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Strategies Of Religious Counselors In Building Sakinah Families In Lima Puluh Kota Regency

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Abstract: Building a *sakinah* family remains a significant challenge amid changing social conditions, economic pressures, and increasing marital conflicts. Religious counselors play an important role in strengthening family resilience through Islamic guidance and counseling. This study aims to analyze the strategies employed by religious counselors in fostering *sakinah* families in Lima Puluh Kota Regency. This research employs qualitative field research with a descriptive-analytical approach. Primary data sources were obtained from 3 religious extension workers and 2 relevant religious figures, while secondary data are derived from academic literature, official documents, and related research. Data collection techniques include interviews, observation, and documentation. Data are analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that religious counselors employ several strategies, including premarital guidance, family counseling, religious education, conflict mediation, and community-based outreach. These strategies emphasize Islamic family values, effective communication, mutual responsibility, and conflict resolution. The effectiveness of these efforts is influenced by community participation, institutional support, and the accessibility of counseling services. However, limited human resources, insufficient facilities, and varying levels of public awareness remain significant challenges. This study highlights the importance of strengthening religious counseling programs, improving institutional collaboration, and developing adaptive approaches to support harmonious, resilient, and sustainable *sakinah* families.

Keywords: Religious Counselors, Sakinah Family, Family Counseling, Islamic Guidance, Family Resilience.

Abstrak*:* Mewujudkan keluarga sakinah menjadi tantangan di tengah perubahan sosial, tekanan ekonomi, dan meningkatnya konflik rumah tangga. Penyuluh agama memiliki peran penting dalam memperkuat ketahanan keluarga melalui bimbingan dan penyuluhan berbasis nilai-nilai Islam. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi penyuluh agama dalam membangun keluarga sakinah di Kabupaten Lima Puluh Kota. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian lapangan (*field research*) dengan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif-analitis. Sumber data primer diperoleh dari 3 orang penyuluh agama dan 2 toko agama terkait, sedangkan data sekunder bersumber dari literatur ilmiah, dokumen resmi, dan penelitian terdahulu.

Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi, sedangkan analisis data menggunakan tahapan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi penyuluh agama meliputi bimbingan pranikah, konseling keluarga, pendidikan keagamaan, mediasi konflik rumah tangga, dan penyuluhan berbasis masyarakat. Strategi tersebut menekankan penguatan nilai-nilai keluarga Islam, komunikasi yang efektif, tanggung jawab bersama, dan penyelesaian konflik. Pelaksanaannya dipengaruhi oleh partisipasi masyarakat, dukungan kelembagaan, dan aksesibilitas layanan penyuluhan. Namun, keterbatasan sumber daya manusia, fasilitas, dan kesadaran masyarakat masih menjadi tantangan. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya penguatan program penyuluhan agama, peningkatan kerja sama antarlembaga, serta pengembangan strategi yang adaptif untuk mewujudkan keluarga sakinah yang harmonis dan berkelanjutan.
Kata kunci: Penyuluh Agama, Keluarga Sakinah, Konseling Keluarga, Bimbingan Islam, Ketahanan Keluarga.

A. Introduction

The household is the smallest unit of society and plays an important role in building a harmonious, prosperous, and happy family[1]. In family life, each member has rights, obligations, and responsibilities that must be fulfilled properly[2]. In reality, however, household life does not always proceed as expected. Various problems may arise and affect family harmony and well-being.[3]

Household problems encompass various issues in family life, including economic difficulties, communication, differences of opinion, child-rearing, the division of responsibilities, and relationships between husbands and wives. One common problem is financial hardship, such as insufficient income to meet daily needs, rising prices of basic necessities, and difficulties managing family finances[4]. Poor communication can also lead to misunderstandings, arguments, and conflicts within the household.

Beyond economic and communication factors, differences in perspectives, family backgrounds, and a lack of mutual understanding can cause household problems. If these issues are not resolved properly, they may affect family members' psychological well-being, children's development, and harmony within the family. Amid the many conflicts that occur in households, religious counselors are expected

[1] Musyarofah Musyarofah, "Pendidikan Agama Sebagai Dasar Dalam Membangun Ketahanan Keluarga," *Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Anak* 8, no. 02 (December 2021): 112, https://doi.org/10.32678/jsga.v8i02.5502.

[2] Rizqi Nur Azizah and Muhammad Yassir, *Hak dan Kewajiban Suami Istri Perspektif Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 1974 Tentang Perkawinan dan Hukum Islam*, n.d.

[3] Mustafid, *Hukum Keluarga: Perkawinan Dalam Islam Dan Adat* (Kota Kupang: Tangguh Denaya Jaya, 2023), hlm. 34.

