

Islamic Family Counseling to Enhance Family Harmony in the Modern Era

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Abstract: Family harmony is a crucial foundation in social life, particularly within Islamic culture and values. In the modern era, communication breakdowns, value differences, and life stressors often disrupt relationships between spouses and extended family members. Islamic family counseling, rooted in Sharia principles and Islamic ethics, offers a structured approach to strengthening family bonds amidst these social changes. This study aims to explore the role of Islamic family counseling in enhancing family harmony in contemporary society. Utilizing a qualitative phenomenological method with narrative analysis, data were gathered through in-depth interviews and field observations involving Muslim families in Semarang who had sought counseling services. The findings reveal that Islamic family counseling significantly improves communication skills, conflict management, and internalizing Islamic values within families. It emphasizes active listening, patience, forgiveness, and integrating worship and community bonding practices into daily life. These techniques contribute to emotional stability and the spiritual resilience of families facing modern challenges. This study offers practical recommendations for improving Islamic family counseling services and highlights its vital contribution to sustaining family harmony in a rapidly changing world.

Keywords: Islamic Family Counseling, Islamic values, Conflict Resolution, Harmonious Family, Modern Era

1. Introduction

Family harmony is vital in social life, particularly within Islamic culture, where family is seen as the foundational unit of society. In the modern era, families face increasingly complex challenges that threaten harmonious relationships among members. Communication barriers, shifting value systems, and pressures from work and social expectations often trigger conflict between husband and wife and extended family members, like in-laws (Rahman, 2023). Everyday situations, such as disagreements over household responsibilities, excessive use of smartphones during family interactions, and interference from extended family, frequently become the source of tension. Based on preliminary interviews conducted with Muslim families in Semarang between January and March 2024, it was found that trivial everyday matters are often the primary triggers of disharmony. Furthermore, the acceleration of modernization has brought changes in family dynamics, making it increasingly difficult for families to maintain traditional Islamic values. In this context, there is a growing need for structured interventions to support families adapting to social changes without losing their spiritual foundations. Islamic family counseling is a strategic solution to address these emerging issues by offering religiously grounded guidance.

Several studies have emphasized the crucial role of family counseling in fostering harmony and emotional well-being among family members. Saputra et al. (2023) demonstrated that family counseling initiatives significantly enhance individuals' awareness of their roles and responsibilities within the family unit when integrated with Islamic principles. Alawiyah (2023) also asserted that Islamic-based family counseling contributes meaningfully to resolving



interpersonal conflicts and improving overall family happiness. Furthermore, Islamic counseling is about solving problems and nurturing a spiritually resilient family environment (Tarmizi, 2018; Haque, 2016). Integrating emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions through Islamic teachings—notably the Qur'an, Sunnah, and Sharia principles—has effectively promoted better communication, patience, and mutual understanding among family members (Suhartono & Naufal, 2024). These findings align with the increasing need for holistic counseling services that address psychological and spiritual needs. However, most existing studies focus either on general family counseling or theoretical Islamic counseling models without deeply exploring their practical applications in today's rapidly evolving family dynamics. Therefore, further exploration is necessary to understand how Islamic family counseling can be effectively implemented to address the real-world challenges faced by modern Muslim families.

Building on the above background, this study seeks to analyze the role of Islamic family counseling in enhancing family harmony in the modern era. It explores how counseling practices rooted in Islamic teachings can effectively address the contemporary issues Muslim families face. Specifically, the research examines counseling techniques that integrate Sharia principles and Islamic ethics, such as active listening, patience, forgiveness, self-reflection (*muhasabah*), and communal worship practices. This study also seeks to assess the impact of Islamic counseling in improving communication, resolving conflicts, and strengthening emotional and spiritual bonds among family members. Utilizing a qualitative phenomenological method with narrative analysis, the study collected data through in-depth interviews and field observations of Muslim families in Semarang who had utilized Islamic family counseling services. By offering an in-depth exploration of clients' experiences, the study aims to provide insights into the practical relevance of Islamic counseling approaches in building stronger, more harmonious family relationships amidst the pressures of modernity. The research contributes to theoretical knowledge and practical strategies for improving counseling services for Muslim families in contemporary contexts.

