



Adolescent Gender Disparities Within Nonformal Islamic Education Majelis Taklim Participation

Disparitas Gender Remaja Dalam Partisipasi Pendidikan Islam Nonformal Majelis Taklim

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OPEN ACCESS

ISSN 2503 5405 (online)

Edited by:
Muhlasin Amrullah

Reviewed by:
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General Background Majelis taklim serves as a fundamental institution fostering social cohesion and character development. **Specific Background** Current religious gatherings across Koto Tengah Village exhibit severe demographic imbalances, predominantly comprising adult women while largely excluding younger demographics. **Knowledge Gap** Previous literature inadequately addresses how deeply embedded gender roles shape youth involvement concerning these traditional forums through a social constructionist framework. **Aims** This qualitative case study analyzes youth involvement levels and perceptions regarding community religious gatherings through a socially constructed lens. **Results** Data gathered through interviews and observations demonstrate remarkably low youth attendance, particularly among boys. The primary deterrent is the prevailing social construct branding the forum exclusively for mothers, compounded by monotonous instructional strategies, insufficient community support, and a generational preference for digital media. **Novelty** This research distinctly applies social construction theory to deconstruct demographic disparities throughout contemporary religious pedagogy. **Implications** Communities and policymakers must redesign instructional strategies incorporating digital media and inclusive practices to dismantle stereotypes and revitalize youth engagement.

Highlights

- **Societal constructs restrict youth involvement regarding traditional religious gatherings primarily toward adult females.**
- **Monotonous instructional methods alongside absent community support severely deter male teenagers from attending.**
- **Integrating interactive digital media and relatable speakers revitalizes youth engagement across community learning.**

Keywords

Social Construction Theory; Youth Involvement; Religious Gatherings; Digital Media; Gender Roles

Received: 01 May 2026

Accepted: 08 May 2026

Published: 07 June 2026

Citation:

Chicy Oktavia, Albertos Damni (2026)
Adolescent Gender Disparities Within
Nonformal Islamic Education Majelis
Taklim Participation

Halaqa: Islamic Education Journal 10:1.
doi: 10.21070/halaqa.v10i1.1856

INTRODUCTION

The Majelis taklim, as a non-formal Islamic educational institution long rooted in Indonesian society, plays a crucial role in disseminating religious values, building character, and strengthening social cohesion (Araniri et al., 2024). Traditionally, the majelis taklim is known as a gathering place for Muslims to listen to religious lectures, study the Qur'an and hadith, and discuss various aspects of life in accordance with Islamic teachings (Damni, 2022; Mustanadi, 2021).

In addition, the maejlis taklim also functions as a forum for the formation of healthy and broad-minded characters in socializing, with an emphasis on coaching, education, and giving directions, which are expected to be a source of new hope in increasing people's insight and enlightenment, especially in the religious and social fields (Suprianto, 2020). More broadly, the majelis taklim is not just a forum for conveying the teachings of da'wah, but also plays an important role in deepening the understanding of Islam and in guiding and improving the social life of people in the surrounding environment (Kasim & Soga, 2021). Until now, the majelis taklim remains popular as a non-formal Islamic educational institution across almost all regions of Indonesia.

The majelis taklim must also be able to adapt to the times, as the system of disseminating religious information has undergone a fundamental transformation. One of them is that, by utilizing digital media, teenagers have much greater flexibility in terms of the time and place of study (Suaidi et al., 2025). Especially men, who tend to value autonomy and freedom of self-regulation, may prefer to access religious content independently according to their interests and schedules (Yunus et al., 2024). Thus, the transformation of the majelis taklim into a non-formal Islamic educational institution in Indonesia can be a solution for improving the quality of education and social welfare, and for strengthening the religious values of the community across various circles (Astuti & Firmansyah, 2025).

However, the policy issued by the government that makes the majelis taklim a non-formal Islamic educational institution in the midst of society that should be for all groups, in practice, is only attended by women, especially mothers (Suhaidi & Anwar, 2021). Several recent studies have explored majelis taklim as a non-formal Islamic educational institution in Indonesia, including research by Friti & Alimni (2023). The results of the study show that adolescent boys' participation in the majelis taklim tends to be lower and less prominent. The factor causing the phenomenon of low adolescent participation in majelis taklim activities is the choice of learning methods and ways of interacting (Friti Sulastri & Alimni, 2023).

This is in line with research conducted by Andy (2022), which shows a significant difference in the participation of adolescent boys and girls in majelis taklim activities. Research conducted by Maulana confirms this (2010), which shows a tendency for adolescent girls to be

more active in participating in various programs and activities organized by Majelis Taklim (Zikri Maulana,

2010).

Several previous studies indicate that adolescent participation in majelis taklim remains influenced by social constructs and gender role differences in society. However, previous studies have not thoroughly explored the relationship among participation levels, adolescent perceptions, and factors influencing adolescent involvement in majelis taklim activities from a gender perspective, using a social constructionist approach.

