



## Research Article

# The Dynamics of Risalah Nur Da'wa: An Analytical Study of Dershane Akhwat Jakarta

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**Abstract.** The dynamics of da'wa in Indonesia face significant challenges, particularly in aligning traditional methods with the complexities of modern urban society. Traditional approaches, often limited to sermons and religious broadcasting, are considered less effective in addressing the evolving needs of urban communities. *Dershane Akhwat Jakarta*, a community-based on the teachings of *Risalah Nur* by Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, offers a contextual and inclusive da'wa model. This study examines the strategies employed by *Dershane Akhwat Jakarta*, particularly its interactive discussions, text readings, and open dialogues tailored to urban societal needs. The findings reveal that *Dershane's* success lies not solely in transferring religious knowledge but in its flexibility to adapt to the participants' spiritual and social needs. This research confirms the validity of moderate da'wa approaches while expanding on their application by emphasizing the importance of social interaction

and community engagement. Furthermore, integrating digital technologies emerges as a crucial innovation to engage younger, tech-savvy audiences. This study underscores the positive impact of *Dershané's* inclusive methods in enhancing participants' understanding and strengthening community bonds. It advocates for strengthening the *Dershané* network nationally and internationally and advancing digital innovations to ensure the widespread and sustainable dissemination of *Risalah Nur's* values.

**Keywords:** Contextual Da'wa, Risalah Nur, Urban Communities, Digital Technology.

## INTRODUCTION

Da'wa activities in Indonesia face various challenges, one of which is the relevance of the methods used to the current societal context. Traditional da'wa patterns, which often prioritize sermons and religious broadcasting, are considered less effective in addressing the complexities of modern society. Changes in mindset, lifestyle, and the needs of urban communities increasingly demand more contextual and inclusive da'wa methods. The importance of da'wa's responsiveness to social phenomena has become a crucial issue, as without such adjustments, da'wa risks losing its relevance and appeal. (Ridla et al., 2017, p. 23)

Previous research has discussed various da'wa approaches, including Mukti Ali's critique of da'i tendencies to separate religion from social phenomena. Mukti Ali emphasized the need for a da'wa approach that not only conveys religious teachings but also provides solutions to social problems. However, these studies tend to be general and lack focus on the application of contextual da'wa methods in specific communities. (Ali, 1971, p. 5-6) On the other hand, studies on *Risalah Nur* by Badiuzzaman Said Nursi highlight the potential of an inclusive, tafsir-based da'wa approach to address contemporary challenges. However, its concrete application in the Indonesian context, especially in urban settings, has rarely been explored.

The Nur Indonesia Da'wa Movement, driven by the Nur Semesta Foundation established in 2007 in Ciputat, South Tangerang, has made the *Risalah Nur* da'wa movement more intensive and systematic. *Dershané* plays a key role in optimizing *Risalah Nur* by routinely studying and discussing the character's thoughts, as well as spreading Nursi's teachings within the community. (Amin, 2015, p. 28) *Dershané Akhwat Jakarta*, in particular, provides a space for women from diverse backgrounds to engage with the *Risalah Nur* treatises, addressing a wide range of personal and societal issues.

*Risalah Nur* explains the essence of Al-Quran Al-Karim, offering powerful remedies that resonate with readers, especially in times of great need. (M. S. Nursi, n.d., p. 197) Despite Nursi's passing on March 23, 1960, his work continues to thrive. *Risalah Nur* has been translated into approximately 40 languages, and its studies are now conducted globally. In Indonesia, Nursi's work gained prominence starting in 2000, following the International Symposium on "Modern Islamic Thought" at the IAIN Jakarta Campus. (Zaprul, 2007)

This study aims to analyze the da'wa strategies implemented by *Dershané Akhwat Jakarta*, particularly in disseminating *Risalah Nur* teachings to urban

communities. It seeks to complement existing literature by providing an in-depth discussion of how contextual da'wa methods are applied in practice and how they impact participants and the surrounding community. With a focus on a case study in Jakarta, this research also evaluates the relevance and effectiveness of these strategies in responding to the needs of modern society.

