

## RELIGIOUS PANACEA TO THE CRISIS OF UNRAISED ADULTS, PARENTING ERRORS AND MARITAL CHAOS

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### ABSTRACT:

In contemporary society, the rising incidence of marital instability and emotional incompatibility among young couples can be traced not only to individual moral failure but also to defective parenting patterns that neglect holistic upbringing. Many parents today, overwhelmed by modern distractions and permissive cultural influences, prioritize material success and academic attainment over moral discipline, spiritual consciousness, and emotional maturity. Consequently, children are often raised into physical adulthood without achieving psychological balance or ethical grounding, entering marriage as “unfinished adults” whose partners must bear the burden of re-parenting them. This paper interrogates the nexus between parenting failures and marital breakdowns, arguing that the home remains the primary training ground for emotional intelligence, empathy, and responsibility. Drawing upon Qur’ānic injunctions, Prophetic traditions, and the moral insights of classical Muslim scholars, the study explores Islam’s comprehensive framework for *tarbiyyah* (moral-spiritual upbringing) as the foundation for stable family life. Using qualitative textual analysis, the paper critically examines Islamic teachings on parental accountability, child development, and spousal harmony, positioning them as a corrective paradigm to modern secular approaches that fragment moral and emotional education. The study finds that Islam envisions parenting as a sacred trust (*amānah*) and a form of moral apprenticeship that extends beyond provision and protection to include ethical modeling, compassion, and emotional literacy. By restoring Islamic principles of holistic upbringing rooted in faith (*īmān*), *adab* (character refinement), and *taqwā* (God-consciousness) the paper offers a spiritual and practical panacea to the widespread crisis of immature adults and fragile marriages. It concludes that no marital therapy can compensate for parental negligence, and that reforming the home through Islamic *tarbiyyah* remains the surest path to building emotionally healthy individuals and enduring marriages.

**Keywords:** Unraised Adults, Parenting Errors, Marital Chaos, Islamic Panacea

**1.0**

**INTRODUCTION**

Marriage, in Islam, is not merely a social contract but a sacred covenant (*mīthāq ghalīz*) founded upon mutual respect, compassion, and moral maturity. However, the rising tide of marital disharmony in contemporary societies reveals a deeper crisis that extends beyond couples themselves a crisis rooted in faulty parenting and moral neglect. Many parents today raise children without instilling in them the discipline, empathy, and sense of accountability necessary for emotional stability and family leadership. In the pursuit of worldly success, the essence of Islamic tarbiyyah (holistic moral and spiritual upbringing) is often sacrificed, resulting in individuals who attain physical and academic growth but remain morally and emotionally underdeveloped. Such individuals enter marriage ill-prepared for the demands of partnership, communication, and responsibility, thereby transferring the consequences of inadequate upbringing into the marital institution.

From an Islamic perspective, the home serves as the first school of character, where children learn through observation, discipline, and moral guidance. The Qur'ān and Sunnah emphasize that effective parenting is a sacred duty (*amānah*) that involves nurturing faith, refining conduct (*adab*), and shaping the soul toward righteousness. When parents fail to fulfill this divine trust, they inadvertently produce adults who approach marriage not as a covenant of companionship, but as a stage for unresolved immaturity. This paper, therefore, examines the link between parenting errors and marital chaos through the lens of Islamic moral philosophy, arguing that Islam provides a timeless panacea to this social malaise. By re-establishing Islamic principles of child upbringing grounded in spiritual education, moral training, and emotional intelligence society can break the

cycle of generational dysfunction and rebuild marriages upon the pillars of faith, responsibility, and emotional wholeness.

