



# Effectiveness of Premarital Counseling Implementation for Prospective Brides and Grooms at the Office of Religious Affairs

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## Abstract

The increasing number of divorce cases in Ranah Pesisir District indicates that many couples lack adequate readiness and maturity in building a household. This suggests that the implementation of premarital counseling at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District has not been fully effective or optimal, as regulated by the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance Decree No. 379 of 2018 concerning the guidelines for premarital counseling. This study employs a field research method with a qualitative approach. The data sources include primary data obtained through interviews with the Head of the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District and prospective brides and grooms who have participated in premarital counseling, as well as secondary data from theses, journals, and books discussing premarital counseling. The findings of this study are as follows: First, premarital counseling is highly important and urgent to be implemented optimally, as it has a significant impact on the preparedness of couples entering married life. Second, the implementation of the premarital counseling program at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District has generally provided benefits to prospective couples, although it has not yet fully complied with the regulations outlined in the Director General's Decree No. 379 of 2018. Third, based on the analysis of five effectiveness indicators, the implementation of the premarital counseling program at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District is considered fairly good, but not yet fully effective according to the applicable regulatory standards.

## INTRODUCTION

Premarital counseling is an effort to help individuals avoid difficulties in marriage, enabling them to attain happiness and navigate family life successfully (Itryah & Ananda, 2023). From an Islamic perspective, premarital counseling is a process of guiding individuals so that their marriage and family life align with the commands and guidance of Allah SWT<sup>1</sup>, thereby achieving happiness in both this world and the hereafter (Kamarusdiana et al., 2022). It is a preparatory process provided to prospective brides and grooms to help them develop their abilities, overcome household challenges, and build a harmonious and lasting family in accordance with Allah's commands (Imran & Salim, 2022).

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However, the divorce rate in Indonesia remains high, particularly in Pesisir Selatan Regency. In 2021, there were 638 divorce cases recorded from January to December; in 2022, the number rose to 652; and in 2023, it reached 730 cases. This increase is largely triggered by couples lacking sufficient knowledge to understand the meaning and responsibilities of marriage (Rahayu et al., 2024). Without adequate preparation, marriages become vulnerable to conflict. In such situations, couples often lack the determination to preserve their marriage, and even minor issues can lead to divorce (Rahim et al., 2025).

This phenomenon has caused concern among communities, especially those who aspire to build happy and harmonious families (Luthfi, 2020). To address this issue, the Ministry of Religious Affairs developed a program known as Suscatin (Premarital Course), later updated as Bimwin (Premarital Counseling), aimed at improving marriage quality and reducing divorce rates (Luthfi, 2020). One of the key focuses of this program is to provide a sound understanding of marital preparation, responsibilities in family life, and conflict resolution strategies. The program is designed to help couples realize their hopes of forming a happy family by equipping them with knowledge about the new life they are about to enter (Aris et al., 2017). Prospective couples are given brief insights into potential challenges in family life so that they can respond wisely and proactively when such situations arise (Salsabila & Faruq, 2024).

The objective of premarital counseling by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, as outlined in the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance Decree No. 379 of 2018, is to build strong family resilience by establishing families that are *sakinah* (peaceful), *mawaddah* (loving), and *warahmah* (compassionate) (Astuti & Fatmawati, 2021). This is achieved through the provision of knowledge, understanding, and skills to create a happy family, foster mutual awareness, strengthen commitment, and develop life skills to face increasingly complex global challenges (Nopilia & Kurnianto, 2024).

The underlying reasons for the need for premarital counseling include individual differences each person has unique physiological and psychological traits (Andryanto & Robbina, 2025); individual needs marriage is a means of fulfilling personal needs (Fakhirah, 2025); and personal development individuals evolve over time (Ridho, 2018). Socio-cultural backgrounds also play a role, as societal changes in social, political, economic, industrial, and value systems indirectly influence individuals both personally and socially (Kurniawati Br Pinem et al., 2021).