Thus, this paper not only offers an analysis of da'wa methods based on *Risalah Nur* but also tests the hypothesis that contextual da'wa approaches can be an effective solution in addressing the challenges of da'wa in urban settings. This research is expected to provide practical recommendations for the development of future da'wa methods.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, which is an intensive study of a person, a group of people, or a unit aimed at generalizing several units. (Moleong, 2007) To understand in depth the da'wa strategy applied by *Dershane Akhwat* Jakarta in disseminating the study of *the Nur Treatise* and the role of the concept of ukhuwah in building harmony between members. This research is qualitative descriptive, where the researcher seeks to describe the phenomenon that occurs in *Dershane Akhwat* Jakarta without intervening in the research object. The research location is at *Dershane Akhwat* Jakarta, which is the center of the study of *Risalah Nur* for women, with research subjects consisting of Dershane's managers and coaches, study participants including female students and mothers, and parties involved in the development of da'wa in the environment.

Data collection techniques are carried out through direct observation of data collection, (Nazir, 2009) Interviews that are interactions and communication, (Singarimbun & Effendi, 1989) And documentation related to things or variables in the form of notes. (Arikunto, 2006) Observations are carried out directly on the study process, learning methods, and dynamics of the ukhuwah formed in the community. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with the managers, coaches, and study participants to explore their experiences and understanding of *Risalah Nur* and the implementation of its values in daily life. This research also involves the analysis of documents that include study materials, activity notes, and related publications to gain a broader perspective on the da'wa strategies applied.

The data obtained was analyzed using qualitative analysis techniques through three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. Data reduction is done by filtering and selecting information that is relevant to the focus of the research. (Sugiono, 2008) The data that has been reduced is then presented in a descriptive form to describe the pattern of da'wa and social interaction in the *Dershane Akhwat* Jakarta community. Furthermore, conclusions are drawn by considering the relationship between da'wa strategies and the concept of ukhuwah in forming a harmonious and productive learning environment.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study applied *the source triangulation* technique by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and document analysis. This approach is used to obtain more objective and accurate conclusions so

that it can comprehensively describe the role of Dershané Akhwat Jakarta in spreading da'wa and the study of *Risalah Nur*.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Nur's Treatise and the Development of Da'wa

*Kulliyat al-Nur* commonly called *Risalah Nur* is a collection of commentaries by Turkish scholar Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, written during the time of the old Said and the new Said. (*Said Qadim* or the *Old Said* period began from his birth in 1876 AD until 1926 AD, spanning approximately 50 years. Meanwhile, the *Said Jadid* or *New Said* period started in 1926 AD, marking the beginning of his life in exile in Barla, and continued until his passing in 1960 AD. n.d.) Nur's treatise, as Nursi herself has said, is a book of instructions to the Quran. This treatise contains more than a hundred secrets of religion, Islamic law, and the main content of the Quran. (Qasim Al-Salihi, 2010) Even Nursi learned from Nur's Treatise and read it. He said, "You should read *Risalah Nur* than meet me". Nur's treatise was written in difficult circumstances. Experiencing slander, exile, and being written in jail. But because of his strong desire, determination, and love to serve the Qur'an, he began to reap the fruits of his thoughts until they became the golden ink that we can read today. It is a guide for man to protect his country and society from the attacks of communist thought, the calamity of freemasons, and to prevent future crimes. (M. S. Nursi, n.d., p. 197)

The writing of this work is not far from the Turkish socio-culture at that time. Socio-culturally, Nursi lived in an era of Western domination and hegemony which was considered a symbol of progress. Turkey declares itself a secular state. According to him, becoming a secular state is the most appropriate choice for the progress of the nation. On 3 March 1924 Kemal, who served as president of Turkey through the National Council of Great Representatives, dismissed the Sultan and abolished the Caliphate system. This was the peak point of the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate. This means that they think that Turkey will only progress if it abandons Islamic values. (Vahide, 2007) Islamic laws were replaced with positive European laws, mosques, and madrassas were closed, the call to prayer in Arabic was not allowed, and the use of Arabic scripts was discontinued and then replaced with Latin and Roman scripts. (J. Zürcher, 2001)

