

## **Gamophobia as a Psychosocial Crisis among Generation Z in Building Family Life: An Islamic Guidance and Counseling Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

Over the past decade, Generation Z Muslims have faced increasingly complex psychosocial dynamics in interpreting marriage and family life. One emerging phenomenon is gamophobia, characterized by fear, anxiety, and avoidance of marital commitment and its accompanying responsibilities. This issue reflects not only individual psychological struggles but also broader structural and cultural transformations shaping the younger generation's life orientation. This article examines gamophobia as a psychosocial crisis among Generation Z Muslims and explores the strategic role of Islamic guidance and counseling in addressing it. Using a qualitative-conceptual approach, the study integrates contemporary psychological theories with a normative-contextual Islamic counseling framework grounded in the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical Islamic scholarship. The findings indicate that gamophobia is influenced by family trauma, economic instability, shifting social values, digital culture, and weakening spiritual orientation. These factors contribute to heightened anxiety toward long-term commitment and delayed marriage. From an Islamic counseling perspective, gamophobia represents a crisis of meaning in understanding marriage as *mithāqan ghalīẓan*. Islamic guidance offers a holistic response through spiritual strengthening, emotional healing, cognitive restructuring, and internalization of Islamic values, reconstructing marriage as worship, tranquility (*sakinah*), and a path toward personal and spiritual growth.

**Keywords:** *Gamophobia, Muslim Generation Z, Psychosocial Crisis, Marital Readiness.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Marriage in Islam is a fundamental institution that not only functions as a legal bond between a man and a woman but also serves as a space for psychological tranquility,

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emotional maturity, and spiritual growth.<sup>1</sup> The Qur'an emphasizes marriage as *mithāqan ghalīzan*, a solemn covenant encompassing moral, social, and transcendental dimensions.<sup>2</sup> The Qur'an emphasizes marriage as *mithāqan ghalīzan*, a solemn covenant encompassing moral, social, and transcendental dimensions. However, in contemporary society, particularly among Generation Z, the meaning of marriage has shifted significantly. Marriage is no longer perceived as an inherent life goal but is often regarded as a source of risk, emotional burden, and a threat to personal freedom.<sup>3</sup> This shift has given rise to the phenomenon of gamophobia, which refers to an excessive fear or anxiety toward marital commitment and long-term domestic responsibilities.

The development of gamophobia as a social issue cannot be separated from rapid and complex social transformations.<sup>4</sup> Generation Z has grown up amid global uncertainty, ranging from economic instability and digital technological disruption to a crisis of interpersonal relationships marked by the weakening of long-term social bonds. Within this context, public and social media narratives about marriage are frequently dominated by negative experiences such as domestic conflict, relationship violence, and divorce.<sup>5</sup> Over time, these narratives gradually shape the collective imagination of young people, portraying marriage as a fragile and risk-laden institution.

At the same time, social and religious responses to this phenomenon often remain normative and prescriptive, emphasizing the obligation to marry without first understanding the psychological conditions and existential anxieties experienced by young adults.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, gamophobia is frequently misinterpreted as a rejection of religious values, whereas in many cases it represents an expression of a broader psychosocial crisis that requires an empathetic and contextual approach.<sup>7</sup>

Developmental psychologists argue that Generation Z demonstrates higher levels

<sup>1</sup> Indarti Muafiqoh Munzillah, Azkiyah Azkiyah, and Siti Rohimah, "Kesiapan Menikah Dalam Perspektif Psikologi Pendidikan Agama Islam," *TSAQOFAH* 4, no. 5 (July 2024): 3575–88, <https://doi.org/10.58578/tsaqofah.v4i5.3381>.

<sup>2</sup> Martaria Rizky Rinaldi, Jelang Hardika, and Rinda Triastuti, "Gen Z Marriage: Loneliness as a Moderator of Partner Phubbing and Marital Satisfaction," *Jurnal Psikogenesis* 13, no. 1 (June 2025): 98–112, <https://doi.org/10.24854/jps.v13i1.4762>.

<sup>3</sup> Tista Rizki Annisa, Fajar Nugraha Asyahidda, and Wilodati, "'Marriage Is Scary': A Deconstructive Look at Gen-Z's Perspectives on Marriage (Case Study of #MarriageIsScary Trend on TikTok Platform)," *Equilibrium: Jurnal Pendidikan* 13, no. 2 (May 2025): 279–91, <https://doi.org/10.26618/equilibrium.v13i2.18326>.

<sup>4</sup> Khamdan Safiudin and Rasheedat Modupe Oladimeji, "Gender Problems in Indonesia: The Phenomenon of Gamophobia in a Permissive Society," *An-Nisa Journal of Gender Studies* 17, no. 1 (July 2024): 67–82, <https://doi.org/10.35719/annisa.v17i1.245>.

<sup>5</sup> Joanna Nian Chang, "Why Do Chinese Women Experience Gamophobia? Psychoanalytic Theory Assisted Discourses Analysis," *Frontiers in Psychology* 15 (April 2024), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1357795>.

<sup>6</sup> Ridhani Ayu Nur Hikmah, Khoirun Nidhom, and Muhammad Ghifari, "Gamophobia in Contemporary Society: An Integrative Analysis of Qur'anic Exegesis and Marital Psychology through Tafsir Al-Munir," *TAFSE: Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 9, no. 2 (December 2024): 222–40, <https://doi.org/10.22373/tafse.v9i2.29283>.

<sup>7</sup> Dian Cyntiawati, Yanto Paulus Hermanto, and Jessica Elizabeth Abraham, "Pastoral Care Bagi Jemaat Dewasa Muda Dengan Gamophobia Menuju Pernikahan Kristen," *Manna Rafflesia* 9, no. 2 (April 2023): 248–59, [https://doi.org/10.38091/man\\_raf.v9i2.293](https://doi.org/10.38091/man_raf.v9i2.293)

of anxiety than previous generations, particularly concerning the future, life stability, and intimate relationships. Jean M. Twenge explains that the rise in anxiety and depression among young people correlates with shifts in social interaction patterns and increasing dependence on digital spaces, which tend to reduce the depth and quality of interpersonal bonds.<sup>8</sup> From a lifespan developmental perspective, early adulthood is a critical stage for forming intimate relationships and long-term commitments; instability or insecurity at this stage may intensify fears surrounding marriage and family formation.

