves. Some of them also experienced milk drops while working and one of them was having difficulties in feeding twin at a go. These factors highlighted their commitment to providing the best nourishment for their children in varying circumstances.

Table 4.12 Factors of Biological Mothers for Choosing to Seek Wet Nurse

| Biological Mother | Factors for Sharing Breastmilk |
|--------------------------|---|
| BM1 | Creating family bonds between the adopted child and her. To maintain modesty (<i>'awrāt</i>) |
| BM2 | Temporary drop in breastmilk supply during working hours Desire for the child to receive only breastmilk |
| BM3 | Inadequate hydration and inability to produce sufficient breastmilk Desire for the child to receive only breastmilk, and not consume any artificial milk or formula milk |
| BM4 | Inability to breastfeed Desire for the child to receive only the breastmilk |
| BM5 | Wanting to fulfil the full breastfeeding milk till 6 months Commitment to providing extended breastfeeding with wet nurse's assistance for two years |
| WN/7BM6 | Infant less than a month old Desire for exclusive breastfeeding Twin infants requiring additional breastmilk Not enough breastmilk to cover twin infants |

4.4.5 Recruitment of Wet Nurse

The sources of wet nurses for these biological mothers were diverse, revealing various approaches to recruiting breastfeeding assistance. Several participants shared common themes regarding the source of their wet nurses and the nature of their relationships with these nursing children.

BM1 and BM5 both turned to family members for wet nursing support, with BM1 sought aid from her grand aunt and cousin, while BM5 relied on her biological sister and sister-in-law. Their statements “*my aunt... my cousin*” (BM1) and “*my sister and my sister-in-law*” (BM5) showed that these family-based recruitment strategies underscored the central role of familial bonds in facilitating breastfeeding assistance, highlighting that family members often emerged as the primary choice for wet nursing.

In contrast, BM3 and WN7/BM6 sought wet nurses through their circle of friends. BM3, guided by a friend’s recommendation, enlisted the help of a trusted acquaintance. Meanwhile, WN7/BM6 reached out to a close friend to provide breastfeeding assistance for her child. These friendships played pivotal roles in delivering the required support and assistance during the breastfeeding journey, underscoring the invaluable role of friends as reliable sources of aid during such crucial times.

Conversely, BM2 and BM4 capitalized on the power of social media platforms, particularly Facebook groups like “*ibu-ibu susuan Malaysia*” (Malaysian Wet Nurses), to connect with potential wet nurses. These online communities offered a distinctive avenue for identifying suitable candidates, even if they began as strangers. This approach illuminated the influence of technology and virtual networks in expanding options for breastfeeding assistance, illustrating how online communities could bridge geographical and interpersonal divides to unite individuals with shared objectives and needs.

In the instances of BM2, BM3, and BM4, the recruitment of wet nurses forged a unique stranger relationship between the biological mother and the individuals providing breastfeeding assistance. These relationships were initially established through social media platforms and online groups, reflecting the contemporary approach to addressing the demand for wet nursing services. This illustrated the

evolving nature of wet nursing, where technological and virtual communities connect people in need of breastfeeding assistance with willing volunteers across boundaries of unfamiliarity for a child's well-being. The wet nurses had begun as strangers, but their shared commitment to providing breast milk to the baby had formed a 'temporary bond' based on mutual support. The 'temporary bond' mentioned refers to milk kinship, formed through wet nursing. Unlike biological or adoptive kinship, this bond often weakens over time. However, Islamic teachings hold that milk kinship is an everlasting kinship.

In contrast, BM1 and BM5 opted for wet nurses within their family circle, resulting in familial relationships between the biological mothers and the wet nurses. BM1's first wet nurse was her grand aunt, establishing a family connection, while her second wet nurse was her cousin, further emphasizing the familial bond. Similarly, BM5 engaged both her biological sister and sister-in-law as wet nurses, reinforcing the family ties involved in providing breastfeeding assistance. These family-based relationships underscored the robust support networks present within extended families, where relatives readily stepped in to ensure the child benefited from breastfeeding.

Lastly, WN7/BM6's choice of a friend as the wet nurse resulted in a unique friendship. This decision demonstrated the trust and deep friendship WN7/BM6 had, enabling her friend's son to play a pivotal role in her well-being. It underscored how profound friendships could extend to the care and nurturing of children, creating a distinctive and meaningful bond between friends and their families.

Table 4.13 The Sources of Wet Nursing Children and the Relationships Involved

| Biological Mother | Source of Wet Nurse | Wet Nurse Relationship with Child |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| BM1 | Family: Aunt and cousin | Grand aunt-adopted grandchild Niece-adopted cousin |
| BM2 | Social media: Facebook group: #bfmember | Stranger |
| BM3 | Friend's recommendation | Stranger |
| BM4 | Social media: Facebook group: <i>ibu-ibu susuan</i> Malaysia (Malaysian Wet Nurses) | Stranger |
| BM5 | Family: Biological sister and sister-in-law | Both are nephews' relationship |
| WN7/BM6 | Friend | Friend's son |

4.4.6 Feeding Method

The wet nursing methods employed by participants can be categorized into three main groups based on their approaches to breastfeeding and nourishing the children they cared for.

The table below illustrates the diversity of wet nursing methods employed by different biological mothers. Notably, none of the wet nurses engaged in direct breastfeeding exclusively. BM1 and BM6 combined direct breastfeeding and bottle feeding. The rest of the children were fed through bottle feeding. All the biological mothers breastfed their babies except BM3 and BM4 who had no supply of breast milk at all.

All biological mothers fed breast milk from the wet nurses using bottles to facilitate indirect breastfeeding. Under this approach, breast milk would be extracted

and given to the infants in bottles if biological mothers felt that direct nursing was neither practical nor acceptable. These wet nurses demonstrated flexibility and adaptability in ensuring that the children receive nourishment through this method.

In contrast, BM1 and BM6 adopted a distinctive approach by employing both direct and indirect breastfeeding of wet nurse’s breastmilk through bottles. They demonstrated their dedication to meeting the child’s wants and preferences by offering several ways for the youngster to benefit from breast milk through this dual strategy. It showed a commitment to using a variety of nursing techniques to guarantee the child’s well-being.

Table 4.14 Feeding Methods Employed by Wet Nurses

| Babies of Biological Mothers | Wet Nurses’ Method of Feeding Breast Milk |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| None | Direct breastfeeding exclusively |
| BM2, BM3, BM4, BM5 | Indirect through bottles |
| BM1, BM6 | Both direct breastfeeding and indirect through bottles |

4.4.7 Age of Wet Nursing Child

The data provided insights into the timelines of wet nursing initiation and the corresponding child ages for several biological mothers. Wet nurse recruitment for BM1 began in 2020, and wet nursing ran for three months until the baby became one year old. The recruitment of wet nurses for children aged three months to one year was started in 2015 by BM2 and BM3. Wet nurse hiring for BM4 also started in 2015, however, the duration of the breastfeeding was not specified.

In contrast, BM5 commenced wet nursing services in 2018, starting before the child reached 3 months of age and continued until the child reached 2 years old. This prolonged duration underscores the commitment of BM5 to provide extended breastfeeding support. BM6 initiated wet nursing recruitment when the child was only

1-2 weeks old but did not specify until when the breastfeeding continued, leaving the exact duration open-ended.

Overall, the data showcased varying timelines for wet nursing initiation and child ages, reflecting the diverse circumstances and needs of the biological mothers and their children. These timelines highlighted the flexibility and adaptability of wet nursing arrangements to accommodate the unique requirements of each situation.

Table 4.15 Wet Nursing Initiation Timelines and Child Age

| Biological Mother | Year of Wet Nursing Initiation | Child Age |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| BM1 | 2020 | After 3 months until before 1 year old |
| BM2 | 2015 | After 3 months until 1 year old |
| BM3 | 2013 | After 3 months until 1 year old |
| BM4 | 2015 | After 3 months, did not mention until when |
| BM5 | 2018 | Before 3 months until 2 years old |
| BM6 | 2016 | 1-2 weeks old, did not mention until when |

4.5 DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the insight gained from the study that adds to the corpus of knowledge on the experiences of biological mothers and wet nurses in seeking and providing wet nursing services in Malaysia respectively. This is pertinent to inform policy and practice of wet nursing. The insights are inferred from interpreting and evaluating the examined aspects of wet nursing. Since wet nursing is becoming popular in Malaysia among the Muslims, it is pertinent to assess the understanding of wet nurses and biological mothers regarding wet nursing, its requirements and impacts. Thus, the first discussion is to explicate the level of understanding of the participants on wet nursing and its surrounding issues.

The subsequent discussion is on the factors that influenced the decision of biological mothers and wet nurses to seek and provide wet nursing services. It provides insight into the familial, relational, and cultural aspects that influenced these decisions. This discussion also highlights the recruitment practices in getting nursing children, exploring the evolving landscape of social media and familial connections in this context.

Additionally, the choice of breastfeeding methods employed by wet nurses was scrutinized, revealing the prevalent use of bottles and alternative methods. The age of wet nursing children surfaced as a critical consideration, shaped by both cultural practices and adherence to religious guidelines.

The interconnectedness of these elements into the wider cultural and religious tapestry had to be recognized as it made its way from one dimension to another. This was intended to contribute to a deeper understanding of wet nursing practices and their impact on individuals, families, and communities through the simplification of these complexities. Furthermore, this discussion sets the stage for contemplating the broader societal impacts of these practices and suggests potential directions for future research and interventions in this complex landscape.

4.5.1 Understanding of Wet Nursing

Wet nursing refers to feeding a child under 2 years old with breast milk from a woman who is not the child's biological mother at least 5 times full feeding of breast milk with the consent of both parties and their spouses. This consent involves consent and proof, witnessed by two men or one man and two women, or four women.³¹⁸ It is shocking to find all participants demonstrated a very basic understanding of wet nursing, conceptualizing it as breastfeeding a child other than her own, without delving into specific Islamic criteria and its consequence.

³¹⁸ Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān Al-'Arab*. 126. Ābū 'Abdullah Muḥammad Bin Idrīs Al-Shāfi'ī, *Al-Umm*. 2nd Ed. Vol.5. Beirut: Dār Al-Fikr, 1403H/1983M. 36. 'Abd Al-Raḥman Bin Muḥammad 'Iwaḍ Al-Juzairī. *Al-Fiqh 'ala Al-Mazāhib Al-Arba'ah*. 2nd Ed. Vol.4. Beirut: Dār Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmiyyah, 1424H/2003M. 227-232. Zaidan, 'Abd AlKarīm. *Nizām Fī Al-Qaḍā' Fī Al-Sharī'ah Al-Islamiyyah*. 3rd Ed. Beirut: Mawsu'ah Al-Risālah Nāshirūn, 1430H/2009M. 160. 'Aqlah, Muḥammad. *Nizām Al-Ushrah Fi Al-Islām*. 4th Ed., 3rd Vol. Amman, Jordan: Maktabah Al-Risālah Al-Ḥadīthah. 409-444.

While majority understood the formed *mahram* relationship as a result of wet nursing, however a minority of them believed that marriage between milk siblings is permissible in Islam; and another viewed that *mahram* relationship is only between milk siblings. This underscores the urgent need to regulate the practices of wet nursing in Malaysia to avoid future problems. This finding is contrary to the findings of quantitative studies conducted by Hamjah et al.³¹⁹ and Dimon et al.³²⁰ Even though Mohamad Safir and her team found a lack of understanding among participants, they pinpointed that the lack of understanding was only regarding the legal aspects of breastfeeding.³²¹

Contrary to this, a study conducted by Hamjah and her colleagues³²² found that a significant number of participants comprehended the regulations related to wet nursing, especially in terms of marriage requirements and feeding methods. The findings of a study by Hamjah and her team substantiated the findings of a study Dimon and her colleagues. This observation suggests that the Muslim community in Selangor demonstrated a strong understanding and awareness of Islamic regulations concerning breastfeeding and their implications.³²³ The mixed and conflicting results imply the topic of wet nursing is not discussed widely in print, electronic, and social media; incomprehensiveness of the dissemination of Islamic knowledge; and the respondents took the topic of wet nursing for granted.

4.5.2 Understanding of Documentation for Wet Nursing Services

It is not surprising to discover that documentation was not the concerns of both wet nurses and biological mothers. The findings of this study augment the corpus body of evidence for the lack of wet nursing documentation reported by other studies. The

³¹⁹ Hamjah et al., "A Quantitative Study on Muslim Milk Mother's Understanding Towards the Islamic Concept of Wet Nursing."

³²⁰ Dimon et al., "Hukum-Hukum Penyusuan Terhadap Anak Susuan: Kajian Kesedaran Masyarakat Islam Di Selangor [Ruling Towards Breastfeeding in Islam: Study on Awareness of Muslim Community in Selangor]."

³²¹ Dimon et al.

³²² Hamjah et al., "A Quantitative Study on Muslim Milk Mother's Understanding Towards the Islamic Concept of Wet Nursing."

³²³ Dimon et al., "Hukum-Hukum Penyusuan Terhadap Anak Susuan: Kajian Kesedaran Masyarakat Islam Di Selangor [Ruling Towards Breastfeeding in Islam: Study on Awareness of Muslim Community in Selangor]."

reason for not documenting wet nursing practice may stem from lack of legal knowledge on the implications of wet nursing; and on who are counted as *mahram* in the formed milk kinship. Assuming that marriage is not permissible between milk siblings only but permissible between milk relatives, thus documentation is not needed because the information can be conveyed from words of mouth.

The absence of documentation motivated some researchers to investigate the practice of documenting wet nursing services by the relevant authorities.³²⁴ These documents served as official proofs that could be obtained through collaboration with the National Registration Department of Malaysia and the State Islamic Religious Council in Malaysia, facilitating proper documentation and legal registration by legislation.³²⁵ One noteworthy success in implementing this method was attributed to the Selangor Department of Islamic Religion, which issued the “MyRadha’ah” card.³²⁶ Several studies advocated for the collaborative efforts of these two entities to fulfil the aforementioned purpose.³²⁷ It would have been highly beneficial if various stakeholders

³²⁴ Salleh, Daud, and Man, “Amalan Pengambilan Ibu Susuan: Satu Kajian Sorotan Terhadap Dokumentasi Bukti Penyusuan”; Mohamad Safir et al., “Intervensi Pengurusan Dokumentasi Anak Susuan Ke Arah Mewujudkan Masyarakat Sejahtera”; Mohamad Safir, Mohamad Safir, and Salleh, “Pengendalian Dokumentasi Anak Susuan Dalam Kalangan Ibu Susuan”; Che Abdul Rahim, Hamjah, Abdul Majid, et al., “A Cross-Sectional Study on The Practice of Wet Nursing among Muslim Mothers”; Mohd Tamyas and Mat Hussin, “Pelaksanaan Kad Radha’ah Sebagai Alternatif Penjagaan Nasab Keturunan Dan Anak Susuan Oleh Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor [Implementation of Radha’ah’s Card as Alternative Care of Nasab and Babies with Breastfeeding by Selangor Islamic Religious Department].”

³²⁵ Mohd Tamyas and Mat Hussin, “Pelaksanaan Kad Radha’ah Sebagai Alternatif Penjagaan Nasab Keturunan Dan Anak Susuan Oleh Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor [Implementation of Radha’ah’s Card as Alternative Care of Nasab and Babies with Breastfeeding by Selangor Islamic Religious Department]”; Salleh, Daud, and Man, “Amalan Pengambilan Ibu Susuan: Satu Kajian Sorotan Terhadap Dokumentasi Bukti Penyusuan”; Mohamad Safir et al., “Intervensi Pengurusan Dokumentasi Anak Susuan Ke Arah Mewujudkan Masyarakat Sejahtera.”

³²⁶ Zainury, Mohd Azlim. “Daftar Kad MyRadha’ah elak kekeliruan nasab”, Sinar Harian. 29 June 2022, <https://www.sinarharian.com.my/article/209145/edisi/daftar-kad-myradhaah-elak-kekeliruan-nasab>. Accessed on 7/12/2023.

³²⁷ Salleh, Daud, and Man, “Amalan Pengambilan Ibu Susuan: Satu Kajian Sorotan Terhadap Dokumentasi Bukti Penyusuan”; Abdul Rahman, Amran, and Abdul Majid, “Faktor Penyusuan Anak Orang Lain & Amalan Pendokumentasian Dalam Masyarakat Kelantan: Satu Kajian Kes”; Mohamad Safir et al., “Intervensi Pengurusan Dokumentasi Anak Susuan Ke Arah Mewujudkan Masyarakat Sejahtera”; Mohamad Safir, Mohamad Safir, and Salleh, “Pengendalian Dokumentasi Anak Susuan Dalam Kalangan Ibu Susuan”; Mohamad Safir, Salleh, and Mohamad Safir, “Keperluan Dokumentasi Penyusuan Anak Susuan Dalam Kalangan Masyarakat Di Malaysia”; Mohd Tamyas and Mat Hussin, “Pelaksanaan Kad Radha’ah Sebagai Alternatif Penjagaan Nasab Keturunan Dan Anak Susuan Oleh Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor [Implementation of Radha’ah’s Card as Alternative Care of Nasab and

had taken proactive measures to realize this noble intention, contributing to the preservation of harmony within Muslim families.

In addition, the present study substantiates the findings of a study conducted by Dhamirah Nursakinah Mohamad Safir et al. They found that Muslims in Terengganu who had wet-nursed children were not recording and documenting the practice using the right method.³²⁸ Subsequent study by Mohamad Safir and her team also observed that there was no proper documentation, except for the exchange of birth certificates.³²⁹ Additionally, another study revealed that respondents resorted to verbal documentation and sharing birth certificates to avoid future issues.³³⁰ Wan Yusoff and Zainol Abidin³³¹ emphasized the need for proper documentation and the maintenance of family connections to prevent potential problems such as health risks and incest.

Apparently, studies done by researchers such as Mohamad Safir and colleagues,³³² and Mohamad Salleh and team³³³ did not cascade down to the masses since there are still many wet nurses and biological mothers who did not document their wet nursing practices. This underscored the necessity of documenting breastmilk sharing to control breastfeeding lineage. Mohamad Salleh et al. highlighted the documentation issues that could be resolved by the National Registration Department, aligning with the *maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* principle of “*Hifzu al-Nasl*” (protection of lineage) to avoid incest or marriage between milk siblings.³³⁴

Babies with Breastfeeding by Selangor Islamic Religious Department]”; Che Abdul Rahim, Hamjah, Majid, et al., “A Cross-Sectional Study on The Practice of Wet Nursing among Muslim Mothers.”

³²⁸ Mohamad Safir et al., “Intervensi Pengurusan Dokumentasi Anak Susuan Ke Arah Mewujudkan Masyarakat Sejahtera.”

³²⁹ Mohamad Safir, Salleh, and Mohamad Safir, “Keperluan Dokumentasi Penyusuan Anak Susuan Dalam Kalangan Masyarakat Di Malaysia.”

³³⁰ Mohamad Safir, Mohamad Safir, and Salleh, “Pengendalian Dokumentasi Anak Susuan Dalam Kalangan Ibu Susuan.”

³³¹ Wan Mazwati Wan Yusoff and Mashitah Zainol Abidin, “A Scoping Review of Wet Nursing in the Muslim World W,” *Jurnal Islam Dan Masyarakat Kontemporari* 23, no. 2 (2022): 58–82.

³³² Mohamad Safir, Salleh, and Mohamad Safir, “Keperluan Dokumentasi Penyusuan Anak Susuan Dalam Kalangan Masyarakat Di Malaysia.”

³³³ Salleh, Daud, and Man, “Amalan Pengambilan Ibu Susuan: Satu Kajian Sorotan Terhadap Dokumentasi Bukti Penyusuan.”

³³⁴ Salleh, Daud, and Man.

4.5.3 Understanding about Payments or Wages of Wet Nursing's Services

It can be inferred from the findings of this study that wet nursing is not perceived as a profession in Malaysia contrary to the practice of some cultures. Wet nurses did not demand payment for breastfeeding and biological mothers did not give payment for the service rendered. Majority of the participants were not aware of the rights of wet nurses to receive payment. The main motivation for sharing breast milk was completely altruistic; the drive to ease other people's burden which rooted from religious conviction and cultural norms. This finding supported a study done by Che Abdul Rahim and her team. They discovered that a vast majority of participants (94.0%) engaged in wet nursing without receiving any payment, while a small percentage received payments ranging from RM1 to RM100.³³⁵ This indicated that most respondents willingly provided wet nursing services without monetary compensation.

