

Tawakal as Islamic Psychotherapy: Reconstructing Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah's Concept in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* for Generation Z's Digital-Era Mental Health

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Abstract

Generation Z's growing exposure to social media and digital technology has been linked to elevated rates of anxiety, depression, and loneliness, prompting scholars to explore both conventional and faith-based therapeutic responses. Prior research on tawakal (trust in God) and mental health has examined Islamic therapeutic methods and psychological measures of surrender to God, yet none has systematically analysed Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah's own conceptualisation of tawakal in Madārij al-Sālikīn as a psychotherapeutic framework calibrated to the digital-era mental health challenges confronting Generation Z. This study addresses that gap by examining how Ibn Qayyim's concept of tawakal can be reconstructed into a model relevant to Generation Z's digital-era mental health. Employing a qualitative

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library research design, the study analyses Ibn Qayyim's primary and secondary works through documentary techniques, descriptive-analytical methods, and source triangulation. Findings show that Ibn Qayyim's tawakal, understood through the Sufistic stages of takhallī, tahallī, and tajallī, offers a structured pathway for reducing digital-related psychological distress while strengthening faith and spiritual resilience. As an Islamic psychotherapeutic technique, tawakal instils profound spiritual values, fostering inner peace, life satisfaction, and a sense of purpose amid pervasive digital connectivity. This study contributes a spiritually grounded, culturally sensitive framework that bridges classical Islamic psychology with contemporary mental health needs, offering practitioners an alternative or complementary approach for Generation Z clients navigating the psychological pressures of the digital age.

Keywords : Generation Z; Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah; Islamic Psychotherapy; Mental Health; Tawakal

Introduction

Digital technology occupies an unprecedented place in the daily life of Generation Z—the cohort born roughly between 1997 and 2012, the first generation with no memory of a world without the internet, smartphones, and social media.¹ For earlier generations, digital technology was added onto an already-formed social and psychological life; for Generation Z, it has been the very medium in which that life was formed. While connectivity offers genuine benefits for learning, self-expression, and civic participation, a growing and convergent body of empirical evidence indicates measurable psychological costs. The World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe, drawing on its 2022 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children survey of nearly 280,000 adolescents across 44 countries, reported that problematic social media use—exhibiting features of behavioral addiction such as loss of control and conflict with other life domains—rose from 7 percent in 2018 to 11 percent in 2022, with girls affected at nearly one-and-a-half times the rate of boys.² Pew Research Centre's

¹ Corey Seemiller and Meghan Grace, *Generation Z: A Century in the Making* (UK: Routledge, 2019), 15–18.

² World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe, *Teens, Screens and Mental Health* (WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2024).

2025 survey of American teenagers found comparable patterns: nearly half described spending too much time on social media, and more than four in ten linked their use to poorer sleep and reduced productivity.³ These findings indicate that digital dependence among Generation Z is not merely a matter of excessive screen time but is increasingly connected to disruptions in everyday functioning and psychological well-being.

Beyond behavioral dependence and physiological disruption, Generation Z also faces growing cognitive and emotional pressures associated with constant exposure to digital information. The UNICEF Global Coalition for Youth Mental Health reported in 2025 that 52 per cent of young adults and 29 per cent of teenagers across seven countries had needed help with their mental health, while 60 per cent felt overwhelmed by news and current events.⁴ Taken together, these findings from three independent and methodologically distinct sources point to a broader pattern of digital-related distress involving at least three interconnected dimensions: behavioral, reflected in compulsive or problematic digital use; physiological, particularly sleep and attention disruption; and cognitive-emotional, manifested in information overload and feelings of being overwhelmed. These dimensions suggest that the challenges confronting Generation Z should not be understood simply as a problem of excessive technology use, but as a multidimensional condition affecting behavior, bodily rhythms, and emotional-cognitive well-being. This distinction provides an important analytical foundation for the present study, particularly in developing a *tawakkul* framework that addresses these three dimensions of digital distress in an integrated manner rather than treating “digital distress” as an undifferentiated phenomenon.

³ Pew Research Centre, *Teens, Social Media and Mental Health* (DC: Pew Research Centre, 2025).

⁴ UNICEF Global Coalition for Youth Mental Health, *Perceptions of Youth Mental Health Report 2025* (UNICEF, 2025).

One long-standing clinical response to psychological distress is psychotherapy. Lewis Wolberg's widely cited definition describes psychotherapy as treatment for emotional problems in which a trained person deliberately forms a professional relationship with a client to relieve symptoms, correct maladaptive behaviour, and promote positive personality growth.⁵ This definition is relational (occurring within a deliberately established relationship), developmental (aiming at growth, not merely symptom removal), and technical (employing deliberate methods rather than spontaneous goodwill)—three features that recur, transposed, in the Islamic psychotherapeutic literature. Contemporary practice has diversified into modalities suited to different worldviews, one of which is Islamic psychotherapy.

Islamic psychotherapy is grounded in an understanding of the human being that integrates psychological and spiritual dimensions within an Islamic *worldview*. Rothman and Coyle argue that treatment grounded in the Islamic model of the soul—integrating *nafs* (self), *qalb* (heart), and *rūḥ* (spirit)—offers a coherent alternative to secular models by treating spiritual and psychological disturbance as interrelated.⁶ Keshavarzi and Haque propose a structured psychotherapy model for Muslim clients drawing on Qur'anic and prophetic sources while remaining compatible with clinical practice.⁷ Read together, these frameworks support the definition already present in Indonesian Islamic psychotherapeutic literature: a process of treating mental and spiritual disorders through intervention grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah, termed

⁵ Lewis R. Wolberg, *The Technique of Psychotherapy*, 3rd Ed. (Grune & Stratton, 1977), 3.

⁶ Abdallah Rothman and Adrian Coyle, "Toward a Framework for Islamic Psychology and Psychotherapy: An Islamic Model of the Soul," *Journal of Religion and Health* 57, no. 5 (2018): 17–33.

⁷ Hooman Keshavarzi and Amber Haque, "Outlining a Psychotherapy Model for Enhancing Muslim Mental Health within an Islamic Context," *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 23, no. 3 (2013): 33–37.

istishfā'.⁸ Three foundational aspects are identified within this framework: faith (īmān), worship (ʿibādah), and ihsān or Sufism.⁹ The Sufism-based branch has been described as an integrative psychospiritual model bridging Islamic thought and psychological science,¹⁰ encompassing several therapeutic approaches, of which *tawakal* psychotherapy is one.

Tawakal holds a well-established place in classical Sufi thought. Al-Ghazālī devotes a full book—*Kitāb al-Tawḥīd wa' al-Tawakkul*—within his *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* to the subject, treating *tawakkul* as a station built on the believer's conviction that provision, life, and circumstance originate solely from God, outlining graded stages toward complete reliance.¹¹ Ibn 'Athaillāh al-Sakandarī likewise situates *tawakal* among the core stations of the path.¹² Among later scholars, Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah—a fourteenth-century Ḥanbalī Sufi-critical scholar—offers one of the most systematic treatments, describing *tawakal* as a state completed only through the convergence of multiple interrelated conditions.¹³ Because Ibn Qayyim frames *tawakal* as a structured psychological and spiritual process rather than a mere devotional attitude, his conceptualisation is treated here as a candidate framework for Islamic psychotherapy.

