The Role of Islamic Religious Counselors in Providing Premarital Guidance at the Religious Affairs Office of Sultan Daulat District, Subulussalam City, Aceh Province

Zainuddin[1], Dhiauddin Tanjung[2], Ramadhan Syahmedi Siregar[3]
[1,2,3]Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia
Email: zainuddinsinaga09@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of premarital guidance at the Religious Affairs Office of Sultan Daulat District, the materials provided in premarital guidance at the Religious Affairs Office of Sultan Daulat District, and the SWOT analysis of premarital guidance at the Religious Affairs Office of Sultan Daulat District. The study used a nautical qualitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews and documentation studies. This study revealed several important findings regarding premarital guidance at the Religious Affairs Office of Sultan Daulat District. The implementation of this guidance follows the requirements for marriage registration in accordance with the latest regulations. Participants were very satisfied with the ease and flexibility of time provided during the guidance, which was arranged according to the agreement between the presenter and participants. Religious counselors showed responsibility and consistency in their duties, making positive contributions to the community by being active in discussions and question and answer sessions. The guidance material was delivered by two groups of presenters: Islamic religious counselors and representatives from the National Population and Family Planning Agency and health agencies. The material covered the management of psychology and family dynamics, reproductive health, and the foundations of a harmonious family. Religious counselors used an independent method in delivering their material. The SWOT analysis shows that religious counselors play a role in reducing the divorce rate in the area. They are also effective in reducing the spread of hoax news about premarital counseling. The guidance methods applied and the flexibility of implementation time help simplify the process and overcome the negative stigma that is often associated with premarital counseling at the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office.
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Keywords: *Islamic Religious Counselor, Premarital Guidance.*

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A. INTRODUCTION

The term household comes from the ancestors of the Indonesian nation, which gives a very deep philosophical meaning taken from the root word "tangga". The classic perspective ladder is in the form of two supporting pillars, which are interpreted as husband and wife, then have a foothold that unites or connects the two pillars, each foothold is interpreted as a journey of life in a family, the more steps that are passed, the more it takes the family to the peak of its achievements, depending on the vision in the family what is to be achieved at the peak. However, it must be realized that each step has an empty space as an interlude, which reflects emptiness, uncertainty and even obstacles, trials and blows that cannot be missed in navigating family relationships in the household.

Carrying out marriage is the embodiment of the most important principles and main points of life in human relationships and the perfection of social spirit in the order of society. Marriage is not just a path to glory in the order of life to strengthen physical and spiritual relationships and efforts to reap offspring, but also to spread the wings of family ties which have implications for mutual assistance and strengthening, even more than that it is a means of perfecting worship to Allah SWT. Rasjid, (2015: 374-375). Affirming by quoting the Law on Marriage, stated in Chapter 1 Article 1 Number 1 of 1974, states that marriage is a physical and spiritual bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife with the aim of forming a happy and eternal family (household) based on the Almighty God. Every family certainly longs for the realization of a family that is full of nuances of peace, love, affection or in other words, a calm, happy, harmonious family, full of romantic love that jokes in every corner and side of the romantic family frame. The truth of this in the family is certainly impossible to achieve without the existence of togetherness of roles, and high consistency collaboration for all family members in the household. Father as head of the family, mother as protector of feelings and intentions, and children as the generation of heirs to the family's good name, each has a very large and significant role (Ridwan, 2012: 5). Therefore, it is inevitable that all family members maximize their roles as internal family members, while external members, including religious counselors, play a very important role in providing guidance to prospective brides and grooms so that in navigating the ship of household, they can create a family that is *sakinah, mawaddah,* and *warahmah* (Uzda, 2018: 4).

