

The concept of love based curriculum management in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the concept of love based curriculum management in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), focusing on three main aspects: curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation. The research employed a literature review method by analyzing books, scientific journals, articles, and official documents relevant to curriculum management and Islamic education. The findings reveal three key results. First, in the planning aspect, the curriculum is designed by integrating values of compassion into the learning objectives, material selection, and strategies for developing children's potential. This approach seeks to create a learning environment that emphasizes not only cognitive development but also affective and spiritual dimensions. Second, in the implementation aspect, the lovebased curriculum is manifested through participatory, dialogical, and exemplary teaching methods, in which teachers serve as compassionate figures capable of motivating and personally guiding students. Third, in the evaluation aspect, the approach adopted is more appreciative, motivational, and constructive, highlighting character development and children's social skills rather than solely academic achievement. The study concludes that lovebased curriculum management can offer a humanistic and holistic model of Islamic education that aligns with the needs of learners in the modern era. Thus, this concept may serve as an alternative paradigm for strengthening the quality of Islamic primary education in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

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Introduction

In an era of dynamic educational transformation, the need for more humanistic and spiritual approaches in the learning process has become increasingly urgent. Education can no longer be solely oriented toward academic achievement; it must also aim at shaping holistic character grounded in the values of compassion, empathy, and love. This is where the importance of systematically implementing a love based curriculum management concept becomes evident within Islamic educational institutions, including Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI). Such a curriculum seeks to cultivate a learning atmosphere that touches the hearts of students, teachers, and the entire school community, ensuring that the learning process encompasses not only cognitive dimensions but also affective and spiritual ones.

However, in its implementation, the curriculum within the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teacher Education Program (PGMI) often encounters various challenges (Roziman, 2022). The curriculum tends to be normative and overly focused on academic targets, while aspects of

compassion and emotional closeness between teachers and students have not received adequate attention. PGMI teachers are frequently burdened with rigid administrative demands, leaving limited space to develop a love based approach (Nurjannah, 2019).

Moreover, vertical and authoritarian relational patterns are still observed in classrooms, where the teacher functions as the sole source of knowledge and students remain largely passive recipients. This creates an emotional distance between educators and learners. An overly dense, exam oriented curriculum further contributes to an uninspiring learning environment in madrasahs (Muslimah, 2021). The absence of curriculum management that explicitly integrates values of compassion has resulted in suboptimal character development among children, particularly at the foundational level such as MI.

In addition, not all teachers possess the understanding or specialized training required to implement learning approaches that emphasize values of love. This condition is exacerbated by the lack of policies that position love as a core framework within curriculum management in MI. Human resource limitations, weak academic supervision, and insufficient family involvement in supporting a love based curriculum continue to pose persistent challenges.

In Islam, the concept of love (*mahabbah*) is central to religious teachings. Allah SWT states in Surah Ali 'Imran verse 31: "Say: If you truly love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you and forgive your sins." This verse underscores that love is the spiritual foundation of all educational actions. A love based curriculum essentially emulates the compassion of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who consistently prioritized gentleness, care, and attentiveness in educating the ummah, including children. The Prophet's Hadith, "He is not one of us who does not show mercy to the young and respect to the elders" (Narrated by Tirmidhi), further affirms the importance of fostering a climate of compassion in education. The Prophet was known as an educator marked by patience, respect for diversity, and tenderness toward children. This concept is highly relevant as a managerial foundation for designing and implementing the curriculum at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

As an alternative solution, curriculum management in MI needs to be developed through a more holistic and integrative approach that embeds the value of love throughout its entire process from planning and implementation to evaluation. This requires collaboration among school principals, teachers, school committees, and parents to create an educational ecosystem that nurtures empathy, tolerance, and care in every aspect of learning.

Several research findings also reinforce the relevance and urgency of this approach. A study conducted by Yerniwilis and Pratiwi (2023) indicates that a learning environment grounded in compassion significantly enhances the motivation and discipline of MI students. Children feel more comfortable, open, and active when they experience the presence of love in the teaching learning process.

Research by Dinata et al. (2025) further emphasizes that love based learning management strengthens emotional bonds between teachers and students. Teachers become more reflective and communicative, while students develop greater confidence and courage to express their ideas. A curriculum infused with the value of love has been proven to foster more meaningful learning experiences (Laili, 2024).

Another finding by Qutni (2018) affirms that Islamic educational institutions that integrate love based values into their curricula demonstrate notable improvements in students' character and spiritual development. Values such as mutual respect, social awareness, and responsibility emerge naturally in students' daily activities within the madrasah.

