



RELIGIOUS EMPOWERMENT THROUGH MAJELIS TAKLIM: ISLAMIC LEARNING STRATEGY FOR MIGRANTS

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Abstract:

This research examines the role of majlis taklim in Islamic religious learning for migrants in Ternate City, focusing on applying the andragogy approach. Majelis Taklim serves as an informal space to strengthen the spiritual identity of migrants separated from their home environment. Through participatory and experiential approaches, majlis tackle provides flexibility in learning that allows the congregation to understand Islamic teachings applicable to daily life. This research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. The data collection techniques in the study include observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation to collect data from several taklim assemblies in Ternate City, namely Majelis Taklim Walisongo, Jum'at Wage, Lailatul Iltima', and Jawara. The research findings indicate that majelis taklim are instrumental in preserving the religious identity of migrants, enhancing social connections, and offering worshipers the chance to deepen their spiritual understanding of the challenges they face in their lives. While this study focuses on a limited number of majelis taklims in Ternate City, the results contribute to the broader comprehension of experiential Islamic learning within migrant communities.

Keywords: *Andragogy, Islamic Religious Learning, Majelis Taklim, Migrants, Religious Identity.*

INTRODUCTION

Urbanization and migration have become inevitable global phenomena, creating complex social and cultural dynamics in various regions (Smart & Smart, 2003; Wu, 2024), including Indonesia (Rustiadi et al., 2021). Ternate City, known as one of the centers of trade and Islamic history in eastern Indonesia, has become one of the leading destinations for migration. Migrants from various regions come to this city with various motivations, from seeking economic opportunities and education to family reasons. However, this migration often has an impact on social and spiritual life patterns, especially for migrants who are far from their hometowns and extended families (Olcese et al., 2024). In such a situation, maintaining religious identity becomes one of the main challenges faced by the migrant community.

Religious identity is an important element in the life of Muslim communities, especially in maintaining the sustainability of Islamic values amid

social change (Hefni et al., 2022; Zainiyati et al., 2024). For migrant communities, this challenge is even more significant because they have to adapt to a new environment that is often more heterogeneous, both in terms of religion, culture, and social values. On the other hand, interaction with local communities with different religious traditions can also be a potential threat to preserving their religious practices (Auer et al., 2023; Sugianto et al., 2024). Therefore, a platform is needed that can serve as a medium for religious learning and a social space that strengthens their collective identity as Muslims.

Majelis taklim (a forum in which Muslims commonly study Islam) is one of the strategic solutions to fulfill the spiritual and social needs of the migrants' community (Octaviana et al., 2023). Majelis taklim, an informal Islamic religious learning institution, has long been part of the religious tradition of Indonesian society (Hasyim, 2021). Its function is not only as a place to gain religious knowledge but also as a space for social interaction that supports the creation of community solidarity (Fallah, 2024). Majelis taklim in Ternate City provides a flexible alternative for migrants to stay connected with Islamic values amidst limited time and resources.

As a non-formal institution not bound by formal structures, majelis taklim uniquely provides more inclusive access for everyone, including migrants (Fadli, 2023). Time flexibility, relevant materials, and contextual approaches are the main advantages that make majelis taklim well received by urban communities. In addition, majelis taklim can also strengthen a sense of community among worshippers, especially for those who are far from family or close relatives (Halija et al., 2021).

The existence of majelis taklim is in line with the principle of lifelong learning which emphasizes the importance of education as an ongoing process, either through formal, non-formal, or informal channels, to improve the quality of life of individuals (Susanti et al., 2021). Majelis taklim, as a non-formal education institution, offers an inclusive learning model for people of all ages, backgrounds, and levels of education to gain religious knowledge relevant to their life needs.

Majelis taklim among migrants is also inseparable from various internal and external challenges. As an internal challenge, urban life consists of various activities that often make it difficult for migrants to consistently participate in religious activities. External challenges include modernization factors, such as more interactive learning methods and digital technology to reach a wider audience. Therefore, innovation in the management of majelis taklim is needed to continue to be relevant to the needs of the migration community in the contemporary era (Hidayat et al., 2024).

