

## Islamic Education Model in Premarital Counseling: A Study at Religious Affairs Offices in Palembang

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### ABSTRACT

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Premarital counseling at Religious Affairs Offices has often been implemented as an administrative and normative program rather than as a structured educational process. This study aims to construct an Islamic education model for premarital counseling at Religious Affairs Offices in Palembang, Indonesia. The study employed an embedded mixed-methods design, with qualitative inquiry as the primary approach and quantitative data as supportive evidence. Data were collected at three Religious Affairs Offices through interviews, participant observation, document analysis, questionnaires, and pretest–posttest measures involving prospective couples and program facilitators. Qualitative data were analyzed through reduction, categorization, triangulation, and thematic interpretation, while quantitative data were examined using descriptive statistics and paired comparison tests. The findings show that Islamic education in premarital counseling is constructed through three interconnected dimensions. The input dimension includes participant characteristics, facilitator competence, curriculum content, and learning facilities. The process dimension involves value-based instruction, dialogic interaction, case-based learning, experiential activities, and contextual use of learning media. The output dimension is reflected in improved participants' understanding of Islamic marriage principles, stronger attitudes toward responsibility and mutual respect, and practical readiness in communication, conflict management, family finance, reproductive health, and religious commitment. Premarital counseling can function as a strategic site of non-formal Islamic education when it integrates theological values, adult learning principles, and practical family-life competencies. However, its effectiveness requires curriculum renewal, longer instructional duration, systematic post-counseling support, and continuous facilitator capacity-building. The proposed model offers a framework for strengthening Islamic premarital education and improving family resilience programs in Indonesia.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Marriage, from an Islamic perspective, holds a fundamental position not only as a legal and spiritual bond but also as an educational space for cultivating values that shape a harmonious family characterized by *sakinah, mawaddah, wa rahmah* (Q.S. Ar-Rum: 21). Islamic values—such as responsibility, justice, communication, and compassion—function as core competencies that must be internalized by prospective couples. Although national regulations (Law No. 1 of 1974; Compilation of Islamic Law) emphasize marriage as a *mitsāqan ghalīzhā* (a strong covenant), these frameworks tend to prioritize normative and juridical aspects rather than structured pedagogical processes. Therefore, premarital guidance should be repositioned as a comprehensive Islamic educational process that integrates knowledge, attitudes, and practical skills.

Empirical data indicate that family resilience in Indonesia remains a critical issue. Data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs (2023–2025) and the Central Statistics Agency show that divorce rates are still high, reaching 463,654 cases out of 1,577,255 marriages in 2023 (29.4%), with a slight increase in 2024. Previous studies Hadi (2020), Rahayu (2021), and Fitri (2018) confirm that these challenges are not only socio-economic but also educational, particularly the limited understanding of Islamic marital values and life skills. However, earlier research tends to emphasize legal, sociological, evaluative, or partial aspects of premarital education. For instance, Syawal (2024) focuses on program models, Mohamad Yazid (2024) on curriculum development, Amiroh (2021) on learning outcomes, and other studies Setiawan (2018), Ziaulhaq (2020), Prayogi & Jauhari (2021), Andri (2020), and Azhari et al., (2020) on effectiveness and implementation. These studies have not comprehensively examined how Islamic education is constructed holistically within premarital guidance programs.

Thus, the research gap lies in the absence of a comprehensive and integrative approach that connects the construction of Islamic educational input, process, and output with participants' lived experiences and contemporary challenges. Moreover, previous studies have not sufficiently explored how prospective couples' understanding of Islamic education influences the application of Islamic values in real family life, nor how premarital programs adapt to modern dynamics such as digital technology and multidisciplinary approaches. This study offers novelty through a mixed-method approach that examines the implementation of marriage guidance at the KUA of Palembang City in a more comprehensive manner. It integrates Islamic educational values with practical dimensions by analyzing curriculum (input), learning interactions (process), and competency outcomes (output). Furthermore, this study explores how participants' understanding of Islamic education affects their readiness to apply Islamic values in married life. It also investigates the extent to which *Bimwin* programs have adapted to contemporary challenges, including the use of digital media and the integration of psychological, sociological, and Islamic economic perspectives.

In the context of Palembang—a socio-culturally diverse city with strong Islamic traditions—these issues become increasingly relevant. Data from the Palembang Religious Affairs Office (2023) show 3,112 divorce cases, while participation in *Bimwin* remains limited. Field findings indicate challenges such as limited instructional time, lack of participant differentiation, and insufficient contextualization of learning materials, highlighting the need for a more structured educational model.

Based on this background, the study is guided by the following research questions: (1) How is the input of Islamic education constructed in the premarital marriage guidance program at the KUA of Palembang City? (2) How is the process of Islamic education implemented in the program? (3) How is the output of Islamic education reflected in participants' competencies and readiness for marriage?. This research contributes to the field of educational science by developing a comprehensive model of Islamic premarital education that integrates curriculum design, pedagogical strategies, and instructional models. It not only enriches the discourse on Islamic education but also offers a practical and contextually relevant framework for improving marriage guidance programs in Indonesia.

