



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE “GOLEK GARWO” MATRIMONIAL TRADITION IN FORMING HARMONIOUS FAMILIES

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the effectiveness of the “Golek Garwo” matchmaking initiative organized by the Forum Ta’aruf Indonesia in facilitating the formation of harmonious families. The “Golek Garwo” event took place in Sewon Bantul, Yogyakarta. This study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach within the field research category. The primary data is sourced from alumni who have maintained successful marriages for 5 to 7 years. The findings indicate that the “Golek Garwo” program, managed by the Forum Ta’aruf Indonesia, has effectively contributed to the formation of harmonious family dynamics through arranged marriages. Predominantly, religiosity emerged as the principal determinant of marital harmony. Besides religiosity, several other supporting factors, including partner adjustment, effective communication, mutual openness, mutual understanding, and collaborative problem-solving, also strengthen marital cohesion.

Keywords: Matchmaking, Harmonious Family, Forum Ta’aruf Indonesia

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mengkaji efektivitas inisiatif penjemputan “Golek Garwo” yang diselenggarakan oleh Forum Ta’aruf Indonesia dalam memfasilitasi pembentukan keluarga harmonis. Acara “Golek Garwo” berlangsung di Sewon Bantul, Yogyakarta. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif-analitis dalam kategori penelitian lapangan. Data utama bersumber dari alumni yang telah mempertahankan pernikahan sukses selama 5 hingga 7 tahun. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa program “Golek Garwo” yang dikelola oleh Forum Ta’aruf Indonesia secara efektif telah berkontribusi pada pembentukan dinamika keluarga harmonis melalui pernikahan yang diatur. Secara dominan, religiusitas muncul sebagai penentu utama keharmonisan pernikahan. Selain religiusitas, beberapa faktor pendukung lainnya, termasuk penyesuaian pasangan, komunikasi efektif, keterbukaan bersama, saling pengertian, dan penyelesaian masalah secara kolaboratif, juga memperkuat kohesi pernikahan.

Kata Kunci: Penjemputan, Keluarga Harmonis, Forum Ta’aruf Indonesia



INTRODUCTION

According to Khoirudin Nasution, one of the primary objectives of establishing a family is to create a harmonious, loving, and merciful household (Nasution, 2013). Achieving a happy family is undoubtedly a complex endeavor, requiring careful consideration of numerous factors (Muhajir, 2022). Among these factors, selecting a prospective life partner is paramount.

The search for a life partner can be approached in various ways, including matchmaking or *ta'aruf*. The term *ta'aruf* is found in the Qur'an in Surah al-Hujurat, verse 13, derived from the word 'arafa, meaning to know (Hamdi, 2017). *Ta'aruf* involves understanding aspects such as religion, morals, character, life vision, independence, finances, education, habits, and other pertinent details about the prospective partner. This process also includes gathering information from the prospective partner's family, friends, neighbors, and close associates (Ghazaly, 2003, p. 56).

In Indonesia, *ta'aruf*, commonly referred to as matchmaking, is a prevalent practice. Many marriages are initiated through matchmaking, facilitated by parents, friends, or matchmaking agencies. Matchmaking agencies serve as platforms for finding suitable partners. Numerous such agencies operate in Indonesia, including in Yogyakarta. One notable agency is "Golek Garwo," established by FORTAIS (Forum Ta'aruf Indonesia) in Sewon, Bantul, Yogyakarta.

Linguistically, "Golek Garwo" translates to "seeking a life partner." The primary objective of this initiative is to assist unmarried individuals in finding their partners. This non-profit social endeavor was

initiated by Ryan Budi Nuryanto in 2011. Since its inception, the program has successfully matched approximately 9,000 couples by 2022. Although based in Yogyakarta, its reach extends nationwide, attracting participants from various regions across Indonesia. The "Golek Garwo" event is held on the third Sunday of each month at the Sewon Sub-district Office in Bantul, DIY. Participants are provided with guidelines and regulations for *ta'aruf* and are taught how to present themselves appealingly to facilitate mutual acquaintance.

