Enhancing Spirituality through Da'wah-Based Training: "Spiritual Motherhood "Class For Muslims Women in Indonesia

Uus Uswatusolihah[1], Enung Asmaya[2], Muskinul Fuad[3],

Abstract

The spirituality of urban Muslim communities is increasingly receiving attention amidst social, economic, and cultural changes. In the fast-paced dynamics of modern life, many individuals, especially middle-class Muslims, seek ways to strengthen their spiritual values to balance worldly and religious aspects. This study explores the Spiritual Motherhood Training program in Jakarta, known as Da'wah-Based Training (DBT). Using a phenomenological approach, data was gathered through observations and purposive interviews with various informants. The analysis was conducted based on da'wah elements. Findings reveal that the Spiritual Motherhood training is designed for urban Muslim women, integrating modern self-development management with Islamic values. This program serves as a da'wah model that enhances the spirituality of middle-class women. It employs a combination of affirmations, visualizations, and emotional engagement, resulting in a profound impact on participants. The training fosters acceptance, surrender, and a deep belief in Allah's power, which in turn inspires motivation and enthusiasm for success. As such, the Spiritual Motherhood training represents an innovative approach to da'wah for middle-class Muslim women.

Keywords: Spirituality, Spiritual Motherhood, Da'wah-based training.

Introduction

Since the early 1990s, Indonesia's urban middle class has emerged, consisting of professionals like managers, technicians, and teachers(Hasan, 2011; Hefner, 1993; Rahman & Hazis, 2018; Robison, 1996; Rofhani, 2015). While modernization has brought them prosperity, it has also led to materialism, individualism, and moral decline, contributing to anxiety and spiritual emptiness(Bell, 1972; Berger, 1999; Eisenstadt, 2006; Giddens, 1996; Lee & Ackerman, 2002). In response, many turn to religion and spirituality to find meaning, motivation, and fulfilment in life. Spirituality, rooted in religious beliefs and values, helps individuals achieve their fullest potential within an existential framework(Burhani, 2001; Carrette & King, 2004; Howell, 2002; Muttaqin, 2016; Oviedo & Roszak, 2024; Ryff, 2021; Saat & Burhani, 2020).

With the growing religious and spiritual needs of the Muslim middle class, Islamic da'wah has undergone significant changes(Fealy, 2008; Hasan, 2009; Hew, 2018; Pattana, 2007). Islamic da'wah aims to transform behaviour and improve conditions from bad to good(Basit, 2023; Natsir, 2000). Islamic da'wah has evolved to transform behaviour and improve life. No longer limited to mosques, majlis tackle, or pesantren, da'wah is now conducted by diverse preachers using various methods and media(Mandaville, 2007; Muzakki, 2012; Rakhmani, 2016). One growing trend in Indonesia is Da'wah-Based Training (DBT), which integrates Islamic teachings

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[1] Faculty of Da'wah Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Islamic State University, Purwokerto, Banyumas, Central Java, Indonesia. Email: uus@uinsaizu.ac.id. (Corresponding Author)
[2] Faculty of Da'wah rof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Islamic State University, Purwokerto, Banyumas, Central Java, Indonesia.
[3] Faculty of Da'wah rof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Islamic State University, Purwokerto, Banyumas, Central Java, Indonesia.

with structured training to enhance spiritual understanding, self-development, and behavioural change.(Asadi, 2018; Hoesterey, 2012; Howell, 2013, 2014; Kailani, 2019; Rudnyckyj, 2014).

Research on DBT has primarily focused on male preachers like Ari Ginanjar, Aa Gym, and Syafi'i Antonio(Fealy, 2008; Hoesterey, 2020; Kailani, 2019; Rudnyckyj, 2014). However, a DBT program specifically for women has now emerged, featuring female speakers and participants. In this context, the "Spiritual Motherhood" class offers a new approach to da'wah. Designed for urban middle-class women, it aims to foster a supportive community, promote spiritual transformation, and equip participants with practical skills to navigate modern challenges.

