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Wasatiyah Transmission in Non-Formal Islamic Education: The Role of Majelis Taklim in Nurturing Religious Moderation

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Abstract

Wasatiyah or Islamic moderation is a key principle for fostering harmony and tolerance within Indonesia's multicultural society. As a community-based non-formal Islamic educational institution, Majelis Taklim occupies a strategic position in transmitting and internalizing wasatiyah values among Muslim communities. This study aims to analyze how Majelis Taklim contributes to the internalization and transmission of wasatiyah values through religious learning, social activities, and community engagement. Employing a descriptive-analytical qualitative approach, this study utilizes data obtained through literature review, document analysis, and observation of Majelis Taklim practices in three Indonesian contexts: Batu-Malang, Lubuk Linggau, and Yogyakarta. The findings reveal that Majelis Taklim functions not only as a space for religious knowledge transmission but also as a transformative educational arena where wasatiyah values are embedded through ta'lim (religious learning), charitable activities, Qur'anic literacy, community service, and social empowerment initiatives. This study contributes to the understanding of non-formal Islamic education by highlighting Majelis Taklim as a grassroots institution capable of strengthening moderate Muslim identity and social cohesion. The findings imply that supporting community-based Islamic educational institutions can serve as an important strategy for sustaining religious moderation and promoting peaceful coexistence in plural societies.

Keywords:

Wasatiyah, Majelis Taklim, Religious Moderation, Non-Formal Islamic Education

Abstrak

Wasatiyah atau moderasi Islam merupakan prinsip penting dalam membangun harmoni dan toleransi di tengah masyarakat Indonesia yang multikultural. Sebagai lembaga pendidikan Islam nonformal berbasis komunitas, Majelis Taklim memiliki posisi strategis dalam mentransmisikan dan menginternalisasikan nilai-nilai wasatiyah di kalangan masyarakat Muslim. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana Majelis Taklim berkontribusi dalam proses internalisasi dan transmisi nilai-nilai wasatiyah melalui pembelajaran keagamaan, aktivitas sosial, dan keterlibatan masyarakat. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif-analitis, penelitian ini memanfaatkan data yang diperoleh melalui kajian literatur, analisis dokumen, dan observasi terhadap praktik Majelis Taklim pada tiga konteks wilayah di Indonesia, yaitu Batu-Malang, Lubuk Linggau, dan Yogyakarta. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Majelis Taklim tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai ruang transmisi pengetahuan keagamaan, tetapi juga sebagai arena pendidikan transformatif tempat nilai-nilai wasatiyah ditanamkan melalui kegiatan ta'lim (pembelajaran agama), aktivitas filantropi, literasi Al-Qur'an, pelayanan sosial, dan program pemberdayaan masyarakat. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pemahaman mengenai pendidikan Islam nonformal dengan menempatkan Majelis Taklim sebagai institusi berbasis masyarakat (grassroots institution) yang mampu memperkuat identitas Muslim moderat dan kohesi sosial. Temuan penelitian ini mengimplikasikan bahwa penguatan lembaga pendidikan Islam berbasis komunitas dapat menjadi strategi penting dalam mempertahankan praktik moderasi beragama serta mendorong kehidupan bersama yang damai dalam masyarakat yang plural.

Kata Kunci:

Wasatiyah, Majelis Taklim, Moderasi Beragama, Pendidikan Islam Non-Formal

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Introduction

The dissemination of Islamic teachings encompasses more than introducing Islam as a system of belief; it involves the internalization of its ethical and spiritual values in order that they are comprehended, internalized, and actualized in daily life. Through such internalization, Islam transcends the realm of belief and becomes a lived experience that informs behavior, social interaction, and the broader cultural ethos of its adherents (Anggraeni & Irfanullah, 2025). This transformative process of spreading and embodying Islamic values within society is commonly referred to as *da'wah*, which functions not merely as religious propagation but as a comprehensive effort to cultivate faith, knowledge, and righteous conduct among individuals and communities (Hasballah, 1999).

Efforts to disseminate Islamic values have been undertaken through various forms of both formal and non-formal education. One of the most prominent non-formal institutions is the *Majelis Taklim*, which serves as a medium for religious learning and community guidance (Latif, 2026). Functioning as an informal yet structured educational forum, *Majelis Taklim* has played a significant role in promoting *wasatiyah* (Islamic moderation) by integrating religious education and *da'wah* activities within local communities. The concept of *wasatiyah* education and *da'wah* represents the enduring legacy of Indonesian *ulama* (Muslim scholars) who have historically emphasized moderation, balance, and tolerance in religious practice (Juhri et al., 2023).

