

THE PHILOSOPHY AND CONCEPT OF THE LOVE CURRICULUM IN EDUCATION: A LITERATURE REVIEW ON INSTILLING THE VALUES OF LOVE, EMPATHY, TOLERANCE, AND HARMONY BASED ON ISLAMIC EDUCATION, HUMANISM, AND THE THEORY OF LOVE

ELMIWATI

Institut Agama Islam Miftahul Ulum Tanjungpinang
elmiwati@staimutanjungpinang.ac.id

Aslan

Universitas Sultan Muhammad Syafiuddin Sambas
aslanalbanjaryo66@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to describe the philosophy and concept of the love curriculum in the context of education, with a focus on instilling the values of love, empathy, tolerance, and harmony. The study was conducted through a literature review that integrated the perspectives of Islamic education, humanism, and the theory of love from educational psychology. The results of the study show that the love curriculum is an educational paradigm that balances spiritual, ethical, and emotional dimensions in the learning process. Islamic education provides a normative foundation through the teachings of rahmatan lil 'alamin, humanism emphasises respect for human dignity, while the theory of love emphasises the development of empathy as a skill that can be honed. The implementation of these values in the curriculum is expected to produce a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also emotionally and socially mature, and capable of building a harmonious society. This study concludes that the love curriculum can be a strategic alternative in facing educational challenges in the modern era.

Keywords: Love Curriculum, Compassion, Empathy, Tolerance, Harmony, Islamic Education, Humanism, Theory of Compassion, Character Education.

Introduction

Education is essentially not only a means of transferring knowledge, but also a vehicle for character building and the development of human values. However, the reality of education today tends to emphasise cognitive aspects and technical skills, while the affective dimensions related to love, empathy, and caring are often neglected. In fact, true education must be able to nurture well-rounded individuals, not merely intellectually intelligent, but also emotionally mature and moral.

The phenomena of violence, intolerance, and social alienation in various educational environments indicate a crisis of compassion. Children and adolescents are faced with situations of competition, academic pressure, and even discriminatory behaviour that actually fosters individualism. These conditions demonstrate the need to formulate a curriculum that emphasises the dimensions of love and compassion as the foundation of a humanistic and inclusive education (Aslan, 2019a).

The concept of a *love-based curriculum* emerged as a response to these issues. This curriculum emphasises instilling the values of compassion, empathy, tolerance, and harmony in all aspects of educational activities. The philosophy behind the curriculum of love underlines that education should not produce a generation that is intelligent but lacking in empathy, but rather a generation that is capable of forging peaceful social relationships, full of care, and respectful of differences (Dhungana, 2024) .

Islamic education offers a strong normative foundation for the development of a curriculum of love. As contained in the teachings of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, Islam places compassion as the main principle in building human life. Through a *tarbiyah* approach that emphasises the formation of character and human values, Islam provides an example that the goal of education is to produce individuals with good character who contribute positively to society(Judijanto & Aslan, 2025) ;(Purike & Aslan, 2025) . Meanwhile, the humanistic perspective emphasises that every human being has equal dignity and is entitled to an education that liberates and humanises them. In the humanistic tradition, education is seen as an effort to develop autonomous individuals who are sensitive to others and capable of creating social harmony (Firmansyah & Aslan, 2025a) ; (Firmansyah & Aslan, 2025b) . Therefore, the integration of humanistic values into the love curriculum can strengthen the philosophical foundation for the development of a generation that upholds tolerance and social justice.

Apart from Islam and humanism, *the theory of compassion* from a psychological perspective makes an important contribution to the concept of the love curriculum. This theory emphasises that compassion and empathy are emotional skills that can be taught, practised, and nurtured through a supportive learning environment. Through this approach, students are shaped into individuals who are able to understand the suffering of others and strive to alleviate that burden (Zhang, 2022) .

The love curriculum thus presents itself as a synthesis of three major paradigms: Islamic spirituality, modern humanism, and the psychology of compassion. By integrating these three, it is hoped that a balanced educational framework will be created: spiritually profound, socially inclusive, and emotionally strong. This comprehensive approach is important in responding to global educational challenges that tend to be competitive but often neglect humanitarian aspects (Braden, 2025) .

