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RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION, SOCIAL SUPPORT, AND FAMILY RESILIENCE: A Study of Coastal Women's Majelis Taklim in Belawan Indonesia

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Abstrak

Keluarga di wilayah pesisir Belawan, Indonesia, menghadapi ketidakpastian ekonomi dan tekanan sosial yang menuntut kemampuan mengelola hubungan keluarga serta memperoleh dukungan komunitas. Dalam konteks ini, Majelis Taklim perempuan menyediakan ruang pembelajaran keagamaan dan interaksi sosial yang perlu dipahami kaitannya dengan praktik ketahanan keluarga. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis bagaimana komunikasi keagamaan dalam Majelis Taklim perempuan pesisir berkaitan dengan pembentukan dukungan sosial dan penguatan ketahanan keluarga. Secara khusus, penelitian menelaah praktik komunikasi, bentuk dukungan antaranggota, serta kondisi yang mendukung dan menghambat penerapan nilai keagamaan dalam kehidupan keluarga. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan orientasi naturalistik di Belawan, dengan data yang dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi mengenai kegiatan Majelis Taklim serta pengalaman peserta. Data dianalisis melalui kondensasi, penyajian, dan penarikan serta verifikasi kesimpulan, dengan pemeriksaan keabsahan melalui perbandingan sumber dan teknik pengumpulan data. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa ceramah, dialog informal, nasihat, dan pertukaran pengalaman menyediakan ruang untuk memaknai persoalan keluarga melalui nilai agama, sementara interaksi yang empatik memfasilitasi dukungan emosional, informasi praktis, dan bantuan antaranggota. Dukungan tersebut dilaporkan membantu pengelolaan emosi, komunikasi keluarga, dan pengasuhan, tetapi keterbatasan waktu, kesenjangan pendidikan, serta rasa malu membatasi partisipasi, sehingga kontribusi Majelis Taklim terhadap ketahanan keluarga perlu dipahami melalui kualitas interaksi dan akses anggota terhadap dukungan komunitas.

Kata kunci: Komunikasi keagamaan; Dukungan sosial; Ketahanan keluarga; Majelis taklim; Perempuan pesisir; Pendidikan Islam nonformal.

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Abstract

Families in coastal Belawan, Indonesia, face economic uncertainty and social pressures that require them to manage family relationships and draw on community support. Within this context, women's Majelis Taklim provide spaces for religious learning and social interaction whose connections to everyday practices of family resilience warrant investigation. This study examines how religious communication within coastal women's Majelis Taklim relates to the formation of social support and the strengthening of family resilience. Specifically, it explores communication practices, forms of support among members, and the conditions that facilitate or constrain the application of religious values in family life. The study employed a qualitative approach with a naturalistic orientation in Belawan, drawing on in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation concerning religious gatherings and participants' experiences. Data were analyzed through condensation, display, and conclusion drawing and verification, with credibility assessed by comparing sources and data collection methods. The findings indicate that sermons, informal dialogue, advice, and exchanges of experience create opportunities to interpret family difficulties through religious values, while empathetic interactions facilitate emotional support, practical information, and mutual assistance. Participants reported that this support helped them manage emotions, communicate within their families, and navigate parenting responsibilities; however, time constraints, educational disparities, and reluctance to speak limited participation, indicating that the contribution of Majelis Taklim to family resilience depends on interaction quality and members' access to community support.

Keywords: Religious communication; Social support; Family resilience; Majelis taklim; Coastal women; Nonformal Islamic education.

INTRODUCTION

Families in coastal communities manage livelihood uncertainty alongside parenting, household relationships, and participation in community life. Research on Indonesian coastal livelihood initiatives shows why women's responsibilities and gender relations need to be considered when assessing opportunities for improving household circumstances (Stacey et al., 2019). Fitrianggraeni (2019) similarly examines an initiative addressing women's economic participation in fishing communities. These studies provide a broader context for the Belawan inquiry, where the interview material describes irregular income, competing domestic responsibilities, and interruptions associated with tidal flooding. Within these circumstances, women participate in majelis taklim as settings for religious learning and interpersonal contact. The crucial issue is how access to these gatherings becomes access to resources for responding to family difficulties. Scholarship on social capital and community resilience provides grounds for examining relationships and collective assistance while retaining attention to their distribution (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Carmen et al., 2022). Academically, this issue

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connects Islamic nonformal education with communication and family adaptation. Practically, it concerns whether opportunities for learning and support remain accessible to participants facing different constraints.

