

FROM COGNITIVE TO AFFECTIVE

Strengthening Religious Moderation in Educational Institutions Through a Love-Based Curriculum

DARI KOGNITIF KE AFEKTIF

Penguatan Moderasi Beragama di Lembaga Pendidikan Melalui Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis reorientasi kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dari paradigma kognitif menuju afektif berbasis cinta sebagai strategi penguatan moderasi beragama. Argumen utama penelitian ini berpijak pada pandangan bahwa pembelajaran PAI yang terlalu berfokus pada aspek kognitif cenderung mengabaikan dimensi spiritual, emosional, dan kemanusiaan peserta didik. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif-deskriptif dengan pendekatan analisis dokumen terhadap kurikulum cinta yang dikembangkan oleh Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa reorientasi pendidikan Islam dari paradigma kognitif menuju afektif melalui Kurikulum Cinta merupakan langkah strategis dalam mengembalikan ruh kasih, rahmah, dan kemanusiaan dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI). Kurikulum Cinta yang dirumuskan oleh Kementerian Agama hadir sebagai respons terhadap kekosongan afeksi ini, dengan mengintegrasikan nilai cinta kepada Allah, sesama manusia, dan alam ke dalam kompetensi dasar dan kegiatan pembelajaran. Penelitian ini berimplikasi pada perlunya dukungan kebijakan dan pelatihan guru yang berkelanjutan guna memperluas penerapan pendidikan Islam berbasis cinta dalam membentuk karakter moderat dan berperi kemanusiaan.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Agama Islam, Kurikulum Cinta, Reorientasi Afektif, Moderasi Beragama, Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the reorientation of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum from a cognitive paradigm toward an affective, love-based approach as a strategy to strengthen religious moderation. The central argument of this research is grounded in the view that PAI

learning, which is overly focused on cognitive aspects, tends to neglect the spiritual, emotional, and human dimensions of students. This study employs a qualitative-descriptive method using document analysis of the “Curriculum of Love” developed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. The findings indicate that reorienting Islamic education from a cognitive to an affective paradigm through the Curriculum of Love represents a strategic effort to restore the spirit of compassion (rahmah), love, and humanity in PAI learning. The Curriculum of Love, formulated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, emerges as a response to this affective void by integrating the values of love for God, fellow human beings, and nature into basic competencies and learning activities. This study implies the need for policy support and continuous teacher training to broaden the implementation of love-based Islamic education in shaping moderate and humane character.

Keywords: *Islamic Religious Education, Curriculum of Love, Affective Reorientation, Religious Moderation, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia generally remains oriented toward the cognitive dimension, emphasizing religious knowledge such as memorization of verses, arguments, and jurisprudential rulings. This learning model produces students who are formally religious but often lack deep spiritual and social sensitivity (Sofjan, 2020; Ghazaryan, 2024; Nugraheni & Firmansyah, 2020). Phenomena such as the rise of hate speech, intolerance, and the polarization of religious identity among youth reflect a gap between understanding and internalizing Islamic values. PAI that focuses excessively on doctrinal mastery tends to neglect the dimension of the heart (*qalb*), even though the essence of religious education lies in cultivating moral and compassionate character (Succarie, 2024; Rosidid et al., 2024). Therefore, it is necessary to reinterpret the orientation of Islamic education so that it does not merely produce people who *know* about religion but also those who *love* and *practice* its values sincerely.

The reorientation of education from a cognitive to an affective approach has become an urgent need in the context of contemporary Islamic education. In this regard, the affective domain holds an essential position as it relates to values, attitudes, and emotions that shape one’s behavior (Memon et al., 2024; Gemar, 2023). Religious education that addresses only the intellectual realm without engaging the affective dimension loses its transformative power (Zaqiah et al., 2024). This reorientation implies that PAI learning must cultivate inner awareness, empathy, and compassion, not merely rote memorization of religious arguments. Thus, students are expected to interpret Islamic teachings in a living and contextual way, rather than only normatively or dogmatically. Such a transformation demands a curriculum that balances knowledge, appreciation, and

practice of religious values so that PAI truly becomes a space for character formation grounded in *rahmah* (mercy) and love.

