

# THEOSINESIS

## Journal of Integrative Understanding and Ethical Praxis

Volume 2, Issue 1, January 2026



### Beyond Religious Lectures: The Effectiveness of Tarawih Sermons in Enhancing Religious Literacy and Worship Commitment Among Congregants

*Lebih dari Sekadar Ceramah Keagamaan: Efektivitas Kultum Tarawih dalam Meningkatkan Literasi Keagamaan dan Komitmen Beribadah Jamaah*

Rizky Firnanda\*<sup>1</sup> M. Alpiansyah<sup>2</sup> Dzulfikli Hadi Imawan<sup>3</sup>

Universitas Islam Indonesia, Yogyakarta, Indonesia <sup>13</sup>

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia <sup>2</sup>

\*Corresponding Author: [firnandarizky88@gmail.com](mailto:firnandarizky88@gmail.com)

Submitted : 15 May 2026

Revision : 4 June 2026

Accepted : 18 June 2026

#### Abstract

Mosques play an important role not only as places of worship but also as centers of non-formal Islamic education, particularly during Ramadan through *kultum tarawih* activities. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of *kultum tarawih* at the Ulil Albab Mosque of Universitas Islam Indonesia in enhancing congregants' religious education and worship adherence. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, involving five informants selected through purposive sampling, with data collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model. The findings reveal that the program was effective in improving congregants' understanding of Islamic teachings, strengthening awareness of Ramadan practices, and encouraging greater participation in worship activities. The effectiveness of the program was supported by the use of relevant themes, competent speakers, positive congregant responses, participant satisfaction, and sustainable program implementation. These findings contribute to the discourse on non-formal Islamic education by demonstrating that mosque-based religious programs can serve as effective instruments for promoting both religious literacy and worship commitment among congregants.

**Keywords:** Kultum Tarawih; Mosque-Based Education; Religious Education; Worship Adherence; Ramadan

#### Abstrak

Masjid memiliki peran penting tidak hanya sebagai tempat ibadah, tetapi juga sebagai pusat pendidikan Islam nonformal, terutama melalui kegiatan kultum tarawih yang dilaksanakan selama bulan Ramadan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis efektivitas kultum tarawih di Masjid Ulil Albab Universitas Islam Indonesia dalam meningkatkan edukasi dan ketaatan ibadah jamaah. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan melibatkan lima informan yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling, sedangkan data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi serta dianalisis menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kultum tarawih efektif dalam meningkatkan pemahaman jamaah mengenai ajaran Islam, memperluas wawasan tentang amaliah Ramadan, serta mendorong peningkatan partisipasi dalam berbagai aktivitas ibadah. Efektivitas tersebut didukung oleh pemilihan tema yang relevan, keterlibatan pemateri yang kompeten, tingginya respons dan kepuasan jamaah, serta keberlanjutan program yang dilaksanakan secara rutin. Penelitian ini berkontribusi dalam memperkaya kajian pendidikan Islam nonformal dengan menunjukkan bahwa program keagamaan berbasis masjid dapat menjadi sarana yang efektif untuk meningkatkan literasi keagamaan dan komitmen beribadah masyarakat.

**Kata Kunci:** Kultum Tarawih; Pendidikan Islam Nonformal; Edukasi Keagamaan; Ketaatan Ibadah; Ramadan



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## INTRODUCTION

Mosques serve not only as places of worship but also as centers for education, da'wah (Islamic preaching), and social development within Muslim communities. Throughout the history of Islamic civilization, mosques have played a strategic role in the transmission of knowledge, character formation, and the strengthening of religious values. Their educational function remains relevant today, particularly in supporting non-formal education that takes place outside formal school settings and family environments.<sup>1</sup> Through various religious activities, mosques provide lifelong learning opportunities for Muslims of different age groups.<sup>2</sup>

One form of non-formal education commonly conducted in mosques is religious preaching through Islamic lectures. Such activities aim to enhance religious understanding, strengthen spiritual awareness, and encourage individuals to apply Islamic teachings in their daily lives. Among the various forms of da'wah practiced in society, *kultum* (*kuliab tujub menit* or seven-minute sermon) has become particularly popular because it delivers religious messages in a concise, systematic, and accessible manner. The delivery of religious content through *kultum* is considered effective in influencing the attitudes and religious behavior of congregants, as it is typically presented by individuals who possess authority and competence in Islamic knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