Thus, the urgency of implementing love based curriculum management in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah is not merely a normative discourse but a necessary effort to restore the spiritual essence of Islamic education as *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. This approach not only cultivates academically capable students but also fosters learners who are gentle hearted, highly empathetic, and morally upright.

The urgency of implementing love based curriculum management has become increasingly evident in light of current realities in primary education, which tend to be trapped in a culture of competition and cognitive oriented assessment. Numerous studies indicate that

excessive academic orientation can trigger learning stress, reduce students' intrinsic motivation, and weaken the emotional bond between teachers and learners (Syawalani et al, 2025). At the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) level, children's emotional development remains highly vulnerable, making an approach grounded in compassion an essential and immediate need. A love based curriculum thus emerges as an alternative that is not only relevant but also aligned with the fundamental nature of primary education as the foundation for character formation.

From a scholarly perspective, the novelty of this study lies in its integration of the concept of love as a managerial foundation throughout the entire curriculum cycle, rather than merely a pedagogical approach within classroom instruction. Previous research on "love based education" has largely focused on teaching methods or teacher student relationships, yet few studies have positioned love as a strategic paradigm for curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation (Nisa et al., 2025). Consequently, this study offers a new perspective by proposing love as a structural dimension capable of influencing policy making, program planning, supervisory practices, and interpersonal relations within the school environment.

Another dimension of novelty appears in the emphasis that love based curriculum management can serve as a reference model for developing a more contextual and humanistic MI curriculum. This study positions the values of compassion (mahabbah), mercy (rahmah), and empathy not merely as moral ideals but as functional principles guiding how teachers design lesson plans, how school leaders make academic decisions, and how character evaluation is conducted systematically. This approach integrates contemporary curriculum management theory with Islamic spiritual principles, producing a model that is unique, transformative, and applicable in practice.

Practically, the implications of this study are highly significant for the professional development of PGMI and MI teachers in the field. Teachers are expected not only to possess pedagogical knowledge but also emotional and spiritual competencies to foster compassionate learning environments. The love based curriculum model provides clear guidance on how teachers can cultivate healthy classroom interactions (Abdullah, 2025), create psychologically safe learning spaces, and conduct assessments that are non repressive, motivating, and humanizing. These implications open opportunities for educational institutions to design more comprehensive and sustainable teacher training programs.

Broader implications also extend to institutional policy within madrasahs. The findings of this study can serve as a foundation for school principals and policymakers to formulate curriculum governance that is not only aligned with national standards but also grounded in humanistic Islamic values. Love based curriculum management encourages the development of a more democratic, communicative, and inclusive school culture. This, in turn, can strengthen the relationship between schools, parents, and the wider community, positioning the madrasah not merely as a learning center but as an institution for character cultivation based on compassion.

Finally, the theoretical implications of this study reinforce the paradigm that Islamic education possesses a rich spiritual framework that can be contextualized to meet contemporary needs. Love, which has often been regarded as an abstract value, is repositioned here as an operational dimension within curriculum management. This opens avenues for further research exploring how Qur'anic values can serve as drivers of change in curriculum development and educational policy. Thus, this study not only enriches academic literature but also offers a new direction for developing an MI curriculum that is responsive, meaningful, and grounded in values of compassion.

Method

This study employs a library research method, a qualitative approach conducted by reviewing, examining, and analyzing various relevant literature sources. Data collection was carried out through document tracing and the use of references sourced from scholarly books, national and international journals, previous research articles, as well as Islamic sources such as the Qur'an, Hadith, and both classical and contemporary works on Islamic education. All collected data were analyzed using a descriptive analytic approach by classifying information

into key themes related to curriculum management, the concept of love in education, and its implementation in Islamic primary educational institutions. Subsequently, the data were analyzed using an inductive approach, drawing conclusions from the existing information to formulate new theoretical understandings. The validity of the data was strengthened through literature source triangulation and thematic relevance across previous studies to produce a comprehensive and scientifically accountable synthesis.

Result and Discussions

1. Love Based Curriculum Planning in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI)

Love based curriculum planning in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) emphasizes the development of a curriculum that not only focuses on cognitive aspects but also nurtures values of compassion, care, and noble character from an early age. In the context of MI, love based curriculum planning entails organizing learning programs that touch the hearts of students, create an enjoyable learning atmosphere, and foster harmonious relationships among teachers, students, and the learning environment (Nada & Listiana, 2025).