In the Indonesian context, the idea of a love-based curriculum is highly relevant. As a country with ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, Indonesia needs an educational model that can maintain social cohesion while fostering a spirit of diversity. Love-based education not only serves to build harmonious relationships between people, but also strengthens national brotherhood amid plurality (Zhao, 2021) .

Furthermore, the love-based curriculum is also in line with the global agenda on education for *peace* and character education. UNESCO, for example, emphasises the importance of tolerance, solidarity, and respect for human rights in education. Thus, the development of a love-based curriculum is not only relevant locally and religiously, but

also has universal significance in striving for a more peaceful future for education (Barthwal-Datta, 2024) . However, formulating a love-based curriculum conceptually requires in-depth study. A literature review can be an appropriate approach, especially in collecting, analysing, and synthesising ideas about love-based education from Islamic, humanistic, and compassion theory perspectives. Through literature analysis, the love curriculum can be systematically mapped in the form of a philosophical framework as well as an implementative guideline (Loreman, 2011) .

This study thus attempts to explore the philosophy and concept of a love-based curriculum through a literature review. The focus of the study is on how the values of compassion, empathy, tolerance, and harmony are articulated in Islamic, humanistic, and theoretical-psychological education, and then synthesised into a conceptual curriculum framework. This comparative study is expected to produce a comprehensive understanding of the relevance of these three foundations of thought in the development of love-oriented education.

With this framework, this study is expected to contribute to the development of curriculum theory while offering a conceptual model rooted in spiritual tradition, based on humanistic values, and oriented towards emotional well-being. Ultimately, the love curriculum can become an alternative paradigm to respond to the humanitarian crisis in education and provide more meaningful, peaceful, and liberating education.

Research Method

The research method used in this study is library research with a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were obtained from various relevant literature sources such as books, journal articles, previous research results, academic publications, and conceptual documents related to Islamic education, humanism, and the theory of love (Eliyah & Aslan, 2025) . The analysis process was carried out through the stages of identification, classification, and interpretation of literature, then synthesised to find patterns, relationships, and concepts relevant to the development of a love curriculum. With this method, the study is expected to produce comprehensive theoretical ideas regarding the philosophy and concepts of a love curriculum in education(Setiyo & Waluyo, 2025) .

Results and Discussion

Philosophy and Concepts of the Love Curriculum

The philosophy of education is essentially the foundation of thought that shapes the direction, objectives, and methods of a learning process. In the modern context, education often places too much emphasis on cognitive and productivity aspects, thereby neglecting the emotional-spiritual dimension. Therefore, the idea of *a love curriculum* has emerged as a new paradigm based on the values of compassion, empathy, tolerance, and harmony as the core of education (Malik, 2025) .

Philosophically, love is understood as the most fundamental force that connects humans with God, fellow humans, and nature. In the tradition of Islamic education, love is expressed through the concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, which places compassion as the source of ethics, morals, and social relations. This indicates that love-based education actually serves to develop noble human nature (Baok et al., 2025).

The love curriculum is also rooted in the tradition of humanism, which emphasises the importance of respect for human dignity. From a humanistic perspective, love is understood not only as an individual feeling, but also as a social ethos that nurtures freedom, equality, and solidarity. The love curriculum is thus a liberating curriculum that encourages students to become active subjects in the learning process while also being able to empathise with others (Kirby, 2023).

From an educational psychology perspective, *compassion theory* asserts that empathy and caring are not merely innate tendencies, but emotional skills that can be cultivated through education. This means that if the curriculum is consciously designed to cultivate compassion, then students will grow into individuals who are able to feel the suffering of others and be motivated to seek solutions (Lin, 2023).

The philosophy of the love curriculum also views education as a means of social healing. Amidst rampant conflict, discrimination, and individualism, this curriculum aims to sow the seeds of peace and harmony. The learning process is no longer seen merely as the transmission of information, but as a space for loving dialogue that enlivens the relationship between teachers and students as partners in goodness (Kass & Marcus, 2016).

Conceptually, the love curriculum places the affective dimension on par with the cognitive and psychomotor dimensions. The values of compassion and empathy are not complementary, but rather the core of the educational process. Therefore, learning methods need to be directed towards strengthening personal interactions, collaborative group work, and reflection on spiritual and humanitarian values (Li, 2025).