[4] Aning Fitriana, R. Satria Setyanugraha, and Reza Rahmadi Hasibuan, "Pengelolaan Keuangan Keluarga Dalam Upaya Meningkatkan Produktivitas Masyarakat Yang Mandiri Kelurahan Teluk Kabupaten Banyumas," *Perwira Journal of Community Development* 1, no. 1 (July 2021): 37–41, https://doi.org/10.54199/pjcd.v1i1.39.

to guide married couples on religious teachings related to family life[5]. Such guidance includes understanding the responsibilities of husbands and wives, the importance of maintaining harmony, and the obligation to treat one's spouse well. Through religious guidance, couples are expected to use religious values as a basis for resolving conflicts.[6]

One strategy used by religious counselors is dialogue with couples experiencing conflict. Counselors seek to create a conducive atmosphere in which both parties can explain their problems, listen to each other's perspectives, and find peaceful solutions. Counselors must act fairly and neutrally and must not take either party's side. Religious counselors also use lectures, including religious study sessions, family counseling, marriage guidance, and community development activities. The material may cover family communication, household financial management, parenting, and the resolution of differences of opinion.

Lima Puluh Kota is a regency in West Sumatra Province with a large population. Data from the Tanjung Pati Religious Court indicate that divorce in the regency is relatively high. Some divorces are caused by economic factors and persistent disputes and arguments within the household. To reduce the divorce rate, religious counselors are expected to develop effective strategies.

Several previous studies have examined the role of religious counselors in addressing household problems. These studies indicate that religious counselors play an important role in providing guidance, counseling, consultation, and assistance to married couples experiencing family problems.

One relevant study, entitled "The Role of Religious Counselors in the Sakinah Family Development Village Program in Dlingo Village," discusses the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting religious counselors in implementing the program[7]. It is similar to the present study because both examine religious counselors' work in addressing household problems. However, the earlier study focuses on implementing the Sakinah Family Development Village Program (DBKS), whereas this study focuses on religious counselors' strategies for reducing divorce.

Another study by Wawan Sopyan, entitled "Da'wah Strategies of Islamic Religious Counselors in Improving Understanding of Community Worship Practices," discusses the role of religious counselors in improving worship

[5] Ahmad Wahyudi And Amin Sobar, "STRATEGI KOMUNIKASI DALAM PENYULUHAN ISLAM," *El-Fatih: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Penyuluan Islam* 3, no. 2 (October 2024): 62–71, https://doi.org/10.65178/elfatih.v3i2.34.

[6] Mustafid Mustafid et al., "Child Custody Rights After Divorce in Indonesia from a Contemporary Islamic Family Law Perspective," *Al-Hurriyah: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 10, no. 2 (2025): hlm. 52., https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30983/al-hurriyah.v10i2.10096.

[7] Nurkholis Nurkholis, Istifianah Istifianah, and A. Syafi'i Rahman, "Peran Penyuluh Agama dalam Program Desa Binaan Keluarga Sakinah Di Desa Dlingo," *Nuansa Akademik: Jurnal Pembangunan Masyarakat* 5, no. 1 (June 2020): 25–36, https://doi.org/10.47200/jnajpm.v5i1.419.

practices[8]. It is relevant because it examines strategies used by religious counselors to increase religious understanding in the community. The difference lies in the focus: the previous study examines da'wah strategies and everyday worship practices, while this study focuses on religious counselors' role in addressing household problems in Lima Puluh Kota Regency. This study aims to analyze strategies for guiding sakinah families and formulate a model applied in the regency.

Based on this research gap, this study aims to analyze the strategies employed by religious counselors in developing sakinah families in Lima Puluh Kota Regency, examine how the different counseling methods complement one another, and identify the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence their implementation. The study also seeks to explain the potential of integrating these strategies into a locally responsive approach to sakinah family development.

B. Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach with a field research design to examine the roles and responsibilities of Islamic religious extension workers in fostering keluarga sakinah (harmonious and tranquil families) in Lima Puluh Kota Regency, West Sumatra, Indonesia. Primary data were obtained from 5 informants, consisting of 2 religious figures, and 3 Islamic religious extension workers. Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on their knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in family guidance programs and religious activities. The selection criteria included active participation in community religious affairs, familiarity with the implementation of keluarga sakinah programs, and willingness to provide relevant information. Data collection was conducted from [month/year] to [month/year] through semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation. Secondary data were obtained from official documents, relevant legal regulations, academic journals, and previous studies.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis through several stages, including data familiarization, initial coding, identification of recurring patterns, development and review of themes, and interpretation of findings. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and relevant documents were systematically examined to identify key themes concerning the roles, strategies, challenges, and contributions of Islamic religious extension workers in promoting keluarga sakinah. The trustworthiness of the findings was assessed through [specify the procedures actually employed, such as source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and member checking]. Source triangulation involved comparing information from different categories of informants, while methodological triangulation involved examining the consistency of findings across interviews, observations, and documentary evidence. Where member checking was conducted, preliminary interpretations were confirmed with

[8] Wawan Sopiyan et al., "Strategi Dakwah Penyuluh Agama Islam Dalam Peningkatan Pemahaman Praktik Ibadah Kemasyarakatan," *Jurnal Khabar: Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam* 6, no. 1 (June 2024): 17–26, https://doi.org/10.37092/khabar.v6i1.745.

selected informants to minimize misinterpretation. These procedures were intended to strengthen the credibility and consistency of the findings and provide a comprehensive understanding of family guidance practices within the local sociocultural context.