Studying women's da'wah in the form of training is essential to understanding this emerging model, which differs from traditional approaches. Previous research has focused on da'wah in *majlis taklim*(Hasanah, 2017; Mahfudin & Safik, 2022; Uswatusolihah et al., 2023; Winn, 2012; Zamhari, 2022), radio and television(Rakhmani, 2016; Sofjan, 2012), community organizations(Fuad, 2021; Kloos & Künkler, 2016; Machmudi & Ardhani, 2020; Smith-Hefner, 2008; Srimulyani, 2012), and social media(Afrianty, 2020; Beta, 2019, 2020; Halim, 2018; Nisa, 2018a, 2018b, 2019; Savitri Hartono, 2018). However, DBT (Da'wah-Based Training) for women represents a new area of study. This training-based da'wah, which integrates material delivery with self-healing, has become a growing trend in enhancing the spirituality of urban middle-class women.

This study aims to explore the implementation of the training, focusing on participants' perspectives, particularly their motivation and religious transformation after attending. The paper discusses the da'wah elements in the training, the motivations behind participation, and the spiritual transformations experienced by participants.

Literature Review

Da'wah is a religious activity aimed at conveying the teachings of Islam to its followers and humanity as a whole. Fundamentally, da'wah seeks to influence and transform individuals' inner attitudes and behaviours, fostering both personal and social piety. Through its religious and social messages, da'wah serves as a call to awareness and a reminder to remain steadfast (*istiqomah*) on the righteous path(Basit, 2023; Millie, 2017; Rosidi, 2021). Da'wah can be conducted through diverse methods and strategies. Even if an activity does not explicitly reference da'wah, it may still be classified as such if it promotes devotion to Allah(Millie et al., 2023; J. Muttaqin, 2021). One of the innovative approaches is through training programs, known as da'wah-based training.

Several scholars have written studies on DBT. Rudnyckyj studied the training carried out by Ary Ginanjar at the Krakatau Steel company called "*Pelatihan Kecerdasan Emosional dan Spiritual*" (Emotional and Spiritual Quoatien Training (ESQ Training)(Rudnyckyj, 2009, 2011, 2014). Howel and Hefner have also researched the training phenomenon led by Ary Ginanjar and Abdullah Gymnastiar (Aa Gym)(Hefner, 2012; Howell, 2013, 2014). Hoesterey exposes "da'i pop" (*Muslim pop preachers*) and "self-help teachers" who utilize and trade symbolic capital and Islamic economics, science, and media technology. Hoesterey explores the activities of several "pop *da'i*," (pop preachers) whom he identifies as "spiritual trainers" and "self-help mentors", such as M. Hamdani Adz Dzaky, Aa Gym, M. Syafi'i Antonio, Ary Ginanjar, Arifin Ilham, Yusuf Mansur, and Hermawan Kartajaya(Burhani, 2020; Hoesterey, 2012, 2017, 2020).

Kailani studies the efforts of *da'i-trainers* in integrating Islamic values and religious

interpretations with Western management theories, which gained prominence from the New Order period through the post-New Order era. Kailani initiated his research by focusing on early preacher-trainers like Imaduddin Abdulrahim and Toto Tasmara, situating their roles within the development agenda of the New Order era(Kailani, 2019). Previous research on da'wah-based training primarily focussed on male figures, often overlooking the phenomenon among women.

Middle-class Muslim women in Indonesia have a unique position in society. They are often involved in the world of work, higher education, and social activities while maintaining traditional roles in the family(Afrianty, 2020; Brenner, 1996; Jones, 2004, 2010). Studies show that they have specific needs in developing a spirituality that is relevant to modern lifestyles(Jones, 2004, 2010). Therefore, an interactive, practical, and contextual approach to da'wah is important in answering their needs.

This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the design, implementation, and impact of da'wah-based training on the spirituality of middle-class Muslim women. To provide a more comprehensive understanding, this paper focuses on the "Spiritual Mmotherhood " training class organized by lembaga *Pola Pertolongan Allah* (The Pattern of Allah's Help).

