Strengthening Family Law and Gender Equality in Premarital Guidance: Preventing Domestic Violence and Divorce in Banyumas

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Abstract

Premarital guidance prepares prospective couples for family life and may help prevent domestic violence (DV) and divorce. However, implementation varies according to program management and community conditions. This study examines premarital guidance in Banyumas Regency and the need to strengthen family law and gender equality content. It employs empirical legal research with a qualitative approach, drawing on interviews with marriage guidance organizers at several Offices of Religious Affairs (KUA). The findings reveal implementation gaps, including the absence of systematic annual data in some KUAs, non-standardized guidance duration, facilitator appointments based primarily on official assignments rather than competency assessment, and the lack of pre-tests and post-tests. Some community members also perceive premarital guidance as an administrative formality. Socioeconomic conditions and educational backgrounds affect participants' ability to understand and internalize the material, particularly in peripheral areas. These findings highlight the need to strengthen premarital guidance through standardized family law and gender equality materials, competency-based facilitator selection, structured learning evaluation, and approaches adapted to participants' socioeconomic and educational circumstances. Such improvements may help prepare prospective couples to build more equitable and resilient families and support efforts to prevent domestic violence and divorce.

Keywords: Divorce; Domestic Violence; Family Law; Gender Equality; Premarital Guidance

I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is not merely a legal union between two individuals; it also establishes a relationship involving reciprocal rights, obligations, responsibilities, and expectations concerning family life. The transition to marriage requires prospective couples to develop an understanding of family law, communication, financial responsibilities, conflict management, reproductive health, and the equitable distribution of domestic roles. Without adequate preparation, differences in expectations and unequal power relations may complicate the process of establishing a stable household. Premarital guidance is therefore important as an educational and preventive mechanism through which prospective couples can acquire the knowledge and practical skills needed to navigate marital responsibilities. Nevertheless, the existence of such a program should not automatically be interpreted as evidence that domestic violence (DV) or divorce will be prevented. Its contribution depends, among other factors, on the relevance of its content, the quality of its delivery, and the extent to which participants understand and internalize the material.

Domestic violence remains a significant legal and social concern because it may involve physical, psychological, sexual, and economic abuse within the household. In Indonesia, Law No. 23 of 2004 concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence establishes a legal framework for prohibiting domestic violence and protecting victims. The law recognizes domestic violence as more than a private family dispute by providing a legal basis for victim protection and recovery. Nevertheless, the availability of legal protection does not necessarily ensure that victims can fully access or exercise their rights in practice (Saniah Saniah, 2024). Preventive efforts consequently require more than general advice about maintaining marital harmony. Prospective couples also need to understand the legal boundaries of acceptable conduct, the rights of each spouse, the forms of conduct that constitute abuse, and the available avenues for seeking assistance. Such knowledge is particularly relevant when harmful behavior is normalized as a domestic matter or justified through unequal interpretations of marital authority.

Gender equality is central to this preventive agenda because domestic relationships are shaped not only by individual behavior but also by social expectations concerning authority, obedience, economic control, and the division of family responsibilities. McCarthy et al in a systematic review of measures examining gender, power, and intimate partner violence, identified gender-inequitable norms and unequal relationship power as important dimensions in research on violence perpetration (McCarthy et al., 2018). This evidence supports the need to examine how gender-related assumptions are addressed in educational interventions. Similarly, Alsina et al, in a systematic review and meta-analysis of interventions to prevent intimate partner violence, found an overall protective effect across the interventions examined and reported that interventions involving men as well as women were more effective than those targeting women alone (Alsina et al., 2024). These findings do not establish that premarital guidance in Banyumas has reduced domestic violence. Rather, they provide a broader evidence base for considering gender-responsive and inclusive prevention strategies. Premarital guidance should therefore encourage prospective husbands and

wives to recognize one another as rights-bearing partners, understand their respective legal responsibilities, reject violence and coercive control, and develop fair approaches to decision-making and household management.

