



Empowering Women Through Religious Education Based on Local Wisdom

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze women's empowerment through religious education based on local wisdom in majelis taklim, a form of nonformal Islamic education, thereby enhancing women's religious, social, and cultural capacities within the community. Majelis taklim functions not only as a venue for religious learning but also as a space for social transformation of women through the internalization of Islamic values and local cultural norms prevalent in society. The research employs a qualitative ethnopedagogical approach to understand the learning processes, cultural values, and religious education practices within majelis taklim activities. Data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving administrators, female religious teachers (*ustazah*), and female members of the majelis taklim. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and thematic conclusion drawing. The results indicate that local-wisdom-based religious education in majelis taklim plays a crucial role in women's empowerment, particularly in enhancing religious understanding, strengthening religious character, fostering social solidarity, and developing women's capacity to fulfill social and familial roles. Local values such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), deliberation, community religious traditions, and mutual respect are integrated into the learning process, creating a contextual and easily accepted educational model for participants. Furthermore, majelis taklim serves as a medium for reinforcing Muslim women's identity, enabling them to adapt to social changes without abandoning cultural values or Islamic teachings. The study concludes that local-wisdom-based religious education in majelis taklim represents an effective model of women's empowerment, fostering sustained religious, social, and cultural awareness in the community.

Keywords: Dick & Carey Model; educational technology; instructional design; Majelis Taklim; non-formal education; Qur'an learning; religious literacy.

Introduction

Education is one of the crucial instruments in developing the quality of human resources, including efforts to empower women across various aspects of life. In Indonesia's religious and multicultural society, religious education plays a strategic role in shaping character, morality, and social awareness. Religious education is not limited to formal channels such as schools and universities, but also thrives through nonformal avenues that emerge within communities, one of which is the majelis taklim. The majelis taklim serves as a nonformal Islamic educational institution closely integrated with community life, particularly for Muslim women, functioning not only as a place for religious learning but also as a space for social interaction, cultural reinforcement, and community empowerment (Abutaleb et al., 2020). Over time, the role of

majelis taklim has transformed from merely a forum for religious study into a socio-religious educational medium that significantly influences the lives of Muslim women. Women, as the dominant participants in majelis taklim activities, gain opportunities to enhance their spiritual, intellectual, social, and even economic capacities through various community-based educational activities. This illustrates that majelis taklim contributes meaningfully to social development by applying religious education in a manner that is contextual to everyday life (Ta'rif, 2017).

This phenomenon is particularly important because women occupy a strategic position within families and society. They are not only homemakers but also primary educators in the family, social agents, and carriers of moral values within the community. Therefore, women's empowerment through education is a vital component of sustainable human development. From an Islamic perspective, women have equal rights to education and self-development. Islam positions women as educational subjects who bear significant responsibilities in fostering a morally upright and high-quality generation. As a nonformal Islamic educational institution, majelis taklim holds substantial potential in empowering women due to its participatory, flexible, and socially contextual learning approach. In addition to providing religious understanding, majelis taklim fosters social solidarity, strengthens local cultural values, and facilitates skill development within the community. Thus, religious education at majelis taklim extends beyond ritual and spiritual dimensions to encompass the cultivation of women's social awareness (Reza et al., 2024).

Hana Nur Afifah, Iwan Hermawan, and Nia Karnia (2025), in their article *Majelis Taklim as a Medium for Women's Empowerment in Villa Karawangi Housing*, emphasize that majelis taklim significantly contributes to enhancing religious knowledge, strengthening social relationships, and promoting women's independence through various community-based productive activities. The study demonstrates that majelis taklim functions as a transformative space for women by integrating religious education with community empowerment activities. Moreover, women's empowerment through religious education becomes increasingly significant amid globalization and modernization, which introduce various social changes. Modernization affects lifestyle patterns, fostering individualism, pragmatism, and gradual erosion of local cultural values. This condition weakens social solidarity, diminishes mutual cooperation (gotong royong), and reduces community participation in socio-religious activities. In this context, majelis taklim emerges as a socio-religious institution capable of preserving both religious values and local cultural heritage (Ningsih & Hidayah, 2026).