The purpose of premarital counseling in Islam is to help individuals resolve problems related to marriage (Raito & Ramadan, 2023), address issues in family life, and guide them in choosing solutions that align with Islamic teachings (Azhari et al., 2020). The legal foundation for marriage is clearly stated in the Quran, Surah Ar-Rum verse 21:

فِي أَنْ رَحْمَةً ۖ وَ مَوَدَّةً بَيْنَكُمْ وَ جَعَلَ الْبَيْنَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا أَرْوَاجًا أَنْفُسِكُمْ مِنْ لَكُمْ خَلَقَ أَنْ أَيْتِهِ وَمِنْ  
بِتَّفَكُّرُونَ لِقَوْمٍ لَأَيُّ ذَلِكَ

Meaning: *And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought* (QS. Ar-Rum: 21)

Premarital counseling for prospective brides and grooms is a form of government concern, as stated in the Director General's Decree No. 379 of 2018 concerning the Guidelines for Premarital Counseling for Prospective Brides and Grooms. The Premarital Counseling Program is a concrete manifestation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' commitment to national development through ideal marital harmony, including the provision of resources and funding (Gichuri et al., 2024).

Regarding its implementation, the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District has conducted premarital counseling in accordance with the regulations outlined in the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance Decree No. 379 of 2018. However, many prospective couples still fail to attend the counseling sessions offered by the Office of Religious Affairs. Despite the urgency of this preparatory program, a significant number of couples preparing for marriage do not participate. As an effort to reduce domestic disputes, acts of domestic violence, and divorce rates, prospective brides and grooms should be aware of the importance of premarital counseling in preparing for family life.

This program is designed to prepare couples before entering marriage, with three main objectives: first, to build readiness by strengthening self-awareness and awareness of others; second, to equip couples with the ability to prevent and manage severe stress within the family environment; and third, to provide continuous intervention services such as training and marital therapy. The materials covered in the Premarital Counseling sessions at the Office of Religious Affairs include: marriage procedures and protocols, religious knowledge, legal regulations on marriage and family, rights and obligations of spouses, reproductive health, family management, and marital and family psychology.

Based on marriage and divorce data from 2021 to 2023 at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District.

**Table 1. Marriage and divorce data in Ranah Pesisir District (2021–2023)**

Year	Marriages	Divorces
2021	296 people	37 people
2022	242 people	41 people
2023	238 people	53 people
Total	776 people	131 people

Based on the data above, it is evident that the divorce rate in Ranah Pesisir District has continued to rise from 2021 to 2023. This increasing trend indicates that many couples lack adequate readiness and maturity in building a marriage, resulting in low marital satisfaction. The data was obtained from the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District, representing preliminary records of couples who received premarital counseling.

Initial observations of several prospective couples who had participated in the counseling revealed discrepancies between the actual implementation and the provisions outlined in the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance Decree No. 379 of 2018. The regulation mandates that premarital counseling be conducted over two full days; however, in practice, most couples received only about two hours of counseling. Additionally, the materials delivered were not as comprehensive as those stipulated in the regulation.

Based on these findings, the author concludes that the implementation of premarital counseling at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District has not been carried out effectively or optimally in accordance with the established guidelines. Therefore, it is deemed necessary to conduct further research on the effectiveness of premarital counseling implementation at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District to provide a more comprehensive overview of its execution.

## METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using a descriptive method (Engkizar et al., 2022, 2024; Oktavia et al., 2023, 2024; Putri et al., 2024; Rasdiany et al., 2024), focusing on illustrating phenomena and field data (Mulyawan et al., 2025).

It adopts an empirical legal research framework through interviews with married couples who have participated in premarital counseling (Amin et al., 2022). The data analysis technique is conducted systematically and factually, aiming to portray reality in depth. The research was carried out at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District, selected based on its relevance to the research subject (Abdul Hafizh et al., 2023).

