



Instructional Communication Resilience: Sustaining *Sakinah* Family Values Amidst Modern Marital Disruption

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ABSTRACT

The increasing rate of divorce in various regions reflects a disruption in marital relationships that contributes to family vulnerability. This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of marital disruption and examine the educational communication strategies employed by religious counselors to internalize *sakinah* family values in Sukowono District, Jember Regency. This research adopts a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with religious counselors, the head of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), and couples participating in premarital guidance programs, complemented by field observations and document analysis. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion verification. The findings indicate that marital disruption in Sukowono is shaped by three main factors: weak interpersonal communication between spouses, limited psychological readiness for marriage, and changing communication patterns influenced by digital technology. To address these challenges, religious counselors apply instructional communication strategies through dialogical interaction, persuasive, value-based religious communication, empathetic counseling, and adaptive communication approaches. This study proposes the concept of instructional communication resilience as a model for strengthening *sakinah* family development through educational communication within community-based religious institutions.

Keywords:

Family resilience;
Instructional communication;
marital disruption;
Religious counselors;
Sakinah family

INTRODUCTION

A *sakinah* family serves as both a normative and social foundation for the sustainability of a stable society, as the family institution shapes value systems, intergenerational educational patterns, and the quality of social relations within the community (Samudera & Prayuda, 2021; Irfanb et al., 2022; Muklisin, 2023; Rahmadana et al., 2025; Wahid, 2025). From the perspective of Islamic family law, a *sakinah* family is built upon the principles of *mawaddah* (affection), *rahmah* (compassion), responsibility, and balanced relations between husband and wife (Suryani & Kadi, 2020; Rahmadana et al., 2025; Ulfatmi et al., 2025). However, within contemporary societies undergoing rapid

social transformation, family stability faces increasingly complex challenges (Syaibani, 2023). The expansion of communication technologies, shifts in gender relations, and growing domestic economic pressures significantly influence the dynamics of marital life (Kılınçer, 2023; Lee, 2020; Rabenda-Nowak & Wylęły, 2022; Hernández et al., 2023; Jabali et al., 2024). These conditions often trigger marital conflicts that eventually lead to divorce (Karney & Bradbury, 2020; Parker et al., 2021; Mohamadian et al., 2024). This phenomenon is also empirically evident in Sukowono District, Jember Regency, where approximately 100 divorce cases were recorded in 2025, including 81 divorce petitions filed by wives (*cerai gugat*) and 22 divorce pronouncements initiated by husbands (*cerai talak*) (KUA, 2026). The dominance of *cerai gugat* reflects tensions within marital relationships associated with weak spousal communication and insufficient psychological readiness for marriage. Therefore, examining strategies to strengthen the internalization of *sakinah* family values is crucial for enhancing family resilience amid ongoing social transformations.

Studies on *sakinah* families and family resilience have developed across multiple perspectives, ranging from normative approaches within Islamic family law to sociological analyses of family dynamics (Fauzan & Amroni, 2020; Arifin & Baharun, 2021; Hidayati et al., 2022; Saleh, 2022; Ridlwan & Fitriana, 2024). Several studies emphasize the importance of premarital education in enhancing couples' readiness to establish harmonious marital relationships (Jannah & Halim, 2022; Kamarusdiana et al., 2022; Musyafaah et al., 2022; Ramadhan, 2024; Yüksektepe, 2024). Other research indicates that marriage guidance programs organized by religious institutions, including the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), help improve couples' understanding of marital rights and obligations, as well as the importance of family communication (Ripley et al., 2019; Djawas et al., 2022; Rosidini et al., 2022; Saleh, 2022; Karmila & Parid, 2023; Bustan et al., 2024). Moreover, numerous studies highlight that the quality of interpersonal communication within families is closely associated with marital stability and family resilience (Javadivala et al., 2021; Johnson et al., 2021; Mundakir et al., 2023; Marlina et al., 2024; Shikha, 2025). Nevertheless, most of these studies continue to conceptualize the *sakinah* family primarily as a normative concept transmitted through formal educational programs, without thoroughly examining how communication processes between religious counselors and community members occur in practical family guidance activities at the local level.

