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The Role of Majelis Taklim (Islamic Learning Assembly) in Instilling Religious Moderation Values in the Community

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ABSTRACT

Background: Indonesia's multicultural society requires religious moderation to maintain harmony and prevent extremism. As a non-formal Islamic educational institution, Majelis Taklim plays a strategic role in fostering moderate religious attitudes and strengthening social cohesion at the grassroots level. **Objective:** This study aims to analyse the role, strategies, and contributions of Majelis Taklim in instilling religious moderation values within the Griya Sidomulyo community, Pekanbaru City. **Method:** This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation involving administrators, preachers, congregants, and community leaders. Data were analysed through reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, supported by triangulation to ensure validity. **Results:** The findings indicate that Majelis Taklim actively promotes moderation values through regular religious study sessions, thematic discussions, and social programs such as Jumat Berkah (Friday Charity Program) and Didikan Subuh (Early Morning Religious Education Program). These activities cultivate tolerance, balance, mutual respect, and social solidarity. Supporting factors include active participation, qualified preachers, and strong community engagement, while financial constraints and coordination challenges remain obstacles. **Conclusion:** Majelis Taklim functions as an effective grassroots institution for cultivating religious moderation and strengthening social harmony in heterogeneous urban communities. **Originality/Value:** This study provides empirical and contextual novelty in the field of nonformal Islamic education and community sociology by revealing the effectiveness of integrating thematic da'wah programs and social community initiatives such as Friday Charity and Early Morning Religious Education alongside community leader engagement regarding the cultivation of religious moderation values within the context of grassroots learning assemblies in heterogeneous urban housing communities, which has received limited scholarly attention compared to formal educational settings. These findings enrich empirical evidence and serve as a strategic reference in grassroots religious governance, empowering community based religious institutions, and formulating social cohesion initiatives at the neighborhood level.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the most diverse countries in the world. Its ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural plurality constitutes both a defining identity and a major social asset (Nugraha et al., 2025). The country's plural society has long attracted international attention for its ability to maintain harmony amid differences (Ramdhan & Arifin, 2025). This reality reflects how tolerance and mutual respect have become integral elements of Indonesia's social life.

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Nevertheless, diversity also presents challenges in religious life. Without proper management, differences may lead to social friction. In this context, religious moderation emerges as a strategic framework for maintaining balance in Indonesia's religious landscape. Religious moderation refers to a perspective and practice of faith that emphasises balance (*tawassuth*), justice (*i'tidal*), tolerance (*tasamuh*), and rejection of extremism (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia [MoRA], 2019). A moderate stance is essential for strengthening social cohesion, preventing radicalism, and fostering peaceful and inclusive religious life.

In recent years, strengthening religious moderation has become a national priority, particularly through programs initiated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA, 2021). Religious moderation is implemented not only through formal education but also through non-formal and community-based educational pathways (Shobri & Abdillah, 2025). One non-formal religious institution closely connected to the community is Majelis Taklim. Majelis Taklim serves as a forum for Islamic learning, spiritual development, and the reinforcement of social solidarity at the community level.

Normatively, the existence of Majelis Taklim is regulated by the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Regulation Number 29 of 2019, which affirms its role in enhancing understanding, appreciation, and practice of Islamic teachings. In addition, Majelis Taklim serves as a centre for religious education, strengthening social bonds, facilitating religious consultation, empowering communities, and exercising social control within national life (Khasanah et al., 2024). With these functions, Majelis Taklim has significant potential to shape a moderate and inclusive religious character within society (Amanda et al., 2024; Masyithoh, 2024).