Informants consisted of married couples who had attended premarital counseling. Primary data were obtained directly from sources through interviews and observation (Sulastri et al., 2024), while secondary data were collected from other sources such as government documents and related references. The analysis process was conducted interactively during and after data collection, involving summarizing and selecting relevant data, presenting it in narrative form, and drawing preliminary conclusions that may evolve based on the evidence found.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Implementation of Premarital Counseling at the Office of Religious Affairs

In accordance with the provisions of the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance Decree No. 379 of 2018 concerning the Guidelines for Premarital Counseling for Prospective Brides and Grooms, the organizers of premarital counseling are the Ministry of Religious Affairs at the regency or city level, the Office of Religious Affairs at the subdistrict level, or other institutions that meet the requirements and have received official permission from the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Prayogi & Jauhari, 2021). Three ministries are involved in delivering premarital counseling: first, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which focuses on the concept of a *sakinah* family, family psychology, and fulfilling family needs; second, the Ministry of Health, which involves local health centers in delivering reproductive health material; and third, the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN), which provides material on preparing quality future generations (Najah et al., 2021).

This premarital counseling program not only emphasizes religious and health aspects but also aims to equip prospective couples with essential life skills for building a harmonious and resilient household (Jasman et al., 2022). The materials include emotional management, effective communication between spouses, family financial planning, and a balanced understanding of the rights and responsibilities of husband and wife (Cahaya et al., 2023). Through this holistic approach, it is hoped that couples will be mentally, emotionally, and socially prepared to enter married life. Article 8, point 1 of the regulation states that the premarital course materials are divided into three groups: a) basic, b) core, and c) supporting. Point 4 mandates that the course must consist of at least 16 instructional hours. Chapter V, point III further explains that instructors should include family consultants, religious leaders, psychologists, and professionals in their respective fields (Jalil, 2019).

The Bimwin program is delivered through two formats: face-to-face counseling and independent counseling. Face-to-face sessions are conducted over 16 instructional hours (JPL), held over two consecutive days or with a one-day interval, facilitated by at least two instructors, with a maximum of 50 participants or 25 couples. Independent counseling is intended for those unable to attend the face-to-face sessions. The instructional breakdown includes: Policy overview on premarital counseling (2 hours), Introduction, expectations, and learning contract (1 hour), Preparing a *sakinah* family (2 hours), Building family relationships (3 hours), Fulfilling family needs (2 hours), Maintaining reproductive health (2 hours), Preparing quality future generations (2 hours), Reflection, evaluation, and post-test (2 hours) (Novitasari, 2021).

The implementation of the premarital counseling program at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District is part of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' effort to enhance the mental, spiritual, and social readiness of prospective couples. The program aims to provide comprehensive understanding of family life and equip participants with knowledge about spousal roles, family communication, conflict management, and reproductive health. This chapter discusses how the program is implemented at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir, including its methods, materials, challenges, and solutions.

To gain deeper insight into the implementation of the premarital counseling program, the author conducted direct interviews with the Head of the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District and several participants who had attended the program. The following are the results of those interviews:

As part of the effort to obtain firsthand data from program implementers, the author interviewed the Head of the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District. In the interview, the informant explained that the premarital counseling program at the Office of Religious Affairs has become a routine agenda, carried out as a preventive service for prospective couples. He stated that:

*We conduct premarital counseling sessions regularly every week, although the schedule is adjusted based on the number and readiness of prospective couples. Typically, once three to five couples have registered, we begin to arrange the session. The materials delivered refer to the official module from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, with a particular emphasis on mental and spiritual preparedness, as well as communication within the household (informant 1)*

He also added that the implementation of the counseling program refers to the regulations set by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, although in practice there are still several technical challenges that need to be adjusted to field conditions.

*We follow the guidelines outlined in the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance Decree No. 379 of 2018, but of course, its implementation in the field is adapted to the time and readiness of the prospective couples who will participate in the counseling (informant 2)*

Nevertheless, the Head of the Office of Religious Affairs also revealed several challenges in its implementation. He stated that.

