

Integration of science and religion in pre-marital education curriculum in Singapore

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Abstract

Pre-marital education in Singapore is a form of government service to help prepare newly married couples to adjust and deal with problems at the beginning of marriage. This program is carried out in a professional manner and is structured according to scientific standards. This study was conducted to see how the concept of pre-marital education is carried out in Singapore, the concept of pre-marital education curriculum for Muslims, and the form of integration of science and religion in the pre-marital education curriculum. The research method used in this study is a qualitative method which produces descriptive data. The main data sources are Muslim brides who participate in educational programs and officers who are involved in pre-marital education programs. The data collection techniques are through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that Pre-marital Education in Singapore is packaged in the form of Household Preparation Courses (KPBT) or Marriage Preparation Programs/Courses (MPP/C). This program is carried out professionally by government partner organizations appointed to organize, support and provide everything needed by couples who take part in pre-marital education programs. The ministry that oversees the implementation and registration of marriages is the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF). In this case APKIM Resources is the only Muslim organization or institution recognized by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) to organize the Household Preparation Course. The KPBT curriculum is compiled and determined by the Singapore Islamic Religious Council (MUIS) with the aim, content, process, and evaluation directed at preparing brides-to-be to navigate the flow of change when they step into the household level. The process of implementing pre-marital education involves the integration of knowledge and faith to understand, digest, and implement it. Without these two things, the process will not run optimally.

Keywords: Integration; Premarital Education; Singapore

Abstrak

Pendidikan Pra Nikah di Singapura merupakan bentuk pelayanan pemerintah untuk membantu mempersiapkan pasangan yang baru menikah untuk menyesuaikan diri dan menghadapi masalah di awal pernikahan. Program ini dilaksanakan secara profesional dan terstruktur sesuai standar keilmuan. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk melihat bagaimana konsep pendidikan pranikah yang dilakukan di Singapura, konsep kurikulum pendidikan pranikah bagi umat Islam, dan bentuk integrasi ilmu dan agama yang ada dalam kurikulum Pendidikan Pra Nikah. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif yang menghasilkan data deskriptif. Sumber data utama adalah calon pengantin muslim yang mengikuti program pendidikan dan petugas yang terlibat dalam program Pendidikan Pra Nikah. Teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Pendidikan Pra Nikah di Singapura dikemas dalam bentuk Kursus Persiapan Rumah Tangga (KPBT) atau Marriage Preparation Programs/Courses (MPP/C). Program ini dilaksanakan secara profesional

oleh organisasi mitra pemerintah yang ditunjuk untuk mengorganisir, mendukung dan menyediakan segala sesuatu yang dibutuhkan oleh pasangan yang mengikuti program pendidikan pranikah. Kementerian yang membawahi penyelenggaraan dan pencatatan perkawinan adalah Kementerian Sosial dan Pembangunan Keluarga (MSF). Dalam hal ini APKIM Resources adalah satu-satunya organisasi atau lembaga Muslim yang diakui oleh Kementerian Sosial dan Pembangunan Keluarga (MSF) untuk menyelenggarakan Kursus Persiapan Rumah Tangga (KPBT). Kurikulum KPBT disusun dan ditetapkan oleh Majelis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS) dengan tujuan, isi, proses, dan evaluasi yang diarahkan untuk mempersiapkan calon pengantin menghadapi arus perubahan ketika mereka melangkah ke tingkat rumah tangga. Proses pelaksanaan pendidikan pranikah melibatkan integrasi ilmu dan iman untuk memahami, mencerna, dan melaksanakannya. Tanpa kedua hal tersebut, proses tidak akan berjalan secara maksimal.

Kata kunci: Integrasi; Pendidikan Pra Nikah; Singapura

Introduction

Muslims in Singapore are facing challenges in their family life. The reason is, from data obtained from SingStat, Singapore's Department of Statistics, in 2020 there were more Singaporean couples who divorced than couples who married. A total of 7,623 marriages ended in divorce, an increase of 3.8% compared to 2018. Between 2015 and 2019, the average number of divorces was 7,536 couples a year, an increase from the previous five-year period of 7,402 couples. Of these, 1,598 divorced Muslim couples of Malays, Indian and other ethnicities were recorded under the Administration of Muslim Law Act (Department of Statistics Singapore, 2020).

This trend has not differed much in the past ten years. According to the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF), among couples who married in 2003, more than 16% ended in divorce after their household was 10 years old. This compares to only 8.7% for couples who married in 1987. According to MSF again, by the 15th year of marriage, about 20.3% of households formed in 1998 ended in separation compared to 12.3% for those married in 1987. Most of the marriages that failed involved young couples between the ages of 20 and 24.

The divorce rate among young Muslim couples is 1.5 times higher than among older couples. The divorce rate among Muslim couples who married in 2003 was 14%. This compares to 11.4% for couples who married in 2008. However, according to MSF, the rate of failed marriages in Singapore is lower than in Britain and New Zealand (MediaCorp, 2014). From the available data, the top two reasons for divorce in Singapore civil society over the past ten years are poor morals, not living together for three years or more, dishonesty, financial problems, and abandonment (MediaCorp, 2014).

To be more specific, the main reason for women filing for divorce is the unreasonable behavior of their spouse. While the reason for the man filing for divorce is living apart from his spouse for three years or more. Based on the data described, it can be said that marriage is not considered taboo by most Singaporean Muslims. The existence of social changes in the perspective of marriage affects the behavior of married couples in making decisions. Whereas in Islam marriage is an act of worship,

a sacred bond that is established between a man and a woman who have committed to love, care for and protect each other. Marriage is a fitrah given by Allah to pair each other (QS Ar-Rum: 21).

Marriage is the first step in forming a family, while a family is the first stone in building a society. If marriage is built on a strong foundation, it will create a successful society. Conversely, a marriage that fails and falls apart is sure to cause great material and mental losses, both for individuals, and society (Shalih, 2011). In Islam, marriage is highly recommended, even required for those who otherwise tend to commit adultery (Shihab, 2007). The recommendation or obligation to marry for Muslims has great wisdom in the life of mankind, including the correct and legal distribution of sexual desires; keeping oneself from immorality because of the fulfillment of the natural needs of sex; and others (Hawari, 2006).

