

## MANAGEMENT OF NONFORMAL ISLAMIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: A Case Study Analysis on Majelis Taklim

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<p><b>KEYWORDS:</b> Majelis Taklim, Educational Management, Nonformal Education</p>	<p><b>ABSTRACT</b></p> <p>The governance of majelis taklim is still diverse and unstandardized, resulting in differences in community participation and management effectiveness, which in turn affect the quality of Nonformal Islamic education. This study examines the governance of Nonformal Islamic educational institutions, specifically majelis taklim, through a qualitative multisite approach in eighteen majelis taklim in Mandailing Natal Regency. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results revealed two distinct governance models: open and closed. Open governance is typically found in majelis taklim established and managed by the community, characterized by high participation in decision-making and management. In contrast, closed governance is observed in majelis taklim managed by religious scholars, where decisions are centralized. The type of governance structure influences community participation levels, open governance shows higher involvement, while closed governance is more limited. These findings indicate that governance structures play a crucial role in determining community engagement and influencing Nonformal Islamic education practices. This study implies the importance of adaptive and participatory governance guidelines to enhance the effectiveness of Islamic study group management and strengthen the role of communities in Islamic education.</p>
<p><b>KEY WORDS:</b> Majelis Taklim, Manajemen Pendidikan, Pendidikan Nonformal</p>	<p><b>ABSTRACT</b></p> <p>Tata kelola majelis taklim masih beragam dan belum terstandar, mengakibatkan perbedaan partisipasi masyarakat dan efektivitas pengelolaan, yang berdampak pada kualitas pendidikan Islam nonformal. Penelitian ini mengkaji tata kelola lembaga pendidikan Islam nonformal, khususnya majelis taklim, melalui pendekatan kualitatif multisitus di delapan beas majelis taklim di Kabupaten Mandailing Natal. Data diperoleh melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan dua model tata kelola berbeda, yaitu terbuka dan tertutup. Tata kelola terbuka umumnya diterapkan pada majelis taklim yang didirikan dan dikelola masyarakat, dengan partisipasi tinggi dalam pengambilan keputusan dan pengelolaan. Sebaliknya, tata kelola tertutup ditemukan pada majelis taklim yang dikelola ulama, dengan keputusan bersifat sentralistik. Jenis tata kelola memengaruhi tingkat partisipasi komunitas: tata kelola terbuka menunjukkan keterlibatan lebih tinggi, sedangkan tertutup lebih terbatas. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa struktur tata kelola berperan penting dalam menentukan keterlibatan masyarakat serta memengaruhi praktik pendidikan Islam nonformal. Penelitian ini berimplikasi pada pentingnya pedoman tata kelola yang adaptif dan partisipatif untuk meningkatkan efektivitas pengelolaan majelis taklim serta memperkuat peran komunitas dalam pendidikan Islam.</p>

## **INTRODUCTION**

Majelis Taklim in Indonesian education regulations are recognized as part of Nonformal education as stated in article 26 of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, article 23 of Government Regulation Number 55 of 2007 concerning Religious Education and Religious Education and Regulation of the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia Number 29 of 2019 concerning Majelis Taklim. State recognition of the existence of Majelis Taklim as part of Nonformal education is a strategic step in strengthening the religious education system in Indonesia. This recognition not only gives legitimacy to the existence of majelis taklim, but also opens up opportunities for more structured funding through the State Budget, both at the central and regional levels. In addition, majelis taklim have the space to obtain financial support from various parties, such as individuals, private companies, and community organizations that have a concern for the development of Islamic education. With access to these various sources of funds, a modern and professional governance system is needed (Azzahro et al., 2024; Manaf, 2024).

Majelis taklim as a Nonformal educational institution that has an important role in community religious development is now required to be managed more professionally. Traditional management that is simple and informal needs to be improved by adopting modern management principles that are

accountable and transparent. This includes systematic work program planning, detailed and accessible financial reporting, and periodic evaluation of activities to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the program. The implementation of good management will make the majelis taklim more trusted by the government, donor partners, and the general public. With professional governance, every activity carried out can be accounted for openly, thus strengthening the legitimacy and sustainability of its existence. The public trust built through such accountability will be a very important social capital in maintaining the sustainability and development of da'wah programs and Islamic education in the community.

State recognition of the existence of majelis taklim as part of Nonformal education is a strategic step in strengthening the religious education system in Indonesia. This recognition not only gives legitimacy to the existence of majelis taklim, but also opens up opportunities for more structured funding through the State Budget, both at the central and regional levels. In addition, majelis taklim have the space to obtain financial support from various parties, such as individuals, private companies, and community organizations that have a concern for the development of Islamic education. With access to these various sources of funds, a modern and professional governance system is required. The Majelis Taklim can no longer be managed in a purely traditional manner, but

must adopt the principles of accountable and transparent management. This includes structured program planning, clear financial reporting, and regular evaluation of activities. Thus, all activities carried out by Majelis Taklim can be accounted for to stakeholders, both the government and the wider community, so that public trust is maintained and the sustainability of community development programs can run optimally.