This study operates under the assumption that Islamic family counseling, when properly applied, can significantly contribute to achieving family harmony in the modern era. The underlying argument is that by rooting counseling practices in Islamic teachings, families are better equipped to navigate the pressures of modernization while maintaining their spiritual integrity. Islamic counseling techniques—such as emphasizing faith (*iman*), worship (*ibadah*), mutual consultation (*musyawarah*), and maintenance of social ties (*silaturahmi*)—are assumed to foster emotional resilience and relational strength within the family (Lubis et al., 2022; Basit, 2017). Additionally, the study hypothesizes that families who actively integrate Islamic values into their daily interactions are likelier to experience reduced conflict levels and increased emotional well-being than those who do not. Through empirical investigation, this research seeks to validate the proposition that Islamic family counseling is not only a spiritual necessity but also a practical and effective response to the evolving challenges faced by Muslim families. Ultimately, the study intends to recommend best practices for Islamic family counselors and provide new perspectives on how Islamic principles can be dynamically adapted to modern family life without losing their essence.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Islamic Counseling: Concept and Foundation

Islamic counseling is a comprehensive approach that integrates psychological support with religious principles, aiming to restore individual well-being while strengthening faith. Haque (2016) explains that Islamic counseling not only addresses emotional distress but also provides spiritual guidance based on the Qur'an and Hadith. The fundamental goal is to help individuals align their behavior and emotions with Islamic teachings, promoting holistic healing. Unlike secular counseling models that often prioritize self-actualization independently of religious values, Islamic counseling places Allah at the center of the therapeutic process. Tarmizi (2018) emphasizes that Islamic counseling requires a balance between spiritual submission (*ubudiyah*) and rational problem-solving. Techniques such as prayer (*salat*), remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*), and consultation (*shura*) are essential therapeutic tools. These practices not only ease emotional burdens but also guide clients toward building stronger relationships with others

through the lens of religious ethics. These foundations offer a unique opportunity to harmonize personal aspirations with communal well-being in family life.

Furthermore, Suhartono and Naufal (2024) highlight that Islamic counseling emphasizes the restoration of a deep connection between the individual and Allah, which subsequently nurtures patience (*sabr*), gratitude (*shukr*), and reliance (*tawakkul*) in facing life's challenges. This theological orientation distinguishes Islamic counseling from conventional methods and makes it particularly effective within Muslim societies, where religious values are integral to daily life. In family settings, counseling informed by Islamic principles fosters an environment where conflicts are approached as tests from Allah, promoting resilience rather than resentment. The teachings embedded in Islamic counseling empower family members to communicate with empathy, forgive easily, and respect each other's rights and responsibilities as ordained in the Sharia. By embedding spiritual dimensions into emotional healing, Islamic counseling addresses surface-level tensions and the deeper existential needs of individuals and families. Hence, understanding the conceptual foundations of Islamic counseling is essential for appreciating its role in promoting family harmony in the modern era.

2.2 The Role of Family Counseling in Achieving Harmony

Family counseling has been recognized as a critical intervention for improving the quality of relationships within households. Saputra et al. (2023) argue that structured counseling enhances awareness of individual roles and fosters mutual understanding among family members. Effective communication, conflict resolution skills, and role clarity are outcomes often associated with successful family counseling interventions. When these counseling practices are imbued with Islamic values, they address interpersonal dynamics and realign family relationships with divine expectations. Alawiyah (2023) found that Islamic-based counseling strengthens emotional bonds through religious practices, such as communal prayer and shared study of the Qur'an. Thus, Islamic family counseling transcends mere problem-solving; it seeks to cultivate a spiritually nourishing environment that nurtures love, patience, and forgiveness. These spiritual values function as protective factors against the various stresses of modernization and changing family structures.

