THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF ISLAMIC MARITAL VALUES IN SELF-MANAGED PRE-MARITAL GUIDANCE (BIMWIN MANDIRI) AT AN OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS IN URBAN INDONESIA

Achmad Rizal Affandi[1], Mahsan[2], Refti Handini Listyani[3], Ahmad Ridwan[4], Nur Kholifah[5], & Mohammad Taufik Murtadho[6]
[1,3,4] Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia
[2] Universitas Surabaya, Indonesia
[5] Universitas Hasyim Asy'ari, Indonesia
[6] Sungkonghoe University, South Korea
e-mail: [1]achmad.23352@mhs.unesa.ac.id, [2]mahsanzaky@gmail.com, [3]reftihandini@unesa.ac.id, [4]ahmadridwan@unesa.ac.id, [5]alkholif019@gmail.com, [6]Taufik.murtadho@office.skhu.ac.kr

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Abstract
This study examines the social construction of Islamic marital values within the Self-Managed Pre-Marital Guidance called "Bimwin Mandiri" program at the Office of Religious Affairs (Kantor Urusan Agama-KUA) Simokerto, a densely populated area of Surabaya, Indonesia. Employing a qualitative case study with eleven informants, data were collected through face-to-face and WhatsApp interviews, passive participatory observation, and documentation. Analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model. Findings reveal that social construction unfolds through three dialectical moments of Berger and Luckmann: externalization of KUA policy positioning Bimwin as a divorce prevention strategy, objectivation of counselor practices adapting materials to participants' backgrounds, and internalization by participants with varying depth. The term "Mandiri" emerged from KUA staff without regulatory basis, signaling linguistic objectivation by local actors. The theoretical contribution lies in extending Berger and Luckmann's framework to mandatory religious policy, while its practical contribution informs the development of Bimwin in heterogeneous urban contexts.

Keywords: social construction; *Bimwin mandiri*; Islamic marital values; family resilience; urban KUA

A. Introduction

Divorce in urban Indonesia has shifted from a domestic matter into a social problem entangled with class structure, economic dynamics, and changing patterns of family life. Data from the Statistics East Java Province recorded 4,641 divorce cases in the city of Surabaya over a single period, the highest figure among all cities in the

province. Of that number, 2,703 cases stemmed from persistent quarrels, while another 1,597 were triggered by economic pressure. These two factors accounted for 92.6 percent of all divorces in Surabaya (Mahkamah Agung, Dirjen Badan Peradilan Agama, 2025). Narratives of divorce in Indonesia cannot be separated from class inequality that shapes how couples interpret domestic conflict (Rinaldo et al., 2024). Strategies to prevent divorce among Muslim families need to address structural dimensions, not merely normative ones (Sururie et al., 2023). The causes of divorce in mid-sized cities follow patterns similar to those in larger cities (Nafisah et al., 2024). Social dynamics and community capital play a significant role in determining whether a family endures or dissolves (Asman & Muda, 2023; Zainuddin et al., 2022). This phenomenon must be read within the framework of the second demographic transition, in which young lower-class couples understand family ties amid economic uncertainty (Munro et al., 2026; Utomo et al., 2022).