Nursi observed that conditions like this require enlightenment in understanding, appreciation, and experience of the values of the Quran. Regarding the background of Turkish society, Nursi uses three types of da'wa in channeling the content of her thoughts, namely positive action, word jihad, and da'wa *bi al ketubah*. (Vahide, 1992) In positive action, they improve and serve the community in various fields including religion, social, cultural, ethical, political, educational, and communication. Jihad is also called da'wa *bi al-lisan*. However, in this da'wa Nursi could not preach efficiently because her life was spent in prison and exile. However, on several occasions, Nursi tried to carry out her actions in the *bi al-lisan* indictment such as in Damascus explaining six diseases that can hinder the progress of Islam along with their antidotes. (Ichwansyah Tampubolon, 2018, p. 108)

To continue Nursi's da'wa, the Thulabunnur took (*Thulabunnur* refers to individuals who study the *Risalah Nur*. n.d.). The initiative to establish *Dershané*

became a forum for studying Nur's Treatise and the figure's thoughts. Not only in Turkey, but also accepted outside Turkey, especially in Iraq and Pakistan which later underwent transliteration in Arabic, Urdu, Indian, and English. The work received a warm welcome in the community. In Greece Risalah Nur is taught in a Madrasah, in Finland Risalah Nur is disseminated through the heads of Islamic organizations so that many Finns become converts, in Japan and Korea it has also experienced transliteration and several other countries. (M. S. Nursi, n.d., p. 961) Indonesia is no exception.

With the spread of Risalah Nur to several parts of the country, then someone asked "How is Risalah Nur able to maintain its existence?" In the onslaught of many opponents, the authors were often exiled, and imprisoned, for a certain time with all their might they tried to prevent the spread, to keep away from many people, especially the youth, to spread slander and propaganda, with this circumstance Risalah Nur continued to spread. The answer is that it contains the essences that are needed by humans. Nur's treatise contains *tashdiq*, not *tasawwur*. (*Tashawwur is a concept or mental image that arises in the human mind directly, without any binding judgment attached to it. It is an understanding of the meaning of something that spontaneously appears in one's thoughts, without being accompanied by a judgment of truth or falsehood. In contrast, Tashdiq refers to the understanding of a meaning that emerges in the human mind along with the attribution of a binding judgment, either in the form of affirmation or denial. It can be said that Tashdiq represents a more developed stage of understanding, as it involves a conclusive judgment derived from the cognitive process initiated during Tashawwur. See (Al-Musa, 2007, p. 26) Tahqiq and not Taqlid.* In his da'wa approach, he uses a persuasive method accompanied by proof of reason and heart, not by coercion and fighting, and shows the important side of nature directly through thirty treatises. (M. S. Nursi, n.d., p. 193)

These treatises are nothing but part of the I'jaz Al-Quran, Nursi in explaining a matter is always accompanied by shlub similes. In this way, the essences that were at first difficult to understand, become easier to understand. (B. S. Nursi, 2008) For example, related to metaphysics, the creation of nature, prophethood, *and the lust of anger*, he explained through parables to make it easier to understand, by making it easier for individuals to relate to the following things, it will grow and strengthen beliefs. The analogy offered by Nursi is also close to daily life so it is easier to understand.