More specifically, it is explained that the guidance and counseling process certainly requires interaction between the client and the counselor, between the counselor and the prospective bride and groom, this interaction takes various approaches, in addition to Islamic arguments, also through interpersonal communication, persuasion and even analogies that are able to provide stimulus illustrations in the household framework, for example with the history of successful families, both past history and contemporary practitioners. Likewise, the formation of a family requires mutual recognition, personality character, enthusiasm and also mutual support between families so that they can pour out affection and remind and motivate each other in building a true household (Uzda, 2018: 5)

The findings of divorce data specifically in Aceh Province, reported by the Aceh Central Statistics Agency, that divorce data in Aceh Province in the last two years, 2021 as many as 6,442 and in 2022 as many as 7.7 96. Meanwhile, divorce data based on the annual register decision at the Subulussalam City Sharia Court in 2023 as many as 102 cases, higher than the previous two years, namely, 2022 as many as 93, and 2021 as many as 101. According to the Aceh Central Statistics Agency, there are several factors that cause divorce cases, including adultery, drunkenness, using illegal drugs, gambling, death of one of the partners and also being sentenced to prison (Directory of Decisions of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia). Based on the initial observation conducted by the researcher at the Religious Affairs Office of Sultan Daulat District, it is required for every couple who have registered

for marriage to attend guidance as pre-marital preparation. The guidance process will be carried out at least ten working days after registration, while the guidance providers are Islamic Religious Counselors who take turns, according to the attendance list on the appointed day. In addition, according to a statement from an Islamic Religious Counselor at the Religious Affairs Office of Sultan Daulat District, people who have registered to get married at the Religious Affairs Office are required to attend the pre-marital guidance process without exception. Meanwhile, the purpose of pre-marital guidance for the internal Religious Affairs Office itself in the institution is certainly part of the embodiment in hacking and at least minimizing the divorce rate in Subulussalam City, especially in Sultan Daulat District.

B. METHOD

The type of research uses qualitative research, with a naturalistic approach. This research examines data that can describe complex and concrete social realities. Qualitative research is the collection of data in the form of words, pictures and not numbers, formulas or other graphs. Qualitative research is often called a naturalistic research method because the research is conducted in natural conditions (Sugiono, 2007) Theoretically, qualitative research is research that is limited to efforts to reveal a problem and situation as it is without engineering, so that it is only a disclosure of facts by analyzing existing data. Cracken as quoted by Muhajir (2010) said that in qualitative research, concepts and categories, not events or frequencies, are questioned. In other words, qualitative research does not examine an empty land but it digs it. While the purpose of qualitative research, as explained by Sujarweni (2014) is to understand social phenomena or symptoms by providing an explanation in the form of a clear description of the social phenomena or symptoms in the form of a series of words that will ultimately produce a theory.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Activities for Implementing Premarital Guidance at the Sultan Daulat District Religious Affairs Office

Activities in each implementation of guidance at the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office have several research findings, especially when examining previous specific findings. Among the research findings that are results and worthy of discussion are the requirements that must be fulfilled for every prospective bride and groom, when applying for registration at the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office. In the researcher's search regarding the marriage requirements, which were conveyed directly by the head of the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office, they were exactly the same as those required in Minister of Religion Regulation Number 20 of 2019, in Article 2 paragraph (1), namely as follows; 1) photocopy of National Identity Card (bride and groom, mother and father & 2 marriage witnesses), 2) photocopy of Family Card. 3) photocopy of birth certificate, 4) photocopy of last diploma, 5) letter of origin (N1, N2, N4, N5), 6) stamped statement of status (junior/virgin), 7) passport photo, 8) soft copy of photo, 9) letter of recommendation

(prospective bride and groom outside the sub-district), 10) divorce certificate (prospective bride and groom who is a widower), 11) death certificate (divorcee), 12) health injection letter, 13) Mobile Number or Email 14) folder"

The Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office provides many conveniences to the public, such as in preparing administrative requirements such as regarding the origin (N1, N2, N4, N5), or other requirements that are required to be entered on a computer, the Religious Affairs Office directs the registrants To go to one of the photocopying services in Sultan Daulat District, they have been collaborating verbally for a long time, so the administrative format is just to change the name or identity of each registrant. This is a form of seriousness of bureaucratic responsibility for public services, both carried out by the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office towards the community (Law Number 25 of 2009, concerning Public Services & Government Regulation Number 2 of 2018, concerning Minimum Service Standards. Meanwhile the speaker or in the regulations it is said that facilitators for mentors for prospective brides and grooms when carrying out guidance have met the standards, as required by regulations, namely that the facilitator presenters come from internally or collaborate with other agencies (Decree of the Directorate General of Islamic Community Guidance Number 172 of 2022, concerning Marriage Guidance Future bride and groom).

Regarding the implementation of the guidance process, it also makes the guidance participants receive material that is very easy, flexible and practical. Moreover, for the Islamic Religious Counselors in Sultan Daulat, in providing marriage guidance, some pay attention to the psychological conditions of the participants, or use an introductory approach with participants who come from the same sub-district, so that the counselors are able to describe and explain the content of the material according to their character and character. the participant's ability to accept each material presented. In the confession of one of the marriage guidance participants, he stated that the material presented was very substantive to the main points of marriage, while the place and time in particular were very flexible, there was no pressure for the presenters to be in this room, or other conditions, because it was based on Guidance for prospective brides and grooms in pre-wedding is essentially, apart from carrying out regulatory orders, it is also just a reminder of religious laws and ways of worship in navigating the household ship.

With the informant's admission of representatives of people who had carried out premarital guidance at the Religious Affairs Office, it gives an indication that the Islamic Religious Counselors at the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office have carried out their duties and functions as community counselors in illuminating Islamic teachings. This is in accordance with the regulations that religious instructors have a role as community guides (Decree of the Minister of Religion, Number 79 of 1985). More specifically, the duties and responsibilities of Islamic Religious Counselors are to provide marriage guidance by holding courses for prospective brides and grooms, developing sakinah family formation, providing pre-marital and post-marital education (Samad, 2021:93).

2. Material Provided in Pre-Marital Guidance at the Sultan Daulat District Religious Affairs Office

The material presented to prospective bride and groom guidance participants is very varied, but remains within the framework of the main material required by the regulations, namely; 1) Foundation of a *sakinah* family 2) Managing psychology and family dynamics, 3) Meeting family needs, 4) Maintaining reproductive health, 4) Building a quality generation

Paralleling the research findings that the researcher explored in interviews, that each material had been fulfilled and delivered by the presenters (facilitators) to be received by the bride and groom participants. From these five materials, by summarizing information from informants in a study of specific research findings, the researcher can specify each material presented and who submitted it, whether internal or external, as outlined below:

a. Foundation of the Sakinah Family (Islamic Religious Counselors)
b. Managing Psychology and Family Dynamics (National Population and Family Planning Agency)
c. Fulfilling Family Needsb (Islamic Religious Counselor)
d. Maintaining Reproductive Health (Health Institutions)
e. Building a Quality Generation (Islamic Religious Counselors)

The description above is an explanation of the completeness of the composition of the material and the delivery of the material is considered to have professionalism according to the qualifications of the agencies in their respective fields. Meanwhile, the study of sub-materials is more rigorously explained, as in the following points below:

a. National Population and Family Planning Agency (Family Planning Agency)
    1) Avoid getting married too young
    2) Prevent marriage from being too old (elderly)
    3) Prevent the birth of children too close
    4) Prevent a mother from giving birth to too many children
    5) Prevents stalling
b. Health Institutions
    a. Examination for psychiatric disorders
    b. Routine examination of Narcotics, Psychotropics and other Addictive Substances
    c. Routine nutrition and obesity checks
    d. Thalassemia genetic examination
    e. Routine checks for sexually transmitted infections
    f. Routine diabetes mellitus checks
c. Islamic Religious Counselor

    For the presenters from Islamic Religious Counselors, apart from the three main themes, namely 1) the foundation of a *sakinah* family, 2) meeting family needs and 3) building a quality generation, the counselors also deepened the religious foundations

or postulates regarding the material points presented from Family Planning agencies and health agencies.