In forming a family, of course, each individual has different goals, so it is not easy to achieve these goals. The same goal must be truly impregnated by the members of the couple and it must be realized that the goal will be achieved together, not just by the wife or husband (Walgito, 2004). To achieve goals in a marriage bond, structured and planned pre-marital preparation is needed so that what is desired can be achieved. In general, premarital preparation is directed at the realization of knowledge and understanding of prospective brides and grooms about marriage law, family, healthy reproduction, and solving problems in the family, instilling the values of faith, piety, *akhlaqul karimah*, worship guidance, and religious education in the family. From all of this, it is hoped that each prospective bridal couple will be able to form a household that is *sakinah, mawaddah, warahmah*, so that the divorce rate can be minimized as much as possible (Mahmudin, 2016).

Unfortunately, many do not understand the importance of religious knowledge and knowledge about marriage. It is no wonder that quarrels and disputes between husband and wife often occur due to ignorance about the nature of marriage as a sacred act of worship. This ignorance throws the family into terrible shocks that often lead to the collapse of the family foundation and the separation of children. This could be due to misconceptions about what is meant by religion, religious education and learning religion. The view that develops in the community, according to them, religion is nothing more than ritual activities such as dhikr, prayer, fasting, zakat, hajj, and the like. The above view also has an impact on their wrong perception of religious education and religious studies, resulting in a dichotomy of knowledge (Suprayogo, 2014).

The best solution in this case is to integrate religious teachings in married life. The integration in question is to incorporate substantive values from Islam into scientific buildings, both at the level of epistemology, ontology, and axiology. In the perspective of science integration, the main awareness developed is that any science, whether based on nature or *qauliah* verses, is a sign of God (ayat Allah). Therefore, it cannot be justified, if science actually leads the study away from God. Every

science, regardless of its name, should lead the student to recognize Allah. If this is the case, then what is called Islamic science is all knowledge that is able to lead the student to recognize Allah, regardless of the field of knowledge (Faishal, 2019).

Actually, every human being has a fitrah in the form of belief in the existence of the Creator, the Almighty. This fitrah is known as the fitrah of tawhid religion given by Allah when the human being is born. This has been emphasized in QS. Rum: 30 and the Hadith of the Prophet (*peace and blessings of Allah be upon him*): "Every human being is born to his mother on fitrah. It is his parents who make him a Jew, Christian or Mussulman." (HR. Bukhari). In this case, Allah's fitrah means Allah's creation. Humans are created by Allah to have religious instincts, namely the religion of monotheism. If there are humans who do not follow the religion of monotheism, then it is because of the influence of the environment. Referring to this, it can be said that faith is the core of religion. This issue is very important, not only because it relates to the essence and existence of Islam as a religion, but also because the discussion of the concept of faith marks the starting point of all theological thought in early Islam.

In Islam, faith is justified with the heart, spoken with the tongue, and practiced with action (deeds). The three elements of faith are a whole and cannot be separated. Faith and knowledge are two important components for humans to organize themselves, behave, socialize, and how humans interpret life. Faith in Allah is a very basic commandment for humans (QS. An-Nisa: 136). Science is a human activity that is closely related to thinking (Taufiq, 2019). In relation to pre-marital education, what is the material in the science of marriage must be integrated with human faith. That is, the knowledge that becomes a person's provision in marriage must be based on strong faith in Allah. Vice versa, true faith must be able to lead man to learn knowledge before he enters it. The pre-marital preparation is only done by certain people who master this knowledge.

In theory, pre-marital preparation is a process of transforming behavior and attitudes in the smallest group or social unit in society towards the prospective bride and groom. Preparation towards marriage needs to be done so that those who will enter it are truly ready, both mentally and materially, especially in realizing family functions, namely the function of sexual regulation, socialization function, status determination function, protection function, and economic function. Apart from these functions, there is a main function that should not be forgotten by a Muslim, namely the function of practicing religion (Mahmudin, 2016). Marriage preparation is carried out through a fairly mature debriefing process or in other words through an educational process, whether the debriefing is carried out by the family or carried out by related agencies, or what is known as a bride-to-be course.

From an educational point of view, pre-marital preparation is included in non-formal education organized by the community according to the needs of the community itself. Pre-marital preparation is considered important because the

beginning of household life is very dependent on the initial provision before the bride and groom enter into marriage and pre-marital counseling also aims to assist prospective bridal couples in making careful plans related to marriage and married life (Latipun, 2010). Pre-marital preparation is part of Pre-Marital Education. Basically, people or prospective brides who take part in pre-marital education certainly have further plans to go to the level of marriage. Pre-marriage education has the meaning of the process of providing assistance to individuals so that in carrying out their marriage and married life they can be in harmony with Allah's provisions and instructions so that they can achieve happiness in this world and in the hereafter (Musnamar, 1992).

In Singapore, this pre-marital education is known as the Household Preparation Course (KPBT). In 1994, the *Muslim Divorce* Committee was set up by the Ministry of Community Development, which is responsible for developing programs to address domestic problems and help reduce the divorce rate among Muslims. Among the programs developed by this Jawatan Kuasa Perceraian Islam (Muslim Divorce Committee) as stated in its 1996 report was to repackage the Pre-Marital Education or KPBT that had been implemented since the 1970s by involving mosques and local organizations such as APKIM Resources, Kasih Sejati, Vista Sakinah and several other organizations.

Singapore's Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) through its partner organizations has organized, supported and provided everything needed by couples participating in pre-marriage education programmes. Some of the Marriage Preparation Programmes established by MSF include *Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Programme (PREP)*, *Marriage Programmes for Singapore Citizen-Foreigner couples*, *Marriage Preparation Programmes for Muslim couples*, *Mandatory Marriage Programmes for Minors*, *Premarital Counselling*, and others. MSF, as the person in charge of marriage affairs in Singapore, establishes programs to improve preparation for marriage, namely the *Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Programme (PREP)*. MSF collaborates with several designated organizations to provide premarital education guidance. Pre-marital education is packaged in *Marriage Preparation Programmes/Courses (MPP/C)*.

In its implementation, the Household Preparation Course (KPBT) compiles a curriculum as a reference material or guide for couples who take pre-marital education course. This KBPT curriculum is compiled and determined by the Singapore Islamic Religious Council (MUIS). The concepts deal with change and group and family dynamics. The curriculum is important from the perspective of preparing couples to navigate the currents of change when they step into a household. This is based on the understanding that no matter how simple education is, it must still have a curriculum (Tafsir, 2012). One of the reasons the curriculum is important is because the curriculum can measure the achievement of the goals set out in a plan. This applies not only as a tool of the learning process, but also can be

used to create programs in human life. For example, curriculum planning for schools, courses, boarding schools, households, mosques, and others (Tafsir, 2012).

