



Integrating *Rukyatul Hilal* Practices and Islamic Family Law: Case Study in Banjar City, Indonesia

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Abstract

Background: The determination of Islamic lunar months through *ruk yatul hilal* constitutes a critical intersection between Islamic jurisprudence and astronomy because it establishes the legal timing of marriage, divorce, *iddah*, inheritance, and other matters of Islamic family law. Despite extensive studies on *ruk yat* and *hisab*, limited empirical socio-legal research has examined their implications for legal certainty at the local level.

Methods: This study employed a qualitative socio-legal case study integrating normative analysis of Islamic legal sources with empirical data collected through semi-structured interviews involving Religious Court judges, Ministry of Religious Affairs officials, religious leaders, and community representatives in Banjar City, West Java, Indonesia. Documentary analysis, triangulation, and thematic analysis were applied within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*.

Results: The findings reveal that legal certainty is strengthened through the integration of *ruk yat*, *hisab*, MABIMS Neo-Visibility criteria, and the national *Sidang Isbat*. Although Religious Courts consistently implement the official Hijri calendar, some communities continue following organizational determinations, creating limited differences in the timing of family law practices without substantially disrupting legal administration.

Discussion: The implementation of Islamic family law depends on institutional coordination among religious authorities, state institutions, astronomers, and local communities rather than on a single method of lunar month determination.

Conclusion: Integrating religious, scientific, and institutional approaches enhances legal certainty while accommodating legitimate jurisprudential diversity in implementing Islamic family law.

Novelty: This study proposes the *Integrated Rukyatul Hilal Governance Framework* (IRHGF), an empirical socio-legal model explaining how astronomical observation, religious authority, institutional coordination, and public administration collectively strengthen legal certainty in Islamic family law.

Keywords: *ruk yatul hilal*; Islamic family law; legal certainty; *hisab*; socio-legal studies.

INTRODUCTION

Rukyatul hilal (crescent moon observation) constitutes one of the principal mechanisms through which Islamic family law is implemented because the determination of the beginning of Hijri months establishes the legal timing of marriage, divorce, *iddah*, inheritance distribution, and other family-related religious obligations. In Indonesia, the commencement of Ramadan, Shawwal, and Dhu al-Hijjah influences not only religious observance but also administrative and legal practices regulated by Islamic institutions. Consequently, determining the beginning of the Hijri month represents both a religious obligation and an issue of legal certainty. Classical Muslim scholars developed complementary approaches through *ruk yah* (crescent observation) and *hisab* (astronomical



calculation), illustrating that Islamic jurisprudence and astronomy have historically developed in mutual dialogue rather than conflict (Anwar, 2016; Khusurur et al., 2023; Musonnif, 2024; Anwar et al., 2024). Recent advances in astronomical observation, digital imaging, and computational crescent detection have strengthened the scientific reliability of lunar observation while simultaneously raising new questions concerning the legal authority of technological evidence within Islamic decision-making (Rojak & Fawzi, 2024; Nasir et al., 2025). These developments indicate that *rukyatul hilal* is no longer merely a theological issue but also an important socio-legal concern affecting the implementation of Islamic family law in contemporary Muslim societies.

Previous studies have investigated Hijri calendar determination from philosophical, historical, juridical, and astronomical perspectives. Research on Islamic legal philosophy emphasizes that calendar determination should promote legal certainty and public welfare while respecting legitimate differences in Islamic jurisprudence (Anwar, 2016). Subsequent studies examined the interaction between Islamic law and astronomy, highlighting the complementary roles of scientific observation and juristic interpretation in determining the beginning of lunar months (Khusurur et al., 2023; Musonnif, 2024; Anwar et al., 2024). Historical scholarship further demonstrates that attempts to standardize lunar month determination have existed since earlier Islamic authorities (Herlambang et al., 2024), whereas comparative research has analyzed the implementation of *Imkân al-Ru'yah* criteria in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia (Fikri et al., 2025). Other studies have explored the contribution of public law, state institutions, and digital astronomical technology in improving calendar governance (Rojak & Fawzi, 2024; Holis et al., 2025; Nasir et al., 2025). Despite these important contributions, previous research generally focuses on doctrinal debates, astronomical accuracy, institutional regulation, or comparative policies independently. Empirical studies explaining how differences in *rukyatul hilal* practices influence the implementation of Islamic family law and legal certainty within local Muslim communities remain relatively scarce.