The integration of gender equality into family-law education is also relevant within an Indonesian Muslim context. Religious concepts and family values can provide meaningful resources for discussing marital responsibility, mutual respect, and the protection of family members. Sapinah et al, for example, examine Qur'anic principles concerning marital rights and obligations and emphasize compassion, good treatment, justice, and responsibility as foundations for family relationships (Sapinah et al., 2024). Their study recommends incorporating Qur'anic values into premarital programs as part of domestic violence prevention. Because their research is based on library research and thematic interpretation, it offers a conceptual and normative foundation rather than empirical evidence about the implementation of guidance at local religious affairs offices. The educational challenge is to translate such principles into practical learning materials that clarify reciprocal rights and responsibilities and do not allow religious or cultural arguments to legitimize violence, intimidation, or the denial of a spouse's legal rights.

In Indonesia, the Office of Religious Affairs (Kantor Urusan Agama, KUA) has an important institutional position in marriage administration and family guidance. Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 30 of 2024 concerning Marriage Registration provides the current regulatory framework for marriage registration, including the processes associated with the registration of marriage intentions, examination, solemnization, and recording (Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 30 of 2024 Concerning Marriage Registration., 2024). In a letter dated 9 January 2026, the Directorate General of Islamic Community Guidance conveyed Decision No. 1221 of 2025 concerning the implementation of marriage guidance for prospective couples and instructed regional offices to ensure that prospective couples receive guidance in accordance with the applicable provisions (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2026). This policy context makes the quality of implementation an important subject of empirical inquiry. The existence of a regulatory framework, however, does not by itself demonstrate that the guidance is delivered uniformly or that its learning objectives are achieved in every KUA.

Previous studies have examined family guidance, gender equality, and domestic-violence prevention from different perspectives, Wuryaningsih and Restuadhi investigated family guidance services at several Offices of Religious Affairs (KUAs) in Banyumas Regency and identified operational constraints related to time, facilitators, budget, and health protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic (Wuryaningsih, 2020). Rambe et al. examined Islamic premarital counseling at KUA Panyabungan, highlighting the integration of compassion, equality, and justice while identifying limited counseling time and perceptions of guidance as an administrative formality as implementation challenges (Rambe et al., 2025). Meanwhile, Muttaqin et al; focused on counseling and support for women experiencing domestic violence through LRC-KJHAM in

Semarang (Muttaqin et al., 2016). Building on these studies, the present research focuses on the intersection of family law, gender equality, and the implementation of premarital guidance in Banyumas, particularly the program arrangements that may affect the delivery and evaluation of its educational content. Their study concerns assistance after violence has occurred rather than preventive education for prospective couples. It nevertheless highlights the need to distinguish premarital prevention from services intended to protect, support, and restore victims. Taken together, these studies provide relevant perspectives on institutional implementation, gender-sensitive family education, and victim support, but they address different stages and dimensions of the broader prevention and response framework.

The preliminary interview findings for the present study indicate several implementation issues in the selected KUAs in Banyumas. The duration of guidance may be adjusted flexibly according to the availability of prospective couples or the scheduling arrangements of the KUA, rather than following a consistently applied duration across the locations examined. Facilitator appointments are described as being based on assignment letters, while competency assessment as a separate selection mechanism was not identified in the information provided by the researcher. The researcher also reports that pre-tests and post-tests are not used to assess participants' learning outcomes. In addition, annual records of prospective couples or guidance activities are available in some KUAs but not in others. Some community members reportedly perceive guidance as a formal administrative requirement rather than a learning process requiring active participation. Educational background and socioeconomic circumstances may further affect participants' ability to understand and internalize the material, although these contextual factors should not be treated as direct causes of domestic violence or divorce without additional evidence.

These preliminary findings point to an implementation question that is not fully answered by the existence of a regulatory mandate or by studies that focus primarily on the general role of family guidance. The issue is whether the substantive preparation provided to prospective couples is supported by consistent program management, appropriately prepared facilitators, systematic documentation, and a means of assessing learning. The absence of pre tests and post tests, for example, does not by itself prove that participants learn nothing; it means that the available implementation information does not provide a structured before-and-after measure of their understanding. Similarly, incomplete annual records do not establish that guidance was not delivered, but they may limit the ability of institutions to monitor participation and evaluate implementation over time. These distinctions are necessary to ensure that the analysis remains grounded in the available evidence rather than making claims that exceed the research design.

