FROM SAKINAH TO CYBER-CONFLICT: PAUL RICOEUR'S HERMENEUTICS AND THE SURPLUS MEANING OF BP4 TEXTS IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the construction of meaning in the official text of the Marriage Advisory, Development, and Preservation Agency (BP4), which has rarely been analyzed through a hermeneutic lens. Previous research has focused primarily on BP4's institutional performance, leaving a gap in understanding how its textual discourse shapes the concept of a harmonious family and how these meanings shift in the digital era. The purpose of this study is to analyze the symbolic structure of the BP4 text, interpret its key concepts, and explore how its meanings are recontextualized within contemporary digital family dynamics. This research employed Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic framework, combining structural analysis, symbolic interpretation, and appropriation. Primary data are drawn from the BP4 book Foundations of a Sakinah Family, particularly chapters on sakinah family ideals, family communication, and conflict management. Data were analyzed through textual coding, thematic mapping, and interpretive triangulation. The findings show that the BP4 text constructs a harmonious family as a dynamic ethical process grounded in *sakinah, mawaddah, and rahmah*. The text frames communication through the principle of qaulan as a moral discipline that regulates emotional expression and relational balance. The study also identifies a transformation of meaning when the text interacts with digital realities, including the reinterpretation of sakinah and islah in relation to cyber infidelity, platform-based communication aggression, and digital psychological stress. These findings highlight the need to update BP4 materials to address digital-era challenges. The study concludes that

Ricoeur's hermeneutics provides a productive framework for renewing state religious literature and strengthening its relevance for contemporary Muslim families.

Keywords: BP4, Religious Literature, Hermeneutics, Paul Ricoeur, Muslim family Indonesia

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji konstruksi makna dalam teks resmi Badan Penasihatan, Pembinaan, dan Pelestarian Perkawinan (BP4), yang hingga kini jarang dianalisis melalui pendekatan hermeneutik. Penelitian sebelumnya lebih banyak berfokus pada kinerja kelembagaan BP4, sehingga menyisakan kekosongan dalam pemahaman mengenai bagaimana wacana tekstual BP4 membentuk konsep keluarga harmonis serta bagaimana makna-makna tersebut mengalami pergeseran dalam era digital. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis struktur simbolik teks BP4, menafsirkan konsep-konsep kuncinya, dan mengeksplorasi bagaimana maknanya direkontekstualisasikan dalam dinamika keluarga digital kontemporer. Penelitian ini menggunakan kerangka hermeneutika Paul Ricoeur dengan mengombinasikan analisis struktural, interpretasi simbolik, dan apropriasi. Data utama bersumber dari buku BP4 Landasan Keluarga Sakinah, khususnya bab-bab yang membahas ideal keluarga sakinah, komunikasi keluarga, dan manajemen konflik. Data dianalisis melalui pengodean teks, pemetaan tematik, dan triangulasi interpretatif. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa teks BP4 membangun konsep keluarga harmonis sebagai suatu proses etis yang dinamis yang berlandaskan pada nilai sakinah, mawaddah, dan rahmah. Teks tersebut memposisikan komunikasi melalui prinsip qaulan sebagai disiplin moral yang mengatur ekspresi emosional dan keseimbangan relasional. Penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasi adanya transformasi makna ketika teks berinteraksi dengan realitas digital, termasuk penafsiran ulang konsep sakinah dan islah dalam kaitannya dengan perselingkuhan siber, agresi komunikasi berbasis platform digital, dan tekanan psikologis digital. Temuan-temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya pembaruan materi BP4 agar mampu merespons tantangan keluarga di era digital. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa hermeneutika Ricoeur menyediakan kerangka yang produktif untuk memperbarui literatur keagamaan negara serta memperkuat relevansinya bagi keluarga Muslim kontemporer.

Kata kunci: *BP4, Literatur Keagamaan, Hermeneutika, Paul Ricoeur, Keluarga Muslim Indonesia*

INTRODUCTION

The digital era has brought significant changes to the configuration of religious authority in Indonesia. Authority previously centered on clerics, formal religious institutions, and the state has now shifted to a more open and participatory digital space.[1] Social media and other digital platforms have become alternative references in shaping public understanding of religious texts, including the BP4 (Badan Penasihatan Pembinaan dan Pelestarian Perkawinan/ Marriage Advisory, Development, and Preservation Agency) reference text.[2] These changes, as Heidi Campbell argues, demonstrate how religion and religious practices are now undergoing a digitalization process, which not only changes the medium but also reshapes identity, authority, and relationships within religious communities.[3] Within a more methodological framework, Gary Bunt also highlights the trans-

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[1] Moch. Khafidz Fuad Raya, "Digital Islam: New Space for Authority and Religious Commodification among Islamic Preachers in Contemporary Indonesia," *Contemporary Islam* 19, no. 1 (April 2025): 161–94, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-024-00570-z; Moh. Nor Ichwan et al., "Digitalization and the Shifting Religious Literature of Indonesian Muslims in the Era of Society 5.0," *Islamic Communication Journal* 9, no. 2 (December 2024): 245–66, https://doi.org/10.21580/icj.2024.9.2.22515.

[2] Moch. Khafidz Fuad Raya, "Digital Islam: New Space for Authority and Religious Commodification among Islamic Preachers in Contemporary Indonesia," *Contemporary Islam* 19, no. 1 (April 2025): 161–94, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-024-00570-z; Moh. Nor Ichwan et al., "Digitalization and the Shifting Religious Literature of Indonesian Muslims in the Era of Society 5.0," *Islamic Communication Journal* 9, no. 2 (December 2024): 245–66, https://doi.org/10.21580/icj.2024.9.2.22515; Sukijan Athoillah, Muhammad Khakim Ashari, and Muhammad Badat Alauddin, "Religious Digital Literacy of Urban Muslim Society in Indonesia: A Systematic Literature Review," *Akademika: Journal of Islamic Thought* 28, no. 2 (November 2023): 141, https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v28i2.7088.