## 2. METHODS

This research was conducted in three strategic locations: the Alang-alang Lebar District Religious Affairs Office (KUA), the Sukarami District Religious Affairs Office (KUA), and the Ilir Timur Satu District Religious Affairs Office (KUA) in Palembang City. The locations were selected purposively, considering geographic, demographic, and sociocultural representativeness. The Alang-alang Lebar KUA represents a suburban area with a high urbanization rate dominated by young migrant couples, the Sukarami KUA represents a semi-urban area with social and professional heterogeneity, while the Ilir Timur Satu KUA reflects the city center with a strong religious-traditional character. This diversity allows the research to comprehensively depict the dynamics of marriage guidance in urban, transitional, and central city contexts. The research was conducted over 12 months within the past year to capture the latest post-pandemic dynamics, including the digital transformation of guidance delivery, regulatory changes, and the community's empirical need for Islamic value-based family education. This time limit also aims to maintain data consistency, enhance internal validity, and ensure the relevance of the research results to contemporary conditions.

This research employed a mixed methods approach with an embedded design, where the qualitative approach served as the primary method, and the quantitative approach served as a supporting method (secondary method). This design was chosen based on the need to deeply understand the construction of Islamic education in marriage guidance (through qualitative data), while objectively measuring the program's effectiveness (through quantitative data). This approach enabled the integration of pedagogical analysis, participant experiences, and evaluation of learning outcomes. Thus, the research not only describes the process and meaning but also assesses learning outcomes in the context of family education. Conceptually, this design can also be understood as a form of limited integration toward a convergent model, with the primary emphasis remaining on qualitative exploration enriched by quantitative data.

Within the qualitative procedure, this study included descriptive-analytical field research. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The researcher was directly involved in marriage guidance activities to observe learning interactions, material delivery methods, and participant responses. Key informants included the head of the Religious Affairs Office (KUA), facilitators, religious instructors, and guidance participants. The study focuses on pedagogical aspects, Islamic educational materials, learning methods, internalization of values, and changes in participants' attitudes and understanding. Data were analyzed using an interactive model through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Furthermore, the empirical analysis results were interpreted using an Islamic legal approach through linguistic interpretation, causation (*illat hukum*), and alignment of evidence, resulting in a normative and contextual understanding of marriage guidance practices.

Meanwhile, the quantitative procedure in this study employed an evaluative approach oriented towards measuring learning outcomes. The instruments used included a Likert-scale questionnaire, as well as pretests and posttests to measure participants' knowledge gains. The study population consisted of 534 prospective brides and grooms from three KUA (Religious Affairs Offices), while the quantitative sample size was determined using a simple random sampling technique. This number was selected considering time and resource constraints, as well as the nature of the study, which prioritizes quantitative data as a supplement, rather than the primary focus of statistical generalization. Thus, the quantitative data serve to reinforce the qualitative findings, particularly in measuring learning effectiveness.

The research instrument was developed based on indicators of Islamic education construction in marriage guidance, encompassing input, process, and output aspects of learning. The instrument validation process was conducted through content validity testing by consulting with Islamic education experts and marriage counseling practitioners on the instrument items, as well as empirical validity testing using product-moment correlation. Instrument reliability was tested using the Cronbach Alpha

coefficient to ensure internal consistency. Furthermore, data normality was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test to inform subsequent analysis. Quantitative data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics to examine the distribution of responses and paired t-tests to measure differences between pretest and posttest results. If data were not normally distributed, the non-parametric Wilcoxon test was used.

Data collection techniques included observations of marriage guidance implementation, interviews with various relevant informants, archival documentation of activities, as well as the distribution of questionnaires and tests. Data were obtained from primary sources in the form of direct interactions with informants and secondary sources in the form of documents, regulations, and related literature. To ensure data validity, triangulation of sources, methods, and time was conducted, as well as increased observational diligence to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

Regarding research ethics, the researcher ensured that the entire research process was conducted according to the principle of informed consent, which involves obtaining consent from informants before data collection. The confidentiality of respondents' identities was maintained, and the data obtained was used only for academic purposes. The researcher also maintained objectivity and avoided conflicts of interest, despite being closely connected to the research environment as a religious instructor. Transparency, academic honesty, and respect for the community's socio-religious values were key principles in the implementation of this research.

The research stages included pre-research, implementation, and report preparation. The pre-research stage encompassed planning, obtaining permits, and preparing instruments. The implementation stage involved intensive data collection in the field using various predetermined techniques. The final stage involves compiling a research report systematically in accordance with dissertation academic standards. This stage is expected to yield valid, comprehensive findings that will contribute to the development of Islamic education, particularly in the context of marriage guidance within the KUA (Religious Affairs Office).