From an Islamic education perspective, the love curriculum is oriented towards the formation of *insan kamil*. This concept emphasises a balance between intellectual intelligence, moral strength, and gentleness. Education rooted in love means striving to foster *akhlakul karimah*, which arises from a gentle heart, full of mercy, and with a high level of social awareness. Within the framework of humanism, the love curriculum emphasises inclusive education. This means that every student is respected as a unique individual, entitled to fair treatment and given the freedom to develop according to their respective potential. Love in this case is manifested in respect for diversity of identity, whether in terms of gender, culture or belief (Imad, 2024).

From the perspective of compassion theory, a love curriculum can be designed by providing space for empathy training, conflict resolution, and compassionate communication skills. Teachers play a role not only as educators but also as role models

of compassion who are able to instil the value of empathy in daily interactions. Thus, a love curriculum makes schools an ecosystem of love and peace (Ampofo, 2025).

The love curriculum also contains a praxis dimension, namely practical application in life. The value of compassion is not only taught theoretically but also applied through direct experience, such as community service activities, social actions, and the habit of mutual cooperation. In this way, students not only learn about love but also experience it in real life (Firdaus, 2025).

Harmony is the primary goal of the love curriculum. Harmony here includes personal harmony (a calm and empathetic self), social harmony (peaceful relationships with others), and cosmic harmony (harmonious relationships with nature and the Creator). Through this harmony, love-based education can produce a generation that is not only intelligent but also balanced and moderate (Wang & et al., 2021).

The philosophy of the love-based curriculum rejects rigid, transactional, and short-term result-oriented approaches to education. Instead, the love-based curriculum views education as a long journey that humanises people, strengthens solidarity, and fosters concern for others. The value of love here also serves as an ethical framework for facing the challenges of globalisation, which tends to erode human values (Loreman, 2011).

Thus, the concept of the love curriculum is not only a normative idea but can also be realised in an operational form. The integration of Islamic education, humanism, and compassion theory can produce a curriculum design that absorbs spiritual wisdom, humanistic ethics, and an empathetic psychological approach. The result is a curriculum that balances intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects.

Overall, the philosophy and concept of the love curriculum emphasise that successful education is not only about producing intelligent and competitive individuals, but also individuals who are compassionate, tolerant, and harmonious. Such education is the answer to the humanitarian crisis in the modern era and the foundation for creating a peaceful, just, and loving world.

Implementation of the Values of Love, Empathy, Tolerance, and Harmony in the Curriculum

The implementation of the value of compassion in the curriculum begins with creating a safe, comfortable, and appreciative learning environment. Teachers must be able to build warm and supportive interpersonal relationships with students so that compassion grows naturally as the foundation for daily interactions at school. In the learning process, the value of compassion can be internalised through *student-centred learning* methods. This method allows teachers to be more sensitive to students' emotional needs and establish empathetic communication, which is an effective medium for instilling mutual love (Dhungana, 2024).

A curriculum that implements the value of empathy is presented through learning activities that involve direct experiences of understanding the feelings and conditions of others. For example, story-based learning, social case discussions, or collaborative projects that encourage students to put themselves in other people's shoes (Aslan & Sidabutar, 2025) . Teachers act as models of empathy by showing concern and sensitivity to the problems faced by students and the school community. This attitude is not only implied in words, but also in concrete actions such as helping students who are experiencing difficulties or creating an inclusive atmosphere without discrimination (Cahyono & Aslan, 2025) .

Tolerance is an important value that must be made a pillar of the love curriculum. Its implementation is carried out by integrating learning content that promotes understanding of cultural, religious, and social diversity as the nation's wealth and capital for peace. Students are encouraged to learn to appreciate differences through various strategies, such as cross-cultural dialogue, exchange of experiences between groups from different backgrounds, and multicultural learning that encourages them to see diversity as a learning opportunity, not a source of conflict (Saputra et al., 2024) ; (Aslan & Rasmita, 2025) .

Strengthening tolerance in curriculum practice also requires the involvement of the entire academic community in creating school rules and policies that guarantee the rights of every individual to be respected and free from all forms of discrimination and violence. The value of harmony is reflected in the implementation of learning that fosters togetherness, collaboration, and mutual respect among all school members. The developed curriculum must provide space for joint activities such as group work, social projects, and extracurricular activities that foster a spirit of solidarity and brotherhood(& Aslan, 2025) ;(Suryadi & Aslan, 2025) .