Local wisdom is a critical element in community education, as it embodies cultural values passed down through generations and serves as a guide for social life. Values such as mutual cooperation, deliberation, tolerance, respect for religious leaders, local religious traditions, and communal bonding remain alive within Indonesian society. Integrating these values into Islamic education ensures that learning is contextual, adaptive, and aligned with community needs. Ahmad Asrin (2024), in his article *Islamic Education in Non-Formal Institutions: The Role of Majelis Taklim Based on Indonesian Local Wisdom*, explains that majelis taklim grounded in local wisdom strengthens spiritual, social, and economic quality through an Islamic educational approach contextualized to local Indonesian culture. The study shows that incorporating local cultural values in religious education enhances community acceptance of learning processes while preserving Muslim Indonesian cultural identity (*Fitrah*) (Asrin, 2024).

Religious education based on local wisdom in majelis taklim also aligns closely with an ethnopedagogical approach. Ethnopedagogy utilizes local culture as a learning resource and a medium for character formation. This approach integrates local cultural values into education, making learning more meaningful and relevant to participants' lives. In majelis taklim, local cultural practices such as tahlilan, yasinan, marhabanan, regular study sessions, mutual cooperation, and social solidarity are incorporated into religious learning, shaping Muslim women's social identity. Women's majelis taklim plays a strategic role in promoting lifelong learning for Muslim women. Education extends beyond formal schooling to community-based socio-religious platforms such as majelis taklim. Through routine study sessions, socio-religious discussions, skill training, and community activities, women gain opportunities for continuous learning throughout their lives (Jaelani Al-Pansori & Syahidi, 2024).

Sururin and Muhammad Muslim (2025), in *Majelis Taklim Muslimat NU: Lifelong*

Learning Based on Local Wisdom, highlight that Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama's women's majelis taklim serves as an effective nonformal educational model based on local culture, fostering lifelong learning. The study illustrates that combining andragogical principles, religious values, and local culture creates a learning system that is both contextual and relevant to community needs (Sururin & Muslim, 2025). Beyond spiritual and cultural aspects, religious education in majelis taklim also impacts women's social and economic empowerment. Many majelis taklim now develop programs for entrepreneurship, household economic skills, *Sharia* financial literacy, and community-based creative economy initiatives. This demonstrates that majelis taklim serves not only as a religious learning medium but also as a vehicle for improving community welfare.

Nur Hidayah, Raihan Rasjidi, and Slamet Munawar (2024), in *Strategies for Women's Empowerment Through Islamic Religious Education Programs*, assert that integrating Islamic religious education with economic skills training significantly enhances women's spiritual and economic independence. The study emphasizes that community-based religious empowerment models are more effective due to emotional and social proximity to participants (Hidayah et al., 2025). Another study by Handayani Indah Susanti (2024), *Empowerment of Community Creative Economy Through the Islamic Education Assembly (Majelis Taklim)*, shows that majelis taklim plays a key role in developing the community's creative economy by strengthening social and economic capacities of female congregants. The research indicates that religious education activities can be combined with productive community-based economic skill development (Susanti, 2025). Majelis taklim also functions in fostering social solidarity and spiritual transformation among women. Social interactions within majelis taklim create strong networks among members, enhancing togetherness, social care, and women's participation in communal activities. This demonstrates that majelis taklim is not merely a religious educational institution but also a social space for women to develop identity, solidarity, and social awareness.

Abdul Rozak Ali Maftuhin, Saiful Amien, and Moh. Nurhakim (2025), in *The Role of Majelis Taklim Pitulasan and Its Impacts on Women Spiritual Transformation*, note that majelis taklim significantly contributes to women's spiritual transformation through educational, motivational, and facilitative functions. Their study shows that nonformal educational activities in majelis taklim enhance women's spiritual awareness and social solidarity (Maftuhin et al., 2025). However, challenges remain in balancing religious and local cultural values amidst globalization. Modernization often leads to cultural shifts and loss of local identity. Therefore, religious education based on local wisdom is vital for preserving cultural identity and strengthening the character of a religious, moderate, and tolerant society. This context is particularly relevant to the community in Serang City, which possesses a strong religious cultural character. Local religious traditions such as routine study sessions, tahlilan, yasinan, marhabanan, and community-based social activities remain integral to daily life. Women's majelis taklim, especially within Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama, has evolved into an active socio-religious educational institution that empowers women based on local culture. Within Muslimat NU, majelis taklim functions not only as a forum for religious learning but also as a medium to reinforce the identity of moderate Muslim women rooted in Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah values and Banten local culture. Routine socio-religious activities constitute an ethnopedagogical educational process, instilling religious, social, cultural, and national values in female congregants (Puspita et al., 2025).

