

## **Efforts of the Pre-Marital Education Program in Enhancing Family Resilience by the Office of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning of Surabaya City**

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**Abstract.** *The high divorce rate is generally caused by several factors, including early marriage, economic issues, differences in perspectives, domestic violence, or even gender inequality. To address this, the Surabaya city government requires its citizens to attend premarital education classes as one of the prerequisites for marriage. This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of premarital education classes organized by the Office of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning (DP3APPKB) in reducing the divorce rate in Surabaya. A qualitative method was used in this study, with observation and interviews with participants and employees as data collection techniques. Based on the data obtained, it can be concluded that the premarital education class program contributes to reducing the divorce rate in Surabaya. This is because the premarital education class program provides four learning materials that can be used to build family resilience*

**Keywords** – divorce; premarital education classes; family resilience;

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The smallest unit in social and community life is the family. Within the family, each member performs their roles and functions as agreed upon together to avoid disharmonious interaction and communication. The socialization process within the family has a significant impact on the growth and development of each individual. Therefore, every family is expected to function well to meet the physical and social needs of its members.

Maintaining family harmony and function is not an easy task. It is often reported that many families face threats to their integrity due to various issues, such as economic problems, differences in perspectives, domestic violence, or even gender inequality [1]. These conflicts ultimately place families in uncertain situations that lead to conflicts that cannot be managed well. This is evidenced by statistics showing that there were 463,654 divorce cases in Indonesia throughout 2023 [2]. In Surabaya, Central Agency of Statistics' (BPS) data recorded 5,724 cases of divorce and separation in 2021, which increased to 6,933 in 2022. This number decreased to 5,454 applicants in 2023 [3]. Another cause of divorce is the unpreparedness of couples to assure the responsibilities of marriage, which is generally experienced by young couples who marry early. According to BPS data from 2022, 19.24% of males and females married at the age of 16-18. More specifically, 6.36% of males married at the age of 16-18. A higher percentage was found among females who married at the age of 16-18, with a percentage of 26.48% [4]. Based on UNICEF data from 2023, Indonesia ranks 4th in the world with an estimated 25.53 million girls married [5]. This phenomenon is very concerning as the teenage years are a period of high emotional tension. Therefore, the risk of divorce among couples who marry early is higher [6]. Furthermore, domestic violence is often highlighted as a cause of divorce. Domestic violence includes several types as regulated in Article 5 of Law Number 23 of 2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence, namely physical violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, and neglect of the household [7]. Domestic violence is a complex issue that can be caused by various factors [8], including: a) Psychological factors, such as emotional problems, mental disorders, or emotional instability; b) Social factors, such as economic pressure, unemployment, and family instability; c) Environmental factors, such as violence in the surrounding environment, easy access to weapons or drugs, and unstable security situations; d) Individual factors, such as low self-

control, a tendency to be aggressive, or a lack of empathy; e) Family history factors, such as past experiences of domestic violence either as a victim or a perpetrator; f) Cultural factors, such as traditional values that promote the use of violence as a solution to conflicts; g) Gender factors, such as power imbalances between men and women, gender stereotypes, and gender discrimination.

Based on the above discussion, it is important for prospective brides to receive preparation before entering married life to enhance family resilience. Family resilience is defined as the ability of a family to live independently and its strength in protecting the family from various threats [9]. The importance of family resilience is outlined in Law Number 2 of 2009, which explains that family resilience is a dynamic condition of a family that possesses perseverance and toughness, and includes physical-material and psychological-mental spiritual capabilities to live independently, develop themselves and their family to live harmoniously, and improve physical welfare and spiritual happiness [10]. Therefore, family resilience is likened to a foundation for individuals, where the family's function can protect its members from various negative influences [11].

Pre-marital education classes are not only conducted in Surabaya City, but also in other cities. Apparently, the issues of divorce and early marriage have become national issues experienced in various cities across Indonesia, which then encourages preventative action through education. For instance, at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Sei Beduk Subdistrict, Batam, implementation of pre-marital education classes has been effective and optimal due to the enthusiasm of prospective brides [12]. Research on pre-marital education is also conducted in Ponorogo, indicating that pre-marital guidance helps underage prospective obtain accurate information and make informed decisions for their future marriages, as well as assisting in resolving unresolved individual issues [13]. In contrast, research in Aceh, noted suboptimal implementation of pre-marital education classes in Simpang Kanan Subdistrict due to time constraints, resulting in inadequate delivery of the curriculum. Moreover, some prospective brides and grooms attend these classes merely to fulfill marriage requirements, thus not paying close attention to the knowledge imparted [14].