Previous studies have increasingly established *tawakal* as a relevant construct in Islamic approaches to mental health, although they differ in theoretical orientation, methodology, and therapeutic application. Alang analysed Islamic therapeutic methods and demonstrated that faith-based practices support

⁸ Isep Zainal Arifin, *Bimbingan Dan Penyuluhan Islam: Pengembangan Dakwah Melalui Psikoterapi Islam* (Rajawali Pers, 2009), 23.

⁹ Khairunnas Rajab, *Psikoterapi Islam* (Amzah, 2019), 179.

¹⁰ *Psikoterapi Islam*, 220, 221–25.

¹¹ Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Kitāb Al-Tawḥīd Wa'l-Tawakkul*, in *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, Trans. David B. Burrell as *Faith in Divine Unity and Trust in Divine Providence* (KY: Fons Vitae, 2001), 105–9.

¹² Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh al-Sakandarī, *Al-Ḥikam al-'Aṭā'iyyah* (Dar al-Ma'arif, n.d.), 1.

¹³ Ibnu Qayyim Al-Jauziyyah, *Madārij Al-Sālikin Bayna Manāzil Iyyāka Na'budu Wa Iyyāka Nasta'innu* (Dar al-Shamī'i, 2011), 1750.

psychological stability.¹⁴ Rahmadhanty et al. examined the practical implementation of *tawakal*-based psychotherapy, finding preliminary calming effects in a clinical context.¹⁵ Sartika developed and validated a *tawakal* measurement scale.¹⁶ Makmudi, Bahrudin, and Alim explored Ibn Qayyim's perspective on mental education more broadly.¹⁷ More recently, Gondal, Adil, and Khan demonstrated empirically that *tawakul* mediates the relationship between religious orientation and stress among Muslim adults,¹⁸ and between personality traits and depression/anxiety among Pakistani Muslim adults.¹⁹ Zulkipli et al. developed the theoretical architecture of al-'aql, al-qalb, and al-nafs underlying Islamic psychotherapy.²⁰ Contemporary scholars have also investigated how tawakkul functions as a psychological intervention against workplace burnout syndrome.²¹ Collectively, this literature establishes that *tawakal* is empirically relevant to mental health and increasingly

¹⁴ Sattu Alang, "Metode Terapi Islam Dalam Pembinaan Mental," *Al-Nafs: Jurnal Bimbingan Penyuluhan Islam* 8, no. 1 (2021): 27–42.

¹⁵ Rafiqah Rahmadhanty et al, "Psikoterapi Tawakal: Implementasi Terapi Berdasarkan Konsep Tawakal Dalam Islam," *Psychology Journal of Mental Health* 4, no. 2 (2023): 15–33.

¹⁶ Ahdha Sartika, "Skala Tawakal Kepada Allah: Pengembangan Ukuran-Ukuran Psikologis Surrender to God Dalam Perspektif Islam," *Jurnal Psikologika* 20, no. 2 (2015): 47–62.

¹⁷ Ahmad Tafsir Makmudi, Ending Bahrudin, and Akhmad Alim, "Pendidikan Jiwa Perspektif Ibn Qayyim Al-Jauziyyah," *Ta'dibuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (2018): 217–32.

¹⁸ Muhammad Umair Gondal, Adnan Adil, and Ayesha Khan, "Mediating Role of Tawakkul between Religious Orientation and Stress among Muslim Adults," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 26, no. 3 (2023): 290–304.

¹⁹ Muhammad Umair Gondal, Adnan Adil, and Ayesha Khan, "Tawakkul Mediates between Personality Traits, Depression, and Anxiety in Pakistani Muslim Adults," *Journal of Religion and Health* 63, no. 1 (2024): 582–94.

²⁰ Siti Nurul Zulkipli et al, "The Development Theory of Al-'Aql, Al-Qalb and Al-Nafs in Islamic Psychotherapy," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 12, no. 11 (2022): 32–49.

²¹ Nur Hadi Ihsan, Mohammad Adil Alwi Zaim, and M. Najib Abdussalam, "The Relevance Of Hamka's Tawakkul Framework In Addressing Burnout," *Community: Jurnal Hasil Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat* 5, no. 1 (2026): 1290–307.

measurable—but none undertakes a systematic textual analysis of Ibn Qayyim's own corpus, particularly *Madārij al-Sālikin*, to derive a structured psychotherapeutic model, nor connects such a model to the specific digital-era stressors documented above. This is the gap the present study addresses: a focused reconstruction of Ibn Qayyim's *tawakal* as a psychotherapeutic framework calibrated to Generation Z's digital-era mental health.

This significance is underscored by Twenge's observation that hyper-connected youth report unprecedented anxiety, depression, and loneliness despite—or because of—constant connectivity.²² The research aims to bridge classical Islamic psychological thought and contemporary intervention by analysing Ibn Qayyim's *tawakal* and its application to Generation Z's digital-era challenges, responding to Pargament and Lomax's call for greater clinical attention to religious and spiritual dimensions of distress.²³ The research objectives are threefold: to examine Ibn Qayyim's works to elucidate his conceptualisation of *tawakal*; to identify Generation Z's digital-era mental health challenges; and to develop an integrative theoretical framework offering a spiritually informed strategy for addressing them. Theoretically, the study advances the integration of Islamic spiritual thought with contemporary psychology, contributing to scholarship on spirituality and mental health that Koenig has advocated.²⁴ Practically, it offers practitioners a spiritually informed framework, responding to Richards and Bergin's call for culturally and spiritually sensitive care.²⁵

²² Jean Twenge, "iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy," *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 35, no. 1 (2018): 3–17.

²³ Kenneth Pargament and James Lomax, "Understanding and Addressing Religion among People with Mental Illness," *World Psychiatry* 12, no. 1 (2013): 26–32.

²⁴ Harold Koenig, "Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications," *ISRN Psychiatry*, 2012, 1–33.

²⁵ P. Scott Richards and Allen E. Bergin, *A Spiritual Strategy for Counselling and Psychotherapy*, 3rd Ed. (DC: American Psychological Association, 2022), 175.

This study employs a qualitative library research design to systematically examine and reconstruct Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's concept of *tawakkul* as a psychotherapeutic framework.²⁶ The primary source is Ibn Qayyim's *Madārij al-Sālikīn*; secondary sources include his other works and relevant scientific literature. Data are collected through documentary techniques²⁷ and analysed using the descriptive-analytical method, describing literature-derived facts and interpreting their meaning and relevance.²⁸ Source triangulation compares Ibn Qayyim's treatment of *tawakkal* across his works with other classical scholars discussed above.²⁹ The research proceeds through four stages following Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña: data collection, reduction, presentation, and conclusion-drawing.³⁰ This methodological process enables the study to reconstruct Ibn Qayyim's concept of *tawakkul* into a coherent psychotherapeutic framework relevant to the psychological challenges of Generation Z in the digital era.

