Bridging SIMKAH and Premarital Guidance: Institutional Reform for Inclusive Digital Marriage Services in Indonesia

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Abstract

Marriage administration has adopted the Marriage Management Information System (SIMKAH), but premarital guidance services still require a workflow linking scheduling, attendance recording, and follow-up. This study proposes institutional reform to strengthen these connections, improve service accessibility for prospective spouses, and promote responsible data use. It aims to examine the relationship between SIMKAH-based administration and the delivery of premarital guidance at Religious Affairs Offices (KUA) and to formulate an inclusive digital marriage service model. The study adopts an empirical legal approach through a reanalysis of interview, observation, and documentary data, supplemented by a review of relevant regulations and literature. The findings indicate that SIMKAH-based administration is not yet connected to attendance recording and follow-up procedures for premarital guidance. The study proposes using the data of couples registered in SIMKAH as the basis for scheduling guidance sessions, recording participation status, and following up on non-attendance. This workflow bridges marriage administration and premarital guidance through clearly assigned staff responsibilities, flexible scheduling options, and restricted access to personal data. The proposed model provides a framework for improving KUA services across Indonesia, subject to adaptation to local conditions and further testing of its implementation.

Keywords: SIMKAH; premarital guidance; service integration; institutional reform; inclusive digital services.

Introduction

Marriage services for Muslims in Indonesia play a vital role in providing legal certainty whilst helping prospective spouses prepare for family life. In this regard, marriage registration provides authentic proof of the marriage, whilst marriage counselling equips couples with the knowledge and skills to build a family and deal with domestic issues (Ali, 2024) . Both are stages undertaken by the same group of users and therefore require continuity in information and service processes. The separation of these administrative and counselling processes has the potential to create a gap between registered prospective spouses and those who have received the necessary preparation. If marriage registration data is not cross-checked against attendance records after each counselling session, officials may be slow to identify prospective spouses who have not attended the sessions. Consequently, the opportunity to contact participants and offer alternative dates before the wedding becomes limited. Meanwhile, unclear schedule information or limited time options can make it difficult for prospective couples to fit

counselling sessions around their work and wedding preparations. Therefore, the development of digital services needs to focus on the ability of information to support monitoring, clarify officials' actions, and help prospective couples receive pre-marital counselling (Bannister & Connolly, 2014) .

From a regulatory perspective, the link between marriage registration and pre-marital counselling is established in Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 30 of 2024 on the Registration of Marriages. Article 3(1) permits the registration of the intention to marry to be carried out at the KUA or online via SIMKAH, whilst Article 5(1) requires prospective spouses who have registered their intention to marry to attend marriage counselling. Article 5(2) positions counselling as a means of equipping individuals with knowledge and skills regarding family life. The Regulation also defines SIMKAH as an electronic marriage administration management application in Article 1, point 14. This provision indicates that registration and counselling form part of an interrelated series of marriage preparations (Abubakar, 2019; Gracenia et al., 2022) . Based on this relationship, the ideal scenario developed in this study is the availability of a workflow that enables registration data to support scheduling, monitoring of attendance, and follow-up on marriage counselling (Saehu et al., 2024) . These provisions form the basis for this study to formulate a workflow linking marriage registration data with scheduling, attendance monitoring, and follow-up marriage counselling.

Furthermore, marriage services must also consider service accessibility and data management responsibilities. Prospective spouses have varying employment situations, availability of time, and ability to access technology; therefore, service development must provide support tailored to their needs (Jalil, 2019) . At the same time, the use of registration data for counselling purposes must be based on lawful processing grounds and have a clear purpose. Law No. 27 of 2022 on the Protection of Personal Data mandates that processing must be limited, specific, lawful, transparent and purpose-limited, whilst also regulating obligations regarding security, confidentiality and the prevention of unauthorized access (Articles 27–28 and Articles 35–39). Therefore, service integration requires regulations regarding the information used, the authorized personnel who may access it, and accountability at every stage. Data inclusion and protection must be considered from the design stage of the service workflow (Nadal & Esteban-Navarro, 2026) .

In the practice studied at the Batang Sub-district KUA, the use of SIMKAH for marriage administration has not been accompanied by the timely monitoring of participation in pre-marital counselling. Findings from interviews, observations and documentation indicate that counselling information is provided at the registration stage; however, attendance is still recorded via a manual attendance register and cross-checked against registration data in the end-of-year summary. These findings demonstrate that an information link has been established, although its use to support follow-up during the service process remains limited. Statements from prospective couples also indicate work-related constraints in adhering to the available schedule. These empirical issues draw attention to the gap between the availability of digital administration and the continuity of the counselling process. This case serves as a basis for examining the relationship between service stages within the framework of national policy, whilst acknowledging that conditions at other KUA offices may differ.

This gap highlights the need for workflow linking marriage registration with the delivery of pre-marital counselling. From the moment of registration, prospective couples need to receive clear information on the schedule, whilst officials require attendance records to

identify who has attended the counselling and who still requires follow-up. Should participants face attendance difficulties, this information can serve as a basis for contacting them and offering alternative dates. The continuity of this process is essential so that prospective couples can fulfil administrative requirements whilst also receiving pre-marital preparation. To support this, registration data must be utilized as the basis for service delivery right through to the stage of participation in marriage counselling (Marzuki, 2020) .

The need for clear procedures and authority makes the integration of SIMKAH and pre-marital counselling an institutional issue. Dunleavy (Dunleavy et al., 2006) , through the concept of Digital-Era Governance, emphasizes the integration of service functions, the organization of services based on community needs, and the development of digital administrative processes. In the context of this study, this perspective helps to explain the importance of linking available data with the actions of staff at every stage of the service. This linkage requires a division of responsibilities regarding the scheduling of sessions, updating attendance records, and following up with participants who have not yet attended counselling sessions. Consequently, efforts to bridge the two services must be accompanied by the organization of workflows so that registration and participation information can be utilized in a timely manner to support the needs of prospective couples.