Several studies have examined the concept of matchmaking. For instance, Randi Wilham Ahmad (2011) explored the "Kontak Jodoh" program conducted by the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Sewon Bantul, which effectively assists individuals in finding partners. Another study by Habib Nanang Setya Budi (2009) in Piyungan Bantul analyzed matchmaking within halaqah tarbiyah (religious study circles) aimed at finding life partners and supporting da'wah efforts. Robith Mutiul Hakim (2014) focused on the *ta'aruf* process from the perspective of *Ustaz* Felix Siau, emphasizing that interaction between potential partners should be minimized before engagement and that education on building a harmonious family should be provided.

While there is a substantial body of literature on matchmaking, these studies often offer unique perspectives and insights. However, there is a relative scarcity of examples and discussions on the effectiveness of matchmaking in creating harmonious families. This paper aims to contribute to the discourse by examining the matchmaking process in the "Golek Garwo" event and its effectiveness in fostering harmonious families.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a field-research characterized by a descriptive-analytical approach, aimed at obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the research object by testing a specific hypothesis. The data sources utilized in this research are twofold: primary data, derived from interviews with alumni of the "Golek Garwo" program, and secondary data, sourced from literature such as books and journals pertinent to the research focus. The methodology adopts a normative approach, supplemented by the effectiveness theory to ensure robust analysis and interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An Overview of the "Golek Garwo" Forum Ta'aruf Indonesia

"Golek Garwo" is a matchmaking event organized by the Forum Ta'aruf Indonesia, founded by Ryan Budi Nuryanto. The forum's slogans, "*Witing tresno mergo upoyo*" (Love comes through effort) and "*Ketemu sedino kanggo nang donyo lan swargo*" (Meet for a day for both the world and the hereafter), reflect its mission (Nuryanto, 2019).

The establishment of the Forum Ta'aruf Indonesia was inspired by Ryan Budi Nuryanto's personal challenges in finding a spouse. His experiences led to the creation of a platform to facilitate matchmaking for others. Since its inception in 2011, the forum has been a non-profit social initiative dedicated to assisting people in finding their life partners. Over the years, it has successfully matched more than 9,000 couples, leading to marriage (Nuryanto, 2019).

"Golek Garwo" is one of the main events conducted by the Forum Ta'aruf Indonesia. This event is held monthly on the third week, from 9 AM to 1 PM, at the Sewon

District Hall, located at Parangtritis Street Km.7, Sewon, Bantul, Special Region of Yogyakarta. The participants, ranging in age from 20 to 80 years and coming from various backgrounds—widows, widowers, bachelors, and single women—gather from all over Indonesia (Nuryanto, 2019).

The requirements to participate in "Golek Garwo" are straightforward. Participants need to attend the event, fill out a biodata form specifying their desired partner, and submit a copy of their Identity Card (KTP) along with a 3x4 close-up photo. They must also sign a notarized statement confirming their serious intent to participate. Additionally, unmarried participants are required to provide parental consent, while divorced participants must present a divorce certificate. Those from outside Yogyakarta can submit these documents via email at golekgarwo@gmail.com (Nuryanto, 2019).

Ta'aruf: Definition and Legal Basis

In Islam, matchmaking is known as *ta'aruf*, derived from the Arabic word *تعرف* - *يتعرف*, meaning to get to know each other. *Ta'aruf* aims to foster connections as a form of maintaining relationships (Fillah & Sholihuddin, 2005).

Terminologically, Abdullah defines *ta'aruf* as "the process of getting acquainted with a prospective partner with the help of a trusted intermediary or institution, to select a partner based on desired criteria as the initial step towards marriage" (Fillah & Sholihuddin, 2005).

Choosing a spouse in *ta'aruf* must consider compatibility (*kafa'ah*). In Islamic jurisprudence, *kafa'ah* refers to the balance or harmony between a prospective husband and wife, ensuring neither party faces undue

hardship in the marriage (Amir, 2014). This balance includes equality in status, social standing, and parity in moral and financial terms. The emphasis of *kafā'ah* is on equilibrium, harmony, and compatibility (Tihami & Sahrani, 2010, p. 56). Achieving this balance is particularly focused on religious adherence. This aligns with the Prophet Muhammad's explanation in a Hadith narrated by Imam Bukhari: "A woman may be married for four reasons: for her wealth, her lineage, her beauty, and her religion; choose the one who is religious, and you will prosper."

This advanced English translation is designed to meet the standards for publication in reputable international journals indexed by Scopus. If further adjustments or additions are necessary to enhance the text's suitability for publication, please let me know.

