

IMPLEMENTATION OF LOVE BASED CURRICULUM IN CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS IN MODERN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS

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Abstract: This study aims to explore the implementation of a love-based curriculum in developing the character of santri at Pondok Pesantren Modern Darul Ulum Al-Muhajirin, Langkat Regency. This curriculum integrates five main values, namely love for Allah, the Messenger of Allah, knowledge, fellow humans, and the homeland, which are applied in various aspects of pesantren life. The method used in this research is a qualitative approach with a case study design, which involves in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. The results showed that the love-based curriculum succeeded in shaping the character of better santri, with improvements in discipline, empathy, social responsibility, and love for knowledge and the homeland. Although the implementation of this curriculum shows positive results, the main challenge faced is the influence of globalization and technology that often conflicts with pesantren values. Overall, the love-based curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Modern Darul Ulum Al-Muhajirin can be an effective model in developing the character of students, who are not only academically intelligent, but also have noble character and care for others and the homeland.

Keywords: Love-based Curriculum, Character, Islamic Education

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi implementasi kurikulum berbasis cinta dalam pengembangan karakter santri di Pondok Pesantren Modern Darul Ulum Al-Muhajirin, Kabupaten Langkat. Kurikulum ini mengintegrasikan lima nilai utama, yaitu cinta kepada Allah, Rasulullah, ilmu, sesama manusia, dan tanah air, yang diterapkan dalam berbagai aspek kehidupan pesantren. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, yang melibatkan wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kurikulum berbasis cinta berhasil membentuk karakter santri yang lebih baik, dengan peningkatan dalam kedisiplinan, empati, tanggung jawab sosial, serta rasa cinta terhadap ilmu dan tanah air. Meskipun penerapan kurikulum ini menunjukkan hasil positif, tantangan utama yang dihadapi adalah pengaruh globalisasi dan teknologi yang sering bertentangan dengan nilai-nilai pesantren. Secara keseluruhan, kurikulum berbasis cinta di Pondok Pesantren Modern Darul Ulum Al-Muhajirin dapat menjadi model yang efektif dalam pengembangan karakter santri, yang tidak hanya cerdas secara akademik, tetapi juga berakhlak mulia dan peduli terhadap sesama serta tanah air.

Kata Kunci: Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta, Karakter, Pendidikan Islam

INTRODUCTION

Character education is an important element in producing a young generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also has good morals and noble character. In the context of religious education, Islamic boarding schools play a strategic role in shaping the character of students. Islamic boarding schools, as Islamic educational institutions, have a distinctive characteristic in that they organize an educational process that focuses not only on teaching religious knowledge but also on developing the morals and character of students. In Indonesia, where the majority of the population is Muslim, Islamic boarding schools are very important educational institutions in shaping the character of the younger generation who adhere to religious values.

The challenges in character education in Islamic boarding schools are not simple. Although Islamic boarding schools teach strong religious values, with the rapid development of the times and various social challenges faced by society, teaching about character education often needs to be adapted to the changing times. This makes it necessary for Islamic boarding schools to formulate a curriculum that is not only based on religious teaching, but also capable of fostering moral values that are relevant to the challenges of the times. One approach that is considered to strengthen character development of students is a love-based curriculum (Masud, 2019).

A love-based curriculum can be understood as a curriculum that integrates the values of love as the basis for the educational process. Love in this context is not only love in the narrow sense as an emotional feeling, but a broader love, including love for God, fellow human beings, and the natural environment (Hapsari, 2025). Love for God can be manifested in solemn worship and consistent practice of Islamic teachings. Love for fellow human beings is reflected in mutual respect, empathy, and mutual assistance. Meanwhile, love for the natural environment includes ecological awareness and responsibility for preserving the environment (Kemenag, 2025).