Previous research already connects religious learning with household relationships and supportive networks. Hakim et al. (2026) describe emotional expression, religious instruction, and family communication within Majelis Taklim Darunnufus. Handayani et al. (2025) examine relationships among Islamic education, religious meaning-making, institutional support, and family practices in West Nusa Tenggara. Research on parenting in Aceh also places Islamic values within family and community circumstances (Abubakar et al., 2023). These contributions establish substantive foundations for the present inquiry. Meanwhile, Ledyawati et al. (2026) demonstrate that coastal women's communication in Bengkulu varies across customary, economic, and religious settings. Taken together, the studies suggest a more focused question concerning how opportunities to communicate become accessible assistance and how participants relate that assistance to household practices. The present study develops this question through accounts of dialogue, support, and barriers within religious gatherings serving Belawan and surrounding areas. Its contribution concerns the conditions connecting these experiences, including circumstances under which attendance does not enable disclosure or sustained engagement. It does not assume that the general relationship between religion and family resilience is previously unexamined.

Accordingly, this study examines how religious communication within coastal women's majelis taklim relates to social support and reported family resilience. Religious communication is approached as an interactional process encompassing message delivery, participants' interpretations, informal conversations, and responses to shared concerns. Three objectives guide the investigation: identifying practices through which participants discuss family experiences; examining emotional, informational, and practical support associated with these interactions; and exploring participants' descriptions of applying learning and assistance within their households. The distinction between available relationships and useful support is analytically important when considering how social resources relate to stress and coping (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Family resilience is understood through adaptive processes involving beliefs, relationships, and communication rather than attendance alone (Walsh, 2021). The analysis also considers trust, familiarity, competing responsibilities, and hesitation to disclose difficulties. Drawing on interviews, observations, and documentation reported in the dissertation, the study asks how, through which interactions, and under what conditions religious communication becomes a source of support relevant to family coping among women in the investigated networks.

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The study advances the provisional argument that religious communication can contribute to family coping when participants interpret messages through responsive exchanges and relate them to practical concerns. Opportunities for dialogue may encourage expression of difficulties, while listening and assistance can make resources available for addressing them. These connections are examined as qualitative propositions, including accounts that complicate the proposed sequence. A multisystemic perspective supports attention to the environments in which adaptation becomes possible, including relationships between individual resources and wider social conditions (Ungar, 2021). In coastal settings, questions of participation also require attention to power and the distribution of opportunities, as emphasized in scholarship on gender and fisheries governance (Gustavsson et al., 2021). The inquiry therefore examines how trust and relevance may enable supportive exchanges, while time pressures and hesitation may interrupt them. Religious participation alone is insufficient evidence of improved family functioning. The intended explanation concerns reported practices and contextual conditions, with attention to alternative influences such as existing friendships, household relationships, and access to assistance outside the religious group.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research relevant to the present study can be organized into three intersecting strands. The first examines women's religious gatherings as institutions of Islamic nonformal education and participation, including the relationship between educational opportunities and women's public voices (Fadillah, 2023). The second investigates family adaptation through belief systems, relational resources, and communication, alongside broader debates about social support and community resilience (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Walsh, 2021; Carmen et al., 2022). The third explores how gender, authority, and social circumstances shape opportunities to communicate and participate (Qibtiyah, 2018; Ledyawati et al., 2026). These strands overlap but direct attention toward different questions: what participants learn, which resources become available, and whose voices receive recognition. Their combination provides a basis for examining religious communication as a situated practice rather than simply the transmission of information. It also requires distinctions among religious participation, supportive relationships, and reported changes within households. The following synthesis uses this mapping to develop an analytical focus on the interactions connecting those dimensions and the circumstances under which such connections are limited.

The first strand emphasizes educational participation and the everyday relevance of religious learning. Fadillah (2023) traces changes in women's majelis taklim and their

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public roles in Jambi, connecting religious organization with wider educational developments. Hakim et al. (2026) offer a more directly domestic orientation through a qualitative study of religious gatherings, emotional expression, and understandings of family life. Abubakar et al. (2023) similarly examine parenting education within Islamic family and community contexts in Aceh. Together, these studies establish the relevance of learning that extends beyond formal classrooms and enters discussions of household responsibilities. Research on digital religious communication further illustrates the diversity of settings in which women encounter and circulate religious messages. Nisa (2018), for example, examines visual da'wa among female Muslim youth on Instagram. That platform and population differ from the Belawan setting, so its findings cannot establish the effectiveness of local WhatsApp groups. Its relevance is to the broader question of how communication formats organize participation. This strand therefore invites examination of both instructional content and the social arrangements through which participants encounter and interpret it.