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Findings

##### 3.1.1 Construction of Islamic Education Input in the pre-marital marriage guidance program

The research results indicate that the input structure of the marriage guidance program at the KUA (Offices of Religious Affairs) in Alang-alang Lebar, Sukarami, and Ilir Timur Satu Districts is generally systematic and categorized as good to excellent, although there is variation in quality in several aspects.

In terms of participants, the three KUAs exhibit relatively similar characteristics, namely, they come from diverse backgrounds in terms of age, education, occupation, and level of Islamic understanding. Interviews with KUA heads and facilitators at the three locations confirmed that this diversity requires a flexible and adaptive learning approach. The facilitators stated that the method of material delivery cannot be standardized due to the varying levels of understanding among participants, ranging from those with basic knowledge to those with extensive religious experience. Furthermore, all informants agreed that participation in marriage guidance is mandatory as preparation for married life. Questionnaire data showed variations in participants' initial competencies, with the Alang-alang Lebar Office of Religious Affairs (Average 3.9) and Ilir Timur Satu Office of Religious Affairs (3.43) in the good category, while the Sukarami Office of Religious Affairs (3.4) was in the fair category.

In terms of facilitators, all three Offices had a similar structure, consisting of a Head of the Office of Religious Affairs, a religious official, an Islamic religious instructor, and a health worker. Interview results indicated that the facilitators had received formal training and held marriage counseling certification. The facilitators were assessed as possessing strong pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies, and were able to deliver material communicatively and contextually. However, several informants expressed the need to improve their competencies in family psychology and

counseling. The questionnaire data indicated that the facilitator competency in all three Offices of Religious Affairs was in the good category, with average scores ranging from 4.1 to 4.2.

In terms of material, all KUAs use a curriculum that adheres to the official guidelines of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, with four main pillars: the foundations of marriage in Islam, family management, communication and conflict management, and reproductive health. Interviews indicate that the material is presented not only theoretically but also linked to the values of the Quran and Hadith, thus providing a spiritual and practical dimension. Furthermore, efforts are made to contextualize the material with local conditions and the participants' actual experiences. Questionnaire data indicates that the material is in the good to excellent category, with the highest average score in the Alang-alang Lebar KUA (4.3), followed by Ilir Timur Satu (4.18), and Sukarami (4.02).

In terms of facilities and infrastructure, the three KUAs generally have adequate facilities to support marriage guidance, such as guidance rooms, presentation media, learning modules, and other supporting facilities. Interviews indicate that facilities and infrastructure are being gradually improved, although several challenges remain, such as limited space, a lack of modules, and the suboptimal use of learning technology. Questionnaire data showed that facilities and infrastructure were in the good to excellent category, with the highest average score at the Ilir Timur Satu Religious Affairs Office (4.27), followed by Alang-alang Lebar (4.4), and Sukarami (3.95).

Overall, the Islamic education input structure within the marriage guidance program at the three Religious Affairs Offices (KUA) demonstrated several strengths, including: (1) a strong Islamic foundation in the curriculum, (2) adequate facilitator competence, (3) relevant and applicable material, and (4) adequate support from facilities and infrastructure. However, this study also identified several challenges, including: (1) heterogeneity in participant backgrounds that impacted learning effectiveness, (2) limited facilitator competence in psychological aspects, (3) relatively short guidance duration, and (4) suboptimal use of technology as a learning medium.

Thus, the input structure of the marriage guidance program at the KUAs in Alang-alang Lebar, Sukarami, and Ilir Timur Satu Districts has provided a strong foundation for preparing prospective brides and grooms for a harmonious family. However, efforts are needed to improve the quality of the curriculum, facilitator competency, and learning media innovation so that this program can run more effectively and sustainably.

### **3.1.2 Construction of the Islamic Education Process in the pre-marital marriage guidance program**

Based on field research conducted at three Religious Affairs Offices (KUA): the Alang-Alang Lebar District Office, the Sukarami District Office, and the Ilir Timur Satu District Office, a comprehensive overview of the Islamic education process in implementing marriage guidance for prospective brides and grooms emerged. In general, the three KUAs demonstrated a relatively consistent pattern in integrating Islamic values into all aspects of learning, including the models, methods, media, interactions, internalization of values, and approaches used. These findings confirm that marriage guidance is no longer positioned merely as an administrative activity, but rather as a systematic and transformative educational process that fosters the spiritual, emotional, and social readiness of prospective brides and grooms.

In terms of learning models, all three KUAs consistently implemented a values-based learning model. This model places Islamic values as the primary foundation in developing participants' understanding and attitudes toward married life. Interviews indicated that facilitators not only delivered material but also guided participants to reflect on Islamic values in the real context of family life, such as respectful communication, responsibility, and affection within husband and wife relationships. This is supported by questionnaire data, which indicates that the majority of participants felt that marriage counseling fostered religious attitudes and went beyond simply transferring knowledge. In the Sukarami Religious Affairs Office (KUA), the average score was 3.73 (good), in Ilir Timur Satu (fair), and a similar trend was observed in Alang-Alang Lebar, indicating positive acceptance of this model.