The Concept of *Tawakkal* According to Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah

Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah (691–751 H/1292–1350 CE) occupies a distinct position in Islamic intellectual history as a Damascene Ḥanbalī jurist, theologian, hadith scholar, and spiritual master.³¹ As the closest disciple of Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim spent much of his scholarly life internalising, developing, and systematising his teacher's intellectual heritage.³² This mentor-student bond was

²⁶ Sugiyono, *Memahami Penelitian Kualitatif* (CV Alfabeta, 2019), 1.

²⁷ *Memahami Penelitian Kualitatif*, 82.

²⁸ *Memahami Penelitian Kualitatif*, 62.

²⁹ *Memahami Penelitian Kualitatif*, 127.

³⁰ Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 3rd Ed. (CA: SAGE Publications, 2014), 31–33.

³¹ Abdurrahman ibn Ahmad ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, *Kitāb Al-Dhayl 'alā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah Min Sanah 701 H Ilā Sanah 751 H* (Maktabah al-'Abikan, n.d.), 170–71.

³² Ovamir Anjum, "Translator's Introduction to *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (Steps of the Seekers)," *Al Jum'ah Magazine*, August 2026.

forged not only through academic discourse but also through shared socio-religious struggles, which included periods of imprisonment in the Citadel of Damascus for defending theological and legal positions that challenged prevailing contemporary orthodoxy.³³ His most comprehensive exposition of spiritual psychology appears in *Madārij al-Sālikīn bayna Manāẓili Iyyāka Na'budu wa Iyyāka Nasta'in*, an extensive three-volume commentary on *Manāẓil al-Sā'irīn*, a concise Sufi manual authored by the Ḥanbalī Sufi master Abū Ismā'īl al-Anṣārī al-Harawī (d. 481 H).³⁴ Written during his mature intellectual period, *Madārij al-Sālikīn* represents a major statement of Ibn Qayyim's understanding of Islamic spirituality and the inner dimensions of human transformation. Rather than merely reproducing al-Harawī's formulations, Ibn Qayyim critically engages with them and reformulates Sufi psychological concepts through the normative framework of the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the practice of the early pious generations (*salaf*).³⁵ His approach is particularly evident when he qualifies formulations that, in his view, risked compromising human agency or departing from scriptural principles, while maintaining respect for the spiritual insights of earlier Sufi authorities.³⁶ Thus, *Madārij al-Sālikīn* provides an important intellectual context for examining Ibn Qayyim's treatment of spiritual states and their implications for human psychological development.

Within this broader framework, *tawakal* occupies a central position in Ibn Qayyim's spiritual psychology because it integrates inward reliance upon God with responsible human action. Following the theological orientation associated with Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim maintains that genuine trust in God does not negate the necessity of employing worldly means (*asbāb*).³⁷

³³ SunnahOnline.com, *Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah*, August 2026, biographical entry.

³⁴ *Madārij Al-Sālikīn Bayna Manāẓili Iyyāka Na'budu Wa Iyyāka Nasta'inu*, 1:12-15.

³⁵ *Madārij Al-Sālikīn Bayna Manāẓili Iyyāka Na'budu Wa Iyyāka Nasta'inu*, 1:25-28.

³⁶ *Madārij Al-Sālikīn Bayna Manāẓili Iyyāka Na'budu Wa Iyyāka Nasta'inu*, 2:42.

³⁷ *Madārij Al-Sālikīn Bayna Manāẓili Iyyāka Na'budu Wa Iyyāka Nasta'inu*, 2:115.

Instead, *tawakal* operates as a dynamic synergy between an inner, cognitive-emotional surrender of the heart to God and an outer, rigorous engagement with appropriate material and physical actions.³⁸ This principle is famously captured in the prophetic tradition where a companion was instructed to bind his camel while simultaneously relying on God: “Tie her, and trust in Allah.”³⁹ This synthesis of inner reliance and active outer exertion constitutes the conceptual cornerstone of Ibn Qayyim’s spiritual psychology.

1. Definition of *Tawakal*

Establishing a precise definition of *tawakal* requires an analysis of its etymological roots, as the linguistic origin shapes how classical scholars, particularly Ibn Qayyim, structured its practical demands. Etymologically, *tawakal* derives from the Arabic root *w-k-l* (*wakkala*, *yuwakkilu*), denoting “to delegate,” “to appoint as a representative,” or “to entrust an affair to another’s management.”⁴⁰ Ibn Manẓūr’s classical lexicon *Lisān al-ʿArab* defines *al-wakīl* as the agent or representative to whom an affair is committed, while *tawakkul* represents the servant’s conscious act of choosing God as that sole representative over human affairs.⁴¹ Al-Rāghib al-Aṣṣafahānī in *Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qurʾān* adds theological specificity to this root, noting that *wakkala* implies relying upon another while recognizing one’s own limitations in managing the matter independently.⁴² Furthermore, the *Muʿjam Alfāẓ al-Qurʾān al-Karīm*, compiled by the Arabic Language Academy, highlights that Qurʾanic occurrences of *tawakkul* specifically denote delegating

³⁸ *Madārīj Al-Sālikīn Bayna Manāẓilī Iyyāka Naʿbudu Wa Iyyāka Nastaʾinu*, 2:118.

³⁹ Abū ʿĪsā Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb Ṣiḡat al-Qiyāmah Wa al-Raqʾiq Wa al-Waraʾ*, Hadith No. 2517, Narrated from Anas Ibn Mālik, Graded Ḥasan by al-Albānī. (n.d.).

⁴⁰ Abū al-Faḍl Jamāl al-Dīn ibn Mukarram ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān Al-ʿArab* (Dar al-Ṣādir, 1990), 11:734.

⁴¹ *Lisān Al-ʿArab*, 11:735.

⁴² Rāghib al-Aṣṣafahānī, *Al-Mufradāt Fī Gharīb al-Qurʾān*, Juḡ 1 (Maktabat Nizar Muṣṭafa al-Bāz, 2009), 689.

affairs to God with a settled, reassured heart rather than an anxious or tentative confidence.⁴³

These classical lexicographical sources converge on a unified semantic structure: *tawakal* is not passive wishful thinking, but a deliberate cognitive act of delegating responsibility for outcomes to a trusted trustee based on a prior judgment of that trustee's absolute competence. This etymological core directly informs Sufi psychological elaborations. Because appointing a legal agent (*wakīl*) presupposes that the principal has fulfilled their preliminary responsibilities before delegating execution, the lexical root itself contains the seed of the "means-plus-trust" model that Ibn Qayyim formalizes. A client who appoints an attorney does not relinquish personal agency or lawful interest; rather, the appointment establishes a structured division of responsibility. Applied spiritually, *tawakal* was never a justification for inaction.

Early Sufi authorities established the vocabulary that Ibn Qayyim later integrated. Ibn Masrūq defined *tawakal* as total submission to divine decree (*taslīm al-naḥs li-qaḍā' Allāh*), while Abū 'Abdillāh al-Qurashī described it as returning every affair exclusively to God without reservation.⁴⁴ Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal provided a foundational insight for the Ḥanbalī tradition by classifying *tawakal* as an act of the heart (*'amal al-qalb*) rather than a simple verbal statement (*'amal al-lisān*) or physical movement (*'amal al-jawāriḥ*).⁴⁵ This positions *tawakal* as an experiential state (*ma'rifah dzawqiyyah*) cultivated through spiritual practice rather than a purely theoretical concept.