Previous research has highlighted the benefits of SIMKAH and the role of premarital counselling from different perspectives. Jamil and Putera (Jamil & Putera, 2025) , through research at the Malua Sub-district KUA, demonstrated that SIMKAH facilitates the processes of registration, recording, management, and storage of marriage data. However, its implementation still faces challenges relating to facilities, human resource capacity, public awareness and internet connectivity. Meanwhile, ‘ discusses the role of pre-marital courses in preparing couples for family life. Both studies provide a basis for understanding the importance of well-organized administration and the preparation of prospective spouses. Nevertheless, the focus of the studies has not specifically addressed the relationship between registration data, the scheduling of counselling, attendance updates, and follow-up as a single institutional process.

The previous studies discussed have not specifically explained how marriage registration data can be used to support continuous marriage counselling. An aspect that requires further examination is how this information helps officials to draw up schedules, track participant attendance, and follow up with prospective couples who have not yet attended counselling sessions. This research fills this gap by formulating a workflow that links data on registered couples in SIMKAH with their counselling participation status. The novelty of this approach lies in the integration of information flows, the division of responsibilities amongst officials, flexible scheduling options, and the protection of personal data within a single institutional reform framework. Through this framework, the bridging element is realized by using registration information as the basis for supporting prospective couples until they receive the counselling.

To formulate this design, this study first examined the relationship between SIMKAH administration and the implementation of marriage counselling, ranging from scheduling to follow-up on non-attendance. The analysis covered the use of information, the fulfilment of staff responsibilities, and the obstacles faced by prospective couples. Based on this focus, this study poses two questions: first, how are marriage administration via SIMKAH and marriage counselling interconnected in terms of scheduling, attendance recording, participant

monitoring, and follow-up on non-attendance? Second, how can an institutional reform model bridge these two services to realise an inclusive digital service that prioritizes the protection of personal data in Indonesia? The first question is answered through an analysis of case study findings. The results are then examined in conjunction with national regulations and the literature on digital governance to develop a reform model that addresses the second question.

Methods

This research is an empirical legal study employing a qualitative approach and a case study of ‘ . The empirical legal research method was used to examine the relationship between legal provisions and the administrative practices of marriage registration via SIMKAH, as well as the implementation of marriage counselling. A qualitative approach using case studies was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the interconnection between the two services at the Batang Sub-district KUA, particularly in relation to scheduling, recording attendance, and following up on the absence of prospective spouses.

The research data sources comprised primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through interviews with the heads of the KUA, marriage officiants, and prospective couples who had and had not attended marriage counselling. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their involvement and experience in the service process. Observations were carried out to monitor the delivery of counselling, the recording of attendance, and follow-up measures for absent participants. Secondary data included marriage registration documents, attendance lists and marriage counselling reports, legislation, and relevant literature. Data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews, observation and documentary analysis to obtain information regarding the relationship between SIMKAH and marriage counselling , the division of responsibilities amongst officials, and barriers to participation by prospective couples (Bowen, 2009) .

The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman’s interactive analysis model, which comprises data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions and verification (Miles et al., 2014) . Data reduction was carried out by selecting and grouping the results of interviews, observations and documentation based on scheduling, attendance records, participant monitoring and follow-up on absences. The data were then presented in the form of descriptions and matrices to illustrate the interconnections between service stages and the gaps identified. Conclusions were drawn by identifying patterns in the findings, interpreting them using a theoretical framework, and analyzing them in light of relevant legal provisions. Conclusions were verified by comparing information between informants and between the results of interviews, observations and documents. This process was repeated to produce evidence-based conclusions that formed the basis for formulating a model for institutional reform.

This study uses the case of the Batang Sub-district KUA to gain an in-depth understanding of the interconnection between SIMKAH administration and marriage counselling. The research findings form the basis for the development of an institutional reform model within the framework of national policy, whilst considering differences in staff capacity, facilities, and the needs of prospective couples across regions. The resulting model is a proposal for service development that requires further adaptation and testing before it can be implemented in other KUA offices.

Results

The research findings show that marriage administration via SIMKAH and marriage counselling are already linked at the stages of information provision and scheduling. However, attendance recording and monitoring of participation are still carried out manually. Based on data collected in the field, the research results were categorized into three aspects, namely (1) administrative and counselling workflows, (2) attendance recording and follow-up, and (3) barriers to participation by prospective couples.

1. SIMKAH Administrative Workflow and the Implementation of Marriage Counselling

The service workflow at the Batang Sub-district KUA begins with the processing of marriage registration. At this stage, SIMKAH is used to record data on prospective couples and to support the administration of marriages. In addition to completing the administrative requirements, prospective couples receive information regarding their obligation to attend marriage counselling. Thus, the registration process serves as the starting point where marriage administration services and the preparation of prospective couples intersect. The information provided regarding the counselling at the registration stage includes the schedule for the sessions. Based on interviews with officials, notifications are conveyed directly to the prospective spouses or via village representatives assisting with the marriage registration process. The method of communication follows the administrative channel used by each couple. If an intermediary is involved in the process, the schedule information is also relayed through that intermediary to the prospective spouses.

After receiving the schedule information, prospective couples are directed to attend face-to-face counselling sessions at the KUA. These sessions are scheduled for Mondays and Wednesdays and are conducted in groups. The marriage officiant is involved in providing guidance on the (marital life) to participants. The transition from the registration stage to the counselling activities thus takes place through notifications and guidance from officials. Within this process, SIMKAH and official communication fulfil different functions. SIMKAH is used to manage marriage administration data, whilst the communication of schedules and instructions regarding the counselling sessions is carried out through direct or indirect communication. In the workflow observed, the data of registered couples is not yet automatically linked to the schedule of counselling sessions they are to attend. The link between these two stages is still managed through the work of officials in conveying information and guiding prospective spouses.

This finding indicates that marriage administration and marriage counselling are linked at the stage of providing information and guidance to participants. The registration provides an opportunity for officials to communicate the schedule, after which the prospective couples attend the sessions in accordance with the guidance received. However, the provision of this information does not immediately indicate whether every registered couple has attended the counselling sessions. To understand the continuation of this service workflow, the following

section outlines attendance recording, participation monitoring, and follow-up measures for participants who are absent.

2. Attendance Recording, Monitoring and Follow-up

Once prospective couples have received their schedule and attended the counselling sessions, their participation is recorded via a manual attendance register. This register contains the participants' identities and signatures as proof of attendance at the sessions held. Consequently, participation information is stored in a document separate from the marriage administration data in SIMKAH. To determine whether registered prospective spouses have attended the counselling sessions, officials need to link these two sources of information through data verification and matching.