Within the family context, fear of commitment is also shaped by childhood experiences, particularly exposure to parental conflict or divorce, which can form negative cognitive schemas about marriage.<sup>9</sup> Statistical data in Indonesia further reinforce this phenomenon. Data from Badan Pusat Statistik indicate that between 2014 and 2024, the marriage rate in Indonesia declined by nearly 29 percent. Among young people, approximately seven out of ten individuals aged 16 to 30 were recorded as unmarried in 2025.<sup>10</sup> These data suggest that delayed marriage is not merely a structural issue but also reflects deeper psychological anxieties.

From an Islamic perspective, several contemporary Muslim thinkers argue that the primary challenge facing young people is not simply reluctance to marry, but a crisis of meaning in how marriage itself is perceived. Marriage is often reduced to a purely social institution, losing its spiritual dimension as a means of *taqarrub ilā Allāh* (drawing closer to God). In *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī emphasizes that marriage functions as a means of spiritual purification and the regulation of desire, contributing to individual psychological tranquility. When this spiritual dimension is not internalized, marriage is easily perceived as a threat to freedom and self-actualization rather than as a shared space for mutual growth.

Recent research on fear of marriage and psychological readiness among young adults has shown significant development over the past five years. An empirical study by Widyawati, Asih, and Utami (2022) confirms that marital readiness in early adulthood is strongly influenced by emotional maturity and preparedness for family roles. Their findings indicate that individuals with low emotional regulation tend to experience anxiety toward marital commitment and view marriage as a psychological burden rather than as a constructive developmental phase.<sup>11</sup> This finding is particularly relevant to the relational anxiety characteristic of Generation Z.

<sup>8</sup> Jean M. Twenge, *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy--and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood--and What That Means for the Rest of Us* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017), 87–92

<sup>9</sup> John W. Santrock, *Life-Span Development*, Eighteenth edition (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education, 2021), 214–18

<sup>10</sup> BPS RI, *Statistik Indonesia 2023* (Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023), 145–47; Pj, “Satu Dekade Terakhir Angka Pernikahan Di Indonesia Terus Menurun, Ekonomi Dan Karier Jadi Faktor Utama,” Leet Media, 2026, <https://leetmedia.id/highlight/satu-dekade-terakhir-angka-pernikahan-di-indonesia-terus-menurun-ekonomi-dan-karier-jadi-faktor-utama/>.

<sup>11</sup> Sri Widyawati, Martha Kurnia Asih, and Retno Ristiasih Utami, “Kesiapan Menikah Dan Kesiapan Menjadi Orangtua Pada Individu Awal Dewasa,” *Jurnal Psikologi* 15, no. 2 (December 2022): 377–86, <https://ejournal.gunadarma.ac.id/index.php/psiko/article/view/6057>.

Another study by Putra et al. reveals that economic uncertainty and exposure to negative discourses about marriage on social media significantly contribute to the increasing tendency of marriage postponement among young adults. The study emphasizes that the massive circulation of narratives about marital failure in digital spaces shapes fear of commitment and reinforces avoidance of long-term marriage.<sup>12</sup> In the context of Islamic guidance and counseling, research by Anriani and Nurjanah (2021) shows that premarital counseling services that remain normatively oriented—focusing primarily on legal and administrative aspects—have not been effective in addressing the psychological anxieties of prospective brides and grooms, particularly among younger age groups.<sup>13</sup>

In line with this, Mu’awanah, Septiana, and Fakhria highlight the importance of integrating psychological and spiritual approaches in Islamic premarital counseling. They conclude that assistance combining the reinforcement of marital meaning, mental readiness, and Islamic values is more effective in increasing marital preparedness than purely normative approaches.<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, these studies have not explicitly positioned gamophobia as a psychosocial crisis of Muslim Generation Z, thereby opening space for a more integrative study from the perspective of Islamic guidance and counseling. Research that explicitly addresses gamophobia as a psychosocial crisis among Muslim Generation Z remains relatively limited. Most studies employ general terms such as “marital anxiety” or “marital unpreparedness” without exploring the deeper existential dimensions and crisis of meaning underlying such fears. Moreover, Islamic counseling approaches in previous research have largely focused on resolving post-marital conflicts or enhancing marital harmony, rather than addressing the premarital phase characterized by anxiety and fear. This gap indicates the need for a comprehensive conceptual framework capable of explaining gamophobia through the integration of modern psychology and Islamic values.

Based on this gap, the novelty of the present study lies in positioning gamophobia as a psychosocial and spiritual crisis experienced by Muslim Generation Z, rather than merely an individual psychological problem. This study proposes Islamic guidance and counseling as a holistic approach that not only aims to reduce anxiety but also to reconstruct the meaning of marriage as *mithāqan ghalīẓan* (a solemn covenant). By integrating developmental psychology, mental health concepts, and principles of Islamic counseling, this research seeks to enrich contemporary discourse on marital readiness among young Muslims in modern society.

<sup>12</sup> Ade Herdian Putra et al., “Analisis Faktor Yang Memengaruhi Kesiapan Menikah Wanita Dewasa Awal Yang Mengalami *Trust Issues* Dalam Hubungan Romansa,” *Jurnal Psikologi Sosial* 22, no. 2 (August 2024): 101–13, <https://doi.org/10.7454/jps.2024.12>.

<sup>13</sup> Rita Anriani and Nurjanah Nurjanah, “Bimbingan Kelompok Pranikah Dalam Mencegah Perceraian Pada Calon Pengantin,” *Al-Ittizaan: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Islam* 4, no. 2 (October 2021): 58–64, <https://doi.org/10.24014/ittizaan.v4i2.15486>.

<sup>14</sup> Mu’awanah, Nila Zaimatus Septiana, and Sheila Fakhria, “Pendampingan Bimbingan Pranikah Dengan Aspek Psikologis Dan Agama Di Lembaga KUA Kota Kediri Dalam Mewujudkan Keluarga Maslahat,” *Transformatif: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 4, no. 1 (July 2023): 31–46, <https://doi.org/10.22515/tranformatif.v4i1.6448>.

