

Optimizing The Role Of The Kanigoro District Religious Affairs Office (Kua) In Realizing Sakinah Families: An Islamic Family Law Perspective

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Abstract

This study examines the optimization of the role of the Kantor Urusan Agama (KUA), or District Religious Affairs Office, of Kanigoro in realizing *sakinah* families from the perspective of Islamic family law. While KUA Kanigoro fulfills its administrative mandate for marriage registration, its broader function as a catalyst for family formation remains underutilized. Drawing on empirical data from Kanigoro and comparative literature on KUA performance, this article identifies three principal deficiencies: the formalistic implementation of premarital guidance (*bimbingan perkawinan*), the absence of systematic post-marital monitoring, and the limited integration of health screening into family resilience programming. From an Islamic family law perspective, these gaps are significant because the *sakinah* family is not merely a sociological ideal but a normative objective grounded in Qur'anic injunction and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. The article argues that optimizing KUA Kanigoro requires a shift from procedural compliance to substantive empowerment, prioritizing the transformative dimensions of *bimbingan perkawinan*, developing sustainable post-wedding advisory services, and embedding health and economic counseling within a *maqāṣid*-oriented framework. Such a reorientation would align KUA practice more closely with the foundational purposes of Islamic marriage: tranquility, mutual affection, and mercy. The study contributes to the broader discourse on the role of religious institutions in Muslim-majority societies and offers practical recommendations for policymakers and KUA practitioners seeking to enhance family resilience programming at the district level.

Keywords: KUA Kanigoro, *sakinah* family, Islamic family law, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, premarital guidance, family resilience.

INTRODUCTION

The Kantor Urusan Agama (KUA), or District Religious Affairs Office, occupies a distinctive position within Indonesia's Islamic family law infrastructure. Established under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the KUA is mandated not only to record marriages and divorces but also to provide guidance and counseling services aimed at fostering *sakinah* tranquil, harmonious, and divinely grounded families. This dual function reflects a broader recognition that the registration of a marriage is a necessary but insufficient condition for the realization of the Qur'anic vision of marital life as a source of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *raḥmah* (Q.S. Ar-

Rūm: 21). The KUA thus stands at the intersection of administrative law and religious guidance, tasked with translating abstract legal and ethical principles into concrete institutional practice.

The strategic importance of the KUA in Indonesian society cannot be overstated. As the front-line institution through which Muslim marriages are formally recognized, the KUA serves as the initial point of contact between the state and the marrying couple. It is here that legal formalities are completed, but it is also here that opportunities for substantive guidance present themselves. The Ministry of Religious Affairs has repeatedly emphasized that the KUA's mission extends beyond mere record-keeping; it encompasses the formation of family resilience through education, counseling, and ongoing support. Yet the gap between this normative vision and institutional reality remains a persistent concern in scholarly and policy discourse.

KUA Kanigoro, located in Blitar Regency, East Java, exemplifies the challenges and opportunities facing district-level religious offices across Indonesia. Research on KUA Kanigoro has documented that while administrative marriage services are functioning including online registration through the Simkah system and clear fee structures for services performed outside regular hours the substantive dimensions of family guidance remain underdeveloped. Specifically, the implementation of *bimbingan perkawinan* (premarital guidance) at KUA Kanigoro has been characterized as tending toward mere formality, a procedural hurdle rather than a transformative educational experience. This finding is particularly concerning given the strategic importance of premarital preparation in establishing the foundations for durable and harmonious marriages.

The local context of Kanigoro further complicates the picture. Blitar Regency has recorded alarming health statistics, with HIV/AIDS cases reaching 20,920 and diabetes mellitus cases reaching 20,120 in 2024. These figures indicate that the community served by KUA Kanigoro faces health challenges that directly implicate family resilience. A family facing chronic illness or preventable disease transmission is under strain that threatens the tranquility and stability that *sakinah* requires. The KUA's guidance function, therefore, cannot be divorced from the broader health and social realities of the community it serves.