The matching of attendance registers with marriage registration data is carried out during the year-end reconciliation process. At this stage, officials check the records of counselling participants and compare them with the registered prospective spouses. This process indicates that marriage administration information and attendance records for the counselling sessions have been reconciled for the purposes of the recapitulation. However, the year-end reconciliation does not provide an immediate update on each couple's participation status following the counselling sessions. Updates are not carried out routinely after each session, so monitoring of participation still relies on checking the attendance lists. When information regarding the attendance of prospective spouses is required, officials must check archived documents and cross-reference them with registration data. Attendance registers may show who attended a particular session, but to determine who has not yet attended the counselling, a further check of the entire list of registered prospective spouses is required. Consequently, recording attendance at each session does not automatically generate a list of participants requiring follow-up.

An overview of attendance and follow-up was evident during observations of a marriage counselling session. At that session, 18 out of 20 prospective couples scheduled to attend were present, whilst the other two were absent. During the observed activity, no specific mechanism was evident for immediately contacting absent participants or arranging alternative sessions for them. These observational findings indicate that whilst the number of participants is recorded, this is not followed by any observable follow-up action regarding absences. Interview results also revealed the absence of an automated reminder system linking the counselling schedule to the data of the prospective couples. The dissemination of information still relies on staff communication, as is the case during the registration stage. Within the identified workflow, information regarding absent participants has not been systematically channelled into the process of re-engaging them and rescheduling sessions. Consequently, the notification of schedules prior to activities and the follow-up after absences are two stages that have not been seamlessly linked.

Overall, attendance records have provided evidence of participants' attendance, whilst year-end reconciliation links this evidence to marriage registration data. Limitations were primarily found in monitoring during the service process and the use of absence information for immediate follow-up. These findings indicate that the availability of attendance records has not been accompanied by a systematic process for updating status and following up. To

understand the circumstances of participants behind these absences, the following section outlines the barriers faced by prospective couples in attending marriage counselling.

3. Barriers to Participation and the Need for Service Improvements

Interviews with prospective brides and grooms who did not attend the counselling sessions revealed that their absence was linked to difficulties in reconciling the timing of the sessions with their work commitments. Some interviewees stated that their work schedules clashed with the counselling sessions at the KUA. Although they had received information about the sessions, they still faced difficulties in attending at the specified times. These findings indicate that receiving information about the schedule does not necessarily mean participants are able to attend the sessions.

In addition to work, the demands for wedding preparations were also cited by interviewees as a reason for non-attendance. Pre-wedding activities take up time and attention, meaning that attendance at counselling sessions must be balanced against various other commitments. These two obstacles indicate a need to manage time between work, wedding preparations, and pre-marital counselling. However, these accounts reflect the experiences of the interviewees and cannot be taken as reasons for all prospective couples who were absent. This difficulty in managing time is linked to the nature of the service, which is delivered face-to-face on Mondays and Wednesdays. To take part in the sessions, prospective brides and grooms must set aside time to attend the KUA in accordance with the available schedule. For interviewees whose schedules conflict with work or wedding preparations, this timing poses a barrier to participation. Consequently, the barriers identified include the alignment between the service schedule and the participants' availability.

In response to this situation, some prospective couples have expressed a willingness to attend online guidance sessions if this option were available. This indicates an interest in a format that would allow them to receive guidance at times that better suit their schedules. To date, communication with prospective couples has taken place via the marriage officiant's personal WhatsApp account or the KUA's general WhatsApp group. These communication channels are used to liaise with participants, but their existence does not yet indicate the provision of structured online counselling. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish between the use of digital media for communication and the provision of digital options for participating in counselling activities.

Overall, the informants' experiences highlight the need for more flexible options regarding timing and modes of participation. This need arises from the scheduling conflicts they face, as well as the willingness of some participants to consider online counselling. These findings complement previous results regarding the limitations of monitoring and follow-up: attendance records indicate participants who have not yet attended the sessions, whilst participants' statements explain the barriers they face. Both types of information provide an

empirical basis for discussions on improving services to better suit the circumstances of prospective brides and grooms.

Discussion

The Interconnection between SIMKAH and Marriage Counselling in Digital Marriage Services in Indonesia

The interconnection between SIMKAH and marriage counselling was analyzed through three dimensions *of Digital-Era Governance*, namely reintegration, user-centered service delivery, and the digitization. The reintegration dimension encompasses the relationship between registration data and schedules and attendance, the continuity of information, and the clarity of staff responsibilities. The dimension of user-centered service examines the delivery of information, the suitability of timetables, and responses to barriers to attendance. Meanwhile, the digitization dimension covers the utilization of digital data across stages, the timeliness of participation status updates, and the use of information as a basis for follow-up. These indicators were operationalized in line with the research focus to identify which parts of the service were already integrated and which still required improvement.

The research findings indicate that marriage administration via SIMKAH and pre-marital counselling have been integrated through the provision of information at the registration stage and the matching of participation data in the end-of-year summary. Registration serves as the entry point for prospective couples to obtain information regarding their obligations and the schedule for marriage counselling. Officials pass on this information directly or via parties assisting with administrative procedures. This relationship demonstrates that both services form part of the same service chain, although their information management utilizes different mechanisms. Marriage administration data is managed via SIMKAH, whilst attendance at counselling sessions is recorded manually and subsequently cross-referenced with registration data (Ahmad et al., 2022; Marzuki, 2020) .

These differences in mechanisms indicate that the established connectivity still relies on staff communication and data collation. Both facilitate the delivery of initial guidance and the compilation of attendance reports, but do not yet fully support the monitoring of prospective couples' status throughout the service process. Attendance information is not yet updated regularly to promptly identify participants requiring follow-up. Consequently, the main issue lies in the continuity between stages, particularly how data available from the registration stage can be continuously utilized to monitor participation and assist prospective couples in receiving pre-marital counselling (Janowski, 2015) .