[3] Heidi A Campbell, "Surveying Theoretical Approaches within Digital Religion Studies," *New Media & Society* 19, no. 1 (January 2017): 15–24, https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444816649912; Mia Lövheim and Heidi A Campbell, "Considering Critical Methods and Theoretical Lenses in Digital Religion Studies," *New Media & Society* 19, no. 1 (January 2017): 5–14, https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444816649911.

formation of religious studies in the digital era.[4] This shift in the authority ecosystem demands a rereading of the religious texts that guide Muslim family life, not only through institutional legitimacy, but also through how these texts are interpreted, understood, and reproduced in the digital space.[5]

State religious texts, such as BP4, must be understood within a broader framework as products of power and discourse. As Talal Asad argues in Formations of the Secular, these texts not only have a normative function but also serve as instruments of power that shape society's understanding of social and religious values. BP4, despite being state religious literature, is also embedded in power relations that influence how the values of a harmonious family are conveyed.[6]

In the context of Indonesian Islam, the BP4 plays a crucial role as an institutional Islamic practice. As James Bowen explains in a New Anthropology of Islam, the BP4 can be seen as part of the Islamic institutional structure that regulates and guides Indonesian Muslim society, particularly in matters of marriage and family life.[7] The BP4 plays a role in maintaining the integrity and continuity of Islamic teachings at the family level through guidance and counseling mechanisms.

As a state-sanctioned institution, the BP4 is also closely linked to modern Indonesian Islamic traditions. Robert Hefner, in Civil Islam, shows that Islam in Indonesia developed within the context of a state that regulated social and religious life, while still maintaining elements of tradition relevant to the needs of the community. In this regard, the BP4 acts as a bridge between Islamic tradition and the practical needs of modern society.[8] The

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[4] Gary Bunt, "Religious Studies: What's the Point?," *Religion* 33, no. 3 (July 2003): 291–291, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0048-721X(03)00083-6.

[5] Astrid Mattes et al., "Religion and Politics of Belonging in Digital Times: Youth Religiosity in Focus," *Frontiers in Political Science* 6 (January 2025): 1476762, 142, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2024.1476762.

[6] Asad, T, *Formations of the Secular* (Stanford University Press, 2003). p. 26-30.

[7] Bowen, J. R, *A New Anthropology of Islam* (Cambridge University Press, 2012). P. 67-80.

[8] Hefner, R. W, *Civil Islam* (Princeton University Press, 2011). p. 56.

materials in BP4 combine religious, legal, and cultural norms in Indonesia, thus serving as normative references in shaping discourse on the ideal family according to the state. The entry of these texts into digital platforms through modules, quotations, and re-narrations by various religious actors has shifted the nature of their reception from formal-institutional to digital-cultural, opening up the possibility of a broader range of interpretations.

Several previous studies have shown that BP4 plays an active role in reducing divorce rates, preventing early marriage, and fostering harmonious families through various programs, such as premarital courses, counseling, seminars, and publishing religious literature.[9] However, these efforts are still faced with various obstacles, including institutional limitations, human resources, and the ability to adapt to the needs of the digital society.[10] In addition, religious literature in the digital era

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[9] Saleh, J et al., "Marriage Guidance Towards Family Resilience in Aceh: A Study of Islamic Law Philosophy," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 6, no. 2 (2): 594–613, https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v6i2.12448; Erie Hariyanto et al., "Sakinah Family Empowerment by Optimizing the Role of BP4 and Parents Mental Revolution Perspective," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 5, no. 2 (December 2021): 619, https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v5i2.10965.

[10] Fauzan Ridho Abduloh, Syarifah Gustiawati Mukri, and Ahmad Mulyadi Kosim, "Analysis of the Role and Duties of the Marriage Guidance and Preservation Advisory Board (BP4) in Building a Household: A Case Study at the South Bogor KUA," *El-Mujtama: Journal of Community Service* 4, no. 6 (December 2024), https://doi.org/10.47467/elmujtama.v4i6.4568; Mitha Hartiani, Ahmad Sobari, and Suyud Arief, "Optimizing the Marriage Guidance and Preservation Advisory Board (BP4) in Creating a Sakinah Family During the Covid 19 Pandemic at the KUA of Bojong Gede District, Bogor," *As-Syar'i: Journal of Family Guidance & Counseling* 4, no. 1 (November 2021): 62–71, https://doi.org/10.47467/as.v4i1.611; Hasanudin Hasanudin et al., "BP4 Dysfunction in the Maslahah Perspective: A Case Study at the Religious Affairs Office, Seruyan Hilir District, Seruyan Regency," *Jurnal Tana Mana* 2, no. 2 (December 2021): 65–77, https://doi.org/10.33648/jtm.v2i2.165; Yuliana Rahmat and Abdullah Abdullah, "BP4 Guidance Pattern (Marriage Advisory, Guidance, and Preservation Agency) in Resolving Domestic Conflicts at the KUA Sorong Kepulauan Duum," *PUBLIC: Publication of Islamic Guidance and Counseling Services* 2, no. 1 (December 2022): 112–22, https://doi.org/10.47945/publik.v2i1.741.