The research gap addressed in this article is therefore located at the intersection of substantive content and implementation governance. Previous research in Banyumas has documented KUA family-guidance services and operational constraints, while research in Lamongan has examined gender equality content and the limited duration of premarital guidance. Studies on marital rights, gendered power relations, and victim counseling provide further conceptual and practical insights. However, the present study examines

how the need to strengthen family-law and gender-equality content relates to the reported implementation conditions in selected KUAs in Banyumas, particularly flexible scheduling, facilitator appointment practices, the absence of pre test and post test assessment, and uneven annual documentation. Its contribution is an empirically grounded analysis of how content and implementation arrangements can be considered together when developing recommendations for premarital guidance. The study does not measure the direct effect of guidance on subsequent domestic-violence incidence or divorce rates.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine the implementation of premarital guidance in selected KUAs in Banyumas Regency and analyze the need to strengthen family law and gender equality content as part of domestic-violence and divorce prevention efforts. It addresses three related questions: how premarital guidance is organized and delivered in the selected locations; what implementation issues may limit the systematic delivery and evaluation of relevant learning materials; and how family-law and gender equality content can be strengthened in ways that are responsive to the legal framework and the circumstances of prospective couples. By connecting empirical findings with existing scholarship and Indonesian regulatory policy, the article seeks to contribute practical recommendations for improving the substance, delivery, and monitoring of premarital guidance without assuming that the program alone can eliminate domestic violence or prevent every divorce.

II. METHOD

This study employed empirical legal research using a qualitative approach to examine the implementation of premarital guidance at selected Offices of Religious Affairs (Kantor Urusan Agama, KUAs) in Banyumas Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. An empirical legal approach was adopted to investigate how the applicable legal and institutional framework was implemented in practice. The qualitative approach enabled an in-depth examination of program organization, facilitator appointment practices, learning assessment, administrative documentation, and the need to strengthen family-law and gender-equality content in premarital guidance.

The research was conducted at four KUAs in Banyumas Regency: Purwokerto Utara, Purwokerto Selatan, Purwokerto Barat, and Purwokerto Timur. These locations were selected as the research settings to examine the implementation of premarital guidance across different KUA offices within the same regency. Data collection was conducted through interviews between June and July 2026. This period provided the temporal context for examining the implementation practices reported by the institutional representatives and the supporting documentation available during the research.

The primary data were obtained through interviews with four heads of KUA, with one informant representing each research location. The informants were selected purposively because their institutional positions provided relevant information concerning the organization and implementation of premarital guidance. The interviews explored the duration and scheduling of guidance sessions, facilitator appointment

procedures, the availability of annual records, the use of pre-tests and post-tests, and challenges in delivering guidance materials to prospective couples. The interviews also addressed the extent to which family-law principles and gender-equality considerations were incorporated into the program and the potential improvements needed to strengthen its implementation. The selection of institutional informants enabled the study to examine program management from the perspective of officials directly responsible for the respective KUA offices. However, the findings primarily reflect institutional perspectives and should not be interpreted as representing the experiences of all prospective couples or guidance facilitators.

Interview data were verified against available written records and relevant documents. This process involved comparing information obtained from the four KUA heads with documentary evidence to assess consistency and identify differences between reported practices and the information recorded in institutional documents. The documents were used to contextualize the interview findings, particularly regarding the availability of annual records and the administration of premarital guidance. Where documentary information was unavailable, this limitation was treated as a constraint on verification rather than automatic evidence that a particular activity had not occurred. The analysis also considered relevant legal and regulatory provisions to distinguish the applicable formal framework from reported implementation practices.

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively through the organization, comparison, and interpretation of interview information and documentary evidence. The analysis focused on four dimensions: program organization and scheduling, facilitator appointment practices, learning assessment and administrative documentation, and the substantive relevance of family-law and gender-equality materials. Information from the four research locations was compared to identify recurring implementation patterns and differences. The findings were subsequently interpreted in relation to the research questions, applicable regulations, and relevant scholarly literature. This process was intended to identify implementation gaps and formulate recommendations for improving the substance, delivery, and monitoring of premarital guidance.

