

## **The Meaning Of Pre Marriage Counseling In Marriage Law In Indonesia**

*Kasiani*

Balitar Blitar Islamic University  
e-mail: hukumkasiani6@gmail.com

*Ervika Dewi Wahyuni*

Balitar Islamic University Blitar  
e-mail: ervikadw@gmail.com

*Ageng Poncho Wicaksono*

Balitar Islamic University Blitar  
e-mail: poncoageng@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

*This study explores the importance of premarital counseling in the context of Indonesian marriage law, with a focus on preparing prospective couples for a happy and healthy married life. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, data was collected through in-depth interviews with couples who had participated in premarital counseling. The results showed that premarital counseling plays an important role in equipping couples with knowledge about effective communication, conflict management, reproductive health, and rights and obligations in marriage. This finding is supported by previous research that shows a positive relationship between premarital readiness and long-term marital success. The mentorship program is based on a strong legal framework, including Law No. 1/1974 on Marriage and Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 20/2019. However, the implementation of premarital guidance faces challenges, such as limited facilities and manpower at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) and differences in the quality of the program across regions. In addition, cultural and social barriers affect the acceptance and effectiveness of this guidance. This study emphasizes the importance of adjusting the guidance program to better consider local customs and culture. Thus, premarital guidance is expected to reduce divorce rates and improve the quality of marriages by preparing prospective couples for the challenges of married life. The findings provide important insights for policy makers and practitioners to improve the quality and accessibility of premarital guidance in Indonesia.*

**Keywords:** *Pre-Marital Counseling, Marriage Law, Marriage.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Around the world, marriage is seen as a basic social institution in many cultures and countries. Marriage, as a moral and legal obligation, connects not only two people, but also their extensive family networks. As the foundation of social life, religious and social values are upheld in Indonesia through marriage. However, careful planning through premarital counseling is very important to ensure the prosperity and longevity of the marriage relationship (Bawono, et al, 2022).

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The aim of premarital counseling is to provide the prospective bride and groom with a comprehensive understanding of all aspects of married life. This includes the duties and obligations of each person in the household as well as good communication, financial management and dispute resolution. Premarital counseling programs have the ability to reduce divorce rates and improve the quality of partnerships, claims Handayani (2019). This is important considering the high divorce rate in Indonesia, which is often caused by a lack of adequate knowledge and planning before marriage.

In Indonesian society, premarital counseling is very important to incorporate religious principles into married life. Research by Devianti & Rahima (2020) shows that religious premarital counseling can improve a couple's ability to handle various marital difficulties. A healthy and happy family can be built on the moral and ethical instructions that religion offers.

Premarital guidance does not only cover religious issues, but also teaching about sexual and reproductive health. Setyawan (2021) emphasized that understanding reproductive health is very important to avoid health problems that may arise in marital relationships. Healthy and harmonious relationships occur more often in couples who have a good understanding of reproductive health.

One of the secrets to a happy marriage is efficient communication, which is another skill taught in premarital counseling programs. According to a study by Astuti (2017), having effective communication skills can help couples resolve disputes and forge closer bonds. Sincere and transparent communication can foster mutual understanding and respect between partners, which will ultimately strengthen the marriage.

Premarital guidance also offers knowledge about managing family finances. Santoso (2018) emphasized that money problems often cause disputes in marriage. Couples can learn how to budget, manage their money together, and make wise financial decisions with the right help. This can reduce the possibility of miscommunication and conflict resulting from financial problems.

An important component of premarital counseling is stress management. Marriage is not always easy, and couples must be prepared to face various demands and difficulties. Premarital guidance, according to Wahyuni (2020), can offer practical stress reduction strategies, helping couples to maintain calm and reason when facing problems. Premarital counseling programs also provide an opportunity for couples to discuss their dreams and aspirations for their lives. This is very important to ensure that their future vision is aligned. According to research by Harahap (2019), married couples who have the same life goals are usually more satisfied and peaceful.

Couples who receive premarital counseling can benefit from learning the value of cooperation and commitment in marriage. Septialti, Mawarni, Nugroho, and Dharmawan (2017) stated that a marriage's ability to survive difficulties can be improved by understanding the value of commitment. The integrity of a marriage is more likely to be maintained by partners who help and work together.

Premarital guidance is very important in helping couples become more mature and ready for marriage. In addition to providing the information and skills needed to handle various difficulties in marriage, this program also helps couples to lay a strong foundation for a happy and peaceful marriage. Therefore, as a first step towards a happy marriage, it is very important for every couple who is getting married to take part in a premarital counseling program (Saputra, Wicaksana, Lestari & Triningtyas, 2021).

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In fact, personal and legal problems often overshadow marriages in Indonesia (Santoso, 2016). One of the things that can cause these issues to develop is a lack of knowledge about what is meant by premarital counseling (Morib, 2020). Therefore, further investigation is needed to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of premarital counseling in relation to marriage law in Indonesia.