## **2.0**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Parenting in Islam transcends biological or social responsibility; it represents a divine stewardship (*amānah*) over the moral and spiritual development of a child. Classical Muslim scholars emphasize that the goal of *tarbiyyah* is not only to raise obedient children but to cultivate righteous, emotionally balanced, and socially responsible adults. Al-Ghazālī, in *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, asserts that a child’s heart is “a precious jewel” susceptible to both good and evil influences, hence requiring deliberate moral cultivation (al-Ghazālī, 45). Similarly, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah underscores that neglecting moral training is tantamount to destroying a child’s soul, as “corruption begins in childhood when parents leave a child untrained in discipline and manners” (Tuhfat al-Mawdūd, 67).

Modern Islamic scholars align with this classical perspective, emphasizing that the purpose of parenting is to develop ‘*aql* (reason), *īmān* (faith), and *akhlāq* (character). According to Abdullah Nasih Ulwan, “a righteous child is the fruit of a balanced upbringing that harmonizes faith, discipline, and love” (Child Education in Islam, 23). Thus, the absence of spiritual and emotional grooming during childhood produces adults ill-prepared for marital and societal obligations.

The Qur’an unequivocally places responsibility on parents to guide their children towards righteousness. Allah commands, “O you who believe, save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is men and stones” (Qur’an, 66:6). This verse, as interpreted by Ibn Kathīr, implies that parents must “teach their dependents what Allah has commanded and forbid them from what

He has prohibited” (Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, 354). Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) reinforced this duty by stating, “Every one of you is a shepherd, and every one of you will be held accountable for his flock” (al-Bukhārī, 893).

Islamic pedagogy, therefore, identifies parents as the first educators whose conduct serves as the primary curriculum for moral and emotional development. Contemporary Muslim ethicists argue that modern neglect of this responsibility manifested in absentee parenting, moral relativism, and overreliance on schools has led to a generation of adults emotionally dependent and spiritually adrift (Siddiqui, 114). Hence, the crisis of marital breakdowns can be traced to the foundational failure of homes to instill Islamic virtues.

Empirical studies and theological analyses both affirm a strong link between early family environment and later marital behavior. In Islamic thought, marriage (*nikāḥ*) is seen as the continuation of moral upbringing, not its beginning. A person who lacks patience, empathy, and self-control—traits primarily learned through early parental guidance—is more likely to struggle with marital communication and conflict resolution. Yusuf al-Qaradawi notes that “marriage does not transform character; it reveals it” (The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam, 76).

Scholarly works in Islamic family ethics further highlight that moral upbringing equips individuals with *ṣabr* (patience), *ḥilm* (forbearance), and *ʿadl* (justice), all indispensable for successful marriage (Kamali, 59). Conversely, where such virtues are absent, partners approach marriage with emotional immaturity, expecting therapy rather than partnership. The Prophet’s model of household harmony illustrates that emotional intelligence manifested in kindness, communication, and forgiveness—is the fruit of sound tarbiyyah, not mere ritual religiosity (Rahman, 212).

Contemporary Muslim societies face unique challenges that undermine proper parenting: urbanization, digital distraction, materialism, and declining religious literacy. Studies reveal that parents often outsource moral training to schools or religious institutions, neglecting their primary role as nurturers of emotional intelligence (Haque, 133). Islam, however, offers a holistic remedy grounded in *ta'dīb* (character education), *tarbiyyah* (spiritual upbringing), and *ta'līm* (knowledge acquisition).

Islamic pedagogue Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas insists that education without *adab* (ethical discipline) produces knowledgeable but corrupt individuals (Islam and Secularism, 108). Therefore, the restoration of Islamic parenting must begin with parental self-reform modeling faith, empathy, and restraint. Integrating daily acts of worship, moral storytelling, and communal responsibility revives the Qur'anic ethos of family as the nucleus of social order. Ultimately, Islam's panacea for the crisis of unraised adults lies in returning to prophetic pedagogy nurturing balanced individuals whose emotional and moral soundness strengthen, rather than strain, the institution of marriage.

