



## Polygamy in the Lens of Generation Z: A Communication Psychology Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

Generation Z, who grew up in the digital era and globalization, faces dynamics in marriage issues that are increasingly complex and diverse, one of which is the issue of polygamy. Therefore the aim of this research is to understand how polygamy is viewed by individuals in Generation Z from a psychological perspective. This research is a quantitative descriptive study with a survey approach using a Likert scale as a way to view the psychometric scale. The results of this research show that Generation Z does not experience high levels of anxiety in facing the issue of polygamous marriage emotionally and psychologically. In the emotional variable, (48%) said it was sufficient, while physiological (42.40%). Overall, this research shows an appropriate reference point for further research by identifying the sources and factors of Generation Z's lack of anxiety regarding the issue of polygamy

**Keyword:** Generation Z, Polygamy, Communication Psychology

### ABSTRAK

Generasi Z, yang tumbuh dalam era digital dan globalisasi, menghadapi dinamika dalam isu pernikahan yang semakin kompleks dan beragam, salah satunya ialah isu poligami. Oleh karena itu tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk memahami bagaimana poligami dipandang oleh individu dalam Generasi Z dari segi psikologi. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif kuantitatif dengan pendekatan survei dengan menggunakan skala likert sebagai cara untuk melihat skala psikometrik. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Generasi Z tidak mengalami tingkat kecemasan yang tinggi dalam menghadapi isu pernikahan poligami secara emosional dan psikologi. Pada variabel emosional terdapat (48%) menyatakan cukup, sedangkan fisiologis (42.40%). Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menunjukkan titik acuan yang tepat untuk penelitian lebih lanjut dengan mengidentifikasi sumber dan faktor dari ketidak cemasan Generasi Z terhadap isu poligami.

**Kata kunci:** Generasi Z, Poligami, Psikologi Komunikasi



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## **Introduction**

Polygamy is a marriage system in which one party owns or marries several members of the opposite sex at the same time (Tihami, 2010). Polygamy is known to be one of the most debated themes in Islamic teachings. Polygamy is currently the most discussed and controversial issue in marriage. On the one hand, polygamy is rejected with a variety of arguments, both normative and psychological, and is always associated with gender injustice (Nuruddin, 2004). On the other hand, polygamy is campaigned for because it is considered to have a firm normative basis and is seen as an alternative to resolving the phenomenon of cheating and prostitution.

The marriage law that adheres to the principle of polygamy has been expressly regulated in the marriage law, with various conditions that must be carried out by husbands who want to practice polygamy. The conditions set for husbands to practice polygamy are quite severe, but a number of studies conducted by LBH APIK, IAIN, and YJP state that 90 percent of Indonesian women do not want to be polygamous (Syarifah, 2021). In fact, many men in Indonesia practice polygamy with various causal factors including infidelity, religious understanding, sexual needs and socio-cultural construction (Nurmila in Syarifah, 2021). The issue of polygamy has become increasingly debated, after the existence of the Indonesian polygamy club (CPI) which is located in the city of Bandung. CPI originated from Malaysia. Indonesia currently has 36 families joining the polygamy club, spread across Bandung, Jakarta, Tasikmalaya, Wonosobo, Medan, and Aceh (Syarifah, 2021).

From 2015 to 2017, the divorce rate in Indonesia increased by 3%. In 2015, the divorce rate reached 353,843. The divorce rate increased to 365,654 in 2016 and 374,516 in 2017. One of the reasons for this divorce is polygamy (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2018). The average couple upon learning that their husband remarried spontaneously experienced feelings of depression, prolonged stress, sadness, and disappointment mixed together, as well as hatred because they felt they had been betrayed (Mulia in Syarifah, 2021). Such feelings do not only occur to the first wife, but also to the second, third, and so on. Data in the field shows that the subject as the second wife felt hurt by the other wife, and also experienced stress when her husband remarried.

People's perceptions of polygamy vary and depend on local conditions and culture. Based on studies in Lhok Aman and Aluh Metuawah Villages, Meukek District, South Aceh Regency, community perceptions of the practice of polygamy in the field show that there are benefits, but it also reduces perfection in the family. In Konawe district, the majority of people in Pondidaha Village reject the practice of polygamy (Munawwarah, 2021). On the other hand, the general public believes that polygamy is a bad thing for reasons of gender and human rights (HAM). Women also have perceptions of polygamy, which shows that some women do not agree with the practice of polygamy (Syuib & Afdillah, 2020).