The Concept of *Sakinah* Family

A family constitutes a unit consisting of several individuals, each holding specific roles and positions. This unit is formed by a couple who have committed to journey through life together with sincerity and loyalty, grounded in a belief solidified through marriage, bonded with love, and aimed at complementing and enhancing each other in pursuit of Allah's pleasure (Soelaeman, 1994, p. 152).

Firstly, the term "*sakinah* family" comprises two components. The family is the smallest social unit consisting of a husband and wife, formed through marriage. The emphasis here is on marriage; without it, there is no family, as Allah SWT elucidates in the Qur'an, Surah Ar-Rum (30): 21. This verse conveys three primary meanings:

Secondly, "*Litaskunū Ilaiḥā*," which means to achieve tranquility. It signifies that

marriage should provide psychological peace for the spouses.

Thirdly, "*Mawaddah*," which means to cultivate love. The root of "*mawaddah*" is "*wadada*," meaning to blaze or surge suddenly, reflecting the intense love often experienced by young couples. This love is frequently accompanied by jealousy, whereas affection is initially low, leading to conflicts due to the inability to control overwhelming emotions.

Fourthly, "*Rahmah*," which means compassion. For young couples, compassion is initially low, while love is high. As they grow older, compassion increases while *mawaddah* decreases.

Etymologically, a *sakinah* family implies calm, tranquility, and happiness both physically and spiritually. Terminologically, according to the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance and Hajj Affairs Decree No. D/7/1999 on the Implementation Guidelines of the *Sakinah* Family, Chapter III, Article 3, "A *sakinah* family is one built upon a lawful marriage, capable of meeting spiritual and material needs adequately and balanced, enveloped in an atmosphere of love among family members and their environment, harmoniously and in harmony, able to practice and internalize the values of faith, piety, and noble character" (Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2001).

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that a *sakinah* family is the smallest unit of society, consisting of a father, mother, and their children living harmoniously, enveloped in love, with their material and spiritual rights fulfilled, experiencing peace and tranquility, practicing religious teachings, and embodying noble character.

The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs has outlined criteria for *sakinah*

families, including: Firstly, a pre-*sakinah* family, which is a family not formed through a lawful marriage and unable to meet basic spiritual and material needs.

Secondly, a *sakinah* family I, which is a family built on a lawful marriage, meeting minimal spiritual and material needs but unable to fulfill psychological needs.

Thirdly, a *sakinah* family II, which is a family established through a lawful marriage, fulfilling life's needs, and understanding the importance of religious teachings.

Fourthly, a *sakinah* family Plus, which is a family that meets all needs of faith, piety, and noble character perfectly, fulfilling social and psychological needs, becoming a role model for their community (Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2001).

In addition to fulfilling rights and obligations, spouses must understand several elements crucial for creating a *sakinah* family. These elements include mutual understanding, cultivating love, covering each other's shortcomings, engaging in consultations during household problems, and readily forgiving one another (Zaini, 2014, p. 10).

Reasons and Procedures for *Ta'aruf* "Golek Garwo" in the *Ta'aruf* Forum of Indonesia

Based on research findings, individuals choose *ta'aruf* in "Golek Garwo" as a method for seeking and evaluating potential life partners not only because it aligns with Islamic teachings as outlined in the Qur'an and Hadith but also for several other reasons. Firstly, *ta'aruf* prevents involvement in *zina* (fornication). Secondly, the *ta'aruf* process is supervised by a *ustaz* (male religious guide) or *ustazah* (female religious guide). Lastly, the foundation for choosing a partner in *ta'aruf* is rooted in religious principles.

Procedures in *ta'aruf* to establish a *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* Family: Firstly, Performing *Istikharah* Prayer Diligently. Once the male candidate (*ikhwan*) receives the data and photograph of the prospective partner, he should perform *istikharah* prayer sincerely to seek the best decision from Allah SWT. It is crucial to approach the *istikharah* prayer without any preconceived preferences towards the given candidate, entrusting the outcome entirely to Allah SWT. Aligning one's intentions with the aim of forming a family that embodies *sakinah* (tranquility), *mawaddah* (affection), and *rahmah* (mercy) is essential, as intentions often dictate outcomes.

Secondly, Scheduling a Meeting. After performing *istikharah* and feeling confident about his decision, the *ikhwan* should report to the *ustaz*. Subsequently, the *ustaz* provides the data and photograph to the *ustazah*, who then shares this information with the female candidate (*akhwat*). If the *akhwat*, after her *istikharah* prayer, feels ready, she informs her *ustazah*, and a meeting schedule is promptly arranged. This initial meeting typically takes place at the *ustazah*'s residence.