Quoting from one of the explanations of the Islamic Religious Counselor at the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office, which stated that, for every material conveyed from Family Planning agencies and health agencies, the Religious Instructor adds Islamic postulates, both from the Koran, Sunnah, Ijamak and Qiyas (analogy). This aims to ensure that guidance participants do not feel worried or have dilemmas in their thoughts, for example between the recommendation to distance children and whether or not this is permissible in Islamic principles. Therefore, by emphasizing and synchronizing the material presented with the Islamic propositions, it gives affirmation to each prospective bride and groom participant to be able to maintain or practice every material presented.

Quoting from Marzuki's research results (2021: 174-175) which states that the specific material presented to prospective bride and groom participants during pre-wedding counseling can be in classified into 3 categories: 1) Al-Quran learning, 2) Al- Quran learning is only emphasized on two sides, namely from the etiquette side of reading the Koran and the knowledge of Tajwid, and 3) Marriage rules.

From the results of the research above, according to the researcher's research, it is slightly different from the material presented by religious instructors at the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office, even the head of the Religious Affairs Office suggested not to focus on studying the science of the Koran, let alone testing the bride and groom participants. Because the context of the ability to read the Koran will be deepened in the family structure when the prospective bride becomes a prospective father. Meanwhile, what is really emphasized is religious studies, for example prayer and the practice of *janabah* bathing, which after marriage will be addressed and practiced in the implementation procedures. Apart from that, the material that is no less important is conveyed by social religious instructors in starting a family so that it can be lasting and the instructor can play a contributing role in preventing the divorce rate, especially for the people of Sultan Daulat District.

Furthermore, regarding the method of delivering the material by the presenter (facilitator) to the prospective bride and groom participants, this is also very important, considering that the material is good, which suits the needs of the prospective bride and groom, but the method of delivery is not interesting or makes the participants bored and boring in receiving the mating guidance material. , it also provides an indication of the essential failure of the marriage guidance implementation process. According to Ghazali in Kutp Sudarso (2005: 82), it is a way of conveying material or messages to achieve certain goals. Methods used in pre-guidance marriage is:

a. Lecture method

   By conveying the material to the prospective bride and groom orally, in this case the material presented is material about marriage

b. Discussion and question and answer methods
Where in the pre-guidance process the prospective bride and groom can also discuss or ask the counselor about things they don't know about marriage or problems that may occur in a family.

Meanwhile, in the procedures for delivering material on the perspective of marriage regulations, it is stated that there are three procedures for implementing premarital guidance, namely;

a. Face to Face Method;
   1) Face-to-face meetings are held at the sub-district Religious Affairs Office or other institutions
   2) The face-to-face meeting is attended by a minimum of 5 prospective bride and groom couples, a maximum of 15 prospective bride and groom couples
   3) Face-to-face meetings were held for 2 days with 5 main material sessions
   4) Providing sessions and main materials
   5) Providing sessions and supplementary materials
   6) The face-to-face schedule is determined by the committee
   7) Determining the place of implementation
b. Virtual Method
   1) Carrying out virtual parties from the Office of Religious Affairs or other institutions as presenters (facilitators)
   2) Virtually attended by a minimum of 10 prospective bride and groom couples, a maximum of 40 prospective bride and groom couples
   3) Virtual method preparation, (WhatsApp group, group companion)
   4) Virtual implementation (conducting sessions, providing session materials)
   5) The facilitator accompanies participants for 30 days before disbanding the WhatsApp group.
c. Independent Method
   1) Carried out at the sub-district Religious Affairs Office
   2) The Religious Affairs Office sets a regular independent schedule
   3) Marriage counseling participants can attend individually or as a couple
   4) Sessions and materials (division of main material sessions and supplementary material sessions)
   5) Providing sessions and materials
   6) Test reflections can be given online