From the research previously conducted by the researcher, it was explained that the pre-marriage curriculum conducted by APKIM Resources Singapore has several objectives, namely to achieve stability to understand, accept, and direct the bride and groom optimally in achieving self-adjustment to the environment, both the general environment and the family environment, helping the bride and groom solution to the problems being faced, helping brides-to-be maintain and develop a good or good situation so that it remains good or becomes better so that it will not become a source of problems for themselves or others, can be achieved optimally if prepared optimally as well, and to fortify brides-to-be who will experience psychological changes because they will live together, in order to accept it with full willingness and calmness in navigating the household ark, adapt and benefit from what they experience in the household (Yazid, 2016).

The pre-marital education curriculum teaching materials are prepared in the form of learning modules by APKIM Resources as the only Muslim organization or institution recognized by MSF to conduct the Marriage Preparation Course (KPBT) in Singapore. The implementation is done with several teaching approaches and techniques. In terms of process, guidance is effective and successful if the prospective bride and groom are actively involved physically, mentally and socially in the guidance process. While in terms of results, there must be preparation from the bride and groom both in terms of physical and psychological. In addition to the preparation of the bride and groom, there is also an awareness of the rights and responsibilities of the couple. The awareness possessed by these couples in understanding their rights and responsibilities is a benchmark in the success of this pre-marital counseling program.

The problem then is that the implementation of the pre-marital education curriculum is arguably not effective enough, given the data mentioned by SingStat which states that divorce among Muslims is still quite high. This means that there could be several things that make the pre-marriage education curriculum design compiled by APKIM Resources not yet on target, in addition to the teaching materials compiled in the modules not being updated with today's social society.

The best solution in this case is to integrate religious teachings in married life. The integration in question is to incorporate substantive values from Islam into the scientific building, in this case the pre-marital education curriculum. So, to be more focused in analyzing the problem, this research on pre-marital education in Singapore is limited to the integration of science and Islam carried out in the curriculum at the Household Preparation Course (KPBT). The purpose of this study is to see how pre-marriage education is carried out by the Singapore government to its people, analyze the pre-marriage education curriculum for Muslim communities

in Singapore, and examine the form of integration of the pre-marriage education curriculum in Singapore.

Research Method

This research is a type of qualitative field research, which is a type of research that emphasizes its analysis on deductive and inductive inference relationships, as well as on analyzing the dynamics of relationships between observed phenomena using scientific logic (Syaifuddin, 1996). According to Bogdan and Taylor quoted by Moleong (2005), qualitative research is research that produces descriptive data procedures in the form of written or spoken words from people and behaviors that can be observed. While the research method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. Qualitative research is conducted to produce descriptive data (Arikunto, 2002).

This research will take data from the Family Development Department under the auspices of Majelis Ugama Islam Singapore conducted at MUIS's partner institution, APKIM Resources, which is located at 134 Arab Street (S) 199824-62951011 Singapore. In qualitative research, research informants are part of the data sources to be studied. The informants in this study are prospective brides who take the APKIM Resources Household Preparation Course and officers who provide pre-marital education.

There are two types of data in research, qualitative data and quantitative data. Qualitative data includes empirical qualitative data and meaningful qualitative data, both of which do not yet have common problems. Meanwhile, quantitative data includes discrete data and quintinum data which have ordinal, interval, and ratio properties (Darwis, 2014). In this research on pre-marital education, the type of data is data in the field that can be observed, both as it is (empirical), as well as data that appears in the field and is interpreted according to the research perspective (meaningful).

The data sources in this research are main and additional data sources. The main data source is the data source that can provide research data directly (Subagyo et al., 2001). The main data sources in this research are informants and other qualitative data. Meanwhile, additional data sources are data sources that are not directly conducted by researchers (Moeloeng, 2005). Additional data sources include documents on marriage and books on pre-marital education, as well as documents published by Singapore Statistics (Singstat) and APKIM Resources. There are at least four ways in which data can be collected, namely: Qualitative descriptive analysis (with sentences without numbers); Quantitative descriptive analysis (with percentage numbers, histograms, or diagrams); Correlation; and Comparison (Darwis, 2014). The inductive data analysis technique is used by researchers to analyze the pre-marital education curriculum prepared by the Household Preparation Course (KPBT).

This research is intended to obtain data in the field in order to describe and answer the formulation of the problem being studied. In this study, researchers used several data collection techniques. *First*, Observation; Observation is direct observation of an object to be studied. Observation can be done in a short time (Nasution, 1996). This method is intended to observe the process of household preparation courses or pre-marital education for catin (prospective brides) carried out at APKIM Resources Singapore. *Second*, Interview; Interview is an activity carried out to obtain information directly by expressing questions to informants (Subagyo et al, 2001).

This method is used to obtain data, information, and information in the process of implementing household preparation courses or pre-marital education and the urgency of pre-marital education for prospective brides. Interviews were conducted with participants of the APKIM Resources household preparation course and the teaching staff. *Third*, Documentation; Documentation is looking for data about things or variables in the form of notes, transcripts, books, newspapers, magazines, agendas, archives, and so on (Arikuntp, 2002). In the context of this study, researchers used written documentation related to the research location. In the form of pamphlets, guidebooks and certificates published by APKIM Resources Singapore and documents published by Singapore Statistics.

Result and Discussion

A. The Concept of Pre-Marital Education in Singapore

Pre-marital education is better known as a pre-marital guidance course. In general, pre-marital education is a form of guidance for prospective brides before they carry out their consent. Pre-marital education is included in non-formal education, which is a learning activity outside the school system or formal education but is still carried out in a structured and well-systemized manner. Pre-marital education is an activity organized for parties who are not yet married, in connection with their marriage plans. These parties come to the counselor to make their decisions more stable and can make adjustments in the future well (Latipun, 2010).

1. The Concept of Pre-Marital Education in Islam

In Islam, the process of pre-marital education is referred to as the period of pre-conception education that applies to periods of education in the family. Therefore, pre-marital education is an educational preparation effort that a person makes from the time he starts choosing and looking for a mate to the time after fertilization in a mother's womb. So, it can be said that this pre-marital education is an education that is preparatory for someone in maturing with something about marriage (Yasin, 2008). This is in line with the Islamic perspective on the comprehensive and integral foundation of marriage described in QS. Ar-Rum: 21, "*And among the signs of His power is that He created for you wives of your own kind, so that you tend to them*

and feel at ease, and He made between you love and affection. Indeed, in such things there are signs for those who think."