Majelis Taklim was established with the main objective of spreading Islamic teachings and protecting the Muslim community from moral and social adversity. *Majelis Taklim* began as small study circles in mosques and has since spread to a variety of public spaces, including community halls, offices, and private homes (Rahmat & Mansur, 2021). The *Majelis Taklim* can be traced back to the earliest forms of Islamic educational gatherings during the Prophet Muhammad's lifetime, specifically the *Dar al-Arqam* sessions, which served as clandestine centers of learning and spiritual formation. This continuity places *Majelis Taklim* within Islam's oldest educational traditions, demonstrating both adaptability and persistence in community-based religious education.

Thus, the *Majelis Taklim* can be understood as a community-based forum for enhancing religious knowledge and cultivating spiritual life, especially in promoting the values of *wasatiyah* (religious moderation) within Indonesia's multicultural context. Religious moderation has become an essential dimension of modern religious life, given the increasing prevalence of intolerance and religiously-inflected violence that threaten social cohesion (Juhri et al., 2023). For instance, the case of non-Muslim residents being rejected in Pedukuhan Karet, Pleret, Bantul, Yogyakarta, illustrates how exclusivist attitudes may lead to communal tension. A local regulation from 2015 forbade non-Muslims from residing in the village, demonstrating how a lack of moderation undermines pluralism (Harianja, 2019; Pratama, 2019). In this regard, *Majelis Taklim* holds strategic significance as a medium for Islamic *da'wah* and moral education. Through regular study circles, social engagement, and collective learning, *Majelis Taklim* serves as a vehicle for disseminating messages of moderation, tolerance, and harmony. Its participatory and inclusive nature enables it to become not only an arena of religious instruction but also a transformative space that fosters peaceful coexistence among diverse members of Indonesian society (Athoillah Islamy, 2023).

Many studies have addressed the issues related to the *Majelis Taklim* in Indonesia. For example, research by Hafidz (2020), which explores the strategies of *Majelis Taklim* in promoting religious moderation, and the study by Nisa and Saenong (2022) on the emergence of female *ulama* and women religious actors in contemporary contexts within *Majelis Taklim* and digital *da'wah* activities that provides valuable insights into the shifting dynamics of religious authority and its implications for the dissemination of moderation values. However, neither of these studies specifically elaborates on how *wasatiyah* values are internalized and transmitted through *Majelis Taklim* as a non-formal Islamic education in the Indonesian context, which is the aim of this paper. To situate this aim within the broader literature, several recent studies are relevant. Rahmadi &

Hamdan (2023) examine religious moderation in the context of Islamic education institutions in Indonesia, highlighting its theoretical and practical dimensions.

Moreover, Nasir & Rijal (2021) investigate how Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia are mainstreaming religious moderation values, thereby offering insight into institutional mechanisms of internalization. Nafisa *et al.* (2023) Explore Islam *wasatiyah* as a form of religious moderation, its core values, implementation, and challenges in Indonesia, providing a conceptual framework for understanding what internalizing *wasatiyah* implies. In addition, A'thoina (2025) emphasizes the crucial role of Majelis Taklim as a non-formal educational institution in supporting women's educational rights in Indonesia, particularly in religious education, findings from two Majelis Taklim in rural and urban areas. By drawing on these literatures, this leaves an important research gap concerning how Majelis Taklim transforms the normative principles of Islam *wasatiyah* into lived religious knowledge, attitudes, practices, and social orientations through its educational activities and everyday religious interactions.

Against this background, the novelty of the present study lies in positioning Majelis Taklim not merely as a venue for religious preaching or community gathering, but as a non-formal Islamic educational ecosystem in which *wasatiyah* values are pedagogically internalized, socially reinforced, and transmitted among Indonesian Muslims. The question is how Majelis Taklim, as a non-formal Islamic educational institution, functions as a site for the internalization and transmission of *wasatiyah* values among Indonesian Muslims. In doing so, the study contributes a more process-oriented understanding of religious moderation and extends the existing scholarship by illuminating the role of community-based non-formal Islamic education in sustaining and reproducing *wasatiyah*-oriented religious practices in Indonesia.

This paper aims to analyze the internalization and transmission of *wasatiyah* values through Majelis Taklim as a form of non-formal Islamic education in Indonesia. The primary focus of the study is to understand how Majelis Taklim, as a community-based religious forum, serves as an effective instrument for promoting religious moderation, tolerance, and social harmony within Indonesia's multicultural society. Employing a descriptive-analytical approach, the paper delves into the educational, social, and cultural dimensions of Majelis Taklim activities that facilitate the embodiment of *wasatiyah* values among Muslim communities.