The second strand conceptualizes resilience through relationships among meanings, resources, and adaptive practices. Walsh (2021) organizes family resilience around shared beliefs, organizational resources, and communication, while Ungar (2021) situates resilience across interacting systems. These perspectives help distinguish individual reassurance from changes in family relationships or wider material circumstances. Social capital scholarship similarly emphasizes the role of social connections in collective responses to adversity (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015). In an Islamic educational setting, Handayani et al. (2025) identify theological interpretation, supportive networks, and family ethics as connected processes. Their work provides a direct precedent for examining religion and support together. However, the implications of religious involvement should remain differentiated by outcome and research design. Garssen et al. (2021) synthesize longitudinal research on religion or spirituality and mental health, a distinct evidence base from retrospective accounts of family coping. For the present inquiry, these distinctions justify examining what participants identify as useful support, how they describe applying it, and whether claims concern personal emotional experiences or relationships involving other household members.

The third strand examines participation as shaped by gendered expectations, authority, and social setting. Qibtiyah (2018) documents diverse understandings of gender among Muslim intellectuals, cautioning against treating Islamic interpretations as uniform. Nisa and Saenong (2022) examine how gender-just religious scholars negotiated authority through digital engagement during the pandemic. In a coastal context, Ledyawati et al. (2026) use focused ethnography to show that women's communicative practices vary across customary, economic, and religious domains. These

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studies direct attention to the legitimacy accorded to speakers and the conditions under which voices become audible. Related fisheries research cautions that nominal inclusion need not address gendered power relations. Lawless et al. (2021) identify a narrowing of gender within policy commitments, while Mangubhai and Lawless (2021) examine inclusion in fisheries management and development. Their settings differ from religious gatherings, but they offer useful questions about the distinction between participation and influence. Applied to Belawan, this distinction supports examining who can raise concerns, which responses follow, and how relationships with established members or teachers affect access to assistance.

The reviewed literature already demonstrates connections among religious education, supportive networks, women's participation, and family life. The research opening therefore concerns how these connections are enacted and constrained within the investigated setting. Accounts of institutional contributions leave further questions about differences between members who speak readily and those who remain hesitant, and between support that is offered and support that can be used. A contextual analysis should also distinguish the availability of interpersonal assistance from the persistence of livelihood or environmental pressures. The present study addresses these questions through paired attention to supportive exchanges and barriers to engagement. Its proposed contribution is an explanation of the conditions connecting message interpretation, disclosure, response, and reported household application. This framing avoids treating either the coastal location or the combination of three concepts as sufficient novelty. It also keeps the evidentiary claim proportionate: the data illuminate participants' experiences and reported practices, while conclusions about durable household change require additional perspectives and observation over time. The contribution is consequently analytical and contextual rather than a claim of universal causal effectiveness.

Building on this synthesis, the study adopts a process-oriented perspective on communication and support within coastal women's majelis taklim. It examines three connected moments: interpreting religious messages in relation to family concerns, exchanging assistance through interpersonal encounters, and describing the application of those resources within household life. These moments guide analysis without presuming a uniform sequence or a beneficial outcome for every participant. Interrupted connections are equally relevant, including unspoken concerns, advice that is difficult to apply, and circumstances that prevent attendance. Family resilience is approached through reported practices of managing adversity, maintaining relationships, and coordinating responses. It is not inferred solely from membership, religious commitment, or descriptions of temporary relief. The resulting focus also distinguishes support within

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the group from resources available elsewhere, leaving room for alternative explanations of perceived change. This orientation seeks to clarify both possibilities and limitations of community-based Islamic learning. Its practical relevance lies in identifying where opportunities for participation or assistance may be strengthened while maintaining attention to the structural circumstances that religious gatherings cannot independently resolve.

RESEARCH METHODS

The primary unit of analysis is the communicative interaction through which women interpret religious messages, exchange support, and relate these experiences to family life. The activities are situated within majelis taklim serving Belawan and surrounding areas represented in the dissertation, including Sicanang, Labuhan, and Marelan, Medan, Indonesia. Defining actors, setting, and analytical boundaries is important for distinguishing evidence about particular interactions from claims concerning a wider population (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Individual participants contribute accounts of their experiences, while religious teachers and group representatives provide descriptions of collective activities. Attention centers on sermons, discussions, advice, and exchanges concerning household difficulties. Family coping is considered through accounts of emotional responses, parenting, and household communication. The household is the setting in which participants describe applying learning; it was not independently observed in every instance. The study therefore retains a bounded interpretation of its evidence, consistent with the distinction between contextual explanation and statistical generalization discussed by Yin (2018). Citing that distinction does not reclassify the original naturalistic inquiry as a newly conducted case study.

