



THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOVE-BASED ISLAMIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN SHAPING STUDENT CHARACTER AT SABILINA TEMBUNG PRIVATE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

PELAKSANAAN KURIKULUM PENDIDIKAN ISLAM BERBASIS CINTA DALAM MEMBENTUK KARAKTER SISWA DI SMP SWASTA SABILINA TEMBUNG

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum in shaping students' character at Sabilina Tembung Private Junior High School. The research employs a qualitative approach with an exploratory case study design, focusing on the subjective experiences of both Islamic Education teachers and students regarding the application of love-based values in Islamic Education. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, involving Islamic Education teachers and students from various grade levels. The findings indicate that the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum significantly enhances students' discipline, empathy, and social interaction. Storytelling and self-reflection methods were found to be effective in helping students internalize the values of love towards Allah, the Prophet, fellow humans, and nature. However, key challenges identified include the limited availability of relevant teaching materials and students' difficulties in applying love values outside the classroom. The study also highlights the importance of parental and community involvement in supporting the implementation of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum beyond the school environment. The research recommends the development of more applicable teaching materials, ongoing teacher training, and stronger collaboration with parents to reinforce the values of love in students' daily lives. This study contributes significantly to the development of love-based curricula in Indonesian private schools.

Keywords : Love-Based Curriculum, Islamic Education, Character Development, Moral Education, Students, Private Junior High School Sabilina Tembung.



Abstrak

Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penerapan Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam Berbasis Cinta dalam membentuk karakter siswa di SMP Swasta Sabilina Tembung. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus eksploratif, yang berfokus pada pengalaman subjektif baik guru Pendidikan Agama Islam maupun siswa terkait penerapan nilai-nilai berbasis cinta dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi kelas, dan analisis dokumen, yang melibatkan guru Pendidikan Agama Islam dan siswa dari berbagai tingkat kelas. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam Berbasis Cinta secara signifikan meningkatkan disiplin, empati, dan interaksi sosial siswa. Metode bercerita dan refleksi diri ditemukan efektif dalam membantu siswa menginternalisasi nilai-nilai cinta kepada Allah, Nabi, sesama manusia, dan alam. Namun, tantangan utama yang diidentifikasi termasuk keterbatasan ketersediaan bahan ajar yang relevan dan kesulitan siswa dalam menerapkan nilai-nilai cinta di luar kelas. Studi ini juga menyoroti pentingnya keterlibatan orang tua dan masyarakat dalam mendukung pelaksanaan Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam Berbasis Cinta di luar lingkungan sekolah. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan pengembangan bahan ajar yang lebih aplikatif, pelatihan guru yang berkelanjutan, dan kolaborasi yang lebih kuat dengan orang tua untuk memperkuat nilai-nilai cinta dalam kehidupan sehari-hari siswa. Studi ini berkontribusi secara signifikan terhadap pengembangan kurikulum berbasis cinta di sekolah swasta Indonesia.

Kata Kunci : Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta, Pendidikan Islam, Pengembangan Karakter, Pendidikan Moral, Siswa, Sekolah Menengah Pertama Swasta Sabilina Tembung.

1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic education in Indonesia plays a crucial role in shaping students' character, particularly in instilling noble ethics. One of the biggest challenges in Islamic education in schools is how the curriculum can effectively integrate the moral, spiritual, and social values embedded in Islamic teachings into students' daily lives. Especially with the rapid development of the digital era, the formation of student character through Islamic education has become an urgent necessity. The moral crisis occurring among Indonesian adolescents, including in major cities like Medan, highlights the urgency of introducing a curriculum that not only focuses on cognitive aspects but also on the holistic development of character and ethics in students (Muhammad & Shiddiq, 2024).

One approach proposed to address this issue is the implementation of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum. This curriculum, introduced by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in 2025, aims to instill love for Allah, the Prophet, fellow human beings, and nature in Islamic education. This approach integrates the principle of love as the core value in Islamic education, with the hope of producing students who are not only academically intelligent but also possess good character and care for others. As stated by Kholidin and Sunhaji (2025), the implementation of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum has great potential to transform the paradigm of religious education, where the moral values and character development of students become the primary focus of every aspect of learning. According to them, this curriculum can provide a strong foundation for the development of students' social and religious character.