In terms of learning methods, all three KUAs employed varied and participatory methods, including contextual lectures, group discussions, Q&A sessions, role-playing exercises, value reflection, and the use of case studies. Interviews with facilitators indicated that these methods were designed to create an active, communicative, and relevant learning environment for participants. Participants not only passively received material but also engaged in hands-on practice, such as a simulation of domestic conflict resolution. The questionnaire data indicated that the methods used were considered effective, with a 79% rating in Sukarami as good, and the majority of respondents in Ilir Timur Satu and Alang-Alang Lebar also giving positive assessments. This demonstrates that the methodological approach used was able to enhance both participants' understanding and practical skills.

In terms of learning media, the three KUA utilized various supporting tools, such as official modules from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, presentation media (LCDs and laptops), educational videos, worksheets, and digital media such as WhatsApp groups. Interviews with facilitators confirmed that media plays a strategic role in clarifying material, increasing participant attention, and facilitating the internalization of values. Questionnaire data showed that the use of media received a very positive response, with a positive rating of 76% in Sukarami and 88% in Ilir Timur Satu, with an average score above 4.00. This demonstrates that learning media serves not only as a tool but also as an effective means of building participant understanding and engagement.

The interactions between facilitators and participants in the three KUAs demonstrated an informal yet educational pattern. Interviews revealed that the open and dialogical atmosphere made participants feel comfortable expressing their opinions and personal issues related to marriage. This interaction not only fostered active participation but also strengthened the emotional bond between facilitators and participants. Questionnaire data indicated a very high level of interaction success, with 91% of participants in Sukarami and 100% in Ilir Timur Satu rating the interaction as successful. This indicates that a humanistic and Islamic communication approach is a crucial factor in the success of marriage guidance.

Regarding the internalization of Islamic values, all three KUAs emphasized core values such as monotheism (*tawhid*), honesty, responsibility, compassion (*mawaddah wa rahmah*), and deliberation (*shura*). The internalization process was carried out through the stages of value transformation (introduction), value transaction (interaction and practice), and trans-internalization (appreciation). Interviews revealed that facilitators used role models, reflection, and simulation as primary strategies in instilling values. Participants were also encouraged to make concrete commitments regarding household life, such as role-sharing and financial management. Questionnaire data showed that internalization of values was successful, with ratings reaching 78% in Sukarami and 100% in Ilir Timur Satu, demonstrating the effectiveness of this approach in shaping participants' religious character.

Meanwhile, in terms of learning approaches, all three KUA implemented an exemplary approach, value contemplation, and interactive dialogue. Interviews indicated that this approach enabled participants not only to understand Islamic teachings cognitively but also to internalize them emotionally and spiritually. Participants were encouraged to reflect on Quranic verses, understand the meaning of *sakinah* (love), *mawaddah* (love), and *rahmah* (mercy), and relate these to real life. Questionnaire data showed that this approach was highly rated by participants, with ratings reaching 87% in Sukarami and 100% in Ilir Timur Satu. This demonstrates that the approach used was able to strengthen the process of internalizing values in depth.

However, this study also identified several challenges in implementing marriage guidance, including the limited time of 16 hours, the diverse backgrounds of participants, and limited facilities and infrastructure at some KUAs. Therefore, program development efforts are needed to increase the learning duration, improve facilitator competency, and provide more adequate facilities.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that the construction of the Islamic education process in marriage guidance at the three KUAs has been systematically and integratively developed, with three main characteristics: (1) the integration of Islamic values into all learning materials and processes; (2) the use of participatory and contextual learning methods; and (3) an emphasis on internalizing values,

rather than simply transferring knowledge. Thus, the KUA functions not only as an administrative institution but also as a center for Islamic family education, playing a strategic role in fostering harmonious, loving, and compassionate families.

### 3.1.3 Construction of Islamic Education Output in the pre-marital marriage guidance program

The research results show that the output of marriage guidance in three KUA (Religious Affairs Offices) in Alang-Alang Lebar, Sukarami, and Ilir Timur Satu Districts is formed through three main dimensions of Islamic education: cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitude), and psychomotor (practice). These three dimensions are interconnected and strengthened through the learning process, internalization of values, and participants' experiences during marriage guidance.

In terms of knowledge (cognitive), all KUAs demonstrated significant improvement in participants' understanding of marriage in Islam. Pre-test and post-test data showed an increase in average scores, such as in KUA Sukarami from 65.26 to 90.70, and in KUA Ilir Timur Satu from 64.72 to 90.40. The questionnaire results also indicated good to excellent ratings, with average scores of 3.83 in Sukarami and 4.00 in Ilir Timur Satu. In fact, in Ilir Timur Satu, the highest percentage of responses reached 100% with a score of 4. This finding indicates that participants have a more comprehensive understanding of the rights and obligations of husband and wife, family communication, and conflict management. This is reinforced by the results of interviews with facilitators, who stated: "Participants were guided to understand that marriage is a form of worship and a sacred bond governed by law..." (SS, Sukarami, August 5, 2025). "*Participants were encouraged to realize that open and polite communication is key to maintaining household harmony...*" (AW, Ilir Timur Satu, August 13, 2025). Furthermore, increased knowledge also encompasses practical aspects such as family financial planning and children's education, which are essential for building a stable and prosperous family.