The significance of this issue extends beyond administrative efficiency. From the standpoint of Islamic family law, the formation of a *sakinah* family is not an optional social aspiration but a normative objective embedded in the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (higher objectives of Islamic law). The preservation of lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), the protection of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), and the safeguarding of the family as the fundamental unit of society all converge on the necessity of equipping marrying couples with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for successful marital life. When KUA guidance services operate only formally, the institution falls short of its *maqāṣid*-oriented mandate. The stakes are therefore not merely institutional but theological and ethical.

This article addresses the following question: How can the role of KUA Kanigoro be optimized to contribute more effectively to the realization of *sakinah* families, assessed through the analytical lens of Islamic family law? In answering this question, the article proceeds from

a diagnosis of current limitations to a prescriptive framework grounded in both empirical evidence and normative Islamic legal principles. The argument advanced is that optimization requires a shift from procedural administration to substantive empowerment, with particular attention to three domains: the transformation of *bimbingan perkawinan*, the development of post-marital advisory infrastructure, and the integration of health and economic counseling within a *maqāṣid*-oriented approach.

The article makes both scholarly and practical contributions. Scholarly, it extends the literature on KUA performance by applying a *maqāṣid*-based evaluative framework to a specific district office, thereby demonstrating how Islamic legal principles can inform institutional assessment. Practically, it offers concrete recommendations for KUA practitioners and policymakers seeking to enhance the substantive dimensions of family guidance programming. By bridging normative Islamic family law and empirical institutional analysis, the article seeks to contribute to the broader project of aligning Indonesian religious institutions with the ethical and legal objectives they are meant to serve.

METHOD RESEARCH

This study employs a qualitative approach combining doctrinal analysis of Islamic family law with empirical assessment of KUA Kanigoro's institutional performance. The doctrinal component examines primary sources the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the regulations governing KUA functions under Ministry of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 34 of 2016 alongside secondary scholarship on *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and Indonesian Islamic family law. The interpretive method draws on the classical and contemporary *maqāṣid* literature, particularly the formulations of al-Ghazālī, al-Shāṭibī, and their modern interpreters, to construct an evaluative framework for assessing institutional performance.

The empirical component draws on existing research documenting KUA Kanigoro's operations, including findings on marriage service delivery, the implementation of premarital guidance, and the health-related challenges facing the Kanigoro community, particularly the documented rise in HIV/AIDS and diabetes cases in Blitar Regency. Comparative references to other KUA offices in East Java, including Mojo and Klojen, provide benchmarks for identifying gaps and formulating recommendations. These comparative cases are selected on the basis of their documented performance in *bimbingan perkawinan* and their relevance to the socio-cultural context of Kanigoro.

The analytical framework integrates *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* specifically the preservation of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*) as evaluative criteria for assessing KUA performance and designing optimized interventions. This framework is applied in two stages. First, it is used diagnostically to identify where current KUA Kanigoro practice falls short of the *maqāṣid* objectives. Second, it is used prescriptively to formulate recommendations that align institutional practice more closely with those objectives. This two-stage application ensures that the analysis moves beyond critique to constructive proposals grounded in Islamic legal principles.

The study also draws on the broader literature on family resilience and Islamic family law in Indonesia, including studies of *bimbingan perkawinan* effectiveness, the role of KUA in family guidance, and the integration of health services into religious institutions. This literature provides both empirical context and theoretical grounding for the analysis. The study's limitations include its reliance on secondary empirical data rather than primary fieldwork; future research should incorporate direct observation and interviews with KUA Kanigoro staff and service users to enrich the analysis.

DISCUSSION

The Normative Framework of Sakinah in Islamic Family Law

The concept of *sakinah* is rooted in the Qur'anic characterization of marriage as a divinely ordained relationship in which spouses find "tranquility" (*sakan*), and God has placed between them "love and mercy" (*mawaddah wa rahmah*) (Q.S. Ar-Rūm: 21). This verse is not merely descriptive but prescriptive: it establishes the ideal toward which marital relationships should aspire. Classical and contemporary scholars have elaborated this concept into a multidimensional framework encompassing spiritual, emotional, economic, and social dimensions. Within Indonesian Islamic family law, the *sakinah* family serves as both an aspirational ideal and a policy objective, informing the Ministry of Religious Affairs' guidance programs and the broader national family resilience agenda.