In this process, teachers act as facilitators who help students find common goals and build habits of respectful interaction. This can foster a sense of togetherness and reduce the potential for conflict between students from different backgrounds. It is also important to integrate these values into the hidden curriculum, i.e. values that are instilled indirectly through school culture, social norms, and daily interactions. A school environment that reflects love, empathy, and tolerance reinforces formal learning (Aslan, 2019b) ; (Aslan & Wahyudin, 2020) .

Character-based learning is a strategic method for internalising these values in a sustainable manner. Through character development, students are trained to make decisions based on love, empathy, and social awareness. The reinforcement of the values of compassion, empathy, tolerance, and harmony can also be maximised by involving parents and the community as partners in education. This collaboration creates an integrated learning ecosystem that supports the growth of these values in various social environments for children (Zhang, 2022) .

The implementation of these values is not limited to classroom activities but is also realised in the form of concrete programmes such as community service, humanitarian social activities, and discussion forums among youth groups that encourage dialogue and understanding across differences. In addition, the use of educational technology can be an effective means of teaching compassion and tolerance interactively through digital media that contain moral messages and simulations of social situations that challenge students' empathy skills (Braden, 2025).

Overall, the implementation of the values of compassion, empathy, tolerance, and harmony in the curriculum requires integration between pedagogical approaches, school culture, and community involvement. With this holistic implementation model, it is hoped that education will produce a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also emotionally and socially mature, ready to build a peaceful and harmonious society.

Conclusion

The first conclusion emphasises that the philosophy of a love-based curriculum in education places love, empathy, tolerance, and harmony as core values that must be embedded in every aspect of learning. Education does not solely focus on the mastery of knowledge, but more on the formation of a well-rounded character, noble morals, and the ability to establish harmonious social relationships. These values are an important foundation for building a peaceful and civilised society.

Second, the literature review shows that Islamic education, with its teachings of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, provides a solid spiritual foundation for the love curriculum, while humanism offers an ethical perspective that emphasises respect for human dignity and individual freedom. On the other hand, the theory of compassion from educational psychology adds a practical dimension through the development of empathy and caring as skills that can be trained and practised in an educational environment.

Thirdly, the integration of these three paradigms—Islamic spirituality, humanistic ethics, and the psychology of compassion—forms a comprehensive conceptual framework for the development of a curriculum of love. This curriculum is not only relevant locally in the context of Indonesia's diversity, but also has universal significance in educational efforts for peace and humanity. Thus, the love curriculum has the potential to become an alternative paradigm that can answer the challenges of education in the modern era, especially in fostering attitudes of empathy, tolerance, and harmony in society.

