Insan Cita

Journal of Islamic Civilization and Social Movements

Muslimat Nahdatul Ulama (Nu) Medan and the *sakīnah* Family Movement: An Analysis of a Social Organization Based on Quranic Nomenclature

Sidiq Hartono[1], A. Fathi[2], Kamall Aly[3]
[1] State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Indonesia
[2] Muhammad Bin Zaid University, United Arab Emirates
[3] An-Nikmah Al-Islamiyah of Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Correspondence Author: sidiq0406201005@uinsu.ac.id

Abstract

This study examines the construction and institutionalization of the *keluarga sakinah* movement by *Muslimat NU* Medan through an organizational sociology approach grounded in Qur'anic nomenclature. It seeks to analyze how the Qur'anic concepts of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* are interpreted, contextualized, and operationalized within a contemporary Islamic women's organization operating in a multicultural urban setting. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through participant observation, and document analysis. The study integrates institutional theory with semantic analysis of Qur'anic terminology to evaluate the coherence between normative scriptural meanings and organizational social praxis. The findings demonstrate that *Muslimat NU* Medan does not treat *keluarga sakinah* as a merely symbolic religious ideal. Instead, it functions as an ethical and programmatic framework guiding structured initiatives such as premarital education, family counselling, marital communication training, parenting workshops, and social assistance programs. Conceptually, *sakinah* is rearticulated as holistic family resilience that integrates spiritual commitment, emotional stability, and socio-economic balance. Meanwhile, *mawaddah* and *rahmah* are operationalized as active relational virtues expressed through marital responsibility, empathetic parenting, and social solidarity. At the institutional level, these Qur'anic values are embedded within formal organizational divisions and routinized practices, illustrating a process of norm internalization and structured collective action. The organization also demonstrates adaptive capacity in responding to Medan's multicultural and socio-economically dynamic context. Overall, the study concludes that there is substantial coherence between the normative Qur'anic foundation and the social praxis of *Muslimat NU* Medan, affirming the relevance of Qur'anic nomenclature as a productive framework for contemporary Islamic civil society.

Keywords: *keluarga Sakinah movement, Muslimat NU, Qur'anic nomenclature, organizational sociology, Islamic civil society*

Introduction

The family constitutes the most fundamental social institution within the structure of society and serves as the primary locus for the transmission of values, identity formation, and socio-religious stability. Beyond its biological function, the family operates as a normative and cultural framework through which moral commitments, religious worldviews, and collective identities are cultivated and reproduced across generations. In sociological terms, the family represents the first site of socialization, where individuals internalize ethical norms, gender roles, and patterns of authority that later shape broader societal interactions. As a microcosm of the wider social order, the stability or fragility of the family inevitably influences the cohesion and moral orientation of society at large.

Within Islamic thought, the construction of the ideal family is normatively anchored in the Qur'anic concepts of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*, as articulated in Q.S. al-Rūm [30]: 21, which affirms that the marital bond is founded upon tranquility, love, and compassion (Qur'an 30:21). Classical exegetes such as al-Ṭabari and Ibn Kathir, as well as contemporary interpreters like Quraish Shihab, understand *sakinah* as a profound existential tranquility granted by God, emerging from spiritual harmony and ethical reciprocity between spouses (Al-Ṭabari, 2001; Kathir, 1999; Shihab, 2002). This tranquility transcends mere psychological calmness; it denotes a divinely inspired stability that enables the family to function as a morally grounded and socially cohesive unit. In this sense, the Qur'anic paradigm situates marriage not only as a contractual relationship but as a sacred covenant oriented toward ethical responsibility and mutual care.

The concept of *sakinah* therefore extends beyond theological abstraction and carries significant sociological implications. By embedding *mawaddah* (enduring love) and *rahmah* (compassionate mercy) within the marital framework, the Qur'anic paradigm integrates emotional intimacy with moral accountability. The family becomes a normative space where affection is inseparable from responsibility, and where relational harmony contributes to social order. Consequently, the notion of *keluarga sakinah* (tranquil family) is frequently positioned as the cornerstone of social resilience and communal integrity in Muslim societies (Anwar, 2018; Nurlaelawati, 2010). It is within the domestic sphere that ethical subjectivity is formed, gender relations are negotiated, and civic virtues are cultivated. Thus, the family functions as both a private institution and a foundational pillar of public morality.

In the Indonesian context, the discourse on *keluarga sakinah* occupies a prominent place within both religious narratives and state policy frameworks. The Ministry of Religious Affairs institutionalizes this paradigm through premarital guidance programs (*Bimbingan Perkawinan*), explicitly framing it as the normative ideal for Muslim households (RI, 2019). Such initiatives reflect the state's recognition of the family as a strategic site for moral governance and social development. However, empirical data reveal persistent structural challenges, including rising divorce rates, domestic violence, and various forms of familial dysfunction (Perempuan, 2023; Statistik, 2023). These trends expose a tension between normative ideals and social realities, indicating that the internalization of the *sakinah* paradigm cannot rely solely on bureaucratic regulation. Rather, it necessitates the active engagement of socio-religious organizations capable of operating at the grassroots level with cultural legitimacy and sustained community networks.