Research Methodology

This research uses a phenomenological approach. This method focuses on exploring the essence of a person's subjective experience, especially how they interpret a particular event, situation, or interaction (Clark Moustakas, 2015; John W. Cresswell, 1998; Mulyana, 2008; Yusanto, 2020). The author limits this research to the *Spiritual Motherhood's* Training held in Jakarta, Indonesia. The research is conducted over one year, from September 2023 to August 2024. Data collection is done through observation, interviews, and documentation. The researcher is directly involved in the *Spiritual Motherhood* training, both offline and online. Interviews are conducted with managers/committees, trainers, and participants. Informants are selected using purposive sampling methods (John W. Cresswell, 2009).

Result and Discussion

Overview of 'Spiritual Motherhood' Training Class

The "Spiritual Motherhood" (SM) training is an exclusive program for women. It is conducted both offline and online. The offline sessions take place at a hotel for a full day, while the online sessions are held via Zoom over two days, from 08:00 AM to 12:00 PM. As of 2024, the SM training has been conducted 166 times.

The SM class was founded by a therapist named Aniq Al-Faqirah, who also serves as one of the trainers at the Pola Pertolongan Allah (PPA) institution. PPA is an Islamic self-development training center with a mission to establish monotheism (*tauhid*) as a fundamental solution to life's challenges. The institution seeks to present the life stories of the Prophet and Islamic scholars in an engaging way that resonates with urban Muslims.

The PPA institution was established in 2013 by Rezha Rendy and Sonny Abi Kim. It began when Rezha explored books, training programs, studies, and individuals who had experienced divine assistance (miracles). Through his research, he identified a common thread—patterns in logic, emotions, and actions among them. He then synthesized these elements into a framework that reflects God's assistance. The PPA institution's vision is to cultivate a society rooted in monotheism. As of March 2021, PPA has conducted over 2,300 training sessions. The institution regularly holds training in 140 cities across Indonesia and currently has a community of more

than 120,000 active alumni.

The Spiritual Motherhood Training is designed specifically for Muslim women and is led by female speakers. Most participants are young mothers from educated, urban, middle-class Muslim backgrounds, including both homemakers and working professionals. The speakers in this training are primarily women, with two notable regular speakers: Dwi Fitria Ambarina, M.Pd.Ct.CHt., a family counseling practitioner known as "Bunda Ambar," and Raudlatul Aniq, S.Psi, CH.CHt., commonly referred to as "Bunda Anik."

The training is held in a hotel setting to provide a comfortable and conducive learning environment. Unlike traditional religious educators such as ustadzah, da'iyyah, or muballighah, the speakers in this program are professionals, including psychologists and psychiatrists. Instead of being addressed with religious titles like ustadzah, Nyai, or muballigh, they are referred to as 'bunda' to foster a sense of warmth and closeness among participants.

Figure 2. Spiritual Motherhood flayer

Content and Methods in Spiritual Motherhood (SM) Training

The SM training material includes topics such as women's issues within the family, addressing emotional wounds, effective parenting, and guidance for spiritual purification (tazkiyyatun nafs). It integrates Islamic spiritual values with modern psychological concepts. This training is designed to support urban women in becoming good mothers by emphasizing both the internal and external aspects of motherhood.

Each session explores various themes, including *"Making Peace with the Situation," "Becoming an Adult Mother," "Being a Better Mother,"* and *"Making Peace with Mistakes."* The training covers essential topics such as toxic parenting, mindfulness, living in the present moment, healing emotional wounds, and understanding the concept of happiness.

Each training session is led by a facilitator referred to as *'bunda'* (mother) and includes monologue-based material along with a "healing" session enhanced by music for a deeper impact. The SM training program offers both offline and online classes. Offline sessions are typically held in hotels and last for one day. Online classes take place via Zoom over two days. The fee for online training is Rp. 400,000, while offline sessions cost Rp. 750,000. These fees cover training materials, community monitoring practices, lunch, two coffee breaks, and access to a self-development community. Participants who complete the training become recognized as "alumni" and gain membership in the community. Members also receive discounts when enrolling in future spiritual classes. Additionally, the organizers offer a 100% money-back guarantee if participants are not satisfied. While the offline class fee covers the session itself, it does not include snacks and lunch. Offline classes generally accommodate 80 to 100 participants, while online classes have a larger audience, typically ranging from 300 to 500

participants.