In the case of Sukorejo Village, the community's perception of polygamy is 37.5% agree and 37.5% disagree, while the remaining 25% are neutral. Apart from that, public perception also depends on understanding of polygamy law and the conditions that must be met (Harjianto, 2022). For example, in Lampung Province, BMOIWI approves polygamy on the condition that it must be preceded by approval from the first wife and approval from the Religious Court, and the husband is able to provide financial and spiritual support and is able to treat his wives and children fairly (Romli, 2016).

Polygamy has various psychological impacts, especially on the women who are polygamous. In Bone, South Sulawesi, for example, a woman committed suicide by drinking poison because she was hurt that her husband had remarried a woman from a neighboring village (Abdurrahman, 2018). Although she was taken to hospital, her life was not saved. Similar things also happen in other countries. In Saudi Arabia, Al-Jouf, a region in northern Saudi Arabia, a woman chose to kill her husband for remarrying. The husband and his young wife were attacked by the first wife in (Wife kills

husband over polygamy, 2018). The husband died on the spot after being shot multiple times. The second wife was also shot, leaving her in critical condition. Problems in polygamous marital life between one wife and another can be known to be quite complicated, it is not easy for polygamous wives to solve their household problems in a short time and repeatedly because conflicts are prone to arise in their lives. Polygamy often causes injustice to wives and household members, such as differential division of affection, and physical and psychological abuse. Psychologically, polygamous marriages have a greater impact on women and children than monogamous marriages (Bahari, 2021).

From this data, it is safe to say that we can affect the happiness of these individuals because polygamy severely tests factors such as commitment, trust, and communication in the marriage relationship. These things can impact women and their psychological systems, such as; how they control their emotional systems, how they control their physiological systems, and even their anxiety levels.

Previous research, which states that there is a lot of anxiety in the events experienced by polygamous couples, therefore researchers are very interested in seeing the perspective of the current generation Z. Generation Z is one of the five human generations. Trajectories of human generations can be divided into five types. These five types are reviewed based on the year of birth, namely: baby boomer generation born 1946-1964, generation X born 1965-1980, generation Y born 1981-1994 (often called millennial generation), generation Z born 1995-2010 also called (Inet-Generation) and generation alpha born 2011-2025. The five generations have differences in personality development (Codrington et al, 2004; Kuppershmidt, 2000). These five generations can in practice have different characteristics in the process of their life patterns.

Stillman's (2017) research, for example, suggests that Generation Z is the newest working generation. This generation was born between 1995 and 2012. This generation is also known as the net generation or internet generation. Stillman (2017) in his book *How the Next Generation Is Transforming the Workplace* explains that, generation Z is different from generation Y or millennials. The difference lies in the mastery of more advanced technology, having a more open mind and not caring too much about the norms or values that exist around them. According to Noordiono (2016), generation Z is a generation that has been exposed to technology and the internet as early as possible, a generation that is hungry for technology. Generation Z currently has a lot of information that can be accessed and easily find out about the issue of polygamy.

Generation Z is currently also more dominant in conducting social activities through cyberspace compared to the real world, making it easier for generation z to find information, especially on the issue of polygamy. Turner (2015) states that generation Z tends to be interested in practical things and is very dependent on technology. Meanwhile, the characteristics of generation Z are that they more often conduct social activities through cyberspace, as well as quickly search and find information (Noordiono, 2016). It is also important for Generation Z to understand the ins and outs of polygamous relationships. One reason for this is the complexity of polygamous relationships, which can have an impact on mental health. By understanding the concept of polygamy, it can help Gen z navigate the relationship in a healthier way. Therefore, it can help them become more empathetic, knowledgeable and culturally sensitive.