Methods

This study adopts a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach. The data were collected through three main techniques: (1) literature review, (2) document analysis, and (3) field observation. *First*, a literature review involved an extensive examination of academic books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and prior research on *wasatiyah*, religious moderation, non-formal Islamic education, and Majelis Taklim in Indonesia. *Second*, official and institutional texts relating to Majelis Taklim were analyzed. The document analysis focused on regulatory texts, such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 29 of 2019 (KEMENAG, 2019) as well as organizational guidelines, program descriptions, and activity reports issued by Islamic organizations overseeing or facilitating Majelis Taklim. *Third*, field observations were conducted in three Majelis Taklim: Batu-Malang (East Java), Lubuk Linggau (South Sumatra), and Pakualaman, Yogyakarta. These locations were chosen specifically to represent a variety of socio-cultural and institutional settings, including urban and semi-urban communities, women-led assemblies, and Majelis Taklim affiliated with governmental or civic institutions. The observations were non-participant in nature and focused on religious learning sessions, social activities, and community engagement programs that explicitly or implicitly conveyed *wasatiyah* values.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic content analysis. The analysis followed several systematic stages. *First*, all data from literature, documents, and observations were read several times to ensure data familiarity. *Second*, initial coding was used to identify key patterns in religious education, social practices, community empowerment, and moderation values. *Third*, these codes were divided into broad thematic categories, such as religious instruction as a means

of transmitting values, social charity as an ethical internalization, and community participation as a practice of moderation. Finally, the themes were analyzed to demonstrate how Majelis Taklim serves as a non-formal educational space for cultivating *wasatiyah* in everyday religious life.

Data triangulation was used to enhance the findings' credibility and validity by cross-referencing insights from literature, official documents, and field observations. This triangulation ensured that the interpretations were not based merely on a single data source but rather reflected a comprehensive and coherent understanding of Majelis Taklim practices across various contexts.

Results

Majelis Taklim as a Space for Islamic Education

The historical roots of Majelis Taklim may be situated within the broader and highly diverse tradition of Islamic learning institutions rather than understood as a single institutional form that has existed unchanged since the early Islamic period. Throughout Islamic history, religious knowledge was transmitted through various educational settings, including mosques and their *halaqah*, scholarly *majlis*, madrasas, *kuttah*, *ribāt*, *ṣāwīyah*, libraries, and the private residences of scholars (Makdisi, 1984). Despite their diverse typologies and structural patterns, such institutions did not emerge within a single historical period; rather, they developed across different eras of Islamic civilization in response to the educational, spiritual, and social needs of Muslim communities. Their establishment was closely tied to the contextual realities of time and place, shaped by the political and cultural circumstances in which they operated. Moreover, the roles and authority of these institutions were often determined either by endorsement from governing authorities or by recognition within the broader social order. This dynamic historical development demonstrates the adaptive nature of Islamic educational institutions, including Majelis Taklim, which have continuously evolved to serve the intellectual and moral formation of Muslim societies (Bakti, 2003).

In the Indonesian context, Majelis Taklim represents a distinctive contemporary manifestation of this broader tradition of community-based Islamic learning. Majelis Taklim can be understood not as a direct continuation of a single classical Islamic institution, but as an Indonesian form of non-formal Islamic education that shares pedagogical and socio-religious characteristics with earlier traditions of communal Islamic learning (Hasyim, 2021). Several ulama define Majelis Taklim as a non-formal Islamic educational institution that functions as a venue for teaching religious knowledge to its *jama'ah* members of the Muslim community who come from diverse social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Beyond serving as a center for religious instruction, Majelis Taklim is also regarded as an effective medium of da'wah for promoting moderate and inclusive interpretations of Islam, reflecting the pluralistic aspirations of Indonesian Muslims from various ethnic and cultural groups. Historically, the spread of Islam in Indonesia has been facilitated not only through trade, intermarriage, and cultural exchange but also through Sufi influences, all of which have contributed to shaping a distinctly moderate and contextualized form of Islam that differs from expressions found in other regions (Hafidz, 2020).

Furthermore, the distinctive position of Majelis Taklim in Indonesia is closely related to the historical development of Islam in the archipelago, where religious transmission often occurred through cultural engagement and social interaction rather than through institutional coercion. Islamic learning networks developed through mosques, pesantren, surau, and community gatherings, allowing religious teachings to interact with local traditions and social realities. This historical pattern contributed to the emergence of forms of Islamic expression that emphasize accommodation, balance, and social harmony. In this context, Majelis Taklim becomes an important arena where religious teachings are interpreted within the lived experiences of Indonesian Muslims.