Moreover, Lubis et al. (2022) emphasize that principles like *musyawarah* (deliberative consultation) and *silaturahmi* (maintenance of social ties) are essential components of Islamic family counseling. These principles encourage inclusivity in decision-making and reinforce the family's role as a unit of moral support. Rather than focusing solely on individual well-being, Islamic family counseling adopts a collectivist approach, aligning the interests of family members with broader communal and religious goals. This methodology addresses the root causes of familial conflict by cultivating a culture of empathy, shared responsibility, and spiritual solidarity. Consequently, Islamic family counseling improves immediate family relations and lays the groundwork for resilient communities built on strong family units. Its relevance continues to grow, particularly in addressing contemporary family challenges where modern values often conflict with traditional moral frameworks. By examining the role of Islamic principles in counseling, it becomes evident that the synergy between faith and therapy provides a sustainable model for achieving family harmony.

2.3 Challenges of Modern Families and the Need for Islamic-Based Counseling

Modern families face numerous challenges threatening the stability and harmony traditionally upheld within Islamic teachings. The advent of technology, for example, has transformed communication patterns, often leading to decreased face-to-face interactions and weakening family bonds (Irwan et al., 2022). Changing gender roles and economic pressures further complicate family dynamics, creating less prominent tensions in previous generations (Ahmed et al., 2023). Without strong value-based interventions, these changes can escalate into conflicts that erode the family's emotional intimacy and spiritual cohesion. Studies by Hehsan et al. (2024) show that families without a firm grounding in values are more vulnerable to disintegration, emotional alienation, and relational instability. As

modern pressures increasingly pull family members away from collective responsibilities, there is a growing need for interventions that address psychological issues and reinforce spiritual and communal identities. In this regard, Islamic-based counseling provides an integrative framework that is deeply aligned with the values and expectations of Muslim families.

Islamic family counseling offers practical strategies for countering the fragmentation caused by modern social changes. By promoting practices such as daily prayer gatherings, Quranic study circles, and collective decision-making (*musyawarah*), Islamic counseling reestablishes spiritual and emotional bonds among family members. These practices are anchors, providing stability and shared purpose despite external socio-economic pressures. Furthermore, counseling rooted in Islamic values teaches families to perceive challenges not merely as obstacles but as divine tests intended for personal and collective growth (Lubis et al., 2022; Basit, 2017). This spiritual reframing fosters resilience, patience, and gratitude, essential for maintaining harmony in a rapidly changing world. By integrating Islamic teachings into practical counseling strategies, families are better equipped to navigate modern challenges while preserving their religious and cultural identities. Thus, Islamic-based family counseling emerges as not only a therapeutic intervention but also a vital tool for safeguarding the spiritual integrity and unity of Muslim families in the contemporary era.

3. Methods

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a descriptive phenomenological design to explore the role of Islamic family counseling in enhancing family harmony in the modern era. Qualitative research was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of participants' lived experiences, emotional dynamics, and the contextual application of Islamic counseling principles within family life (Sujarweni, 2014). The phenomenological approach focuses on capturing participants' perceptions and meanings attached to their counseling experiences, while narrative analysis is used to structure the findings into coherent and thematic narratives.

Data were collected from January to March 2024 in Mijen District, Semarang City, Indonesia. A purposive sampling technique was applied to select participants actively engaged in Islamic family counseling services. The study involved 15 family members representing diverse family structures, including nuclear and extended families. The participants were predominantly Muslims, aged between 25 and 55 years, comprising both genders and varied socio-economic backgrounds. Data collection methods included semi-structured, in-depth interviews and non-participant observations conducted during family counseling sessions and subsequent family interactions. Interviews were guided by open-ended questions that explored participants' experiences before, during, and after counseling interventions.

Data analysis followed the phenomenological method, consisting of several stages: (1) data transcription and familiarization, (2) initial coding to identify significant statements, (3) formulation of meaning units, (4) clustering into major themes, and (5) synthesis into a comprehensive description of the counseling experience. Narrative analysis was employed to present participants' stories systematically, emphasizing their emotional, relational, and spiritual transformations. Credibility was ensured through member checking and triangulation between interviews and observation data. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation, were strictly maintained throughout the research. The chosen methodological framework ensures that the study authentically captures the lived experiences of Muslim families undergoing Islamic counseling, thus providing robust insights into its effectiveness in fostering family harmony.

