

Women's Essence, Perception, and Premarital Education Case Study of Marriage Guidance at the KUA of Lohbener District

Elis Sahmiatik^{1*}, Ario Rian Hidayat², M. Novan Leany³, Dody Sulistio⁴

¹ Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, Indonesia

² Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt

³ Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

⁴ Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Thaha Saifuddin, Jambi, Indonesia

* ssahmiatik@gmail.com

Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas bimbingan perkawinan yang diberikan kepada calon pengantin khususnya perempuan, dalam mempersiapkan peran sebagai istri dan ibu. Fokusnya pada materi bimbingan, kesiapan mental calon pengantin, serta persepsi perempuan terhadap esensi dan perannya setelah menikah. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan studi kasus di KUA Kecamatan Lohbener, melalui observasi partisipan, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi. Temuan utama mencakup desain pendidikan pranikah memiliki materi yang meliputi strategi kesiapan mental menghadapi pernikahan dan pemahaman atas peran perempuan untuk mendewasakan usia menikah pertama. Meskipun materi yang diberikan mencakup aspek hukum, ekonomi, dan manajemen rumah tangga, namun belum menjangkau materi psikologis yang disampaikan oleh para ahli seperti psikolog.

Kata Kunci: Esensi Perempuan, Pendidikan Pranikah, Psikologi, kesiapan mental.

Abstract

This article discusses premarital counseling provided to prospective brides, particularly women, in preparing them for their roles as wives and mothers. The focus is on the counseling material, the mental readiness of brides-to-be, and women's perceptions of the essence and their roles after marriage. This research employs a qualitative method with a case study conducted at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Lohbener District, utilizing participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The key findings reveal that the design of premarital education includes material covering strategies for mental readiness in facing marriage and understanding women's roles in ensuring maturity at the time of their first

Submissions:

20-05-2023

Accepted:

25-06-2024

Published:

30-06-2024



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

marriage. Although the material addresses legal, economic, and household management aspects, it does not yet cover psychological topics delivered by experts such as psychologists.

Keywords: *The Essence of Women, Premarital Education, Psychology, Mental Readiness.*

Introduction

Indramayu Regency is known as one of the regions with the highest divorce rates in Indonesia. Data from the Religious Court of Indramayu Regency shows that in 2021, there were 8,002 divorce cases, the majority of which were initiated by wives through divorce petitions ("Kasus Perceraian Meningkat 53%, Mayoritas Karena Pertengkaran," 2022). This phenomenon not only reflects the fragility of family foundations but also serves as a social portrait of the economic and cultural challenges faced by the community. Most divorces in Indramayu are attributed to economic issues, with the husband's inability to meet household needs being the primary reason. Additionally, the high rate of early marriages and the significant number of female migrant workers (TKW) working abroad also contribute to this problem (Nugoho, 2021). Young couples who marry between the ages of 20 and 24 often experience divorce due to a lack of mental readiness and understanding of roles and responsibilities within the household.

The rampant phenomenon of divorce in Indramayu not only impacts the couples involved but also creates a negative stigma for the local community. Nicknames such as "RCTI" (Rangda Cilik Turunan Indramayu), referring to the prevalence of young widows in the area, represent one of the stereotypes that have gained traction at the national level. This perception tarnishes the image of Indramayu women, often associated with early marriages, divorce, or working as migrant workers (Sanidah, 2022). This phenomenon highlights the lack of comprehensive premarital education for young couples, particularly in rural areas with low educational levels. Marriage counseling programs, which should serve as preventive measures, often fail to include relevant materials to equip couples for the dynamics of household life. Moreover, the government's weak role in providing education on family planning and household economic management further exacerbates the situation.

In this context, a critical approach to the phenomenon of divorce in Indramayu is essential to understand its root causes and find effective solutions. One of the main critiques is the lack of attention to the role of women in building a family. As the primary managers of households, women play a key role in creating balance and harmony within the family. However, the lack of education and access to premarital knowledge leaves many women unprepared for this role. Furthermore, the persistence of a strong patriarchal culture often silences women in family decision-making processes, thereby increasing the risk of conflict and divorce (Sakina, 2017). A gender-

sensitive perspective needs to be reinforced in premarital education policies and programs to ensure that both husbands and wives have an equal understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the household.

This article will examine several research questions relevant to the phenomenon of divorce in Indramayu Regency, particularly concerning the preparation of prospective couples in building a household. First, what materials are provided in the Premarital Counseling sessions at the Lohbener District Religious Affairs Office (KUA), and to what extent are these materials effective in equipping young couples? Second, how prepared are the mental states of prospective couples as they approach marriage? Third, what are the perceptions of prospective brides regarding their essence and role after marriage in efforts to create a harmonious family?