The research employed qualitative field inquiry with a naturalistic orientation, reflecting the dissertation's emphasis on participants' perspectives within everyday religious activities. Naturalistic inquiry attends to meanings and circumstances without manipulating the setting to produce an experimental comparison (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This orientation is appropriate for examining how participants interpret communication, support, and family responsibilities. The design combines interview accounts with observations and documentary information reported in the dissertation. It is exploratory and interpretive, seeking contextual understanding of practices and perceived relationships. Guidance on qualitative design emphasizes alignment among research questions, evidence, and the scope of interpretation (Tracy, 2020). Accordingly, the article treats accounts of improvement after participation as retrospective explanations rather than independently measured causal effects. The conceptual categories developed for the

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article organize the reporting of existing material; they do not establish that new fieldwork, intervention, or outcome measurement took place. Attention to patterns in accounts is also distinguished from a claim that the study implemented a separate reflexive thematic analysis protocol, whose assumptions and procedures require explicit specification (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Primary information came from religious teachers associated with the Belawan Office of Religious Affairs and representatives of the participating majelis taklim. The dissertation's participant table records 47 informants, comprising three religious key informants and representatives of the listed groups. Informants were selected purposively for their involvement and capacity to address the research concerns. Women's accounts supplied information about participation, family experiences, and supportive exchanges, while teachers described message delivery and responses to concerns. The number recorded in the table does not itself demonstrate saturation, which depends on research purposes, sample characteristics, and the depth of information obtained (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Observational material contextualized religious activities and interpersonal communication. Documentary materials included relevant records and interview-response tables presented in the dissertation, while scholarly publications provided conceptual context. Documentary evidence requires attention to its origin and limitations (Morgan, 2022). Repeated quotations appearing in more than one dissertation table were therefore treated as the same evidence rather than additional independent testimony. Interview statements about household changes were also distinguished from directly observed events.

Data collection combined semistructured in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentary study. Interview guides addressed communication practices, difficulties encountered by participants, and the perceived contribution of religious activities to family life. The semistructured format permitted clarification and follow-up while maintaining attention to the research questions, consistent with the balance between flexibility and focus described by DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019). Participant observation involved attending gatherings and examining message delivery, atmosphere, and interactions among teachers and members. The dissertation describes an observation guide organized around its central research concerns. Documentary study considered available records, reports, and materials relevant to the setting. The techniques supplied complementary perspectives: interviews elicited interpretations, observation contextualized practices, and documents provided supporting descriptions. This reporting follows the procedures documented in the dissertation and does not imply that every interview assertion was independently confirmed. In particular, statements about WhatsApp exchanges remain interview evidence unless supported by separately

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available digital material. Such distinctions help retain a transparent connection between the kind of data collected and the claims made from it.

Analysis followed the dissertation's interactive approach of data condensation, display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles et al., 2020). Condensation selected and organized information relevant to communication, supportive exchanges, family experiences, and barriers to participation. Descriptive categories and narrative displays supported comparison of patterns across accounts. The distinction between descriptive labels and interpretive categories is useful for keeping analytic conclusions connected to their evidentiary basis (Saldaña, 2021). For this article, interpretation centers on message delivery, interpersonal responses, and reported household applications. Conclusions were examined against the available accounts, including differences concerning confidence, disclosure, and digital participation. The dissertation reports comparison across informants and across interviews, observations, and documentation. These comparisons address credibility while leaving disagreements open to interpretation. Methodological writing on trustworthiness emphasizes the need for transparent links between evidence and conclusions (Nowell et al., 2017). Accordingly, analytical descriptions do not treat repeated testimony as prevalence estimates or participants' accounts as independent measures of whole-family outcomes. No claim of additional coding software, intercoder agreement, or newly completed validation procedures is made.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Religious Communication: Opportunities for Dialogue and Unequal Participation

Religious communication within the investigated Majelis Taklim combined sermons, questions, advice, and conversations about everyday family concerns. A religious teacher explained that participants were given opportunities "to respond, ask questions, discuss, and express the problems they face." A member of Majelis Taklim Teratai Pesisir similarly described seeking guidance directly: "When we are confused about household problems, we ask directly at the majelis taklim." These accounts position family difficulties within the content of religious interaction, alongside instruction concerning worship. Teachers also described adapting their delivery to participants' circumstances, including differences in educational background and familiarity with religious terminology. One female teacher reported approaching participants privately after a gathering or through WhatsApp when their concerns involved personal or family matters. Her stated purpose was to enable disclosure without embarrassment or a sense of being judged. The interview material therefore documents

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several communication settings, ranging from collective instruction to personal consultation, with different opportunities for participants to raise concerns and receive responses.

