



## Digital Da'wah, SIMKAH, and Religious Bureaucracy in Indonesian Islamic Marriage Governance

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### ABSTRACT

*The digital transformation of Islamic public services has significantly reshaped marriage administration practices within the Offices of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Indonesia. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Marriage Management Information System (SIMKAH) at KUA Gandus, Palembang, and examine its role as a form of administrative da'wah and digital Islamic governance. This research employed a qualitative case study approach using semi-structured interviews, documentation, and thematic analysis. The participants consisted of penghulu, SIMKAH operators, administrative staff, Islamic religious counselors, and prospective brides and grooms involved in SIMKAH-based marriage services. The findings reveal that SIMKAH has transformed conventional marriage administration into a more efficient, transparent, and digitally integrated public service system. The implementation of SIMKAH improves administrative accuracy, accelerates registration procedures, strengthens legal marriage awareness, and expands public accessibility to Islamic marriage services. The study further demonstrates that SIMKAH functions not merely as a technological administrative instrument but also as a medium of administrative da'wah through digital legal education and institutional guidance. However, several challenges remain, including digital inequality, limited technological literacy, and unstable internet infrastructure. The novelty of this study lies in introducing the concept of administrative da'wah within digital Islamic public services, where Islamic bureaucracy simultaneously functions as a mechanism of governance, religious education, and social transformation.*

**Keywords:** *Administrative da'wah; digital transformation; digital Islamic governance; marriage administration; SIMKAH.*

### INTRODUCTION

The acceleration of digital transformation has significantly reshaped the structure of public services across the globe, including within religious institutions and Islamic administrative systems. In contemporary society, digitalization is no longer perceived merely as a technological modernization process but has become

an integral component of governance reform, institutional transparency, bureaucratic efficiency, and public accessibility (GHOjaee Hkamanh & Taybhosayni, 2016). The emergence of e-government systems has transformed the interaction between state institutions and citizens by simplifying administrative procedures, reducing bureaucratic barriers, and strengthening accountability in public services (Fountain, 2004; D. F. Norris & Moon, 2005). Within the Indonesian context, the digitalization of Islamic public services has increasingly become a strategic agenda of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, particularly through the implementation of the Marriage Management Information System (Sistem Informasi Manajemen Nikah/SIMKAH) in Offices of Religious Affairs (Kantor Urusan Agama/KUA).

SIMKAH represents one of the most important innovations in the digital transformation of Islamic marriage administration in Indonesia. The system was developed to improve the efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility of marriage registration services while integrating Islamic family administration with national digital governance systems (Aditya & Wardana, 2022). Through SIMKAH, prospective brides and grooms are able to conduct online registration, access administrative requirements, validate identity data integrated with the national population database, and monitor the registration process more transparently (Utomo & McDonald, 2016). This transformation marks a significant shift from conventional manual administration toward integrated digital religious services that emphasize effectiveness, transparency, and accountability.

The development of digital Islamic administration reflects broader transformations occurring in Muslim societies in the era of digital religion. Recent scholarship has highlighted that digital technology increasingly influences Islamic authority, religious communication, da'wah practices, and public religious engagement (Bunt, 2018; Campbell, 2012). Studies on digital Islam demonstrate that religious activities are no longer confined to mosques, classrooms, or face-to-face interactions but have expanded into virtual spaces mediated by technological platforms (Nisa, 2018). Social media, mobile applications, online sermons, and digital religious services have become important instruments for disseminating Islamic knowledge and shaping religious awareness among Muslim communities (Hammond & Hamidi, 2025).

Nevertheless, most existing studies predominantly focus on digital da'wah in the form of online preaching, Islamic influencers, and virtual religious communities, while institutional digital services within Islamic bureaucracy remain underexplored. This situation reveals an important academic gap. The discourse of da'wah in many contemporary studies remains heavily associated with verbal preaching activities such as sermons, lectures, and religious content dissemination through media platforms. In fact, the transformation of Islamic institutions in the

digital era demonstrates that da'wah may also operate through administrative practices, bureaucratic ethics, public services, and institutional communication. Islamic public service institutions increasingly function not only as bureaucratic agencies but also as mediators of religious values, legal awareness, and Islamic social education (Samudra et al., 2024). Consequently, the implementation of SIMKAH should not merely be understood as technological modernization in marriage administration but also as part of a broader transformation in contemporary da'wah practices.

The concept of administrative da'wah becomes particularly relevant in this context. Administrative da'wah refers to the dissemination of Islamic values, ethical guidance, and religious legal awareness through institutional services and governance mechanisms rather than solely through oral preaching. In this perspective, Islamic bureaucracy serves not only administrative functions but also educational and religious functions within society (Hauser, 2012). SIMKAH reflects this transformation by integrating digital technology with Islamic legal administration, thereby educating Muslim communities regarding the importance of official marriage registration, legal documentation, and state-recognized marital legitimacy (Abubakar & Purnama, 2019). Through digital administration, religious institutions indirectly cultivate public awareness concerning Islamic family law, social responsibility, and legal protection. Several previous studies have demonstrated that digital governance contributes significantly to improving public service quality and citizen satisfaction.