### **History and the Dynamics of *Dershane Akhwat* Jakarta**

Etymologically, *Dershane* comes from the Turkish *dershane* meaning study, and *hane* which means place. In conclusion, *Dershane* is a place to learn. Ustadz Hasbi Sen as the chairman of the Nur Semesta Foundation explained the history of the introduction of Risalah Nur in Indonesia, "The Da'wa movement of Risalah Nur was driven by the Thulabunnur and established *Dershane-Dershane* in various countries, including Indonesia. In 1999 Said Nursi's direct disciple came to IAIN Jakarta, preached Risalah Nur, and met Alm. Prof. Azyumardi Azra introduced a Turkish scholar who has a work, namely Risalah Nur. After the meeting, it was decided to hold an International seminar in 2000 at IAIN Jakarta, then continued in 2001 at IAIN

Yogyakarta, and in 2002 at IAIN Palembang. Prof. Nabila Lubis was one of the speakers, who then introduced *Dershane* as a forum to study Nur's Treatise." (H. Sen, personal communication, November 29, 2023)

The study of Nur's Treatise is inseparable from *Dershane's* stance. "*Dershane* Putra was established on March 11, 2002, in Palembang, with Ustadz Hasbi as a supervisor. In 2007, the Nur Semesta Foundation was established with Dr. Muhibb Abdul Wahab. In 2009, *Dershane* Ikhwan was established in Jakarta. In the same year Ustadz Hasbi Sen, sent Nur Hasanah to Turkey to study the Nur Treatise and the *Dershane* system for 1 year. In 2010 *Dershane* Putri was founded, which was attended by Prof. Nabila Lubis, Prof. Amany Lubis as well as the Thulabunnur from the Philippines. Nur Hasanah was entrusted as the first coach. During the first four months of *Dershane Akhwat's* establishment, no pilgrims came, these four months were used by Nura to study Nur's Treatise in Indonesian because previously it used Turkish. And at that time Nura was determined that when he founded *Dershane* would not see his background, nor his past. Because anyone is allowed to learn, and the students who come have different backgrounds of problems, promiscuity, living in the glitter of the night world, and so on. So, Nura committed, that when someone enters *Dershane* in a sad state he must come out in a state of sadness. His stomach must be full of food, his heart, and his mind must be full of essence, said Nura." (N. Hasanah, personal communication, November 20, 2023)

After the establishment of *Dershane Akhwat*, not directly getting worshippers, Nur has a strategy of inviting worshippers to study Nur's Treatise "2010 in the era of Facebook as one of the social media used as a place to vent. All calamities and complaints are poured into it. Nura as a coach began to strategize to make Facebook a da'wa field and socialize in it. When someone pours out their hearts, then, Nura answers with Said Nursi's advice written in Nur's Treatise, until people ask the meaning of this advice. In facecooking, does not necessarily immediately get the congregation. The first congregation to come through Facebook was Titin Mufarraha. It was Titin, who trapped this *Dershane* until he had a congregation. In *Dershane*, a coach is assigned to stabilize the activities and hierarchy in it. A coach who is sincere and gives zakat to his age. The figures who contributed to the establishment were Ustadz Hasbi Sen who was sent from Turkey, Prof. Nabila Lubis, Prof. Amany Lubis, Nur Hasanah, and Titin Mufarraha as the people who bridged *this Dershane* to have a congregation." (N. Hasanah, personal communication, November 20, 2023)

Indeed, the method of the bond in *Dershane* is ukhuwah which maintains solidarity between others. This bond is not between parent and child, not between the shaykh (tharekat) and his student, nor between brother and sister. Each helps the other spiritually, even materially if needed. *Dershane* has relationships and regular studies both on a small scale and on an international scale. (B. S. Nursi, 2008, p. 212) Because the path of *Dershane* is sincere friendship, the principle is also solid and requires the existence of friends who are loyal, sincere, willing to sacrifice, respect each other, love each other, and always give encouragement. Of course, the key to solidarity is sincere sincerity, therefore it is mandatory to read the Sincere Treatise in *Dershane* every week. (Sa'id Nursi, 2018)

