



Love-Based Curriculum In Early Childhood Education: A Philosophical Literature Review From The Ministry Of Religious Affairs

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Received: 2025-10-28; Accepted: 2026-1-30; Published: 2026-3-12

ABSTRACT

The Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) launched by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in 2025 represents a paradigm shift in education towards a humanistic and spiritual approach, particularly in early childhood education (PAUD). This study aims to analyze the philosophical basis and conceptual framework of KBC in the context of PAUD. The research method used a literature review with content analysis of Ministry of Religious Affairs policy documents, Islamic education literature, and humanistic education theory. The results of the study show that KBC is built on three main foundations, namely: (1) rahmah ilahiyyah as the theological basis of education, (2) empathetic pedagogical relationships between teachers and children as the core of learning, and (3) the holistic integration of cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions. These findings confirm that the CBC functions not only as a pedagogical approach but also as an ethical-spiritual framework that reorients the goals of education, the role of teachers, and the learning climate in early childhood education. Thus, the Love-Based Curriculum has the potential to become a conceptual model for humanistic, religious, and transformative early childhood education.

Keywords: *Love-Based Curriculum; PAUD; Rahmah; Islamic Education; Literature Review*

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (PAUD) is a fundamental phase in the development of a child's character, social attitudes, and spiritual awareness.

However, early childhood education practices still tend to emphasize cognitive achievement and under-optimize students' affective and spiritual dimensions (Rahmawati & Hidayat, 2022). This orientation has implications for the development of students who excel academically but lack empathy, social awareness, and emotional balance.

In response to this situation, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia introduced the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) as a new paradigm for national education in 2025. This curriculum places the values of compassion (*rahmah*), empathy, and justice at the core of the educational process, particularly in the context of Islamic education and PAUD. The KBC emphasizes that education is not solely oriented toward learning outcomes, but rather a learning process that honors children as subjects endowed with human innate potential.

From an Islamic educational perspective, love is understood as the spirit of education that animates the process of moral formation and spiritual awareness. Al-Ghazali emphasized that true education is education of the heart, namely the effort to instill good manners and compassion as a manifestation of worship to Allah SWT (Al-Ghazali, as quoted in Mahmud, 2021). This principle aligns with the humanistic educational approach, which emphasizes empathy, unconditional acceptance, and appreciation for students' potential (Rogers, 1983).

Based on this background, this research aims to conceptually examine the Love-Based Curriculum through a literature review approach. The focus of the study includes the philosophical and theological foundations of the Love-Based Curriculum, its basic principles, and its relevance to the development of early childhood education. This study is expected to provide a conceptual contribution to strengthening the humanistic, religious, and character-based paradigm of early childhood education.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a library research method. The study focused on a conceptual and normative analysis of the Love-Based Curriculum launched by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in 2025. Data sources included official Ministry policy documents, scientific books, and national and international journal articles relevant to Islamic education, early childhood education (PAUD), and humanistic educational theory.

Data collection was conducted through documentation studies and scientific literature searches using academic databases. Data analysis employed content analysis techniques to identify key themes, values, and concepts related

to the value of mercy (rahmah), pedagogical relationships, and the integration of child development dimensions. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation and critical cross-literature review.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Philosophical Foundation of the Love-Based Curriculum

The study's findings indicate that the Love-Based Curriculum is rooted in an Islamic theological perspective that places divine mercy as the ontological principle of education. Education is understood as a process of developing a complete human being, inseparable from the values of compassion and etiquette. This perspective strengthens the function of education as worship and a means of internalizing human values.

Theoretically, the Love-Based Curriculum aligns with humanistic education, which emphasizes empathetic relationships and unconditional acceptance in the learning process (Rogers, 1983). The integration of these two perspectives positions love as the ethical foundation of education, not merely a methodological approach.

Conceptual Summary: The philosophical foundation of the Love-Based Curriculum affirms love as the fundamental principle of education, integrating Islamic theological values and modern humanism.

B. Basic Principles of the Love-Based Curriculum

This study identifies four main principles of the Love-Based Curriculum: (1) love as the foundation of educational values, (2) teachers as empathetic figures and moral guides, (3) children as dignified subjects of education, and (4) a safe and loving learning environment. These principles shift the orientation of education from instructional to relational.

In the context of Early Childhood Education (PAUD), these principles encourage learning practices that emphasize role models, the instilling of values, and positive emotional relationships between teachers and children.

Conceptual Summary: The KBC principle reorients PAUD education from an instructional approach to a relational approach based on compassion.

C. Conceptual Implementation in PAUD

The implementation of KBC at the PAUD level is realized through a child-friendly learning approach, meaningful play, and empathetic communication. Teachers act as facilitators of children's emotional and spiritual development, not merely transmitters of material.

This approach aligns with the concept of ta'dīb in Islamic education, which emphasizes the formation of good manners through role models and humanistic

relationships. The value of love is internalized through enjoyable and non-judgmental daily learning experiences.

Conceptual Summary: The implementation of KBC positions learning experiences as a space for internalizing the values of love and good manners from an early age.

D. Relevance to 21st-Century Education

The Love-Based Curriculum has strong relevance to 21st-century education, which emphasizes the development of social and emotional skills. The value of love serves as an ethical foundation for developing creativity, communication, and collaboration, while maintaining a humanitarian orientation.

Conceptual Summary: The Love-Based Curriculum enriches 21st-century education with an ethical-spiritual dimension based on mercy.

CONCLUSION

The Love-Based Curriculum is an educational paradigm that places compassion at the core of the entire learning process. The study results indicate that the Love-Based Curriculum serves as an ethical-spiritual framework that reorients educational goals, the role of teachers, and the learning climate in early childhood education. This curriculum has the potential to strengthen humanistic, religious, and character-based early childhood education. Therefore, the Love-Based Curriculum is worthy of consideration as a conceptual model in the development of Islamic early childhood education.

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