The state responds to this problem through mandatory marriage guidance for prospective brides and grooms. Under Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 30 Year 2024 regarding Marriage Registration, every prospective couple must attend pre-marital guidance before the marriage contract is solemnized (Peraturan Menteri Agama Nomor 30 Tahun 2024 Tentang Pencatatan Pernikahan, 2024). Article 5, paragraph (4) of this regulation delegates technical arrangements to the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance. That delegation was realized through Decree of the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance Number 1221 Year 2025 regarding the Implementation of Pre-Marital Guidance for Prospective Bride and Groom, which was subsequently disseminated to all Regional Offices via Letter Number B-43/DT.III.II/HM.00/1/2026 (Keputusan Direktur Jenderal Bimbingan Masyarakat Islam Nomor 1221 Tahun 2025, 2025). The regulation positions the KUA as one of the official implementers of the program, alongside legally incorporated Islamic community organizations, *pesantren*, and Islamic higher education institutions. That position grants the KUA operational space to manage its own planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program. Studies on pre-marital guidance in Indonesia and Malaysia reveal differences in regulatory emphasis, yet both position the state as the primary implementing actor (Kamarusdiana et al., 2022). Although reforms in the Islamic marriage bureaucracy have improved service delivery, their impact on social practice remains uneven (Kharlie et al., 2021). Marriage guidance in Aceh is positioned as an instrument for building family resilience through an Islamic legal philosophy approach (Saleh et al., 2022). However, most studies stop at regulatory issues and administrative outcomes. The social process unfolding within the guidance space - how actors form, negotiate, and interpret Islamic marital values - has not been widely explored.

KUA Simokerto in the city of Surabaya is a strategic locus for examining that process as it operates in a densely populated district with the highest divorce rate in East Java. KUA Simokerto runs pre-marital guidance for prospective couples (called Bimwin Catin) under a self-managed model, a practice that KUA staff themselves call "Bimwin Mandiri." The term appears in no regulation, yet it is used consistently by staff, appears on program banners, and is documented in public uploads. Within the framework of street-level bureaucracy, actors on the ground translate general rules into concrete situations that are not always uniform (Chang & Brewer, 2023). A decolonial perspective is therefore necessary to read how front-line bureaucrats in Global South countries negotiate policy against unequal structural conditions (Eiró & Lotta, 2024). Public trust and participation are determining factors in service experiences in coastal Indonesia (Hasmin et al., 2026), just as decentralization in Indonesia has produced

uneven outcomes on the ground (Hidayat et al., 2025). The urban context of Simokerto brings together participants with diverse educational, occupational, and economic backgrounds. That heterogeneity challenges the uniform application of a national curriculum, while simultaneously opening space for a distinctive process of meaning construction.

A number of studies have evaluated the effectiveness of Bimwin Catin at the KUA level. For example, the influence of pre-marital guidance on prospective couples' understanding of the *sakinah, mawaddah,* and *rahmah* family concept has been measured at KUA Bululawang (Robbani et al., 2026). Educational attainment and pre-marital guidance play an important role in building family harmony and preventing domestic violence (Prismadianto et al., 2025). Family resilience has also been built among early marriage practitioners in North Bogor (Fitriyani et al., 2025). Similar efforts have been documented at KUA Bungah, Gresik, while community-based religious institutions, including mosques, play an important role in *sakinah* family education in urban areas (Haq & Velayati, 2024; Katni et al., 2026). The construction of the *sakinah* family can also be read as a basis for psychosocial well-being (Wahid, 2025). These three studies focus on program outcomes, whether in the form of participant understanding or indicators of family resilience. What has not been widely touched is how Islamic marital values themselves are socially formed within the guidance space, and how actors at the KUA office head, counselors, participants negotiate with one another in interpreting a mandatory program. Unlike those studies that assess program effectiveness and outcomes, this research places the social process of meaning formation as its primary object of inquiry. It is at this point that the study identifies the gap it seeks to fill.

The social construction framework of Berger and Luckmann offers an appropriate analytical tool for reading that process (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Within this framework, social reality is formed through three dialectical moments: externalization, objectivation, and internalization. Externalization refers to the process by which actors pour subjective meaning into the social world. Objectivation occurs when that meaning crystallizes into a reality that appears objective. Internalization takes place when that objective reality is reabsorbed into subjective consciousness. A similar framework has been used to read how ritual practices in Java sacralize public space and the state (Wibowo & Hasnawan, 2026). Another application was made to the relationship between Islam and the Samin community in Bojonegoro, while the religio-spiritual dimension has also been demonstrated in global education policy (Brent Edwards, 2025; Mubarok, 2024). These three studies show that the social construction framework remains relevant for reading processes of meaning formation in religious and policy spaces. However, no study has applied it specifically to pre-marital guidance at the KUA, particularly in an urban context where national policy meets local practice. The theoretical contribution of this research lies in its effort to extend the Berger and Luckmann framework into the realm of mandatory religious policy, by demonstrating how policy externalization, counselor objectivation, and participant internalization unfold within a guidance space that is managed independently by the KUA.