*One of the most frequent challenges we face is scheduling. Many prospective brides and grooms work outside the region, making it difficult for them to follow the timetable we set. In addition, some participants perceive the guidance sessions as unimportant, resulting in a lack of seriousness in their participation. We also face constraints in terms of facilitators. At times, when the number of participants is quite large, we struggle to provide enough resource persons to deliver all the material effectively (informant 3)*

Furthermore, he explained the reason why premarital counseling sessions in Ranah Pesisir District generally last no more than two hours. According to him.

*According to the official guidelines, premarital counseling is ideally conducted over the course of two full days. However, in practice, this is often difficult to implement. Many prospective couples have limited time some need to return to work immediately or travel from outside the region making it impractical to attend longer sessions. As a result, we usually condense the material to its essential points, and the sessions typically last no more than two hours. This limitation is also influenced by the shortage of available facilitators (informant 4)*

Based on an interview with the Head of the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District, the author concludes that the implementation of the premarital counseling program in the region has been carried out routinely and is grounded in official regulations, namely the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Guidance No. 379 of 2018. However, its implementation still faces several challenges, such as participants' limited availability, low awareness among prospective couples, a shortage of facilitators, and field conditions that often restrict the sessions

to a maximum of two hours. Nevertheless, in terms of substance, the program has been conducted in accordance with the applicable regulations.

To complement the field data and gain a clearer picture of how the premarital counseling program is implemented at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District, the author conducted direct interviews with several prospective couples who had participated in the program. Their opinions and experiences serve as valuable input for evaluating the extent to which the program has been implemented in line with the established guidelines.

Interview with informants regarding the implementation of premarital counseling at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District. The couple shared the following:

*In our opinion, the implementation of premarital counseling at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District has been running well. We attended a session that lasted approximately two hours, and we found the material to be very beneficial. However, the delivery method still relies on lectures, which can feel monotonous. As for challenges, scheduling was quite difficult for us due to living in different locations (informant 5)*

The author then conducted an interview with a couple informant. The couple shared the following insights.

*We attended the premarital counseling session along with three other couples, from morning until just before noon. In our view, the material was good and beneficial. As far as we can recall, the Office of Religious Affairs presented topics related to the rights and responsibilities of husband and wife, as well as several aspects of marital relations according to Islamic law. One of the challenges we faced was the amount of data that needed to be filled out before the session began (informant 6 & 7)*

The next interview was conducted with another couple informant regarding the implementation of premarital counseling at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District. The couple stated:

*In our opinion, the premarital counseling program at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir has been carried out well. As far as we know, the program is usually held over two days and involves facilitators from the local health center (Puskesmas) and the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN). However, at that time, the session lasted only two hours and was delivered solely by staff from the Office of Religious Affairs. Overall, the material presented was useful, and we believe it would be even better if Puskesmas and BKKBN were also involved as facilitators. We did not encounter any major obstacles during the session, but we feel that the implementation of premarital counseling in Ranah Pesisir has not yet reached the optimal standard as outlined in the official regulations (informant 8 & 9)*

Interview with a couple informant. The couple shared:

*At that time, we were the only ones attending the premarital counseling session, so the duration wasn't very long around one to two hours and mostly focused on filling out the data validation forms. The material presented included advice for newlyweds, which is sometimes not taught at home. We didn't encounter any issues during the counseling process, but we were unaware that, according to the regulations, premarital counseling is supposed to last for two days (informant 10 & 11)*

Interview with a couple informant. The couple shared their views on the implementation of premarital counseling at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District:

*As we mentioned earlier, the premarital counseling program is very important. However, in practice, many prospective couples seem to regard it as a mere formality, so the material presented is often taken lightly. Moreover, the delivery of the material tends to resemble a lecture, which can feel monotonous. In terms of challenges, scheduling the session was difficult because at the time we were still working outside the region (informant 12 & 13)*

The author then conducted an interview with another couple informant regarding the implementation of the premarital counseling program at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District. The couple shared their views:

*At that time, we attended the premarital counseling session along with six other prospective couples in the Marriage Hall of Ranah Pesisir District. We were somewhat surprised to learn that the program was actually designed to last for two days, as the information we had received from other couples indicated that it typically lasted no more than two hours. The material presented covered topics such as preparing for a harmonious family (keluarga sakinah), women's health, how to navigate pregnancy, and family planning. As for challenges, we only found out about the two-day duration shortly before our wedding reception, so we couldn't fully concentrate during the sessions (informant 14)*

The author also conducted interviews with a couple informant regarding the implementation of premarital counseling at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District. The couple shared:

*At that time, we attended the counseling session along with two other couples. The session lasted from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. The material was quite good, especially the part that discussed how husbands and wives should understand each other's roles. It helped us feel more prepared to face differences in marriage (informant 15)*

Interview with another couple informant. They stated:

*We started around 10 a.m. and finished before noon. We initially thought the counseling would be a structured training session, but it turned out to be a brief lecture delivered by staff from the Office of Religious Affairs. There were no external facilitators or representatives from related agencies, as mentioned in the official guidelines. However, there was a short discussion session after the lecture, which allowed us to ask questions about things we didn't fully understand. That part was very helpful (informant 16)*

Based on interviews conducted with the Head of the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District and several prospective couples, the author concludes that the implementation of the premarital counseling program in the district has generally provided meaningful benefits to participants particularly in enhancing their understanding of marital rights and responsibilities, family communication, and preparations for building a harmonious household. Most couples stated that the material presented was useful and broadened their perspectives prior to marriage.

However, the participants also noted that the program's implementation has not fully aligned with the regulations outlined in the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Guidance No. 379 of 2018. Several discrepancies were identified, including: The duration of the counseling sessions was mostly limited to two hours, and in some cases less than half a day, whereas the regulation stipulates a full two-day program. The delivery method remained predominantly lecture-based, lacking the use of interactive learning strategies such as simulations, role plays, or case studies. The involvement of external facilitators from agencies such as the Health Office or the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN) was inconsistent; most sessions were conducted solely by staff from the Office of Religious Affairs. Supporting facilities such as modules, visual aids, and supplementary reading materials were perceived as insufficient. Scheduling challenges were common, especially for couples residing in different locations or working outside the area (Fahrur et al., 2023).

Some couples also expressed that the counseling was often viewed merely as an administrative formality prior to marriage, rather than a serious process of mental and spiritual preparation. This perception contributed to low levels of active participation during the sessions. Nevertheless, the majority of participants felt that

the substance of the material remained relevant and beneficial for married life, although the delivery methods could be improved.

In conclusion, while the premarital counseling program at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District has been implemented in accordance with basic regulatory standards, it has yet to reach optimal effectiveness in terms of duration, methodology, and stakeholder involvement. Improvements can be made through: Developing more flexible schedules that accommodate the circumstances of prospective couples. Diversifying delivery methods to include more interactive approaches. Strengthening collaboration with relevant institutions. Educating couples on the importance of engaging seriously in the counseling process.

### **Effectiveness of Premarital Counseling Implementation at the Office of Religious Affairs**

The effectiveness of a program can be measured by comparing the initial plans with the actual outcomes achieved. According to Sondang P. Siagian, effectiveness can be assessed through five key indicators: goal attainment, target accuracy, timeliness, resource optimization, and the positive impact generated (Aulia & Hasneli, 2022). If the efforts made do not reach the intended targets or fail to achieve the established goals, the program implementation may be considered ineffective (Prayogi & Jauhari, 2021). In this study, the author analyzes the effectiveness of the premarital counseling program conducted by the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District based on these five indicators, referring to interview data collected from the Office of Religious Affairs and participating couples.