On the contrary, Reyes and colleagues found that their respondents preferred gifting rather than buying or selling breast milk, aligning with a negative view on monetary transactions for milk exchange, which was prohibited on certain milk-sharing platforms.³³⁶ Historically, wet nursing was an occupation for *Banī Sa'd*, and Ḥalīmah al-Sa'diyah, who wet nursed Prophet Muḥammad peace be upon him, was one of them.³³⁷ Even in American history, women employed for wet nursing were willing to accept low wages.³³⁸ In Article 151 of the Jordanian Personal Status Law, if mothers could not breastfeed their children, it was up to the father to pay a wet nurse.³³⁹

Virginia Thorley noted that wet nursing typically involved a woman who usually did it to be paid. Meanwhile, cross-nursing was an informal way to share breast milk between equals, often without payment, and might be reciprocal.³⁴⁰ In Islam, a wet nurse

³³⁵ Che Abdul Rahim, Hamjah, Abdul Majid, et al., "A Cross-Sectional Study on The Practice of Wet Nursing among Muslim Mothers."

³³⁶ Beatriz M. Reyes-Foster, Shannon K. Carter, and Melanie Sberna Hinojosa, "Milk Sharing in Practice: A Descriptive Analysis of Peer Breastmilk Sharing," *Breastfeeding Medicine* 10, no. 5 (2015): 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.1089/bfm.2015.0009>.

³³⁷ Ibn Hisham. *al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah Li-Ibni Hishām*, ed. Mustafā al-Saqā. 2nd Ed., 1st Vol. Egypt: Sharikah Maktabah Wa Maṭba'ah al-Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa Awlādūh. 1955. 162-163.

³³⁸ Golden, Janet. (2001). *A Social History of Wet Nursing in America: From Breast to Bottle*. Ohio State University Press. 31, 81

³³⁹ 'Aqlah, Muḥammad. *Nizām Al-Usrah Fi Al-Islām*. 4th Ed., 3rd Vol. Amman, Jordan: Maktabah Al-Risālah Al-Ḥadīthah, 1989. 409-444.

³⁴⁰ Thorley, "Sharing Breastmilk: Wet Nursing, Cross-Feeding, and Milk Donations."

is required to be paid by the father of the child from day one until the end of wet nursing.³⁴¹ Taking into account current practices in a specific culture, the amounts to be paid and the date on which the payment is made have been decided upon by mutual agreement.³⁴² The two parties could bring proceedings before a court if there were problems relating to payments. Additionally, Daud et al. argued on how to pay the mother's wages.³⁴³ *Al-Qur'ān* specifically mentioned that the father is obligated to pay the mother of his child wages for breastfeeding in the case of divorce. This *al-Qur'ān* injunction was examined by various researchers including a team of scholars headed by Daud et al.; and the findings revealed that a wet nurse has a right to receive payment for her service and a divorced mother also has a right to be paid by her ex-husband for breastfeeding their child. These findings were disseminated for the consumption of the people.³⁴⁴

4.5.4 Factors in Providing Wet Nursing Services

Before the advent of internet and social media, breast milk was shared among relatives, close friends, and neighbors. Presently, social media is among the platforms used for breast milk sharing. This raised a pertinent question about reasons for giving breast milk to other women's children. This study discovered various factors influencing wet nurses to share their breast milk. The first factor was to establish milk kinship between the child and her adopted family. Families without children use wet nursing to form a *mahram* relationship between the adopted children and the family. Usually, women would ask their sisters to breastfeed their adopted children to create a *mahram* relationship between the women and her adopted children. This finding substantiated

³⁴¹ Bensaïd, "Breastfeeding as a Fundamental Islamic Human Right"; Normadiyah Daud et al., "Breastfeeding Wages According to Al Quran and Al Sunnah," *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation* 24, no. 4 (2020): 2522–29, <https://doi.org/10.37200/ijpr/v24i4/pr201359>; Salleh, Daud, and Man, "Amalan Pengambilan Ibu Susuan: Satu Kajian Sorotan Terhadap Dokumentasi Bukti Penyusuan."

³⁴² Daud et al., "Breastfeeding Wages According to Al Quran and Al Sunnah." 'Aqlah, Muḥammad. *Nizām Al-Ushrah Fi Al-Islām*. 4th Ed., 3rd Vol. Amman, Jordan: Maktabah Al-Risālah Al-Ḥadīthah. 455-458.

³⁴³ Normadiyah Daud et al., "Breastfeeding Practices among Malay Academicians in Malaysia," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 7, no. 4 (2017): 130–41, <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v7-i4/2793>.

³⁴⁴ Daud et al., "Breastfeeding Wages According to Al Quran and Al Sunnah." 'Aqlah, Muḥammad. *Nizām Al-Ushrah Fi Al-Islām*.

the findings of a study conducted by Rahman and team. They found that the desire to maintain the *silaturrahim* (relationship) and build *mahram* relationships with adopted children as the factor for wet nursing.³⁴⁵ Thorley also supported the idea of fostering a relationship³⁴⁶ even when forming a new relationship with a stranger.³⁴⁷

To strengthen friendship and the desire to support family in need was another factor for being a wet nurse. This study supported Thorley's studies which identified a common factor: their respondents were close friends and wives of one husband, and they found the arrangement of wet-nursing each other's babies convenient for both of their children.³⁴⁸ Other respondents wet-nursed their cousins and younger sisters as a form of supporting their family to provide essential nutrition for their babies; and another one because to help their friend's baby.³⁴⁹ Rahman and colleagues further substantiated this study. They found that close friends and family members were often requested to be wet nurses.³⁵⁰

Furthermore, this study found that excessive supplies and preventing wastage of breast milk was another factor for wet nursing. Several studies corroborated the excessive milk production and preventing breast milk wastage as another factor for wet nursing. The studies were conducted by Rahman et al.; AlHreashy; Hamjah et al.; Che Abdul Rahim et al.; and Ghaly.³⁵¹ For Malaysians who are being nurtured by their

³⁴⁵ Abdul Rahman, Amran, and Abdul Majid, "Faktor Penyusuan Anak Orang Lain & Amalan Pendokumentasian Dalam Masyarakat Kelantan: Satu Kajian Kes."

³⁴⁶ Thorley, "Mothers' Experiences of Sharing Breastfeeding or Breastmilk, Part 2: The Early 21st Century."

³⁴⁷ Daud et al., "Benefits of Breast Milk for Health Care: Analysis from the Islamic Perspective."

³⁴⁸ Thorley, "Mothers' Experiences of Sharing Breastfeeding or Breastmilk, Part 2: The Early 21st Century."

³⁴⁹ Thorley.

³⁵⁰ Abdul Rahman, Amran, and Abdul Majid, "Faktor Penyusuan Anak Orang Lain & Amalan Pendokumentasian Dalam Masyarakat Kelantan: Satu Kajian Kes"; Thorley, "Mothers' Experiences of Sharing Breastfeeding or Breastmilk, Part 2: The Early 21st Century."

³⁵¹ Hamjah et al., "A Quantitative Study on Muslim Milk Mother's Understanding Towards the Islamic Concept of Wet Nursing." Che Abdul Rahim, Hamjah, Abdul Majid, et al., "A Cross-Sectional Study on The Practice of Wet Nursing among Muslim Mothers." Ghaly, "Human Milk-Based Industry in the Muslim World: Religioethical Challenges." AlHreashy, "Non-Maternal Nursing in the Muslim Community: A Health Perspective Review." Abdul Rahman, Amran, and Abdul Majid, "Faktor Penyusuan Anak Orang Lain & Amalan Pendokumentasian Dalam Masyarakat Kelantan: Satu Kajian Kes."

parents to practice the teachings of not wasting food, they would feel guilty to throw away excess breast milk. In *al-Qur'ān*, *Sūrah al-A'raf* (7:31):

يٰۤاَيُّهَا اٰدَمُ خُذُوْا زِيْنَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوْا وَشَرِبُوْا وَّلَا تُسْرِفُوْا ۗ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ

الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾

Translation: “O children of Adam! Take your adornment at every masjid and eat and drink but be not excessive.

Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess” and *Sūrah al-Isra'* (17:26-27)

Allah said:

وَوَاتِ دَاۤاَلْفُرْقٰى حَقَّهُۥ ۗ وَالْمَسْكِيْنَ وَاَبْنَ السَّبِيْلِ وَّلَا تُبَدِّرْ تَبَدِّيْرًا ﴿٢٦﴾

Translation: “And give the relative his right, and the poor and the traveler, and do not spend wastefully. Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and ever has Satan been to his Lord ungrateful.”

While the direct context of these verses was not related to breastfeeding or wet nursing, the principles of mindful resource use and avoiding excess are universal themes in *al-Qur'ān*, aligned with the practice of wet nursing to prevent wastage of excessive breastmilk waste.

Another factor influencing the decision to wet nurses was to help mothers who were sick and hospitalized. This study adds another evidence to support the conclusion made by Hamjah et al. as well as Thorley. They found that mothers were feeding other women’s babies out of compassion for those whose mothers were facing health challenges.³⁵² Thorley discovered that mothers who were sick with cancer relying on wet nurses to care for their babies.³⁵³ Additionally, participants in AlHreashy’s study reported nursing other babies either due to the mothers’ illnesses or the babies being hospitalized after being infected by sickness.³⁵⁴ In Kayseri, Turkiye, a study by Müge

³⁵² Hamjah et al., “A Quantitative Study on Muslim Milk Mother’s Understanding Towards the Islamic Concept of Wet Nursing.”

³⁵³ Thorley, “Mothers’ Experiences of Sharing Breastfeeding or Breastmilk, Part 2: The Early 21st Century.”

³⁵⁴ AlHreashy, “Non-Maternal Nursing in the Muslim Community: A Health Perspective Review.”

Yılmaz et al. revealed that 29% of wet nurses chose to wet nurse because the babies' mothers were either sick or pregnant.³⁵⁵ Similarly, Ergin and Uzun conducted the same study in Turkiye and found that 25% (5 respondents) also had the same reason for wet nursing, that is, the babies' mothers were sick.³⁵⁶ Safir et al. made the same conclusion that mothers' inability to breastfeed effectively due to complications during childbirth was a factor for wet nursing.³⁵⁷ Moreover, a scoping review conducted Wan Yusoff & Zainol Abidin supported this factor.³⁵⁸

4.5.5 Factors of Biological Mothers Taking Breastmilk

This study sheds some light on the factors influencing babies' mothers to seek breast milk from other women. This study found four factors encouraging wet nurses to supply their breast milk to other women's babies. Whereas this study discovered two reasons for birth mothers to seek breast milk from wet nurses. All birth mothers, except BM1, sought assistance from wet nurses because of the desire to provide breast milk exclusively for their babies. This is a new development since in the late 20th century, most working mothers and mothers with low supply of breast milk would opt for formula milk. In this study, the mothers chose to seek wet nurses because of low supplies of milk as well as the mother had to go back to work. This demonstrated the success of the programs to support exclusive breastfeeding that were started by the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and Malaysia's Ministry of Health.³⁵⁹

Moreover, the birth mothers were educated, and they have access to information on the significance of breastfeeding for the babies' physical, mental and emotional

³⁵⁵ Yılmaz et al., "Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices About Wet-Nursing and Human Milk Banking in Kayseri, Turkey."

³⁵⁶ Ahmet Ergin and S. Utku Uzun, "Turkish Women's Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors on Wet-Nursing, Milk Sharing and Human Milk Banking," *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 22, no. 4 (2018): 454–60, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-018-2433-1>.

³⁵⁷ Mohamad Safir, Mohamad Safir, and Salleh, "Realiti Penyusuan Anak Susuan Pada Zaman Silam Dan Kontemporari: Kajian Tinjauan [The Reality of Wet-Nursing in the Past and Contemporary: A Review Study]."

³⁵⁸ Wan Yusoff and Zainol Abidin, "A Scoping Review of Wet Nursing in the Muslim World W."

³⁵⁹ World Health Organization, "WHA Global Nutrition Targets 2025: Wasting Policy Brief." UNICEF. (2007). *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children Statistical Review* (Vol. 6). Geneva: UNICEF Publications. Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia. (2015). *National Breastfeeding Policy*. Malaysia: Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia.

development. Besides, mothers who were members of online breastfeeding groups were well informed of the benefits of breast milk. Nutrient-dense breast milk lowers infant mortality, fosters psychological and social development, and guards against childhood obesity.³⁶⁰ Similarly, Abdul Rahman, Amran and Abdul Majid found that most mothers choose to get breastmilk from wet nurses despite the existence of formula milk nowadays, owing to the awareness of the importance of breast milk.³⁶¹

Another factor influencing the decision to seek wet nurses was to form milk kinship and build *mahram* bond between the child and their adopted parents. This can be considered a common practice by couples who could not give birth to their own child. Similarly, Abdul Rahman found a common practice of seeking wet nurses' breast milk to maintain relationships and build *mahram* bonds with adopted children.³⁶²

4.5.6 Recruitment of Nursing Child

This study (in Chapter 1) highlights the growing popularity of breastfeeding and wet nursing social media groups where the members searched for wet nurses as well as offered to supply breast milk. This study confirmed that some birth mothers searched for wet nurses in Facebook groups. Findings from studies by Safir et al., Reyes-Foster et al., Thorley, Perrin et al., Baumgartel et al., and Rahman et al. further strengthen the conclusion that social media played an important meeting point for both birth mothers and wet nurses.³⁶³ Social media is where strangers meet to assist each other for the

³⁶⁰ Abdul Rahman, Amran, and Abdul Majid, "Faktor Penyusuan Anak Orang Lain & Amalan Pendokumentasian Dalam Masyarakat Kelantan: Satu Kajian Kes"; Normadiah Daud et al., "Penyusuan Dan Bank Susu Menurut Islam [Breastfeeding and Milk Bank According to Islam]," *Islamiyyat* 34 (2012): 107–18; Salleh, Daud, and Man, "Amalan Pengambilan Ibu Susuan: Satu Kajian Sorotan Terhadap Dokumentasi Bukti Penyusuan."

³⁶¹ Fabio Mosca and Maria Lorella Gianni, "Human Milk: Composition and Health Benefits," *Pediatrica Medica e Chirurgica* 39, no. 2 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.4081/PMC.2017.155>; Abdul Rahman, Amran, and Abdul Majid, "Faktor Penyusuan Anak Orang Lain & Amalan Pendokumentasian Dalam Masyarakat Kelantan: Satu Kajian Kes."

³⁶² Abdul Rahman, Amran, and Abdul Majid, "Faktor Penyusuan Anak Orang Lain & Amalan Pendokumentasian Dalam Masyarakat Kelantan: Satu Kajian Kes."

³⁶³ Mohamad Safir, Mohamad Safir, and Salleh, "Pengendalian Dokumentasi Anak Susuan Dalam Kalangan Ibu Susuan"; Reyes-Foster, Carter, and Hinojosa, "Milk Sharing in Practice: A Descriptive Analysis of Peer Breastmilk Sharing"; Thorley, "Mothers' Experiences of Sharing Breastfeeding or Breastmilk, Part 2: The Early 21st Century"; Perrin et al., "A Mixed-Methods Observational Study of Human Milk Sharing Communities on Facebook"; Baumgartel, Sneeringer, and Cohen, "From Royal Wet Nurses to Facebook: The Evolution of Breastmilk Sharing"; Abdul Rahman, Amran, and

benefit of children in the future. As mentioned in Chapter 1, many social media sites facilitated the recruitment of wet nursing children. This finding indicated an unconventional method used to seek wet nurses.

Alternative ways of finding wet nurses and nurslings were from the recommendation of friends and family members. This indicated that it is a common practice to seek help from friends and family members since other studies also reported the same findings such as studies conducted by Thorley, Safir et al., Safir et al., Rahman et al., Rahim et al., and Saari et al.³⁶⁴ This may stem from religious consciousness of observing Quranic teachings as mentioned in the *al-Qur'ān* in *Sūrah al-Nisā'* (4:36): “Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbours, the neighbours farther away, the companion at your side, the traveller, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful.” This verse broadened the concept of righteous behavior to encompass not only parents but also extended to relatives, neighbors, and others. It underscored the inclusive aspect of fostering positive relationships with diverse individuals in society, incorporating the concept of milk kinship.

4.5.7 Breastfeeding Method

This study found that most wet nurses breastfed their nurslings directly whereas only two of the birth mother participants gave their babies to be breastfed directly by the wet nurses but not exclusively. The choice of feeding methods depended largely on the convenience of both birth mothers and wet nurses. Since most birth mothers were working and they aimed for exclusive breast milk feeding, it was convenient to collect

Abdul Majid, “Faktor Penyusuan Anak Orang Lain & Amalan Pendokumentasian Dalam Masyarakat Kelantan: Satu Kajian Kes.”

³⁶⁴ Thorley, “Mothers’ Experiences of Sharing Breastfeeding or Breastmilk, Part 2: The Early 21st Century”; Mohamad Safir, Mohamad Safir, and Salleh, “Pengendalian Dokumentasi Anak Susuan Dalam Kalangan Ibu Susuan”; Mohamad Safir, Mohamad Safir, and Salleh, “Realiti Penyusuan Anak Susuan Pada Zaman Silam Dan Kontemporari: Kajian Tinjauan [The Reality of Wet-Nursing in the Past and Contemporary: A Review Study]”; Abdul Rahman, Amran, and Abdul Majid, “Faktor Penyusuan Anak Orang Lain & Amalan Pendokumentasian Dalam Masyarakat Kelantan: Satu Kajian Kes”; Che Abdul Rahim, Hamjah, Majid, et al., “A Cross-Sectional Study on The Practice of Wet Nursing among Muslim Mothers”; Saari et al., “Wet Nursing: A Historical Review and Its Ideal Characteristics.”

the breast milk and feed them using bottles. A consistent pattern has been observed among the studies of Rahim et al., Gribble, Arnold, and Thorley, indicating widespread use of bottles as opposed to direct breastfeeding in wet nursing services for feeding infants. The fact that the respondents were well acquainted with how milk could be given via different methods, such as expressing milk in a bottle, emphasized their acceptance of alternative feeding arrangements other than direct breastfeeding.³⁶⁵

4.5.8 Age of Wet Nursing Child

These findings indicated that survey participants comprehended and were conscious that the age limit for wet nursing and the establishment of milk kinship should be under two years old. This corroborated the findings of studies done by Mhanna and Shamsu and Salleh et al., which suggested that majority of Muslim women understood that wet nursing during the first two years of a child's life results in forbidden marriage due to milk kinship.³⁶⁶ This study revealed that birth mothers understood the significance of feeding breast milk exclusively for at least six months to two years as supported by scientific research and mentioned in *al-Qur'ān* 2:233, "Mothers may nurse (i.e., breastfeed) their children to complete two years of age for whoever wishes to complete the nursing period."

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter delved into the lived experiences of wet nurses and birth mothers in wet nursing. All participants (wet nurses and birth mothers) demonstrated a very minimal understanding especially on the legal aspects of *mahram* relationship formed because of wet nursing. It also presented factors influencing both wet nurses offering their services and the reasons why biological mothers sought assistance from wet nurses. These factors encompassed a wide range, from familial connections to individual

³⁶⁵ Ulfat Shaikh and Omar Ahmed, "Islam and Infant Feeding," *Breastfeeding Medicine* 1, no. 3 (2006): 164–67, <https://doi.org/10.1089/bfm.2006.1.164>; Ghaly, "Milk Banks Through the Lens of Muslim Scholars: One Text in Two Contexts."

³⁶⁶ Mhanna and Shamsu, "أحكام الرضاع المحرم في الفقه الإسلامي: دراسة فقهية حديثة" [The Ruling of Milk Kinship in Islamic Jurisprudence: Studi in Legal and Prophetic Tradition]; Salleh, Daud, and Man, "Amalan Pengambilan Ibu Susuan: Satu Kajian Sorotan Terhadap Dokumentasi Bukti Penyusuan." 332-357.

preferences and needs. The chapter extensively explored how wet nurses perceived their roles, delving into their understanding of milk kinship, documentation practices, and expectations regarding compensation.

The recruitment process for infants assigned to wet nurses was thoroughly examined, revealing diverse channels through which these arrangements were made, including family ties, friendships, and social media. Biological mothers seeking wet nurse services were driven by various factors, including breastfeeding challenges and the desire for exclusive breast milk due to considerations of modesty and family dynamics. The chapter emphasized the significance of these motivations in shaping the practice of wet nursing within the Malaysian Muslim community.