This article examines the social construction of Islamic marital values in the implementation of Bimwin Mandiri at KUA Simokerto, a religious affairs office in a densely populated area of Surabaya. The term "Mandiri" is used by KUA staff themselves to describe the self-managed administration of the program within the framework of SK Dirjen Nomor 1221 Tahun 2025. The research focuses on three matters. First, how Bimwin policies and regulations are translated into institutional action at the KUA level. Second, how counselors design and deliver materials so that

Islamic marital values become social meanings that participants can understand. Third, how participants reinterpret those values within the framework of their personal experience. By placing social process, rather than program outcomes alone, as the object of inquiry, this article seeks to contribute a more critical reading of the KUA's role in shaping family values in urban Indonesia. In practical terms, the findings are expected to provide input for the development of Bimwin program, particularly in urban contexts that face participant heterogeneity and time constraints.

B. Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach with an instrumental case study design. The qualitative approach positions meaning as the core of analysis and emphasizes an interpretive understanding of social reality as experienced and constructed by individuals within their context (Savin-Baden & Major, 2025). The case study design enables an in-depth examination of social practices within religious institutions, including interactions among actors and the institutional context surrounding them (Yin, 2017). The research locus was KUA Simokerto, a religious affairs office in a densely populated area of Surabaya, East Java province, Indonesia. The research period spanned from August to December 2025. Informants were selected through purposive sampling, comprising eleven individuals: one head of KUA, two Islamic religious counselors, and eight participants of the Bimwin Mandiri program. Two informants (I4 and I5) are a married couple who responded separately via WhatsApp. One party confirmed that their answers were identical, and the researcher permitted the joint submission. Their answers are reported as a single unit. Data saturation was declared reached after the eleventh informant, as no new themes emerged (Saunders et al., 2018).

Data collection was conducted through three methods. First, face-to-face interviews with one informant (I3), lasting approximately thirty minutes. Second, written interviews via WhatsApp with ten informants (I1, I2, I4–I11). This method was chosen due to the informants' time constraints: KUA staff were occupied with work, and participants were busy preparing wedding receptions. Text-based interviews allowed informants to respond according to their own schedules, and have been recognized as a legitimate method in qualitative research (Kaufmann & Peil, 2020; Pearce et al., 2014). Third, passive participatory observation. The researcher attended three Bimwin Mandiri sessions: October 2025 (16 participants), November 2025 (20 participants), and December 2025 (13 participants) in the role of moderator and documentarian. Facilitators were coded as F1–F4 to protect their identities. Session materials included preparing the *sakinah* family (F1), family psychology and dynamics (F2), family needs and financial management (F3), and strategies and definitions of the *sakinah* family (F4). Documentation collected included interview transcripts, WhatsApp screenshots, and group photographs of participants with Bimwin Mandiri certificates. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, encompassing data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Coding was performed manually. Initial codes were organized into themes, then interpreted through three theoretical categories: externalization, objectivation, and internalization.