Based on the findings and limitations of previous research, the novelty of this study lies in its specific focus on examining the level of participation and adolescents' perceptions of majelis taklim activities, as well as the factors influencing them, from a gender perspective using a social constructionist approach. Unlike previous studies, which generally emphasized the function of majelis taklim as a non-formal Islamic educational institution or its role in community development, this study focuses on the dynamics of adolescent participation, particularly the differences in engagement between male and female adolescents. This study uses social construction theory, from a gender perspective, as a conceptual framework and primary analytical tool to explain the extent of adolescent participation in majelis taklim activities. Therefore, this research theoretically contributes to the field of gender studies within nonformal Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia.

This research is important given the paradigm shift in the availability of information and in the preferred learning methods across various groups. This raises many questions that must be answered to explore the dynamics of adolescent involvement in today's majelis taklim. Why do women, especially mothers, still constitute the majority in majelis taklim, and how can this perception be changed? What are the specific factors that cause adolescent boys to show a higher level of reluctance to join and actively participate in the activities of the majelis taklim, and most crucially, how can the majelis taklim as a non-formal Islamic educational institution adapt and transform to be more inclusive for the younger generation, especially adolescent boys, in the midst of the rapid flow of digitalization and changes in lifestyle preferences?

This research was conducted in Koto Tengah Village, Sungai Penuh City, due to similarities in characteristics to the study's focus and the significant difference in participation levels between adolescent boys and girls in the majelis taklim activities there. This study aims to identify and analyze comprehensively to answer fundamental questions about the level of adolescent participation in majelis taklim activities and the difference in perception between adolescent boys and adolescent girls towards majelis taklim in the socio-cultural context of Koto Tengah Village, and the factors behind it are analyzed using social construction theory from a gender perspective.

This study provides concrete, practical solutions to help managers of religious study groups (Majelis Taklim)

design inclusive, engaging, and relevant learning strategies and methods for the younger generation. Thus, Innovations emerging in Islamic study groups are projected to increase youth participation among both boys and girls. The potential of youth as agents of change and transmitters of Islamic values can be maximized to enhance community welfare and the future competitiveness of the nation's children. This research is expected to be a significant contribution to efforts to revitalize the role of the majelis taklim in Indonesia as a center for education and people's development, and to make it adaptive and relevant to the challenges and dynamics of the times.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the meanings, subjective experiences, and social factors that affect adolescents' views of the gender perspective of majelis taklim. The research design used is a case study. Case studies are the right approach for understanding a particular problem or situation in depth. In this study, a case study was used to examine the level of adolescent participation in the majelis taklim, adolescents' perceptions of the majelis taklim, and the factors that affect it. This approach allows researchers to gather rich, in-depth information about the phenomenon under study, enabling a broader problem to be understood through the observation of specific cases formulated as research questions (Assyakurrohim et al., 2023). According to Stake, case study research aims to uncover the peculiarities and unique characteristics inherent in the case being studied. The case forms the basis for implementing a study, so the main purpose and focus of this research lie in the case itself (Hakim, 2017).

This research uses social construction theory as a foundation for thinking, an analytical tool, and a methodological guide to understand the phenomena under study (Kriyantono, 2017). With social construction theory, the phenomena under study can be viewed in a structured, comprehensive manner, and in accordance with scientific research procedures. The use of social construction theory in this research is expected to deepen understanding of how social reality influences adolescents' interactions, interpretations, and subjective experiences during their participation in the majelis taklim in Koto Tengah Village. Social construction theory plays a significant role in explaining adolescents' levels of participation and perspectives on majelis taklim.

Participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling, in which informants were chosen based on their suitability for the research criteria (Sugiyono, 2013). Participants included ustadz, ustadzah, the chairman of the majelis taklim, members of the majelis taklim, adolescent boys, and adolescent girls in Koto Tengah Village. The data in this study were collected using three main techniques: semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. In addition, it also uses literature studies (Hardani et al., 2020).

The data analysis technique used in this study is

based on the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which consists of three main stages, namely data collection, data analysis, and drawing conclusions (Muin et al., 2022). The analysis was conducted using data from semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, documentation, and a literature review on adolescents' participation in and perceptions of majelis taklim in Koto Tengah Village, from a gender perspective. Informants in this study were selected using purposive sampling, based on their residence, knowledge of the research topic, and personal experience. Informants included members of the majelis taklim organizational structure, preachers, and youth. Data reduction involved selecting, grouping, and simplifying data in accordance with the research objectives.

After data reduction, the results are presented in a structured narrative format to help researchers understand the patterns, relationships, and meaning of the phenomena under study. Conclusions are then drawn from the data in a gradual, continuous manner, comparing various data sets to ensure consistent interpretation and an objective, ground-truth approach. To ensure data validity, source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking are also conducted.

Source triangulation aims to confirm the validity of sources used in research, such as books, journal articles, and informants. Method triangulation is employed to validate the data obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation by comparing findings across multiple methods. Meanwhile, member checking is used to confirm data from interviews and observations with informants. In collecting research data, research instruments are prepared by considering various indicators that align with the research objectives, so that the data collection process is directed and systematic (Rahmat, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Existence and Conceptual Basis of the Majelis Taklim

The majelis taklim is one of the non-formal educational institutions that plays an important role as a forum for conducting da'wah (Rahmat, 2021). Da'wah is an activity that aims to invite people to do good for others and to encourage them to avoid actions contrary to religious teachings and societal moral norms. Da'wah must also be accompanied by sound, appropriate methods, so that people can receive valuable lessons for social and religious life (Islami & Aula, 2020).