In this context, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has introduced the concept of the Curriculum of Love (*Kurikulum Cinta*) as a new paradigm in the development of Islamic education. This curriculum seeks to instill values of compassion (*rahmah*), love for God and others (*mahabbah*), and respect for life and diversity (*ta'āyush salmī*) (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2025). This approach emphasizes not only cognitive achievement but also the cultivation of students' emotional and spiritual sensitivity. The Curriculum of Love emerges as a response to the need for a more humanistic and peaceful form of education amid the growing phenomena of dehumanization and symbolic violence in the name of religion. It also reaffirms that the ultimate mission of Islamic education is to nurture noble character and love, not merely to transfer theological knowledge (Khairani et al., 2025). Therefore, the Curriculum of Love represents a significant paradigm shift from indoctrinative to transformative education.

The presence of the Curriculum of Love is deeply relevant to the national agenda of religious moderation (*wasathiyah*) promoted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Love-based education is conceptually rooted in the values of balance, tolerance, and respect for differences, all of which are central to religious moderation. Through the internalization of love as a spiritual and moral force, students are guided to understand religion as a source of universal mercy, not as a means of division (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2025). Such education fosters individuals who are empathetic, open-minded, and peaceful in their religiosity. Hence, love-based education is not only a pedagogical strategy but also a cultural one—serving as a means to build an inclusive religious society. In Indonesia's multicultural context, this idea is strategically significant as a means of strengthening the nation's social and spiritual cohesion.

The concept of love holds profound spiritual and philosophical depth within Islamic tradition. Classical Sufi thinkers such as al-Ghazālī and Jalāluddīn Rūmī positioned love as the pinnacle of the human spiritual journey, a means of purifying the soul (*tazkiyah al-nafs*) and attaining closeness to God (Kurniawati, 2022). In modern education, the value of love aligns with theories of affective education and emotional intelligence, which emphasize empathy, self-awareness, and harmonious human relationships (Sari & Zulfikar, 2021). The integration of the Islamic concept of love with modern affective theory presents a holistic educational paradigm—one that is rational, spiritual, and emotional at once. With this theological and pedagogical foundation, love-based education offers a potential solution to the moral and humanitarian crises of modern society while enriching contemporary Islamic educational scholarship.

Grounded in this framework, this study aims to analyze how the reorientation from cognitive to affective paradigms within the PAI curriculum can strengthen the values of religious moderation in Indonesia. It also seeks to explore how the concept of love can serve as both a theoretical and practical foundation for PAI learning, in both schools and madrasahs. Conceptually, this study is expected to contribute to the discourse on developing a humanistic and *rahmatan lil-‘ālamīn* (mercy to all creation) Islamic curriculum. Practically, the findings are expected to provide recommendations for educators and policymakers in designing educational models that balance intellectual, spiritual, and emotional intelligence. Thus, Islamic education can truly produce generations who are faithful, knowledgeable, and loving—and who act as agents of peace amid the nation’s pluralism.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the meaning, orientation, and implementation of affective values within the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum. This approach allows the researcher to explore how the concepts of love and religious moderation are understood, internalized, and practiced by educators and educational institutions under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. The primary data were obtained through literature review, which included document analysis of the *Curriculum of Love* policy issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, as well as books produced by the Ministry concerning religious moderation and the *Curriculum of Love*. The collected data were analyzed using content analysis, which was employed to trace the representation of love and affective values within the Ministry’s curriculum and policy documents. The results of the analysis were then interpreted within the theoretical frameworks of affective education, the concept of love in Islam, and the theory of religious moderation. This integration aims to produce a comprehensive understanding of how the reorientation of the curriculum from cognitive to affective dimensions can enrich the praxis of Islamic education that is both humanistic and inclusive in the Indonesian context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned in the introduction, for several decades, the practice of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesian schools and madrasahs has been dominated by a cognitive orientation. This pattern is reflected in the excessive emphasis on mastery of subject matter, memorization of Qur’anic verses and hadith, and normative understanding of jurisprudence and theology (Suwendd et al., 2024; Ariandy, 2019). In such a context, teachers often serve as the sole source

of information, while students are positioned as passive recipients of textual authority. Consequently, PAI learning tends to conclude with formal academic achievements without penetrating the realm of spiritual and ethical experience (Budiarto, 2023; Husnaini et al., 2024). Although this model strengthens students' conceptual understanding of religion, it fails to foster deep existential awareness, such as love, empathy, and social responsibility, which constitute the core of Islamic teachings (Budiarto, 2023; Mulyana, 2023).