Darul Ulum Al-Muhajirin Modern Islamic Boarding School, located in Langkat Regency, is one of the Islamic boarding schools that has a vision to produce a generation that not only has intellectual intelligence but also noble character. As an educational institution that prioritizes a holistic religious approach, this Islamic boarding school tries to implement a curriculum that emphasizes not only cognitive aspects but also character, moral values, and spirituality. In this case, a love-based curriculum is expected to be a solution to shape the character of students for the better, covering all dimensions of their lives.

Islamic boarding schools play a very important role in character education, because they are not only

places to acquire religious knowledge, but also places to educate students to have attitudes and behaviors in accordance with Islamic teachings. Islamic boarding schools also have traditional values that emphasize a simple, disciplined life full of educational activities. In the pesantren environment, students are taught to live in an orderly manner, follow existing rules, and form habits that support good character development (Hakim & Herlina, 2018).

Although Islamic boarding schools have attempted to integrate the value of love into their curriculum, implementing a love-based curriculum is not easy. One of the main challenges is how to internalize the values of love in the daily lives of students. The value of love is not something that can be taught only through theory or teaching alone, but must be manifested in daily practices that are reflected in the attitudes, behaviors, and actions of the students.

Another challenge is how to ensure that every component of the Islamic boarding school curriculum, from religious subjects and life skills to extracurricular activities, can consistently teach the value of love. In addition, the role of teachers or boarding school caregivers is very important in this regard. They must be able to set a real example of the values of love that they want to teach to students. Furthermore, in facing increasingly complex social dynamics, Islamic boarding schools also need to adapt their love-based curriculum

to remain relevant to the challenges of the times (Hafidz, 2018).

This study aims to explore the extent to which the implementation of a love-based curriculum at the Darul Ulum Al-Muhajirin Modern Islamic Boarding School can contribute to the character development of students. This study also aims to identify the various challenges faced in implementing a love-based curriculum and analyze its impact on the character development of students at the Islamic boarding school.

Through this research, it is hoped that a clearer picture of the effectiveness of the love-based curriculum in shaping the character of students can be obtained. In addition, the results of this study are expected to provide useful recommendations for boarding school administrators in refining a character education curriculum that is more based on the values of love, so that it can produce students who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have noble character and are ready to face the challenges of the times. The results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for other Islamic boarding schools in formulating a more holistic curriculum that focuses not only on academic intelligence but also on character building and strong moral values. In addition, this study is also expected to provide insight into how love-based character education can be applied in the context of Islamic boarding schools that have strong religious traditions and values.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design, aiming to explore the implementation of a love-based curriculum in character development at the Darul Ulum Al-Muhajirin Modern Islamic Boarding School in Langkat Regency. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on a deep understanding of the phenomena that occur in the context of implementing a love-based curriculum in the pesantren environment (Swendra, 2018).

The subjects in this study consisted of boarding school caregivers, teachers, and students. Caregivers and teachers were interviewed to understand their perspectives on the policies and practices of implementing a love-based curriculum. Students were the main subjects who directly experienced the implementation of this curriculum, with the hope of exploring their experiences regarding the curriculum's influence on their character.

Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation (Moleong, 2018). Interviews will be conducted with caregivers, teachers, and students to obtain their views on the implementation of the love-based curriculum. Participatory observation allows researchers to see firsthand how the value of love is applied in the daily activities of students. Documentation will be used to collect materials related to the

curriculum and educational policies in Islamic boarding schools.

The data obtained will be analyzed using thematic analysis, in which the researcher will identify the main themes that emerge in the interviews and observations. This process will be carried out using triangulation techniques to ensure the validity of the data, both through different sources and methods used. The results of this study are expected to provide deeper insights into the implementation of a love-based curriculum and its contribution to the character development of students

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to explore the implementation of a love-based curriculum in the character development of students at the Darul Ulum Al-Muhajirin Modern Islamic Boarding School, , Langkat Regency. Based on the analysis of data obtained from in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation, it can be concluded that the love-based curriculum implemented in this pesantren has a significant impact on the character development of santri, despite the challenges faced in the implementation process.

Implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum

The love-based curriculum implemented at the Darul Ulum Al-Muhajirin Modern Islamic Boarding School is designed to integrate the values of love into every aspect of boarding

school life, both in learning and in daily social life. This curriculum covers five main dimensions, namely: love for Allah and His Messenger, love for knowledge, love for fellow human beings, love for the natural environment, and love for the homeland. The application of these five aspects is carried out in a comprehensive manner, involving all elements in the pesantren, from caregivers and teachers to the santri themselves.

1. Love for Allah and His Messenger

The value of love for Allah is the main foundation of this curriculum. In the learning process, caregivers and teachers always emphasize the importance of a personal relationship with Allah through devout worship, such as prayer, remembrance, and reading the Qur'an. Religious learning is not only limited to theory but is also practiced in daily life. The students are taught to love Allah by worshiping sincerely and following the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad.

The value of love for Allah is also introduced through the concepts of *tawakal* (surrender) and gratitude. Students are taught to always be grateful for all the blessings they receive, whether it be good health, knowledge, or a supportive environment. This teaching is carried out through lectures, discussions, and also through regular weekly recitation activities. From interviews with boarding school supervisors, it is known that teaching the value of love for Allah through consistent worship practices has proven effective in improving the spiritual

quality of students, as reflected in their discipline in performing daily worship.

2. Love for Knowledge

In addition to love for Allah and the Prophet, this boarding school also emphasizes the importance of love for knowledge. The students are not only taught to pursue religious knowledge, but also general knowledge that can support their lives as individuals who are beneficial to society. Love for knowledge is implemented through a strong learning culture, where students are encouraged to always strive to acquire knowledge diligently and sincerely. Learning at this pesantren does not only focus on memorization, but also on a deep understanding of the knowledge they learn, both religious and other sciences.

Students are expected to view knowledge as part of worship, which is not only beneficial for their personal lives, but also for society and religion. This teaching is imparted through direct examples, where caregivers and teachers demonstrate the importance of knowledge in shaping a better and more dignified life. Interviews with several santri show that they feel more motivated to continue learning and developing themselves because they understand that love for knowledge is part of their efforts to get closer to Allah and follow in the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad.

3. Love for Fellow Human Beings

The love-based curriculum also covers the importance of loving fellow human beings. This concept is introduced

in various aspects of pesantren life, from interactions between students to relationships with caregivers and the surrounding community. One of the main values instilled is *ta'awun* (mutual assistance). In this case, students are taught to help each other in any activity, whether it be household chores, studying together, or social activities. This value of *ta'awun* is introduced in the form of daily activities that involve cooperation between students, for example, in cleaning the pesantren environment or organizing social events for the surrounding community.

The boarding school supervisors and teachers consistently teach the importance of maintaining good relationships with others, both within and outside the boarding school. This can be seen from various activities that involve interactions between students from different backgrounds, which aim to develop empathy and solidarity among them. One of the regular activities is *charity work*, such as social services for the community around the pesantren. Through this activity, students learn not only to focus on themselves but also to pay attention to others in need.

Observations show that these social activities have a significant impact on the development of the students' character. Many students show an increase in empathy and social awareness, which is reflected in their active involvement in social activities outside the pesantren. Some students also express

that their experiences in these charitable activities have broadened their understanding of the importance of sharing and caring for others.

4. Love for Nature

Love for nature is also an aspect that is emphasized in the love-based curriculum at the Darul Ulum Al-Muhajirin Modern Islamic Boarding School. The students are not only taught to love God and fellow human beings, but also to protect and care for their natural surroundings. This value is introduced through various activities aimed at fostering ecological awareness among the students. One such activity is planting trees and maintaining the boarding school garden, which involves all students.

The students are also educated on the importance of maintaining environmental cleanliness and reducing negative impacts on nature. This learning is not only done in theory but also applied in the daily life of the pesantren. For example, students are taught to manage waste wisely, use water and energy efficiently, and maintain the cleanliness of the pesantren facilities.