Studies on majelis taklim so far have been dominated by historical approaches (Fadillah, 2023; Nasution, 2022; Yusnita, 2018), dakwah (Alawiyah, 1997; Hasanah, 2017), education (Suhaidi, 2021), and sociology (Zamhari, 2013). Meanwhile, studies on Majelis Taklim with a management science approach generally focus on the use of management functions as an analytical tool, namely planning, organizing, actualizing, and evaluating. Some studies that show this direction are conducted by Musodik (2020), Salma (2018), and Fauzi (M. Fauzi & Nasution, 2022). Experts such as Azyumardi Azra (2003) and Mujamil Qomar (2007) for example, agree that management science is very important to be applied in formal, informal and Nonformal Islamic education. This will have implications for improving the quality and standard of educational outcomes. In contrast to formal education, majelis taklim as Nonformal education has its own uniqueness in applying management science.

The performance of an organization is at least influenced by internal and external factors. As an institution, majelis taklim cannot be separated from internal and external influences (Sallis, 2005). If formal education races to follow market demands that require its managers to be adaptive, majelis taklim does not. It is an institution that depends entirely on two entities, namely the ulama and the congregation. The ulama and the congregation become the most determining factor in how a majelis taklim institution is managed.

This study aims to analyze in depth how institutional governance is carried out by managers and communities in several locations of majelis taklim in Mandailing Natal. The research was conducted on eighteen majelis taklim that were selected based on various considerations. This research contributes to the knowledge of Nonformal Islamic education by analyzing the management practices of Majelis Taklim in Mandailing Natal. The study highlights how leadership, curriculum planning, funding and community involvement shape the sustainability and effectiveness of these institutions. The findings offer practical insights for policymakers and Islamic education stakeholders to strengthen governance, optimize the use of resources, and improve the learning environment in Majelis Taklim. In addition, this study also serves as a model for improving informal religious education in rural and socio-culturally rich areas in Indonesia and beyond.

## **THEORY DESCRIPTION**

The management of Nonformal Islamic education institutions such as majelis taklim is a crucial component in strengthening the delivery of Islamic teachings and increasing community involvement in religious activities (Fadli, 2023). In the context of Mandailing Natal Regency, which geographically has many rural and remote areas, the existence of majelis taklim is a strategic means to convey Islamic values to people who may not be reached by formal education (Fansuri, 2023).

According to Hidayat et al. (2024), Nonformal education plays a major role in ensuring lifelong learning, especially in terms of spiritual development and moral development of Muslim communities. This is particularly relevant in Mandailing Natal, where majelis taklim is often the main meeting point for Muslims in acquiring religious knowledge.

Effective management in majelis taklim demands governance that is not only functional, but also contextual and participatory (Al-Razi et al, 2024). Rijal emphasizes the importance of participatory management that involves local elements, including religious leaders, traditional leaders, and the general public in the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating activities (2023). This approach has been proven to increase program relevance and strengthen social support for the sustainability of Majelis Taklim (Hasyim, 2021).

In addition, transformational leadership theory as proposed by (Dr. Shaikhah J. Alainati

et al, 2023). underlines the importance of the leader figure in inspiring and motivating participants to commit to learning and social change. In the context of majelis taklim in Mandailing Natal, the presence of leaders who are able to encourage positive change and build collective spirit determines the effectiveness of managing this institution.

Thus, this theoretical study provides a basis for understanding the management of majelis taklim comprehensively, both in terms of structure, leadership approach, and community involvement strategy, all of which are important for realizing empowered and sustainable Nonformal Islamic education in Mandailing Natal Regency. Therefore, it is important for the management of majelis taklim to continue to improve their managerial capacity and be adaptive to social change, so that the functions of da'wah and education can run more effectively and be oriented to the needs of the local community.

## **METHODS**

This research uses qualitative research methods with a multi-site approach. Multi-site research is a qualitative research approach used to gain in-depth knowledge about phenomena that have never been studied before (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Multi-site research design involves several locations and research subjects that are assumed to have different characteristics but have similar problems. In this multisite research, there are eighteen Majelis Taklim studied,

namely (1) Hubbun Nabi Majelis Taklim; (2) Baitul Bukhari Majelis Taklim; (3) Marta'ul Jannah Majelis Taklim; (4) Nurul Haramain Majelis Taklim; (5) Darul Hadith Islamic Boarding School Majelis Taklim; (6) Musthafawiyah Islamic Boarding School Majelis Taklim; (7) Roihanul Jannah Islamic Boarding School Majelis Taklim; (8) Salamuddin Idris Majelis Taklim Haji Munawwar Nasution Education Foundation; (9) Majelis Taklim al-Furqan Education Foundation; (10) Majelis Taklim Masjid al-Falah; (11) Majelis Taklim Masjid Baburohmah; (12) Majelis Taklim Masjid Jami' Darussalam; (13) Majelis Taklim Masjid Qurra wal Huffazh; (14) Majelis Taklim Muhammadiyah Mandailing Natal Regency; (15) Majelis Taklim Fatayat Nadhlatul Ulama Mandailing Natal Regency; (16) Majelis Taklim Jamaah Salafi; (17) Majelis Taklim Mardiyatul