The credibility of the findings was supported by cross-checking interview information against available written data and documents. This verification procedure helped distinguish information supported by documentary evidence from information derived primarily from informants' accounts. The analysis also maintained a distinction between observed or reported implementation conditions and the researcher's interpretation of their implications. Because the study focused on institutional implementation and did not measure domestic-violence incidence or divorce rates before and after participation in premarital guidance, it did not seek to establish a direct causal relationship between the program and reductions in domestic violence or divorce. Instead, the findings provide an empirical basis for assessing implementation conditions and identifying opportunities to strengthen family-law and gender-equality content in premarital guidance in Banyumas Regency.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Results

The findings are based on interviews with four heads of the Offices of Religious Affairs (Kantor Urusan Agama, KUAs) in Purwokerto Utara, Purwokerto Selatan, Purwokerto Barat, and Purwokerto Timur, conducted between June and July 2026. The interview data were cross-checked against available written records and institutional documents. The findings concern the organization of premarital guidance, facilitator preparation, the delivery of family-law and gender-related materials, participants' learning needs, and institutional resource constraints.

1. Scheduling and Duration of Premarital Guidance

The interviews indicated that premarital guidance was organized flexibly according to the availability of prospective couples and the scheduling arrangements of the respective KUAs. Work commitments were among the circumstances considered when determining the timing of guidance sessions. This arrangement allowed the institutions to accommodate prospective couples who might otherwise experience difficulties attending sessions at predetermined times.

However, the duration of guidance was not consistently standardized across the implementation practices described by the informants. The time allocated could be adjusted according to local arrangements and participants' availability. Although scheduling flexibility may facilitate participation, variations in duration raise questions about whether sufficient time is consistently available to address the different aspects of marital preparation.

The findings do not establish that flexible scheduling necessarily reduces the quality of guidance. Nevertheless, the combination of variable scheduling and non-standardized duration highlights the importance of ensuring that essential learning materials are delivered regardless of when or how long a session takes place. This is particularly relevant when prospective couples are expected to understand marital rights and obligations, family responsibilities, conflict management, and the legal protection of family members.

2. Facilitator Training and Competency Assessment

The interviews revealed a distinction between facilitator training and the mechanism used to assess facilitator competence. According to the information provided by the KUA heads, facilitators could receive training lasting approximately two weeks in Jakarta. However, a separate competency assessment specifically for premarital guidance facilitators was not identified. Facilitator appointments were based on official assignment letters.

These findings indicate that training opportunities were available, but the appointment process was not accompanied by a separate competency assessment of the kind the researcher identified in the mediator context. The distinction is important because participation in training and formal assessment of competence are not identical processes. Training provides an opportunity to develop knowledge and skills, whereas competency assessment evaluates whether the required standards have been met.

The available information does not establish that the facilitators lacked competence or that their training was inadequate. Rather, the findings identify a gap in the documented mechanism for assessing competence independently of training and official appointment. Further clarification of training standards, assessment procedures, and professional-development requirements would help establish how facilitator readiness is maintained across the selected KUAs.

3. Family Guidance Materials and the Limited Explicit Treatment of Gender Equality

One of the substantive findings concerned the treatment of gender equality in premarital guidance. According to the information obtained from the KUA heads, gender equality was not explicitly presented as a distinct topic in the guidance delivered to prospective couples. The perspective described by the informants tended to associate men with the responsibility of earning a living and women with the role of managing the household.

This understanding reflects a conventional division of marital roles. However, it does not fully account for the varied economic and social circumstances of contemporary families. Some women contribute substantially to household income, while others become the principal breadwinners. Indonesian women who work abroad as migrant workers also illustrate that women may undertake significant economic responsibilities for their families. These circumstances make it important for premarital guidance to address the diversity of family arrangements rather than assume that all households follow a single pattern of gender roles.

The finding concerns the limited explicit treatment of gender equality, not necessarily the complete absence of related values from all guidance materials. Concepts such as mutual responsibility, cooperation, and respect may be discussed within broader family guidance. Nevertheless, without explicit discussion of gender-related issues, participants may have fewer opportunities to examine how assumptions about household roles relate to decision-making, economic responsibilities, and the distribution of domestic work.