The *sakinah* concept has deep roots in the Islamic legal tradition. Classical jurists discussed the mutual rights and obligations of spouses (*ḥuqūq al-zawjiyyah*) in detail, emphasizing that marriage is a partnership of mutual support and cooperation. Al-Ghazālī, in his *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, described marriage as a means of spiritual development, a relationship in which spouses assist one another in fulfilling religious obligations and in cultivating virtuous character. This spiritual dimension of marriage is often underemphasized in contemporary discourse, yet it is central to the Islamic vision of *sakinah*. A family is not merely a social unit but a locus of worship and moral formation.

Crucially, *sakinah* is not achieved automatically through the performance of the marriage contract. It requires cultivation, and this cultivation is precisely where the KUA's guidance mandate finds its justification. The *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* framework reinforces this conclusion: the preservation of lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*) depends not merely on biological reproduction but on the creation of stable, nurturing environments in which children can be raised. The preservation of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*) within the family context requires that spouses understand and practice their mutual rights and obligations. The preservation of intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*) and property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*) similarly implicate marital dynamics conflict resolution, financial management, and decision-making that premarital and post-marital guidance can address.

The *maqāṣid* framework thus provides a robust basis for evaluating KUA performance. An institution that merely registers marriages without attending to the substantive dimensions of family formation is failing to fulfill the *maqāṣid* objectives that underpin Islamic family law. Conversely, an institution that engages substantively with couples, providing them with the

knowledge and skills needed for successful marital life, is actively contributing to the realization of those objectives. The evaluative question, therefore, is not merely whether the KUA is performing its administrative functions but whether it is contributing to the *maqāṣid*-oriented formation of *sakinah* families.

The Formalistic Trap: Bimbingan Perkawinan at KUA Kanigoro

The most significant gap in KUA Kanigoro's *sakinah* programming is the formalistic character of its premarital guidance. Research has documented that *bimbingan perkawinan* (Bimwin) at KUA Kanigoro tends to be conducted as a procedural requirement rather than as a substantive educational intervention. This pattern is not unique to Kanigoro; studies of other KUA offices have identified similar challenges, including reliance on lecture-based delivery, the absence of take-home materials, and insufficient attention to the practical skills couples need for marital success.

The formalistic approach to Bimwin manifests in several ways. First, the content tends to be generic, focusing on broad principles rather than practical skills. Couples may be taught that they should communicate with one another, but they may not be given the specific tools to do so effectively. Second, delivery is often passive, with participants listening to lectures rather than engaging in active learning exercises such as role-playing, case studies, or group discussions. Third, there is often little or no follow-up to assess whether participants have applied what they learned. The result is a learning experience that may satisfy administrative requirements but fails to equip couples with the competencies they need for marital success.

The consequences of formalistic Bimwin are significant from both legal and social perspectives. Legally, the guidance function is intended to operationalize the *maqāṣid* objectives of marriage; when it becomes a mere formality, the institution's capacity to contribute to *sakinah* formation is diminished. Socially, couples enter marriage without adequate preparation for the challenges they will face: conflict, financial strain, communication breakdowns, and the negotiation of gender roles thereby increasing vulnerability to divorce and marital dysfunction. The stakes are particularly high in communities facing economic stress and health challenges, where the absence of adequate preparation can have cascading effects on family well-being.

The contrast with effective practice elsewhere is instructive. At KUA Klojen, researchers found that well-programmed and scheduled *bimbingan perkawinan* produced measurable positive impacts on couples with one to two years of marriage, including improved understanding of mutual rights and obligations, enhanced communication skills, and better conflict resolution capacity. The difference lies not in resources but in approach: substantive Bimwin engages participants actively, provides practical tools, and follows up to assess application. The Klojen model offers a replicable template that KUA Kanigoro could adapt to its local context.