Based on the above foundation, it can be said that the role of pre-marital education is as a catalyst in the process of creating a successful family in the true sense, namely success in the world with the aim of success in the hereafter. That marriage is an act of worship as the essence of life, where people who want to carry it out must understand the Islamic vision of family life, and know the knowledge as an important element in the success of a family.

Related to this, there are several opinions about the objectives of pre-marital education. Some say that there are two objectives of pre-marital education, namely general goals and specific goals. The general purpose of pre-marital education is to help individuals develop themselves optimally according to their level of development and pre-dispositions (such as basic abilities and talents), various existing backgrounds (such as family background, education, socio-economic status) and in accordance with the positive demands of their environment. Meanwhile, the specific objectives of pre-marital education are the elaboration of the general objectives mentioned above which are directly related to the problems experienced by the individual concerned according to the complexity of the problem (Fakih, 2001).

There are also those who say that the general purpose of pre-marital education is to help individuals realize themselves to be fully human in order to achieve happiness in life in this world and in the hereafter. While the specific objectives are to help individuals not to face problems; Help individuals overcome the problems they face; and help individuals maintain and develop good / already good situations and conditions so that they remain good. So that it will not be a source of problems for himself and others.

Meanwhile, pre-marital guidance aims to help individuals prevent problems related to marriage, among others by helping individuals understand the nature of marriage according to Islam; Helping individuals understand the purpose of marriage according to Islam; Helping individuals understand the requirements of marriage according to Islam; Helping individuals understand their readiness to carry out marriage; Helping individuals carry out marriage in accordance with the provisions (sharia) of Islam (Fakih, 2001).

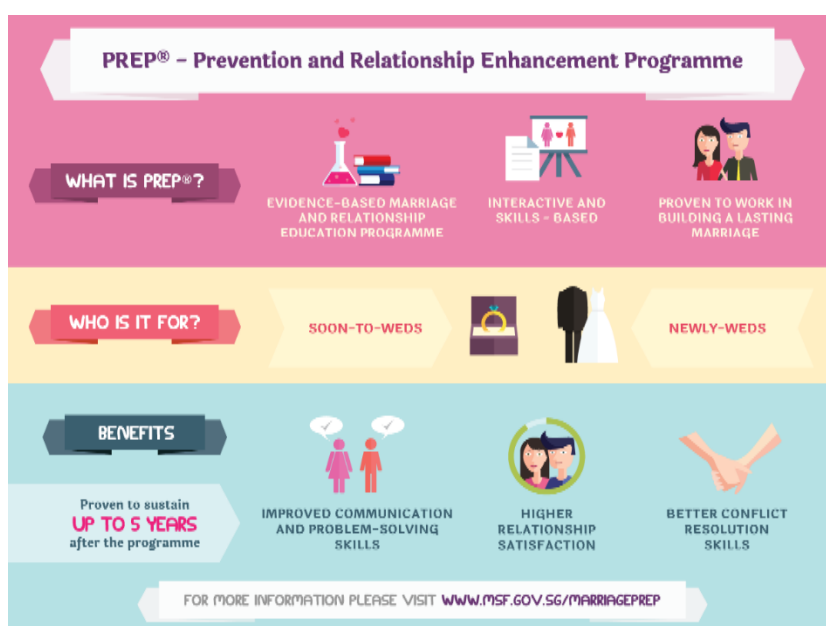
2. Pre-Marital Education in Singapore

In Singapore, Pre-Marital Education is known as the Household Preparation Course (KPBT). In 1994, the Muslim Divorce Committee was set up by the Ministry of Community Development, which is responsible for developing programs to address domestic problems and help reduce the divorce rate among Muslims. Among the programs developed by the Muslim Divorce Committee as stated in its 1996 report was to repackage the Pre-Marital Education or KPBT that had been

implemented since the 1970s by involving mosques and local organizations such as APKIM Resources, Kasih Sejati, Vista Sakinah and several others. Singapore's Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) through its partner organizations has also organized, supported and provided everything needed by couples participating in the pre-marital education program.

The Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) is responsible for the conduct and registration of marriages. Marriage registration for Singapore residents is done at the Registry of Marriages (ROM). Muslims register their marriages at the Registry of Moslem Marriages (ROMM). Singapore's Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) through its partner organizations has organized, supported and provided everything needed by the couples participating in the pre-marriage education program. MSF, as the person in charge of marriage affairs in Singapore, establishes pre-marriage preparation enhancement programs, namely the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Programme (PREP). MSF collaborates with several designated organizations to provide pre-marriage education guidance. Pre-marriage education is packaged in Marriage Preparation Programmes/Courses (MPP/C).

In 1994, pre-marital education or better known as MPP/C was reorganized and repackaged with the aim of addressing domestic problems and helping to reduce divorce rates.



Source: <https://www.msf.gov.sg>

Picture 1. Program of Pre-Marital in Singapore

Some of the Marriage Preparation Programs established by MSF are as follows:

a. Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Programme (PREP)

PREP is a program offered by MSF related to marriage education. Research has shown that couples who participated in the PREP program had good communication skills with their spouse and gained strong confidence in the sustainability of the marriage institution (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2023).

1. Introduction to PREP' Lunchtime Talk

MSF provides a 2-hour PREP lunch-time talk for couples getting married at The Registry of Marriages (ROM). The forum shares skills on good communication skills, managing targets and building strong marriage institutions. The forum is free of charge and is offered every ROM working day from Monday to Friday from 12.15pm to 2.15pm. The forum is offered in both English and Mandarin (Tuesdays only) with content in both languages. Couples interested in this forum are encouraged to register with the e-filling process for their wedding. The couple will be enrolled in a marriage preparation education class at the time they register their documents and wedding date.