A critical limitation of previous studies is the lack of attention to the dimension of instructional communication used by religious counselors as a central mechanism for internalizing *sakinah* family values. In many studies, family development programs are understood merely as the transmission of normative knowledge about marital law or premarital education, without exploring how counselors implement communication strategies when confronting complex family issues in real social contexts. Furthermore, much of the research on family resilience tends to analyze divorce and marital conflict from a macro perspective through statistical or policy-based approaches, thereby overlooking the micro-level social interactions that occur during family counseling and religious outreach activities. Consequently, a significant research gap remains in explaining how religious counselors develop adaptive, dialogical, and context-sensitive communication strategies to transform *sakinah* family values within communities undergoing social change.

In response to these limitations, this study offers a new analytical perspective by positioning the instructional communication of religious counselors as the central focus in examining the internalization of *sakinah* family values. This approach does not merely view family development as a process of delivering normative religious teachings, but rather as a dynamic social communication process that occurs through interactions between religious counselors and community members. By situating the empirical context within the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Sukowono District, Jember Regency, this research seeks to explore how religious counselors develop dialogical, persuasive, and empathetic communication strategies in responding to the phenomenon of marital disruption. Accordingly, the novelty of this study lies in the development of the concept of instructional communication resilience of religious counselors as an adaptive model of *sakinah* family development. This framework contributes to expanding interdisciplinary discussions between Islamic family law, family communication studies, and family resilience scholarship.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study addresses the central question of how *sakinah* family values are internalized through the instructional communication strategies of religious counselors in their responses to the phenomenon of marital disruption in society. The high number of divorce cases in Sukowono indicates that issues of family resilience are not solely related to legal aspects of marriage, but are also closely linked to

the quality of spousal communication and the understanding of marital values in everyday family life. Therefore, this study argues that the internalization of *sakinah* family values cannot rely solely on the formal transmission of religious norms; rather, it requires adaptive, dialogical, and context-sensitive instructional communication strategies that align with families' lived realities. By examining the communication practices of religious counselors at the KUA in Sukowono, this research aims to contribute theoretically to the development of Islamic family law studies while simultaneously proposing a communication-based family development model that can strengthen Muslim family resilience amid contemporary social transformations.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the process of internalizing *sakinah* family values through religious counselors' instructional communication practices (Achjar et al., 2023; Adil et al., 2023). The qualitative approach was chosen because the phenomenon under investigation involves meanings, social experiences, and interactional dynamics that cannot be adequately reduced to numerical data alone. Through this approach, the researcher can explore how *sakinah* family values are transmitted, interpreted, and internalized by the community through religious counseling practices. The case study design was selected because the research focuses on a specific institutional context, namely the family development practices conducted at the Office of Religious Affairs (Kantor Urusan Agama/KUA) in Sukowono District, Jember Regency, which possesses distinctive socio-religious characteristics. The selection of this research site is based on the strategic role of the KUA as a state institution that not only administers marriage registration but also performs an educational function through premarital guidance programs, family consultations, and religious counseling. Within the social context of Sukowono, which has undergone transformations driven by economic dynamics, social mobility, and the penetration of communication technologies, the KUA provides a relevant empirical setting for examining how *sakinah* family values are contextually internalized through instructional communication practices.

Data collection was conducted using a combination of complementary techniques to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. First, in-depth