The objective of this study is to analyze gamophobia as a psychosocial crisis among Muslim Generation Z in preparing for family life and to examine the role of Islamic guidance and counseling in responding to this phenomenon. The research questions include: What are the characteristics and causal factors of gamophobia among Muslim Generation Z? How is gamophobia understood from the perspective of Islamic guidance and counseling? What strategies can be proposed to enhance psychological and spiritual readiness for marriage? The focus of this study is conceptual and integrative analysis, placing the psychological experiences of Generation Z in critical dialogue with normative Islamic values.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of contemporary Islamic counseling discourse by expanding its focus from post-marital domestic problems to issues of premarital readiness and anxiety. Practically, it is expected to serve as a reference for counselors, educators, and religious institutions in designing premarital guidance models that are more empathetic, contextual, and relevant to the psychosocial challenges faced by Generation Z. Thus, this research not only seeks to explain the phenomenon of gamophobia but also offers a solution-oriented framework aimed at fostering healthy, harmonious, and sustainable Muslim families.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a conceptual-analytical design aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of gamophobia as a psychosocial crisis among Generation Z from the perspective of Islamic guidance and counseling. A qualitative approach is selected because the research is not oriented toward statistical measurement or quantitative hypothesis testing, but rather toward the interpretation of meaning, conceptual construction, and the integration of relevant theoretical frameworks. In qualitative inquiry, reality is understood as complex, contextual, and meaning-laden; therefore, this approach is considered most appropriate for analyzing the interrelation between psychological experiences, social dynamics, and religious values.<sup>15</sup>

The type of research conducted is library research, positioning literature as the primary source for constructing arguments and analysis. Library research enables the researcher to engage in a critical dialogue between the concept of gamophobia in modern psychology and Islamic perspectives on marriage and counseling. As emphasized by Zed, library research is not merely the collection of reading materials but requires analytical competence to interpret, compare, and systematically synthesize ideas from diverse sources.<sup>16</sup>

The data sources in this study are divided into primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include the Qur'an, the Hadith of the Prophet, and classical Islamic works discussing marriage, mental well-being, and moral development, such as the writings of al-Ghazālī and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah. These sources are utilized to explore

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<sup>15</sup> John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2014), 41–44.

<sup>16</sup> Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2004), 3–6.

the normative and ethical framework of Islam in understanding marriage as *mithāqan ghalīẓan* (a solemn covenant) and as a means of attaining inner tranquility. Secondary sources consist of developmental psychology texts, mental health literature, and recent scholarly journal articles addressing Generation Z, marital anxiety, and practices in Islamic guidance and counseling.

Data collection was conducted through systematic inventory and selection of relevant literature, which was then categorized based on major themes such as gamophobia, psychosocial crisis, marital readiness, and Islamic counseling.<sup>17</sup> The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis by identifying recurring patterns, key concepts, and interrelationships among ideas, and subsequently integrating them critically between modern psychological theories and principles of Islamic counseling.<sup>18</sup>

The analytical process concluded with reflective-critical interpretation, formulating a conceptual synthesis that is not merely descriptive but also offers a comprehensive framework and theoretical implications for the development of Islamic guidance and counseling in responding to gamophobia among Generation Z.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Gamophobia as a Psychosocial Crisis of Generation Z

In the context of Generation Z, gamophobia can be understood as a complex psychosocial phenomenon. It is not merely an individual fear of marriage, but rather a reflection of a broader crisis of meaning regarding commitment in modern society. Psychologically, gamophobia refers to an irrational and excessive fear of marriage or formal long-term commitment. The term derives from the Greek words *gamos* (marriage) and *phobos* (fear). Within the framework of modern clinical psychology, gamophobia is not specifically classified as a distinct disorder in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition* (DSM-5). However, its symptoms may be interpreted as part of specific phobia, relational anxiety, generalized anxiety disorder, or social anxiety disorder. The American Psychiatric Association explains that fears centered on social or relational situations often manifest in avoidance behaviors, cognitive distortions, and intense emotional responses—patterns that are clearly observable in cases of gamophobia.<sup>19</sup>

The main characteristics of gamophobia include anxiety triggered by discussions about marriage, a tendency to avoid relationships that may lead to long-term commitment, and negative perceptions of marriage as a source of lost freedom, diminished identity, and reduced personal autonomy. Corey argues that fear of commitment often stems from intrapsychic conflict between the need for emotional intimacy and the fear of attachment

<sup>17</sup> Virginia Braun and Victoria and Clarke, “Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology,” *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (January 2006): 77–101, <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>.

<sup>18</sup> Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (London: SAGE Publications, 2014), 31–33.

<sup>19</sup> American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition* (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), 190–97, <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596>.

perceived as restrictive.<sup>20</sup> Among Generation Z, this conflict is intensified by a social environment that emphasizes individual freedom, life flexibility, and self-achievement as dominant values.

Gamophobia among Generation Z cannot be separated from the broader structure of social and economic uncertainty. Ulrich Beck's concept of the "risk society" explains that modern society is characterized by increasing systemic risks and uncertainties that can no longer be fully controlled by individuals.<sup>21</sup> Employment instability, economic fluctuations, rising living costs, and career uncertainty contribute to the perception of marriage as a high-risk decision that may increase life burdens. In such conditions, marriage is no longer perceived primarily as a source of security, but rather as a potential additional problem to be avoided.

Zygmunt Bauman reinforces this analysis through his concepts of *liquid life* and *liquid love*, in which human relationships are fluid, temporary, and easily dissolved. In a "liquid" social order, long-term commitment is often seen as incompatible with the demands of flexibility and social mobility.<sup>22</sup> Generation Z, raised within digital culture and the gig economy, tends to internalize this logic, leading to the perception of marriage as a rigid bond that contradicts adaptive and fast-paced lifestyles.

From a developmental psychology perspective, attachment theory, proposed by John Bowlby, provides an important framework for understanding gamophobia. Bowlby explains that early relational experiences with caregivers significantly shape adult attachment patterns.<sup>23</sup> Many individuals in Generation Z have grown up in families marked by high divorce rates, parental conflict, or emotionally insecure relationships. Such conditions contribute to the development of avoidant attachment patterns—characterized by discomfort with emotional closeness and deep commitment—because marriage is cognitively associated with hurt, failure, and instability. Thus, gamophobia among Generation Z may be viewed as the intersection of psychological vulnerability, sociocultural transformation, and structural uncertainty. It represents not only an individual anxiety disorder but also a manifestation of broader psychosocial shifts in the meaning of intimacy, security, and lifelong commitment in contemporary society.

Furthermore, contemporary relationship culture—dominated by social media and dating applications—intensifies relational uncertainty. Anthony Giddens describes this phenomenon as the *pure relationship*, a form of relationship sustained only insofar as it provides emotional satisfaction to both parties, without strong moral, traditional, or institutional bonds.<sup>24</sup> Within this framework, marriage loses much of its sacred and

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<sup>20</sup> Gerald Corey, *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy* (Australia ; United States: Cengage Learning, 2017), 214–18

<sup>21</sup> Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (London ; Newbury Park, Calif: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1992), 21–37

<sup>22</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Love: On the Frailty of Human Bonds* (Cambridge, UK : Malden, MA USA: Polity, 2003), 63–67

<sup>23</sup> John Bowlby, *A Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development*, Nachdruck (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 120–34.