In this context, this article aims to examine the perceptions of prospective couples, particularly women, regarding their readiness to take on the roles of wife and mother amidst various social challenges. This study is based on observations conducted at the Lohbener District Religious Affairs Office (KUA) in Indramayu, focusing on premarital counseling as a preventive measure to reduce divorce rates. The author argues that the mental readiness and understanding of prospective couples regarding household dynamics can be key to building families that embody *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*. Through a critical and data-driven analysis, this article seeks to contribute to the development of more effective and inclusive premarital education policies.

Literature Review

Studies on premarital education, perceptions, and the essence of women have garnered significant attention among scholars. These studies are generally divided into three areas of focus. First, studies discussing the objectives of premarital counseling (Nurfauziyah, 2018; Wati et al., 2019). Second, studies examining premarital counseling and mental preparedness (Azhari, 2020; Prayogi & Jauhari, 2021; Sundani, 2018). Third, studies addressing premarital counseling and the essence of women (Burhanuddin & Suriyati, 2022; Hotimah, 2019; Surbakti, 2021; Zulfikar, 2019). However, existing research on premarital education appears to be limited to the goals of counseling, mental preparedness, and the essence of women. This article aims to fill this gap by focusing on the perceptions, essence, and roles of women as central figures in the household, such as the roles of a wife, and the responses of prospective brides.

Conceptual Framework

The formation of a *sakinah* family undoubtedly depends on the readiness of each individual. Adequate mental preparedness for every prospective couple must be carefully considered. A person who has reached adulthood is often seen as ready for marriage, and in societal stereotypes, marriage is even used as a benchmark for maturity. Marriage is considered a developmental task that needs to be accomplished during early adulthood.

Building connections and marriage is one of the developmental stages that every individual will experience in the early years of their adulthood.

To analyze this aspect, the article applies the theory of early adulthood developmental psychology. Marriage is not only viewed as fulfilling one's duties in adhering to religious commandments and beliefs but also as meeting human desires as living beings from the perspective of developmental psychology (Hurlock, 1997). Early adulthood is a reproductive phase characterized by starting a family life. Specifically, women under the age of 30 are considered ready to take on the responsibilities of motherhood, as their reproductive organs are fully developed and prepared for reproduction. However, this period is also depicted as challenging, as individuals must adjust to married life, the roles of parenting, and fulfilling their responsibilities as legally recognized adult citizens (Putri, 2019).

Early adults must fulfill developmental tasks to function effectively in life and avoid serious issues. Hurlock categorizes early adulthood developmental tasks into several areas: having a job, choosing a life partner, learning to live with a spouse to form a family, raising children, managing a household, accepting responsibilities as a citizen, and joining a social group. The developmental tasks outlined by Hurlock are integrated with Havighurst's views, as cited in Hurlock, which include: selecting a mate as a husband or wife, learning to live with a spouse, starting family life, nurturing children, managing a household, starting a career, taking on responsibilities as a proper citizen, and finding a social group with similar values and perspectives (Hurlock, 1997).

These developmental tasks are defined by Havighurst as: "*A developmental task is a task which arises at or about a certain period in the life of the individual, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and to success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by society, and difficulty with later tasks.*" This statement implies that developmental tasks emerge throughout an individual's life and can significantly influence subsequent tasks. Failure to accomplish these tasks may result in individual unhappiness, societal rejection, and challenges in completing future developmental tasks (James et al., 2006). Additionally, another theory used to examine the perceptions of prospective brides comes from gender studies, particularly regarding the position of women. Men and women have distinct roles that are meant to complement each other. This complementary relationship fosters the development of a husband-wife dynamic, which serves as the foundation for building a household and raising their children (Samsidar, 2020).

Research Method

This article uses a qualitative methodology with a case study approach and a descriptive-analytical framework (Creswell & Creswell, 2014). Participant observation was conducted from September 2021 to May 2022, with the marriage counseling program lasting for two days. During this period, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews

with informants and collected documentary data. Data collection was carried out using purposive sampling, based on specific criteria. With this approach, the article aims to explore the design of pre-marriage education, including strategies for navigating married life as a form of mental preparedness for marriage, and to understand the perspectives of prospective brides regarding their readiness for marriage and the maturation process of early marriage.

