



## Enhancing Religious Behavior and Well-being in Elderly Through Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan: A Case Study

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the role of Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan in improving religious behavior and mental well-being among elderly participants. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the research delves into the methods and processes used by Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan and identifies the factors that support and hinder its effectiveness. Data were collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews with religious leaders and elderly participants, and documentation of spiritual activities. Findings reveal that Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan significantly enhances elderly individuals' religious behavior through educational programs on Islamic teachings, supports social cohesion, and addresses mental health issues. The study underscores the importance of such institutions in providing spiritual and social support to older people, contributing to their overall quality of life. Limitations include the study's focus on a single location and its qualitative nature, suggesting a need for broader research. Recommendations include developing policies and programs to sustain and enhance Majelis Taklim's role in supporting elderly individuals.

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini mengkaji peran Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan dalam meningkatkan perilaku keagamaan dan kesejahteraan mental di kalangan lansia. Menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi metode dan proses yang diterapkan oleh Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan serta mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang mendukung dan menghambat efektivitasnya. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi langsung, wawancara mendalam dengan tokoh agama dan peserta lansia, serta dokumentasi aktivitas keagamaan. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan secara signifikan meningkatkan perilaku keagamaan lansia melalui program pendidikan tentang ajaran Islam, mendukung kohesi sosial, dan menangani masalah kesehatan mental. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya lembaga semacam ini dalam memberikan dukungan spiritual dan sosial kepada lansia, yang pada gilirannya berkontribusi pada kualitas hidup mereka secara keseluruhan. Keterbatasan studi mencakup fokus pada lokasi tunggal dan sifat kualitatifnya, yang menunjukkan perlunya penelitian lebih luas. Rekomendasi termasuk pengembangan kebijakan dan program untuk mempertahankan dan meningkatkan peran Majelis Taklim dalam mendukung lansia.

### Introduction

Islamic education plays a crucial role in character formation<sup>1</sup> and the enhancement of individual religiosity, especially in the context of older people.<sup>2</sup> Older people are a vulnerable age group,<sup>3</sup> and during this stage, religiosity often becomes a source of inner

<sup>1</sup> Mino Asadzandi, "An Islamic Religious Spiritual Health Training Model for Patients," *Journal of Religion and Health* 59, no. 1 (2020): 173-87, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-018-0709-9>.

<sup>2</sup> Mahin Moeini, Somaye Sharifi, and Zahra Zandiyeh, "Does Islamic Spiritual Program Lead to Successful Aging? A Randomized Clinical Trial," *Journal of Education and Health Promotion* 5, no. 1 (2016).

<sup>3</sup> Shwetambara Kekade et al., "The Usefulness and Actual Use of Wearable Devices among the Elderly Population," *Computer Methods and Programs in Biomedicine* 153 (2018): 137-59,



peace and guidance in facing old age.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the development of religiosity among older people through Islamic education is a relevant and urgent issue to be examined, given its role in maintaining older people's mental and spiritual well-being.<sup>5</sup>

Previous studies have demonstrated the significant role of religious study groups (*Majelis Ta'lim*) in enhancing religious understanding and practice within the community. For instance, research by Triana et al. highlighted that the *Majelis Ta'lim An-Nisa* successfully increased Islamic values and provided significant benefits for women.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, research by Putri et al. found that religious activities at the *Majelis Ta'lim Baitul Ikhlas* successfully enhanced the spiritual understanding of participants, particularly in aspects of creed (*akidah*), worship (*ibadah*), ethics (*akhlak*), and women's jurisprudence (*fiqh*).<sup>7</sup> These studies indicate that *Majelis Taklim* is essential to fostering community religiosity.

Research by A.S. Efendi et al.,<sup>8</sup> and Almaidah & Nengsih<sup>9</sup> It also underscores the importance of *Majelis Taklim* in developing religiosity, especially for homemakers and women in local communities. In their studies, the *Majelis Ta'lim An-Nisa* in Dusun Katimbang and other *Majelis Taklim* contributed to religious guidance and the social development of daily life. These findings strengthen the argument that *Majelis Taklim* is not merely a place for learning about religion but also enhances social relationships and moral community development.

Additionally, research conducted by Nahariah<sup>10</sup> and Munawaroh & Zaman<sup>11</sup> Highlights the success of *Majelis Taklim* in enhancing the religious understanding of the broader community. For example, the *Majelis Taklim Nurul Hijrah* has been proven to successfully change the attitudes and behavior of participants to become more religious. At the same time, the *Majelis Ta'lim Ahad Pagi* in Kadirejo has effectively nurtured harmonious families (*sakinah*) and empowered the underprivileged (*kaum dhuafa*). These results demonstrate that *Majelis Taklim* can have a profound and wide-ranging impact on the community's religious life.

<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cmpb.2017.10.008>.

<sup>4</sup> Nasrin Akter et al., "Astute Exploration of Collective Mental Health Events among the Residents of Elderly Care Homes," *Heliyon* 9, no. 7 (2023): e18117, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e18117>.

<sup>5</sup> Zachary Zimmer et al., "Spirituality, Religiosity, Aging and Health in Global Perspective: A Review," *SSM - Population Health* 2 (2016): 373–81, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2016.04.009>.

<sup>6</sup> Ade Triana, Hamlan Hamlan, and Suharnis Suharnis, "Peran *Majelis Ta'lim An-Nisa* Dalam Meningkatkan Nilai-Nilai Keislaman Bagi Keluarga Di Desa Toaya Kecamatan Sindue Kabupaten Donggala," *Al-Tawjih: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 2 (2022): 134–46.