Islamiyah; (18) Majelis Taklim Nurul Iman Az-Zikra. Although they come from different backgrounds and affiliations, the 18 Majelis Taklim have the same characteristics, namely as Nonformal institutions that focus on Islamic development and community-based da'wah activities. Similarities can be seen in the form of activities such as routine recitation, lectures, and moral development. Therefore, the site deserves to be used as a unit of analysis in a multicluster approach because it shows similar patterns of religious activity and can be studied comparatively. Based on the opinion of Tuty Alawiyah (1997), Fauziah Nasution (2022), Suhaidi (2021) and Umdatul Hasanah (2017) who divide the typology of majelis taklim based on the organizers, the eighteen majelis taklim can be mapped as follows:

**Table 1.** Research Location of Majelis Taklim

No.	Majelis Taklim category	Name of Majelis Taklim	Manager
1	Majelis taklim managed by a personal cleric	Majelis Taklim <i>Hubbun</i> Nabi	Ibrahim Zannun and Family
2	Study groups managed by the foundation	Majelis Taklim Baitul Bukhari	H. Amiril Yusuf and family
		Majelis Taklim Marta'ul Jannah	Baginda Rajo Ameh and colleagues
		Majelis Taklim Nurul Haramain	Ahmad Salman Nasution and family
3	Majelis taklim managed by the pesantren	Majelis Taklim Pesantren Darul Hadis	Descendants of Sheikh Ali Amri Arsyad Lubis
		Majelis Taklim Pesantren Musthafawiyah	Descendants of Sheikh Musthofa Husein's family
		Majelis Taklim Pesantren Roihanul Jannah	Descendants of Sheikh Roihan Rangkuti
4	Majelis taklim managed by non pesantren educational institutions	Majelis Taklim Salamuddin Idris Haji Munawwar Nasution Education Foundation	H. H. Munawwar Kholil Nasution and family
		Majelis Taklim of al-Furqan Education Foundation	H. Wahidin Rambe and family

No.	Majelis Taklim category	Name of Majelis Taklim	Manager
5	Study groups managed by the mosque committee	Majelis Taklim Masjid al-Falah	Sipolu-polu Village Community
		Majelis Taklim Baburohmah Mosque	Community of Kayu Jati Village
		Majelis Taklim Masjid Jami' Darussalam	Siantar City Sub-district Community
		Qurra wal Huffazh Mosque Taklim Council	People of Panyabungan II Sub-district
6	Learning groups managed by community organizations n	Majelis Taklim Fatayat Nadhlatul Ulama Mandailing Natal Regency	Fatayat NU Management and Members
		Majelis Taklim Jamaah Salafi Mandailing Natal Regency	Salafi leaders and followers
		Majelis Taklim Muhammadiyah Mandailing Natal Regency	Muhammadiyah leaders and members
7	Majelis taklim supervised by extension workers managed by the community	Majelis Taklim Mardiyatul Islamiyah	Extension Officer Muhammad Ikbal and the Community of Simaninggir
		Majelis Taklim Nurul Iman Az-Zikra.	Extension Officer Khairul Saleh and the people of Gunung Tua Jae Village