Digital public services are considered capable of accelerating administrative processes, minimizing corruption opportunities, reducing operational costs, and strengthening institutional responsiveness (Chen, 2010; Janowski, 2015). Research on e-government in developing countries further indicates that technological innovation enhances public trust and institutional legitimacy when supported by adequate infrastructure and digital literacy (Grafton, 2006). Within the context of Islamic governance, digital systems also facilitate more transparent religious administration and improve access to religious services for broader communities (Munir dkk, 2021). However, studies specifically examining the relationship between digital Islamic bureaucracy and da'wah transformation remain very limited.

In Indonesia, KUA holds a strategic role in managing Islamic family administration and marriage registration for Muslim citizens. Historically, marriage administration in KUA relied heavily on manual documentation, handwritten registration systems, and direct face-to-face bureaucratic procedures. Such systems often resulted in administrative inefficiency, data duplication, and difficulties in document verification (Fatahillah et al., 2025). The introduction of SIMKAH transformed these practices into more integrated digital procedures.

Identity validation connected to the national population database (Dukcapil), online registration systems, and digital marriage documentation have significantly improved administrative performance and reduced bureaucratic complexity (Heaphy, 2018).

The digitalization of Islamic public services has significantly transformed marriage administration practices in Indonesia. Previous studies suggest that digital administrative systems improve service efficiency, transparency, accessibility, and public awareness regarding legal marriage registration. Beyond administrative functions, digital platforms also facilitate the dissemination of information, legal guidance, and religious education, indicating that Islamic public services increasingly serve as instruments of governance as well as contemporary da'wah in the digital era.

Despite these positive developments, the implementation of SIMKAH also faces several challenges. One of the most dominant obstacles identified in the interviews involves digital inequality among communities. Elderly citizens, rural populations, and individuals with limited technological literacy often experience difficulties in accessing online registration systems (Fitriani et al., 2025). Technical problems such as unstable internet connections, server disruptions, and data input errors also remain significant challenges in service implementation. These conditions demonstrate that successful digital governance depends not only on technological innovation but also on digital literacy, institutional adaptation, and infrastructural readiness (Dijk, 2005).

The issue of digital literacy becomes increasingly important within Islamic public services because the effectiveness of digital administration is strongly influenced by community readiness in utilizing technology. Studies on technology acceptance suggest that users' perceptions of usefulness, accessibility, and ease of use significantly determine the success of digital systems in public institutions (Davis, n.d.). Therefore, the implementation of SIMKAH requires not only technological infrastructure but also continuous public education, socialization programs, and institutional assistance for communities with limited digital competencies. In this regard, KUA officials and religious counselors play an essential role as mediators between technology and society.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing literature on digital Islam, Islamic governance, and religious bureaucracy by introducing the perspective of administrative da'wah within digital public service systems. Unlike previous studies that focus primarily on online religious preaching, this research argues that Islamic bureaucratic services may also function as instruments for disseminating religious values and strengthening Islamic legal awareness. SIMKAH demonstrates how digital governance systems reshape the interaction between religion, bureaucracy, and technology in contemporary Muslim societies.

The study also expands discussions on digital religion by emphasizing the institutional dimensions of Islamic digitalization rather than merely individual or social media-based religious practices. Furthermore, this research contributes empirically to understanding the transformation of Islamic public services in Southeast Asia, particularly within the Indonesian context. While Indonesia has become one of the largest digital Muslim societies in the world, scholarly attention toward the institutional digitalization of Islamic bureaucracy remains relatively limited. By focusing on SIMKAH implementation in KUA Gandus, this study provides important insights into how digital administrative systems influence religious awareness, public trust, and legal consciousness in everyday Muslim life.

## **METHODS**

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design to examine the transformation of Islamic marriage administration through the implementation of the Marriage Management Information System (SIMKAH) at the Office of Religious Affairs (Kantor Urusan Agama/KUA) of Gandus District, Palembang, Indonesia. The qualitative approach was selected because this research aimed to explore comprehensively the experiences, perceptions, institutional responses, and social meanings associated with the implementation of SIMKAH as a form of digital Islamic public service and administrative da'wah. Qualitative research is particularly appropriate for investigating social phenomena, institutional transformation, and human interaction within religious bureaucratic environments because it allows researchers to understand participants' perspectives in their natural contexts (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

This study adopted a descriptive case study design because the implementation of SIMKAH at KUA Gandus represents a specific institutional phenomenon within the broader context of digital Islamic governance in Indonesia. Case study research enables researchers to investigate contemporary phenomena in real-life institutional settings while capturing contextual complexity, organizational dynamics, and participant experiences comprehensively (Heale & Twycross, 2018). The case study design was also considered relevant because this research focused on understanding how digital bureaucracy intersects with Islamic public services, religious legal awareness, and administrative da'wah practices within KUA institutions.

The research was conducted at the Office of Religious Affairs (Kantor Urusan Agama/KUA) of Gandus District, Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia. The site was purposively selected because KUA Gandus has actively implemented the Marriage Management Information System (SIMKAH) as part of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' digital transformation initiative in Islamic marriage

administration. Moreover, the institution provides a relevant setting for examining the intersection of digital governance, Islamic public services, and administrative da'wah within contemporary religious bureaucracy.