The majelis taklim itself consists of two syllables rooted in Arabic; the word majelis comes from *jalasa*, *yujalisu*, and *julisan*, which mean "sitting" or "meeting". At the same time, the word taklim comes from the word *alima*, *ya'lamu*, *ilman*, which means knowing something or knowledge. Thus, the majelis taklim can be understood as a place for learning religious knowledge. Meanwhile, in terms of language, the majelis taklim is a place for recitation and education (Zulmuqim, 2022). Essentially, the majelis taklim itself has existed since the time of the Prophet; the majelis taklim functions as a place to preach,

develop, and teach Islamic teachings, as well as build the strength and resilience of Muslims (Mustanadi, 2021). In addition, the majelis taklim during the time of the Prophet also served as a forum to improve the standard of living of Muslims (Mustafa, 2016).

The existence of the majelis taklim as a non-formal educational institution is recognized in Indonesia based on Regulation of the Minister of Religion Number 29 of 2019 concerning the Majelis Taklim. Initially, the recognition of the Taklim Council as a non-formal educational institution since 1980 in the Majelis Taklim Deliberation throughout DKI Jakarta. In this deliberation, it was decided that the majelis taklim is an Islamic non-formal educational institution with its own form and curriculum, distinct from Islamic formal educational institutions, such as Islamic boarding schools and madrasas, as well as other Islamic non-formal educational institutions held in *suraus* and *dayahs* (Daulay, 2018).

In addition to playing an important role in education and da'wah, the majelis taklim assumed a pivotal, strategic role in driving the socio-cultural evolution of Indonesian society. The majelis taklim, synonymous with Islamic educational activities such as studying the Qur'an and hadith, as well as da'wah carried out in mosques, has been the most popular cultural and religious forum since ancient times (Hasyim, 2021). There are at least three important roles of the majelis taklim: 1) as a religious institution, 2) as an educational institution, and 3) as an institution for economic and social empowerment (Hasanah, 2019).

Meanwhile, Wildan (2022) stated that the purpose of the majelis taklim is not limited to counseling activities or to serving as a means of gathering and socializing. More than that, the majelis taklim serves as a place to deepen understanding of religious teachings, strengthen its members' spirituality, and strengthen the bonds of brotherhood in Islam (Wildan, 2022). According to Daulay (2018), there are six essences of the majelis taklim: non-formal Islamic educational institutions; educators; students or congregations; the delivery of material; regularity; and the aim of achieving a degree of devotion to Allah SWT (Daulay, 2018).

In the Regulation of the Minister of Religion Number 29 of 2019 concerning the Majelis Taklim, it also explains the purpose of the majelis taklim, among others, to increase faith, piety, noble morals, and comprehensive religious knowledge. So that the realization of Islamic individuals with spiritual maturity, who can understand the basics of religion, as manifested in religious teachings such as the study of monotheism, religious law (fiqh), religious moderation, and Sufism, is achieved (Wildan, 2022; Zufriani et al., 2024). Thus, the main goal of the majelis taklim is as a religious activity and Islamic education for the spread of Islamic values to all levels of society, through the application of Islamic education methods, as well as a program for moral development or good character in individuals. This approach is directly related to human religious beliefs (Supriani, 2022).

One of the important aspects inherent in the majelis taklim is the process of knowledge transfer, known as recitation. Subandari, quoted by Ahmad Sarbini, then details some of the characteristics of the study itself as

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1. The majelis taklim is carried out regularly and periodically
2. Material learned about the teachings of Islam
3. Using several delivery methods such as lectures, discussions, and Q&A
4. There is a figure of a *ustad* or *ustazah* as the builder
5. It has the main goal, which is to understand Islamic teachings for groups or members of the majelis taklim (Mustanadi, 2021).

Conceptually, the majelis taklim is a place to learn religion that is open to all groups, both men and women, young and old (Friti Sulastri & Alimni, 2023). There are various types today, such as majelis taklim for children, women, men, and adolescents. This is related to the community's high level of religious awareness, which fosters interest in activities aligned with religious values and teachings. Therefore, the majelis taklim plays a significant role in various levels of society, especially for women (Nst. et al., 2025).

B. Levels and Patterns of Youth Participation in the Majelis Taklim

In practice, the current majelis taklim in Koto Tengah Village, Sungai Penuh City, is a women-dominated religious activity. Based on the observations, adolescent participation in majelis taklim activities remains relatively low. The majelis taklim activities, held every Friday afternoon, are more attended by adult women, especially mothers. There was no participation from young men, and only a few young women participated in this activity. This further strengthens the findings from interviews with many male students who consider the majelis taklim a special activity for mothers. At the same time, adolescent girls are also less involved for various reasons, such as busyness or a lack of interest in the activity. This condition shows the inequality of participation based on gender as well as the low involvement of the younger generation in community-based religious activities.