The Spiritual Motherhood classes integrate da'wah, training, self-reflection (*muhasabah*), and healing within a single session. Music is incorporated to foster a conducive atmosphere for discussion and emotional healing. However, the speakers rarely quote full verses from the Qur'an or hadith directly when presenting the material. Instead, they emphasize the essence and values derived from Islamic teachings. This approach differs from conventional da'wah methods typically employed by *da'i* or preachers in broader religious outreach (Millie, 2011; Rohmatulloh et al., 2022). Perhaps for this reason, the instructors in Spiritual Motherhood are not referred to as *ustadzah*, *da'i*, or *muballighah*.

Although the teachings include stories from the Prophet's life, they are presented through practical examples. For instance, an instructor might share the story of Sayyidah Zainab, saying: *"The commentators agree that Sayyidah Zainab would not have been married to the Prophet if she had rejected Zaid's proposal... meaning, her prayer was answered after she passed her test."* They might then add:

"Allah says: O mothers whose homes are clean, heaven awaits you… but that's not explicitly written, right? Cleanliness is part of faith, but we must be flexible…"

Applied Sufism and simplified religious material

The goal of Spiritual Motherhood's training is for women to have the ability to manage emotions well when facing various problems in life, to realize dreams into reality, and to be a bridge for the development of themselves and others. The training materials were specially designed and presented during the two days, from 08.00 to 17.00. Figure 2 shows the schedule and materials in the two-day Spiritual Motherhood training:

Figure 2. Spiritual Motherhood flayer

Communication skills, sound and light settings

As speaker, Ambarina and Aniq Nia Fiani have good communication skills to influence the audience. The arrangement of the voice and speaking style in such a way that the participants are carried away in the atmosphere and emotions that the speaker wants. His speaking style is able to encourage the audience to do what he wants and expects, such as hugging himself, giving a thumbs up, hugging, crying, and so on.

In addition, the light and sound settings are designed in such a way as to support the training

material. Light is controlled between light, dim and dark. The dim and dark light is designed at the time of the reflection and reflection sessions, to make the audience even more immersed in the psychological atmosphere of the expected training. Sounds are also prepared in such a way, such as the sound of water splashing, wind gusts, relevant music and songs.

Self- Healing Session

All Spiritual Motherhood training activities are healing sessions. Sessi healing ini hakekatnya adalah self healing. *Self-healing* literally means self-healing(Bachtiar & Faletehan, 2021; Rahmasari, 2020). Self-healing is a step to recover from various inner wounds, such as fear, unstable emotions, stress, depression, loss of vitality, tendency to despair, and other psychological disorders. This process emphasizes the active role of the individual in healing inner wounds deeply, to transform negative conditions into positive ones(Abraham et al., 2013).

The self-healing method is one of the ways to cure mental disorders without the use of drugs. This healing process is carried out through the release of emotions and feelings that are hidden within the individual. Self-healing is an effort to recognize and understand oneself to the best point, as well as to take concrete steps to overcome inner wounds. This process involves re-excavating old, buried wounds, that often brings back painful memories or experiences(Pertiwi Rahmawati & Setiawan, 2020).

The success of self-healing is highly dependent on self-confidence and intrapersonal communication, which is a person's willingness and ability to dialogue with themselves. Self-healing helps individuals identify emotions, understand how to manage them, recognize the problems they face, mindsets, as well as other psychological aspects that affect the current condition(Bachtiar & Faletehan, 2021).

In Islamic teachings, the concept of healing has a meaning commensurate with *ash-shifa*, which means treatment or healing. Self-healing in Islam is also known as *muhasabah* (self-introspection), which is realizing and evaluating what has been done while asking for forgiveness from Allah SWT. In the Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah verse 153, Allah says:

وَالصَّلٰوةِۗاِنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اسْتَعِيْنُوْا بِالصَّبْر

O you who believe, ask for help (from Allah) with patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah and those who are patient

Most of the time, the training includes healing sessions. In the healing session, participants were asked to close their eyes and absorb what was conveyed by the coach. The coach conveyed the selected words with the right tone and intonation and accompanied by music or distinctive natural sounds that made the participants drift away until they cried.