Triangulation was conducted through two pathways. Source triangulation compared data from the head of the KUA, counselors, and participants. Technical methodological triangulation compared interview, observation, and documentation data (Vivek et al., 2023). The credibility of findings was strengthened through the researcher's five-month engagement in the field and the use of data from multiple sources. Ethical principles were applied from the outset. Informed consent was

obtained verbally via WhatsApp. Informant identities were anonymized with codes I1–I11. Photographs and screenshots are not appended in the article to protect informant privacy, although they have been published on KUA social media (Congiunti et al., 2023; Potthoff et al., 2023). The researcher's position as moderator in Bimwin Mandiri activities influenced how the researcher understood the data. Reflexivity was applied to recognize and manage that influence (Finlay, 2002). The trustworthiness of this study refers to four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

C. Findings and Discussion

1. Findings

Field data gathered from eleven informants yielded three interrelated themes. Informants consisted of one Head of KUA (I1), two Islamic counselors (I2 and I3), and eight participants of the Bimwin Mandiri program. I1 was interviewed via WhatsApp on 3 November 2025; I2, a functional counselor, was interviewed via WhatsApp on 4 November 2025; and I3, a government contract (PPPK) counselor, was interviewed face-to-face on 5 November 2025. All participants were interviewed via WhatsApp on 4 November 2025. I4 and I5 are a married couple who responded separately, and their answers are reported as a single unit. The first theme concerns institutional policy and its implementation at KUA Simokerto, specifically how the Bimwin Mandiri program is positioned as a response to urban family vulnerability. The second theme relates to counseling practices that adapt to the diverse backgrounds of participants. The third theme highlights the transformative experiences of participants after attending the program. These three themes do not stand alone; rather, they form a mutually reinforcing sequence of processes.

The Bimwin Mandiri policy is framed by KUA Simokerto as a preventive strategy against divorce. The Head of KUA stated that divorce occurs for various underlying social and economic factors, and that the government responds through a structured pre-marital guidance program. He explained: *"Through BIMWIN, prospective brides and grooms are taught the importance of maintaining family unity, managing finances, emotions, disputes, and responsibilities"* (I1, interview 3 November 2025). This program is not merely an administrative requirement; it is a preparatory space that addresses the practical aspects of domestic life. Pre-marital guidance for prospective couples (Bimwin Catin) itself is a national program mandated by Peraturan Menteri Agama Nomor 30 Tahun 2024 (Peraturan Menteri Agama Nomor 30 Tahun 2024 Tentang Pencatatan Pernikahan, 2024). At the implementation level, SK Dirjen Bimas Islam Nomor 1221 Tahun 2025 designates KUA as one of the official implementers (Keputusan Direktur Jenderal Bimbingan Masyarakat Islam Nomor 1221 Tahun 2025, 2025). This position grants KUA operational space to manage the program independently, and in Simokerto that space is filled with a practice that staff call "Bimwin Mandiri" (I1, interview 3 November 2025).

Program socialization was carried out through community networks, not solely through bureaucratic channels. The Head of KUA explained that understanding of the importance of Bimwin is conveyed through *rafa'*, RT, RW, and kelurahan meetings, as well as wedding events when KUA is invited to provide counseling (I1, interview 3 November 2025). This strategy shows that policy does not stop at the administrative desk but moves through everyday social interaction. However, program implementation faces recurring operational obstacles. The Head of KUA acknowledged that participants' willingness and their work schedules are the main barriers because the program is held on working days. He stated: *"The supporting factor*

in implementing Bimwin is good cooperation between KUA and the counselors... The obstacle relates to the willingness of prospective brides and grooms and their workplaces because the program is held during working hours" (I1, interview 3 November 2025). There is tension between policy optimism and the social reality of participants. On one hand, the Head of KUA reported a decline in divorce rates; on the other, he acknowledged that participant attendance is often constrained by work. This contradiction indicates that program success cannot be measured by statistics alone, but also by how policy interacts with participants' social conditions.

Counselors do not deliver material uniformly. Both counselors interviewed explained that they first study participants' backgrounds before sessions begin. The functional counselor (I2) stated that identifying education, age, and culture is the initial step in designing materials. The PPPK counselor (I3) added that participant registration data serves as a basis for examining religious status, personal habits, occupation, and education. This profiling is not merely a formality; it is the foundation for adjusting communication approaches. I2 emphasized: *"Designing and delivering pre-marital guidance materials to suit the diverse needs and characteristics of participants requires planning in material development"* (I2, interview 4 November 2025). This practice shows that marital values are not transmitted mechanically, but through conscious adjustment to participant diversity.

