

## **Teaching Strategies of Religious Leaders in Fostering Congregational Participation in Learning At-Taqwa Islamic Study Group, Cibat, Garut Regency**

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### **Abstract**

*This study aims to analyze the teaching strategies employed by religious leaders in fostering community participation in learning through religious study sessions at the At-Taqwa Cibat Majelis Taklim, Garut Regency. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. The data were collected through in depth interviews, observations, and documentation of religious leaders and members of the Majelis Taklim. Data analysis was conducted through several stages, including reduction, grouping, categorization, and thematic interpretation. The research findings indicate that the religious leaders' teaching strategies include the use of simple language, the delivery of contextualized material, interactive lecture methods, and a persuasive approach toward the congregation. Factors influencing community participation include religious motivation, spiritual needs, emotional closeness between the congregation and religious leaders, as well as a conducive study session atmosphere. These strategies have proven effective in encouraging attendance, active engagement, and sustained community participation in religious activities. This study also confirms that religious leaders play a vital role in fostering a participatory learning environment through teaching approaches that are communicative and relevant to daily life.*

**Keywords:** *Teaching Strategies, Religious Leaders, Learning Participation, Majelis Taklim.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Efforts to foster religious understanding are realized through nonformal Islamic education, namely Majelis Taklim, which plays a vital role in the intellectual development of the community. The primary activity organized by majelis taklim is regular religious study sessions (pengajian) as a means of conveying religious knowledge; however, the function of majelis taklim extends beyond this, serving as a space for the formation of religious values, attitudes, and behaviors within social life. Within the scope of community education, one form

of education that serves as a collective learning space for the community is the majelis taklim, as it bridges the community's spiritual needs a fundamental human need through a flexible and contextual learning process. This study indicates that majelis taklim plays a strategic role in fostering religious understanding and cultivating the religious character of the community through continuous learning activities conducted within the majelis taklim. This aligns with research conducted by Alandes, Akil & Susanto (2024), who noted in their study that the strategic role of majelis taklim can shape character and deepen the community's religious understanding. Based on these findings, the position of majelis taklim as a nonformal learning space is strengthened within a heterogeneous community environment characterized by diverse daily activities.

In the learning process at majelis taklim, religious figures serving as ustadz/instructors play a central role as facilitators and the primary source of religious knowledge for the congregation. The teaching strategies employed by these religious figures significantly impact the success of the learning process, particularly in fostering community interest and participation in the religious study sessions held at majelis taklim. Based on the research findings, the teaching strategies applied are not only focused on delivering content but also on efforts to create active learning interactions between the instructor and the students. Research conducted by Sutarno &

Sari (2022) states that learning strategies must not only provide knowledge but also develop attitudes, feelings, and real life experience, meaning that effective teaching strategies must be able to develop various aspects, including understanding, attitudes, and real life experiences in social life. This refers to the demands of the process that accompanies learning activities, where learning strategies must be able to produce outputs that align with shared expectations; naturally, this also places an additional burden on educators to design, as effectively as possible, the teaching strategies to be implemented in the teaching and learning activities at the majelis taklim. In addition to teaching strategies, other factors that can influence the dynamics of community participation in religious study sessions at majelis taklim include religious motivation, spiritual needs, and the individual's desire to deepen their religious knowledge as internal factors; while external factors may include the surrounding social environment, the teaching approach used by the instructor, and the learning atmosphere created during the sessions. The small group discussion method encourages collaborative learning and increases active participation among learners. This is a research finding from the study by Ilmawan & Tumin (2024), which illustrates that active learning methods can also encourage more intensive student engagement in ongoing learning activities.

In the context of religious study groups, the teaching strategy itself is a key factor in fostering congregant engagement. A lecture method combined with discussion, question and answer sessions, and a contextual approach can create a more participatory learning environment. This is evidenced by research by Sofiatin & Rozi (2025), which found that contextual teaching strategies, active discussions, and sustained religious activities can foster awareness and engagement among participants in religious activities; this, of course, becomes a determining factor in whether learning participation within the community grows or wanes. Majelis taklim also serves as a learning space for the community, facilitating *lifelong learning* for the surrounding community. In practice, education in majelis taklim aims not only to foster religious understanding but also to build social solidarity and strengthen the bonds of brotherhood (*ukhuwah islamiyah*) among community members. Research conducted by Susanti, Mustopa & Kusumawati (2024) states that educational strategies in the nonformal sector, specifically community based settings such as majelis taklim, can be implemented through integrated curriculum development, collaborative activities, and active learning methods to improve learning quality. This indicates that learning strategies implemented in majelis taklim can include the integration of religious materials with the daily lives of the surrounding community, the use of active learning methods, and the development of activities relevant to community needs so that these spaces can serve as community learning environments that meet intellectual needs through community based nonformal education.