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demands adequate digital literacy so that people are not only able to access information, but also to validate and understand it comprehensively.[11]

In the scientific realm, contemporary Islamic hermeneutic studies emphasize the need for a more historical, social, and contextual interpretative approach as developed by Paul Riceour. This hermeneutical approach encourages rereading, reinterpreting, and updating the meaning of texts to remain in line with the challenges of modernity and pluralism—including in family issues, communication, and conflict resolution.[12] However, research related to the hermeneutics of BP4 texts as religious literature in the digital era is still very limited, especially in the context of how BP4 texts are interpreted, distributed, and reinterpreted through digital media. Most relevant hermeneutical research focuses only on texts in the Qur'an, Hadith, Legalization Discourse, Malay Pantun, Oral Poetry, and Novels.[13] In addition,

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[11] Ichwan et al., "Digitalization and the Shifting Religious Literature of Indonesian Muslims in the Era of Society 5.0"; Athoillah, Ashari, and Alauddin, "Religious Digital Literacy Of Urban Muslim Society In Indonesia." 245–66.

[12] Taufik Hidayatulloh et al., "Ibn Arabi's Hermeneutics as an Alternative Religious Exegesis for Contemporary Urban Muslim Communities," *Akademika: Journal of Islamic Thought* 30, no. 1 (June 2025): 61–76, https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v30i1.10082; Nurkhalis Nurkhalis and Fauzan Fauzan, "Hermeneutics Controversies in Contemporary Islamic Studies," *KALAM* 17, no. 2 (December 2023): 147–70, https://doi.org/10.24042/002023171465000.

[13] Ramadhani Islami Putri, *Marriage Postponement Among Young Couples: A Hermeneutical Study of Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement on Qs An-Nur: 32,* 11 (2025); Mansur Mansur and Makherus Sholeh, "Implementing Character Education Based on Local Wisdom in a Public Islamic Elementary School," *Journal of Integrated Elementary Education* 4, no. 1 (June 2024): 54–70, https://doi.org/10.21580/jieed.v4i1.20238; Ahmad Rajafi Sahran and Ummi Hasanah, "Hadith of Women Traveling Without MaḥRam: Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutical Perspective," *Aqlam: Journal of Islam and Plurality* 3, no. 1 (June 2018), https://doi.org/10.30984/ajip.v3i1.633; Muttaqin Choiri, *Interpretation of the Qawwâmah Verse on Family Leadership (Hermeneutical Study of the Discourse of Indonesian Islamic Family Law Legislation),* no. 110 (2017); Alena Ririn Novrianti and Wachid Eko Purwanto, "The Function of the Family in the Malay Pantun of the Balai Pustaka Editorial Team and Its Relation to Teaching Materials: A

research on religious literature in Indonesia has so far focused more on Islamic literature, the role of Islamic boarding schools, the development of da'wah narratives, reader responses, and oral traditions in building identity and social harmony.[14]

While numerous studies have explored religious literature in Indonesia, very few have addressed the BP4. Most previous research has focused on institutional effectiveness, neglecting the BP4 text as a source of religious literature. No study has examined the structure, symbols, or discourse within the BP4 text. Furthermore, no research has integrated Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics with the context of the digital family. Consequently, the meaning of communication, conflict, and relationships in the BP4 text have never been reinterpreted within the context of the digital ecology that shapes contemporary Muslim family life. This article fills this gap.

Thus, the research focuses on the problems, namely 1) how the meaning of the concept of a harmonious family is constructed in the BP4 text, 2) how the text shapes the discourse of family communication and marital conflict resolution, and 3) how these meanings are recontextualized in the digital era.

This study offers significant novelties, namely 1) BP4 is positioned not only as a government technical module, but as state religious literature that plays a role in shaping the ideals of Muslim families, 2) Ricoeur's hermeneutic approach is applied to read the BP4 text as a construction of religious meaning and symbolism, an approach that has not been used in previous studies, 3) This study shows that the digitalization of family life presents a new field of interpretation for the symbols of sakinah, *qaulan*, and *ishlah*, thus opening up space for reinterpreting the

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Hermeneutical Study of Paul Ricoeur," *Jurnal Nusantara Raya* 2, no. 3 (January 2024): 122–32, https://doi.org/10.24090/jnr.v2i3.10433.

[14] Athoillah, Ashari, and Alauddin, "Religious Digital Literacy of Urban Muslim Society in Indonesia"; Moh Arif Susanto et al., "Exploring the Possible Worlds of Religious Literature in Indonesia: A Narratological Approach," *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding* 10, no. 6 (June 2023): 222, https://doi.org/10.18415/ ijmmu. v10i6.4680.

BP4 text in the ecosystem of digital platform-based religious discourse.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative design using Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic approach, which is well suited for interpreting texts, symbols, and human actions through the dialectic of explanation, understanding[15] and appropriation. Ricoeur's framework enables a layered reading of the BP4 text by treating family communication and conflict resolution as symbolic actions that can be analyzed as texts. This approach is appropriate for the research aim because it allows the researcher to uncover the ethical meanings embedded in BP4's guidance[16] on sakinah families,[17] marital communication, and conflict mediation.

The data consist of primary and secondary sources. The primary data are drawn from BP4's *Foundations of a Sakinah Family: Independent Reading for Prospective Brides*, specifically chapters on the concept of a sakinah family (pp. 1–19), family communication (p. 57), and conflict management (pp. 169–179). Secondary data include literature on Ricoeur's hermeneutics, previous studies on BP4, family jurisprudence, and works on the digitalization of religious literature. The unit of analysis comprises symbolic terms such as *sakinah*, *mawaddah*,

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[15] Paul Ricoeur and John B. Thompson, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation* (Cambridge University Press, 2016). 90-101.