2. PREP 12-hour Workshop

Couples can also register for the PREP 12-hour workshop. This workshop is conducted over a 2-day weekend, covering more in-depth topics including communication, conflict resolution and problem solving. Each couple during the workshop has the opportunity to reflect on their relationship and learn how to improve the quality of their marriage. PREP 12-hour workshops are organized by several agencies, as follows:

- a) Fei Yue Community Services (fully subscribed) Contact No.: 6593 5282 / 6593 6454, Email Address: leemingchoo@fycs.org/dorcasho@fycs.org
- b) Cornerstone Community Services Contact No.: 6344 8063, Email Address: info@cornerstoneservices.org.sg
- c) Society of Sheng Hong Welfare Services Contact No.: 6289 5022, Email Address: fsc@shenghong.org.sg

PREP workshops are open to couples who are about to get married and couples who have just gotten married. The form of service is on a first-come, first-served basis at each of the previously mentioned agencies. To improve the quality of the program, MSF organized a study to review the PREP program. The study examined various issues faced by couples and offered solutions to review the program.

b. Marriage Programmes for Singapore Citizen-SC-Foreigner Couples (Marriage Preparation Programmes for Singapore Citizens and Foreigners)

Since 1 December 2014, the Ministry of MSF has introduced a marriage program for *Singapore Citizen (SC)* and *Foreigner Couples*. All couples are encouraged to join this program to ensure their marriage has a strong foundation. Couples will be required to attend this program as part of the *Long-Term Visit Pass (LTVP)* application process.

The Marriage Preparation Program for SC-Foreigner couples will address the constraints and customs of the couple, communication, conflict management, legal relationship and financial arrangements in a different cultural context. For Civil marriages: A 2–5-hour Marriage Preparation Program conducted by the Registry of Marriages (ROM) at the time of verification of marriage registration documents. For couples living overseas, the 8-hour Marriage Preparation and Support Program (MMPSP) is available.

As for *Muslim marriages: Eternal Love Program* organized by APKIM Resources by registering with APKIM at +65 6295 1011. APKIM Resources is the only institution or body appointed and recognized by the Singapore state to organize this program.

c. Marriage Preparation Programmes for Muslim Couples

Marriage preparation programmes are set up to provide all the necessities for a wedding. The Cinta Abadi program organized by APKIM Resources is a program that aims to prepare for the first and last marriage. Every Muslim couple who are 21 years old and above and are about to enter the institution of marriage are advised to take the Cinta Abadi Marriage Preparation Program.

d. Remarriage Preparation Program

MSF provides a remarriage preparation program. This is for anyone who is getting married for the umpteenth time. The program provides a *step-parenting* theme, which explains ways and tips to build a new family and help the children adapt to their new family, which they brought from their respective marriages. This program is called the *Remarriage Preparation Program*.

e. Mandatory Marriage Preparation Programmes for Minors

MSF provides a special preparation program for couples under the age of 21. This program is called *Marriage Preparation Program for Young Couples*. Since September 1, 2011, *minor couples* who wish to marry are required to attend *Marriage Preparation Programmes* before registering for marriage. This requirement is for one or both persons of the couple to be either Singapore Citizens, or Permanent Residents; subject to the following criteria: Under 18 years old; and both 18 years old and above and under 21 years old.

This requirement is intended to help young couples prepare for marriage. For marriages where one person is under 18 years of age, the couple must have their eligibility assessed directly by MSF prior to obtaining a *Special Marriage License*. These couples must attend MSF's in-person Marriage Preparation Program. Marriages where both bride and groom are above 18 and less than 21 years of age, these couples may choose to participate in *Marriage Preparation Programmes* of their own choice. Of course, the institution or agency MSF chooses or works with is MSF. Each couple will be subsidized up to \$350 (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2023).

f. Premarital Counselling

Premarital counselling is part of the Marriage Preparation Program. This program helps couples to prepare for their wedding. Couples can visit some of the following organizations/bodies:

- 1) Secular organizations, such as voluntary welfare organizations and private counselling centres
- 2) Religious organizations such as churches, mosques and temples
- 3) Private Counsellors / family therapists
- 4) Marriage Support Program

The Marriage Support Programme is a follow-up to the Marriage Preparation Programme and helps strengthen understanding between couples of different nationalities. The program introduces daily terms and phrases commonly used in Singaporean society. The program is conducted over 8 hours, 4 times at different locations. Registration is done by visiting the Marriage Preparation Program.

In order to ensure the program runs. MSF organizes support programs, namely: *Marriage Preparation Program* followed by *Marriage Preparation and Support Program* as listed below:

Table 1. MSF Singapore Support Program

| Group | Program to Participate |
|--|---|
| Civil (Young Marriage), where one of the bride and groom is under 18 years of age or both are under 21 years of age. | Mandatory Marriage Preparation Program for civil young marriage; Marriage Preparation and Support Program |
| Muslim Marriage, where one spouse is under 21 years old. | <i>Marriage Preparation Program</i> organized by INSPIRASI Hubs <i>Marriage Preparation and Support Programme</i> |
| Muslim re-Marriages, namely one or both of the bride and groom have been reviously married. | <i>Iqra Marriage Preparation Program</i> organized by PPIS Vista Sakinah <i>Marriage Preparation and Support Program</i> |

Source: Research Interview Results

g. The Catholic Marriage Preparation Course (CMPC)

One of the Marriage Preparation Courses conducted by organizations suggested by MSF is conducted by the Catholic Church. The program was started in 1983, at the initiative of the church, due to the large number of divorced couples. The program helps Christian couples prepare for their roles as husband and wife and future parents (Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore, 2024).

In Singapore, the objectives of pre-marital education have their own objectives according to the program.

1. Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Programme (PREP)

The program is designed based on 30 years of research in the United States, which aims to help couples who want to get married soon:

- a) Improve communication skills with your partner
- b) Increases relationship satisfaction between partners
- c) Build conflict resolution skills between partners

2. Marriage Programmes for Singapore Citizen-SC-Foreigner Couples

The purpose of this programme:

- a) Helping Singaporeans and their foreign spouses to understand the issue of cultural differences between countries.
- b) Helping foreign spouses adapt and adjust to Singaporean society.
- c) Connecting couples to all the resources in Singapore.

3. Marriage Preparation Programmes for Muslim Couples

These Marriage preparation programs aim to provide all the necessities for marriage.

4. Remarriage Preparation Programme

This program aims to explain how and how to build a new family and help the children adapt to their new family, brought from their respective marriages.

3. *The Concept of Pre-Marital Education for Muslim Bride in Singapore*

The pre-marital counseling in Singapore is conducted by APKIM Resources as the only Muslim organization or institution recognized by MSF to conduct the Marriage Preparation Course (KPBT). APKIM or Muslim Family Improvement Academy provides services for married couples and new families, also handles counseling for cases of marriage issues and strengthening husband and wife relationships in a joint program with the Singapore Islamic Religious Council (MUIS) for *low-income families*. This service is an effort to provide assistance to prospective brides and grooms in solving problems and information faced by couples. The purpose of the implementation of this pre-marital counseling guidance, in order to achieve stability to understand, accept, and direct the bride and groom optimally in achieving adjustment to the environment, both the general environment and the family environment.