A number of basic questions arise, including what is meant by Premarital Guidance. How are the Premarital Guidance Regulations in Indonesia regulated? This research intends to investigate a deeper understanding of the meaning of premarital guidance in the context of marriage law in Indonesia and its implications for married life by outlining the history of this issue. It is hoped that a deeper understanding can help have a positive impact on public knowledge and understanding regarding the importance of premarital counseling within the legal framework of marriage in Indonesia.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research uses a phenomenological approach combined with qualitative research methodology. This approach is used to gain a comprehensive understanding of the perspectives and experiences of couples who have attended premarital counseling. In-depth interviews with couples who had attended premarital counseling at various religious and counseling organizations in Indonesia were used to collect data. Semi-structured interviews were used to provide space for relevant and detailed exploration of the subject. Using a purposive sampling approach, couples who had received premarital counseling and had been married for at least one year were selected as participants.

Thematic analysis is a method used to analyze data. Reading the interview transcript aloud several times to get the tone and substance is the first step in this process. To investigate the deeper meaning and relationships between motifs, an analysis of each theme was carried out. Interpreting data involves making connections between research results and related theory and literature. To increase the validity and dependability of study findings, data triangulation is the process of comparing findings from different sources and methodologies. The analysis findings are then presented narratively, providing a complete picture of the value and influence of premarital counseling on a couple's married life.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION TIMES ROMAN 12PT**

The goal of premarital counseling is to prepare engaged couples for a happy and healthy marriage by providing information and support. Premarital guidance has a strong legal basis in marriage law in Indonesia, especially in Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage and its implementing regulations.

### **Meaning of Pre-Marital Guidance**

Premarital counseling plays an important role in preparing the bride and groom for a happy and healthy marriage. Previous research has supported the elements taught in this program, including education about reproductive health, constructive conflict resolution, recognizing the rights and obligations of husbands and wives, and good communication skills. A study conducted by Markman, Rhoades, Stanley, and Ragan (2010) shows a positive correlation between successful communication and effective conflict resolution and long-term marital success. Premarital therapy programs that

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focus on these areas can help couples develop a more satisfying and strengthening bond. In addition, research by Gottman and DeClaire (2008) emphasizes how important it is to control emotions to maintain marital harmony. Premarital counseling that instructs couples to recognize and manage their own emotions, as well as those of their partners, can help prevent protracted conflict.

Research by Hawkins, Blanchard, Baldwin, and Fawcett (2008) indicates that a strong understanding of each partner's responsibilities and rights can increase marital stability. A proactive step in preparing couples to deal with legal and domestic life problems is premarital guidance that explains children's rights, marriage laws, and joint financial management. Aspects of moral and ethical ideals are also important, according to Tsai and Ying's (2001) research, which shows how people's interactions in marital relationships are influenced by the societal standards they have internalized. It is thought that by strengthening these elements with successful mentoring programs, we can lower divorce rates and raise marriage standards in our society.

### **Legal Basis for Pre-Marital Guidance in Indonesia**

Premarital counseling is legally supported in Indonesia by a number of important laws that emphasize the importance of thorough preparation before marriage. These guidelines are intended to ensure that prospective couples obtain the information and skills necessary to create a happy and successful family.

Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage is the main regulation that regulates the institution of marriage in Indonesia. A man and a woman become husband and wife in accordance with Article 1 of this law, with the aim of forming a happy and eternal family (household) based on the belief in the Almighty God. This goal highlights the need for thorough preparation before marriage, because apart from being a legal commitment, marriage also involves considerable emotional and spiritual commitment. Many preparations are made to ensure the bride and groom are ready for this big commitment, including pre-wedding counseling.

The implementation of premarital guidance in Indonesia is regulated in Minister of Religion Regulation no. 20 of 2019 of the Republic of Indonesia. According to this regulation, prospective brides and grooms must receive marriage counseling. The aim of these regulations is to equip couples with the knowledge and skills they need to be ready for family life. The advice material discusses a number of topics, including moral and ethical principles in family life, reproductive health, and the rights and responsibilities of husbands and wives. It is hoped that the prospective bride and groom can create a happy, prosperous and functional family by following this advice.

Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) Presidential Instruction no. 1 of 1991 offers further advice on marriage for Muslim couples. In accordance with Islamic law, KHI regulates a number of areas of marriage, such as the marriage process, the rights and obligations of husband and wife, and how to handle disputes that arise during marriage. Within the framework of premarital counseling, KHI highlights how important it is to understand Islamic marriage law. To build a household, husband and wife must understand sharia values, including justice, compassion and accountability. Therefore, premarital counseling based on KHI helps prospective couples prepare themselves legally and spiritually in accordance with their religious beliefs.

### **Implementation of Pre-Marital Guidance in Indonesia**

Premarital guidance is implemented in Indonesia by a number of organizations, with the Ministry of Religion as the main implementer through the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA). KUA plays an important role in ensuring that every prospective bride

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and groom who registers to get married gets the training needed to prepare for the wedding. As part of the government's efforts to improve the quality of marriage and reduce the divorce rate, all couples who register their marriage at the KUA must participate in this premarital counseling program.