Results and Discussion

History and Position of Muslim Women in Indonesia

The struggle for gender equality by women in the West has given rise to various feminist thoughts. These movements eventually sparked a national gender movement. According to historical records, feminist figures or women's liberation activists in Indonesia only emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Among them were R.A. Kartini, Dewi Sartika, Cut Nyak Dien, and Kristina Marthathiahahu (Vreede-de Stuers, 2017). These pioneering women generally shared one prominent similarity – they all came from noble families, although their roles and positions varied (Supraja, 2013). Furthermore, several Muslim intellectuals such as (Widyastini, 2008; Yusuf et al., 2020) among others, worked towards empowering women (Darojat, 2019).

Musdah Mulia is another prominent Indonesian Muslim feminist known for her vocal advocacy of gender equality ideas, highlighting many issues contributing to gender injustice. According to Musdah, there are three main causes: *first*, the dominance of patriarchal culture that prioritizes men's interests. *Second*, the skewed patriarchal ideals and gender perspectives that shape how religious teachings are interpreted. *Third*, the strong hegemony of the state (Mulia, 2007). The next generation must receive gender awareness education from an early age to keep up with modern progress and ensure there is no discrimination or gender inequality that may affect women. This aligns with Muhadjir Effendy's earlier viewpoint that pre-marriage education programs in Indonesia should be prioritized for women. This approach aims to provide women with a comprehensive perspective.

The Qur'an, Hadith, and the Position of Women in Islam

The Qur'an, which Allah has provided as the fundamental source of knowledge and guidance for human life, truly presents an egalitarian vision for humanity without any stereotypes that disadvantage women. The mention of the creation of women in the Qur'an, particularly in Surah an-Nisa, has been theorized by academics. The verse reads: "*O mankind! Fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs (i.e., family ties). Surely Allah is ever over you, an Observer.*" Some scholars have argued that the belief that women are more susceptible to discrimination stems from the notion that they were created from a man's rib. However, the belief that men and women are created from the same essence may be more forgiving

of errors rather than diminishing women (Syam, 2018). The Qur'an also clarifies that women are not rivals to men, nor are men to women. Both are complementary to each other, as expressed in Allah's words in Surah Ali Imran: 195.

The Qur'an and Hadith also highlight the special status of women. One such example is the saying that a righteous woman is the jewel of the world, signifying that women are among the noblest of Allah's creations, deserving to preserve their beauty from head to toe. A Hadist Says: "The World is but a provision, and the best of its provision is a righteous wife" (HR. Muslim Form Abdullah binn Amr). This shows that women have a nature that must always be protected. Furthermore, women are given exemptions in worship, highlighting their special status. From this, it is evident that women hold a high and respected position in Islam, as evidenced by both the Qur'an and Hadith. This is a testament to Allah's love and care for women. The Qur'an and Hadith present numerous privileges for women, which make it inappropriate to compare their status with any form of discrimination or social inequality. Indeed, Allah has placed paradise beneath the feet of mothers, and mothers are women.

The Values of Women's Position in the Family and Society

In the modern era, women face two challenges that need to be overcome. The first challenge comes from within themselves, related to their roles and functions within the family. The second challenge comes from knowledge and technology, especially for women who play dual roles (Huda & Dodi, 2020). Women, who in reality hold the status of both wives and mothers, have very important and fundamental rights, such as the right to secure welfare in the form of livelihood.

Women, as wives, are reflected in various verses of the Qur'an, such as Surah al-Najm (53:45), Surah al-Naba (78:8), and Surah al-Qiyamah (75:39), which indicate that Allah created men and women as complementary pairs. This is because, by nature, humans are interdependent, especially during the phase of sexual maturity. These verses emphasize the importance of creating a home in accordance with divine law, which aligns with human instinct (Zulfikar, 2019). Women, as mothers, truly begin their roles when they undergo pregnancy, bear a child, and give birth. Allah's command in Surah al-Ahqaf (46:15) underscores the importance of treating mothers with kindness, especially those who have conceived, given birth, and raised their children. As mothers, women are also expected to be educators for their children (Zulfikar, 2019). This is crucial because education in the home plays a significant role in shaping children's social development, which will later influence their role in society. Moreover, women are responsible for managing household affairs. To improve the quality of family life, a mother must ensure the health and well-being of every family member (Samsidar, 2020).