Based on these phenomena and previous research, it is clear that women's empowerment through local wisdom-based religious education in majelis taklim is a significant issue warranting in-depth study. This research is relevant as it seeks to understand how religious education grounded in local culture shapes empowerment in spiritual, social, cultural, and community aspects. Furthermore, it contributes to developing nonformal Islamic education models that are ethnopedagogically contextual to Indonesian society. Accordingly, this study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to Islamic education, women's empowerment, nonformal education, and ethnopedagogy, as well as practical contributions for the development of majelis taklim as a community-based religious educational institution responsive to social and cultural needs (Ahida et al., 2025).

Method

This study employs a qualitative research approach using an ethnopedagogical method to examine the empowerment of women through local wisdom-based religious education in women's *majelis taklim* in Serang City. The qualitative approach was selected because the study seeks to obtain an in-depth and contextual understanding of social, cultural, and educational phenomena occurring within *majelis taklim* activities. This approach enables the researcher to explore religious learning processes, the integration of local cultural values, forms of women's empowerment, and the social meanings constructed within the community setting. Ethnopedagogy is applied as the main analytical framework, emphasizing education rooted in local wisdom, traditions, and cultural practices as contextual learning resources. In this study, it is used to analyze how Banten's local cultural values are embedded in religious education activities within women's *majelis taklim* in Serang City, and how these values contribute to empowerment processes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2022).

This research is field-based with a descriptive qualitative design. Field research allows the researcher to directly engage with socio-religious activities in the *majelis taklim*, while the descriptive approach is used to systematically describe the phenomenon of women's empowerment through religious education grounded in local wisdom. The study locations were selected purposively based on *majelis taklim* that actively conduct religious education, community engagement, and empowerment programs while maintaining local cultural traditions. The research subjects are female members of *majelis taklim* who are actively involved in religious learning and empowerment activities. Informants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure relevance and depth of information. They include *ustazah* (religious instructors), *majelis taklim* leaders, administrators, active congregants, community leaders, and women participating in empowerment programs. This selection allows comprehensive insight into educational practices, cultural integration, and social impact (Sugiyono, 2021).

Data were collected using three main techniques: participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Through participatory observation, the researcher engaged directly in religious sessions and community activities to understand interaction patterns and cultural practices. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore religious education processes, empowerment forms, cultural values, and social impacts. Documentation such as program records, activity reports, photos, and institutional archives was also collected to support and validate findings. Data analysis follows the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with verification (Miles et al., 2014). Data reduction involves selecting and categorizing relevant information into themes such as religious education, local wisdom, empowerment, and social transformation. Data display is conducted through narrative descriptions and thematic organization, while conclusions are continuously verified to ensure accuracy and consistency. Data validity is ensured through triangulation, including source triangulation, technique triangulation, and time triangulation. Member checking is also conducted to confirm interpretations with informants. Overall, the research focuses on religious education systems, integration of local wisdom, women's empowerment forms, social roles of *majelis taklim*, and the impact of ethnopedagogical religious education on women and community development (Creswell, 2015).

Results and Discussion

Overview of Women's Majelis Taklim in Serang City

Women's *majelis taklim* in Serang City represents an active and dynamic form of nonformal Islamic education embedded within the local community structure. These institutions function not only as centers for religious learning, but also as important hubs for social interaction, cultural preservation, and women's empowerment based on community participation. Most of the *majelis taklim* observed in this study are located within religiously strong communities in Serang City, Banten, where Islamic cultural traditions are deeply rooted in daily life. These traditions include *yasinan*, *tahlilan*, *marhabanan*, routine religious study circles, social assistance activities, and *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), all of which contribute to shaping a collective religious and cultural identity among female participants (Barus, 2025).

Religious education activities within the majelis taklim are generally conducted on a weekly or monthly basis, depending on the structure and capacity of each group. The content of learning is diverse and contextually relevant to the needs of women in the community. It includes Qur'anic recitation and interpretation (tafsir), women's Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh al-nisa'*), moral and ethical teachings (*akhlak*), tawhid (Islamic monotheism), Islamic history, and family education. In addition, these learning sessions emphasize the reinforcement of socio-religious values that are directly applicable to everyday life, particularly in relation to family roles, community engagement, and personal spiritual development. Through these structured yet flexible learning processes, majelis taklim serves as a continuous platform for lifelong religious education for women (Rahmat, 2022).

Beyond religious instruction, majelis taklim also organizes various social and community-based empowerment programs. These include assistance for orphans and underprivileged families, women's vocational and skills training, small-scale creative economy initiatives, and guidance for building harmonious and Islamic-based family systems. Such programs reflect the multifunctional nature of majelis taklim, where religious education is closely integrated with social welfare and economic empowerment. In many cases, women are encouraged to develop productive skills such as home-based entrepreneurship, food processing, sewing, and handicrafts, which contribute to household income generation and financial independence (Abutaleb et al., 2020).

