



Love-Based Curriculum in Aqidah and Akhlak Learning in Forming Students' Religious Character

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the planning of the Love-Based Curriculum (LBC) in Aqidah Akhlak learning to strengthen students' religious character at MAN 1 Tulungagung, Indonesia. A qualitative field research design was employed to obtain an in-depth understanding of curriculum planning and implementation. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis involving the principal, vice principal for curriculum affairs, Aqidah Akhlak teachers, and students. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with continuous verification through triangulation. The findings reveal that the Love-Based Curriculum is systematically planned through the establishment of a curriculum core team, formulation of short-, medium-, and long-term programs, curriculum socialization and workshops, madrasah context analysis, development of teaching resources, and integration of the Panca Cinta values into curricular and extracurricular activities. The integration of the Merdeka Curriculum with the Love-Based Curriculum strengthens Aqidah Akhlak learning by fostering compassion, empathy, tolerance, environmental responsibility, and spiritual awareness. The principal contribution of this study is the identification of madrasah context analysis as an essential stage of curriculum planning that bridges institutional characteristics, students' needs, and curriculum implementation. This finding extends existing curriculum management models by positioning contextual analysis as a strategic planning component. The proposed framework provides a practical reference for Islamic educational institutions seeking to implement value-based curricula that promote holistic character development, sustainable educational quality, and transformative learning practices.

Keywords: Love-Based Curriculum; Aqidah Akhlak; Curriculum Planning; Religious Character; Islamic Madrasah.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis perencanaan Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta (Love-Based Curriculum/KBC) dalam pembelajaran Aqidah Akhlak untuk membentuk karakter religius peserta didik di MAN 1 Tulungagung. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian lapangan. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan studi dokumentasi yang melibatkan kepala madrasah, wakil kepala bidang kurikulum, guru Aqidah Akhlak, serta peserta didik. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, serta penarikan dan verifikasi kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perencanaan KBC dilaksanakan secara sistematis melalui pembentukan tim inti

kurikulum, penyusunan program jangka pendek, menengah, dan panjang, pelaksanaan sosialisasi serta workshop, analisis konteks madrasah, pengembangan perangkat pembelajaran, dan implementasi nilai-nilai Panca Cinta ke dalam seluruh aktivitas akademik maupun nonakademik. Integrasi Kurikulum Merdeka dengan Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta memperkuat pembelajaran Aqidah Akhlak melalui pengembangan nilai kasih sayang, empati, toleransi, kepedulian lingkungan, serta tanggung jawab spiritual. Kontribusi ilmiah penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa analisis konteks madrasah merupakan tahapan penting yang perlu ditempatkan sebagai bagian integral dalam perencanaan kurikulum karena mampu meningkatkan kesesuaian antara kebutuhan peserta didik, karakteristik lembaga, dan implementasi kurikulum. Temuan ini menawarkan model konseptual perencanaan kurikulum berbasis nilai yang dapat menjadi rujukan bagi madrasah dalam mengembangkan pendidikan karakter yang holistik, humanis, dan berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta; Aqidah Akhlak; Perencanaan Kurikulum; Karakter Religius; Madrasah.

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Introduction

Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and process that enables students to actively develop their potential in spiritual and religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and essential skills for personal, societal, national, and global life (Zebua et al., 2024). However, the complexity of these goals often leads to fragmented implementation, especially when worldly and afterlife aspects are treated separately. This fragmentation risks undermining the holistic objectives of the curriculum (Rita Zubaidah et al., 2026).

Within the Indonesian context, the vision of Golden Indonesia 2045 emphasizes the need for strong, competitive human resources. Yet, this national aspiration must be translated into concrete practices at the institutional level. Madrasahs, as Islamic educational institutions, face the challenge of integrating spiritual values with modern educational demands (Utama & Hidayati, 2026.). Current approaches often remain abstract, lacking a practical framework that bridges philosophical ideals with classroom realities (Dirman, 2025).

This study addresses that gap by examining the Love-Based Curriculum at MAN 1 Tulungagung. Unlike broad philosophical discussions of love from Plato, Aristotle, Freud, or Geertz, which risk turning into an unfinished literature review, this research focuses on the specific urgency of embedding love as a pedagogical principle within the madrasah context (Chanifudin et al., 2025). The aim is to explore how love can function not merely as a moral concept but as an operational foundation for curriculum design, teacher professionalism, and student character formation.

The main targets include improving people's quality of life, mastering technology, and achieving environmental sustainability. To realize this grand vision, the key lies in developing quality human resources. In this context, superior human resources are not only intellectually proficient, but also possess high

morals, integrity, and the skills to face global challenges. There are seven characteristics of quality human resources: academic and cognitive abilities, social and communication skills, work ethic and discipline, adaptability and problem-solving skills, positive attitudes and character, tolerance and compassion, and physical and mental balance (Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023).