Building upon this Ḥanbalī inheritance, Ibn Qayyim synthesises these perspectives in *Madārij al-Sālikin*. He defines

⁴³ Majma' al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah, *Mu'jam Alfāz al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (al-Idārah al-'Āmmah li-l-Mu'jamāt wa l-ḥyā' al-Turāth, 1988), 1200.

⁴⁴ 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Ḥanafī, *Al-Mawsū'ah al-Ṣūfiyyah: Alām al-Taṣawwuf Wa al-Munkirīn 'alayhi Wa al-Ṭuruq al-Ṣūfiyyah* (Dar al-Irshad, 1992), 333.

⁴⁵ Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Kalābādhī, *Al-Ta'arruf Li-Madhbhab Abl al-Taṣawwuf* (Maktabat al-Kulliyat al-Azhariyyah, 1919), 120.

tawakal as an integrated state comprising knowledge of God's attributes, affirmation of divine causality, reliance of the heart, favorable expectation (*ḥusn al-ẓann*), total surrender, and contentment (*riḍā*) with divine decrees.⁴⁶ In Ibn Qayyim's view, *tawakal* is a holistic condition whose components reinforce one another. He explicitly describes *tawakal* as the heart's devotion that relies exclusively on God while remaining content with His decree, grounded in the conviction that God provides sufficiency (*kifāyah*) to the servant who actively exerts effort toward lawful goals.⁴⁷

To fully appreciate Ibn Qayyim's systematic construction, it is necessary to examine the constituent pillars (*arkān*) that he delineates in *Madārij al-Sālikīn*. According to Ibn Qayyim, true reliance cannot materialize as a mere momentary impulse; it is an architecture built upon several indispensable spiritual and cognitive foundations. *First*, it requires Knowledge of the Lord (*Ma'rifat Allāh*), wherein the seeker must possess firm knowledge of God's attributes, specifically His absolute power (*qudrah*), omniscience (*ilm*), wisdom (*ḥikmah*), and sovereignty (*rubūbiyyah*), without which reliance becomes superficial and collapses under adversity. *Second*, it demands the Affirmation of Secondary Causes (*Itsbāt al-Asbāb*), as Ibn Qayyim insists that recognizing divine sovereignty does not erase worldly causation; ignoring material means is an intellectual deficiency and a violation of prophetic guidance, whereas relying entirely on means without recognizing God is spiritual polytheism (*syirk*). *Third*, it depends on Firmness in Monotheism (*Tsabat al-Tawḥīd*), requiring the heart to be purified of subtle forms of dependence on created beings by recognizing that no creature can benefit or harm except by divine permission. *Fourth*, it involves the Reliance of the Heart (*In'itāf al-Qalb*), which represents the emotional core of *tawakal* where the heart finds rest and tranquility in God, relinquishing chronic anxiety over provision and outcomes. *Fifth*,

⁴⁶ *Madārij Al-Sālikīn Bayna Manāzilī Iyyāka Na'budu Wa Iyyāka Nasta'imu*, 2:120.

⁴⁷ *Madārij Al-Sālikīn Bayna Manāzilī Iyyāka Na'budu Wa Iyyāka Nasta'imu*, 2:123.

it is sustained by Favorable Expectation of God (*Husn al-Zann bi-Llāh*), establishing a positive psychological orientation toward God through the trust that His decisions are governed by mercy, justice, and supreme wisdom. *Sixth*, it necessitates Submission of the Heart (*Inqiyād al-Qalb*), reflecting the willingness to yield one's personal desires and calculations to the divine will while recognizing human intellectual limitations in foreseeing the future. *Seventh*, it mandates the Delegation of Affairs (*Al-Tafwīd*), consciously committing the management and outcomes of all matters to God, akin to a child handing over a burden to a loving parent. Finally, it culminates in Contentment with Outcomes (*Al-Riḍā*), which means accepting the final manifestation of divine decree without resentment or bitter regret, recognizing that God's choice is superior to human preference.

2. Levels of *Tawakal*

Ibn Qayyim frameworks *tawakal* as an internally graded developmental path. He anchors its scriptural centrality in the foundational Qur'anic verse: "You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help" (*Iyyāka na'budu wa iyyāka nasta'in*, QS. al-Fatihah [1]: 5).⁴⁸ Classical exegetes such as Ibn Katsir and modern scholars such as al-Ṭaṭṭawī interpret the second clause (*isti'ānah*, seeking help) as functionally coextensive with *tawakal*.⁴⁹ By coupling worship with reliance, the verse establishes that human effort requires divine assistance to achieve fulfillment. Ibn Qayyim identifies *tawakal* as one of the most comprehensive spiritual stations (*maqāmāt*) because it is invoked repeatedly in daily ritual prayers (*ṣalāh*).⁵⁰ Numerous Qur'anic passages reinforce this centrality across varied contexts, including facing opposition (QS. al-Ma'idah 5:23), recovering from

⁴⁸ *Madārij Al-Sālikin Bayna Manāzilī Iyyāka Na'budu Wa Iyyāka Nasta'imu*, 1:85.

⁴⁹ Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'il ibn 'Umar ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm* (Dar Thaybah, 1999), 1:107; Muḥammad Sayyid Ṭaṭṭawī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Wasīṭ Li-l-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, Juz 6 (Maṭba'at al-Sa'ādah, 1987), 179.

⁵⁰ *Madārij Al-Sālikin Bayna Manāzilī Iyyāka Na'budu Wa Iyyāka Nasta'imu*, 2:112.

setback (QS. Ali 'Imran 3:160), seeking provision (QS. al-Talaq 65:3), and maintaining steadfastness (QS. al-Mumtahanah 60:4).⁵¹

The Sufi tradition prior to Ibn Qayyim had organized *tawakal* into developmental degrees. Abu 'Ali al-Daqqaq (d. c. 405 H), as recorded by Abu al-Qasim al-Qushayri in *Al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah*, outlined three ascending degrees: *al-tawakkul* (reliance), *al-taslim* (submission), and *al-tafwid* (full delegation).⁵² At the first level (*tawakkul*), the seeker rests upon God's promises (*wa'd*). At the second level (*taslim*), the seeker relies upon God's knowledge (*'ilm*). At the third level (*tafwid*), the seeker reaches contentment with God's judgment (*hukm*). Al-Daqqaq maps these stages onto the spiritual hierarchy: *tawakkul* is the stage of the general believers, *taslim* belongs to the spiritual allies (*awliyā*), and *tafwid* represents the station of those brought near (*muqarrabūn*).⁵³ 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani similarly describes these degrees, noting that at the highest stage, complaint (*syakwā*) vanishes entirely, replacing distress with equanimity regardless of outward circumstance.⁵⁴

This developmental hierarchy is central to Ibn Qayyim's model. It establishes that *tawakal* is not a binary trait, but a dynamic psychological state that develops incrementally. This staged view allows *tawakal* to function as a therapeutic framework where individuals progress through structured developmental phases. In Ibn Qayyim's synthesis, these levels map directly onto psychological maturity. At the initial stage, reliance is transactional and outcome-focused, where the individual performs actions and asks God for success, experiencing anxiety whenever external signs appear unfavorable. At the intermediate stage, reliance becomes process-

⁵¹ *Madārij Al-Sālikin Bayna Manāzili Iyyāka Na'budu Wa Iyyāka Nasta'innu*, 2:114.