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), as Indonesia's largest Islamic organization, represents a pivotal actor in this domain. Through its autonomous women's wing, *Muslimat NU*, the organization plays a strategic role in family development, women's empowerment, and community-based social services (Fealy & Bush, 2014; van Bruinessen, 2012). *Muslimat NU* extends its activities beyond religious instruction and preaching; it implements structured programs addressing family resilience, reproductive health, maternal welfare, and economic empowerment within households (Arifianto, 2021; Muzakki, 2020). From the perspective of organizational sociology, these initiatives exemplify processes of institutionalizing religious values within social structures. Through cadre formation, programmatic intervention, and network-building, normative Qur'anic concepts are translated into operational strategies that shape lived social practices (Halafoff, 2013; Scott, 2014).

The branch of *Muslimat NU* in Medan City presents a particularly compelling case for examining this process. Medan, as a multicultural urban center in North Sumatra, is characterized by ethnic diversity, religious plurality, and socio-economic dynamism. Such complexity generates both opportunities and challenges for socio-religious movements promoting normative family ideals. In this plural and rapidly evolving environment, the *sakinah* family movement cannot be reduced to a static doctrinal agenda. Instead, it must be understood as a dynamic process of contextual adaptation

in which Qur'anic values are negotiated, translated, and institutionalized within specific socio-cultural conditions. Research on local Islamic women's organizations indicates that the effectiveness of religious movements often depends on their capacity to reinterpret normative texts in ways that resonate with lived realities (Rinaldo, 2013; Robinson, 2009). Analyzing *Muslimat NU* Medan therefore offers insight into how Qur'anic family ideals are operationalized within a community-based organizational framework.

Academically, scholarship on *Muslimat NU* has largely focused on political participation, gender activism, and women's leadership within Islamic civil society (Arifianto, 2021; Rinaldo, 2013). Meanwhile, studies on *keluarga sakinah* tend to concentrate on Islamic family law or state policy analysis (J. Bowen, 2003; Nurlaelawati, 2010). There remains a notable gap in research that integrates organizational social analysis with a Qur'anic nomenclature-based conceptual approach. A nomenclature-based reading of the Qur'an treats scriptural terminology not merely as symbolic legitimation but as analytically robust categories through which normative coherence and practical transformation can be examined (Fazlur rahman, 1982; Izutsu, 2002). Within this framework, *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* are understood as semantically dense and ethically charged concepts whose institutional translation into social practice warrants systematic analysis.

Accordingly, this article seeks to analyze the construction and implementation of the *keluarga sakinah* movement by *Muslimat NU* Medan through an organizational sociology approach grounded in Qur'anic nomenclature. It addresses three principal questions: (1) How does *Muslimat NU* Medan interpret and conceptualize *keluarga sakinah* based on Qur'anic terminology? (2) How are these concepts institutionalized within the organization's structural arrangements and programmatic activities? (3) To what extent is there coherence between the normative Qur'anic foundation and the social practices enacted by the organization? By addressing these questions, the study aims to contribute to broader discussions on the institutional mediation of Qur'anic ethics within contemporary Islamic civil society.

Method

This study employs a qualitative research design grounded in an interpretive paradigm to examine how *Muslimat NU* Medan constructs and institutionalizes the concept of *keluarga sakinah* within its organizational framework. A qualitative approach is particularly appropriate because the research seeks to explore meaning-making processes, normative interpretations, and lived organizational practices rather than to test causal relationships quantitatively (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). By situating the analysis within a socio-textual framework, the study integrates organizational sociology and Qur'anic semantic analysis to bridge normative religious discourse with empirical social realities.

The research adopts a case study strategy focusing specifically on the *Muslimat NU* branch in Medan City. A case study design enables in-depth exploration of a bounded institutional setting within its real-life social context, particularly when the boundaries between normative discourse and social practice are intertwined (Yin, 2018). Medan, as a multicultural urban centre in North Sumatra, provides a dynamic socio-religious environment in which Islamic family ideals are negotiated within pluralistic conditions. The case study approach facilitates thick description and contextual interpretation, consistent with interpretive traditions in social research that emphasize the cultural embeddedness of social action (Geertz, 1973)

The analytical framework combines organizational institutionalism and Qur'anic nomenclature analysis. From the perspective of organizational sociology, the study examines how religious values are institutionalized through structures, leadership patterns, programmatic interventions, and networks of legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 2014). This perspective highlights processes of norm diffusion, isomorphic adaptation, and the construction of organizational authority within religious civil society. Simultaneously, the research applies a semantic and conceptual analysis of key Qur'anic terms *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*. Drawing on Qur'anic semantic scholarship and contextual hermeneutics (Al-Din Al-Zaral, 2012; Saeed, 2006), these terms are treated not merely as theological signifiers but as analytical categories. This approach enables a systematic comparison between their normative meanings in classical and contemporary exegesis and their operationalization within organizational discourse and practice.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Interviews were carried out with key organizational actors,

including branch leaders, program coordinators, and active members, to capture their interpretations of *keluarga sakinah*, organizational strategies, and perceived social impacts. Semi-structured interviews provide methodological flexibility while maintaining analytical focus (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Participant observation was undertaken during selected organizational activities related to family development programs, allowing direct examination of symbolic practices, interactional dynamics, and ritual expressions that may not be fully articulated in formal discourse (Spradley, 1980). In addition, official documents such as training modules, internal guidelines, and program reports were analyzed to identify how Qur'anic terminology is embedded in institutional narratives and policy framing (G. A. Bowen, 2009). Triangulation across these data sources was applied to enhance interpretive rigor and credibility (Patton, 2015)