Education plays a role not only in transferring knowledge, but also in shaping character and moral values, producing a generation that is intelligent, has integrity, and is ready to face future challenges (Rahma, 2025.). Within this framework, the Love-Based Curriculum is presented as a strategy to instill the values of compassion, harmony, and civilization based on an attitude of mutual love. This aligns with the mandate of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which emphasizes the development of students' potential to become individuals who are faithful, pious, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and responsible (Kep Dirjen Pendidikan Islam 6077 Tahun 2025)

The curriculum serves as a guideline for achieving learning objectives, a guide for delivering instruction across all subject areas, and an academic tool. Therefore, curriculum development is crucial in today's education. To modernize the curriculum, it is necessary to create a superior generation to improve, refine, and optimize educational activities in madrasas (Fatimah, 2024). To produce a generation that is more prepared to learn, curriculum changes are inevitable, which will foster a passion for learning among students.

However, amidst its strategic role, the education system is facing challenges that cannot be ignored. One of these is the issue of humanity. In the past decade, humanity has become a hot topic, both globally and locally. At the global level, for example, issues such as civil war, inter-state conflict, discrimination, and so on have come to the fore very intensely (Cingranelli et al., 2019; Canavan & Ide, 2024). Likewise, at the local-national level, Indonesia is still facing similar realities: issues such as intolerance (Langingi et al., 2025), violation of religious freedom (Danisworo, 2023), or social conflict (Pulubuhu et al., 2020) still appears frequently.

This kind of dehumanization certainly has a destructive impact on individuals and society. Things like fear, hatred, and conflict will increasingly surface. Therefore, it is crucial to address this phenomenon by promoting humanitarian values, such as empathy, tolerance, and equality, all of which are based on love (Batiridou et al., 2025).

In this context, the Love-Based Curriculum presents a strategic solution to address these challenges and seek to address them through education. Education is the right starting point, based on at least two reasons: First, education is the right choice for instilling values from an early age. Through education, children and young people can be shaped into individuals who understand, accept, appreciate, and add color to diversity. The Love-Based Curriculum is an inclusive curriculum that provides opportunities for students to share experiences and knowledge about diversity. The process of internalizing values such as love, tolerance, empathy, and social justice can be carried out systematically and structured from an early age. Second, within educational institutions themselves, minor issues have emerged that lead to the violation of humanitarian values. For example, identity-based

discrimination practices, such as bullying and violence, are still found in madrasah environments towards students to the issue of intolerance (Hidayati et al., 2025); (Nasirudin et al., 2026). Therefore, the Love-Based Curriculum is here to reconstruct (reorganize) the education system so that it is able to produce people who are humanist, nationalist, naturalist, tolerant, and always prioritize love as a basic principle in life.

The Love-Based Curriculum has the potential to be oriented not only toward solving humanitarian problems at the local level but also to contribute to solving global challenges. Through an approach that integrates the values of love and tolerance into learning, this curriculum offers solutions to various social conflicts, discrimination, and injustices that occur in various parts of the world. Thus, a love-based curriculum is a strategic step towards creating a more peaceful, harmonious, and civilized world that exists within a unified framework of mutual love (Danil et al., 2025). In an era of technological and scientific advancement, many students still neglect science. They see science merely as a subject at madrasah, not as a way to understand life and the universe. This lack of interest in science often stems from a rigid learning approach with little relevance to real life (Shirazi, 2017). As a result, many students only memorize the theory without understanding the deep meaning behind it.

The integration of a love-based curriculum in Aqidah Ahklak learning is expected to have a positive impact on the formation of students' humanist, tolerant, loving and nationalist characters. States that a relevant and contextual curriculum can increase student motivation and engagement in learning (Safira et al., 2026). By linking learning materials to real-life environmental issues, students will more easily understand character values such as responsibility, caring, and cooperation. The Love-Based Curriculum is a curriculum designed with an emphasis on character development, experiential learning, and in-depth attention to the social and emotional aspects of education. This curriculum aims to produce individuals who are humanistic, nationalistic, naturalistic, and tolerant, and always prioritize love as a basic principle in life (David Azizi et al., 2026). In an effort to achieve these goals, various approaches and strategies have been developed. One approach deemed relevant and effective is the integration of a love-based curriculum into the teaching of faith and morals. Love is defined as a feeling or state that motivates someone to care for, cherish, or appreciate another person. Love can encompass various forms, such as love for a partner, family, friends, or even something broader. This definition can be understood from various perspectives, including philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and religion and Sufism.