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with ten key informants who were directly involved in the implementation and utilization of SIMKAH services. The participants comprised two penghulu (marriage registrars), two SIMKAH administrative operators, two Islamic religious counselors, two KUA administrative staff members, and two prospective brides and grooms who had utilized SIMKAH-based marriage registration services. The informants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that participants possessed relevant experience, knowledge, and direct engagement with digital marriage administration processes. This sampling strategy enabled the researcher to obtain rich and diverse perspectives from both service providers and service users, thereby facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of SIMKAH and its role in Islamic marriage governance (Patton, 2014). This sampling strategy enabled the researcher to obtain rich, relevant, and contextually meaningful information regarding the implementation of SIMKAH in Islamic marriage services.

Semi-structured interviews were employed because they provide flexibility for researchers to explore participant experiences while maintaining focus on predetermined research themes (Seidman, 2006). The interview process explored several important aspects related to SIMKAH implementation, including digital administrative transformation, public accessibility, service effectiveness, legal marriage awareness, digital literacy, institutional adaptation, technological challenges, and perceptions regarding SIMKAH as a medium of administrative da'wah. Interviews were conducted directly with participants and documented using audio recordings and field notes to ensure data accuracy, consistency, and completeness.

In addition to interviews, this study also utilized documentation techniques to strengthen data validity and contextual understanding. The documentation data included SIMKAH administrative procedures, digital registration mechanisms, institutional records, government regulations concerning marriage administration, and supporting documents related to Islamic public services within KUA. Documentation analysis was used to support interview findings and provide broader institutional perspectives regarding the implementation of SIMKAH within the framework of digital Islamic governance.

The data analysis process employed thematic analysis techniques. Thematic analysis was used to identify, categorize, interpret, and construct major themes emerging from interview transcripts and institutional documents (Clarke & Braun, 2017). The analysis process was conducted systematically through several stages.

First, all interview recordings were transcribed verbatim into textual form. Second, the researcher repeatedly reviewed the transcripts to gain comprehensive understanding of participant narratives and institutional contexts. Third, coding techniques were applied to identify significant concepts, repeated patterns, and relevant statements related to digital Islamic public services, bureaucratic transformation, religious legal awareness, and administrative da'wah practices. After the coding process, the identified data were grouped into broader thematic categories. Several major themes emerged from the analysis, including the digital transformation of Islamic marriage administration, SIMKAH as administrative da'wah, public awareness regarding official marriage registration, institutional adaptation to digital governance, and challenges of digital Islamic public services. These themes were subsequently interpreted critically using perspectives from digital governance, digital da'wah, Islamic public service, and religious bureaucracy theories.

To ensure the validity and credibility of the findings, this study employed triangulation techniques. Data triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different categories of informants, including penghulu, administrative operators, Islamic religious counselors, KUA staff, and prospective brides and grooms. Method triangulation was also applied through the integration of interview findings and documentation analysis (Hartley & Sturm, 1997). In addition, member checking was conducted informally during the interview process to confirm participant statements and reduce interpretative bias. Ethically, this study maintained participant confidentiality and voluntary participation throughout the research process. All participants were informed regarding the objectives and academic purposes of the study before interviews were conducted. Informants voluntarily agreed to provide information related to their experiences and perceptions concerning SIMKAH implementation. The researcher also ensured that all collected data were used solely for academic research purposes and handled responsibly to maintain participant privacy and institutional integrity.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the transformation of Islamic marriage administration through SIMKAH and examine its role as a form of administrative da'wah within digital Islamic governance. Specifically, this research investigates how SIMKAH improves public service efficiency, strengthens awareness regarding official marriage registration, facilitates religious legal literacy, and transforms the relationship between bureaucracy and da'wah in Indonesian Islamic institutions. Through qualitative analysis based on interviews with KUA officials, penghulu, religious counselors, administrative operators, and prospective brides and grooms, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of digital Islamic public services and their implications for

contemporary da'wah practices in Indonesia.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Findings on the Implementation of SIMKAH in Islamic Marriage Services

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of the Marriage Management Information System (SIMKAH) has significantly transformed Islamic marriage administration services at the Office of Religious Affairs (Kantor Urusan Agama/KUA) of Gandus District, Palembang. Based on interviews conducted with penghulu, SIMKAH operators, administrative staff, Islamic religious counselors, and prospective brides and grooms, the implementation of SIMKAH has generated substantial changes in administrative procedures, public accessibility, bureaucratic efficiency, and service effectiveness within Islamic marriage services (Aditya & Wardana, 2022).

Field findings reveal that KUA Gandus actively positions itself not merely as a bureaucratic institution responsible for marriage registration, but also as a public religious service institution that adapts to digital transformation in order to improve community accessibility and administrative transparency. The implementation of SIMKAH reflects the institutional commitment of KUA Gandus to modernizing Islamic marriage administration while maintaining its religious and social functions within the Muslim community. The institution increasingly emphasizes efficiency, accessibility, and digital responsiveness as part of its public service orientation (Hasanah & Niskaromah, 2025).