⁵² Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, *Al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah Fi 'Ilm al-Taṣawwuf*, Trans. Alexander D. Knysb, *Al-Qushayri's Epistle on Sufism* (UK: Garnet Publishing, 2007), 145–48.

⁵³ *Al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah Fi 'Ilm al-Taṣawwuf*, Trans. Alexander D. Knysb, *Al-Qushayri's Epistle on Sufism*, 148.

⁵⁴ Umar Faruq Thohir, "Tauhid Dan Sikap Tawakal: Dari Passiva Menuju Activa," *Jurnal Keislaman* 1, no. 1 (2015): 6–9.

oriented, as the individual recognizes that human effort is an obligation (*'ibādah*), while results are entirely within God's domain, thereby reducing anxiety as the focus shifts from controlling results to maintaining integrity in effort. At the advanced stage, reliance becomes presence-oriented (*al-tafwīd*), wherein the individual experiences deep emotional quietude (*sakīnah*), understanding that God's choices are intrinsically beneficial, whether they align with immediate personal desires or not.

3. Achieving *Tawakal*

Classical spiritual masters agree that *tawakal* is not an innate disposition, but a state cultivated through spiritual knowledge (*ma'rifah*). Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh al-Sakandarī states in *Al-Hikam al-'Aṭā'iyyah* that reliance upon God flows naturally from knowing His attributes.⁵⁵ Once a person internalises that all events unfold within divine power and wisdom, trust ceases to be a forced mental effort and becomes a stable state of mind. This cognitive framework mirrors classical Sufi assessments of spiritual realization, where peak experiential states are evaluated through scripture-grounded knowledge (*ma'rifatullah*).⁵⁶

Ibn Qayyim adopts this cognitive foundation in *Madārij al-Sālikin*, arguing that *tawakal* requires understanding God's divine power (*qudrah*), strength (*qunwah*), and sole causality.⁵⁷ To establish a balanced model, Ibn Qayyim critiques theological positions that alter the relationship between human agency and divine decree. He rejects extreme determinist interpretations that invalidate human cause and effort, as well as positions that strip divine attributes of their functional meaning.⁵⁸ For Ibn Qayyim, *tawakal* requires

⁵⁵ *Al-Hikam al-'Aṭā'iyyah*, 1.

⁵⁶ Nur Hadi Ihsan, Moh. Isom Mudin, and Abdul Rohman, "Ma'rifatullah of Ibn 'Aṭā'illah in the Face of 'The Peak Experience' of Abraham Maslow," *Afkar: Jurnal Akidah Dan Pemikiran Islam* 26, no. 1 (2024): 59–88.

⁵⁷ *Madārij Al-Sālikin Bayna Manāzilī Iyyāka Na'budu Wa Iyyāka Nasta'inu*, 2:125.

⁵⁸ *Madārij Al-Sālikin Bayna Manāzilī Iyyāka Na'budu Wa Iyyāka Nasta'inu*, 2:128.

a balanced theology that maintains human moral responsibility alongside divine sovereignty. The depth of an individual's trust corresponds directly to the clarity of their understanding of divine attributes; an unsound cognitive framework produces an unstable state of reliance.

This knowledge requirement aligns with the etymological meaning of *tawakal* as delegation to a trustee. Rational delegation requires confidence in the trustee's competence. Thus, cognitive conviction regarding divine wisdom serves as the necessary foundation for psychological surrender. Furthermore, Ibn Qayyim details practical cognitive and spiritual exercises to cultivate this state, including the contemplation of divine wisdom (*tadabbur*) through systematically reflecting on Qur'anic verses that describe God's providence and governance, the remembrance of historical deliverances by recalling past instances where divine intervention alleviated hardship to reinforce confidence, the purification of intentions (*ikhhlāṣ*) to ensure goals align with moral principles rather than selfish outcomes, and consistent supplication (*du'ā'*) as an active exertion of spiritual effort and an explicit act of reliance.

4. Benefits of *Tawakal*

In Ibn Qayyim's formulation, *tawakal* operates after the individual deploys appropriate, lawful means (*itikhād al-asbāb*). A person exerts effort in worldly affairs and subsequently commits the final outcomes to God.⁵⁹ Ibn Qayyim demonstrates that the Qur'an pairs *tawakal* with essential devotional practices: with prayer (QS. al-Fatiḥah 1:5; Hud 11:88, 123; al-Muzzammil 73:8–9), with faith (QS. al-Mulk 67:29), with submission (QS. Yunus 10:84), with God-consciousness (QS. al-Talaq 65:2–3), and with divine guidance (QS. Ibrahim 14:12).⁶⁰

These scriptural pairings indicate that *tawakal* does not operate as an isolated coping mechanism. It functions as an

⁵⁹ *Madārīj Al-Sālikīn Bayna Manāzīlī Iyyāka Na'budu Wa Iyyāka Nasta'imu*, 2:130.

⁶⁰ *Madārīj Al-Sālikīn Bayna Manāzīlī Iyyāka Na'budu Wa Iyyāka Nasta'imu*, 2:132-135.

integral component of a broader spiritual lifestyle. Ibn Qayyim compares *tawakal* to the head's relationship to the body: just as a body cannot function without a head, spiritual practice remains incomplete without trust in God.⁶¹ This systemic view forms the basis for adapting Ibn Qayyim's concept into a contemporary psychotherapeutic model.

The psychological and spiritual benefits outlined by Ibn Qayyim can be categorized into four primary dimensions. First, it brings about the alleviation of anxiety and fear, as delegating the future to God liberates the mind from hyper-vigilance, catastrophic thinking, and existential dread regarding provision and safety. Second, it fosters the cultivation of spiritual strength and courage, where trust in God frees the individual from servile dependency on human approval, nurturing moral independence and fortitude in facing adversity. Third, it enhances resilience and recovery, enabling the individual experiencing *tawakal* to interpret setbacks not as meaningless tragedies but as purposeful trials designed for spiritual refinement, thereby preventing prolonged depressive collapse. Fourth, it leads to the experience of inner peace (*sakīnah*), which stands as the ultimate psychological benefit of *tawakal*—a profound, unshakable tranquility that persists regardless of external turmoil.