The research findings also reveal that women are the central actors in the functioning and sustainability of *majelis taklim*. Female congregants are not merely passive participants in religious learning activities, but actively take on multiple roles within the organization. They serve as administrators, coordinators of study sessions, social facilitators, and organizers of community-based programs. In addition, they act as transmitters of religious values within their families and broader social networks, thereby extending the influence of majelis taklim beyond formal learning spaces into everyday domestic and community life. This highlights the transformative role of majelis taklim in strengthening women's agency and leadership at the grassroots level. The active involvement of women in these institutions demonstrates that majelis taklim plays a strategic role in developing both the spiritual and social capacities of women. Through continuous engagement in religious learning and community activities, women are able to enhance their understanding of Islamic teachings while simultaneously improving their social skills, organizational abilities, and sense of responsibility within society. This dual development of spiritual and social competencies positions majelis taklim as an important institution for holistic women's empowerment (Afifah et al., 2025).

These findings are consistent with the study conducted by Hana Nur Afifah, Iwan Hermawan, and Nia Karnia (2025), which emphasizes that majelis taklim functions as an effective medium for women's empowerment. Their research highlights that such institutions strengthen women's spiritual, social, and even economic capacities within the community context. Similarly, the present study reinforces the idea that majelis taklim is not merely a space for religious instruction, but also a transformative social institution that contributes to the development of empowered, active, and socially engaged Muslim women (Ananda & Afifah, 2024).

Religious Education as a Medium for Women's Empowerment

The research findings indicate that religious education within majelis taklim plays a significant role in strengthening women's empowerment in Serang City. This empowerment is reflected in multiple dimensions, including spiritual development, increased social awareness, improved communication skills, enhanced self-confidence, and greater participation in community life. Through continuous engagement in structured and informal religious learning activities, women experience a gradual transformation in both personal and social capacities, which enables them to function more effectively within their families and broader society. Routine study sessions serve as the primary medium through which female congregants enhance their Islamic knowledge and understanding. These sessions are not limited to ritualistic or doctrinal teachings, but are instead designed to address various aspects of women's everyday lives. Topics discussed often include child education, family harmony, social ethics, household management, family health,

and the roles and responsibilities of women in society from an Islamic perspective. By integrating religious teachings with real-life issues, majelis taklim creates a learning environment that is both practical and contextual. This approach enables women to connect religious values with daily experiences, thereby strengthening their ability to apply Islamic principles in managing family and social matters (Aisyah et al., 2022).

As a result of this holistic form of religious education, women are able to broaden their understanding of Islam beyond formal worship practices. They develop the ability to interpret social issues through an Islamic worldview, which enhances their critical awareness of their roles within the family and society. This intellectual and spiritual growth contributes to a deeper sense of responsibility among women, particularly in relation to educating children, maintaining family well-being, and contributing to community development. In this sense, majelis taklim functions not only as a religious institution but also as an informal educational space that fosters lifelong learning and personal development. Several participants in the study reported significant changes in their social behavior and confidence levels after actively participating in majelis taklim activities. Before joining, many women described themselves as relatively passive in community affairs, with limited involvement in social forums and decision-making activities. However, after becoming regular participants, they gradually became more confident in expressing opinions, engaging in discussions, and participating in community programs. They also became more active in supporting child education initiatives and local social activities. These changes demonstrate that religious education in majelis taklim has a transformative social function, enabling women to develop critical awareness and a stronger sense of agency in their social roles (Maftuhin et al., 2025).

The findings of this study are consistent with the research conducted by Nur Hidayah, Raihan Rasjidi, and Slamet Munawar (2024), which emphasizes that community-based Islamic education has the potential to enhance women's spiritual and social independence. Their study highlights that such educational environments support the development of self-capacity and encourage active participation in community life. In line with these findings, the present research further confirms that majelis taklim contributes significantly to empowering women through continuous religious learning and social engagement. In addition to individual empowerment, religious education in majelis taklim also strengthens social solidarity among women. Regular interactions during study sessions create strong emotional bonds between participants, fostering a sense of togetherness and mutual understanding. These relationships often extend beyond formal learning sessions into daily life, where women support each other in times of need, share resources, and collaborate in community activities. This culture of mutual assistance and social care reflects the strong communal values embedded within majelis taklim activities (Hidayah et al., 2025).