One of the most dominant findings concerns the transformation from conventional manual administrative procedures toward integrated digital services. Prior to the implementation of SIMKAH, marriage registration processes relied heavily on handwritten documentation, manual archives, and direct face-to-face bureaucratic procedures. The introduction of SIMKAH gradually transformed these practices into a more structured and digitally integrated administrative system. One KUA officer explained that the primary purpose of implementing SIMKAH was to simplify the storage and management of prospective bride and groom data while improving the overall quality of administrative services. The transition from handwritten records to digital administration was also perceived as a significant institutional improvement. One informant emphasized that marriage books were previously completed manually, whereas digitalization has standardized marriage documentation nationally through computerized printing systems. The officer stated: *“Previously, marriage books were handwritten, but after digitalization, they are printed digitally, making the format standardized throughout Indonesia.”*

This finding indicates that SIMKAH not only improves administrative efficiency but also contributes to institutional standardization, document accuracy, and bureaucratic professionalism within Islamic marriage services (Hardiyansyah

et al., 2024). Another important finding concerns the integration between SIMKAH and the national population administration system managed by the Department of Population and Civil Registration (Dukcapil). Administrative staff explained that identity verification became significantly easier because the system is directly connected to national demographic databases. One SIMKAH operator noted that once the National Identity Number (NIK) is entered into the system, personal information automatically appears through synchronized digital verification. Similarly, another operator explained that the integration between SIMKAH and Dukcapil minimizes data duplication and reduces the possibility of identity falsification. According to the informant, digital synchronization improves data validity and strengthens the reliability of marriage administration services. This demonstrates that digital governance systems significantly contribute to transparency and accountability within Islamic public administration (Fauzi & Yuhana, 2022).

Field observations and interview findings further show that KUA Gandus has attempted to develop a more adaptive and community-oriented service culture through digital administration. KUA officers not only facilitate online registration but also provide guidance for community members who experience difficulties in accessing digital platforms. One penghulu explained that many prospective brides and grooms are now able to register independently through online systems, while those who face technological limitations are directly assisted by KUA staff. This indicates that the implementation of SIMKAH at KUA Gandus combines technological modernization with direct social assistance and institutional guidance. The findings further reveal that SIMKAH substantially accelerates public services and simplifies bureaucratic procedures. Several KUA officers explained that prospective brides and grooms are no longer required to visit KUA repeatedly for initial registration because applications can now be submitted online. Administrative staff also emphasized that the digital registration system reduces procedural complexity and shortens service duration (Tamimi et al., 2025). One officer explained that prospective brides and grooms only need to come to KUA for document verification after completing online registration procedures. This finding illustrates that SIMKAH has transformed conventional bureaucratic mechanisms into more accessible and user-oriented services.

The experiences of prospective brides and grooms also support the positive impact of SIMKAH implementation. Most participants described the system as easy to access and relatively simple to use. Several respondents explained that digital registration procedures could be understood independently through online information platforms and internet-based guidance. One participant stated: *"SIMKAH is very helpful because it can be accessed through Google and other websites."* Another respondent similarly stated that the service became "faster and more

efficient” compared to previous administrative procedures. The findings further indicate that SIMKAH contributes to improving public understanding regarding the importance of official marriage registration. Several participants acknowledged that digital services provided clearer information concerning marriage procedures, legal documentation, and administrative requirements. One prospective bride explained that the system helped her understand *“the importance of officially registering marriages through KUA.”*

A religious counselor also emphasized that SIMKAH plays an important role in increasing public awareness regarding legal marriage registration. According to the informant, digital systems encourage communities to recognize that officially registered marriages are important both legally and religiously. The counselor stated: *“The importance of marriage registration at the Office of Religious Affairs is that it becomes the benchmark for marriages recognized legally by the state and religiously by Islam.”* These findings indicate that SIMKAH functions not only as an administrative instrument but also as a medium for strengthening Islamic legal awareness and public religious literacy within the community served by KUA Gandus. Another significant finding concerns the increasing role of digital communication and social media in supporting marriage administration services. Religious counselors explained that social media platforms are actively utilized to educate communities about SIMKAH registration procedures and marriage administration requirements. Public education is conducted through institutional accounts, personal communication channels, and digital informational content (Büchler & Schlatter, 2013). One informant explained that younger generations often learn registration procedures independently through online platforms before visiting KUA.

The findings additionally reveal variations in digital literacy levels among community members. KUA officers acknowledged that younger and urban communities generally adapt more easily to online systems because they are already familiar with digital technologies. However, some groups continue to experience difficulties in accessing SIMKAH independently. A religious counselor explained that not all communities possess sufficient digital literacy, particularly elderly individuals and those with limited educational backgrounds. Similarly, a SIMKAH operator stated that rural communities and elderly users often encounter difficulties in inputting data and navigating digital registration systems. This finding indicates that digital inequality remains a significant challenge within Islamic public service transformation. Technical obstacles were also repeatedly identified during interviews. The most common challenges involved unstable internet connections, server disruptions, and network limitations. Several prospective brides and grooms reported that internet connectivity problems occasionally slowed the registration process (Nisa, 2020). A penghulu similarly

explained that internet lag frequently becomes an obstacle in digital marriage services.