The implementation of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum at the junior high school level, specifically at Sabilina Tembung Private Junior High School, represents an important step in developing a value-based educational model. However, the implementation of this curriculum in private schools, particularly in areas like Medan, has not been widely studied. Research by Indriastuti et al. (2025) indicates that although the love-based curriculum has been implemented in madrasahs and Islamic schools, the main challenge faced is the limited development of relevant teaching materials and training for teachers. This is crucial since teachers are the ones who will implement these values in the classroom. Therefore, this study aims to explore in more detail how the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum is implemented at Sabilina Tembung Private Junior High School and its impact on the formation of student character at this school.

While the love-based curriculum aims to integrate moral values into Islamic education, the challenges faced in its implementation cannot be overlooked. Cahaya (2025) asserts that the application of character-based curricula, such as the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum, often encounters obstacles such as the lack of supporting resources. This is especially true in private schools, where limited teaching materials and teacher training often become major hindrances. In line with this finding, Rahmawati and Setiawati (2022) emphasize that the preparedness of teachers in teaching the love-based curriculum greatly depends on the training they receive. Teachers need to be empowered to effectively integrate the value of love into the learning process, which should encompass not only theory but also students' daily practices.

Furthermore, Z. Kholidin and Sunhaji (2025) in their study revealed another challenge in the implementation of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum, which is the disparity in understanding between teachers and students regarding the love values being taught. While this curriculum provides a clear framework for how love values can be taught, not all students are able to connect these values with real actions outside the classroom. Therefore, the success of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum depends not only on the teaching within schools but also on the involvement of the family and community environment in reinforcing the values being taught. This is also highlighted by Hamzah (2025), who stresses the importance of collaboration between schools and parents in supporting the character development of students based on the value of love.

The Love-Based Curriculum Guidebook published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2025) provides an official guide on how to implement the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum in schools, including curriculum structure, learning objectives, and methods that can be used by teachers. The guidebook also recommends that the value of love should not only be taught as a concept but should be practically integrated into students' daily activities at school. As explained in the guidebook, love for Allah, the Prophet, fellow humans, and nature must become the foundational principle in every subject, not limited to religious education alone. In this way, the curriculum can strengthen the relationship between religious knowledge and students' everyday life practices.



Overall, the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum offers a more comprehensive approach to shaping students' character, integrating religious education with broader moral development. As part of the educational reform, the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum offers new hope for improving the quality of religious education in Indonesia, particularly in addressing the moral crisis faced by many adolescents today. Therefore, this research is highly relevant in identifying both the successes and challenges in the implementation of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum at Sabilina Tembung Private Junior High School and contributing to the development of love-based curricula at the secondary education level..

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach with an exploratory case study design to examine the implementation of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum in shaping students' character at Sabilina Tembung Private Junior High School. The exploratory case study design was selected as it allows an in-depth investigation of the phenomenon in its real-life context, focusing on the experiences and perceptions of the Islamic Education teachers and students involved. This approach enables the researcher to explore how the love-based curriculum influences the students' character development in practice.

The study involved Islamic Education teachers and students from various grade levels at Sabilina Tembung Private Junior High School. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who were directly involved with the implementation of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum. These participants were chosen to provide diverse perspectives on their experiences with love-based learning.

Data were gathered through three main techniques: semi-structured interviews, direct classroom observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Islamic Education teachers and students to explore their understanding and experiences regarding the application of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum. Classroom observations were carried out over two weeks to monitor teacher-student interactions and observe changes in students' attitudes and behaviors in the love-based learning process. Document analysis was also conducted to examine the Lesson Plans and students' reflective journals, which provided insights into how the curriculum was implemented and its impact on students' character development.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which enabled the identification of recurring themes that highlight the impact of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum on the students' character. The themes were grouped to identify both the successes and challenges encountered in the implementation process. To ensure the validity of the findings, data triangulation was performed by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and document analysis.