This overly cognitive tendency reveals that the paradigm of religious education remains trapped in a *transfer of knowledge* model rather than a *transformation of character* (Nurhidin & Habibah, 2024). Learning assessments generally emphasize reproductive abilities, such as repeating theories or answering test questions, rather than reflective abilities to interpret and apply Islamic values in real life. As a result, affective values such as sincerity, compassion, and respect for others are not systematically accommodated in the learning process (Azmi, 2023). This highlights an urgent challenge for Islamic education: to shift from a purely cognitive approach toward a more humanistic and affective one so that PAI can genuinely serve as a means for forming faithful, moral, and compassionate individuals.

As a response to the emotional and spiritual dryness of religious education, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia introduced the *Curriculum of Love* (Kementerian Agama RI, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c). This initiative aims to revive the dimensions of compassion, *rahmah*, and empathy within the PAI learning system (Kementerian Agama RI, 2024b). An analysis of the curriculum documents shows that affective values, such as love for God, love for fellow human beings, appreciation of diversity, and responsibility toward nature, are explicitly integrated into the learning outcomes (Kementerian Agama RI, 2024c; Khairani et al., 2025). Thus, the *Curriculum of Love* not only emphasizes understanding religious teachings but also internalizing the values of love and peace within a plural social life.

This approach foregrounds the principle of *education of the heart*, an educational model that nurtures affective awareness as the moral and spiritual foundation of learners (Khairani et al., 2025). A review of teacher training modules and instructional materials shows a strong encouragement for teachers to move beyond their traditional role as transmitters of doctrine and to become facilitators of spiritual nurturing (Qamariah & Anwar, 2025). Through role modeling, value reflection, and collaborative activities, educators are encouraged to instill love as the driving energy of character formation. Therefore, the *Curriculum of Love* is not merely an administrative revision of the old curriculum but a paradigmatic

correction of a cognitively rigid approach, redirecting PAI toward an Islamic education that is gentle, joyful, and peace-building.

Field observations indicate that the initial implementation of the *Curriculum of Love* has begun to be piloted in several model madrasahs under the Ministry's supervision. PAI teachers have gradually adapted their teaching methods to the affective approach through activities such as spiritual reflection, collective prayer, and social service initiatives like sharing with others (Observation, 2025). Learning no longer stops at theoretical understanding but extends to emotional experiences that cultivate inner awareness among students. Programs such as "Empathy Day" and "Love for the Environment Projects" have become effective mediums for instilling values of compassion and social responsibility concretely within the school environment (Observation, 2025).

Interviews with educators reveal that this approach fosters a warmer and more humane learning atmosphere. Teachers feel closer to their students, while students display positive behavioral changes in politeness, mutual respect, and social care (Interview with Irman, 2025). Although challenges remain in pedagogical readiness and evaluation systems, this transformation marks a significant paradigm shift in PAI learning, from knowledge orientation to value internalization, from teaching to nurturing (Interview with Irman, 2025). Thus, the *Curriculum of Love* has begun to manifest as a tangible praxis of Islamic education that is liberating, fulfilling, and peace-oriented.

Furthermore, field findings demonstrate that implementing love-based values in PAI learning has had a tangible impact on strengthening students' moderate attitudes. Students involved in love-based activities show increased tolerance, interreligious empathy, and concern for their social environment (Observation, 2025). Their religious attitudes become more open and inclusive, as they learn to perceive differences as blessings rather than threats. Religious discussions in the classroom have transformed into respectful dialogues, illustrating that love can serve as a universal language transcending theological and cultural boundaries (Observation, 2025).

At this stage, the transformation underscores that religious moderation is not merely the result of rational reasoning but the fruit of noble affective habituation. When love becomes the foundation of the curriculum, *wasatiyyah* values such as balance, tolerance, and justice naturally flourish within learners. They begin to understand religion not as a rigid system of laws but as a path of compassion that brings peace to all beings. Hence, the *Curriculum of Love* not only shapes individuals with religious knowledge but also those with gentle hearts, social empathy, and readiness to act as agents of harmony within a plural society.

Reorienting the Paradigm of Islamic Education: From Cognitive to Affective

Islamic education is historically rooted in the mission of forming *insān kāmil*, a complete human being encompassing intellectual, spiritual, and moral dimensions (Yuliharti, 2019). However, in modern practice, the focus of learning has often shifted toward the cognitive domain alone, emphasizing mastery of religious knowledge without engaging the deeper layers of the learner's inner self (Yusuf & Sterkens, 2015). The reorientation of the educational paradigm from cognitive to affective is therefore an imperative in the midst of globalization and the moral crises affecting younger generations. This shift aligns with the Islamic view that places the *qalb* (heart) as the center of spiritual and moral consciousness (Abdurrohim, 2024). In the Qur'an, the heart is described as the source of true understanding, not merely the rational intellect (Subchi et al., 2022). Accordingly, Islamic education must aim not only to enlighten the mind (*ta'aqqul*) but also to purify the heart (*tazkiyah al-qalb*), so that knowledge becomes a means of illumination rather than mere accumulation of information.