Data analysis followed a thematic coding procedure combining inductive and deductive strategies. Initial open coding identified recurring themes emerging from interviews and field notes, while subsequent axial coding connected these themes to broader analytical categories related to institutionalization processes and Qur'anic nomenclature (Saldaña, 2016)The semantic dimensions of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* were first mapped based on authoritative exegetical sources, and these normative constructs were then used as interpretive benchmarks to assess alignment, reinterpretation, or transformation within organizational praxis. This comparative analytical procedure enables systematic evaluation of the coherence between scriptural ideals and institutional implementation.

Results and Discussion
The Conceptual Construction of *Keluarga Sakinah* in the Discourse of *Muslimat NU* Medan

The findings of this study demonstrate that *Muslimat NU* Medan constructs *keluarga sakinah* not as a mere normative religious slogan or ceremonial expression, but as a comprehensive ethical-spiritual framework that informs and structures family development initiatives at the community level. Organizational actors consistently articulate the concept as a living paradigm rather than a symbolic abstraction. In interviews with branch leaders, senior cadres, and program coordinators, *sakinah* is described as a condition of holistic tranquility that arises from the balanced integration of religious commitment, emotional equilibrium, and economic stability within the household. This interpretation reveals an applied hermeneutic approach in which existential peace is not confined to inward spirituality but is embedded within the practical realities of family life. Thus, *sakinah* is framed as both a theological ideal and a socio-material condition that sustains relational harmony and domestic resilience.

Within this discourse, the Qur'anic vocabulary is operationalized in ways that bridge normative doctrine and everyday practice. The concept of *mawaddah* is not reduced to romantic affection or passive emotional attachment; rather, it is interpreted as an active and productive form of love characterized by responsibility, loyalty, shared struggle, and sustained partnership between spouses. Organizational narratives emphasize that *mawaddah* entails intentional commitment and mutual sacrifice, reflecting a vision of marriage as collaborative moral labor rather than individual fulfillment alone. Similarly, *rahmah* is conceptualized as a broader ethical disposition of compassion and empathetic concern that transcends the domestic sphere. It is invoked to justify social solidarity, care for vulnerable families, and collective responsibility within the wider community. In this sense, *rahmah* becomes a moral bridge connecting intimate familial bonds with communal ethics.

These interpretations resonate with classical exegetical traditions on Q.S. al-Rūm [30]: 21, where *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* are presented as divinely instituted foundations of marital life (al-Ṭabarī, 1955; Kathir, 1999)). Classical commentators emphasize that these terms signify not only emotional states but divinely ordained relational principles designed to stabilize and sanctify the marital bond. Contemporary Qur'anic scholarship further elaborates that the semantic structure of these concepts reflects an integrated moral order in which emotional intimacy, ethical reciprocity, and divine intentionality converge (Izutsu, 2002; Shihab, 2007). In the discourse of *Muslimat NU* Medan, this integrated moral vision is translated into a structured conceptual model for family resilience.

Importantly, the organization's conceptual construction of *keluarga sakinah* illustrates a process of semantic expansion and contextual application. The transcendental dimension of *sakinah* as divinely granted tranquility is preserved rhetorically, yet it is simultaneously translated into operational indicators such as healthy communication, financial responsibility, emotional maturity,

and conflict management. This indicates that the Qur'anic terminology functions not merely as legitimizing language but as an analytical and programmatic reference point. Through this interpretive process, *Muslimat NU* Medan repositions Qur'anic nomenclature within a contemporary socio-organizational framework, ensuring that its ethical substance remains intact while its practical relevance is continuously reaffirmed.

Theologically, *Muslimat NU* Medan explicitly anchors its conceptual framework in Q.S. al-Rūm [30]: 21, a verse that consistently functions as the normative point of departure in religious sermons, training modules, marital counseling sessions, and community study circles. The verse is not invoked merely as a ritual citation; rather, it serves as a foundational scriptural axis around which organizational discourse on family life is structured. In numerous programmatic settings, leaders articulate *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* as divinely ordained principles that define the moral architecture of marriage. However, empirical findings reveal that the organization does not confine these terms to their abstract theological meanings. Instead, it engages in a deliberate process of contextual reinterpretation.

In practical terms, *sakinah* is no longer limited to an inward psychological calmness or purely spiritual serenity. It is rearticulated as a socially sustained condition supported by measurable elements such as economic resilience, emotional intelligence, constructive communication patterns, and effective conflict management within the household. Organizational actors frequently associate family tranquility with financial stability, equitable role distribution, and the cultivation of dialogical habits between spouses. This interpretive shift illustrates what semantic scholars describe as "contextual actualization," whereby key Qur'anic terms acquire additional operational dimensions when engaged with specific historical and socio-cultural circumstances (Izutsu, 2002; Saeed, 2006). The transcendental meaning of *sakinah* is not abandoned; rather, it is reframed within the lived realities of contemporary urban families facing economic pressures and relational challenges.