From a philosophical perspective, love is understood not merely as an emotion but as a fundamental concept encompassing moral, rational, and existential dimensions of human life. According to Plato in Symposium, love (eros) is a transformative force that guides individuals from the appreciation of physical beauty toward the pursuit of absolute beauty, virtue, and truth ((Buzguța, 2024). Similarly, Aristotle viewed love, particularly in the form of *philia* (friendship), as a virtuous relationship grounded in mutual respect, goodwill, and the shared pursuit of *eudaimonia*-human flourishing (Torres, 2021). From a modern philosophical perspective, Erich Fromm, in *The Art of Loving*, argued that love is

not merely a spontaneous feeling but an art that requires knowledge, discipline, responsibility, care, respect, and commitment (O'Dwyer, 2011). Collectively, these philosophical perspectives suggest that love is a fundamental human value that shapes ethical character, directs moral action, and enables individuals to cultivate meaningful relationships while pursuing personal growth and the realization of a meaningful life.

MAN 1 Tulungagung, as a higher education institution under the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, has great potential to integrate a love-based curriculum into all subjects. The madrasah's location in the city of Tulungagung, with its abundant potential, can be a special attraction for students. However, in practice, the integration of a love-based curriculum at MAN 1 Tulungagung still faces various challenges. These challenges include a lack of teacher understanding of the love-based curriculum, due to the new curriculum launched by the Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs.

Methods

The research employed a qualitative field study design with multiple data collection techniques. Participants consisted of 12 Aqidah Akhlak teachers and 36 students at MAN 1 Tulungagung, selected through purposive sampling to ensure relevance to the study's objectives. Observations were conducted over a period of six weeks, with three structured sessions per week, focusing on teacher-student interactions, instructional strategies, and the integration of the "Panca Cinta" values into classroom practices.

In-depth interviews were carried out using a semi-structured interview guide, which included questions on curriculum planning, pedagogical approaches, and perceptions of love-based education. Documentation was collected in the form of photographs, institutional archives, and field notes to provide triangulated perspectives on curriculum implementation.

The data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which emphasizes the iterative and simultaneous nature of three components: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Suyitno, 2018). First, raw data from observations and interviews were reduced by coding and categorizing themes relevant to curriculum planning and evaluation, while irrelevant information (e.g., extracurricular activities unrelated to Aqidah Akhlak) was excluded. Second, the reduced data were displayed systematically in matrices, tables, and narrative summaries to facilitate pattern recognition. Third, conclusions were drawn through continuous reflection and verification, achieved by triangulating sources (teachers, students, documents) and comparing observation results with interview and documentation findings. This iterative cycle ensured both rigor and credibility in the analysis process.

Result and Discussion

Results

In this section, the researcher describes data related to the curriculum planning of a love-based approach in Aqidah Akhlak learning to shape students' religious character at MAN 1 Tulungagung. To ensure the process runs smoothly, MAN 1 Tulungagung must have a curriculum planning team. As is well known, the curriculum at MAN 1 Tulungagung adopts the *Merdeka Curriculum* under the

Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. Based on this curriculum, the curriculum planning team works to design a love-based *Merdeka Curriculum*.

To integrate the two curricula, MAN 1 Tulungagung established a working group for planning a love-based curriculum. The curriculum planning team consists of the principal, the vice principal for curriculum affairs, the vice principal for student affairs, homeroom teachers, and several teachers at MAN 1 Tulungagung, as well as involving the madrasah supervisor. The Acting Principal of MAN 1 Tulungagung, Drs. Muhibundin, M.Pd.I, stated:

Madrasah Aliyah integrates the Merdeka Curriculum and the love-based curriculum in order to nurture individuals with noble character (akhlaqul karimah), intelligence, independence, skills, and a healthy environmental culture, grounded in the Qur'an and Hadith, excelling academically, independent, and possessing strong character in accordance with the school's vision and mission (Vice Principal of MAN 1 Tulungagung, November 15, 2025).

From the above statement, it is evident that MAN 1 Tulungagung implements two curricula, namely the *Merdeka Curriculum* and the love-based curriculum in Aqidah Akhlak learning. This is further reinforced by Novel, an Aqidah Akhlak teacher who participated in the planning of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC), as follows:

In the planning of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC), there is a process of integrating the values of love into the Aqidah Akhlak curriculum. This planning is carried out systematically through stages of formulating learning objectives, selecting materials, designing learning strategies, and conducting assessments – all of which are directed toward fostering compassion, empathy, and sincerity within students (Vice Principal Novel, November 11, 2025).

