

Transforming The Role of Religious Office Affairs to Reduce the Divorce Rate in Padang City

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the strengthening of the role of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in reducing the rate of household divorce in Padang City through the Pusaka Sakinah program, the strategies of religious counselors, and the strengthening of socio-religious family service regulations. This research employed a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation at several KUA offices in Padang City, particularly in Kuranji, North Padang, and West Padang Districts. The findings reveal that KUA no longer functions solely as an administrative institution for marriage registration but has been transformed into a socio-humanistic institution that plays an important role in strengthening family resilience. The Pusaka Sakinah program is implemented through premarital guidance, family counseling, household conflict mediation, family development programs, and continuous religious counseling. Religious counselors serve as mediators, counselors, and facilitators in resolving family conflicts. The study also found that the program's success was influenced by local government support, cross-sector collaboration, and the integration of Minangkabau cultural values into family counseling activities. Nevertheless, several challenges remain, including limited human resources, low public participation, social stigma toward counseling services, and challenges related to the digitalization of KUA services. This study concludes that strengthening regulations, standardizing services, improving the competence of religious counselors, and implementing preventive approaches grounded in local cultural values are important strategies for reducing divorce rates and strengthening Muslim family resilience in Padang City.

Keywords: Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), divorce, religious counselors, family resilience.

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INTRODUCTION

Divorce is a social issue that continues to increase in Indonesia and poses a serious challenge to national family resilience. This phenomenon affects not only marital relationships but also children's psychological stability, family economic well-being, and the social fabric. In this context, the state, through the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), holds a strategic position in upholding household integrity. The KUA functions not only as an administrative institution for registering marriages but also as a normative and social authority, providing family guidance, premarital counseling, domestic conflict mediation, and religious counseling for the community

(Sheila & Fakhria, 2021). Through this function, the KUA is expected to serve as a preventive instrument to reduce divorce rates and strengthen family resilience.

In both regulatory and practical terms, the KUA (Religious Affairs Office) is responsible for guiding couples from the premarital phase through the marriage process and after marriage. Through marriage guidance programs, family counseling, conflict mediation, and religious education, the KUA is directed towards creating harmonious, peaceful, loving, and compassionate families. The presence of religious instructors and family counselors is crucial in helping couples understand domestic communication, conflict management, husband-wife responsibilities, and religious values in family life (Duski Samad et al., 2016). From a public policy perspective, this role demonstrates that the KUA works not only in the administrative realm but also in the social, psychological, and educational dimensions to maintain household stability (Ismail et al., 2019).

However, empirical reality shows that the high divorce rate remains a problem that has not been significantly reduced. Supreme Court data show that the divorce rate in Indonesia has exceeded 400,000 cases per year in recent years. In West Sumatra Province, a 2022 report from the Padang High Religious Court recorded 10,128 divorce cases filed with religious courts, of which 8,954, or approximately 88%, resulted in divorce (Padang High Religious Court, 2022). Padang City had the highest divorce rate, with 1,354 cases, most of which were lawsuits. Interestingly, the leading cause of divorce was no longer classic issues such as adultery, polygamy, or domestic violence, but rather persistent disputes and arguments, which accounted for 7,733 cases. This phenomenon reveals a crisis in relationships and communication in modern households and suggests that family development efforts have not been fully effective in preventing marital breakdown.

This situation raises important academic questions regarding the effectiveness of the KUA's role in reducing divorce rates. On the one hand, the KUA has been equipped with the authority, programs, and resources of religious counselors to provide family guidance. However, the divorce rate continues to rise, particularly in Padang City. This situation suggests a possible gap between the KUA's normative function and its practical implementation on the ground. In other words, the KUA's role in divorce prevention has not been fully optimized, both in terms of regulation, service quality, mediation effectiveness, the capacity of religious counselors, and the social and cultural approaches used in family guidance (Basripuzi et al., 2023).