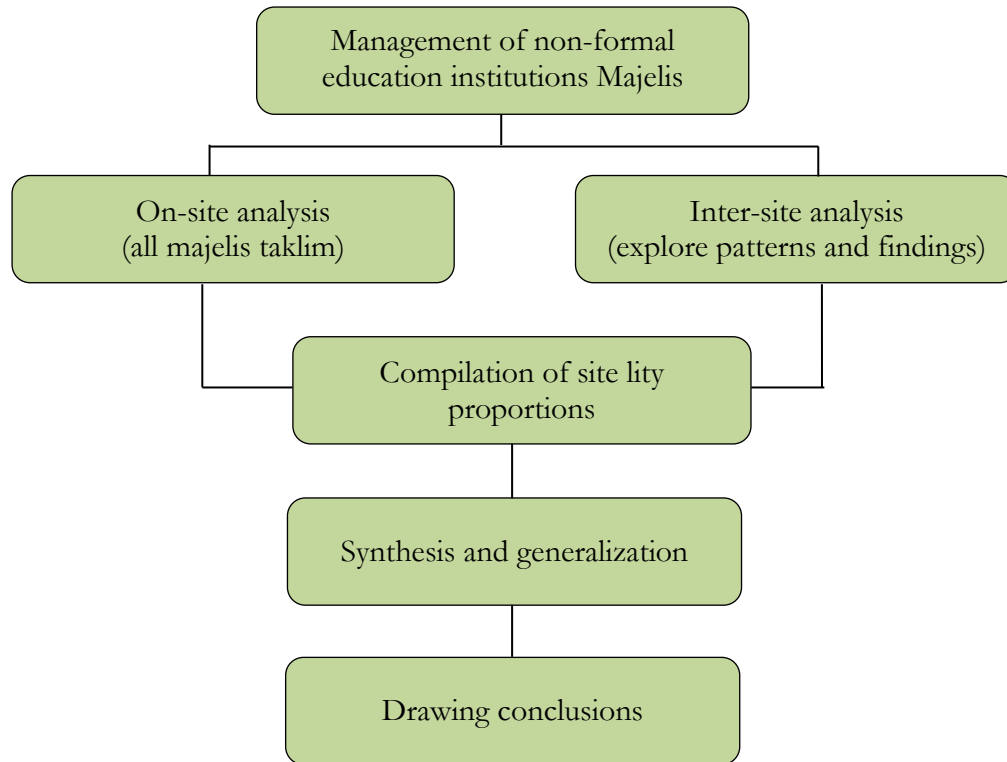
The research data sources consist of primary data, namely informants who are administrators, ustadz/ustadzah, and active participants from the eighteen majelis taklim, as well as secondary data from literature studies such as books, journals, and regulatory documents related to majelis taklim. This combination of data is used to strengthen the validity and depth of analysis. Data in this study were collected through three main techniques, namely observation, interviews, and documentation studies. Observation was used to directly observe activities and interactions in the Majelis Taklim so as to obtain a real picture of the implementation of activities. Interviews were conducted with selected informants to explore in-depth information related to the experiences, views, and organizational structure of the majelis taklim. Meanwhile, documentation studies

utilized official documents, activity reports, and supporting literature as supporting data to strengthen and complement the research findings. The combination of these three techniques allows for rich and valid data for analysis.

The data analysis technique in this study adopted the multicriteria analysis approach proposed by Robert K. Yin (Yin, Robert K., 2003). The analysis was conducted in two stages, namely analysis within sites and analysis between sites. The within-site analysis focused on in-depth data processing and understanding in each majelis taklim as a case study unit. Meanwhile, inter-site analysis was conducted by comparing findings from all majelis taklim to identify patterns, similarities, and differences that emerged between locations. This approach allows the research to produce a comprehensive

understanding at both the micro and macro levels of the phenomenon under study. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and data collection techniques, as well as member crosscheck by confirming findings with

informants. This method increases the credibility and reliability of the research results. In the form of a data analysis technique scheme is presented below:



**Figure 1.** Multisite Data Analysis (Yin, R. K., 2003)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Management Pattern of Majelis Taklim

The term governance is defined as a management method, which is related to how leaders manage and organize an activity (A. Fauzi, 2014). So, governance is defined as a set of interrelated and moving behaviors carried out to regulate an institution or organization or activity. If it is associated with the Majelis Taklim, then the governance of the Majelis Taklim is a set of behaviors that are regulated by the management or congregation in managing

the institution, organization, and activities of the Majelis Taklim. To manage an organization, cooperation between administrators and members is needed. Majelis taklim as an organization requires effective and efficient management. As an organization, there is a determination and grouping of tasks to be carried out, determination and delegation of authority and responsibility so that everyone works effectively in achieving goals (Hasibuan, 2005).

The governance of majelis taklim from various forms of majelis taklim in Mandailing Natal Regency can be categorized into two forms, namely open governance and closed governance. The theory of closed and open governance originated from the theory of open and closed systems proposed by Karl Ludwig von Bertalanffy, which is based on the concept of General System Theory which was originally used in the field of biology. He later developed what is called living systems theory (Drack, 2009). A system can be distinguished based on its interaction with the environment, namely open systems and closed systems. In open systems, interaction with the external environment is in the form of exchanging system service elements such as energy, issues/problems, people, and information. Whereas in a closed system, only energy is exchanged with the environment.

If the system theory is associated with the governance of the Majelis Taklim, then the open governance of the Majelis Taklim means that the change of management in the governance of the Majelis Taklim is based on consensus among the members. Meanwhile, the closed governance of majelis taklim means that the management of majelis taklim is controlled by a handful of people and their position is very exclusive. The open management model of majelis taklim is practiced by majelis taklim managed by the Mosque Management Board, majelis taklim under the auspices of community organizations, and majelis taklim supervised by

religious instructors (Surahman, 2023) . Meanwhile, the closed management model of majelis taklim is practiced by majelis taklim under the auspices of educational institutions (both pesantren and non-pesantren), majelis taklim managed by non-educational foundations, and privately managed majelis taklim.