<sup>7</sup> Nofembra Putri et al., "Pembinaan Keagamaan Masyarakat Melalui Kegiatan Majelis Taklim Di Kenagarian Salimpat Kabupaten Solok," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 6, no. 1 (2022): 786–98.

<sup>8</sup> Arif Efendi A.S, Armin Armin, and Suparman Suparman, "Peranan *Majelis Ta'lim An-Nisa* Dalam Pembinaan Perempuan Di Dusun Katimbang Desa Cemba Kecamatan Enrekang Kabupaten Enrekang," *JIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 5, no. 5 (2022): 1347–52, <https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v5i5.571>.

<sup>9</sup> Oksy Almaidah and Novia Nengsih, "Peranan Majelis Taklim Dalam Pembinaan Keberagaman Bagi Ibu Rumah Tangga," *Al-Kawakib* 2, no. 1 (2021): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.24036/kwkib.v2i1>.

<sup>10</sup> Nahariah Nahariah, "Peran Majelis Taklim Nurul Hijrah Dalam Meningkatkan Pola Pemahaman Keagamaan Dan Prilaku Di Masjid Besar Nurul Hijrah Kota Makassar," *Jurnal Al-Qiyam* 3, no. 2 (2022): 123–31, <https://doi.org/10.33648/alqiyam.v3i2.246>.

<sup>11</sup> Munawaroh Munawaroh and Badrus Zaman, "Peran Majelis Taklim Dalam Meningkatkan Pemahaman Keagamaan Masyarakat," *Jurnal Penelitian* 14, no. 2 (2020): 369–92, <https://doi.org/10.21043/jp.v14i2.7836>.

Despite the many studies showing the great benefits of *Majelis Taklim*, there are still some limitations and challenges, particularly in the context of older people. Many studies have focused more on the influence of *Majelis Taklim* on younger or adult age groups, while research on older people remains relatively limited. Furthermore, challenges such as educational barriers, health issues, and accessibility may affect *Majelis Taklim*'s effectiveness in enhancing the religiosity of the elderly.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, further research is needed to fill this gap and explore the specific role of *Majelis Taklim* in supporting the religiosity of older people.

This study focuses on the role of *Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan* in enhancing religious behavior among older people. This research aims to understand the methods and processes used by *Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan* and identify the inhibiting and supporting factors in efforts to improve religious behavior among older people. Thus, this study is expected to significantly contribute to the literature on Islamic education, particularly in the context of older people, and offer practical guidance for *Majelis Taklim* administrators in enhancing the religiosity of older people in their communities.

### Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach aimed at profoundly understanding the role of *Majelis Ta'lim Al-Sulthan* in enhancing religious behavior among older people. This approach was chosen because it provides a comprehensive depiction of the phenomenon occurring within the context of the religious lives of older people without manipulation or intervention by the researcher. The descriptive methodology is used to analyze the emerging phenomena in religious activities, including how *Majelis Ta'lim Al-Sulthan* plans and implements programs that support the religious development of its congregation. Furthermore, the selection of the qualitative descriptive method in this study is based on the goal of understanding the subjective experiences of older adults in their religious context, which are challenging to quantify. This method allows the researcher to capture the nuances and complexities of older adults' religious behavior and provides space for them to express their perspectives.

The research procedure involved several stages, starting with direct observation at *Majelis Ta'lim Al-Sulthan*, located in Taman Nuansa Majasem, Cirebon. The study also included in-depth interviews with religious leaders, elderly caregivers, and several members of the congregation and surrounding community to gain diverse perspectives on the role of the *Majelis Ta'lim* in the spiritual lives of older people. Documentation was carried out by collecting photographs, recordings of religious activities, and relevant documents to support data analysis. The interview techniques included semi-structured questions, allowing informants to provide rich and in-depth responses. Informants were selected based on criteria applicable to the research theme, such as their experience and involvement in *Majelis Ta'lim Al-Sulthan*. The informant selection process followed the principles of purposive sampling to ensure that the data obtained were relevant and representative.

The tools used in this research included voice recorders for interviews, cameras for visual documentation, and data analysis software to assist in data presentation and interpretation. Primary data were obtained from direct interviews and observations, while secondary data were gathered from books, journals, and other documents relevant to this research.

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<sup>12</sup> Ali Jadidi et al., "Spiritual Needs of the Muslim Elderly Living in Nursing Homes: A Qualitative Study," *Journal of Religion and Health* 61, no. 2 (2022): 1514–28, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-021-01263-0>.

Data was collected using three main techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. The collected data were analyzed using data reduction, presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification. Data analysis was carried out using triangulation of sources, techniques, and time to ensure the accuracy and validity of the findings. To ensure the reliability and validity of the research, the researcher employed triangulation, which involved comparing information from various sources and methods, as well as repeating data collection at different times to ensure the consistency of the findings.