Academically, studies on the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) have focused primarily on the formal administrative and legal functions of marriage registration. Previous studies have generally highlighted marriage service procedures, administrative legality, bureaucratic governance, and the efficiency of public services within the KUA (Yenni, Sri, & Utami, 2015). Meanwhile, studies specifically addressing the KUA's role in reducing divorce rates are relatively limited. Research on divorce mediation at the KUA has also been partial and has not examined

the effectiveness of comprehensive family development programs (Ismail & Rumadan, 2021). Furthermore, aspects of gender, local culture, the competence of religious counselors, and the integration of government policies in divorce prevention efforts have also not received adequate attention in previous studies (Mia Hadiati et al., 2020).

Several studies have shown that the effectiveness of mediation and family development at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) is influenced by various factors, including mediator competence, family support, economic conditions, and patriarchal cultural constructs in society (Sheila & Fakhria, 2021). In many cases, women face greater obstacles in mediation and domestic conflict resolution. This demonstrates that divorce cannot be understood solely as a family law issue but is also related to power relations, culture, and social structures that influence household sustainability. Therefore, a more comprehensive study of the KUA's role in reducing divorce rates requires a multifaceted approach that simultaneously considers social, cultural, and gender dimensions.

Based on these conditions, there is an academic problem: a gap between normative expectations regarding the KUA's role as an institution for fostering families and the reality of the increasing divorce rate in society. Furthermore, the limited research examining the effectiveness of KUA programs, strategies, and regulations in preventing divorce highlights a research gap warranting further investigation. Therefore, this study is relevant to exploring the role of the KUA in reducing the divorce rate among households in Padang City, including the potential, limitations, and strategies for building more inclusive, effective, and gender-equitable family resilience. This research is expected to make academic contributions to the development of Islamic family studies and public policy, while also serving as evaluation material to strengthen the KUA's role in maintaining household integrity in Indonesia.

In analyzing the strengthening role of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in reducing divorce rates in Padang City, this study uses a theoretical framework of public service, family resilience, social mediation, and the diffusion of innovation. This theoretical framework is used to understand the transformation of the KUA's function from an administrative institution to a socio-religious institution oriented towards preventive, educational, and family-building services.

1. Regulation and Standardization of the Role of the KUA in Islamic Family Law

From an Islamic family law perspective, the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) functions not only as an administrative institution for registering marriages but also as a socio-religious institution with a moral responsibility to foster family resilience and prevent divorce (Ardiansyah et al., 2022: 45). Therefore, regulation and standardization of KUA services are crucial to ensure that marriage services, conflict mediation, and family development are carried out professionally, measurably, and in accordance with Islamic legal principles.

Normatively, the role of the KUA is regulated in various regulations, such as Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974, Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 34 of 2016 concerning the Organization and Work Procedures of the District KUA, and Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 20 of 2019 concerning Marriage Registration. These regulations provide legal legitimacy for the KUA in implementing premarital services, marriage registration, family guidance, and divorce mediation. From a public policy theory perspective, regulations serve to create legal certainty, increase bureaucratic professionalism, and strengthen the accountability of public services to the community (Maloko, 2014: 67). Thus, the regulation and standardization of KUA services are seen as state instruments for building family resilience and maintaining social stability.

2. Islamic Perspective on Sakinah Family and Household Resilience

From an Islamic perspective, the concept of a harmonious family is the primary basis for family development carried out by the Religious Affairs Office (KUA). The Qur'an emphasizes that the purpose of marriage is to create peace, love, and harmony in the household, as explained in QS. Ar-Rum verse 21: "And among His signs is this: He created for you mates from yourselves, that you may be inclined to them and find them at ease, and He placed between you love and compassion" (Ismatulloh, 2015: 88). This verse shows that marriage is not only biological or administrative, but also has spiritual, emotional, and social dimensions that must be maintained through good communication, responsibility, and wise conflict resolution. Therefore, family development programs carried out by the KUA are directed at strengthening the values of love and compassion in household life.

Furthermore, Surah An-Nisa verse 34 explains the husband's responsibility to maintain family continuity through leadership, protection, and the provision of the family's livelihood. According to Imam al-Qurthubi, this verse cannot be interpreted as a sign of male superiority over women, but rather as a form of social and moral responsibility in maintaining household stability (Ziska Yanti, 2022: 102). In the context of this research, this verse serves as the normative basis for implementing premarital guidance, family counseling, and household education programs conducted by the Religious Affairs Office (KUA). The Islamic approach used in this research is holistic, namely, viewing family resilience from religious, psychological, social, economic, and interpersonal communication perspectives (Nur Hotimah, 2021: 54).