This low level of participation is evident not only in attendance but also in the minimal active involvement of teenagers in various majelis taklim activities, such as study and other social activities. Majelis taklim tends to follow a one-way pattern, in which participants act as passive listeners. This pattern is not in accordance with the characteristics of adolescents, who tend to be active and dynamic and need more space for interaction. This phenomenon shows that majelis taklim in Koto Tengah Village has not yet become an attractive space for the younger generation to study religious knowledge.

Based on field observations, a mosque in Koto Tengah Village was found to no longer be used for social and religious activities. According to an informant, this mosque, called the Muhajirin Mosque, had long been discontinued for religious activities, including majelis taklim. These majelis taklim were only held at the Nurul Huda Mosque in Koto Tengah Village. Several informants believed that the Nurul Huda Mosque was in a less strategic location and was difficult for most of the Koto Tengah Village community to access.

The low participation of adolescents in the majelis

taklim in Koto Tengah Village aligns with the theory of social construction, which holds that individuals imitate, follow, and act in accordance with the customs of those around them. This is because socio-religious activities are limited to the Nurul Huda Mosque, whereas at the Muhajirin Mosque, no community members participate in the majelis taklim activities. In social construction theory, the non-use of the Muhajirin mosque is a cause of social change, shaped by ongoing interactions and social habits. When the Muhajirin Mosque, as a religious space, is not used as a social and religious space for the community, it will contribute to the decline of collective consciousness, including among adolescents. This situation contributes to teenagers' low involvement in socio-religious activities due to limited space.

One informant believed that community participation in the majelis taklim would increase if the Muhajirin Mosque were repurposed for socio-religious activities. The revival of the Muhajirin Mosque as a socio-religious space would encourage men, including teenagers, to actively participate. To ensure the continued prosperity of the Muhajirin Mosque, one approach is to introduce a rotation system for majelis taklim activities in Koto Tengah Village. The majelis taklim would be held alternately at the Nurul Huda Mosque and the Muhajirin Mosque. This rotation system is expected to increase community participation, ensuring the mosque remains full of worshippers and motivating the community to attend religious activities, including majelis taklim, regardless of the distance traveled or the less-than-convenient location.

By prospering the two mosques in Koto Tengah Village, it can also play an important role in fostering Muslims and the community in Central Koto Village. Various positive impacts arise after the mosque is prospered, including protecting, empowering, and uniting people, thereby fostering quality, moderate, and tolerant Muslims (Nursaiyid, 2022). The lack of interest among adolescent boys in the activities of the majelis taklim conducted with male students in Koto Tengah Village was found to stem from their understanding of the majelis taklim as a place to learn religious knowledge, such as studying the Qur'an and hadith and listening to lectures from ustadz or ustadzah. However, they perceive this activity as more associated with mothers, so they feel less interested in participating. Ovindra (24), one of the teenage boys in Koto Tengah Village who was used as an informant, said:

"Menurut saya, majelis taklim itu tempat menuntut ilmu, mungkin seperti mendalami Al-Qur'an, hadis, atau hal-hal yang berkaitan dengan agama Islam. Tapi saya pikir itu lebih untuk ibu-ibu."

Mrs. Dewi (50), as the supervisor of the taklim council of Central Koto Village, added an explanation of the condition of the majelis taklim and the level of community participation in the taklim council in Koto Tengah Village. She revealed that:

"...Kegiatan majelis taklim sebenarnya terbuka untuk semua kalangan, termasuk bapak-bapak dan anak-anak muda. Tidak terbatas pada ibu-ibu, seperti anggapan sebagian besar masyarakat."

From the results of this interview, it can be seen that

the majelis taklim in Koto Tengah Village is open to all groups, including fathers and teenagers, not just mothers. However, most people think that the majelis taklim is only for mothers. This kind of assumption is one of the causes of the low participation of adolescent boys in majelis taklim activities in Koto Tengah Village. Then, there is a tendency for teenagers not to make majelis taklim the main choice for acquiring religious knowledge. Amid the development of digital technology, teenagers have access to more flexible and engaging learning resources, such as social media and other digital platforms. This causes Majelis Taklim to lose its appeal as a relevant learning space for the younger generation (Nabila, 2021).

This situation indicates that adolescents' needs are not being met through majelis taklim as nonformal Islamic educational institutions. Special methods and understanding are needed to increase adolescent participation in religious activities. These findings indicate majelis taklim has not been considered an attractive and inclusive space for adolescents as part of non-formal Islamic education.

C. Social Construction of Gender in the Perception of the Majelis Taklim

The majelis taklim is perceived as an activity for parents, especially mothers. The taklim council is typically found in a dusun or RT within a village or sub-district, including those in Koto Tengah Village, Sungai Penuh City. Male students in Koto Tengah Village believe the majelis taklim is more associated with mothers, so they feel they have no place in this activity. For this reason, it was revealed why male students were never seen or present in the majelis taklim activities in Koto Tengah Village. The data is strengthened by interviews with several informants, who stated that in the majelis taklim in Koto Tengah Village, there have never been any adolescent boys participating; thus, the assembly is considered special for mothers only.