As expressed by the Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs at MAN 1 Tulungagung, Dr. Januariani, M. Si, regarding the curriculum as follows:

MAN 1 Tulungagung integrates two curricula, namely the Merdeka Curriculum and the Love-Based Curriculum. The Love-Based Curriculum refers to the curriculum of love established by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, with its implementation directly applied to each subject. This Love-Based Curriculum is reflected in the curriculum documents of MAN 1 Tulungagung. The curriculum of MAN 1 Tulungagung includes General Subject Group: 10 subjects (6 general subjects and 4 religious subjects), 2 subjects in Group B, and 1 extracurricular subject (Scouting), as well as 3 distinctive madrasah subjects. Local content represents curricular activities designed to develop competencies tailored to the characteristics and potential of the region, including regional excellence, with materials that cannot be categorized into existing subjects. The substance of local content is determined by the educational institution (Vice Principal of MAN 1 Tulungagung, November 11, 2025).

In addition to the above statement, Novel further added that:

The planning of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) at MAN 1 Tulungagung also involves collaboration with various stakeholders. It engages parties who play strategic roles in the implementation of education, including teachers, the principal, the MGMP team, vice principals, students, as well as parents and the wider community. By involving all these elements, it is expected that the goals of Islamic education – namely, to shape individuals who are faithful,

knowledgeable, and noble in character, grounded in love and compassion – can be realized (Vice Principal Novel, November 11, 2025).

The same point was conveyed by the Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs and further reinforced by the Acting Principal of MAN 1 Tulungagung, Drs. Muhibudin, M.Pd.I, as follows:

The curriculum of MAN 1 Tulungagung includes Group A: 12 general subjects (Islamic Religious Education – Qur'an and Hadith, Aqidah Akhlak, Fiqh, Islamic Cultural History (SKI), Arabic Language, Pancasila Education, Indonesian Language, Mathematics, Natural Sciences – Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Social Sciences – History, Sociology, Geography, Economics, English Language, Physical Education and Sports (PJOK), Informatics, Arts and Culture, and Coding). Group B (Local Content) consists of: Muhadatsah (Arabic conversation), Research, Qur'an Memorization (Tahfidul Qur'an), Skills, TOEFL preparation, and Coding. Group C (Additional Program Subjects) includes: Religious Memorization, Counseling Guidance, Qur'an Reading (Tahsin), and Classical Islamic Text Reading (Kitab Kuning) (Principal of MAN 1 Tulungagung, November 9, 2025).

On another occasion, the Acting Principal of MAN 1 Tulungagung, Drs. Muhibudin, M.Pd.I, also stated that:

With regard to self-development, in fact, self-development is not a subject that must be taught by teachers. Self-development aims to provide opportunities for students to develop and express themselves according to their needs, talents, and interests in line with the conditions of the madrasah. Self-development activities are facilitated and/or guided by counselors, teachers, or education staff and can be carried out in the form of extracurricular activities. Self-development activities are conducted through counseling services related to personal and social issues, learning, and career development of students (Principal of MAN 1 Tulungagung, November 8, 2025).

The Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs at MAN 1 Tulungagung, Dr. Januariani, M.Si, reinforced what was conveyed by the Principal regarding student development. Furthermore, the Vice Principal for Curriculum added the following:

Learning of general subjects and additional program subjects in grades X, XI, and XII during the 2024/2025 academic year is carried out through integrative learning using both the Merdeka Curriculum and the Love-Based Curriculum. The learning hours for each subject are allocated as stated in the curriculum structure. The time allocation for one learning hour is 35 minutes for all classes (from grade X, XI up to XII) (Vice Principal of MAN 1 Tulungagung, November 3, 2025).

From several interviews above, it is clearly evident that the curriculum structure at MAN 1 Tulungagung has been systematically arranged. In detail, the curriculum can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Structure of Curriculum at MAN 1 Tulungagung