The distinction between public discussion and private consultation becomes clearer when participants' accounts are considered alongside teachers' descriptions. Access to a gathering did not necessarily translate into willingness to speak before the group. A member of Majelis Taklim Teratai Pesisir explained, "Sometimes we are embarrassed to ask, afraid of saying the wrong thing," adding that clarification could instead be sought from a close friend. Another participant from Raudatul Jannah described established members as closer to the teacher, while newer members sometimes hesitated to join the conversation. Accounts of digital communication also differed. One teacher described WhatsApp exchanges involving questions, prayers, and encouragement, whereas another reported that participants did not consult him in the group and tentatively attributed this to embarrassment. These statements describe variation in communicative access across relationships and settings. They indicate that the same general channel could support participation for some members while remaining unsuitable for others, particularly when the issue required personal disclosure.

Four patterns characterize this finding, as summarized in Table 1. First, religious instruction was connected to practical concerns, including marital relationships, parenting, and household management. Second, communication occurred across collective and individual settings, allowing some concerns to be addressed outside the public gathering. Third, participants' access to dialogue was shaped by familiarity, confidence, and their relationships with teachers or fellow members. Fourth, digital communication extended opportunities for contact, although reported use varied and did not eliminate reluctance to disclose problems. The central pattern is the coexistence of opportunities for dialogue and constraints on their use. Teachers' descriptions of responsiveness were accompanied by participants' accounts of hesitation and indirect information seeking. This finding supports an interpretation of participation as differentiated within the investigated groups. It does not establish that all gatherings were equally interactive or that private consultation was available to every member. Rather, the evidence identifies particular practices through which communication could become more responsive to personal circumstances.

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Table 1. Religious communication practices and conditions of participation

Pattern	Interview evidence	Descriptive finding
Practical religious instruction	Teachers discussed marriage, parenting, and household concerns alongside worship.	Religious messages addressed problems encountered in daily family life.
Movement between public and private settings	A female teacher described conversations after gatherings and personal contact through WhatsApp.	Sensitive concerns could be discussed outside the collective forum.
Unequal confidence and familiarity	Participants described fear of speaking incorrectly and newcomers' hesitation around established members.	Opportunities to speak were experienced differently across participants.
Variable digital participation	Teachers reported both interactive exchanges and an absence of personal consultation in group chats.	Digital availability did not ensure disclosure or engagement.

Source: Interview-response tables in the uploaded dissertation. Entries summarize reported practices; they do not represent frequency counts.

Social Support: Emotional Recognition and Practical Assistance

Participants described support through being heard, receiving encouragement, and obtaining assistance during difficulties. A member of Raudatul Jannah explained, "At the majelis, I have many friends; I can talk, I can cry, and there is always someone who encourages me." A participant from Nurul Hijrah similarly stated that members sometimes attended because they wanted to share concerns, adding, "Here we feel heard." These accounts identify interpersonal responses as a valued component of participation. Other statements concerned practical assistance. A member of Majelis Taklim Silaturahmi described helping a fishing family affected by misfortune: "Some gave money, and others helped with basic food supplies." A participant associated with BKMT reported visiting sick members and contributing help during hardship. The forms of support described therefore extended from listening and encouragement to money, food, and shared labor. These statements provide concrete examples of assistance within the religious networks, although the interview tables do not establish its frequency, value, or distribution across all members.

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The support described in these accounts involved both recognition of difficulties and responses adapted to available resources. Emotional support appeared in opportunities to talk, express distress, and receive reassurance. Practical support appeared in pooled contributions, visits, food assistance, and help with collective tasks. Participants also described learning from other members' experiences. A member of MTPI Labuhan explained that conversations about children and spouses provided ideas for dealing with problems at home. Another participant described the group as resembling an extended family because members helped one another and reduced feelings of being alone. These descriptions clarify what participants meant by solidarity: it involved particular actions and relationships that they could identify in their own experience. Religious and interpersonal elements were closely associated in these accounts, as encouragement could accompany prayer, advice, or shared reflection. However, the evidence does not separate the contribution of religious messages from that of friendship or repeated social contact, and it does not demonstrate that every member received comparable assistance.