In summary, Chapter 4 provided an overview of the foundations of wet nursing practices among Malaysian Muslims. It highlighted the intricate and varied motivations and dynamics involved in this enduring tradition, shedding light on the cultural, familial, and individual dimensions that influenced both wet nurses and biological mothers.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE REALITY OF MILK KINSHIP RELATIONSHIP MAINTENANCE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter exposed the understanding of wet nurses and birth mothers on wet nursing and its impact from Islamic perspective as well as lived experiences of birth mothers and wet nurses in seeking and providing wet nursing services respectively. From the Islamic perspective, the offsprings, grandchildren, parents, uncles and aunts of the wet nurses are the mahram of their nursed sons and daughters. Therefore, close family relationships should be maintained. This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of wet nurses and their family members in strengthening milk kinship bond with their nursed children. Additionally, it aimed at exploring how the birth mothers and their children-maintained connection with the wet nurses. This is significant since little is known about the maintenance of milk kinship relationship by both the nursed children and their wet nurses and family members. Furthermore, it is important to maintain a strong bond between milk family members to avoid future problems after the demise of both birth parents and wet nursing parents.

The importance of maintaining the relationship between milk family members is aligned with the will of Allah which is stated in *al-Qur'ān*; and emphasizes the preservation of lineage. Preserving family ties corresponds with the divine will outlined in *al-Qur'ān*, specifically *Sūrah al-Furqān* verse 54, which states:

﴿ وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ مِنَ الْمَاءِ بَشَرًا فَجَعَلَهُ نَسَبًا وَصِهْرًا ۗ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ قَدِيرًا ﴿٥٤﴾ ﴾

Translation: “And It is He who created from water human being and made him [a relative by] lineage and marriage; and indeed, your God is powerful (creates whatever He wills).” [45]

Upholding this milk kinship helps prevent marriages between milk siblings, incest, misunderstanding, and misconceptions with *Sharī'ah* law regarding property inheritance, custody, cohabitation, and *mahram* lineage.

This chapter discusses the nuanced dynamics and expectations of wet nursing relationships; and how wet nurses and biological mothers maintained the milk kinship relationship between wet nursed children, wet nurses, and families. Furthermore, this chapter explains the experiences of wet nurses and biological mothers in ensuring the nursed children continue to recognize the wet nurses and their family members as part of the nursed children's family. Wet nurses and birth mothers understanding about the responsibility of wet-nursed children towards their breastfed mothers in the future is also discussed. In addition, this chapter describes the perspectives of both wet nurses and birth mothers regarding the future responsibilities of these children. This chapter concludes with a discussion that explores the research findings.

5.2 RELATIONSHIP MAINTENANCE BY THE WET NURSES AND FAMILIES

The analysis of the data revealed that most wet nurses made the efforts to stay connected with the families of the children they nursed, but the communication and connection were not as frequent and intimate as expected. The data analysis revealed three themes indicating the wet nurses' level of commitment to stay connected with their nursed sons and daughters. Their commitment, which revealed the extent to which they were interacting, can be seen through the frequency of meetings, constant reminders of familial bond, and continuous communication.

5.2.1 Frequency of Meetings

Meeting regularly could promote intimacy between family members. However, frequency of meetings depended on the physical distance between the family members. An analysis of the data found that six participants mentioned the significance of geographical proximity in maintaining relationships. For instance, WN1 and WN2, who breastfed their cousin's babies, highlighted that being close to their cousins facilitated regular meetings. They said *"Because I live near the cousin's house, the cousin... lives nearby, so indeed... always, the cousin is also the same age as me. We... always meet. Close cousins. Always meet. It just so happens that her child that I breastfeed is the same..., the same age as my child"* (WN1) and *"Meet often. See them often."* (WN2).

WN3 recognized the challenges posed by distance and emphasized using social media platforms like Facebook to stay connected. She clarified the meeting on social media can be considered as meeting; however, she tried to introduce them to know each other. This showed in her statement, *“For now, I’m trying to introduce them. ...It’s just... sometimes the distance, the distance and the time cause the situation to be difficult, because sometimes the time to meet is difficult... even the date of vacation, ... it’s hard to match. It’s just, ...I wish I could introduce ... to... my own family. And sometimes I... share pictures... through... Facebook, through the media so that at least people know, these are the children I have wet nursed. I think, my family members know...”* (WN3).

WN5 and WN6 pointed out that relationships were sustained through continuous visits and interactions. They claimed *“...still keep in touch until now... we always see each other... until now”* (WN5) and *“Always be in touch. Always visiting”* (WN6).

5.2.2 Using Terms of Endearment

Familial bond can be nurtured by using terms of endearment to address the wet nurse like by calling her “mama”. WN2 and WN4 encouraged their nursed children to address them in this manner, fostering a sense of familial closeness. Four wet nurse participants emphasized strengthening the familial bond between wet nursing children and their own families. This was achieved by teaching the children to address them as “mama” and consistently reminding them that they were part of the family, akin to biological siblings. WN5 underlined the notion that these relationships were considered part of their own family in her statement *“...the relationship remains until now... Each of them already knows... the law ... Islamic rules nursling siblings and wet nurses with nursing children are like their own family. So, we always see each other... until now”*, and WN7/BM6 expressed *“...my sister-in-law is very cautious... people say... in terms of... religion... instead of like... even though his son is still small, not yet achieve puberty, but... she doesn’t allow his sons to shake hands with me,”* and *“But, for the son I breastfed, she will say shake hand”*, which indicated that religious aspects were considered in the maintenance of these bonds.

5.2.3 Continuous Communication

Only one participant, WN3, discussed the importance of communication by sharing pictures and updates through platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp. WN3 said, *“And sometimes I.. share pictures... through... Facebook, through social media so that at least people know, these are the children I have wet nursed. I assume, my immediate family members know... know them (wet nursed children)”*. This helped to ensure that both sides of the wet nursing relationship remained aware of each other’s lives, even when physical meetings were infrequent.

In summary, the data provided valuable insights into the strategies employed by wet nurses to ensure future acknowledgment of the children they have nursed. These strategies included using terms of endearment, visiting frequently, and communicating continuously to nurture “strong milk kinship connection”. The importance of continuing to be in close contact with families of nursing children through periodic visits, addressing use terms of endearment, and religious considerations had been stressed by participants. The delicate dynamics of relationships between wet nurses and their nursed children; and their commitment to maintaining such connections over time were reflected in these divergent approaches.

It is interesting to discover that all wet nurse participants introduced their nursed children to their offsprings only. Their parents, siblings, uncles and aunts were not introduced to their nursed sons/daughters. Therefore, it can be assumed that the extended families of the wet nurses were in the dark about the formed mahram relationship, their connections were not properly informed to the kins.

Table 5.1 Wet Nurses’ Practices in Maintaining Relationships with Milk-Families

| Practice on Maintaining Milk Kinship Relationship | WN 1 | WN 2 | WN 3 | WN 4 | WN 5 | WN 6 | WN7/ BM6 |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Frequent meetings | / | / | / | / | / | / | |
| Reinforce family bond | | / | | / | / | | / |
| Continuous communication | | | / | | | | |

5.3 RELATIONSHIP MAINTENANCE BY THE BIRTH MOTHERS AND FAMILIES

The majority of birth mothers were actively involved in different approaches to developing these connections, to foster relationships between wet-nursed children and their wet nurse's family.

5.3.1 In-person Interaction and Bonding

To strengthen the relationships, two participants, BM1 and WN7/BM6 prioritized in-person interactions. BM1 encouraged playtime during regular visits, fostering a connection between her son and the wet nurse and her offsprings. BM1 mentioned in her statement *"They're playing together"* and *"Always visiting... and I keep telling my child, 'This is your wet nurse and milk siblings'"*. WN7/BM6 relied on their close friendship when she said *"... Because we're friends... if there's... if there's a spare time... sometimes... meet her, go to her house ... or she even comes to visit here too... like that. And... we will always talk about it... and we... introduced her and asked him to kiss her hand because we know ... she is a mahram, right? She can shake hands, right? ... that's how we remind him...."*. This saying highlights the milk-sibling bond and provides opportunities for children to engage in activities and build connections like shaking hands, visiting each other, and playing together.

5.3.2 Modern Communication and Consistency

Two participants demonstrated modern communication and consistency in maintaining milk kinship bond. BM3 proclaimed *"It's still maintained, it's just that we're not close. But... we know where she lives... that's how it was. Sometimes, we visited... when it's free, we WhatsApp each other... only sometimes. But not so often."*. With this proclamation, BM3 adopted modern communication methods, using WhatsApp to exchange news. This showed that they incorporated technology into the maintenance of connections. Same as BM3 and BM4, their commitment was demonstrated by frequent phone calls as some sort of communication. This showed their determination to maintain that relationship as long as possible. BM4 stated *"Through telephone calls... like a family member too"* and *"I... asked him to try treat her like her own mother"*. This

explains that biological mothers used modern communication and try to consistently be in touch via either WhatsApp or telephone calls.

5.3.3 Informing and Two-pronged Engagement

By continuously informing families about the relationship between the wet nurse and the children, BM5 emphasized family bonds. *“I... make sure my son... is always... alert and aware, my sister-in-law is not only his aunt but also his wet nurse. So, I have to... also inform my son, that my sister-in-law’s children and my sister’s children are his milk siblings. And there can’t be any kind of marriage, it must be considered siblings. Relationships are like siblings ... like that.”*. As for BM2, she adopted a two-pronged approach. She informed that, *“... stay connected. Until now still in touch. Plus, when she wants to buy a cake, why not? (laughing) I sell cakes, and I also cook. She always messages me to buy a cake”*. BM2 maintained regular contact with wet nurse families and leveraged the relationship for business opportunities. A deep commitment to maintaining relationships that included both personal and professional aspects was a key element of this strategy.

In conclusion, two participants (BM1 and BM6/WN7) prioritized in-person interactions, but it seemed still less frequent. They shied away from mentioning how many times they met, which showed that milk kinship relationship maintenance was still not completely successful. Two participants (BM3 and BM4) displayed modern communication and consistency in maintaining milk kinship. Another two participants (BM2 and BM5) used continuous reminders and a two-pronged engagement strategy. BM5’s statement showed that the strategy that had been used was good in maintaining milk kinship. However, the way used by BM2 implied that the interaction was a transactional relationship devoid of emotions. The business transactions were mostly between birth mother and wet nurse. The wet nursed child has a limited chance to connect with the wet nurse, let alone to connect with the other milk siblings. In a nutshell, the various strategies used by biological mothers to maintain contact with the families of the wet nurses were illustrated in these practices, which were interpersonal interactions, application of modern tele-communication, and continuous reminders to ensure that nursed offsprings knew their milk mothers. Overall, the relationship

maintenance by biological mothers and families was shown that it was not enough to be called proper maintenance.

Table 5.2 Biological Mothers' Practices in Maintaining Relationships with Milk-Families

| Maintain Milk-Families Relationship | Biological Mother | Practice |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| In-person interaction and bonding | BM1 | Visited and encouraged playtime among milk siblings |
| | WN7/BM6 | Visited each other due to a close friendship, emphasizing the milk-sibling bond and allowing children to interact and handshake |
| Modern communication and consistency | BM3 | Utilized WhatsApp for communication and news exchange |
| | BM4 | Consistently contacted families through phones |
| Informing and multipronged engagement | BM2 | Maintained contact with families and used the relationship for business opportunities |
| | BM5 | Ensured families were informed about wet nurse relationships and emphasized the familial connection |

It can be inferred from data gathered from the conversations with the birth mothers and wet nurses that the interactions between the milk siblings were minimal, too little to promote close relationships. The findings also indicated that there was no interaction between the wet nursed sons/daughters with the wet nurses' parents, siblings, uncles and aunts. If there were interactions, it was because they were family members, in the case of sisters and cousins being the wet nurses.

5.4 WET NURSES' PERSPECTIVES ON FUTURE RECOGNITION OF WET-NURSED CHILDREN

This section explains what the wet nurses had practiced ensuring their wet nursed sons/daughters will recognize them as their milk mothers and their husbands as milk fathers; the wet nurses offsprings as their milk siblings; wet nurses' parents and grandparents as their milk grandparents and great grandparents; wet nurses' siblings as their milk uncles and aunts. The analysis revealed four emerging themes: emphasis on family connection, documentation and communication, reminders and encouragement, and parental attitude.

5.4.1 Emphasis on Family Connection

Many participants (four) highlighted the importance of maintaining a robust familial connection between the wet nurse and the children she had nursed. This connection was established through endearing terms such as “mama” (WN2, WN4) or “wet nurse” (WN1, WN5), along with reinforcing the notion that children nursed by them were considered integral members of the family. They highlighted the familial bond, akin to that of biological siblings, to ensure future acknowledgment.

5.4.2 Documentation and Communication

WN3 expressed a desire to gather and keep important documents of her wet nursed sons and daughters such as marriage certificates, birth certificates, and identity cards of the children. This demonstrated a proactive approach to having tangible evidence of the connection and a means to stay in touch. The use of social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp also plays a role in maintaining communication. However, she focused on the relationship between her nursed sons/daughters and her own sons/daughters. This is consistent with her understanding that milk kinship is only between the wet nursed sons/daughters and her offsprings, her husband, parents, grandparents, and siblings are not involved in the formed mahram relationship.

This can be seen through her long statement:

“... One thing I'm trying to make sure, and I hope... I still can't gather complete information about wet-nursed sons and daughters at this time.

I just hope I have time to get their documents myself, ... I mean like the marriage certificate of the mother and father, ... the birth certificate, the child's IC (identification card) ... because I hope... there is documentation that I can hold so that ... in the future, if anything happens, there is still more information for me to refer to related to this matter. ... It's just... me... That little intention, that intention in my heart is that, if possible, I always want to keep in touch with the family that I'm wet nursing. Because... we are afraid one day, afraid if the maintenance is broken, afraid what will happen, cause another problem. So... what I do now is if I can connect through Facebook, I will connect through Facebook. We just, right, just... always monitor via Facebook, via WhatsApp... like that. We live far apart. If we live close, I'll introduce the family. And I always remind, especially my eldest son, that there are other nursing siblings that he must... always... follow up so that the relationship is not broken. ... Because the one below is probably small. Maybe they don't understand that concept, right? I just hope that this eldest son can understand and always remember. Because I collect all the pictures of breastfed children, I save them in a folder, I create folder name "children", so, I want other children to know, this kinship exists... is part of their families too" (WN3).

5.4.3 Reminders and Encouragement

Most of the participants (4 wet nurses), mentioned the importance of regularly reminding the wet nursing children about their role and connection as wet nurses. This could be through terms used to address milk mothers and siblings, physical interactions like shaking hands, and verbal reinforcement. The idea was to ensure that the children remembered their wet nurse and recognized her as a significant figure in their lives. These can be seen through their responses:

- *Maybe ... she told her child about me as a wet nurse. And... and then, maybe... I will introduce myself... as her wet nurse. ... This is her nursling sister (WN1).*
- *Then, always... Remind them that biological children and wet nursing children are brothers and sisters. So, ... In sya Allah until the future, they will always remember and know their wet nurse (WN4).*
- *Recognize yourself as a wet nurse, just like her biological mother (WN5).*
- *"..indeed... he will... or... when they meet, right? It will... always remember that. Reminded them that I am their wet nurse" (WN7/BM6).*

5.4.4 Parental Attitudes

One participant (WN7/BM6) suggested that the degree of recognition and acknowledgment in the future might depend on the attitudes and actions of the biological parents. She mentioned that in her statement, “*I think it depends on what his parents are like.*” (WN7/BM6). If the parents were caring and supportive of the wet nursing relationship, the children were more likely to remember and acknowledge the wet nurse.

In summary, the wet nurses in this study employed a variety of strategies to secure future recognition and acknowledgment from the children they had wet nursed. These strategies revolved around fostering a normal sense of familial connection, maintaining documentation and communication, regularly reminding the offsprings, and relying on the support of the biological parents. Despite that, from all the strategies above, it was clear that the perspective of wet nurses towards wet nursed children was not very high. They started calling “mama” or “wet nurse” from the very beginning. But it stopped at milk mothers and sometimes milk siblings. There was no reference to the extended family of the wet nurses. The data obtained suggested that the relationship with the wet nurse’s spouse, parents, grandparents, and siblings as their milk fathers, their milk grandparents, their milk great grandparents, their milk uncles and aunts respectively was not emphasized.

As for documentation, it has been shown in *al-Qur’ān*,

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَنْتُمْ بِدِينٍ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ ۚ وَلْيَكْتُب بَيْنَكُمْ كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ وَلَا يَأْب كَاتِبٌ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ ۚ وَلْيَمْلِكِ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ ۚ وَلَا يَبْخَسَ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا ۚ فَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ سَفِيهًا أَوْ ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يُمِلَّ هُوَ فَلْيَمْلِكْ وَلِيَّهُ بِالْعَدْلِ ۚ وَأَسْتَشْهَدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ ۚ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ مِمَّن تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكَّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى ۚ ﴾³⁶⁷

Translation: O you who have believed, when you contract a debt for a specified term, write it down. And let a scribe write [it] between you in justice. Let no scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him. So let him write and let the one who has the obligation dictate. And let him fear

³⁶⁷ Al-Baqarah, 2:282.

Allah, his Lord, and not leave anything out of it. But if the one who has the obligation is of limited understanding or weak or unable to dictate himself, then let his guardian dictate in justice. And bring to witness two witnesses from among your men. And if there are not two men [available], then a man and two women from those whom you accept as witnesses – so that if one of the women errs, then the other can remind her.

This verse is used by Al-Shāfi‘ī to substantiate his ruling that witnesses should be provided to make a contract legally binding including a contract between a father and a wet nurse and her spouse.³⁶⁸ This means that a good contact document should include all necessary information including the names of trustworthy witnesses. Only one participant expected proper and efficient documentation such as marriage certificates, birth certificates, and identity of wet nursed children. This wet nurse also used a media platform to maintain communication, but it was not enough because the wet nursed children may not have seen Facebook or WhatsApp, and this was limited only to biological mothers and wet nurse’s account owners, which was only those who knew about the info said without reaching the knowledge of wet nursed children.

Reminders and encouragement given by the wet nurses to their wet nursed children on future acknowledgment were limited to occasional phone calls, religious pilgrimages (*‘Umrah*), and reminders about the prohibition of marriage. However, their understanding of Islamic rulings related to wet nursing was not sufficiently comprehensive to encompass other relevant aspects, such as the inability to inherit property, the permissibility of performing *‘Umrah* and *Hajj* together, the role of a milk-relative as a *maḥram*, and the importance of introducing wet nursed children to extended family members, including those from both the wet nurse’s lineage and her spouse’s family. Lastly, from the wet nurse’s perspective future recognition will depend on parental attitudes. A good attitude from biological parents on caring and support towards milk kinship was needed. This means that both parties are needed to work together in maintaining this relationship. It can be assumed that there is a narrow perspective on the future acknowledgment from milk sons/daughters towards their wet nurses.

³⁶⁸ Al-Shāfi‘ī, *Al-Umm*. Vol. 5. 58 & Vol. 7. 51.

Table 5.3 Summary of Wet Nurses' Perspectives on Future Responsibilities of Wet-Nursed Children

| Perspective on Future Responsibilities | Wet Nurse | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------|
| | WN1 | WN2 | WN3 | WN4 | WN5 | WN6 | WN7/BM6 |
| Recognition of milk kinship | / | / | | / | / | | |
| Respect and prayers | | | / | | | | |
| Focus on immediate family | / | | | / | / | | / |
| No Monetary responsibilities | | | | | | | / |

5.5 BIRTH MOTHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON FUTURE RECOGNITION OF WET-NURSED CHILDREN

Several common themes emerged from the responses of the birth mothers regarding how they believed children who had been wet nursed would be recognized and acknowledged in the future.

5.5.1 Communicating and Informing

Three participants, BM1, BM2, and BM3 emphasized the importance of communicating and informing their sons of their wet nurses. They believed it was crucial to introduce their sons to the wet nurses and their milk siblings to ensure their sons understood the familial connection and its legal implications. For example, BM1 said, "*visiting*" (BM1) and she agreed when asked whether she let her son play with the wet nurse's children together. "*Keep in touch. I must tell my son. That... This is his wet nurse, this is his nursling siblings, right? Tell him that he must maintain the relationship. Can't lose contact there.*" Similarly, BM2 and BM3 agreed by saying, "*...we must explain it to him.... this is his wet nurse. This one is his nursling sibling. ... In terms of law, I must tell him. So... we also ask him... so that when he grows up in the future... he must... must*

maintain the relationship because this is his milk mother, the same as his birth mother too. Ha, that's it".