No Jata Pelajaran Umum JP			Mata Pelajaran Pilihan											
			XII A (SAINTIK)		JP	XII J (AGAMA)		JP	XII F, G, H, I (SOSHUM)		JP	XII K (SOSBUD)		JP
1	Al-Qur'an Hadis	2	Informatika	5	Ilmu Tafsir	3	Ekonomi	5	Bahasa Indonesia	5	Bahasa Inggris TL	5	Sosiologi	5
2	Aqidah Akhlak	2	Kimia	5	Ushul Fikih	3	Sosiologi	5	Bahasa Inggris TL	5	Sosiologi	5	Antropologi	5
3	Fikih	2	Fisika	5	Biologi	5	Geografi	5	Antropologi	5	Antropologi	5	PKWU	2
4	SKI	2	Matematika TL	5	Bahasa Arab TL	5	Antropologi	5	Antropologi	5	Antropologi	5	PKWU	2
5	Bahasa Arab	2	PKWU	2	Bahasa Indonesia TL	5	PKWU	2	PKWU	2	PKWU	2	PKWU	2
6	Pendidikan Pancasila	2	Jumlah	22	Jumlah	21	Jumlah	22	Jumlah	22	Jumlah	22	Jumlah	22
7	Bahasa Indonesia*	4	XII B, C, D (SAINS)	JP	XII E (SOSIOSAINS)	JP								
8	Matematika*	4	Biologi	5	Biologi	5								
9	Bahasa Inggris	3	Kimia	5	Kimia	5								
10	PJOK*	3	Fisika	5	Sosiologi	5								
11	Sejarah*	2	Matematika TL	5	Ekonomi	5								
12	Seni dan Budaya*	2	PKWU	2	PKWU	2								
	Jumlah	30	Jumlah	22	Jumlah	22								
13	Mulok													
	a. Tahfidhul Qur'an	4	1 kelas											
	b. Toefl (+2 JP)	2	7 kelas											
	c. Riset (+2 JP)	2	1 kelas											
	d. Kodring (+2 JP)	2	2 kelas											
14	Mapel Program Tambahan													
	a. Keterampilan	3												
	b. BK	1												
	b. TKA	4												
	c. Baca Quran Tahsin		KEM sistem blok											
	d. Baca Kitab Kuning		KEM sistem blok											
	Jumlah	78	Jumlah	88										
Keterangan: * PSRA terintegrasi dengan														
Tulungagung, 14 Juli 2025 Kepala Madrasah														

Keterangan :

* PSRA terintegrasi dengan

Tulungagung, 14 Juli 2025

Kepala Madrasah

ANALISIS KEBUTUHAN GURU											
MADRASAH ALIYAH NEGERI 1 TULUNGAGUNG											
TAHUN 2025 / 2026											
No.	Mata Pelajaran	Kelas					Jumlah Jam	Jumlah Guru	JP per Guru	Catatan	
		X (13 Rombel)	XI (13 Rombel)	XII (11 Rombel)							
1	Al-Qur'an Hadis	2	26	2	26	2	22	74	4	19	
2	Aqidah Akhlak	2	26	2	26	2	22	74	3	25	
3	Fikih	2	26	2	26	2	22	74	4	19	
4	SKI	2	26	2	26	2	22	74	3	25	
5	Bahasa Arab	4	52	2	26	2	22	100	6	17	ditambah Bahasa Arab TL
6	Pendidikan Pancasila	2	26	2	26	2	22	74	3	25	
7	Bahasa Indonesia	4	52	4	52	4	44	148	5	30	ditambah Bahasa Indonesia
8	Matematika	4	52	4	52	4	44	148	8	19	ditambah Matematika TL
9	Bahasa Inggris	2	26	2	26	2	22	74	5	15	ditambah Bahasa Inggris T
10	PJOK	3	39	3	39	3	33	111	5	22	
11	Sejarah	2	26	2	26	2	22	74	4	19	
12	Seni dan Budaya	2	26	2	26	2	22	74	3	25	
13	Informatika	2	26	5	10	5	5	41	2	21	
14	PKWU			2	24	2	20	44	4	11	

From the curriculum structure table above, it is evident that the content has been organized into groups of general subjects and local content, with time allocations according to each subject and its integration model. Furthermore, in the planning of the Love-Based Curriculum at MAN 1 Tulungagung, the Principal, Drs. Muhibudin, M.Pd.I, stated that:

The underlying rationale of the Love-Based Environmental Curriculum is essentially to shape students with strong character. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate the values of love, which represent character education that is highly needed for the future generation of the nation. It is thus very important to be taught at MAN 1 Tulungagung, as learning during childhood will crystallize more deeply in students' learning experiences. In addition, it also aims to develop students' abilities and skills to be characterized by love for their environment, to increase sensitivity and appreciation of the importance of cleanliness and health, to foster responsibility in environmentally friendly behavior, to preserve the functions of the environment, and to improve environmental quality. Programs developed include Balistik, which encourages students to always bring their own lunch boxes and drinking bottles, and to buy food and drinks at the canteen using their own containers. Another program is cultivating environmentally friendly behavior through the movement to reduce plastic waste and to process household waste within the madrasah (Principal of MAN 1 Tulungagung, November 9, 2025).

The Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs at MAN 1 Tulungagung, Dr. Januariani, M.Si, emphasized and reinforced what had been conveyed by the

Principal regarding student development. Furthermore, the Vice Principal for Curriculum stated that:

Curriculum planning at MAN 1 Tulungagung is carried out in a structured and cyclical manner. At the end of each academic year, the school prepares the curriculum for the upcoming year. Specifically, at the close of the even semester, the madrasah designs the schedule for teaching and learning activities as well as the human resource needs for teachers. This planning process is guided by the outcomes of the New Student Admission (PPDB) and the subjects to be taught. Such a mechanism reflects the institution's commitment to aligning curriculum design with student intake and subject distribution, ensuring that the allocation of teaching staff corresponds to the actual needs of the madrasah. This approach demonstrates a proactive model of curriculum governance, where planning is not only anticipatory but also responsive to the dynamics of student enrollment and subject requirements (Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs, November 9, 2025).