Previous studies have demonstrated that Majelis Taklim contributes to improving religious literacy, nurturing moral character, and strengthening social solidarity (Hakim, 2020; Nisa, 2019). Meanwhile, research on religious moderation has primarily focused on conceptual discussions or its implementation in formal educational settings (Huda, 2021; Yusuf & Rahman, 2022). However, studies specifically examining the implementation of religious moderation values through Majelis Taklim within heterogeneous urban communities remain limited. Many existing works have not comprehensively explored practical strategies, activity models, and supporting or inhibiting factors involved in internalising moderation values at the local community level. This research gap underscores the need for further contextual and empirical studies on the role of Majelis Taklim in promoting religious moderation across diverse urban settings. Community-based research is fundamental because it enables value internalisation to occur directly, participatively, and sustainably.

The Griya Sidomulyo community, located in Perhentian Marpoyan Subdistrict, Marpoyan Damai District, Pekanbaru City, consists of residents from diverse religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Despite this diversity, social life in the area remains relatively harmonious. The presence of numerous mosques and active religious activities does not generate conflict; rather, it strengthens social concern and interaction among residents. Majelis Taklim activities in this area are conducted not only in mosques but also in residents' homes, creating an inclusive and community-based space for religious learning.

The distinctiveness of this study lies in its empirical focus on analysing the role of Majelis Taklim in instilling religious moderation values within a heterogeneous urban community. Rather than merely describing religious activities, this research examines implementation strategies, forms of activities, and factors influencing the success of internalising religious moderation values at the grassroots level.

This study aims to describe and analyse the role of Majelis Taklim in instilling religious moderation values within the Griya Sidomulyo community, and to identify the strategies and supporting and inhibiting factors affecting its implementation. Through a qualitative descriptive approach, this research contributes theoretically to the development of community-based Islamic education studies and practically as a model for strengthening religious moderation at the community level.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach using a library research design. A qualitative framework was selected because the research seeks to explore and interpret concepts, principles, and models of Islamic character education based on normative and theoretical sources. Library research focuses on collecting, analysing, and interpreting data derived from relevant literature, including the Qur'an, Hadith, classical Islamic scholarly works, academic books, and peer-reviewed journal articles (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Through this approach, the study examines in depth the conceptual foundations of Islamic character education and its implications for contemporary educational contexts.

2.2 Data Sources

In library-based research, the terms population and sample are replaced with data sources. The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary materials. Primary sources include the Qur'an, the Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ, and classical scholarly works on Islamic education and ethics, such as those by Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawayh. Secondary sources include academic books, journal articles, and prior research relevant to character education, Islamic education, and moral development. Sources were selected purposively based on their relevance, scholarly authority, and alignment with the research focus.

2.3 Data Collection

The primary instrument in this study is the researcher, serving as a human instrument responsible for identifying, gathering, and analysing data from various literature sources. Data collection was conducted through a documentation study, involving a systematic review of books, journal articles, Qur'anic exegesis, Hadith compilations, and other scholarly references. The collected data were then classified into thematic categories, such as the concept of character education, Islamic character values, and methods of character development in Islam (Bowen, 2009).

2.4 Data Analysis

Data were analysed using content analysis, a systematic and objective technique for identifying, examining, and interpreting meaning within texts or documents. The analysis process included data reduction, categorisation, interpretation, and conclusion drawing (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). This analytical framework was used to construct a comprehensive and systematic model of Islamic character education derived from the examined sources.

2.5 Research Procedure

The research was conducted through several stages. First, the researcher identified and formulated research problems related to Islamic character education. Second, relevant literature was collected from various academic sources. Third, the data were classified and selected based on their relevance to the research focus. Fourth, content analysis was applied to identify concepts and patterns related to Islamic character education. Finally, the findings were systematically organised, and conclusions were drawn based on the analytical results.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

Based on interviews with Mr Heri, Vice Chair, and Mr Del, Head of the Worship Division, administrators of Majelis Taklim at Masjid Baiturrahim in Griya Sidomulyo, it was found that Majelis Taklim activities are conducted regularly every Sunday evening, as well as during Islamic commemorative events and the month of Ramadan. Through religious study sessions and spiritual guidance programs, Majelis Taklim plays a significant role in instilling religious moderation, particularly by fostering tolerance, solidarity, and mutual respect among community members.