5.5.2 Emotional Bond and Gratefulness

Only one participant, BM4 saw wet nursing as a profound act of providing sustenance akin to offering her own blood to a breastfed child. She conveyed that, *"I... will ask him to treat the wet nurse like his own mother because... people say... wet nursing is like... giving... our blood to a breastfed child so that he grows up well"*. This perspective suggested a desire to nurture a strong emotional bond between the child and the wet nurse for being grateful for the wet nurse's sacrifice to provide nourishment for her child.

5.5.3 Mutual Respect and Love

Two participants, BM5 and WN7/BM6, emphasized the need for mutual respect and love between the child and the wet nurse. They encouraged their sons to treat the wet nurse with the same love and respect as their biological mother. BM5 emphasized that in her saying, *"I remind my son... respect and love his wet nurse as well, just as much as he loves and respects me as his mother"* and *"It means to also appreciate the services of... wet nurse is the same. Got to love and respect and love just like his own mother"*. Similarly, BM6 also expressed *"Since she is a wet nurse, that means we must remember that she is also her mother because she used to wet nursed. She used to, used to give milk ..."* (WN7/BM6). WN7/BM6 expressed the same idea as BM5, that is, to respect and love milk mothers.

In summary, the biological mothers expressed a shared commitment to maintaining the acknowledgment of the wet nurse as a significant figure in the child's life. They stressed on continuous communicating and informing them to develop a sense of responsibility in ensuring that the child recognized and respected the wet nurse as a part of their family. The data also acknowledged potential challenges in maintaining relationships, particularly when the child didn't spend much time with the wet nurse.

Table 5.4 Biological Mothers' Perspectives on Future Acknowledgment

| Perspective on Future Acknowledgement | Biological Mother | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------|
| | BM1 | BM2 | BM3 | BM4 | BM5 | WN7/BM6 |
| Communicating and informing | / | / | / | | | |
| Emotional Bond and Gratefulness | | | | / | | |
| Mutual Respect and Love | | | | | / | / |

5.6 WET NURSES' VIEWS ON THE FUTURE RESPONSIBILITIES OF WET-NURSED CHILDREN

Several recurring themes and similarities about the future duties of wet nursed sons/daughters towards their birth mothers may be detected from the wet nurses' comments on those children's commitments. The themes are recognition of the established milk kinship, respect and prayers from milk sons/daughters, no expectation to receive monetary help from the wet nursed children, focus on the wet nursed child's immediate family, and no intention of holding the wet nursed children responsible for their future welfare.

5.6.1 Recognition of Milk Kinship

Two participants, WN1 and WN3, stressed the recognition of milk kinship. WN1 emphasized its significance by noting the prohibition of marriage between the wet nursed child and the wet nurse's siblings, underscoring the child's need to comprehend this familial connection in her statement "*We must stay alert, that's our nursing child... I mean... we can't, ... our siblings can't marry him... in the future*" (WN1). WN3 valued the child's recognition of her and her family in her proclamation, "*That it is enough for the wet nursed child to know and accept the wet nurse and her family*". This highlighted that it was enough for the wet nursed child to know and accepted the wet nurse and her family, deemed sufficient expressions of the responsibility of wet nursed

sons/daughters. In both cases, the acknowledgment of kinship held a vital place in the wet nursed child's future responsibilities.

5.6.2 Respect and Prayers

One participant, WN3, mentioned the desire for mutual respect and prayers from the wet-nursed child as a way of acknowledging the relationship. WN3 claimed "*So... I don't ... expect something that is too... high ... on the responsibility of milk kinship, of wet nursed child. It is enough if the child knows me, accepts my family, has a sense of respect, and prays for me. But I don't expect anything more than that, it's enough just to have a milk kinship, which has respect only.*" While not a tangible responsibility, WN3 signified the importance of maintaining a connection with respect and prayers.

5.6.3 Focus on Immediate Family

One wet nurse, WN5 mentioned that the primary responsibilities of the wet nursed child should lie with their immediate family, including their spouse, children, and biological mother. WN5 stated "*... If according to responsibility, if he is already... married, his main responsibility is his wife, his children, and then... just... his mother, the last one might be... me. But I don't care. Because people also have their own families, right... So ... only they understand.*". This perspective prioritizes personal responsibilities over obligations to the wet nurse. This underscores the sincerity of the wet nurse in providing nourishment for the wet nursed sons/daughters who stemmed from religious upbringing and cultural norms. In Malaysia, wet nursing is not considered as a profession.

5.6.4 No Monetary Responsibility

Five wet nurse participants were concerned about financial responsibilities towards their milk sons and daughters and vice versa. Three responses provided by WN1, WN4, and WN7/BM6 indeed reflected uncertainty when it came to the topic of inheritance through milk kinship. Phrases like "*I think so,*" (WN1 and WN7/BM6) "*Not sure,*" (WN4), and "*I've heard people say yes*" (WN7/BM6) indicated a level of uncertainty or lack of clarity in the participants' understanding of the matter. These expressions

suggested that the respondents might not have a definitive or confident stance on whether inheritance can be obtained through milk kinship.

The WN5 phrase “*We never think about property at all*” suggested that the person does not attach much importance or consideration to the concept of property when it comes to their role as a wet nurse or their relationship with the wet nursed child. In participating as wet nurses, they showed a lack of interest in or concern for the wealth and inheritances from wet nursed sons/daughters. While only one participant, WN3, appeared to be the only participant who had expressed a degree of certainty with respect to the issue of inheritance for and from wet-nursed children. WN3 explicitly stated that “*There is nothing that can be claimed by a wet nursed child in terms of inheritance or the distribution of faraid (inheritance shares according to Islamic law), except for gifts*”. The statement indicated that WN3 was aware of the limitations on inheritance rights for lactating children and believed it to be in their knowledge. The other parties used phrases such as ‘*I think so*’ or expressed a lack of clarity on the issue of inheritance.

5.6.5 Selflessness

Two wet nurses, WN2 and WN7/BM6 took a light, casual approach to the question, indicating that they have no particular expectation or serious concerns about the future responsibilities of the wet nursed children. WN2 declared “*Expect nothing*”, while WN7/BM commented “*... I didn't, I didn't say put anything... even expectations. ... No, in terms of... responsibility. Indeed, I never set expectations. So... I don't have anything... there's nothing... ... I don't think about that responsibility, ha!*”. This indicated that some wet nurses shared their breast milk willingly without expecting any return from the birth mothers or the wet nursed sons/daughters in the future. These responses suggested the selflessness of these wet nurses who did not have any expectations regarding the future responsibilities of their wet-nursed children. Instead, their focus was more on maintaining a sense of kinship and connection rather than specific obligations.

Despite these common themes, it was important to note that there were also significant differences in responses, with some wet nurses more concerned with certain responsibilities or expectations than others, non-monetary. The complex nature of wet

nursing relationships and the cultural, personal, and contextual factors that influence these views are reflected in this diversity of views.

Table 5.5 Summary of Wet Nurses’ Perspectives on Future Responsibilities of Wet-Nursed Children

| Perspective on Future Responsibilities | Wet Nurse | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------|
| | WN1 | WN2 | WN3 | WN4 | WN5 | WN6 | WN7/BM6 |
| Recognition of milk kinship | / | | / | | | | |
| Respect and prayers | | | / | | | | |
| Focus on immediate family | | | / | | | | |
| No monetary responsibilities | / | | / | / | / | | / |
| Selflessness | | / | | | | | / |

5.7 BIRTH MOTHERS’ VIEWS ON THE FUTURE RESPONSIBILITIES OF WET-NURSED CHILDREN

The responses of birth mothers on future responsibilities for their children towards their wet nursing mothers revealed several shared observations which can be classified into three themes. The themes are respect and relationship continuation, rights and kinship, and uncertainty about future responsibility of their sons/daughters towards their wet nursing mothers.

5.7.1 Respect and Relationship Continuation

Four participants (BM1, BM2, BM4, and BM5) stressed the importance of maintaining a respectful and ongoing relationship with the wet nurses and their families. BM1 mentioned the significance of going on a pilgrimage and continuing to meet with the wet nurse’s family, “... *This child... He also needs to ... continuously... I mean... go on a pilgrimage... I mean like... it doesn’t stop there. Had to meet... had to... because... he is part of the wet nurse’s family, right.*”. BM2 brought a similar theme, “*All that I know*

is that he must respect that wet nurse. Because the wet nurse has already become his mother, right?'". BM4 suggested that the child should treat the wet nurse well and maintain good manners saying, *"As I was told earlier... the child should really... treat her like her own mother and treat her well. Always take care of manners"*. While BM5 in her statements, *"The child should be more aware and loving"* and *"I hope he loves me the same way he respects me and loves me, the same love should be shown to his nursing mother"* emphasized that the child should show love and respect to both his biological mother and wet nurse. Majority of birth mothers fall into this category proved that they were united in respecting their own wet nurses and must have a milk kinship bond continuation.

5.7.2 Rights and Kinship

BM3 acknowledged that the child's responsibilities were not entirely on them due to the brief period of wet nursing. However, she stressed that the child has rights over their mother and nursing siblings. BM3 emphasized maintaining kinship and assisting family members in times of need in her claim, *"... his responsibility is not, not completely. It's not totally on him, because she wet nursed in a short period, right? ... but he still... has rights, has rights over his mother. There is a right over the brothers and sisters who are siblings. Because... guess because they are nursing siblings. So, he... has to recognize that as his wet nurse, as his milk sibling. And he... has to... help them if they have a hard time one day. They have the responsibility to accompany their milk mothers to go on a pilgrimage. They have to... keep the kinship even if people say they are not close. But... you must understand, you have to know that's a responsibility"*. By examining this response, it can be concluded that the birth mother viewed that it is her son's responsibility to help his milk mother and siblings when they are in need. She also believed that her son has the responsibility to accompany his milk mother if she wants to go on a pilgrimage.

5.7.3 Uncertainty of Future Responsibilities

Only one wet nurse, WN7/BM6, expressed uncertainty about the child's responsibilities and raised questions about whether they were similar to the responsibilities toward the

biological mother. She proclaimed “... *Interesting question because I never thought about what the responsibility is, is it the same as ... the responsibility towards the biological mother? I’m not sure about that*”. WN7/BM6 might have a lack of information on future responsibilities of her son/daughter towards his/her milk mother and siblings.

Overall, the data highlighted varying perspectives on the future responsibilities of children who had been wet nursed. While some biological mothers stressed respect, kinship, and love, others expressed uncertainty about the specific responsibilities. Additionally, cultural and religious practices seem to influence their views, particularly regarding physical contact and familial relationships.

Table 5.6 Birth Mothers’ Perspectives on Future Responsibilities of Wet Nursed Children

| Perspective on Future Responsibilities of Wet Nursed Children | Biological Mother | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------|
| | BM1 | BM2 | BM3 | BM4 | BM5 | WN7/BM6 |
| Respect and relationship continuation | / | / | | / | / | |
| Rights and milk kinship | | | / | | | |
| Uncertainty of future responsibilities | | | | | | / |

5.8 DISCUSSION

The main aim of this study was to explore how the birth mother and the wet nurses maintained the formed milk kinship between the wet nursed sons/daughters and wet nurses and their family members including the husbands, parents, grandparents, siblings, uncles and aunts. This is important because Islam teaches that family relationship should be maintained. It is more so in the case of milk kinship to avoid future problem such marriage between milk siblings. A valuable insight into the complexity of family relationships has been gained through the study of milk kinship

maintenance, which has revealed a unique aspect that is often overlooked in conventional discussions. The findings are addressed in this brief discussion and their wider impact on family bonds and societal norms is explored.

Moreover, a new dimension has been added to the existing research body by the study's revelation of proactive measures taken by both birth mothers and wet nurses on the future recognition of the milk kinship. Recognition and acknowledgement of milk mothers and siblings, documented relationships, and actively maintained connections emerged as essential practices contributing to the enduring strength of these unique familial ties.

The correlation between the findings of this study with historical examples, in particular Prophet Muḥammad's life, has illustrated the cultural and religious significance of milk kinship. This recognition establishes a basis for these bonds to be preserved within the wider Islamic community, to foster continuity and interlinkages.

The important contribution that this study has made to understanding the responsibility of milk kinship, as well as its possible impact on family and social dynamics, is highlighted in this brief discussion. These active measures can serve as a useful guide to people who want to manage and contribute to the longevity of these unique relationships.

5.8.1 Milk Kinship Maintenance and Recognition

The main motivation for conducting this study are the intellectual curiosity about how the formed mahram relationship is maintained considering some wet nurses are strangers to the birth parents. The search for literature on this subject was futile. It is understandable that if the wet nurses were close relatives or neighbors, the milk kinship bond can easily be maintained. The curiosity stemmed from reports that even a brother married his own sister from a different mother because of family relationship was not known and maintained. This study shed some lights on how the birth mothers and wet nurses maintained the milk kinship bond especially the bond between the nursed sons/daughters with the offsprings of the wet nurses, the husbands, parents, grandparents, siblings, uncles and aunts of the wet nurses.

This study found that majority of wet nurses and the minority of birth mothers visited each other but the frequency of meeting was not sufficient to create a strong familial bond. However, analysis of the data revealed two distinct findings. If the wet nurses were close family members of the birth parents, sister, sister-in-law, cousin, the frequency of visitation was more. In addition, geographical proximity was another factor for regular physical interactions to foster stronger familial ties. Visits and meetings with the families of the children they have nursed was also reflected in the many *aḥādīth* indicating the frequent interactions they had with their wet-nursed sons/daughters. For example, several *aḥādīth* reported Ḥalīmah regularly visited Prophet Muḥammad, Peace Be Upon Him, after he grew up and shared her concerns with him.

However, a minority of them (three wet nurses, to be exact) rarely or never visited the family of their wet nursed sons/daughters for the reason of living far away from the wet nurse sons/daughters. Instead of visiting they resorted to social media to bridge the gap and maintain connection, though this was not on par with what had been done in the Sunnah. Even though Ḥalīmah stayed far from the Prophet Muḥammad's place, she still visited him whenever she had the chance. Nowadays, transportation is more advanced than in the ancient days, so living far away is not an excuse to neglect to maintain milk kinship. This indicated that some people were still unaware of the importance of visiting between wet nurses and wet-nursed sons/daughters as a means of maintaining milk kinship, following Sunnah's practice.

The phenomenon of maintaining family bond was also captured in the Prophetic biography (*sīrah nabawiyyah*) by Ibn Hisham,³⁶⁹ where Shaymā' introduced herself as a nursling sibling (milk sister) upon being presented to the Prophet. She even exposed a scar, a mark on her back from being bitten by the Prophet during his childhood. The fact that milk kinship bonds were still tied and significant in the Prophet's relationships with his wet nurses was demonstrated by these examples. The scar was immediately recognized by the Prophet and he then acknowledged and honored Shaymā'. In addition, this study showed that the practice of wet nurses and biological mothers was not consistent with the teachings of the *aḥādīth* discussed in Chapter 2, *aḥādīth* of 'Ā'ishah and Ḥafṣah the wives of the Prophet. They, too, received visits from their milk uncles

³⁶⁹ Al-Saqā, Al-Abyāri, and Al-Shalbī, *Al-Sīrah Al-Nabawiyyah Li-Ibnu Hishām*. 458.

and brother, underscoring the significance of maintaining the bonds of milk kinship between the families of wet nurses and their nursing children.

Besides visiting, the study found that addressing wet nurses as ‘mama’ or milk mother’ was one way to maintain milk kinship relationship. This practice is consistent with the Sunnah of the Prophet. History report indicated that there was an explicit mention of the Prophet Muḥammad (Peace Be Upon Him) calling her wet nurse, Ḥalīmah as “*ummi*”³⁷⁰ (meaning “mother”) in the traditional way. His actions and expressions of deep respect and affection towards her throughout his life can be interpreted as a reflection of that milk kinship bond.

Continuous communication was also practiced, by using social media to share updates and pictures as a modern approach to maintaining connections, limited by the extent of engagement from the children themselves. Only two biological mothers (BM2 and BM3) used modern communication mediums (WhatsApp and telephone calls), which do not conform to the close relationship expected in milk kinship. This demonstrated a proactive effort to maintain the strength of the milk kinship bond in modern times, despite physical separation. However, it highlighted a gap in ensuring that the wet-nursed children themselves, not just the wet nurse, and the biological mothers’ families remain engaged and informed about these relationships, as well as the need to inform all extended families.

The data showed that maintaining a strong bond with extended families, as taught by the Sunnah, was still unsuccessful. In Islamic history, the *Hawāzin* delegation led by Abū Tharwān, the Prophet’s milk uncle, was mentioned in *Tabaqāt al-Kubrā*.³⁷¹ When he met the Prophet, he introduced himself as a family member and praised him greatly for his childhood and wet nursing period. He also asked for Allah’s blessings alongside the Prophet’s blessings. The wet nursing uncle then sought help for their affliction alongside the *Hawāzin*’s leader. Notably, Abū Tharwān, along with 14 others, converted to Islam after that, further solidifying the bond between the Prophet’s nursing family and the Islamic community. The significance of maintaining links with families of milk kinship in the wider society was underlined by these actions, which emphasized the importance of not only wet nurses’ spouses and children being recognized as milk

³⁷⁰ Ibn Sa’d, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, 1990.

³⁷¹ Ibn Sa’d. 92.

kinship but also extended milk kinship such as milk uncles, milk aunts, milk grandparents, and so on.

Furthermore, Prophet Muḥammad stayed connected with his milk by inquiring about their well-being. In the case of Thuwaybah, his initial wet nurse, the Prophet attempted to free her through Khadījah (his wife), but Abū Lahab rejected the offer.³⁷² The Prophet showed his concern for her by sending her clothes despite the failure to free her from Abū Lahab.³⁷³ The Prophet then inquired about Masrūḥ (Thuwaybah's son) when he came back from Khaibar and found that he had sadly passed away before Thuwaybah's death. No other family remained.³⁷⁴ The Prophet's unyielding dedication to honouring milk kinship was represented through these deeds of support and remembrance.

Even though there was no explicit mention of his mother (Āminah) maintaining the relationship with the wet nurse family in Prophet Muḥammad's history (as she passed away early in his childhood), the Prophet himself actively preserved the milk kinship in numerous ways. Similar to the methods discussed in this study, he recognized his milk kinship relatives, visited each other, and strengthened these bonds. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the bonds can be seen in the *aḥādīth* of 'Ā'ishah and Ḥaḥṣah, which informed that they were visited by their wet milk uncles and brother. In addition, the Prophet Muḥammad peace be upon him himself, acknowledged his milk siblings, including Ḥamzah (Prophet's biological uncle/milk brother) and Ḥamzah's children,³⁷⁵ Abū Sufiyān (Prophet's cousin/milk brother),³⁷⁶ and Abū Salamah (his milk brother).³⁷⁷ Therefore, both two parties (wet nurses and birth mothers) to a milk kinship should take steps towards maintaining contact and caring for this bond, thus preserving its endurance and keeping it in good bond.

³⁷² Ibn Sa'd. 87.

³⁷³ Ibn Sa'd. 87.

³⁷⁴ Ibn Sa'd.

³⁷⁵ Mentioned in Chapter 3.

³⁷⁶ Shihāb Al-Dīn Aḥmad Bin Muḥammad Bin Abī Bakar Bin 'Abd Al-Malik Al-Qastalānī Al-Qutaibī Al-Misrī Abū Al-Abbās, *Al-Mawāhib Al-Laduniyyah Bi Al-Minḥ Al-Muḥammadiyyah*, 1st ed. 1st Vol. (Al-Qāhirah, Egypt: Al-Maktabah Al-Taufiqiyyah, 2010). 374. Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, 1990. 4th Vol. 37.

³⁷⁷ Mentioned in Chapter 3.

The Prophet has also demonstrated consideration and care for his milk kinship families as well. For instance, with al-Shayma', he illustrated maintenance by spreading his robe for her, asking about her needs and whether she wanted to remain or return to her people. The Prophet had respected and granted al-Shayma's wishes, taking into account his kindness to his milk sister. He then showed benefaction with the action of providing her with a boy called Makhul and a slave boy even after al-Shayma' had chosen to return to her people. Eventually, she wedded one of them, and their offspring remained bound to the community, making the Prophet also a matchmaker for her milk sister!³⁷⁸

Further than that, the Prophet sent plenty of aid packages, consisting of 40 lambs, and a camel with a *howdah* (a saddle placed on a camel's back) at the request of his other wet nurse, Ḥalīmah al-Sa'diyah.³⁷⁹ It was a model of the Prophet's empathy and willingness to assist the family of his wet nurse when they needed it. The Prophet's devotion to the maintenance and care of his milk kinship was illustrated by these examples. He actively engaged with his milk kinship and relatives, provided support and care during their tribulations, and secured the continuance of these bonds for future generations.