Based on the exposition from previous studies, there are several cities that have succeeded and others that have not succeeded in implementing pre-marital education classes. The challenges relate to the delivery of materials, class duration, and community enthusiasm towards pre-marital education classes. The success of the program will influence the government's success in reducing divorce rates and educating the community to foster family resilience. Therefore, this research aims to further examine the effectiveness of the pre-marital education program organized by the Surabaya City government.

## **II. METHOD**

Qualitative approach is utilized as the methodological approach in this research. Qualitative research method is also referred to as naturalistic research method because it is conducted in natural conditions [15]. The qualitative research method aims to deeply understand a fact, reality, or phenomenon. Facts, realities, and phenomena can only be comprehended when researchers conduct research not only superficially, but also in depth [16]. Data collection techniques are employed to gather information or data. This study utilizes interviews and observations as data collection techniques. Interviews are conducted using semi-structured interviews, where the interviewer has prepared a structured list of questions for 2 pairs of pre-marital education class participants and 1 employee of DP3APPKB Surabaya City. Meanwhile, observations are conducted during both offline and online sessions of the pre-marital education classes.

### **III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **A. Results**

The premarital education classes organized by the Surabaya City government can be attended by participants either online via Zoom application or offline at the Family Learning Center (PUSPAGA) on the 2nd floor of the Siola building. The classes are conducted for a duration of 4 hours, covering 4 subjects in psychological, economic, health, and religious aspects, delivered by experts in their respective fields.

The implementation of premarital education classes has received positive responses from the residents of Surabaya. The community recognizes the importance of thorough preparation before embarking on married life, one of which involves equipping themselves with the learning provided by PUSPAGA. The materials presented are delivered directly by specialists, covering diverse and comprehensive topics. Participants interviewed, identified as AF and SK, noted that after attending the pre-marital education classes, they and their partners felt more confident in their ability to lead a good family life. This confidence stems from the new understanding and perspectives gained through the education, enhancing their ability to face future challenges.

However, some members of the community have expressed complaints about the program through the PUSPAGA hotline and the "Wargaku" application. By making this program mandatory, it has been perceived as complicating marriage procedures, particularly for elderly residents, those residing outside Surabaya, or individuals unfamiliar with technology. Moreover, there have been instances where residents did not receive comprehensive information from local offices or health centers regarding procedures, operational hours, and other regulations. Consequently, upon arriving at PUSPAGA Kota, they were redirected to other departments, offices, or local offices due to initial misinformation.

In seeking more in-depth information, interviews were also conducted with one of the DP3APPKB Surabaya City employees, identified as RY, who serves as a counselor at PUSPAGA. Through PUSPAGA, DP3APPKB Surabaya City fulfills its function by organizing pre-marital education classes aimed at reducing divorce rates, violence against women and children, and preventing stunting caused by inadequate parenting understanding among prospective parents. Early marriages can also pose challenges for prospective spouses or parents due to inadequate psychological and mental preparedness. Through the implementation of this work program since February 2023, RY mentioned that this program has contributed to reducing divorce rates, based on data from the Surabaya Religious Court.

#### **B. Discussion**

In every phase of life, individuals have developmental tasks that if not fulfilled adequately, can lead to the formation of an incomplete personality. According to Erik Erikson in his psychosocial theory, individuals aged 12-18 enter the identity vs. role confusion stage, wherein they face an ego identity crisis [17]. During this phase, individuals experience an identity crisis that brings about confusion regarding self-identity, self-assessment, or future goals. Consequently, the risk of divorce among early-married couples is higher [6]. In marriage, conflicts among family members are often inevitable. The emotional immaturity of young couples may prevent them from effectively resolving issues [18]. Early marriage also entails detrimental effects, as young couples may struggle to meet daily living needs due to insufficient financial independence [6]. Furthermore, young couples may regret leaving their education and teenage years behind [19]. Women who marry early are at greater

risk of experiencing physical, psychological, emotional violence, and social isolation within their marriages [20].