The position of women within the household and in the public sphere can be considered when analyzing the responsibilities they undertake. *First*, in traditional roles, women are seen primarily as bearers of reproductive functions, fully dedicating their lives

to the family. *Second*, during the transitional phase, gender-based division of labor takes place, but women continue to be responsible for maintaining family harmony and managing domestic issues. *Third*, the roles of women in both the domestic and public spheres are equally important. The moral support from husbands can either strengthen a woman's resilience or, conversely, create conflict, whether open or latent. *Fourth*, the egalitarian position requires women to engage in outdoor activities and work outside the home. The husband's concern in preventing issues related to role distribution and providing moral support is crucial in maintaining balance and harmony (Indah, 2013).

In greater depth, the researcher conducted interviews with informants, specifically female brides-to-be, as part of an effort to understand how they accept and internalize the marriage guidance materials provided. These values of position will be gradually understood by the brides-to-be as they build their household, in relation to their husbands, families, and the surrounding community. The following are the responses of three female brides-to-be: Lina, Kuriyah, and Dewi:

"It's more about being able to adapt to the role that I will take on. Becoming a wife is something new for me, so I still have a lot to learn. Especially in understanding my husband, because I've only known him for a short time, so there is still much to learn. Actually, in order to fulfill many roles, as women, we must be aware and learn a lot, because we are given these responsibilities, and we must be able to carry them out well" (Darajat, 2019).

"I need to be able to adjust, especially since I'm considered a newcomer, a new family member, so I have to adapt. I've prepared a lot, but it's still unclear how things will go, since everything is new. But looking ahead, I already have plans and understand my duties as a wife. It's really a woman's destiny, so I just have to go with it. As long as I'm sincere, Insha Allah, the path will be easy" (K. Supriati, Mei 2022).

"My perception of women with double roles is that it's just normal. Because on my husband's side, he doesn't force me to do any specific kind of work, based on his wishes. Sometimes, he helps with my chores; he cooks sometimes and washes the dishes. So, I always tell him that physical tasks are not just a woman's role, but the husband's responsibility too. These roles aren't only women's duties. Particularly when it comes to raising children, the husband must also take part. While the natural role of a woman is to bear and give birth, physical tasks should be shared between us" (Dewi, Mei 2022).

The results from the interviews with several brides-to-be regarding the roles of women led to a discussion where the informants expressed a clear awareness from the outset that these roles are responsibilities they will continually embrace. For the informants, this was not a significant issue, as they had prepared themselves to dedicate their lives as wives and mothers to manage their families. For example, as Lina expressed, she is fully aware of the many roles a woman plays in the household, but in terms of the value of her position, she is still uncertain, as evidenced by her statement that she still needs to learn more. Meanwhile, Kuriyah's understanding reflects a resigned acceptance that all the roles women bear in the household are part of their natural destiny, and thus, they must be carried out with sincerity. On the other hand, Dewi emphasized that the value of a woman's position should be considered in the household, especially when it comes to physical tasks that must be shared equally, as women's natural role is limited to

pregnancy and childbirth, while everything else is a shared responsibility. From the statements of the three informants, it was found that not all women understand the value of this position, as they are still constrained by the patriarchal dogma passed down by previous generations. However, the researcher also observed that Dewi, an informant with a university degree, was able to fully grasp the value of a woman's position. This could be attributed to her educational background, which provided her with a different perspective.

In this chapter, the discussion on gender and the patriarchal dogma in society does not always align with the reality on the ground. The understanding that women should remain at home managing domestic affairs is, in practice, adjusted to the needs of each individual. For example, informants Lina and Kuriyah dedicated themselves to managing the household because they chose to do so and were not bound by any external employment. Meanwhile, Dewi, who works as a teacher, still manages domestic tasks, but with less involvement, which is adjusted to the specific conditions and needs of her family. Therefore, the needs and functions of women cannot be uniformly applied to all married women who have built their households.

The Impact of Perception and Motivation on Marriage Guidance at the Lohbener Sub-district Religious Affairs Office (KUA)

The impact, perceptions, and motivations of the brides and grooms were derived from the results of the pre-test and post-test administered by the Lohbener Sub-district KUA. The pre-test and post-test questions covered topics such as knowledge about a *sakinah* (harmonious) family, household management, domestic violence, child rearing, relationships with family after marriage, and the surrounding community. The pre-test consisted of 18 questions, while the post-test included 20 questions. The answers from both tests were analyzed, leading to findings in the following areas: the context of a *sakinah* family, financial family management, child-rearing practices, and family harmony within the community.

The term "*sakinah*" is often simply translated as peace. In the context of family, *sakinah* refers to a calm and peaceful state that can endure despite the various challenges and trials of life. This peace is complemented by the element of *mawaddah*, which linguistically means love. This term signifies that someone who harbors love in their heart will possess an open soul and strive to avoid negativity. The next element is *rahmah*, which means compassion or mercy. This feeling encourages an individual to extend kindness and happiness to others. Therefore, an ideal family is one that can maintain peace, love, and compassion—qualities that complement each other to create happiness with one's partner.