The findings therefore identify a need to examine how family-law principles and gender equality can be incorporated into the substantive content of premarital guidance. Relevant topics include the reciprocal rights and obligations of spouses, shared family responsibilities, fairness in household decision-making, and the legal boundaries of acceptable conduct within marriage. These topics can be addressed in ways that recognize the diversity of family circumstances while remaining consistent with the applicable legal framework.

4. Learning Assessment and Participants' Understanding

The interviews indicated that pre-tests and post-tests were not used as structured instruments to assess participants' understanding before and after guidance sessions. Consequently, the available information did not provide a systematic measure of changes in participants' knowledge. This finding does not demonstrate that participants failed to learn from the program; rather, it indicates that learning outcomes were not assessed through a standardized before-and-after procedure.

The absence of structured learning assessments is relevant to the evaluation of guidance content. Without a common assessment mechanism, it is difficult to determine systematically whether participants have understood important material concerning marital rights and obligations, gender relations, conflict management, and protection from domestic violence. It is also difficult to compare learning outcomes across different sessions or locations.

The interviews further indicated that some community members perceived premarital guidance primarily as an administrative formality associated with marriage. Such perceptions may create challenges for encouraging active participation in the educational process. However, the available evidence does not establish how widespread this perception is or demonstrate that it necessarily results in lower learning outcomes.

Educational background and socioeconomic circumstances were also identified as contextual factors that may influence participants' ability to understand and internalize the material, particularly in peripheral areas. These findings suggest the importance of clear explanations, accessible learning materials, and opportunities for discussion. They should not be interpreted as establishing that participants from particular socioeconomic or educational backgrounds are inherently less capable of understanding the guidance.

5. Budgetary and Institutional Constraints

The interviews identified budget limitations affecting several supporting aspects of premarital guidance. These included the provision of snacks for prospective couples, the involvement of external facilitators to supplement the delivery of materials, and the availability of physical and administrative facilities. The absence of structured pre-tests and post-tests was also identified as a limitation in the assessment of learning outcomes, although the extent to which this was directly attributable to budget constraints would require further documentary clarification.

These constraints concern the supporting conditions under which guidance is delivered. The availability of external facilitators may broaden the range of expertise and perspectives provided to participants, while appropriate facilities and learning-assessment instruments can support the organization and evaluation of sessions. Limitations in these areas may therefore restrict the range of supporting resources available to the program.

Nevertheless, the findings do not establish that budget limitations have prevented the selected KUAs from conducting premarital guidance. Nor do they demonstrate that providing snacks or additional facilities alone would improve participants' understanding. The more relevant issue is whether available resources adequately support the program's educational objectives, including the delivery of substantive materials, opportunities for interaction, and systematic assessment of learning.

6. Administrative Documentation and Program Monitoring

The examination of available records revealed differences in the availability of annual data relating to prospective couples or premarital guidance activities. Such records were available in some KUAs but not in others. This uneven availability limits the ability to compare participation and implementation systematically across the four research locations.

The absence of complete annual records does not establish that guidance activities did not occur. Instead, it represents a limitation in the documentary information available for monitoring the program. Consistent documentation could provide a clearer record of participation, the frequency of sessions, and the implementation arrangements applied by each KUA. When combined with structured learning assessments, administrative records could also support a more systematic review of program delivery over time.

Overall, the findings identify several areas requiring attention in the implementation of premarital guidance in the selected KUAs: flexible scheduling and non-standardized duration, the absence of a separate competency assessment for facilitators, the limited explicit treatment of gender equality, the lack of structured pre-tests and post-tests, uneven annual documentation, and constraints involving supporting resources. These findings provide an empirical basis for examining how the content, delivery, and monitoring of premarital guidance can be strengthened. They do not, however, establish a direct causal relationship between the identified implementation conditions and subsequent domestic-violence or divorce rates.

B. Discussion

1. Implementation of Premarital Guidance and the Challenge of Program Standardization

The findings from the four selected Offices of Religious Affairs (Kantor Urusan Agama or KUAs) in Purwokerto indicate that the implementation of premarital guidance is shaped by the need to accommodate the availability of prospective couples and the administrative arrangements of each office. Flexible scheduling may help couples participate despite work-related commitments. Nevertheless, flexibility in delivery raises a separate question concerning the consistency of the educational experience received by participants. When the duration and scheduling of guidance are adjusted without a consistently applied implementation framework, the amount of time available to discuss substantive issues may vary.