Family disharmony often triggers catastrophes, including domestic violence. Apart from internal factors, external factors such as social, environmental, and cultural influences play a crucial role in shaping domestic violence behaviors. The perpetuation of patriarchal ideologies in society, where males are perceived to hold greater authority, influences social perceptions on gender roles and behavior [21]. These perceptions are then socialized within communities, shaping individual behaviors within gender roles. Social role theory focuses on society's role in determining socially accepted beliefs about men and women, such as gender differences in personality, skills, and behaviors [22]. Culture also plays a significant role in forming gender schemas, particularly in Javanese culture with its patrilineal beliefs. Gender relationship imbalances arise from patriarchal cultures that reinforce gender roles [23]. Cultures placing men in authoritative positions (patriarchy) are the root cause of male dominance over women. This imbalance explains the likelihood of dominant individuals using their power over subordinates, thus normalizing behaviors of violence. Domestic violence is one manifestation of male dominance asserting masculinity over women [24].

In response to these issues, preventive actions are necessary to curb divorce rates and early marriages. Human behavior is a blend of innate elements and learning, making education a preferred solution chosen by the Surabaya City government to address barriers to family resilience. Viewing humans as adaptable beings capable of learning behaviors in various situations, Albert Bandura believes humans can regulate their lives through learning [25]. Triadic reciprocal causation posits that behavior is determined through interactions between behavior, cognition, and the environment [17]. Individual cognition, including values and perspectives, influences decision-making and behavior. Social and cultural environments also impact individual actions, thereby influencing cognitive, environmental, and behavioral aspects.

Through education, individuals are expected to develop behaviors and create positive environments within their families. Surabaya City's PUSPAGA efforts to educate prospective couples involve providing foundational materials across three aspects of family resilience: physical, social, and psychological resilience [9]. Physical family resilience relates to economic capabilities, including meeting basic needs such as clothing, food, shelter, education, and healthcare. Psychological family resilience refers to family members' ability to manage emotions, resulting in a positive self-concept. Social family resilience involves a family's resilience in applying religious values, effective communication, role distribution, goal-setting, and healthy social relationships. When compared, the categorization of pre-marital education class materials by PUSPAGA Surabaya City based on family resilience aspects is as follows:

**Tabel 1.** List of Prematerial Education Class Materials by PUSPAGA

<b>Aspects</b>	<b>Material Titles</b>	<b>Scope of Materials</b>
Physical Family Resilience	Financial Literacy for Prospective Brides	Principles of Family Financial Management 2. Financial Planning
	Reproductive Health in Marriage	1. Physical Health Preparation 2. Nutritional Preparation

3. Health Conditions to Watch  
Out For

Psychological Family  
Resilience

Preparing for Marriage from a  
Psychological Aspect

1. Building Effective  
Communication
- Benefits of Positive Parenting
3. Family Resilience
4. Gender Equality
5. Recognizing Domestic  
Violence

Social Family  
Resilience

Building a Spiritual Foundation  
in Marriage

1. Purpose of Marriage
2. Principles of the 5 Pillars

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The knowledge gained from these lessons will enhance individuals' confidence in facing future challenges. This confidence reflects self-efficacy, or belief in one's ability to solve problems, influencing one's actions [25]. Self-efficacy determines an individual's feelings, thoughts, self-motivation, and behavior. According to interviews conducted with participants AF and SK from the pre-marital education classes at PUSPAGA Surabaya, each couple expressed increased confidence in their ability to handle responsibilities as spouses in the future.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

The premarital education program initiated by DP3APPKB of Surabaya City through PUSPAGA, in response to the high rates of divorce, domestic violence, early marriage, and child stunting in Surabaya, has played a significant role in reducing the divorce rate in the city. Through this program, PUSPAGA provides free education to prospective brides and grooms on four key topics: financial literacy for prospective brides and grooms, reproductive health in marriage, psychological preparation for marriage, and building a spiritual foundation in marriage. The implementation of this program helps prospective brides and grooms to prepare themselves for family life, instilling confidence to face future challenges in their marriages.

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