Two-way dialogue is the primary method in guidance sessions. I2 explained that interaction occurs most frequently when materials touch on participants' life experiences, particularly domestic problems and marriage goals. I3 added that participants are invited to design a family vision and discuss shared agreements. The two counselors have different emphases. I2 highlights the importance of dialogue to avoid monotony, while I3 emphasizes profiling strategies and grouping participants by readiness level. This difference in emphasis shows that material adaptation is not uniform, even among counselors at the same KUA. Participant heterogeneity presents its own challenges. Differences in education levels among participants, and between prospective husbands and wives, influence how they understand duties and responsibilities (I2, interview 4 November 2025). I3 even noted that participants with lower educational backgrounds tend to view marriage as a mere legal formality (I3, interview 5 November 2025). This finding indicates that counselors act not only as conveyors of material but also as mediators bridging differences in understanding.

Participants joined the program with diverse motivations, but centered on readiness for domestic life. I4 and I5 (a couple) stated that their goal was to gain knowledge and skills to build a harmonious family (I4 and I5, interview 4 November 2025). I7 cited the formation of a *sakinah* family as the primary motivation (I7, interview 4 November 2025). I8 wanted to learn the basics of marriage and form a civilized family based on Islam (I8, interview 4 November 2025). The emerging pattern is an orientation toward practical and spiritual readiness, not merely the fulfillment of administrative requirements. However, not all participants start from the same point. I6 stated that she and her partner already felt ready before attending the program, so the program's impact on her was more reinforcing than transforming (I6, interview 4 November 2025). Communication then became a recurring theme in participant reflections. I4 stated that communication, mutual agreement, and cooperation are the main keys (I4, interview 4 November 2025). I11 emphasized the importance of maintaining communication and honesty with one's partner (I11, interview 4 November 2025). This awareness did not emerge instantly, but through dialogue and reflection during the sessions.

The most concrete attitudinal change appears in how participants interpret

domestic conflict. I10 acknowledged that the material on yielding between partners changed her perspective. She explained*: "I personally was not willing to give in... after attending this program I learned how important it is that when one partner is angry, the other should calm down"* (I10, interview 4 November 2025). This admission indicates internalization of values that is personal and reflective. Other participants highlighted the importance of mental and emotional health in relationship dynamics in the digital era (I4 and I5, interview 4 November 2025). I9 added that interaction with other participants helped her become a person more responsible toward the role of husband or wife (I9, interview 4 November 2025). The changes reported by participants varied in depth. I10 showed a concrete attitudinal shift, while I7 merely stated "yes, there is" without elaborating on the form of change (I7, interview 4 November 2025). This variation indicates that value internalization does not proceed uniformly.

The three themes that emerged show interrelated patterns. Institutional policy is the starting point, counseling practice is the mediation, and participant experience is the outcome. However, the relationship between these three stages is not always smooth. Operational obstacles especially participants' work schedules show that a policy well-designed at the central level can be hindered by social realities on the ground. Participant educational heterogeneity also presents variation in value reception. Participants with lower educational backgrounds tend to require more concrete approaches, while those with higher education are more responsive to reflection. This difference is not a program weakness but a reflection of social complexity that must be managed. The pattern that emerges is not uniform. Some participants experience deep transformation, while others merely reinforce pre-existing readiness. The term "Bimwin Mandiri" emerges consistently from KUA staff, not from the researcher. This term is not found in any regulation, yet it is used in everyday conversation and appears on program banners. Local actors do not merely implement policy; they also name their own practice a distinctive form of linguistic objectivation (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