The Indonesian context illustrates the practical implications of these differences because the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and other Islamic institutions occasionally adopt different methods or criteria for determining the beginning of Hijri months. Although such diversity reflects the richness of Islamic jurisprudence, it may also influence administrative coordination and public perceptions of legal certainty concerning marriage registration, divorce procedures, *iddah*, inheritance administration, and other aspects of Islamic family law. Contemporary Islamic legal scholarship consistently demonstrates that legal reform should integrate scientific development with the objectives of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* while remaining responsive to social realities (Asman & Muchsin, 2021; Ahyani et al., 2022; Hidayah et al., 2023; Lathif & Shapiulayevna, 2024; Maulana et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2024; Lestianingsih et al., 2025). Similar adaptive patterns are evident in studies concerning local customs, family law administration, and institutional governance within Indonesian Islamic legal practice (Rajab et al., 2025; Suleman et al., 2025; Za et al., 2025). Within this broader context, Banjar City, West Java, Indonesia, provides an important empirical setting because the Religious Court, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, religious organizations, and local Muslim communities interact directly in implementing Islamic family law based on nationally recognized and organizational determinations of the Hijri calendar. Examining this local experience enables a more comprehensive understanding of how legal certainty is negotiated between religious authority, institutional governance, and everyday legal practice.

Based on these considerations, this study addresses three research questions. First, how do *rukyatul hilal* practices influence the implementation of Islamic family law in Banjar City, West Java? Second, how do differences between *rukyah* and *hisab* affect legal certainty in the administration of Islamic family law? Third, how can stronger coordination among religious organizations and state institutions improve legal certainty while accommodating legitimate diversity within Islamic jurisprudence? Accordingly, this research aims to analyze the influence of *rukyatul hilal* practices on the implementation of Islamic family law, identify the legal and institutional factors affecting legal certainty, and formulate an integrative socio-legal framework capable of strengthening coordination between religious authorities and governmental institutions. Unlike previous studies that primarily discuss calendar unification, astronomical methodology, or jurisprudential interpretation, this article emphasizes the practical implications of lunar month determination for Islamic family law through empirical evidence obtained from Banjar City, West Java.

The significance of this study extends beyond discussions concerning lunar observation because it demonstrates how Islamic legal certainty is constructed through the interaction of religious interpretation, scientific knowledge, and institutional governance. Empirical evidence from Banjar City shows that the implementation of Islamic



family law depends not only on the scientific accuracy of determining the beginning of Hijri months but also on effective communication between religious organizations, government institutions, the Religious Court, and Muslim communities. This perspective complements broader developments in Islamic legal scholarship concerning family law reform, legal pluralism, gender justice, and contextual legal interpretation (Fernando et al., 2024; Khairuddin, 2024; Mansur et al., 2024; Rahmawati et al., 2024; Munirah et al., 2025; Taman et al., 2025; Zumrotun & Muna, 2025). The novelty of this research lies in providing an empirical socio-legal analysis of how *rukyatul hilal* practices shape the implementation of Islamic family law and legal certainty at the local level. By integrating Islamic jurisprudence, astronomy, institutional governance, and field evidence from Banjar City, West Java, Indonesia, this study contributes both theoretically to interdisciplinary Islamic legal studies and practically to policy discussions on strengthening legal certainty while respecting legitimate diversity within Islamic legal traditions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The determination of the beginning of Islamic lunar months through *rukyatul hilal* constitutes one of the most important intersections between Islamic jurisprudence and astronomical science because it directly governs numerous religious obligations and legal consequences. Within Islamic legal tradition, the commencement of Ramadan, Shawwal, and Dhu al-Hijjah serves not only as the basis for worship but also influences the implementation of Islamic family law, including the calculation of *iddah*, the scheduling of marriages, inheritance administration, and other legal acts requiring chronological certainty. Classical Islamic jurists recognized both *rukyah* (crescent observation) and *hisāb* (astronomical calculation) as legitimate epistemological approaches, although they differed regarding their legal authority and practical application. Contemporary scholarship likewise argues that Islamic law and astronomy should not be viewed as competing systems but rather as complementary sources of knowledge capable of supporting legal certainty in Muslim societies (Anwar, 2016; Khusurur et al., 2023; Anwar et al., 2024; Herlambang et al., 2024; Musonnif, 2024). Historical studies further demonstrate that Muslim scholars continuously adapted astronomical knowledge to strengthen the implementation of Islamic law, indicating that scientific development has long formed an integral part of Islamic legal reasoning rather than an external challenge to it.

Beyond theological discussions, recent studies have increasingly emphasized the institutional dimension of *rukyatul hilal* and its implications for legal governance. In Indonesia, differences in determining the beginning of Hijri months often arise from variations in crescent visibility criteria, interpretative approaches to *hisāb* and *rukyah*, and the respective authority exercised by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Islamic organizations. Comparative analyses involving Indonesia, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia reveal that although scientific methods have become increasingly sophisticated, institutional diversity continues to produce different legal outcomes concerning the commencement of Islamic months (Fikri et al., 2025). Research also indicates that public law plays an essential role in coordinating religious authority and ensuring legal certainty within a pluralistic Muslim society (Holis et al., 2025). Meanwhile, advances in digital astronomy, astronomical computation, and observational technology have significantly enhanced the reliability of lunar visibility analysis, thereby providing stronger scientific support for Islamic legal decision-making without eliminating jurisprudential diversity (Rojak & Fawzi, 2024; Nasir et al., 2025). Consequently, contemporary scholarship suggests that legal certainty depends not only upon scientific accuracy but also upon effective institutional coordination between religious scholars, governmental authorities, and Muslim communities.