The implementation of *kultum* activities becomes more intensive during the month of Ramadan. Ramadan is a spiritually significant period for Muslims, during which various religious activities, such as Islamic studies, Qur'anic recitation sessions, and *kultum tarawih* (short sermons delivered in conjunction with Tarawih prayers), are organized more frequently. This holy month is often utilized by religious institutions to strengthen Islamic understanding and improve the quality of worship among congregants. In this context, *kultum tarawih* functions not only as a medium for conveying religious knowledge but also as a form of spiritual guidance aimed at enhancing both religious understanding and worship commitment among participants.<sup>4</sup>

Although *kultum tarawih* has become a common practice in many mosques, its effectiveness in improving religious education and worship adherence among congregants still requires empirical investigation. Previous studies have demonstrated that Islamic preaching and religious lectures can increase religious awareness and strengthen religious behavior within communities.<sup>5</sup> However, most existing studies have focused on da'wah activities in schools, religious organizations, or social media platforms. Research specifically examining the effectiveness of *kultum tarawih* as a religious educational program within university mosque settings remains limited. Therefore, there is still a research gap concerning the extent to which *kultum tarawih* contributes to the educational and spiritual development of congregants in campus mosques.

The Ulil Albab Mosque of Universitas Islam Indonesia is one of the university mosques that regularly organizes *kultum tarawih* programs during Ramadan, involving academics, religious

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1 Yasmin Muhammad, *Edukasi Pola Kebiasaan Menjaga Kebersihan Masjid*, 2024.

2 Desi Pristiwanti et al., "Pengertian Pendidikan," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling* 4, no. 6 (2022): 7911–15, <https://journal.universitaspahlawan.ac.id/index.php/jpdk/article/view/9498>.

3 Sipatuhar, Siti Nurhalizah, and Zulham Zulham. "Efektivitas Ekstrakurikuler (Rohis) dalam Meningkatkan Kesadaran Beribadah Siswa di Sman 1 Na Ix X." *Learning: Jurnal Inovasi Penelitian Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran* 4, no. 3 (2024): 837–49. <https://doi.org/10.51878/learning.v4i3.3327>.

4 Roza Muspita Sari, Guijiao Zou, and Lie Jie, "The Use of Murajaah Method in Improving Qur'an Memorization: Tahfiz A-Qur'an," *International Journal of Educational Narratives* 1, no. 2 (July 11, 2023): 63–74, <https://doi.org/10.55849/ijen.v1i2.304>.

5 Syaif Uddin and Abdul Muhid, "Efektivitas Pesan Dakwah Di Media Sosial Terhadap Religiusitas Masyarakat Muslim: Analisis Literature Review," *Alhadharah: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 20, no. 1 (2021): 17, <https://doi.org/10.18592/alhadharah.v20i1.4835>.

scholars, and practitioners from diverse backgrounds. The variety of topics and speakers featured in these programs makes the mosque an interesting setting for investigating how effectively such activities achieve their educational and spiritual objectives. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on evaluating the effectiveness of *kultum tarawih* within a university mosque context, an area that has received limited scholarly attention.

This study employs the effectiveness theory proposed by Nakamura and Smallwood. This framework was selected because it provides a comprehensive approach to evaluating program effectiveness through five indicators: goal attainment, efficiency, target-group satisfaction, target-group responsiveness, and system maintenance.<sup>6</sup> These indicators enable the effectiveness of *kultum tarawih* to be assessed not only in terms of program implementation but also in relation to the outcomes experienced by congregants as the primary target group.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of *kultum tarawih* at the Ulil Albab Mosque of Universitas Islam Indonesia in enhancing religious education and worship adherence among congregants from the perspective of Nakamura and Smallwood's effectiveness framework. This study is expected to contribute to the development of scholarship on non-formal Islamic education and to provide practical insights for mosque administrators in improving the quality of religious preaching and spiritual development programs.

## Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the effectiveness of *kultum tarawih* (short Islamic sermons delivered in conjunction with Tarawih prayers) at the Ulil Albab Mosque of Universitas Islam Indonesia in enhancing congregants' religious education and worship adherence. The research was conducted at the Ulil Albab Mosque, Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII), during Ramadan 1446 H, corresponding to March 2025. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and responses of congregants toward the implementation of *kultum tarawih*.<sup>7</sup>

Research informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on their involvement in the implementation of and participation in the *kultum tarawih* program. The study involved five informants consisting of two mosque administrators, one *kultum* speaker, and two congregants who regularly attended Tarawih prayers during Ramadan. Data were collected through non-participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to examine the implementation of *kultum tarawih* and congregants' responses throughout the activities, while interviews were carried out to obtain information regarding goal attainment, efficiency, congregant satisfaction, responsiveness, and program sustainability based on the effectiveness indicators proposed by Nakamura and Smallwood.<sup>8</sup>

The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.<sup>9</sup> Data trustworthiness was ensured through source triangulation and technique triangulation by comparing findings obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation across different informants. In

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6 Agustine Carla Amelinda and Tiyas Nur Haryani, "Efektivitas Program Dapur Sehat Atasi Stunting Di Kampung Keluarga Berkualitas Srikandi Gilingan, Kota Surakarta," *Jurnal Mahasiswa Wacana Publik* 3, no. 2 (2023): 436–47, <https://jurnal.uns.ac.id/wacana-publik/article/view/80230>.

