



**STRATEGIC ROLES OF MAJELIS TAKLIM NURUL HUDA IN STRENGTHENING
ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN YELLU VILLAGE, SOUTH MISOOL
DISTRICT, RAJA AMPAT**

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Diterima : 2025-11-21

Direvisi : 2025-10-20

Disetujui : 2025-12-04

ABSTRACT

Majelis Taklim is a non-formal Islamic educational institution that facilitates religious learning and moral development within Indonesia's Muslim communities. This study investigates the strategic role of Majelis Taklim Nurul Huda in strengthening Islamic religious education among women and youth in Yellu Village, South Misool District, Raja Ampat. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through interviews with the chairperson and three members of the Majelis Taklim, two members of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), two mosque committee officers, and two local Islamic community leaders. The findings show that Majelis Taklim Nurul Huda implements integrated pedagogical strategies rooted in Qur'anic literacy, collective religious study, moral exemplification, and youth mentoring. The supporting factors include strong communal solidarity, collective religious identity, and recognition of women as custodians of household spiritual life. However, geographic isolation, limited instructional resources, and low pedagogical capacity among voluntary teachers present challenges. The impact of these strategies is evident in improved religious awareness among families, increased youth participation in mosque-based activities, strengthened ethical conduct, and greater intra-community cooperation. This study contributes to Islamic sociology by showing how non-formal women-led religious institutions in maritime Papua sustain religious identity and moral continuity within geographically marginalized communities.

Keywords: Majelis Taklim, Islamic Education, Community Learning, Religious Identity, Raja Ampat, Islamic Sociology

INTRODUCTION

Majelis taklim has long served as one of the most influential forms of non-formal Islamic education in Indonesia, particularly among women and community groups in rural and urban peripheries (Sulaeman, 2019). As voluntary religious learning circles, majelis taklim not only function as spaces of religious instruction but also as arenas for identity formation, social cohesion, and moral cultivation. Within Muslim communities that lack access to formal Islamic educational institutions, majelis taklim often constitute the primary medium through which Islamic values are reproduced and transmitted across generations (Ipa Salma Alhamid; Indria Nur; Hasbullah, 2024; Tang et al., 2018). However, existing scholarship has primarily examined majelis taklim in urban or densely populated rural settings, leaving limited attention to their role in geographically isolated maritime Muslim communities such as those found in Raja Ampat, Papua (Alkadry et al., 2025). This gap highlights the need to comprehend how Islamic educational practices are implemented under conditions of spatial remoteness, cultural pluralism, and shifting religious influences.

Yellu Village in Misool Selatan, Raja Ampat, represents a unique sociocultural context for examining community-based Islamic education. The village is situated in an archipelagic region characterized by dispersed settlements, limited institutional infrastructure, and a strong reliance on marine-based livelihoods. These geographical conditions create distinct challenges for religious learning, including restricted access to formal Islamic schools, inconsistent religious teacher availability, and limited mobility across islands (Nur, 2022; Maelan et al., 2025). At the same time, Yellu Village is part of a multi-faith and multi-ethnic environment shaped by maritime trade networks, inter-island migration, and localized cultural syncretism. Islamic education in such contexts must navigate both Islamic orthodoxy and local cultural expressions, making religious instruction an adaptive social process rather than a standardized pedagogical system (Nur, 2022; Subair et al., 2024; Hidayat et al., 2024).

Within this environment, Majelis Taklim Nurul Huda has emerged as a central institution for the transmission of Islamic knowledge, particularly among mothers and youth. The Majelis Taklim conducts Qur'anic reading classes, religious discussion sessions, ritual training, and moral guidance activities that are embedded within daily routines and collective community life. Unlike Pesantren or Madrasah, which operate through formal curricula and structured hierarchies, Majelis Taklim Nurul Huda relies on informal learning, communal engagement, and shared responsibility among participants. As a women-centred religious space, it provides mothers with religious literacy and moral leadership capacities that directly influence family practices, child upbringing, and intergenerational cultural continuity. This dynamic position of the Majelis Taklim is both an educational and sociological agent within the village (Nur, 2022; Alfian et al., 2025).

The first research question asks: How does Majelis Taklim Nurul Huda strategically construct, organize, and deliver Islamic educational activities to mothers and youth? This inquiry foregrounds the pedagogical strategies and organizational practices through which Islamic knowledge is shaped, communicated, and contextualized. It highlights the need to understand not only what is taught, but how teaching is conducted, who facilitates it, and how learning structures emerge from local social arrangements. By focusing on strategy rather than output alone, this study explores Islamic education as a lived and negotiated process.

The second research question concerns the sociocultural, religious, and environmental factors that support or hinder these educational strategies. In the maritime and multi-faith context of Raja Ampat, religious instruction is influenced by kinship structures, community leadership, local belief systems, mobility patterns, and ecological conditions. Understanding these factors is crucial for explaining why certain educational practices succeed or encounter obstacles. This perspective situates Islamic learning within the broader social environment, emphasizing that religious education is not merely doctrinal but embedded within daily life, labour, space, and relationships.