C. Discussion and Research Results

The Role of Religious Counselors in Sakinah Family Development

Religious counseling aims to guide religious communities in developing their mental and moral well-being and devotion to God Almighty[9]. A religious counselor is a civil servant assigned by the government to provide religious guidance and counseling, as well as support community development through religious language. In the Indonesian dictionary, the term for counselor is associated with suluh, an object used to provide light[10]. In everyday language, counseling refers to providing enlightenment or guidance to the public, whether through government or non-government institutions. The English term "counseling" is related to guidance. In Arabic, guidance and counseling are referred to as al-irsyad al-nafsiy, meaning psychological guidance.

The legal foundations for religious counselors include the following:

a. Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 791 of 1985 concerning Honoraria for Religious Counselors[11].
b. Joint Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Head of the National Civil Service Agency No. 574 of 1999 and No. 178 of 1999 concerning the Functional Position of Religious Counselors and Its Credit Points[12].
c. Decree of the State Minister/Coordinating Minister for Development Supervision and Administrative Reform No. 54/KEP/MK.WASPAN/9/1999 concerning the Functional Position of Religious Counselors. Religious counselors are particularly needed by married couples facing possible divorce, especially when they are considering ending their marriage.

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[9] Ayu Aspila and Baharuddin B, "Eksistensi Penyuluh Agama Sebagai Agen Moderasi Beragama Di Era Kemajemukan Masyarakat Indonesia," *La Tenriruwa: Jurnal Bimbingan Penyuluhan Islam* 1, No. 1 (December 2022): 104–23, Https://Doi.org/10.30863/jbpi.v1i1.3367.

[10] Fatia Salma Fiddaroyni, *Peran Penyuluh Agama dalam Upaya Pemberantasan Buta Huruf Al-Qur'an di Kecamatan Gurah Kabupaten Kediri*, n.d.

[11] Sarifa Suhra, Syarifah Qamariah, and Ambo Saenal, "Peran Penyuluh Agama Dalam Pembinaan Karakter Toleransi Pada Masyarakat," *La Tenriruwa: Jurnal Bimbingan Penyuluhan Islam* 2, no. 1 (August 2023): 1–17, https://doi.org/10.30863/jbpi.v2i1.5217.

[12] Agus Suaidi Hasan, "Optimaslisasi Penghimpunan Dan Penguatan Literasi Wakaf Tunai Melalui Peranan Penyuluh Agama," *AL-MIKRAJ Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Humaniora (E-ISSN 2745-4584)* 6, no. 1 (January 2026): 1657–67, https://doi.org/10.37680/almikraj.v6i1.8892.

d. The role of Islamic religious counselors is inseparable from the main duties and functions established by Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs. Their main duties are regulated by Decree No. 54/Kep/MK.WASPAN/9/1999, which assigns them to conduct and develop religious guidance and counseling, as well as community development, through religious language (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2012).

The roles of religious counselors include: Religious counselors as community guides, Religious counselors as role models, Religious counselors as providers of religious information and Religious counselors specializing in sakinah families. Religious counselors are directly involved in community guidance activities. Their involvement in religious affairs includes teaching religious knowledge and providing guidance to the community.

The term sakinah comes from the Arabic root سَكَنَ, يَسْكُنُ, سَكِينَة, meaning tranquility, calm, peace, and security[13]. Another definition describes sakinah as a state of calmness and freedom from anxiety. In Arabic dictionaries, sakinah is associated with al-waqār, al-tuma'nīnah, and al-maḥabbah—dignity, inner tranquility, and love. In his Tafsir al-Kabir, Imam al-Razi explains that divine sakinah is experienced as inner peace, while sakana 'indahu refers to physical calm. The Encyclopedia of Islam also defines sakinah as peace and tranquility of the soul.

