

Implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) in the Madrasah Diniyah Program to Strengthen Students' Religious Competence

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) in the Madrasah Diniyah program, analyze the strategies employed by teachers in its application, and examine its impact on students' religious competence at MTs Muhammadiyah Kemuning. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques consisting of observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted through systematic processes of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of KBC is carried out through approaches of compassion, role modeling, and consistent habituation of worship practices. Teachers apply several strategies, including building emotional closeness with students, creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere, and providing continuous spiritual reinforcement. The impact of the implementation of KBC can be seen in the improvement of students' ability to read the Qur'an, mastery of prayer memorization, and the development of more consistent religious behavior. In addition, there is an increase in students' discipline, responsibility, and social awareness in their daily lives. These findings demonstrate that KBC is effective as a learning approach in strengthening students' religious competence within the Madrasah Diniyah environment. This study provides practical implications for the development of compassion-based learning models in Islamic education. However, this research is limited to a specific contextual setting; therefore, further studies are needed to test the generalizability of these findings across different contexts and educational levels more comprehensively. Future research is also recommended to employ mixed-methods approaches, thereby strengthening the results, making them quantitatively measurable, and enabling more objective comparisons regarding the effectiveness of KBC implementation in various Islamic educational settings.

Keywords: Love-Based Curriculum, Madrasah Diniyah, Religious Competence, Islamic Education.

I. Introduction

Education is a fundamental instrument in shaping the quality of human resources, particularly in moral and spiritual aspects. From the perspective of Islamic education, the objective of education is not merely oriented toward cognitive achievement but also toward the internalization of values of faith (*iman*), piety (*taqwa*), and noble character (*akhlak*). This view is consistent with the perspective of Al-Ghazali, who emphasized that education should be able to shape individuals who are balanced both intellectually and spiritually. However, various studies indicate that educational practices in schools still tend to emphasize cognitive aspects, while affective and spiritual dimensions have not been optimally internalized (Azzahroh &

Enjelia, 2026). Social developments and technological advancements have also brought implications for changes in students' behavior. Several empirical studies report a tendency toward declining levels of student religiosity, as indicated by low interest in reading the Qur'an, inconsistency in performing religious practices, and weak internalization of religious values in daily life (Maulana & Syabani, 2024; Syarifah, 2023). Studies published in international journals further indicate that learning approaches that are overly oriented toward academic outcomes often neglect students' emotional needs, which in turn affects the low level of spiritual engagement in the learning process (Berkowitz & Bier, 2015; Nucci & Narvaez, 2014). These findings highlight the need for a more holistic learning approach.

One relevant alternative approach is the Love-Based Curriculum (Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta/KBC), a learning model that places compassion, empathy, and exemplary conduct at the core of the educational process. Conceptually, this approach is closely related to Humanistic Learning Theory developed by Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, which emphasizes the importance of fulfilling emotional needs in the learning process. Research shows that positive relationships between teachers and students significantly contribute to increased intrinsic motivation, learning engagement, and character development (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Wentzel, 2012). Therefore, a love-based approach has the potential to become an effective strategy for internalizing religious values. The implementation of these values can be integrated into the *Madrasah Diniyah* program, a non-formal Islamic educational institution that focuses on strengthening basic Islamic competencies, such as the ability to read the Qur'an, understanding *fiqh*, and character development. *Madrasah Diniyah* plays a strategic role in complementing formal education, particularly in strengthening the spiritual dimension of students (Daulay, 2018). However, the effectiveness of this program is highly dependent on the pedagogical approach employed. Conventional and monotonous learning methods tend to be less capable of fostering deep religious awareness.

Several previous studies have examined value-based character education within the context of Islamic education. For example, research by Lickona (2013) emphasizes the importance of moral value-based character education, while (Azra, 2012) highlights the integration of Islamic values in the learning process. However, studies that specifically link a love-based approach with the implementation of the *Madrasah Diniyah* program remain limited. Moreover, there is still a lack of empirical research examining how teachers implement such an approach and how it affects students' religious competencies at the *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (MTs) level. This research gap indicates the need to examine the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum in a more specific and applicable context. MTs Muhammadiyah Kemuning serves as a relevant research site because it has integrated this approach into its *Madrasah Diniyah* program. This study is important for understanding how values of compassion are implemented in learning practices and how they influence the improvement of students' religious competencies. Based on the above explanation, this study focuses on three main aspects: (1) the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum in the *Madrasah Diniyah* program at MTs Muhammadiyah Kemuning, (2) teachers' strategies in applying this approach, and (3) its impact on students' religious competencies. This research is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of value-based learning models in Islamic education and provide practical contributions for educational institutions in improving the effectiveness of religious learning.