interviews were conducted with key informants, including religious counselors, the head of the KUA, and community couples who had participated in premarital guidance programs or family consultations. These interviews aimed to explore the informants' experiences, communication strategies, and perceptions of the process of internalizing *sakinah* family values. Second, field observations were conducted to directly examine counseling practices and communication dynamics during family development activities within the KUA environment. Through observation, the researcher identified interaction patterns, methods of delivering educational materials, and community responses to the religious messages conveyed. Third, a document analysis was conducted by reviewing various documents related to family development programs, including premarital guidance modules, counseling activity reports, and relevant administrative records (Mulyana et al., 2024). The combination of these three techniques enabled the researcher to obtain richer, deeper, and more contextually grounded data on the instructional communication practices involved in the internalization of *sakinah* family values.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 2014). During the data condensation stage, the researcher selected, simplified, and organized data relevant to the research focus, categorizing complex information into thematic groups, such as the communication strategies of religious counselors, the dynamics of internalization of the *sakinah* family value, and family responses to family development programs. Subsequently, the condensed data were presented in the form of analytical narratives and thematic categorizations to facilitate the identification of relationships among data and emerging patterns. The final stage involved data verification, conducted through analytical reflection to ensure the consistency of the findings and to formulate conclusions that can be scientifically justified. To ensure the credibility and validity of the data, this study applied source and method triangulation, which involved comparing information from different informants and across multiple data collection techniques.

FINDINGS

The Phenomenon of Marital Disruption and Family Vulnerability in Sukowono

The phenomenon of marital disruption in this study is understood as a condition characterized by shifts and instability in marital relationships, marked by increasing family conflicts, declining quality of spousal communication, and rising divorce rates within a particular social setting. In the context of this research, marital disruption refers to the dynamics of family vulnerability in Sukowono District, Jember Regency, reflected in the growing number of divorce cases and changes in marital relations. Field data indicate that throughout 2025, approximately 100 divorce cases were recorded in Sukowono, comprising 81 divorce petitions filed by wives (*cerai gugat*) and 22 divorce pronouncements initiated by husbands (*cerai talak*). The dominance of *cerai gugat* suggests increasing tension in marital relationships and highlights the fragility of family stability within the community. These findings indicate that family vulnerability in Sukowono is not merely related to the legal aspects of divorce, but is also closely linked to the dynamics of family communication, couples' readiness for marital life, and evolving social values that influence the relationship between husbands and wives.

Interview results with one of the religious counselors at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Sukowono, Mahrus, reveal that marital conflicts leading to divorce often stem from weak communication between spouses. He explained that many couples seek consultation only after conflicts have persisted for a considerable period without constructive resolution. In the interview, Mahrus (47) stated:

"Most couples who come for consultation have actually been experiencing conflict for quite some time. The issue is often not merely economic, but rather their inability to establish effective communication, which causes minor problems to escalate into recurring disputes."

This statement indicates that family conflicts often evolve from communication problems that are not resolved through constructive dialogue. Based on these findings, the researcher interprets that family vulnerability in Sukowono is not solely triggered by economic factors or social pressures, but is also closely related to the limited capacity for interpersonal communication within marital relationships.

A similar finding was expressed by another religious counselor, Nasiruddin (39), who emphasized that the increasing divorce rate is closely associated with couples' lack of readiness to understand and assume their responsibilities in marital life. He stated:

"Many couples enter marriage without adequate psychological readiness. They do not yet understand how to perform their roles as husband and wife, so when differences of opinion arise, conflicts tend to escalate quickly."

Meanwhile, another religious counselor, Fauzan (45), added that changes in communication patterns brought about by technological developments have also influenced family dynamics. Fauzan explained:

"Nowadays, family conflicts are often triggered by misunderstandings in everyday communication, including those related to the use of social media, which sometimes amplifies problems within the household."

The researcher interprets these two statements as indicating a transformation in the structure of family relationships, influenced by contemporary social dynamics. Couples' psychological unpreparedness, combined with changing communication patterns, has become an important factor affecting family stability within the community.

Based on interview results and field data analysis, the phenomenon of marital disruption in Sukowono can be understood through a process that illustrates how family vulnerability emerges. The process generally begins with couples' lack of readiness to understand family roles, which gradually develops into weak interpersonal communication between husbands and wives. This condition is further intensified by economic pressures and the influence of communication technology, which frequently triggers misunderstandings in marital life. When family conflicts are not managed constructively through dialogue and compromise, these situations evolve into persistent relational tensions. If such conditions continue without appropriate intervention or family guidance, the conflicts may ultimately lead to divorce. This pattern suggests that divorce represents the culmination of an accumulated conflict process within marital relationships.