The results of the interviews indicate that the informants view the concept of a *sakinah* family as preparation for adopting new habits in married life. For example, Lina and Dewi described how they envision a family with new routines that differ from life before marriage, and they are preparing themselves to embrace these changes (L. Muzaki, personal communication, Mei 2022). Kuriyah added that she imagines a family living

independently in their own home, separate from their parents, where communication with her partner is crucial to avoid misunderstandings within the family (K. Supriati, personal communication, Mei 2022). Meanwhile, Supriyadi expressed his commitment as the head of the family to make his family happy, with sufficient preparation before marriage (S. Saputra, personal communication, Mei 2022).

However, the analysis reveals a difference in the level of enthusiasm between the responses of male and female informants. For example, Syafi'i merely expressed a shared view with his fiancée without providing further elaboration (M. Syafii, personal communication, Mei 2022). In contrast, Supriyadi articulated a clear goal of building a happy family, while Apriyanto explained that he and his fiancée had made plans from the start to avoid confusion after marriage (Apriyanto, personal communication, Mei 2022). This difference highlights the importance of *mitsaqan ghalizan* or a strong commitment in building a family. This commitment involves not only the couple's dedication to themselves but also to their partner, in order to create the family they both desire.

In addition to the aspect of commitment, the interviews also highlighted the importance of financial preparation in marriage. Several informants shared their views on family financial management. For instance, Muhammad Syafi'i stated that he entrusts all financial arrangements to his wife, as women are considered more skilled in this area (M. Syafi'i, personal communication, May 2022). A similar view was expressed by Supriyadi, who believes his wife is capable of managing finances well, as long as there is open communication (M. Syafii, personal communication, Mei 2022). A similar view was expressed by Supriyadi, who believes his wife is capable of managing finances well, as long as there is open communication (S. Saputra, personal communication, Mei 2022). Lina added that she already has a strategy for managing expenditures, saving, and planning household needs, making financial management more structured (L. Muzaki, personal communication, Mei 2022). Similarly, Apriyanto and Dewi emphasized the importance of trust and communication in managing finances together. Dewi, who also works, stated that they would combine their incomes to collectively meet the family's needs (Dewi, personal communication, Mei 2022).

This result emphasizes that financial preparation is one of the key aspects that need to be well-prepared before marriage. The informants are aware that economic factors are often a major cause of divorce, so they strive to minimize this risk by developing a well-thought-out strategy. In this context, the *zawaj* analytical framework is used to illustrate the cooperation within the marital relationship to build a strong and harmonious family (Sahmiatik & Subaidi, 2022).

In terms of parenting styles, the informants expressed concern about the negative impact of technological advancements on the morals and character of the younger generation. One informant voiced their worry about children becoming addicted to gadgets and, as a result, planned to send their child to an Islamic boarding school for more monitored religious education. This decision was supported by their partner, who also

wanted their child to understand religion from an early age, although some couples preferred a more democratic approach to parenting. For example, one informant shared that they wanted their children to be raised in an assertive family environment, where they would have the freedom to express opinions and engage in discussions with their parents.

The analysis shows that there are differences in parenting styles between couples who are more authoritarian, making decisions about their children's education without involving them in discussions, and couples who are more democratic, prioritizing consultation. This aligns with Hurlock's theory, which states that parenting styles are influenced by factors such as personality, beliefs, and the parenting styles the parents themselves experienced. This context also highlights the importance of consultation within marriage, as taught in the four pillars of marriage (Hurlock, 1997).

In addition, the ability to adapt to the environment and the partner's family is also an important factor in determining the success of a marriage. Some informants explained how they made efforts to adjust to the customs and traditions of their partner's family. For example, Kuriyah, who moved into her husband's house, emphasized the importance of adapting to her husband's family's habits, even though they were still in the same region (K. Supriati, personal communication, Mei 2022). This was reinforced by the experience of Apriyanto and Dewi, who come from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. They highlighted the importance of open communication and mutual respect for differences in creating harmony.

This study also highlights how good adaptation can reduce stigma against intercultural couples. In certain cases, intercultural marriages can actually strengthen harmony through mutual understanding and cooperation. This suggests that the behavior of *mu'asyarah bil ma'ruf*—acting kindly towards one's partner, the partner's family, and the surrounding community—can serve as a foundation for creating harmonious relationships within both the family and society (Hilmi, 2023).