Several previous studies have shown the importance of majelis taklim in religious and social empowerment. Ridho, in his research, found that majelis taklim in urban areas had a significant impact on women's empowerment. In addition to deepening religious knowledge, taklim assemblies also serve as a space to develop social and emotional skills, strengthening women's roles in the family and society. Taklim assemblies become a means of psychological empowerment that makes women more confident in facing life's challenges (Ridho et al., 2023).

Research by Hidayat, Kosim, and Salman Yafi shows that majelis taklim in rural areas also have a dual role. In addition to being a place to learn about religion, majelis taklim in rural areas have become centers of economic empowerment. Through Islamic values-based training, such as small entrepreneurship, majelis taklim helps its members improve their economic skills, which impacts improving their welfare. This shows that majelis taklim can

integrate aspects of religious education with economic development (Hidayat et al., 2024).

Safira Halija, in her research, emphasizes the importance of majelis taklim in character building and community spirituality. Majelis taklim plays a role in creating an environment that supports the growth of positive character and strengthens the social resilience of Muslims. Through teaching based on Islamic values, majelis taklim not only increases religious knowledge but also improves members' quality of life in various social and economic aspects. These three studies confirm that majelis taklim is more than just a place to learn religion but also an integral means of socio-economic empowerment (Halija et al., 2021).

From the above studies, it is clear that majelis taklim has a significant role in strengthening morality and social empowerment in local communities. However, studies that specifically highlight the role of majelis taklim in the context of migrant communities are still minimal. Previous studies have focused more on majelis taklim in rural or homogeneous environments without examining the dynamics in urban environments such as Ternate City. This is a novelty in research that needs to be bridged, especially in understanding how majelis taklim adapts to the needs of migrant communities with unique values and characteristics.

In Ternate City, majelis taklim not only functions as a place to learn religion but also as a medium to maintain local Islamic traditions passed down from generation to generation. The existence of these majelis taklim provides opportunities for migrants to understand and integrate Islamic values into their daily lives while strengthening their connection to the Muslim community in the region. Thus, majelis taklim has a strategic role in supporting the sustainability of Islamic education in the midst of modernization.

This research aims to answer several important questions related to the role of majelis taklim in learning Islam for migrants. First, how is the learning strategy applied in majelis taklim to meet the spiritual and intellectual needs of migrants? Second, to what extent is the impact of majelis taklim on strengthening the religious and social identity of the migrants' community? Third, what challenges and opportunities are faced in managing majelis taklim in an urban environment such as Ternate City?

This research is expected to make a significant contribution, theoretically and practically, by examining these questions. Theoretically, this research fills a gap in the academic literature on the role of majelis taklim in the context of migrant communities. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a guide for majelis taklim managers, policymakers, and Muslim communities to develop more effective and adaptive learning strategies.

The results of this study are expected to be the basis for efforts to strengthen the role of majelis taklim in supporting the religious identity of Muslim communities in urban environments, both in Ternate City and other areas with similar characteristics. In addition, the findings also serve as a reflection on the importance of maintaining Islamic traditions in the face of the dynamics of modernization. Amid globalization, which often erodes local values, majelis taklim emerges as a spiritual fortress that can maintain the sustainability of Islamic values and space to strengthen social solidarity among migrants.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach to understanding the experiences and meanings of the migration community related to learning Islam through majelis taklim in Ternate City (Phillips-Pula et al., 2011). This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore how

majelis taklim becomes a space for religious learning and a social forum for migrants' communities to maintain their religious identity.

The research was conducted in Ternate City with a focus on four main majelis taklim that are active in the community, namely: Majelis Taklim Walisongo, Jum'at Wage, Lailatul Iltima', and Jawara. The selection of this location is based on the uniqueness of each majelis taklim, both in terms of learning methods, religious traditions, and social functions developed in the majelis taklim.