The pre-marriage process of implementing bride-to-be guidance carried out by APKIM Resources shows that one guidance work has been planned systematically so that later the guidance process can run well and according to the expected objectives, the process of administrative equipment to schedules and participants in the implementation of guidance must indeed be planned systematically so that later the implementation of pre-marriage guidance becomes a form of direction that can be received by prospective brides with careful preparation.

Pre-marital education for brides-to-be in Singapore has several things in its program, namely:

- a. Implementation Time. The scheduled implementation time of the bride-to-be course activities makes it easier for each prospective couple to get course services for sure. Therefore, the implementation time of the bride-to-be course activities is systematically scheduled.
- b. Bride-to-be Course Participants. Bride-to-be course participants are Singaporean Muslim brides-to-be who register their marriages at ROMM. Bride-to-be course participants have met the criteria of bride-to-be as stipulated in the Singapore law, i.e. at least 21 years old.
- c. Bride-to-be Course Materials. The bride-to-be course material provided covers seven aspects, namely marriage procedures and procedures, religious knowledge, laws and regulations in the field of marriage and family, rights and obligations of husband and wife, health and reproduction, family management, and psychology of marriage and family.

The methods used are adapted to the learning methods of adults who are about to enter the institution of marriage. And it pays close attention to the principles of adult learning, where adults will learn well if they get materials and materials that are relevant to their own needs. Participants will be actively involved in the learning process through group activities, discussions, games, reflection exercises, presentations, *role* plays and action planning. The evaluation of the household preparation course is done through summative assessment in order to measure the extent of the participants' understanding of the material provided.

Premarital counseling is a pattern of providing assistance aimed at helping couples understand and respond to the concept of marriage and family life based on developmental tasks and religious values as a reference in preparing for their expected marriage. The core of premarital counseling services is the counseling interview, through counseling interviews it is hoped that couples can gain knowledge, understanding, skills, values and solid beliefs, and help deal with problems that interfere with them towards the expected marriage. The pre-marital counseling in question is designed in a system with the components of the counseling aspects clearly identified and organized into an arrangement that can increase the effectiveness and efficiency of a service. Based on the results of interviews with the Director of APKIM Resource, there are 2 types of KPBT, namely Personal Counseling, conducted between the bride and groom with mentor/tutor/consultant privately with the appointed *ustadz*; Group Counseling, conducted after couples have had private counseling, is followed by group premarital counseling. One group consists of a maximum of 6-12 couples.

Meanwhile, the approach technique was carried out through courses/training conducted in groups, in pairs with each prospective partner. The approach is carried

out through various techniques, such as lectures, questionnaires for participants, simulations, and electronic media through video shows.

B. Pre-Marital Curriculum for Singapore's Muslim Community

The pre-marital curriculum, commonly known as the Marriage Preparation Course Curriculum (KBPT), is booked into a reference material or guide for couples who take the pre-marriage education course. The KBPT curriculum was compiled and established by the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS). The concepts deal with family and community dynamics. Both concepts are important from the perspective of preparing couples to navigate the currents of change when they step into a household.

1. Curriculum Objectives of the Family Preparation Course

The purpose of the KBPT curriculum is to help prepare newly married couples to adjust to and deal with problems in early marriage. Newly married couples are a fragile team that will undergo a process of adjustment in married life.

This insight for KPBT is based on the context of married life in an atmosphere of Islamic simplicity as a religious requirement that cannot be ignored. This was chosen based on *surah* Al Baqarah verse 201, "*And among them are those who pray: "O Our Lord, grant Us goodness in this world and goodness in the hereafter and keep Us from the torment of hell"*". Based on this, KPBT acts as a catalyst in the process of creating a successful family in the true sense, namely success in the world with the aim of success in the hereafter.

2. Curriculum Content of Household Preparation Course

The content of the KPBT curriculum is provided in the form of learning modules. The expression Islamic family vision is discussed in detail in the first module. The importance of having a vision in life, understanding worship as the essence of life, explaining the vision of Islam in family life and knowing its knowledge as an important element in the success of a family are aspects that are emphasized in this module.

Based on this vision, the model of a successful Islamic family is included in this module. The successful Islamic family model is discussed in more depth in the "*Are You Ready*" module. In this module, participants will be asked about their true understanding of marriage readiness. Are they willing to build a family based on a successful Islamic family model?

The "*Wisdom of Marriage*" module also explores the concept of marriage in Islam. Participants will be explained the law of marriage, which originally must, can change to sunnah, obligatory, *makruh* and can also become haram following the circumstances of the prospective *pengatin*. The meaning of *ijab kabul* in Islam will also be emphasized as a process of handing over responsibility.

The next module "*Rights and Responsibilities*" is a continuation of the Marriage Wisdom module. This module explains the rights of husbands and wives and the responsibilities of each spouse in Islam. Participants will be explained that every responsibility that is carried out is also a command from Allah and couples who carry out their responsibilities well will be rewarded by Him. At the end of this module, participants will be encouraged to carry out their duties sincerely with the aim of achieving the pleasure of Allah SWT.

The "Memorable Communication" module has two parts. The first part discusses the importance of effective communication for a good relationship between married couples. The participants will be explained about the important aspects of communication and recognize the differences between men and women in communication. In the second part, participants will also be helped in terms of effective ways of giving information as well as giving and receiving information.

In the "*Wise Decision Making*" module as well, participants will be able to determine the important factors to be taken into account when making decisions. The module also provides awareness on the close relationship between decisions and choices and how they can prevent disputes between couples. The module is expected to provide fundamental guidance in addressing domestic disputes.

Furthermore, KPBT presents the "*Family Finance*" module to increase participants' awareness of the concept of wealth as a mandate and not as personal property alone. In addition to explaining the concept of livelihood and its proper implementation, this module also equips participants with skills in setting priorities and preparing family expenditures.

Furthermore, the "*First Night*" module is the most sensitive module to be discussed, because it explains about sexual intercourse. In this module, the main message emphasized is that sex is not just a physical activity, but it has relationship, emotional and spiritual implications. In addition to learning about the physical differences between men and women in sexual relations, the laws regarding sex in Islam will also be touched upon.