The spirit of cooperation developed within majelis taklim contributes to the formation of a supportive social network among women. This network plays an important role in addressing various social and economic challenges faced by community members. Through collective action, women are able to organize social programs such as charity activities, educational support for children, and assistance for vulnerable families. In this way, majelis taklim not only functions as a religious learning center but also as a platform for building resilient and cohesive communities. Overall, the findings suggest that religious education in majelis taklim has a multidimensional impact on women's lives. It enhances spiritual understanding, strengthens social skills, increases confidence, and fosters active participation in community development. At the same time, it nurtures solidarity and collective responsibility among women, making majelis taklim an essential institution for both religious education and social empowerment in Serang City (Asrin, 2024).

Integration of Local Wisdom in Religious Education

Religious education in the majelis taklim of Serang City is deeply influenced by the local wisdom embedded within Banten society. This integration of cultural values into religious learning reflects a unique educational model in which religion and culture are not positioned as separate entities, but rather as mutually reinforcing components of daily life. In this context, local cultural values are systematically incorporated into both the learning process and the broader socio-

religious activities of female congregants. As a result, religious education becomes more contextual, meaningful, and closely connected to the lived experiences of women in the community (Anwari, 2020).

One of the most prominent manifestations of local wisdom in majelis taklim activities can be seen in traditional religious practices such as tahlilan, yasinan, marhabanan, house-to-house study sessions, and community-based mutual assistance (gotong royong). These practices serve not only as religious rituals but also as important educational media that strengthen the relationship between religious teachings and cultural values. Through these activities, women are exposed to a continuous process of moral, spiritual, and social learning. For instance, tahlilan and yasinan gatherings provide opportunities for Qur'anic recitation, collective prayer, and religious reflection, while simultaneously fostering social solidarity and emotional closeness among community members. Similarly, marhabanan activities, which involve the recitation of praises for the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), reinforce spiritual devotion while preserving cultural heritage (Hidayah et al., 2025).

House-to-house study sessions (pengajian keliling) also play a significant role in expanding access to religious education. These informal learning gatherings allow women to participate in religious discussions within a familiar and comfortable environment. In addition, community-based mutual assistance activities reflect the strong cultural value of solidarity in Banten society. Through collective cooperation in social and economic matters, women are able to practice Islamic values such as compassion, cooperation, and social responsibility in real-life situations. In this way, these cultural traditions function as integrated tools for religious and character education. The integration of local culture into religious education makes the learning process more contextual and relatable for female congregants. Religious teachings are not presented in an abstract or overly theoretical manner, but are instead connected directly to the daily experiences and social realities of the participants. As a result, women perceive religious material as more meaningful and applicable to their roles within the family and society. This contextualization enhances their ability to internalize Islamic values and apply them in practical life situations, such as child-rearing, family management, and community engagement (Maisaroh et al., 2021).

In addition, the use of local language and a familial, informal approach in teaching further strengthens the effectiveness of the learning process. Religious instructors often communicate using regional dialects and adopt a warm, respectful, and inclusive teaching style. This approach creates a participatory and communicative learning environment in which women feel comfortable expressing opinions, asking questions, and engaging in discussions. Consequently, the relationship between instructors and participants becomes more collaborative rather than hierarchical. This atmosphere fosters stronger social bonds and enhances the overall quality of interaction within the majelis taklim community. This educational model reflects the principles of ethnopedagogy, in which local culture is utilized as an essential learning resource. Within this framework, culture is not seen as something external to Islamic education, but rather as a complementary element that supports the internalization of religious values. In the context of Serang City's majelis taklim, local cultural practices do not contradict Islamic teachings; instead, they function as effective mediums for transmitting and reinforcing Islamic values in everyday life. Through this integration, religious education becomes more holistic, encompassing spiritual, moral, and social dimensions simultaneously (Nata, 2020).

The findings of this study are consistent with the views of Ahmad Asrin (2024), who argues that majelis taklim based on local wisdom strengthens both the spiritual and social quality of communities through culturally contextual Islamic education. According to this perspective, the incorporation of local cultural elements enhances the relevance and effectiveness of religious learning, particularly in community-based settings. Similarly, Sururin and Muhammad Muslim (2025) highlight that women's majelis taklim, such as those under Muslimat NU, function as lifelong learning systems that are closely aligned with the needs and realities of Muslim women. Their study emphasizes that such institutions provide continuous educational opportunities that support both spiritual development and social empowerment. Overall, the integration of local wisdom into religious education within majelis taklim in Serang City demonstrates a sustainable and culturally grounded model of Islamic learning. It shows that religion and culture can coexist

harmoniously, producing an educational environment that is not only spiritually enriching but also socially transformative. Through this approach, women are able to strengthen their religious understanding, preserve cultural identity, and actively contribute to community development in a meaningful and empowered manner (Asrin, 2024; Sururin & Muslim, 2025).