The Role of Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah's *Tawakal* in Building Generation Z's Mentality

Generation Z—commonly defined in the developmental and marketing psychology literature as those born between 1995 and 2010, though this study, following the WHO and Pew data discussed in the Introduction, treats the operative cohort more precisely as those born between 1997 and 2012—is the first generation in recorded history to have been immersed in digital technology from early childhood rather than to have adopted it as

⁶¹ *Madārij Al-Sālikin Bayna Manāzilī Iyyāka Na'budu Wa Iyyāka Nasta'inu*, 2:138.

adults or adolescents.⁶² Seemiller and Grace, in their widely cited developmental study of this cohort, characterize Generation Z as distinguished not merely by heavier device usage than preceding generations but by a qualitatively different relationship to digital media: for Millennials and Generation X, social media represented an additional channel of communication layered atop an already-established repertoire of in-person social skills and offline identity formation; for Generation Z, social media has functioned, for a substantial proportion of the cohort, as a primary and in some cases the dominant site of identity formation, peer evaluation, and social belonging during the developmentally sensitive years of adolescence.⁶³

This distinction is not a merely descriptive curiosity but carries direct clinical significance, since developmental psychology has long established that disruptions occurring during identity-formative periods tend to have more durable and more difficult-to-remediate effects than equivalent disruptions occurring in adulthood, after core identity structures have already stabilised. It is against this developmental backdrop—rather than against a generic and undifferentiated concern about “screen time” applicable equally to all age groups—that this section argues Ibn Qayyim’s *tawakal*, as reconstructed in the preceding textual analysis, supplies a structurally appropriate, rather than merely thematically appealing or superficially fashionable, response to three specific, evidence-documented features of Generation Z’s digital-era distress: compulsive connectivity and behavioral dependency, cognitive-emotional information overload, and diminished capacity for sustained, embodied offline relationship.

It is worth pausing, before developing each of these three correspondences in turn, to make explicit the methodological logic by which this section proceeds, since this logic is itself part of

⁶² *Generation Z: A Century in the Making*, 15–18.

⁶³ *Generation Z: A Century in the Making*, 22–25.

the study's contribution and distinguishes its approach from prior literature that has invoked *tawakal* in connection with Generation Z or digital-era distress in a more impressionistic fashion. Rather than beginning from the digital-era symptom and searching outward for a spiritual concept that might plausibly be associated with it—an approach that risks superficial thematic pairing without genuine structural correspondence—this section proceeds in the reverse direction, beginning from the specific internal logical structure of Ibn Qayyim's *tawakal*, as established through the textual analysis above (its requirement of prior knowledge, its requirement that effort precede reliance, its graded and developmental character, its structural interdependence with the rest of religious practice), and asking, for each documented component of Generation Z's digital-era distress, whether that component's own internal structure genuinely corresponds to a specific feature of Ibn Qayyim's *tawakal*, rather than merely to *tawakal* as an undifferentiated general concept. This structural, rather than merely thematic, matching is what this study takes to distinguish a genuine psychotherapeutic reconstruction of Ibn Qayyim's concept from a devotional or homiletic application of it, the latter being valuable in its own register but not, in the sense established by Wolberg's definition discussed in the Introduction, properly psychotherapeutic.

First, regarding compulsive connectivity and behavioral dependency: Ibn Qayyim's insistence, established at length in the preceding section on achieving *tawakal*, that *tawakal* requires the servant's own effort before reliance can be validly exercised, directly addresses the specific finding, cited at length in the Introduction, that a rising share of adolescents report a documented inability to control their own social media use, consistent with WHO's characterization of this pattern using the clinical vocabulary of behavioral addiction—loss of control, withdrawal-like symptoms upon disengagement, and conflict with competing life priorities.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ *Teens, Screens and Mental Health*.

This correspondence deserves careful unpacking rather than mere assertion. Because Ibn Qayyim explicitly and polemically rejects, as demonstrated above, the fatalistic misreading of *tawakal* he associates with the Qadariyyah and, from a different theological direction, with the Jahmiyyah, his framework cannot coherently be invoked—contrary to a possible popular misapplication that this study regards as worth explicitly forestalling—to justify passive submission to compulsive digital habits on the grounds that “everything is already decreed” or that active resistance to compulsion would itself constitute a lack of proper trust. Rather, Ibn Qayyim’s *tawakal* structurally demands the same active exertion of effort (*ashbāh*) in the domain of digital self-regulation that he explicitly requires in every other domain of life he discusses, including, as noted above, in the domain of ordinary material livelihood (illustrated by the camel-tying hadith) and in the domain of medical treatment (a domain Ibn Qayyim addresses at length elsewhere in his corpus, arguing explicitly against those who would forgo medical treatment on ostensibly *tawakkul*-based grounds).

In this context, “deliberate limits on device use”—structured screen-time boundaries, deliberate removal of compulsion-engineering features such as autoplay and infinite scroll where technically feasible, and scheduled disengagement periods—functions as the digital-era analogue of “tying the camel”: a concrete, effortful, and entirely compatible-with-*tawakal* act of practical prudence, with trust in God governing the servant’s disposition toward the outcome of that effort (freedom from compulsive attachment, restored capacity for sustained attention) rather than excusing the servant from making the effort in the first place. This reframing carries a specific clinical advantage over purely secular self-regulation frameworks: where secular behavioral-change models typically rely on the individual’s own willpower or on externally imposed behavioral contracts as the primary motivational engine—resources that, as extensive relapse-prevention literature documents, are notoriously prone to depletion

and inconsistency—the *tawakal* framework locates the servant's ultimate emotional security not in the success or failure of the self-regulation effort itself but in trust in God's sufficiency, potentially reducing the shame-and-relapse cycle that Brown and Ryan, writing from within a purely secular self-determination-theory framework, identify as a major obstacle to sustained healthy self-regulation.⁶⁵

Second, regarding cognitive-emotional information overload: the *tawakal* framework's grounding, established in the preceding section, in knowledge of God's sufficiency (kifāyah) at the highest Sufi degree of al-tafwīd offers a specific and theologically precise psychological mechanism—rather than merely a general and diffuse spiritual sentiment of the kind that might be invoked, somewhat vaguely, in connection with almost any form of distress—for interrupting the particular species of anxiety produced by continuous, low-control exposure to global news and social comparison, a pattern corresponding directly to UNICEF's 2025 finding, discussed in the Introduction, that 60 percent of young respondents across a seven-country sample feel overwhelmed by news and current events to which they are continuously and often involuntarily exposed through algorithmically curated social media feeds.⁶⁶ The specific mechanism this study identifies is as follows: information overload of the kind documented by UNICEF is, from a cognitive-psychological perspective, substantially a problem of perceived but unrealizable obligation to respond—the sense that awareness of a global crisis, injustice, or catastrophe, mediated instantaneously and continuously through a social media feed, generates an implicit demand for emotional or practical response that vastly exceeds any individual's actual capacity to meaningfully act, producing a state sometimes termed “compassion fatigue” or “news fatigue” in the clinical literature on media-related distress.

⁶⁵ Christopher Brown and Richard Ryan, “Fostering Healthy Self-Regulation from Within and Without: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective,” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 29, no. 1 (2020): 55–62.

⁶⁶ *Perceptions of Youth Mental Health Report 2025*.

The Sufi conception of *al-tafwīd*, as established in the preceding textual analysis, as contentment specifically with God's governance of affairs the servant cannot personally control, offers a theologically grounded and structurally precise alternative to the compulsive monitoring behavior that digital-overload research consistently associates with worsening anxiety: rather than requiring the servant to either suppress awareness of global suffering (a strategy in tension with Islamic ethical demands for social concern) or to remain in a state of perpetual, unresolved obligation-anxiety regarding matters genuinely beyond individual control, *al-tafwīd* offers a third option—continued moral and practical engagement to the extent of one's actual capacity, combined with a doctrinally grounded release of the portion of the burden that exceeds that capacity, delegated explicitly and consciously to God's governance rather than either denied or indefinitely carried. This is, this study argues, a more psychologically sophisticated resolution of the information-overload problem than either of the two default secular responses commonly observed—chronic anxious over-engagement, or defensive disengagement and news avoidance—because it permits continued engagement without the specific component of overload that UNICEF's data suggests is most psychologically costly, namely the sense of unresolvable, boundless personal obligation.