Regarding attitudes (affective), all three KUAs demonstrated positive changes in participants' attitudes, both spiritually, socially, and morally. Questionnaire data showed an average score of 3.80 in Sukarami and 3.73 in Ilir Timur Satu, which is considered good. This change is marked by an increased awareness that marriage is an act of worship, a growing attitude of mutual respect, and the ability to manage emotions in dealing with conflict. Interview results show that participants also experienced real behavioral changes: "Those who previously did not wear the hijab began to wear the hijab, those who previously spoke rudely became more polite..." (HS, Ilir Timur Satu, 13/8/2025). In addition, the participants' attitude of responsibility and active participation in guidance activities are also important indicators: "*Participants attended each session in an orderly, disciplined, and committed manner...*" (HW, Sukarami, 5/8/2025). The formation of religious attitudes is also emphasized through the example of the Prophet Muhammad as a basis for building a *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* family.

Regarding program reflection, questionnaire results indicated that participants considered the marriage guidance program highly beneficial, with an average score of 4.05 in Sukarami and 4.10 in Ilir Timur Satu. These reflections demonstrate that the program is not only informative but also transformative in shaping participants' mental, spiritual, and social readiness. This was confirmed in interviews: "*Marriage guidance provides a moment to reflect on personal readiness before marriage...*" (AA, Sukarami, August 5, 2025). "*This program prepares prospective husbands and wives to be spiritually, morally, and socially mature...*" (AW, Ilir Timur Satu, August 13, 2025). These reflections also emphasized the importance of participatory learning methods and the need for post-guidance support to ensure the program's impact is more sustainable.

Regarding the practical (psychomotor) aspect, the research results indicate that most participants have begun to apply the guidance findings in their domestic lives, such as open communication, deliberation, financial management, and the habit of communal worship. Questionnaire data showed an average score of 4.00 in Sukarami and Ilir Timur Satu, indicating a good rating. Interview results supported this finding: "*Participants will implement guidance outcomes such as effective communication and conflict management...*" (HW, Sukarami, August 21, 2025). "*Participants strive to resolve problems through deliberation and religious values...*" (AW, Ilir Timur Satu, August 13, 2025). However, implementation

challenges persisted, including time constraints, social influences, and a lack of post-guidance communication forums.

Regarding impact-based evaluation, the study found that although the program made a positive contribution to the preparedness of prospective brides and grooms, the post-guidance monitoring system was still suboptimal. Some of the challenges include limited resources, a lack of integrated evaluation systems, and low participant participation in follow-up activities. As expressed by a facilitator: *"Monitoring is often incidental and not systematically programmed..."* (HS, Ilir Timur Satu, August 13, 2025). *"Limited KUA resources are an obstacle to long-term guidance..."* (HM, Ilir Timur Satu, August 13, 2025). Nevertheless, indicators of program success can be seen in improved communication skills among couples, reduced potential for conflict, and increased awareness of practicing Islamic values within the family.

Overall, the output structure of marriage guidance at the KUA Alang-Alang Lebar, Sukarami, and Ilir Timur Satu demonstrates the program's effectiveness in holistically improving the readiness of prospective brides and grooms. The resulting outputs include not only increased knowledge but also changes in attitudes and practical skills that support the formation of a harmonious, loving, and compassionate family. However, to strengthen the program's sustainable impact, it is necessary to develop a monitoring system, increase the capacity of facilitators, and innovate a more structured and sustainable post-marital assistance program.

### 3.2 Discussion

The marriage guidance program delivered by religious counselors at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Palembang City is designed to strengthen family resilience through structured educational and counseling strategies. This program encompasses a wide range of materials, including the purpose and substance of marriage in Islam, legal pillars and requirements, marital procedures, and the rights and obligations of spouses. It also integrates practical aspects such as children's education and health, family financial management, and conflict-related issues like divorce, iddah, polygamy, and inheritance. By combining doctrinal understanding with applied knowledge, the program seeks to prepare prospective brides and grooms holistically. Its comprehensive scope reflects the recognition that marriage is not merely a legal contract but a lifelong partnership requiring emotional, spiritual, and socio-economic readiness.