The relationship between lunar calendar determination and Islamic family law has also received increasing scholarly attention within broader discussions concerning legal reform and the objectives of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. Islamic family law requires certainty regarding time because numerous legal consequences—including marriage registration, divorce, reconciliation, *iddah*, inheritance distribution, and other family-related obligations—depend upon accurate determination of Islamic dates. Contemporary studies demonstrate that Islamic law possesses considerable capacity to accommodate scientific development while preserving its normative objectives of justice, legal certainty, and public welfare (Asman & Muchsin, 2021). Similar adaptive tendencies have been identified in research concerning inheritance justice, religious court administration, marriage registration, digital legal governance, and the transformation of Islamic legal norms within contemporary Indonesian society (Ahyani et al., 2022; Hidayah et al., 2023; Lathif & Shapiulayevna, 2024; Maulana et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2024). Collectively, these studies reinforce the argument that Islamic family law should be understood as a dynamic legal system capable of integrating scientific knowledge whenever such integration strengthens legal certainty and serves the broader objectives of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*.



Recent socio-legal scholarship further illustrates that the implementation of Islamic law is shaped not only by legal doctrine but also by local religious practices, institutional interaction, and community acceptance. Studies on customary marriage traditions, living Islamic law, religious moderation, local religious authority, and community-based legal practices demonstrate that Islamic legal implementation frequently reflects negotiation between normative doctrine and local socio-cultural realities (Fernando et al., 2024; Khairuddin, 2024; Mansur et al., 2024; Rahmawati et al., 2024; Rajab et al., 2025; Munirah et al., 2025; Suleman et al., 2025; Za et al., 2025; Zumrotun & Muna, 2025). These findings indicate that differences in determining Islamic dates may influence not only religious rituals but also public perceptions of legal certainty, institutional legitimacy, and the practical administration of Islamic family law. Consequently, empirical investigation at the local level becomes essential for understanding how national legal policies and religious decisions are implemented within particular Muslim communities. This perspective provides an appropriate analytical framework for examining the interaction among religious authorities, state institutions, and local society in Banjar City, West Java.

Despite substantial progress within the existing literature, an important research gap remains. Previous studies have predominantly examined *rukyyatul hilal* from the perspectives of Islamic legal philosophy, astronomical methodology, institutional governance, technological innovation, or national calendar harmonization. Likewise, studies on Islamic family law generally concentrate on marriage administration, inheritance, gender justice, legal reform, or local customs without specifically analysing how differences in *rukyyatul hilal* practices influence the implementation of Islamic family law within local communities. Consequently, limited empirical socio-legal research has explored how Religious Courts, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, religious organizations, and Muslim communities negotiate differing lunar calendar determinations when administering family law in practice. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the case of Banjar City, West Java, by integrating normative Islamic legal analysis with empirical field evidence to explain how *rukyyatul hilal* practices influence legal certainty, institutional coordination, and the implementation of Islamic family law. Through this approach, the study contributes a localized socio-legal perspective that complements previous doctrinal and astronomical studies while providing a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between lunar calendar determination and Islamic family law in contemporary Indonesia.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative socio-legal case study design to examine how *rukyyatul hilal* practices influence the implementation of Islamic family law in Banjar City, West Java, Indonesia. A socio-legal approach was selected because the research seeks to understand not only the normative foundations governing lunar calendar determination but also how those legal principles are interpreted, negotiated, and implemented by religious authorities, state institutions, and Muslim communities in everyday practice. Unlike purely doctrinal legal research, this study combines normative analysis of Islamic legal sources with empirical investigation of institutional practices to explore the interaction between Islamic jurisprudence, astronomical knowledge, and legal administration. The analytical framework is grounded in *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, particularly the principles of preserving religion (*hifz al-dīn*), legal certainty, public welfare (*maṣlahah*), and social harmony, enabling the study to evaluate whether existing *rukyyatul hilal* practices adequately support the implementation of Islamic family law within a pluralistic Muslim community. This methodological design was adopted to answer three research questions: (1) how do *rukyyatul hilal* practices influence the implementation of Islamic family law in Banjar City; (2) what legal, institutional, and practical factors affect legal certainty arising from differences in determining the beginning of Hijri months; and (3) how can religious authorities and state institutions strengthen coordination to improve the implementation of Islamic family law while respecting legitimate jurisprudential diversity.