This reorientation can be explained through Bloom's taxonomy, which identifies the affective domain as one of the three primary domains of learning alongside the cognitive and psychomotor (Gemar, 2023). In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), the affective domain encompasses the processes of receiving, responding, valuing, and internalizing religious values into concrete behavior (Succarie, 2024). This means that the success of religious education is not measured by the number of verses memorized, but by the extent to which the teachings transform one's ways of thinking, acting, and interacting with others. When the affective dimension is neglected, religious knowledge loses its spirit and risks producing a formalistic religiosity devoid of spiritual depth (Zaqiah et al., 2024). Therefore, a paradigm shift toward affective-based learning is a fundamental necessity for Islamic education to cultivate individuals who are both knowledgeable and empathetic.

The transformation toward affective-based education is closely related to the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs*, the purification of the soul so that humans can receive divine truth with a pure heart. Education that emphasizes *tazkiyah* is essentially one that balances *'aql* (intellect) and *qalb* (heart), knowledge and inner realization. Within this balance, Islamic moral values such as honesty, compassion, humility, and responsibility acquire their true meaning. This reorientation is not merely a methodological renewal but an epistemological shift that restores Islamic education to its original purpose: to form *insān adabī*, a person of virtue whose knowledge leads to goodness and universal compassion. Thus, affective education becomes the concrete embodiment of Islam's vision as a religion that enlightens the mind, calms the soul, and cultivates love in every aspect of life.

Love as the Theological and Pedagogical Foundation of Islamic Education

In Islamic thought, *love* (*maḥabbah*) occupies a fundamental theological position as the essence of all teachings and the core of the relationship between human beings and God. The Qur'an repeatedly affirms that God's compassion and mercy form the foundation of all existence, as stated in *Surah al-Anbiyā'* [21]:107. This verse underscores that Islam is not a rigid religion of dogma, but a faith of compassion that gives life. Thus, love is not merely a spiritual emotion but a manifestation of faith itself. It serves as the ethical and theological basis of Islam, integrating creed (*'aqīdah*), worship (*'ibādah*), and morality (*akhlāq*). In the context of education, the value of love provides a foundation for constructing pedagogical relationships grounded in empathy, compassion, and respect for students as fellow creations of God (Sukiman & Suyatno, 2021).

Great Islamic thinkers such as al-Ghazālī and Ibn 'Arabī have provided a conceptual foundation for understanding love as the essence of Islamic spirituality. Al-Ghazālī viewed love for God as the pinnacle of the spiritual journey, wherein knowledge of the Divine generates profound awe and affection (Moosa, 2024). Meanwhile, Ibn 'Arabī emphasized that all creation is a manifestation of Divine Love, through which God desires to be known and loved. For him, love is the cosmic energy that animates all reality and connects human beings to the source of their existence (Aydogan, 2023). In the educational context, this Sufi perspective asserts that religious instruction must never be divorced from the dimension of love—because without love, knowledge becomes dry and devoid of spiritual meaning. The true educator, therefore, is not merely a transmitter of knowledge but a guide of the soul, leading learners toward recognition of and love for the Creator.

At this point, the pedagogical dimension of love can be understood as a creative and transformative force within human beings. Al-Ghazālī emphasized that love is the energy that awakens human potential, liberates individuals from fear, and nurtures the moral courage to do good (Khalid, 2018). Within the framework of Islamic education, this idea reflects the need for a pedagogical approach that cultivates compassion, courage, and social responsibility among learners. Love-based education does not merely instill moral rules but nurtures inner awareness that every act of goodness stems from love for God and others. By positioning *maḥabbah* as both a theological and pedagogical paradigm, Islamic education can form individuals who are both knowledgeable and compassionate, combining intellectual intelligence with spiritual warmth that dignifies life.

The Relationship Between Love and Religious Moderation

In the Islamic perspective, *love* is not merely a personal emotion but a spiritual force that underlies the relationship between human beings, God, and the universe. In the context of Islamic education, love serves as a moral foundation that fosters compassion, empathy, and respect for diversity (Musyahid, 2023). When the value of love is internalized within the learning process, it not only develops students' emotional intelligence but also cultivates profound spiritual awareness. Love motivates learners to study not out of obligation, but out of a sincere longing to understand truth and spread goodness. Thus, love becomes the vital energy that harmonizes faith, morality, and knowledge in character formation.