<sup>24</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies* (London: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), 58–61.

normative dimension, shifting into an emotional contract that can be terminated at any time. Such conditions encourage Generation Z to postpone or even reject marriage, perceiving it as incompatible with the fluid dynamics of modern relationships.

The impact of gamophobia on marital readiness is highly significant. Marital readiness is not merely a matter of age or financial preparedness; it also encompasses emotional maturity, identity stability, and the capacity to manage conflict and responsibility.<sup>25</sup> Gamophobia obstructs this developmental process because individuals become trapped in anticipatory anxiety and avoidance strategies, leaving little psychological space to cultivate healthy relational preparedness.

In interpersonal relationships, gamophobia tends to produce shallow, temporary, and fragile bonds. Erik Erikson explains that early adulthood is marked by the developmental crisis of *intimacy versus isolation*.<sup>26</sup> Fear of marriage and long-term commitment may hinder individuals from developing authentic intimacy, thereby increasing the risk of emotional isolation, loneliness, and long-term relational dissatisfaction.

At the societal level, gamophobia has implications for the sustainability of the family institution. The decline in marriage rates and the growing preference for life without long-term family commitment weaken the family's role as an agent of value socialization, emotional stability, and psychosocial support. Cherlin argues that the weakening of marriage reflects a broader process of the deinstitutionalization of the family, which may undermine social cohesion.<sup>27</sup> From a classical sociological perspective, Émile Durkheim warns that the erosion of social bonds can lead to *anomie*—a condition of normative and existential crisis that heightens collective anxiety within society.<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, gamophobia among Generation Z is not merely an individual psychological issue but a psychosocial crisis reflecting tensions between the demands of modernity, structural uncertainty, and the fundamental human need for attachment and meaningful commitment. Addressing gamophobia requires a multidisciplinary approach that goes beyond individual intervention, incorporating broader social and cultural reflection on how marriage and commitment can be reinterpreted in ways that are contextual and relevant to the lived realities of Generation Z.

### **Factors Contributing to Gamophobia Among Generation Z**

Gamophobia among Generation Z is a multidimensional phenomenon that cannot be explained through a single cause. Rather, it emerges from the complex interaction between internal psychological factors and external structural-cultural dynamics, further exacerbated by the weakening of spiritual orientation and religious meaning attached to

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<sup>25</sup> John W. Santrock, *Life-Span Development*, Eighteenth edition (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education, 2021), 412–18

<sup>26</sup> Erik Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968), 135–41

<sup>27</sup> Andrew J. Cherlin, "The Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66, no. 4 (November 2004): 848–61, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0022-2445.2004.00058.x>

<sup>28</sup> Emile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study In Sociology*, ed. George Simpson, trans. John A. Spaulding (Riverside: Free Press, 1997), 241–47

marriage. In developmental and clinical psychology, gamophobia may be understood as a form of relational anxiety rooted in both subjective experiences and broader social conditions. It thus reflects a psychosocial crisis among young people in confronting long-term commitment.

From the internal perspective, one of the most dominant factors is family-related trauma, particularly experiences involving parental conflict, domestic violence, or divorce. Research by Paul R. Amato indicates that individuals raised in divorced families tend to exhibit significantly higher levels of skepticism toward marriage compared to those from intact families.<sup>29</sup> Such experiences often form negative cognitive schemas portraying marriage as a space of conflict, suffering, and failure, thereby generating a latent fear of commitment. For Generation Z—who, globally, have experienced higher exposure to divorce than previous generations—family trauma plays a substantial role in shaping defensive attitudes toward the institution of marriage.

Emotional anxiety is another significant internal factor. Generation Z is widely recognized as having relatively high prevalence rates of anxiety and depressive disorders. Data from the Mental Health Foundation show that approximately 28% of individuals aged 16–29 globally experienced anxiety disorders in 2021, and around 26.6% of those aged 18–29 reported anxiety symptoms within a two-week period in 2022. A global epidemiological analysis by Wu et al. further confirms the increasing trend of anxiety disorders among young adults.<sup>30</sup> The World Health Organization explains that such anxiety extends beyond academic or occupational stress, permeating relational domains, including fears of emotional dependency, rejection, and relational failure.<sup>31</sup> Arnett notes that during the stage of emerging adulthood, individuals frequently experience ambivalence between the desire for intimacy and the fear of losing autonomy—an ambivalence that, within Generation Z, often manifests as gamophobia.<sup>32</sup>

Psychological immaturity also constitutes a relevant internal factor. Although Generation Z reaches biological adulthood at a similar pace as previous generations, emotional maturity and self-regulation may be delayed due to prolonged transitions into adulthood. Santrock explains that psychological maturity involves the capacity for long-term decision-making, tolerance of frustration, and readiness to assume responsibility.<sup>33</sup> Gamophobia tends to arise when individuals perceive themselves as psychologically

<sup>29</sup> Paul R. Amato, “Research on Divorce: Continuing Trends and New Developments,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 72, no. 3 (June 2010): 650–66, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00723.x>.

<sup>30</sup> Mental Health Foundation, “Anxiety: Statistics,” Mental Health Foundation, 2025, <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/statistics/anxiety-statistics>; Yajuan Wu et al., “Trends in the Epidemiology of Anxiety Disorders from 1990 to 2021: A Global, Regional, and National Analysis with a Focus on the Sociodemographic Index,” *Journal of Affective Disorders* 373 (March 2025): 166–74, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2024.12.086>.

<sup>31</sup> WHO Media Team, “Over a Billion People Living with Mental Health Conditions – Services Require Urgent Scale-Up,” *Who.int*, 2025, accessed January 29, 2026, <https://www.who.int/news/item/02-09-2025-over-a-billion-people-living-with-mental-health-conditions-services-require-urgent-scale-up>.

<sup>32</sup> Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens Through the Twenties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 112–18.

<sup>33</sup> John W. Santrock, *Life-Span Development*, Eighteenth edition (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education, 2021), 410–18.

unprepared to meet the demands of marriage, making avoidance a primary coping mechanism.

External factors further reinforce these tendencies. Economic pressure is among the most significant determinants. The International Labour Organization reports that over 30% of young workers globally are engaged in precarious or non-permanent employment.<sup>34</sup> In Indonesia, data from Badan Pusat Statistik indicate that the open unemployment rate for individuals aged 15–24 reached 16.46%, significantly higher than the national average. Under such conditions, marriage is frequently perceived as a financial burden and risk rather than a source of stability.<sup>35</sup> The OECD identifies a strong correlation between economic instability and delayed marriage, reinforcing the structural dimension of gamophobia among young adults.<sup>36</sup>

Taken together, these internal and external factors demonstrate that gamophobia among Generation Z is not simply an irrational fear of marriage. It is deeply rooted in family experiences, emotional vulnerability, developmental transitions, and structural-economic uncertainty. As such, it reflects a broader psychosocial condition shaped by the interplay between personal history and contemporary societal transformations.