2. Discussion

The three themes that emerged from the field data reflect the three dialectical moments of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann: externalization of policy, objectivation of counselor practice, and internalization by participants. This framework enables the researcher to read how Islamic marital values are not merely inherited, but socially constructed within the space of pre-marital guidance. The findings demonstrate that social construction unfolds through interaction between national policy, local counselor practices, and participants' personal experiences. What distinguishes this study from previous research is its placement of social process as the primary object of inquiry, rather than program outcomes as indicators of success (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

The KUA's framing of Bimwin Mandiri as a preventive strategy illustrates how religious policy operates as a moral project, not merely an administrative procedure. The Head of KUA positioned the program as a response to divorce, but the significance lies in how this positioning transforms bureaucratic procedure into a value-laden intervention. This finding aligns with the argument that street-level bureaucrats translate central policy into concrete situations that are not always uniform (Chang & Brewer, 2023). This study extends that framework, however, by demonstrating that externalization does not stop at rule translation; it encompasses the projection of moral values into public space. Policy becomes an arena where Islamic values concerning responsibility, cooperation, and emotional maturity are articulated as collective

imperatives. The transformation from administrative procedure into value-laden educational intervention indicates that externalization is not a neutral process (Keputusan Direktur Jenderal Bimbingan Masyarakat Islam Nomor 1221 Tahun 2025, 2025; Peraturan Menteri Agama Nomor 30 Tahun 2024 Tentang Pencatatan Pernikahan, 2024).

The socialization of Bimwin Mandiri through community networks shows that policy is not imposed in a top-down manner, but socially negotiated. The Head of KUA mentioned *rafa'*, RT, RW, and village meetings as channels of socialization. This practice reflects what has been described as bureaucracy negotiating policy against unequal structural conditions (Eiró & Lotta, 2024). Public participation and trust become determining factors in service experiences (Hasmin et al., 2026). However, decentralization in Indonesia has produced uneven outcomes on the ground (Hidayat et al., 2025). This study shows that unevenness is not solely a matter of institutional capacity, but also a product of how local actors interpret and give meaning to policy. Pre-marital guidance regulations in Indonesia and Malaysia differ in emphasis, yet both position the state as the primary actor (Kamarusdiana et al., 2022). Reform of Islamic marriage bureaucracy has produced changes at the service level, though its impact on social practice remains uneven (Kharlie et al., 2021). For instance, marriage guidance in Aceh is positioned as an instrument for building family resilience via an Islamic legal philosophy approach (Saleh et al., 2022).

Counselors transform marital values into social meanings through participant profiling and reflective dialogue. The functional counselor identified education, age, and culture; the PPPK counselor studied registration data to examine religious status, personal habits, occupation, and education. This practice demonstrates that objectivation does not proceed through rigid doctrinal instruction, but through interpretive dialogue that allows participants to situate Islamic values within their own experiential frameworks. This finding reinforces the argument that the effectiveness of pre-marital guidance depends on facilitators' capacity to adapt their approach to participants' backgrounds (Robbani et al., 2026). Educational attainment and pre-marital guidance play an important role in building family harmony (Gita Prismadianto et al., 2025). This study shows, however, that adaptation is not only pedagogical but also social. Counselors act as mediators, bridging differences in understanding.

Heterogeneity in participants' education and economic backgrounds presents challenges that compel counselors to function as mediators, not merely conveyors of material. The PPPK counselor noted that participants with lower educational backgrounds tend to view marriage as a legal formality. This finding aligns with a study showing that understanding of Islamic family law among urban Muslims in Gresik is generally adequate, yet faces obstacles in practical application (Rohman et al., 2024). Empathetic dialogue and meaning reconstruction become strategies that enable participants to challenge entrenched beliefs and reconstruct their understanding (Jarvis, 2021). The transformative religious education model at Pondok Modern Gontor demonstrates that student transformation occurs through reflective engagement in collective activities, not through classroom instruction alone (Jusubaidi et al., 2024). This study extends that finding by showing that objectivation in Bimwin Mandiri takes place within a limited time frame, requiring counselors to cultivate reflective dispositions in brief sessions. Family resilience is also built through community-based *sakinah* education, including mosques, in urban areas (Katni et al., 2026). Similar efforts have been documented at KUA Bungah, Gresik (Akbarsyah Izzul Haq & Velayati, 2024). The construction of the *sakinah* family can be read as a basis for psychosocial