These interview findings were reinforced by observations made by the researcher during family consultation sessions at the KUA Sukowono. During these sessions, it was observed that couples seeking consultation had generally experienced marital conflicts for a considerable period of time. Some couples appeared to struggle to express their

concerns openly, and emotional outbursts often marked the communication during consultations. The researcher also noted that several couples admitted they had never received any prior guidance on marital conflict management before entering marriage. Based on these observations, the researcher interprets that family vulnerability in Sukowono is closely related to limited understanding among couples of communication skills and conflict management in marital life. This finding indicates that family development through religious counseling plays an important role in strengthening couples' capacity to build more stable family relationships.

Overall, the research data demonstrate that the phenomenon of marital disruption in Sukowono is characterized by the increasing number of divorce cases and the emergence of various forms of vulnerability within family relationships. Field findings reveal that marital conflicts are generally triggered by poor spousal communication, insufficient psychological readiness for marriage, and changing patterns of interaction influenced by modern social dynamics. The data indicate that family conflicts often develop gradually from unresolved communication problems, which then escalate into prolonged conflicts and eventually lead to divorce. Therefore, the divorce phenomenon in Sukowono can be understood as a manifestation of fragile family resilience that requires intervention through strengthening *sakinah* family values and improving the quality of communication within marital relationships.

Table 1. The Phenomenon of Marital Disruption and Family Resilience Vulnerability in Sukowono District

| Finding Dimension | Meaning | Indicators | Implications for Family Resilience |
|--|--|--|---|
| Quality of spousal communication | Family conflicts often stem from the breakdown of healthy interpersonal communication between husbands and wives. | Repeated arguments, communication misunderstandings, and minor issues escalating into major conflicts. | Family resilience weakens because conflicts are not resolved through constructive dialogue, thereby increasing the likelihood of divorce. |
| Psychological readiness of couples in marriage | Psychological unpreparedness prevents couples from effectively managing differences and pressures in their marriages | limited understanding of family roles, low conflict-management skills, and emotional immaturity | Family stability becomes vulnerable because couples lack the readiness to face the dynamics of marital life. |
| Changes in social communication | The transformation of social communication influences family | Conflicts triggered by social media, misunderstandings in | Family resilience is affected by poorly managed changes in |

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|----------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|
| patterns due to technology | interaction patterns and may intensify the potential for conflict | digital communication, and technology-disrupted family interactions. | social communication patterns. |
|----------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|

The data presented in the table above indicate that family vulnerability in Sukowono is closely associated with three primary dimensions: the quality of spousal communication, the psychological readiness of couples in marital life, and changes in social communication patterns driven by technological development. Religious counselors emphasize that family conflicts often emerge from minor issues that are not managed through constructive communication. This condition suggests that economic factors do not solely determine family stability but are also strongly influenced by couples' ability to establish healthy interpersonal communication within their marriages.

Furthermore, the data pattern demonstrates a clear relationship between couples' psychological unpreparedness and weak communication within the family. When couples lack adequate understanding of their roles and responsibilities in marriage, the potential for conflict increases because each partner tends to develop different expectations regarding family relationships. In this context, divorce can be seen as the culmination of accumulated conflict within the household. Therefore, strengthening *sakinah* family values and enhancing couples' communication capacities become essential components in reinforcing family resilience within society.

Overall, the research findings reveal a consistent pattern in which divorce in Sukowono begins with couples' lack of readiness to understand family roles, which subsequently evolves into weak interpersonal communication within marital relationships. This condition is further intensified by social transformation and the influence of communication technologies, which often generate misunderstandings in everyday family interactions. When such conflicts are not managed constructively, they develop into prolonged relational tensions that eventually lead to divorce. This pattern indicates that family resilience is not determined solely by structural factors, but also by couples' ability to build healthy communication and internalize *sakinah* family values within their marital lives.