The formalistic trap is not inevitable, but escaping it requires a conscious reorientation of priorities and methods. It requires, first, a recognition that Bimwin is not merely an administrative requirement but a substantive opportunity for capacity-building. Second, it

requires investment in curriculum development, facilitator training, and participant engagement. Third, it requires a willingness to measure outcomes, not merely outputs, so that programs can be refined based on evidence of what works. These are not insurmountable challenges, but they do require a shift in institutional culture from compliance to empowerment.

Health, Economy, and the Integrated Dimensions of Family Resilience

KUA Kanigoro's mandate to foster *sakinah* families cannot be divorced from the broader health and economic realities of its community. Data from Blitar Regency reveal alarming trends: HIV/AIDS cases reached 20,920, and diabetes mellitus cases reached 20,120 in 2024. These health challenges directly implicate family resilience. A family facing chronic illness or preventable disease transmission is under strain that threatens the tranquility and stability that *sakinah* requires. Moreover, health challenges are not evenly distributed across society; they tend to cluster among populations facing economic disadvantage, thereby compounding the stresses on vulnerable families.

From a *maqāṣid* perspective, the preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs*) and the prevention of harm (*dar' al-mafāsīd*) demand that KUA guidance incorporate health literacy and preventive screening. The integration of premarital health examinations into KUA services while already partially institutionalized requires deeper embedding within the broader *sakinah* framework. Health screening is not merely a medical formality; it is an act of responsible stewardship that protects the marital relationship and any future children from preventable harm. The KUA, as the institution through which couples enter marriage, is ideally positioned to frame health screening as an expression of the couple's shared commitment to one another and to their future family.

The framing of health screening matters. If it is presented merely as a bureaucratic requirement, couples may comply grudgingly and without internalizing the underlying rationale. If, however, it is presented as an expression of *ḥifẓ al-naḥs* the Islamic imperative to protect life and health it can become a meaningful component of marital preparation. This framing requires KUA staff to be knowledgeable about both the medical and the Islamic dimensions of health, and to communicate in a way that resonates with couples' values and aspirations.

Similarly, economic counseling addresses the preservation of property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*) and the practical dimensions of family management. Research on effective Bimwin programs has identified economic management as a key component of marital preparation, yet at KUA Kanigoro this dimension appears underemphasized. Couples who lack basic financial literacy and planning skills are more vulnerable to the economic stresses that frequently precipitate marital conflict. Islamic teachings on financial responsibility including the obligation of the husband to provide for the family (*naḥaqah*), the importance of avoiding *ribā* and *gharar*, and the principles of mutual consultation (*shūrā*) in financial decision-making provide a rich resource for economic counseling that is both practically useful and religiously grounded.

The integration of health and economic counseling within KUA services is not merely an expansion of scope but a deepening of mission. It recognizes that *sakinah* is

multidimensional and that the KUA's guidance must address the whole person and the whole family. It also recognizes that the challenges facing families in Kanigoro health risks, economic pressures, and social change are not separate from the religious and legal dimensions of marriage but are intertwined with them. An integrated approach is therefore both more effective and more faithful to the holistic vision of Islamic family law.

Toward Optimization: From Procedure to Empowerment

Optimizing KUA Kanigoro's role requires a fundamental reorientation from procedural administration to substantive empowerment. Three strategic interventions emerge from the analysis.

First, the transformation of *bimbingan perkawinan* from a formal requirement to a transformative educational program. This requires moving beyond lecture-based delivery toward participatory methods, providing take-home materials that couples can reference throughout their marriage, and developing modules that address the specific challenges facing the Kanigoro community including health risks, economic pressures, and the negotiation of gender roles in contemporary Javanese society. The Klojen model, where Bimwin has demonstrated measurable impact, offers a replicable template. The transformation also requires investment in facilitator training, so that KUA staff are equipped not merely to deliver content but to engage participants, respond to their questions, and facilitate learning. Finally, it requires a system of follow-up, so that couples can be supported as they apply what they have learned in the early years of marriage.