The primary strategy adopted by the administrators to maintain a moderate religious orientation involves inviting qualified preachers with broad knowledge and balanced Islamic perspectives. In addition to religious instruction, the Majelis Taklim organises social initiatives such as Jumat Berkah and Didikan Subuh, both of which help strengthen social solidarity and communal harmony.

Key factors in Majelis Taklim Baiturrahim's success include cohesive leadership and active community participation. However, operational funding limitations remain a challenge. To address this issue, administrators seek donor support and optimise congregational infaq. Overall, the activities of Majelis Taklim Baiturrahim have contributed to fostering a religious, tolerant, and harmonious society while reinforcing the practical implementation of religious moderation in the Griya Sidomulyo area.

Interviews with Mr Syahdi, the Imam of the mosque and a congregant of Majelis Taklim Nurul Iman, indicate that Majelis Taklim activities in Griya Sidomulyo are held regularly every Thursday on the second and fourth weeks after Maghrib prayer. These activities receive enthusiastic participation from residents, reflecting strong engagement in local religious programs.

The instructional materials focus primarily on fiqh and tawhid, aiming to enhance congregants' understanding of both doctrinal beliefs and daily worship practices. Through these sessions, Majelis Taklim Nurul Iman contributes

to nurturing tolerance, mutual respect, and togetherness within a heterogeneous community. A strong sense of brotherhood emerges as a positive outcome of these regular gatherings.

In terms of strategy, the administrators also organise Jumat Berkah programs and special study sessions for women, expanding both spiritual and social development initiatives. These programs strengthen religious understanding while fostering social solidarity and mutual care among residents. The positive impact is evident in improved social relationships and increased harmony within the community.

While high community enthusiasm, particularly during major Islamic celebrations, is a strong supporting factor, challenges remain due to inconsistent coordination among administrators. To address this issue, regular deliberative meetings are conducted to enhance communication and strengthen interpersonal bonds among members.

Further interviews with Mr Nursalim, Head of the Worship Division at Masjid Nurul Hidayah and a respected community figure, reveal that Majelis Taklim Nurul Hidayah holds regular sessions every Sunday morning after Fajr prayer, during Islamic commemorative events, and in women's study sessions after Friday prayer. Approximately 30 to 40 congregants participate enthusiastically in discussions covering Islamic creed, fiqh, muamalah, and thematic Islamic studies delivered by competent preachers.

Majelis Taklim Nurul Hidayah plays a vital role in promoting religious moderation by emphasising tolerance, mutual respect, and social cohesion. This is achieved by inviting knowledgeable speakers who can present diverse scholarly perspectives objectively. Beyond study sessions, administrators provide supportive facilities and modest refreshments to strengthen a sense of brotherhood and communal care.

Community responses to these activities are overwhelmingly positive, with tangible impacts on strengthening social relationships. Supporting factors include the quality of speakers, congregational support, and adequate facilities. Differences of opinion among residents are resolved through open dialogue and deliberation. Looking ahead, Majelis Taklim Nurul Hidayah is expected to continue developing as a moderate, educational, and harmonious religious institution that reinforces social cohesion in a pluralistic society.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Majelis Taklim in Griya Sidomulyo functions not merely as a routine religious forum but as a dynamic and meaningful centre of community-based religious development. Through consistent weekly studies, thematic discussions, Islamic commemorations, and social programs such as Jumat Berkah and Didikan Subuh, Majelis Taklim serves as an effective medium for contextualising and internalising the values of religious moderation. These values are conveyed not only through sermons but also through daily social interactions characterised by mutual respect, solidarity, and collective responsibility.

The presence of knowledgeable and balanced preachers ensures that religious teachings are not understood solely in textual terms but are applied wisely within a diverse social environment. The impact is reflected in strengthened brotherhood, enhanced social solidarity, and harmonious coexistence within the heterogeneous urban community of Griya Sidomulyo.