References

- Ampofo, J. (2025). Exploring the Role of Teacher Empathy in Student Mental Health and Engagement. *Frontiers in Psychology*.
- Aslan. (2019a, January 17). Pergeseran Nilai Di Masyarakat Perbatasan (Studi tentang Pendidikan dan Perubahan Sosial di Desa Temajuk Kalimantan Barat) [Disertasi dipublikasikan]. <https://idr.uin-antasari.ac.id/10997/>
- Aslan, A. (2019b). *HIDDEN CURRICULUM*. Pena Indis.
- Aslan, A., & Rasmita, R. (2025). EXPLORING CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TO YOUNG LEARNERS. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 2(11), Article 11.
- Aslan, A., & Sidabutar, H. (2025). APPLICATION OF PIAGET'S THEORY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 3(1), Article 1.
- Aslan & Wahyudin. (2020). *Kurikulum dalam Tantangan Perubahan*. Bookies Indonesia. <https://scholar.google.com/scholar?oi=bibs&hl=en&cluster=17745790780728460138>
- Baok, A., Sarnoto, M., & Yuliharti, N. (2025). Analisis Konseptual Kurikulum Cinta: Pendekatan Humanistik dan Pendidikan Islam. *Nusantara: Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia*, 5(2), 430–431. <https://doi.org/10.62491/njpi.2025.v5i2-13>
- Barthwal-Datta, M. (2024). Pedagogy as Care: Love, Loss, and Learning in the World Politics Classroom. *Journal of International and Comparative Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17550882241283591>
- Braden, E. (2025). Revolutionary Love: Centering the Full Humanity of Children. *Reading Research Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.592>
- Cahyono, D., & Aslan, A. (2025). THE ROLE AND CHALLENGES OF HONORARY TEACHERS IN THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM: A LITERATURE REVIEW. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIETY REVIEWS*, 3(5), Article 5.
- Dhungana, S. (2024). Ways of Enhancing Harmony among Teachers and Students: A Critical Reflection. *Journal of Transformative Praxis*.
- Elijah, E., & Aslan, A. (2025). STAKE'S EVALUATION MODEL: METODE PENELITIAN. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Indonesia*, 3(2), Article 2.
- Firdaus, S. A. (2025). Fostering Social Harmony: The Impact of Islamic Character Education. *Alishlah Journal*.
- Firmansyah, F., & Aslan, A. (2025a). EFFECTIVENESS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE LITERATURE. *INJOSEDU: INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIAL AND EDUCATION*, 2(2), Article 2.
- Firmansyah, F., & Aslan, A. (2025b). THE RELEVANCE OF STEAM EDUCATION IN PREPARING 21ST CENTURY STUDENTS. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 3(3), Article 3.
- Imad, M. (2024). Embracing Love as the Heart of Higher Education. *Frontiers in Education*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2024.1286113>
- Judijanto, L., & Aslan, A. (2025). ADDRESSING DISPARITIES IN MULTISECTORAL EDUCATION: LEARNING FROM AN INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE REVIEW. *Indonesian Journal of Education (INJOE)*, 5(1), Article 1.

- Kass, J., & Marcus, A. (2016). Curriculum of Love: Loveful Pedagogy in Education. *Interchange*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10780-016-9297-x>
- Kirby, J. N. (2023). Compassion as a Framework for Creating Individual and Social Well-being in Education. *Journal of Global Citizenship and Education*.
- Li, X. (2025). Curriculum Planning and Implementation Combining Mindfulness and Humanistic Theory. *Scientific Reports*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-95491-z>
- Lin, V. (2023). Compassion Education: Nurturing Empathy and Kindness in Classrooms. *Global Education Review*.
- Loreman, T. (2011). Pedagogical Love in Education: A New Approach. *Journal of Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022057411198001>
- Malik, M. (2025). A Hadith-Based Love Curriculum in Islamic Education. *Jurnal Ilmiah Al Mu'ashirah*, 22(2), 204–215. <https://doi.org/10.22373/jim.v22i2.30928>
- Pongpalilu, F., & Aslan, A. (2025). THE ROLE OF TEACHERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE IN SHAPING STUDENTS' CREATIVITY, CHARACTER, AND SOCIAL SENSITIVITY: A LITERATURE REVIEW. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 2(11), Article 11.
- Purike, E., & Aslan, A. (2025). A COMPARISON OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DIGITAL AND TRADITIONAL LEARNING IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. *Indonesian Journal of Education (INJOE)*, 5(1), Article 1.
- Saputra, H., Usman, S., Sakka, A. R., & Aslan, A. (2024). The Effect Of Using Learning Media On Learning Motivation About Creed and Morals At Mas Ushuluddin Singkawang. *IJGIE (International Journal of Graduate of Islamic Education)*, 6(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.37567/ijgie.v6i1.3698>
- Setiyo, M., & Waluyo, B. (2025). *Metodologi Penelitian dan Perancangan Eksperimen*. Unimma Press.
- Suryadi, Y., & Aslan. (2025). PENGELOLAAN STRES PADA GURU HONORER DALAM KONTEKS PENDIDIKAN: KAJIAN LITERATUR. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Indonesia*, 3(2), Article 2.
- Wang, X. & et al. (2021). Loving Pedagogy: Theory and Application in Language Teaching. *Language Teaching Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211046214>
- Zhang, Z. (2022). Toward the Role of Teacher Empathy in Students' Engagement in EFL Contexts. *Frontiers in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.9201024>
- Zhao, S. (2021). Reflection on Loving Pedagogy and Students' Engagement in Language Learning. *Frontiers in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.622348>