Thirdly, Engaging in In-Depth Questions. During the meeting, both parties, accompanied by the *ustaz* and *ustazah*, should engage in thorough questioning. Topics should cover personal information, family background, hobbies, health issues, and visions and missions for family life. While initial meetings may be marked by shyness and nervousness due to unfamiliarity, these feelings usually dissipate over time. The role of the guides is pivotal in easing the atmosphere, ensuring the interaction remains relaxed yet serious, with a touch of humor to prevent stiffness.

Fourthly, Arranging a *Ta'aruf* Meeting with the *Akhwat*'s Family. If the *ikhwan* feels

a compatibility in visions and missions with the *akhwat* after the initial *ta'aruf*, he should decide to meet her family. This visit, however, should not be conducted alone to avoid slander and differentiate the *ta'aruf* process from conventional dating ("ngapel"). Both parties must ensure the *ustaz* and *ustazah* are informed to maintain communication and coordination, ensuring a positive outcome.

Fifthly, Inviting the *Akhwat* to Visit the *Ikhwan's* Family. In a non-dating marriage arrangement, it is natural for the *ikhwan's* parents to wish to meet their potential daughter-in-law. It is acceptable for the *ikhwan's* parents to invite the *akhwat* for a visit. To prevent any misunderstandings, the *akhwat* should be accompanied by her *ustazah* or a friend from her religious study group, demonstrating care and concern.

Sixthly, Setting the Date for *Khitbah* (Engagement). After mutual visits and compatibility in visions and missions between the *ikhwan*, *akhwat*, and their families, it is advisable not to delay the engagement (*khitbah*). The time between *ta'aruf* and *khitbah* should be kept short to avoid any potential slander.

Seventhly, Determining the Date and Venue for the Wedding. All days and months in Islam are considered good. Therefore, it is essential to avoid selecting auspicious dates and months, which may lead to superstitions (shirk). Follow the Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) example for a simple wedding, inviting orphans, segregating male and female guests, ensuring the bride does not engage in excessive adornment (*tabarruj*), and maintaining modesty in food and drink.

By adhering to these steps, the *ta'aruf* process in "Golek Garwo" can facilitate the establishment of a harmonious and blessed family life, rooted firmly in Islamic principles and practices.

Participants' Views on the Effectiveness of Arranged Marriages in Forming a Harmonious Family

The researcher conducted interviews with participants of the "Golek Garwo" matchmaking event who successfully found partners through the program. Seven participants were interviewed.

Firstly, Teguh and Tantri. This couple participated in the "Golek Garwo" event in February 2011. They met, felt compatible, and decided to marry. They have maintained a harmonious (*sakinah*) family relationship to this day. According to them, finding a partner is not difficult if one prioritizes the religious aspect in their choice. They believe that religion can be a benchmark for determining the future of the family. If a person's religion is good, then the family they build will also be good.

In building a harmonious family relationship, every couple needs to maintain good communication, be open with each other, and adjust to family life. Teguh and Tantri do not consider employment status a significant issue in their family. They believe that the "Golek Garwo" matchmaking event remains effective and can form a harmonious family.

Secondly, Suprianto and Yeni. This couple joined the "Golek Garwo" event in May 2011 and decided to marry in September 2011. Before marrying, they aligned their views with their extended families. They have maintained their family relationship to this day. They believe that in married life, there are many fluctuations, but these can be resolved through mutual adjustment, good communication, and deliberation in solving problems. Their view is that matchmaking is very effective in helping society and forming a harmonious, loving, and compassionate family (*sakinah, mawaddah, warahmah*).

Thirdly, Suharno and Dinda. This couple participated in the "Golek Garwo" event in January 2012. Feeling compatible, they decided to marry in March 2012. They have maintained their family relationship to this day. According to them, the religious factor in choosing a partner is one of the most effective ways to form a harmonious family. Additionally, nurturing love, mutual understanding, and deliberation in decision-making or resolving disputes are other supporting factors. They believe that matchmaking remains very effective and that it has allowed them to maintain harmony in their family.