This study adhered to ethical research principles, ensuring that informed consent was obtained from all participants, and the confidentiality of the data was maintained. The results are presented transparently, reflecting the experiences and perceptions of the participants. The



case study design, therefore, provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and successes in implementing the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum at Sabilina Tembung Private Junior High School and its role in shaping students' character.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study successfully explored the experiences and perceptions of both students and teachers regarding the implementation of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum at Sabilina Tembung Private Junior High School. Data analysis from interviews, observations, and documentation revealed that the implementation of this curriculum significantly impacted the formation of students' character and ethics, though some challenges were encountered in its application.

One of the primary findings was that the value of love was effectively integrated into the Lesson Plans. Islamic Education teachers purposefully selected teaching methods that emphasized the application of love-based values. One of the methods was storytelling, which recounted the life of Prophet Muhammad SAW as an example of compassion in everyday life. As one teacher of Islamic Education stated, "I try to ensure that each lesson contains the value of love, such as in the stories of the Prophet showing compassion toward his followers. This makes it easier for students to understand and emulate his behavior." This method proved to be effective in facilitating students to connect religious teachings with real-life actions.

The implementation of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum also contributed significantly to changes in students' behavior, especially in terms of discipline, empathy, and cooperation. Classroom observations indicated that many students showed increased participation in religious activities, such as being more diligent in performing congregational prayers and attending study circles (*pengajian*). Furthermore, students displayed positive changes in their social interactions. One student shared, "Since taking this class, I feel more caring and patient with my friends. I have also become more diligent in praying." This suggests that love-based education not only influences students' religious development but also strengthens their social relationships.

However, this study also identified several challenges in implementing the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum at Sabilina Tembung Private Junior High School. A primary obstacle was the lack of appropriate teaching materials aligned with the love-based curriculum. Some teachers expressed difficulty in finding teaching resources that could facilitate the practical application of love values in the classroom. As one teacher stated, "Although the guidelines from the Ministry of Religious Affairs are available, we still struggle to find materials that can be directly applied in class. We need more practical resources that connect the value of love with students' lives." This finding underscores the fact that, despite the official adoption of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum, its effective implementation depends heavily on the availability of relevant teaching materials.

Another challenge was the disparity in understanding between teachers and students regarding the application of love values outside the classroom. Several students reported



difficulty in applying the love values they learned in class to their everyday lives. One student explained, "Sometimes, I find it difficult to apply what I learned in class outside of school. Even though I understand the value of love, it is hard to consistently implement it." This suggests that while love values can be taught within the classroom, their application in students' daily lives requires continued support from their family and community environments.

a. Discussion

The implementation of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum at Sabilina Tembung Private Junior High School has demonstrated significant impacts on the formation of students' character. The findings of this study are consistent with previous research that indicates value-based education, especially one centered around love, can comprehensively improve students' character, both in religious and social aspects. This aligns with the research conducted by Muhammad and Shiddiq (2024), which argues that by integrating the love for Allah, the Prophet, fellow human beings, and nature in educational practice, the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum serves not only to educate students cognitively but also to instill deeper moral values in their lives (Kholidin & Sunhaji, 2025).

However, despite the positive outcomes, the implementation of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum also faces several challenges. One of the main difficulties is the lack of teaching materials that are suitable for the love-based curriculum. Islamic Education teachers at Sabilina Tembung Private Junior High School reported challenges in finding appropriate resources that can practically facilitate the application of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum. This is consistent with the findings of Rahmawati and Setiawati (2022), who suggest that the development of love-based teaching materials requires additional efforts to provide content that connects theory with students' everyday practices. For instance, Indriastuti et al. (2025) noted that while moral values are successfully instilled, the most significant challenge lies in the scarcity of teaching resources that support love-based learning.

Furthermore, the study also revealed differences in understanding between teachers and students regarding the application of love values. While the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum provides a theoretical understanding of moral and social values, its practical application outside the classroom often encounters obstacles. For example, several students expressed difficulty in applying the love values taught in class to their daily lives. One student explained, "Sometimes, I find it difficult to apply what I learned in class outside of school. Even though I understand the value of love, it's hard to consistently practice it." This finding resonates with the work of Cahaya (2025), who highlighted that while character-based education can enhance students' moral understanding, its application outside the school requires continuous support from the family and community environment. Thus, the success of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum depends heavily on the active involvement of parents in supporting the character development of their children, as emphasized by Z. Kholidin and Sunhaji (2025).