Although supported by active participation, cohesive leadership, and donor engagement, challenges such as limited funding and coordination issues persist. Strengthening communication, consultation, and collaboration remains essential to sustaining program effectiveness.

In conclusion, Majelis Taklim in Griya Sidomulyo plays a strategic role as a non-formal Islamic educational institution that not only deepens religious understanding but also cultivates moderate attitudes and reinforces social harmony. It stands as a pillar of community development, contributing significantly to the formation of a religious, tolerant, and peaceful society within a framework of diversity.

3.2. Discussion

This discussion reaffirms the study's primary objective: to analyse the role of Majelis Taklim in instilling religious moderation values within the Griya Sidomulyo community. The field findings demonstrate that Majelis Taklim does not merely perform an educational function in the sense of delivering religious instruction, but also serves as a space for shaping social character oriented toward harmony. Routine activities such as weekly study circles, Islamic commemorative events, and social initiatives, including 'Jumat Berkah' and 'Didikan Subuh', function as concrete mechanisms for transforming normative religious teachings into social attitudes and behaviours. Thus, the research objective of examining how religious moderation is internalised through community practice is empirically addressed. Moderation does not remain at the conceptual level; it is manifested in daily interactions through mutual respect, social concern, and openness to differences.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings reinforce the concept of religious moderation articulated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in 2019, which emphasises balance, justice, and the rejection of extremism. The Islamic principle of *wasathiyyah*, meaning the middle path and proportionality, is reflected in

study materials that avoid exclusivist narratives or condemnation of other groups (Abdullah et al., 2025). Within Islamic educational theory, nonformal institutions such as Majelis Taklim possess flexibility and participatory characteristics that allow them to adapt effectively to community contexts. The process of value internalisation occurs through the exemplary conduct of religious teachers, interactive dialogue, and repeated social practice. This aligns with social learning theory, which emphasises that values and attitudes are formed through interaction, observation, and sustained collective experience (Eriksson et al., 2019). In this sense, Majelis Taklim operates as an effective community-based arena for character education.

The findings may also be interpreted through the perspective of Hakim et al. (2023), who emphasised that the moderate character of Indonesian Islam has been shaped through networks of Islamic education, both formal and nonformal. educational institutions play a central role in transmitting values of tolerance and cultural adaptation. In the context of Griya Sidomulyo, Majelis Taklim demonstrates this function by delivering contextual and dialogical religious instruction. Religious values are not presented rigidly; instead, they are integrated with the needs of a socially diverse urban community (Hijeat & Al-Bazzaz, 2024). Therefore, this study provides empirical evidence at the community level of how religious moderation is sustained through grassroots Islamic educational traditions.

In addition, the results align with Robert W. Hefner's framework of civil Islam, defined as a form of religiosity that promotes social participation, tolerance, and civic responsibility (Hefner, 2019). The activities of Majelis Taklim extend beyond religious study sessions to include social solidarity programs and community engagement initiatives. This demonstrates that religiosity is practised in an inclusive and socially oriented manner. Majelis Taklim is a grassroots institution that strengthens Islamic values while simultaneously reinforcing social cohesion within a plural society.

Compared with previous research, most studies on Majelis Taklim have emphasised improvements in religious understanding, individual moral development, and women's empowerment (A'thoina, 2025; Maftuhin et al., 2025; Azis et al., 2023; Syamsiah, & Ritonga, 2025). Meanwhile, studies on religious moderation have often focused on state policy or its implementation in formal educational settings (Sudrajat et al., 2021; Muhsin et al., 2024). This research synthesises both perspectives by demonstrating that Majelis Taklim functions as an agent of religious moderation at the community level. The primary distinction lies in the analytical focus, which positions religious moderation as the central variable rather than as a secondary outcome of religious activities. Consequently, this study expands the existing literature by showing that moderation values can be internalised organically through structured and sustained socio-religious engagement.