Data were collected through three main techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation (Sugiyono, 2009). Observations were conducted in a participatory manner during the assembly activities to observe interactions, teaching methods, and the learning atmosphere. Interviews were conducted with the management of the majelis, pilgrims from among the migrants, and religious leaders to explore their experiences directly. Meanwhile, documentation in recordings, photos of activities, and written archives complemented and strengthened the data obtained from observations and interviews.

Data analysis used the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, and Saldana, which includes three stages: data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014; Ridder et al., 2014). The collected data were reduced to focus on relevant information and then presented as descriptive narratives or tables to identify patterns and themes. Conclusions were drawn gradually with verification through technical triangulation and source triangulation. To maintain data validity, this research applied triangulation and member check strategies. Triangulation ensured that the data obtained was consistent through various techniques and sources. At the same time, a member check was conducted by confirming the research findings with participants to ensure the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation (Ulfatin, 2015).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Learning Strategies in Majelis Taklim

Islamic religious learning implemented in majelis taklim in Ternate City is heavily influenced by the principles of andragogy, a theory of adult learning developed by Malcolm Knowles. The main principle in andragogy is that adults learn better when the material taught is relevant to their needs based on their life experiences (Purwati et al., 2022). In this context, majelis taklim not only provides theoretical religious teaching but also pays attention to the diverse life experiences of the congregation, especially since the majority of them are migrants from various regions with different social and cultural backgrounds.

This applies to Majelis Sholawat Walisongo, where the congregation listens to religious lectures and engages in various interactive dialogues that discuss the application of Islamic values in daily life. This dialogical process provides space for the congregation to share their personal experiences dealing with the challenges of living in a big city like Ternate. One of the congregants, Yudi, revealed that through interactive dialogues at the taklim assembly, he could relate the problems he faced at work to the teachings of Islam. "In this majelis, I learned to live calmly and solve work problems patiently." This shows that the experience-based approach in taklim assemblies effectively provides applicable religious understanding.

In addition, taklim assemblies also emphasize context-based learning. At the Lailatul Ijtima' Assembly, the congregation was invited to talk about how they deal with religious and cultural differences in the work environment and how Islamic teachings can be a guide in resolving these differences. This experiential learning is essential in connecting religious teachings with the reality of the lives

of pilgrims who often face significant challenges as migrants. In this way, Islamic religious learning is a theory and practice that can be directly applied in everyday life (Sugianto, 2020). Communication dynamics in Islamic religious learning can also be the basis for developing more effective and inclusive learning strategies (Rofiqi & Sugianto, 2024).

Another andragogy principle is that adults learn better when controlling their learning (Yahya et al., 2024). In the vibrant setting of majelis taklim, congregants possess the empowering freedom to select the topics they wish to delve into, creating a dynamic and interactive atmosphere. They are actively encouraged to pose questions and express their opinions, fostering an engaging dialogue among participants. At Majelis Jawara, the discussions are particularly tailored, allowing individuals to choose topics that resonate with their real-life challenges. This thoughtful approach not only cultivates a deep sense of involvement in the learning experience but also enriches their understanding of the material, making the sessions meaningful and impactful.

However, although the principles of andragogy are well implemented in majelis taklim, there are challenges related to the diverse backgrounds of the congregation. Some congregants have different levels of religious understanding, which can hinder the learning process. Therefore, the majelis taklim must be able to adjust how the material is delivered so that it can be understood by all worshipers, both those who already have a deep understanding of religion and those who are just learning about Islamic teachings. This requires the caregivers of majelis taklim to be facilitators who can balance between theory and practice in religious learning.

In addition, time constraints are another challenge for adults in religious learning. Many majelis taklim members are busy with their jobs, making it difficult to attend regular learning sessions. As a solution, some majelis taklim have arranged meeting times in the evenings or holidays. At Majelis Jum'at Wage, meetings are held in the evening after working hours, allowing those who work during the day to join the activities. This shows that the majelis taklim tries to adjust the time to the congregation's work schedule by the principles of andragogy that emphasize the importance of flexibility in adult learning.

