

From the Heart to the Classroom: Love-Based Indonesian Language Learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in South Sumatra

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze Indonesian language learning based on the Love-Based Curriculum at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah An-Nafira in South Sumatra. This curriculum is designed to integrate the values of love, empathy, and polite communication into the teaching and learning process, thereby creating a harmonious classroom atmosphere that supports student character development. The research method used was a mixed method with data collection techniques through questionnaires administered to 30 students. The questionnaire instrument contained three main indicators, namely the personal approach of teachers and students, the integration of the value of love in the material, and the creation of a positive learning environment. The results showed that the majority of students responded with agree or strongly agree to the implementation of this curriculum, with the highest percentage on the indicators of teachers using polite language when interacting (93.3%) and the classroom feeling comfortable and safe for learning (93.3%). These findings indicate that the Love-Based Curriculum is effective in building positive relationships between teachers and students, fostering empathy, and creating a conducive learning climate. This study recommends the continued implementation of this curriculum in other subjects to strengthen character building in elementary schools.

Keywords: Character Education; Indonesian language; Learning; Love-Based Curriculum;

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia berbasis Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah An-Nafira Sumatera Selatan. Kurikulum ini dirancang untuk mengintegrasikan nilai kasih sayang, empati, dan komunikasi santun dalam proses belajar mengajar, sehingga tercipta suasana kelas yang harmonis dan mendukung perkembangan karakter siswa. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah mix method dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui angket kepada 30 siswa. Instrumen angket memuat tiga indikator utama, yaitu pendekatan personal guru-siswa, integrasi nilai kasih sayang dalam materi, dan pembentukan lingkungan belajar positif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas siswa memberikan tanggapan setuju atau sangat setuju terhadap penerapan kurikulum ini, dengan persentase tertinggi pada indikator guru menggunakan bahasa sopan

saat berinteraksi (93,3%) dan kelas terasa nyaman dan aman untuk belajar (93,3%). Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta efektif dalam membangun hubungan positif antara guru dan siswa, menumbuhkan empati, serta menciptakan iklim belajar yang kondusif. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan penerapan berkelanjutan kurikulum ini pada mata pelajaran lain untuk memperkuat pembinaan karakter di sekolah dasar.

Kata Kunci: Bahasa Indonesia; Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta; Pembelajaran; Pendidikan Karakter

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of Indonesian language learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah An-Nafira, South Sumatra, is currently facing increasingly complex challenges. On the one hand, Indonesian serves as the language of unity and national identity; on the other hand, technological developments and the widespread use of foreign languages and slang influence students' language skills and politeness (Maharani, 2024). This phenomenon raises concerns that students' ability to master proper and correct Indonesian will decline if serious improvements are not undertaken. This situation encourages the need for curriculum innovation that not only focuses on cognitive aspects but also builds students' emotional attachment to their national language (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam, 2025).

The Love-Based Curriculum is one innovative approach that has begun to be implemented in various educational institutions, including madrasahs. This approach emphasizes the importance of building a learning atmosphere filled with empathy, compassion, and appreciation of students' potential. The application of the concept of love in learning is believed to enhance learning motivation and shape positive student character (Fakhrudin, 2007). In the context of Indonesian language learning, this is relevant because language is not merely a communication tool but also a medium for shaping thoughts, attitudes, and behavior.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs, through the Directorate General of Islamic Education, has prepared curriculum guidelines integrating character values, including love and care, into Indonesian language learning in madrasahs (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam, 2025; Direktorat KSKK Madrasah, 2025). These guidelines aim to create a conducive learning atmosphere and foster positive relationships between teachers and students. Their implementation is expected to cultivate students' love for the Indonesian language and strengthen their national identity.

Field observations indicate that not all teachers fully understand and are able to properly implement the Love-Based Curriculum concept. Some teachers still focus primarily on academic achievement without integrating emotional and affective aspects. This condition is exacerbated by limited training and assistance related to curriculum implementation (Laili, n.d.; Syaripudin et al., 2025). This creates a gap between the ideal concept and classroom practice.

Previous research by (Istianingrum & Hidayat, 2023) shows that applying love values in learning positively impacts student engagement. Teachers who use friendly greetings, polite language, and praise tend to receive positive responses from students. However, the study was

conducted at the secondary school level, so in-depth studies at the madrasah ibtidaiyah level remain limited.

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah An-Nafira South Sumatra has unique characteristics in implementing Indonesian language learning. The diversity of students' cultural backgrounds and local wisdom presents potential for integration into love-based learning. The culture of mutual cooperation, respect, and strong use of local languages can serve as capital for developing more contextual and meaningful Indonesian language learning (Laili, n.d.). However, this potential will not be optimal without appropriate instructional strategies. Teachers must integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in every learning process. The implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum requires teachers to serve as role models in demonstrating compassion, patience, and appreciation for students. This aligns with humanistic education principles that place learners at the center of the learning process (Rogers, 1961).