The planning of a love based curriculum in MI begins with formulating an educational vision and mission that highlight spiritual and affective values. The curriculum is directed not solely toward academic achievement but also toward character formation through compassionate approaches. Teachers, as the primary planners, are required to possess emotional sensitivity and empathy when designing learning materials, instructional strategies, and humanistic forms of assessment.

Learning plans are developed based on the principles of compassion and appreciation for each student's unique potential. The curriculum is designed to accommodate diverse learning styles and student abilities while providing an emotionally safe space for growth. This aligns with the Islamic concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, which emphasizes values of mercy and compassion in all aspects of life, including education.

Moreover, love based curriculum planning takes into account the involvement of parents and the community as partners in education. Love is not only cultivated within the school environment but also strengthened at home and in the surrounding community. Therefore, effective curriculum planning includes strategies for fostering communication between teachers and parents, as well as involving the community in character building activities (Ifendi, 2025). Curriculum documents such as lesson plans, syllabi, and semester programs are oriented toward learning that humanizes students. Such planning provides space for developing positive emotions through activities such as greeting routines, moments of reflection, sharing practices, and project based learning related to social or environmental themes.

A love based curriculum can be integrated with Islamic values such as mahabbah, rahmah, and ta'awun across all subjects. Thus, curriculum planning becomes a means for internalizing Qur'anic values that are applicable in students' daily lives, rather than merely theoretical concepts taught in the classroom (Laili, 2024).

Such curriculum planning must be supported by ongoing teacher training to ensure that educators understand the principles of love based pedagogy. Teachers need to be equipped with the ability to design learning activities that engage students affectively, employ non judgmental approaches, and facilitate heartfelt dialogue throughout the learning process. Accordingly, love based curriculum planning in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah serves as a strategic effort to realize holistic Islamic education. It nurtures not only the intellect but also the heart and behavior of the child, aligning with the mission of Islamic education to cultivate *insan kamil* individuals who are intelligent, ethical, and compassionate.

The implementation of a love based curriculum also requires visionary and supportive institutional leadership. The madrasah principal plays a crucial role as a policy director who ensures that all components of the school operate within a framework of compassion and student centered care. Leadership grounded in love fosters an inclusive school culture in which every member of the madrasah community feels valued and heard (Prajuningsetia & Hariyadi,

2025). Consequently, curriculum planning becomes not merely an administrative procedure, but a cultural movement that animates Islamic values in everyday practice.

In addition, planning a love based curriculum must be accompanied by the provision of a psychologically safe learning environment. Classrooms, school layouts, and interpersonal dynamics within the madrasah should reflect warmth and acceptance (Yasin, 2024). Child friendly learning facilities, rules developed through mutual agreement, and positive disciplinary approaches are essential factors that ensure students feel comfortable in the learning process. Such an environment helps students develop self confidence, expressive courage, and healthy emotional regulation.

A love based curriculum also underscores the importance of continuous reflection throughout the planning process (Syarifudin & Hasna, 2025). Teachers and school administrators need to evaluate the curriculum design, the methods employed, and their impact on students' character formation and emotional development. This reflection may take place through regular meetings, teacher discussion forums, and even by incorporating the voices of students and parents. Through a culture of reflection, curriculum planning becomes more adaptive, responsive to learners' needs, and capable of keeping pace with social changes in the community.

Ultimately, the success of love based curriculum planning in madrasah ibtidaiyah (MI) depends heavily on the consistency of its implementation. The curriculum holds little meaning if it remains merely a written document; it must be embodied in daily interactions between teachers and students. This consistency is reflected in how teachers greet, motivate, gently correct, and build relationships grounded in respect and compassion. When a love based curriculum is implemented holistically, it can produce a generation that is not only intellectually capable but also emotionally and spiritually mature, in line with the holistic aims of Islamic education.

2. Implementation of a Love Based Curriculum in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI)

The implementation of a love based curriculum in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) demonstrates that this model requires teachers not only to teach but also to cultivate warm emotional connections with students. The enactment of love oriented learning emphasizes positive interactions between teachers and learners, with teachers acting as attentive and empathetic companions, thereby creating a comfortable and enjoyable learning environment (Ifendi, 2025).

In practice, MI teachers apply learning methods that prioritize personal and participatory approaches. Learning processes are designed to ensure students actively engage in discussions, role playing, and creative activities that nurture compassion and cooperation. Thus, the learning experience fosters not only academic understanding but also character development and mutual respect among students.