From the perspective of *wasatiyah*, Majelis Taklim occupies a strategic position because it provides a social space where moderate religious values can be transmitted through everyday educational practices. The learning process within Majelis Taklim does not only involve cognitive

transmission of religious knowledge but also includes the formation of attitudes, ethical orientations, and patterns of social interaction (Mulianah et al., 2026). Through repeated religious gatherings, communication between teachers and participants, collective rituals, and community activities, values such as *tawāḥḥun* (balance), *tasāmuh* (tolerance), *i'tidāl* (justice), and respect for diversity can become embedded in the religious consciousness of participants.

Therefore, Majelis Taklim represents more than a non-formal educational institution; it functions as a social mechanism for reproducing and transmitting religious values across generations. Its significance lies in its ability to connect Islamic normative teachings with everyday social realities, transforming abstract principles of moderation into lived religious practices. In this sense, studying Majelis Taklim as a site of *wasatiyah* transmission provides an important contribution to understanding how religious moderation is produced not only through state policies or formal educational institutions but also through grassroots Islamic educational spaces embedded within Muslim communities.

The Role of Majelis Taklim in Religious Education and Community Development

As a non-formal educational institution with distinct religious characteristics and strong community foundations, Majelis Taklim holds highly strategic roles in Islamic education and social development in Indonesia. These roles are formally recognized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs through the Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 29 of 2019, Chapter 1, Article 3 (Kemenag, 2019) which outlines the general provisions concerning Majelis Taklim. The regulation has been implemented by numerous assemblies organized by major Islamic community organizations, including Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and various independent associations.

The findings of this study reveal several concrete manifestations of these strategic roles, which have become routine programs among Majelis Taklim congregations across the country.

Majelis Taklim serves as a center for Islamic religious education for the community.

It provides a flexible platform for interaction between *mu'allim* (teachers) and *jama'ah* (participants) that is not bound by place or time, thereby functioning as an accessible educational alternative for those unable to pursue formal religious education (Dahlan, 2019). The inclusivity of Majelis Taklim is open to all ages, genders, and social backgrounds, making it the closest Islamic educational institution to the community. Its flexibility also aligns with the concept of lifelong education, providing continuous spiritual and moral learning opportunities for Muslims (Ridwan & Ulwiyah, 2020). Religious instruction is often conducted in the form of *mau'idzab hasanah* (good advice) to enhance both knowledge and piety, with regular gatherings for Qur'anic recitation, study, and worship (Setiawan, 2019).

Generational renewal as an effort to sustain da'wah in Majelis Taklim

Particularly in nurturing *ustad and ustadah*, administrators, and youth cadres who will sustain the continuity of *da'wah* and education. This regeneration process is implemented through structured mentoring, study circles, and teacher training programs that combine religious mastery with pedagogical and managerial competence. For instance, several Majelis Taklim under the auspices of Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama and 'Aisyiyah Muhammadiyah have initiated "*da'i muda*" (young preachers) programs that train emerging leaders to deliver sermons, manage religious gatherings, and integrate moderate Islamic narratives into their teachings. These programs not only prepare the younger generation to inherit the intellectual and spiritual mission of their predecessors but also ensure that *wasatiyah* values are embedded in their leadership ethos. As Haryanto (2020) notes, such youth-oriented initiatives within Majelis Taklim demonstrate how community-based Islamic education can serve as an incubator for transformative leadership, one that harmonizes tradition and modernity, faith and social responsibility. Through these regeneration efforts, Majelis Taklim continues to sustain the vitality of Islamic scholarship while promoting inclusive, adaptive, and forward-looking religious leadership across generations.

Strengthening *Ukhuwah Islamiyah* based on Majelis Taklim

Majelis Taklim functions as a means of strengthening *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (brotherhood) within Muslim communities. As social spaces, these assemblies encourage continuous interaction among members, facilitating the exchange of ideas and the cultivation of solidarity. The frequent gatherings, through routine *pengajian* sessions, joint prayers, Qur'an recitations, and communal celebrations, foster an atmosphere of intimacy and mutual care, allowing members to develop empathy and a shared sense of moral responsibility (Putri, 2016; Rodiah, 2015).

Majelis Taklim plays a vital role in religious service delivery and consultation, serving as a bridge between formal Islamic scholarship and community-based religious life. Although these assemblies may not possess the same academic intensity as universities or formal Islamic higher education institutions, their accessibility and expansive reach enable them to disseminate Islamic teachings to even the most remote rural areas, thereby fostering spiritual enlightenment and moral guidance among lay Muslims. In many regions, Majelis Taklim teachers, *ustād* and *ustāḍah*, provide counseling and religious consultation on matters such as marriage, family relations, and moral dilemmas, areas that often fall beyond the scope of formal education but are central to everyday Muslim life (Mukhtar Mas'ud, 2021).