Although several studies have examined the role of majelis taklim in the context of community education, there remains a lack of research specifically highlighting the role of religious leaders' teaching strategies in shaping community learning participation in religious study sessions. Most studies have focused more on aspects of learning management or religious programs in general, while research on the relationship between religious leaders' teaching strategies and community learning participation remains limited. Therefore, this study is important to conduct in order to gain a deeper understanding of how the teaching strategies employed by religious leaders can encourage community learning participation in an intellectual activity, namely religious study sessions at the Majelis Taklim.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the teaching strategies of religious leaders in fostering community learning participation through religious study sessions at the At-Taqwa Majelis Taklim in Cibat, Garut Regency. This study is expected to contribute to academic discourse in the development of nonformal Islamic education studies, as well as provide practical recommendations for majelis taklim administrators in their efforts to improve the quality of learning and community participation.

One relevant approach in this study is andragogy theory, developed by Malcolm Knowles, which emphasizes that adult learning has characteristics different from those of child learning. Adults tend to learn based on needs, experience, and an orientation toward problem solving in daily life (Asma, 2022). Therefore, the learning process must be contextual, participatory, and relevant to the life realities of the learners. In the context of the majelis taklim, congregants as adult learners require a teaching approach that not only delivers religious material but is also able to relate it to their life experiences and spiritual needs.

This study employs three main theoretical foundations, namely andragogy theory, learning participation theory, and social learning theory. Malcom Knowles (in Yatimah, Sari, Madhakomala & Adman, 2024) argues that andragogy theory emphasizes that adult learning must be adapted to the needs, experience, and life context of the learners. In this discussion, congregants of the majelis taklim, as adult learners, tend to more readily understand material that is contextual, relevant, and applicable to daily life. Therefore, an adaptive, experiencebased teaching strategy is key to fostering and strengthening congregant engagement in learning.

Andragogy serves as the primary foundation for understanding the characteristics of the congregation as adult learners. Knowles explains that adults have a need for learning that is self directed, experience based, and oriented toward practical application. In this study, andragogy is evident in teaching strategies that adapt the material to the congregation's needs, the use of a contextual approach, and the provision of opportunities for participation in the learning process. The application of andragogical principles in the context of nonformal education has been shown to significantly boost the engagement and motivation of adult learners. Yahya, Purnama & Supeno (2024) found in their research that learning methods focused on independence, life experience, and the relevance of the material are capable of enhancing learning success and highlight the need for a more adaptive and responsive approach to the needs of adult learners, both in formal and nonformal education contexts. This aligns with the learning conditions at the At-Taqwa Cibatuh Majelis Taklim, where the congregation, as adult learners, demonstrated greater engagement when the material presented was contextual and relevant to their daily lives. This finding reinforces the position of andragogy theory as an appropriate conceptual framework for understanding the dynamics of learning in a majelis taklim.

Furthermore, the theory of learning participation is used to explain the forms of congregants' engagement in the learning process. Participation is not merely defined as physical presence but also encompasses active engagement on cognitive, affective, and social levels in study group activities. Research findings indicate that congregants' participation is reflected through interaction, discussion, and efforts to internalize the values learned into their daily lives. Learning participation is a crucial element in the success of the educational process, both formal and nonformal. Suryana, Mumuh & Hilman (2022), in their study on the basic concepts and theory of educational participation, explain that communities actively involved in the educational process whether in organizing, implementing, or evaluating learning activities are more likely to produce an education system that suits the real needs of the community. Moreover, active participation has been shown to produce individuals who are more intellectually capable and better able to address the problems of their social lives. This is consistent with findings on the active participation of congregants in managing majelis taklim (Islamic study assemblies), which affirm that active congregant participation and management commitment are key factors supporting the sustainability and effectiveness of majelis taklim in improving the religious and social quality of the community (Sundari, Sinaga, Prayoga, Prayogi & Kurniawan, 2026). In this context, congregant participation in religious study activities at Majelis Taklim At-Taqwa Cibatuh is not merely physical attendance, but represents genuine involvement in building a meaningful learning community oriented toward the spiritual and intellectual needs of the community. Similar findings were also presented in research on the participation of female students (santriwati) in pesantren majelis taklim, which showed that participation in majelis taklim

produces a harmonization between tradition and transformation that strengthens social cohesion (Mutmaina & Hanif, 2026).