The activities at *Dershane Akhwat* Jakarta are in the form of "external and internal activities. For the internal program, the main activity is to read the Nur Treatise, each member is required to have a reading target. This activity is carried out every day after the dawn prayer and after the Isha prayer which is followed by a question and answer session and discussion. The coach who mobilized this activity. This activity is quite productive and trains the thinking skills of the members in narrating what is contained in the Nur Treatise. *Dershane* requires its members to pray in congregation at dawn, maghrib, and isha. Risalah Nur as the main study is used as a reference and his values are practiced in daily life guided by the *Dershane* program. Every two times a year, *Dershane* holds the Okumakcamp program, this activity requires members to focus more on their reading until they finish a large book of Risalah Nur. As for *Dershane's* external program, after the members learn with the various programs, *the members of Dershane* are required to be able to convey what they have learned in the external general study. This activity is held so that what the members have learned is not enough for themselves only but can be useful for others. This activity includes weekly studies, the congregation is students, studies in Pamulang which contains mothers, and studies in Parung Panjang with children. These activities have also become one of Risalah Nur's da'wa fields." (S. Kartika, personal communication, November 29, 2023)

Rosyid Ridla in his book revealed that the basic problem that exists in da'wa is that the *da'is* who interpret da'wa are only limited to religious broadcasting and lectures this understanding narrows da'wa activities as they should, not only the delivery of religious matters and invites goodness. However, much broader than that, namely how religion responds in looking at social phenomena or realities. The da'wa approach, if studied theoretically, is considered good. However, it would be better if there was an approach with a response to the problems of the people. This means that when da'wa is successful in one community, it will not necessarily be successful in other communities. So it requires different approaches and strategies as well. (Ridla et al., 2017, p. 23)

Da'wa which is an activity that has direct interaction with the community, da'wa is also required to adapt to social developments in the community, as well as the elements of society that will be faced, whether mothers, students, or small children. In these three things, of course, there are different strategies and approaches. This reminds us that in the process of applying the theory and practice of da'wa to certain communities, it is different from other communities. *Dershane Akhwat* Jakarta strives for ideal da'wa in various components of society, so that the da'wa message conveyed can be accepted and help in the success of Risalah Nur's da'wa. In the da'wa activities of *Dershane Akhwat* Jakarta, there are three components of society, namely mothers, students, and young children. (S. Kartika, personal communication, November 29, 2023)

Sri Kartika explained the method used for the children "In the approach to children, it initially takes about three months to find an approach that fits their world. For children, the approach must be accompanied by examples and language that is easy for them to understand, occasionally have light discussions, and be invited to communicate to test their responsiveness and understanding. The examples given

must also be by their world. As for the vocabulary that is new and difficult to understand, Sri took the initiative so that they always remember, that the vocabulary is written in mading so that it is always read. Because Risalah Nur is a book that is difficult to understand even for adults. So what is presented to children are their values such as Tawheed, Prophethood, Creation of the universe, and so on. (S. Kartika, personal communication, November 29, 2023)

Children who are still holy and innocent will in essence become true disciples of Risalah Nur. If children in their childhood do not get lessons in faith, when they grow up it will be difficult for them to accept Islam, especially when parents do not set an example of piety in front of them. In the end, the child will be a disaster for his parents, even if he sees the current condition of preferring to wait for the death of his parents rather than nurturing and filial to him. In the hereafter, it will be more painful, he does not intercede but demands both while saying "Why didn't you save me with Islamic upbringing"?(Said Nursi, 2014) So it is important to pay attention to children's religious education from a young age. Children are still very likely to receive lessons that will then be useful and influential for their future. For parents, it is also important to provide good examples for children who will shape their characteristics.