[16] Nurul Saniah, "Social Communication of BP4 (Marriage Guidance and Preservation Advisory Board) in Preventing Early Marriage in Kualuh Hilir District, Indonesia," *Journal of Social and Political Sciences* 4, no. 2 (February 2023): 1018–35, https://doi.org/10.56552/jisipol.v4i2.102.

[17] Sifa Mulya Nurani and Tajul Arifin, "Conflict Resolution on Violence Behavior in Yogyakarta," *MUHARRIK: Journal of Da'wah and Social Affairs* 4, no. 02 (December 2021): 427–40, https://doi.org/10.37680/-muharrik.v4i02.1049; Rahmat and Abdullah, "Bp4 Guidance Pattern (Marriage Advisory, Development and Preservation Agency) in Resolving Domestic Conflicts in KUA Sorong, Duum Islands"; Abduloh, Mukri, and Kosim, "Analysis of the Role and Duties of the Marriage Development Advisory Board (BP4) in Fostering Households."74-89.

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rahmah, *qaulan*, and *islah*, as well as the narrative structure and presentation of husband–wife relations and conflict mediation. Data were collected through document study, digital tagging, and systematic memo writing.

Data analysis followed Ricoeur's three hermeneutic stages.[18] The explanation stage involved mapping the internal structure of the text, identifying key concepts, argumentative flow, and instructional patterns.[19] The interpretation stage examined symbols and their surplus of meaning,[20] focusing on Islamic ethical concepts and their relation to family communication and conflict resolution. The recontextualization stage translated these meanings into contemporary digital family life, including reinterpretations of *qaulan* in online communication and readings of digital conflicts such as cyber-jealousy as textual actions. Documentation included coding, tagging, and extracting relevant passages as a hermeneutic audit trail. Validation was conducted through triangulation of BP4 documents, discussions with BP4 extension workers, and peer debriefing to ensure coherence and depth. Interpretations were considered valid when consistent with textual structure, aligned with Ricoeur's principles, and relevant to the realities of modern Muslim families.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Findings

BP4 Text Analysis

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[18] Ricoeur, P, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge University Press, 1981); Gadamer, H. G, *Truth and Method* (Continuum, 2004). 113-170.

[19] Anders Lindseth and Astrid Norberg, "A Phenomenological Hermeneutical Method for Researching Lived Experience," *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences* 18, no. 2 (June 2004): 145–53, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6712.2004.00258.x.

[20] Janez Vodicar, "Ethics and Natural Science through Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutics," *Communications - Scientific Letters of the University of Zilina* 19, no. 1 (January 2017): 59–63, https://doi.org/10.26552/com.C.2017.1.59-63; Paul Ricoeur and John B. Thompson, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation.*

BP4 contributes to family development in Indonesia through the production of educational literature, including *Foundations of a Sakinah Family: Independent Reading for Prospective Brides and Grooms*. The text refines earlier marriage guidance modules into a more comprehensive and contextual resource. It covers core themes such as the foundations of a harmonious family, communication principles, and conflict management, integrating fiqh, psychology, and counseling insights.[21] The book also addresses contemporary issues by incorporating economic literacy and digital literacy, responding to challenges such as cyber infidelity, gadget overuse, and the impact of social media on marital relations.

This book was published by the Sub-Directorate for the Development of Sakinah Families, Directorate of KUA and Sakinah Families, as part of a systematic effort to provide independent reading materials for prospective brides and grooms who participate in the marriage guidance program. Structurally, this book is divided into several major themes, including the foundations for building a harmonious family, the principles of family communication, and managing conflict within the family. [22]Furthermore, this book explicitly integrates a fiqh approach with psychological insights and modern counseling theory, thus bridging the needs of Muslim communities facing the complexity of contemporary household issues, including domestic violence, emotional conflict, and imbalanced roles between husband and wife. One of the book's added values is the inclusion of dimensions of family economic literacy and digital literacy as important themes. Discussions on household financial management,

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[21] Adib Machrus et al., *Foundations of a Sakinah Family: Independent Reading for Prospective Brides and Grooms* (Jakarta: Subdid of Sakinah Family Development, Directorate of KUA and Sakinah Family Development, Directorate General of Islamic Community Guidance, Ministry of Religion, Republic of Indonesia, 2025). 121

[22] Adib Machrus et al., *Foundations of a Sakinah Family: Independent Reading for Prospective Brides and Grooms* (Jakarta: Subdid of Sakinah Family Development, Directorate of KUA and Sakinah Family Development, Directorate General of Islamic Community Guidance, Ministry of Religion, Republic of Indonesia, 2025).

economic planning, and the ethical use of digital media demonstrate the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the BP4's response to modern problems such as cyber infidelity, gadget addiction, oversharing on social media, and the impact of digital information on marital relationships.

One of BP4's important contributions to family development in a comparative reading shows that the BP4 text shares structural and symbolic continuity with the Kitab Kuning tradition, despite its modern guidebook format. BP4 employs an argumentative structure, religious symbolism, and pedagogical functions similar to classical Islamic literature, while adapting them to contemporary family contexts. This positions BP4 as part of the broader Nusantara religious literary tradition, functioning as state-sanctioned religious literature parallel to the authority of Kitab Kunings in pesantren.

Table 1.
Sources of Discourse and Religious Authority

Aspect	BP4 Text	*Kitab Kuning*
Source of authority	State (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia), BP4, and internal clerics	Classical ulama, traditional authority of Islamic boarding schools
Function	Guidelines for a harmonious family, premarital guidance, conflict resolution	Formation of understanding of jurisprudence, ethics and morals
Tradition	Modern-institutional	Classical, based on *sanad* and pesantren traditions

Source: BP4 Text, The Foundation of a Sakinah Family, 2025

As shown by Table 1, BP4 and Kitab Kuning both serve as normative references, though grounded in different authority regimes: state institutions versus classical ulama. On structural aspect, table 2, 3, 4 and 5 overviews the difference between BP4 text and Kitab Kuning.