Social learning theory emphasizes that the learning process occurs through social interaction, observation, and imitation of figures regarded as authoritative or exemplary. This is reinforced by research conducted by Irama, Sutarto & Risal (2024), which concluded that Albert Bandura's social learning theory can enhance the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education learning by creating a learning environment that supports the development of attitudes and behaviors in accordance with Islamic values. In the context of this study, religious figures act as social models who not only deliver material but also provide real examples in communal life. Based on interview results, emotional closeness, well-established communication, and the exemplary behavior demonstrated by religious figures are important factors in shaping behavior and fostering congregants' learning motivation. By integrating these three theories, this study holds that the success of teaching strategies in fostering learning participation is determined not only by the method of material delivery, but also by its suitability to the characteristics of adult learners, patterns of participant engagement, and the quality of social interaction built during the learning process.

From the perspective of social learning theory, figures who hold authority and serve as role models within a community play an important role in shaping the behavior of its members. Riasti (2025) explains that individuals, particularly in the context of community-based learning, tend to imitate the actions of those they regard as role models, such as religious or community leaders, and when the examples displayed reflect positive values, individuals more readily adopt those values into their daily behavior. This is relevant to the findings of research conducted by Anjarahmi & Alamin (2023), which state that religious figures are prominent individuals or role models within a community's social structure, making their role highly significant in enhancing the spirituality of the surrounding community. In the context of this study, the religious figure at Majelis Taklim At-Taqwa Cibatuh acts as a social model who not only delivers religious material but also demonstrates genuine exemplary conduct in communal life, such that the learning process occurs not only through knowledge transfer but also through mechanisms of observation and value internalization.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using the case study method to analyze the teaching strategies of religious figures in their efforts to foster community learning participation through religious study sessions at the Majelis Taklim At-Taqwa Cibatuh in Garut Regency. This qualitative approach was chosen based on its strengths and suitability for deeply exploring the experiences, perspectives, and meanings provided from the informants' viewpoints regarding social phenomena within their natural context. In line with what is stated in Sugiyono (2020), qualitative research aims to understand a social problem. The subjects of this study consisted of religious leaders as the main teachers as well as several Majelis Taklim congregants selected using purposive sampling because they were considered to have information relevant to the research objectives.

Data collection in this study was conducted through several stages. According to Putra (2025) in his book *Metodologi Penelitian Kuantitatif dan Kualitatif: Teoritis & Praktis dan Aplikatifnya*, these stages include the following: the first stage is preliminary observation (a pilot study), in which the researcher conducted direct observation of the implementation of religious study activities at Majelis Taklim At-Taqwa Cibatuh in order to obtain a general overview of the teaching process, the interaction between the religious figure and the congregants, and the overall field conditions. This was followed by in depth interviews, conducted in a semi structured

manner guided by a previously prepared interview guide, while still allowing informants the freedom to elaborate on their answers; these interviews were directed at the religious figure as the main instructor and at congregants selected through purposive sampling. The next stage was participatory observation, in which the researcher was directly involved in following the series of religious study activities in order to gain a firsthand understanding of the dynamics of learning, communication patterns, and the forms of exemplary behavior demonstrated by the religious figure in interactions with congregants. This was followed by documentation study, carried out by collecting supporting data in the form of photographs taken during interviews, photographs taken during the religious study sessions, and other supporting documents. Next was data recording and transcription, in which all interview and observation results were recorded (with the informants' consent) and then transcribed verbatim to facilitate the data reduction and data analysis processes in the subsequent stages. All of these data collection steps were carried out repeatedly and complemented one another, so that the data obtained had reached the point of data saturation.

Data analysis in this study was conducted through several stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Additionally, the researcher employed *coding* techniques, including *open coding* to identify initial concepts, *axial coding* to group categories, and *selective coding* to identify the main themes of the study. This process was conducted systematically to ensure that the collected data could be analyzed in depth and yield valid findings.