Religious Counselors' Strategies in Educational Communication for Realizing *Sakinah* Families

In this study, instructional communication strategies are understood as educational approaches employed by religious counselors to convey *sakinah* family values to the community through premarital guidance, family consultations, and religious counseling activities. Instructional communication does not merely refer to the delivery of information but also encompasses dialogical interactions aimed at embedding normative family values into everyday marital life. In this context, instructional communication resilience refers to the adaptive capacity of religious counselors to adjust their communication strategies in response to various family problems encountered in society. Religious counselors at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Sukowono serve not only as transmitters of religious knowledge but also as social mediators, helping couples understand the values of *mawaddah* (affection), *rahmah* (compassion), family responsibility, and the importance of harmonious communication in marital relationships. Therefore, instructional communication strategies serve as a crucial tool for internalizing *sakinah* family values within the community's social dynamics.

Interview findings with a religious counselor, Mahrus (47), indicate that the internalization of *sakinah* family values is carried out through a dialogical educational approach. In premarital guidance sessions, counselors do not merely explain the legal rights and obligations of husbands and wives but also encourage couples to reflect on the meaning of a *sakinah* family in daily life. Mahrus explained:

"When guiding prospective couples, we do not only explain marriage regulations. We also invite them to discuss how to build good communication within the family, because many marital conflicts actually begin with unhealthy communication."

This statement demonstrates that the instructional communication employed by religious counselors is not one-directional; rather, it involves dialogical engagement that encourages couples to reflect on *sakinah* family values within their marital relationships. The researcher interprets this dialogical approach as an effective communication strategy for fostering couples' awareness of the importance of harmonious communication in family life.

Interview findings with another religious counselor, Nasiruddin (39), reveal that instructional communication strategies are also implemented through a persuasive approach that emphasizes religious values in family life. Nasiruddin explained:

“We usually relate family issues to religious values so that couples understand that marriage is not merely a social relationship but a trust that must be preserved.”

Meanwhile, another counselor, Fauzan (45), emphasized that flexibility in communication is often necessary because each family faces different problems. He stated:

“When dealing with couples experiencing conflict, the approach cannot be the same as in premarital guidance. Sometimes we need to listen more so that they feel understood.”

The researcher interprets these statements as indicating the adaptive capacity of religious counselors to adjust their communication strategies to the circumstances faced by each family. Such adaptability reflects a form of communication resilience within the practice of family counseling.

Based on interviews and field data analysis, the instructional communication strategies employed by religious counselors in internalizing *sakinah* family values can be understood through a sequential process. The process begins with the delivery of foundational teachings on *sakinah* family values in premarital guidance programs. This stage is followed by dialogue and reflection between couples regarding their roles and responsibilities in family life. In the subsequent stage, religious counselors provide guidance through family consultations when couples encounter marital conflicts. Through this process, values such as *mawaddah*, *rahmah*, patience, and family responsibility are gradually internalized within marital relationships. This sequence indicates that the internalization of *sakinah* family values does not occur instantly but rather through an ongoing educational communication process.

Observational findings from premarital guidance sessions conducted at KUA Sukowono further demonstrate that religious counselors employ various communication methods when delivering materials on *sakinah* family values. In several sessions, counselors used group discussions and case examples of families to help participants better understand the complexities of marital life. The researcher also observed that participants were more actively engaged when the materials were delivered through

dialogue and case studies compared to lecture-based approaches alone. These observations suggest that participatory communication methods facilitate more effective internalization of values, as participants are not merely passive recipients of information but actively engage in reflective learning grounded in family experiences.

Overall, the findings indicate that the instructional communication strategies employed by religious counselors at KUA Sukowono play a significant role in the internalization of *sakinah* family values. Religious counselors not only convey normative religious teachings but also develop dialogical, persuasive, and adaptive communication strategies tailored to the conditions families face. The emerging pattern suggests that the success of internalizing *sakinah* family values is strongly influenced by the counselors' ability to build empathetic communication and provide guidance to couples when confronting marital conflicts. Thus, resilient instructional communication becomes a crucial instrument in strengthening family resilience within the community..