The implementation of a love based curriculum also underscores the importance of a friendly and inclusive school environment (Salma & Najibah, 2025). Madrasahs strive to create psychologically safe spaces in which students feel valued without pressure or fear. This aligns with Islamic principles that emphasize compassion and respect for human dignity as a divine mandate.

Challenges in implementing this curriculum typically relate to teachers' readiness to apply affective approaches and the availability of facilities that support creative and inclusive learning. Nevertheless, teacher training and strengthening a compassion based school culture are effective solutions to overcome these obstacles (Roziman, 2025).

The implementation of a love based curriculum in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah highlights not only academic achievement but also character building through instilling values of compassion and respect for every individual. This is consistent with the aims of Islamic education to cultivate individuals who are faithful, morally upright, and compassionate toward others and their environment (Lismawati et al., 2022).

Moreover, the implementation of this curriculum involves embedding values of compassion in daily activities, such as practicing smiles and greetings, mutual assistance, and

appreciating diversity and differences. Teachers serve as role models in demonstrating sincere acts of kindness, enabling children to emulate and internalize these behaviors in their social lives.

The importance of collaboration with parents and the community also constitutes an integral component of implementing a love based curriculum (Fakhruddin, 2007). Intensive communication between teachers and parents helps reinforce the values of compassion practiced both at school and at home, thereby ensuring that the learning process becomes more holistic and sustainable.

Evaluation within a love based curriculum focuses on holistic assessment, measuring not only cognitive aspects but also affective and psychomotor domains. Teachers assess students' character development, empathy, and social attitudes through observation and reflection, ensuring that learning outcomes reflect the overall growth of students as compassionate individuals.

The implementation of a love based curriculum also requires classroom management strategies that place love as the primary foundation (Fachruddin, 2007). Teachers need to establish calming daily routines, such as beginning lessons with collective prayer, positive affirmations, or brief reflective activities that strengthen the emotional connection between teachers and students. Such classroom management enables students to feel valued as individuals and provides a sense of safety that allows them to engage with learning materials without fear of making mistakes. A classroom atmosphere built on compassion enhances students' intrinsic motivation, making them more enthusiastic and active throughout the learning process.

Beyond classroom management, the implementation of a love based curriculum demands that teachers communicate with gentleness and empathy. Teachers should employ child friendly language, avoid judgmental expressions, and provide constructive feedback (Qomariah & Anwar, 2025). This form of communication helps students understand that teachers are not merely instructors, but also companions who are ready to guide them through academic and emotional challenges. Such communication reflects the values of *tarbiyah* in Islam, which emphasize educating with tenderness and exemplary conduct.

Furthermore, the success of implementing a love based curriculum also depends on teachers' consistency in demonstrating behaviors that embody the values of compassion. Teachers in *madrasah ibtidaiyah* are expected not only to design emotionally supportive learning activities but also to serve as role models in demonstrating patience, respect for differences, and attentiveness. This exemplary behavior is crucial because children at the MI level learn significantly through observation and imitation. When teachers show love in their actions, students internalize the message that love is an integral part of daily life (Qomariah & Anwar, 2025).

Ultimately, the implementation of a love based curriculum becomes stronger when the *madrasah* upholds a school culture aligned with the values of compassion. All members of the school community teachers, principals, staff, and students must build shared norms that emphasize respect, care, and mutual support. School programs such as community service activities, empathy based literacy initiatives, and collaborative projects can serve as platforms to strengthen this culture of love. When these values are embedded in the school culture, the implementation of a love based curriculum transcends classroom practices and becomes the lifeblood that permeates all aspects of *madrasah* life.

3. Evaluation of a Love Based Curriculum in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI)

The evaluation of a love based curriculum in *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (MI) emphasizes that assessment within this curriculum does not solely focus on cognitive aspects but also gives serious attention to students' affective and psychomotor development. Evaluation is conducted holistically to measure the extent to which values of love, empathy, and tolerance have been internalized by students throughout the learning process (Laili, 2024).

The implementation of evaluation in MI that applies a love based curriculum involves various methods, such as daily behavior observation, portfolio assessment, and periodic self

reflection conducted by both teachers and students. These methods aim to provide a comprehensive picture of character development and positive attitudes, which constitute the primary focus of the curriculum (Nada & Listiana, 2025).

Furthermore, love based evaluation includes constructive feedback from teachers delivered with a gentle and motivating approach. Teachers do not only assess final outcomes but also pay attention to the learning process and social interactions that reflect values of compassion and respect for others (Saripuddin & Hasna, 2024).