This still-limited connectivity highlights a gap between the digitization of administrative processes and the integration of service delivery. The use of SIMKAH has provided a database for marriage registration, but information on attendance at pre-marital counselling still needs to be traced through separate documents (Hidayati et al., 2026) . Consequently, the availability of data in digital form does not automatically generate information that can be immediately used to monitor the participation of prospective couples. In this case, the issue relates to how information is transferred, updated and utilised in subsequent stages. Year-end reconciliation may meet the need for summarization, whilst follow-up on non-attendance requires information whilst prospective couples still could attend

a make-up session before marriage. This difference in timing explains why reporting alone is insufficient to support service continuity. Thus, integration must be understood as the ability to link registration data, participation status, and staff actions within a single workflow that runs throughout the service process.

a. The Dimension of Reintegration

The reintegration dimension in Digital-Era Governance emphasizes the importance of reconnecting service functions and processes that operate in isolation (Dunleavy et al., 2006) . In this study, this dimension is operationalized through three indicators: the link between registration data and schedules and attendance; the continuity of information across stages; and the clarity of staff responsibilities. All three are used to assess whether the SIMKAH administration and marriage counselling have formed a service chain that allows information from one stage to be utilized in the next.

The first indicator—the relationship between registration data and schedules and attendance—assesses the extent to which the schedules and participation of prospective spouses registered in SIMKAH in marriage counselling can be traced (Mergel et al., 2019) . This linkage requires a match in identity between the data of registered couples and the records of counselling participants. Field findings indicate that registration has provided an opportunity for officials to convey information regarding the schedule. However, participants' attendance is recorded in a manual attendance register separate from the marriage administration data. The two sources of information are then matched during the end-of-year recapitulation. Based on these findings, data linkage is available through matching but has not yet become part of the routine monitoring of each couple throughout the service process. Consequently, reintegration under the first indicator remains partial: whilst the relationship between registered couples and counselling participants can be identified, it requires a separate document check.

The limitations of these data links relate to the second indicator, namely the continuity of information between stages. This indicator assesses whether registration, scheduling and attendance information is available in time to carry out the next stage (Haug et al., 2024) . In the practice under study, schedule information had been provided since registration, whilst attendance records had not yet been routinely forwarded to identify participants requiring follow-up. Observations during guidance sessions also did not reveal any specific mechanisms for promptly contacting absent participants or arranging alternative sessions. These findings indicate that the flow of information takes place during the initial and recapitulation stages, but is not yet continuous through to the follow-up of absences. Consequently, the continuity of information remains limited to notifications and reporting, whilst its use to support the continuity of participants' services has not yet been implemented systematically.

These limitations in data linkage relate to the second indicator, namely the continuity of information across stages. This indicator assesses whether registration, scheduling and attendance information is available at the time required to carry out the next stage (Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019) . In the practices studied, schedule information has been provided since registration, whilst attendance records have not yet been routinely forwarded to identify participants requiring follow-up. Observations during guidance sessions also did not reveal any specific mechanisms for promptly contacting absent participants or arranging alternative sessions. These findings indicate that the flow of information occurs during the

initial and summary stages but is not yet continuous through to the follow-up of absences. Consequently, the continuity of information remains limited to notifications and reporting, whilst its use to support the continuity of participants' services has not yet been implemented systematically.

The continuity of these services also depends on the third indicator, namely the clarity of staff responsibilities. This indicator examines the division of roles in managing registration data, communicating schedules, recording attendance, and passing on information to those responsible for follow-up (Bélanger & Carter, 2008) . Field findings indicate the involvement of officials in administrative management and the dissemination of information, as well as the role of the village head in providing guidance. Direct communication, as well as communication through intermediaries, helps to connect prospective couples with scheduled activities. However, the available data does not specify who is responsible for ensuring that every registered couple has attended the guidance sessions, nor should follow up on absences. This lack of evidence cannot be taken as grounds for stating that there is no division of tasks at all. The conclusion that can be drawn is that the roles in each activity are evident, whilst the responsibility for ensuring continuity between stages has not been fully delineated.

Based on these three indicators, the reintegration of SIMKAH and marriage counselling has been established through communication between officials and data matching but does not yet cover the entire service chain in a continuous manner. The existing arrangements enable prospective couples to receive counselling information and staff to compile records of participation. However, tracking the status of each couple, communicating information regarding non-attendance, and responsibilities for follow-up remain areas that need to be strengthened. Consequently, the need for reintegration lies in organizing the relationship between data and staff duties so that the registration process can be monitored until prospective couples receive counselling.

b. Dimensions of User Needs

The continuity of the service process also needs to be reviewed in terms of its alignment with the needs of prospective couples (Bannister & Connolly, 2014) . The service dimension based on user needs, or 'needs-based holism', within Digital-Era Governance emphasizes the organisation of services whilst taking into account the comprehensive needs of the community (MacLean & Titah, 2022). In this study, this dimension is operationalized through three indicators, namely: the provision of information, the alignment of the schedule with participants' circumstances, and the response to barriers to attendance. These three are used to assess the extent to which the SIMKAH administration and counselling support help prospective couples to receive preparation from the moment they register their marriage.

The first indicator, the provision of information, assesses how prospective couples receive explanations regarding their obligations, the schedule, and how to participate in the counselling sessions. This information must be received by the couples concerned so that it can serve as a basis for preparing for attendance (Nadal & Esteban-Navarro, 2026). Field findings indicate that notifications were issued at the registration stage, either directly or via village officials assisting with administrative procedures. This practice demonstrates an effort to connect prospective couples with the counselling programmed from the outset of the service. However, notifications via intermediaries involve an additional stage of information relay before reaching

the participants. The research data is insufficient to confirm whether all information is received and understood uniformly through both channels. Therefore, this indicator shows that channels for conveying information are in place, whilst the certainty of participants' reception and understanding cannot yet be comprehensively assessed. Differences in communication channels cannot, therefore, be directly regarded as the cause of non-attendance.

The availability of this information needs to be considered alongside the second indicator, namely the suitability of the schedule to participants' circumstances. This indicator assesses whether the timing of the sessions allows prospective couples to attend counselling whilst balancing work commitments and pre-wedding preparations (Figueredo & Silva, 2026) . Findings indicate that face-to-face sessions were scheduled for Mondays and Wednesdays, whilst some participants experienced clashes with their work schedules and the demands of wedding preparations. This implies that simply being aware of the schedule does not necessarily enable participants to attend. From a user-needs perspective, this situation indicates that a regular schedule set by the organizer's does not necessarily align with each participant's availability. The conclusion regarding this indicator is that there is a gap between the available service times and the circumstances of some of the prospective brides and grooms. These findings support the need to consider schedule flexibility, although they do not yet prove that specific schedule changes would increase attendance.