II. Literature Review

Religious education in Islamic educational institutions aims not only to transmit knowledge but also to develop students' moral character and spiritual awareness. In the context of Islamic education, the learning process should integrate cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions to achieve holistic educational outcomes (Arisinah et al., 2024; Mujahid & Madum, 2025). According to contemporary studies in Islamic education, effective religious learning must involve the internalization of values through meaningful learning experiences rather than merely focusing on the transmission of doctrinal knowledge (Ardiyansyah et al., 2023; Nurwahidah & Jamilah, 2022). This perspective aligns with the broader framework of character education,

which emphasizes the development of moral virtues, ethical awareness, and responsible behavior among students (Hadi Untung et al., 2025; Zahroh & Asyhari, 2024).

One approach that supports the internalization of values in education is the Love-Based Curriculum (Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta/KBC). This approach emphasizes compassion, empathy, and positive relationships between teachers and students as essential elements of the learning process. The theoretical foundation of this approach can be traced to Humanistic Learning Theory, particularly the ideas of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, who argue that learning becomes more meaningful when students' emotional and psychological needs are fulfilled (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Within this perspective, a supportive and caring learning environment encourages intrinsic motivation, enhances students' engagement, and fosters character development. Recent research highlights the importance of teacher-student relationships in shaping students' attitudes and learning outcomes. Wentzel (2012) explains that teachers who demonstrate care, empathy, and support are more likely to create a positive classroom climate that encourages students' academic engagement and moral development. Similarly, studies in educational psychology indicate that emotionally supportive learning environments significantly contribute to students' motivation, well-being, and character formation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). In the context of Islamic education, the cultivation of compassion and exemplary behavior by teachers is considered an effective strategy for instilling religious values and strengthening students' spiritual awareness.

The implementation of value-based learning is particularly relevant within the context of *Madrasah Diniyah*, a non-formal Islamic educational institution that focuses on strengthening students' foundational religious competencies. *Madrasah Diniyah* plays a strategic role in complementing formal schooling by providing structured learning related to Qur'anic literacy, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and moral education (Daulay, 2018). Through these programs, students are expected to develop not only religious knowledge but also a strong commitment to practicing Islamic teachings in their daily lives (Muzayaroh, 2021). However, several studies suggest that the effectiveness of *Madrasah Diniyah* programs depends greatly on the pedagogical approaches used in teaching (Mukhid et al., 2023). Conventional instructional methods that rely heavily on memorization and teacher-centered learning often limit students' engagement and fail to foster deeper understanding of religious values (Helmi et al., 2025). Therefore, innovative and value-oriented learning approaches are needed to enhance the quality of religious education and strengthen students' spiritual competencies.

Previous research has also highlighted the importance of integrating character education into religious learning. Lickona (2013) emphasizes that effective character education must involve moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. In the context of Islamic education, this framework can be implemented by combining religious knowledge with the cultivation of attitudes and behaviors that reflect Islamic values. Furthermore, recent studies indicate that educational programs that emphasize empathy, compassion, and moral reflection are more effective in shaping students' ethical behavior and social responsibility (Mukhid et al., 2023). Despite the growing attention to character education and value-based learning, studies that specifically examine the integration of a love-based curriculum within the *Madrasah Diniyah* program remain limited. Most previous research focuses on the general integration of Islamic values in formal education without exploring pedagogical strategies that emphasize compassion and emotional connection in the learning process. Therefore, examining the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum within the *Madrasah Diniyah* program becomes important to understand how such an approach can contribute to strengthening students' religious competencies and character development.

III. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. This approach was selected because the research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation process of the Love-Based Curriculum (Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta/KBC), the strategies used by teachers, and its impact on students' religious competencies within a natural context. A descriptive qualitative approach allows researchers to

explore meanings, experiences, and social interactions that occur during the learning process (Creswell, 2014; Moleong, 2018). The research was conducted at MTs Muhammadiyah Kemuning, which has integrated the Love-Based Curriculum into its Madrasah Diniyah program. The research subjects included the head of the madrasa, Madrasah Diniyah teachers, and students. The subjects were selected using purposive sampling, with the criteria that participants were directly involved in the implementation of the program and possessed relevant information related to the focus of the study (Sugiyono, 2020).

Data collection was carried out through three main techniques. First, participatory observation was conducted to directly observe the learning process, teacher–student interactions, and the application of compassion-based values in Madrasah Diniyah activities. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers, the head of the madrasa, and students to obtain data related to learning strategies, experiences, and perceptions regarding the implementation of KBC. Third, documentation was used by analyzing curriculum documents, learning materials, and archival records related to the implementation of the program (Miles et al., 2014). Data analysis was conducted interactively and continuously until data saturation was achieved. The stages of analysis included data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data reduction was carried out by selecting and focusing on data relevant to the research objectives. Data display was presented in descriptive narrative form to facilitate understanding of patterns and relationships among the data. Conclusions were drawn systematically by considering the consistency of findings in the field (Miles et al., 2014).