Islamic religious learning at taklim assemblies in Ternate City has applied the principles of andragogy well. The taklim assemblies not only provide religious learning in theory but also relate religious teachings to the real life of the congregation. With an experiential approach and interactive discussions, taklim assemblies have answered the religious learning needs of adults who need relevance and application in everyday life. This experiential learning also strengthens the community and solidarity among the congregation, most of whom are migrants from different cultural and religious backgrounds.

The andragogy approach in majelis taklim is constructive in adjusting learning methods to the needs, experiences, and maturity level of the congregation so that majelis taklim does not only function as a space to convey religious information but also as a space for congregants to learn based on their own experiences actively. Yudi, an immigrant who works as a trader in Ternate, said, "We are taught not only the theory of religion but also how to practice it in daily life practically. That is what makes me understand more". Based on the results of this interview, most worshipers feel that they can better understand religious teachings when the material presented is related to their daily life experiences.

Caregivers of majelis taklim who apply the principles of andragogy emphasize participatory and experiential learning. They avoid the monotonous lecture method and prefer discussion, question and answer, and case studies

relevant to the congregation's daily lives. At Majelis Jawara, the caregivers often invite the congregation to share personal experiences about their challenges in maintaining religious commitment in a plural environment. Harris, one of the congregation members active in various dialogues, said, "We not only learn from lectures but also from the experiences of fellow members who have interesting stories." This approach is very suitable for migrants with diverse backgrounds and different life experiences, as they are allowed to explore religious teachings in a more contextual and applicable way.

Andragogy-based learning also allows the congregation to take initiative in their learning process. At Majelis Lailatul Iltima', congregants are often asked to lead or recite prayers together, allowing them to learn while honing their public speaking skills and interacting with fellow congregants. This gives them a sense of confidence while at the same time fostering a sense of responsibility in guiding others. Dwi Kartaji, a worshipper who actively leads prayers, says, "I feel more confident to lead prayers, and it makes me closer to religion. Here, we are allowed to grow."

The andragogy approach also facilitates more flexible learning, where adult learners can choose materials that better suit their needs (Kadir, 2016). In Majelis Sholawat Walisongo, the caregiver of the assembly provides space for the congregation to choose the theme they want to discuss in each meeting. Fajar, a migrant who chose to learn prayers when facing life's difficulties, said, "Here we can choose the theme we want to discuss, and it makes learning feel more personal and meaningful." This makes worshippers feel more involved in the learning process and feel that their religious teachings are relevant to their life needs.

By embracing an andragogical approach that values experience and practical needs, majelis taklim transforms education for migrants into a powerful tool for personal and communal growth. This method allows learners to connect their studies to their everyday lives, igniting a passion for knowledge that transcends the classroom. It beautifully aligns with the spirit of adult learners, who seek education that is theoretical, applicable, and enriched by their own life journeys. Such an approach enlightens and empowers, inspiring individuals to rise above challenges and thrive.

Strengthening the Migrants' Religious Identity through Majelis Taklim

As a migrant community, many of the congregants in Ternate City face challenges in maintaining their religious identity. In an overseas life filled with various social and cultural challenges, majelis taklim serves as a space that allows them to maintain and strengthen their religious identity. Religious identity is important to one's social identity, especially for migrants far from their home communities (Curtis & Olson, 2019). Majelis taklim in Ternate City significantly strengthens social and religious identity through applicative and experiential religious learning.

One way that majelis taklim strengthens migrants' religious identity is by creating an inclusive and mutually supportive space among congregants (Hasanah, 2019). At Majelis Lailatul Iltima', pilgrims from various social and cultural backgrounds can meet and share their experiences regarding applying Islamic teachings in their daily lives. Through meetings like this, pilgrims feel strengthened to live as Muslims in the big city. Khoiruddin revealed, "This majelis not only a place to learn religion but also a place to meet friends with the same spirit." This proves the congregation feels more confident living in Ternate after attending the majelis taklim.

This strengthening of religious identity can also be seen in the way the

taklim assembly responds to the challenges faced by migrants, such as difficulties in living in a heterogeneous environment. In Majelis Sholawat Walisongo, congregants often discuss how they maintain their religious principles amidst city life's various temptations and challenges. One topic often discussed is maintaining consistency in practicing worship amid busy work. Such discussions can provide moral and social support for the congregation to remain steadfast in practicing religious teachings, which strengthens their religious identity (Rofiqi et al., 2023).