The strength of this study lies in its integrative approach, which connects educational, social, and cultural dimensions within a single analytical framework. Rather than merely describing activities, the research explains the mechanisms through which moderation values are internalised through repeated interaction, religious leadership, and active congregational participation. Furthermore, the study identifies supporting factors, such as preacher competence, cohesive leadership, and strong community engagement, while acknowledging constraints, including financial limitations and coordination challenges. This comprehensive analysis offers practical implications for strengthening Majelis Taklim's management and effectiveness in promoting religious moderation.

This discussion confirms that Majelis Taklim holds a strategic position as a nonformal Islamic educational institution capable of bridging normative religious teachings and social reality. Through participatory and sustained learning processes, religious moderation values are not only cognitively understood but also embodied in harmonious social practice. Strengthening institutional capacity, enhancing program quality, and sustaining community support are therefore essential to ensuring Majelis Taklim's continued role as a pillar of religious moderation at the grassroots level.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

4.1 Research Implications

This study offers important implications for understanding the role of Majelis Taklim as an effective nonformal Islamic educational institution in cultivating religious moderation at the community level. The findings demonstrate that regularly conducted, well-structured activities, supported by active congregational participation, can foster balanced, tolerant, and inclusive religious understanding. This confirms that continuous community-based religious guidance significantly influences the formation of moderate religious attitudes and behaviours.

Another key implication is that Majelis Taklim functions not merely as a medium for transferring religious knowledge but also as a space for internalizing moderation values. Through religious study sessions, discussions, and social initiatives such as Jumat Berkah and Didikan Subuh, Majelis Taklim instils tolerance, solidarity, and social

responsibility. These findings indicate that religious moderation can be effectively developed through educational and community-oriented approaches embedded naturally in everyday social life.

The study also has practical implications for strengthening community-based religious development programs. Several critical factors, including the competence of religious speakers, the cohesiveness of administrators, and active community support, influence the effectiveness of Majelis Taklim in promoting moderation. Conversely, financial constraints and coordination challenges present obstacles that require institutional strengthening and collective participation. Professional and sustainable management of Majelis Taklim is therefore essential for enhancing the effectiveness of moderate religious guidance.

Furthermore, Majelis Taklim serves as an instrument for reinforcing social cohesion within diverse communities. Its activities not only enhance religious understanding but also strengthen social relationships, deepen brotherhood, and cultivate mutual respect among residents. In this sense, Majelis Taklim holds strategic importance in maintaining social harmony and nurturing peaceful religious life within plural societies.

4.2 Research Contributions

This study contributes to the literature by enriching scholarship on the role of nonformal Islamic educational institutions in promoting religious moderation. The findings affirm that Majelis Taklim operates not only as a religious learning forum but also as a social institution that shapes a moderate religious character within the community. This expands the academic discourse in Islamic education studies, particularly regarding the role of community-based religious institutions in fostering a harmonious religious life.

Empirically, the research provides concrete evidence of Majelis Taklim's role in instilling values of moderation within a heterogeneous urban community. The findings show that structured, sustained religious development activities can nurture tolerance, balance, and social solidarity. This offers a practical illustration of how religious moderation can be implemented effectively through grassroots religious institutions.

The practical contribution of this study is equally significant. For Majelis Taklim administrators, the findings provide a reference for developing more effective strategies to strengthen moderation values. For government bodies and religious institutions, the research may serve as a basis for designing policies and community-based religious development programs. For academics and researchers, it provides a foundation for further studies exploring the role of religious institutions in building moderate, harmonious societies.

Overall, the principal contribution of this study is to affirm that Majelis Taklim is a strategic institution for cultivating religious moderation at the community level. Its presence not only enhances religious understanding but also helps shape a society that is religious, tolerant, and harmonious. Majelis Taklim, therefore, stands as a crucial pillar in strengthening religious moderation and sustaining social harmony amid diversity.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

5.1 Research Limitation

This study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted within a single community setting in Pekanbaru City, limiting the generalizability of the findings to Majelis Taklim in other regions with different social and cultural contexts. Second, the descriptive qualitative approach emphasises in-depth understanding but does not quantitatively measure the level of success in instilling moderation values. Third, the data were obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation that rely on informants' openness and the researcher's interpretation, leaving room for subjectivity. Fourth, the study does not examine the long-term impact of Majelis Taklim activities nor compare them with similar institutions in other areas.