## Result and Discussion

### 3.1. The Role of *Majelis Ta'lim* Al-Sulthan in Enhancing the Religious Behavior of the Elderly

In this section, the researcher focuses on the role of *Majelis Taklim* in improving the religious behavior of elderly congregants. The role of *Majelis Ta'lim* Al-Sulthan includes:

#### 3.1.1. Enhancing Religious Behavior

Based on the observations made by the researcher, the *Majelis Ta'lim* Al-Sulthan serves as a medium for enhancing religious behavior. This is evident in the frequent religious study sessions where the material predominantly revolves around Islamic teachings related to religious behavior. For example, on the night of Monday, February 12, 2024, the guide or speaker at the *Majelis Ta'lim* presented a lesson on the Qur'an and its interpretation (from Tafsir Ibnu Katsir). It can be concluded that *Majelis Ta'lim* Al-Sulthan teaches Islamic principles encompassing aspects of worship and faith, such as believing in Allah SWT and trusting in His scripture. Studying the Qur'an is mandatory in Islam, preparing for worldly life and the Hereafter. Additionally, there is instruction on fiqh through the study of hadiths from the book *Bulughul Maram*. The material offered lessons on worship practices for the congregants of *Majelis Ta'lim* Al-Sulthan, as demonstrated by Ibu Rumsih, who applies these teachings daily, including performing sunnah prayers.

As an informal institution, *Majelis Taklim* is crucial in enhancing religious behavior, particularly among older people. This aligns with Peter Jarvis's concept of a "learning society," where learning occurs not only in formal classrooms but also through everyday experiences within the community.<sup>13</sup> *Majelis Taklim* provides a platform for older people to continue learning and deepening their understanding of religion, strengthening their faith and religious practices.

In this context, the learning approach used in *Majelis Taklim*, such as studying classical texts like Tafsir Ibnu Katsir and *Bulughul Maram*, aligns with cognitive learning theory.<sup>14</sup> This theory emphasizes the importance of internal processes in learning, where knowledge is constructed through interaction with the environment, including discussions and reflections on religious material.

Therefore, it can be concluded that *Majelis Ta'lim* Al-Sulthan delivers content related to religious behavior, covering aspects of faith (*Aqidah*), worship (*Ibadah*), ethics (*Akhlak*), and social interactions (*Muamalah*). The elderly congregants actively and regularly participate in the study sessions at *Majelis Ta'lim* Al-Sulthan.

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<sup>13</sup> Martin Dyke, "Paradoxes of a Long Life Learning: An Exploration of Peter Jarvis's Contribution to Experiential Learning Theory," *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 36, no. 1-2 (March 2017): 23-34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2017.1269475>.

<sup>14</sup> Deri Firmansyah and Dadang Saepuloh, "Social Learning Theory: Cognitive and Behavioral Approaches," *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Holisti (JIPH)* 1, no. 2 (December 2022): 297-324, <https://doi.org/10.55927/jiph.v1i3.2317>.



### 3.1.2. A Means to Strengthen *Ukhuwah* (Islamic Brotherhood)

Islam aims to establish a united, harmonious, and peaceful social order where everyone is bound by brotherhood and affection as part of one family. This universal brotherhood transcends territorial boundaries. To achieve this Islamic goal, *Majelis Taklim* emerges as an appropriate solution for creating a solid social order. By organizing regular study sessions, *Majelis Taklim* acts as a forum to strengthen the *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood) among the congregation. This is demonstrated through activities such as celebrating the Prophet's birthday (Maulid), visits between different *Majelis Taklim* groups, visiting members who are ill, and commemorating other Islamic holidays. These activities foster fellowship among the congregation and the broader community.

The concept of *ukhuwah Islamiyah*, or brotherhood in Islam, is highly relevant when discussing the role of *Majelis Taklim* in strengthening social bonds among the congregation. *Ukhuwah Islamiyah* refers to individual relationships, social solidarity, and community cohesion. According to Pierre Bourdieu's social capital theory, *ukhuwah* can be viewed as a form of social capital that binds a community together through shared values and trust.<sup>15</sup>

*Majelis Taklim*, through various activities such as regular study sessions, Islamic holiday celebrations, and inter-congregational visits, serves as a socializing agent that strengthens this *ukhuwah*. These activities reinforce interpersonal relationships and create a sense of unity and togetherness within the community.

### 3.1.3. Mental Health Support for Congregants

Mental disorders, such as anxiety, can negatively impact the behavior of congregants. Many elderly congregants spend their free time sitting, daydreaming, isolating themselves, or gossiping with neighbors. To address and mitigate these issues, *Majelis Taklim* has emerged as an innovative solution for mental health challenges.

Various mental disorders affect the elderly, such as dementia, depression, and anxiety disorders. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 20% of the elderly population worldwide suffers from mental disorders. Elderly individuals experiencing depression often show physical symptoms such as fainting, pain, heaviness in the body, and constipation. They may also exhibit prominent anxiety, abnormal behavior, or hysteria, particularly in older individuals. Psychotic factors, such as delusions, guilt, poverty, or physical illness, may also be present. Family psychologist Probowatie Tjondronegoro notes that mood changes, such as irritability and sensitivity, are common in older people. Probowatie also explains that depression in the elderly is often caused by anxiety about death, which can lead to feelings of weakness and worthlessness. According to a study titled "Prevalence of Psychiatric Disorders in U.S. Older Adults: Findings from a Nationally Representative Survey" conducted by Kristin Reynolds et al., elderly men tend to experience personality disorders. In contrast, older women are more prone to anxiety disorders.<sup>16</sup>

Mental tranquility is crucial, particularly in terms of mental health. In Islam, it is believed that every mental disorder or affliction has a remedy and a solution. Allah SWT says in the Qur'an, Surah Yunus, verse 67: "O mankind, there has come to you instruction

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<sup>15</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for The Sociology of Education*, ed. Jhon G. Richardson (Greenwood Press, 2008), 241–58, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470755679.ch15>.