The research was conducted in Banjar City, West Java, Indonesia, because the city represents an appropriate local setting where decisions regarding the beginning of Islamic lunar months are implemented through interaction between governmental institutions, Religious Courts, Islamic organizations, and the wider Muslim community. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews involving officials of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Agama), judges and administrators of the Religious Court, local religious scholars (*ulama*), mosque leaders, members of rukyat observation teams, and community representatives who participate in or are directly affected by the implementation of Islamic family law. Documentary analysis complemented the interview data through examination of Indonesian legislation concerning religious administration, official government decrees on the determination of Ramadan, Shawwal, and Dhu al-Hijjah, Religious Court administrative documents, institutional guidelines, and relevant Islamic legal sources, including the Qur'an, Hadith, classical fiqh



literature, and contemporary fatwas. Secondary data consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles discussing Islamic law, Islamic astronomy, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, family law, legal certainty, and *rukyatul hilal* practices in Indonesia and other Muslim countries (Anwar, 2016; Asman & Muchsin, 2021; Khusurur et al., 2023; Anwar et al., 2024; Herlambang et al., 2024; Musonnif, 2024; Rojak & Fawzi, 2024; Fikri et al., 2025; Holis et al., 2025; Nasir et al., 2025; Taman et al., 2025). Additional literature concerning Islamic family law reform, religious courts, legal pluralism, digital governance, and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* was incorporated to strengthen contextual interpretation of the empirical findings (Ahyani et al., 2022; Hidayah et al., 2023; Khairuddin, 2024; Lathif & Shapiulayevna, 2024; Maulana et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2024; Rajab et al., 2025; Suleman et al., 2025; Zumrotun & Muna, 2025).

Data were analysed using thematic analysis integrated with qualitative legal interpretation. The analytical process consisted of four sequential stages. First, interview transcripts, legal documents, and supporting literature were organized and coded according to recurring themes, including *rukyatul hilal* practices, institutional authority, legal certainty, implementation of Islamic family law, and community perceptions. Second, thematic coding was employed to identify similarities, differences, and patterns among the perspectives of Religious Court officials, Ministry of Religious Affairs officers, religious leaders, and community members concerning the practical implications of differing lunar calendar determinations. Third, empirical findings were interpreted alongside Islamic legal principles, statutory regulations, and relevant scholarly literature to examine the interaction between normative legal frameworks and local implementation. Finally, all findings were synthesised using the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* framework to formulate an integrated socio-legal explanation of how *rukyatul hilal* practices influence the implementation of Islamic family law in Banjar City. To ensure the trustworthiness of the research, methodological triangulation was applied by comparing interview findings with documentary evidence and academic literature, while source triangulation was conducted across different categories of participants. This analytical strategy enhances the credibility of the findings by demonstrating that the conclusions are supported by convergent evidence derived from normative legal analysis, institutional documentation, and empirical observations within the local socio-legal context of Banjar City, West Java, Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Influence of *Rukyatul Hilal* Practices on the Implementation of Islamic Family Law in Banjar City, Indonesia

The empirical findings demonstrate that the practice of *rukyatul hilal* in Banjar City extends beyond a purely religious observance and functions as an important institutional mechanism supporting the implementation of Islamic family law. Field observations conducted at the Moon Observation Post (Pos Observasi Bulan/POB) of Gunung Putri during the determination of 1 Dzulhijjah 1445 H (7 June 2024) and 1 Syawal 1447 H (19 March 2026) reveal that crescent observation constitutes an integral part of the legal process through which the beginning of Islamic lunar months is formally established. Although the actual observation is undertaken by the Regional Hisab and Rukyat Board (BHRD) together with officials from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, its implications extend directly to legal and administrative matters, including the calculation of *iddah*, marriage administration, inheritance timing, and other family law procedures administered by Religious Courts. These findings indicate that lunar month determination is inseparable from legal certainty because many legal consequences under Islamic family law depend upon officially recognized Hijri dates. This empirical evidence supports previous arguments that astronomy and Islamic jurisprudence should not be viewed as competing epistemologies but rather as complementary instruments for implementing Islamic legal norms (Anwar, 2016; Anwar et al., 2024; Musonnif, 2024).

According to the view of the Head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of Banjar City during the interview conducted on 19 March 2026, *rukyatul hilal* represents not merely an astronomical observation but a legal process intended to provide certainty for Muslims regarding the commencement of Islamic months. The informant emphasized that the implementation of *hisab* and *rukyat* should be understood as mutually reinforcing methods rather than alternative approaches, while the final legal authority remains vested in the National *Sidang Isbat* organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. From the perspective of legal administration, this coordination enables Religious Courts, marriage registrars, and other public institutions to apply a uniform calendar in processing matters related to marriage registration, divorce decisions, and *iddah* calculations. Such institutional coordination reflects broader developments in Indonesian Islamic legal governance, where scientific evidence is increasingly incorporated into legal decision-making without diminishing the authority of Islamic jurisprudence. These findings reinforce earlier studies highlighting that legal



reform within Islamic law can successfully accommodate scientific development through the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, public welfare (*maṣlahah*), and legal certainty (Asman & Muchsin, 2021; Hidayah et al., 2023; Lathif & Shapiulayevna, 2024; Lestianingsih et al., 2025).