4. Result

4.1 The Importance of Islamic Family Counseling in Creating Family Harmony

Family harmony is key to a prosperous and emotionally stable society, particularly within Islamic values, prioritizing compassion, respect, and mutual responsibility. Interviews with fifteen participants revealed that prior to undergoing Islamic family counseling, many families struggled with unresolved conflicts arising from daily stressors, miscommunication, and value differences. One participant shared, *"I felt burdened because my concerns about household chores were often ignored, and my husband did not realize how that affected me emotionally."* Such communication breakdowns led to emotional distancing between family members. Following counseling, participants reported notable improvements in their ability to communicate openly and empathetically. Islamic family counseling interventions, rooted in teachings of *sabr* (patience) and *afw* (forgiveness), taught families to view interpersonal conflicts not as personal failings, but as tests from Allah meant to strengthen their relationships (Ashraf & Khan, 2024). By reframing conflict through a religious lens, families were better equipped to manage emotional responses and prioritize reconciliation over resentment. Active listening techniques, patience-building practices, and empathy training were frequently cited as crucial changes that positively impacted household dynamics. Consequently, the findings affirm that Islamic family counseling fosters essential communication and relational skills for maintaining harmony in the complex social realities of modern Muslim families (Martin & Johnson, 2024).

In addition to improving communication, Islamic family counseling strengthened emotional bonds by integrating shared religious practices. Participants described a renewed commitment to activities such as praying together, reading the Qur'an as a family, and reflecting on Islamic teachings in daily life. These spiritual activities nurtured individual faith and created a sense of purpose and belonging within the household. One respondent explained, *"After maghrib prayers, we share one hadith or ayah. It keeps our family grounded and united."* Engaging in shared worship fostered emotional intimacy and provided structured opportunities for family members to reconnect with God and each other (Renard, 2023). Several participants noted that the spiritual emphasis of counseling shifted the family's focus away from material concerns toward cultivating inner peace and gratitude. As Hehsan et al. (2024) point out, family spirituality is a protective factor against the stresses of modern life, strengthening resilience and reducing the likelihood of chronic familial discord. Therefore, Islamic family counseling proved effective in addressing psychological and emotional barriers and realigning family life around shared spiritual goals, leading to greater overall harmony.

4.2 Techniques in Islamic Family Counseling

Islamic family counseling utilizes spiritual, emotional, and relational techniques to restore harmony within the family unit. One of the most frequently employed techniques is encouraging joint worship, such as performing *salat jama'ah* (congregational prayer) and communal Qur'an recitation at home. Families reported that establishing a routine of worship together significantly deepened emotional bonds and created a sacred space for daily reflection. One mother noted, *"Before, we were busy with our gadgets after dinner. Now, we pray and read together, and it feels like Allah's blessings fill the house."* According to Lawrence (2024), this spiritual synchronization enhances emotional intimacy and embeds religious values into daily family life. The act of worship fulfills religious obligations and becomes a medium for reinforcing communication, patience, and empathy among family members. When maintained consistently, such practices increased feelings of unity, reduced conflict, and nurtured resilience in facing external life pressures. Therefore, Islamic counseling techniques prioritizing collective spirituality are crucial in building robust and harmonious family structures amid the distractions and individualism of modern society.

Another critical technique emphasized in Islamic family counseling is *silaturahmi*, which is the active maintenance of relationships with extended family and community members. Participants revealed that establishing strong external support networks helped mitigate emotional isolation and provided practical assistance during crises. One father expressed, *"When we started reconnecting with our extended family, we found more support in*

difficult times. It made us feel that we are not alone." Maintaining silaturahmi reinforces Islamic social ethics as mandated in Qur'anic teachings (QS. 4:36) and strengthens the social capital necessary for family resilience (Mustofa, 2022). In addition, musyawarah (consultative decision-making) was reported as highly effective in resolving internal family conflicts. Families adopted regular consultation sessions, often held after shared worship, to collectively discuss and decide on important matters, ensuring that all voices were heard and respected. Self-reflection (muhasabah) was another technique promoted through counseling, encouraging individuals to critically evaluate their attitudes and behaviors before blaming others. Andriani and Fardlillah (2024) highlight that self-reflection nurtures personal growth and fosters accountability within family interactions. These techniques, when combined, provide a comprehensive and dynamic strategy for fostering sustainable family harmony through Islamic teachings.