Despite these challenges, respondents generally viewed SIMKAH positively and considered it a major improvement in Islamic marriage administration. Administrative staff emphasized that the system improves institutional coordination, service effectiveness, and administrative accuracy. One operator explained that SIMKAH facilitates digital monitoring systems, QR-code-based services, and integrated online reporting mechanisms (Himawan et al., 2022). Furthermore, several informants highlighted future innovations planned within SIMKAH services. One KUA officer explained that future developments may include fully digital marriage books and broader electronic documentation systems within Islamic marriage administration. These developments indicate that digital transformation within Islamic public services will continue evolving in response to technological advancement and societal needs.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that SIMKAH has transformed Islamic marriage administration at KUA Gandus into a more efficient, accessible, transparent, and digitally integrated public service system. The implementation of digital governance within KUA Gandus not only improves administrative performance but also strengthens public understanding regarding legal marriage registration and Islamic family administration. Although challenges related to digital literacy and technological infrastructure remain significant, SIMKAH reflects the growing integration between Islamic bureaucracy, digital governance, and contemporary public service transformation in Indonesia.

### **SIMKAH as Administrative Da'wah and Religious Legal Awareness**

The implementation of the Marriage Management Information System (SIMKAH) at KUA Gandus demonstrates that digital Islamic public services are not limited to administrative transformation alone but also function as instruments of religious education and administrative da'wah. The findings indicate that the role of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) has gradually expanded beyond conventional bureaucratic responsibilities into broader functions associated with Islamic guidance, legal literacy, and digital religious communication (S. K. Sharma, 2024). In this context, SIMKAH represents a form of digital religious governance in which administrative services simultaneously become mediums for disseminating Islamic legal awareness and strengthening public understanding regarding official marriage registration (Campbell, 2020).

Contemporary discussions regarding da'wah have increasingly shifted from traditional face-to-face preaching toward broader forms of religious communication mediated by digital technology and institutional interaction. Previous studies on digital Islam argue that the digitalization of religious services

has transformed the methods through which Islamic values, norms, and legal understandings are disseminated within Muslim societies. Digital technology not only changes communication patterns but also reconstructs religious authority, institutional legitimacy, and public engagement with Islamic governance [22]. Within this transformation, Islamic bureaucratic institutions increasingly function as agents of religious mediation through public service mechanisms.

The findings of this study reveal that SIMKAH contributes significantly to strengthening public awareness regarding legal marriage registration. Digital registration systems provide prospective brides and grooms with clearer procedural information, administrative guidance, and legal understanding concerning the importance of officially registered marriages (Maiyori & Tsuro, 2025). Such findings support previous studies emphasizing that digital governance systems can improve public legal awareness and institutional trust through transparency, accessibility, and procedural clarity (Najmudin et al., 2025). The implementation of SIMKAH also reflects the emergence of what may be conceptualized as “administrative da‘wah,” namely the dissemination of Islamic ethical values and legal understanding through bureaucratic services and institutional procedures. Unlike conventional da‘wah models centered on sermons and religious lectures, administrative da‘wah operates through practical guidance, service interaction, legal education, and public assistance embedded within institutional systems (Maiyori & Tsuro, 2025). This transformation illustrates that da‘wah in contemporary Muslim societies increasingly occurs through administrative structures, digital communication, and governance mechanisms (Slama, 2017).

In the context of KUA Gandus, digital marriage administration becomes closely associated with Islamic family law education. The registration process does not merely function as a technical bureaucratic requirement but also serves as a medium for educating communities regarding marital legality, family rights, and religious obligations (Hsb et al., 2025). Previous studies on Islamic legal literacy demonstrate that public understanding of marriage registration contributes significantly to legal protection, family stability, and social order within Muslim societies (Hooker, 1975). Consequently, SIMKAH plays an important role in integrating bureaucratic modernization with Islamic legal awareness. The findings further demonstrate that SIMKAH contributes to institutional transparency and public trust toward Islamic public services. Studies on e-government consistently argue that digital systems improve service accountability, minimize procedural ambiguity, and strengthen citizen confidence in public institutions (Lindsey, 2016). Similar patterns are evident in the implementation of SIMKAH, where digital registration systems simplify administrative procedures and reduce the complexity commonly associated with conventional bureaucracy. Through online registration,

identity synchronization, and digital verification mechanisms, communities perceive KUA services as more accessible, practical, and responsive (Grönlund & Horan, 2005).

The role of digital communication also becomes increasingly important in supporting administrative da'wah within Islamic public services. Social media platforms, digital information systems, and online communication channels enable KUA to disseminate information regarding marriage registration procedures more effectively. Previous scholarship on digital religion highlights that online communication technologies have become central instruments in shaping contemporary Islamic public engagement (Ali & Aljahsh, 2025). Digital communication therefore expands the reach of Islamic institutions beyond physical office interactions and enables broader public access to religious administrative services.

The findings additionally indicate that SIMKAH contributes to reconstructing the image of Islamic bureaucracy within contemporary society. Bureaucratic institutions are often perceived as rigid, complicated, and inaccessible. However, the digital transformation implemented through SIMKAH demonstrates that Islamic public services can adapt to technological modernization while maintaining their religious and social functions. This transformation aligns with previous studies emphasizing that digital governance enhances institutional adaptability, efficiency, and service legitimacy within public organizations (Menski, 2018).

Another important aspect identified in this study concerns the relationship between digital services and Islamic legal consciousness. The implementation of SIMKAH strengthens awareness regarding the importance of legal marriage documentation as both a state requirement and a religious necessity (Hududillah et al., 2025). Research on socio-legal Islamic studies suggests that official marriage registration functions not only as legal administration but also as a mechanism for protecting women's rights, children's legal status, inheritance systems, and family welfare (Bano, 2007). Therefore, digital Islamic public services indirectly contribute to strengthening maqāṣid-oriented family protection within Muslim societies.