**Figure 1** Documentation of External Activities of *Dershane Akhwat* Jakarta (Study of Parung Panjang, with children, Bogor)



The approach to the mothers in Pamulang, learning the Risalah Nur by reading the book directly, so we brought the book Risalah Nur. When the study was completed, the book could be read by every worshipper present. This is certainly different from the da'wa method that is circulating in our society. In the taklim assembly, in general, the main speakers or teacher hold the text and the main access to the material text. But the da'wa of Risalah Nur provides a text to be read together in turn. Access to the text is very good, meaning that at any time the congregation can reread the Risalah Nur at their respective homes without having to wait for the presence of a teacher. When offering if there are questions that will be submitted by the congregation, of course, this is always welcome. This means that there are always questions from mothers, whether it is asking about the problems of their daily lives or the problems that are being studied about the Nur Treatise, so the approach for

mothers is especially to spread literacy first so that they are more familiar with books. (T. Mufarraha, personal communication, December 15, 2023)

**Figure 2** Documentation of External Activities of *Dershane Akhwat* Jakarta (Pamulang Study, with mothers, South Tangerang)



In the approach to female students, because the student is critical in higher education, of course, the methods or methods used are also more rationalistic and also build students' critical thinking skills so that it can also have a direct impact on the process of thinking and accepting religious views. This means that the right da'wa strategy for students is a da'wa method that builds critical thinking. One of the students responded, "As a student who can be said to be quite regular in weekly studies at *Dershane Akhwat* Jakarta, I feel that the method applied is very much by the needs of the congregation. This means that the dissemination of Said Nursi's interpretation through *Risalah Nur* is also studies that are open to the public so that as a student the existence of the Akhwat darsana is also a place to deepen religious knowledge that is philosophical and critical and also provides inner peace." (T. Azzahra, personal communication, December 18, 2023)

Because the da'wa method applied such as reading and then reconveying, along with the personal spiritual experiences of the congregation provides a space for dialogue to all members as one of the most relevant methods. Said Nursi provides enlightenment and at the same time provides answers to inner peace and answers the various crises that occur around us both from within and outside ourselves. Amid the dialogue that takes place among the congregation, of course, it does not lose the important meaning conveyed by Said Nursi in his books and also adds enlightenment and clear clarity about how we should as humans in religion understand an important matter. (T. Azzahra, personal communication, December 18, 2023)

In introducing *Risalah Nur Dershane Akhwat* Jakarta uses different approaches and strategies. Characteristics, needs, and social context must also be considered so that the da'wa mission of *Risalah Nur* can be conveyed productively. Facebook as a social media that was trending at that time was also used to invite worshippers. This

study is committed to accepting all people with different backgrounds, regardless of differentiation from each other. The concept of *ukhuwah* that is applied becomes the foundation of harmony for each member in it. Each worshipper who attended was allowed to read, argue, and convey the problems or issues that he or she was concerned about, which then problems could be discussed and solutions found with the guidance of *Risalah Nur*, of course. (A. Rahima, personal communication, Desember 2023)

**Figure 3** Documentation of External Activities of *Dershane Akhwat Jakarta* (Cirendeu Study with female students, South Tangerang)



## CONCLUSION

The journey of *Risalah Nur* da'wa through *Dershane Akhwat Jakarta* demonstrates that da'wa methods based on moderation, inclusivity, and wisdom can effectively address modern social challenges. The significant finding of this research is that the success of *Dershane* does not solely depend on traditional religious knowledge transfer but also on its flexibility in adapting da'wa approaches to the specific needs of urban communities. The discussion-based, text-reading, and open dialogue methods applied by *Dershane* have proven relevant in fulfilling the spiritual and social needs of its participants.

This research contributes to the scholarly field by affirming the importance of contextual and responsive da'wa approaches to social changes. It confirms the concept of moderate da'wa proposed in previous studies but also expands it by emphasizing the role of social interaction and community engagement in building a more applicable understanding of religious teachings. This study also offers a new perspective by highlighting the integration of digital technology as an innovative means to reach younger generations and urban communities increasingly accustomed to digital-based learning.

The case study of *Dershane Akhwat Jakarta* shows that this da'wa strategy has had a positive impact, both in enhancing participants' understanding and strengthening community bonds. This inclusive da'wa model has also successfully

maintained its relevance amid the dynamics of modern society. Therefore, strengthening the *Derslane* network on both national and international levels, as well as further development of digital innovations, is essential to ensure that the values of *Risalah Nur* can be more widely accessed and remain relevant for future generations.

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