This time gap is further linked to the third indicator, namely the response to barriers to attendance. This indicator examines how organisers recognise participants' difficulties and assist them in securing the opportunity to attend counselling sessions following an absence (Alshallaqi & Al-Mamary, 2024) . In the sessions observed, no specific mechanism was evident for promptly contacting absent participants and arranging alternative sessions. On the other hand, some prospective couples expressed a willingness to attend counselling online if more flexible options were available. At the time of the research, communication took place via the marriage officiant's personal WhatsApp account or KUA's general group chat, but no dedicated platform for online counselling was available. These findings highlight the participants expressed need for alternatives, whilst the service's response to these needs remains limited. The willingness to participate in online activities should be understood as the participants' preference, rather than evidence that such a service is already available or has been proven effective.

Based on these three indicators, a focus on user needs was evident through the provision of information from the registration stage onwards; however, this was not fully supported by schedule flexibility or follow-up regarding participants' constraints. Work commitments and preparations for the pre-wedding ceremony indicate that absences need to be examined alongside the circumstances affecting the prospective couples' ability to access the sessions. The integration of SIMKAH and counselling must therefore be assessed in terms of its ability to help staff identify who has not yet received training and what obstacles they face. With this understanding, service continuity encompasses access to information, opportunities to attend, and support to participate in counselling when the initial schedule cannot be met.

c. The Dimension of Digitalisation

The dimension of digitalization complements the analysis of reintegration and user needs by examining how technology is transforming information management and service delivery.

Within the framework of Digital-Era Governance, digitalization relates to the use of technology to develop government administrative processes (Dunleavy et al., 2006) . This dimension is operationalized through three indicators: the utilization of digital data across stages, the timeliness of updates to participation status, and the use of information as a basis for follow-up actions. These three indicators are used to assess the extent to which data managed through SIMKAH supports the marriage counselling process throughout the provision of the service.

The first indicator, the utilization of digital data across stages, assesses whether information available from the time of registration can be used to support the scheduling and monitoring of counselling (Liu et al., 2025) . Field findings indicate that SIMKAH has been used to manage marriage administration, whilst attendance records for counselling are kept in manual attendance registers. Officials then reconciled these two sources through data matching. This situation demonstrates that digitalization has taken place in marriage administration, but the utilization of digital data has not yet encompassed the entire counselling process. The existence of manual records does not automatically indicate a failure of digitalization; the issue lies in the need for additional tracing and matching when participation information is required. Based on this indicator, the use of digital data remains concentrated on administrative tasks, whilst its integration with the monitoring of pre-marital counselling has not yet been implemented in a continuous manner.

These limitations in utilization are linked to the second indicator, namely the timeliness of updates to participation status. This indicator assesses when attendance information becomes available to track the progress of services for each prospective bride and groom. Findings indicate that attendance is recorded during the implementation of activities, but its cross-referencing with registration data is carried out during the end-of-year recapitulation. Consequently, the recording of a session does not immediately result in a participation status that can be readily traced from the data of registered couples. This time lag is significant because the requirements for annual reporting differ from those for pre-marital monitoring. The annual summary can show the achievements of activities over a single period, whilst monitoring requires information whilst participants are still able to attend subsequent counselling sessions . Therefore, the second indicator shows that updates to information for reporting purposes have taken place, but the timeliness of this information for individual follow-up remains limited.

This timeliness determines the usefulness of the information in the third indicator, namely the use of information as a basis for follow-up. This indicator examines whether attendance data is used to identify participants who have not attended guidance sessions and to support staff decisions regarding the next steps (Ebbers et al., 2016) . In the sessions observed, participants' absences were noted, but no specific mechanism was provided to contact them immediately or arrange alternative sessions. Automatic reminders were also not yet available, whilst communication still relied on staff. Nevertheless, the lack of automation was not the sole basis for assessment, as follow-up could still be carried out through clear manual procedures. The issue identified was the lack of a systematic link between absence information and follow-up actions. Based on this indicator, the data had functioned as a record of activities, but its use to support the continuity of participants' services was not yet consistent.

Based on these three indicators, the digitalization of the services under study has supported the administration of marriage registration but has not yet fully linked registration information with progress in participation in pre-marital counselling. Its limitations include the utilization of data across stages, timely status updates, and the translation of information into

follow-up actions. These findings suggest that the development of digital services requires changes in how data is used throughout the service delivery process. Consequently, measures of progress in digitalization must include the ability of officials to access relevant information and use it to assist prospective couples in completing the pre-marital counselling programmed.

In the Indonesian context, the lesson from this case is the need to assess the development of KUA digital services through the continuity of processes, rather than merely the use of applications for individual activities. The commonality of the national policy framework provides a basis for considering the relationship between marriage registration and pre-marital counselling as a single service chain (Ahmad et al., 2022; Saehu et al., 2024) . However, the findings at the Batang Sub-district KUA do not prove that all KUAs face the same conditions. Their national relevance lies in aspects that can be examined across various regions, namely the interconnection of registration and attendance data, the timeliness of information, the clarity of staff responsibilities, and responsiveness to the needs of prospective couples. These aspects can form the basis for evaluation whilst considering differences in local resources and service practices.

Differences in capacity between KUA offices also mean that strengthening data integration requires flexibility in its implementation. KUA offices with limited technological support can begin with routine data matching and a clear division of tasks, whilst the development of functions within SIMKAH requires coordination with the authorities responsible for managing the system. Implementation options may vary, but the aim of the improvements is to ensure that information is available when staff need to provide follow-up services. Based on this analysis, institutional reform needs to link data, responsibilities and access support within a workflow that can be implemented in line with KUA's capacity. These requirements form the basis for the formulation of the model discussed in the following subsection.

A Model for Institutional Reform towards Inclusive Digital Marriage Services in Indonesia

The proposed institutional reform model stems from the limited link between the SIMKAH administration and the delivery of marriage counselling. Research findings indicate that registration and attendance data are still managed through separate records, matching is carried out in the year-end summary, and follow-up on non-attendance has not yet been carried out systematically. At the same time, some prospective couples face scheduling conflicts with work and wedding preparations. These circumstances highlight the need for a workflow that links information on registered couples with their opportunities to attend counselling sessions. Furthermore, the model is designed to build an inclusive service through flexible scheduling, the provision of easily understandable information, and support from staff for participants facing access barriers (Nadal & Esteban-Navarro, 2026) . These improvements combine the continuity of information and clarity of staff responsibilities with support tailored to the needs of prospective couples, as well as the protection of personal data at all stages of the service.