Table 2.
Text Presentation Structure

Aspect	BP4 Text	*Kitab Kuning*
Text form	Socio-religious guidelines, modules, guides	Fiqh texts, morals, tafsir, hadith
Argumentation pattern	Definition → proposition → application → example	Nas → sharia → wisdom → applicative
Language	Modern Indonesian	Arabic/Jawi (with typical balaghah and fiqhiyyah patterns)

Source: BP4 Text, The Foundation of a Sakinah Family, 2025

BP4 mirrors Kitab Kuning argumentation patterns, especially in its use of symbols such as *sakinah–mawaddah–rahmah*, which historically appear in classical works like *Ihya' Ulumuddin* and *Adab al-Mufrad*.

Table 3.
Religious Symbols and Values

Symbol	BP4 Text	*Kitab Kuning*
Sakinah Mawaddah Rahmah	The foundation of a harmonious family	Used in family and morals jurisprudence
Qaulan Sadīdan, Ma'rūfan, Liyyinan	Modern family communication ethics	Communication ethics in the books of *Adab al-Mufrad* and *al-Akhlaq*
Reconciliation and Deliberation	Principles of family conflict resolution	Classical principles in munakahat jurisprudence

Source: BP4 Text, The Foundation of a Sakinah Family, 2025

BP4 reinterprets classical symbols for modern family needs, illustrating what Ricoeur describes as the recontextualization of symbols.

Table 4.
Social Function of Text

Aspect	BP4 Text	*Kitab Kuning*
Function	Organizing Muslim family life in a practical way	Educating morals and law in traditional society
Primary user	Bride and groom, young family, BP4 counselor	Students, religious scholars, Islamic boarding school teachers
Basis of legitimacy	State legislation & religious arguments	Classical Islamic scientific tradition

Source: BP4 Text, The Foundation of a Sakinah Family, 2025

BP4 functions as a "modern Kitab Kuning," offering practical guidance for Muslim families much like classical texts once shaped social life in pesantren communities.

Table 5.
How Texts Construct Meaning

Mechanism	BP4 Text	*Kitab Kuning*
Interpretation of meaning	Argument → modern context	Evidence → classical explanation
Dialogue space	There is a space for appropriation (interpretation of the digital family)	The space for interpretation is limited to tradition (syarah)
Symbolic patterns	Family symbol as a relational horizon	Moral-spiritual symbols in wisdom format

Source: BP4 Text, The Foundation of a Sakinah Family, 2025

BP4 constructs meaning through modern contextual argumentation and provides interpretive space for digital-era family issues, while Kitab Kunings remain rooted in classical explanatory frameworks.

In summary, BP4 does not merely cite classical texts but revitalizes their ethical foundations for contemporary family life. Its reinterpretation of Quranic and fiqh-based symbols demonstrates continuity with the Kitab Kuning tradition while adapting to modern social and digital challenges. As state religious literature, BP4 shapes normative understandings of the sakinah family within Indonesia's legal and social framework,[23] illustrating the strategic role of state institutions in guiding family ethics.

Hermeneutical Analysis of BP4 Text

The BP4 text presents *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* as core symbols of a harmonious Muslim family.[24] Its structure follows a consistent argumentative pattern: defining key concepts, grounding them in Qur'anic evidence (especially QS al-Rum 21), outlining moral instructions, and providing practical examples. This shows that BP4 functions not only as doctrinal guidance but also as a practical manual for cultivating peace, affection, and mutual respect in the household. Through Ricoeur's hermeneutic lens, these symbols operate as layered meanings that connect Islamic norms with the lived experiences of modern families, including the need for emotional stability, empathy, and communication in digital environments.[25]

BP4 also emphasizes communication ethics through the concepts of *qaulan sadīdan*, *qaulan ma'rūfan*, *qaulan layyinan*, and *qaulan karīman*. These terms symbolize honesty, kindness, gentleness, and dignity in interaction. Hermeneutically, they function as "action-as-text," guiding both verbal and digital communication. BP4 identifies poor communication as a major source of conflict and frames conflict resolution through *islah* and deliberation. These symbols represent moral recovery, trust-building, and reconciliation, which in the digital era extend

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[23] Asad, T, *Formations of the Secular*. 26-30.

[24] Adib Machrus et al., *Fondasi Keluarga Sakinah: Bacaan Mandiri Calon Pengantin*. 169

[25] Mursalin, "The Concept of Sakinah Family Arrangement in the Perspective of Munakahat Fiqh," December 2022. P. 29.

to managing online misunderstandings, cyber-jealousy, and digital privacy.

The text further highlights empathy, active listening, coope-ration, and shared responsibility as essential relational ethics. Ricoeur's perspective interprets these as inter-subjective prac-tices that shape the moral world of the family. BP4 recontex-tualizes these values for contemporary challenges, including screen-time balance, digital co-parenting, and the emotional pressures of online interaction. The text also acknowledges that digital media reshapes family dynamics, requiring Qur'anic symbols such as *qaulan* and *sakinah* to be reinterpreted for digital communication and relational well-being. Hermeneutical analysis of BP4 is presented in both Table 6 and 7.