The interviews highlight that curriculum planning at MAN 1 Tulungagung is conducted annually, particularly at the end of each even semester. This process encompasses not only the design of teaching and learning schedules but also the allocation of teacher resources. The planning is guided by the outcomes of the New Student Admission (PPDB) and the subjects to be taught. As emphasized by the Principal, the Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs, and reinforced by one of the teachers of Aqidah Akhlak, Suci Surya Insani, S.Pd.I, the alignment between student intake and subject distribution facilitates curriculum management and planning. By referring to the PPDB results, the madrasah can anticipate the number of students and their learning needs, thereby ensuring that the curriculum structure and teacher assignments are responsive and effective.

This mechanism reflects a proactive governance model in curriculum planning, where the institution integrates administrative foresight with pedagogical needs. It demonstrates that curriculum design at MAN 1 Tulungagung is not only a technical exercise but also a strategic effort to balance student enrollment, subject requirements, and teacher availability (Teacher of Aqidah Akhlak, November 18, 2025).

Before the planning of the integrated Love-Based Merdeka Curriculum at MAN 1 Tulungagung, the Head of the Madrasah, Drs. Muhibudin, M.Pd.I, as the highest leader in the institution, took several steps to ensure that the planning of the Love-Based Curriculum would run successfully. The steps are presented as follows:

There are several general steps in developing the integrated curriculum at MAN 1 Tulungagung, namely by conducting various workshops attended by all structural and functional staff of the madrasah. In these workshops, a central theme or main issue to be integrated is determined (Statement by Drs. Muhibudin, M.Pd.I, November 9, 2025). At MAN 1 Tulungagung, several values will be habituated, including: "Love for Allah through the daily practice of worship such as reciting asmaul husna, performing sholat dhuha in congregation, and Qur'an memorization classes." These practices take place within the madrasah and its surrounding environment, and are integrated into every

learning activity, both intra-curricular and extra-curricular (KTSP Document of MAN 1 Tulungagung).

The workshop activities mentioned above were reinforced by documentation of the workshop implementation, which is attached in the appendix (Documentation of Curriculum Development Workshop at MAN 1 Tulungagung).



Figure 1. curriculum evaluation

Furthermore, on another occasion, the Head of the Madrasah, Drs. Muhibudin, M.Pd.I, stated that:

In the curriculum at MAN 1 Tulungagung, development and integration are also carried out through learning experiences – understanding, applying, and reflecting – based on the values of Panca Cinta and the improvement of environmental quality. The implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum focuses particularly on Love for Nature (Statement by the Head of MAN 1 Tulungagung, October 7, 2025).

This was further reinforced by the Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs, Dr. Januariani, M.Si, together with the Aqidah Akhlak teacher, Agus Novel Mukhlison, S.Ps.I, who stated that:

To strengthen the steps and maintain the consistency of the agreed plan, the Head of the Madrasah formed a Love-Based Curriculum Planning Team at the school level, which was then officially established through a decree (SK) issued by the Madrasah (Statement by the Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs of MAN 1 Tulungagung, November 9, 2025).

It was also observed by the researcher during fieldwork at MAN 1 Tulungagung that the structure of the integrated curriculum planning team was legally reinforced through a Decree (SK) issued by the Head of the Madrasah, followed by the curriculum planning flow as outlined below:

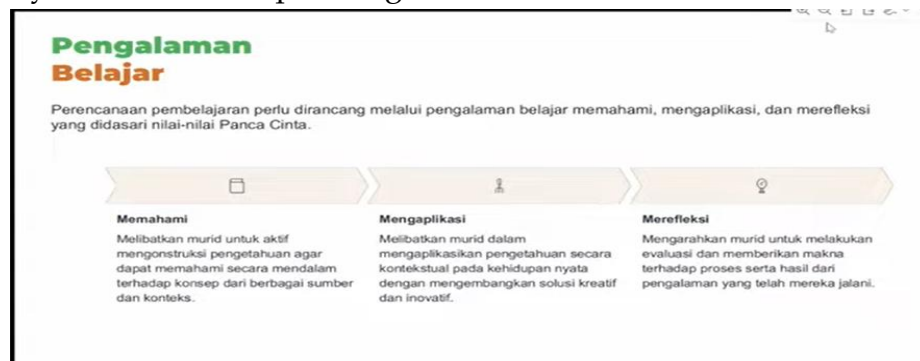


Figure 2. The Curriculum Planning Flow of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) at MAN 1 Tulungagung (KTSP Documentation, 2025).