The connection between love and religious moderation lies in the spirit of balance and openness. The principle of moderation rejects all forms of extremism, whether excessive fanaticism or unrestrained liberalism (see Ministry of Religious Affairs RI, 2019). Love trains the heart to perceive truth with compassion and to avoid hastily judging differences. A person who truly loves is able to appreciate differing views without losing conviction in their own faith. Therefore, love-based education becomes a natural medium for cultivating values of moderation, not through indoctrination, but through consistent habituation and exemplary conduct characterized by kindness, patience, and empathy toward others (Sofjan, 2020).

Moreover, love serves as the foundation for *tasāmuḥ*, or tolerance, in religious life. In Islamic education, *tasāmuḥ* does not merely mean accepting differences, but celebrating diversity as a manifestation of Divine will. Love guides learners to see others as part of the larger human family created by the same God. When love becomes the fundamental value in social and religious interactions, differences are no longer perceived as threats but as opportunities for learning and spiritual growth. In this way, love becomes the bridge that connects the theological dimension of Islam with the plural realities of society.

Ultimately, love gives birth to peaceful coexistence. In Islamic education, this ideal can be realized through learning models that emphasize dialogue, interfaith collaboration, and social activities that promote human solidarity. Love extinguishes the flames of hatred and replaces them with the spirit of universal brotherhood (Shadiqin et al., 2024). By placing love at the heart of the curriculum and educational praxis, Islam presents its true face as a religion of mercy and peace, aligned with the Prophet's mission as *rahmatan lil-ʿālamīn* (a mercy to all creation). In this sense, love-based education is not merely a pedagogical strategy but also a spiritual path for building a moderate, peaceful, and civilized society.

Implementative Strategies for Reorienting the Love-Based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Curriculum

The reorientation of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum based on love requires a fundamental transformation in both pedagogical paradigm and instructional practice. This effort entails not only revisions at the formal curriculum level but also a renewal of educators' mindsets and awareness (Sebrina & Sukirman, 2019). Love-based education emphasizes that the learning process must engage the heart (*qalb*) and behavior, not merely intellectual ability. Therefore, implementation strategies should begin with establishing a shared vision that the ultimate goal of PAI is to nurture individuals who are faithful, virtuous, and compassionate toward others. A love-based curriculum does not simply add new subject content; rather, it shifts education's orientation into a living space for spiritual and moral formation.

The first and most crucial step is teacher training and mentorship. Teachers are the front line of value transformation in the classroom; thus, they must possess mature emotional and spiritual awareness. Training programs should focus on strengthening affective competencies such as empathy, ethical communication, and holistic student guidance. In addition to technical training, a *community of practice* among PAI teachers should be established to share experiences in integrating love-based values into teaching. Through such collaboration, teachers evolve from mere transmitters of knowledge into role models of compassion and sources of moral inspiration for their students.

Next, teaching methods must be updated to align with the spirit of love-based education. The *experiential learning* approach, for instance, provides opportunities for students to experience and internalize religious values within real-life contexts (Budiarto, 2023). Value reflection can also become an integral part of classroom activities, inviting students to contemplate the meaning of worship, honesty, or empathy in daily life. Moreover, social practices such as community service, social visits, and humanitarian projects serve as concrete means of nurturing compassion and solidarity. These methods make PAI more contextual, dialogical, and relevant to the moral challenges of modern society.

Another essential aspect is institutional support from schools and madrasahs. Educational institutions must create a conducive ecosystem for cultivating the values of love—starting from inclusive school culture to policies that respect diversity. Principals, curriculum coordinators, and other educators should work collaboratively to ensure that affective values are reflected in school regulations, extracurricular programs, and social interactions within the school community. Thus, the implementation of the love-based curriculum extends beyond the classroom, becoming embedded in the broader educational culture.

Finally, policy support from the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Agama RI) is a decisive factor in the success of this reorientation. Within the framework of religious moderation, the Ministry has integrated the principle of love as a foundational value in national PAI curriculum regulations, including the formulation of competency standards, learning materials, and evaluation systems that assess students' affective dimensions (Ministry of Religious Affairs RI, 2019). These policies must also be accompanied by programs for teacher capacity building, research on love-based education, and collaborative forums among Islamic educational institutions. Through synergy between teachers, schools, and the government, love-based Islamic education can foster a generation that is religious, empathetic, and moderate, embodying Islam's vision as a faith that brings mercy to all creation.