<sup>16</sup> Kristin Reynolds et al., "Prevalence of Psychiatric Disorders in U.S. Older Adults: Findings from a Nationally Representative Survey.," *World Psychiatry: Official Journal of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA)* 14, no. 1 (February 2015): 74–81, <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20193>.

from your Lord and healing for what is in the breasts and guidance and mercy for the believers." Additionally, Allah says in the Qur'an, Surah al-Ra'd, verse 28: "Those who believe and whose hearts are at rest by the remembrance of Allah. Behold, it is by the remembrance of Allah that hearts find rest."

From the points above, it can be concluded that elderly congregants perceive significant positive benefits from participating in religious study sessions at *Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan*. These benefits include improvements in religious behavior, such as worship, social interactions, faith, and ethics. As an Islamic educational institution, *Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan* plays a vital role in the Curug village community, especially for women and older people. Learning about Islam is not limited by age; all Muslims must strive to acquire religious knowledge in preparation for the afterlife. Moreover, *Majelis Taklim* serves as a means to strengthen *ukhuwah*, as fostering good relationships among Muslims is obligatory. Activities such as celebrating the Prophet's birthday, inter-*Majelis Taklim* gatherings, and visiting friends or fellow congregants who are ill or facing hardship are ways to maintain good fellowship.

Finally, mental health is a crucial issue, especially for the elderly, who are highly susceptible to physical and psychological illnesses. Mental health is essential for older people, as their physical health may deteriorate, leading to stress due to loneliness or a lack of activities. This stress can result in boredom. *Majelis Taklim* is expected to be a source of inner healing, alleviating loneliness and providing opportunities to share problems with *Ustazd*, *Ustazdah*, or fellow congregants experiencing similar issues, thereby finding solutions together.

*Majelis Ta'lim Al-Sulthan* has proven effective in enhancing the religious behavior of elderly participants, particularly in applying Islamic teachings related to faith (*Aqidah*), worship (*Ibadah*), ethics (*Akhlak*), and social interactions (*Muamalah*) in their daily lives. The participants actively engage in these religious practices, reflecting positive changes in their religious behavior. This finding aligns with the study by Rizqi et al. (2022), which demonstrated that *Majelis Ta'lim Al-Mubaroq* in Cijati effectively fostered communal worship behaviors through activities like congregational prayers and religious lectures.<sup>17</sup> Both studies highlight the role of *Majelis Ta'lim* as an effective educational platform for older people.

Moreover, *Majelis Ta'lim Al-Sulthan* strengthens *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood) through religious gatherings and social activities, including Islamic holiday celebrations and visits between different *Majelis Ta'lim* groups. These activities build stronger social bonds, functioning as a form of social capital, consistent with Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social capital, which emphasizes the importance of social ties in fostering community solidarity. This is supported by Hasanah's (2019) study, which also found that *Majelis Ta'lim* strengthens social relationships in urban communities, reinforcing the idea that *Majelis Ta'lim* plays a broader social role beyond being a purely religious institution.<sup>18</sup>

Additionally, *Majelis Ta'lim Al-Sulthan* provides mental health support by offering spiritual guidance and a supportive environment where elderly participants can share

<sup>17</sup> Rizqi Muhammad Firdaus Rizqi, Herdianto Wahyu Pratomo Herdi, and Nuruddin Araniri Udin, "The Educational Role of *Majelis Ta'lim Al-Mubaroq* in an Effort to Increase Community Worship in Cijati Village, Majalengka Regency," *International Journal of Educational Qualitative Quantitative Research* 1, no. 1 (2022): 1-7, <https://doi.org/10.58418/ijeqqr.v1i1.1>.

<sup>18</sup> Umdatul Hasanah, "Majelis Taklim and the Shifting of Religious Public Role in Urban Areas," *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies* 13, no. 34 (2019): 80-90, <https://doi.org/10.15575/idajhs.v12i1.4632>.

their struggles and find comfort in prayer and religious counsel. This finding aligns with Ahmad and Ghufuran's (2018) study, which demonstrated that regular spiritual practices, such as prayer, significantly improve mental health and psychological resilience among elderly Muslims.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Pramesona and Taneepanichskul's (2018) research showed that religious interventions, including Qur'anic recitations and sermons, can reduce depressive symptoms and improve the quality of life for elderly residents in nursing homes.<sup>20</sup> Both studies corroborate the present findings, affirming that *Majelis Ta'lim* plays an essential role in supporting the mental well-being of elderly participants.

In summary, the findings demonstrate that *Majelis Ta'lim* Al-Sulthan plays a pivotal role in enhancing the religious behavior and mental well-being of elderly participants. The regular religious teachings and activities foster spiritual growth and strengthen social ties within the community, aligning with existing literature highlighting the dual role of *Majelis Ta'lim* as both a religious and social institution. Additionally, the mental health benefits observed, such as reduced anxiety and depression, reinforce the significance of spiritual practices in promoting psychological resilience among older people. These findings are consistent with previous research, affirming the transformative impact of religious interventions in supporting holistic well-being.