Digital culture and individualism also play a significant role. Generation Z is a digital native generation that lives within the ecosystem of social media and dating applications. Research by Hobbs, Owen, and Gerber demonstrates that excessive exposure to an abundance of relational choices through dating apps can increase commitment avoidance and relational dissatisfaction.<sup>37</sup> Relationships become easily replaceable, while marriage is perceived as a final choice that limits opportunities for self-exploration. A culture of individualism that emphasizes personal freedom and self-actualization further reinforces the perception that marriage threatens autonomy.

Negative narratives about marriage circulating widely on social media further intensify gamophobia. Content concerning celebrity divorces, domestic conflicts, and failed marriages is often consumed without balanced context. Research by Coundouris, Tyson, and Henry found that exposure to negative narratives about long-term relationships in digital media correlates with increased cynicism toward marriage among young people.<sup>38</sup> Within this framework, marriage is reduced to a source of problems rather than a space for mutual growth.

Another equally important factor is the weakening of spiritual orientation and

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<sup>34</sup> ILO, *WORLD EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL OUTLOOK: Trends 2023* (S.I.: INTL LABOUR OFFICE, 2023), 15

<sup>35</sup> Azura Yumna Ramadani Purnama, “BPS: Nyaris 10 Juta Gen Z Di Indonesia Pengangguran Pada 2023,” *Www.Bloombergtechnoz.Com*, 2024, <https://www.bloombergtechnoz.com/detail-news/38185/bps-nyaris-10-juta-gen-z-di-indonesia-pengangguran-pada-2023>

<sup>36</sup> OECD, *Society at a Glance 2024: OECD Social Indicators*, Society at a Glance (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2024), 12–15, <https://doi.org/10.1787/918d8db3-en>.

<sup>37</sup> Mitchell Hobbs, Stephen Owen, and Livia Gerber, “Liquid Love? Dating Apps, Sex, Relationships and the Digital Transformation of Intimacy,” *Journal of Sociology* 53, no. 2 (June 2017): 271–84, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783316662718>

<sup>38</sup> Sarah P. Coundouris, Courtney L. Tyson, and Julie D. Henry, “Social Networking Site Use and Relationship Quality: A Double Edged Sword,” *Computers in Human Behavior* 123 (October 2021): 106871, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.106871>.

religious meaning attached to marriage. From the perspective of the sociology of religion, modern secularization has caused marriage to lose its transcendental dimension and be reduced to a mere social contract. Peter L. Berger explains that when religion no longer functions as the primary framework of meaning, social institutions such as marriage lose their symbolic legitimacy.<sup>39</sup> Mahoney et al. further demonstrate that individuals with lower levels of religiosity tend to exhibit weaker marital commitment and higher levels of relational anxiety.<sup>40</sup>

In the context of Muslim societies, the weakening of religious understanding of marriage as *mithāqan ghalīzan* (a solemn and binding covenant) results in the erosion of its spiritual, ethical, and eschatological meaning. Marriage is no longer perceived as an act of worship (*ibadah*) and a divine trust (*amanah*), but rather as a lifestyle choice that can be postponed or avoided. This condition leaves Generation Z facing marriage without a spiritually reassuring framework of meaning, allowing fear and anxiety to dominate rather than hope and trust.

Thus, gamophobia among Generation Z represents the cumulative outcome of personal trauma, psychological anxiety, economic pressure, digital-individualistic culture, negative narratives about marriage, and a crisis of spiritual meaning. The phenomenon underscores that gamophobia is not merely an individual psychological issue, but a reflection of broader structural and cultural crises that require comprehensive psychological, social, and religious approaches.

### **Gamophobia from the Perspective of Islamic Guidance and Counseling**

From the perspective of Islamic guidance and counseling, gamophobia cannot be reduced solely to an individual psychological disorder. Rather, it should be understood as an expression of a crisis of meaning and a spiritual crisis within the religious life of Generation Z. Fear of marriage is rooted not only in emotional anxiety, relational trauma, or socio-economic pressures, but also in the weakening of a religious worldview regarding marriage itself.

In Islam, marriage is positioned as a sacred bond that transcends biological and social dimensions, as it constitutes a *mithāqan ghalīzan*—a solemn covenant imbued with theological, ethical, and spiritual responsibility. The Qur’an emphasizes this in Surah al-Nisā’ [4]:21, referring to marriage as a “strong covenant,” a term which classical exegetes employ to describe bonds requiring profound moral commitment. Ibn Kathīr explains that the designation *mithāqan ghalīzan* indicates that the marital relationship is not an ordinary union, but a divine trust that must be upheld with seriousness and spiritual consciousness.<sup>41</sup>

Within this framework, marriage is also understood as an act of worship. The Prophet Muhammad explicitly positioned marriage as a means of safeguarding morality

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<sup>39</sup> Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Open Road Media, 2011), 45–49

<sup>40</sup> Annette Mahoney et al., “Religion and the Sanctification of Family Relationships,” *Review of Religious Research* 44, no. 3 (March 2003): 220, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3512384>.

<sup>41</sup> Abu al-Fida’ Ismail bin Umar Ibnu Kasir, *Tafsīr Al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*, Juz I (Beirut: Al-Kitab Al Ilmi, 1999), 237–39

and psychological well-being, thereby integrating spiritual purpose with personal and social stability. In an authentic hadith, he said:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ قَالَ لَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمُ الْبَاءَةَ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ فَإِنَّهُ أَغْضُ لِلْبَصْرِ وَأَحْصَنُ لِلْفَرْجِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وِجَاءٌ

*Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah said to us: " O young people, whoever among you is able to afford it, let him marry, for it lowers the gaze and guards chastity. But whoever is not able, then let him fast, for fasting will be a shield for him."* (Narrated by al-Bukhārī, no. 5066; Muslim, no. 1400).

Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, in *Fath al-Bārī*, emphasizes that this hadith should not be understood narrowly as merely a biological encouragement. Rather, it represents a legal and spiritual framework aimed at safeguarding psychological stability, inner tranquility, and moral order. According to him, marriage functions as a preventive mechanism against emotional unrest and moral disorder that may arise from unmanaged instinctual drives.<sup>42</sup>

However, within the lived reality of Generation Z, this dimension of worship and spiritual protection is often diminished. Marriage is more frequently perceived as a psychological burden and a life risk, which in turn fosters gamophobia. From the perspective of Islamic counseling, this condition reflects a crisis of meaning—namely, the failure to understand marriage as a path toward *sakinah* (tranquility), *mawaddah* (affection), and *rahmah* (compassion), as affirmed in the Qur'an in Surah al-Rūm [30]:21. When marriage is viewed solely through the lenses of economic uncertainty, past trauma, and narratives of failure, its transcendental dimension disappears, leaving the individual's inner world dominated by anxiety.

This perspective resonates with the thought of Viktor E. Frankl, who argues in *Man's Search for Meaning* that anxiety disorders often stem from an existential vacuum—a condition of meaninglessness. Frankl maintains that individuals who lose their orientation toward meaning become more vulnerable to fear, anxiety, and avoidance of major life commitments.<sup>43</sup> In the Muslim context, the loss of meaning in perceiving marriage as an act of worship (*ibadah*) and a divine trust (*amanah*) exacerbates the tendency toward gamophobia, as individuals no longer possess a spiritually reassuring foundation when confronting the inherent risks of married life.

Another hadith of the Prophet further emphasizes the importance of this dimension of meaning, as he said:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ النِّكَاحُ مِنْ سُنَّتِي فَمَنْ لَمْ يَعْمَلْ بِسُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَتَزَوَّجُوا فَإِنِّي مُكَاتِرٌ بِكُمْ الْأُمَّمَ وَمَنْ كَانَ دَا طَوْلٍ فَلْيُنكِحْ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصِّيَامِ فَإِنَّ الصَّوْمَ لَهُ وَجَاءٌ

*The Messenger of Allah said: "Marriage is part of my Sunnah; whoever turns away from my Sunnah is not from me. Marry, for I will boast of your great numbers before other*

<sup>42</sup> Ibnu Hajar Al-'Asqalani, *Fath Al-Bari Fi Syarh al-Sahih al-Bukhari*, Juz X (Libanon: Dar Al-Ma'arif, 1885), 112–14

<sup>43</sup> Victor E. Frankl, *Man's Search For Meaning*, Cet. V (Jakarta: Noura, 2019), 104–7.

*nations. Whoever among you can afford it, let him marry, and whoever cannot, then let him fast, for fasting will diminish his desire.” (Narrated by Ibn Mājah, no. 1846)*

Al-Būṣīrī, in his commentary *Miṣbāḥ al-Zujājah fī Zawā'id Ibn Mājah*, explains that the phrase “not from me” in the hadīth “*al-nikāḥ min sunnatī*” does not imply expulsion from Islam. Rather, it constitutes a strong rebuke (*zajr wa taḥdhīr*) against those who reject marriage based on misguided understanding. According to him, the warning is directed at individuals who avoid marriage not due to a legitimate shar'ī excuse, but because of excessiveness, disproportionate fear, or the belief that abstaining from marriage is spiritually superior. Al-Būṣīrī emphasizes that marriage is part of the Prophet's Sunnah that preserves the balance between spiritual, biological, and social needs. Therefore, an ideological rejection of marriage reflects an imbalance in comprehending the objectives (*maqāṣid*) of Islamic law.<sup>44</sup>

In Islamic guidance and counseling, the principle of *tawḥīd* serves as the foundational framework for responding to gamophobia. *Tawḥīd* situates all aspects of life—including marriage—within the paradigm of servitude to Allah. Excessive fear of marriage may signal a shift in orientation from reliance upon Allah toward purely rational calculations devoid of deeper meaning. The Qur'an reminds believers that anxiety about the future must be balanced with faith and trust (*tawakkul*), as affirmed in Surah al-Ṭalāq [65]:2–3:

فَإِذَا بَلَغَ أَجَلُهُنَّ فَامْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ فَارِقُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَأَشْهِدُوا ذَوِي عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ لِلَّهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَن كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَن يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِن حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَن يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَلِّغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا

“*And whoever fears Allah—He will make for him a way out and provide for him from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon Allah—then He is sufficient for him.*”

Within this theological framework, Islamic counseling seeks not merely to reduce anxiety symptoms, but to restore spiritual orientation, strengthen trust in divine providence, and reframe marriage as a meaningful act of worship grounded in faith rather than fear.

The verses you cited are from the Qur'an, Surah al-Ṭalāq [65]:2–3. Below is a refined English translation suitable for academic writing: (2) “Then when they have reached the end of their waiting period, retain them in a fair manner or part with them in a fair manner. And call to witness two just persons from among you, and establish the testimony for the sake of Allah. That is instructed to whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day. And whoever fears Allah—He will make for him a way out, (3) and will provide for him from where he does not expect. And whoever places his trust in Allah—He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose. Allah has set a measure for all things.”

<sup>44</sup> Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr Būṣīrī, *Miṣbāḥ al-zujājah fī Zawā'id Ibn Mājah* (Lebanon: Dār al-Jinān, 1986), 2:102–3

Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah recites this verse not merely as a rule of divorce law, but as an inner education on how human beings deal with loss, uncertainty, and fear of the future. In his explanation, the phrase “*wa man yattaqillāha yaj'al lahū makhrajan*” is not only interpreted as a material way out, but rather the breadth of the soul that Allah opens when a person maintains piety in the midst of situations that most shake his emotions. According to Ibn Qayyim, people often feel their lives collapse when the relationship ends, when God can actually bring help from a direction that is not expected at all. Therefore, *tawakkal* in this verse is not a form of escape from reality, but the courage to keep going without being controlled by fear. He emphasized that a heart that relies on God is not easily destroyed by changing circumstances, because he understands that every Destiny has a measure and wisdom that is not necessarily immediately visible to humans.<sup>45</sup>

In the context of gamophobia, the fear of marriage often arises from the shadow of failure, conflict or loss of control over life. This verse presents a different spiritual logic: that the way out is not always obvious in the first place, and that both emotional sustenance and life can come “from unexpected directions.”<sup>46</sup>

Ibn Qayyim in *Madarij Al-Salikin* explains that *tawakkal* is not an escape from fear, but the courage to keep going while realizing the limitations of man in controlling the end result. Therefore, relationships in Islam are built not on the illusion of absolute certainty, but on *Mu'āsharah bi al-Ma'rūf*—the willingness to treat a partner with kindness despite life's constant changes. For individuals who experience commitment anxiety, this verse gives a subtle message that peace is not born from the ability to control all possibilities, but from the belief that God does not let man walk alone to face his future.<sup>47</sup>

In the context of Islamic counseling and discussions on gamophobia, these verses provide a theological foundation for balancing responsible action with *tawakkul* (trust in God). They affirm that while marriage and its responsibilities require justice, witnesses, and structured accountability, ultimate security lies not in complete control over outcomes but in reliance upon Allah, who has determined a measure for all things.