The institutional reform model for linking SIMKAH and marriage counselling was developed using the Strategic Triangle framework from (Moore, 2004) , which encompasses public value, legitimacy and support, and operational capacity. Public value is directed towards the expected benefits for prospective couples, particularly ease of access to information,

opportunities to attend counselling, and follow-up support when facing attendance difficulties. Legitimacy and support encompass the basis of authority, clarity of procedures, division of responsibilities, and coordination in the management of the system and personal data. Meanwhile, operational capacity encompasses the availability of staff, time, facilities, and the ability to manage information. These three dimensions are used in conjunction to design the relationships between registration data, scheduling, attendance recording, and follow-up, which can be implemented in accordance with the conditions at the KUA. Within this framework, each element of the model is assessed based on the benefits to participants, institutional support, and the resources required to deliver an inclusive service.

The results of the reintegration dimension analysis indicate that marriage registration and pre-marital counselling have been linked through communication between officials and data matching during the end-of-year reconciliation. However, this link does not yet support continuous monitoring of participation, as administrative data on marriages and attendance at counselling sessions are still managed through separate records. Based on these findings, this study proposes an Integrated Marriage–Counselling Service Workflow, namely a series of procedures that utilises SIMKAH registration data as the basis for scheduling, participant confirmation, attendance recording, and follow-up on non-attendance. This workflow is supported by a monitoring register with the same registration reference, as well as a division of responsibilities amongst staff at each stage. The KUA can begin by compiling a list of counselling participants based on SIMKAH registration data, then confirming the schedule with the prospective couples by telephone, private message, or when they visit the KUA. After each session, staff cross-check the participant list against the attendance register and update the participation status. Participants who are absent are contacted personally to ascertain the reasons for their absence and to offer an alternative session. The schedule, attendance and results of the communication are recorded in a single monitoring register with the same registration reference. The service coordinator then reviews these records regularly to ensure that participants who have not yet attended the counselling receive follow-up from the designated staff member.

Viewed from the public value dimension within the Strategic Triangle, the expected benefits are the assurance of service continuity for prospective couples and ease of monitoring for staff (Thabit et al., 2025) . Prospective couples receive information regarding the schedule and next steps when they are unable to attend. Meanwhile, staff can track participation status without having to cross-check all documents each time information is required. These benefits need to be tested through implementation to determine whether the proposed workflow speeds up the identification of participants and assists in the completion of pre-marital counselling.

Achieving these benefits requires institutional legitimacy and support through joint procedures and a clear division of responsibilities. Procedures must specify which party is responsible for confirming schedules, updating attendance records, receiving information on absences, and recording the results of follow-up actions (Dwimawanti et al., 2026) . Timelines for updating and checking records must also be established to ensure information is available when needed. This organization must be coordinated by the head of the KUA in accordance with their authority. If the integration requires changes to the features or functions of SIMKAH, its implementation must be coordinated with the party authorized to manage the system.

From an operational capacity perspective, the model requires designated staff, coordination time, and monitoring records, alongside restricted access (Féral & Dreveton,

2026) . In the initial stages, the workflow can be carried out using simple recording tools that refer to registration data, provided their use is in accordance with authorized roles and access controls. The division of roles must be adjusted to the number of staff and their workload, including the designation of a substitute when the person in charge is unavailable. With this support, the reintegration recommendations are realized as changes to work processes whereby every registered couple has a traceable counselling status, and every follow-up requirement has a designated person in charge.

In addition to data continuity, the results of the analysis of service dimensions based on user needs indicate the need to tailor access to counselling to the circumstances of the prospective couples. Schedule information has been provided since registration, but some participants still face difficulties attending due to work and wedding preparations. Responses to these constraints have not yet been supported by systematic follow-up. Based on these findings, the reform model proposes confirming availability, identifying attendance constraints, and providing alternative schedules in line with the available service options. These adjustments are linked to registered couple data so that participants' needs and schedule changes can be identified by the responsible officers.

The reform proposal regarding user needs is implemented through Adaptive Guidance Scheduling, which involves arranging schedules based on the availability of the prospective bride and groom and the capacity of the KUA services. Staff confirm the schedule and identify potential attendance barriers from the time of registration. If the proposed time cannot be accommodated, staff offer alternative available sessions and record the agreed schedule. Participants who do not attend are contacted again to ascertain the reason for their absence and to arrange an opportunity to attend the next session. The recording of obstacles is limited to information relevant to service adjustments, such as clashes with working hours. The alternative schedule is then recorded with reference to the same SIMKAH registration, ensuring that the time adjustment remains linked to the administration and monitoring of participation in the counselling programme.

Viewed from the public value dimension within the Strategic Triangle, the expected benefit is the opportunity to receive guidance that is better suited to the circumstances of the prospective couples. Schedule confirmation helps participants plan their time, whilst the option of alternative sessions provides an opportunity for those facing difficulties with the original schedule. The willingness of some resource persons to participate in online counselling also forms the basis for considering alternative service formats. However, such options need to be developed based on participants' needs, organizational requirements, and service readiness. The benefits must be assessed in terms of participants' ability to engage adequately with the counselling, rather than merely being recorded as present via a different channel.

Achieving these benefits requires institutional legitimacy and support through clear procedures for schedule adjustments. These procedures must specify the party responsible for receiving change requests, the method for setting alternative schedules, and the mechanism for communicating changes to both trainers and participants. Adjustments must also uphold the requirements regarding the content and completion of the guidance. If an online format is considered, organizers must ensure it complies with applicable guidelines and clarify the methods of implementation, verification of participation, and recording of completion. Such institutional support is necessary to ensure that flexibility is implemented consistently and in an accountable manner.