A key objective of marriage guidance is to build confidence among prospective couples while preventing misconduct and misunderstandings. This aligns with Qur'anic guidance, particularly Surah An-Nahl verse 72, which highlights the divine blessing of companionship, offspring, and sustenance. The program encourages individuals of marriageable age to seek compatible partners while acknowledging that compatibility alone does not eliminate conflict. Differences in perspectives and expectations are inevitable in married life. Therefore, the guidance emphasizes anticipatory awareness, equipping couples with the ability to identify potential problems early and manage them constructively. This preventive approach reflects an educational philosophy that prioritizes preparedness and resilience rather than reactive problem-solving after conflicts arise.

The regulatory framework for marriage guidance is outlined in the Decree of the Directorate General of Islamic Community Guidance No. 189 of 2021. This policy establishes several objectives, including ensuring the availability of marriage guidance services as a flagship program at KUA offices and providing accessible participation opportunities for prospective couples. It also emphasizes standardized implementation through official modules, effective organizational management, and accountability in service delivery. Furthermore, the decree ensures the availability of clear operational guidelines for program organizers at all administrative levels. These provisions demonstrate the government's commitment to institutionalizing marriage guidance as a systematic and sustainable intervention to enhance family resilience across Indonesian society.

According to Hasbullah (2020), strengthening preventive skills among prospective couples requires a structured understanding of Islamic marriage principles. This includes comprehension of the

nature and purpose of marriage, its legal requirements, and personal readiness for marital life. Additionally, individuals must be guided to implement marriage practices in accordance with Islamic law (sharia). This framework positions marriage guidance as a transformative educational process that shapes attitudes, knowledge, and behavior. By internalizing these principles, couples are expected to develop resilience against common marital challenges. The emphasis on prevention reflects a proactive approach, ensuring that couples enter marriage with sufficient intellectual, emotional, and spiritual preparation.

Religious counselors at KUA play a central role in delivering preventive education for prospective couples. Their activities include helping individuals understand the essence and objectives of family life in Islam and guiding them in building a *sakinah, mawaddah wa rahmah* household. As noted by Sopyan (Siregar, 2015; 1994), these values represent tranquility, love, and compassion as the foundation of an ideal Islamic family. Through counseling sessions, participants are encouraged to align their expectations with these principles. This approach ensures that marriage is not only seen as a social institution but also as a spiritual endeavor that requires continuous nurturing and commitment.

Marriage guidance in Palembang typically adopts multiple forms, combining theoretical and practical approaches. These include Islamic law-based instruction, premarital counseling sessions, reproductive health education, financial management training, psychological guidance, and child education. Such multidisciplinary content reflects the complex nature of family life, which extends beyond religious obligations to include health, economics, and interpersonal relationships. By integrating these aspects, the program aims to equip couples with comprehensive life skills. This holistic design underscores the importance of preparing couples not only for marital roles but also for broader responsibilities within the family and society.

Despite its comprehensive design, the effectiveness of marriage guidance programs varies across regions. Research by Juwaini et al. (2022) indicates that in Aceh and South Sumatra, these programs have not significantly reduced divorce rates or strengthened family resilience. Conversely, Mursyid et al. (2022) found that the *Pusaka Sakinah* program in Ciawi successfully addressed early marriage issues and improved family stability. These findings suggest that program effectiveness depends on contextual factors, implementation quality, and follow-up support. Therefore, continuous evaluation and contextual adaptation are necessary to ensure that marriage guidance programs achieve their intended outcomes.

Marital life inherently involves challenges, making problem identification and resolution essential skills for couples. Common issues include poor communication, neglect of spousal rights and obligations, decision-making conflicts, interference from extended family, domestic violence, financial instability, and physical or mental health concerns. Marriage guidance programs aim to prepare couples for these realities by providing strategies to address them constructively. This focus on practical problem-solving highlights the importance of equipping couples with interpersonal and emotional competencies, which are crucial for sustaining long-term relationships.

An important principle emphasized in marriage guidance is the recognition that many problems originate within the couple and their immediate family environment. Couples are encouraged to engage in open dialogue to identify root causes and develop solutions collaboratively. Allowing problems to persist without resolution can have serious consequences for family stability. Therefore, the program promotes a constructive perspective, viewing challenges as opportunities for growth rather than burdens. This mindset fosters resilience and adaptability, enabling couples to maintain harmony despite difficulties.

The implementation of marriage guidance programs faces several challenges, including inadequate formulation, limited evaluation mechanisms, insufficient funding, and weak inter-agency collaboration. Nevertheless, these programs remain essential due to their broad benefits for individuals, families, and society. Research highlights that economic pressures can strain marital relationships, but strong support systems and effective problem-solving skills can mitigate these effects. Factors such as optimism, self-efficacy, family cohesion, flexibility, and communication significantly influence family

resilience. These findings underscore the need for integrated approaches that address both individual and structural determinants of marital stability.

From an Islamic education perspective, marriage guidance shares fundamental components with formal educational processes. These include clearly defined objectives, qualified educators or counselors, structured teaching materials, active participants, appropriate media, effective methods, and systematic evaluation. The alignment between marriage guidance and Islamic education is evident in their shared goal of developing morally upright, knowledgeable, and responsible individuals. As noted by Maghfiroh (2019), participants in marriage guidance function both as subjects and objects of learning, actively engaging in self-development while receiving structured instruction.