Data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation by comparing data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation. In addition, member checking was conducted with informants to confirm the accuracy of the data with the realities experienced by participants. These techniques were applied to enhance the credibility and validity of the research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study was conducted with careful consideration of research ethics. The researcher ensured that permission was obtained from the madrasa and informants prior to data collection. The identities of the informants were kept confidential, and all data were used solely for academic purposes.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum (Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta/KBC) in the Madrasah Diniyah Program at MTs Muhammadiyah Kemuning is conducted in a structured, consistent, and pedagogically meaningful manner through the systematic integration of compassion values into the learning process. The empirical data—derived from classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation—indicate that this implementation is not merely normative but is operationalized in observable pedagogical practices.

a. Three dominant patterns characterize the implementation of KBC.

First, the compassion-based pedagogical approach serves as the foundational instructional orientation. Teachers consistently demonstrate empathy, attentiveness, and warm interpersonal communication in classroom interactions. The learning atmosphere is dialogical and participatory, allowing students to express themselves without fear or pressure. Observational data confirm that teachers deliberately avoid authoritarian and punitive approaches, instead prioritizing persuasive and humanistic strategies. This condition contributes to the creation of a psychologically safe learning environment, which in turn enhances students' engagement and intrinsic motivation. Second, role modeling (*uswah hasanah*) emerges as the central instructional strategy. Teachers function not only as transmitters of religious knowledge but also as living examples of Islamic values in practice. This is reflected in their consistent demonstration of proper worship practices, such as Qur'anic recitation with correct *tajwid*, disciplined prayer performance, and the embodiment of ethical conduct (*adab*). The data indicate that students tend to internalize these values

through imitation, suggesting that behavioral transmission occurs through observational learning mechanisms.

Third, the implementation is reinforced through structured and continuous habituation practices. The Madrasah Diniyah program integrates routine religious activities, including Qur'anic recitation (*tadarus*), memorization of daily supplications, and guided worship practices. These activities are systematically scheduled and repetitively conducted, contributing to the formation of stable religious habits (*ta'wid*). The consistency of these practices strengthens the internalization of religious values beyond the cognitive level.

1) Implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC)

The implementation of KBC is carried out across three interconnected stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation, indicating alignment with instructional design principles. At the planning stage, teachers explicitly integrate compassion values into instructional documents, including lesson plans and teaching materials. Learning objectives are formulated holistically, encompassing not only cognitive achievement but also affective development (religious attitudes) and social behavior. This reflects a value-oriented curriculum design. At the implementation stage, three main instructional patterns are consistently observed:

a) Affective-humanistic approach

Learning activities begin with greetings, collective prayers, and light ice-breaking sessions. These activities function as emotional conditioning strategies that reduce students' anxiety and enhance readiness to learn. Observational evidence shows increased student responsiveness and participation.

b) Direct role modeling

Teachers consistently demonstrate correct religious practices, particularly in Qur'anic recitation and daily behavior. The absence of repeated verbal instructions suggests that students engage in spontaneous imitation, indicating effective internalization.

c) Structured habituation

Routine religious practices are embedded in each learning session with predetermined time allocations. The repetitive nature of these activities supports the development of automaticity in worship practices. At the evaluation stage, assessment extends beyond cognitive measurement to include affective and behavioral dimensions. Teachers utilize direct observation and daily progress records to monitor students' religious practices and attitudes. This indicates the application of authentic and holistic assessment.

2) Teachers' Strategies in Implementing KBC

The findings reveal that teachers employ adaptive and student-centered strategies to ensure effective implementation of KBC.

a) Emotional closeness (teacher–student bonding)

Teachers actively build personal connections with students by recognizing individual differences and responding to their emotional needs. This relational approach enhances students' sense of belonging and trust.

b) Positive reinforcement

Teachers consistently provide verbal appreciation and recognition of positive religious behaviors. This strategy strengthens behavioral repetition and supports character formation.

c) Varied instructional methods

Teachers employ diverse teaching methods, including demonstration, guided practice, and collaborative learning. These methods increase student engagement and accommodate different learning styles.

d) Integration of spiritual values

Instructional content is contextualized by linking religious teachings with students' daily experiences. This approach enhances the relevance and meaningfulness of learning. Importantly, interview data confirm that teachers continuously adjust their strategies based on students' characteristics, indicating the application of differentiated instruction within a value-based pedagogical framework.