well-being (Luvia Wahid, 2025). The social construction of ritual in Java demonstrates how religious practice becomes an enduring social reality (Wibowo & Hasnawan, 2026). The social construction of religious values is also evident in the Samin community in Bojonegoro (Mubarok, 2024). The religio-spiritual dimension of global education policy reveals how ritual and bureaucracy intertwine (Edwards, 2025).

Participants enter the program with diverse motivations, but centered on practical and spiritual readiness. Internalization begins with personal awareness that marriage demands preparation, not merely affection. This finding reinforces the argument that pre-marital education is linked to psychological readiness and the capacity to anticipate relational challenges (Asmuni et al., 2025). Internalization of Islamic values in urban society often remains limited to value transactions and has not yet reached trans-internalization (Aditya & Zuhdi, 2023). This study offers a contrasting case: some Bimwin Mandiri participants demonstrated concrete attitudinal shifts, particularly in how they interpret domestic conflict. The contrast suggests that the depth of internalization is not determined by the program itself, but by the interaction between program content and participants' prior dispositions. This finding is significant because it shows that the program does not operate on a blank slate; it interacts with pre-existing moral frameworks that participants bring from their families and communities.

The depth of internalization varies, and this variation is not random; rather, it is shaped by structural conditions. Divorce narratives in Indonesia cannot be separated from class inequality that shapes how couples understand domestic conflict (Rinaldo et al., 2024). Consequently, strategies to prevent divorce among Muslim families need to address structural dimensions (Sururie et al., 2023). Causes of divorce in mid-sized cities follow patterns similar to those in larger cities (Nafisah et al., 2024). Furthermore, social dynamics and community capital play a significant role in determining whether a family endures or dissolves (Asman & Muda, 2023; Zainuddin et al., 2022). This phenomenon must be read within the framework of the second demographic transition, in which young lower-class couples understand family ties amid economic uncertainty (Utomo et al., 2022). Young lower-class couples perceive marriage as a bond fraught with uncertainty (Munro et al., 2026). The variation observed in this study between participants who experienced deep transformation and those who merely reinforced existing readiness reflects this broader structural condition, in which class position shapes the stakes of marital preparation. One participant stated she already felt ready before attending the program, so its impact was more reinforcing than transforming. This admission is not a failure of the program, but a reflection of how prior dispositions mediate the internalization process.

Communication and emotional regulation become the most concrete outlets of internalization. The shift from reluctance to yielding illustrates how religious values become embodied dispositions, not merely cognitive commitments. This finding aligns with the argument that internalization of religious values promotes moral consistency and emotional intelligence in family relations (Krok et al., 2024). This study shows, however, that internalization does not always produce deep transformation. Some participants merely reinforced pre-existing readiness, while others experienced more concrete attitudinal shifts. The variation confirms that internalization is reflective, not mechanical. Emotional discipline, in this sense, is not a program output but a reflexive achievement of the participant.