In Islamic counseling, individuals are guided to understand that marriage is not merely a domain of human risk, but also a space for divine mercy and intervention. In addition to *tawhīd*, the principle of balance (*tawāzun*) serves as an essential foundation. Islam does not deny psychological realities such as trauma and anxiety, yet it also does not justify extreme attitudes in the form of total rejection of marriage. Yusuf al-Qaradawi emphasizes that Islam is a religion of moderation, placing caution and trust in proper proportion.<sup>48</sup> In the context of gamophobia, Islamic counseling seeks to recalibrate the individual's worldview so that marriage can be perceived in both realistic and spiritual

<sup>45</sup> Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, *Tafsīr Al-Qayyim* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2000), 1:452.

<sup>46</sup> Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *I'lam al-Muwaqqi'in 'an Rabb al-'alamin* (Kairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2004), 2:45.

<sup>47</sup> Ibnu Qoyyim Al-Jawziyyah, *Madarij Al-Salikin* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Arabi, 2008), 129.

<sup>48</sup> Yusuf Qardhawi, *Fiqh Al-Wasatiyyah* (Kairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 2005), 135–39

terms.

The principle of *maṣlahah* (public and personal benefit) further complements this framework. In Islam, marriage aims to realize personal and social good, safeguard honor and lineage, and maintain societal stability. Ibn ‘Āshūr situates marriage within the higher objectives (*maqāṣid*) of Sharī‘ah, particularly the preservation of human dignity and continuity.<sup>49</sup> If left unaddressed spiritually, gamophobia has the potential to undermine these broader purposes.

Thus, from the perspective of Islamic guidance and counseling, gamophobia represents a manifestation of a crisis of meaning and spirituality that requires a holistic response. Islamic counseling does not stop at managing psychological anxiety; rather, it endeavors to restore the understanding of marriage as a *mithāqan ghalīẓan*, an act of worship, and a path toward inner tranquility. This approach is particularly relevant for Generation Z, so that they are prepared not only emotionally, but also spiritually, in facing one of life’s most fundamental commitments.

### **Strategies of Islamic Guidance and Counseling in Addressing Gamophobia**

Strategies for addressing gamophobia through Islamic guidance and counseling must be formulated holistically, taking into account the psychosocial complexity of Generation Z. Gamophobia is rooted not only in individual psychological anxiety, but also in existential uncertainty, structural instability, and weakened integration between emotional, cognitive, and spiritual dimensions. Therefore, Islamic counseling offers an integrative approach that goes beyond symptom reduction and focuses on cultivating comprehensive marital readiness through strengthening faith, emotional healing, cognitive restructuring, and internalizing the objectives of marriage as a space of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*.

#### **1. Strengthening Spirituality and Faith**

Spiritual reinforcement constitutes the primary foundation of marital readiness in Islamic counseling. Spirituality in Islam is not viewed as a supplementary aspect of life, but as its central orientation, shaping how individuals interpret the future, risk, and commitment. Research by Mahoney et al. indicates that individuals with high levels of intrinsic religiosity tend to demonstrate stronger marital commitment and lower relational anxiety compared to those whose religiosity is merely instrumental.<sup>50</sup>

In the perspective of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, spiritual strengthening before entering marriage is not enough to be interpreted as an increase in formal rituals, but rather the coaching of the heart in order to have peace in the face of life's uncertainties. Ibn Qayyim explains that the human heart is often overwhelmed with *wahm*—prejudice and excessive anxiety about the future—because of weak faith in Allah. In *Madarij al-Salikin*, he emphasized that *tawakkal* is not a passive attitude, but an inner state that makes a person keep striving while submitting the end result to Allah with complete peace. When prospective spouses understand marriage as a way of worship,

<sup>49</sup> Ibn ‘Āshūr, *Maqāṣid Al-Sharī‘ah al-Islāmiyyah* (Amman: Dār al-Nafā’is, 2001), 271–75

<sup>50</sup> Mahoney et al., “Religion and the Sanctification of Family Relationships.”

then the relationship is no longer built on the fear of loss, but on a sense of spiritual security (*sukun al-qalb*). From here, the readiness to marry is born not only from economic or psychological readiness, but also from the ability of the heart to accept fate with space and hope. This thought shows that spirituality serves as an inner buffer that keeps people from collapsing by social anxiety or uncertainty about the future.<sup>51</sup>

Within Islamic counseling, strengthening spirituality involves cultivating *tawhīd*-based awareness that marriage exists within the framework of servitude to Allah. Consequently, fear of the future is no longer governed solely by rational calculation, but balanced with *tawakkul* (trust in God). This approach aligns with Pargament's concept of positive religious coping, which enhances resilience in the face of existential anxiety.<sup>52</sup>

## 2. Emotional Healing and Trauma Processing

Emotional healing is a crucial strategy, particularly for individuals who have experienced family trauma or negative relational models. Islamic counseling emphasizes an empathetic and reflective approach, in which the counselor serves as a compassionate companion who helps the client safely re-narrate traumatic experiences in a meaningful way. Worthington et al. demonstrate that integrating therapeutic empathy with religious values accelerates emotional healing and enhances self-acceptance.<sup>53</sup>

Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah viewed inner wounds as something that not only remained in memory, but also settled in the soul as a burden of fear, suspicion, and loss of the meaning of relationships. In *Rawḍat al-Muḥibbīn*, he explains that humans often fail to distinguish between love that soothes the soul and emotional attachment born of fear of abandonment. Therefore, a person who has lived in a relationship full of conflict tends to view closeness as a threat, not as a safe space.<sup>54</sup> This is where the process of emotional healing becomes important: not simply erasing bitter memories, but reimagining the way the Soul understands compassion.

Ibn Qayyim wrote that a wounded heart needs *rifq* (tenderness) and *uns* (a comforting sense of closeness), for the soul cannot be restored through pressure or judgment. This approach is very close to the principles of modern empathic counseling. In the context of gamophobia, the fear of marriage is not treated as a moral weakness, but is understood as an emotional response that was once shaped by a painful experience. When a person is given the space to retell his traumatic experiences without a sense of judgment, he slowly begins to separate the past from the different possibilities of the future.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Al-Jawziyyah, *Madarij Al-Salikin*, 118–25.

<sup>52</sup> Kenneth I. Pargament, *Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy: Understanding and Addressing the Sacred* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2007), 89–93.