From the perspective of Qur'anic nomenclature analysis, this transformation can be understood as a process of semantic extension. A concept originally embedded within theological discourse expands into a socio-organizational category that informs institutional practice. Crucially, this extension does not represent a dilution of meaning. Instead, it reflects an effort to translate scriptural semantics into operational strategies. Fazlur Rahman's theory of the "double movement" provides a useful interpretive lens here: normative Islamic principles must first be understood within their historical-revelatory context and subsequently projected into contemporary conditions in order to recover their moral intent (Fazlur rahman, 1982). The empirical data suggest that *Muslimat NU* Medan operates within precisely such a hermeneutical dynamic. The organization maintains fidelity to the Qur'anic lexicon while adapting its practical implications to the socio-economic realities of an urban Muslim community.

Consequently, the construction of *keluarga sakinah* within *Muslimat NU* Medan cannot be characterized as rigid textualism. The organization adopts an integrative paradigm that combines normative exegesis with pragmatic responsiveness to contemporary social exigencies. This approach reflects a broader tendency within Indonesian Islamic civil society, where religious organizations function as mediating institutions that bridge scriptural authority and lived social realities (Fealy & Bush, 2014; Rinaldo, 2013). Rather than positioning the Qur'anic paradigm as a static doctrinal template, *Muslimat NU* Medan treats it as a living ethical vocabulary capable of guiding structured social intervention.

In this integrative model, *keluarga sakinah* operates simultaneously at multiple levels. It functions as a theological ideal grounded in divine revelation, as a moral vocabulary shaping communal norms, and as a programmatic framework informing concrete organizational initiatives. The organization's discourse demonstrates a sustained effort to preserve coherence between the normative authority of the Qur'an and the empirical conditions of urban family life. Through this mediation, Qur'anic terminology remains both theologically anchored and socially actionable, enabling the *sakinah* paradigm to retain its spiritual depth while addressing contemporary familial challenges in a systematic and institutionalized manner.

Institutionalization of Qur'anic Values within Organizational Structure and Programs

The empirical findings demonstrate that the Qur'anic values of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* are not confined to discursive affirmation within *Muslimat NU* Medan, but are systematically institutionalized within its organizational structure and programmatic architecture. These values are

translated into concrete administrative arrangements, operational guidelines, and structured interventions that shape the organization's strategic direction. Rather than functioning as symbolic rhetoric invoked in ceremonial contexts, Qur'anic terminology becomes embedded in formal divisions, program design, and evaluative mechanisms.

At the structural level, *Muslimat NU* Medan maintains a dedicated division responsible for family development and women's welfare, indicating a deliberate institutional commitment to operationalizing the *keluarga sakinah* paradigm. This division designs and coordinates a range of initiatives, including premarital education seminars, family counseling services, marital communication workshops, parenting training modules, and assistance programs for economically or socially vulnerable households. Each of these interventions reflects a specific dimension of the Qur'anic triad: *sakinah* is pursued through conflict mediation and emotional stability training; *mawaddah* is cultivated through relational commitment and partnership-based marital education; and *rahmah* is expressed in social solidarity programs, welfare assistance, and advocacy for families affected by domestic hardship. Such arrangements illustrate that Qur'anic nomenclature functions as a normative blueprint informing organizational planning, budgeting priorities, and programmatic implementation.

From the perspective of organizational sociology, this process exemplifies what institutional theorists identify as norm internalization the incorporation of normative principles into formalized rules, organizational routines, and collective practices (Scott, 2014). Through internal regulations, leadership structures, and standardized program guidelines, ethical values are transformed into institutionalized patterns of action. Religious norms cease to operate solely at the level of personal conviction; they are codified into operational expectations that guide organizational conduct. This transformation enables abstract moral principles to acquire structural permanence.

Furthermore, institutionalization is reinforced through mechanisms such as cadre formation, periodic leadership training, and the consolidation of community-based religious networks (*majelis taklim*). These mechanisms function as channels for transmitting interpretive frameworks and ensuring continuity across organizational levels. Through repeated training sessions and routine community engagement, the semantic content of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* becomes standardized and socially reproduced. In institutional theory, such processes contribute to isomorphic stabilization, whereby norms gain legitimacy through repetition, formalization, and alignment with broader cultural expectations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

In this sense, institutionalization does more than preserve religious vocabulary; it restructures that vocabulary into an operational category embedded within governance structures. Qur'anic values are no longer merely cited they are enacted through measurable programs, organizational hierarchies, and structured community interventions. *Muslimat NU* Medan thereby functions as a mediating institution that translates theological principles into patterned social action. Through this institutional embedding, the ethical substance of the Qur'anic paradigm acquires organizational durability, enabling the *keluarga sakinah* movement to function as a sustained and systematized social initiative rather than an episodic moral appeal.

The value of *rahmah* (compassion), for instance, is operationalized through a range of structured social assistance programs and advocacy initiatives that address concrete forms of vulnerability within the community. These include financial aid for economically disadvantaged families, counseling and accompaniment for victims of domestic violence, and outreach programs designed to support widows, single mothers, and households experiencing crisis. In these contexts, *rahmah* is not treated as a passive emotional disposition but as an ethical imperative demanding institutional response. Compassion is translated into organized care, protective intervention, and sustained social solidarity. Such initiatives resonate with broader Islamic ethical discourses that position mercy as a foundational principle of justice, social responsibility, and communal accountability (Saeed, 2006). In this sense, *rahmah* becomes the normative basis for welfare-oriented action and moral responsiveness within civil society.