The ultimate goal of marriage in Islam is to establish a harmonious and compassionate family, which contributes to a civilized society. This aligns with the broader objectives of Islamic education, which aim to develop individuals who understand their relationship with God, themselves, and society. As emphasized by Panjaitan (2023), Islamic education seeks to produce individuals capable of fulfilling their roles as stewards (caliphs) on earth. This perspective is reinforced by Indonesian Marriage Law No. 1 of 1974, which defines marriage as a physical and spiritual bond aimed at forming a happy and eternal family. Thus, marriage guidance serves as a specific application of broader Islamic educational goals.

Facilitators in marriage guidance programs come from various institutions, including the Ministry of Religious Affairs, health services, and family planning agencies. Their responsibilities include managing sessions effectively, applying standardized modules, maintaining participant data, and ensuring proper reporting. They are also expected to adopt a moderate and harmonious perspective in guiding participants. This multidisciplinary involvement reflects the recognition that family resilience requires collaboration across sectors. The diverse expertise of facilitators enhances the quality of guidance and ensures that participants receive comprehensive support.

The methods used in marriage guidance align closely with Islamic educational approaches. These include lectures, discussions, simulations, demonstrations, and problem-based learning strategies. Techniques such as humor, storytelling, and interactive activities are employed to enhance engagement. The program also draws on Qur'anic principles, particularly Surah An-Nahl verse 125, which emphasizes wisdom, good advice, and constructive dialogue. Quraish Shihab in Junaedi (2017) highlights the importance of adapting methods to the audience's intellectual level, ensuring that communication is effective and respectful. This pedagogical flexibility is essential for addressing the diverse backgrounds of participants.

In practice, premarital guidance in Palembang is often conducted as a one-day program, although ideally it should last at least three days to allow for deeper understanding and skill development. The curriculum is multidisciplinary, covering Islamic law, family sociology, psychology, economics, health, and communication. Effective implementation requires competent facilitators with pedagogical, social, professional, and digital skills. Evaluation systems include input, process, and output assessments, with remedial support provided when necessary. Overall, marriage guidance programs play a crucial role in enhancing family resilience, but their effectiveness depends on continuous evaluation, adequate resources, and sustained collaboration among stakeholders (Juwaini et al., 2022; Nashrun et al., 2022).

The implementation of marriage guidance at KUA can be further strengthened by explicitly grounding its practices in established educational theories such as constructivism, andragogy, and experiential learning. From a constructivist perspective (Vygotsky, 1978), participants actively construct knowledge through interaction, discussion, and reflection during counseling sessions, particularly when engaging in problem-based and contextual learning. Meanwhile, the andragogical approach proposed by Knowles (1984) is highly relevant, as participants are adult learners who bring prior experiences, require practical relevance, and prefer self-directed learning. Experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1999) is also evident in simulation and demonstration methods used in premarital guidance, where participants learn through concrete experiences and reflective observation. Integrating

these theoretical frameworks more systematically would enhance the pedagogical coherence of marriage guidance programs and improve participant engagement and learning outcomes.

When compared with previous studies, the findings of this research reveal both alignment and gaps in the effectiveness of marriage guidance programs. Studies by Juwaini et al. (2022) indicate limited impact on family resilience in regions such as Aceh and South Sumatra, primarily due to weak evaluation systems and lack of post-marital support. In contrast, Mursyid et al. (2022) demonstrate that structured and context-sensitive programs like Pusaka Sakinah can significantly reduce early marriage rates and strengthen family resilience. Similarly, Nashrun et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of continuous mentoring beyond premarital stages. This study supports these findings by highlighting that one-off training models, such as the one-day guidance commonly implemented in Palembang, are insufficient to achieve long-term behavioral change. Therefore, a more sustained and iterative learning model is needed, incorporating follow-up sessions and continuous assessment.

The educational implications of this study are particularly significant for curriculum design, teaching strategies, and learning outcomes in marriage guidance programs. Curriculum development should adopt an integrative and competency-based approach, combining Islamic teachings with practical life skills such as communication, financial literacy, and conflict resolution. Teaching strategies should shift from lecture-dominated methods to interactive, learner-centered approaches, including simulations, case studies, and collaborative problem-solving. Learning outcomes should be clearly defined in cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains, ensuring that participants not only understand concepts but also demonstrate skills and attitudes conducive to family resilience. To enhance clarity and effectiveness, future research and program implementation should incorporate visual models, tables, or conceptual frameworks that map the relationships between educational components, learning processes, and expected outcomes, thereby facilitating systematic evaluation and replication.