In addition, the reason for the majelis taklim is that only mothers attend because teenagers and fathers have less free time to participate in activities than mothers, as provided by Mrs. Nur, one of the members of the majelis taklim in Koto Tengah Village:

"...Kalau menurut saya, mungkin karena ibu-ibu lebih punya banyak waktu dibanding bapak-bapak dan remaja, jadi ibu-ibu bisa mengikuti pengajian rutin di majelis taklim."

This opinion is also strengthened by the statement of Ustazah Lebainidar (38), a member of the taklim council and an educator at the Al-Qur'an Education Park in Koto Tengah Village. He thinks that, for a long time, society has believed that the taklim council is indeed for elderly mothers. Actually, it is not like that; the majelis taklim should demand religious knowledge from everyone. Humans demand knowledge from the burial ground to the burial ground, unlimited time and unlimited age. The Majelis Ta'lim to the Badan Kontak Majelis Taklim (BKMT) has members ranging from pregnant women to elderly mothers, both mothers and fathers.

The chairman of the majelis taklim in Koto Tengah Village revealed that the majelis taklim is often seen as synonymous with mothers, due to the community mindset

that this activity is more suitable for them. In fact, the majelis taklim is also important for fathers and teenagers. Most teenagers also find the majelis taklim unattractive because the way material is delivered in majelis taklim activities is considered monotonous and unsuitable for teenagers. They prefer an interactive and innovative approach, such as discussion or technology. As revealed by Satria Dinata (26), one of the teenage boys, when interviewed in Koto Tengah Village, said:

“Tapi agak kurang menarik bagi remaja. Kalau ada kegiatan khusus yang memanfaatkan teknologi, mungkin saya lebih tertarik.”

Ustadzah Siti Hajir, a regular speaker at the majelis taklim in Koto Tengah Village, when interviewed, also admitted that the current generation prefers learning methods beyond lectures.

“...Karena Gen Z ini berbeda dengan remaja zaman saya, jadi remaja sekarang ini kalau hanya dijelaskan saja mungkin mereka tidak mau. Lebih baik menggunakan metode game, tanya jawab, atau diskusi yang lebih nyaman.”

Based on field findings, it is evident that the public perception of majelis taklim as a religious activity associated with adult women, particularly mothers, did not develop naturally. This perception results from a continuous process of social construction within the community of Koto Tengah Village. From the perspective of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann's social construction theory, social reality is formed through three main processes: externalization, objectification, and internalization. These three processes explain how a social custom can develop into a collective understanding that is considered normal and correct by society (Lestari & Satria, 2025).

During the externalization stage, society establishes specific patterns of social practice through repeated activities. Within the scope of this research, it was found that, for a long time, majelis taklim activities were attended exclusively by adult women, particularly mothers. It was demonstrated that during the implementation of the majelis taklim in Koto Tengah Village, the majority of attendees were women. Interviews with several informants revealed that weekly religious studies and social events were exclusively attended by women. This was also evident in the organizational structure of the Majelis Taklim, which was dominated by women. This contrasted sharply with the contribution and role of men in the Majelis Taklim, which was virtually non-existent. This pattern gave rise to social speculation that the Majelis Taklim was a religious space exclusively for women, not for men.

Entering the objectification stage, long-standing, repeated practices are treated as truth and accepted by the masses without debate or questioning. The presence of mothers in religious study groups has become an identity and a symbol that these groups are religious spaces for women. This forces men to seek other social and religious spaces. Social construction is formed through societal norms and customs regarding the positions and roles of men and women. Consequently, teenage boys who attend majelis taklim often feel they are in a space that is socially “not their own.”

This process then proceeds to the internalization stage, during which the established social reality is accepted and internalized by the individual as part of their self-understanding. Indirectly, adolescent boys internalize the view that majelis taklim activities are incongruent with their inherent social identity. This condition gives rise to feelings of shame, reluctance to participate, and low interest in joining majelis taklim activities. On the other hand, adolescent girls are usually more open and ready to participate in majelis taklim activities. This is because adolescent girls are taught from childhood about gender norms related to women, which are seen as being more closely associated with religious activities and domestic matters. It's understandable that adolescent participation in majelis taklim activities is influenced not only by individual desires but also by processes of socialization and social construction. Gender roles significantly influence adolescent involvement in majelis taklim.

Furthermore, perspectives and behaviors are also influenced by social constructs. This is evident in the lack of participation of adolescent boys in religious study groups, reflecting long-standing social conditions. Social practices that are repeated and consistent are accepted as truth in society. In this case, male involvement becomes part of a social mix that continues to reinforce the stereotype that Islamic study groups are for women.

Therefore, efforts to increase youth participation in majelis taklim cannot be achieved through traditional methods such as issuing invitations or adding activities. These efforts must consider the process of deconstructing social perceptions that have become part of society. Islamic study groups must be re-evaluated and established as non-formal Islamic educational spaces open to all groups without gender discrimination. This can be achieved by creating programs that better meet youth needs, involving male youth in leadership processes, and fostering a social environment that supports equal participation by men and women. In this way, Islamic study groups will no longer be viewed as religious spaces exclusively for women, but rather as religious educational institutions aligned with current social realities.