Similarly, *mawaddah* (active and enduring love) is concretized through marital relationship workshops, premarital guidance sessions, parenting education grounded in empathy, and training modules that promote constructive spousal communication. These programs emphasize partnership, shared responsibility, and emotional literacy as essential components of marital stability. Rather than reducing love to sentimentality, *Muslimat NU* Medan frames *mawaddah* as a disciplined ethical commitment expressed through patience, sacrifice, dialogue, and mutual respect. Parenting

initiatives likewise reinterpret *mawaddah* as affectionate guidance combined with moral cultivation, thereby reinforcing the intergenerational transmission of ethical values. Through these pedagogical interventions, affective Qur'anic concepts are systematically translated into educational strategies and relational competencies designed to strengthen household resilience.

Analytically, this institutionalization process illustrates how *Muslimat NU* Medan operates as a mediating agent between normative scripture and social structure. Organizational actors do not merely cite Qur'anic terminology for symbolic legitimacy; they reinterpret and operationalize these categories within contemporary socio-cultural frameworks. Abstract theological ideals are transformed into structured collective action through administrative planning, programmatic design, and community engagement. This mediating function corresponds with broader scholarship on Islamic civil society, which underscores the role of religious organizations as intermediaries translating scriptural authority into social policy, community mobilization, and public ethics (Fealy & Bush, 2014; Hasan, 2009). In performing this role, the organization bridges the gap between textual normativity and lived realities, ensuring that Qur'anic family ideals are embodied in sustained institutional practice rather than confined to rhetorical discourse.

Moreover, the institutionalization of *keluarga sakinah* as a core organizational agenda reinforces the argument that the movement transcends moral exhortation. It represents a structured social project embedded in formal leadership hierarchies, programmatic cycles, monitoring mechanisms, and grassroots networks. By integrating Qur'anic values into strategic planning, resource allocation, and community outreach, *Muslimat NU* Medan demonstrates that religious concepts can acquire institutional durability and social efficacy. This transformation reflects a dynamic interaction between text and context: normative ideals are preserved in their ethical substance while simultaneously adapted to address contemporary challenges such as economic precarity, domestic conflict, and shifting gender roles. Consequently, the *keluarga sakinah* movement emerges as both a theological commitment rooted in revelation and an organized social movement sustained through institutional mechanisms and collective action.

Contextual Adaptation of the *Keluarga Sakinah* Movement in a Multicultural Urban Environment

The socio-cultural configuration of Medan as a multicultural and economically dynamic urban center profoundly shapes the conceptualization and operationalization of the *keluarga sakinah* movement by *Muslimat NU* Medan. As one of the major metropolitan areas in North Sumatra, Medan is characterized by high mobility, ethnic heterogeneity including Malay, Batak, Javanese, Minangkabau, and Chinese communities religious plurality, and stratified patterns of economic activity. These characteristics generate a socially differentiated environment in which communal cohesion is more fluid and less homogeneous than in rural or semi-urban settings. Urban sociological theory has long emphasized that metropolitan life produces segmented social networks, impersonal interactions, intensified economic competition, and exposure to diverse value systems (Castells, 2010; Wirth, 1938). Such structural conditions inevitably affect family life, creating new pressures and redefining expectations regarding marriage, gender roles, and household authority.

In this complex urban environment, Islamic family ideals cannot be implemented through rigid or uniform approaches. Normative prescriptions must be translated into flexible and context-sensitive strategies capable of addressing pluralistic lifestyles and rapidly shifting socio-economic realities. Religious organizations operating in metropolitan settings are therefore compelled to negotiate between doctrinal fidelity and contextual pragmatism. To sustain legitimacy and social resonance, they must demonstrate that religious ethics offer viable solutions to contemporary urban challenges rather than remaining confined to abstract moral exhortation.

Within this heterogeneous milieu, the concept of *sakinah* undergoes a functional reinterpretation. While its theological dimension as divinely granted tranquility remains acknowledged, it is simultaneously articulated as a form of structural and emotional resilience. Tranquility is framed not merely as inward serenity but as the capacity of families to withstand economic uncertainty, relational volatility, and evolving gender expectations. Urban households often confront employment precarity, rising living costs, consumerist pressures, and shifting norms regarding women's participation in the workforce. These realities necessitate a broadened understanding of *sakinah* that encompasses negotiation skills, adaptive coping mechanisms, and economic planning.

Field observations indicate that *Muslimat NU* Medan directly engages with issues such as increasing divorce rates, domestic disputes, financial instability, and the dual burden borne by women balancing domestic responsibilities with public employment. Workshops and counseling sessions frequently integrate discussions on communication skills, financial literacy, emotional regulation, and shared marital responsibilities. This practical orientation reflects what scholars describe as the "socialization" of religious ethics, whereby doctrinal concepts are reframed as instruments for addressing structural and communal challenges (Bayat, 2013; Hasan, 2009). In this context, Qur'anic values are not reduced to private piety; they are mobilized as ethical resources for strengthening family resilience within an urban setting marked by complexity and change.