The transformation of SIMKAH also reflects broader developments in digital Islamic governance. Previous studies have argued that digital governance within Muslim-majority societies increasingly integrates religious institutions with technological infrastructure in order to improve service quality and institutional legitimacy (Al-Turabi & Auda, 2025). In Indonesia, the digitalization of KUA services demonstrates how Islamic institutions negotiate modernization while preserving religious authority and social trust. This process illustrates that technological adaptation within Islamic governance is not merely administrative

but also cultural, religious, and educational. The following table summarizes the transformation of SIMKAH from conventional administration toward administrative da'wah within Islamic public services:

Table 1

**Transformation of SIMKAH from Conventional Marriage Administration toward Administrative Da'wah in Islamic Public Services**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Conventional Marriage Administration</b>	<b>SIMKAH-Based Digital Services</b>	<b>Da'wah Implication</b>
<b>Registration Process</b>	Manual and face-to-face	Online and integrated	Easier public access to Islamic services
<b>Public Communication</b>	Limited interaction	direct Digital communication and online guidance	Expansion of digital Islamic outreach
<b>Marriage Awareness</b>	Administrative compliance only	Religious and legal education	Strengthening Islamic legal awareness
<b>Bureaucratic Role</b>	Administrative institution	Educational and service-oriented institution	Bureaucracy as administrative da'wah
<b>Service Transparency</b>	Limited procedural visibility	Transparent digital procedures	Increased institutional trust
<b>Community Assistance</b>	Conventional consultation	Digital assistance and guidance	Human-centered Islamic services

Source: Author's Observation, 2026

Despite these positive transformations, the findings also reveal several limitations in implementing administrative da'wah through digital systems. Digital inequality remains a significant challenge, particularly among elderly communities and individuals with limited technological literacy. Previous studies on digital governance emphasize that technological innovation cannot function effectively without adequate digital literacy and infrastructural accessibility (Hargittai, 2010). Therefore, the success of digital Islamic public services depends not only on technological systems but also on continuous educational support and institutional adaptation.

The findings of this study therefore contribute theoretically to the growing discourse on digital da'wah, Islamic governance, and religious bureaucracy. Existing scholarship predominantly focuses on online preaching, Islamic influencers, and social media da'wah as the primary forms of digital religious

engagement (Cholil, 2023). However, this study demonstrates that Islamic public services themselves may function as mediums of da'wah through administrative interaction, legal education, and institutional communication. SIMKAH thus represents a new model of administrative da'wah in which digital bureaucracy simultaneously performs public service, religious mediation, and Islamic legal education within contemporary Muslim society.

Overall, the implementation of SIMKAH at KUA Gandus illustrates that digital Islamic public services are not merely technological innovations but also mechanisms for strengthening religious legal awareness, institutional legitimacy, and public Islamic literacy. The integration between bureaucracy, digital governance, and da'wah practices demonstrates the emergence of a contemporary Islamic administrative model in which public services become instruments of religious communication and social transformation in the digital era.

### **Challenges and Future Directions of Digital Islamic Public Services**

Despite the significant transformation achieved through the implementation of SIMKAH, the findings of this study reveal that the digitalization of Islamic public services continues to face multiple structural, technological, and socio-cultural challenges. The transition from conventional bureaucratic administration toward digitally integrated governance systems requires not only technological infrastructure but also institutional readiness, digital literacy, organizational adaptation, and sustainable public engagement. These challenges demonstrate that digital transformation within Islamic public institutions is a multidimensional process involving technological modernization, social adaptation, and religious institutional restructuring simultaneously (Setiawan et al., 2024).

One of the most dominant challenges identified in this study concerns digital inequality within society. Although SIMKAH has improved accessibility and administrative efficiency, not all community members possess equal technological capabilities or digital literacy (Sharma et al., 2016). Elderly individuals, rural communities, and citizens with limited educational backgrounds often experience difficulties in accessing online registration systems independently. This finding aligns with previous studies emphasizing that digital transformation frequently reproduces social inequalities when technological access and digital competence remain unevenly distributed (Norris, 2003).

Research on digital governance consistently highlights that the effectiveness of e-government systems depends heavily on citizens' technological readiness and digital participation (Katuk et al., 2023). In many developing countries, public digital services continue to face barriers associated with internet accessibility, educational disparities, and limited technological infrastructure (Hoover, 2002). Similar conditions were identified in KUA Gandus, where certain users still rely

heavily on direct assistance from KUA officers during online registration processes.

Consequently, digital Islamic public services cannot rely exclusively on technological systems but must also incorporate human-centered assistance and continuous digital education (Campbell, 2013). Another major challenge concerns technical infrastructure and system stability. The findings indicate that unstable internet connections, server disruptions, and synchronization delays remain recurring obstacles in the implementation of SIMKAH (Husaini et al., 2025). Such technical limitations frequently interrupt registration procedures, delay administrative processing, and reduce service efficiency. Previous scholarship on e-government implementation similarly identifies technological reliability as a central factor influencing public trust and user satisfaction within digital governance systems (Zahraamadhani & Mursyidah, 2025).