7 John W Creswell and Cheryl N Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (Sage publications, 2016).

8 Robert T. Nakamura and Frank Smallwood, *The Politics of Policy Implementation: Why Policies Succeed or Fail* (New York: Martin's Press, 2018).

9 Matthew B Miles and A Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, 2nd ed. (Sage Publications, 1994).

addition, the researcher conducted repeated checks of the collected data to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, thereby enhancing the scientific rigor and trustworthiness of the research findings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Effectiveness of Tarawih Sermons in Enhancing Congregants' Religious Education

The *kultum tarawih* program at the Ulil Albab Mosque has demonstrated considerable effectiveness in enhancing the religious education of congregants. This effectiveness is reflected in the mosque management's effort to develop a model that differs from those commonly found in other mosques by organizing two sermon sessions, namely before and after the Tarawih prayer. Based on interview findings, the pre-Tarawih session was delivered by academics and figures from the university community, while the post-Tarawih session featured speakers with broader reputations at the national level. According to Rival Mustaba, this innovation was designed to provide congregants with more diverse learning experiences and to encourage them to participate in the entire series of Ramadan activities at the mosque. This strategy indicates a systematic effort to achieve program objectives through the provision of varied and engaging educational content. This finding reinforces research suggesting that diversity in learning methods and educational resources can improve the effectiveness of religious education programs within communities.

The enhancement of congregants' religious education is also evident in the primary objectives of the *kultum tarawih* program. Interview findings reveal that the program was intended not only to deliver religious knowledge but also to deepen congregants' understanding of various Ramadan practices and Islamic values applicable to daily life. Rival Mustaba explained that the sermons serve as a medium for increasing Islamic knowledge while simultaneously strengthening congregants' attachment to the mosque. This finding indicates that the educational process extends beyond the mere transfer of information and seeks to cultivate deeper religious awareness. Consequently, the sermons function as an educational medium that connects religious knowledge with spiritual experience. The findings of this study are consistent with research indicating that structured religious preaching can enhance religious understanding while strengthening individuals' attachment to religious institutions and communities.<sup>10</sup>

The educational dimension of the *kultum tarawih* program is further reflected in the content delivered by the speakers. The findings show that the topics discussed were not limited to normative explanations regarding Ramadan worship but also emphasized the practical application of Islamic values in everyday life. Nanang Nuryanta explained that one of the topics addressed the importance of increasing good deeds during Ramadan so that opportunities to attain divine blessings would not be wasted. Such an approach enables congregants not only to understand religious concepts theoretically but also to gain practical guidance on how to implement them. The inclusion of examples closely related to daily experiences helps participants comprehend the messages more easily. This condition supports research demonstrating that contextual religious instruction is generally more effective in enhancing participants' understanding and awareness than content that remains purely conceptual.<sup>11</sup>

10 Patricia Snell Herzog et al., "Studying Religiosity and Spirituality: A Review of Macro, Micro, and Meso-Level Approaches," *Religions* 11, no. 9 (August 24, 2020): 437, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11090437>.

11 Ayse Demirel Ucan and Andrew Wright, "Improving the Pedagogy of Islamic Religious Education through an Application of Critical Religious Education, Variation Theory and the Learning Study Model," *British Journal of Religious Education* 41, no. 2 (April 3, 2019): 202–17, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2018.1484695>.

The effectiveness of the sermons in improving religious education is also influenced by the selection of themes relevant to community needs. Interviews with mosque administrators and speakers revealed that the chosen topics generally addressed issues currently developing within society while remaining closely connected to the spirit of Ramadan. At the same time, speakers sought to avoid themes that could potentially generate conflict or division among congregants. This strategy made the material more accessible because it resonated with the experiences and concerns of participants. Furthermore, the use of communicative language enabled congregants from different backgrounds to understand the content without significant difficulty. The findings further support research suggesting that the relevance of educational content to participants' needs is a crucial factor determining the success of learning processes within religious educational activities.<sup>12</sup>