Thus, the *keluarga sakinah* movement in Medan represents a contextual adaptation rather than a static doctrinal imposition. The organization demonstrates an applied reinterpretation of Qur'anic principles, aligning transcendental ideals with the tangible realities confronting urban Muslim households. By recalibrating its programs to address economic stress, gender negotiation, and social fragmentation, *Muslimat NU* Medan ensures that the moral vocabulary of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* remains both theologically grounded and socially actionable within a multicultural metropolitan environment

Crucially, *Muslimat NU* Medan adapts its *da'wah* strategies by employing communicative, accessible, and contextually grounded language while maintaining fidelity to Qur'anic foundations. Organizational leaders consciously avoid presenting scriptural injunctions in highly abstract theological terminology that may feel distant from the lived realities of their audience. Instead, they embed the concepts of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* within relatable narratives concerning marital negotiation, parenting dilemmas, financial management, and everyday domestic tensions. In sermons, workshops, and counseling sessions, Qur'anic vocabulary is translated into concrete illustrations: conflict resolution between spouses, equitable division of household responsibilities, emotional regulation, and resilience in times of economic hardship. This discursive recalibration reflects contextual hermeneutical approaches in contemporary Qur'anic interpretation, which emphasize the necessity of translating normative meanings into historically and socially situated applications (Saeed, 2006). Through such contextualization, Qur'anic terminology retains both its theological depth and its practical immediacy, functioning as a living moral vocabulary that guides behavior rather than as a distant doctrinal abstraction.

This communicative strategy also strengthens pedagogical effectiveness. By linking scriptural concepts to recognizable experiences, the organization enhances interpretive accessibility and emotional resonance. Participants are encouraged to perceive Qur'anic principles not as external obligations imposed from above, but as ethical resources capable of illuminating and resolving personal challenges. In this way, doctrinal continuity is preserved while interpretive presentation becomes adaptive. The authority of revelation remains central, yet its articulation is calibrated to the socio-economic realities of urban Muslim families.

From the standpoint of religious social movement theory, such adaptive capacity constitutes a decisive factor in organizational sustainability and influence. Social movements that rigidly adhere to fixed interpretive frames, without recalibrating their discourse in response to social transformation, risk marginalization, declining participation, and erosion of relevance (Snow & Benford, 1988; Tarrow, 2011). Interpretive frames must resonate with participants' lived experiences in order to mobilize commitment and sustain engagement. In contrast, *Muslimat NU* Medan demonstrates what may be described as "contextual flexibility" a strategic equilibrium between doctrinal continuity and pragmatic responsiveness. This flexibility enables the organization to maintain theological coherence while simultaneously addressing urban pluralism, shifting gender roles, and socio-economic instability. It also consolidates collective identity by affirming that Qur'anic principles are not relics of a pre-modern past, but enduring moral resources capable of engaging contemporary complexity without forfeiting normative authority.

Therefore, the contextual adaptation of the *keluarga sakinah* movement in Medan illustrates a dialogical interplay between text and environment. Qur'anic ideals are neither diluted through excessive accommodation to modern trends nor fossilized through rigid literalism detached from social reality. Instead, they are dynamically rearticulated within a complex urban matrix characterized by diversity, economic change, and evolving family structures. This dynamic supports the broader argument that Islamic civil society organizations operate as mediating institutions that translate scriptural normativity into socially embedded practice in pluralistic settings (Fealy & Bush,

2014). In this light, the *keluarga sakinah* movement in Medan transcends moral exhortation and emerges as a structured, socially responsive framework integrating spiritual commitment, institutional organization, and pragmatic engagement with the concrete challenges of contemporary urban family life.

Coherence between the Normative Qur'anic Foundation and Organizational Social Praxis

A more detailed comparative analysis between the normative semantic content of the Qur'anic terms *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* and their manifestation in the organizational practices of *Muslimat NU* Medan demonstrates a substantive level of coherence, albeit accompanied by processes of contextual reframing and selective operationalization. At the normative level, *sakinah* in the Qur'an signifies a divinely granted tranquility rooted in transcendental assurance and spiritual equilibrium (Qur'an 30:21). The term is not merely descriptive of emotional calm; rather, it reflects a metaphysical condition in which divine intentionality stabilizes human relationships. Classical exegetes such as Ibn Kathir and al-Ṭabari interpret *sakinah* as a state of existential repose bestowed by God, enabling trust, permanence, and moral grounding within marital relations (Al-Ṭabari, 2001; Kathir, 1999). From a semantic-ontological perspective, Izutsu emphasizes that *sakinah* conveys a profound sense of divine presence that reorders the inner structure of human life, thereby exceeding the boundaries of psychological comfort and entering the domain of theological anthropology (Izutsu, 2002).

In the organizational praxis of *Muslimat NU* Medan, however, this transcendental dimension is translated into concrete and operational categories. *Sakinah* becomes associated with emotional regulation, effective conflict resolution, stable marital communication, and balanced socio-economic management within the household. Such translation represents neither secularization nor dilution, but rather a process of practical mediation. The theological premise remains intact in discourse, yet its articulation is oriented toward observable social indicators reduced domestic violence, strengthened spousal dialogue, and improved family cohesion. In hermeneutical terms, this reflects what Rahman conceptualizes as the "double movement" of interpretation: returning to the normative moral vision of the Qur'an and projecting it forward into contemporary social circumstances (Rahman, 1982). Saeed similarly argues that contextualist interpretation necessitates operationalizing scriptural values in ways that address the lived realities of believers (Saeed, 2006). Thus, the transformation of *sakinah* from transcendental assurance to social resilience illustrates a contextual application of normative principles rather than a rupture with theological meaning.