In addition, majelis taklim also serves as a place where migrants can strengthen relationships with fellow Muslims from various regions. The social solidarity created within the majelis taklim strengthens the sense of community and collective identity (Jailani, 2024). Majelis Jum'at Wage, its congregation, often collaborates in social activities, such as helping fellow migrants experiencing difficulties. This activity strengthens the social ties between congregants and their religious identity as Muslims who care about each other.

Religious identity is also strengthened through religious practices taught in the majelis taklim. In addition to lecture material, majelis taklim also teaches various forms of worship such as prayer, dhikr, and congregational prayer, which are very important for maintaining the spiritual consistency of the congregation. With the routine of worshipping together, the congregation feels more connected to their religion and community, even though they live far from their families and hometowns. For example, in Majelis Jum'at Wage, the congregation always performs congregational prayers, which strengthens their relationship with God and fellow members of the majelis taklim.

Majelis taklim in Ternate City has an important role in strengthening the religious identity of migrants. By creating an inclusive space, providing social support, and teaching religious values relevant to daily life, the majelis taklim succeeds in helping the congregation maintain and strengthen their religious identity. This experiential religious learning provides an understanding of religion and builds a sense of community and solidarity among fellow migrants.

One of the main contributions of majelis taklim to the migrant community in Ternate City is strengthening their religious identity. As individuals separated from their home environment, migrants often face significant challenges in maintaining the cultural diversity and religious beliefs they bring with them (Zhuang & Lok, 2023). Therefore, majelis taklim becomes a critical forum for strengthening their understanding of the teachings of Islam and maintaining their relationship with religious values that have been instilled long ago in their hometowns.

For some migrants, the busyness of life in the big city often obscures their spiritual goals. However, with majelis taklim, they are given the space to renew their intentions, understand the meaning of Islamic teachings in modern life, and practice these teachings daily. The congregants are taught to pray on time despite their hectic routines and the importance of keeping their hearts and minds clean from feelings of envy and jealousy. This indirectly reminds them to always maintain their moral and spiritual attitude, even amid a busy and sometimes materialistic life.

This majelis taklim also serves as a reminder that religion is connected with ritual worship and social ethics. Learning about manners and noble morals is an important part of the material delivered at majelis taklim (Sukirman et al., 2021). The caregivers of the majelis teach about the importance of respecting parents, maintaining brotherhood, and behaving well toward others. These lessons help the congregation, especially migrants who often feel isolated, maintain harmonious relationships with others and practice religious values in

their social lives. It is also a means of strengthening bonds between migrants and their religious identity in a heterogeneous big city.

The impact of this intensified religious identity is reflected in the congregation's unwavering commitment to safeguarding their cherished religious traditions, even while living far from their hometown. They perceive their strong connection to the majelis taklim as a vital factor in sustaining an Islamic lifestyle, serving as a beacon of guidance and support. This situation highlights the pivotal role that majelis taklim plays in reinforcing the bonds of brotherhood among its members and enriching their religious identity. Amid the bustling diversity and challenges of urban life, the majelis taklim becomes a sanctuary where individuals can nurture their faith and community ties, fostering a sense of belonging and continuity in their spiritual journey.

Challenges of Religious Learning in Majelis Taklim

Although majelis taklim has a vital role in guiding and strengthening the religious identity of migrants in Ternate City, majelis taklim is faced with several challenges that must be faced in religious learning. One of the main challenges is the limited time owned by the congregation. Most majelis taklim members are adults with various obligations, whether working, taking care of the family, or taking care of other social life. Therefore, the flexibility of the activity time needs to be considered. Meetings are often held in the evening after working hours, but many congregants need help to set aside enough time to attend meetings regularly.

Benny, one of the Walisongo congregants, said, "Sometimes I can only come a few times a month because I have to work during the day, and at night, I am already exhausted." This time limitation also impacts the more profound understanding of religious learning materials. Some worshipers feel that they need more time to absorb the material optimally. Therefore, the caregivers of majelis taklim must be more creative in delivering learning materials to be well understood in a limited time.