Within the context of Islamic public services, technological instability may also influence institutional credibility because bureaucratic efficiency is increasingly associated with digital responsiveness (Campbell & Evolvi, 2020). Public expectations toward fast, transparent, and accessible services become difficult to fulfill when technological infrastructure remains inconsistent. Therefore, improving internet networks, strengthening server capacity, and developing integrated digital infrastructure are essential for ensuring the sustainability of SIMKAH implementation (Hamdani, 2023).

The findings additionally reveal organizational challenges within the institutional adaptation process. Digital transformation requires KUA officers, penghulu, and administrative staff to continuously develop technological competencies and digital communication skills (Sudirman et al., 2023). Previous studies emphasize that organizational resistance and limited institutional capacity often become major barriers in implementing digital governance reforms (Kurniawan et al., 2024). Islamic public institutions that historically relied on conventional bureaucratic procedures must now adapt to rapidly evolving technological systems while maintaining administrative accuracy and religious accountability (Akhyar, 2024).

This transformation also alters the role of KUA officers within society. Previously, marriage administration primarily involved procedural documentation and face-to-face bureaucratic interaction. However, digitalization increasingly positions KUA personnel as technological facilitators, digital communicators, and public educators responsible for assisting communities in navigating online systems (Hasanah & Mujiburrohman, 2026). Such changes require institutional flexibility, continuous training, and organizational innovation within Islamic bureaucratic structures.

The issue of digital literacy furthermore remains strongly connected to

generational differences within society. Younger users generally adapt more easily to online systems because they are already familiar with digital platforms and internet-based communication (Hertlein & Blumer, 2013). Conversely, older generations frequently encounter difficulties in understanding digital registration procedures and technological terminology. Studies on digital religion and online Islamic engagement similarly demonstrate that generational gaps significantly influence patterns of technological adoption within Muslim societies (Alqahtani, 2020). This generational disparity illustrates that digital Islamic governance cannot be separated from broader socio-cultural transformations occurring within contemporary Muslim communities (Hoesterey, 2022).

Technological modernization affects not only administrative procedures but also communication patterns, institutional interaction, and religious engagement. Therefore, Islamic public institutions must balance technological innovation with inclusive service strategies capable of accommodating diverse social groups (Yousaf et al., 2025). Another critical issue concerns the ethical and security dimensions of digital Islamic public services. The integration between SIMKAH and national demographic databases improves administrative accuracy and identity verification mechanisms; however, it also raises concerns regarding data protection, privacy, and cybersecurity (Rehman, 2026). Previous studies on digital governance argue that personal data security has become increasingly important within public digital services due to the growing risks of cybercrime, information leakage, and unauthorized data access (Jingting, 2020). Within Islamic public institutions, maintaining data confidentiality and administrative integrity becomes particularly important because marriage registration involves highly sensitive personal information related to family identity, legal status, and religious administration.

Therefore, strengthening cybersecurity systems, digital authentication mechanisms, and institutional data protection policies constitutes an essential component of future Islamic digital governance. In addition to technical and organizational challenges, the findings of this study also reveal broader cultural tensions surrounding the digitalization of religious services. In some communities, direct face-to-face interaction remains culturally associated with religious legitimacy and institutional trust (Lissitsa, 2019).

Consequently, excessive dependence on digital systems may reduce personal interaction between KUA officers and society. Previous research on digital religion indicates that technological mediation often transforms traditional patterns of religious communication and institutional authority (Fadhilah et al., 2025). This condition creates a paradox within digital Islamic governance. On one hand, digital systems improve efficiency and accessibility; on the other hand, excessive bureaucratic automation may weaken the interpersonal dimensions

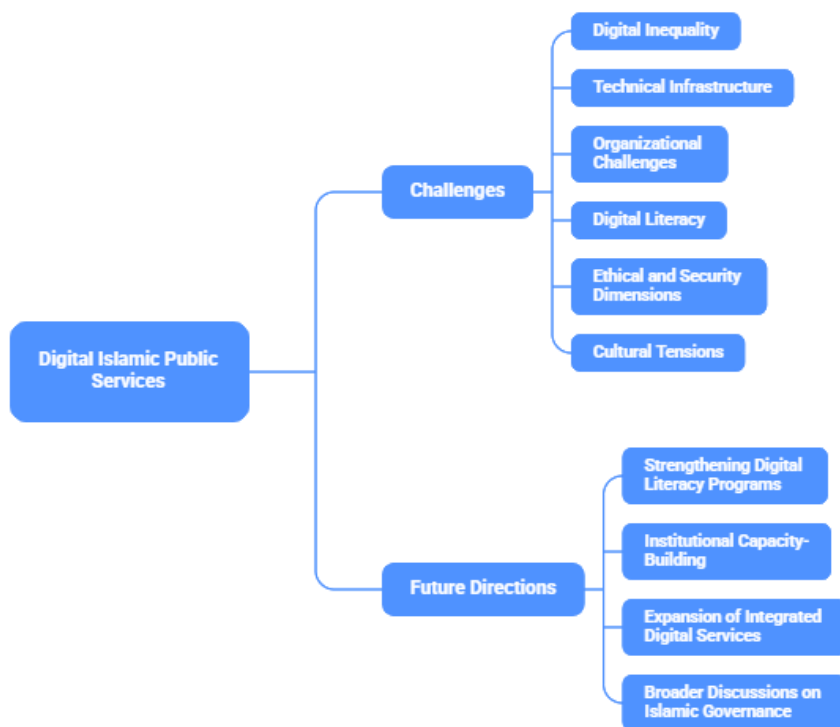
traditionally embedded within Islamic public services. Therefore, future Islamic digital governance must maintain a balance between technological efficiency and human-centered institutional interaction.