A comparable dynamic is evident in the organizational treatment of *mawaddah* and *rahmah*. Within Qur'anic discourse, these terms articulate the affective and ethical architecture of marital life (Qur'an 30:21). *Mawaddah* implies a sustained, intentional, and morally responsible form of love, while *rahmah* signifies mercy, protective care, and empathetic solidarity. Contemporary exegetical reflections underscore that these concepts encompass both emotional intimacy and ethical accountability (Shihab, 2002). In *Muslimat NU* Medan's programming, *mawaddah* is concretized through structured marital communication workshops, counseling initiatives, and parenting education rooted in affection and responsibility. *Rahmah*, in turn, is embodied in social outreach programs, assistance for vulnerable families, and advocacy for victims of domestic violence. Although the operationalization of these terms necessarily condenses their multilayered semantic richness into implementable programmatic forms, their ethical core mutual responsibility, compassion, and relational commitment remains preserved.

From the standpoint of institutional theory, this process exemplifies how normative belief systems become embedded within organizational routines and structures (Scott, 2014). Institutionalization confers durability upon values by translating them into procedural guidelines, training modules, and patterned collective action. In this sense, *Muslimat NU* Medan functions as a mediating institution that bridges textual normativity and lived social practice. Fealy and Bush argue that Islamic civil society organizations in Indonesia frequently serve as intermediaries that reinterpret scriptural authority within structured social engagement (Fealy & Bush, 2014). The findings of this study reinforce that observation: Qur'anic categories do not remain confined to symbolic affirmation but are routinized within institutional frameworks that shape everyday behavior.

Importantly, the presence of reinterpretation and pragmatic simplification does not necessarily entail conceptual erosion. Instead, it reflects the inherent tension between semantic depth and programmatic clarity. Religious organizations must render complex theological ideas communicable

and actionable without severing their normative roots. The evidence suggests that *Muslimat NU* Medan manages this balance with relative consistency. While certain metaphysical nuances of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* are condensed for pedagogical purposes, the essential moral architecture tranquility grounded in divine intentionality, love sustained by commitment, and compassion expressed through care remains operative within organizational praxis.

Therefore, the coherence observed between the Qur'anic normative foundation and the social praxis of *Muslimat NU* Medan indicates that the *keluarga sakinah* movement transcends moral rhetoric and attains institutional embodiment. It represents a structured social initiative embedded in organizational governance, community networks, and sustained programmatic activity. This coherence demonstrates that Qur'anic nomenclature can function not merely as a theological lexicon but as a productive analytical and operational framework for contemporary Islamic social organizations. When mediated through institutional mechanisms, scriptural categories retain both theological legitimacy and social efficacy, enabling them to guide collective action in complex modern contexts.

To synthesize the comparative analysis between the normative semantic content of the Qur'anic triad *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* and their institutional manifestation within *Muslimat NU* Medan, the analytical alignment is systematically summarized in Table. The table illustrates how scriptural terminology is translated into organizational interpretation, structurally embedded within institutional divisions, and operationalized through concrete programmatic interventions. This schematic consolidation clarifies the degree of coherence between theological foundations and social praxis.

Table 1. Normative–Operational Coherence of Qur'anic Concepts in *Muslimat NU* Medan

Qur'anic Term	Normative Semantic Meaning (Exegetical Basis)	Organizational Interpretation	Institutional Manifestation	Programmatic Implementation
Sakinah	Divinely granted tranquility rooted in spiritual equilibrium (Qur'an 30:21; al-Ṭabari; Ibn Kathir; Izutsu)	Holistic family resilience integrating spirituality, emotional regulation, and economic stability	Embedded in Family Development Division	Premarital education, marital counseling, conflict mediation training, financial management workshops
Mawaddah	Sustained, responsible love grounded in moral commitment (Qur'an 30:21; Shihab)	Active partnership, loyalty, shared responsibility between spouses	Integrated in marital education modules	Communication workshops, parenting education, spousal partnership training
Rahmah	Compassionate mercy and protective care as ethical obligation (Qur'an 30:21; Saeed)	Institutionalized compassion expressed through social solidarity	Embedded in social welfare and advocacy programs	Assistance for vulnerable families, domestic violence support, widow/single mother outreach

As shown in Table, the process of institutional translation does not sever the semantic roots of the Qur'anic terminology; rather, it demonstrates a structured mediation in which transcendental meanings acquire operational clarity within organizational frameworks. While certain metaphysical nuances are necessarily condensed for pedagogical and administrative purposes, the ethical architecture of tranquility, committed love, and compassionate solidarity remains substantively intact. This structured alignment confirms that the *keluarga sakinah* movement in Medan represents

not merely symbolic religiosity, but an institutional embodiment of Qur'anic ethics adapted to contemporary socio-cultural realities.