This finding is consistent with (Dhammanando & Nyanasuryanadi, 2024), whose systematic literature review of premarital guidance services in Indonesia identified government support, funding, and facilities as important components of program implementation. Their review also found variation in the organization of guidance services and the materials delivered. Similarly, (Gazi et al., 2022) found that premarital education in the Indonesian settings they examined lacked clear and coherent implementation standards, making it difficult to evaluate program performance. These studies provide a broader institutional context for interpreting the findings in Purwokerto: implementation challenges are not limited to the availability of guidance but also concern how the program is organized, delivered, and evaluated.

The implication is not that every KUA must apply an identical schedule regardless of local circumstances. Rather, a distinction should be made between standardizing minimum educational requirements and adapting the method of delivery. A common minimum standard could specify essential topics, minimum learning objectives, facilitator responsibilities, and documentation requirements, while allowing the scheduling and teaching methods to respond to participants' circumstances. Such an approach would preserve accessibility without allowing flexibility to undermine the substantive purpose of premarital guidance.

This distinction is particularly important because premarital guidance is connected to a broader legal and administrative framework. Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia No. 30 of 2024 concerning Marriage Registration requires prospective couples to have participated in marriage guidance, as reflected in the marriage examination requirements. The existence of this requirement, however, should not be treated as proof that educational objectives have been achieved uniformly. The empirical findings instead suggest the need to examine whether the implementation arrangements adequately support the substantive preparation of prospective couples.

2. Gender Equality as a Substantive Component of Family Law Education

One of the central findings is that gender equality is not explicitly presented as a distinct topic in the guidance described by the informants. Their accounts indicate that discussions of marital roles may rely on conventional expectations in which husbands are primarily associated with earning income and wives with managing the household. Such expectations may reflect familiar social understandings, but they do not necessarily represent the diverse economic arrangements of contemporary families. Some women contribute substantially to household income, act as primary breadwinners, or work abroad as migrant workers. Premarital education therefore needs to prepare couples for different family circumstances rather than assume that every household will follow a single division of roles.

The relevance of this issue is supported by (Nurhasanah et al., 2018), who found that gender perspectives were not explicitly integrated into the premarital counseling materials and delivery they examined at BP4 in Pekanbaru. The similarity is analytically important: when gender equality is not made an explicit

learning objective, it may remain dependent on the individual perspectives of facilitators rather than being addressed consistently through the program. The present findings do not establish that every facilitator in Purwokerto holds the same view, but they indicate that gender equality needs clearer institutional recognition in the educational content.

Gender equality should not be understood as requiring every couple to divide paid employment and domestic work in exactly the same way. Its educational relevance lies in enabling couples to discuss responsibilities fairly, recognize each spouse's contribution, and make household decisions through informed agreement rather than rigid assumptions. This includes discussion of financial management, unpaid care work, access to household resources, decision-making authority, and the consequences of economic dependence. Such topics are particularly relevant when the actual circumstances of a family differ from conventional assumptions about the roles of husbands and wives.

The relationship between gender norms and violence also provides a basis for strengthening this content. (McCarthy et al., 2018), in a systematic review of measures concerning gender, power, and intimate partner violence, examined the relationship between gender-related factors and male perpetration of violence. Their review supports treating gender and relationship power as relevant dimensions in understanding intimate partner violence, rather than considering violence exclusively as an individual dispute. For premarital guidance, this means that discussions of harmony should be accompanied by practical explanations of respect, consent, non-coercive decision-making, and the boundaries of acceptable conduct within marriage.

The preventive implications must nevertheless be stated carefully. The absence of an explicit gender-equality topic does not by itself prove that participants will experience unequal relationships or domestic violence. It indicates a limitation in the educational framework identified in this study: prospective couples may not receive sufficiently structured opportunities to examine gendered expectations before entering marriage. Explicit content would help make these issues discussable and connect general messages about family harmony with concrete principles of fairness and mutual responsibility.