Majelis Taklim as community empowerment-based education

Majelis Taklim also plays a pivotal role in community empowerment-based education, reflecting its expanding function beyond religious instruction into the social and developmental spheres. Many Majelis Taklim have established partnerships with prominent women's organizations such as Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and 'Aisyiyah Muhammadiyah to improve public literacy on nutrition, health, and family well-being (Nursalikah, 2022). These collaborations empower women not only as recipients of religious knowledge but also as active educators and agents of community transformation.

Majelis Taklim actively supports the development and preservation of Islamic art and culture, recognizing cultural expression as an integral dimension of religious education and social harmony. Through programs such as *badrah*, *marawis*, *qasidah*, and *tambourine* performances, these assemblies serve not only as platforms for artistic appreciation but also as vehicles for transmitting spiritual values and fostering intergenerational continuity of Islamic traditions (Hariyanto, 2020). Such cultural activities are commonly embedded within religious gatherings and commemorative events, transforming art into a medium of *da'wah* that conveys messages of peace, gratitude, and community solidarity.

Majelis Taklim as community economic empowerment

Majelis Taklim also contributes significantly to community economic empowerment, aligning religious education with socio-economic advancement and poverty alleviation. Many Majelis Taklim have introduced sharia-based microfinance initiatives such as *Baitul Mal wa Tamwil* (BMT) and cooperative savings groups to strengthen household economies and promote self-reliance among their members (huda, 2020; Muzakkiyah, 2024; Rusliati & Mulyaningrum, 2021). Through these initiatives, congregants, particularly women, are encouraged to participate in micro-entrepreneurial activities supported by training in financial literacy, small business management, and vocational skills. These practices reflect the integrative vision of Majelis Taklim, where spiritual growth, ethical entrepreneurship, and community welfare converge to reinforce the principles of moderation and holistic Islamic development.

Finally, Majelis Taklim plays a crucial role in promoting public awareness and exercising social control, functioning as a moral and educational force that upholds community ethics and social harmony. Women's groups within Majelis Taklim have been particularly active in preventive campaigns against drug abuse, intolerance, and radicalization by disseminating peaceful and inclusive interpretations of Islam that emphasize compassion, balance, and social responsibility. Prevention Analyst at BNPT, Indra Apriyanto, explained that the Majelis Taklim community, whose members are mostly women's groups, has an important role in jointly tackling the notions of intolerance and radicalism. The Majelis Taklim is very good for spreading peace-loving messages

that are calm and serene and do not lead to violence (Harrison & Dermawan, 2021). As Putri (2016) highlights, the adaptive nature of Majelis Taklim allows it to respond dynamically to emerging social challenges, making it not only a center of spiritual instruction but also an institution of civic virtue that sustains peace and pluralism in Indonesia's religiously diverse society. This function aligns with the needs and desires of community members for knowledge and religious education. The increasing demands of the congregation and the role of non-formal education have led to various initiatives from community members to develop and improve the existence of Majelis Taklim, then they can carry out their functions and responsibilities.

Transmission of Wasatiyah through Religious and Social Practices

Each Majelis Taklim conducts both regular and incidental Islamic study activities, often coinciding with major Islamic holidays and community religious events. Generally, the primary method of conveying religious messages within Majelis Taklim is through *ta'lim* or recitation sessions, which constitute the central feature of their educational practice. Indeed, it is nearly impossible to separate Majelis Taklim from recitation activities, as most religious gatherings and *pengajian* in Indonesia are organized under this framework. In its simplest sense, a recitation refers to a structured and systematic activity designed to communicate Islamic teachings to enhance the congregation's understanding, appreciation, and practical application of religious principles, whether through lectures, interactive discussions, question-and-answer sessions, or practical demonstrations.

In promoting moderate attitudes, perspectives, and behavior in religion, Majelis Taklim also integrates social engagement and educational initiatives into its programs. The dissemination of religious moderation through Majelis Taklim can be observed both in the thematic content of the teachings delivered and in the social and educational activities conducted within their communities. The following sections elaborate on several key examples that illustrate how Majelis Taklim serves as a medium for cultivating moderation and strengthening communal harmony within Indonesia's plural religious landscape (Kamsi, 2016; Rohmawati, 2021; Sulaiman et al., 2020).

Majelis Taklim of Durek Village

This Majelis Taklim is located in Durek Village, Batu City, Malang, East Java, and consists primarily of a women's congregation. One of its main efforts to internalize the values of religious moderation is carried out through regular *ta'lim* or recitation activities. A notable session on religious moderation was held on September 10, 2021, during which the preacher emphasized that justice and balance must serve as the foundational principles of religious moderation, warning against excessive or extreme behavior in any aspect of faith and practice. The message was supported by a reference to Ibn Kathir's interpretation of Surah al-Rahman, verse 9, which highlights the Qur'anic command to "establish balance with justice and do not fall short in the balance."