### 3.2. Methods and Processes of Recitation at the *Majelis Ta'lim* Al-Shultan

The teaching methods used by the *Ustazd* and *Ustazdah* (religious teachers) in providing religious guidance are as follows:

#### 3.2.1. Lecture Method

The lecture method involves the educator verbally explaining and presenting information to the students in the classroom. In other words, this method delivers information through verbal explanation by the educator to the students. This method is widely used because it is easy to implement. Prophet Muhammad often used the lecture method to teach his followers, alongside other methods. Most religious instructors at *Majelis Ta'lim* Al-Shultan use the lecture method because the congregation members are of varying ages and educational backgrounds, with some being quite elderly and others unable to write. Therefore, the lecture method is the most suitable and commonly used method.

#### 3.2.2. Dialogue Method

Dialogue is a conversation that alternates between two or more parties through questions and answers on a topic aimed at a specific goal. Both parties exchange views on a particular matter. Sometimes, they reach a conclusion, or one party may remain unsatisfied with the discussion. Nevertheless, one can still learn from the dialogue and form one's stance. Dialogue profoundly impacts the listeners or readers who follow the conversation attentively and with full attention. This is due to several reasons: First, the subject matter is presented dynamically, as both parties are directly involved in a reciprocal discussion, making it engaging. Second, the method keeps listeners interested in following the conversation, preventing boredom and renewing enthusiasm. Third, this method can evoke emotions and create impressions in the soul, helping individuals

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<sup>19</sup> Wakeel Ahmad and Mohammad Ghufuran, "Impact of Religious Practices on Hardiness and Mental Health of Elderly Muslim Subjects," *International Journal of Indian Psychology* 6, no. 3 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.25215/0603.88>.

<sup>20</sup> Bayu Anggileo Pramesona and Surasak Taneepanichskul, "The Effect of Religious Intervention on Depressive Symptoms and Quality of Life among Indonesian Elderly in Nursing Homes: A Quasi-Experimental Study," *Clinical Interventions in Aging* 13 (2018): 473–83, <https://doi.org/10.2147/CIA.S162946>.

conclude. Fourth, suppose the dialogue is conducted well and adheres to Islamic ethical guidelines. In that case, it will influence participants to adopt moral education, proper speaking manners, respect for others' opinions, etc. The dialogue method is used in the teaching activities at *Majelis Ta'lim Al-Shultan*, but the religious instructors rarely employ it due to the infrequent questions from the congregation.

This study found that the lecture method is the predominant teaching approach used at *Majelis Ta'lim Al-Sulthan* due to its simplicity and adaptability, particularly for elderly participants who vary in age and education levels. While the dialogue method is employed occasionally, it is less frequent because participants rarely ask questions. However, when the dialogue method is utilized, it fosters a more profound understanding through reciprocal discussions.<sup>21</sup>

These findings align with research that underscores the importance of dialogic education in enhancing learner engagement and fostering deeper comprehension through interactive learning methods. Haase (2019) emphasizes that dialogue-centered education creates a learner-focused environment where participants can actively engage with the content.<sup>22</sup> However, the dominance of the lecture method suggests that *Majelis Ta'lim Al-Sulthan* has not fully tapped into the transformative potential of dialogue-based learning. This contrasts with Vrikki et al. (2019), who argue that creating a dialogic space encourages more active participation and profound understanding in religious education.<sup>23</sup>

While the lecture method is acknowledged as being more practical for elderly participants who may be more passive, the effectiveness of the dialogue method in deepening understanding highlights the need for its more frequent application. Techniques like bibliodrama and interactive education, as shown by Kienstra et al. (2018), foster critical thinking and reflection on religious concepts.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, dialogue plays a crucial role in promoting interreligious understanding in pluralistic societies, as discussed by Mandarić (2019).<sup>25</sup> Therefore, increasing the dialogue method at *Majelis Ta'lim Al-Sulthan* could help elderly participants become more engaged and deeply internalize religious teachings.

The findings suggest that while the lecture method remains relevant and effective for elderly participants at *Majelis Ta'lim Al-Sulthan*, the dialogue method deserves more emphasis due to its potential to enhance engagement and comprehension. The literature supports the value of dialogic education in encouraging active participation and critical reflection on religious teachings. However, the challenge remains in implementing this method with a more passive audience. Therefore, *Majelis Ta'lim Al-Sulthan* should consider adopting more inclusive and adaptive strategies to increase the use of dialogic

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<sup>21</sup> Dan Haase, "Dialogue Education: A Learning-Centered Pedagogy," *Christian Education Journal* 16, no. 2 (July 26, 2019): 359–68, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739891319847695>.

<sup>22</sup> Haase.

<sup>23</sup> Maria Vrikki et al., "Exploring Dialogic Space: A Case Study of a Religious Education Classroom," *Language and Education* 33, no. 5 (September 3, 2019): 469–85, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2019.1604741>.

<sup>24</sup> Natascha Kienstra, Monique van Dijk-Groeneboer, and Olav Boelens, "Religious-Thinking-Through Using Bibliodrama: An Empirical Study of Student Learning in Classroom Teaching," *Religious Education* 113, no. 2 (2018): 203–15, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2017.1403788>.