4.3 The Role of Islamic Counselors in Building Harmonious Families

The role of Islamic counselors emerged as pivotal in guiding families toward emotional healing and spiritual realignment. Counselors were perceived by participants not only as facilitators of conflict resolution but also as empathetic mentors who embodied Islamic values in their therapeutic practices. One participant recounted, *"Our counselor did not just tell us what was right; she showed us how Islamic teachings could help us see each other with mercy."* The counselors' ability to contextualize modern family challenges within Islamic ethical frameworks made their guidance both spiritually enriching and practically applicable. According to McDowell et al. (2022), effective counselors build trust by demonstrating cultural and religious competence, thus enabling more authentic therapeutic relationships. Participants reported that counselors introduced them to religious coping mechanisms, such as tawakkul (trust in Allah) and shukr (gratitude practices), which helped them reinterpret family challenges as part of their spiritual journey rather than mere burdens. This integration of spiritual education with emotional counseling created a holistic healing process that addressed both relational breakdowns and existential distress.

Moreover, the counselors' role extended beyond immediate problem-solving to facilitating long-term behavioral and attitudinal family changes. Counselors emphasized the importance of consistent spiritual practice, equitable role distribution within the family, and the nurturing of emotional intelligence based on prophetic traditions (Putra & Rumondor, 2019). For instance, one couple noted that after counseling, they established a weekly musyawarah night to discuss family issues openly, inspired by their counselor's recommendations rooted in Islamic principles. The ability of counselors to inspire behavioral transformation by linking daily practices to broader religious goals proved to be a distinguishing strength of Islamic family counseling. Zhong and Zhang (2024) argue that counselors who embed moral education into their guidance foster more sustainable relational resilience than purely secular approaches. Therefore, this study's findings underscore that Islamic family counselors are crucial agents of change, blending religious wisdom with therapeutic expertise to foster lasting harmony and spiritual maturity within modern Muslim families.

4.4. Challenges Facing Families in the Modern Era: An Islamic Perspective

The complexities of modern life present numerous challenges for families, particularly in the face of rapid technological advancements, shifting gender roles, and mounting socio-economic pressures. Interviews with families attending Islamic family counseling reveal significant struggles in these areas, providing insight into how Islamic teachings can guide families through contemporary difficulties.

One of the most pervasive challenges families identify is the influence of technology. The widespread use of cell phones and social media has become a constant distraction, leading to a breakdown in meaningful family interactions. As one father explained, the constant presence of electronic devices in the household has made it difficult for him to spend quality time with his children. The children, in turn, have become more absorbed in the virtual world, neglecting family conversations and fostering emotional distance. This dynamic often leads to feelings of deprivation, as families experience a decline in the intimacy central to their relationships. However, Islamic family counseling

encouraged families to apply togetherness and healthy communication principles, limiting technological distractions. According to recent studies, technology in the family setting can create a disconnection unless families actively prioritize face-to-face interactions (Khan, 2023). The counselor emphasized the importance of balancing technological use with time spent nurturing personal relationships, which aligns with Islamic teachings on the significance of family bonds and mutual care (Ahmed et al., 2023).

Changing gender roles, influenced by evolving social expectations, represent another major challenge for modern families. Women, in particular, are increasingly balancing domestic responsibilities with professional careers. One housewife shared her struggle managing both roles effectively, feeling pressured to meet her husband's expectations at home while excelling in her career. Such dual expectations often lead to stress and feelings of inadequacy. Islamic family counseling highlights the complementary nature of marital responsibilities, with both partners expected to contribute equally to the household. The counselor emphasized that in Islam, the roles of husband and wife are based on cooperation and support. This perspective is crucial in helping families navigate modern gender roles without undermining the essential values of partnership and shared responsibility (Hsu et al., 2023). When couples engage in open communication and share the burdens of daily life, they are better equipped to handle the pressures of modernity without resentment or neglect.