The future direction of SIMKAH implementation consequently requires more comprehensive and sustainable policy development. One important recommendation involves strengthening digital literacy programs for communities, particularly among elderly citizens and technologically marginalized groups. Educational workshops, online tutorials, and community-based digital assistance programs could significantly improve public participation in digital Islamic services. Studies on public digital transformation emphasize that citizen education remains one of the most effective strategies for increasing technological adoption and reducing digital inequality (Hanna, 2016).

Institutional capacity-building programs are equally necessary for KUA officers and administrative personnel. Continuous training regarding digital administration, online communication, cybersecurity awareness, and technological adaptation would strengthen institutional readiness within the evolving digital environment. Previous studies indicate that organizational learning and human resource development are fundamental components of successful digital governance implementation (Waris et al., 2026). Another important future direction concerns the expansion of integrated Islamic digital services.

The findings suggest that SIMKAH has already initiated broader digital transformation within Islamic bureaucracy through online registration systems, QR-code-based documentation, and integrated demographic synchronization. Future developments may include fully digital marriage certificates, mobile-based administrative applications, cloud-based Islamic public service systems, and integrated religious family databases (Lamprell, E, 2022). Such innovations would further modernize Islamic public administration and strengthen institutional accessibility for broader communities.

The transformation of SIMKAH also contributes to broader discussions regarding the future of Islamic governance in the digital era. Previous scholarship argues that digital technology increasingly reshapes the relationship between religion, state institutions, and society within Muslim-majority countries (Abdullah et al., 2024; Potarca, 2021). Islamic institutions are no longer isolated from technological modernization but actively participate in reconstructing digital public engagement, religious communication, and institutional legitimacy.



Source: Author's Observation, 2026

Figure 1 Challenges and Future Directions of Digital Islamic Public Services

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the future of Islamic public services depends not only on technological modernization but also on institutional adaptability, public literacy, ethical governance, and sustainable digital inclusion. SIMKAH reflects an important stage in the transformation of Islamic bureaucracy toward contemporary digital governance; however, its long-term success requires continuous infrastructural improvement, educational support, organizational innovation, and socially inclusive policies. The integration between technology, bureaucracy, and Islamic public service therefore represents not merely administrative modernization but a broader reconstruction of Islamic governance within the digital era.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of the Marriage Management Information System (SIMKAH) has significantly transformed

Islamic marriage administration services at KUA Gandus, Palembang, from conventional bureaucratic procedures into digitally integrated public services. The digitalization of marriage administration has improved service efficiency, accelerated administrative processes, strengthened data accuracy through integration with national demographic systems, and enhanced public accessibility to Islamic marriage services.

SIMKAH has therefore contributed substantially to the modernization of Islamic public administration within the Indonesian religious governance system. This study further reveals that SIMKAH functions not merely as a technological administrative instrument but also as a medium of administrative da'wah and religious legal education. Through digital registration systems, online communication, and procedural guidance, KUA Gandus indirectly disseminates Islamic legal awareness regarding the importance of official marriage registration, family legality, and state-recognized marital administration. In this context, the role of Islamic bureaucracy expands beyond technical administration into broader functions associated with religious communication, public education, and institutional guidance within contemporary Muslim society.

The findings additionally indicate that the transformation of Islamic public services through SIMKAH reflects the emergence of digital Islamic governance in which bureaucracy, technology, and religious authority become increasingly interconnected. The implementation of SIMKAH reconstructs the relationship between Islamic institutions and society by promoting transparency, accessibility, and institutional responsiveness within public religious services. This transformation also demonstrates that da'wah in the digital era is no longer confined to conventional preaching activities but may also operate through bureaucratic interaction, digital administration, and institutional service practices.

Nevertheless, the implementation of SIMKAH continues to face several challenges, particularly concerning digital inequality, technological infrastructure limitations, digital literacy disparities, and institutional adaptation to rapidly evolving technological systems. Elderly communities, technologically marginalized groups, and rural populations frequently encounter difficulties in accessing digital services independently.

Furthermore, unstable internet connections and system disruptions remain important obstacles affecting service effectiveness and public satisfaction. Therefore, the sustainability of digital Islamic public services requires continuous infrastructural improvement, institutional capacity building, cybersecurity enhancement, and community-based digital literacy programs. Islamic public institutions must also maintain a balance between technological efficiency and human-centered interaction in order to preserve institutional trust and social legitimacy within religious services.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing discourse on digital da'wah, Islamic governance, and religious bureaucracy by introducing the concept of administrative da'wah within digital Islamic public services. The study argues that contemporary Islamic bureaucracy may function simultaneously as a mechanism of governance, religious education, and social transformation through digitally mediated administrative systems. Practically, the findings provide important implications for the future development of Islamic digital governance in Indonesia, particularly regarding the integration of technology, religious services, and public legal education within modern Muslim societies.

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