To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation, method triangulation, and temporal triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from religious figures and congregants, while method triangulation was carried out through interviews, observations, and documentation, and time triangulation was conducted at different time points. Thus, the data obtained complemented one another and strengthened the validity of the research findings.

The researcher acknowledges the potential for bias in the data collection and analysis process, primarily due to direct involvement in the field. To minimize this bias, the researcher engaged in self reflection, maintained objectivity in data interpretation, and cross checked the results of interviews with informants. These steps were taken to ensure that the research findings remain credible and scientifically accountable.

The findings of this study are also contextual and limited to the At-taqwa Cibatun Majelis Taklim as the case study location; therefore, the research results cannot be broadly generalized, but they can serve as a reference or illustration for understanding similar phenomena in other nonformal religious education contexts with similar characteristics

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The field reality shown in the research findings reveals that the teaching strategy applied by the religious figure at Majelis Taklim At-Taqwa Cibatun was designed adaptively, taking into account the needs and characteristics of the congregants as adult learners. The selection of study themes was focused on material relevant to daily life, such as the Qur'an, tafsir (exegesis), tawhid (monotheism), fiqh (jurisprudence), and tasawuf (Sufism). This material was not only oriented toward knowledge, but was also directed at the practical needs of congregants in carrying out their religious and social lives.

Each religious study session lasted approximately 90 minutes. This duration was considered sufficient to deliver material optimally without causing fatigue among the congregants. The learning process tended to use a tutorial approach, while still providing space for discussion for congregants who wished to ask questions or deepen their understanding. In

addition, before moving on to new material, the religious figure consistently reviewed previous material as an effort to strengthen the congregants' understanding and retention.

In delivering the material, the religious figure used the Sundanese language, adjusting its usage based on the congregants' educational background and social conditions. The use of foreign terms or Arabic was always accompanied by an explanation of their meaning, so that the material could be understood thoroughly. In addition, the study material was frequently linked to the local context, such as agricultural practices, buying and selling, household life, and social interaction, making the learning more contextual and applicable.

In terms of learning media, the study sessions did not use digital media, but instead relied on a guidebook systematically compiled by the religious figure. This book contained material that had been studied, was currently being studied, and would be studied in the future, allowing congregants to review it independently at home. This strategy was adapted to the condition of the congregants, the majority of whom were elderly.

The teaching strategy was also evident in the interpersonal approach taken by the religious figure. New congregants were welcomed openly and warmly, while long standing congregants were given verbal appreciation as a form of recognition for their consistency in attending the study sessions. Congregants were also given space to participate actively through questions, responses, and sharing experiences, which were likewise appreciated by the religious figure. This created an inclusive learning atmosphere and encouraged more open congregant engagement.

In addition, the management strategy for the study sessions was also carried out participatively through deliberation between the religious figure and the congregants, particularly in determining the study schedule. The schedule, which was originally held in the evening, was subsequently agreed to be moved to after Dzuhur prayer, around 1:00 PM. The frequency of sessions was set at twice a week with a structured division of material, while also taking care to avoid conflicts with study sessions at other majelis taklim.

Location was also a supporting factor in the teaching strategy, as the study sessions were held at a mosque located within a relatively close residential area. This made access easier for congregants without requiring transportation costs. Nevertheless, there was flexibility in attendance, particularly for congregants working as farmers, who were sometimes unable to attend the sessions due to work demands or fatigue.

Furthermore, the teaching strategy was not limited to routine activities alone, but was also reinforced through other religious activities such as celebrations of major Islamic holidays, nadran, Rajab, and Maulid commemorations. These activities served as a means of implementing the values learned while also strengthening social bonds among congregants.

In addition, the religious figure also integrated local values such as *silih asah*, *silih asih*, and *silih asuh* (mutual sharpening, mutual love, and mutual care) into daily life. These values were reflected in the congregants' social interactions and became part of a learning process that was not only cognitive, but also affective and social in nature.

Community learning participation in the study activities at Majelis Taklim At-Taqwa Cibatun was influenced by a combination of internal and external factors that interacted dynamically. From the internal aspect, religious motivation was the primary factor driving congregants to attend the study sessions consistently. Congregants held an awareness of the importance of fulfilling spiritual needs, so that the sessions were viewed as a means of developing the quality of worship and religious understanding. In addition, the desire to acquire knowledge relevant to daily life such as worship practices, muamalah (social transactions), and social interaction further strengthened congregant participation.