Efforts to Build a Sakinah Family, Harmony between husband and wife can be achieved through the following efforts:

1) Mutual Understanding. Husbands and wives should understand each other's physical and mental circumstances. Each person has strengths and weaknesses. Spouses may not have known each other deeply before marriage and may have met only after reaching adulthood. They may differ not only in gender but also in personality, attitudes, behavior, and points of view[14].
2) Accepting Reality. Husbands and wives should recognize that a spouse, sustenance, and death are within God's power and cannot be determined mathematically. Human beings are nevertheless instructed to make efforts. The outcome is a reality that must be accepted, including the circumstances of each spouse[15].
3) Mutual Adjustment. Adjustment within a family means that each family member tries to compensate for others' shortcomings and is willing to accept

[13] Gema Rahmadani, Muhammad Faisar Ananda Arfa, And Muhammad Syukri Albani, *Konsep Pernikahan Sakinah Mawaddah Dan Warahmah Menurut Ulama Tafsir*, n.d.

[14] Ade Daharis et al., *Relevansi Konsep Mubadalah Dalam Relasi Suami-Istri Menurut Hukum Keluarga Islam*, n.d.

[15] R. Zainul Mushthofa and Siti Aminah, "Tinjauan Hukum Islam Terhadap Praktek Kafa'ah Sebagai Upaya Membentuk Keluarga Sakinah (Studi Praktek Kafa'ah Di Kalangan Yayasan Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat)," *Ummul Qura Jurnal Institut Pesantren Sunan Drajat (INSUD) Lamongan* 15, no. 1 (April 2020): 11–23, https://doi.org/10.55352/uq.v15i1.389.

and acknowledge their strengths. Each member's ability to adjust has a positive impact on family development as well as on society and the nation[16].

4) Nurturing Love. Every married couple hopes to live happily and prosperously. Happiness and prosperity are relative and depend on individual aspirations and needs. Nevertheless, happiness generally involves tranquility, security, peace, and the fulfillment of mental and spiritual needs. To achieve family happiness, husbands and wives should continually nurture love through affection, care, mutual respect, appreciation, and openness[17].
5) Practicing Consultation. In family life, consultation—especially between husband and wife—is important. Many problems can be resolved when consultation is practiced. This requires openness, patience, honesty, willingness to give and receive, and a refusal by either spouse to insist on always being right. Consultation can foster a sense of belonging and responsibility among family members as they address and resolve problems[18].
6) Willingness to Forgive. Husbands and wives should be willing to forgive each other for their mistakes[19]. This is important because even small matters can disrupt marital relationships and sometimes lead to prolonged disputes.
7) Working Together Toward Shared Goals. Both spouses should support one another in efforts toward mutual improvement and progress, which can ultimately contribute to family happiness.

Strategy for Establishing Sakinah Family Guidance Groups

As for after the religious extension workers know their duties and functions, the religious extension workers carry out coaching grouping, the fostered groups here are groups or members of the community who deliberately group themselves, or are grouped by religious extension workers and are the target of the guidance of religious extension workers in a continuous and planned manner. The grouping is as follows: 1) Approach community leaders/religious leaders in the area/target area and 2) Conduct meetings to form fostered groups by paying attention to the needs/interests of the existing target groups.[20]

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[16] Meiliati Ligit, "Kontrol Diri Dan Penyesuaian Diri Dalam Pernikahan Remaja Putri Yang Menjalani Pernikahan Dini Akibat Kehamilan Pra Nikah," *Psikoborneo: Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi* 4, no. 3 (September 2016), https://doi.org/10.30872/psikoborneo.v4i3.4103.

[17] Sopiyan et al., "Strategi Dakwah Penyuluh Agama Islam Dalam Peningkatan Pemahaman Praktik Ibadah Kemasyarakatan."

[18] Siti Masitoh and Ali Khosim, *Musyawarah dan Saling Menghormati Antara Suami Istri: Kajian Tafsir Tematik Atas Prinsip Keharmonisan Keluarga (Menjelaskan Nilai Syura dalam Relasi Rumah Tangga dan Pengasuhan Anak)*, n.d.

[19] Nurhayati Nurhayati, "Hubungan Komunikasi Interpersonal Dan Pemaafan Dengan Kebahagiaan Suami Istri," *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmiah INTAJ* 1, no. 2 (October 2017): 47–70, https://doi.org/10.35897/intaj.v1i2.94.

[20] Deddi Efendi (religious official KUA Pangkalan), interview conducted on July 27, 2026.

The fostered group according to the point of view of the duties of a religious extension worker must exist, because without the fostered group of a religious extension worker in carrying out tasks without clear targets and goals, so that what has been carried out will not bring the results that have been set. The Holy Qur'an explicitly commands the human ummah to hold the values of Islamic teachings in total and comprehensively, intact and kaffah. Muslims are commanded to carry out teachings related to the obligations of individuals to Allah and also related to their obligations to the environment and other members of society[21].