Four forms of support emerge from the interview material presented in Table 2. Emotional support involved listening, reassurance, and opportunities to express distress. Informational support involved advice and the exchange of experiences concerning household difficulties. Instrumental support included money, basic supplies, visits, and contributions of labor. A further pattern concerned belonging, expressed through descriptions of the group as a family and through accounts of no longer facing difficulties alone. These forms could overlap within a single relationship or encounter. For example, a visit during illness could provide companionship alongside practical help, although the available accounts do not consistently document the sequence of such exchanges. The evidence supports a description of majelis taklim as settings in which participants reported mobilizing several kinds of assistance. It provides less information about requests that went unanswered, the obligations associated with receiving help, or differences between central and peripheral members. Consequently, the finding establishes the presence and diversity of reported support while leaving its overall coverage undetermined.

Table 2. Forms of social support reported by participants

Form of support	Evidence in the interview material	Reported relevance
Emotional	Opportunities to talk, cry, receive encouragement, and feel heard.	Relief from isolation and reassurance during difficulties.

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Informational	Exchanges about children, spouses, and ways of handling household problems.	Practical ideas for responding to family concerns.
Instrumental	Contributions of money, food, visits, and labor.	Assistance during illness, misfortune, or collective activities.
Belonging	Descriptions of members as an extended family who help one another.	A sense of connection and shared responsibility.

Source: Interview-response tables in the uploaded dissertation. Categories organize the reported experiences without assigning prevalence or measuring support intensity.

Reported Family Changes and Constraints on Access

Participants linked their experiences in majelis taklim with changes in emotional responses, household dialogue, and religious parenting. A member of Muslimah Nahdlatul Ulama described her response to children's behavior: "Now I talk to them more rather than getting angry." A participant from STM DMTS similarly contrasted previously keeping household problems to herself with discussing finances and children's education with her husband. Another account, from a Nurul Hijrah representative, described using stories about the Prophet at bedtime after learning them during religious gatherings. These statements identify specific practices through which participants associated religious learning with family life. An MTPI Labuhan member offered a particularly direct connection between collective discussion and household application, explaining that hearing others discuss family difficulties helped her learn ways of responding and encouraged more conversation with her spouse and children. The evidence consists of retrospective accounts of perceived change. It documents how participants explained their experiences, without independently confirming the duration, consistency, or household-wide consequences of those changes.

Restated in practical terms, the reported changes concerned how participants responded to everyday difficulties rather than the disappearance of those difficulties. Accounts of greater patience coexisted with descriptions of uncertain livelihoods and competing responsibilities. Access to gatherings could itself be interrupted by the conditions that generated a need for support. A participant from Uswatun Hasanah explained, "During the fishing season, we go to sea to help our husbands, so sometimes we have to miss the majelis taklim." A Nurul Hijrah representative described tidal flooding entering homes and submerging access roads, creating competing demands between attending and managing floodwater. Another participant reported that her

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husband had previously opposed frequent attendance because of concerns about household responsibilities. These statements locate religious participation within work, domestic relationships, and environmental disruption. They show that reported benefits were experienced alongside continuing constraints. The available evidence does not establish whether participants could consistently replace missed gatherings with private consultation or digital contact.

Four patterns summarize this third finding. First, participants reported greater restraint in responding to conflict, particularly in interactions with children and spouses. Second, they described increased willingness to discuss household concerns, including finances and education. Third, religious parenting involved practical activities such as storytelling, shared prayer, and personal example. Fourth, opportunities to sustain participation were constrained by livelihood demands, tidal flooding, and household expectations. Table 3 brings these reported practices and constraints together without treating them as equivalent indicators of improvement. Across the accounts, the clearest connection was between specific experiences of learning or discussion and participants' descriptions of what they subsequently attempted at home. This connection supports a finding of perceived application and adaptation. It does not establish a uniform progression from attendance to stronger family resilience, nor demonstrate that economic or environmental vulnerabilities were resolved. The overall result is a differentiated account in which women described useful changes in family practices while continuing to negotiate the conditions governing access to religious learning and interpersonal support.

Table 3. Reported family practices and constraints on participation

Pattern	Evidence in the interview material	Scope of the finding
Emotional restraint	Participants described speaking with children and spouses more calmly.	Self-reported changes in responses to household difficulties.
Household dialogue	Accounts described discussing finances and children's education instead of withholding concerns.	Perceived changes in communication; other household members' perspectives are not established by these excerpts.