Majelis Taklim with open governance can be explained as follows. First, the Majelis Taklim is managed by the Mosque Prosperity Council. The management structure of the Majelis Taklim is under the control of certain fields. There is no special structure that separates itself from the management structure of the mosque prosperity board. In other words, it can also be said that the management structure of the Majelis Taklim is the same as the management structure of the mosque's prosperity body. The duties of the mosque's prosperity body, apart from managing the use of the mosque building for congregational prayers, meetings, and the distribution of infaq and alms, also include facilitating the community in learning religious knowledge. So, the majelis taklim managed by the Mosque Management Board is under one field, namely mosque management, which is managed jointly by the entire structure. Decisions are taken through deliberations by the mosque prosperity body to determine the format of the Majelis Taklim to be held. Determining the time of the Majelis Taklim activities, the speakers who will fill in, the themes to be discussed, and the transportation reimbursement that will be given

to the speakers, are all discussed in a consensus deliberation involving the management and worshipers of the mosque (Minangsih, 2014; Putri et al., 2024).

If in the structure of the Mosque Management Board there is a division that handles majelis taklim activities or lectures at the mosque, then this division has the task and function of determining who will be the preacher for the Friday sermon (usually decided at the end of the year), scheduling speakers for Ramadan studies, preparing speakers for lectures on Islamic holidays, and determining permanent speakers who will fill the majelis taklim activities held at the mosque. This model of majelis taklim management is adopted by the Qurra wa Huffadz Mosque, the Jami' Darussalam Mosque in Siantar City, and the Al-Falah Sipolu-Polu Mosque.

Based on the above, it can be explained that the task of managing the majelis taklim is often entrusted to individuals who are considered capable and dedicated. After the program design is prepared, it is usually discussed in a meeting with the entire board. In some cases, the community gives high trust to the head of the mosque management due to his educational background and experience. This, for example, can be seen in the management of Majelis Taklim at the Darussalam Mosque in Siantar City, where the head of the mosque's prosperity body also holds a strategic position at a religious higher education institution.

Second, the majelis taklim guided by religious instructors. The Majelis Taklim guided by religious instructors has a management model that is elected alternately by the community according to the management period. The change of management is monitored by extension workers to report to the Ministry of Religious Affairs regarding the development of the majelis taklim. In addition, the organization's journey is also assisted by extension workers, such as implementing activity programs, managing financial administration, and managing other documents. In this case, the extension worker has a central role. Apart from being a resource person, the extension worker also acts as a facilitator who assists the management of the majelis taklim in managing the organization. The administrators or congregation of the majelis taklim consult with the extension workers on various matters related to the management of the majelis taklim. This happens because most of the administrators and congregants of the majelis taklim are elderly women or men who are approaching old age, so they are less dexterous in handling various administrative tasks of the majelis taklim.

The implementation of majelis taklim, which is guided by a religious instructor, is held at the home of one of the members of the majelis taklim. However, there are also many majelis taklim that hold recitations in mosques due to limited space and access. The village mosque is often used for majelis taklim activities because it has a large enough room and is easily

accessible to the congregation. According to several informants from the majelis taklim who usually teach, they usually have a regular schedule once a month to hold majelis taklim in several villages.

The management of majelis taklim, which is self-managed by the community and supervised by an instructor, is carried out according to a mutually agreed period. Community members who become congregants take turns becoming administrators. The administrators are responsible for managing activities that will be carried out regularly, such as weekly studies, or incidental activities such as commemorating Islamic holidays (Mubarok, 2022; Zuhri, 2019). The administrators and facilitators are also in charge of bridging if there is a joint majelis taklim activity. Joint majelis taklim activities are usually facilitated by the contact body of majelis taklim at the sub-district or district level.

Third, majelis taklim under the auspices of a community organization has its own characteristics, especially in the aspects of leadership and activity management. These Majelis Taklim are subject to a rotation system of leadership and management that is officially regulated in the Articles of Association and Bylaws of the organization. This rotation is carried out periodically according to a mutually agreed period. The change of management in the structure of the parent organization automatically affects the management structure of the Majelis Taklim, because the structure of

the Majelis Taklim is an integral part of the organization, both in terms of policies, programs, and the implementation of its religious activities.

From the analysis of the management of majelis taklim with an open system above, it can be concluded that the management of the majelis taklim is characterized by transparency, accountability, and based on deliberation and consensus. Transparency means that the activities of the majelis taklim are open to discussion by all elements of society who actively participate in the majelis taklim to provide input. Accountable means that the activities of the majelis taklim can be accounted for, starting from the selection of ustaz, the use of funds, to receiving criticism and input from the congregation. The management can be held accountable if the Majelis Taklim activities experience problems. Musyawarah Mufakat means that the activities of the Majelis Taklim are based on mutual agreement between the management and the congregation.