Majelis Taklim as a Space for Women's Social Transformation

The study indicates that majelis taklim functions not only as a space for religious learning, but also as an important platform for women's social transformation in Serang City. Beyond its primary role in providing Islamic education, majelis taklim serves as a dynamic social institution where women actively engage in organizational, educational, and community-based activities. Through continuous participation in these activities, women gradually develop a wide range of skills, including leadership abilities, social communication competence, and organizational management skills. This transformation reflects the broader function of majelis taklim as a vehicle for empowering women in both religious and social dimensions. In many cases, women who were previously confined mainly to domestic roles have begun to expand their participation into public and community spheres. This shift is evident in their involvement in various activities such as organizing religious events, participating in community outreach programs, joining creative economy training sessions, and contributing to social welfare initiatives at the neighborhood level. These activities provide women with opportunities to interact with a wider social network, engage in collective decision-making, and take on responsibilities that extend beyond household boundaries. As a result, their social visibility and active participation in community life increase significantly (Rosyad, 2022).

This increased involvement also contributes to the development of self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills among women. By engaging in organizational tasks such as coordinating events, managing group activities, and collaborating with community leaders, women learn how to express ideas, negotiate roles, and work effectively in teams. These experiences help them overcome social hesitation and gradually build confidence in public engagement. Moreover, participation in collective programs fosters a sense of responsibility and ownership toward community development, further strengthening their social identity as active contributors rather than passive participants. Another important finding of this study is that majelis taklim plays a key role in reinforcing the identity of moderate Muslim women who are grounded in local cultural values. Through religious teachings that emphasize balance, tolerance, and social harmony, women are encouraged to adopt a moderate understanding of Islam that respects diversity within society. This moderation is reflected in attitudes that prioritize peace, mutual respect, and cooperation in social interactions. The integration of local cultural wisdom further strengthens this identity by aligning religious values with everyday cultural practices, creating a balanced worldview that is both religiously rooted and socially inclusive (Sururin & Muslim, 2025).

In addition to organizational and identity development, *majelis taklim* also provides women with a safe and supportive space to share personal experiences and family-related challenges. Within this environment, women are able to openly discuss issues such as household dynamics, child-rearing difficulties, economic pressures, and emotional struggles. These discussions are typically conducted in a non-judgmental and empathetic atmosphere, allowing participants to feel heard and supported. As a result, strong emotional bonds and social solidarity are formed among female congregants, reinforcing a sense of sisterhood and mutual care within the majelis taklim community. This supportive environment plays a crucial role in reducing social isolation and strengthening psychological well-being among women. By sharing experiences and offering mutual advice, participants collectively develop coping strategies for everyday challenges. The sense of belonging created within majelis taklim encourages women to remain actively engaged in both religious and social activities, thereby sustaining their participation in community development processes over time (Humeira, 2026).

The findings of this study are consistent with the research conducted by Abdul Rozak Ali Maftuhin, Saiful Amien, and Moh. Nurhakim, which demonstrates that majelis taklim has a significant impact on both spiritual and social transformation. Their study highlights that majelis taklim functions not only as an educational institution but also as a community-based platform

that fosters empowerment, social cohesion, and religious development. In line with these findings, the present study further confirms that *majelis taklim* plays a vital role in shaping empowered women who are spiritually grounded, socially active, and capable of contributing meaningfully to community life. Overall, *majelis taklim* in Serang City can be understood as a transformative social institution that bridges religious education with real-life social development. Through its diverse activities, it enables women to grow as individuals, strengthen their social networks, and actively participate in shaping their communities in a positive and sustainable manner (Maftuhin et al., 2025).

Impact of Religious Education on Women's Lives

Local wisdom-based religious education at *majelis taklim* has a positive and multidimensional impact on women in Serang City. One of the most significant impacts is spiritual strengthening, where women experience an improvement in their understanding of Islamic teachings, discipline in worship, and overall spiritual awareness. Through regular participation in religious study sessions, women develop a deeper connection with their faith, which contributes to inner peace and emotional stability. This spiritual foundation also helps them to reorient their life priorities based on Islamic values, enabling them to approach personal and family problems with a more patient, reflective, and religiously guided mindset. As a result, religion becomes an important source of strength in facing everyday challenges (Siregar & Rohman, 2023). In addition to spiritual development, *majelis taklim* also contributes to social strengthening among women. The activities within these institutions foster strong social bonds through continuous interaction, communication, and collective participation in community life. Women are actively involved in various forms of mutual assistance, community care, and social cooperation, which reinforce a sense of togetherness and solidarity. Social programs organized within *majelis taklim*, such as charitable donations, visits to sick members, condolence activities, and community aid initiatives, reflect the practical implementation of solidarity values. These activities not only strengthen interpersonal relationships but also build a supportive social environment where women help one another in times of need (Syahrudin et al., 2025).