After registering their marriage at KUA, prospective couples will be assigned to participate in a premarital guidance program. Usually, these programs take the form of lectures where professionals talk about various important issues related to marriage. These activities cover topics such as emotional and mental preparation, effective communication, dispute resolution, and emotional regulation. In addition, this program also covers the rights and responsibilities of husband and wife under Indonesian marriage law.

The premarital guidance program consists of counseling and discussion sessions. During discussion sessions, prospective husbands and wives can interact with facilitators and other participants, exchange perspectives and experiences, and gain a more comprehensive understanding of married life. Couples are encouraged to share their aspirations and concerns during these often interactive discussions by asking questions.

Another important element of premarital guidance is counseling. Counseling sessions are often held in small groups or one-on-one settings, giving couples a forum to talk about more intimate and specific topics. Experienced counselors assist couples in identifying possible problems and offer remedies and techniques that can be applied to conquer obstacles in marriage. Couples who receive counseling also benefit from improved communication skills and a better understanding of the dynamics of their relationship.

## **Discussion**

Premarital counseling is offered in Indonesia through the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), which is a step consistent with previous research and theory regarding the value of thorough preparation before marriage for a happy and lasting marriage. Building a happy relationship largely depends on constructive conflict resolution and efficient communication, according to the marital psychology theory proposed by Gottman (1994). Premarital counseling programs that concentrate on developing these skills are consistent with prevention strategies for reducing the likelihood of divorce.

Comprehensive education provided through premarital guidance programs has been proven to improve the quality and satisfaction of marital relationships (Hawkins, Blanchard, Baldwin, & Fawcett, 2008). The findings of this study are in line with the observation that couples who participate in premarital counseling at KUA report having a better understanding of their rights and responsibilities as a married couple, as well as better conflict resolution skills.

However, in practice, there are still several obstacles that must be overcome before this program can be fully implemented. First, KUA's inadequate facilities and workforce often pose a challenge. There are not enough professionals in many KUAs to provide comprehensive advice. According to a study by Stanley, Amato, Johnson, and Markman (2006), uniform standards must be followed when implementing a premarital counseling program to ensure the success of the program in all areas. Additionally, there is often a lack of space and time to implement the instructions, which prevents these programs from being implemented as effectively as they could be. Second, not all

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prospective husbands and wives appreciate advice. Some couples enroll in the program simply to fulfill administrative obligations, without truly understanding and assimilating the information offered.

In addition, there are gaps in the quality and coverage of premarital guidance in various regions in Indonesia. These programs usually have more experienced and more structured facilitators in big cities such as Jakarta and Surabaya. However, mentoring initiatives are often ineffective and become just a formality in rural communities. This is due to a lack of training of local facilitators and limited access to resources.

Couples may sometimes face additional cultural and social barriers that impact how well they receive premarital counseling services. Couples feel hesitant to actively participate in discussions and therapy sessions because, in some societies, topics such as communication and emotional regulation are still taboo to discuss in public. This shows that when implementing premarital counseling, an approach is needed that takes into account the customs and culture of the area.

### **The Importance of Pre-Marriage Guidance**

So that the prospective bride and groom can enter married life with mature readiness and thorough awareness of the complexities of marriage, premarital counseling is very important. Previous research has validated some of the program's tenets, including conflict resolution and effective communication techniques. Markman, Rhoades, Stanley, and Ragan (2010) found a correlation between long-term marital success and effective communication and constructive dispute resolution. Premarital counseling programs that concentrate on improving these abilities can help couples create a more satisfying and strengthening bond. In addition, research by Gottman and DeClaire (2001) emphasizes the importance of conflict and emotional management to maintain marital harmony. Premarital counseling that teaches couples how to identify and control their own feelings as well as those of their partners, helps prevent escalation of conflict that is detrimental to the relationship.

The main goal of premarital counseling is to educate prospective partners regarding their rights and responsibilities in marriage, according to research by Hawkins, Blanchard, Baldwin, and Fawcett (2008). A strong understanding of these legal and social aspects increases a couple's ability to manage various aspects of domestic life and strengthens the marital bond. The program also highlights the value of family planning and reproductive health education, which, according to a study by Miller, Benson, and Galbraith (2001), can improve family well-being and reduce the risk of health problems related to pregnancy and childbirth.

Premarital guidance is also expected to foster a caring and mutually supportive family atmosphere by introducing moral and ethical principles into family life. Tsai and Ying's (2001) research shows how interactions within married couples are influenced by social norms absorbed by society. Premarital counseling helps couples to lay a strong foundation for the future happiness and well-being of their family besides preparing them for the wedding event. Premarital counseling is predicted to reduce divorce rates through this comprehensive approach by preparing prospective brides and grooms to face the obligations and problems that arise in building a family.

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## CONCLUSION

Based on the study findings, it can be said that although the premarital guidance program at KUA has a lot of potential to improve marriage standards in Indonesia, there is still room for development. Existing difficulties can be overcome by improving program quality and intensity, improving facilitator training, and adopting a more inclusive and culturally sensitive approach. Therefore, premarital counseling services can be a more useful tool in helping couples prepare for a happy and lasting marriage.

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