Table 2. Strategies and Resilience of Religious Counselors' Instructional Communication

| Finding Dimension | Meaning | Indicators | Implications for Family Resilience |
|---|---|---|--|
| Dialogical approach in counseling communication | Instructional communication is built through dialogue and reflection, enabling couples to understand <i>sakinah</i> family values in a participatory manner | Interactive discussions in premarital guidance; reflection on family experiences; active participant engagement | Enhances couples' awareness of the importance of harmonious communication in family life |
| Persuasive approach based on religious values | Values of <i>sakinah</i> , <i>mawaddah</i> , and <i>rahmah</i> are conveyed through normative religious perspectives linking marriage to moral and spiritual responsibility | Integration of religious values in family counseling; emphasizing marriage as a moral trust | Strengthens value orientation in marital relationships and promotes family stability |
| Empathetic approach in family counseling | Counseling communication emphasizes empathy and active listening rather than merely delivering information | Counselors' willingness to listen; consultative dialogue; interpersonal engagement | Helps couples manage conflicts constructively and prevents conflict escalation |
| Flexibility in counselors' communication strategies | Religious counselors adapt communication methods according to the diverse conditions and problems faced by families | Contextual communication methods; adaptive counseling approaches | Improves the effectiveness of counseling in strengthening family resilience |

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|---|---|---|---|
| Resilience of instructional communication | The ability of counselors to maintain communication effectiveness in addressing complex family problems | Consistent family guidance; ongoing assistance; role as social mediator | Strengthens couples' capacity to build more harmonious and sustainable family relationships |
|---|---|---|---|

The data presented in the table above indicate that the instructional communication strategies employed by religious counselors in family development programs in Sukowono are constructed through a combination of complementary communication approaches. The dialogical approach enables couples to understand *sakinah* family values through discussion and shared reflection. The persuasive approach grounded in religious values helps couples view marriage as a moral and spiritual responsibility. Meanwhile, the empathetic approach demonstrated through counselors' willingness to listen to family concerns illustrates that counseling communication is not solely oriented toward information delivery but also toward fostering humane interpersonal relationships.

Furthermore, the data pattern indicates that the success of internalizing *sakinah* family values depends not only on the counseling materials but also on counselors' ability to adjust communication strategies to the circumstances families face. This communication flexibility reflects the resilience of religious counselors in fulfilling their role as social mediators in family life. Consequently, the instructional communication practiced by religious counselors at KUA Sukowono can be understood as a form of social education that not only transmits religious values but also strengthens couples' capacities to develop more harmonious family relationships.

Overall, the research findings reveal a pattern in which the instructional communication strategies of religious counselors in internalizing *sakinah* family values unfold through three main stages: the transmission of *sakinah* family values through premarital guidance; dialogue and reflection between couples regarding family life; and family assistance through consultation when conflicts arise. This pattern indicates that the internalization of *sakinah* family values is an ongoing educational process that requires adaptive communication responsive to the dynamics of family life. Therefore, the resilience of instructional communication among religious counselors becomes a key factor in strengthening family resilience amid the social transformations affecting contemporary marital life.

DISCUSSION

The phenomenon of marital disruption identified in Sukowono indicates that family vulnerability is primarily triggered by weak interpersonal communication between spouses and by a lack of psychological readiness for marital life. This finding reinforces classical arguments in family studies that position communication as a central determinant of marital stability. Research by Adegboyega, Castillo-Lopez, Kanter, Karney, khezri and shroul demonstrates that negative communication patterns before and during marriage are significantly correlated with increasing marital conflicts and the potential for divorce during the early years of marriage ((Karney & Bradbury, 2020; Khezri et al., 2020; Kanter et al., 2021; Adegboyega, 2021; Shroul et al., 2022; Castillo-López et al., 2024) . This finding is also consistent with Kurniati, Pramono, and Williamson’s study, which emphasizes that family communication constitutes a fundamental foundation for maintaining emotional cohesion and preventing prolonged marital conflicts (Pramono, 2020; Williamson, 2020; Kurniati et al., 2021). Wulandari-Amanda and Zamralita further argues that family communication functions as an important mediating factor in strengthening family functioning and enhancing the psychological well-being of family members (Wulandari & Amanda, 2023; Zamralita et al., 2024). However, the field findings in Sukowono reveal a more complex dimension than those highlighted in previous studies. Marital conflicts are not solely triggered by poor communication but are also shaped by local social pressures, changing family interaction patterns, and rising expectations within modern marital relationships. These findings suggest that family communication should not be understood merely as an interpersonal variable but rather as a social phenomenon that interacts with broader structural dynamics within society.