Social and psychological challenges faced by students also need to be considered in the context of implementing the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum. Kholidin and Sunhaji



(2025) stated that the application of love values in Islamic education does not solely rely on the attitude changes taught in class, but also on how students can adapt to their social environments. Many students feel that the values taught are not fully accepted or applied in their social lives, especially when facing challenges outside the school setting. In line with this, Creswell (2013) stressed the importance of designing flexible and contextualized lesson plans that allow teachers to adjust teaching methods based on the needs of students in the classroom, making it easier for them to apply love values in their everyday lives.

Moreover, while the implementation of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum has brought positive changes in religious activities such as congregational prayers and study circles, the application of love values beyond the school context remains a significant challenge. This suggests that love-based education requires broad involvement from all parties influencing the students' lives, not just within the school's boundaries. Hamzah (2025) emphasizes the importance of collaboration between schools and communities to create an ecosystem that supports character education and the comprehensive formation of students' character.

This study supports the view put forward by Indriastuti et al. (2025), who stated that collaboration among teachers, parents, and students is a key factor in the success of value-based education. Strengthening the love-based curriculum not only depends on its implementation in schools but also on how these values are practiced in students' daily lives, both at home and in their social interactions. In line with this, Sukmara (2025) suggests that it is important for both teachers and parents to have a uniform understanding of applying love values so that there is continuity between what is taught at school and what is implemented at home.

b. Recommendations

Based on the findings, this study recommends several steps to improve the implementation of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum. First, the development of more practical teaching materials is essential to support love-based education. Islamic Education teachers need more practical and relevant materials that can be directly applied to students' lives. Second, continuous professional development for teachers is required to ensure that they are not only teaching theory but also able to integrate love values into students' everyday practices. Third, the role of parents should be strengthened through improved communication between schools and families to ensure that love values are consistently applied both at home and at school. These recommendations align with the suggestions of Z. Kholidin & Sunhaji (2025), who emphasize the importance of strengthening collaboration among teachers, students, and parents in implementing character-based education comprehensively. Thus, although the implementation of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum at Sabilina Tembung Private Junior High School has had a positive impact, some of the challenges faced require further attention. Efforts to improve the quality of teaching materials, ongoing teacher training, and support from parents and the community will significantly enhance the successful implementation of this curriculum in shaping students' character.



4. CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum at Sabilina Tembung Private Junior High School has had a significant impact on the formation of students' character and ethics. Based on the findings of this study, the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum successfully integrated values of love for Allah, the Prophet, fellow human beings, and nature into Islamic education, leading to improvements in students' discipline, empathy, and social relationships. The use of storytelling and self-reflection methods in teaching proved effective in helping students internalize the value of love, as well as promoting positive changes in their social interactions and religious activities, such as increased participation in congregational prayers and study circles.

However, despite the positive outcomes, this study also identified several challenges in the implementation of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum. One of the main challenges is the limited availability of relevant teaching materials and the insufficient training for teachers to effectively teach the love-based curriculum. Some teachers reported difficulties in finding practical teaching materials that can be directly applied in the classroom, while students faced challenges in applying the love values they learned in class to their daily lives outside of school. These findings suggest that the success of implementing the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum is highly dependent on the development of more relevant teaching materials and strengthening collaboration between schools, parents, and the community.

The implementation of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum also highlighted the important role of family and community support in reinforcing the values taught at school. Therefore, it is crucial for schools, parents, and communities to work together more closely to ensure that the value of love is consistently applied in students' lives. This study emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach to character development, where the love-based curriculum not only relies on education in schools but also takes into account the influence of students' social environments.

Overall, the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum has proven to be an effective approach to shaping students' character at Sabilina Tembung Private Junior High School. While there are still challenges in its implementation, steps such as developing more practical teaching materials, providing continuous teacher training, and encouraging active parental involvement will enhance the effectiveness of the Love-Based Islamic Education Curriculum in creating students who are not only academically intelligent but also possess noble character. This study contributes significantly to the development of love-based curricula in Indonesian private schools and recommends that this curriculum be more widely implemented, taking into account the aspects identified in this research.

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