3. The Sakinah Heritage Program and the Theory of Innovation Diffusion

The KUA programs, in the form of Pusaka Sakinah, are understood as a socio-religious innovation aimed at strengthening family resilience and reducing divorce rates. These programs include premarital guidance, family counseling, domestic conflict mediation, parenting classes, family economic development, and post-divorce family support. In this study, these programs

were analyzed using Everett Rogers' diffusion of innovation theory, which explains how an innovation is accepted and adopted by society (Everett M. Rogers, 2018: 15). According to Rogers, the success of an innovation is influenced by five main factors: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability.

In the context of the Religious Affairs Office (KUA), relative benefits are seen when the community perceives premarital guidance and family counseling programs as more effective than traditional conflict resolution methods that often lead to divorce. Compatibility indicates that KUA programs are more readily accepted when they align with the cultural and religious values of the local community (Umar & Saihu, 2022: 77). Complexity, on the other hand, refers to the extent to which the community understands the program's procedures and benefits. Trialability demonstrates the importance of pilot testing the program before widespread implementation. Observability, on the other hand, holds that the community will more readily accept a program if its benefits are observable; for example, couples who participate in a counseling program demonstrate a more harmonious household (Rogers, 2018: 259). Thus, the diffusion of innovation theory is used to explain the successes and obstacles in implementing the Pusaka Sakinah program within the community.

4. Public Service Theory in KUA Services

This study also uses public service theory to analyze the quality of services provided by the KUA in the field of marriage and family development. Public service theory emphasizes the importance of service quality, accessibility, accountability, effectiveness, and community participation in the implementation of government services (Muflihah, 2014: 85). In this context, the KUA is seen as a public service institution that not only provides administrative services for marriage registration but also consultation, mediation, and family development services. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry explain that service quality significantly influences public satisfaction with public institutions (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988: 23). Therefore, the professionalism of the registrar and religious instructors, as well as the quality of service communication, are important factors in the effectiveness of the KUA's role.

In addition to service quality, this study draws on Mark Bovens' perspective on public service accountability, which emphasizes that every public institution must be able to account for the policies and services it provides to the public in a transparent manner (Mark Bovens, 2007: 450). In this context, the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) is required to provide services that are open, easily accessible, and responsive to community needs. Osborne and Gaebler also explain that effective public services must be able to optimize available resources to produce maximum service (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992: 48). Thus, the effectiveness of the KUA in reducing divorce rates is determined not only by regulations, but also by the quality of service, the competence of the apparatus, and the institution's ability to build public trust.

5. Sociological Approach and Symbolic Interactionism

From a sociological perspective, this study uses symbolic interactionism and structural functionalism to understand the relationship between the KUA (Religious Affairs Office) and society. Symbolic interactionism is used to analyze how society interprets the services, mediation, and family development provided by the KUA (Setiyanto, 2017: 39). In this theory, social meaning is formed through interactions between individuals and social institutions. Therefore, the success of the KUA program is greatly influenced by public perception of KUA services' functions, credibility, and benefits in family life. If society views the KUA solely as an administrative institution for marriage registration, its family development and conflict mediation functions will not function optimally.

Meanwhile, structural functionalism views the family as a social institution that maintains order and stability in society. From this perspective, the Religious Affairs Office (KUA) functions as part of the social system, helping maintain family resilience through regulation, guidance, and resolution of domestic conflicts. When divorce rates increase, this condition can be understood as an indication of social dysfunction within the family system and social institutions. Therefore, the KUA plays a strategic role in strengthening social integration through programs that foster harmonious families, mediate conflicts, and educate households to achieve greater social stability.

6. Contractual Theory and Justice in Marriage

This study also draws on contractual theory in family law, which views marriage as a social and legal contract between two individuals that sets out the rights and obligations of each party. From this perspective, the KUA functions as a mediator and facilitator so that couples understand the legal, social, and moral implications of a marriage (Sanford Braver & Diane O'Connell, 1998: 67). Elizabeth Scott explains that modern marriage increasingly emphasizes aspects of individual freedom and personal autonomy, so that husband and wife relationships are more flexible than traditional family patterns (Elizabeth Scott, 2000: 1225). Therefore, family guidance from the KUA is important to ensure that couples have the mental, emotional, and social readiness to live together.