D. Factors Influencing Adolescent Participation in Majelis Taklim Activities

The low participation of adolescents in majelis taklim activities in Koto Tengah Village, Sungai Penuh City, is affected by several factors, including:

1. The perception that the majelis taklim is only for mothers

The lack of interest of adolescent boys in the activities of the majelis taklim is also caused by the misperception of the majelis taklim, as the results of interviews conducted with male students in Koto Tengah Village found that they understand the majelis taklim as a place to learn religious knowledge, such as studying the Qur'an, hadis, and listening to lectures from ustadz or ustadzah. However, they perceive this activity as more associated with mothers, so they feel less interested in participating. One of the informants stated:

"Menurut saya, majelis taklim itu tempat menuntut ilmu, mungkin seperti mendalami Al-Qur'an dan hadis, atau hal-hal yang berkaitan dengan agama Islam. Tapi saya pikir itu lebih untuk ibu-ibu."

This perception is not in line with the definition of majelis taklim, which describes majelis taklim as a non-formal educational institution that is open to all circles, both men and women, not just for mothers. So it is not wrong that many male students in Koto Tengah Village think the majelis taklim is more associated with mothers, and they feel they have no place in this activity. They had never seen a man present in the majelis taklim, so this assumption was even stronger. This opinion is strengthened by the admission of a

member of the majelis taklim, who stated that mothers have more free time than fathers or teenagers.

"...Kalau menurut saya, mungkin karena ibu-ibu lebih punya banyak waktu dibanding bapak-bapak dan remaja, jadi ibu-ibu bisa mengikuti pengajian rutin di majelis taklim."

This opinion is also reinforced by the statement of the ustazah who fills in the study that this assumption is only because of the mindset that exists in the community.

"...Mindset kita selama ini memang orang-orangnya ibu-ibu, dan ibu-ibu itu bukan ibu-ibu muda, tetapi ibu-ibu lansia. Sebenarnya tidak. Belajar menuntut ilmu agama itu dari buayan hingga liang lahat, tidak terbatas waktu dan tidak terbatas umur. Majelis Ta'lim sampai ke BKMT itu anggotanya mulai dari ibu hamil sampai ibu-ibu yang sudah lansia, baik ibu-ibu maupun bapak-bapak..."

This is also supported by an interview with the chairman of the Majelis Taklim of Koto Tengah Village, who said that the majelis taklim is often seen as synonymous with mothers, due to a community mindset

that considers the taklim council's activities more suitable for mothers. In fact, the majelis taklim is also important for fathers and teenagers.

Men's disinterest in the activities of the majelis taklim is also illustrated when taking research data in the field. The misunderstanding of what is meant by the majelis taklim was explained by an ustazah, a speaker at the majelis taklim activity in Koto Tengah Village. He stated that the majelis taklim is actually part of PERMATA. PERMATA is an abbreviation for the Majelis Taklim Association. The majelis taklim is in every dusun or RT in a village. From this combination of majelis taklim, it is called the Persatuan Majelis Taklim (PERMATA). Anyone can participate, whether men or women, old or young, not limited to mothers only.

2. The activities of the majelis taklim are considered less attractive

The delivery method in the majelis taklim is considered monotonous and less appealing to teenagers. They prefer an interactive and innovative approach, such as discussion or technology. This statement is based on the results of an interview with one of the informants, who stated the following:

"Tapi agak kurang menarik bagi remaja. Kalau ada kegiatan khusus yang memanfaatkan teknologi, mungkin saya akan lebih tertarik."

An ustadzah, when interviewed, also admitted that the current generation prefers learning methods beyond lectures.

"...Karena Gen Z ini berbeda dengan remaja zaman saya, jadi remaja sekarang ini kalau hanya dijelaskan saja mungkin mereka tidak mau. Lebih baik menggunakan metode game, tanya jawab, atau diskusi yang lebih nyaman."

3. Lack of promotion and socialization for men

Many young men feel that they do not get enough information about this activity. They consider that the

majelis taklim is not for them because there is no special promotion or invitation for men.

"...Harapannya, harus ada pengumuman bukan hanya di masjid, tapi juga di media sosial, bahwa majelis taklim itu bukan hanya untuk ibu-ibu atau perempuan saja, tapi untuk semua kalangan..."

The chairman of the Majelis Taklim also admitted that they are still lacking in their approach to fathers and young men.

"...Untuk melibatkan bapak-bapak serta remaja, kita perlu menggunakan pendekatan yang melibatkan mereka sejak awal, misalnya dengan tema kajian yang relevan dan kegiatan yang bervariasi."

Based on the research findings, the low participation of adolescents in majelis taklim activities

is influenced not only by standalone external factors but also by the interaction among social constructs, the development of digital technology, and the social environment, all of which influence one another. The most significant factor influencing adolescent participation in majelis taklim is the prevailing social construct. Majelis taklim are considered religious spaces exclusively for mothers and do not represent the identities and needs of adolescents. This social construct is reinforced by the environment, family, and peers, thus discouraging motivation to participate in majelis taklim activities.