In addition to spiritual education, the Majelis Taklim actively promotes moderation through social and philanthropic activities conducted periodically. These include assisting those in need, particularly victims of natural disasters, as a form of communal empathy and moral solidarity. Such habits of *sadaqah* (acts of giving) are understood to nurture generosity, humility, and social awareness, virtues that counter arrogance and greed. In this sense, *sadaqah* is intrinsically connected to the concept of *wasatiyah*, as it fosters balance in wealth distribution and contributes to the establishment of a peaceful, compassionate, and prosperous society founded upon *ukhawah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood) and mutual love among believers.

Majelis Taklim of Lubuk Linggau

The Majelis Taklim of Lubuk Linggau is situated in the East Lubuk Linggau II Subdistrict of Lubuk Linggau City and consists predominantly of a women's congregation that holds weekly *ta'lim* or recitation sessions. One of the recurring themes addressed in these gatherings is *wasatiyah* (Islamic moderation). The teachings of *wasatiyah* conveyed in this Majelis Taklim emphasize justice as a

form of balance, a principle that calls for a measured and equitable perspective in perceiving, evaluating, and responding to various aspects of life. This balanced disposition, known in Arabic as *al-wasṭ*, represents the middle path between two extremes and is deeply rooted in Qur'anic teachings. As highlighted in Surah al-Baqarah (2:143), the Qur'an designates the Muslim community as *ummataṁ wasataṁ*; a “middle community” chosen by Allah to exemplify fairness, moderation, and moral equilibrium in both faith and practice. Through such weekly recitations, the Majelis Taklim of Lubuk Linggau seeks to internalize and operationalize these values among its members, fostering a moderate religious outlook that harmonizes spiritual devotion with social responsibility.

Pakualaman Yogyakarta Police subdistrict Office

The Majelis Taklim of the Pakualaman Police Subdistrict Office in Yogyakarta conducts a variety of social-religious activities aimed at fostering community engagement and religious moderation. One of its prominent initiatives involves organizing religious service activities in collaboration with residents. These programs typically include cleaning community worship places in designated areas, followed by the distribution of gifts or donations to residents. The activity, held regularly every Friday morning, functions as an implicit medium for the transmission of *wasathiyah* (moderation) values, as it brings together individuals from diverse backgrounds to participate in shared acts of service and cooperation. Such initiatives embody the principles of mutual respect and social harmony, as they are carried out in ways that neither contradict the core teachings of Islam nor conflict with national values of unity and pluralism.

In addition to community service, this Majelis Taklim also conducts teaching and learning programs, notably Qur'anic literacy classes for police officers and administrative staff at the subdistrict office. These sessions are facilitated by an Islamic religious instructor from the Office of Religious Affairs (*Kantor Urusan Agama*) of Pakualaman Subdistrict. The program is open not only to officers but also to local community members who wish to improve their ability to read and understand the Qur'an. Through these dual initiatives-religious education and community service- the Majelis Taklim of Pakualaman embodies the practical integration of *wasathiyah* values, encouraging spiritual development, civic responsibility, and social cohesion within a pluralistic Indonesian context.

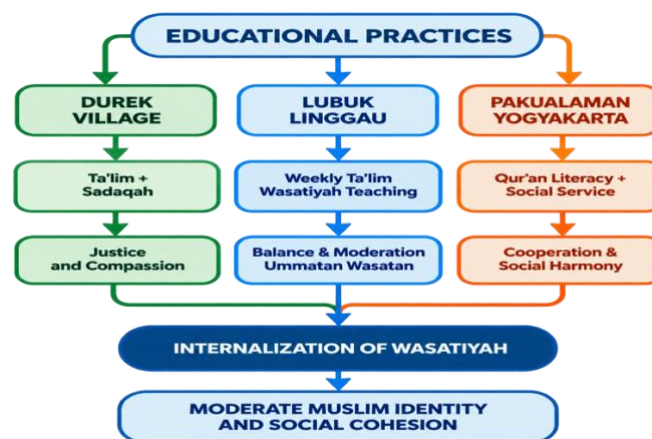


Chart1. Wasathiyah Transmission Pattern in Majelis Taklim

The findings presented above demonstrate that Majelis Taklim operates not only as a space for religious instruction but also as a dynamic non-formal Islamic educational institution in which *wasathiyah* values are transmitted and internalized through multiple pathways. Across the cases observed in Batu–Malang, Lubuk Linggau, and Pakualaman, religious moderation is fostered through structured religious learning (*ta'lim*), social charity, community service, cultural expression, and empowerment initiatives. These patterns indicate that *wasathiyah* in Majelis Taklim is conveyed