In addition to contractual theory, this study employs distributive justice and agency theories to understand the relationship among the state, the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), and society. Distributive justice theory emphasizes the importance of distributing KUA services fairly, equitably, and inclusively, without discrimination based on gender or social status (Amelia, 2020: 44). Meanwhile, agency theory views the KUA as a state agent that implements government policies in the areas of family law and household development. In the context of this study, these theories are used to explain that the KUA's success in reducing divorce rates is determined not only by formal regulations but also by the institution's ability to build fairness in services, social trust, and sustainable family resilience.

Many researchers have examined the role of the Religious Affairs Office (KUA) in reducing divorce rates. However, most of this prior research has focused on premarital counseling, the effectiveness of courses for prospective brides and grooms (suscatin), and the role of religious counselors in providing marriage counseling. Meanwhile, research on post-marital service programs based on Pusaka Sakinah that are implemented sustainably and systematically remains relatively limited. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by examining the KUA's strategies and work programs to reduce divorce rates in Padang City through a post-marital family development approach.

Andi Novita Mudriani and Dhita Amalia conducted the first study in the *Al-'Adl Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2019, titled "The Role of the Religious Affairs Office (KUA) in Reducing Divorce Rates in Pomalaa and Wundulako Districts." This study aims to determine the factors contributing to divorce, the effectiveness of the KUA's role in reducing divorce rates, and the obstacles encountered in implementing courses for prospective brides and grooms. The study used a legal sociology approach, examining the effectiveness of the KUA not only from a regulatory perspective but also from a community legal culture perspective. The results showed that the implementation of courses for prospective brides and grooms has been quite effective normatively but ineffective from a community legal culture perspective due to low public awareness of the importance of premarital courses. The effectiveness of the SusCatin program in the Pomalaa and Wundulako Districts has reached only around 60% (Novita & Amalia, 2019). This research differs from the author's research, which focuses more on the impact of the ineffectiveness of prospective bride and groom courses. In contrast, the author's research focuses more on post-marital services and guidance provided by the KUA, particularly through the Pusaka Sakinah program, to resolve household conflicts and reduce divorce rates.

The second study was conducted by Nur Chayati et al. in the 2021 issue of the *Al-Hukkam Journal*, titled "The Role of Religious Counselors in Reducing Divorce Rates in the North Pekalongan District Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in 2017–2019." This study found that Islamic religious counselors play a crucial role in divorce prevention efforts through the development of counseling materials, coordination with community leaders and government agencies, and the implementation of marriage counseling for couples experiencing marital problems (Chayati, 2021). This study focused more on the activities of religious counselors in providing guidance and counseling to couples experiencing problems. However, this study did not examine in depth how the counselor's work program is systematically structured, scheduled, and sustainable within the KUA institutional program framework. The author's research focuses on KUA's institutional strategy, using the Pusaka Sakinah program as an instrument for family development and divorce prevention in Padang City.

Further research was conducted by Darmawati in the 2020 issue of the *Harmoni Journal*, titled "The Effectiveness of BP4 Counselors in Reducing Divorce Rates in Makassar City." The results showed that divorce in Makassar City was influenced by the lack of responsibility of husbands in providing a living, domestic violence, and infidelity due to social media. This study also found that BP4 counselors had carried out their duties optimally but still faced various obstacles, such as time constraints, low participation by prospective brides and grooms in socialization activities, and a lack of competence among BP4 counselor resources (Darmawati, 2020). This study further highlighted the factors inhibiting the effectiveness of BP4 counselors in reducing divorce. Meanwhile, the author's research not only examined these obstacles but also examined how the KUA implemented the *Pusaka Sakinah* program as an institutional strategy to foster post-marital families.