The majelis taklim with closed management can be explained as follows: First, Majelis Taklim that are under the auspices of educational institutions. The management of majelis taklim carried out by educational institutions can be categorized into two forms, namely majelis taklim managed by pesantren educational institutions and majelis taklim managed by non pesantren educational institutions. Majelis taklim managed by pesantren administrators, the management

structure of the majelis taklim is under the auspices of the foundation by prioritizing foundation administrators or family members as managers of the majelis taklim. There are two forms of majelis taklim management under the auspices of the pesantren foundation, namely:

- a. The board of the pesantren foundation also functions as the board of majelis taklim. However, for administrative and financial purposes, this responsibility is given to the pesantren administrative staff. For example, Pesantren Musthafawiyah applies this model. The head of the Majelis Taklim is the wife of the leader of Pesantren Musthafawiyah H. Musthofa Bakri Nasution, namely Mrs. Hafsa. Meanwhile, administrative and financial activities are assigned to the administrative staff of the pesantren. The same thing is also done by the leader of Pesantren Darul Hadis. The pesantren leader assigned his son-in-law, Ustaz Muhammad Nasir Lc. S.Pd.I, to be the coordinator in charge of the majelis taklim at Pesantren Darul Hadis. The difference is, as coordinator, Ustaz Muhammad Nasir also handles the administration and finance.
- b. The management of the majelis taklim consists of teachers or staff who are assigned by the foundation or pesantren leadership to oversee the activities of the majelis taklim. Pesantren Roihanul Jannah applies this model. The leader of Pesantren Roihanul Jannah assigned Ustaz Ahmad

Sulaiman Rangkuti, who also served as Roisul Muallimin, to be the coordinator responsible for the majelis taklim. Ustaz Ahmad Sulaiman Rangkuti is in charge of determining the ustaz who will lead the recitation in the mosque of Pondok Pesantren Roihanul Jannah. Ustaz Ahmad Sulaiman Rangkuti's task is only to arrange the schedule of speakers and ask for their willingness to fill the recitation. Meanwhile, the funding is the responsibility of the pesantren's finance department.

Not much different from the Pesantren majelis taklim, majelis taklim under the auspices of non-Pesantren educational institutions also applies two management patterns, namely:

- a. The management of majelis taklim consists of teachers or staff assigned by the Foundation to be responsible. These teachers or staff are responsible for preparing everything needed for the organization of majelis taklim activities. Al Furqon Foundation Mandailing Natal is one of the foundations that applies this model. The foundation manages Al Furqon Integrated Islamic Kindergarten and Elementary School. Al Furqon Foundation regularly organizes majelis taklim activities at the school. The wife of the head of al-Furqon Foundation, Hj Isnaini Burhanuddin, is a teacher. Hj. Isnaini Burhanuddin assigned one of the teachers to organize the schedule of majelis taklim activities at the school regularly every week.

b. The foundation management also doubles as the board of the majelis taklim. One institution that applies this model is the al Munawwar Islamic Education Foundation. The head of the foundation, Kholil Nasution, along with his brother, Ma'mun al-Rasyid Nasution (secretary of the foundation), also doubles as the head and secretary of the majelis taklim.

Second, the majelis taklim managed by the foundation. Majelis taklim managed by the foundation, the foundation management is the management of the majelis taklim. Majelis Taklim Nurul Haramain Foundation applies this management model. The head of the Majelis Taklim, Salman Ahmad Nasution, doubles as the head of the foundation and the head of the Majelis Taklim. As the head of the foundation and leader of the Majelis Taklim, all affairs are managed by Ustaz Ahmad Salman. Ustaz

Ahmad Salman is also the only resource person for the Majelis Taklim.

Not much different from Majelis Taklim Nurul Haramain and Majelis Taklim Baitul Bukhari, Majelis Taklim Marta'ul Jannah also applies the same management pattern. Ustaz Bagindo Rajo Ameh, as the supervisor of the Majelis Taklim, also acts as the sole speaker in the Majelis Taklim activities. The same thing is also done by Majelis Taklim Baitul Bukhari. Majelis Taklim Baitul Bukhari is led by Ustaz Yusuf Amiril Nasution, who also serves as the head of the Al Yusufiah Foundation. Apart from being the head of the foundation and the leader of the Majelis Taklim, Ustaz Yusuf Amiril Nasution is also the main speaker in the Majelis Taklim activities, along with other speakers. Based on the description above, the governance of majelis taklim in Mandailing Natal Regency can be categorized as open and closed.