On the other hand, advances in digital technology have further reinforced this social construct by changing the learning patterns and interactions of the younger generation. Teenagers are more likely to choose digital media as a means of acquiring religious knowledge because it is considered more practical, interactive, and suited to their lifestyle (Nasyfa & Khasanah, 2025). While majelis taklim still relies on monotonous conventional teaching methods, digital media offer a more appealing alternative for teenagers. The interplay between limited social support and high levels of digital media use is increasingly causing teenagers to distance themselves from majelis taklim activities. Under these conditions, digital media not only serves as an alternative learning resource but also reinforces the perception that majelis taklim is a traditional activity less relevant to the characteristics of the younger generation. This phenomenon aligns with research conducted by Syaiful Iman Zuhri and Juni Wati Sri Riski (2026), which explains that social media has become the dominant space for religious practices that are brief, visual, and interactive (Sholha et al., 2024; Zuhri & Riski, 2026).

In addition, the gender constructs that have developed in society also interact with religious representations in social settings and digital media (Rosyidah & Nurwati, 2019). Since majelis taklim activities are more frequently associated with adult women, adolescent boys face social and psychological barriers to active participation due to concerns that they will be perceived as failing to conform to the masculine identity shaped by their environment. Therefore, based on field findings, the low participation of adolescents in majelis taklim activities results from an interrelated dynamic among social constructs as a dominant factor, a lack of social support, and the development of digital technology, which together shape adolescents' perceptions and behavioral patterns regarding religious activities.

E. Re-Design of the Majelis Taklim as an Inclusive Space for Adolescents

The lack of interest and participation from adolescent boys in majelis taklim activities has fostered various recommendations and suggestions to make improvements in majelis taklim activities in Koto Tengah Village. Teenagers and male students made this suggestion to increase their future participation in majelis taklim

activities in Koto Tengah Village. Among the suggestions are:

1. Tailoring learning methods to teens' interests

Learning methods are one of the key factors in increasing the motivation of adolescent boys in majelis taklim activities. Among the methods that can be applied in the activities of the majelis taklim. *First*, the lecture method, which prioritizes delivering material through oral explanations by ustadz or ustadzah to members of the majelis taklim (Lukman et al., 2019). *Second*, the question and answer (Q&A) method that prioritizes interaction between the presenter and members of the majelis taklim, in the form of question and answer (Q&A) activities. Members of the majelis taklim who do not understand the material presented may ask questions. Meanwhile, the ustadz or ustadzah is tasked with answering questions from members of the majelis taklim and repeating the explanation of the material delivered. This activity is arranged by the host to ensure that the delivery of the material runs smoothly (Tanjung, 2016).

Third, the demonstration method that prioritizes the delivery of material in majelis taklim activities by practicing oral explanations and movements, followed by the members of the majelis taklim. *Fourth*, the method of assigning assignments prioritizes the assignment of material from majelis taklim activities, aimed at measuring the extent of understanding of the material conveyed by the ustadz or ustadzah, to achieve a good understanding for all members of the majelis taklim (Wildan, 2022).

In addition, it is necessary to follow up on some suggestions from male learners who want a more interactive, engaging learning method and themes that relate to their lives. Yuhana (21) believes that for teenagers to participate in majelis taklim activities, these activities must be more aligned with teenagers' daily lives. For example, discussing things that teenagers often face, such as friendship problems, education, or Islamic ways of life, is easy to apply. In addition, the majelis taklim must be more flexible and less formal, so that teenagers do not feel forced to participate in majelis taklim activities.

Today's teenagers, especially Generation Z, have different learning styles from previous generations. They prefer methods that are interactive, dynamic, and utilize technology. Findings in the field show that one of the main reasons male students are not interested in participating in the majelis taklim is because of the monotonous learning method. They feel that one-way talks are less engaging and more difficult to understand. Individuals are more likely to understand information when they are directly involved in the learning process rather than merely passive listeners. Therefore, the majelis taklim needs to innovate its learning methods to better suit adolescents' needs.

2. Utilizing technology in majelis taklim activities

In the digital era, technology is key to attracting the younger generation's interest in various aspects of life, including religious learning (Setyaningsih, 2023).

One of them is using smartphones to find information or to learn about Islam (Najah et al., 2024). The use of digital technology as a da'wah tool in the activities of the majelis taklim is now an unavoidable imperative. Therefore, the speakers are required to master the concept of electronic lectures to create digitally based da'wah that can spread Islamic teachings in accordance with the dynamics and demands of the times.

This is in line with the nature of Islamic teachings, which are always relevant to the conditions of the times. One medium that can be used for da'wah activities to reach the wider community and disseminate information quickly and in real time is the internet (Setyaningsih, 2023). One of the informants, who is a student, stated:

"...Mungkin teknologi bisa dimanfaatkan, seperti kajian online atau siaran langsung di media sosial. Jadi, majelis taklim lebih mengikuti perkembangan zaman."

This is also strengthened by the statement of the ustazah who said that the majelis taklim can use the method of lectures, questions and answers, and discussions. In addition, the delivery of material in the majelis taklim can use infocus media or a kind of drama; teenagers usually prefer such things to sitting in monotony, which makes them passive audience members.