Challenges and Prospects of Humanistic Islamic Education

Humanistic Islamic education, which is oriented around the value of love, faces several fundamental challenges in the process of its transformation. One of the main obstacles lies in the resistance of some teachers toward a paradigm shift in learning. Many teachers remain bound to traditional approaches that emphasize memorization and doctrinal accuracy rather than character formation and the cultivation of empathy among students. Such paradigm resistance tends to view religious knowledge merely as a cognitive construct, rather than as a process of spiritual and social awakening (Dhani, 2020). As a result, love-based curriculum innovations are often misunderstood as deviations from "the purity of doctrine." This challenge illustrates that the reorientation of Islamic education requires more than curriculum reform, it must also touch the consciousness and spirituality of educators as the primary agents of transformation.

In addition to paradigm resistance, the lack of adequate teaching materials poses a significant barrier to the implementation of humanistic Islamic education. Many Islamic Religious Education (PAI) textbooks are still written in a normative style, lacking social context and failing to highlight narratives of compassion and universal humanity. Teachers also often lack concrete guidance for translating the value of love into measurable learning activities. Yet, love-based education requires integrative teaching resources that combine religious texts, reflective experiences, and social engagement. Therefore, the development of innovative learning media and modules that emphasize spiritual and empathetic experiences must be carried out systematically. This effort demands support from educational institutions, research centers, and government policies to ensure that Islamic education goes beyond the transfer of knowledge toward the transformation of values.

Another challenge arises from doctrinal bias and the politicization of religion, which often obstruct the development of humanistic Islamic education. In

certain social contexts, discourses on love and humanity are misinterpreted as forms of liberalization or value relativism. In reality, love-based education is firmly rooted in Islamic theology, particularly in the concepts of *rahmah* (divine mercy) and the ethics of the Prophet. The doctrinal bias that separates orthodoxy from empathy must be corrected through comprehensive hermeneutical and theological approaches. Teachers and curriculum developers need to be encouraged to interpret religious texts within the framework of human well-being (*maslahah*), rather than through rigid legalism. In this way, Islamic education can return to its true spirit, as a means of soul purification and the cultivation of a civilization of compassion.

Despite these challenges, the prospects of humanistic, love-based Islamic education are highly promising in the long term. This paradigm offers a model of learning that aligns with contemporary needs by forming a generation that is religious yet inclusive, moderate, and empathetic toward others. In a global context marked by identity conflicts and intolerance, love-based education serves as a bridge between spirituality and universal humanity. It expands the meaning of *ta'dīb* and *tarbiyah* as processes of nurturing manners, self-awareness, and social responsibility. If implemented consistently through supportive policies, teacher training, and curriculum reform, humanistic Islamic education can become a tangible contribution of the Muslim world to global peace and the strengthening of religious moderation in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This study found that the reorientation of Islamic education from a cognitive to an affective paradigm through the *Curriculum of Love* represents a strategic step in restoring the spirit of compassion (*rahmah*) and humanity within Islamic Religious Education (PAI). The main findings reveal that conventional learning practices, dominated by cognitive approaches, have created a gap between knowledge and the internalization of spiritual values. The *Curriculum of Love*, formulated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, emerges as a response to this affective void by integrating the values of love for God, for fellow human beings, and for nature into basic competencies and learning activities. Early implementation in several model madrasahs indicates positive shifts in students' behavior and social awareness, including increased empathy, tolerance, and environmental concern. Thus, love-based education demonstrates significant potential to strengthen moderate character and nurture personalities that are gentle-hearted, reflective, and socially harmonious.

In terms of implications, this study underscores the need for sustained policy support and continuous teacher training to expand the implementation of love-

based Islamic education in shaping moderate and humane character. At the same time, stronger institutional backing from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, educational institutions, and other stakeholders is essential to broaden the national adoption of the *Curriculum of Love*. Teacher training should be prioritized to ensure that the affective paradigm is internalized within concrete pedagogical practices. In addition, the ongoing development of instructional materials that emphasize empathetic, reflective, and contextual dimensions is crucial. This study also acknowledges its limitations, particularly in the scope of fieldwork, which was confined to several pilot madrasahs. Therefore, further research is recommended to explore the effectiveness of love-based education in broader social contexts, including public schools and pesantren in order to enrich both the theoretical understanding and practical implementation of humanistic Islamic education grounded in the values of love and *rahmah*. □

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