**Table 2.** Management Pattern of Majelis Taklim

No.	Category	Types of Majelis Taklim	Form of Governance/Management
1	Open Management	Managed by the Mosque Prosperity Board	Integrated in the mosque management structure; Jointly managed by the mosque management field
		Mentored by religious instructors	The management is elected periodically by the community; Accompanied and supervised by religious counselors.
		Under community organizations	Following the rotation of the management of the parent organization; Policies and activities follow the parent structure.
2	Closed Management	Under the boarding school education institution	The foundation management is also the board of majelis taklim. Caretaker from assigned teacher/staff
		Under non-boarding education institutions	Management from teachers/foundation staff The foundation management is also the board of majelis taklim
		Managed by the foundation independently	The foundation's management is also the administrator and lecturer of the majelis taklim

## Ulama Authority and Community Participation in Majelis Taklim

Open management in the context of majelis taklim refers to a management system that provides space for the participation of worshipers and the wider community, including in terms of providing input and criticism of organizational performance. In this system, the management structure is dynamic and can undergo periodic changes according to the members' agreement. Each board is elected for a certain predetermined term of office. This is in line with Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 29/2019 which states that the term of service of the management of the Majelis Taklim is determined within a certain period of time in accordance with the internal provisions of each assembly.

According to Robbins and Coulter (2012), open management is oriented towards organizational transparency and accountability, where openness to criticism and input is an important part of maintaining performance effectiveness. In addition, Erlena (2022) states that rotating leadership and participatory management can strengthen the legitimacy of the organization while increasing the sense of belonging among members.

In contrast, closed governance reflects an exclusive management model that does not provide participatory access to the general public. The management in this system is generally only run by a limited circle, such as the

founder of the foundation, family members, or individuals who have personal closeness to the founder. A distinctive feature of this model is the absence of clear term limits - in some cases, management positions are lifelong and passed down through generations. This is in line with Weber's view (1948) of traditional domination, which often places power in one elite group that is passed down through generations without a formal succession mechanism.

Majelis taklim initiated and managed by ulama tend to follow a closed pattern. Ownership of the institution is indirectly attached to certain individuals or groups, especially the ulama and their close circle. The congregation in this context acts as beneficiaries of religious studies, without significant involvement in decision-making or governance. The power relationship between the ulama and the congregation often creates obstacles for the community to be more involved in management, because of the assumption that strategic decisions are the prerogative of the ulama. This is in line with Mills' elite theory (1956), which states that elite groups seek to maintain hegemony and control over social resources, including religious institutions.

In contrast, majelis taklim formed collectively by the community show a tendency towards open management. This institution was born out of a common need to explore religious knowledge, and is usually managed in a participatory manner. Scholars or religious

figures are invited as resource persons, while administrative management is carried out by a forum or committee formed by the congregation itself. This pattern is more like a modern organizational system that has a management structure, division of tasks, and position rotation mechanisms according to the articles of association or internal regulations. Suryana (2010) emphasizes that member participation in organizational management is very important to ensure the sustainability and relevance of the organization to the needs of its members.

Thus, in practice, majelis taklim can take the form of an open and democratic organization, but it can also develop into an exclusive and closed institution. Even in some contexts, majelis taklim are positioned as social properties that are inherited in order to maintain existence, authority, and certain symbolic and material interests (Bourdieu, 2018).

In Mandailing Natal District, the management of majelis taklim shows significant institutional variation. The fundamental difference lies in who initiates and manages the institution. Majelis taklim managed by ulama are generally closed, while those born from community initiatives and funding are more open and participatory. This phenomenon shows that the governance structure of Majelis Taklim does not only reflect administrative technical choices, but also reflects power relations, leadership patterns, and socio-religious culture in each community.

The closedness of the management of majelis taklim carried out by the ulama is partly due to the initial purpose of establishing majelis taklim, namely the awareness of the ulama to convey religious teachings to the community and the motivation of the community to study with the ulama. Meanwhile, the openness in the management of majelis taklim is carried out by the community because the initial purpose is to seek religious knowledge and foster social ties among community members, especially for the people of Mandailing Natal Regency, ulama still hold strong religious authority. Someone who has authority, especially if the authority is religious, will indirectly be obeyed by his followers and can issue orders/regulations that will be followed by his followers. This is because someone who has authority will have the power to give orders and impose obedience without using violence (Krämer & Schmidtke, 2006). Recognition of this authority in the community of Mandailing Natal Regency makes it very difficult for the community to correct, provide input, or intervene in the management of the majelis taklim. The authority obtained by the ulama theologically and socially provides its own privileges, so they are obeyed by their followers. They can give orders that will be obeyed by their followers without coercion and violence. At the same time, this is a barrier for the community to participate in the governance of majelis taklim institutions.