Conclusion

The findings of this study confirm that *Muslimat NU* Medan has successfully translated the Qur'anic concepts of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* into an institutionalized social movement rooted in structured organizational mechanisms. The *keluarga sakinah* paradigm is not treated as a symbolic or rhetorical ideal; rather, it functions as a normative-ethical framework that guides conceptual orientation, structural arrangements, and programmatic interventions within the organization. At the conceptual level, *Muslimat NU* Medan reinterprets *sakinah* as a holistic model of family resilience encompassing spiritual commitment, emotional stability, constructive communication, and socio-economic balance. *Mawaddah* and *rahmah* are operationalized as active relational virtues expressed through marital commitment, empathetic parenting, and social solidarity. This reinterpretation reflects a contextual actualization of Qur'anic nomenclature, where theological categories are extended into practical social dimensions without losing their ethical core.

At the institutional level, these values are embedded within formal organizational divisions, training programs, premarital education, family counseling, and social assistance initiatives. The process demonstrates that Qur'anic ethics are routinized into durable organizational practices, transforming normative doctrine into collective action. *Muslimat NU* Medan thus functions as a mediating institution that bridges scriptural normativity and lived social reality. Moreover, the organization's adaptive capacity in responding to Medan's multicultural and urban context ensures the continued relevance of the *keluarga sakinah* movement. By contextualizing Qur'anic values in accessible language and addressing contemporary family challenges such as divorce, domestic conflict, and shifting gender roles the movement maintains doctrinal coherence while engaging pragmatically with social change.

Overall, the study concludes that there is a substantive coherence between the normative Qur'anic foundation and the social praxis of *Muslimat NU* Medan. Although operational simplifications and reinterpretations occur, they do not undermine the ethical substance of the original concepts. Instead, they illustrate a productive interaction between text and context. The *keluarga sakinah* movement therefore represents a structured and socially responsive model of Islamic civil society, demonstrating that Qur'anic nomenclature can function as both a theological foundation and an effective framework for contemporary organizational practice.

References

Al-Din Al-Zaral, S. (2012). Applied semantics and the Qur'an: Izutsu's methodology as a case study. *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, *14*(1), 173–200. https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2012.0047

Al-Ṭabari. (2001). *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān ʿan Taʾwīl Āy al-Qurʾān*. Muʾassasah al-Risālah.

al-Ṭabarī, M. ibn J. (1955). *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān ʿan Taʾwīl Āy al-Qurʾān*. Dār al-Maʿārif.

Anwar, E. (2018). *Gender and Self in Islam*. Routledge.

Arifianto, A. R. (2021). *Islam and the State in Indonesia: From Co-optation to Resistance*. Routledge.

Bayat, A. (2013). *Post-Islamism: The Changing Faces of Political Islam*. Oxford University Press.

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *9*(2), 27–40.

Bowen, J. (2003). *Islam, Law and Equality in Indonesia*. Cambridge University Press.

Castells, M. (2010). *The Rise of the Network Society* (2nd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design*. Sage Publications.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Sage Publications.

DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, *48*(2), 147–160.

Fazlur rahman. (1982). *The Qur'an came to create a society, a social order, a civilization..." (Islam and Modernity, h 6.*

Fealy, G., & Bush, R. (2014). *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power within Islam and Politics in Indonesia*. ISEAS.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books.

Halafoff, A. (2013). *The Multifaith Movement: Global Risks and Cosmopolitan Solutions*. Springer.

Hasan, N. (2009). The making of public Islam: Piety, agency, and commodification on the landscape of the Indonesian public sphere. *Contemporary Islam*, *3*(3), 229–250. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-009-0096-9

Izutsu, T. (2002). *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

Kathir, I. (1999). *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*. Dār Ṭayyibah.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Muzakki, A. (2020). Women's Leadership in Nahdlatul Ulama. *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, *14*(2), 305–328.

Nurlaelawati, E. (2010). *Modernization, Tradition and Identity: The Kompilasi Hukum Islam and Legal Practice in Indonesia*. Amsterdam University Press.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. Sage Publications.

Perempuan, K. (2023). *Catatan Tahunan Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan 2023*. Komnas Perempuan.

Rahman, F. (1982). *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*. University of Chicago Press.

RI, B. L. dan D. K. A. (2019). *Moderasi Beragama*. Kementerian Agama RI.

Rinaldo, R. (2013). *Mobilizing Piety: Islam and Feminism in Indonesia*. Oxford University Press.

Robinson, K. (2009). *Gender, Islam and Democracy in Indonesia*. Routledge.

Saeed, A. (2006). *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach*. Routledge.

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Scott, W. R. (2014). *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

Shihab, M. Q. (2002). *Tafsir Al-Misbah: Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an,Jilid 2, hlm 562* (lentera ha).

Shihab, M. Q. (2007). *Wawasan Al-Qur'an*. Mizan.

Snow, D. A., & Benford, R. D. (1988). Ideology, frame resonance, and participant mobilization. *International Social Movement Research*, *1*, 197–217.

Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant Observation*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Statistik, B. P. (2023). *Profil Kemiskinan di Indonesia 2023*. BPS Indonesia.

Tarrow, S. (2011). *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

van Bruinessen, M. (2012). *Indonesian Muslims and Their Place in the Larger World of Islam*. ISEAS.

Wirth, L. (1938). Urbanism as a way of life. *American Journal of Sociology*, *44*(1), 1–24.

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods* (6th ed.). Sage.