One participant only used milk kinship as a business opportunity but sadly did not take this opportunity to tie the relationship between the milk mother and her milk son. This participant failed to fully connect the wet-nursed child with their wet nurse and her extended family, thereby neglecting the deeper familial bonds and obligations inherent in milk kinship which have been taught by the Sunnah in previous discussion. Such a perspective reduces a profound and historically significant relationship to a mere transactional interaction, missing the essential spiritual, social, and emotional elements that milk kinship is meant to foster.

The case of BM5 was also noteworthy; she was excluded from the analysis because she did not mention any visits as part of maintaining the milk kinship. This absence of physical interaction underscores a critical gap in the practice of milk kinship. Visits and in-person interactions are fundamental to reinforcing the bonds between wet-

³⁷⁸ Al-Saqā, Al-Abyāri, and Al-Shalbī, *Al-Sīrah Al-Nabawīyyah Li-Ibnu Hishām*. 2nd Vol. 458.

³⁷⁹ Al-Dīn Muḥammad Bin Mukrim Bin 'Alī Abū Al-Faḍl Jamāl Ibnu Manzūr, *Lisan Al-'Arab*, 3rd ed. 8th Vol. (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār Ṣādir, 1994). 406.

nursed children and their wet nurses, as well as integrating these children into the broader family network as enlightened by the Sunnah in the previous discussions too.

Both examples (BM2 and BM5) highlighted a broader issue within the study: the need for a more comprehensive and committed approach to maintaining milk kinship. The data suggested that without regular, meaningful interactions and a genuine effort to foster familial ties, the essence of milk kinship is lost. This underscores the importance of educating and guiding birth mothers as well as wet nurses on the significance of milk kinship, ensuring that it was honoured in both spirit and practice according to al-Sunnah and Islamic ways. It is also critical to highlight that both wet nurses and birth mothers excluded the extended family members in their effort to strengthen the milk family bond contrary to the practices shown by the Sunnah of Prophet Muḥammad. It is highly probable that they did not understand who are involved in the mahram relationship. The evidence is when they say that milk siblings are allowed to be married just that it is not encouraged like marriage between cousins. Furthermore, one of them said that only milk siblings are prohibited to marry but not the extended family members of the wet nurses.

In summary, the data illustrated that the varied strategies employed by the wet nurses and biological mothers fell short from what had been taught by the Sunnah and Islam. Improvement is needed through actions taken by all parts of the community, especially by the government, religious departments and institutions, and educational bodies.

For future generation's deepened understanding, it could be practical to demonstrate and display all circles of *mahram* connections in a lineage tree format, similar to a genealogical diagram³⁸⁰ like the one found in Zainol Abidin and Wan Yusoff's study on the Prophet's Milk Sibling Diagram.³⁸¹ It would show the elaborateness of these relationships and their extended distance, not only within one

³⁸⁰ Mary Bouquet, "Family Trees and Their Affinities: The Visual Imperative of the Genealogical Diagram," *Royal Anthropological Institute* 2, no. 1 (1996): 43–66, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3034632>.

³⁸¹ Zainol Abidin and Wan Yusoff, "A Critical Need for Breastmilk Collection Centres for High-Risk Premature Babies."

generation but also with great-grandchildren and even future generations that might have lengthened lifetime.

5.8.2 Future Responsibilities of Milk Kinship

The purpose of exploring wet nurses' and birth mothers' perspectives on the responsibility of the wet nursed sons/daughters was to discover whether the relationship was still maintained after the completion of breastfeeding by the wet nurses. When the breast feeding stopped, the nursed toddlers no longer came in contact with the wet nurses, thus relationships may become tenuous. Since the relationship between wet nurses and her nursling is eternal, therefore relationship must be maintained. Analysis of the collected data from both wet nurses and birth mothers revealed a range of perspectives on the future responsibilities of wet-nursed sons/daughters and highlighted common themes as well as areas of divergence. These insights provided a cursory but significant view of the expectations and cultural significance of maintaining milk kinship relationships.

In classifying future responsibilities because of milk kinship, it should be known that not all responsibilities of wet nursed sons/daughters towards their milk mothers and relatives are similar to their responsibilities towards their birth mothers and their own blood relatives. From the literature on Prophet Muḥammad's and his companions' interactions with their milk relatives, it can be concluded that wet nursed sons/daughters should shoulder some responsibilities, discussed hereinafter, to maintain the milk kinship bond.

This study found that no one on both sides, wet nurses or birth mothers, expected psychological and physical support as future responsibilities of wet nursed sons/daughters. In contrast, analysis of historical data showed that wet nurses may seek psychological and physical support, such as consulting on how to deal with their problems, to help them cope with life after the wet nursing children have grown up. For example, Ḥalīmah, the Prophet's wet nurse, sought help during a tribulation in her village due to drought. The Prophet and his wife, Khadijah, supplied Ḥalīmah with 40 lambs and a camel with a howdah (a saddle placed on a camel's back) to ease her

hardships.³⁸² The data of this study proved that some wet nurses and birth mothers still lack understanding of the future responsibilities of wet nursed children.

It is surprising to find that slightly less than 50% of the wet nurses expected recognition and respect as milk mothers from their wet-nursed children in the future. The reason for not expecting recognition and respect from their milk sons/daughters is probably because they were giving sincerely without expecting any return as evident from the data that indicated their selflessness in providing help for those in need. This is in contrast with the perspective of birth mothers because they were the ones who were at the receiving end. Therefore, it is not surprising to discover that almost all biological mothers expect their children to respect and continue the milk kinship with the wet nurses in the future. Recognizing milk siblings is always necessary, as demonstrated by Prophet Muḥammad with his milk siblings (Ḥamzah, Abū Sufiyān, and Abū Salamah). To preserve the milk kinship, both parties must remain in contact and maintain a close relationship. This includes understanding the mahram genealogy which comprises the wet nurse's offsprings and their descendants, the wet nurse's parents and those above, the wet nurse's siblings, and the wet nurse's spouse (milk father).

Pertaining to the recognition of milk relatives (the milk mother's extended family members), the analysis of the data revealed that none of the participants from both wet nurses and birth mothers expected recognition of milk kinship relatives and none of them mentioned about visiting milk relatives to strengthen milk family ties. This indicated weakness in understanding who are involved in mahram relationship which in turn lead to the participants neglecting the Sunnah of the Prophet. This also implies issues surrounding the impact of wet nursing are not the mainstream conversation in Malaysia's media; and analysis of content of Islamic education showed no focus on the comprehensive impact of wet nursing. According to the *aḥādīth* of 'Ā'ishah and Ḥafṣah', milk uncles and brother came to visit both 'Ā'ishah and Ḥafṣah from time to time. Prophet Muḥammad similarly recognized and visited his milk kinship relatives.

Records and documents on wet nursing practices including data about wet nurse, her husband, offsprings, parents, grandparents, siblings, uncles and aunts are crucial for

³⁸² Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*, 1990. Vol. 1. 92. Al-Din Muḥammad Bin Mukrim Bin 'Alī Abū Al-Faḍl Jamāl Ibnu Manzūr, *Lisan Al-'Arab*, 3rd ed. Vol.8 (Beirut, Lubnan: Dār Ṣādir, 1414H). 406.

future reference to serve as evidence of milk kinship. However, this study found only one wet nurse (WN3) kept very limited records and documentation of breast feeding. To provide reference and give better understanding to future generations on wet nursing kinship, it is very important to document all involved in milk kinship in a family tree or genealogical diagram. Milk kinship extended beyond one generation. It is everlasting until great-great-grandchildren and even into the afterlife. It is also important to record all the milk given, recognition and witnesses from both sides, along with clarification on future responsibilities.

Furthermore, this study shed some light on the wishes of the participants from both sides (wet nurses and birth mothers) to frequently visit each other's family to strengthen the milk kinship ties in the future. Even though they focus only on visiting the immediate family members but this practice is a good start. The view held by all participants to maintain future recognition and strength of milk kinship bond is consistent with the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. He (peace be upon him) showed that families should welcome guests from milk relatives into their homes and honour them. This practice was exemplified in the *aḥādīth* of 'Ā'ishah and Ḥafṣah on entertaining their milk uncles.

Another finding discovered by this study was the expectation of wet nurses and birth mothers on caring for milk kinship families. All participants except one wet nurse did not expect the wet-nursed sons/daughters to care for the milk family relatives when they have grown up. All participants, however, recognized the responsibility to love, respect and care for the milk mothers only. Whereas Prophet Muḥammad took care of milk kinship relatives, as seen in the story of al-Shayma', his milk sister. He (peace be upon him) provided support and arranged marriage for her.³⁸³ This scenario highlighted the Prophet's concern, care, and assistance to his milk relatives. However, most respondents did not expect this as a responsibility exemplified by the *Sunnah*.

Additionally, this study found that birth mothers did not see in future that their sons/daughters would interact as mahram with their milk siblings. Some did not view free mingling with milk siblings as permissible in Islam. Only one participant mooted that her son has the responsibility to accompany his milk mother to Mecca for

³⁸³ Al-Saqā, Al-Abyāri, and Al-Shalbī, *Al-Sīrah Al-Nabawīyyah Li-Ibnu Hishām*. Vol. 2. 458.

pilgrimage, but only milk mother and not milk sisters. In contrast, the Prophet allowed certain interactions, such as being alone, traveling together, and ablution not to be invalidated if touched, with milk relatives. This was evident in the *ḥadīth* about ‘Ā’ishah being visited by her milk uncle, Aflah. Despite that, none of participants focused on this permissibility of interaction as one of the future responsibilities between wet nursed sons/daughters and wet nurses and her extended family members.

Moreover, none of the participants highlighted the prohibition of love and marriage between milk relatives. They focused on the prohibition of marriage between milk siblings, but a minority of them even believed that milk siblings can be married. This was not compatible with the Islamic teaching, which explicitly prohibited intermarriage between milk relatives. To avoid any inadvertent infringement, it is necessary to consistently remind people of this prohibition. Besides, all participants did not mention about what were not the responsibilities of the wet nursed sons/daughters towards their wet nurses and their relatives. Three things that do not apply to milk kinship³⁸⁴:

1. Inheritance: In the event of death, neither the wet nurse, milk father, nor the wet nursed children can inherit from each other.
2. Alimony: The obligation for alimony is not imposed on either party, as it differs from the maintenance required for biological descendants.
3. Testimonial in court: Testimony between relatives by blood lineage is rejected, but the testimony of a close relative through breastfeeding is accepted because in this aspect, milk kinship is not considered the same as close blood relative.

There was noticeable uncertainty among wet nurses regarding material responsibilities and inheritance through milk kinship. WN1, WN4, and WN7/BM6 expressed confusion or lack of clarity on this matter, while WN3 clearly stated that wet-nursed children do not have inheritance rights, except for receiving gifts. In contrast, the biological mothers focused on respect and relationship continuation, indicating a need for better understanding and guidance on these issues.

³⁸⁴ Muḥammad ‘Aqlah, *Niḥām Al-Uṣrah Fī Al-Islām*, 4th ed. (Amman, Jordan: Maktabah al-Risālah al-Ḥadīthah, 2010). 452.

In summary, many participants lack understanding of future responsibilities of both wet nurses and wet nursed sons/daughters, and this conformed that actions should be taken to enlighten the community to ensure the teaching of Islam and Sunnah of the Prophet are being practiced. These findings may indicate dissemination of Islamic knowledge about wet nursing is not adequate and properly conducted. A lot must be done to educate the Muslims on Islamic rulings and the Sunnah of the Prophet.

5.9 CONCLUSION

This investigation of wet nursing relationships looked at the complex dynamics and expectations that formed the connections between wet nurses, biological mothers, and the infants they wet nursed. This chapter highlighted the complex nature of these connections, emphasizing the upkeep and nurturing of these ties. The perspectives of both biological mothers and wet nurses were explored, uncovering their beliefs and practices regarding future acknowledgment and the responsibilities of wet-nursed children.

The findings offered a heartbreaking insight into the gaps and missed opportunities in strengthening milk kinship bonds. This study highlighted the lack of information on how to effectively maintain these relationships and the failure to properly introduce extended families into the kinship network. For example, the Prophet Muḥammad (Peace Be Upon Him) practiced informing his wives about the rules and regulations of milk kinship, teaching them how to show respect and maintain these relationships, a practice not fully adopted by modern wet nurses and biological mothers. Addressing this gap is crucial, especially for Muslims, as it is an important aspect of al-Sunnah that should have been emphasized for fulfilling milk kinship's responsibilities.

With the sharing of breast milk, the relevance of milk kinship remains significant today. It is essential to bridge connections and highlight the continuing importance of wet nursing in communities, including its maintenance, acknowledgment, and future responsibilities. This task should have been a priority for authorities.

As the chapter concluded, it is acknowledged that milk kinship relationships are not static but continue to evolve in response to changing social dynamics.

Understanding the complex nature of these relationships led to a greater appreciation of their lasting significance and the profound connections they fostered between individuals and families as enlightened by the Sunnah. The authorities, governments, and religious departments need to take action to educate the Muslim community on the importance of milk kinship, maintenance, and the responsibilities it entails, ensuring that these relationships are not viewed merely as transactional but as vital, enduring bonds, which follows Sunnah's order.



CHAPTER SIX

IMPLICATIONS OF WET NURSING PRACTICES IN MALAYSIA

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study has explained wet nursing from the Islamic perspective and the implication of which is the establishment of wet nursing kinship with the status of *maḥram* relationship which prohibited marriage between milk kinship relatives. Since breast milk was also shared among strangers in Malaysia, concern regarding the maintenance of milk kinship relationship arises to prevent possible incestuous marriage between milk relatives. Therefore, this study has examined *al-Qur'ān*, *aḥādīth* and historical records to discover the position of wet nurses to determine the proper treatment of wet nurses and her family members by her nursed sons and daughters. Furthermore, it discovered guidance from the Prophet of how to deal with milk mothers, milk siblings and other extended milk kinship relatives accentuating on the importance of knowing and informing the family lineage of the wet nurses and treating them with compassion and respect. The findings from the analysis of the *al-Qur'ān*, *aḥādīth*, and historical records were used to evaluate and make judgment of the current practices of milk kinship maintenance among Malaysian Muslims.

Furthermore, this study has expounded the lived experiences of wet nurses and birth mothers in the practice of wet nursing. It found that the understanding of the implications of wet nursing was quite limited, particularly regarding the scope of the *maḥram* relationship. Most participants believed that only the milk mother's (wet nurse) offspring are considered as *maḥram*. Limited awareness was also observed regarding the prohibition of marriage between milk relatives, the importance of documenting wet nursing services, the maintenance of milk kinship as demonstrated by Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, and the ongoing responsibilities of wet nursed sons and daughters toward their milk mothers and milk relatives. This study also found that the wet nurses' and birth mothers' practices were consistent with their understanding which revealed a huge gap between the Sunnah of the Prophet and the practices of the Muslims.

Therefore, this chapter intends to discuss the implications of wet nursing practices in Malaysia to rectify the problems involved in wet nursing practices and to reduce the gap between the Sunnah of the Prophet and the tradition of Muslims in Malaysia. It presents the implications in terms of policy development and implementation that can adequately deal with the intricacies brought about by milk kinship. It will cover key considerations including preparation of written policies, training of the appropriate stakeholders, and the need for documentation and record-keeping. The chapter also identifies the need to be in close liaison with religious and government authorities to build a broader understanding of, and support from, the public for milk kinship.

Wet nursing in Malaysia carries implications that are not confined to the immediate nourishment aspect but spill over into wider social, legal, and cultural dimensions. The notions of milk kinship are sacrosanct in many tenets of Islamic jurisprudence, in which the maintenance of such connections is, as a matter of fact, a part of religious duty and societal obligations. Undoubtedly, while wet nursing progresses with society, it is also imperative that such practices be in keeping with modern standards and ideals to address present-day issues adequately.

The balancing act, however, really lies in how to preserve these traditional practices amidst modern governance imperatives and the demand of today's society. This will involve developing policies that address the complicated issues of milk kinship maintenance by providing clear guidelines and support systems, education, and training for the stakeholders concerned. Additionally, the integration of these into the current legal and cultural framework needs to be evoked so that these are respected and upheld across various sectors. Addressing these issues, policies will be supporting a better-informed practice, for both wet nurses and recipients of milk, whereby the practice of milk kinship will continue to merit respect and remain an integral part of Malaysian society.

6.2 IMPLICATION FOR STRENGTHENING FAMILY TIES

Al-Qur'ān has shown the values of kindness, care, and securing the family ties. It teaches respect for our parents, respect for neighbors, and the building of relationships

leading to a safe, secure, and humane society. The position of milk mother according to *al-Qur'ān* is the same as birth mother because she has endured hardship upon hardship to breastfeed the child, sometimes up to two years. Furthermore, scholars agreed that the word 'wālidayn' (parents) such as in *Sūrah al-Nisā'* verse 36, *Sūrah al-Isrā'* verse 23, *Sūrah Luqmān* verse 14, *Sūrah al-Aḥqāf*, verse 15 include milk mothers. These verse command the Muslims to treat parents with 'iḥsān' which means to interact with them in the most excellent manners. Since 'parents' in the verses include milk mothers, therefore, milk mother should be treated with care and in the best possible ways one could perform using whatever means available.

Al-Qur'ān commands Muslims to do good not only to milk mothers but also milk relatives. Furthermore, it is the Sunnah of the Prophet, peace be upon him, to care, visit, respect, help in times of need, and communicate consistently to strengthen the familial bond and show gratitude. Most importantly, the Sunnah provides guidance in knowing and sharing information on who the milk mothers' relatives are. This is to avoid future problems like incestuous marriage between *maḥram* relatives. On the contrary, the study conducted in Malaysia highlighted a point of concern: most participants did not have good understanding of what wet nursing really means according to *al-Qur'ān* and al-Sunnah. This misunderstanding was manifested in their actions towards milk mothers and milk relatives. This means that there is a huge gap between their practices and the Sunnah of Prophet.

Al-Sunnah teaches and explains the lifestyles of Prophet Muḥammad, and great emphasis is given to the preservation of family relationships, particularly those that have come into existence through milk kinship. The life of the Prophet, peace be upon him, teaches that people ought to take care of everyone in the community, including the relatives who are from the same genealogy or through milk kinship. By practicing the Sunnah, it would mean that one treats the milk parents and milk relatives with dignity, honour, love, and care the same way one treats his/her own birth parents and their lineage. Even though there are differences which may occur legally, such as regarding issues on inheritance and testifying in court, the social and emotional obligations to milk kinship remain a vital part of life. While in Malaysia, this research revealed that many do not appreciate the importance of these relationships and do not know how to rightly

practice the Sunnah with respect to such relationships, indicating a need for more education and awareness.

Islam prohibited severing family bonds thus preserving milk kinship is significant for it maintains values related to family and community cohesion. By nurturing these bonds people contribute to a close-knit and supportive Muslim community that values various forms of kinship recognized in Islamic tradition. This tradition underscores the importance of family in Islam and ensures that Prophet Muḥammad’s teachings regarding compassion and empathy are implemented in various spheres of life including relationships established through milk kinship. The results of this research conducted in Malaysia underscored the necessity for awareness and education regarding these matters to enable a deeper appreciation and application of Islamic principles, within the community’s cultural framework.

