Implementation of a Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum in Shaping Students' Morals at SMP Islam Terpadu Bangkinang Kota

Diky Ardha Sundawa, Charles Rangkuti, Hadi Saputra Panggabean

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of a love-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in shaping students' morals at SMP Islam Terpadu Bangkinang Kota. This research is motivated by the decline in students' moral quality, marked by various deviant behaviors such as lack of discipline, low respect for teachers, and weak awareness in practicing religious values. In this context, a love-based curriculum emerges as an educational approach emphasizing compassion, empathy, and humanization in the learning process. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with field research methods. Data collection techniques included observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and Likert scale questionnaires as supporting data. Data analysis used the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the implementation of the love-based PAI curriculum is carried out through learning activities that instill values of compassion, teacher role modeling, habituation of worship, humanistic communication, and strengthening emotional relationships between teachers and students. The implementation positively impacts students' moral development, such as improving discipline, politeness, responsibility, empathy, and religious awareness. Therefore, a love-based curriculum can become a strategic approach in strengthening character education and shaping students' morals in Islamic school environments.

Keywords: Love-Based Curriculum, Morals, Islamic Religious Education, Character Education.

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Introduction

Morality occupies a very important position in Islamic teachings because it serves as the primary indicator of a person's faith quality. In the context of Islamic education, moral development is not only oriented toward outward behavior but also includes the cultivation of spiritual, moral, and social awareness among students. Successful education does not merely produce academically intelligent students but also individuals with good character who are capable of implementing Islamic values in their daily lives. However, the current educational reality shows that the decline in students' moral quality has become increasingly complex and poses a serious challenge in education.

Various forms of deviant behavior are still frequently found in schools, such as tardiness, lack of respect toward teachers, impolite speech, violations of school regulations, and low awareness in performing religious practices. These conditions indicate a gap between the moral values taught and the actual behavior of students in everyday life. (Abdullah & Darnoto, 2024) [1] explained that weak internalization of moral values within educational environments is one of the main factors causing deviant behavior among students.

The development of the digital era has also significantly influenced students' character formation. Advances in information technology provide broad access to various sources of knowledge, but they also open opportunities for the entry of global cultures that are not always aligned with Islamic values. Uncontrolled use of social media, low digital communication ethics, and exposure to negative content affect students' behavioral changes. (Qoyimah & Ratnasari, 2025) [2] stated that the digital era presents major challenges for Islamic education in maintaining balance between technological advancement and character development.

In facing these conditions, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a strategic role as the main instrument in shaping students' character and morals. PAI is not only oriented toward the transfer of religious knowledge but also emphasizes the development of attitudes, spirituality, and habituation of Islamic behavior. (B. Siregar et al., 2025) [3] explained that an integrative PAI curriculum is capable of balancing students' intellectual, moral, and spiritual aspects.

As an innovation in Islamic education, the concept of a love-based curriculum has emerged, placing compassion (rahmah) as the primary foundation of the learning process. This curriculum emphasizes positive emotional relationships between teachers and students through humanistic approaches, empathy, and exemplary behavior. (Fakhrurridha et al., 2025) [4] explained that integrating compassion values into learning can improve students' empathy and emotional regulation, thereby positively impacting character formation.

Based on preliminary observations at SMP Islam Terpadu Bangkinang Kota, several problems related to students' behavior were still found, such as lack of discipline, low social awareness, and weak religious consciousness. Therefore, this research is important to examine the implementation of a love-based PAI curriculum in shaping students' morals at SMP Islam Terpadu Bangkinang Kota.

Literature Review Islamic Religious Education (PAI)

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is an educational process aimed at shaping students who are faithful, God-fearing and possess noble character through the internalisation of Islamic values in daily life. In the context of modern education, PAI is no longer understood merely as the transfer of religious knowledge, but also as a holistic character building process encompassing the cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions of students.

(Sari et al., 2024) [5] explain that an integratively designed PAI curriculum is capable of striking a balance between intellectual and ethical aspects, so that students are not only academically intelligent but also possess strong character. Thus, PAI serves as the primary instrument in guiding students to be able to internalise Islamic teachings comprehensively.

In practice, the development of moral character through PAI requires an approach that emphasises not only knowledge but also the strengthening of moral awareness and the cultivation of behaviour. (Efsha et al., 2023) [6] also demonstrate that the implementation of

the PAI curriculum can foster religious character traits such as honesty, compassion, and responsibility through the practice of worship and learning activities.

Love Based Curriculum

A love-based curriculum is an educational approach that places the value of compassion (rahmah) as the primary foundation of the learning process. This approach emphasises that educational success is determined not only by mastery of subject matter but also by the quality of interpersonal relationships between teachers and pupils. "According to (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2025) [7], the Love-Based Curriculum is a curriculum designed with a focus on character development, experience-based learning, and a deep attention to the social and emotional aspects of education. This curriculum aims to produce individuals who are humanistic, nationalistic, naturalistic, tolerant, and who always prioritise love as a fundamental principle in life".

The main principles of the love-based curriculum include the humanisation of education, empathy and compassion, teacher role modelling, and meaningful learning. In this regard, (Muwahid et al., 2025) [8] emphasise that humanistic education must be able to value the individual potential of students and create an inclusive and conducive learning environment. Meanwhile, teacher role modelling is a crucial factor in the success of learning, as students tend to imitate the behaviour they observe in daily interactions.