3. Integrating Family Law, Marital Rights, and Domestic-Violence Prevention

Premarital guidance should not be limited to encouraging prospective couples to build a harmonious household. It should also provide a practical understanding of marital rights and obligations and explain that family relationships remain subject to legal protections. In the Indonesian context, Law No. 23 of 2004 concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence recognizes domestic violence as a matter requiring legal prevention and protection. Guidance should therefore help participants distinguish ordinary disagreements from conduct involving physical, psychological, sexual, or economic abuse, while explaining that violence cannot be justified merely by reference to marital status, family privacy, or customary expectations.

Sapinah provide a complementary normative perspective through their analysis of Qur'anic principles concerning the rights and duties of husbands and wives (Sapinah et al., 2024). Their discussion emphasizes

values such as compassion, justice, good treatment, and mutual responsibility. These principles can support family-law education in a religious setting, provided they are translated into practical learning outcomes rather than presented only as general moral advice. Prospective couples need to understand how mutual responsibility relates to everyday matters such as financial provision, household decisions, conflict management, and respect for each spouse's dignity.

The distinction between normative principles and practical application is important. Religious teachings about harmony and responsibility may provide a meaningful foundation, but the educational value of those teachings depends partly on how they are explained and applied. Guidance should enable participants to identify unacceptable conduct, discuss how to respond to escalating conflict, and understand where assistance may be sought when safety or legal rights are threatened. It should also distinguish prevention for prospective couples from services for people who have already experienced violence. Research by (Muttaqin et al., 2016) on counseling for women experiencing domestic violence through LRC-KJHAM in Semarang illustrates the importance of support services for survivors. Such services complement preventive education but serve a different purpose: guidance before marriage cannot replace protection, assistance, and recovery for victims after violence occurs.

International evidence also supports a cautious emphasis on the design of preventive education. Alsina et al. in a systematic review and meta-analysis of interventions to prevent intimate partner violence, assessed intervention outcomes across the studies included in their review. Their work offers a broader evidence base for considering the design of violence-prevention initiatives, including the participation of men and women (Alsina et al., 2024). It does not establish that a particular premarital guidance model in Banyumas will produce the same outcomes. Instead, it reinforces the importance of designing prevention as a structured intervention with relevant content and assessable objectives.

Consequently, family-law and gender-equality content should be integrated rather than treated as unrelated subjects. Legal knowledge can explain rights, obligations, and prohibited conduct, while gender-responsive education can help couples examine assumptions about authority and responsibility that may affect how those rights are understood in practice. Together, these elements can make premarital guidance more practical and relevant to the prevention of harmful relationship dynamics.

4. Facilitator Capacity, Learning Evaluation, and Institutional Accountability

The findings also raise questions about facilitator preparation and the evaluation of learning. Informants reported that facilitators were appointed through official assignment letters and that training of approximately two weeks in Jakarta had been undertaken. The findings do not indicate that facilitators received no training. Rather, the issue is that a separate competency assessment specifically for premarital guidance facilitators was not identified in the information obtained. Training participation and demonstrated ability to facilitate learning are related but distinct matters. A training certificate may document participation,

whereas a competency-based assessment can help determine whether a facilitator can explain family-law principles accurately, manage sensitive discussions, and respond appropriately to participants' questions.

The relevance of facilitator preparation is consistent with the institutional concerns identified by (Dhammanando & Nyanasuryanadi, 2024), particularly the role of personnel, government support, funding, and facilities in delivering premarital guidance. The findings of (Gazi et al., 2022) further suggest that unclear implementation standards can make program performance difficult to assess. In the context of the present study, these arguments support the development of clearer facilitator requirements, shared learning materials, and mechanisms for reviewing delivery quality. Such measures should be understood as proposals for improvement, not as evidence that the existing facilitators are necessarily ineffective.

The absence of structured pre-tests and post-tests creates a related evaluation limitation. Without a baseline assessment and a comparable assessment after guidance, institutions cannot systematically determine whether participants' understanding of marital rights, gender equality, conflict management, or domestic-violence prevention has improved. This does not mean that participants learn nothing from the sessions. It means that the available information does not provide a structured before-and-after measure of their learning outcomes. A brief assessment could help identify misconceptions before the session and establish which topics require further explanation afterward.