<sup>25</sup> Valentina Mandarić, "The Contribution of Religious Education to the Promotion of Interreligious Dialogue," in *Proceedings of the Islamic Pedagogical Faculty in Zenica. December 2019* (Zenica: Islamic Pedagogical Faculty in Zenica, 2019), 163, <http://www.ipf.unze.ba/zbornik-radova/>.



methods to improve religious behavior and mental well-being among its elderly participants.<sup>26</sup>

### 3.3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Enhancing Religious Behavior Among the Elderly

#### 3.3.1. Supporting Factors

The ongoing success of *Majelis Ta'lim* for over 20 years can be attributed to several key factors. One of the main supporting elements is the role of the religious instructors. Mr. Eef mentioned that he faces no obstacles in delivering religious guidance at *Majelis Ta'lim* Al-Shultan. He stated, "Oh, there are no obstacles that hinder me. When management informs me that there is a schedule, if I can fill it in, there will be no obstacles. If I am healthy and asked to go, I will go. There are no obstacles to teaching." This is largely due to the consistent communication between the *Majelis Ta'lim* leadership and the instructors before each session. Additionally, the well-organized teaching schedule ensures that there are no interruptions, except in cases where the instructor has a major personal commitment, in which case another instructor steps in.

Another significant factor comes from the participation of the elderly congregants. Their strong willingness to engage in religious studies sets an example for others to follow. For instance, Mak Haji Hawa, who is in her 70s, is always the first to arrive at the *Majelis Ta'lim* sessions, serving as the oldest and one of the most dedicated members. Her enthusiasm motivates other elderly members to enhance their religious behavior. Despite their age, the elderly congregants remain active and attentive during the teachings. The sessions are designed to be interactive and engaging, with the Ustazd and Ustazdah occasionally incorporating salawat and inviting the congregation to participate, ensuring that the atmosphere stays lively and that the members do not become bored or sleepy.

Finally, the sense of camaraderie among the congregation is another crucial supporting factor. The strong bonds between the members foster mutual motivation and create an environment where they can support one another in both religious studies and personal matters. This peer support has significantly contributed to the lasting success of *Majelis Ta'lim*, enabling it to thrive for over two decades.

#### 3.3.2. Inhibiting Factors

Any activity may have inhibiting factors, and the same applies to *Majelis Ta'lim* Al-Shultan. Despite its strengths, some inhibiting factors *Majelis Ta'lim* Al-Shultan faces in enhancing religious behavior among older people. These can be considered inhibiting factors for religious instructors and elderly congregation members.

Religious instructors must demonstrate patience and open-mindedness in conveying Islamic teachings. Eef Saefullah, M.Ag noted that the challenges of preaching require a heart filled with tolerance and broad-mindedness. He emphasized that no matter what others say, the key is to respond in a manner that pleases Allah, making those challenges easier to overcome. This mindset ensures that external opinions do not hinder religious instructors.

Meanwhile, elderly members of the congregation face natural challenges that come with aging, such as decreased hearing and vision and occasional illness, which can hinder their attendance at *Majelis Ta'lim* Al-Shultan. Financial issues arise, especially when

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<sup>26</sup> Kyriaki Vassilou Xanthi Albanaki, "Teaching Religious Education Through the CLIL Method: An Interdisciplinary Approach and a Tool for Empowering Cognitive Skills," *Journal of International Scientific Publications* 16 (2018): 62–68.

events such as the Prophet's birthday (*Maulid Nabi*) require funding. In such instances, congregation members are expected to contribute, as the available funds at *Majelis Ta'lim Al-Shultan* primarily come from donations collected during each meeting.

This study reveals that the primary factors supporting the improvement of religious behavior among elderly participants at *Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan* are the guidance of religious instructors, the strong willingness of elderly participants to engage, and the social support from fellow congregants. These elements create a conducive environment for active participation in religious activities such as routine studies and communal worship. The presence of experienced instructors and the enthusiasm of elderly participants motivate others to stay involved in spiritual activities.<sup>27</sup>

However, the study also identifies several inhibiting factors, primarily the physical limitations elderly participants face, such as hearing and vision impairments and fluctuating health conditions. This aligns with the findings of Niewiadomska and Szot (2021), who noted that physical impairments can restrict active engagement in religious services among older adults.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, financial constraints emerged as a barrier, particularly for those who struggle with transportation to attend religious activities.

From a literature perspective, these findings are broadly consistent with previous studies highlighting the importance of social support and mental health in elderly religious participation. For instance, Saffari et al. (2019) found that social connections within religious communities enhance the mental well-being of elderly participants, a factor also observed in this study through the support of fellow congregants.<sup>29</sup> However, the inhibiting factors identified, primarily physical and financial limitations, are corroborated by studies such as those by Cowden et al. (2022) and Pramesona & Taneepanichskul (2018), which emphasize the role of accessibility and financial support for elderly participants.<sup>30,31</sup>

The findings of this study confirm that the improvement of religious behavior among elderly participants at *Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan* is driven by a combination of effective religious instruction, a strong willingness to participate, and social support. However, challenges such as physical limitations and financial constraints pose significant barriers. Based on the existing literature, adopting more inclusive approaches, such as providing transportation and health support, could enhance elderly participation in religious activities. To address these obstacles, religious organizations must be more

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<sup>27</sup> Afsaneh Bakhtiari et al., "Does Religion Predict Health-Promoting Behaviors in Community-Dwelling Elderly People?," *Journal of Religion and Health* 58, no. 2 (2019): 452–64, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-018-0710-3>.

<sup>28</sup> Iwona Niewiadomska and Leon Szot, "Article Preference for Religious Coping Strategies and Passive versus Active Coping Styles among Seniors Exhibiting Aggressive Behaviors," *Religions* 12, no. 7 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12070553>.