Religious counselors establish guidance groups consisting of at least 15-20 members to facilitate family counseling activities.[22] Through these groups, counselors provide guidance on building a *sakinah* family, fulfilling family responsibilities, and responding constructively to household problems. The establishment of guidance groups forms part of the government's broader efforts to strengthen family resilience and address issues associated with marital conflict and divorce. In an interview, Akmal Husni, a religious counselor at the Harau District Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), explained: "We, as religious counselors, are instructed to establish guidance groups. Each counselor is required to have two groups, and each group must have at least 15 members."[23] This statement illustrates how guidance groups are organized as an institutional strategy for delivering family-related counseling to community members. Although these activities may help improve participants' understanding of family responsibilities and provide opportunities to discuss household challenges, the available findings do not establish that the formation of guidance groups directly reduces divorce rates. Their contribution should therefore be understood in terms of their potential to support family resilience and prevent the escalation of marital problems, while their actual impact on divorce requires further empirical assessment.

Establishing guidance groups is one strategy used by counselors to reduce the rising divorce rate in Lima Puluh Kota Regency. This is consistent with Ali Hamzah's 2018 study, which reported that religious counselors establish guidance groups and hold meetings three times a week[24].

Establishing guidance groups is one of the strategies employed by religious counselors to support the development of *sakinah* families in Lima Puluh Kota Regency. According to Mr. Deddi Efendi, a religious counselor at the Pangkalan Koto Baru District Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), each counselor is required to establish two guidance groups, with at least 15-20 members in each group.[25] This strategy

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[21] Rahmat Hidayat, *Peran Penyuluh Agama Dalam Kehidupan Beragama Guna Meningkatkan Keluarga Sakinah (Study Kasus Pada Majelis Ta'lim Al-Muhajirin Sukarame Ii Bandar Lampung)*, 1, no. 1 (2019); ibid.

[22] H. Yong indra (religious official KUA Kapur IX), interview conducted on July 25, 2026.

[23] Akmal Husni (religious official KUA Harau), interview conducted on July 29, 2026.

[24] Ali Hamzah, "Kinerja Penyuluh Agama Non Pns Kementerian Agama," *Islamika : Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 18, no. 02 (January 2019): 37–48, https://doi.org/10.32939/islamika.v18i02.309.

[25] Deddi Efendi (religious official KUA Pangkalan), interview conducted on July 27, 2026.

enables counselors to deliver guidance on family responsibilities, religious values, and household problem-solving to multiple participants simultaneously, making counseling more efficient. Guidance groups can be particularly effective when participants attend regularly, the materials address their actual family-related concerns, and counselors encourage active discussion rather than relying solely on one-way explanations. Through this approach, participants can exchange experiences and learn how religious principles may be applied to maintain household harmony. This finding is consistent with Ali Hamzah's study, which discusses the establishment of guidance groups as part of religious counselors' activities.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of group guidance is constrained by the sensitive nature of household problems. Some participants may be reluctant to discuss marital conflicts openly because of privacy concerns, fear of social judgment, or differences in personal circumstances. Moreover, general guidance may not adequately address complex problems such as persistent communication conflicts or serious marital disputes. Therefore, guidance groups should be viewed primarily as a preventive and educational strategy rather than a comprehensive solution to every family problem. To strengthen their effectiveness, religious counselors can complement group activities with individual counseling for participants who require more confidential assistance and refer complex cases to appropriate professional services when necessary. Consequently, the success of this strategy should not be measured solely by the number of groups established or participants reached, but also by the relevance of the guidance, the level of participant engagement, and the availability of appropriate follow-up support.

Religious Lectures and Question-and-Answer Sessions

According to Dimyati, the lecture method is a form of teaching and learning interaction that is carried out through oral narration and explanation by a teacher to a group of his students. The fact that the lecture is greatly influenced by the personality and abilities of the teacher obtained from his life experiences as well as his talents and mastery of the material. The lecture method according to Ust wahyunaldi is a technique of conveying messages in lessons that is commonly delivered by a teacher at school. Lectures are interpreted as a way of delivering and explaining materials orally by a teacher when necessary.[26]

This lecture method is delivered in the form of a concise, concise and clear speech, therefore an extension worker must have the ability to speak and master the language well and also have the ability to comprehend language, have broad insights, and also understand social psychology and have a strong personality. Usually this lecture is delivered in a tone of voice that tends to be calm.

The main advantage of the lecture method lies in its ability to transmit knowledge quickly, structured, and efficiently, especially when the material

[26] Ust wahyunaldi (religious figure), interview on August 2, 2026

presented is informative and normative, as is often found in the subject of Islamic Religious Education (PAI).[27] One effective strategy used by religious counselors specializing in sakinah families to reduce divorce in Lima Puluh Kota Regency is to deliver religious lectures on sakinah families. During these lectures, counselors explain what a sakinah family is and how one can be established.