From the perspective of target-group satisfaction, congregants expressed positive responses toward the implementation of the *kultum tarawih* program. Wahyu Syihab stated that the sermons functioned as reminders of the importance of consistently performing various Ramadan-related acts of worship. This statement indicates that participants not only gained additional religious knowledge but also reinforced their existing understanding of Islamic teachings. Congregants' satisfaction emerged because the material addressed their spiritual needs during Ramadan. Moreover, several topics were perceived as offering new perspectives that helped participants gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of worship. This phenomenon strengthens research findings indicating that participant satisfaction in religious educational activities tends to increase when the content provided aligns with their needs, experiences, and social circumstances.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to acquiring religious knowledge, congregants also demonstrated strong responsiveness to the material delivered during the sermons. This was evident from their enthusiasm in attending both the pre-Tarawih and post-Tarawih sessions. According to interview findings, the relatively consistent attendance rate suggests that congregants perceived the content as meaningful and beneficial. Responsiveness was reflected not only in physical attendance but also in the attention shown by participants throughout the sessions. When the themes discussed were directly connected to daily life, congregants tended to be more focused on listening to and understanding the material. This finding indicates that the educational messages conveyed through the sermons were successfully received by the target audience. These results confirm research demonstrating that active participant engagement is an important indicator of successful learning processes in non-formal educational settings.<sup>14</sup>

Based on the overall findings, the *kultum tarawih* program at the Ulil Albab Mosque can be considered effective in enhancing congregants' religious education. This effectiveness is reflected in the program's success in expanding religious knowledge, providing content relevant to congregants' needs, generating participant satisfaction, and eliciting positive responses from the target audience. Innovations in program implementation through dual sermon sessions, the involvement of competent speakers, and the selection of contextual themes were among the primary factors contributing to this success. Therefore, *kultum tarawih* serves not merely as a complementary Ramadan activity but also as an important form of non-formal Islamic education that contributes significantly to improving congregants' religious understanding.

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12 Zahra Nasrollahi et al., "Spirituality and Effective Factors in Education: A Qualitative Study," *Journal of Education and Health Promotion* 9 (January 2020), [https://doi.org/10.4103/jehp.jehp\\_430\\_19](https://doi.org/10.4103/jehp.jehp_430_19).

13 Ahmad Aseery, "Enhancing Learners' Motivation and Engagement in Religious Education Classes at Elementary Levels," *British Journal of Religious Education* 46, no. 1 (January 2, 2024): 43–58, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2023.2256487>.

14 Gianluca Gravino et al., "Integrating Formal and Non-Formal Learning: A Qualitative and Quantitative Study of Innovative Teaching Strategies in Secondary Schools," *Education Sciences* 15, no. 12 (December 6, 2025): 1649, <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15121649>.

## The Effectiveness of Tarawih Sermons in Enhancing Congregants' Worship Adherence

The findings indicate that the *kultum tarawih* program at the Ulil Albab Mosque was effective in strengthening congregants' worship adherence during Ramadan. From the perspective of goal attainment, the program was designed not only to provide religious knowledge but also to encourage congregants to increase their engagement in various forms of worship and Islamic activities. This objective was reflected in the content of the sermons, which consistently emphasized the virtues of Ramadan, the importance of performing righteous deeds, and the spiritual opportunities available during the holy month. According to Rival Mustaba, one of the purposes of the program was to improve the quality of worship among congregants and to spiritually "recharge" them throughout Ramadan.

The effectiveness of the program was further reflected in the way congregants perceived the sermons as reminders that encouraged them to maintain consistency in their worship practices. Wahyu Syihab explained that the *kultum tarawih* sessions essentially functioned as a reminder of the importance of carrying out Islamic practices and maintaining devotion throughout Ramadan. This finding suggests that the educational value of the sermons extended beyond knowledge acquisition and contributed to the reinforcement of religious awareness. Within the framework of Nakamura and Smallwood, this condition demonstrates successful goal attainment because the messages delivered by the speakers were received and understood by the target audience. Such outcomes are consistent with research showing that continuous religious reminders can strengthen individuals' awareness of worship obligations and encourage greater consistency in religious behavior.<sup>15</sup>

Another factor contributing to worship adherence was the relevance of the themes delivered by the speakers. Based on interview findings, the sermons frequently focused on practical issues closely related to congregants' experiences during Ramadan. Nanang Nuryanta explained that one of the themes he delivered concerned the importance of maximizing opportunities for worship during Ramadan so that believers would not allow the month to pass without meaningful spiritual gains. The emphasis was not merely on increasing ritual activities but on developing habits that could continue after Ramadan. By presenting worship as a lifelong commitment rather than a seasonal practice, the sermons encouraged congregants to view religious observance as an integral part of daily life. This finding aligns with research indicating that contextual and practical religious messages are more likely to influence participants' attitudes and behavioral commitment.<sup>16</sup>