<sup>29</sup> Mohsen Saffari et al., "The Role of Religious Coping and Social Support on Medication Adherence and Quality of Life among the Elderly with Type 2 Diabetes," *Quality of Life Research* 28, no. 8 (2019): 2183–93, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11136-019-02183-z>.

<sup>30</sup> Richard G. Cowden et al., "Identifying Pathways to Religious Service Attendance among Older Adults: A Lagged Exposure-Wide Analysis," *PLoS ONE* 17, no. 11 November (2022): 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0278178>.

<sup>31</sup> Pramesona and Taneepanichskul, "The Effect of Religious Intervention on Depressive Symptoms and Quality of Life among Indonesian Elderly in Nursing Homes: A Quasi-Experimental Study."

adaptive in designing programs tailored to the needs of the elderly, as suggested by prior studies.<sup>32,33</sup>

### 3.4. The Impact of *Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan* on Enhancing the Quality of Religiosity among the Elderly

This study focuses on the role of *Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan* in enhancing religious behavior among older people, including the methods used and the supporting or inhibiting factors in its implementation. Based on previous literature, *Majelis Taklim* has long been recognized as an effective means of fostering religiosity within the community, particularly among women and older people. This study confirms the vital role of *Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan* in strengthening Islamic values among elderly congregants and promoting their mental health.

The findings indicate that *Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan* has successfully improved religious behavior among older people in terms of worship, faith (Aqidah), morality (Akhlaq), and social transactions (Muamalah). Older people actively participate in religious study sessions and demonstrate increased application of spiritual teachings in their daily lives. Interestingly, *Majelis Taklim* also strengthens ukhuwah (Islamic brotherhood) among the congregants and provides a platform for mental health development through spiritual guidance that soothes the soul.<sup>34</sup> These findings align with previous studies that emphasize the role of *Majelis Taklim* in supporting its members' religiosity and social well-being.<sup>35</sup>

Similar and essential differences emerge when comparing these findings to previous studies. Similar to the research conducted by Triana et al.,<sup>36</sup> and Putri et al.,<sup>37</sup> This study confirms that *Majelis Taklim* plays a significant role in strengthening religious aspects. However, this research adds a new dimension related to support for the mental health of older people, which has not been widely discussed in previous literature. This indicates that *Majelis Taklim* is a place for religious learning and an integrative solution for the psychosocial issues older people face.

The role of *Majelis Taklim* in the mental health of older people can be understood from Islamic teachings, which suggest that peace of mind and spirit can be achieved through religious teachings. *Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan* provides a space for the elderly to share their problems and seek tranquility through dhikr, prayer, and guidance from religious teachers. This is particularly important given the high prevalence of mental

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<sup>32</sup> Luciano Magalhães Vitorino, Alessandra Lamas Granero Lucchetti, and Giancarlo Lucchetti, "The Role of Spirituality and Religiosity on the Cognitive Decline of Community-Dwelling Older Adults: A 4-Year Longitudinal Study," *Aging & Mental Health* 27, no. 8 (August 3, 2023): 1526–33, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2022.2141195>.

<sup>33</sup> Milad Borji and Asma Tarjoman, "Investigating the Effect of Religious Intervention on Mental Vitality and Sense of Loneliness Among the Elderly Referring to Community Healthcare Centers," *Journal of Religion and Health* 59, no. 1 (2020): 163–72, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-018-0708-x>.

<sup>34</sup> Fikriyah Winata and Sara L McLafferty, "Therapeutic Landscapes and Networks in Restricted Lives: Constructing Restorative Experiences among Indonesian Female Domestic Workers in Hong Kong," *Wellbeing, Space and Society* 5 (2023): 100163, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wss.2023.100163>.

<sup>35</sup> Almaidah and Nengsih, "Peranan Majelis Taklim Dalam Pembinaan Keberagamaan Bagi Ibu Rumah Tangga."

<sup>36</sup> Triana, Hamlan, and Suharnis, "Peran Majelis Ta'lim An-Nisa Dalam Meningkatkan Nilai-Nilai Keislaman Bagi Keluarga Di Desa Toaya Kecamatan Sindue Kabupaten Donggala."

<sup>37</sup> Putri et al., "Pembinaan Keagamaan Masyarakat Melalui Kegiatan Majelis Taklim Di Kenagarian Salimpat Kabupaten Solok."

health disorders among the elderly, as reported by the WHO.<sup>38</sup> These findings suggest that a religious approach can be an effective method for addressing mental health issues in the elderly.

However, the interpretation of these findings should be approached with caution. Factors such as the congregants' educational background, physical condition, and willingness to participate in religious activities can influence the observed outcomes. Challenges such as funding and health issues the congregants face must be considered when implementing similar religious programs elsewhere.

The research findings indicate that *Majelis Ta'lim* Al-Sulthan significantly improves religious behavior and mental well-being among elderly participants. Through religious activities like prayer, Quranic recitation, and religious lectures, the elderly experience enhanced religiosity and improved social interactions and mental health. Participants report an increased sense of community and spiritual fulfillment, positively impacting their overall well-being.<sup>39</sup> This aligns with the concept that religious practices are not just acts of devotion but also enhance life's psychological and social dimensions.<sup>40</sup>

In comparison with previous studies, the findings from *Majelis Ta'lim* Al-Sulthan are mainly consistent with Triana et al. and Putri et al., who highlighted the importance of religious platforms in improving the spirituality and social engagement of the elderly. However, this study expands on previous research by emphasizing the mental health benefits of regular participation in *Majelis Ta'lim*.<sup>41</sup> The findings regarding improvements in mental well-being through spiritual guidance reflect the conclusions of Aziz et al. (2021), who noted that regular religious participation among elderly Muslims contributed to higher levels of life satisfaction and lower rates of depression.<sup>42</sup> Thus, this study corroborates the existing literature while adding the crucial element of mental health.