The third research question examines the impacts of the Majelis Taklim on religious identity, moral formation, and generational transmission of Islamic values. In peripheral Muslim communities, sustaining Islamic identity is not only a matter of teaching religious knowledge but also involves shaping emotional attachments, social belonging, and ethical dispositions. The Majelis Taklim plays a key role in cultivating shared religious narratives, communal solidarity, and behavioural norms that reinforce collective Muslim identity amid cultural diversity and globalization pressures. This inquiry addresses how religious education translates into social transformation and community resilience.

Taken together, these three research questions define the novelty of this study: it investigates Islamic education in a remote maritime Muslim society through the lens of women-centered, community-based religious institutions. By examining Majelis Taklim Nurul Huda in Yellu Village, the study expands scholarly understanding of how Islamic knowledge is sustained beyond formal institutions, how religious identity persists in geographically isolated contexts, and how women serve as pivotal agents of intergenerational Islamic continuity. This research contributes to the fields of Islamic sociology, anthropology of religion, and community-based education by highlighting the adaptive and relational nature of Islamic learning in Indonesia's maritime frontier.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design to interpret the role of Majelis Taklim Nurul Huda within the sociocultural and religious setting of Yellu Village. The descriptive qualitative approach is suitable because it focuses on the lived experiences, meaning-making processes, and shared symbolic values that shape Islamic educational practices. The research emphasizes naturalistic inquiry, in which the phenomenon is studied in its natural context without manipulating variables (Creswell, 2009).

Data collection techniques included semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document review of Majelis Taklim activity notes, Qur'anic learning schedules, and mosque announcements. Interviews were conducted in a flexible conversational style to allow respondents to express their insights, interpretations, and emotions regarding their participation in the Majelis Taklim (Sarwono, 2011). The researcher also observed regular Islamic teaching sessions, informal conversations among participants, and community religious gatherings (Alfian et al., 2025).

The informants in this study consisted of: the chairperson of the Majelis Taklim, three active members who represent mother and youth groups, two religious authorities from Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) Raja Ampat, two members of the mosque committee in Yellu, and two

respected Islamic community leaders (*tokoh agama*). Purposive sampling was used to ensure that respondents had direct involvement or legitimate leadership roles in community religious life. This selection strategy enabled the researcher to capture multi-voiced perspectives from internal actors, institutional authorities, and broader community influencers.

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, involving three continuous stages: (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing. To ensure the credibility of the findings, triangulation was applied across sources (interview cross-checking), methods (interviews and observations), and theoretical lenses (Islamic sociology and non-formal education theory). This methodological approach ensures that the interpretations authentically represent community realities and are analytically grounded.

Findings

Perspectives of the Majelis Taklim Chairperson emphasized that the core strategy of Majelis Taklim Nurul Huda is a routine schedule of Islamic teaching, involving Qur'anic reading, tafsir explanation, and practical religious life guidance. She explained that the Majelis focuses not only on transmitting knowledge but on cultivating emotional and spiritual bonding among participants. According to her, religious learning must be "*mengalir dari hati ke hati*" (flowing heart to heart), reflecting a pedagogical approach grounded in affection and sincerity.

Perspectives of Three Majelis Taklim members described the majelis as a *safe, comforting, and supportive learning environment*, especially for mothers who experience social isolation due to limited mobility in island life. They stated that participation improved their ability to guide their children to pray, recite the Qur'an, and maintain respectful conduct. The majelis became a "spiritual home" where women gained confidence in practicing and teaching Islam.

Perspectives of the local MUI representative explained that Majelis Taklim Nurul Huda helps "anchor religious identity" in Yellu, preventing religious erosion and confusion that may arise from media influence and external ideologies. He affirmed that the Majelis supports MUI's role in maintaining religious orthodoxy, especially in remote communities lacking formal Islamic institutions.

Perspectives of two other MUI members acknowledged that while the Majelis is effective, it faces a challenge in limited pedagogical resources. Volunteers often lack teaching training, leading to uneven instructional depth. They suggested additional collaboration with MUI trainers and visiting ustadz to enhance knowledge quality.

Perspectives of the mosque committee highlighted that the Majelis strengthens mosque life by increasing women's attendance, encouraging youth participation, and revitalizing religious events. They noted improved cooperation in mosque maintenance, charity, and Ramadan programs as outcomes of Majelis participation.

Perspectives of two local religious leaders described the Majelis as crucial in intergenerational value transmission. They observed that participants became more patient, disciplined, and responsible in household and community affairs, indicating a moral transformation that extended beyond religious rituals.