## **Methodology**

This research uses descriptive quantitative. Quantitative methods are methods of collecting and analyzing numerical data conducted to answer scientific research questions. Quantitative methods are used to summarize, average, find patterns, make predictions, and test causal relationships and generalize results to a wider population (Brenner, 2020; Mertens et al, 2018). Researchers started with a sample selection method by choosing carefully with the population used was generation Z aged 11-25 years with a research sample of 125 respondents. Data collection was carried out by a survey in the form of a questionnaire distributed to respondents via google form. The questionnaire was divided

into two parts, namely emotional factors and physiological factors, respondents were asked to answer questions by indicating the extent of agreement or disagreement about the perception of polygamy. The data obtained was collected and then interpreted descriptively to get a conclusion on the current generation z's perception of the polygamy issue. Analysis of experimental results, carried out by processing data completeness, bivariate analysis using Pearson correlation test techniques, multivariate analysis, validating using relevant theories in the field of psychology. Previous researchers have not discussed the perception of generation z on the issue of polygamy. The previous research explained about polygamy in people's perceptions of polygamy permits based on article 3 of Law Number 1 of 1974 by M, Syuib and Aii Afdillah. The research on polygamy was authored by Ramlah, Musyafikah Ilyas with the title Polygamy Practices in Campalagian District, Polewali Mandar Regency. The impact of polygamy on the fulfillment of the rights of legal wives in marriage based on the compilation of Islamic law authored by Marisa Elsa.

## Results and Discussion

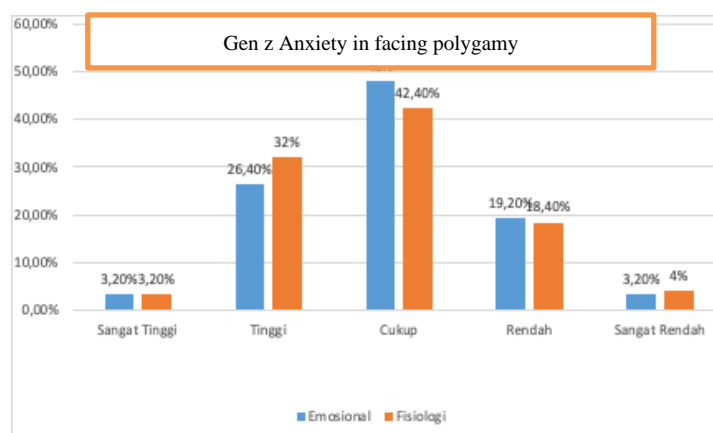
### Results

The data already owned by the researcher is processed and must be validated by the validity test first to find out that the questionnaire questions given are valid. The results obtained by researchers from the calculation of the product moment validity test of the 36 items tested are all valid, because the average result of  $r$  count in the validity test is greater than  $r$  table (sample 125 = 0.176) or Sig value  $<0.05$ .

Reliability test, used to determine a variable is consistent in its size. if a variable shows an Alpha Cronbach value  $>0.60$ . Then it can be concluded that the variable can be said to be reliable or consistent in measuring (Putri, 2015). It can be seen that the consistency of the questionnaire in this case obtained a good alpha value of 0.921. Therefore, based on the calculation of Cronbach's Alpha, this questionnaire can be used. Can be shown in the table below:

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.921	36

**Table 1. results of the Generation Z anxiety level questionnaire in facing marriage**



**Figure 1: Percentage of Gen Z Anxiety**

Based on the emotional table above, the anxiety level of generation z is very high (3.20%), high

(26.40%), moderate (48%), low (19.20%) and very low (3.20%). Meanwhile, based on the psychological table above, the anxiety level of generation z is very high (3.20%), high (32%), moderate (42.40%), low (18.40%) and very low (4%). It can be concluded based on the results of the analysis above, the level of anxiety in generation Z in facing polygamous marriage emotionally and psychologically is quite high. The generation Z in this study shows that there is still a strong negative stigma in society regarding polygamy, especially generation Z as a representation of young people. Almost 77% of generation Z informants considered that polygamy has an emotional psychological influence that has a direct impact on their behavior to communicate. On the other hand, there are still 22% of informants who think that the issue of polygamy does not really affect their emotional feelings when interacting.

## **Discussion**

Polygamy is a marital practice in which an individual has more than one partner simultaneously. The conditions for polygamy are religious permission, wife's consent, financial capability, justice, and state law. In this case, it has become a debate in society, because the function of a family is neglected. There are several functions of the family including the religious function which places the family as the main pillar in instilling religious values and providing religious identity, the socio-cultural function shows that the family is the main vehicle in fostering and instilling the noble values of the nation's culture, the function of love illustrates that the family is a place to create an atmosphere of love and affection, the function of socialization and education shows the family as the main and first place to provide education to all children for the future (Herawati, 2020).