In addition to technology and changing gender roles, socio-economic challenges are increasingly prevalent among families. Many families report experiencing stress due to unstable economic conditions, leading to frequent arguments about financial management. One family revealed that disputes over money were a recurring issue in their marriage. Islamic teachings emphasize justice and mutual support in financial matters, urging families to practice fairness and transparency. Counselors guide families to divide financial responsibilities according to their capabilities, promoting harmony and reducing tensions. Furthermore, Islamic principles of patience (*sabr*) and trust in God (*tawakkul*) provide a spiritual framework that helps families cope with financial challenges, fostering a sense of inner peace and collective resilience (Grant, 2023).

Socio-economic pressures also manifest as societal expectations related to material wealth and status. Families often feel compelled to maintain a lifestyle that meets societal standards, leading to debt and financial strain. In these cases, counselors return families to Islamic values of simplicity and contentment, encouraging them to focus on what truly matters: family harmony and spiritual well-being. Recent research has shown that pursuing material wealth often leads to dissatisfaction and stress, while prioritizing emotional and spiritual fulfillment can result in greater life satisfaction (Ahmed et al., 2023). By embracing the Islamic emphasis on gratitude (*shukr*) and modest living, families can find peace in their circumstances, reducing the pressures of striving for social status.

Another significant challenge facing families is the impact of individualism on family identity. Young families often struggle to maintain strong familial ties in societies that increasingly prioritize personal freedom over collective well-being. Interviews with such families revealed that cultural influences, which emphasize personal autonomy, sometimes conflict with the traditional values of familial cohesion. Islamic family counseling addresses this issue by reinforcing the importance of mutual respect, shared responsibilities, and consistent communication. Counselors encourage families to engage in joint activities, such as regular family meetings or collective worship, strengthening relationships and restoring unity. This approach echoes Islamic principles of community (*ummah*) and the value placed on family as the foundational unit of society.

In conclusion, the challenges families face in the modern era—from technological distractions and evolving gender roles to socio-economic pressures and cultural shifts—are complex and multifaceted. However, Islamic family counseling provides an effective means of navigating these difficulties. By grounding their approach in Islamic values of justice, cooperation, simplicity, and respect, counselors offer practical solutions and help families cultivate a more profound sense of peace and mutual understanding. As these families demonstrate, Islam offers timeless guidance that can help families maintain harmony and resilience in the face of contemporary challenges. Therefore, Islamic

family counseling is essential for fostering stronger, more harmonious family relationships, ensuring families can adapt to modern realities without losing sight of their core values.

5. Discussion

This research shows that Islamic family counseling effectively promotes harmony in modern families. Through in-depth interviews and observations of 15 families in Semarang, it was found that counseling techniques based on Islamic values, such as congregational prayers, family deliberations, gatherings, and muhasabah, helped improve communication, resolve conflicts, and strengthen spiritual bonds among family members. In addition, a religious approach to conflict, as a test from God, encourages families to respond to problems more patiently and empathetically. Families who previously faced tension due to differences in values, economic pressures, and the influence of technology reported improved emotional well-being after attending counseling. This finding strengthens the view of Suhartono and Naufal (2024) that strengthening spiritual values can be the key to family resilience in facing modern challenges. Using phenomenological methods and narrative analysis, this study captures the real changes in the pattern of family interaction after counseling, confirming that the Islamic approach is not only normative but has a concrete and applicable impact on family dynamics in the contemporary era.

The results of this study indicate that Muslim families continue to seek spiritual foundations in resolving family conflicts, even amid strong modernization currents. The fact that these families feel calmer, more grateful, and emotionally connected after applying Islamic values proves that spirituality is still a major source of strength (Lubis et al., 2022). This challenges the assumption that social change automatically leads to secularization in family life. Rather, this study shows that modernity does not have to conflict with religious values; combining the two can result in harmonious adaptations. It is important to note that effective counseling teaches communication techniques and revives religious awareness in daily life. As Haque (2016) emphasized, the emotional healing process in Islam is very closely related to human relationships with Allah. Reflections from these findings show that Islamic counseling changed the paradigm of family thinking: from a pattern of "blaming others" to "self-reflection" and seeking solutions based on divine values, showing the depth of the transformation that occurred in the client.