The interviews further reveal that practical implementation in Banjar City illustrates the dynamic interaction between empirical observation and scientific calculation. According to the view of the Chairperson of the Regional Hisab and Rukyat Board (BHRD), although the crescent moon was not successfully observed during the 19 March 2026 observation because of unfavorable weather conditions, the observation results nevertheless formed part of the national reporting system considered during the *Sidang Isbat*. Likewise, according to the view of a member of the BHRD observation team interviewed on 7 June 2024, the determination of 1 Dzulhijjah relied not solely upon direct visual observation but also upon *hisab* calculations and the Neo-Visibility MABIMS criteria to compensate for meteorological limitations. These findings indicate that contemporary *rukyatul hilal* practice in Banjar City combines observational evidence with astronomical computation in order to preserve both scientific reliability and religious legitimacy. Rather than undermining Islamic legal authority, technological and astronomical developments strengthen institutional confidence in determining the beginning of lunar months, consistent with previous research on crescent visibility, digital astronomy, and computational lunar observation (Rojak & Fawzi, 2024; Fikri et al., 2025; Herlambang et al., 2024; Nasir et al., 2025).

The legal implications of these practices become particularly evident in the implementation of Islamic family law. According to the view of a Religious Court judge interviewed on 22 March 2026, all judicial administration concerning marriage registration, divorce proceedings, inheritance documentation, and the calculation of *iddah* consistently follows the official Hijri calendar established through the government's legal mechanism. Although differences of opinion among Islamic organizations regarding *hisab* and *rukyat* remain respected as legitimate expressions of Islamic jurisprudential diversity, administrative justice requires a single legal reference to ensure equal treatment before the law. Similarly, according to the view of a local religious leader interviewed on 20 March 2026, Muslim communities generally acknowledge that jurisprudential diversity constitutes part of the rich heritage of Islamic scholarship; nevertheless, ordinary citizens primarily expect certainty regarding the timing of religious observances and family law administration. Consequently, continuous dialogue among religious scholars, astronomers, Islamic organizations, and government institutions is considered essential for preventing confusion while maintaining respect for legitimate differences of opinion. These empirical findings resonate with broader studies emphasizing that Islamic family law continuously adapts to institutional, technological, and social developments while preserving its normative objectives of justice and public welfare (Ahyani et al., 2022; Maulana et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2024; Suleman et al., 2025).

Overall, the findings answer the first research question by demonstrating that *rukyatul hilal* significantly influences the implementation of Islamic family law in Banjar City through its role in establishing legal certainty regarding the beginning of Islamic lunar months. The empirical evidence suggests that the practical significance of *rukyatul hilal* lies not in the observational process alone but in its institutional integration within Indonesia's national legal framework. The combination of *rukyat*, *hisab*, scientific standards, and governmental coordination enables family law administration to function consistently while preserving the pluralistic traditions of Islamic jurisprudence. This study therefore extends previous scholarship by providing empirical socio-legal evidence that the relationship between astronomy and Islamic law is manifested not only at the level of legal theory but also in everyday institutional practice. In the context of Banjar City, *rukyatul hilal* serves simultaneously as a religious ritual, a scientific procedure, and a legal instrument supporting certainty, consistency, and public confidence in the implementation of Islamic family law. This integrated perspective represents one of the principal contributions of the present study to contemporary discussions concerning the interaction between Islamic law, astronomical science, and legal governance in Indonesia.

Legal, Institutional, and Practical Factors Affecting Legal Certainty in the Implementation of Islamic Family Law

The implementation of Islamic family law in Banjar City, West Java, demonstrates that legal certainty concerning the beginning of the Hijri month is influenced by an interaction of legal norms, institutional authority, scientific methodology, and practical conditions encountered during crescent observation. Although Indonesia has established a national mechanism through the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Isbat Session, local implementation remains dependent upon coordination among regional religious institutions, the Religious Court, the Regional Moon Sighting Board (BHRD), and community religious organizations. The empirical findings indicate that the



legal certainty experienced by society does not originate solely from statutory regulations but also from institutional trust and the legitimacy of the decision-making process. According to the perspective of an official of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Banjar City during an interview conducted on 19 March 2026, the implementation of *rukyatul hilal* should be understood as both an astronomical observation and a legal mechanism that provides certainty regarding the commencement of the Hijri month. The informant explained that the simultaneous application of *hisab* and *rukyat*, followed by the final decision of the national Isbat Session, enables government institutions to apply a uniform legal reference in matters related to Islamic family law administration. This finding supports the argument that legal certainty in Islamic law is achieved through harmonization between religious authority and institutional governance rather than through scientific calculation alone (Anwar, 2016; Anwar et al., 2024; Holis et al., 2025).