not merely through doctrinal discourse but is embedded in everyday religious and social practices. Building on these findings, the following discussion situates the role of Majelis Taklim within broader theoretical and historical perspectives on non-formal Islamic education, da'wah, and religious moderation in Indonesia.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that Majelis Taklim's role as a strategic site of non-formal Islamic education, in which *wasatiyah* is fostered through an integrated process of religious learning and social practice. Majelis Taklim emerges as a community-based educational space where moderation values are internalized through continuous interaction, collective worship, social engagement, and cultural activities, rather than merely as a forum for transmitting doctrinal information. This provides support to the view that religious moderation is a lived educational process shaped by everyday religious experiences in the community, rather than a theological construct (Anggraeni et al., 2024). The empirical evidence from the three research contexts—Durek Village in Batu–Malang, Lubuk Linggau, and Pakualaman Yogyakarta—demonstrates that Islamic moderation is developed through interconnected religious and social practices, including ta'lim activities, Qur'anic literacy, sadaqah, community service, and collective engagement. These findings indicate that *wasatiyah* is not only understood as a theological concept but is transformed into lived religious practice through continuous interaction, participation, and social experience.

According to Haidar Putra Daulay (2007) in his work “The History of the Growth and Reform of Islamic Education in Indonesia”, the concept of Majelis Taklim began to gain recognition in Indonesia during the early period of Islamic dissemination, which was carried out intensively through the da'wah method. One of the most prominent examples of this approach can be traced to the *Wali Songo*, whose efforts in propagating Islam incorporated communal learning sessions where *ustād* (Islamic teacher) delivered religious teachings and engaged in interactive question-and-answer discussions with their congregations. Hence, within the Indonesian context, Majelis Taklim is considered one of the oldest forms of Islamic educational institutions, deeply rooted in the nation's religious history. Furthermore, as Islamic knowledge and thought evolved, the educational landscape expanded beyond the non-formal framework of Majelis Taklim to include formal institutions such as *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), *madrasah*, and other Islamic educational establishments that continue to shape Indonesia's religious and intellectual development (Nashiruddin & Zulmuqim, 2022).

According to Saenong (2016) in his 'Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Culture', between 2014 to 2016, and linked to a rise in the expression of religion in the Indonesian public sphere, Majelis Taklim has exploded in many societal units, including university offices, neighborhoods, and political parties. The social elites who frequently assemble in *arisan* (regular social gatherings) groups have begun incorporating *tausiah* (Islamic preaching and advice) into their gatherings by inviting celebrated ustadz. Socialites who previously adhered to secular and glamorous lifestyles have also started to follow and enjoy this trend. The Ministry of Religious Affairs recorded that in 2013, there were approximately 158,960 Majelis Taklim, with permanent members numbering 4,173,870 across Indonesia. It must be noted that this number only reflects those from the conventional Majelis Taklim that have been officially recorded.

The development of Majelis Taklim in the capital can be traced to Majelis Taklim Habib Ali Kwitang, established in 1870, which produced notable *mu'allim* such as K.H. Abdullah Syafi'i, K.H. Thohir Rohili, and K.H. Ali Syibromalisi, whose teachings inspired the proliferation of similar institutions throughout the city based on intellectual and genealogical networks (Alatas, 2012; Saenong, 2016). Notably, K.H. Abdullah Syafi'i was the first scholar to formally introduce the term Majelis Taklim, popularizing it through his recitations at Al-Barkah Mosque for both men and women, which later became a defining model for non-formal Islamic education in Indonesia (Aulia, 2014).

In 2019, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenag, 2019) issued Regulation No. 29 of 2019 concerning Majelis Taklim, which formally governs the establishment and administration of these non-formal Islamic educational. The regulation stipulates, in Article 6 Paragraph (1), that every Majelis Taklim must be registered with the local office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs to ensure institutional accountability and data management. According to M. Juradi, Director of Islamic Religious Information at the Ministry, the formulation of PMA 29/2019 underwent extensive consultation with leaders of Majelis Taklim organizations and was intended primarily to create a comprehensive national database and to facilitate training and capacity-building programs, rather than as a reactive measure to issues such as radicalism or intolerance (Kiki, 2019). The regulation thus represents a government effort to formalize and strengthen the role of Majelis Taklim as a legitimate partner in promoting religious education and moderation across Indonesia. According to Rosihan Anwar et al. (2002) and Tutty Alawiyah (1997), Majelis Taklim in Indonesia can be categorized based on several criteria, including social grouping, area, venue, and organizational structure. From a social perspective, Majelis Taklim may consist of men's groups, women's groups, youth groups, or mixed congregations comprising men and women of various ages (Ridwan & Ulwiyah, 2020). Finally, from the organizational standpoint, some Majelis Taklim function independently, while others are formally affiliated with established religious organizations such as 'Aisyiyah, Muslimat NU, and Al-Hidayah, which provide structural guidance and programmatic continuity (Dahlan, 2019).