The learning participation shown by congregants was reflected not only in regular attendance, but also in active engagement that was cognitive, affective, and social in nature. Congregant participation was also reflected in their willingness to speak up during discussions

when encountering something they did not yet understand. The communicative responses of the religious figure, delivered in simple language, created an open and supportive learning atmosphere that encouraged congregants to engage actively in the learning process.

Beyond internal factors, there were also external factors influencing congregant participation. Family support was one important factor that reinforced congregants' involvement in the study activities. The absence of demands or pressure from the surrounding environment, along with positive encouragement from family members, indicated that congregant participation was voluntary and grounded in personal awareness.

On the other hand, the religious figure as the central figure had a highly significant influence on the pattern of congregant participation. A good reputation, a sincere attitude of devotion, and commitment to guiding the congregants established the religious figure as a trusted and respected figure. In some circumstances, the religious figure even demonstrated dedication by prioritizing the study sessions over personal interests. This strengthened the emotional bond between congregants and the religious figure, which in turn fostered loyalty and participation in the study activities.

Another factor that also influenced participation was the additional financial element of routine shadaqah (voluntary almsgiving) during each session. Although the amount was relatively small, this practice reflected a sense of ownership toward the study activities.

In terms of the learning environment, facility conditions also affected the congregants' comfort in attending the sessions. Despite certain limitations, such as an inadequate learning space and toilet sanitation facilities that were not yet optimal, these were not the main obstacles preventing congregants from attending. The availability of basic facilities, such as natural lighting and a consistent supply of clean water, was still sufficient to support the learning activities.

Active congregant engagement in each session was also evident through interactions such as questions, discussions, and the sharing of experiences relevant to the material being discussed. Although the number of participants who asked questions was not large, the congregants' willingness to engage indicated that the learning atmosphere was open, communicative, and not rigid.

Based on the research findings in the field, the teaching strategy applied was reflected in the attendance and consistency of congregants in following the sessions. At certain times, such as during the month of Ramadan, both congregants and the religious figure reported that attendance tended to be higher compared to ordinary days, indicating strong interest in the study activities. On the other hand, the presence of congregants who regularly attended the sessions indicated fairly strong stability in participation.

In addition, the teaching strategy could also be observed through the pattern of congregant loyalty toward the study activities. Congregants demonstrated commitment to continuing their attendance as long as the religious figure remained active in teaching at the majelis taklim, indicating a positive dependency on the religious figure as the primary source of learning. The proximity of the location and the flexibility of scheduling, which did not conflict with daily activities, were also important supporting factors in maintaining participation. Interestingly, the study activities at this majelis taklim were not exclusive in nature, but rather complementary to other majelis taklim in the surrounding area, thereby providing congregants with the opportunity to enrich their religious knowledge from various sources without diminishing their loyalty to the majelis taklim they regularly attended.

In terms of learning outcomes, based on the interview results, the teaching strategy applied was related to the congregants' understanding of the study material delivered. Nevertheless, in practice there were still limitations, such as memorization that was not yet fully strong. In addition, congregants also demonstrated efforts to apply the values gained from the sessions to support their daily lives, although this process of internalization occurred gradually.

Furthermore, the study activities also strengthened solidarity among congregants, such as visiting one another when someone was ill and carrying out communal work (gotong royong) to maintain the cleanliness of the mosque environment. In addition, the sessions also played a role in gradually reducing social conflict within the community, even to the extent of curbing deviant behavior.

Nevertheless, this teaching strategy still faces several limitations. One of these is the still limited participation of the younger generation in the study activities, as seen in the low interest of youth in becoming involved despite the activities taking place within their own environment. In addition, age and health conditions also pose obstacles for some congregants in attending the sessions regularly. On the other hand, work commitments and personal interests within the community also constitute barriers to expanding participation.

Overall, the research findings indicate that the teaching strategy of the religious figure at Majelis Taklim At-Taqwa Cibatuh is related to community learning participation, as reflected in attendance, active engagement, and impact on individual and social life. Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that the teaching strategy applied still has room for further development, particularly in reaching the younger generation and strengthening the internalization of religious values in daily life.