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Religious parenting	Participants described prophetic storytelling, shared worship, and teaching through example.	Reported application of religious learning at home.
Constrained participation	Fishing work, tidal flooding, and household expectations could interrupt attendance.	Access to learning and support remained conditional on everyday circumstances.

Source: Interview-response tables in the uploaded dissertation. Reported changes are retrospective accounts, not independently measured before-and-after outcomes.

Discussion

This study examined connections among religious communication, social support, and reported family coping within coastal women's majelis taklim. Three findings characterize the documented accounts. Religious communication included sermons, questions, informal exchanges, and private consultation, but willingness to speak varied with confidence and familiarity. Participants described reassurance, practical advice, material assistance, and belonging as available forms of support. Women also associated participation with calmer emotional responses, more open household dialogue, and religious parenting, while livelihood demands, tidal flooding, and household expectations could interrupt attendance. Together, these findings identify particular interactions through which participants explained the usefulness of religious gatherings. They also show that opportunities for learning and assistance were unevenly accessible. The strongest conclusion concerns perceived benefits and conditions of engagement rather than a uniform effect of attendance on family functioning. Religious content and interpersonal relationships appeared closely connected within participants' accounts, but their respective contributions cannot be isolated. This combination of supportive practices and participation barriers provides the empirical basis for interpreting how community-based learning becomes relevant to family difficulties.

A plausible explanation lies in the relationship between meaningful guidance and responsive interpersonal exchanges. Religious messages offered ways of interpreting difficulties, while conversation allowed participants to connect general teachings with household circumstances. Listening and practical assistance could make resources available for responding to those concerns. This interpretation is compatible with the distinction between social connections and stress-relevant support developed by Cohen and Wills (1985), but the present study does not statistically test a buffering effect. Walsh's (2021) framework likewise supports examining relationships among beliefs, communication, and family resources. These connections could be interrupted when

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concerns remained unspoken or participation became difficult. The explanation therefore depends on access and relevance rather than attendance alone. Existing friendships, prior religious commitment, and household relationships remain alternative influences. Moreover, the outcome described here is perceived family coping, which should not be equated with clinical improvement or generalized mental-health effects. Garssen et al. (2021) draw on a different, longitudinal evidence base, reinforcing the importance of distinguishing outcome domains and designs when discussing the possible benefits of religious involvement.

The findings converge with research that relates Islamic learning to household practices while specifying conditions of access within the investigated networks. Hakim et al. (2026) discuss religious gatherings, emotional expression, and family communication, while Abubakar et al. (2023) examine Islamic parenting within family and community contexts. Handayani et al. (2025) explicitly connect theological meaning-making with supportive institutional relationships and family ethics. The present study therefore extends an existing conversation rather than introducing religion and support as a previously unexamined combination. Its focus on hesitation and differences in familiarity also relates to Ledyawati et al.'s (2026) account of context-dependent communicative agency. The distinctive contribution lies in locating potential constraints at several points: reaching the gathering, entering discussion, disclosing a concern, obtaining a response, and applying guidance at home. These points provide a contextual explanation of uneven experiences within religious networks. They do not establish a universal sequence or prove that the proposed process accounts for every reported change. Further comparative work is needed to examine whether similar conditions organize support in other settings.

Within coastal social life, majelis taklim can be interpreted as settings where religious expectations and practical responsibilities are considered together. Women described learning patience and appropriate speech while managing household work and uncertain livelihoods. These experiences give participation relevance beyond scheduled instruction because messages and conversations can inform caregiving and responses to conflict. Fadillah's (2023) historical account places women's religious organization within wider changes in education and public participation. However, diverse interpretations of gender within Indonesian Muslim settings caution against assuming a single religious position on women's responsibilities (Qibtiyah, 2018). The Belawan accounts suggest negotiation within an existing distribution of labor rather than demonstrated transformation of that distribution. Coastal livelihood research similarly directs attention to gendered opportunities and constraints (Stacey et al., 2019; Fitrianggraeni, 2019). Participants' confidence in speaking may expand while attendance remains subject to

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domestic expectations. Interpreting these developments therefore requires attention to both the meanings women assign to religious participation and the material conditions within which those meanings can be put into practice.