This is the method for delivering regulatory perspective material, with three options for implementation, face-to-face, virtual and independent. Reflecting on the researcher's findings regarding the method used by Islamic Religious Counselors at the sub-district Religious Affairs Office in providing marriage guidance, through interviews with informants which the researcher presented in previous special findings, that the method that has been used so far is to use the lecture method and also question and answer after delivering the material. delivered to the marriage guidance participants, and according to the informant's account, the participants

occasionally interrupted to ask questions when the counselors were providing the material. The instructors welcome questions, because of the behavior of the instructors in providing material in a democratic and open form, not with the concept of patronizing, let alone forcing them to fill in all the instructors' knowledge, in other words, the implementation of Biwin is relaxed and open, like panel and interactive discussions between presenter (facilitator) with marriage guidance participants

Meanwhile, for three of the implementation procedures for conducting premarital guidance according to the concept offered by the regulations above, the Islamic Religious Counselors at the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office prefer the independent method. Marriage guidance activities are carried out by the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office, and the administrator of the Religious Affairs Office sets a regular independent schedule, while pre-marital guidance (marriage guidance) participants can also take part in guidance individually or as a couple. This was done by the Office of Religious Affairs with the aim of making it easier for guidance participants, so that they are not bound by time and circumstances. This includes scheduling, although it is determined by the administrator of the Office of Religious Affairs, but it is still up to the agreement of the participants, and participants who have prospective partners who live far away, are also not forced to be in pairs to take part in the guidance process.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Religious Counselors always receive a schedule for each guidance, the extension members are more focused on the material provided and can be used as a guide or a kind of reflection for the guidance participants, so that the absorption of the material is good and easy to understand, especially in social life, it is hoped that they will be able to maintain the ship. a household that is *sakinah, mawaddah, warahmah* until death separates the marriage ties. That is the orientation of the counselors, in instilling values from the material presented, with this, it is not surprising that now the community's response is gradually improving that the implementation of pre-wedding (bride-to-be) guidance at the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office, has the concept of *sharing* scientific *muzakarah* discussions. and experience through the framework of Islamic teachings, as well as the implementation of flexible and fraternal guidance between presenters (facilitators) and guidance participants.

3. SWOT Analysis in Premarital Guidance at the Sultan Daulat District Religious Affairs Office?

The implementation of pre-marital guidance at the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office, carried out by Islamic Religious Counselors or presenters from other agencies, is something that is also commonly carried out in various Religious Affairs Offices in other sub-districts. However, the nature of its implementation certainly cannot be separated from various situations and circumstances, because SWOT analysis is used as an assessor or analysis tool which is very appropriate for making positive contributions, namely specifically with this analysis uncovering strengths,

weaknesses, opportunities and threats that occur during the implementation of guidance. pre-wedding at the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office during the period 2022 to 2023.

Elaborating on the results and discussion of the research in this third question is also inseparable from the specific findings of previous research, namely the extraction of information through interviews with informants and participants. To make it easier to analyze the four indicators in the SWOT analysis theory which relate to the implementation of premarital guidance, then all the informant's answers will be mapped in table form, by adapting them to the SWOT analysis indicators, as described in the table below:

Table 1 SWOT Analysis

No	Informant	Informant's Answers According to SWOT Analysis Indicators			
		Strengths	**Wheakness**	**Opportunities**	**Threats**
1	Informant I	The completeness of the presenters (facilitators), whether from external parties, Family Planning agencies, health, or internally, namely Islamic Religious Counselors, who are experts in Islamic religious knowledge, on average they are Islamic boarding school graduates.	There are no guidelines or technical guidelines for guidance materials, so each instructor presents a variety of materials.	Premarital guidance techniques have the opportunity to adjust regulations. Through, good cooperation and educational qualifications of all undergraduate extension workers	Information in society makes premarital guidance difficult. Anticipation, lightening of the Koran reading test material is eliminated
2	Informant II	Potential content and method of delivering material. Islamic religious instructors are professional and proportional	Material, not the same. The prospective bride and groom are less disciplined about their time and clothes.	Complete interla & external speakers. Communication makes guidebooks, because the average instructor is an expert at writing	Limited facilities are a negative issue, which has implications for choosing to get married without going through the Office of Religious Affairs
3	Informant III	Participants receive a certificate. The premarital counseling process at the Office of Religious Affairs seems easy and fast	-	Establish cooperation between institutions and agencies in the community	-
4	Informant IV	Substantive material, flexible time, and can be agreed upon	There is minimal discipline, and the committee	Potential instructors, worthy of online (virtual)	Ignoring virtual guidance will instill a

			does not wait for participants	guidance,	negative stigma in the Office of Religious Affairs
5	Informant V	updates on the renewal of the marriage guidance system. Availability of Elsimil certificates from the Family Planning Agency,	There is no certificate yet from the Office of Religious Affairs. As instructed by regulations	marriage guidance, flexible, and has the opportunity to open access to marriage guidance via online (virtual)	Hoax regarding difficult marriage guidance at the Religious Affairs Office. In reality, marriage guidance is a means of religious and social understanding of the household

The explanation of the table above indicates that the results of the researcher's interviews with several informants stated that the strengths and opportunities that the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office has in increasing the potential for improvement in the implementation of premarital guidance are quite numerous, as well as weaknesses and threats. These weaknesses or threats are more likely to be due to the lack of uniformity in the material provided by the instructors, while the threat is more to do with the spread of hoaxes among the public who claim that premarital guidance is at the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office, but in reality, all of this is refuted by the opinion of one of the informants who once carried out the guidance. get married at the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office which includes substantive material and flexible timing. However, it is still a note for the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office that socialization needs to continue to be encouraged and access to digital media also needs to be updated. There are indications of threats, if the hoax continues to circulate in society, it will give a negative stigma to the institution and people will choose to marry outside the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office.

Among the functions of the Religious Affairs Office as stated in the provisions of Supreme Court Regulation Number 34 of 2016, include providing guidance and information services regarding Islamic religious studies, and guidance services for sakinah families. Referring to the regulatory information, the Islamic Religious Counselors at the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office, in relation to carrying out their roles and duties, by paralleling the SWOT analysis theory, according to the confessions of research informants in interviews, give indications that Islamic Religious Counselors in providing pre-wedding guidance for prospective brides and

grooms at the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office, providing positive implications, including;

a. Play a role in minimizing the divorce rate in Sultan Daulat District
b. Play a role in minimizing hoax news regarding difficulties with marriage at the Religious Affairs Office
c. Simplifying the material and methods for delivering premarital guidance, flexible implementation times so as to eliminate the negative stigma that the guidance process at the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office is difficult and takes a long time to implement

D. CONCLUSION

The implementation of this guidance follows the requirements for marriage registration in accordance with the latest regulations. Participants were very satisfied with the ease and flexibility of time provided during the guidance, which was arranged according to the agreement between the presenter and participants. Religious counselors showed responsibility and consistency in their duties, making positive contributions to the community by being active in discussions and question and answer sessions. The guidance material was delivered by two groups of presenters: Islamic religious counselors and representatives from the National Population and Family Planning Agency and health agencies. The material covered the management of psychology and family dynamics, reproductive health, and the foundations of a harmonious family. Religious counselors used an independent method in delivering their material. The SWOT analysis shows that religious counselors play a role in reducing the divorce rate in the area. They are also effective in reducing the spread of hoax news about premarital counseling. The guidance methods applied and the flexibility of implementation time help simplify the process and overcome the negative stigma that is often associated with premarital counseling at the Sultan Daulat Religious Affairs Office.

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