The empirical evidence further reveals that practical factors significantly affect the implementation of *rukyatul hilal* in Banjar City. During the observation of 1 Dhu al-Hijjah 1445 H on 7 June 2024 and the observation of 1 Shawwal 1447 H on 19 March 2026 at the Gunung Putri Moon Observation Post, unfavorable weather conditions prevented direct visibility of the crescent moon. Nevertheless, according to the perspective of a member of the Regional Moon Sighting Board interviewed on 7 June 2024, the inability to observe the crescent did not invalidate the legal process because astronomical calculations and the MABIMS Neo-Visibility criteria remained available as complementary scientific evidence. Similarly, according to the perspective of the Chairperson of the Regional Moon Sighting Board during the interview on 19 March 2026, unsuccessful local observations continued to be reported to the national Isbat Session, where reports from numerous observation sites throughout Indonesia were collectively evaluated before determining the official beginning of the Hijri month. These findings demonstrate that legal certainty is maintained through institutional procedures rather than relying exclusively upon successful local observations. They also reinforce recent scholarship arguing that advances in Islamic astronomy, computational methods, and standardized visibility criteria strengthen legal legitimacy without replacing Islamic jurisprudential authority (Musonnif, 2024; Fikri et al., 2025; Nasir et al., 2025).

Institutional coordination also emerged as one of the principal determinants of legal certainty in Islamic family law implementation. Interviews conducted with a judge of the Religious Court of Banjar City on 22 March 2026 indicate that judicial administration concerning marriage registration, divorce proceedings, inheritance administration, and the calculation of *iddah* consistently follows the official Hijri calendar issued by the Government of Indonesia. While judges acknowledge the legitimacy of differing jurisprudential opinions regarding *hisab* and *rukyat*, court administration requires a single authoritative calendar to ensure consistency, equality before the law, and procedural certainty. Consequently, diversity in Islamic jurisprudence is accommodated within theological discourse but does not alter administrative legal practice. This institutional approach reflects broader developments in Indonesian Islamic legal governance, where state institutions increasingly balance religious pluralism with administrative uniformity to safeguard legal certainty and public welfare (Ahyani et al., 2022; Hidayah et al., 2023; Rahman et al., 2024). From the perspective of *maqāsid al-sharī'ah*, such institutional harmonization serves the objectives of preserving religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), protecting legal rights, and maintaining social order, thereby demonstrating that administrative consistency constitutes an important dimension of contemporary Islamic legal implementation (Asman & Muchsin, 2021; Lestianingsih et al., 2025).

Beyond legal and institutional dimensions, the findings also reveal the continuing influence of social and religious practices upon perceptions of legal certainty. According to the perspective of a religious leader interviewed on 20 March 2026, differences between *hisab* and *rukyat* have long been recognized as part of the rich intellectual heritage of Islamic jurisprudence and therefore should not be interpreted as legal conflict. Nevertheless, the informant emphasized that Muslim communities generally expect certainty regarding the timing of religious observances because such certainty directly influences family-related obligations, including marriage ceremonies, *iddah*, inheritance distribution, and other legal acts regulated according to the Hijri calendar. The interview further highlighted the importance of strengthening communication among Islamic scholars, astronomers, religious organizations, and government institutions so that jurisprudential diversity can coexist with administrative certainty. Similar observations have been reported in recent studies demonstrating that Islamic family law increasingly requires adaptive institutional communication capable of integrating religious interpretation with contemporary governance while respecting local religious traditions and legal pluralism (Khairuddin, 2024; Mansur et al., 2024; Rajab et al., 2025; Suleman et al., 2025).



Overall, the findings indicate that legal certainty in the implementation of Islamic family law in Banjar City cannot be explained by a single factor. Instead, it emerges through the interaction of legal authority, scientific astronomy, institutional coordination, standardized observation procedures, and community acceptance. The use of *hisab*, *rukyat*, the MABIMS Neo-Visibility criteria, and the national *Isbat* Session collectively forms an integrated legal mechanism capable of accommodating empirical uncertainty while preserving administrative consistency. The Banjar City case demonstrates that effective governance does not eliminate legitimate jurisprudential diversity but instead provides institutional arrangements through which different Islamic legal opinions can coexist without generating legal uncertainty for society. This empirical finding extends previous scholarship that primarily focused on doctrinal debates concerning Hijri calendar determination by showing that legal certainty is fundamentally an institutional achievement resulting from sustained cooperation among the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Regional Moon Sighting Board, the Religious Court, religious organizations, astronomers, and local communities. Consequently, the study argues that strengthening legal certainty in Islamic family law requires continuous integration of scientific evidence, Islamic legal principles, and collaborative governance rather than privileging any single method of determining the beginning of the Hijri month (Anwar, 2016; Khusurur et al., 2023; Taman et al., 2025; Holis et al., 2025).