Women's Education as a Solution to Divorce Issues in Indramayu

Indramayu Regency has a rather unique social phenomenon related to marriage and divorce. One common view suggests that many people marry during the harvest season and divorce when the drought season arrives. This phenomenon is closely linked to economic factors, where low financial conditions often become the primary trigger for divorce. The high divorce rates in Indramayu are also associated with a lack of preparedness among couples, both mentally and financially, as well as the influence of social culture that normalizes early marriage.

In an interview with community leaders at the KUA (Religious Affairs Office) of Lohbener District, Sahlan and Wakid provided the view that the stereotype of frequent divorce in Indramayu needs to be seen in a more proportional manner. According to them, divorce cases are not only prevalent in Indramayu but also in other regions, although the

numbers appear higher due to the large population in the area. Sahlan emphasized that the significant number of migrants in Indramayu also contributes to this negative perception, while Wakid argued that this view often comes from outsiders who only see a fraction of the cases.

Data from the Indramayu Religious Court supports this perspective. In 2021, there were 8,002 divorce cases, consisting of 5,865 *cerai gugat* (wife-filed divorce) and 2,137 *cerai talak* (husband-filed divorce). Economic factors were the main cause of divorce, especially due to the large number of women working abroad (TKW) and leaving their spouses for extended periods. Additionally, the immaturity of young couples was also a significant cause of many divorce petitions.

For example, the term "RCTI" (Rangda Cilik Turunan Indramayu) has become a social phenomenon that causes concern. This nickname refers to the high divorce rates among young couples, especially those married before the age of 25 (Sanidah, 2022). The Regent of Indramayu, Nina Agustina, acknowledges that early marriage often has negative impacts on women, prompting the government to take steps to prevent early marriages through continuous education ("Bupati Nina, Ngarot, Menghapus Imej," 2022). However, Sahlan and Wakid note that the implementation of such education is not evenly distributed, especially in villages where the community's level of education is low (J. Sahlan, personal communication, Mei 2022; Wakid, personal communication, Mei 2022).

In addition to economic issues, early marriage is also one of the root causes of the high divorce rates in Indramayu. Wakid noted that many underage marriages often occur due to the limited knowledge young couples have about married life. In this context, marriage counseling (*bimbingan perkawinan* or *bimwin*) is considered important to provide young couples with an understanding of marriage before they tie the knot (Wakid, personal communication, Mei 2022).

The external perception of Indramayu often creates harmful stigmas. In several writings, such as those by Muhammad Farhan and Chris Pudjiastuti, the negative image of women from Indramayu is frequently associated with sex workers, migrant workers (TKW), early marriages, and divorce (Farhan, 2022). This has led to the stereotype that the people of Indramayu are quick to marry and divorce, even though, in reality, not all couples or individuals fit this description. Other writings, such as those by Amalia Utami and Fatikha Yuliana, also highlight that this stigma often stems from a patriarchal viewpoint that reduces women to stereotypical objects (Yuliana, 2022).

This study found that social issues in Indramayu are closely related to factors such as the economy, education, and culture. The local government needs to intensify educational efforts for the younger generation, especially in rural areas that are difficult to reach, in order to reduce the rates of early marriage and divorce. Furthermore, a broader understanding of the diversity of Indramayu's population could help reduce the negative stereotypes that have developed at the national level.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study emphasizes the importance of premarital education as an integral part of social education aimed at preparing young couples for married life. The study highlights how a premarital education curriculum can be designed and implemented effectively, particularly through the marriage counseling program at the KUA (Religious Affairs Office) in Lohbener District. As an institution that directly serves the community, the KUA plays a strategic role in ensuring that the counseling provided is not merely administrative, but also offers long-term benefits for prospective couples. The article found that the material provided covers aspects of law, economics, and household management; however, it would be more effective if supplemented with psychological material delivered by experts such as psychologists.

This article offers several key recommendations. First, marriage counseling activities should be treated as mandatory education for the public, with optimal implementation in accordance with the schedule. Second, there is a need to develop a follow-up program in the form of post-marriage counseling for married couples to monitor and support the sustainability of their household. Third, collaboration with psychologists to provide psychological material for prospective couples is considered to enhance the quality of the counseling program, especially in equipping couples with emotional and communication skills.