Hopeful for a miracle

In addition to the consultation session from tauma and inner wounds, the training also invited participants to look at life with an optimistic attitude. In this case, the coach assured the participants that Allah, the Most Merciful and Merciful, would grant all our prayers and hopes. The condition is that we must beg with all our hearts and visualize the moment of hope with focus.

The coach shows how Allah knows our desires and expectations through direct experience. The participants were asked to pair up with a friend next to them, then each person listed 10 types of surprises, desires and ideals of their partners. After completion, it is then given to the person

concerned. So after being given, it turns out that most of what is tulsa by the couple is in accordance with their ideals and expectations. With this method, the participants felt a sense of belonging and optimism in looking at the future of religion.

Motivation of Participants

Based on the results of the interview and discussions with several participants, it turned out that the motivation of the participants to participate in the Spiritual Motherhood training was diverse. People's motivations for spiritual training can vary, depending on their needs, experiences, and personal goals. Here are some common reasons:

Religious escape for inner peace

One of the reasons that encourages pilgrims to take part in the Spiritual Motherhood training is the desire to transform a depressed psychological state into a calmer and happier state. These changes can be temporary or last for a longer period of time. Temporary peace is often felt when a person is involved in the training process. However, after the activity was over, they returned to face their daily routine, so that the sad feelings that had subsided reappeared. Therefore, training and healing in Spiritual Motherhood are often considered as temporary solutions or temporary escapes.

Realizing this, trainer and his team strive to make the training have a deeper and more sustainable impact. They add healing to inner wounds and counsels. In tausiah, pilgrims are invited to reflect on the problems they may be experiencing. Tausiah also serves as a form of psychotherapy that adopts the Gestalt approach, where therapy is carried out by recalling emotional and traumatic experiences from the past to the present, as well as helping the individual to take responsibility for himself.

Religious transformation and self-improvement

The motivation for participating in the second training is to improve self-quality which includes patience, empathy, and sincerity. Spiritual training often teaches practices that help personal growth toward a better person. Improving one's quality is closely related to one's religious transformation.

Religious transformation involves changes in three main aspects: a) the change of religious affiliation from one religion to another, b) increasing attention to religion from less religious to more religious, and c) changes in commitment to a particular religion, for example from less obedient to more obedient. This research mainly focuses on the third aspect, namely the shift in commitment to Islam among participants. This transformation includes changes in attitudes, behaviours, and levels of commitment to religious values, which are observed through the subjective recognition of the participants.

Some participants revealed that there were changes that varied, ranging from moderate to significant, even drastic. One participant stated that participating in *the Spiritual Motherhood* training had helped her feel closer to God. In terms of attitude, he admitted that he has a desire to become a better person, while in behaviour, He began to try to do good to others. Transformation is also reflected in the shift in the purpose of religious life towards a clearer and more directed direction. One participant stated that he felt positive changes, such as becoming more accepting, sincere, and *tawakal* to Allah. In addition, the participants also felt more optimistic and happy in living life, with confidence in God's great love for them.

The transformation experienced by these participants is a form of positive change. However, the transformation does not always happen instantly, but rather through a gradual process that is the accumulation of various intense spiritual experiences. The degree of transformation also varies from one participant to another, depending on the experience and spiritual journey of each individual.

Enjoying community and supporting the stages of religious growth

The motivation for participating in Spiritual Motherhood training is also related to the search for community and social support. Joining spiritual training also often provides an opportunity to meet people who share similar goals, creating a sense of community and emotional support. participant will join the alumni community. The alumni community is a member of a Whatsapp group. This group has the function of supporting each other, giving advice, reminding kindness and praying. One of the participants felt happy to have a community and friends who remembered and supported each other in kindness and approach to Allah SWT.