Local wisdom-based religious education plays an important role in local cultural preservation. Through study sessions and socio-religious activities, women actively participate in maintaining and transmitting local Islamic cultural traditions that are unique to Banten society. Traditions such as *yasinan*, *tahlilan*, and *marhabanan* are continuously practiced and passed down across generations, ensuring their sustainability within the community. In this process, women serve as important agents of cultural preservation, particularly within their families and social environments. By teaching and practicing these traditions, they help to maintain the identity of local Islamic culture while adapting it to contemporary social contexts (Silitonga, 2025).

Another important impact is the strengthening of women's roles within the family. Through religious education, women gain valuable knowledge related to child education, household management, and Islamic family ethics. This knowledge equips them with practical guidance in managing family life according to Islamic principles. Women become more capable of fostering household harmony, improving communication within the family, and providing better moral and religious education for their children. As a result, the quality of family education improves, and women play a more active and influential role in shaping the moral and spiritual development of their households. Overall, the integration of local wisdom in *majelis taklim* creates a comprehensive educational impact that extends beyond religious knowledge. It strengthens women spiritually, socially, culturally, and within the family structure. This holistic development demonstrates that *majelis taklim* is not only a center for religious learning but also a vital institution for empowering women and strengthening community resilience through culturally grounded Islamic education (Susanti, 2025).

Challenges in Women's Empowerment at Majelis Taklim

Despite its significant contributions to women's empowerment and community development, *majelis taklim* in Serang City still face several notable challenges that need to be addressed to ensure their continued effectiveness and sustainability. One of the main challenges is the limited scope of women's economic empowerment programs. Although some initiatives such as small-

scale training and creative economy activities exist, they are not yet systematically developed or widely implemented across all majelis taklim. As a result, the economic potential of women has not been fully optimized through these religious community institutions. In addition, many majelis taklim still operate with relatively simple organizational management structures. This limitation affects planning, program implementation, and long-term development strategies. Without stronger institutional management, it becomes difficult to expand activities or introduce more structured empowerment programs. Another challenge is the minimal availability of learning facilities, such as adequate meeting spaces, teaching materials, and educational media, which can affect the quality and effectiveness of religious education activities (Tilaar, 2021).

The study also identifies low digital literacy among some female congregants as a significant obstacle. In the current era of digital transformation, limited ability to access and utilize digital platforms restricts women's participation in broader learning opportunities and information exchange. This gap also affects the potential integration of digital tools in religious education. Furthermore, the development of community-based education curricula remains suboptimal, as many programs are still informal and not systematically designed to address evolving social and educational needs. Another emerging challenge is the impact of modernization and digital media on the participation of younger women. Some younger generations show decreasing interest in traditional majelis taklim learning models, preferring digital and more flexible forms of religious learning. This situation creates a gap between traditional educational practices and contemporary learning preferences, requiring innovation to make majelis taklim more adaptive and relevant to current developments. Despite these challenges, local cultural values and familial approaches remain the key strengths of majelis taklim in sustaining community-based religious education in Serang City. The strong sense of kinship, cultural rootedness, and communal solidarity continues to attract women to participate and maintain engagement in these institutions. Therefore, while innovation and adaptation are necessary, preserving these foundational values is essential to ensure the long-term sustainability and relevance of majelis taklim in a changing social landscape (UGM Press, 2021).

Based on the research findings, it can be understood that women's empowerment through local wisdom-based religious education in the women's majelis taklim of Serang City represents a form of nonformal Islamic education that performs multiple and interconnected functions, including spiritual, social, cultural, and community-based empowerment. This demonstrates that majelis taklim is not merely a place for religious instruction, but a living institution that contributes significantly to the holistic development of Muslim women in their everyday lives. Through continuous participation in religious learning and social activities, women experience gradual transformation in their personal values, social roles, and community engagement.