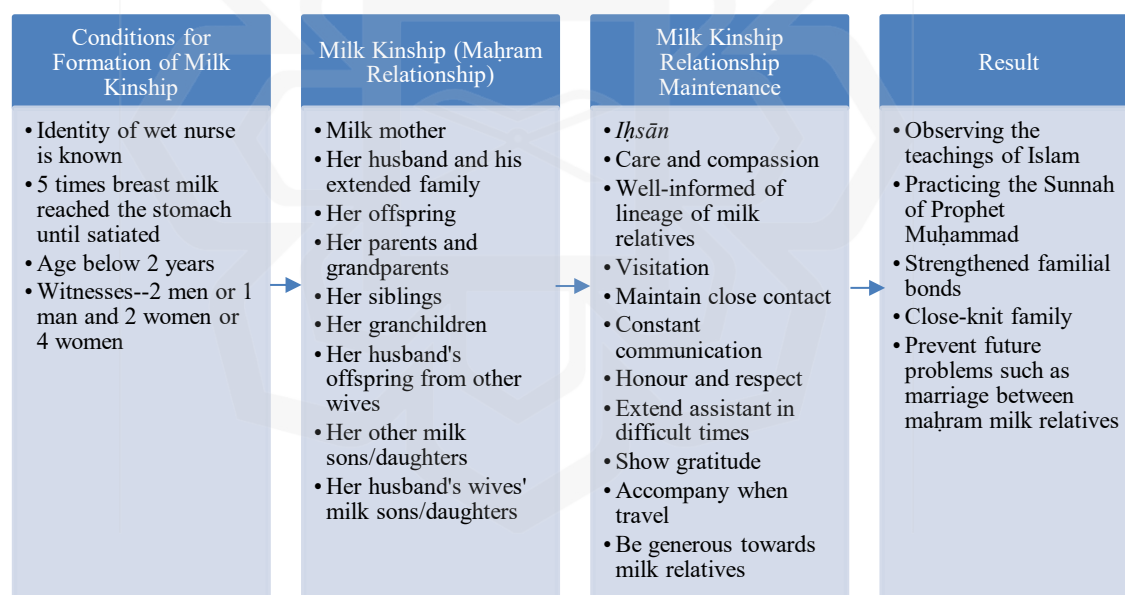


Figure 6.1 Wet Nursing Kinship Maintenance According to *al-Qur’ān* and al-Sunnah

To sum up, observing milk kinship relationships is just another vivid reminder of the culture that Islam explicitly advocates in both *al-Qur’ān* and al-Sunnah. In doing so, not only believers are fulfilling an important religious duty by respecting these milk

kinship bonds but also aiding in a stronger, more connected and well-informed community in Malaysia.

6.3 IMPLICATION FOR RECORD AND DOCUMENTATION

Analysis of the Sunnah of the Prophet revealed that the Prophet was well-informed about his own milk mothers and milk relatives, and he shared this information with others. Besides, the Prophet also recognized his wives' milk relatives probably because the society at that time was small and people knew each other thus oral sharing of information was sufficient. In the present time when strangers who live far apart share their breast milk, proper documentation is needed. Accurate recording and documentation in milk kinship are important because such clarity brings forth compliance to the Islamic injunction. Accordingly, al-Shāfi'ī school considers the validity of documentation for which it requires either two male witnesses, one male and two female witnesses, or four female witnesses (which have been discussed in Chapter 2). This flexibility is to extend the context within which the documentation process takes place coactively with Islamic principles, where fairness and accuracy can be maintained.

The data from this study revealed a very huge gap in knowledge of how best to record and document milk kinship. For the most part, participants were uninformed about the procedures they needed to follow, evidenced by the fact that only one participant, a wet nurse, kept a record of the milk she expressed for the wet-nursed children. This practice ensured the amount of breast milk given to the baby was more than 5 feedings to fulfil the condition of *mahram* relationship formation. In a nutshell, this study highlighted limited documentation of practice by wet nurses and birth mothers and thus an issue that calls for greater addressing in practice to ensure that milk kinship is effectively acknowledged and managed at the community level.

Addressing these gaps requires some form of guidance and education into what is necessary according to al-Shāfi'ī school regarding the documentation. For instance, explaining acceptable configurations of witnesses to participants includes such options as two men, one man and two women, or four women, which help participants understand how to fulfil their documentation obligations (which have been discussed in

Chapter 2). Secondly, all parties involved should be provided with practical training in keeping proper records of distributed milk, along with other related information.

Proper documentation itself plays a very important role in milk kinship. Good record-keeping would avoid disputes, clarify who is related to whom, and provide for the rights and responsibilities of everyone concerned. This will in turn enhance the knowledge and practices of wet nursing within the community, improve the practice of milk kinship relationship by living up to Islamic teachings and keeping the prophetic tradition alive. At the very least, the document should include the conditions to be fulfilled for those contemplating to be or use a wet nurse; and this document is made available at every religious institution and department. Such conditions specified in the document may include:

- Knowledge about wet nursing and its implications according to Islamic teachings
- The process involved in executing the wet nursing service
- Information on wet nurse's health condition, such as blood type and medical history
- Information on wet nurse's and birth parent's demography
- Providing legal documents such as the birth certificate and ID card of the nursed baby, birth parents, wet nurse and her husband
- Information on wet nurse's family tree: genealogy
- An agreement between the wet nurse and her husband and the birth parents which may include consent, payment, and declaration of understanding of the impact of wet nursing.

At least those who are involved in wet nursing have a basic understanding of the implications of wet nursing, their rights and duties according to the Islamic law and prophetic Sunnah.

For birth parents who choose to use wet nursing services, they should go to the nearest Breast Milk Centre or relevant institution, such as a hospital or maternal and child health clinic, to complete the registration form. One notable example is Pusat Susu

Bonda Halimatussaadia, located within SASMEC @ IIUM in Kuantan, Pahang, which began operating in late 2019 as part of IIUM's Baby-Friendly Hospital initiative. As the first Syariah-compliant "milk bank" in Malaysia, it is approximately 350 km east of Kuala Lumpur, making it accessible to parents living in the eastern region of Peninsular Malaysia. The parents will be educated about wet nursing and its implications from the Islamic perspective and the process involved in getting a wet nurse. After they have understood, they will be given a list of potential wet nurses containing information about the wet nurses and their characteristics. Then they have to choose a wet nurse and a meeting with the wet nurse and her husband at the centre will be arranged. If they (the birth parents and wet nurse) agreed, then health and shariah experts will explain in detail the consequences of wet nursing before consent form and agreement are signed by all involved including witnesses. If the birth parents and the wet nurse do not consent then, the birth parents can choose another wet nurse and go through the process one more time. After the consent form and an agreement are signed, the birth parents will receive the breast milk witnessed by two male witnesses. If they choose to use direct breastfeeding, then four women can be the witnesses. After the baby is fed with five feedings until satiated, then the milk kinship relationship should be maintained. The process involved will be recorded by the relevant authority. It is better for birth parents to recruit wet nurses through Breast Milk centres and hospitals to avoid possible disease infection.

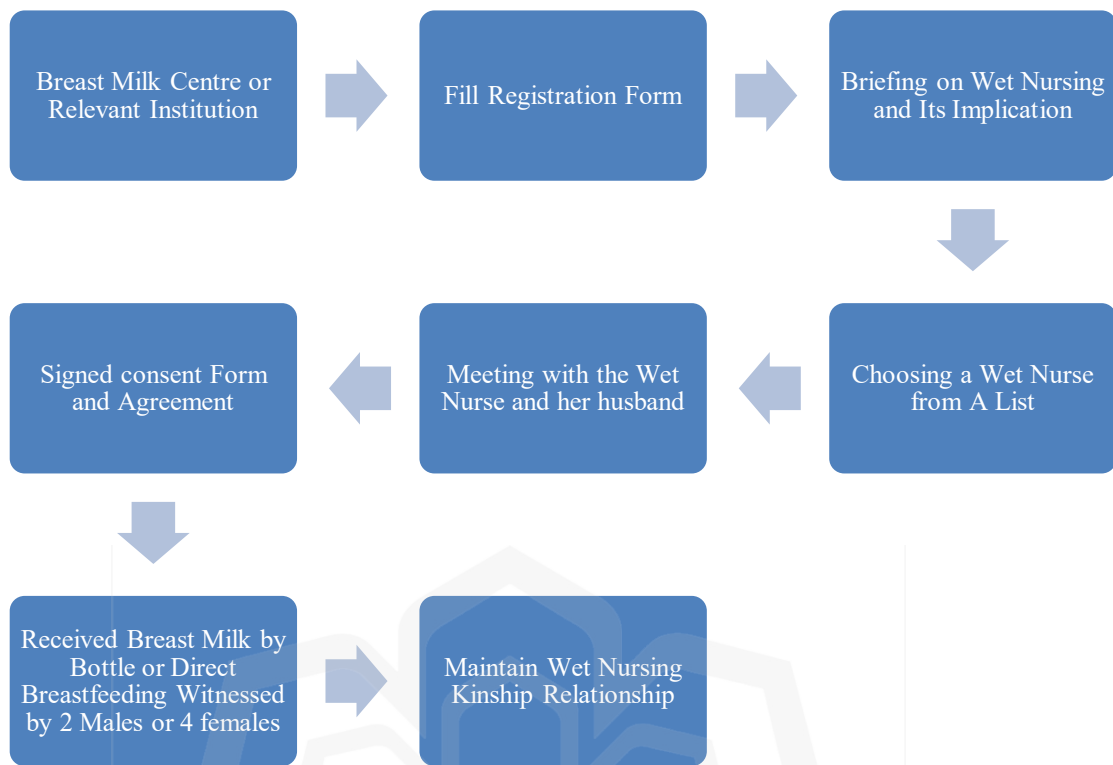


Figure 6.2 Process of Securing a Wet Nurse by Birth Parents

For women who chose to be wet nurses, they too should go to Breast Milk Centre of relevant institutions to offer their breast milk. After they have completed the registration forms, the officer at the centre would give a briefing about wet nursing and its implications from Islamic perspective and the process involved in being a wet nurse. Next step is the health screening of the applicant wet nurse to ensure that she is healthy and could provide sufficient nourishment for the receiving baby. Then she and her husband must sign a consent and declaration form together with the appointed officer at the centre. After that, with the guidance of the relevant health officer, the breast milk will be expressed. Two male *mahram* witnesses or four female witnesses should be present at the time of breast milk expression and labeling. The expressed breast milk will be stored with adequate labels including name of the wet nurse, date of expression and other relevant information. Next step is meeting with the birth parents organized by the centre; and if they agreed, consent and agreement forms will be signed by the wet nurse and her husband and the birth parents. Then, breast milk is supplied for the baby if they choose bottle feeding and arrangement will be made if they choose direct

feeding. The final step will be maintaining the newly formed milk kinship. All steps will be recorded and kept by the authorized institutions.

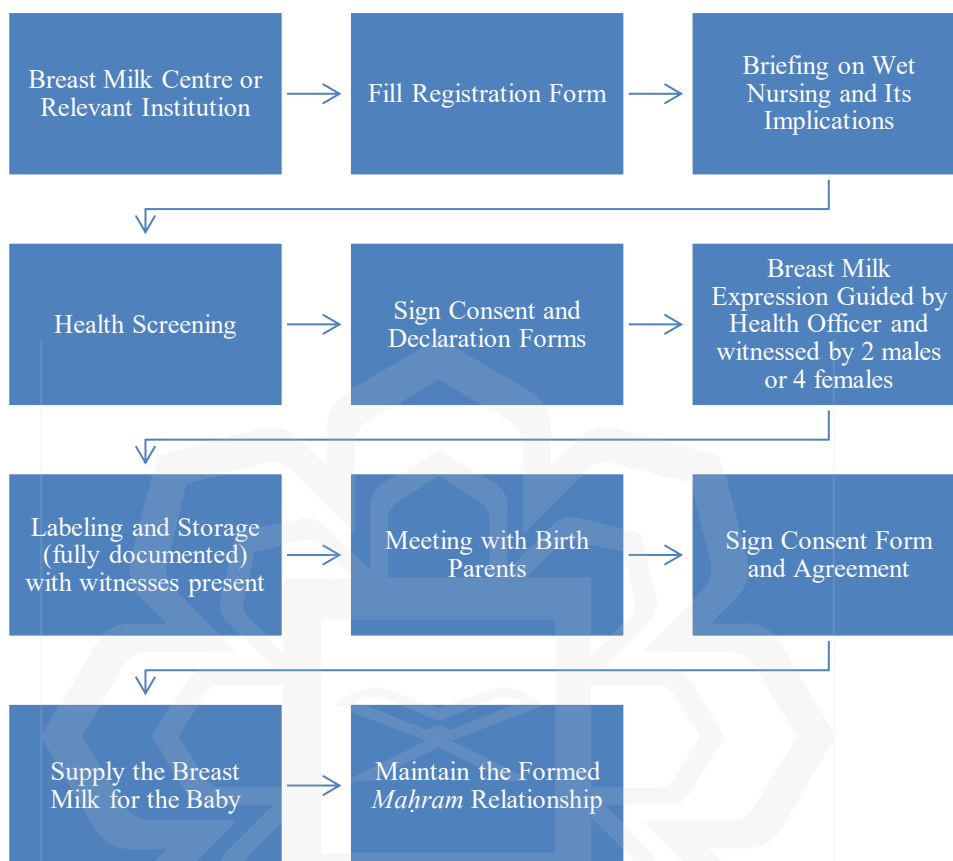


Figure 6.3 Process of Providing Wet Nursing Service

In an emergency when a doctor prescribed breast milk to save a life of a baby (especially premature baby), the parents may choose either to form a *mahram* relationship with the wet nurse or not. If the parents choose to form a wet nursing kinship after a briefing about wet nursing and its implication, then the Emergency Department will contact Breast Milk Bank or Centre informing parents of so and so will go and fill registration form. After that the breast milk will be delivered to the Emergency Department. A consent form and agreement will be signed and detailed information about other babies who were fed by the same wet nurse will be shared with the parents since their baby will become the milk siblings of the other babies. Then, the breast milk will be fed to the baby more than five feedings until satiated witnessed by two males or four females. The Breast Milk Bank will organize a meeting between the

wet nurse and her husband and the baby’s parents. Lastly, the former milk kinship should be maintained according to the Sunnah of the Prophet. All steps involved should be documented. If the wet nurse chose not to form the *mahram* relationship with the baby, the Breast Milk Bank, should keep a detailed records so that less than 5 feeding will be given to a baby.

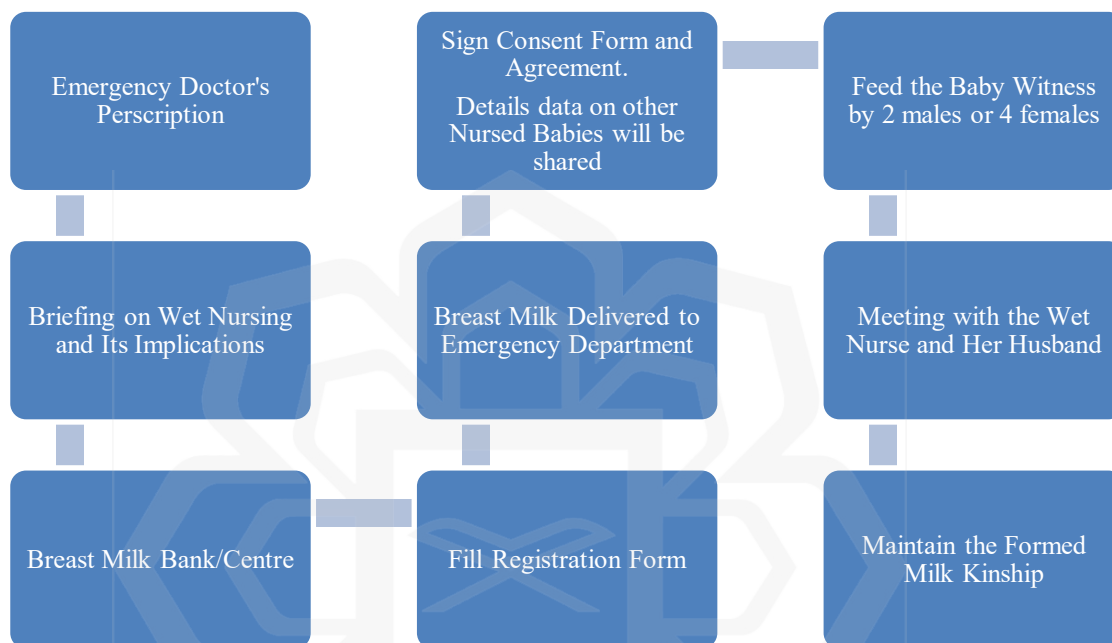


Figure 6.4 Process of Providing Breast Milk in an Emergency

The promotion of education and awareness in terms of the recording and documentation of milk kinship is very important. Keeping birth parents and wet nurses aware of requirements and procedures will enable the community to handle these relationships and follow Islamic directions for keeping the recognized practice of milk kinship run smoothly.

6.4 IMPLICATION FOR ISLAMIC EDUCATION

Education is the ongoing process of instilling knowledge into humans to develop all aspects of human, the body, the mind, and souls, so that human can recognize and acknowledge his/her roles and place in this world. The topmost aim of Islamic education

is to produce *'abd* (servant) who fully submit to Allah; and *khalīfah* (vicegerent) who contribute to the development of the community and humanity at large for the sake of Allah. Therefore, there are permanent and the change in education as the world and community changes according to time and place.

Since presently the sharing of breast milk among strangers is increasingly common, therefore knowledge that is instilled into Muslims should also change to cater the needs of the contemporary society. This means that the curriculum of Islamic education at the primary, secondary, and tertiary level should be reviewed and modified to include the concepts of milk kinship. Islamic education is taught at both the government school and the religious school established and administered by state religious department. Furthermore, most higher education institutions in Malaysia offer courses in Islamic studies and *Sharī'ah*. This study proposed adding the topic of milk kinship in the curriculum of Islamic education in schools run by the Ministry of Education. This is because primary and secondary education is compulsory in Malaysia so majority of Muslims will be exposed to the concept. Moreover, students who choose to specialize in Islamic studies at tertiary level should be educated in the concept of wet nursing and its legal consequences since they will be referred to by the Muslim public after they graduated.

The review of the Islamic education curriculum for primary and secondary schools found that the concept of milk kinship was not included in subjects like Islamic Education, and Tasawwur Islam. Table 6.1 illustrates the additional topics regarding milk kinship in the curriculum of primary and secondary schools in Malaysia. This syllabus focuses on Islamic Education with a specific emphasis on milk kinship (relationships formed through breastfeeding). The syllabus is structured by year/form, subject, section, unit, and proposed topics. Among the important topics that should be taught to students are:

- Wet nursing and its implications
- The concept of milk kinship
- Prophet Muḥammad's milk mothers and milk relatives
- Milk kinship maintenance

- Responsibilities towards milk parents and milk relatives
- Prohibitions and law regarding milk kinship
- Breast Milk Bank

Year 1 (Tahun 1)

In Year 1, under the subject of Islamic Education, specifically within the section of Islamic History (Sīrah), students will learn about “The Birth of Allah's Beloved” (Kelahiran Kekasih Allah). The proposed education includes learning about the Prophet Muḥammad’s, peace be upon him, milk kinship family, specifically his wet nurses. Students will also become familiar with the Prophet's milk father and siblings. Additionally, they will read about and learn to emulate care and compassion towards milk families. The objective is for the students to name the Prophet’s wet nurses and their husbands and the Prophet’s milk siblings.

Year 4 (Tahun 4)

In Year 4, under Islamic Education in the *Ḥadīth* Field section, students will learn “Honoring Milk Kinship” (Memuliakan Saudara Susuan). They will observe and reflect on the importance of milk kinship, read and comprehend teachings about it, and learn about the position of milk kinship in Islam. Students will also understand the significance of honouring milk kinship and engage with related poetry.

Form 1 (Tingkatan 1)

In Form 1, within the Islamic History’s Field section of Islamic Education, students will delve into the “Biography of the Prophet Muḥammad peace be upon him” (Riwayat Hidup Nabi Muḥammad SAW). They will learn about the Prophet’s milk father and milk siblings and understand the timeline of events before and after the Prophet's apostleship.

Form 3 (Tingkatan 3)

In Form 3, under the Field of Islamic Morals section in Islamic Education, the focus will be “Travel Etiquette” (Adab Bermusafir). Students will learn about the religious rulings and etiquette of traveling, particularly when visiting and traveling with milk kinship, including performing *‘Umrah* and *Hajj*.

Form 4 (Tingkatan 4)

In Form 4, students will study “Courtesy Towards Milk Kinship” (Adab Terhadap Saudara Susuan) under the Courtesy section of Islamic Education. They will define milk kinships, explain the Sunnah of dealing with milk relatives, and describe the responsibilities towards milk relatives.

Under the Islamic History and Civilization section, it should include “The Prophet’s Milk Kinship” (Persaudaraan Susuan Nabi Muḥammad SAW) where stories about the wet nurses of the Prophet, milk siblings, and extended milk kinship relatives are encapsulated. The students will also visualize these relationships through charts.

In Islamic *Shari‘ah* Education, issues pertaining to the provision of Islamic wills, Wasiat, and acceptable distribution of inheritance for milk families are also included.