The interpretation of the results of this study makes it clear that the success of Islamic family counseling lies in the unification of psychological, emotional, and spiritual dimensions in one intervention framework. Techniques such as joint prayer and deliberation are social rituals and a medium to strengthen empathy, patience, and family commitment to divine values (Renard, 2023). In addition, by perceiving conflict as part of God's test, families are invited to turn negative perceptions into opportunities for spiritual and emotional growth (Ashraf & Khan, 2024). This aligns with the concept of religious coping put forward by Basit (2017), where the values of faith and worship play a significant role in increasing individual and collective resilience. This interpretation shows that the success of Islamic counseling does not depend solely on technical methods, but on the effectiveness of building spiritual awareness in the face of worldly challenges. Thus, Islamic counseling introduces a problem-focused and spiritually-centered approach, making it particularly relevant in today's Muslim family dynamics.

Compared to other studies in general family counseling, this study shows the advantages of religious value-based counseling in building family resilience. Many secular counseling models, such as those proposed by Nichols and Straus (2021), emphasize communication techniques and emotion management without associating them with transcendental aspects. Rather, this study shows that strengthening a relationship with God is a major motivator for positive behavior change in the family. In addition, compared to more individualistic Western counseling models, Islamic counseling exhibits a collectivistic character that emphasizes togetherness, deliberation, and shared moral responsibility (McDowell et al., 2022). These results are also consistent with the research of Hehsan et al. (2024), who found that families that maintain religious values tend to be more resistant to modern social disintegration. Thus, Islamic family counseling offers an alternative to a more integral counseling model, with success measured not only from conflict resolution but also from improving the spiritual and social quality of the family.

Based on the results of this study, follow-up is needed in the form of developing an Islamic family counseling model that is more systematic and adaptive to contemporary social dynamics. One of the following research directions is to develop a digital application-based counseling module to facilitate family access to counseling services, especially in the post-pandemic era, where online interactions have become common (Hsu et al., 2023). In addition, longitudinal studies need to be conducted to evaluate the sustainability impact of counseling on family harmony in the long term, including its impact on the next generation. Research also needs to be extended to more diverse populations, such as Muslim families in large cities or diaspora communities, to understand differences in the application of Islamic counseling values. No less important, there needs to be special training for Muslim family counselors to be able to apply culturally and theologically sensitive approaches. Thus, Islamic family counseling will be better able to answer the challenges of the times, adhere to religious principles, and be relevant in building a harmonious family in an ever-changing world.

6. Conclusion

This study found that Islamic family counseling is important in creating family harmony in the modern era. A phenomenological analysis of Muslim families in Semarang revealed that counseling methods based on Islamic values significantly improved communication skills, managed conflicts, and strengthened emotional and spiritual bonds among family members. Techniques such as congregational prayers, gatherings, deliberation, and muhasabah are the key to building healthier and more harmonious relationships. This counseling also helps families understand conflict as a test from God, encouraging patience and forgiveness of one another. Integrating religious values in daily practice strengthens the emotional resilience of families in the face of modern social pressures. Thus, these findings confirm that Islamic family counseling is not only a spiritual solution, but also a practical approach to maintaining family integrity in the context of rapid social change.

This research makes an important contribution to scientific development, especially in Islamic counseling guidance and modern family dynamics. In contrast to previous studies that were more theoretical, this study offers empirical evidence of the effectiveness of the practical application of Islamic principles in improving family harmony. In addition, this study enriches the literature by highlighting the active role of Islamic counselors as agents of change that combine spiritual values and therapeutic approaches. Using phenomenological and narrative approaches, the study also introduces a more in-depth analysis method to understand clients' subjective experiences. The integration between psychological and spiritual aspects in counseling revealed in this study provides a new, more relevant framework to apply amid the cultural, social, and technological changes facing contemporary Muslim families.

For further research development, the study of Islamic family counseling should be expanded to include more geographically and culturally diverse populations to understand the variations in the application of counseling techniques in different contexts. In addition, longitudinal research is needed to measure the long-term impact of Islamic-based counseling on family stability. The study can also explore the role of technology in supporting Islamic family counseling, for example, through online applications to strengthen spiritual practices with families. On the other hand, it is important to develop adaptive intervention models, which consider new challenges such as changing gender roles and economic pressures. By expanding the scope and approach of research, Islamic family counseling will be increasingly relevant and effective in supporting family harmony in the era of globalization and modernization.

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