This curriculum planning initiative was further reinforced by Novel, one of the Aqidah Akhlak teachers at MAN 1 Tulungagung, who stated that:

In essence, the learning of Aqidah Akhlak based on love is to cultivate the five principles of Panca Cinta. However, in integrating the values of love into the Aqidah Akhlak subject, the planning is carried out systematically through stages of formulating learning objectives, selecting materials, designing learning strategies, and conducting assessments – all directed towards fostering compassion, empathy, and sincerity within students. In addition, lesson plans are prepared and practiced to make the learning more impactful for students, thereby ensuring that the learning objectives can be achieved. Personally, during classroom practice, I prepare the lesson plans (RPP) at the beginning of each new academic year (Statement by Novel, Aqidah Akhlak Teacher, November 10, 2025).

From the data above, it can be concluded that the Love-Based Curriculum planning at MAN 1 Tulungagung was established by the Head of the Madrasah, who appointed a core curriculum planning team consisting of the Head of the Madrasah, Vice Principal for Curriculum, Vice Principal for Student Affairs, homeroom teachers, head of administration, KBC experts, Vice Principal for Facilities and Infrastructure, and teachers. This core curriculum planning team prepared the curriculum plan by integrating two curricula. Each member developed and arranged programs that must support and complement one another to ensure the successful implementation of the curriculum. The love-based curriculum planning for Islamic aqidah and akhlak (religious and moral) learning at MAN 1 Tulungagung was determined by the Principal, who appointed a core curriculum planning team consisting of the principal, the vice-chancellor of curriculum, the vice-chancellor of student affairs, homeroom teachers, the head of administration, the KBC expert team, the vice-chancellor of facilities and infrastructure, and teachers. This core curriculum team developed a love-based curriculum plan by combining two curricula: the Merdeka Curriculum and the Love-Based Curriculum. Each team created and developed programs that supported and complemented each other for effective implementation. They then determined a short-term plan (1 year), a medium-term achievement plan (2-3 years), and a long-term achievement plan (5 years). Practically, monitoring the implementation of the KBC was carried out by each teacher, ensuring that each subject teacher was able to develop a lesson plan (RPP) at the beginning of the new school year. Forming a Core Team for Curriculum Planning, Establishing a Core Team for Love-Based Curriculum at MAN 1 Tulungagung (Short-term, medium-term and long-term programs), Socialization and Workshops at the madrasah by the core team, Madrasah Context Analysis, Development of Learning Materials and Resources, At the practical level of implementing the Love-Based Curriculum.

Discussion

Love-Based Curriculum Planning in Aqidah and Akhlak Learning to Shape the Religious Character of Students at MAN 1 Tulungagung.

The planning of a love-based curriculum in the learning of aqidah and akhlak at MAN 1 Tulungagung goes through several stages. The Preparation and Planning

Stage includes the Formation of the Love-Based Curriculum Core Team at MAN 1 Tulungagung. The formation of the Love-Based Curriculum Core Team plays a strategic role in the Learning Community Core Team (KBC) at MAN 1 Tulungagung, at a certain level the formation of the Love-Based Curriculum Core Team (KBC) at MAN 1 Tulungagung is a crucial step in supporting the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum which emphasizes the development of continuous teacher professionalism. This Core Team was formed to be a driving center that plans, facilitates, and evaluates collective learning activities within MAN 1 Tulungagung. The main goal is to transform the teacher's work culture from individualistic to collaborative (Wijarwadi et al., 2025), so that a process of reflection and sharing of best practices occurs in a structured and directed manner. The KBC Core Team actually consists of a Coordinator (Head of MAN 1 Tulungagung or Deputy Head of Madrasah for Curriculum Affairs), Main Facilitator (Leading Teacher/Senior Teacher), and Teacher Field Members (subject representatives), who are selected based on their competence and commitment to improving the quality of learning within the madrasah.

The implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) at MAN 1 Tulungagung demonstrates how theoretical frameworks of care and collaborative planning are contextualized within a religious educational setting. While Noddings emphasizes the ethics of care as the foundation of meaningful education, the daily practices observed—such as the recitation of *Asmaul Husna*, congregational *dhuha* prayers, and Qur'an memorization—illustrate how care is embodied through devotion and spiritual discipline. Similarly, DuFour's notion of professional collaboration is reflected in the establishment of a curriculum planning team legitimized by the Head of Madrasah through an official decree (Herrelko, 2016), ensuring that teachers, administrators, and curriculum experts work collectively to integrate values of *Panca Cinta* into lesson plans and extracurricular activities. These processes not only highlight the structural dimension of curriculum planning but also reveal its practical impact: students gradually internalize compassion, empathy, sincerity, and love for nature as part of their religious character formation. Thus, the Love-Based Curriculum at MAN 1 Tulungagung bridges theoretical ideals with empirical realities, showing that curriculum planning is not merely procedural but transformative in shaping students' moral and spiritual identities.