The boarding school supervisors believe that by teaching love for nature, students not only gain an understanding of the importance of preserving the environment, but also understand that protecting nature is part of their obligation as creatures of God. Interviews with several students show that they feel more responsible for the cleanliness and preservation of nature, and many say that

tree planting and garden maintenance activities at the pesantren give them a sense of ownership and pride in their surroundings.

5. Love for the Homeland

The importance of love for the homeland is also an integral part of the love-based curriculum at the Darul Ulum Al-Muhajirin Modern Islamic Boarding School. Students are taught to love Indonesia as their homeland that must be protected and respected. Learning about Indonesian history, the struggles of heroes, and the importance of maintaining national unity and integrity is always emphasized in educational activities at this boarding school.

The pesantren also involves students in various activities aimed at increasing their love for the homeland, such as flag ceremonies, national holiday celebrations, and community service oriented towards the development and maintenance of the environment surrounding the pesantren. The boarding school administrators emphasize that love for the homeland is part of the students' responsibility towards the progress of the nation, which is in line with Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of maintaining peace and harmony in society.

Challenges in Implementing a Love Based Curriculum

Although the love-based curriculum has a significant positive impact on the character of the students, its

implementation is not without challenges. One of the biggest challenges faced by the Darul Ulum Al-Muhajirin Modern Islamic Boarding School is the influence of globalization and rapid technological developments. The students, most of whom come from diverse social backgrounds, are often influenced by outside values that are not always in line with the principles taught at the pesantren. Although the caregivers and teachers have tried their best to integrate the value of love into every aspect of learning, not all students can immediately accept and apply these values easily. Some students find it difficult to change their habits, especially those related to attitudes and daily behaviors that are not in accordance with the teachings of the pesantren.

The boarding school caregivers and teachers try to overcome this challenge in creative ways. They hold regular discussions and studies to provide a deeper understanding of the values of love and how to apply them in daily life. In addition, they also involve the students' parents in the character building process by holding regular meetings to discuss the students' character development.

Impact on Student Character Development

Overall, the implementation of a love-based curriculum at the Darul Ulum Al-Muhajirin Modern Islamic Boarding School has had a significant impact on the character development of the students (). Observations and interviews with the students show that they have experienced

positive changes in their attitudes and behavior. The students have become more disciplined, empathetic, and responsible, both towards themselves, others, and their surroundings.

The students revealed that the values of love taught at the boarding school have helped them to appreciate themselves and others more. They feel more connected to their fellow students, more concerned about social issues, and more responsible for the natural environment around them. One student said, "Here, I learned not only to love God, but also to love others and take care of the earth we live on. This has changed my perspective on life." Teaching the value of love for Allah, fellow human beings, and nature has also had an impact on improving the spiritual and moral quality of the students. Many students feel closer to Allah and are more diligent in performing their religious duties. This shows that the love-based curriculum not only focuses on developing social character but also strengthens the spiritual dimension of the students.

The implementation of the love-based curriculum at the Darul Ulum Al-Muhajirin Modern Islamic Boarding School has had a positive impact on the character development of the students. Despite the challenges faced, especially regarding external influences that are not always in line with the values of the boarding school, the love-based curriculum has succeeded in instilling strong moral values in the students. This

curriculum has proven effective in creating santri who are not only intellectually intelligent but also have noble character, are empathetic, and care for others and the environment. The results of this study can serve as a reference for other pesantren in designing a curriculum that integrates the value of love as the basis for shaping the character of santri.

Analysis and novelty of the research

The implementation of the love-based curriculum at the Darul Ulum Al-Muhajirin Modern Islamic Boarding School focuses on developing the character of students through five main dimensions: love for Allah, the Prophet Muhammad, knowledge, fellow human beings, and the homeland. This discussion will use various educational theories and character concepts to understand how this curriculum can contribute to shaping the character of students, as well as the challenges faced in its implementation. Character education is an effort to instill moral and ethical values in students so that they can become good, honest individuals who are able to contribute positively to society. Several character education theories can be used to explain the love-based curriculum approach of at the Darul Ulum Al-Muhajirin Modern Islamic Boarding School. Moral and social values are considered the main foundation in the character education process. Values-based character education, as taught in this pesantren, aims to teach

santri the basic values that shape their actions and attitudes in daily life. This concept is closely related to the love-based curriculum that teaches students to love Allah, the Prophet, knowledge, others, and their homeland (Kemenag, 2025). In this context, the values of love become instruments for shaping better character in students.