Second, the development of post-marital advisory infrastructure. The *sakinah* family is not built in a single premarital session; it requires ongoing support. KUA Kanigoro could establish regular counseling hours, peer support networks for newly married couples, and periodic check-ins at critical junctures (the first year, the arrival of children, and periods of economic stress). Such services would operationalize the KUA's mandate for "pelayanan bimbingan keluarga sakinah" (sakinah family guidance services) in a continuous rather than episodic manner. The infrastructure could be modest a regular schedule of counseling hours, a roster of trained volunteers, and a system for referring couples to specialized services when needed but its impact could be significant. Couples facing challenges would have somewhere to turn, and the KUA would have a mechanism for providing ongoing support rather than only premarital instruction.

Third, the integration of health and economic counseling within a *maqāṣid*-oriented framework. Health screening should be framed not as a bureaucratic requirement but as an expression of the couple's shared commitment to *ḥifẓ al-nafs*. Economic counseling should address not only budgeting but also the Islamic principles of financial responsibility, mutual support, and the avoidance of *ribā* and *gharar*. This integrated approach recognizes that *sakinah* is multidimensional and that KUA's guidance must address the whole person and the whole family, not merely the legal formalities of marriage. The integration also opens possibilities for collaboration with other institutions health centers, economic development agencies, and community organizations thereby leveraging resources and extending reach.

These three interventions are interconnected. Transformed Bimwin provides couples with a foundation of knowledge and skills; post-marital advisory services provide ongoing support as they face challenges; and integrated health and economic counseling addresses the practical dimensions of family life that are often neglected. Together, they constitute a comprehensive approach to *sakinah* formation that moves beyond procedural compliance to substantive empowerment. The approach is ambitious but achievable, requiring not a massive infusion of resources but a reorientation of priorities and a commitment to continuous improvement.

CONCLUSION

The optimization of KUA Kanigoro's role in realizing *sakinah* families requires more than administrative efficiency; it demands a substantive commitment to the *maqāṣid*-oriented purposes of Islamic marriage. Current practice, while functional in its registration and documentation functions, falls short in the guidance and empowerment dimensions that are equally essential to the KUA's mandate. The formalistic implementation of *bimbingan perkawinan*, the absence of sustained post-marital support, and the insufficient integration of health and economic counseling represent significant gaps in the institution's capacity to contribute to family resilience.

From an Islamic family law perspective, these gaps are not merely operational deficiencies but normative failures. The *sakinah* family is a Qur'anic ideal and a *maqāṣid* imperative; institutions that are entrusted with supporting its realization bear a corresponding obligation to act substantively rather than symbolically. KUA Kanigoro has the institutional position, the regulatory mandate, and the community trust necessary to fulfill this obligation. What is required is a reorientation of priorities and methods: from procedure to empowerment, from formality to transformation, and from episodic intervention to sustained accompaniment.

The broader significance of this analysis extends beyond Kanigoro. Across Indonesia, KUA offices face similar challenges: administrative burdens that crowd out substantive guidance, formalistic approaches to premarital preparation, and limited integration of health and economic dimensions into family programming. The lessons drawn from KUA Kanigoro about the importance of substantive Bimwin, the value of post-marital advisory infrastructure, and the necessity of a *maqāṣid*-oriented framework are therefore relevant to other district offices seeking to enhance their contribution to family resilience. The analysis also suggests the need for policy support at higher levels, including curriculum development, facilitator training, and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.

Future research should examine the implementation of optimized guidance programs at KUA Kanigoro, measuring outcomes not only in terms of participant satisfaction but in indicators of marital stability, conflict resolution capacity, and family well-being. Such research would contribute to the broader project of aligning Indonesian Islamic family law institutions with the *maqāṣid* objectives they are meant to serve. Comparative research across multiple KUA offices would also be valuable, identifying contextual factors that shape the effectiveness of different approaches and informing the development of evidence-based guidelines for practice. Ultimately, the goal is not merely to improve administrative performance but to

contribute to the flourishing of Muslim families a goal that is both empirically measurable and normatively grounded in the Islamic tradition.

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