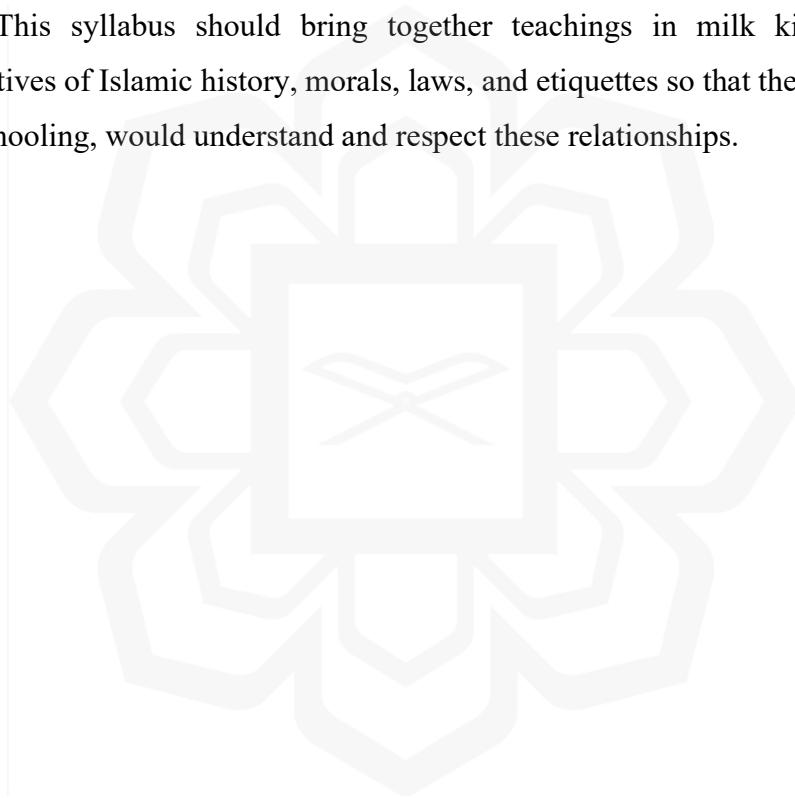
Form 5 (Tingkatan 5)

In Form 5, under the topic of Marriage section of Islamic Education, students will learn about “Forbidden Marriages” (perkahwinan yang diharamkan) and marriage prohibitions due to milk siblings through the use of graphic organizers. Under the Issues in Marriage topic, students will learn “issues on intermarriage between milk kinship” (isu-isu perkahwinan campur saudara susuan), encompassing marriage annulment after knowing the husband and wife are milk siblings and responsibilities between milk siblings following marriage nullification.

Through the Estate Management After Death section, students shall cover the concept of wills in Islam, then the permissible portion of a will for the wet-nursed children which is not more than 33.33% of the total inheritance,³⁸⁵ and that there is no *Farā'id* (Islamic inheritance law) distribution for milk kinship.

In Islamic *Sharī'ah* Education, under the section of Fiqh, the students will learn about “Milk Kinship” (Saudara Susuan). They should be able to explain what is meant by milk kinship and how it is established. Students should also be able to list the milk relatives and their lineage. Furthermore, they should be able to briefly explain the laws related to milk kinship and name centers for Islamic breast milk bank.

This syllabus should bring together teachings in milk kinship from the perspectives of Islamic history, morals, laws, and etiquettes so that the students, during their schooling, would understand and respect these relationships.



³⁸⁵ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Al-Umm*. (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1990). Vol. 4. 126

Table 6.1 Propose Education Syllabus Form Year 1 to Form 5

| YEAR/FORM | SUBJECT | SECTION | UNIT | PROPOSE EDUCATION |
|------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Year 1/ Darjah 1 | Islamic Education/ Pendidikan Islam | Islamic History/ Sirah | The Birth of Allah's Beloved/ Kelahiran Kekasih Allah | The Prophet Milk Kinship's Family (Wet Nurses) / Keluarga Susuan Nabi (Ibu-ibu susuan) |
| Year 1/ Darjah 1 | Islamic Education/ Pendidikan Islam | Islamic History/ Sirah | The Birth of Allah's Beloved/ Kelahiran Kekasih Allah | Getting to Know the Prophet's Milk Kinship's Family (Milk Father and Milk Siblings)/ Kenali Keluarga Susuan Nabi (Bapa Dan Adik-beradik Susuan), Reading and Imitating (Compassion Towards Milk Families) & (Responsibility in Assisting Milk Families)/ Mari Baca Dan Contohi (Penyayang Terhadap Saudara Susuan) & (Bertanggungjawab Membantu Saudara Susuan) |
| Year 4/ Darjah 4 | Islamic Education/ Pendidikan Islam | <i>Hadith</i> Field/ Bidang <i>Hadith</i> | Honoring Milk Kinship/ Memuliakan Saudara Susuan | Observation and Reflection/ Lihat Dan Fikirkan, Reading and Comprehension/ Baca Dan Fahami, Islam's Respect Milk Kinship/ Islam Memuliakan Saudara Susuan, |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | The Importance of Honouring Milk Kinship/ Kepentingan Memuliakan Saudara Susuan, Poetry/ Mari Bersyair |
| Form 1/ Tingkatan 1 | Islamic Education/ Pendidikan Islam | Islamic History's Field/ Bidang Sirah | Biography of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him/ Riwayat Hidup Nabi Muhammad SAW | The Prophet's Milk Father/ Ayah Susuan Nabi The Prophet's Siblings/ Adik-beradik Susuan Nabi Chronology Before and After Apostolate/ Kronologi Sebelum Dan Selepas Kerasulan |
| Form 3/ Tingkatan 3 | Islamic Education/ Pendidikan Islam | The Field of Islamic Morals/ Bidang Akhlak Islamiyyah | Travel Etiquette/ Adab Bermusafir | The Traveling Law (Visiting Milk Kinship) & (Travelling with Milk Kinship Including Umrah and Hajj)/ Hukum Bermusafir (Sunat Menziarahi Saudara Susuan) & (Musafir Dengan Saudara Susuan Termasuk Ibadah Umrah Dan Haji) |
| Form 4/ Tingkatan 4 | Islamic Education/ Pendidikan Islam | Courtesy/ Adab | Courtesy Towards Milk Kinship/ Adab Terhadap Saudara Susuan | Milk Kinship Definition/ Maksud Saudara Susuan, Milk Kinship in Sunnah/ Saudara Susuan Di Dalam Sunnah, Responsibilities Regarding Milk Kinship/ Tanggungjawab Saudara Susuan |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Form 4/ Tingkatan 4 | Islamic Education/ Pendidikan Islam | Islamic History and Civilization/ Sirah Dan Tamadun Islam | The Prophet's Milk Kinship/ Persaudaraan Susuan Nabi Muḥammad SAW | The Prophet's Wet Nurses and Their Stories/ Ibu-ibu Susuan Nabi dan Kisah-kisahny, The Prophet's Milk Siblings and Their Stories/ Adik-beradik Susuan Nabi Dan Kisah-kisahny, The Prophet's Milk Kinship Relatives and Their Stories/ Saudara-saudara Susuan Nabi Dan Kisah-kisahny, Charts of the Prophet's Milk Kinship/ Carta Saudara Susuan Nabi |
| Form 4/ Tingkatan 4 | Islamic <i>Sharī'ah</i> Education/ Pendidikan <i>Sharī'ah</i> Islamiyyah | Islamic Will/ Wasiat | Problems Related to Islamic Will / Permasalahan Yang Berkait Dengan Wasiat | Permissible Distribution of Milk Families / Pembahagian Yang Dibenarkan Terhadap Keluarga Susuan |
| Form 5/ Tingkatan 5 | Islamic Education/ Pendidikan Islam | Marriage/ Perkahwinan | Forbidden Marriages/ Perkahwinan Yang Diharamkan | Charts of Forbidden Marriage in Milk Kinship/ Carta Perkahwinan Saudara Susuan Yang Diharamkan |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Form 5/ Tingkatan 5 | Islamic Education/ Pendidikan Islam | Issues in Marriage/ Isu- isu Dalam Perkahwinan | Issues on Intermarriage Between Milk Kinship/ Isu-isu Perkahwinan Campur Saudara Susuan | Dissolution of Marriage Due to Milk Kinship/ Pembubaran Perkahwinan Disebabkan Pertalian Darah (Saudara Susuan), Responsibilities After Divorce Among Milk Siblings/ Tanggungjawab Selepas Penceraian Di Antara Saudara Susuan |
| Form 5/ Tingkatan 5 | Islamic Education/ Pendidikan Islam | Estate Management After Death/ Pengurusan Harta Selepas Kematian | Will in Islam/ Wasiat Dalam Islam | Allowed Portion of the Will for Wet-Nursed Children / Bahagian Wasiat Yang Dibenarkan Untuk Anak Susuan |
| Form 5/ Tingkatan 5 | Islamic Education/ Pendidikan Islam | Estate Management After Death/ Pengurusan Harta Selepas Kematian | Faraid in Islam/ Faraid Dalam Islam | No Faraid Distribution Among Milk Kinship/ Tiada Pembahagian Faraid untuk Saudara Susuan |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------|---|----------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Form 5/ Tingkatan 5 | Islamic Education/ Pendidikan Islamiyyah | <i>Sharī'ah</i> Syariah | Fiqh/ Feqah | Milk Kinship/ Saudara Susuan | Definition of Milk Kinship/ Pengertian Saudara Susuan Establishment of Milk Kinship/ Penubuhan Saudara Susuan Milk Kinship Relatives/ Saudara-mara Susuan Related Laws/ Hukum-hakam Berkaitan Islamic Milk Centre/ Pusat Susu Ibu Susuan |
|------------------------|---|----------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|--|

Higher Education Institution

This study suggests that graduates who are knowledgeable in wet nursing from Islamic perspective should be produced. Currently in Malaysia, higher education institution which is active in doing research at postgraduate level in wet nursing and its legal implications is Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Kuala Terengganu. Therefore, this study suggests that all higher education institutions which offer undergraduate programs in Islamic studies should include the topic of wet nursing in courses such as Islamic jurisprudence, shariah, Qur'an and Sunnah, and Islamic ethics. The following are topics that may be included in the already existing courses of Islamic jurisprudence, *Sharī'ah*, Qur'an and Sunnah, Islamic ethics, etc.

- Islamic Jurisprudence of Wet Nursing (Fiqh of *Raḍā'ah*)
 - Definition of wet nursing
 - Wet nursing from Quran and Sunnah perspective
 - Conditions for establishing milk kinship
 - Implications of wet nursing
 - Rights and responsibilities of wet nursing
 - Comparative school of fiqh in wet nursing
 - *Fatāwā* surrounding wet nursing in Malaysia
- Health and Practical Aspects of Wet Nursing
 - Health benefits of wet nursing to child and wet nurse
 - Risks of wet nursing to child and wet nurse
 - Hygienic method of breast milk handling
 - Nutrition and diet for lactating mothers
 - Health screening for wet nurses
 - Basics of breastfeeding
 - Basics infant development and nutrition
 - Challenges in breastfeeding
- Contemporary Issues and Bioethics on Wet Nursing
 - Milk banks and breast milk collection centre
 - Breast milk sharing in the modern context
 - Cross wet nursing among friends and relatives

- Documentation of wet nursing
- Health and genetic testing of wet nurses
- Child Adoption through wet nursing
- Roles of state religious councils regarding wet nursing
- Managing breast milk at childcare centre
- Ethical and Social Considerations of Wet Nursing
 - Personality screening of wet nurse
 - Wisdom of wet nursing and milk kinship
 - Wet nursing from *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* perspective
 - Wet nursing and sustainable development goals
 - Wet nursing and the concept of *iḥsān*
- Maintaining milk kinship relationship from *al-Qur'ān* and Sunnah perspective
 - Status of wet nurse in *al-Qur'ān*
 - Ihsan towards milk parents
 - *Aḥādīth* on maintain milk kinship relationship
 - Prophet Muhammad's milk mothers and relatives
 - Maintaining milk kinship relationship from *sīrah* perspective

6.5 IMPLICATION FOR POLICY OF MILK KINSHIP MAINTENANCE

This study revealed an eye-opening insight of the lack of knowledge among wet nurses and birth mothers on the concept of wet nursing, who the milk kinship relatives are, the importance of record and documentation, the prohibition of marriage between milk siblings and milk *mahram* relatives, the legal issues surrounding milk kinship, and the maintenance of milk kinship relationship. The lack of knowledge is manifested in the distant relationship between the milk siblings and milk relatives. Whereas *al-Qur'ān* and al-Sunnah command Muslims to do good to their milk mothers and milk relatives; and not to sever the familial bonds. To rectify these problems, this study suggests several policy recommendations.

1. Establish a written policy on the maintenance of milk kinship, which sets out incentives, support, protection, risks, and effects related to wet nursing.

This policy aims to provide a comprehensive framework for the maintenance of milk kinship, highlighting the importance of clear guidelines on the incentives for wet nursing. Mechanisms to address these issues; protective measures and a full understanding of the potential risks and impacts of such practices are set out in this regulation.

2. Provide training for all members of the Health Department involved in maternal and child health services, as well as staff from the Department of Islamic Affairs, and the Department of National Registration, to enhance their skills in the implementation and promotion of the importance of documentation and maintaining milk kinship.

Training programs for religious officers, health department staff, officials of Islamic Religious Department (Jabatan Agama Islam), and National Registration Department (Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara) are designed to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge. It is essential to achieve this objective and the importance of maintaining milk kinship needs to be highlighted. The focus is also on cultural, religious, and social dimensions which are relevant for the use of wet nurses.

3. Jabatan Agama Islam of every state should provide easily accessible literature about wet nursing and its implications from the Islamic perspective as well as the importance for maintaining milk kinship relationship as demonstrated by Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him. Printed literature should be disseminated to relevant institutions and organisations for easy reference.

Efforts will be focused on communicating with birth mothers and wet nurses, emphasizing the necessity to safeguard the milk kinship by following the teachings of *al-Qur'ān* and al-Sunnah. Working with breast milk centers, Department of National Registration, Islamic education division of Ministry of Education, the Department of Islamic Religion will play a key role in providing this information.

4. Set guidelines for breast milk donors, their spouses, and breast milk recipients' parents on how they can maintain milk kinship when the feeding period is over, and they live far away from each other to ensure that religious obligations are fulfilled with the help of Jabatan Agama Islam.

Guidance on milk kinship will be provided to all parties concerned regarding potential problems that may arise after the baby has completed breastfeeding and separated from the milk mother so that milk familial bond is sustained. The consultations will be made with Jabatan Agama Islam to ensure that guidance given is in conformance with religious requirements founded on *al-Qur'ān* and al-Sunnah teachings.

5. Obtain written consent in collaboration with Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara and Jabatan Agama Islam, from mothers, fathers, wet nurses, and wet nurses' spouses for the practice of maintaining milk kinship, and document and record these consents, together with witnesses.

The policy stresses the need for all interested parties concerned to give explicit consent in writing before the formation of milk kinship. The aim is to ensure official documentation and legal validity of such consents through cooperation with Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara and the presence of witnesses.

6. Support face-to-face and online communication, and explain the concept of milk kinship, with the assistance of Jabatan Agama Islam, for religious guidance.

To ensure that interested parties in maintaining the kinship of milk can make meaningful discussions, efforts will be put into facilitating efficient communication using all face-to-face, online, and offline internet channels. In providing religious guidance and explanations on the concept of milk kinship, Jabatan Agama Islam will play an important role.

7. Encourage visits to the home, in cooperation with Jabatan Agama Islam to maintain a connection between the wet nursing child and the family of the milk mother, and to highlight the cultural and social aspects of milk kinship.

Both wet nursed sons/daughters and the milk mother's family should be visiting each other frequently to strengthen the milk kinship connection. During these visits, with the assistance of Jabatan Agama Islam, culture and social interactions will be taken as an act to maintain milk kinship.

8. Establish or strengthen wet nursing support groups, working together with Jabatan Agama Islam and Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara, as reference point for birth mothers and wet nursing mothers for assistance in maintaining milk kinship and dealing with issues arising.

The policy encourages the creation or expansion of wet nursing support groups, such as those mentioned in the preceding chapter, and acknowledges the value of community support. To make sure that Jabatan Agama Islam and Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara can offer solutions particularly for protecting the milk kinship and successfully handle any relevant concerns.

9. Make sure that relevant officers of the Health Ministry, Jabatan Agama Islam, and Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara, work together to create a system that can be used to trace and monitor the milk familial lineage. The purpose of this project is to promote behaviours that uphold and contribute to the preservation of the cultural and religious value of milk kinship.

This policy requests collaboration between Jabatan Agama Islam, Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara, and the Ministry of Health to establish a system that can track milk ancestry. This will involve appropriate marketing techniques that respect and promote the religious and significance of milk kinship family.

In summary, careful consideration should be given to deal with the complex and multifaceted issue of preserving milk kinship in Malaysia. The problems of maintaining milk kinship should be tackled to safeguard the health and well-being of wet-nursed children, cultural and religious beliefs, finding a solution to the record-keeping dilemma, and increasing public awareness. To develop policies that address the needs and difficulties of the Malaysian community, particularly the Muslims, while also respecting the cultural and religious significance of milk kinship, policymakers had to work closely with religious scholars, community leaders, and competent authorities.

6.6 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, this study has expounded implications for maintaining milk kinship relationship, record and documentation, Islamic education and implication for policy. This chapter accentuated the responsibility of every Muslim to practice the teachings of *al-Qur'ān* and al-Sunnah of our beloved Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, in all aspects of life including the maintenance of familial relationship between milk relatives. Since milk mothers' position is equal to birth mother, therefore they should be treated with *iḥsān*, care and compassion.

Moreover, al-Sunnah the Prophet informed the importance of knowing and recognizing milk relatives especially after the demised of birth parents and milk mothers. This can be easy if the milk mothers were sisters, aunts, or grandmothers of birth parents. But, when the milk mothers are strangers who live far apart from their milk sons/daughters, information on milk relatives can be lost. Therefore, documentation and record are very important so that the lineage of milk relatives are available. This study has suggested the processes involved for proper documentation to ensure the established *mahram* relationship because of wet nursing can be verified and validated.

Furthermore, this study has suggested the inclusion of topics regarding wet nursing and its implications in the curriculum of Islamic education in Malaysia. This suggestion was made because the best way to disseminate knowledge to the masses is through formal schooling. Knowledge about wet nursing kinship is important since the practice of wet nursing is increasing due to the parents' desire to provide exclusive breast milk for their babies. This study suggested several key topics to be included in the Islamic education syllabi at the primary and secondary school level. This will make certain not only maintenance of cultural and religious values but also a foundation for a greater continuity of this practice for future generations.

Additionally, what is essentially required is an overall policy framework. This study has proposed the need to clearly design guidelines, incentives, and protection measures so that the milk kinship does not get lost which would lead to potential risks and impacts. Training at all levels of relevant stakeholders, including health and

religious officials, to confidently deal with or handle promotion or practice of wet nursing should be arranged. Again, collaboration with religious and governmental bodies like Jabatan Agama Islam and Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara would help in promoting information dissemination, gaining consents, and completing documentation with legal recognition. The support system, educational curriculum, and community support groups greatly increased awareness and compliance with the milk kinship principles.

Milk kinship in Malaysia needs to be balanced with tradition and reality. Focusing on the gaps identified within this research and putting in place specific policies with relevant support mechanisms will help Muslims in Malaysia to maintain milk kinship relationship according to the teachings of *al-Qur'ān* and al-Sunnah. Most importantly to ensure the practice continues as an important, dignified practice within the Islamic life.

The successful integration of these practices into contemporary society will contribute to a more cohesive and informed community, reflecting the true spirit of Islamic teachings and cultural heritage.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the whole study and a conclusion. It begins with the summary of the whole study beginning with the problem that the study aimed to explore to find solutions. Subsequent discussion is on contributions of this study for theory and practice follows by recommendations for future research, limitations of study and conclusion.

7.2 SUMMARY

The motivation for conducting this study was the increasing number of mothers who offered, online, their breast milk to other mothers who needed breast milk for their babies. Strangers giving breast milk to other strangers pose a big problem from Islamic perspective. Wet nursing other people's babies would create a mahram relationship that comes with its rulings from jurisprudential and legal perspectives. Since the milk mothers and the wet nurses were strangers, how can they ensure their offsprings and lineage knew their milk siblings and milk relative lineage; and how did they maintain the milk kinship relationship. An extensive review of literature found no literature that specifically focus on milk kinship maintenance from the Qur'anic and Sunnah perspectives. Literature that provide empirical data on how milk kinship was maintained by milk family relatives was also wanting. Therefore, this study was conducted to analyze *al-Qur'ān* and *aḥādīth* to find guidance on how milk kinship should be maintained; and to investigate the lived experiences of birth mothers and wet nurses in maintaining wet nursing kinship.