Another study, conducted by Khaerudin in 2021, was titled "The Role of Islamic Religious Counselors in Addressing Divorce at the Religious Affairs Office, Plered District, Cirebon Regency." The results showed that the activities of Islamic religious counselors in Plered District were carried out through community development, including counseling and family guidance. Factors found to cause divorce included economic problems, third parties, poor communication, jealousy, early marriage, and domestic violence. This study also found that the role of religious counselors was not optimal because the community did not understand the functions and duties of religious counselors, resulting in few couples seeking marriage counseling (Khaerudin, 2021). Unlike the aforementioned studies, the author's research did not focus solely on the causes of divorce, but rather on the effectiveness of the KUA's work program in providing ongoing family guidance and support.

Syahrul Anwar et al.'s 2020 study, "Retracing the Position of Sharia Science in the Formulation of Laws and Regulations," explains that sharia science plays a crucial role in the formulation of regulations governing Islamic religious affairs, including those on KUA services. This study emphasizes that the KUA's role should not be solely administrative but also directed at preventive efforts to reduce divorce rates (Anwar et al., 2020). Similarly, Supriyanto (2018) found that the KUA still faces various institutional obstacles, such as weak inter-agency coordination, unclear role allocation, and limited access to public services. These two studies demonstrate that institutional and regulatory issues remain major challenges in optimizing the KUA's role in society.

Furthermore, Ismail Rumadan and Ummu Salamah (2021) in their article entitled "Settlement of Divorce Dispute Through the Forum of Mediation in Judicial Institutions as an Effort of Legal Protection for the Rights and Interests of the Child of Post-Divorce" explained that the competence of the mediator greatly influences the effectiveness of divorce mediation, the willingness of the couple to reconcile, and socio-cultural factors in the community. This study

confirms that mediation plays a crucial role in protecting family rights after divorce (Rumadan & Salamah, 2021). Abdullah Taufik (2021) also found that the effectiveness of divorce mediation at the Religious Affairs Office (KUA) is influenced by the mediator's competence and the community's socio-cultural support. These studies show that the KUA's mediation function still needs strengthening, particularly regarding mediator professionalism and socio-religious approaches.

Fadil Maiseptian et al. (2021), in their article entitled "The Role of Religious Extenders in Improving Family Resilience in the Religious Affairs Office (KUA) Padang City", highlighted the influence of gender and culture on KUA services. The study found that women often face procedural barriers and cultural pressures in the divorce process, making them vulnerable to social discrimination. Therefore, KUA services must be more sensitive to issues of gender justice and the protection of women's rights within the household (Maiseptian et al., 2021). This research is important because it demonstrates that KUA services are not only related to administrative aspects, but also concern social justice and family protection.

In addition, Siti Mukzizatin (2020), in a study entitled "The Competence of Islamic Religious Counselors in Maintaining Harmony Between Religious Communities in South Jakarta," explained that Islamic religious counselors play an important role in preventing divorce through susucinan activities and family guidance. However, the study also found inhibiting factors such as limited infrastructure, low participation of prospective brides and grooms, and the absence of mandatory rules for attending susucatin (Mukzizatin, 2020). Meanwhile, Bob Andrian (2020) in his article "Consultative Communication of Islamic Religious Counselors in the Border Area of West Kalimantan" explained that religious counselors play a role in reducing divorce rates through guidance on sakinah families, courses for prospective brides and grooms, socialization of marriage age, and strengthening IMTAQ (Iman Taqwa) and Islamic understanding (Andrian, 2020). However, this study still focuses on premarital guidance and has not looked at postmarital services in depth.

Overall, previous studies share similarities in their discussion of the role of religious instructors and the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in reducing divorce rates. Most use a descriptive qualitative research approach (field research) and focus primarily on premarital counseling activities and the factors that support and inhibit their implementation. The author's study, however, differs fundamentally in that it focuses on the role of the Padang City KUA through the Pusaka Sakinah program, which is implemented systematically, regularly, and sustainably in postmarital family development. This study also examines the service strategies, counseling, mediation, and family support implemented by religious instructors in several sub-district KUAs in Padang City as a concrete effort to reduce divorce rates and strengthen family resilience.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with field research. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the social phenomenon of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) 's role in reducing divorce rates through family development programs and Pusaka Sakinah services in Padang City. The study was conducted at several KUAs in Padang City, specifically in Kuranji, North Padang, and West Padang Districts. The research subjects included the head of the KUA, marriage registrars, Islamic religious instructors, officials of the Class IA Padang Religious Court, officials of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and couples experiencing divorce. The research data consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews, observations, and direct interactions with informants. In contrast, secondary data were obtained from official documents, regulations, reports from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, archives of the Religious Court, books, and relevant scientific journals. The informant selection technique employed purposive sampling based on specific considerations aligned with the research needs (Adi, 2004; Sukandarrumidi, 2006).