The term “Mandiri” that emerged from KUA staff represents a form of linguistic objectivation showing how local actors name their operational autonomy. Although the term is not found in any regulation, it is used consistently in everyday conversation

and appears on program banners. This finding extends Berger and Luckmann's framework into the realm of mandatory religious policy by showing that local actors do not merely implement policy; they also name their own practice. This phenomenon aligns with the study of state sacralization through ritual practice in Java, where religious symbols become part of social reality (Wibowo & Hasnawan, 2026). Similarly, the social construction of religious values in the Samin community also demonstrates how values are objectivated through collective practice (Mubarok, 2024). In the context of street-level bureaucracy and religion, studies confirm that front-line officials negotiate policy with local religious sensibilities (Golan-Nadir, 2024). The theoretical contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that linguistic objectivation is not only a cultural phenomenon, but also part of religious bureaucratic practice. Unlike previous studies that applied Berger and Luckmann to cultural or ritual phenomena, this study demonstrates that the framework can also explain how mandatory religious policy is socially constructed at the bureaucratic level.

This study offers two contributions. Theoretically, the findings extend Berger and Luckmann's framework into the realm of mandatory religious policy by demonstrating that externalization, objectivation, and internalization unfold within a guidance space managed independently by the KUA. Practically, the findings provide input for the development of Bimwin Catin, particularly in urban contexts facing participant heterogeneity and time constraints. The limitations of this study must be stated explicitly. This is a single case study with eleven informants, so the findings cannot be generalized to all KUAs. Data were collected primarily through WhatsApp interviews, which limited non-verbal data. Field notes were not systematically recorded, and no member checking was conducted. Interview durations were not uniform. The researcher's position as moderator in Bimwin Mandiri activities influenced how the researcher understood the data, and reflexivity was applied to recognize that influence (Savin-Baden & Major, 2025). Recommendations for future research include comparative multi-KUA studies, longitudinal studies to measure long-term impact, and the development of digital modules that accommodate working participants.

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that the social construction of Islamic marital values within self-managed pre-marital guidance (Bimwin Mandiri) at KUA Simokerto unfolds through three interrelated dialectical moments. Externalization occurs as the KUA positions the program as a preventive strategy against divorce, rather than a mere administrative procedure. Objectivation takes shape through counselors' practices of adapting materials to participants' backgrounds, employing reflective dialogue as the primary method. Internalization materializes when participants reconstruct the meaning of marriage through personal experience, though its depth varies considerably. These findings demonstrate that national policy is not applied uniformly on the ground; it is interpreted and given meaning by local actors. Furthermore, the term "Mandiri," which emerged from KUA staff without any regulatory basis, evidences that local actors do not merely implement policy; they also name their own practice.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in extending Berger and Luckmann's framework into the realm of mandatory religious policy. Whereas previous studies applied this framework to cultural or ritual phenomena, the present research demonstrates that the same framework can explain how mandatory religious policy is socially constructed at the bureaucratic level. Its practical contribution is to inform the development of Bimwin, particularly in urban contexts marked by

participant heterogeneity and time constraints. The finding on varying depths of internalization reveals that the program does not operate on a blank slate; it interacts with moral frameworks participants already possess. Consequently, program development must account for participants' initial dispositions, not merely the content of materials.

Several limitations warrant explicit acknowledgment. This is a single case study with eleven informants; thus, the findings cannot be generalized to all KUAs. Data were collected primarily through WhatsApp interviews, which restricted non-verbal data. Field notes were not systematically recorded, and no member checking was conducted. Interview durations were not uniform. Additionally, the researchers' role as moderators in Bimwin Mandiri activities influenced how the data were understood. Recommendations for future research include three directions. First, a comparative multi-KUA study to test whether the patterns observed in Simokerto also appear in other contexts. Second, a longitudinal study to measure the program's long-term impact on family resilience. Third, the development of digital modules that accommodate working participants, as proposed by participants themselves during interviews.

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F. Author Contributions Statement

ARA conceived the research design, conducted data collection and analysis, and drafted the manuscript. MH provided conceptual guidance and scholarly input on the analytical framework. RHL acted as academic supervisor, offering methodological direction and critical refinement of the arguments. AR contributed to data validation and sharpening of the theoretical discussion. NK assisted in data organization and supporting literature search. MTM provided input on the interpretation of findings and policy context. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

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