The functional implications concern opportunities for learning, emotional recognition, and assistance during hardship. The accounts suggest that religious networks can connect individual difficulties with resources beyond the household, consistent with attention to social relationships in community resilience research (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Carmen et al., 2022). Potential dysfunctions arise when assistance depends on established relationships or confidence in speaking. Newer or less vocal members may encounter barriers even where solidarity is valued. Another interpretive risk concerns treating women's patience as the principal solution to family difficulties while overlooking financial pressures and unequal domestic responsibilities. Fisheries scholarship cautions against equating attention to women with a fuller examination of gender relations (Lawless et al., 2021; Mangubhai & Lawless, 2021). This caution is relevant by analogy, not as direct evidence about the investigated groups. The findings do not demonstrate that religious messages intensified inequality; they identify a reason to examine whose responsibilities are emphasized and whose needs remain unmet. Assessment should consequently consider both reported benefits and the distribution of opportunities to obtain support.

The findings support practical measures aimed at widening access to discussion and making assistance responsive to participants' circumstances. Organizers could provide predictable opportunities for questions, smaller conversations, and private consultation, while explaining unfamiliar terminology and checking understanding. Scheduling should be reviewed with members in relation to fishing work and domestic demands, with feasible contact arrangements during flooding. Digital communication may supplement access, but studies of religious media demonstrate that platforms operate within particular audiences and authority relationships (Nisa, 2018; Nisa & Saenong, 2022). Their existence alone does not establish suitability for sensitive consultation. The Belawan Office of Religious Affairs and community partners could also help connect members with assistance beyond religious advice. Evaluation should examine whose participation improves, whether requests receive responses, and what practices members report applying. Attention to voice and the distribution of opportunities is consistent with the questions raised by Gustavsson et al. (2021). Future assessment should incorporate consenting household members' perspectives and examine outcomes over time before making stronger claims about sustained family resilience.

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CONCLUSION

The central lesson of this study is that the contribution of religious gatherings to family resilience depends on how participants can access, interpret, and use the relationships available within them. Women's accounts associated religious instruction with opportunities to discuss difficulties, receive encouragement, exchange practical assistance, and reconsider household communication. The significance of majelis taklim therefore emerged through concrete encounters in which participants felt heard and connected religious learning with everyday responsibilities. These opportunities were uneven: hesitation, differences in familiarity, livelihood demands, household expectations, and tidal flooding could restrict participation. The findings consequently suggest that strengthening the supportive role of majelis taklim requires attention to both the content of religious messages and the conditions under which women can express concerns and obtain responses. Participants' descriptions of calmer interactions, greater openness, and religious parenting illustrate perceived applications of learning and support. They also demonstrate the importance of understanding family resilience as an ongoing response to difficulties, since useful interpersonal resources can coexist with persistent economic, environmental, and relational pressures.

The study's principal scholarly contribution is a contextual account connecting religious communication, access to social support, and reported family practices within coastal women's majelis taklim. Its empirical strength lies in bringing together teachers' descriptions of communication with women's accounts of receiving assistance, applying guidance, and encountering participation barriers. This combination highlights differences between opportunities formally available within a gathering and the support that participants feel able to seek or use. Conceptually, the study proposes that the relationship between religious learning and family coping can be examined through connected processes of interpretation, disclosure, interpersonal response, and household application. These processes provide an analytical framework grounded in the reported experiences rather than a statistically validated model. The contribution also extends discussion of Islamic nonformal education by foregrounding the conditions under which learning becomes practically relevant beyond the instructional setting. It generates further questions about whose concerns receive attention, how supportive exchanges vary across relationships, and why similar opportunities may produce different experiences among members of the same religious network.

The findings are bounded by the qualitative scope, geographical coverage, and composition of the evidence. Accounts drawn from Belawan and surrounding areas cannot establish patterns across all coastal communities or majelis taklim, and differences between the represented locations require closer examination. The analysis also relies

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substantially on participants' retrospective descriptions of change; it does not provide independently measured baseline and follow-up outcomes or consistently include spouses' and children's perspectives. Consequently, reported improvements cannot be attributed exclusively to religious participation, and individual experiences should not be generalized to entire households. The evidence presented offers limited insight into women who discontinued attendance, received insufficient assistance, or remained outside these networks. Future research should incorporate such experiences, compare groups with different participation arrangements, and examine household perspectives over time. Longitudinal qualitative inquiry could clarify how support is sustained or interrupted, while carefully designed mixed-method research could investigate the proposed relationships more broadly. Additional attention to livelihood pressures, environmental disruption, and domestic responsibilities would deepen understanding of the conditions shaping access to religious learning and support.

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