The findings further demonstrate that the strength of Majelis Taklim lies in its ability to bridge Islamic normative teachings with social realities. Unlike formal educational institutions that primarily rely on structured curricula and institutional assessment, Majelis Taklim develops religious understanding through interpersonal relationships between teachers (*mu'allim*) and participants (*jama'ah*), collective worship, repeated religious gatherings, and community activities. Through these processes, values such as *tawāzun* (balance), *tasāmuḥ* (tolerance), *i'tidāl* (justice), compassion, and respect for diversity are gradually embedded within the religious consciousness of participants. Therefore, the internalization of *wasatiyah* occurs not only through cognitive understanding but also through emotional engagement and behavioral practices that shape individual and collective religious identity (Kamali, 2015).

The importance of this finding lies in the relationship between religious knowledge and social attitudes. Religious moderation is not automatically produced by religious identity; rather, it requires continuous educational processes that encourage reflection, dialogue, and contextual understanding. This finding corresponds with research on peace education, which emphasizes that religious learning spaces can contribute to social harmony when they promote tolerance, mutual respect, and recognition of diversity.

The findings of this study demonstrate that Majelis Taklim functions as a pivotal non-formal Islamic educational institution that contributes significantly to the internalization and transmission of *wasatiyah* values in Indonesia. The practices observed across various regions, Batu–Malang, Lubuklinggau, and Yogyakarta, reveal that Majelis Taklim not only disseminates religious knowledge through *ta'lim* and recitation but also integrates social service, community empowerment, and cultural activities as means of cultivating balanced and moderate religious attitudes. In line with previous research (A'thoina, 2025; Hafidz, 2020; Juhri et al., 2023; Nasir & Rijal, 2021) the results of this paper confirm that community-based Islamic education remains a vital platform for promoting tolerance, civic ethics, and social harmony in the multicultural context of Indonesia.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Majelis Taklim functions as a strategic grassroots institution of non-formal Islamic education in transmitting and internalizing *wasatiyah* (religious moderation) within Indonesian Muslim communities. The findings reveal that the contribution of Majelis Taklim extends beyond religious knowledge transmission, as it integrates *ta'lim*, collective religious practices, social charity, community service, and empowerment activities into an interconnected educational process. The study highlights that *wasatiyah* is not merely constructed as a theological understanding but is developed as a lived religious orientation through continuous interaction between religious discourse and social practice. The cases examined in Durek Village, Lubuk Linggau, and Pakualaman Yogyakarta demonstrate that Majelis Taklim enables the transformation of Islamic moderation values—particularly justice (*i'tidal*), balance (*tawāzun*), tolerance (*tasāmul*), compassion, and social responsibility—into everyday behaviors that strengthen moderate Muslim identity and social cohesion. The main contribution of this study lies in expanding the understanding of Islamic non-formal education by positioning Majelis Taklim as an active social institution that produces religious moderation through community-based learning processes rather than merely as a complementary space for religious instruction.

The findings also provide important theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this study contributes to the discourse on religious moderation by demonstrating that the internalization of *wasatiyah* occurs through a multidimensional process involving cognitive understanding, moral formation, and social engagement. This perspective challenges approaches that conceptualize moderation primarily as a doctrinal or ideological framework by emphasizing its experiential and relational dimensions within community life. Practically, the findings suggest that strengthening Majelis Taklim should become part of broader strategies for developing inclusive Islamic education and maintaining social harmony in plural societies. Religious institutions, policymakers, and community organizations may consider Majelis Taklim as a potential partner in promoting peaceful religious narratives, strengthening civic responsibility, and developing community resilience against intolerance and social fragmentation.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. The research was conducted within three selected Majelis Taklim contexts, which provide valuable insights into the mechanisms of *wasatiyah* internalization but may not fully represent the diversity of Majelis Taklim practices across Indonesia's different cultural and regional settings. Furthermore, this study primarily examined institutional practices and collective processes, while the long-term transformation of individual religious attitudes and behaviors requires further investigation. Future research could employ longitudinal approaches to examine how *wasatiyah* values develop over time among participants, conduct comparative studies between Majelis Taklim and other Islamic educational models, and explore the roles of specific actors, including religious leaders, women's groups, and youth cadres, in sustaining moderate Islamic education. Such studies would further strengthen understanding of how community-based Islamic institutions contribute to religious moderation and social cohesion in contemporary Muslim societies.

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