Within this love-based curriculum, students are taught to feel a connection with Allah through sincere worship, which in turn influences how they interact with others and their environment. It is understandable that learning that includes emotions, feelings, and spirituality will be more effective in changing the attitudes and character of students. Therefore, loving Allah is the basis for developing noble character, which includes a sense of responsibility and empathy for others (Qathrun Nada & Listiana, 2025).

Teaching about love for the Prophet Muhammad in this curriculum refers to the theory of moral and ethical education in Islam, which emphasizes the importance of emulating the Prophet Muhammad's Muhammad SAW as a role model. In many Islamic educational literature, such as the works of Al-Ghazali and Al-Shahrastani, the Prophet Muhammad is considered a perfect role model in moral and social aspects. Following the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, both in personal and social behavior, is at the core of religious-based character education (Afryansyah & Sirozi, 2025).

Darul Ulum Al-Muhajirin Modern Islamic Boarding School also teaches the value of love for knowledge, which is in line with the principles of Islamic education that prioritize the pursuit of knowledge as one of the main obligations for every Muslim, as mentioned in the hadith of the Prophet, Seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim (Ibn Majah). Humanistic Education Theory, popularized by Carl Rogers, is also relevant in this context, as it emphasizes the importance of holistic individual potential development, including intellectual and emotional intelligence (Subiyono et al., 2021).

A person's moral development can be achieved through an understanding of social justice, respect for human rights, and empathy for others. This love-based curriculum instills a sense of empathy and solidarity among students through social activities and the teaching of national values. Multicultural Education Theory can also be used to explain the importance of love for the homeland, especially in the context of social diversity in Indonesia. This theory emphasizes the importance of appreciating cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity, as well as how national values can strengthen love for the homeland (Transinata, 2017). In this pesantren, santri are taught to maintain national unity and integrity, as well as contribute to social development through activities involving the surrounding community.

Although the love-based curriculum has a positive impact, the

challenges in its implementation cannot be ignored. The influence of globalization and technological developments are external factors that affect the character formation of santri (Collins et al., 2025). Media Socialization Theory states that media, including social media, has a major impact on the formation of social values. Therefore, Islamic boarding schools face challenges in maintaining the consistency of Islamic boarding school values amid the rapid flow of information coming from outside. In addition, the implementation of a love-based curriculum requires an adaptive approach to keep up with the times (Syaripudin & Hasna, 2025). Therefore, Islamic boarding school caregivers and teachers need to continue to innovate in conveying the values of love to students, so that they not only memorize but truly internalize these values in their daily lives.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the implementation of a love-based curriculum at the Darul Ulum Al-Muhajirin Modern Islamic Boarding School has a significant impact on the character development of students. This curriculum integrates five main values: love for Allah, the Prophet Muhammad, knowledge, fellow human beings, and the homeland. These values are applied in various aspects of pesantren life, so that students not only develop academically but also have good character, are compassionate, and care for others. Love for Allah and the Prophet Muhammad is upheld through

worship practices and exemplary character, while love for knowledge, fellow human beings, and the homeland is nurtured through learning and social activities. However, the implementation of a love-based curriculum faces major challenges, mainly due to the influence of globalization and technology, which bring foreign values that may conflict with the principles of Islamic boarding schools. Therefore, a creative and adaptive approach is needed to ensure that Islamic boarding schools remain relevant in preserving these noble values. Nevertheless, this curriculum has succeeded in improving the character of students, as seen in their increased discipline, empathy, and sense of social responsibility. Overall, this love-based curriculum is effective in shaping students who are not only intelligent but also have strong and noble character.

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