In this context, majelis taklim functions as an important medium for transmitting religious knowledge while simultaneously shaping the social identity of Muslim women that is deeply rooted in local cultural values. The integration of Islamic teachings with local wisdom creates a contextualized educational model that is highly relevant to the lived realities of the community. Because the learning process is closely connected to cultural practices and daily experiences, it becomes more easily accepted, understood, and internalized by participants. As a result, the empowerment process does not feel forced or artificial, but instead develops naturally within the social life of women and their communities (Walad et al., 2025).

The ethnopedagogical approach applied in majelis taklim further highlights the essential role of local culture in community-based education. This approach emphasizes that education is most effective when it draws from the cultural values and social practices of the community itself. In Serang City, values such as gotong royong (mutual cooperation), musyawarah (deliberation), social solidarity, and various local religious traditions are actively incorporated into learning and social activities. These values are not only taught theoretically but are also practiced directly in everyday interactions, allowing women to internalize them more deeply. Through this process, majelis taklim becomes a space where cultural identity and religious understanding reinforce each other. Moreover, religious education within majelis taklim contributes significantly to the development of a moderate and harmonious society. By emphasizing principles such as tolerance, togetherness, respect for diversity, and social balance, majelis taklim helps shape women who are capable of contributing positively to social cohesion.

Women who participate in these educational activities tend to develop a more inclusive understanding of religion, which encourages peaceful social relations and strengthens community harmony. This moderation is particularly important in maintaining social stability in a diverse society (Amaliyah et al., 2024).

In addition, *majelis taklim* plays a strategic role in strengthening women's empowerment through Islamic education while simultaneously preserving and transmitting local wisdom. Women are not only recipients of knowledge but also active agents in maintaining cultural continuity. They pass down religious traditions and local cultural practices to their families and communities, ensuring that these values remain alive across generations. This dual role reinforces their position as both cultural custodians and agents of social transformation. Overall, the findings indicate that women's *majelis taklim* in Serang City represents a powerful model of community-based Islamic education that integrates spirituality, culture, and social empowerment. It shows that when religious education is grounded in local wisdom and delivered through participatory and contextual approaches, it can produce meaningful and sustainable empowerment outcomes. Through this model, women are able to strengthen their religious identity, enhance their social roles, preserve cultural heritage, and contribute to the development of a more moderate, cohesive, and empowered society (Aisyah et al., 2022).

Conclusion

Based on the research findings on women's empowerment through local wisdom-based religious education in the women's *majelis taklim* of Serang City, it can be concluded that *majelis taklim* plays a strategic role as a nonformal Islamic educational institution that extends beyond religious instruction. It functions as a vital platform for empowering women in spiritual, social, cultural, and community dimensions. In the context of globalization and rapid social change, *majelis taklim* remains relevant because it integrates Islamic teachings with local wisdom, thereby strengthening religious identity while preserving cultural values and enhancing women's social roles in society. Religious traditions such as yasinan, tahlilan, marhabanan, routine study sessions, gotong royong (mutual cooperation), and silaturahmi (social networking) play an important role in shaping the educational process. These traditions are not only cultural expressions but also serve as effective media for moral, spiritual, and social learning among women. The study also confirms that women occupy a central position in community development, acting as primary educators in the family and as active social agents in the wider society. Therefore, empowering women through *majelis taklim* contributes significantly to building a harmonious, religious, and culturally grounded community.

Methodologically, this study employs a qualitative approach using ethnopedagogical analysis to understand how local wisdom is integrated into religious education. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of learning processes and empowerment practices within *majelis taklim*. The findings show that religious education significantly enhances women's spiritual understanding, communication skills, social awareness, self-confidence, and solidarity. Through continuous learning and participation in community activities, women gain meaningful, contextual experiences that are directly relevant to their daily lives. Local wisdom is identified as a key factor in the success of this empowerment process. Cultural values such as cooperation, deliberation, respect for religious leaders, and social harmony make learning more relatable and easily accepted.

Furthermore, *majelis taklim* serves as a space for social transformation where women actively participate not only as learners but also as leaders, organizers, and agents of change. This strengthens the identity of Muslim women who are religious, moderate, and culturally rooted. In addition, *majelis taklim* contributes positively to spiritual growth, family education, cultural preservation, and community engagement. It also functions as a lifelong learning space that continuously supports women's development through socio-religious activities. However, several challenges remain, including limited economic empowerment programs, simple organizational structures, low digital literacy, and the influence of modernization that reduces interest among younger women. Despite these limitations, *majelis taklim* continues to thrive due to its strong cultural foundation and familial approach, making it a sustainable institution for women's empowerment in Serang City.

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