Summary of impact, collectively, respondents agreed that the Majelis has produced visible social-spiritual impacts, including improved Qur'anic literacy, increased female religious agency, strengthened youth moral awareness, and enhanced communal solidarity rooted in Islamic ethics.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this research indicate that Majelis Taklim Nurul Huda plays a significant sociological and educational role in sustaining Islamic religious identity and moral formation in Yellu Village. This is consistent with Rahardjo's (2020) argument that Majelis Taklim serves not merely as a site of instruction but as a religious socialization institution where Islamic norms are embedded through routine collective practice. In the case of Yellu, daily communal life is closely interwoven with religious meaning, and the Majelis Taklim atmosphere of the primary medium through which this meaning is reproduced across generations.

The interplay between Buton/Bajo migrant families and indigenous Misool Muslims shapes the distinctive cultural atmosphere of the majelis. Butonese/Bajo Muslims bring a long historical tradition of Qur'anic recitation culture, maritime Islamic networks, and strong diasporic solidarity, while Misool Maya Muslims contribute localized kinship forms, territorial guardianship values, and customary communal ethics (Nur, 2022); (Juli et al., 2025). The Majelis thus becomes a meeting point of Islamic cosmopolitanism and indigenous identity, enabling a shared religious space that transcends ethnic boundaries while respecting cultural differences (Maelan et al., 2025).

The religious strategy of the Majelis is grounded not in formal pedagogy, but in relational teaching (*ta'lim bil hal*) — teaching by example, affection, repetition, and lived practice. Such pedagogy aligns with the concept of embodied piety, where religious commitment is cultivated through emotional atonements and bodily habituation rather than doctrinal instruction alone (Yuliani et al., 2023; Demirkoparan, 2025). Women in the Majelis described their learning as something that “grows into the heart,” reflecting internalization rather than memorization (Azra, 2004).

The role of the Majelis in mentoring youth is particularly significant. In many remote Muslim communities, youth are vulnerable to cultural dislocation, digital influence, and religious fragmentation (Azra, 2004; Suhail et al., 2025). Majelis Taklim Nurul Huda responds to this by providing youth religious gatherings, Qur'anic reading circles, and mosque-based volunteerism. These practices create structured moral routines that stabilize youth identity in an environment where formal educational institutions are limited.

Challenges such as limited pedagogical resources, lack of trained instructors, and geographic isolation constrain the depth of learning. This supports the analysis by Ahmad Amir Aziz & Miftahul Huda, (2024); Prabowo et al., (2021); Gani, (2025), who notes that non-formal religious institutions in Eastern Indonesia require stronger collaboration with religious councils to sustain knowledge quality. However, limitations have not prevented the Majelis from functioning effectively because its strength lies not solely in content transmission but in its communal bonding function (Hidayat et al., 2024).

The Majelis also demonstrates how women can exercise religious agency in shaping family and community morality. Contrary to the assumption that Islamic authority is male-dominated, the women of Majelis Taklim Nurul Huda serve as custodians of household spiritual life, influencing prayer discipline, the Qur'anic literacy of children, and moral decision-making within the family (Farhan et al., 2022). This aligns with Ahmad Amir Aziz & Miftahul Huda, (2024), who argue that women-led religious education is central to moral reproduction in Indonesian Muslim households.

The synergy between the Majelis and the mosque demonstrates a model of integrated religious community governance. The mosque committee recognizes the Majelis as a key institution that sustains daily religious practice, mobilizes community support for mosque activities, and strengthens unity during Islamic holidays. This integration supports community resilience and reduces social fragmentation (Farhan et al., 2022; Sözeri et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the impact of Majelis practices extends beyond ritual performance to broader ethical and social behaviour, including cooperation, honesty, conflict reduction, and mutual support. These ethical shifts embody the Islamic sociological principle that religion is not simply believed, but lived and shared through social relations (Dzulfian Syafrian, 2025; Naumi et al., 2025; Hamzah et al., 2020).

Finally, the Majelis provides a cultural buffer against external influences that may weaken local Islamic identity (Sulaeman, 2019; Nur, 2022; Alfian et al., 2025). By grounding religious learning in local cultural expression and emotional attachment to community life, Majelis Taklim Nurul Huda strengthens religious belonging, preventing identity erosion in a rapidly changing socio-cultural environment.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Majelis Taklim Nurul Huda plays a strategic role in strengthening Islamic religious education in Yellu Village by nurturing Qur'anic literacy, shaping moral behavior, supporting women's religious leadership, and mentoring youth participation in religious activities. Its educational approach is relational, community-based, and rooted in emotional solidarity, making it well-suited to the cultural and geographic context of Raja Ampat's island communities.

Despite limitations in instructional resources and geographic challenges, the majelis succeeds due to strong communal commitment, intergenerational trust, and recognition of women as central moral educators. The institution serves as a vital medium for transmitting Islamic values and maintaining religious identity across both the Buton/Bajo migrant groups and indigenous Misool Muslim families.

This study contributes to the sociology of Islamic education by showing how non-formal women-led religious organizations sustain religious resilience, social unity, and moral continuity in geographically marginal Muslim societies. Strengthening collaboration between majelis taklim, local mosques, and MUI can further enhance the sustainability and depth of Islamic learning in Yellu and similar remote communities.

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