Each individual's motivation is unique and can be a combination of some of the reasons above. Spiritual Motherhood training is considered a way to achieve a balance between the physical, emotional, and spiritual worlds.

Training effects: Cognitive and affective aspects

The description of the motivation to participate in Spiritual Motherhood training is closely related to the effect of Spiritual Motherhood training. The effect in da'wah includes three dimensions, namely the affective dimension, the cognitive dimension, and the psychomotor dimension. Affective influence concerns individual feelings, such as happy or unhappy, like or dislike, while the cognitive dimension is related to changes in the way of thinking, and psychomotor is related to behavior, such as imitating or doing what is conveyed by the da'i. This paper focuses on affective and cognitive influences because psychomotor influences have complex variables.

The affective effect of Spiritual Motherhood's training can be traced through the comments, the responses they give. The affective effect can also be seen from their decision to invite others to participate in Spiritual Motherhood training. In each training, the committee will question how they feel and experience after participating in the Spiritual Motherhood training. The following are the responses and responses of participants after participating in the Spiritual Motherhood training:

"Spiritual Motherhood is a testament from Allah for me to survive, because I come back to continue to remember Allah, recognize my nature, and believe that Allah's destiny is never wrong. Hopefully, in the future, there will be many women who will be able to pass the path of their destiny strongly, calmly, and patiently. Inas, a participant in the 2024 Spiritual Motherhood Training)

Another participant stated:

"I have participated in Spiritual Motherhood in 2023. At that time, I was a very arrogant person, I didn't care about people. Usually I want to achieve something for something, always trying to meet my mother's expectations, everyone's expectations I want to meet. When I joined Spiritual Motherhood, I was open that as a woman you have to be funable. I have become more aware of myself that I am in the world not only to achieve something but to achieve it for Allah as His servant" (Aisyah, a participant in the 2023 Spiritual Motherhood Training).

In addition, Afiza from Malaysia revealed:

"This program is very good and has an impact on me from the perspective of a woman who wants to better understand, recognize herself and want to give more as a wife, mother's child, friend, employer, and servant of Allah SWT,"

The affective effect can also be traced to their decision to join the social media created by the organizers for the alumni. Spiritual Motherhood has several social media such as Whatsapp Group and Instagram, Named *Spiritual Motherhood Alumni* . This WAG is a medium of interaction and communication for *Coaches*, and fellow alumni. WAG *Spiritual Motherhood Alumni* is used as a medium to remind each other of kindness and obedience to get closer to Allah SWT. One example of a message in the WAG is an invitation to pray *tahajjud,* an invitation to read prayers and pray for others.

Spiritual Motherhood training is a very supportive medium for religious growth. The characteristics of the training include a feeling of acceptance of all that God has given, optimism about the coming of miracles, seeing all human beings as equal, creating a special atmosphere in the training. The participants felt accepted, loved, not worried about being blamed and judged, always felt brotherhood, enjoyed a free and open environment, and with music, songs and prayers. This situation is very supportive for everyone's religious growth in the Spiritual Motherhood training.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, this study draws the following conclusions*: First,* Islamic da'wah is undergoing a significant shift, which is different from the previous. The Spiritual Motherhood training is a training for urban Muslim women that combines modern self-development management with Islamic values. The Spiritual Motherhood training uses an interesting and non-boring approach, by combining affirmation, visualization and feeling. *Second,* the trainer as a da'i and resource person in the Spiritual Motherhood Training has a very important role. Thus, the charisma of the coach is not the only factor that attracts prospective participants to take part in the training. Most of the participants did not know who the person who was coaching them was.

Third, an important phenomenon in this study is the activity and expression of the participants. The Mirace Women trainees had a feeling that was a combination of sick soul religion and healthy-minded religion. Both of these experiences were very good for their religious development. *Fourth*, the most significant finding in this study is the various internal motivations of the participants. There are at least four internal motivations: escaping religion from various problems, religious transformation and improving one's quality and establishing relationships with the community. Fifth, the Spiritual Motherhood Training was recognized by the participants as having an effect, in the form of a good cognitive and affective effect for the growth of participants' religious attitudes and spirituality.

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