The impact of *Majelis Ta'lim* Al-Sulthan on both religiosity and mental health illustrates the multi-dimensional role of religious activities. Theories on religious engagement, such as those proposed by Tang et al. (2022), suggest that religious practices offer more than just spiritual benefits; they provide a supportive environment where elderly individuals can form social bonds, reduce feelings of isolation, and foster a sense of belonging.<sup>43</sup> This study's findings are consistent with the meta-analysis by Coelho-Júnior et al., which found that high levels of religious participation were correlated with improved mental health outcomes in the elderly. While this aligns with existing theories,

<sup>38</sup> Haoyu Huang et al., "Metabolic Pathways Altered by Air Pollutant Exposure in Association with Coagulation Function among the Rural Elderly," *Journal of Hazardous Materials*, 2024, 135507, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhazmat.2024.135507>.

<sup>39</sup> Syazwan Nazri Amir et al., "Impact of Religious Activities on Quality of Life and Cognitive Function Among Elderly," *Journal of Religion and Health* 61, no. 2 (April 18, 2022): 1564–84, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-021-01408-1>.

<sup>40</sup> Wakeel Ahmad and Mohammad Ghufuran, "Impact of Religious Practices on Hardiness and Mental Health of Elderly Muslim Subjects."

<sup>41</sup> Borji and Tarjoman, "Investigating the Effect of Religious Intervention on Mental Vitality and Sense of Loneliness Among the Elderly Referring to Community Healthcare Centers."

<sup>42</sup> Aziz Ilhan, "The Impact of Game-Based , Modeling , and Collaborative Learning Methods on the Achievements , Motivations , and Visual Mathematical Literacy Perceptions," *SAGE Open* 11, no. 1 (2021): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211003567>.

<sup>43</sup> Xiaoli Xinming Tang et al., "'Analytic' Philosophy of Religion I," *BMC Microbiology* 17, no. 1 (2018): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biotechadv.2018.09.003><http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.bbamem.2015.10.011><http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27100488><http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26126908><http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cbpa.2017.03.014><https://doi.org/>.



the unique aspect of this research is its focus on the Indonesian context, where *Majelis Ta'lim* holds a central role in community-based religious learning.

The findings indicate that *Majelis Ta'lim* Al-Sulthan enhances the religious and mental well-being of elderly participants. This dual impact can be seen in the participants' strengthened sense of community (*ukhuwah*) and improved mental resilience through spiritual practices. These findings align with those of Ahmad and Ghufuran (2018), who demonstrated that regular religious practices contribute to higher psychological hardiness and lower psycho-physical stress.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, the study adds a novel perspective by highlighting the under-explored mental health benefits of *Majelis Ta'lim*'s participation, particularly in the Indonesian context. This reinforces the idea that religious practices, especially within organized community platforms, offer spiritual and psychological support to elderly populations. Thus, *Majelis Ta'lim* Al-Sulthan serves as a space for religious learning and a holistic support system for improving the overall quality of life among the elderly.

The implications of these findings are significant. The role of *Majelis Taklim* in developing religiosity and mental health among older people highlights the importance of social and spiritual support in facing the challenges of aging. This study underscores the need for policies and programs that support the sustainability of *Majelis Taklim*, particularly in the context of older people. *Majelis Taklim* not only functions as a place for religious learning but also as a crucial pillar in supporting the mental and social well-being of older people, which contributes to the overall improvement of their quality of life.

## Conclusion

This study aims to understand the role of *Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan* in enhancing religious behavior among older people and the methods and processes used, including the obstacles and supports in this effort. The findings indicate that *Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan* plays a significant role in improving the religious behavior of older people through various learning materials that cover aspects of faith, worship, morality, and social transactions. Additionally, this *Majelis Taklim* strengthens the Islamic brotherhood and fosters the mental health of elderly congregants. The implications of these findings emphasize the importance of social and spiritual support provided by *Majelis Taklim* in facing the challenges of aging. *Majelis Taklim* has proven to be a place for religious learning and a crucial pillar in supporting older people's mental and social well-being improving their quality of life. This study demonstrates that *Majelis Taklim Al-Sulthan* is crucial in helping older people remain spiritually, socially active, and productive.

However, this study also has some limitations, particularly regarding the respondent coverage, which is limited to a single location, and the qualitative nature of the observations, which may only partially reflect the situation in other *Majelis Taklim*. Further research is recommended to expand the scope of the study, both in terms of location and methodology, and to explore different aspects that may influence *Majelis Taklim*'s effectiveness in improving the quality of life for older people. As a recommendation, developing policies and programs that support the sustainability of *Majelis Taklim*, particularly for older people, is highly needed. Future research could also focus on evaluating the long-term impact of *Majelis Taklim*'s activities on the

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<sup>44</sup> Wakeel Ahmad and Mohammad Ghufuran, "Impact of Religious Practices on Hardiness and Mental Health of Elderly Muslim Subjects."

mental and social well-being of older people, as well as developing more inclusive and adaptive learning models to meet the needs of older people.

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