Strengthening Coordination Between Religious Authorities and State Institutions Through the Integrated *Rukyatul Hilal* Governance Framework (IRHGF)

The empirical findings demonstrate that strengthening institutional coordination represents the most decisive factor in improving the implementation of Islamic family law without eliminating the legitimate diversity of Islamic jurisprudential opinions. Rather than arising from theological disagreement alone, legal uncertainty in Banjar City, West Java, is largely influenced by the interaction between religious organizations, governmental institutions, astronomical experts, and judicial authorities. The interviews conducted during the *rukyatul hilal* observations at the Gunung Putri Lunar Observation Post indicate that these institutions already cooperate in practice; however, their coordination remains primarily procedural and has not yet developed into an integrated governance mechanism capable of consistently translating astronomical observations into legal certainty for society. Consequently, the implementation of Islamic family law continues to depend not only on scientific observation but also on the effectiveness of institutional communication throughout the decision-making process. This finding supports previous scholarship arguing that Islamic law increasingly requires collaborative governance capable of integrating scientific evidence with legitimate legal authority while maintaining public trust (Anwar, 2016; Musonnif, 2024; Holis et al., 2025).

According to the views of officials from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Banjar City expressed during interviews on 19 March 2026, *rukyatul hilal* should not be understood merely as an astronomical observation but as a legal mechanism intended to provide certainty regarding the commencement of Islamic lunar months. They emphasized that astronomical calculations (*hisab*) and direct observation (*rukyat*) are complementary methods, whereas the final legal authority remains vested in the National *Sidang Isbat* organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. This institutional arrangement ensures that administrative activities—including marriage registration, determination of *iddah* periods, inheritance administration, and judicial procedures in Religious Courts—operate under a nationally recognized legal calendar. Likewise, according to the views of Religious Court judges interviewed on 22 March 2026, differences in juristic interpretation are respected within Islamic legal scholarship, yet judicial administration requires a single authoritative calendar to guarantee equal legal treatment and procedural consistency. These empirical findings reinforce the argument that legal certainty in Islamic family law is fundamentally an institutional product generated through coordination between religious authority and state governance rather than through astronomical precision alone (Hidayah et al., 2023; Rahman et al., 2024; Taman et al., 2025).

The interviews further reveal that scientific uncertainty arising from weather conditions has not become the principal obstacle to legal implementation because institutional mechanisms have successfully accommodated such limitations. According to the views of the Chair of the Regional *Hisab* and *Rukyat* Board (BHRD) and members of the observation team interviewed during the observations on 7 June 2024 and 19 March 2026, unsuccessful crescent observations caused by heavy cloud cover did not invalidate the decision-making process. Instead, observational reports from Banjar City were integrated with reports submitted from observation stations throughout Indonesia and evaluated collectively during the National *Sidang Isbat*. Furthermore, astronomical calculations based on the Neo-Visibility MABIMS criteria were employed to complement empirical observations whenever direct visibility could not be confirmed. This institutional combination of local observation, scientific

computation, and centralized legal decision-making illustrates how contemporary Islamic governance successfully harmonizes empirical science with Islamic jurisprudence. Similar conclusions have been reported in previous studies demonstrating that digital astronomy, standardized visibility criteria, and computational analysis strengthen rather than replace Islamic legal authority in determining lunar months (Rojak & Fawzi, 2024; Anwar et al., 2024; Fikri et al., 2025; Nasir et al., 2025).

Building upon these empirical findings, this study proposes the Integrated *Rukyatul Hilal* Governance Framework (IRHGF) as a conceptual model for strengthening coordination between religious authorities and state institutions while preserving legitimate jurisprudential diversity. Unlike previous studies that primarily discuss astronomical methodology or legal doctrine separately, the IRHGF integrates five mutually reinforcing governance components: (1) Astronomical Observation, consisting of *rukyatul hilal*, astronomical calculations (*hisab*), Neo-Visibility MABIMS criteria, and modern observational technology; (2) Religious Authority, involving the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Regional Hisab and Rukyat Boards (BHRD), Islamic scholars, and religious organizations; (3) Institutional Coordination, which facilitates data exchange, verification, consultation, and communication among all stakeholders; (4) National Legal Decision, represented by the National *Sidang Isbat* that establishes the officially recognized commencement of Islamic lunar months; and (5) Islamic Family Law Implementation, encompassing marriage registration, determination of *iddah*, inheritance administration, Religious Court proceedings, and broader public religious administration. The model emphasizes that legal certainty emerges through continuous interaction among these five components rather than through reliance upon any single institution or methodology. Accordingly, scientific evidence enhances legal legitimacy, while institutional collaboration transforms diverse scientific and jurisprudential perspectives into a unified administrative framework capable of serving society effectively. This governance perspective reflects the adaptive character of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, which seeks to preserve religion (*hiḍḍ al-dīn*), legal certainty, social harmony, and public welfare through coordinated institutional action (Asman & Muchsin, 2021; Lestianingsih et al., 2025).