Theoretically, the Love-Based Curriculum is closely related to Carl Rogers' humanistic education theory, which emphasizes unconditional positive regard, empathy, and warm teacher-student relationships. An emotionally safe learning environment enables students to participate more confidently, ask questions, and express opinions. In Indonesian language learning, this condition can significantly improve students' speaking, reading, and writing skills (Mudlofir & Mudlofir, 2013; Nada & Listiana, 2025; Syaripudin et al., 2025).

Students' emotional involvement in learning has been proven to have a positive relationship with academic achievement. Research by (Gunawan, 2022; Qamariah & Anwar, 2025; Qathrun Nada & Listiana, 2025) indicates that students who feel valued and cared for have higher learning motivation. In the madrasah context, this is important because Indonesian language learning is often perceived as boring if it focuses solely on grammar and memorization. The integration of love values can make learning more engaging and enjoyable.

Although several studies have examined love-based and humanistic approaches in education, most remain conceptual or focus on secondary and higher education levels. Previous research has emphasized theoretical aspects without strong empirical data, especially at the madrasah ibtidaiyah level. Furthermore, research specifically examining the integration of the Love-Based Curriculum in Indonesian language learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in South Sumatra is still very limited. This indicates a research gap, namely the lack of empirical quantitative and qualitative evidence regarding the effectiveness of the Love-Based Curriculum in building classroom interaction, learning climate, and student character development at the Islamic elementary level.

This study aims to provide a clear description of how far the Love-Based Curriculum has been implemented in Indonesian language learning at MI An-Nafira South Sumatra. The main focus is on how teachers create a loving learning atmosphere, appreciate students, and integrate love values into learning materials. The findings are expected to serve as evaluation material for curriculum development in madrasahs.

The benefits of this research are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it enriches studies on love-based education, particularly in Indonesian language learning in madrasahs. Practically, it serves as guidance for teachers in creating more humanistic and meaningful learning.

Therefore, this research is relevant in addressing 21st-century educational challenges that demand a balance between knowledge mastery, skills, and character formation. The Love-Based Curriculum offers a holistic approach integrating cognitive, emotional, and spiritual intelligence. In this context, Indonesian language learning becomes a strategic medium for achieving national educational goals rooted in character and culture.

METHODS

This study employed a mixed-methods approach with an explanatory sequential design, combining quantitative and qualitative methods in a structured manner to comprehensively understand the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum in Indonesian language learning. The research site was purposively selected at MI An-Nafira South Sumatra. The research subjects included Indonesian language teachers, students in grades IV–VI, and the school principal. Teachers acted as key informants, students as primary informants, and the principal as a supporting informant. A total of 30 students were purposively selected based on their involvement in Indonesian language learning.

Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Observations were conducted to directly examine classroom implementation; interviews were used to explore experiences and perceptions; and documentation supported field data. The main instrument was the researcher as a human instrument, supported by interview guidelines, observation sheets, and data analysis formats. Data analysis followed the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Hidayah, 2023; Sugiyono, 2021; Sukmadinata, 2020). Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking to maintain accuracy and credibility.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the previous analysis results, the initial stage of data collection was carried out by examining excerpts from learning sources and questionnaire results containing the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum in Indonesian language learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah An-Nafira, South Sumatra. Each excerpt and questionnaire data was selected based on its relevance to the indicators of learning implementation, such as planning that integrates love values, the application of instructional strategies that foster empathy, and teacher–student interactions that reflect appreciation and compassion. The data were then analyzed to reveal the extent to which love values were implemented in teaching and learning activities.

The next stage involved organizing these findings into thematic tables that included learning indicators, percentages of student responses, examples of classroom practices, and brief interpretations. The preparation of these tables aimed to facilitate the classification, interpretation, and visualization of data so that patterns of the implementation of love values in each learning aspect could be clearly identified. The analysis showed that learning tended to emphasize values such as caring for others, respect for teachers and peers, cooperation in groups, and the strengthening of students' positive character in line with the objectives of the Love-Based Curriculum.