The lecture method is one of the strategies employed by religious counselors to help Muslim families understand and address household problems. Through lectures, counselors provide guidance on the religious principles, responsibilities, and values needed to establish a sakinah family. However, the role of lectures extends beyond explaining the concept of a harmonious family. Counselors also discuss common sources of marital conflict, such as inadequate communication, neglect of family responsibilities, and difficulties in fulfilling emotional and material needs. As Ust fembri deswandi[28] explained, she discusses the meaning of a sakinah family, the conditions necessary to establish one, and the consequences of failing to maintain household harmony. She also highlights the effects of divorce on children, particularly the potential loss of parental attention and affection and its implications for their psychological well-being and academic performance. By explaining these consequences, counselors seek to encourage couples to consider the impact of their actions, strengthen their commitment to family responsibilities, and resolve disagreements before they escalate into more serious conflicts. This method is particularly useful for providing preventive guidance to a large number of community members, especially those who regularly attend religious study gatherings. Nevertheless, lectures alone may not adequately address individual family problems because participants have different circumstances and may need more specific assistance.

To address this limitation, religious counselors complement lectures with question-and-answer sessions that allow participants to clarify the material and discuss problems they encounter in their family lives. Through dialogue, counselors can identify misunderstandings, respond to questions about marital responsibilities, and provide religious guidance relevant to the participants' concerns. This interaction also enables counselors to recognize issues that may require more focused attention, including recurring disagreements, difficulties in fulfilling family obligations, and challenges in maintaining communication between spouses. Rather than relying solely on general explanations, counselors can use participants' questions to connect religious teachings with practical approaches to resolving household problems. However, the effectiveness of this method depends on participants' willingness to speak openly, the counselor's ability to respond

[27] Muhammad Abdul Aziz, *Efektivitas Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Metode Ceramah Terhadap Pembentukan Moral Luhur Di SDN Mojotengah*, n.d.

[28] Ust fembri deswandi (religious figure), interview on August 2, 2026

appropriately, and the availability of a supportive and non-judgmental environment. Some participants may hesitate to disclose sensitive marital issues in a public setting. Therefore, when a problem requires privacy or more intensive assistance, individual counseling or referral to an appropriate professional service may be necessary. The lecture and question-and-answer methods thus serve complementary functions: lectures provide general knowledge and preventive guidance, while dialogue helps clarify understanding and address specific concerns. Their contribution to building sakinah families lies in improving religious understanding and supporting constructive responses to household difficulties; however, their direct effectiveness in reducing divorce requires further evidence beyond the implementation of counseling activities alone.

Silaturahmi and Individual Guidance Strategies

Etymologically, the word "silaturahmi" comes from two words in Arabic, namely "silah" which means relationship and "womb" which means affection. In a general sense, silaturahmi means maintaining a relationship with affection between one individual and another, both in the scope of family, friends, or in the wider social life of the community. Silaturahmi is a form of deep communication, which involves sincerity and empathy.

Silaturahmi comes from the word "silah" which means connection or relationship, and "womb" which means kinship. According to Imam Al-San'ani, friendship is doing good to relatives who have a nasab relationship. This assistance includes various forms of positive interaction such as giving, visiting, and forgiving each other.

In daily life, friendship can be done in various ways, from visiting relatives' houses, attending family events, participating in social activities, to using technology to communicate with people who are far away. These activities are not only limited to physical encounters but also involve strong emotional connections that ensure the continuity of social relationships[29].

Silaturahmi—visiting others to maintain and strengthen social ties—is an effective way to develop and guide the Muslim community. Through these visits, community members feel cared for and are more likely to apply the counselor's advice in daily life. Silaturahmi takes place not only during religious study gatherings but also through visits to neighbors and other Muslims. It provides opportunities to exchange information, deepen emotional relationships, and foster togetherness and social solidarity[30].

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[29] Safrizal Safrizal, "Silaturahmi Sebagai Sarana Komunikasi Interpersonal Dalam Mempererat Hubungan Sosial (Perspektif Hadits)," *Buana Komunikasi (Jurnal Penelitian Dan Studi Ilmu Komunikasi)* 6, no. 1 (April 2025): 9–26, https://doi.org/10.32897/buanakomunikasi.2025.6.1.3996.

[30] Muhammad Ali Nasir and Kun Wazis, "Strategi Komunikasi Penyuluh Agama Islam Dalam Menjaga Toleransi Umat Beragama Di Kecamatan Tempurejo Kabupaten Jember," *Maddah: Journal of Advanced Da'wah Management Research* 1, no. 2 (October 2022): 188–202, https://doi.org/10.35719/maddah.v1i2.13.

As Akmal Husni stated:[31] "Besides establishing guidance groups and delivering religious lectures at study gatherings, I actively visit close friends and neighbors to provide counseling. I consider this method very effective. Sometimes people feel embarrassed or reluctant to ask questions during religious gatherings, but when I visit their homes, they are much more open about sharing their problems."