3) Impact on Students' Religious Competence

The implementation of KBC has a significant impact on students' religious competence, which can be analytically categorized into three domains:

a) Cognitive domain

Students demonstrate improved understanding of basic Islamic teachings, as evidenced by their ability to explain concepts related to *fiqh* and daily supplications. This indicates effective knowledge acquisition.

b) Psychomotor domain

Students show measurable improvement in Qur'anic reading skills, particularly in fluency and accuracy of *tajwid*. Additionally, the quantity and retention of memorized daily prayers increase progressively.

c) Affective domain

The most substantial impact is observed in students' attitudes and behaviors. Students exhibit increased discipline in participating in religious activities, demonstrate polite and respectful behavior, and show heightened social awareness. Observational data indicate a shift from externally driven behavior to self-initiated religious practice, suggesting successful internalization of values.

4.2. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the effectiveness of the Love-Based Curriculum (Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta/KBC) lies in its ability to systematically integrate the affective dimension into the learning process. This integration is not incidental but constitutes a deliberate pedagogical orientation that positions students' emotional engagement as a central component of learning. In line with Rogers (1969), meaningful learning occurs when students are emotionally involved and perceive the learning environment as supportive and non-threatening. The compassion-based approach applied by teachers in this study successfully creates such a psychologically safe learning environment, characterized by openness, mutual respect, and empathetic interaction. This condition significantly contributes to increased student participation and active engagement in classroom activities. Furthermore, the findings reinforce the perspective of Edward Ryan & Deci (2017), who emphasize that the fulfillment of basic psychological needs—particularly relatedness—enhances intrinsic motivation. The emotional closeness established between teachers and students in the KBC framework fulfills this need, thereby encouraging students to engage in learning not merely as an obligation but as an internally motivated activity. This suggests that affective pedagogy is not only complementary but foundational in promoting sustainable learning motivation.

Another significant finding concerns the central role of teacher role modeling as a mechanism for value internalization. The data indicate that students tend to imitate observable behaviors more rapidly than they comprehend abstract religious concepts. This phenomenon strongly aligns with Albert Bandura's social learning theory, which posits that observational learning is a primary process through which individuals acquire new behaviors. In the context of Madrasah Diniyah, teachers function as live models of Islamic values, and their consistent demonstration of worship practices and ethical conduct facilitates the internalization process. This finding highlights that the success of value-based education is highly dependent on the

authenticity and consistency of teacher behavior. In addition, the study confirms that structured and consistent habituation practices play a crucial role in shaping students' religious behavior. According to Arends (2012), repeated and reinforced activities contribute to the formation of stable and enduring habits. The routine implementation of activities such as Qur'anic recitation (*tadarus*), memorization of daily supplications, and guided worship practices serves as a behavioral reinforcement mechanism. Over time, these repeated practices shift students' behavior from externally regulated actions to internally driven habits, indicating successful value internalization.

From the perspective of learning outcomes, the simultaneous improvement in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains demonstrates that KBC operates as a holistic educational approach. This finding is consistent with the argument of Berkowitz & Bier (2015), who assert that value-based education contributes not only to character development but also to academic achievement and behavioral outcomes. The integration of these three domains suggests that KBC effectively bridges the traditional dichotomy between knowledge acquisition and character formation in Islamic education. However, despite its effectiveness, the study also identifies several structural and pedagogical challenges that may influence the sustainability of KBC implementation. First, heterogeneity in students' initial competencies, particularly in Qur'anic reading skills, creates disparities in learning progress. Students with limited prior exposure require additional scaffolding, which may not always be optimally provided within regular instructional time. Second, limited instructional time allocation constrains the depth and consistency of habituation practices. While routine activities are implemented, the available time may not be sufficient to ensure equal mastery among all students, especially those who require more intensive guidance. Third, variation in teachers' competence in applying affective and humanistic approaches indicates that not all educators possess the same level of pedagogical readiness. The effectiveness of KBC is thus closely linked to teachers' understanding of affective pedagogy, emotional intelligence, and their ability to translate compassion values into concrete teaching practices. These challenges suggest that the success of KBC is not solely determined by curriculum design but is significantly influenced by teacher capacity and institutional support systems.

V. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) in the Madrasah Diniyah Program at MTs Muhammadiyah Kemuning is carried out systematically through the integration of compassion values in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning. The implementation is realized through affective approaches, teacher role modeling, and consistent, structured worship habituation. Teachers' strategies play a crucial role in the successful implementation of KBC. Teachers build emotional closeness with students, employ varied learning methods, and provide positive reinforcement and spiritual values in every learning activity. This approach creates a conducive learning environment and increases students' active participation. The impact of KBC implementation can be observed in the improvement of students' religious competence, covering cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Students demonstrate improvement in Qur'an reading skills, memorization of prayers, and understanding of basic Islamic teachings. Additionally, behavioral changes occur, including increased discipline, responsibility, and consistency in performing worship. However, the effectiveness of KBC implementation is influenced by several factors, such as differences in students' initial abilities, limited instructional time, and variations in teachers' competencies. Therefore, strengthening teacher capacity, optimizing instructional time, and developing more systematic programs are necessary.

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