When viewed more specifically, there are three instruments used by the ulama to

strengthen their authority in Mandailing Natal Regency. This is adapted from Ismail Fajrie Alatas' research entitled Religious Authority Sowing Sunnah, Weaving Society. This research explains that Bā'Alawī saints and scholars (habib/haba'ib) from Hadramaut, Yemen to Java from the 18th century to the present have carried out various productive works to maintain their religious authority by involving figures, texts and institutions. If this model is adopted to analyze the religious authority possessed by scholars in Mandailing Natal Regency in managing Majelis Taklim, it can be explained as follows:

*First*, the figure. The figure of ulama who have great authority in the community of Mandailing Natal Regency are ulama who come from pesantren alumni and continue their studies in Haramain. Although there are many ulama and Majelis Taklim that have developed in Mandailing Natal Regency, there are three Majelis Taklim that quantitatively have many followers, namely Majelis Taklim Pesantren Musthafawiyah, Majelis Taklim Baitul Bukhari, and Majelis Taklim Nurul Haramain. The similarity between these three Majelis Taklim is that they have strong religious leaders. Majelis Taklim Pesantren Musthafawiyah relies on the figure of Sheikh Musthofa Husein as the founder of the pesantren, Majelis Taklim Baitul Bukhari relies on the figure of H. Amiril Yusuf Nasution, commonly known to the community as Mr. Nalomok, and Majelis Taklim Nurul Haramain relies on the figure of Ahmad Salman

Nasution. These three figures are alumni of the pesantren and continued their studies at Shaulatiyah Makkah.

*Second*, the text. Religious authority in Islam comes from two sacred texts, the Quran and the Hadith. It takes a keen intellect to explore their meaning. Therefore, those who have the ability to understand the Quran and Sunnah become very special. One of the signs of a person who is able to understand the Quran and Sunnah is a person who has the ability to understand the yellow Islamic classic books because it is considered as one of the means to understand the authoritative texts of Islam, namely the Quran and Sunnah. Scholars who are able to explain the yellow Islamic classic books well to the community, whether related to the basics of religion such as tafsir, hadith, fiqh, tawhid, tasawwuf, and fadhail amal, indirectly gain status as a chosen or honorable person in the eyes of the community. It is this position that gives them religious authority.

*Third*, institutions. The institution used is the Majelis Taklim. Majelis taklim is an institution that brings together the ulama and the community to interact intensively through dialogue, discussion, guidance, counseling, and strengthening emotional and intellectual ties. The work of the ulama in skillfully managing the activities of the majelis taklim creates a very strong emotional bond in the community and naturally motivates them to attend the recitation. The work of managing majelis taklim is not only focused on the study and improvement of

religious knowledge. But also real work through the management of various activities such as the recitation of dhikr, prayers, wirid, and the holy verses of the Koran which are chanted together in harmony. There are also religious pilgrimage activities to various tombs and mosques guided by scholars, both from within and outside the country, such as Umrah invitations with scholars facilitated by visits to Islamic historical sites in Mecca and Medina. Similarly, efforts to collaborate with the community to commemorate Islamic holidays such as Maulid Nabi, Isra Mi'raj, commemoration of 1 Muharram, welcoming the month of Ramadan, Eid al-Adha celebrations, and halal bi halal events after Eid al-Fitr. The work of the ulama is integrated in a series of beautiful majelis taklim activities organized by the ulama together with the people of Mandailing Natal Regency.

The governance of the majelis taklim also affects the organizational structure of the majelis taklim. Majelis taklim that apply closed governance have an organizational structure that is filled with scholars, foundation administrators, and those closest to them in managing the majelis taklim. Meanwhile, Majelis Taklim that apply open governance have an organizational structure filled by various layers of society according to mutual agreement. Decision-making is determined based on consensus deliberation from the community to the ulama so that the ulama have dominant authority in determining the objectives, organizational structure, member management, activity

management, and development of the majelis taklim.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the management model of majelis taklim in Mandailing Natal Regency is divided into two main forms, namely a closed management system and an open management system. The closed system tends to be controlled internally by the ulama and their closest network, while the open system provides participatory space for the wider community in the governance and implementation of religious activities. These two systems reflect the socio-religious dynamics that live and develop, and show the diversity of approaches in supporting Nonformal Islamic education. The findings confirm that the successful management of majelis taklim is not only determined by internal structure and authority, but is also strongly influenced by the quality of social engagement and the participatory capacity of the congregation. Therefore, open-system Majelis Taklim are advised to improve the competence of administrators and congregants through training and mentoring programs. On the other hand, closed-system majelis taklim are encouraged to expand communication channels, increase transparency, and open up more inclusive collaboration spaces with the surrounding community. By integrating structured internal control and dynamic external

participation, majelis taklim can become an adaptive, relevant, and capable religious learning platform that responds to the challenges of the times. This will strengthen the position of majelis taklim as a strategic institution in character building and community Islamic literacy. The implications of this research cover three main aspects: practical, theoretical and policy. Practically, the results of this study can be a reference for majelis taklim administrators in choosing and developing management models that are in accordance with the social context and the needs of the congregation. Theoretically, this research contributes to the literature on the management of Nonformal Islamic education institutions, especially in understanding the differences in impact between closed and open systems. In terms of policy, the results of this study can be taken into consideration by local governments and religious institutions to design a more participatory, accountable and sustainable majelis taklim development program.

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