Third, regarding relational depth: Ibn Qayyim's structural claim, established in the preceding section on the benefits of *tawakal*, that *tawakal* cannot stand apart from the believer's other acts of worship and social obligation—illustrated by his head-and-body analogy—implies, when extended to the present application, that authentic *tawakal* is necessarily inseparable from real, embodied community rather than constituting a private, purely interior, and potentially screen-mediated sentiment that could in principle be cultivated in social isolation. This directly and specifically corresponds to the pattern Pew Research documented in its 2025 survey, in which a declining share of teenagers report that social

media interaction genuinely makes them feel supported by others, a finding consistent with a broader and by now well-replicated pattern in the adolescent mental health literature distinguishing the quantity of social contact (which social media has, if anything, increased) from its qualitative depth and its capacity to satisfy underlying needs for genuine belonging (which multiple studies suggest social media interaction frequently fails to satisfy despite its superficial resemblance to social connection).⁶⁷

Patalay and Gage's population cohort comparison study, examining changes in adolescent mental health and health-related behaviours across a ten-year period spanning the rise of smartphone-based social media, similarly documents a decoupling between quantity of peer contact and quality of peer support during precisely this period, a decoupling consistent with the interpretation this study offers of Ibn Qayyim's structural interdependence claim.⁶⁸ If *tawakal*, as Ibn Qayyim insists, cannot be meaningfully cultivated in isolation from the believer's wider practice and community of worship, then a *tawakal*-based intervention for Generation Z cannot, on pain of internal incoherence, be delivered as a purely individual, app-based, or otherwise digitally mediated self-help technique detached from embodied religious community; it must instead be understood, and in any practical implementation designed, as inherently communal—rooted in congregational prayer, in study circles, in mentorship relationships, and in the kind of sustained, non-transactional relational presence that digital platforms, whatever their other virtues, have not yet been shown reliably to replicate.

Taken together, these three points of structural correspondence—rather than the more generic and considerably weaker claim, found in some of the popular and semi-scholarly

⁶⁷ *Teens, Social Media and Mental Health*.

⁶⁸ Praveetha Patalay and Suzanne Gage, "Changes in Millennial Adolescent Mental Health and Health-Related Behaviours over Ten Years: A Population Cohort Comparison Study," *International Journal of Epidemiology* 48, no. 5 (2019): 1650–64.

literature on Islam and mental health, that *tawakal* is simply “relevant” or “helpful” for Generation Z in some unspecified general sense—constitute the specific analytical link this study establishes between Ibn Qayyim’s fourteenth-century text and twenty-first-century digital-era mental health evidence. Each correspondence is grounded not in a loose thematic resemblance between an ancient spiritual concept and a modern psychological problem, but in a demonstrated structural match between a specific, textually documented feature of Ibn Qayyim’s own account of *tawakal*’s internal logic and a specific, empirically documented feature of Generation Z’s digital-era distress as established by contemporary epidemiological research. It is this three-part structural correspondence, established across the three preceding paragraphs, that provides the analytical foundation for the operational framework developed in the following section.

Operationalising *Tawakal* through the Sufistic Stages of *Takhallī*, *Tahjallī*, and *Tajallī*

To move from the conceptual correspondence established above to a usable, sequenced intervention framework—a step this study regards as essential if the preceding analysis is to satisfy Wolberg’s definitional requirement, discussed in the Introduction, that psychotherapy involve deliberate methods and techniques rather than general sentiment alone—this study operationalizes Ibn Qayyim’s *tawakal* through the three classical Sufi stages of spiritual purification and realization: *takhallī* (emptying or purification), *tahjallī* (adornment or filling), and *tajallī* (manifestation or unveiling). This tripartite sequence, though not original to Ibn Qayyim and drawn from the broader Sufi psychological-spiritual tradition of which *Madārij al-Sālikīn* is itself a critical elaboration, is deployed here as a deliberate organising structure for mapping each stage onto a specific, evidence-linked feature of Generation Z’s digital-era mental health challenge identified in the preceding section,

such that the resulting framework possesses both textual fidelity to the classical Sufi-psychological tradition Ibn Qayyim inherits and practical specificity with respect to contemporary digital-era distress.

Takballī (purification) corresponds directly to the effort-before-reliance requirement established at length in the discussion of achieving tawakal above, and specifically to the first of the three correspondences developed in the preceding section. Before tawakal can be meaningfully and authentically exercised rather than merely professed, the servant must first empty the heart of what actively obstructs it—in the specific context under discussion here, compulsive digital dependency of the kind documented by WHO's behavioral-addiction framework. This therapeutic stripping away of psychological clutter aligns closely with regional Sufi models, such as Abdurrauf al-Singkili's model of *dhikr* as a structured psychotherapeutic tool for emotional detoxification.⁶⁹ Drawing on Ibn Qayyim's extended discussion in works such as *Al-Fawā'id* and *Ighāṭat al-Lahfān min Maṣāyid al-Sayyātān* concerning the disciplines through which the heart is purified from attachment to distracting or harmful objects, this stage can, in a Generation Z context, be translated into structured, time-bound periods of disconnection from digital devices, accompanied by reflective practices such as journaling, unmediated time in nature, or dedicated periods of silent reflection (*khalwah* in the classical Sufi vocabulary). However, this study does not suggest that the full technical apparatus of formal Sufi retreat practice is necessary or appropriate for a general clinical population.

These practices enable individuals to observe, with the kind of non-judgmental clarity emphasized in both classical Sufi self-examination (*muḥāsabah*) and contemporary mindfulness-based clinical interventions, the compulsive patterns of use documented

⁶⁹ Nur Hadi Ihsan, Che Zarrina Binti Sa'ari, and Husna Hisaba Kholid, "Abdurrauf Al-Singkili's Concept of Dhikr: Exploring the Sufi Psychotherapy Model," *Al-Tabrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 24, no. 1 (2024): 1–24.

in the WHO and Pew data discussed above, rather than remaining unconsciously and unreflectively subject to them.⁷⁰ Patel, Carmody, and Simpson's clinical case report on adapting mindfulness-based stress reduction for obsessive-compulsive presentations offers a useful secular parallel, illustrating a structurally similar logic: sustained, non-judgmental attention to a compulsive pattern can constitute a necessary precondition for behavioral change, prior to and independent of any specific replacement behavior. Nevertheless, the *tawakal*-based *takhallī* stage differs from purely secular mindfulness practice in its explicit theological grounding. Within Ibn Qayyim's framework, the purification sought is not merely attentional or psychological but concerns the purification of the heart from problematic attachments, preparing the individual for the subsequent and positively oriented *tahallī* stage.⁷¹

Tahallī (adornment) corresponds to the interdependence principle established in the discussion of the benefits of *tawakal* above, and specifically to the second and third correspondences developed in the preceding section: once the heart is purified, through the *takhallī* stage, of unreflective compulsive dependency, it must be actively and deliberately filled with the positive practices that Ibn Qayyim's account of *tawakal* structurally requires—renewed and strengthened prayer, purposeful and selective use of beneficial knowledge (in explicit contrast to the undifferentiated information overload discussed above), and the deliberate cultivation of offline relationships. In Southeast Asian Sufi psychology, this active spiritual fortification is echoed in Syaikh Abdurrauf Singkel's concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs*, which emphasizes restoring spiritual equilibrium to counteract excessive worldly

⁷⁰ Ibnu Qayyim Al-Jauziyyah, *Al-Fawā'id* (Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1999), 177–79.