Data collection techniques included interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were used to gather information on the strategies and services of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) to reduce divorce rates. At the same time, direct observation was conducted to examine family development activities and Islamic religious counseling services. Documentation was used to supplement the research data through activity archives, Pusaka Sakinah program reports, photographs, and other documents. The data analysis technique used the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model, which includes data condensation, data presentation, and concluding/verification. The analysis was conducted qualitatively and empirically through a systematic process of data description and interpretation to obtain an overview of the effectiveness of the KUA's role in reducing divorce rates in Padang City (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that strengthening the role of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in reducing the divorce rate in Padang City is no longer limited to the administrative function of registering marriages but has expanded into social, educational, and preventive functions aimed at building family resilience.

First Strengthening Regulations and Standardization of KUA Services in Reducing Divorce Rates. The results of the study indicate that the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Kuranji, North Padang, and West Padang Districts has a significant role in reducing divorce rates through the implementation of the Pusaka Sakinah program. The program is realized through premarital guidance services, family counseling, household conflict mediation, fostering a

harmonious family, and ongoing religious counseling. Based on interviews with the head of KUA and religious counselors, family guidance is provided not only at the pre-marital stage but also after marriage, as a form of social assistance for married couples. This finding shows a transformation of KUA services from an administrative pattern to a preventive and educational approach in maintaining family resilience in the community (Mudriani & Amalia, 2019).

The strengthening of regulations and standardization of KUA services in Padang City also demonstrates a shift in institutional orientation, making it more responsive to the social dynamics of urban communities. Premarital counseling, previously an administrative formality, has now evolved into a family education platform addressing household communication, conflict management, reproductive health, and marital responsibilities from a religious and social perspective. Observations indicate that this approach helps couples better understand the social and psychological consequences of marriage. Thus, the KUA is no longer positioned solely as a marriage registration agency but as a socio-religious institution with a sustainable function in family development (Matthew B. Miles & Huberman, 2014).

Second Preventive Approach and Family Mediation by the Religious Affairs Office (KUA). This study also found that Islamic religious instructors play a central role in the implementation of the PUSAKA SAKINAH program. Religious instructors not only serve as conveyors of religious material but also as social mediators and family counselors in resolving household conflicts in the community. Based on interviews and field observations, religious instructors employ a persuasive approach through family consultations, home visits, and informal mediation within the community. This interpersonal approach makes couples experiencing conflict feel more open to discussing their household issues. This finding aligns with Nur Chayati's research, which states that religious instructors play a strategic role in providing marriage guidance and family counseling to reduce divorce rates (Chayati, 2021). Furthermore, the KUA's preventive approach is highly relevant to the needs of the Padang City community amid modern social changes. The mediation and counseling program conducted before a case goes to the Religious Court has been shown to help some couples reconsider their decision to divorce. In some cases, couples who initially came for consultation regarding the divorce process ultimately chose to continue their marriage after participating in mediation and family counseling. This shows that a preventive approach based on education and interpersonal communication is more effective than a repressive approach oriented solely towards formal legal resolution (Amiruddin & Zainal Asikin, 2014).

Third Integration of Local Values and Minangkabau Culture in KUA Counseling. The results of the study indicate that the success of KUA programs in Padang City is also influenced by counselors' ability to integrate religious values with local Minangkabau culture. The counseling materials provided to the community not only present the concept of a harmonious

family from an Islamic perspective but also include Minangkabau traditional values such as deliberation, family responsibility, and the importance of maintaining household honor. This local wisdom-based approach makes it easier for the community to accept family development programs, as it aligns with their daily social and cultural realities. Thus, the integration of religious values and local culture is one of the main strengths of the KUA strategy in building family resilience (Sukandarrumidi, 2006).