In addition to communication factors, this study demonstrates that insufficient psychological readiness before marriage is a significant contributor to family vulnerability. These findings confirm previous studies emphasizing the importance of premarital education in developing couples’ emotional readiness and relational skills. Sponge, Kamarusdiana, and Lomotey argue that structured premarital education can improve communication skills and conflict management abilities, thereby reducing the likelihood of divorce (Kamarusdiana et al., 2022; Lomotey, 2025; Sponge et al., 2025). Similarly, Asadpour, Hopipah & Ulfiah and Rajabi’s study indicates that premarital education improves couples’ understanding of marital responsibilities and the dynamics

of their relationships (Rajabi et al., 2023; Asadpour et al., 2025; Hopipah & Ulfiah, 2025). These findings are further supported by Djawas, Gazioglu and Prismadianto's research, which shows that marriage guidance programs can enhance family literacy in interpersonal communication and conflict management (Djawas et al., 2022; Gazioglu et al., 2022; Prismadianto et al., 2025)

Nevertheless, the findings of this study simultaneously challenge the normative assumption that premarital education automatically prevents family conflicts. In the Sukowono context, several couples who had participated in premarital guidance programs still experienced serious marital conflicts after marriage. This phenomenon supports the analysis by Heyman and Nkurunziza, who argue that the effectiveness of premarital programs largely depends on the quality of program implementation, pedagogical methods, and the relevance of the materials to couples' real social conditions (Heyman et al., 2020; Nkurunziza et al., 2025). Therefore, premarital education cannot be regarded as a single solution for strengthening family resilience.

This study also highlights that religious counselors at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Sukowono play a strategic role in internalizing *sakinah* family values through instructional communication strategies that are dialogical, persuasive, and empathetic. This finding aligns with Marlina and Ridlwan & Fitriana's research, which suggests that Islamic counseling approaches grounded in empathetic communication can help couples manage marital conflicts constructively (Marlina et al., 2024; Ridlwan & Fitriana, 2024). Arifin, Herni and Sururie's study further indicates that family development programs grounded in the values of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* can strengthen family resilience in the face of social pressures (Arifin & Baharun, 2021; Sururie et al., 2023; Herni et al., 2024). Similarly, Saleh and Ulfatmi's research demonstrates that families that integrate religious values into their communication practices tend to exhibit higher resilience in dealing with life challenges (Saleh, 2022; Ulfatmi et al., 2025). These findings are also supported by Eksi, Howard and Uditha 's study, which emphasizes that family spirituality serves as an important psychological resource in building family cohesion (Eksi & Özkapu, 2023; Howard et al., 2023; Uditha & Bulathwatta, 2025).

Nevertheless, the Sukowono findings suggest that the internalization of *sakinah* values cannot rely solely on normative religious approaches. In practice, religious counselors must combine normative teachings with dialogical and contextual

communication strategies so that these values can be meaningfully understood and applied by couples in their everyday marital experiences. This insight expands previous studies that have primarily emphasized the normative dimension of family development while overlooking the role of instructional communication.