Table 6.
Hermeneutic Analysis of BP4 Text (1)

BP4 Text Unit	Structure (Explanation)	Key Symbol	Hermeneutic Meaning (Understanding – Appropriation)
"A harmonious family is built through peace, love, and affection"	The narrative begins with a normative definition, followed by a moral appeal. Structure: definition → core values → relationship goals.	*Peaceful, loving,* and *merciful*	Sakinah is interpreted as a dynamic process, not a static state. Mawaddah symbolizes affective energy, and rahmah symbolizes empathy. In the digital context, these values require emotional stability amidst the pressure of information and online activities.
"Family communication is based on qaulan sadīdan, qaulan	Presentation based on Qur'anic categories. Structure: principles → evidence →	*Qaulan sadīdan, ma'rūfan, layyinan*	Qaulan sadīdan is read as honesty in digital communication; ma'rūfan as the ethics of sharing information; layyinan as gentleness in online conversations

ma'rūfan, and qaulan layyinan."	communication ethics.		to avoid digital aggression.
"Domestic conflicts are resolved through reconciliation and deliberation."	Pattern: problem → Islamic principle → resolution steps.	*Islah, deliberation*	Reconciliation is understood as a process of moral reconstruction, not simply peace. Deliberation has become a symbol of egalitarian relationships. In the digital age, this symbol signifies dialogue about limits on gadget use, digital privacy, and transparency in relationships.
"BP4 emphasizes the importance of mutuality and cooperation between husband and wife."	Structure: value affirmation → implementation example → relationship goal.	*Mutuality, cooperation*	Mutuality is seen as a symbol of an equal relationship. In a digital context, mutuality means sharing caregiving roles, managing online activities, and understanding each other's emotional burdens.
"The foundation of a peaceful family comes from QS. al-Rum verse 21."	Structure: reference proposition → normative principle → relational value.	*Verse sakinah, peace, peace of mind*	This verse becomes the horizon of meaning. Sakinah is read as a psychological state that must be maintained through emotional management, digital impulse control, and strengthening empathy-based relationships.

"Poor communi cation is a major source of family conflict."	Causal structure: premise → effect → textual solution.	*Conflict, disharmony*	Conflict is understood not as failure, but as a space for growth. In the digital context, conflict is expanded to include misinterpretation of chats, message tone, cyber-jealousy, and oversharing.
"Couples are encourage d to listen to each other and find common ground."	Structure: ethical instructions → practical steps → goal of peace.	*Hearing, meeting point*	*Listening* is a symbol of acceptance. In the digital age, it means providing space for non-confrontational dialogue and a willingness to understand your partner's digital pressures.
"BP4 teaches conflict resolution based on empathy and compassi on."	Argumentative structure: ethics → values → application.	*Empathy, compassion*	Empathy is understood as the ability to read a partner's inner experiences. In a digital context, empathy is crucial for mitigating conflicts caused by misunderstandings over messages, communication breakdowns, and other online interactions.
"The use of digital media affects the quality of husband-wife relationshi ps."	Descriptive-analytical structure: phenomenon → impact → value needs.	*Digital media, relationships , modern challenges*	Digital media symbols signify changes in the family ecology. Hermeneutics links this to the recontextualization of Qur'anic symbols (qaulan, sakinah) into new communication patterns.

Source: BP4 Text, The Foundation of a Sakinah Family, 2025

Table 7.
Hermeneutic Analysis of BP4 Text (1)

BP4 Text Unit	Structure (Explanation)	Key Symbol	Hermeneutic Meaning (Understanding – Appropriation)
"Mental and spiritual readiness of a couple is the foundation of family harmony."	Pattern: concept → conditions → ethical goals.	*Mental readiness, spiritual readiness*	This signifies the family as a space for personality formation. In a digital context, mental readiness means the ability to manage distractions, social media pressure, and digital anxiety.
"Husband-wife relationships must be built on mutual respect and acceptance of differences."	Moral argument: values → relationships → outcomes.	*Respect, differences*	This symbol demands openness. In the digital age, differences encompass technology preferences, communication patterns, and device usage boundaries.
"Good communication is the key to preventing misunderstandings."	Causal structure: communication → impact → solution.	*Misunderstanding, good communication*	In a digital context, misunderstandings often arise from short messages, emojis, pauses in replies, or unclear tone.
"BP4 emphasizes the importance of emotional control in dealing with conflict."	Instruction pattern: value → action → result.	*Emotional control*	Emotions are understood as inner structures that require discipline. In the digital environment, emotional control is associated with quick responses, angry

			impulses, or reactions to a partner's online activities.
"Every family has different dynamics according to their social conditions."	Descriptive structure: recognition of plurality → implication.	*Family dynamics, social conditions*	This symbol of plurality opens up space for contextual interpretation. The digital era has created new dynamics such as virtual long-distance relationships, hybrid families, and "second space" online relationships.
"The BP4 text invites couples to be open and honest with each other."	Ethical call: values → actions → beliefs.	*Openness, honesty*	In a digital context, this symbol signifies transparency in social media use, clear privacy boundaries, and trust in one's partner's online interactions.
"Differences of opinion are normal in a household."	Normalization: phenomenon → argumentation → dialogic solution.	*Dissent*	In hermeneutic reading, differences are a symbol of maturity. In the digital age, differences also encompass preferences for online activities, content consumption, and how to resolve conflicts via chat.
"Couples are advised to have quality time to increase emotional attachment."	Pattern: suggestion → goal → psychological outcome.	*Quality time, emotional attachment*	The existential meaning: quality time must compete with screen time. Quality time means taking a break from digital media to restore relationships.
"Families	Normative	*Commitme*	Symbols of

| must have a commitment to maintaining domestic peace." | structure: commitment → action → composure. | *nt, peace of mind* | commitment have shifted from morals to practical ones. In the digital age, maintaining peace includes agreeing on digital ethics, such as limiting cell phone use during conflict or family time. |
| "The challenges of the modern family include economic issues, social pressures, and technological change." | Analytical structure: modern phenomena → list of challenges → implications. | *Technology, social pressure* | The symbol of technology signifies a shift in the lifeworld. Hermeneutics reads this symbol as a new space for conflict, but also an opportunity to strengthen communication if used wisely. |