This study employed qualitative research methods to collect and analyze data. The relevant Qur'anic verses and *aḥādīth* were analyzed thematically to discover the position of wet nurses, the impact of wet nursing, and the treatment of milk mothers. While *aḥādīth* were analyzed thematically to find out guidance given by Prophet

Muhammad, peace be upon him, on al-Sunnah in maintaining milk kinship relationship. A phenomenological research design was employed to explore the lived experiences of birth mothers and wet nurses in maintaining milk kinship relationship. The participants were interviewed to gain their perspectives on wet nursing, its impact, factors for choosing wet nursing, and their practices to ensure the formed *mahram* relationships were maintained.

Chapter 2 introduced wet nursing and its implications from Islamic perspective. Before the Islamic perspective of wet nursing was explained, this chapter travelled back into history to trace the practice and development of wet nursing from various places, cultures, and social classes. Historical reports highlighted many variables that affect the use of wet nursing services such as economic needs, social traditions and status, health, and in some cultures, wet nursing is a profession. Reasons for opting to be a wet nurse and to use a wet nurse in the present are not very different from the past. The need to exclusively provide breast milk for their babies, health, economy, creating *mahram* relationship, and altruism were among the reasons why wet nursing was the best option. The subsequent discussion was on the formation of *mahram* relationship when the conditions are met. From the Islamic jurisprudential perspective, the conditions for establishing milk kinship are the identity of the wet nurse is known, method and quantity of feeding, and the baby's age (below two years old). It mentioned that milk kinship can be established through direct breastfeeding, bottle-feeding, or other methods, with Shāfi'ī school requiring 5 feedings. The role of witnesses under the Shāfi'ī school was also discussed, especially in Malaysia, where there are specific requirements for witnesses for any transaction. The fatwas on wet nursing practices and emphasized the need for thorough documentation to preserve lineage and maintain legal and social integrity was also discussed. Wet nursing goes beyond physical nourishment and affects legal, social and familial dynamics in Islam.

Chapter 3 delved deeper into milk kinship beginning with elucidation of its meaning and who are included as milk kinship relatives since many have misunderstanding by limiting milk kins as to only the offspring of the wet nurse. The objective of this chapter was to present the findings from the analysis of the relevant Qur'anic verses and *ahādīth* regarding the position and the maintenance of milk kinship

relationship. The analysis revealed the position of milk mother as the same as birth mother thus should be treated with *ihsān*. Through the verses of *al-Qur'ān* and *aḥādīth*, the chapter showed how Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, treated his wet nurses and milk siblings, and the responsibilities, and deep emotional bonds that come with it. The roles of the Prophet's wet nurses, particularly Ḥalīmah al-Sa'diyah and Thuwaybah, were examined, and several diagrams were used to demonstrate the lineage and milk kinship ties. These diagrams, including those depicting the Prophet's extended milk kinship relationships with Ḥamzah and Abū Sufiyān, underscore the enduring impact of these bonds on the Prophet's life and to guide the broader Muslim community. The wisdom behind milk kinship was discussed, including permissible interactions, financial considerations, and the familial bonds created through breastfeeding. It is essential to uphold Islamic guidelines to ensure the continuous chain of milk kinship relationships is not broken.

Chapter 4 reported the wet nursing practices among Malaysian Muslims and discussed both the providers and receivers of such services. The chapter started off with presenting demographic data about wet nurses and birth mothers, and their backgrounds. The chapter shared the understanding of wet nurses and birth mothers on the concept of wet nursing, its implications, documentation and feeding practices, and factors for supplying and demanding breast milk. It revealed that most wet nurses and biological mothers lack understanding and knowledge of the full impact of wet nursing, who are included in the *maḥram* relationship, the legal rulings surrounding *maḥram* relationship, the importance and practices of documentation. Furthermore, in this chapter, the recruitment of wet-nursed children, the breastfeeding methods used, and the age of the babies involved were discussed. Additionally, it highlighted the transactional relationships which lacked emotional relationship as popular practice among the wet nurses and the birth mothers. This chapter then moved into the major influences for wet nurses to provide their services and the reasons for birth mothers to use wet nurses. Most wet nurses and the birth mothers informed that avoiding wastage of breast milk, supporting family member or friends in need, establishing milk kinship, and insufficient supply of breast milk but wanting to exclusively feed babies with breast milk, and creating *maḥram* relationship as reasons for choosing wet nursing

respectively. This chapter ended with the complex interplay of religion, culture, and society that determined wet nursing practices in Malaysia, and gives a rich understanding of this ancient tradition in the Muslim community.

Chapter 5 reported the findings on the experiences of the wet nurses and the birth mothers in maintaining wet nursing kinship relationship focusing on how to keep these relationships alive even after breastfeeding stopped. This chapter revealed that while many wet nurses and biological mothers attempted to maintain connections through visitations, communication, and calling milk mother as mother, these efforts often fail to resemble the strong bonds that Islam recommends. This chapter focused on two of the major difficulties faced which were geographical distance and the ignorance of the comprehensive concept and obligations of milk kinship (such as milk family meaning not only immediate milk family but also milk relatives). The results indicated a lack of knowledge and application to upkeep of these relationships, so there was very little interaction between wet-nursed children and their milk kinship relatives. Moreover, the chapter discussed the wet nurses' expectations of future responsibilities from wet-nursed children when they grow up, and while respect and acknowledgment were to be expected there was not much mention of deeper responsibilities like caring for and doing good to the milk parents in their old age. This chapter showed a huge gap between the Islamic teachings and practice. The chapter concluded by mentioning the needs to provide education and guidance in the Muslim community about milk kinship maintenance according to al-Sunnah and Islamic teachings, that these relationships are permanent and lasting relationships which should be cherished.

Chapter 6 suggested the implications of wet nursing practices in Malaysia, particularly within the context of Islamic tradition and modern societal norms. The chapter begins by discussing the religious, cultural, and social significance of milk kinship, emphasizing the need for its preservation as a fundamental part of Islamic jurisprudence and community life. It highlights the challenges of maintaining these traditional practices amidst contemporary governance and societal demands. The chapter proposed ways to strengthen milk kinship relationship according to *al-Qur'ān* and al-Sunnah and to record and document wet nursing practices from the perspectives of the wet nurse, the birth mother, and in an emergency. Additionally, implications for

the curriculum of Islamic education were also presented. It also addressed the necessity for written policies, education, and training to ensure that milk kinship is properly understood and respected in modern Malaysia. Key recommendations include the development of comprehensive policies that encompass incentives, protection measures, and clear guidelines for maintaining milk kinship. The importance of proper documentation, guided by Islamic principles, is emphasized to prevent future disputes and to ensure proper recognition of milk kinship relationships. The chapter also advocated for collaboration between religious authorities and government bodies to promote awareness, provide legal recognition, and support the practice of milk kinship. The chapter concluded by asserting the importance of balancing traditional values with modern realities, ensuring that milk kinship remains a respected and integral part of Malaysian Islamic life.

In conclusion, this thesis has presented an overarching overview of the practice of wet nursing and its implications within the Malaysian Muslim community. It has explored the religious, cultural, and social dimensions of milk kinship, delving into both historical and contemporary perspectives. By examining the roles and responsibilities of wet nurses, biological mothers, and wet-nursed children, this study has highlighted the significance of maintaining milk kinship relationships as prescribed by Islamic teachings. The research also underscored the gaps in understanding and documenting these relationships, emphasizing the need for better education, awareness, and policy development. Through its comprehensive analysis, the thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of wet nursing's role in fostering familial bonds and social cohesion in an Islamic context, offering recommendations for preserving these practices in alignment with both tradition and modern societal needs.

7.3 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

7.3.1 Contribution to Theory

This thesis modestly advances the theoretical knowledge of wet nursing from the perspective of Islamic teachings and its modern application in Malaysia. It emphasizes on the concept of milk kinship, offering a nuanced interpretation of how these

relationships are established and maintained according to *al-Qur'ān* and al-Sunnah. By exploring guidance from *al-Qur'ān* and al-Sunnah on wet nursing, this research enriches the existing body of knowledge on Islamic family relationship and social structures. It also highlights the gaps in current understanding, particularly in the areas of milk kinship documentation and the long-term implications of these relationships. The thesis emphasizes the need of incorporating religious teachings with modern social activities to contribute to a more complete knowledge of how Islamic values could be implemented in modern society.

Moreover, by adding fresh ideas on the complexity of milk kinship, this study questions and expands the current theoretical framework. It emphasizes the spiritual and legal obligations tied to wet nursing, offering a fresh perspective on how these ancient practices continue to hold relevance today. Filling a crucial gap in the literature on Islamic social customs, the thesis offers a better knowledge of how milk kinship is seen and experienced by recording the lived experiences of wet nurses and biological mothers.

7.3.2 Contribution to Policy and Practice

The humble practical contributions of this thesis are significant in shaping policy development and implementation regarding wet nursing in Malaysia. With an emphasis on preserving milk kinship, the study shows the necessity of a thorough legislative framework to control and assist wet nursing. It suggests the development of established policies including encouragement for wet nurses, safety precautions, and precise documentation of milk kinship to ensure the respect of these connections within society.

The thesis also emphasizes the need for training courses for religious authorities, health officials, and other stakeholders to empower them to handle the complexity of milk kinship legally and morally. Focused on cooperation between religious organizations like Jabatan Agama Islam and government institutions to guarantee appropriate paperwork, acquire permission, and help distribute knowledge.

Furthermore, the study supports including milk kinship education in the school and higher education curriculum to develop early knowledge of these ties and their role

in Islamic society. It also calls for the establishment of wet nursing support groups and suggests using technology to enhance the documentation and monitoring of milk kinship.

Having everything taken into account, this thesis offers practical solutions for preserving milk kinship in modern Malaysian society, therefore safeguarding this important Islamic heritage and addressing current social and legal issues.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Finally, the following are the suggestions of the researcher for further research:

1. Following Wet Nursing Relationship Over Time

Longitudinal studies following the phenomenon of wet nursing over an extended period would be helpful. This will help us to better grasp how milk kinship forms and changes, the long-term emotional and social consequences on wet nurses and the children they tend after, and how these special ties affect family dynamics and social integration.

2. Replication of this Study

More similar studies should be conducted to provide more empirical data to confirm or disprove the findings of this study. More empirical data would offer better justifications to support the implementation of suggestions put forward by this study.

3. Quantitative Study to Support Generalization

Based on the findings of this study, quantitative studies may be conducted to collect a large amount of data to warrant a generalization of the findings to the whole Muslim population in Malaysia. The studies may be a cross-sectional survey or inferential statistics to measure the relationships between variables of wet nursing practices.

4. Creating Awareness and Education

Studies in the future may want to focus on the importance of awareness and education based on the knowledge gaps concerning both the legal and religious aspects of wet nursing. Research could look at how increasing awareness about the implications of milk kinship influences the practices of both wet nurses and biological mothers, particularly in terms of documentation and maintaining these important family ties.

5. Legal Frameworks and Policy Development

Future research may seek to investigate the future establishment and improvement of legal frameworks and policies in Malaysia regarding wet nursing. For instance, this can be investigated by elaborating on how the working systems work, such as the “MyRadha’ah” card introduced by Selangor, and discussing whether a similar system could be invoked at a higher scale in the country.

6. The Influence of Social Media

With social media playing a growing role in connecting wet nurses and families, future research may wish to explore in more detail the role such platforms play in wet nursing practices. Studies could explore the potential risks, as well as the best practices for ensuring that these arrangements are safe, ethical, and aligned with Islamic principles.

7. Using Technology for Better Record-Keeping

Given that documentation is a major issue highlighted in this study, further research might consider how technology could alleviate any of the problems. For example, developing mobile apps or digital platforms could help standardize and simplify the documentation of wet nursing relationships, ensuring that all necessary records are kept accurately and efficiently.

7.5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research does not aim to solve all the issues that come from neglecting milk kinship relationship, but it does offer valuable guidance for authorities to take necessary precautions and consider updates to education, policies, regulations, and laws. It also emphasizes the importance of family practices in preserving these vital relationships. While neglecting milk kinship relationship is something that can be prevented, it requires ongoing effort from everyone involved in educating and guiding Muslims, especially in Malaysia. This study offers a literature (which is lacking) to guide Muslims in preserving the milk kinship that they have established. By following the teaching of *al-Qur'ān* and al-Sunnah, and of course *Insha'Allah* (with Allah's will), it can ensure that the milk kinship is respected and preserved for future generations as well as improvement of *ummah's* (community) understanding and practices.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER I



AN INTERNATIONAL AWARD-WINNING INSTITUTION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

22 Ogos 2022

KEPADA SESIAPA YANG BERKENAAN

Dengan ini disahkan bahawa Mashitah Binti Zainol Abidin, No. Pelajar: G1921222 adalah calon Sarjana Kedoktoran di Kulliyah Ilmu Wahyu dan Warisan, Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia.

Beliau sedang menjalankan penyelidikan dalam bidang "Al-Quran dan Al-Sunnah" dengan tajuk penyelidikannya yang bertajuk "Wet-Nursing Kinship in Malaysia: An Exploratory Phenomenological Study from Quranic and Prophetic Perspective" dan memerlukan maklumat daripada pihak tuan dan puan.

Pihak Penyelia amat berterima kasih jika pihak tuan/puan dapat memberi kerjasama kepada beliau.

Sekian dimaklumkan.

(Mashitah Binti Zainol Abidin)

Penyelidik

Tarikh: 22 Ogos 2022

Disahkan Oleh:

(Assist. Prof. Dr. Wan Mazwati Bin Wan Yusoff)

Tarikh: 22 Ogos 2022

Mashitah Binti Zainol Abidin
Sarjana Kedoktoran Ilmu Wahyu Dan Warisan
Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia
Gombak, Selangor.

Kepada sesiapa berkenaan,

22 Ogos 2022

Tuan/Puan,

PERMOHONAN UNTUK MENJALANKAN KAJIAN PENYELIDIKAN

Dengan segala hormatnya merujuk perkara di atas.

2. Sukacita dimaklumkan kepada tuan/puan bahawa saya ialah pelajar Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia sedang mengikuti program sarjana kedoktoran di dalam bidang Al-Quran dan Al-Sunnah, ingin memohon kebenaran kajian bagi memenuhi keperluan kelulusan penyelidikan saya.
3. Maklumat permohonan saya adalah seperti berikut:
Nama : Mashitah Binti Zainol Abidin
No. Pelajar : G1921222
Tajuk : "Wet-Nursing Kinship in Malaysia: An Exploratory Phenomenological Study from Quranic and Prophetic Perspective".
4. Tujuan kajian adalah untuk mengkaji secara mendalam bagaimana praktis ibu susuan dan keluarga anak susuan di Malaysia berhubung dan berkomunikasi bagi mengekalkan ikatan saudara susuan serta kefahaman mereka tentang tanggungjawab anak susuan dan keluarga susuan. Kajian ini juga mengkaji bagaimana pakar menerangkan proses perkenalan antara keluarga susuan dan anak susuan serta kesan dari ikatan susuan.
5. Kajian ini akan melibatkan sesi temuduga dan pemerhatian terhadap responden dan pakar dari Pusat Susu Bonda Halimatussadia bagi menjawab persoalan kajian. Dalam penulisan kajian tersebut, nama sebenar anda (ibu susuan dan ibu kandung) akan dirahsiakan dan nama samaran akan digunakan. Manakala bagi pakar, nama dan jawatan akan digunakan bagi tujuan rujukan kesahan. Maklumat yang berkenaan kajian sahaja akan dianalisis bagi mengisi data kajian ini.
6. Bersama-sama surat ini, saya sertakan surat pengesahan pelajar untuk menjalankan penyelidikan dari pihak penyelia. Juga, saya memohon kepada tuan/puan agar saya memperoleh kebenaran untuk membenarkan saya menjalankan penyelidikan ini.

Penglibatan anda dalam kajian ini amat dihargai. Sekian, terima kasih.

Yang benar,


.....
(MASHITAH BINTI ZAINOL ABIDIN)

Disokong oleh,


.....
(ASSIST. PROF. DR. WAN MAZWATI BIN WAN YUSOFF)

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (WET NURSES AND MOTHERS)

CONSENT LETTER (EXPERTISE, WET NURSES AND MOTHERS)

SURAT PERSETUJUAN PESERTA KAJIAN

Kepada peserta kajian,

Saya, Mashitah Binti Zainol Abidin sedang mengikuti program ijazah kedoktoran di Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia dalam bidang Al-Quran dan Al-Sunnah. Saya mengucapkan terima kasih kerana sudi mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini. Kajian ini dijalankan untuk memenuhi keperluan ijazah kedoktoran tersebut.

Tajuk kajian saya ialah "**Wet-Nursing Kinship in Malaysia: An Exploratory Phenomenological Study from Quranic and Prophetic Perspective**". Tujuan kajian adalah untuk mengkaji secara mendalam bagaimana praktis ibu susuan dan keluarga anak susuan di Malaysia berhubung dan berkomunikasi bagi mengekalkan ikatan saudara susuan serta kefahaman mereka tentang tanggungjawab anak susuan dan keluarga susuan. Kajian ini juga mengkaji bagaimana pakar menerangkan proses perkenalan antara keluarga susuan dan anak susuan serta kesan dari ikatan susuan.

Temu bual akan dijalankan untuk kajian ini. Rakaman audio dan video akan digunakan untuk merakam temu bual.

Dalam penulisan kajian tersebut nama sebenar anda (ibu susuan dan ibu kandung) akan dirahsiakan dan nama samaran akan digunakan. Manakala bagi pakar, nama dan jawatan akan digunakan bagi tujuan rujukan kesahan. Anda berhak untuk menarik diri daripada menyertai kajian ini pada bila-bila masa. Penglibatan anda dalam kajian ini amat dihargai. Sekian, terima kasih.

Yang benar,

.....
(MASHITAH BINTI ZAINOL ABIDIN)

SURAT PERSETUJUAN PESERTA KAJIAN

Dengan ini saya telah membaca semua penerangan untuk kajian ini. Saya bersetuju untuk menyertai kajian yang dilaksanakan oleh Puan Mashitah Binti Zainol Abidin yang bertajuk "**Wet-Nursing Kinship in Malaysia: An Exploratory Phenomenological Study from Quranic and Prophetic Perspective**" untuk memenuhi keperluan ijazah kedoktoran di UIAM.

Saya akan bekerjasama ke atas soalan-soalan yang ditanya dalam sesi temu bual. Saya memahami bahawa temu bual bersama rakaman audio dan video akan dijalankan terhadap saya.

Tandatangan:

Tarikh:



APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR WET NURSES AND MOTHERS

The interview questions are tailored to the target respondents.

Part One: Wet Nurses

1. What is a wet nurse and why do you choose wet nursing?
2. Where do you get a child to wet nurse and who is the child?
3. How do you wet nursing?
4. When do you start wet nursing?
5. Do you have any other children that you have been a wet nurse? Do they know each other?
6. Does wet nursing play a role as a barrier to marriage among breastfeeding siblings?
7. Do you maintain the relationship with blood families? If you do, how?
8. How do you think children that have been wet nursed by you will be acknowledged in the future?
9. What do you think is the responsibility of the child that has been wet nursed by you in the future?
10. In your opinion, what are the elements that should be given to both wet nurse and child's family due attention in recording wet nursing?
11. Do you get any wages or payment for wet nursing or supplying milk to the wet nurse?
12. What is your opinion if there is a new policy in maintaining the milk kinship relationship?

Part Two: Mothers of the Child

1. What is a wet nurse and why do you seek wet nurse's services?
2. How do you get a wet nurse and who is she?
3. How is the wet nurse nursing your child?
4. When did you nurse your child with wet nurse breast milk?
5. Do you know any other child except the wet nurse's family that have been sharing the same breastmilk?
 - If yes, who are they? Are they your child's milk kinship (mahram) too?
 - If not, how do you know that?
 - If not sure, do you intend to know the other milk kinship families too?
How?
6. Does wet nursing play a role as a barrier to marriage among breastfeeding siblings?
7. Do you maintain the relationship with milk families? If you do, how?
8. How do you think your child that has been wet nursed will be acknowledged as a kinship of wet nurse in the future?
9. What do you think the responsibility of the child that has been wet nursed to their mother kinship in the future?
10. In your opinion, what are the elements that should be given to both wet nurse and child's family due attention in recording wet nursing?
11. Do you pay wages or any payment to the wet nurse for the services? Why?
12. What is your opinion if there is a new policy in maintaining the milk kinship relationship?