### **3.0**

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study adopts a qualitative research design, employing textual and analytical methods rooted in Islamic scholarship. The qualitative approach is appropriate because the research investigates moral, spiritual, and behavioral concepts rather than quantifiable variables. Primary data were drawn from the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical Islamic texts notably the works of al-Ghazālī, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, and Abdullah Nasih Ulwan providing the theological and ethical

framework for understanding parenting and marital stability. These sources were complemented by secondary materials , including contemporary Islamic studies journals, family psychology texts, and sociological analyses that contextualize the relevance of Islamic parenting principles in modern society. .

### **3.2 Data Collection**

Interviews were conducted with ten Islamic marriage counselors, five Imams, and eight married individuals (both male and female) from Kogi, Kaduna, and Abuja between May and July 2025.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed through thematic textual analysis, identifying recurring motifs such as parental accountability, emotional intelligence, moral upbringing (*tarbiyyah*), and marital harmony. The analysis followed a comparative interpretive model, contrasting Islamic teachings with modern secular parenting trends to highlight areas of convergence and deviation. This method allowed for a critical exploration of Islam’s holistic approach as a panacea to the crisis of “unraised adults” and marital instability. The study’s interpretive framework is anchored in Islamic moral philosophy, ensuring that conclusions are both spiritually authentic and socially applicable to contemporary Muslim families.

## **4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Crisis of Unraised Adults, Parenting Errors and Marital Chaos**

The findings from both textual analysis and field interviews reveal a profound correlation between parenting quality and marital stability in Muslim societies. The consensus indicated that a

significant percentage of marital conflicts arise not from financial strain, but from emotional immaturity, poor communication, and lack of moral discipline traits often traceable to inadequate parenting during childhood. One Imam noted, “Parents raise their children to pass exams, not to pass life’s tests” (Field Interview, 2025). Counselors further emphasized that children raised in homes without consistent discipline or affection tend to replicate these behavioral deficiencies in their marriages, lacking the empathy and self-restraint that Islamic teachings uphold (Ulwan, 56).

Observation of pre-marital counseling sessions at two Islamic centers (Abuja Central Mosque and Anyigba Juma’ah Mosque) reinforced these findings. Many intending couples displayed weak emotional literacy ,difficulty expressing remorse, forgiving, or managing anger. This supports al-Ghazālī’s assertion that character, if not refined early, “becomes a hardened habit resistant to correction” (Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn, 142). Similarly, the Prophet’s model of family life demonstrates that successful marriages are built upon emotional intelligence (*hilm*), mutual respect, and compassion qualities developed through early moral training (Rahman, 98). Respondents agreed that modern parents often “outsource” parenting to schools, media, or domestic help, weakening moral formation. The findings confirm the argument of al-Attas that the crisis of modern Muslim families stems from education without *adab* knowledge devoid of ethical grounding (Islam and Secularism, 111).

Furthermore, the study observed that parents who demonstrated balance between firmness and compassion produced more emotionally stable children who later sustained healthier marriages. In contrast, authoritarian or indulgent parenting styles often led to adults who either fear conflict or dominate partners. These behavioral patterns align with Qur’ānic principles emphasizing moderation (*wasatiyyah*) and accountability (Qur’an, 31:17-19). Participants in the study

acknowledged that marriage is not a rehabilitation center for untrained adults, echoing al-Qaradawi's position that moral character, not age or wealth, determines marital success (The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam, 88). The findings therefore affirm that Islamic *tarbiyyah* , which integrates faith (*īmān*), discipline (*adab*), and compassion (*rahmah*), remains the most effective foundation for marital harmony. By reinstating parenting as an act of worship and responsibility before Allah, Muslim families can correct generational emotional deficiencies and build homes grounded in faith, maturity, and respect.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

The study concludes that the increasing crisis of marital instability in modern Muslim societies is not primarily a failure of marriage itself, but a reflection of parental neglect and moral underdevelopment . Many adults enter marriage carrying unresolved emotional immaturity products of homes that prioritized academic or material success over moral, spiritual, and emotional formation. The Qur'an and Sunnah emphasize that the home is the first institution of life, and parents are its educators and custodians (Qur'an, 66:6; al-Bukhārī, 893). When parents fail to fulfill this *amānah* (trust), the consequences manifest in dysfunctional marriages and societal decay. The findings, supported by interviews and observations, reveal that emotional literacy, empathy, and self-restraint essential virtues for marital harmony are largely learned through early family life, not discovered in adulthood.