Evaluation should also extend beyond a test score. Facilitators could use short case scenarios, guided discussions, or participant reflections to assess whether prospective couples can apply the material to realistic situations. For example, participants could be asked how a couple should respond when both spouses work, how financial decisions should be made, or what steps may be taken when disagreement escalates into intimidation or violence. These exercises would provide a practical indication of comprehension while helping facilitators identify topics that require clarification. They should not, however, be treated as evidence that future violence or divorce has been prevented.

Institutional documentation is equally relevant. The finding that annual records of prospective couples or guidance activities are available in some KUAs but not others suggests uneven capacity to monitor implementation. Incomplete records do not establish that guidance was not conducted. Nevertheless, without consistent documentation, it becomes more difficult to establish the number of participants reached, identify recurring implementation constraints, and compare program delivery over time. A basic monitoring system could record participation, dates, topics delivered, facilitator assignments, evaluation results, and follow-up needs, while protecting personal information. Such records would support administrative accountability and provide a more reliable basis for future evaluation.

5. Toward an Adaptive and Accountable Model of Premarital Guidance

Taken together, the findings point to the need for a model that combines substantive consistency with responsiveness to local conditions. First, the educational content should include a clear minimum set of

family-law and gender-equality learning objectives. These should cover reciprocal marital rights and obligations, financial and domestic responsibilities, fair decision-making, communication, conflict management, forms of domestic violence, and available sources of assistance. Religious and family values can be integrated into these topics while maintaining clarity about legal rights and the prohibition of violence.

Second, the program should distinguish the standardization of content from the scheduling of delivery. The flexibility reported by informants may help accommodate participants who face work-related constraints. A consistent minimum curriculum, facilitator guide, and record of topics delivered could preserve the educational objectives even when session arrangements differ. This proposal responds to the implementation concerns identified in the present study and to the wider literature on standardization and institutional support (Dhammanando & Nyanasuryanadi, 2024).

Third, facilitator development should combine training with opportunities to demonstrate relevant competencies. The competencies required need not be limited to knowledge of marriage regulations; they should also include the ability to explain gender equality, facilitate discussion of sensitive family issues, and guide participants through realistic case scenarios. Fourth, learning evaluation should be introduced in a proportionate and practical form. Short pre-session and post-session assessments, scenario-based exercises, and participant feedback could help determine whether the intended learning objectives have been addressed. Finally, consistent documentation would enable KUAs and relevant supervisory institutions to review delivery, identify resource constraints, and plan improvements.

The model must remain sensitive to the circumstances of prospective couples. Educational background, employment schedules, and socioeconomic conditions may affect participation and comprehension, but these factors should not be treated as direct causes of domestic violence or divorce on the basis of the present data. Instead, they indicate the need for accessible language, concrete examples, and teaching methods suited to different levels of prior knowledge. Budget and facility constraints should also be considered when designing evaluation and documentation procedures so that proposed improvements remain feasible.

The contribution of this study lies in connecting the substance of premarital guidance with the institutional conditions under which it is delivered in the selected KUAs in Purwokerto. The findings indicate areas requiring attention in scheduling, explicit gender-equality content, facilitator competency assessment, learning evaluation, and documentation. They do not establish the direct effect of these conditions on subsequent domestic-violence or divorce rates. Further research involving prospective couples, facilitators, and follow-up data would be needed to assess learning outcomes and determine whether improvements in guidance are associated with changes in family knowledge, attitudes, or experiences over time. Within these limits, strengthening premarital guidance offers a practical direction for making family-law education more consistent, gender-responsive, and accountable.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study examined the implementation of premarital guidance across four Offices of Religious Affairs (KUAs) in Purwokerto, Banyumas Regency, focusing on family-law and gender-equality content to prevent domestic violence and divorce. The empirical findings reveal several implementation challenges at the local level, including non-standardized scheduling, limited explicit gender-equality content, lack of facilitator competency assessments, absence of pre- and post-tests, uneven annual documentation, and a public perception of guidance as an administrative formality. To address these gaps and strengthen institutional delivery, practical improvements should include a standardized minimum curriculum, gender-responsive materials detailing reciprocal rights and duties, competency-based facilitator training, structured learning assessments, and consistent documentation, while maintaining flexible scheduling to accommodate participants. Although these recommendations provide a framework for program enhancement, further research is required to evaluate learning outcomes and long-term preventive impacts on domestic violence and divorce.

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