Furthermore, the love-based curriculum approach also has implications for improving the overall quality of learning. (Fandra et al., 2025) [9] demonstrate that values-based learning can enhance student engagement in the learning process and strengthen the internalisation of moral values. Additionally, (H. A. Siregar, 2023) [10] explains that the love-based curriculum comprises five main pillars known as Panca Cinta, namely: love for Allah and His Messenger, love for knowledge, love for the environment, love for oneself and others, and love for the homeland. These five pillars form the framework of values in shaping the character of learners. "Thus, a love-based curriculum can serve as a strategic alternative in the development of a more humanistic education focused on character building. This approach is not only relevant within the context of Islamic education but also in addressing the challenges of modern education, which tends to emphasise cognitive aspects alone."

Morality in Islam

Morality in Islam is generally divided into two categories: akhlak mahmudah (praiseworthy), such as honesty, trustworthiness, and patience; and akhlak mazmumah (blameworthy), such as arrogance, envy, and malice. This division forms the basis of Islamic moral education, which aims to shape individuals who not only understand the value of goodness but are also able to implement it in their daily lives. The formation of ethics is influenced by various factors, such as family, the school environment, the social environment, and technological developments. (Syifa et al., 2025) [11] explain that the formation of ethics requires a systematic and continuous approach through education that instills spiritual, moral, and social values in an integrated manner.

The school environment is also a crucial factor in the formation of ethics. (Abdullah & Darnoto, 2024) [12] state that interactions between students and teachers, as well as a conducive educational environment, significantly influence students' moral development. In this context, teachers do not merely act as instructors but also as role models who provide concrete examples of proper behavior. Furthermore, the social environment exerts a significant influence on moral development. (Sukmawati, 2023) [13] explains that technological advancements and social changes in the era of disruption have a direct impact on students' moral behavior, both positively and negatively. Therefore, character development must be conducted comprehensively by involving various educational environments to produce individuals who possess a balance between spiritual, moral, and social aspects.

Curriculum Implementation

Implementation of the curriculum is the process of applying educational plans to classroom learning practices. This process is not limited to the delivery of content but also encompasses how the values, objectives, and competencies embedded in the curriculum can be effectively internalized by students. (B. Siregar et al., 2024) [14] explain that the implementation of the Islamic Education (PAI) curriculum is carried out through planning, execution, and evaluation, using a flexible approach tailored to students' needs.

In the context of Islamic education, curriculum implementation is not solely focused on academic achievement but also on the development of students' character and moral values. (Pahlawati et al., 2024) [15] explain that effective PAI instruction must be carried out systematically through varied teaching methods while emphasizing the aspects of exemplary behavior and the instillation of moral values. The success of curriculum implementation heavily depends on the teacher's role as a facilitator, motivator, and role model in the learning process. (Asriani et al., 2025) [16] emphasize that PAI teachers play a central role in shaping students' moral character through interactive, communicative, and values-based learning approaches. Teachers do not merely deliver content but also guide and direct students to internalize the values being taught.

Research Methodology

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using field research. The qualitative approach was chosen because it provides an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the love-based Islamic Education curriculum in shaping students' moral character. The study was conducted at SMP Islam Terpadu Bangkinang Kota. The research subjects consisted of the school principal, Islamic Education teachers, and students. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives.

Data collection techniques included observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and a Likert scale questionnaire as supplementary data. Observations were conducted to examine the learning process and teacher-student interactions. Interviews were used to elicit information regarding the implementation of the love-based curriculum, while documentation was used to supplement research data in the form of school records and documents. Data analysis employed the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation and methodological triangulation to confirm the reliability of the research data.

Results

The research findings indicate that the implementation of the love-based PAI curriculum at SMP Islam Terpadu Bangkinang Kota is carried out through several key strategies, namely humanistic learning, teacher role modeling, fostering religious practices, empathetic communication, and strengthening emotional bonds between teachers and students.

PAI teachers apply a more humanistic learning approach by creating a comfortable and respectful learning environment. Teachers serve not only as instructors but also as mentors and role models for students. During the learning process, teachers pay attention to students' emotional well-being and foster polite and compassionate communication. Additionally, the cultivation of religious practices is a crucial component of the love-based curriculum implementation. Activities such as congregational prayer, reciting the Qur'an before lessons, and character development are conducted routinely as a form of internalizing religious values.

Observation results indicate changes in student behavior following the implementation of the love-based approach. Students have become more disciplined, more respectful toward teachers and peers, and exhibit greater social awareness. The relationship between teachers and students has also become more harmonious, thereby creating a conducive learning environment.

The following table presents the results of the love-based curriculum implementation:

Table 1. Results of the love-based curriculum implementation

No	Love Based Curriculum Implementation	Impact on Student Character
1	Teacher role modeling	Enhances good manners
2	Enhances religious awareness	Encouraging religious practice
3	Communicating humanely	Enhances students' self-confidence
4	Empathetic approach	Enhances social awareness environment
5	Creating a comfortable learning	Enhances student discipline

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of a love-based curriculum makes a significant contribution to the development of students' character. A humanistic and compassionate approach makes students feel valued, making it easier for them to embrace the moral values being taught.

Conclusion

The implementation of the love-based Islamic Education (PAI) curriculum at SMP Islam Terpadu Bangkinang Kota is carried out through humanistic teaching, teachers serving as role models, fostering the habit of worship, empathetic communication, and strengthening emotional bonds between teachers and students. This approach has a positive impact on the development of students' character, such as improved discipline, manners, responsibility, empathy, and religious awareness.

The love-based curriculum has proven capable of creating a more comfortable, harmonious, and meaningful learning atmosphere, thereby making the process of internalizing Islamic values more effective. Therefore, the love-based curriculum can serve as a strategic approach to strengthening character education in Islamic schools. The implications of this study indicate that the successful development of students' character requires synergy among teachers, schools, and families in creating an educational environment filled with love and exemplary behavior.

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