From an operational capacity perspective, the choice of schedule and format for the guidance must be adapted to the availability of counsellors, time, space, and communication facilities. The KUA may first organize the use of existing sessions before considering the addition of further activities. Where possible, online delivery requires facilities accessible to both counsellors and participants, technical support, and arrangements for interaction during the sessions. Meanwhile, prospective couples who experience difficulties using digital channels still need to be offered communication support or face-to-face options. Assessing this capacity helps prevent the provision of services that cannot yet be delivered consistently. Thus, service recommendations based on user needs incorporate flexibility as part of a planned procedure. The link between SIMKAH and the counselling programme is realized using registration data to link participants' time requirements, agreed schedules, and progress in their participation. The alignment of public benefits, institutional support, and operational capacity forms the basis for ensuring that these adjustments expand opportunities to access counselling whilst maintaining the quality and continuity of the service.

Finally, the analysis of the digitalisation dimension indicates that electronic data has supported marriage administration but has not yet been fully utilised to monitor participants' progress in guidance programmes in a timely manner. Attendance is still recorded via manual lists and cross-checked against registration data in the end-of-year summary. This situation limits the availability of information that can be directly used to identify participants who need to be contacted. Based on these findings, the proposed reforms include updating attendance status after each session, compiling a list of participants requiring follow-up, and recording the outcomes of communication. These recommendations complement the integration of service workflows by ensuring that the information within them remains up-to-date and usable by staff.

The proposed reforms regarding digitalization are implemented through the Monitoring and Follow-up of Regular Guidance. At this stage, staff cross-check the list of scheduled participants against attendance records after each session, then update participation status using the same SIMKAH registration reference. Participants who have not attended are included in the follow-up list to be contacted by designated staff. The time of contact, confirmation results and rescheduled dates are recorded so that the progress of the service can be tracked. Participants who have not yet been successfully contacted remain on the follow-up list. Each update includes the time of recording and the officer's identity so that changes to the information can be verified. Automatic reminder support can be developed once procedures and the division of responsibilities are consistently implemented, through coordination with the system administrator.

Viewed from the public value dimension within the Strategic Triangle, these updates are expected to yield more up-to-date information and follow-up that is more timely . Staff can identify participants who have not attended counselling whilst there is still an opportunity to offer the next session. For prospective couples, the benefits include continued communication and clarity regarding the steps they need to take following their absence. The updated information is also expected to reduce the risk of participants being overlooked in monitoring or being contacted again after they have actually attended the counselling sessions. These benefits need to be tested through the accuracy of records, the speed of follow-up, and changes in participant attendance following contact.

Achieving these benefits requires institutional legitimacy and support through data update and verification procedures. These procedures must specify the deadline for updates following

a session, the parties responsible for recording and verifying the information, and how to handle errors or discrepancies in the records. Access rights are differentiated according to role, so that staff can only view or amend the information necessary to carry out their responsibilities. The use of data must also be accompanied by a statement of purpose, restrictions on the information recorded, and arrangements for its storage and security. In this design, the protection of personal data is a guiding principle for the implementation of monitoring, whilst the development of new functions within SIMKAH still requires coordination with the system administrators.

In terms of operational capacity, the initial implementation requires a simple recording format, secure storage facilities, staff training and technical support as required. The monitoring format should be easy to update and check, and should minimise the need to re-enter information that is already available. Training should focus on identity verification, status updates, recording follow-up results, and error handling. Work schedules should also be arranged so that updates can be carried out after activities without disrupting other service duties. If digital support is not yet adequate, orderly manual record-keeping may be used temporarily, with the same verification and security procedures, and then developed further based on the results of the evaluation.

Thus, the digitisation recommendations position participation information as the basis for continuously updated service actions. The link with SIMKAH lies in the use of the same registration reference to track schedules, attendance, and follow-up outcomes. Alignment between public benefits, clear procedures, and the capacity of implementers is expected to foster accountable monitoring. The success of the model must subsequently be assessed based on the accuracy of the information and the consistency of its use in assisting prospective couples to receive guidance.

These three recommendations form a unified whole within the Integrated Marriage Guidance Service Flow Model. Data integration and the division of responsibilities ensure that couples registered in SIMKAH can be tracked regarding their schedules and participation in guidance sessions. Adaptive scheduling helps tailor opportunities to attend activities to the circumstances of the prospective couples and the capacity of the KUA. Meanwhile, regular monitoring and follow-up ensure that attendance records are kept up to date and that participants who have not yet attended the counselling sessions receive attention from designated officers. These three elements complement one another: registration data serves as a reference, schedules are agreed upon with participants, and attendance information is used to determine the next course of action. Thus, the proposed reform links administrative processes with the opportunities for prospective couples to receive pre-marital guidance. This continuity requires the use of prospective couples' information at various stages and by officials with different responsibilities. Consequently, the integration of services must be accompanied by regulations regarding the necessary data , the purpose of its use, and the authorised parties who may access it (Mergel et al., 2019) . Information for scheduling, monitoring and follow-up must be restricted to what is necessary for each specific task. The protection of personal data thus becomes a guiding principle underpinning all components of the model, ensuring that the convenience of the service goes hand in hand with respect for the rights of the prospective couples.

These arrangements begin by limiting the data included in the monitoring register. The necessary information includes the SIMKAH registration reference, the participants' minimum identification details, the schedule, participation status, and the results of follow-up. Contact

numbers are used only by staff responsible for contacting participants, whilst reasons for absence are recorded only as necessary to determine service adjustments. For example, the note 'unable to attend due to work commitments' is sufficient without specifying the participant's place of work or personal circumstances. These restrictions help ensure that the records remain relevant to the purpose of the counselling and do not result in the collection of excessive information.

Data restrictions are then followed by the allocation of access rights according to staff responsibilities. Guidance facilitators receive a list of participants for the sessions they are responsible for; record-keepers update attendance records; and those responsible for follow-up use the necessary information to contact participants. Communication regarding absences is conducted privately; general group channels are used solely for schedule announcements and activity information. Every status change includes the time of recording and the identity of the staff member so that it can be checked in the event of an error. Prospective couples also need to be provided with an explanation regarding the use of their data, as well as the channels through which they can request corrections to their records.

Implementing these steps requires secure storage procedures and the establishment of responsibilities for managing the register. The KUA must determine the storage media to be used, the parties authorised to access it, and the retention period in accordance with service requirements and archiving regulations. Within the Strategic Triangle framework, this arrangement supports public values in the form of services that safeguard participants' rights, legitimacy through clear data usage procedures, and operational capacity through facilities and staff capabilities. Thus, the integration of SIMKAH and counselling can be directed towards service continuity whilst maintaining the confidentiality of prospective couples' information.