#### **Goal Achievement**

The primary objective of the premarital counseling program is to equip prospective couples with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to build a harmonious, loving, and compassionate family (*sakinah, mawaddah, wa rahmah*) (Anindita & Adiyanti, 2020). Based on interview findings, the majority of couples reported gaining a basic understanding of the rights and responsibilities of husband and wife. However, practical skills such as household conflict management, effective communication, and family financial planning were not conveyed optimally. Therefore, the implementation of premarital counseling at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District has partially achieved its intended goals, but remains suboptimal, particularly in preparing couples mentally and practically for the dynamics of married life.

#### **Target Accuracy**

The target of the premarital counseling program is all prospective couples planning to marry within the Ranah Pesisir District (Putra, 2023). Based on field data, most participants were indeed legitimate prospective couples, in line with the program's intended target. However, irregularities were observed in the participant recruitment process. Some counseling sessions were attended by only one to three couples, which limited the effectiveness of group learning dynamics. Therefore, while the program's target accuracy has been reasonably met, the participant recruitment mechanism still requires improvement to better align with the implementation standards outlined in the official guidelines.

#### **Time Accuracy**

According to official regulations, premarital counseling is ideally conducted over the course of two full days (Ramadi et al., 2025). However, interview findings indicate that most sessions lasted only between two to three hours, with some even taking less than one hour. This shows that the time accuracy in the implementation of premarital counseling at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District has not met the standards outlined in the guidelines. The short duration limits the depth of material delivery, thereby reducing the potential for achieving the program's intended outcomes.

### **Resource Optimization**

Ideally, the implementation of premarital counseling should involve facilitators from various relevant institutions such as the Office of Religious Affairs, community health centers, and the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN), in order to provide comprehensive material (Rosyadi & Faruq, 2024). According to participant accounts, nearly all sessions were facilitated solely by staff from the Office of Religious Affairs, without the involvement of external speakers. Moreover, the delivery method remained conventional and lecture-based, which was perceived as monotonous. This indicates that resource utilization in the premarital counseling program at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District has not been optimal both in terms of the number of facilitators and the diversity of instructional methods.

### **Positive Impact**

Several married couples stated that they benefited from the premarital counseling program, feeling more prepared and gaining a better understanding of the importance of communication and equality within marriage after participating in the sessions (Widiatmoko et al., 2024). However, its impact on reducing divorce rates has not been significant. This is attributed to several factors: suboptimal technical implementation (in terms of duration, methods, and involvement of external institutions), low levels of active participation and awareness among participants, and the absence of a post-marriage monitoring system (Kalamiah & Habibi, 2025).

Based on an analysis of the five effectiveness indicators, the implementation of the premarital counseling program at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District can be considered reasonably well-executed, though not yet fully effective according to the regulatory standards. Goal achievement and target accuracy have been met, albeit not maximally (Muslihati et al., 2024). However, time accuracy, resource optimization, and the creation of long-term positive impact remain challenges that require serious attention (Suud Sarim Karimullah, 2021).

Therefore, improvements are needed in the technical aspects of implementation, enhancement of participant awareness, and strengthening of cross-sectoral coordination to support the program's optimization in the future (Khasanah et al., 2021). To provide a more concrete picture of the premarital counseling program at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District, the following section presents interview data from several married couples regarding the implementation, challenges, and perceived benefits of the program. This data aims to clarify the effectiveness of the program based on the direct experiences of its participants.

Based on data analysis, it can be concluded that the implementation of the premarital counseling program at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District has generally contributed positively to prospective couples' understanding of married life. However, several aspects still require improvement, including the accuracy of scheduling, the involvement of more diverse facilitators, and the enhancement of instructional methods. These improvements are necessary to optimize the program's effectiveness and ensure a more tangible impact in reducing divorce rates.

### **CONCLUSION**

The implementation of the premarital counseling program at the Office of Religious Affairs in Ranah Pesisir District has generally provided benefits to prospective couples, particularly in enhancing their understanding of marital rights and responsibilities, family communication, and preparation for building a

harmonious (*sakinah*) household. However, interviews with the Head of the Office of Religious Affairs and couples who have participated in the program revealed that its implementation has not fully aligned with the regulations outlined in the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance No. 379 of 2018.

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