The results of the study on the construction of marriage guidance output at the KUA of Alang-Alang Lebar, Sukarami, and Ilir Timur Satu Districts indicate that the Marriage Guidance (Bimwin) program has a significant contribution in improving the readiness of prospective brides and grooms, both in terms of knowledge, attitude, reflection, and practice of domestic life. Data from interviews with facilitators revealed that participants experienced an increase in understanding of the rights and obligations of husband and wife, effective communication, and conflict resolution based on Islamic values. This is supported by questionnaire data which shows the average score of knowledge change is in the good category (ranging from 3.83 to 4.00), attitude change in the good category (around 3.73–3.80), and a very positive reflection program (reaching 4.05–4.10). In addition, the practical application aspect also showed good results with an average score of 4.00, indicating that most participants have begun to implement the values acquired in domestic life. However, the research results also found limitations in terms of implementation duration, learning methods, and minimal post-guidance support, which affected the optimization of the program's long-term impact.

#### a. The Paradigm of Islamic Education in Marriage Guidance

Marriage guidance at the Palembang City Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) demonstrates a tendency toward values education that focuses on character development and marital morality. This paradigm aligns with a humanistic-religious approach, where participants are positioned not merely as recipients of material but as active subjects constructing the meaning of Islamic marriage. However, in practice, there are still inconsistencies between the ideal values instilled and the reality of their implementation. For example, although the material covers the values of monotheism, responsibility, and Islamic communication, the methods used are not fully contextual and participatory due to limited time and human resources.

#### b. Critique of Training Duration and Model

The short duration of Bimwin (only one day) is less than ideal for fostering a deep understanding and internalization of Islamic values. The training model, which is still predominantly lecture-based, does not fully develop the reflective and transformative dimensions of Islamic education. However,

creating a harmonious family requires a continuous educational process that addresses cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. This highlights the need to strengthen methodologies and develop post-marriage education programs.

The paradigm of Islamic education reflected in marriage guidance at the KUA in Palembang can be analytically understood through the lenses of constructivism and humanistic education. From a constructivist perspective, as proposed by Lev Vygotsky (1978), learning is an active process in which individuals construct meaning through social interaction and contextual experience. This aligns with the intention of marriage guidance to position participants as active subjects who interpret Islamic marital values such as tauhid, responsibility, and ethical communication. In parallel, the humanistic approach emphasized by Carl Rogers (1969) highlights personal growth, self-awareness, and value internalization, which are central to forming *sakinah* families. However, the inconsistency between ideal values and implementation indicates a gap between theory and practice. Limited use of participatory and contextual methods suggests that the learning environment has not fully facilitated meaning-making processes, thereby reducing the effectiveness of value internalization in real-life marital contexts.

The critique of the short duration and lecture-dominated model of Bimwin can be further examined through adult learning (andragogy) and experiential learning theories. According to Malcolm Knowles (1984), adult learners require sufficient time, relevance, and active engagement to internalize knowledge effectively, as they rely heavily on prior experiences and problem-centered learning. Similarly, David Kolb (1999) emphasizes that meaningful learning occurs through a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, conceptualization, and active experimentation. The one-day training model limits opportunities for reflection and application, thereby weakening transformative learning outcomes. This condition supports Jack Mezirow's (1991) argument that deep learning requires critical reflection over time to reshape perspectives. Therefore, strengthening marriage guidance requires extending training duration, adopting interactive and reflective methods, and integrating post-marital educational programs to ensure continuous learning and sustainable family resilience.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

The findings of this study contribute theoretically to the development of Islamic education by reinforcing the relevance of integrative and contextual learning models within adult education frameworks. The three-stage structure—input, process, and output—demonstrates that marriage guidance is not merely an administrative or doctrinal activity, but a form of transformative Islamic learning that aligns with principles of constructivism, andragogy, and experiential learning. This confirms that Islamic education can be effectively operationalized in non-formal settings through value internalization, reflective engagement, and real-life application. Moreover, the study enriches the discourse on adult Islamic education by highlighting how religious values can be contextualized within contemporary family life, thereby bridging the gap between normative teachings and lived experiences. In this sense, marriage guidance emerges as a practical model of applied Islamic pedagogy that integrates theological, social, and psychological dimensions in a holistic learning process.

Practically, these findings have important implications for curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers. Curriculum design should adopt a more structured, competency-based, and continuous model, extending beyond short-term training toward sustained pre- and post-marital education. Educators or facilitators need to strengthen participatory, reflective, and experiential teaching strategies to enhance value internalization and behavioral change. Policymakers, particularly within the Ministry of Religious Affairs, should consider increasing program duration, improving facilitator training, and strengthening inter-agency collaboration to ensure program effectiveness. However, this study has limitations, including its focus on a specific regional context (Palembang) and limited longitudinal data on participants' long-term behavioral outcomes. Therefore, future research should explore comparative studies across regions, incorporate longitudinal designs to assess long-term family resilience, and

develop evaluative models that integrate educational, social, and spiritual indicators for a more comprehensive understanding of marriage guidance effectiveness.

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