It can therefore be concluded that the contribution of this model lies in the use of registration data as a link between marriage administration and the opportunity to receive counselling. The Digital-Era Governance analysis identifies service areas that lack continuity, whilst the Strategic Triangle helps formulate improvements based on benefits for participants, institutional support, and the capacity of implementers. The relationship between these two frameworks demonstrates that digital service reform requires alignment between information, officials' responsibilities, and the needs of prospective couples. In the context of developing KUA services in Indonesia, this model offers a basis for strengthening such continuity through measures that can be adapted to local conditions. Its contribution remains a case-study-based design; its impact on access to and participation in counselling needs to be demonstrated through implementation research.

The use of registration data as a link between service stages entails a responsibility to safeguard the personal information of prospective couples. Consequently, the protection of personal data is a fundamental aspect of the proposed digital service reform. Data used for scheduling, recording attendance and follow-up must be restricted to what is necessary for the service and may only be accessed by authorised officials. With such arrangements, the strengthening of the continuity of marriage administration and marriage counselling goes hand in hand with respect for prospective spouses' rights to their personal information.

These arrangements can be implemented through a monitoring register containing only the necessary information, namely the SIMKAH registration reference, minimum participant identification details, contact details used for communication, confirmed schedules, attendance status, and follow-up results. Access to information is differentiated according to the staff

member's responsibilities. Scheduling officers use identity details and contact information to confirm sessions; attendance recorders update statuses based on the attendance list; whilst follow-up officers contact participants who have not attended the counselling sessions. Communication is conducted privately, and participants' difficulties are recorded only to the extent necessary to determine the next steps, without detailing irrelevant personal matters. Records are stored on restricted-access systems, whilst each update is accompanied by the time of entry and the staff member's identity so that changes can be traced. Prospective couples must also be provided with an explanation of the purpose for which the information is used, as well as the channels through which they can request corrections should there be any errors in the data.

Within the Strategic Triangle framework, these arrangements reinforce the three considerations underpinning the model's viability. In the public value dimension, data protection is aimed at safeguarding the rights and trust of prospective couples when their information is used to support their participation in the counselling programme. In the dimension of legitimacy and institutional support, its implementation requires clarity regarding the basis for data use, the establishment of access authorisations, and accountability procedures in the event of errors or misuse of information. Meanwhile, the operational capacity dimension demands the availability of secure storage facilities, staff understanding of data confidentiality, and regular audits of record-keeping and access. These three considerations indicate that data protection must be integral to the integration of service workflows, adaptive scheduling, and monitoring and follow-up. Consequently, the viability of the reform is also assessed based on the organisers' ability to use information responsibly in assisting prospective couples to access counselling.

Based on these recommendations as a whole, the Integrated Marriage–Counselling Service Flow Model combines data integration and staff accountability, adaptive scheduling, and monitoring and follow-up into a single service sequence. The process begins with the preparation of a list of prospective participants based on SIMKAH registration referrals, followed by confirmation of times and the scheduling of counselling sessions. Once the activity has taken place, staff check attendance and update participation status. Participants who have not attended are contacted personally to identify any obstacles and offer alternative sessions subject to service availability. The outcome of this communication is recorded so that staff are aware of the steps taken and any necessary follow-up actions. Each stage of the process has a clearly defined person in charge, whilst the use of information is restricted to what is necessary for the task at hand. The coherence of this model lies in the traceability of the process from registration through to participation in the guidance sessions, with the protection of personal data ensuring compliance at every stage.

The KUA can begin improvements by establishing a monitoring register linked to SIMKAH registrations, appointing a person responsible for each stage, and setting up procedures for confirming schedules and following up on non-attendance. The Ministry of Religious Affairs can support these measures through data management guidelines, capacity building for staff, and an assessment of system development needs. Initial implementation should be carried out on a limited scale, assessing the accuracy of information, the speed of follow-up, ease of access for participants, the workload of staff, and the implementation of personal data protection. Further research should test the ' ' model in KUA offices with different

characteristics to assess the feasibility of implementation and its impact on participation in marriage counselling.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the integration of marriage administration via SIMKAH and the delivery of marriage counselling at the study sites remains partial. The relationship between the two services has been established through the provision of information by staff and data matching in summaries; however, it has not yet formed a continuous workflow from registration through to follow-up on participation. Registration data has not yet been fully utilised as a shared reference for confirming schedules, updating attendance status, and identifying participants who require alternative schedules in a timely manner. The alignment of schedules with the circumstances of some prospective couples also remains a challenge. These findings indicate that the digitisation of administrative processes must be accompanied by the organisation of information flows, the allocation of staff responsibilities, and a responsive approach to participants' needs in order to support the continuity of marriage counselling.

In response to the need for such improvements, this study proposes an Integrated Marriage Service–Counselling Workflow Model that encompasses data integration and the allocation of staff responsibilities, adaptive scheduling, as well as regular monitoring and follow-up. This model utilises SIMKAH registration data as a shared reference to confirm schedules, update attendance status, and provide follow-up to participants who have not yet attended the counselling sessions. Inclusivity is embedded in the design through schedule adjustments and access support tailored to participants' needs, whilst the protection of personal data is a guiding principle at every stage. The contribution of this research lies in establishing the relationship between registration information, staff actions, and the needs of prospective couples as a basis for institutional reform. This design offers a direction for the development of KUA services in Indonesia, linking the completion of marriage administration with the opportunity to receive pre-marital counselling.

This model can serve as a reference for improving KUA services in Indonesia by adapting to the number of participants, the availability of staff, facilities, and the needs of prospective couples in each region. However, this research is based on a single case study and has not yet tested the model's implementation; consequently, its empirical findings cannot yet represent the conditions of all KUAs or prove an increase in access to and participation in counselling. Further research should conduct pilot studies at KUA offices with diverse characteristics to assess the benefits for participants, resource requirements, staff workload, and the implementation of personal data protection. The results of these pilot studies are needed to refine the model and assess its suitability for the wider development of services.

Acknowledgements

The authors thank the research participants for their time and contributions to this study.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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