The impacts of polygamy include competition and conflict, attention gaps, financial burden, child development (Latupon, 2020). In addition, several previous studies have also shown a huge impact, especially for first wives in polygamous marriages. It can be seen from the higher risk of experiencing feelings of depression, feelings of excessive anxiety, and negative attitudes or thoughts (Krenawi et al, 1997; Kianpoor, 2006). These studies report similar findings to the current meta-analysis, where women in polygamous marriages have twice the risk of developing depression compared to monogamous marriages. It is therefore very important for Generation Z to know the impact of polygamy.

The impact of polygamy creates anxiety in someone who has experienced it. Those who have a partner who decides to be polygamous tend to feel anxiety more easily. This anxiety can be caused by ideas that are obtained due to overthinking (Mulia, 2007). So in this case, researchers want to examine the perception of generation z in understanding anxiety to deal with the issue of polygamy. Based on sigmund freud's theory of anxiety, which states that "anxiety arises when a person feels helpless in the face of a perceived threat." anxiety is also central to human motivation, experience, and psychological difficulties (Juraman, 2017). With this theory, we can conclude that the anxiety felt by someone who has a polygamous relationship is because they feel threatened and helpless when they have to share their partner with someone else.

Polygamy, as a practice of marrying more than one person, has a complex impact on the psychological condition of the family. According to research, polygamy can cause unhappiness in marriage, the absence of a harmonious relationship between the first wife and her husband, loss of inner contact, the tendency of the first wife to behave in a virtuous manner, lowering the self-esteem of the first wife, and unfairness of the husband in providing support, both physical and spiritual (Nurhanifah et al., 2021). From a communication psychology perspective, polygamy can affect interpersonal family communication. Interpersonal communication in polygamous families is two-way communication, where communication experts say that interpersonal communication is effective communication in changing the attitudes and behavior of the communicants. For polygamous husbands, their psychological condition and well-being can be affected by complex psychosocial dynamics. Several negative psychological effects have been found in husbands who are polygamous, such as anxiety, depression, somatization, obsessive-compulsive, paranoid and psychotic (Darmawati et al., 2021).

The results in this study show that Generation Z does not have high anxiety about the issue of polygamy, even though Generation Z currently has unlimited access to information, but unfortunately this is not well utilized by Generation Z to find out educational information. As a result, many of them may feel inadequately informed about issues that involve social, cultural and historical contexts, such as polygamy. Lack of media literacy can lead to a superficial or even erroneous understanding of polygamy (Holloway, 2013). Information accessed through social media, short videos and news briefs may only provide a limited view that does not cover the complexities and controversies behind the issue. The effects of a lack of media literacy on Gen Z's knowledge of polygamy can vary greatly. Some individuals may rely on superficial and stereotypical views on polygamy, while others may feel confused or unsure about the angle they should take. In fact, some of them may not realize that there are many different perspectives on the issue, including feminist, ethical, religious, and social viewpoints.

Stronger media literacy education efforts can be a solution to address this negative impact. By strengthening Gen Z's ability to critically analyze and evaluate information, they can become better able to understand the complexities of polygamy issues and formulate more informed views. Effective media literacy education can also help them recognize stereotypes, bias and manipulation in the information they consume, giving them the ability to participate in more meaningful and informed discussions on social issues. Therefore, it is important for educational institutions, communities and the media to work together to strengthen Generation Z's media literacy. In this way, Gen Z can develop the necessary skills to overcome their limited media literacy and better understand complex issues such as polygamy, ensuring that their views and decisions are based on a deep and diverse understanding.

## Conclusion

The conclusion of this research is that polygamy from Generation Z's perspective is an action that can cause psychological aspects for them. They tend to feel anxious and afraid to interact and establish communication with others. This is due to the fear of receiving feedback that is not in line with expectations when interacting, such as negative comments. On the other hand, around 22% of informants considered that the issue of polygamy did not affect their emotional feelings psychologically, and considered polygamy as a normal phenomenon. Apart from this, polygamy as a phenomenon is still very interesting to look at further. For example, from a socio-cultural perspective or a religious perspective, which for some informants is still used as a basis for argumentation when discussing the issue of polygamy.

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