3. Opening a special majelis taklim for men

Interviews with several adolescent boys revealed that comfort was also a factor in their high or low participation in majelis taklim activities. They consider comfort in activities to be one of the factors contributing to adolescents' lack of interest and participation in majelis taklim. Adolescent boys feel uncomfortable when they have to join a group whose majority of participants are mothers. The solution proposed by adolescent boys is to create a special majelis taklim for boys with more flexible schedules. This is also strengthened by the statement of Ustadz Gusman Tabri (58) as a speaker at the majelis taklim in Koto Tengah Village, he said:

"Mungkin remaja laki-laki dan bapak-bapak malu untuk bergabung dengan ibu-ibu pada kegiatan majelis taklim. Seandainya malu menjadi alasan mereka, salah satu caranya yaitu dengan membuat majelis taklim khusus untuk laki-laki. Semakin banyak majelis taklim untuk semua kalangan, semakin bagus...."

Keep in mind that the increasing number of majelis taklim does not automatically reflect an increase in the community's religious understanding and spirituality. The essence of the quality of the majelis taklim lies in its ability to empower individuals, make it a center for the transformation of religious values, and equip them with a basic understanding of religion as a basis for forming a person of faith, righteousness, and noble character (Irvani et al., 2025).

4. Presenting more relatable speakers

In taklim council activities, the resource person can be considered a teacher or lecturer; thus, teachers have a

strategic role in the learning process. In this case, in majelis taklim activities, they must be able to apply teaching styles and strategies that align with adolescents' preferences so that the knowledge transfer process becomes interesting, runs smoothly, and is easy to understand (Jemain & Aryati, 2021). This is reasoned because teenagers tend to be more comfortable and interested when the speakers are figures they consider relatable and who understand their world.

"...Mungkin kalau pembicaraanya anak muda yang lebih relatable, kita juga akan lebih nyaman untuk ikut majelis taklim."(Yuhana, 2025)

Based on the results of interviews and observations, participation of adolescents in majelis taklim activities in Koto Tengah Village remains relatively low, especially among adolescent boys. Field findings indicate that traditional methods of preaching and learning in religious study groups (Majelis Taklim) are less suited to the character and needs of today's youth. Mehrad (2016) argues that humans tend to be drawn to psychological, social, and intellectual activities. The greater the needs that can be met through activities, the higher the level of satisfaction felt. In this phenomenon, adolescents are more attracted to interactive learning methods that can generate happiness and meet their desires, such as socializing on social media platforms or forming age groups, compared to participating in religious study groups, which are considered too formal, monotonous, and quickly lead to boredom (Hadi, 2021). This is in line with the findings of research conducted by Damni in 2024 and Irhami in 2025, which said that creative and adaptive religious communication has greater appeal to the younger generation (Damni, 2024; Irhami, 2025).

Connell (2009) argued that differences in participation can arise because women are associated with religious and domestic roles from an early age, whereas men are directed toward freedom and public activities (Connell, 2009). At least four habits influence the differences in roles between boys and girls. Among these habits are the perspectives on parental influence, children's influence, mutual socialization, and the ecological-systemic perspective (Carter, 2014). Therefore, it is not surprising that the majelis taklim is perceived as the domain of mothers and women in general, so that adolescent boys feel that they are not part of the space.

Furthermore, adolescents' involvement in the majelis taklim is also influenced by environmental support. This study revealed that the lack of encouragement from parents, teachers, and community leaders also weakened adolescents' interest in religious activities. These findings are supported by a study conducted by Adista (2024), which states that family and community involvement play an important role in shaping adolescents' religious awareness (Adista, 2024; Nurhalya & Damni, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study shows that male adolescents' participation in majelis taklim in Koto Tengah Village remains relatively low. Mothers dominate learning and other social activities held by these majelis taklim. This is due to a social construct that has formed and become a habit within the community, which views the Majelis Taklim as a religious space exclusively for mothers. This social construct is the primary factor behind the low participation of adolescents in Majelis Taklim activities. This condition is reinforced by a lack of variety in teaching methods, low support from family and the social environment, and a shift in adolescents' learning preferences toward more interactive digital media. Using a social constructionist approach, this study confirms that patterns of adolescent participation in majelis taklim result from the construction of gender values and relations that have developed in society. This study also makes a theoretical contribution by strengthening research on the relationship between social construction, gender, and adolescent participation in non-formal Islamic educational institutions. These findings underpin the importance of transforming the majelis taklim as non-formal Islamic educational institutions. This transformation must address various aspects, including those within the majelis taklim institution, such as learning innovations that utilize digital media and interactive methods, and the involvement of youth in the majelis taklim's institutional structure. Furthermore, attention must be paid to the equal roles of men and women in participating in majelis taklim activities. Youth involvement requires extensive support from the family and community. This will impact the advancement of majelis taklim as non-formal Islamic educational institutions that are adaptive and open to all groups, in line with developments in digital technology and the times. This study has limitations because it focuses on a single research location and uses a descriptive qualitative approach, so the findings cannot yet be widely generalized. Therefore, the next research needs to expand the scope of the study location so that the results obtained are more comprehensive. Use a mixed-methods or quantitative approach to examine strategies for developing digital-based majelis taklim and participatory approaches for adolescents in greater depth.

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