The module "*Designing Your Family*" emphasizes the need to build a planned family for happiness and prosperity in this world and the hereafter. Factors that should be taken into account in designing a family are also discussed. The module also gives an overview of the importance of children's education in Islam and the function of family planning on the integrity and brilliance of the family in the future.

The module "*Problems in Households*" is the last module in this KPBT. It invites the participants to think carefully about their plans to achieve the desired household, and not just busy preparing for the wedding party. Next, they will be guided to recognize sources of tension and crisis in the husband-and-wife relationship as well as understanding differences in personality/personality or behavior, family values, understanding of expectations and their respective roles. In addition, participants

will also be encouraged to recognize the adjustments that need to be made to recognize and understand their partner's personality and family system.

The final section of the module, "*Planning for Action*" is a synthesis of all the previous modules. It helps participants to scrutinize and introspect about their stance on marriage and the household they are about to build. It is hoped that this module will give brides and grooms an overview and guidance on the journey they will take in the future.

3. Curriculum Process of Household Preparation Course

Basically, pre-marital education for prospective brides at APKIM Resources is an effort to provide a process of providing assistance that focuses on the problems faced by married couples so that in carrying out marriage later and their household life later can be in harmony with Allah's provisions and instructions so that they can achieve happiness in this world and the hereafter.

The process uses two approaches. *First*, through a group approach in order to provide pre-marital counseling assistance services for couples. Some of the approaches taken include marriage interaction; Financial Management; Religious Dimensions of Marriage; and sex issues. *Second*, the approach through *self-help groups* through a group approach. The group counseling approach through *self-help groups* is based on the views of sociology and psychology, meaning that through the *self-help group* approach it is hoped that it can provide social support to support the psychological impact in unfavorable events experienced by individuals. So that each other provide mutually beneficial support (Adi, S. W., Gading, I. K., and Sedanayasa, G., 2019).

The function of guidance methods cannot be ignored, because guidance methods determine the success or failure of a guidance process and are an integral part of a guidance system. In achieving the expected pre-marital counseling guidance objectives, the pre-marital counseling guidance methods at APKIM Resources continue to strive to be implemented, without leaving the old methods that are good. In the implementation of pre-marital counseling guidance at APKIM Resources, the supervisor acts as a facilitator in delivering the material, so that the supervisor is not the only information, the bride and groom can also be active in guidance.

The form of implementation of pre-marital counseling guidance at APKIM Resources includes using existing methods that need to be developed and adapted to the material being taught. Among the methods used in pre-marital counseling guidance at APKIM Resources include: *Lecture method*, this method is used by the counselor as the main method. This method is also used in all the material provided. This method will be effective in providing knowledge about the material to prospective brides; *Question and answer method*, the question and answer method carried out in pre-marital counseling guidance at APKIM Resources which is more directed at further understanding of the material provided, this method will be able

to provide a deep understanding for prospective brides to understand further material; *Demonstration method*, the demonstration method which is mostly carried out in pre-marital counseling guidance at APKIM Resources in the process of marriage contract procedures, prospective brides will be guided directly on how to practice this properly, because direct practice will make it easier for people to understand the material, especially in the form of skills; *Problem solving method*, This method was developed in pre-marital education at APKIM Resources to find solutions to any material problems or outpourings of the bride and groom; *Discussion method*, The discussion model carried out in the pre-marital education process at APKIM Resources according to the researcher is the educational diagnosis meeting discussion, namely the bride and groom talk about problems that occur in practice with the intention of correcting their understanding. This method is also intended to stimulate the bride and groom to learn and think critically and express their opinions rationally and objectively in solving a problem so that with this method it is hoped that the guidance process will lead to the formation of the independence of the bride and groom in thinking and acting when later married.

The use of methods carried out in pre-marital education at APKIM Resources according to researchers is quite good because with variations in the use of methods tailored to the guidance situation, the objectives of Islamic guidance will be achieved, because it is impossible to go towards one guidance goal by using only one guidance method. Basically, everyone does not want boredom in his life. This is also true in the teaching and learning process. If the mentor in the teaching and learning process does not use variations, it will bore the bride-to-be, the bride-to-be's attention is reduced, sleepy as a result the learning objectives are not achieved.

This method is considered effective in increasing the motivation of the bride-to-be in mastering the guidance material that will be discussed at the next meeting. Some of the above methods are intended so that the script given and taught to the bride-to-be and becomes a character in her life, because in the guidance process it is necessary to build the character of the bride-to-be whose existence is one of the means to build the goodness of individuals, society, and human civilization.

According to the researchers, in the implementation of pre-marital counseling guidance at APKIM Resources, the supervisor acts as a facilitator in delivering the material, so that the supervisor is not the only information, the bride and groom can also be active in the guidance. In addition, the achievement of the pre-marital counseling guidance process at APKIM Resources is inseparable from good preparation, appropriate material and professional mentors. Professional mentors are needed because the guidance process can be delivered well because it is carried out by experts. With this special expertise, it is hoped that a pre-marital counseling guidance at APKIM Resources that is carried out will be successful, because the person who does something has the ability according to the demands of his expertise,

as said by the Prophet SAW; *From Abu Hurairah r.a. said, the Prophet said, "If a matter is left to the non-expert, then wait for its destruction"* (H.R. Bukhari).

In addition, from the point of view of the material provided in pre-marital counseling guidance at APKIM Resources, it leads to providing knowledge about marriage law and religion, provisions in marriage, pregnant women's health and reproductive health, and *sakinah* family material can help prospective brides and grooms to meet their physical and psychological needs when living in a household, so that they are in harmony with the provisions and instructions of Allah SWT, also in accordance with social norms and know the importance of health as well as careful planning in a household.

4. Curriculum Evaluation of Household Preparation Course

The effectiveness of the pre-marital education curriculum at APKIM Resources can be seen in terms of process and results. In terms of process, guidance is effective and successful if the bride and groom are actively involved physically, mentally and socially in the guidance process. The impact of pre-marital education at APKIM Resources, namely the preparation of the bride and groom both physically and psychologically. In addition to the preparation of the prospective bride and groom, there is also an awareness of the rights and responsibilities of the couple as husband and wife. The awareness possessed by these couples in understanding their rights and responsibilities is a benchmark in the success of this pre-marital counseling guidance program.

Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers with several couples, they admitted that this pre-marital counseling guidance was very important and beneficial for all of them. Couples claim to get new knowledge, especially related to the materials presented, because previously they realized that they never knew about the things related to this pre-marital counseling process.

The same thing is also felt by one of the prospective bridal couples who received pre-marital counseling guidance, because with the pre-marital counseling guidance admitted that they got a lot of knowledge. This provision is the basis for being better prepared to navigate his new life, namely household life.

Judging from the pattern of planning and implementation carried out in the pre-marital education curriculum for prospective brides at APKIM Resources, it is very effective. It is in accordance with the planning and the implementation process runs smoothly. With three hours of guidance in the first session, namely from 09.00am-12.30 pm and four hours later in the second session, the effectiveness of the guidance is quite in-depth for prospective brides. Guidance that is carried out in a short time but is well packaged, the right method and qualified teachers are able to streamline the understanding of prospective brides and grooms of the material, so that it is felt to be able to equip prospective brides and grooms to be better prepared for the institution of marriage.

C. An Analysis of the Integration of Science and Religion in the Pre-Marital Education Curriculum in Singapore

The world society is now experiencing a shift, from an agricultural society to an industrial society. This is characterized by the rapid development of science and technology in people's lives. This condition is also accompanied by the development of human perspectives, mindsets, and lifestyles due to the influence of world globalization through the internet. Knowledge is easily obtained which has implications for slowly changing the social order of society.

This is also happening in Singapore, especially in the Singapore Muslim community. Globalization has changed the lifestyle of the Muslim community, especially the younger generation, including in terms of marriage for most Singaporean Muslim communities, marriage is no longer considered taboo. The existence of social changes in the perspective of marriage affects the behavior of married couples in making decisions.

The data collected in this study shows that the divorce rate among young Muslim couples is 1.5 times higher than among older couples. Most failed marriages involve young couples between the ages of 20 and 24. Over the past ten years, there have been several major reasons for divorce in Singapore civil society, including poor morals and financial problems. This means that the individual human being affects the course of a marriage.

From the results of this study, the researcher then concluded that the key to the success of a marriage is in the development of individual human beings. So, pre-marital education is the best solution in Singapore in an effort to help prospective brides and grooms to focus on the problems faced by married couples so that in carrying out marriage later and their household life later can be in harmony with Allah's provisions and instructions so that they can achieve happiness in this world and the hereafter. The curriculum provided is selected and organized systematically and programmatically in order to carry out the intended objectives. In the process, the implementation of pre-marital education involves the integration of knowledge and faith to understand it, digest it, and carry it out. Without these two things, it is possible that the process will not run optimally. Because the subject and object of education are humans. So, pre-marital education is actually about fostering humans before entering marriage.

In pre-marital education, the implementation of this integration can start from the education of children before birth or prenatal education. In an Islamic perspective, prenatal education is included in the period or stages that exist in the educational process in the family. However, the education of children before birth is not carried out on the child, but on the mother and father of the baby who will be born. In this regard, premarital education is a kind of educational preparation carried out by human individuals, both men and women who have not yet entered into marriage. And this must start from the process of choosing a mate to the conception

of the concept and foundation of the household that will later be run. After the marriage is performed, the knowledge gained before the marriage can be practiced and applied. This is a form of integration of science and faith in pre-marital education, namely by preparing humans to be able to use their intellect and *qalb* to shape their personality into a pious person before entering marriage. In life, there are principles that must be obeyed, otherwise the rules that can regulate all aspects of human life will run out of order or divorce. So, what is done by humans in the form of marriage must be able to fulfill Islamic regulations. Because all of that is in the context of worship to Allah *ta'ala*.

From the observations made, the pre-marital education process carried out by APKIM Resources was successful in conveying knowledge related to knowledge related to marriage in Islam. The material content of the compiled curriculum contains modules related to sharia sciences related to marriage chapters. However, the weakness of this pre-marital education process is in the neglect of fostering the individuals, in this case the prospective bride and groom who will get married. These brides-to-be are only given knowledge, but not accompanied by faith development. From this it can be seen that in the absence of scientific integration with faith as the spirit of religion, the pre-marital education process carried out will not run according to its objectives, even though the curriculum contains very complete religious material.

In essence, understanding the teachings of Islam cannot only be from the existing sciences and from rituals that are obligatory. Islam also talks about good deeds that have coherence with faith and morals. In other words, Islam is not only about the cultivation of intellectual values, but also spiritual values that involve revelation from the Creator. The essence of faith is to believe in Allah, i.e. to deify Him either in His substance, *asma wa shifa'*, or actions. A person who believes or believes that Allah is the Lord of the Universe will definitely base his behavior in accordance with the rules that He has set. So, it can be said that faith cannot be separated from good deeds.

Pre-marital education is education that involves humans as servants of Allah. So, involving a faith in every process is a must so that all actions taken can form a good Muslim person. Faith and knowledge are two important components for humans to organize themselves, behave, socialize, and how humans interpret life. Both are necessary for humans to live correctly. For this reason, the modules compiled in the pre-marital education curriculum must involve fostering the faith of prospective brides and grooms so that they can understand and live the knowledge they get as part of their good deeds as servants of Allah. The process of integrating science and faith in the pre-marital education curriculum in Singapore must of course be supported by various related parties, especially MUIS as the person in charge of Singapore Muslim education activities.

Conclusion

Faith and knowledge are two important components for humans to organize themselves, behave, socialize, and how humans interpret life. Both are necessary for humans to live correctly. Science and knowledge have a very close relationship. If knowledge is conceptual logic or a set of sciences that have not been compiled in a particular method, then science can simply be interpreted as all knowledge constructed through several scientific methods. Therefore, science is one of the human knowledge areas that must be truly valued.

In relation to pre-marital education, what is the material in the science of marriage must be integrated with human faith. That is, the knowledge that becomes a person's provision in marriage must be based on strong faith in Allah. Vice versa, true faith must be able to lead man to learn knowledge before he enters it. The pre-marital preparation is only done by certain people who master this knowledge.

Given the importance of pre-marital education in preparing prospective brides and grooms to enter the family institution, it is advisable for every couple to take pre-marital education or household preparation courses. This is to further strengthen and mature the personality of each prospective bride and groom in entering a new life. Regarding the pre-marital education curriculum, it is better if the spiritual development of individual brides-to-be is further enhanced because the key to the success of a marriage is in its people. So, faith-forming materials can get a larger portion of the curriculum content.

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