Furthermore, using a local cultural approach helps religious instructors communicate more effectively with the community. In practice, instructors often use traditional expressions, Minangkabau proverbs, and a family-like approach to mediate domestic conflicts. This approach not only strengthens the social legitimacy of the KUA program but also creates a sense of emotional closeness between the community and the KUA institution. These findings suggest that the success of religious-based public services is greatly influenced by the institution's ability to understand the local social and cultural context (Nasution, 1992).

Fourth Challenges in the Implementation and Digitalization of KUA Services. On the other hand, this study identified several barriers to implementing the KUA program. The main obstacles faced include the limited number of religious instructors, low community participation in participating in family guidance programs, and the persistence of social stigma against couples who consult about household issues at the KUA. Some people still view family consultations as something private and taboo to discuss openly. This condition means not all couples experiencing household conflict are willing to participate in the mediation or counseling process provided by the KUA. This finding is similar to Darmawati's research, which identifies low community participation and limited instructor competence as the main obstacles to the effectiveness of family guidance services at the KUA (Darmawati, 2020).

This study also shows that digital technology is beginning to be used as part of the innovation of KUA services in Padang City. Mobile applications, social media, and online consultation platforms are being used to expand public access to family guidance and marriage counseling services. However, the digitalization of these services also presents new challenges, particularly regarding the privacy and data security of couples who consult. Furthermore, not everyone has the skills and access to technology needed to use digital services effectively. Therefore, the digital transformation of KUA services requires human resource readiness, data protection regulations, and adequate infrastructure support to ensure effective and reliable services (Haris Hardiansyah, 2013).

Fifth Social Implications of Strengthening the KUA Program for Family Resilience. Furthermore, research results indicate that the PUSAKA SAKINAH program has broad social implications for family resilience and community stability. Based on interviews with couples participating in the family development program, most stated that counseling and mediation

services helped them understand the importance of communication, family responsibilities, and peaceful conflict resolution. The presence of the KUA as a socio-religious institution provides couples facing marital problems with a sense of security and moral support. In this context, strengthening the KUA program not only reduces the divorce rate but also contributes to the formation of more harmonious and socially and psychologically stable families (Maiseptian et al., 2021).

Thus, this study confirms that strengthening the role of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) through regulation, service standardization, improving counselor competence, a multidisciplinary approach, and the use of technology is a strategic step in addressing the rising divorce rate in Padang City. The transformation of KUA services demonstrates a paradigm shift from an administrative approach to a socio-humanistic approach that is more responsive to community needs. Despite still facing various obstacles, the existence of family guidance and mediation programs conducted by KUA shows a real contribution to strengthening the resilience of Muslim families. Therefore, regular evaluation, strengthening counselors' capacity, and cross-sector collaboration are important factors for KUA programs to continue developing sustainably and have a broader impact on society (B. Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Padang City has a strategic role in reducing the divorce rate through strengthening regulations, standardizing services, and implementing the PUSAKA SAKINAH program. Strengthening the role of the KUA is no longer solely oriented towards the administrative aspects of marriage registration; it has evolved into a socio-religious institution that carries out functions in education, mediation, counseling, and family development in a preventive and sustainable manner. Through premarital guidance services, family mediation, religious counseling, and fostering a harmonious family, the KUA strives to build household resilience that is more harmonious and better adapted to social dynamics. This approach is strengthened by integrating Minangkabau cultural values, involving community leaders, and developing the competencies of religious instructors, so that the services provided are more contextual, humanistic, and responsive to community needs. In addition, the use of digital technology is becoming an important part of efforts to expand access to services and monitor family development programs.

On the other hand, this study also found that the KUA program's effectiveness in reducing divorce rates remains constrained by several challenges, including limited counselor resources, low community participation in family development programs, and the social stigma surrounding household consultation services. Nevertheless, innovative programs such as BERKAH, KOMPAK, and LESTARI within the PUSAKA SAKINAH framework have had a positive

impact on increasing awareness among married couples regarding the importance of communication, family responsibilities, and peaceful conflict resolution. Therefore, successfully strengthening the KUA's role in reducing divorce rates requires ongoing regulatory support, cross-sector collaboration, regular program evaluation, and improved service quality based on a multidisciplinary approach. Thus, the KUA has great potential to become a strategic institution in building harmonious families, strengthening social stability, and supporting the realization of Muslim family resilience in Padang City.

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