Fourthly, Mustopo and Roidah. This couple met at the "Golek Garwo" event in February 2013. After two months of getting to know each other, they decided to marry in May. They have maintained their family relationship to this day. They believe that the key to finding a partner is considering the religious aspect of the prospective partner. Besides religion, financial stability is also important, as it is a necessary aspect of family life. They believe that matchmaking events like "Golek Garwo" are very effective in forming harmonious families.

Fifthly, Rusdi and Lina. This couple participated in the "Golek Garwo" event in March 2013. After getting to know each other for several months, they decided to marry and have maintained their family relationship to this day. They believe that in choosing a partner, the first thing to consider is the quality of the person's religion and lineage. If the prospective partner understands religion and how to build an Islamic family, the marital relationship will be harmonious. Rusdi also considers lineage important, as he desires a large family. They believe that the "Golek Garwo" matchmaking event is a vital tool in society, effectively helping people find their partners.

The longevity and harmony in marriage should be the main goals for every couple, as it is their responsibility to maintain their household.

Sixthly, Joko. An alumnus of the "Golek Garwo" event in 2012, Joko found a partner through the event and was married for a year. However, his marriage did not last due to many incompatibilities between the couple. Joko believes that finding a partner requires careful consideration of the partner's background, not just their physical appearance. He continues to participate in the "Golek Garwo" event to find a new partner. According to him, the matchmaking event is still effective because it helps both young and old in society.

Seventhly, Zainal. An alumnus of the "Golek Garwo" event in 2013, Zainal found a partner through the event. However, he was not successful in forming a family, as he divorced his wife due to the involvement of a third party. Zainal believes that his mistake was choosing a partner based on physical appearance. Ultimately, physical appearance alone does not guarantee a harmonious family. Based on consultations with friends who successfully found partners and formed harmonious families through "Golek Garwo," Zainal realized that the primary factor to consider is religion. He also believes that matchmaking events are very effective in helping society find their partners.

In conclusion, the effectiveness of the "Golek Garwo" matchmaking event in forming harmonious families is evident from the participants' experiences. The emphasis on religious compatibility, good communication, mutual understanding, and financial stability are key factors contributing to the success of these marriages. The participants' positive views on the event highlight its importance and effectiveness in

helping individuals find suitable partners and build harmonious families.

Title: Analyzing the Effectiveness of Arranged Marriages in Forming Harmonious Families among "Golek Garwo" Alumni

Based on interviews conducted with participants who successfully formed harmonious families through the "Golek Garwo" matchmaking program, the research indicates that the program organized by the Forum Ta'aruf Indonesia is quite effective in establishing *sakinah* (harmonious) families. This conclusion is drawn from interviews with couples such as Teguh-Ratri and Suharno-Dinda, who joined the "Golek Garwo" matchmaking event with the explicit goal of forming a *sakinah* family.

The initial strategy employed by these couples involved selecting a partner based on religious compatibility. Upon entering married life, they planned to create a harmonious family by practicing mutual openness and employing a system of deliberation to make joint decisions on all family matters.

Further insights were gathered from couples Suprtianto-Yeni, Rusdi-Lina, and Mustopo-Roidah. In addition to religion being the primary factor, these couples also considered other supporting factors such as lineage, wealth, and family background to facilitate the process of forming a harmonious family.

Analyzing this program through the lens of effectiveness theory, the "Golek Garwo" matchmaking initiative by the Forum Ta'aruf Indonesia demonstrates a significant level of effectiveness in establishing harmonious families. This is further corroborated by the data recorded by the Forum Ta'aruf Indonesia, which shows that the "Golek Garwo" program has successfully facilitated

the marriages of over 9,000 couples. Among these, except for only 10 couples, the majority have successfully built harmonious families, as monitored by the Forum Ta'aruf Indonesia organizers and mentors.

This study highlights the potential of structured matchmaking programs in fostering strong family units, emphasizing the importance of shared religious values and additional supportive factors in achieving familial harmony.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the "Golek Garwo" program, organized by the Forum Ta'aruf Indonesia, has been effective in fostering harmonious families through matchmaking. The primary factor contributing to this harmony is religion. In addition to religious compatibility, several other supporting factors play a crucial role, including mutual adjustment with one's partner, effective communication, openness, mutual understanding, and consistently engaging in deliberation to resolve conflicts.

If further elaboration or adjustments are needed to enhance the quality and make it suitable for publication in a high-impact Scopus-indexed journal, please let me know.

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