While this article provides significant insights, the authors acknowledge certain limitations. To complement the intellectual debate, it is recommended that future research adopt in-depth approaches such as ethnography or phenomenology to explore the relationship between premarital education and local culture. This is important, considering Indonesia's rich traditions and cultures, which can offer new perspectives in Islamic educational psychology. With a more innovative approach, premarital education could become a crucial pillar in building a harmonious and empowered society.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Nina Mariani Noor for her guidance, direction, and inspiration throughout the process of writing this article. My thanks also go to all the respondents who contributed valuable insights and data, and to the Head of KUA Indramayu for the support and cooperation that facilitated the research process. I am also grateful to UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung and UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, the institutions where I gained knowledge and received the facilities that supported the smooth running of this research. All parties who contributed their support, both directly and indirectly, have played an important role in the realization of this work.

References

- Apriyanto. (2022, Mei). *Wawancara Mengenai Konteks Keluarga Sakinah* [Personal communication].
- Azhari, N. H., Sardin, S., & Hasanah, V. R. (2020). Efektivitas pelaksanaan bimbingan perkawinan pranikah calon pengantin dalam meningkatkan kesiapan menikah. *Indonesian Journal of Adult and Community Education*, 2(2), 19–27.
- Bupati Nina, Ngarot, Menghapus Imej. (2022, July 15). *Mata Pantura*. <https://matapantura.republika.co.id/posts/31051/bupati-nina-ngarot-dan-menghapus-imej-rcti>.
- Burhanuddin, B., & Suriyati, S. (2022). PERSEPSI PESERTA SUSCATIN TERHADAP BIMBINGAN PERKAWINAN DI KUA SINJAI UTARA KABUPATEN SINJAI. *Jurnal Mimbar: Media Intelektual Muslim Dan Bimbingan Rohani*, 8(1), 1–12.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Sage Publications.
- Dewi. (2022, Mei). *Kedudukan Nilai-Nilai Perempuan dalam Keluarga dan Masyarakat* [Personal communication].
- Farhan, M. (2022, July 16). Jeleknya Citra Wadon Indramayu: Antara Kebenaran dan Sesat Pikir. *Kompasiana*. <https://www.kompasiana.com/muhammadfarhan0058/60dc71c415251073a7508104/jeleknya-citra-wadon-indramayu-antara-kebenaran-dan-sesat-pikir>.
- Hilmi, I. L. (2023). Mu'asyarah bil ma'ruf sebagai asas perkawinan (Kajian Qs. al-Nisa: 19 dan Qs. Al-Baqarah: 228). *Misykat Al-Anwar Jurnal Kajian Islam Dan Masyarakat*, 6(2), 155–174.
- Hotimah, N. (2019). *PARENTING SKILLS DALAM PROGRAM BIMBINGAN PERKAWINAN: Studi Kasus di KUA Kecamatan Pamekasan* [PhD Thesis, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta]. <https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/40798>
- Huda, H. D., & Dodi, L. (2020). *Rethinking Peran Perempuan dan Keadilan Gender: Sebuah Konstruksi Metodologis Berbasis Sejarah dan Perkembangan Sosial Budaya*. CV Cendekia Press.
- Hurlock, E. B. (1997). *Psikologi perkembangan: Suatu pendekatan sepanjang rentang kehidupan*. <http://library.stik-ptik.ac.id/detail?id=25662&lokasi=lokal>
- Indah, I. (2013). Peran-peran perempuan dalam masyarakat. *Academica*, 5(2).
- Irawaty, & Darajat, Z. (2019). Kedudukan dan Peran Perempuan dalam Perspektif Islam dan Adat Minangkabau. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Studies*, 59(76).