### **Discussion**

The repetition of material before moving on to a new discussion is an important strategy in strengthening understanding, particularly for congregants with diverse educational backgrounds. This finding is consistent with Sutarno & Sari (2022), who state that reinforcing material and adapting it to learners' needs can enhance understanding and learning retention.

The use of a guidebook as a learning medium reflects an adaptation to the characteristics of the congregants, the majority of whom are elderly. This is consistent with Ilmawan & Tumin (2024), who affirm that the compatibility of methods with learners' characteristics is an important factor in learning success.

The humanistic and inclusive approach applied by the religious figure in which the religious figure sought to eliminate social distance with congregants so that interaction became more open has had an impact on increasing congregants' willingness to participate during the study sessions. This finding is consistent with Alandes, Akil & Susanto (2024), who state that good interpersonal relationships between educators and learners can foster motivation and active engagement in learning.

Flexible management of time and location, despite certain attendance limitations for congregants who work as farmers, in fact demonstrates adaptation to social conditions within the community. This is supported by Sofiatin & Rozi (2025), who argue that flexible learning management can encourage sustained participation in learning activities within the scope of nonformal education.

The teaching strategy applied by the religious figure at Majelis Taklim At-Taqwa Cibatuh demonstrates consistency with the principles of andragogy. This is evident in the selection of material relevant to congregants' needs, the use of simple and contextual language, and a non rigid learning approach. Congregants, as adult learners, did not merely receive material passively but were also given space to ask questions, engage in discussion, and relate the material to their own life experiences. As a result, the learning process became more meaningful and easier to internalize into daily life. In line with this, Eli, Ridwan, Salama & Nursaidah (2026), in their study on andragogical strategies at PKBM (Community Learning Centers), found that the application of andragogy based learning strategies significantly encourages active participation, comprehension of material, and practical skills among adult learners compared to conventional methods. This indicates that the compatibility between teaching strategy and adult learner characteristics is a key factor in learning success, as manifested in the study sessions at the majelis taklim, which are flexible, dialogical, and oriented toward congregants' needs.

The learning participation demonstrated by congregants reflected not only in regular attendance but also in active cognitive, affective, and social engagement is consistent with the findings reported by Khairinnisa, Nurhasanah & Maksum (2024), who state that learners' active participation in the learning process encompasses the full range of active behaviors and actions during learning, and that an educator capable of creating a supportive learning environment, facilitating interaction among participants, and employing varied teaching methods has been shown to significantly encourage learner participation. This condition is manifested in the dynamics of the study sessions at the majelis taklim, where the religious figure's communicative approach was able to open broad space for congregants to actively ask questions, engage in discussion, and share experiences.

Ilmawan & Tumin (2024) argue that intrinsic motivation and the relevance of material are crucial factors in developing learning participation, as reflected in congregants' willingness to discuss and ask questions when encountering something they did not yet understand. The influence of the religious figure on congregants' loyalty and participation is also consistent with previous research showing that a strong emotional bond between instructor and learner can foster engagement in the learning process (Ilmawan & Tumin, 2024).

The condition of the facilities indicating that facility factors serve as a supporting rather than a primary determinant of participation is consistent with Sofiatin & Rozi (2025), who state that a comfortable learning environment can foster engagement, even though it is not a dominant factor.

Overall, community learning participation in the study sessions at Majelis Taklim At-Taqwa Cibatuh is the outcome of the interaction of various complementary factors. Religious motivation and spiritual needs are the primary factors driving participation, while family support, the religious figure's reputation, and the condition of the learning environment serve as reinforcing factors. Participation within the context of a majelis taklim can therefore be understood as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that requires a holistic approach to its management.

Congregant participation in the study activities at Majelis Taklim At-Taqwa Cibatuh illustrates that these activities have succeeded in becoming a meaningful and relevant learning space for the surrounding community. This finding aligns with the research results of Anisa, Septianingrum, Triwinarti & Wulandari (2022), who found that community participation in the management of nonformal education is influenced by the extent to which an institution is able to respond to the needs and local context of its community. When learning activities are designed with consideration for the background, needs, and living values within the community, participation is no longer viewed as an obligation, but instead grows organically as a form of collective awareness arising from within the congregants themselves.