Source: BP4 Text, The Foundation of a Sakinah Family, 2025

Discussion
Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutic Analysis of the BP4 Text

1. Structural Analysis

The BP4 text exhibits a clear, layered, and pedagogically oriented structure that aligns closely with Ricoeur's notion of the text as an autonomous discourse that "stands on its own" [26] once written. Across its various modules and guidebooks, including *Foundations of a Sakinah Family*, the BP4 corpus consistently begins with the normative foundations of a harmonious family before moving into thematic elaborations on spousal roles,

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[26] Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation,* 1st ed., ed. John B. Thompson (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 67-90 https://doi.org/10.1017/ CBO 9781316534984.

communication ethics, and conflict resolution. This structural consistency reflects BP4's institutional mandate as a state-sanctioned body responsible for shaping Muslim family life in Indonesia, a role historically rooted in its establishment as the official marriage advisory institution since 1960.

The text's presentation pattern namely: definition, argument, explanation, example, and solution, reveals its didactic intention. Rather than functioning solely as doctrinal exposition, BP4 is designed to guide practical behavior in domestic life. This aligns with the state's broader project of shaping religious and social values, as discussed by Asad, who argues that state religious texts operate as instruments of power that regulate moral life. BP4's structural choices therefore reflect its dual identity: on one hand, it preserves the symbolic and normative vocabulary of Islamic tradition; on the other, it translates these values into actionable guidance for contemporary families navigating both offline and digital environments.[27]

Symbolic vocabulary such as *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, *rahmah*, *qaulan*, and *islah* reinforces the text's moral orientation and reflects the symbolic density described by Ricoeur, where symbols "say more than what is written."[28] These terms function as ethical anchors throughout the text, appearing consistently across chapters on family foundations, communication, and conflict resolution. Their recurrence demonstrates BP4's intention to construct a coherent moral universe in which family harmony is achieved through emotional discipline, ethical communication, and mutual responsibility. This symbolic consistency also mirrors the structure of classical Islamic texts, where key ethical terms serve as thematic pillars for broader moral instruction.

2. Reflective Analysis

At the reflective stage, readers engage with the BP4 text not merely as a set of prescriptive instructions but as a moral discourse that intersects with their lived experiences. In Ricoeur's hermeneutics, this stage represents the movement from explana-

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[27] Asad, T, *Formations of the Secular*. 26-30
[28] Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*. 87.

tion to understanding, where the reader begins to "see themselves in the text" and discovers how its symbolic world illuminates their own relational realities.

BP4's communication ethics such as *qaulan sadīdan*, *qaulan maʻrūfan, qaulan layyinan*, and *qaulan karīman* are also reinterpreted reflectively. Readers understand these Qur'anic categories as invitations to cultivate honesty, kindness, and gentleness, especially in the digital communication spaces described in the Introduction, where tone, timing, and interpretation are easily distorted.[29] Thus, *qaulan* becomes a framework for managing both verbal and online interactions.

Similarly, deliberation and *islah* are understood not merely as formal obligations but as psychological and relational needs. Readers perceive *musyawarah* as a call for shared decision-making and emotional openness, while *islah* becomes a process of mutual healing and trust-building. This aligns with Ricoeur's view that texts invite self-understanding by projecting an ethical world that readers internalize.

Digitalization further shapes this reflective process. As noted in the Introduction, digital media reshapes authority and family dynamics.[30] Readers facing cyber-jealousy, online misunderstandings, or emotional strain find in BP4's ethical vocabulary a mirror for interpreting their own struggles. Through this engagement, BP4's teachings become a living resource that helps readers negotiate the complexities of contemporary Muslim family life.

3. Existential Analysis

Existential analysis, or the appropriation stage, is the core of Ricoeur's hermeneutics, where readers "take over" the meaning of the text and bring it to life within the context of their own lives. At this stage, the BP4 text is no longer understood solely within the context in which it was written, but is brought to life

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[29] Ricoeur.

[30] Campbell, "Surveying Theoretical Approaches within Digital Religion Studies" 15–24; Mattes et al., "Religion and Politics of Belonging in Digital Times." 1476762

by modern readers facing the challenges of family life in the digital age, an era of high mobility, and an era of rapid social change. The latest generation of readers interprets sakinah not only as spiritual tranquility, but also as emotional stability, mental health, and the family's ability to manage external pressures such as work demands, economic problems, and the rapid flow of digital media.

The principle of communication (*qaulan)* in BP4 also takes on new meaning in the digital context. Modern readers interpret qaulan sadīdan as an invitation to avoid hoaxes, not to spread personal information excessively (*oversharing)*, and to be careful about what one says in digital conversations. Likewise, the concept of qaulan layyinan is understood as an invitation to avoid rude communication, sarcasm, or digital aggression that often occurs via text messages or social media. Thus, the BP4 text is understood existentially as a guide to digital communication ethics in modern families.

In the context of conflict resolution, recent readers give new meaning to the concept of islah. In the digital era, domestic conflicts arise not only from differences in principles, but also from online activities such as cyber infidelity, gadget addiction, social media comments, and lack of quality time. Modern readers interpret conflict resolution based on BP4 as a call for trust building, digital transparency, and mutuality in the use of technology. This existential meaning shows that the BP4 text is open and able to adapt through the reader's reinterpretation process as described by Ricoeur in the theory of the "world of possibilities" opened by the text. Thus, recent readers find the text of BP4 relevant not only as a traditional moral guide, but also as an ethical framework that guides Muslim families in facing modern challenges.