- James, W. B., Witte, J. E., & Galbraith, M. W. (2006). Havighurst's Social Roles Revisited. *Journal of Adult Development*, 13(1), 52–60.
- Kasus Perceraian Meningkat 53%, Mayoritas Karena Pertengkaran. (2022, March 30). *Badan Pusat Statistik*.
- M. Supraja. (2013). *Potret Feminisme Muslim: Studi Pemikiran Lima Feminis Muslim di Indonesia*. Sadra International Institute.
- Mulia, M. (2007). Islam & inspirasi kesetaraan gender. (No Title). <https://cir.nii.ac.jp/crid/1130000796857549312>
- Muzaki, L. (2022, Mei). *Wawancara Mengenai Konteks Keluarga Sakinah* [Personal communication].
- Nugoho, A. (2021, September 6). Janda Corona, Selama Pandemi 5.980 Wanita Muda Menceraikan Suaminya di Indramayu – Cirebon Raya. *Cirebon Raya Pikiran Rakyat*. <https://cirebonraya.pikiran-rakyat.com/ciayumajakuning/pr-1141326979/janda-corona-selama-pandemi-5980-wanita-muda-menceraikan-suaminya-di-indramayu>
- Nurfauziah, A. (2018). *Bimbingan Pranikah bagi Calon Pengantin dalam Mewujudkan Keluarga Sakinah di Kantor Urusan Agama (KUA) Kecamatan Cimanggung Kabupaten Sumedang* [PhD Thesis, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung]. <https://digilib.uinsgd.ac.id/9764/>
- Prayogi, A., & Jauhari, M. (2021). Bimbingan Perkawinan Calon Pengantin: Upaya Mewujudkan Ketahanan Keluarga Nasional. *Islamic Counseling: Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling Islam*, 5(2), 223–242.
- Putri, A. F. (2019). Pentingnya orang dewasa awal menyelesaikan tugas perkembangannya. *SCHOULID: Indonesian Journal of School Counseling*, 3(2), 35–40.
- Sahlan, J. (2022, Mei). *Wawancara Mengenai Kritik Stereotip Masyarakat Luar Tentang Budaya WINREI (Kawin Cerai) di Indramayu* [Personal communication].
- Sahmiatik, E., & Subaidi, S. (2022). Perceraian, Aktor, Modal Pendidikan, dan Ekonomi dalam Masyarakat Indramayu. *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan*, 8(1), 178–188.
- Sakina, A. I. (2017). Menyoroti budaya patriarki di Indonesia. *Share Social Work Journal*, 7(1), 71–80.
- Samsidar, S. (2020). Peran ganda wanita dalam rumah tangga. *An Nisa'*, 12(2), 655–663.
- Sanidah, S. (2022). *Rangda Cilik turunan Indramayu (RCTI) dan tingginya jumlah kasus perceraian di Kecamatan Arahau Kabupaten Indramayu* [PhD Thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim]. <http://etheses.uin-malang.ac.id/id/eprint/33590>

- Saputra, S. (2022, Mei). *Wawancara Mengenai Konteks Keluarga Sakinah* [Personal communication].
- Sundani, F. L. (2018). Layanan Bimbingan Pra Nikah dalam Membentuk Kesiapan Mental Calon Pengantin. *Irsyad: Jurnal Bimbingan, Penyuluhan, Konseling, Dan Psikoterapi Islam*, 6(2), 165-184.
- Supriati, K. (2022, Mei). *Kedudukan Perempuan dalam Keluarga dan Masyarakat* [Personal communication].
- Surbakti, R. (2021). Peran perempuan sebagai anak, istri, dan ibu. *Jurnal Kajian Gender Dan Anak*, 4(2), 123-136.
- Syafii, M. (2022, Mei). *Wawancara Mengenai Konteks Keluarga Sakinah* [Personal communication].
- Syam, N. F. (2018). *Pemahaman Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Hadis (Studi Tekstual dan Kontekstual Dalam Al-Kutub As-Sittah)* [PhD Thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara]. <http://repository.uinsu.ac.id/4304/1/Tesis%20FIX.pdf>
- Vreede-de Stuers, C. (2017). *Sejarah Perempuan Indonesia: Gerakan & Pencapaian. (No Title)*. <https://cir.nii.ac.jp/crid/1130282268685257344>
- Wakid. (2022, Mei). *Wawancara Mengenai Kritik Stereotip Masyarakat Luar Tentang Budaya WINREI (Kawin Cerai) di Indramayu* [Personal communication].
- Wati, M., Subekti, A., & Jazari, I. (2019). Analisis Program Bimbingan Perkawinan Dalam Mewujudkan Keluarga Sakinah Studi Kasus Di KUA Lowokwaru Kota Malang. *Jurnal Hikmatina*, 1(2), 113-119.
- Widyastini, W. (2008). Gerakan Feminisme Islam Dalam Perspektif Fatimah Mernissi. *Jurnal Filsafat*, 18(1), 65-80.
- Yuliana, F. (2022, July 16). Stereotip Perempuan Indramayu. *Mubadalah*. <https://mubadalah.id/stereotip-perempuan-indramayu>
- Yusuf, M., Baharuddin, B., & Mardan, M. (2020). The Quranic Hermeneutics Approach To Gender Equality In Amina Wadud Muhsin's View. *Jurnal Adabiyah*, 20(2), 214-237.
- Zulfikar, E. (2019). Peran Perempuan Dalam Rumah Tangga Perspektif Islam: Kajian Tematik Dalam Alquran Dan Hadis. *Diya Al-Afkar: Jurnal Studi al-Quran Dan al-Hadis*, 7(01), 79-100.