5.2 Recommendation for Future Research

Based on these limitations, several recommendations are proposed. First, future research should expand the geographical scope to the district, city, or provincial level to provide a more comprehensive and representative understanding of Majelis Taklim's role in promoting religious moderation. Second, subsequent studies are encouraged to adopt a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative techniques, enabling both in-depth exploration and objective measurement of the influence of Majelis Taklim activities on moderation attitudes.

Third, further research should assess the effectiveness of various development methods, including lectures, discussions, social initiatives, and community empowerment programs, in instilling moderation values. Fourth, future studies should analyse supporting and inhibiting factors more specifically, such as leadership patterns, speaker competence, institutional support, and community participation, in order to formulate sustainable streng-

thening strategies. Fifth, long-term impact studies are needed, particularly regarding the influence of Majelis Taklim activities on shaping religious character among younger generations in the context of globalisation and technological advancement. Such research will help reinforce the role of Majelis Taklim as a nonformal Islamic educational institution contributing to moderate, harmonious, and tolerant societies.

6. CONCLUSION

This study further demonstrates that the existence of Majelis Taklim in Griya Sidomulyo reflects the vital contribution of community-based Islamic education in responding to contemporary social and religious challenges. Through consistent religious guidance and community engagement, Majelis Taklim creates a learning environment that integrates religious knowledge with practical social values. The structured implementation of study circles, thematic discussions, and social outreach programs illustrates that religious moderation can be nurtured through continuous interaction, dialogue, and collective participation within the community. As a result, religious understanding is not merely theoretical but is translated into attitudes and behaviours that promote balance, inclusivity, and peaceful coexistence.

Moreover, the findings indicate that the sustainability of religious moderation initiatives depends significantly on organisational capacity and community support. The presence of competent religious speakers ensures that the delivered messages align with balanced Islamic teachings, while strong coordination among administrators enables programs to run effectively and consistently. Active participation from congregants strengthens the internalisation process, as values are reinforced through shared experiences and social solidarity. Even amid financial and managerial constraints, the community's culture of deliberation and cooperation helps maintain continuity and resilience in program implementation.

Ultimately, this research confirms that Majelis Taklim serves as more than a venue for religious instruction; it operates as a transformative social institution at the grassroots level. By combining educational, spiritual, and social dimensions, Majelis Taklim contributes meaningfully to the cultivation of tolerant and harmonious community life. Its role in fostering religious moderation underscores the importance of strengthening informal Islamic educational institutions as strategic partners in promoting social cohesion and preventing religious polarisation. Therefore, reinforcing institutional capacity, community engagement, and program sustainability remains essential to maximising Majelis Taklim's long-term impact on religious and social development.

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Author Contribution Statement

The author declares that the entire research and writing process for this article was conducted independently. The author assumes full responsibility for all data associated with this research. No other individual contributed as a co-author or made any significant contribution to the content of this work.

Declaration of Generative AI (GenAI) Usage in Scientific Writing

The authors declare that ChatGPT-4o, an artificial intelligence (AI) tool developed by OpenAI, was used solely to assist with language refinement and manuscript editing, including improving grammar, spelling, punctuation, clarity, and academic style. Its use did not replace the authors' scholarly analysis, interpretation, or decision-making. All ideas, interpretations, and conclusions presented in the manuscript are the authors' own. All AI-generated suggestions were critically evaluated, verified, and revised by the authors to ensure accuracy and compliance with academic standards. All instances of Generative AI usage in this article were conducted by the authors in accordance with the JISMB GenAI Tool Usage Policy, with the authors assuming full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the work."

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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