In addition to guiding and providing religious counseling at study gatherings, Islamic religious counselors should make themselves available to help consider and resolve problems faced by the community, whether personal, family-related, or broader social issues. They must be willing to listen carefully to the problems people face[32]. Individual guidance services help people address their problems through face-to-face consultations. People who visit the Office of Religious Affairs often seek advice about household disputes, including infidelity, financial support, differences of opinion, inheritance, domestic violence, and children's behavioral problems.

Individual services provided by religious counselors can be more effective than group guidance because participants may feel more comfortable openly discussing household problems. Counselors can also provide more direct advice and recommendations.

Integrating Five Strategies into a Sakinah Family Counseling Model

Integration in English is "integration" which means all and whole. The term integration has the meaning of the renewal or union of elements where there are differences so that with these differences can make unity and unity, for example can unite differences in opinions. As for Islamic education, it is taught about respecting each other so that there are no quarrels even though there are many differences. This integration has the meaning of a whole unity in knowledge that is not divided. On the other hand, integration also includes the needs and completeness of the members who form a unit.

According to Durkheim, integration can be divided into two categories, namely: first, normative integration in a cultural perspective. Second, functional integration with an emphasis on organic solidarity, which is solidarity formed through interdependent relationships between dependent parts or elements in society. Meanwhile, according to Muwardi Sutedjo, integration is the renewal of something until it becomes a complete unity[33].

The strategy used by religious counselors to reduce divorce in Lima Puluh Kota Regency integrates five approaches. First, groups are established as a setting

[31] Akmal Husni (religious official KUA Harau), interview conducted on July 29, 2026.

[32] Muhammad Adam and Junaidi Junaidi, "Peranan Penyuluh Agama Islam Non Pns Dalam Meningkatkan Motivasi Ibadah Majelis Taklim Al Kahfi Mandar Salurihan," *Alhaqiqa: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam* 3, no. 2 (June 2021): 38–47, https://doi.org/10.36915/alhaqiqa.v3i2.129.

[33] Ratna Dewi, "Integrasi Pendidikan Islam Dalam Implementasi Ekologi," *Sustainable Jurnal Kajian Mutu Pendidikan* 4, no. 2 (December 2021): 119–31, https://doi.org/10.32923/kjmp.v4i2.2175.

for guidance, allowing participants to attend together. Once the groups have been formed, counselors deliver lectures explaining how to build a sakinah family. To assess group members' understanding, counselors open question-and-answer sessions in which participants can ask about material they do not understand or describe problems they are experiencing. Counselors also build individual relationships through silaturahmi. Once a relationship has been established, individual guidance becomes easier to conduct. Participants are expected to speak openly about their problems, enabling counselors to offer appropriate advice or solutions.

Implementation, Challenges, and Strengthening the Strategic Model

The implementation of the religious extension strategy in forming a sakinah family is one of the important efforts to realize a harmonious, peaceful, and prosperous home life. Religious extension workers have a strategic role in providing guidance, counseling, and assistance to the community, especially married couples who face various domestic problems[34]. The implementation of this strategy is carried out through religious counseling activities, marriage guidance, family coaching, and the delivery of religious materials related to the rights and obligations of husband and wife, communication in the family, parental responsibility, and the resolution of domestic conflicts. Through these activities, religious extension workers are expected to be able to increase public understanding of the importance of building a family based on religious values.

In its implementation, religious extension workers need to implement strategies that are in accordance with the social, cultural, and religious understanding conditions of the community. In Fifty Cities Regency, the extension approach can be carried out through recitation activities, taklim assemblies, religious lectures, family consultations, and cooperation with religious leaders and community leaders. A persuasive and communicative approach is needed so that religious messages can be well received by the community. In addition, religious extension workers need to build close relationships with the fostered families so that married couples feel comfortable conveying the problems they face[35]. Thus, the implementation of the strategy is not only oriented to the delivery of religious materials, but also to the formation of attitudes and behaviors that support the creation of a sakinah family.

Nevertheless, the implementation of the religious extension strategy in forming a sakinah family is inseparable from various obstacles. One of the obstacles that can be faced is the low awareness of some people about the importance of participating in family guidance and counseling activities. Some married couples

[34] Khomsiatul Inayah and Rini Laili Prihatini, "Peran Penyuluh Agama Dalam Menjalankan Fungsi Profesi Untuk Kasus Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga (KDRT) Di Parung Bogor," *Jurnal Penyuluhan Agama (JPA)* 8, no. 1 (January 2022): 57–72, https://doi.org/10.15408/jpa.v8i1.24377.