The fairly strong stability of participation, reflected in congregants' attendance and consistency, indicates that the applied teaching strategy is able to maintain the sustainability and continuity of congregant engagement over the long term. Sutarno & Sari (2022) argue that learning that is interactive and relevant to learners' needs can encourage engagement and the sustainability of participation.

The focus of learning on understanding and internalization rather than mere memorization affirms that religious learning is a long term process requiring continuity and repeated reinforcement. This finding is consistent with Sofiatin & Rozi (2025), who argue that religious learning is not only related to cognitive understanding but also gradually encourages changes in attitudes and behavior.

The social impact of these study activities namely strengthening solidarity, reducing social conflict, and even curbing deviant behavior demonstrates that the majelis taklim functions not only as a site of religious learning but also as an agent of social change capable of fostering a more harmonious community life. The success of the applied teaching strategy is inseparable

from the application of andragogical principles, in which learning relevant to congregants' needs and experiences is able to foster their motivation and engagement. This indicates that an appropriate adult learning approach can produce more active and sustained participation.

The limited participation of the younger generation found in the field is consistent with the view of Sutarno & Sari (2022), who argue that a major challenge in nonformal education is attracting the participation of the younger generation and adapting learning strategies to the social dynamics of the community.

The exemplary conduct of the religious figure as the central figure in the study activities at Majelis Taklim At-Taqwa Cibatuh reflects a real world application of Bandura's social learning theory. Wahyuni & Fitriani (2022), in their research, found that the application of Bandura's social learning theory within a religious based environment tends to shape positive behavior and internalize values through processes of observation and emulation of respected figures. This finding is consistent with conditions in the field, where the emotional closeness between the religious figure and the congregants, along with the consistent exemplary conduct demonstrated in daily life, are the primary factors driving congregants to voluntarily and continuously attend the study sessions and internalize the values being taught.

This study also offers a new perspective in the development of nonformal Islamic education studies by affirming that the integration of the andragogical approach, learning participation, and social learning forms a conceptual framework for understanding community engagement in study activities. This finding enriches the theoretical perspective by showing that the success of religious learning depends not only on lecture based methods, but also on the instructor's ability to build emotional closeness, present relevant learning, and serve as a role model in social life. This study thus implies that teaching strategies based on values, context, and social interaction need to be continuously developed within the practice of nonformal religious education.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the teaching strategies employed by religious figures at the Majelis Taklim At-Taqwa Cibatuh have been implemented in an adaptive, contextual manner, and guided by the needs of the local community, thereby creating a learning process that is relevant and easily understood by the congregation. These strategies do not merely emphasize the delivery of religious content as the sole learning objective but also integrate communicative approaches, exemplary behavior, and local values such as the pillars of Sundanese culture *silih asah*, *silih asih*, and *silih asuh* which align with Islamic teachings. Learning conducted in a simple yet meaningful manner, accompanied by a warm, open, and participatory study session atmosphere, makes the congregation feel comfortable, valued, and motivated to consistently participate in the study sessions with steadfast commitment.

Community participation in religious study sessions is also influenced by various interrelated factors, particularly internal motivation stemming from an awareness of spiritual needs and a desire to deepen religious understanding factors that are further reinforced by external support such as family encouragement, a close relationship with religious leaders serving as instructors, and a supportive social environment. Additionally, the flexibility of study session schedules, proximity of locations, and an inclusive, nonrigid approach by religious leaders also play a crucial role in sustaining congregational participation. Despite some limitations, such as facilities that are not yet fully adequate and the still limited interest of the younger generation, religious study sessions continue consistently. Such factors do not significantly hinder the congregation's enthusiasm for attending sessions at the majelis taklim.

Research findings indicate that the teaching strategies employed are linked to the congregation's active engagement in religious study sessions, their understanding of the religious

material presented, and tangible efforts to internalize and apply the values gained from these sessions in daily life. Beyond individual impacts, the religious study sessions also have a social impact on the community, such as increased solidarity and care among congregants, as well as a reduction in social problems and deviant behavior in the surrounding environment. Thus, the At-Taqwa Majelis Taklim serves not only as a space for non-formal religious learning but also as a space for the formation, nurturing, and strengthening of Islamic character within the surrounding community in a sustainable manner. Therefore, teaching strategies based on needs, exemplary behavior, and socio-cultural approaches, as implemented in this majelis taklim, can serve as a relevant model for fostering community participation in learning within the context of non-formal religious education.

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