Figure 1 should be inserted immediately after this paragraph to illustrate the structure of the Integrated *Rukyatul Hilal* Governance Framework (IRHGF) before the concluding discussion of this subsection.



Source: Developed by the authors based on empirical findings from Banjar City, West Java, Indonesia (2024).



Finally, the proposed IRHGF contributes both theoretically and practically to contemporary Islamic legal scholarship. Theoretically, it extends socio-legal discussions by demonstrating that the implementation of Islamic family law should be understood as a governance process integrating jurisprudence, astronomy, institutional coordination, and public administration rather than as a purely doctrinal or scientific issue. Practically, the framework provides a policy-oriented model that can be adopted not only in Banjar City but also by other regional governments seeking to strengthen coordination between Religious Courts, Ministries of Religious Affairs, regional *rukyatul hilal* institutions, and religious organizations. Importantly, the framework does not seek to eliminate the long-standing diversity of Islamic legal opinions regarding *hisab* and *rukyat*. Instead, it establishes an institutional mechanism through which legitimate jurisprudential diversity can coexist with administrative uniformity, thereby ensuring that Islamic family law is implemented consistently while respecting the pluralistic nature of Islamic legal thought. Consequently, the IRHGF represents the principal novelty of this study by offering an interdisciplinary governance model that bridges astronomy, Islamic jurisprudence, and public administration to strengthen legal certainty and the practical implementation of Islamic family law in contemporary Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the practice of *rukyatul hilal* in Banjar City extends beyond a religious ritual and functions as an essential institutional mechanism underpinning the implementation of Islamic family law. The determination of the beginning of Islamic lunar months through the integration of *rukyat*, *hisab*, the MABIMS visibility criteria, and the national *Sidang Isbat* directly affects legal consequences in family law administration, including the calculation of *iddah*, marriage registration, divorce procedures, and inheritance distribution. At the local level, Religious Courts and civil registration institutions consistently rely on the officially issued Hijri calendar, while segments of society continue to follow different organizational determinations. This condition indicates that Islamic family law operates within an interconnected structure involving state authority, religious institutions, and social acceptance, where legal certainty is produced through institutional coordination rather than a single epistemic source.

Regarding legal certainty, the divergence between *rukyah* and *hisab* generates a layered form of legal certainty rather than a uniform one. Formal legal certainty is achieved through the nationally standardized Hijri calendar established via the Ministry of Religious Affairs' *Sidang Isbat*, which serves as the authoritative reference for judicial and administrative processes. Simultaneously, socio-religious certainty persists within communities that adhere to different organizational calendars, reflecting the plural character of Islamic jurisprudential practice in Indonesia. Nevertheless, this plurality does not lead to systemic legal disruption due to the presence of structured coordination mechanisms that combine observational data, astronomical computation, and standardized visibility thresholds under MABIMS guidelines. Within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, this condition reflects a dynamic legal construction aimed at balancing legal certainty, public welfare (*maṣlahah*), and social harmony, rather than enforcing epistemic uniformity. Therefore, legal certainty in Islamic family law emerges as a collaborative institutional outcome shaped by the interaction of scientific knowledge, religious authority, and state governance.

The novelty of this study lies in the formulation of the Integrated *Rukyatul Hilal* Governance Framework (IRHGF), which conceptually integrates astronomical observation, religious authority, institutional coordination, national legal decision-making, and Islamic family law implementation into a single analytical structure. This framework moves beyond prior studies that tend to treat lunar calendar determination as either a purely juridical or astronomical issue, by demonstrating its socio-legal and governance dimensions in a localized empirical context. The contribution of this study is twofold: first, it enriches contemporary socio-legal scholarship on Islamic family law by providing empirical evidence of how legal certainty is constructed at the local level; and second, it offers a policy-relevant model that may strengthen coordination between the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Religious Courts, regional *rukyat* institutions, and Islamic organizations. However, this study is limited by its geographical scope, which is confined to Banjar City, thereby restricting broader national generalization. It also does not fully capture the diversity of organizational perspectives across Indonesia, nor does it employ quantitative methods to measure the socio-economic impacts of differences in lunar calendar determination. Future research is therefore recommended to expand the geographic scope, adopt comparative multi-regional or cross-country approaches, and integrate mixed-method methodologies to provide a more comprehensive and robust understanding of the relationship between *rukyatul hilal* practices and Islamic family law in contemporary Muslim societies.

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