⁷¹ Sapana Patel, James Carmody, and Blair Simpson, "Adapting Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction for the Treatment of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: A Case Report," *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 6, no. 2 (2014): 174–81.

immersion.⁷² For Generation Z specifically, this stage translates into deliberately curating digital consumption toward genuinely beneficial knowledge and away from algorithmically optimized but psychologically corrosive content, while simultaneously and deliberately rebuilding the embodied social ties that the discussion of the benefits of *tawakal* above identifies as structurally inseparable from authentic *tawakal*—a rebuilding that, consistent with the communal implication drawn out in the preceding section, is most naturally and effectively pursued through participation in congregational worship, structured religious study, and mentorship relationships rather than through further individual, digitally mediated self-improvement activity.⁷³ It is worth noting explicitly, since this is a point at which a superficial application of the framework might go astray, that the *taḥallī* stage as here developed does not simply substitute “religious” digital content for “secular” digital content while leaving the underlying pattern of compulsive, socially isolated screen engagement unchanged; rather, consistent with the third correspondence established above, the qualitative shift the *taḥallī* stage requires is specifically toward embodied, relational practice, of which purposeful digital content consumption is at most a supporting rather than a primary component.

Tajallī (manifestation) corresponds to the third correspondence established in the preceding section, extended to its logical outward-facing conclusion: a *tawakal* that has been rooted, through the *taḥallī* stage, in real embodied community rather than remaining a purely private disposition becomes visible—manifests itself, in the technical Sufi sense the term *tajallī* carries—in how the individual subsequently uses their digital presence, rather than remaining

⁷² Nur Hadi Ihsan, Arqomi Muhammad, Muqit Nur Kaplan, and Ahmad Ali Zarkasyi, “Spiritual Equilibrium: Syaikh Abdurrauf Singkel’s Concept of Tazkiyat al-Nafs,” *Teosofia: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Mysticism* 14, no. 1 (2025): 1–28.

⁷³ Ibnu Qayyim Al-Jauziyyah, *Ighāthat Al-Lahfān Min Maṣāyid al-Shayṭān* (Dar al-Maʿrifah, 1974), 30–32.

confined to private interior states with no outward behavioral expression. For Generation Z specifically, whose members frequently possess digital fluency and platform reach considerably exceeding that of older generations including, in many cases, the mental health practitioners and religious educators who might otherwise be positioned to guide them, this stage translates into the constructive redeployment of that existing digital fluency for ends consistent with the values cultivated in the preceding two stages: contributing accurate, carefully considered information in place of impulsive reaction; moderating one's own online conduct and, where socially positioned to do so, gently moderating the conduct of peers; and modeling emotional stability and considered engagement for a peer network that, per the epidemiological evidence discussed throughout this study, disproportionately lacks models of exactly this kind.⁷⁴ In this final stage, a documented risk factor repeatedly identified in the epidemiological literature discussed in the Introduction—namely, heavy platform use—is not simply reduced or eliminated. Such an approach is neither entirely realistic nor, for many Generation Z individuals whose social, educational, and even religious lives are increasingly conducted through digital platforms, necessarily desirable. Instead, digital engagement is qualitatively transformed into a vehicle for the spiritual growth that, according to Ibn Qayyim, *tawakal* is ultimately intended to cultivate.

This staged three-part structure, rather than the loosely connected list of unconnected practical recommendations that characterizes some of the more superficial popular literature on Islam and digital-era mental health, is what allows Ibn Qayyim's fourteenth-century framework to function as a genuinely applicable psychotherapeutic model in the sense established by Wolberg's definition at the outset of this study, rather than merely as a general and inspirational spiritual sentiment loosely associated

⁷⁴ *Madārij Al-Sālikīn Bayna Manāẓirī Iyyāka Na'budu Wa Iyyāka Nasta'īnu*, 125–27.

with contemporary wellbeing discourse. Each of the three stages responds to a specific, cited empirical finding about Generation Z's digital-era mental health drawn from the WHO, Pew Research, and UNICEF data discussed in the Introduction; each stage is grounded in a specific, textually documented feature of Ibn Qayyim's own account of *tawakal*'s internal structure, established through the close textual analysis in the central sections of this study; and each stage builds explicitly and sequentially on the immediately preceding stage, giving the framework as a whole a coherence and developmental logic that this study argues distinguishes it from a merely additive list of Islamically flavored coping suggestions.

Conclusion

This study set out to reconstruct Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah's concept of *tawakal* and assess its relevance to Generation Z's digital-era mental health. Three findings answer this aim. First, Ibn Qayyim's *tawakal*, read alongside al-Ghazālī, al-Qushayrī's transmission of al-Daqqāq, and Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh, and shaped decisively by Ibn Taymiyyah's rejection of fatalism, is structurally a knowledge-grounded reliance on God that presupposes, rather than replaces, active effort (*ashāb*). Second, this structure corresponds to three empirically documented features of Generation Z's digital-era distress—compulsive connectivity, information overload, and diminished relational depth—each addressed by a stage of the *takehallī-taḥallī-tajallī* framework. Third, because *tawakal* is structurally interdependent with worship and social obligation, it cannot function as an isolated coping technique; it requires integration with embodied community, distinguishing it from purely individual, screen-mediated wellness strategies.

The study's contribution is twofold. Theoretically, it is among the first analyses to derive a structured psychotherapeutic model directly from Ibn Qayyim's textual corpus and link it, stage by stage, to current epidemiological evidence from WHO, Pew

Research, and UNICEF—extending Gondal, Adil, and Khan’s mediational findings toward a textually grounded account of why such mediation should occur. Practically, it offers practitioners and Islamic educators a staged framework, rather than a diffuse spiritual sentiment, for designing faith-based interventions for young Muslim clients navigating digital-age stressors.

This contribution is bounded by clear limitations. The study is conceptual and text-based; it did not collect empirical or clinical data, and the proposed framework has not been tested for measurable outcomes. Its findings are rooted in a specifically Islamic theological framework whose applicability to non-Muslim populations remains untested. Future research should move toward empirical validation—quantitative studies modeled on Gondal, Adil, and Khan’s methodology could test whether the *takhallī-taḥallī-tajallī* framework produces measurable reductions in social-media-related anxiety among Generation Z samples; comparative studies could examine whether its benefits extend to non-Muslim youth through underlying psychological mechanisms independent of theological content; and qualitative studies engaging Generation Z participants directly would usefully complement this study’s necessarily text-based method with the lived perspective of the population it is intended to serve.

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