The Contribution of Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutic Approach on the BP4 Text

Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutical framework provides a strong theoretical foundation for revitalizing BP4's sakinah family literature in response to the complexities of modern Muslim family life. Ricoeur views texts as autonomous, symbolic entities

whose meanings remain open and continuously renewed through interpretation. Through this lens, the BP4 text, which contains guidance on harmonious relationships, ethical communication, and conflict resolution, can be read not merely as prescriptive religious instruction but as a living discourse whose relevance evolves across generations. This approach enables BP4 to move beyond a purely normative orientation toward a reflective and existential mode of meaning that adapts to contemporary social realities.

First, Ricoeur's hermeneutics allows for a deeper reinterpretation of BP4's core religious symbols. Concepts such as sakinah, mawaddah, rahmah, islah, and musyawarah carry symbolic richness that "say more than what can be said literally." Through hermeneutic reading, these symbols can be expanded to address the needs of modern families. Sakinah, traditionally associated with inner peace, can be reinterpreted as psychological stability, emotional safety, and the capacity to manage digital stress. Mawaddah becomes not only emotional affection but also intellectual and spiritual commitment, while rahmah emerges as empathy and sensitivity to a partner's struggles. This symbolic renewal maintains fidelity to Islamic values while ensuring relevance for contemporary family dynamics.

Second, Ricoeur emphasizes that texts construct a "world of possibilities" for their readers. The BP4 text, when read hermeneutically, offers an ethical horizon in which families can imagine and strive toward a world characterized by peace, justice, emotional balance, and cooperation. This resonates with Saba Mahmood's insights on how moral practices shape emotional and ethical dispositions. BP4 thus functions not only as a source of practical advice but also as a moral imagination that helps families navigate the pressures of globalization, digital media, and social mobility.

Third, Ricoeur's concept of "action as text" provides a valuable framework for expanding BP4's counseling methods. Human actions, such as communication patterns, gestures of care, or expressions of anger, can be interpreted like texts because they carry symbolic meaning. This perspective enables BP4 counselors to read poor communication, indifference, or

symbolic violence as signs of a deeper crisis of meaning within the relationship. Conversely, positive actions such as attentive listening, apology, or mutual support can be interpreted as enactments of sakinah and rahmah. This hermeneutic approach enriches BP4's counseling model by shifting it from merely legalistic advice to interpretive guidance grounded in symbolic understanding.

Fourth, Ricoeur's hermeneutics supports the recontextualization of BP4's teachings in the digital era. Modern family life is shaped by social media, online communication, and digital intimacy, which introduce new forms of conflict such as cyber infidelity, gadget addiction, and emotional miscommunication. Hermeneutic rereading allows BP4 to reinterpret qaulan sadidan as digital communication ethics, qaulan layyinan as gentleness in online interactions, and *islah* as reconciliation processes relevant to technology-based conflicts. This ensures that BP4's guidance remains adaptive to the evolving realities of contemporary Muslim families.

Fifth, Ricoeur's emphasis on dialogue and participatory meaning making encourages BP4 to adopt a more interactive model of family education. Rather than relying solely on normative instruction, BP4 can design guidance programs that invite discussion, reflection, and collaborative problem solving. This approach addresses long standing critiques that BP4's modules are overly prescriptive and insufficiently responsive to participants' lived experiences.

Overall, Ricoeur's hermeneutical approach opens significant opportunities for strengthening BP4's relevance in the modern era. It positions BP4 not merely as an administrative institution but as an interpreter of Islamic values capable of guiding families to internalize and embody sakinah, mawaddah, and rahmah in meaningful ways. Through symbolic renewal, action-based interpretation, digital recontextualization, and dialogical engagement, BP4 can evolve into an adaptive, reflective, and transformative source of religious literature for Indonesian society.

In conclusion, Ricoeur's insight that texts are open, symbolic narratives whose meanings evolve across time underscores

the central findings of this study. The BP4 text is not a fixed doctrinal artifact but a dynamic moral discourse that gains new relevance as families reinterpret it within changing social and digital contexts. As digital communication reshapes family life, BP4's teachings on harmony, communication, and reconciliation continue to expand in meaning, demonstrating the text's enduring capacity to guide Muslim families toward ethical and emotionally resilient relationships.

CONCLUSION

This study finds that the BP4 text constructs the concept of a harmonious family not as a fixed ideal, but as a dynamic process grounded in love, compassion, ethical communication, and the ability to manage relational differences. Through Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic lens, BP4's symbolic vocabulary such as sakinah, mawaddah, rahmah, qaulan, and islah is reinterpreted to address the realities of modern Muslim families, including digital communication ethics and technology-based conflict resolution. The BP4 text functions not only as normative religious literature but also as a reflective and adaptive discourse that remains relevant in the digital era.

However, this study has several limitations. The hermeneutic approach used relies heavily on interpretive subjectivity, making the analysis dependent on the researcher's perspective. The absence of empirical data from BP4 counselors or couples undergoing marriage guidance limits insight into how the text is received and practiced in real-life settings. Additionally, the study focuses only on selected themes such as family harmony, communication, and conflict, while other important aspects like economic resilience, mental health, and digital literacy remain unexplored.

Future research should expand the thematic scope of BP4 analysis and incorporate empirical perspectives to enrich understanding of its practical application. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of Indonesian Islamic hermeneutics by applying Ricoeur's framework to state religious texts. Practically, it recommends updating the BP4 module to include digital ethics, platform-based conflict mediation, and hermeneu-

tic-based counseling strategies. These steps will help BP4 evolve as a dialogic and transformative institution capable of guiding Muslim families through the challenges of contemporary life.

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