In addition to the problem of time constraints, another challenge faced by majelis taklim is the diversity of the congregation's background (Hawari et al., 2023). In a big city like Ternate, the congregation comes from various regions with different cultural and religious backgrounds. Although the congregants are Muslims, they often bring with them different traditions and religious understandings, which sometimes lead to different views in discussions. At Majelis Jawara, congregants from areas with strong religious traditions sometimes need help understanding a more flexible and experiential learning approach. Haris, one of Jawara's congregants, said "I come from an area that is more rigid in practicing religion, so sometimes I feel confused by how the material is delivered here".

Nevertheless, these differences do not hinder the routine of the taklim assembly. On the contrary, this diversity becomes a strength in developing religious learning that is more inclusive and experience-based. Discussions and interactive dialogues in the taklim assemblies often focus on the different views to understand and respect these differences. In Majelis Lailatul Iltima', pilgrims from different regions often share their views on various religious practices, enriching mutual understanding. Religious learning becomes more dynamic as worshipers are invited to view Islamic teachings from various perspectives.

However, although diversity is an added value in religious learning, it also requires the caregivers of majelis taklim to have skills in managing differences. The caregiver of the majelis taklim needs to be a wise facilitator in directing the discussion so that it remains by the correct religious teachings without offending

worshippers who have different views. In addition, a question and answer session after the lecture to provide opportunities for the congregation to clarify things they have not understood or consider still ambiguous also needs to be implemented. In this way, majelis taklim activities remain productive, and the congregation feels valued even though they come from different backgrounds.

Furthermore, majelis taklim must also maintain the continuity of religious learning amid a fast-paced and modern life (Hasyim, 2021). Therefore, majelis taklim must continue to provide motivation and enthusiasm so that the congregation does not feel lost and increases its awareness of the importance of maintaining faith and piety even amid a materialistic world. This program encourages the congregation to understand religion and practice religious values in daily life.

Majelis taklim in Ternate City not only serves as a means to deepen religious knowledge but also as a means to build social relationships among migrants. As a community separated from their families and hometowns, migrants often feel lonely and isolated in big cities. In this context, majelis taklim is a gathering place that allows migrants to form social networks and support each other. The existence of majelis taklim is essential, especially in creating a sense of community that reduces the feelings of alienation often experienced by migrants (Suryaneta & Gusman, 2022).

The social solidarity created in majelis taklim can also be seen in the social activities organized by the congregation of majelis taklim (Prianda et al., 2024). At Majelis Walisongo, the congregation is often involved in social activities such as collecting funds to help fellow migrants experiencing difficulties. These social activities strengthen the bonds between congregants and remind them of the importance of caring for others. For example, the majelis taklim held a fundraiser to help a congregation whose house was burned down. This activity shows a sense of solidarity and how majelis taklim functions as a strong social network for migrants.

CONCLUSION

Majelis taklim in Ternate City has a very strategic role in strengthening the religious identity of the migrant community. Through the andragogy approach, taklim assemblies provide a more flexible and participatory space for migrants to understand the teachings of Islam in the context of daily life. The congregation can improve their religious insight through discussions based on personal experience and applicable understanding. In addition, majelis taklim serves as a place to maintain religious traditions and strengthen social relations among migrants, who often feel isolated in a heterogeneous environment. Religious learning through majelis taklim allows migrants to maintain their religious identity despite being away from their hometowns. This research contributes to understanding the dynamics of experience-based Islamic religious learning and how the andragogy approach can increase the effectiveness of learning in the overseas context. The implication of this research is the recognition of the role of majelis taklim as a forum for religious learning that is not only formal but also adaptive to the needs of the overseas community. However, there are limitations in this study, namely that it only focuses on several majelis taklim in Ternate City, which limits the generalization of the results of this study to the overseas community as a whole, both in Ternate City and in other areas. Therefore, further research is needed involving more majelis taklim in a wider scope in order to obtain more comprehensive results.

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