Another important finding is that the effectiveness of religious counselors' instructional communication is strongly influenced by their ability to adapt to social changes, particularly the rapid development of digital communication technologies. In several cases observed in Sukowono, marital conflicts were triggered by misunderstandings arising from the use of social media and digital communication in family interactions. This finding is consistent with previous studies, which suggests that technological transformation has significantly altered family relational dynamics and increased the potential for interpersonal conflict (Hertlein, 2021; Singh & Gaurav -, 2025). Zamralita's research also demonstrates that families possessing adaptive communication skills tend to exhibit greater resilience when facing social and psychological pressures (Zamralita et al., 2024). However, this study's findings indicate that religious counselors can serve as communication mediators, helping couples navigate these social transformations. In this regard, the instructional communication carried out by religious counselors should be understood not only as a medium for transmitting religious values but also as a mechanism of social adaptation that enables families to manage changes in communication in modern society.

From a broader perspective, this research demonstrates that family development cannot be understood merely as the transmission of religious norms or the enforcement of legal regulations related to marriage. Studies on family resilience emphasize that family stability results from complex interactions among psychological factors, interpersonal communication, and broader social structures (Rahmi et al., 2023; Vladislav et al., 2024). Family communication research also highlights that the quality of family relationships is strongly influenced by family members' ability to engage in reflective and empathetic communication (Lloyd et al., 2023; Ferić, 2024). The findings in Sukowono illustrate that religious counselors play an important role in bridging the normative dimension of religion with the lived realities of family life. Consequently, the role of religious counselors extends beyond an educational function to include a mediating function in managing relational dynamics within families at the community level.

Conceptually, this study contributes to the development of Islamic family law scholarship by demonstrating that the internalization of *sakinah* family values constitutes a dynamic process of social communication. Previous studies have tended to frame marriage guidance programs as administrative initiatives focused primarily on delivering normative materials (Fauzan & Amroni, 2020; Samsul & Husen, 2020; Muklisiin, 2023). In contrast, this research's findings indicate that the effectiveness of family development efforts largely depends on religious counselors' ability to construct dialogical, empathetic, and adaptive instructional communication strategies that resonate with the community's social realities (Rosdialena et al., 2021; Huriani et al., 2022; Noviansyah et al., 2022). Accordingly, this study introduces the concept of instructional communication resilience of religious counselors as a new analytical framework for understanding how *sakinah* family values can be effectively internalized within society. This concept highlights that religious counselors function not only as transmitters of religious knowledge but also as social mediators, facilitating reflective communication between religious values and families' lived experiences (Hafizhah et al., 2023; Umriana et al., 2023). The theoretical implication of this study is to strengthen the interdisciplinary nexus among Islamic family law, family communication studies, and family resilience research. In contrast, its practical implication emphasizes the need to enhance the communication capacity of religious counselors so that family development programs within the KUA can function more effectively in strengthening Muslim family resilience in the context of contemporary social transformation.

CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of marital disruption in Sukowono is closely associated with vulnerabilities in family communication, couples' psychological unpreparedness, and the weak internalization of *sakinah* family values, both before and during marriage. Divorce data dominated by *ceraai gugat* (divorce petitions filed by wives) indicate relational tensions that emerge from problems in interpersonal communication within the family. These findings confirm previous studies that emphasize the importance of spousal communication and premarital readiness in maintaining family resilience. In this context, the instructional communication strategies employed by religious counsellors through dialogical, persuasive, and empathetic approaches have proven to be important

mechanisms for internalizing the values of *mawaddah* (affection), *rahmah* (compassion), and family responsibility. Accordingly, this study demonstrates that strengthening family resilience does not rely solely on legal regulations governing marriage, but also on the effectiveness of educational communication conducted by religious institutions at the community level.

The implications of this research suggest that the development of *sakinah* families requires strengthening the instructional communication capacities of religious counselors so they can respond effectively to the social dynamics influencing family life. In practice, these findings provide a foundation for developing an adaptive, communication-based model of family development within premarital guidance programs at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA). Theoretically, this study expands the discourse of Islamic family law by integrating perspectives from family communication and social resilience studies. Therefore, future research is recommended to conduct comparative studies across different regions to examine variations in religious counselors' communication strategies in family development programs. Additionally, subsequent studies may explore the longitudinal effectiveness of premarital guidance programs to assess their long-term impact on family stability.

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