Islam provides a comprehensive panacea to this generational crisis through the integrated system of *tarbiyyah* , *ta'dīb* , and *īmān* a moral training that harmonizes faith, knowledge, and character.



As al-Ghazālī reminds, moral character, once properly cultivated, becomes the axis of human happiness and societal stability (Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn, 147). Therefore, restoring Islamic parenting means reviving a prophetic model that nurtures emotional balance alongside spiritual devotion. This approach transforms the home from a mere living space into a moral workshop that shapes responsible spouses and citizens.

Ultimately, the paper concludes that marriage is not designed to heal what parenting failed to form. True reform begins not at the wedding altar, but in the cradle where compassion, discipline, and God-consciousness are first learned. Unless Muslim parents reclaim their divine duty to raise morally and emotionally whole children, society will continue to witness marriages collapsing under the weight of unlearned character. The path forward lies in reviving Islamic family ethics as both preventive and curative measures ensuring that the next generation enters marriage not as unfinished homework, but as emotionally mature, spiritually grounded, and morally responsible adults.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Based on the findings and analysis, this study presents several recommendations for parents, educators, religious leaders, and policymakers to address the crisis of inadequate parenting and its resultant marital dysfunctions.

1. Parents should be educated on Islamic principles of child upbringing as a divine trust (*amānah*). Mosques, Islamic schools, and family counseling centers should organize parenting workshops that teach Qur’ānic parenting values empathy, discipline, and communication before and during child-rearing. The Prophet’s model of compassionate leadership and balance should be

reintroduced in modern family life (al-Bukhārī, 893). This preventive approach ensures that character formation precedes adulthood and marriage.

2. Islamic education must go beyond rote memorization of religious texts to include emotional literacy, conflict management, and ethical reasoning, reflecting the Prophet's example of teaching both knowledge (*'ilm*) and character (*adab*). Curriculum developers should collaborate with Islamic scholars to include modules on *ta'dīb* (ethical discipline) and *akhlaq* (moral values) in early education. As al-Attas argues, knowledge devoid of *adab* produces intellectual but morally disoriented individuals (Islam and Secularism, 108).

3. Before marriage, intending couples should undergo mandatory faith-based counseling, addressing emotional maturity, communication skills, and realistic marital expectations. Interviews with Imams and marriage counselors confirm that most couples approach marriage with romantic ideals rather than moral readiness. Islamic marriage institutions should include Qur'ānic and psychological perspectives to balance spiritual and emotional preparation (Ulwan, 89).

4. Parents must model the virtues they expect from their children. The Qur'an (31:17-19) and classical scholars emphasize that consistent parental behavior forms the strongest moral lesson. Islamic leaders and community organizations should advocate for family accountability programs, encouraging parents to self-assess their communication, empathy, and faith practices at home.

5. Governmental and religious institutions should collaborate to promote family development policies based on Islamic ethical frameworks. This includes establishing family guidance centers within local mosques to address early signs of parenting failure and marital stress. Counseling

programs should integrate spiritual therapy (*ruḥāniyyah*) and behavioral guidance, aligning with Islamic ethics of compassion and justice (Qur'an, 4:19).

6. Finally, Muslim families must restore the home as the primary center of learning, discipline, and affection. Media influence, peer culture, and economic pressures should not replace parental presence and moral engagement. Parents must invest time in shared spiritual activities daily prayers, Qur'an recitation, and family discussions to strengthen emotional bonds and religious consciousness. As Fazlur Rahman notes, "moral renewal begins in the smallest unit of society the family" (Major Themes of the Qur'an, 121).

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