From the perspective of target-group responsiveness, the findings revealed positive reactions among congregants toward the implementation of the program. According to Subhan Afifi, Ramadan consistently attracts large numbers of people seeking religious knowledge and spiritual enrichment, and the *kultum tarawih* sessions became one of the activities that supported this enthusiasm. Congregants not only attended the prayer sessions but also remained to listen to the sermons, indicating that the content delivered was perceived as valuable and relevant. The consistent participation of congregants throughout the program demonstrates that the messages communicated by the speakers resonated with the audience. This responsiveness is an important indicator of effectiveness because a program can only achieve its objectives when the target group actively receives and engages with the information provided.

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15 Asep Nursobah et al., "Integrative Model of Religious Habituation in Building Students Religious Character," *Fitrah: Journal of Islamic Education* 6, no. 2 (September 16, 2025): 310–25, <https://doi.org/10.53802/fitrah.v6i2.1142>.

16 Jaffar Aman et al., "Religious Affiliation, Daily Spirituals, and Private Religious Factors Promote Marital Commitment Among Married Couples: Does Religiosity Help People Amid the COVID-19 Crisis?," *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (August 6, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.657400>.

The dimension of target-group satisfaction was also evident in the perceived benefits reported by congregants. Interview data revealed that participants considered the sermons beneficial because they provided both spiritual motivation and practical guidance for improving worship. Rather than functioning solely as a formal religious activity, the program offered opportunities for reflection and self-evaluation. Congregants were encouraged to assess the quality of their worship, identify areas requiring improvement, and strengthen their commitment to religious practices. The positive perceptions expressed by participants indicate that the program successfully met their spiritual needs during Ramadan. Such findings support research suggesting that participant satisfaction in religious programs tends to increase when activities provide meaningful and applicable benefits for everyday religious life.<sup>17</sup>

The effectiveness of the *kultum tarawih* program can also be observed through the system maintenance dimension proposed by Nakamura and Smallwood. Findings show that the program has become a regular component of Ramadan activities at the Ulil Albab Mosque and continues to be maintained through various innovations. One example is the implementation of two sermon sessions featuring speakers from different backgrounds and levels of expertise. This strategy reflects the mosque management's commitment to sustaining congregants' interest and ensuring the long-term relevance of the program. The continuity of the program demonstrates that it is not merely a temporary activity but an institutionalized effort to support the spiritual development of congregants.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the *kultum tarawih* program at the Ulil Albab Mosque effectively enhanced congregants' worship adherence through the achievement of program goals, positive responsiveness, participant satisfaction, and sustained program implementation. The consistent emphasis on worship, the relevance of sermon themes, the active participation of congregants, and the continuity of the program collectively contributed to its effectiveness. More importantly, the sermons functioned not only as a source of religious information but also as a mechanism for strengthening spiritual awareness and encouraging congregants to translate religious knowledge into concrete worship practices.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the *kultum tarawih* program at the Ulil Albab Mosque of Universitas Islam Indonesia was effective in enhancing both the religious education and worship adherence of congregants. The effectiveness of the program was reflected in the achievement of its educational and spiritual objectives, the positive responses of congregants, the satisfaction experienced by participants, and the sustainability of the program. Educationally, the sermons expanded congregants' understanding of Islamic teachings and Ramadan practices through relevant themes, competent speakers, and a dual-session format that enriched learning experiences. Spiritually, the program encouraged congregants to strengthen their worship practices, increase participation in Islamic activities, and maintain greater awareness of the religious opportunities provided during Ramadan. These outcomes were achieved because the sermons were delivered in a contextual manner, addressed the actual needs of congregants, and continuously reinforced religious values through regular interaction between speakers and participants.

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17 Sun Ah Lim and YunHee Jung, "The Effects of Participation in Christian Religious Activities on the Satisfaction with Life of Older Adults: The Mediating Effects of Depressive Symptoms," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 27, no. 1 (January 2, 2024): 57–70, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2024.2304708>.

This study contributes to the literature on non-formal Islamic education by demonstrating that mosque-based religious programs can function not only as channels for religious instruction but also as effective instruments for strengthening religious commitment and worship practices. Furthermore, the findings provide practical insights for mosque administrators regarding the importance of program innovation, contextual themes, and sustainable implementation in maximizing the impact of religious activities. However, this study is limited by its focus on a single mosque and a relatively small number of informants, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future studies are therefore encouraged to involve a wider range of participants, compare programs across different mosque settings, and examine the long-term influence of *kulturn tarawih* on congregants' religious behavior beyond the month of Ramadan.

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