[35] Farah Nur Amelia Sabina, Syifa Nurfauziah Lia Dinar, and Fauzun Jamal, "Strategi Penyuluh Agama Islam Dalam Membangun Ketahanan Perkawinan Melalui Pendampingan Konflik Komunikasi Pasangan Muda," *Al-Isyrof: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Islam* 8, no. 1 (June 2026): 117–45, https://doi.org/10.51339/isyrof.v8i1.5162.

tend to consider that domestic problems are personal problems that must be solved by themselves without involving other parties. In addition, time constraints, busy work, differences in education levels, and lack of understanding of rights and obligations in marriage can be factors that hinder the success of family development. This condition requires religious extension workers to develop a more flexible, communicative, and appropriate approach in accordance with the needs of the community.

Other obstacles are related to the complexity of household problems faced by the community, such as communication conflicts between husband and wife, family economic problems, lack of responsibility, jealousy, and differences of views in decision-making[36]. These problems cannot always be solved only through lectures or the delivery of religious advice in general. In certain situations, families need more intensive assistance, an individualized approach, and referrals to professionals if the problems faced are beyond the authority of religious counselors. Therefore, religious extension workers need to have interpersonal communication skills, an understanding of family dynamics, and skills in providing non-judgmental guidance[37]. These skills are important so that extension workers can help families find solutions that suit their conditions and needs.

The proposed model for strengthening religious counseling in the development of *sakinah* families is formulated based on the field findings concerning the strategies, supporting factors, and challenges experienced by religious counselors in Lima Puluh Kota Regency. The findings indicate that family development requires more than the delivery of religious knowledge; it also involves providing opportunities for discussion, understanding family problems, and facilitating appropriate assistance. Therefore, the proposed model integrates five complementary strategies: religious lectures, guidance groups, question-and-answer sessions, individual counseling, and cross-sector collaboration. Religious lectures provide a foundation of Islamic values and family responsibilities, while guidance groups create opportunities for participants to exchange experiences and learn from one another. Question-and-answer sessions allow counselors to clarify misunderstandings and respond to participants' concerns, whereas individual counseling provides more confidential and focused assistance for families facing specific problems. Cross-sector collaboration supports these strategies by connecting counselors with relevant institutions and services when family problems require assistance beyond the counselors' capacity. These five strategies are interrelated rather than independent activities: lectures provide general knowledge, guidance groups encourage shared learning, dialogue identifies and clarifies

[36] Moh Rosil Fathony, "The Form of Husband and Wife Relationships in the Context of Differences in Economic Status and Their Impact on Household Harmony (Case Study in Masbagik District, East Lombok Regency)," *Journal for Islamic Studies* 8, no. 1 (2025).

[37] Muhammad Qadaruddin and Abd Rahim Arsyad, *Development of Interpersonal Communication Competency of Religious Extension Workers in Pre-Marriage Guidance for Brides-to-be, Religious Affairs Office of Watang Sidenreng, Sidrap Regency*, 19, no. 2 (n.d.).

concerns, individual counseling addresses more personal difficulties, and institutional collaboration facilitates further support when necessary.

The integration of these strategies also responds to the practical conditions identified in the field. Positive community participation, permission from local authorities, and access to meeting facilities provide opportunities to implement group-based activities. However, limited funding, differences in counselors' competencies, extensive service areas, and the large population relative to the number of counselors may restrict the continuity and reach of counseling programs. To address these challenges, the proposed model emphasizes strengthening counselors' competencies in family communication, basic counseling, conflict mediation, and participatory facilitation, alongside improved coordination with the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), local governments, community leaders, educational institutions, and agencies responsible for protecting women and children. In practice, counselors can use lectures and guidance groups to reach broader community audiences, employ question-and-answer sessions to identify concerns, and prioritize individual counseling or referrals for families requiring more specialized assistance. This arrangement can help counselors allocate limited resources more effectively while ensuring that general educational activities are connected to more targeted support. Accordingly, the proposed model is grounded in the relationship between field-identified needs and existing institutional constraints. Its effectiveness should be evaluated not only through attendance and participation but also through the relevance of counseling materials, the availability of follow-up assistance, changes in participants' understanding and family problem-solving practices, and evidence of longer-term outcomes. Although the model offers a structured framework for improving the *sakinah* family development program, its contribution to reducing divorce should be established through further evaluation rather than assumed from the implementation of counseling activities alone.

D. Conclusion

This study identifies five strategies used to develop sakinah families in Lima Puluh Kota Regency: guidance groups, religious lectures, question-and-answer sessions, silaturahmi, and individual guidance. These strategies do not operate independently; rather, they form a guidance model that progresses from group engagement and knowledge delivery to dialogue, social-personal engagement, and individual counseling. Based on these findings, the study formulates an integrated, layered religious counseling model in which counselors serve not only as providers of religious information but also as facilitators of dialogue and supporters of families facing difficulties. This model contributes to scholarship on religious counseling and sakinah families and may serve as a reference for strengthening counseling practices in other regions. The study recommends strengthening counselors' competencies, developing materials based on family needs, and conducting ongoing evaluations of counseling outcomes.

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