Tabel 1. Questionnaire on the Implementation of the

Love-Based Curriculum in Indonesian Language Learning at MI An-Nafira South Sumatra

| No | Statement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|
| A. Personal Teacher-Student Approach | | | | | |
| 1 | The teacher always greets me warmly at the beginning of the lesson.. | | | | |
| 2 | The teacher uses polite language when interacting with students. | | | | |
| 3 | 3. The teacher gives praise when I successfully complete an assignment. | | | | |
| 4 | The teacher patiently helps me when I experience difficulties.. | | | | |
| B. Integration of Love Values in Learning Materials | | | | | |
| 5 | The learning materials include stories or texts that teach empathy. | | | | |
| 6 | The assignments encourage me to cooperate with my classmates. | | | | |
| 7 | The teacher teaches how to express opinions without hurting others' feelings | | | | |
| C. Positive Learning Environment | | | | | |
| 8 | My classroom feels comfortable and safe for learning. | | | | |
| 9 | My classmates respect each other during discussions | | | | |
| 10 | The teacher evaluates my attitude in class, not only my test scores | | | | |

*Source: Researcher's Personal Document

The research instrument used was a closed-ended questionnaire with a four-point Likert scale: 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Agree), and 4 (Strongly Agree). This questionnaire was designed to measure the level of implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum in Indonesian language learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah An-Nafira, South Sumatra. The statements in the questionnaire were divided into three main indicators: (A) Teacher-

Student Personal Approach, (B) Integration of Love Values in Learning Materials, and (C) Positive Learning Environment. Each indicator contained several statements representing aspects of learning implementation in accordance with the principles of the Love-Based Curriculum.

The questionnaire was administered to 30 students as respondents. They were asked to choose one of the four answer options that best reflected their experiences during Indonesian language learning. The questionnaire data were then compiled and analyzed to determine the level of curriculum implementation based on each indicator.

Tabel 2. Simulation Questionnaire Results

| No | Indicator | Percentage of Agree/Strongly Agree (%) |
|----|---|--|
| 1 | The teacher always greets me warmly at the beginning of the lesson. | 90.0 |
| 2 | The teacher uses polite language when interacting with students. | 93.3 |
| 3 | The teacher gives praise when I successfully complete an assignment. | 86.7 |
| 4 | The teacher patiently helps me when I experience difficulties. | 90.0 |
| 5 | The learning materials include stories or texts that teach empathy. | 83.3 |
| 6 | Materi pembelajaran memuat cerita atau teks yang mengajarkan empati | 86.7 |
| 7 | Guru mengajarkan cara menyampaikan pendapat tanpa menyinggung perasaan orang lain | 80.0 |
| 8 | Kelas saya terasa nyaman dan aman untuk belajar | 93.3 |
| 9 | Teman-teman saling menghargai saat berdiskusi | 86.7 |
| 10 | Guru menilai sikap saya di kelas, bukan hanya nilai ujian | 83.3 |

*Source: Researcher's Personal Document

The formula written was used to calculate the percentage of positive responses for each statement in the questionnaire.

$$\text{Persentase} = \frac{\text{Jumlah Jawaban Positif}}{\text{Jumlah Responden}} \times 100\%$$

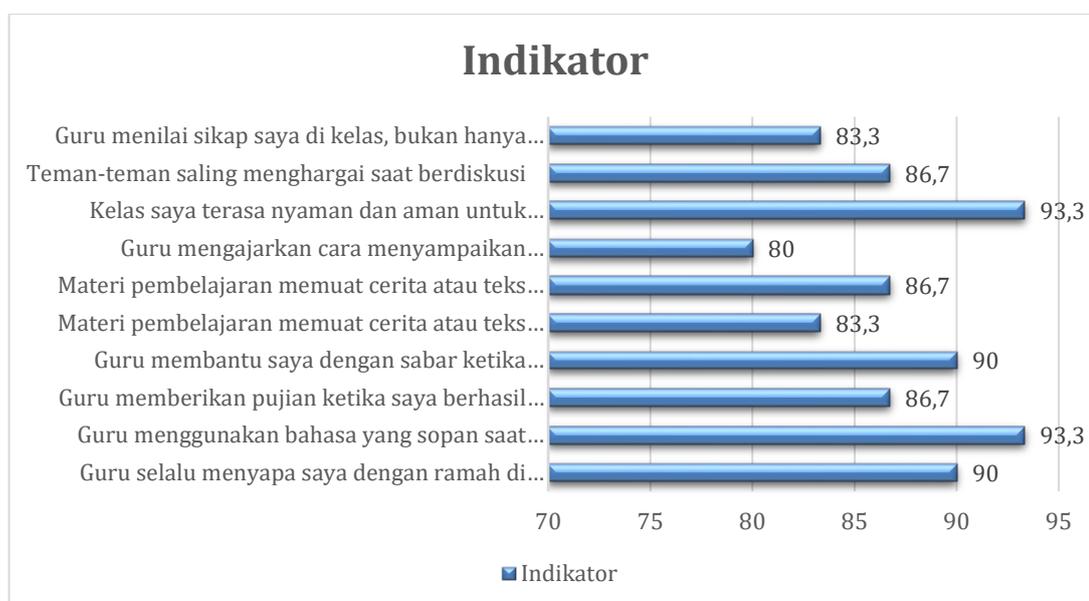


Diagram 1. Results of the Implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum Among Students at School.

The questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of percentages and mean values for each indicator. The analysis results showed that the average percentage of “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” responses across all indicators reached more than 85%, which falls into the high category. The highest average values were found in the indicators of teachers’ use of polite language and the creation of a comfortable learning environment, each reaching 93.3%. These findings indicate that quantitatively, the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum is categorized as very good and consistent across all measured aspects.

Based on the questionnaire results administered to 30 students, it can be seen that the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum in Indonesian language learning at MI An-Nafira South Sumatra received highly positive responses across all indicators. The highest percentages were recorded for the statements “The teacher uses polite language when interacting with students” and “My classroom feels comfortable and safe for learning,” each reaching 93.3%. This shows that teachers pay attention not only to academic aspects but also to creating an ethical and comfortable learning environment.

The Teacher–Student Personal Approach indicator showed an average percentage above 88%, with particular emphasis on teachers’ friendly attitude at the beginning of lessons (90%) and their patience in assisting students (90%). These findings indicate that positive interpersonal interaction is an important component of the learning process.

In the Integration of Love Values in Learning Materials indicator, although the percentage was slightly lower than other indicators, it still showed relatively high results, ranging from 80% to 86.7%. This indicates that the materials used contained empathy and cooperation values, although there is still room for improvement in teaching students to express opinions politely (80%).

The Positive Learning Environment indicator also recorded high results, with the majority of students feeling safe and comfortable in the classroom (93.3%) and experiencing mutual respect during discussions (86.7%). Furthermore, teachers' evaluation that considers students' attitudes in addition to exam scores (83.3%) shows that affective aspects receive special attention in learning assessment. Overall, these data demonstrate that the Love-Based Curriculum has been well implemented at MI An-Nafira South Sumatra through teachers' approaches, the integration of values in learning materials, and the creation of a positive learning environment.

Tabel 3. Main Findings of the Love-Based Curriculum

| Aspek Temuan | Deskripsi Temuan | Dampak Positif |
|--|---|--|
| Teacher-Student Personal Approach | Teachers greet, praise, and use polite language in every interaction. | Students feel valued and comfortable in learning. |
| Integration of Compassion Values in the Learning Materials | The teaching materials incorporate themes of empathy, cooperation, and respect for diversity. | This enhances students' awareness of acting with empathy. |
| Positive Learning Environment | The classroom is organized to promote positive interaction; assessment covers cognitive, skills, and attitudinal aspects. | This improves cooperation and mutual respect among students. |

The research findings indicate that the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum aligns with humanistic education principles that position students as subjects of learning rather than merely objects of knowledge transfer. The personal approach applied by teachers corresponds with Carl Rogers' view of the importance of unconditional positive regard in the learning process. In the context of Indonesian language learning, this is reflected in the selection of teaching materials that foster empathy and polite communication skills.

These findings strengthen the research of (Qathrun Nada & Listiana, 2025), which states that love-based learning can increase student engagement and create a conducive classroom atmosphere. The improvement in students' motivation and positive attitudes at MI An-Nafira South Sumatra proves that this approach impacts not only academic achievement but also character development.

However, the study also found challenges such as high teacher administrative workloads and diverse student backgrounds that require more intensive individual approaches. This indicates the need for continuous teacher training and institutional policy support so that the Love-Based Curriculum can be implemented consistently.

CONCLUSION

Based on research findings on the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum in Indonesian language learning at MI An-Nafira in South Sumatra, it can be concluded that the curriculum's implementation has been successful and received positive feedback from the majority of students. The high percentage of "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" responses for each indicator indicates that teachers have successfully integrated a personal approach and the value of compassion into the material, while creating a positive learning environment.

Friendly teacher-student interactions, the use of polite language, and patience in assisting students are key factors in creating a conducive learning environment. The learning materials also incorporate the values of empathy, cooperation, and respect for others' opinions, although improvements in expressing opinions politely are still needed to achieve a perfect implementation of these values. The safe and comfortable learning environment, along with the respect shown among peers during discussions, confirm that the Love-Based Curriculum not only strengthens academic competency but also develops students' affective aspects.

Therefore, this study demonstrates that the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum can be an effective strategy for Indonesian language learning at the elementary madrasah level, while also contributing to the development of students' character, emphasizing noble character, empathy, and mutual respect.

Based on the research findings, the Love-Based Curriculum is recommended for more systematic implementation through the development of learning tools that explicitly include affective indicators, ongoing training for teachers on empathy-based learning strategies, and the integration of attitude assessments into Indonesian language learning evaluations. Madrasahs are also advised to provide policy support and mentoring to ensure consistent and sustainable implementation of this curriculum.

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