<sup>53</sup> Everett L. Worthington et al., "Religion and Spirituality," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 67, no. 2 (February 2011): 204–14, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20760>

<sup>54</sup> Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, *Rawḍat al-muḥibbīn wa-nuzhat al-mushtāqīn*, version [al-Ṭab'ah 1], [al-Ṭab'ah 1] (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Ṣafā, yuṭlabu min Maktabat al-Jāmi'ah, 1973), 145–52.

<sup>55</sup> Al-Jawziyyah, *Rawḍat al-muḥibbīn wa-nuzhat al-mushtāqīn*, 152.

In *Zād al-Ma'ād*, Ibn Qayyim also emphasizes that peace of mind is born when the heart is able to put love in proportion—not excessive to the point of giving birth to dependence, and not closed to the point of rejecting closeness altogether. Thus, emotional healing in Islamic counseling is not only a psychological process, but also a process of restoring the meaning of love so that relationships are seen as a path of grace, not a source of threat.<sup>56</sup>

In the context of gamophobia, empathetic engagement helps clients recognize that their fear of marriage is an understandable emotional response, yet it need not determine their relational future. Reflective processes allow clients to distinguish past experiences from the possibility of healthier future relationships.

### 3. Value-Based Cognitive Restructuring

Gamophobia is often sustained by cognitive distortions, such as overgeneralizing from others' failed marriages, catastrophizing about future domestic life, or irrationally believing that marriage inevitably eliminates personal freedom. In cognitive psychology, cognitive restructuring seeks to identify and correct maladaptive thought patterns. Islamic counseling adopts this method by integrating the values of *tawhīd*, *tawāzun* (balance), and *ḥusn al-ẓann* (positive assumption).

Hamdan shows that cognitive therapy integrated with Islamic teachings effectively reduces anxiety and improves psychological well-being among Muslim clients.<sup>57</sup> In practice, clients are guided to reassess negative beliefs about marriage through a Qur'anic and ethical lens, ensuring that rational evaluation remains connected to spiritual insight.

This restructuring is also essential in challenging dominant individualistic narratives within modern culture. Many members of Generation Z perceive marriage as a threat to self-actualization. Islamic counseling invites clients to critically re-examine concepts of freedom and independence in Islam, where autonomy is not negated by commitment but finds deeper meaning within responsible relationships. This perspective resonates with Lambert and Dollahite, who found that religiously oriented couples interpret marriage as a shared space for spiritual growth rather than a restriction of personal development.<sup>58</sup>

The internalization of the objectives of marriage as a means of attaining *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* represents the culminating strategy in Islamic counseling. Gamophobia often arises because individuals fail to perceive the transcendental purpose of marriage, focusing solely on its risks and burdens. Islamic counseling seeks to instill the understanding that the goal of marriage is not the achievement of a perfect life, but a shared journey toward inner tranquility and

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<sup>56</sup> Ibnu Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, *Zadul Ma'ad* (Beirut: Dar Al-Fikr, 1995), 6:178–81.

<sup>57</sup> Aisha Hamdan, "Cognitive Restructuring: An Islamic Perspective," *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 3, no. 1 (May 2008): 99–116, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15564900802035268>.

<sup>58</sup> Nathaniel Lambert and David Dollahite, "How Religiosity Helps Couples Prevent, Resolve, and Overcome Marital Conflict," *Family Relations* 55, no. 4 (September 2006): 439–49, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2006.00413.x>.

spiritual maturity.<sup>59</sup>

Research by Raesi et al. indicates that couples who construct their relationships upon value-based and spiritual meaning are more capable of managing conflict and sustaining long-term commitment. Within this framework, *sakinah* is understood as psychological tranquility, *mawaddah* as an active and intentional form of love that must be cultivated, and *rahmah* as empathy and compassionate acceptance of a partner's imperfections.

Through the internalization of these objectives, Islamic counseling assists clients in shifting their orientation from fear to hope, and from avoidance to preparedness. Marriage is no longer viewed as the end of personal freedom, but as a space for embodying faith-based values in lived reality. This approach also emphasizes that readiness for marriage is not a static or perfect condition; rather, it is a dynamic process that can be developed through continuous spiritual, emotional, and cognitive growth.

In conclusion, Islamic guidance and counseling strategies for addressing gamophobia require an integrative, critical, and contextual approach. Strengthening faith, facilitating emotional healing, implementing value-based cognitive restructuring, and internalizing the objectives of marriage as *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* constitute interrelated pillars. This framework is not only theologically grounded but also supported by contemporary empirical findings, enabling it to respond more comprehensively to the psychosocial challenges faced by Generation Z.

## CONCLUSION

Gamophobia among Generation Z represents a complex and contextual psychosocial crisis that cannot be reduced to a mere individual anxiety disorder. The phenomenon emerges from the intersection of multiple factors: psychological elements such as family trauma, emotional anxiety, and affective immaturity; socio-economic pressures including job insecurity and the demands of modern life; cultural influences characterized by individualism and negative narratives about marriage; and spiritual dimensions reflected in the weakening of religious meaning attached to marriage as an act of worship and divine trust. This complexity indicates that gamophobia is fundamentally an expression of a crisis of meaning and relational uncertainty, mirroring broader shifts in social structures and value systems within Generation Z.

Within this context, Islamic guidance and counseling holds significant theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, these findings reinforce the argument that approaches grounded solely in psychological frameworks are insufficient to fully explain and address gamophobia. The integration of modern psychological insights with Islamic

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<sup>59</sup> Rasoul Raesi et al., "The Impact of Spiritual and Cultural Beliefs on Family Relationships and Marital Satisfaction in Religious Communities: A Systematic Review," *The Open Public Health Journal* 18, no. 1 (July 2025): e18749445401885, <https://doi.org/10.2174/0118749445401885250704054224>

values provides a more comprehensive conceptual framework, positioning spirituality as a foundational element in cultivating marital readiness.

Practically, Islamic counseling plays a vital role in assisting Generation Z individuals to reconstruct the meaning of marriage through strengthening faith, facilitating emotional healing, and implementing value-based cognitive restructuring rooted in the principles of *tawhīd*, balance, and *maṣlahah*.

Based on these findings and analyses, it is essential to enhance marriage literacy and contextual Islamic counseling initiatives for Generation Z through formal education, religious institutions, and premarital counseling services. Furthermore, future empirical research is strongly recommended to examine the effectiveness of premarital counseling models that integrate psychological approaches with Islamic values. Such efforts would ensure that this integrative framework possesses not only normative legitimacy but also robust empirical support.

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