In the context of affective evaluation, teachers employ instruments that assess students' abilities to demonstrate mutual respect, cooperation, and emotional maturity (Qomariah & Anwar, 2025). This type of assessment is crucial as it forms the foundation of children's character, which will continue to develop throughout their lives, in accordance with the objectives of Islamic education that prioritize the cultivation of noble character.

Love based curriculum evaluation is also participatory, involving parents and the school community. Intensive communication between teachers and parents through meetings or child development reports helps reinforce evaluation outcomes, ensuring that the values of compassion instilled at school receive full support from families. However, this study identifies several challenges in conducting such evaluations, particularly related to teachers' limited capacity to develop valid and reliable affective assessment instruments. Additionally, time constraints within the school schedule often hinder teachers from conducting in depth evaluation of character aspects (Nada & Listiana, 2025).

To address these challenges, ongoing teacher training is strongly recommended to enable educators to design and implement comprehensive evaluations in line with the principles of a love based curriculum (Fakhruddin, 2007). Strengthening school support systems, including technological assistance and the development of instructional materials, also facilitates the evaluation process.

Therefore, evaluation in a love based curriculum at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah plays a crucial role in ensuring the success of character formation and the development of compassion in students. Holistic, participatory, and process oriented evaluation provides a strong foundation for measuring and enhancing the quality of humanistic education grounded in Islamic values.

In addition, the evaluation of a love based curriculum must be directed toward the continuous monitoring of students' emotional development (Syarifudin & Hasna, 2025). Teachers may utilize daily journals, anecdotal records, or reflective dialogues to assess how students express emotions, manage conflicts, and demonstrate care in various situations. These instruments enable teachers to identify patterns in students' emotional growth, allowing educational interventions to be tailored to each child's needs. Such evaluation not only serves an assessment function but also acts as an avenue for emotional education, helping students to recognize and understand themselves more deeply.

Beyond emotional monitoring, the evaluation of a love based curriculum emphasizes the importance of authentic assessment that connects the value of compassion with real life situations experienced by students (Syarifudin & Hasna, 2025). For instance, collaborative projects, community service activities, or routines that cultivate empathetic behavior can serve as meaningful assessment bases. Through authentic assessment, teachers are able to determine the extent to which students apply compassionate values in real contexts, rather than merely understanding them as theoretical concepts. This type of assessment reinforces the goals of a love based curriculum to foster character that is genuinely reflected in students' actions.

Furthermore, love based evaluation requires systematic documentation of students' development. A character portfolio, for example, can be used to record students' achievements in affective and social domains throughout a semester or academic year. Through such portfolios, teachers and parents can observe the child's developmental journey holistically, not only from the perspective of academic achievement but also in terms of growth in empathy, cooperation, and independence (Roziman, 2025). This form of documentation also supports schools in reflecting on the curriculum and identifying areas that require improvement in the implementation of love based learning.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of evaluating a love based curriculum depends on the commitment of all stakeholders to position compassion as a key indicator of educational success. Madrasah principals, teachers, and parents must share a common vision that character education cannot be measured instantaneously but requires a consistent process accompanied by comprehensive and development sensitive evaluation. When evaluation is carried out as a process of nurturing rather than judging, a love based curriculum can truly serve as a medium for nurturing a generation that grows with tenderness of heart, noble behavior, and holistic intelligence aligned with Islamic values.

Conclusion

The concept of love based curriculum management in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah represents a strategic approach that places values of compassion, empathy, and care at the core of the entire educational process, encompassing planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning. In the planning stage, teachers and school administrators design learning activities that are not solely oriented toward cognitive achievement but also emphasize character development through content imbued with values of love, tolerance, and faith. During implementation, teacher student interactions are grounded in respect, two way communication, and motivational practices that stimulate students' learning enthusiasm. In evaluation, success is measured not only by academic outcomes but also by students' attitudinal development, empathy, and responsibility toward others and their environment.

This love based curriculum management aligns with Islamic teachings that prioritize gentleness in education, as reflected in the Qur'an and the exemplary conduct of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In the context of primary education, this approach is highly relevant, as MI aged children are in a critical period of character formation requiring intensive emotional and spiritual guidance. By applying this concept comprehensively and consistently, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah can serve as an educational institution that cultivates not only intellectually capable students but also morally upright, caring individuals with strong social sensitivity.

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