The main function of the Love-Based Curriculum Planning Core Team at MAN 1 Tulungagung is to ensure that the Love-Based Curriculum can run, not only as a discussion forum (FGD), but also as a school-based problem-solving mechanism (School-Based Problem Solving). This team is tasked with identifying real problems faced by subject teachers in the classroom. Starting from the difficulty of implementing differentiated assessments to low student learning motivation, then designing specific learning sessions to overcome these challenges (Faradiba et al., 2026; Mukhibat, 2023). In the Madrasah context, the love-based curriculum integrates *Paca Cinta* religious values in the development of teaching materials (RPP), making it contextual. The operational tasks of this team include preparing routine schedules, creating learning modules, documenting the process, and disseminating knowledge gained from external training to all fellow teachers, making them a bridge between information and practice.

To ensure its effectiveness, the Core Team planning the Love-Based Curriculum must work based on the Main Duties and Functions (tupoksi) established by the Principal of MAN 1 Tulungagung. The coordinator is fully responsible for policy and resource support, the main Facilitator focuses on the quality of the content and methodology of the learning sessions (e.g., leading Lesson Study or peer coaching), while other members are responsible for bringing and representing the specific needs of their teacher groups. This detailed Tupoksi aligns with the principles of effective teacher professional development, which must be focused, active, and collaborative (Utama & Hidayati, n.d.); .

Next, Socialization and Workshop at the madrasah by the core team. The follow-up to the formation of the Love-Based Curriculum Core Team at MAN 1 Tulungagung, through the newly formed Love-Based Curriculum Core Team (KBC), will further implement a strategic program in the form of Socialization and Workshop of Love-Based Curriculum for all educators and education personnel. This program is a proactive response of the madrasah in integrating the values of Panca love, compassion, and spirituality (rahmatan lil 'alamin) into the curriculum structure and daily learning practices, going beyond the mere administrative demands of the Love-Based Curriculum (Fatimah, 2024). This socialization aims primarily to align the perception that KBC is an educational philosophy that places the affective and psychological aspects of students at the main axis, in line with humanistic learning theory that emphasizes personal growth and self-fulfillment (Mappaenre et al., 2023). The Love-Based Curriculum Core Team, acting as the main facilitator, explains the theological and pedagogical foundations of KBC, ensuring that every subject teacher understands that the implementation of this curriculum involves a paradigm shift from merely transferring knowledge to educating the heart and character.

The workshop phase that accompanied the socialization focused on developing contextual teaching materials and adapting teaching methods based on the principles of the Love-Based Curriculum. In this session, teachers were invited to explore the concept of affective differentiated learning, where students' diverse emotional needs and learning styles are accommodated through empathetic and caring interactions (Danil et al., 2025; Hidayatullah et al., 2025). The KBC Core Team provided practical guidance on how to design classroom activities, student behavior management, and non-cognitive assessments that reflect the values of the Five Loves. For example, teachers were taught how to integrate reflective journaling and empathy-based social projects into their respective subjects.

This workshop activity was carried out collaboratively, dividing teachers per subject group, encouraging the internal Professional Learning Community (PLC) to produce curriculum products that are ready to be implemented, starting from Teaching Modules to Virtue Project-based Assessments, ensuring that the Love-Based Curriculum is not just a jargon, but a real practice that is internalized in every corner of the madrasah (Napitupulu et al., 2025; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). This socialization and workshop as a whole demonstrate MAN 1 Tulungagung's commitment to creating a safe, supportive, and transformative learning environment, which ultimately aims to form graduates who are academically intelligent and emotionally-spiritually mature.

Madrasah Context Analysis. MAN 1 Tulungagung has significant internal strengths as the basic capital for implementing the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC). As a State Islamic Senior High School, this madrasah already has a strong religious foundation, which facilitates the integration of spiritual values and rahmatan lil 'alamin into the "Love" philosophy in the KBC. The presence of competent teachers, especially those who have been trained in the Independent Curriculum, as the core of the KBC Core Team, enables them to design learning that focuses not only on cognitive but also affective and psychological aspects of students, in line with the humanistic approach in education (Munir et al., 2026). Furthermore, the Independent Curriculum policy from the central government is a golden external opportunity that provides autonomy to madrasahs to develop a contextual curriculum (KBC) and integrate P5 with P2RA. However, madrasahs must be aware of internal weaknesses in the form of potential conflicts between the demands of the KBC and the high pressure to maintain academic achievement. Excessive focus on cognitive values can cause teachers to neglect character development and empathy, which are at the heart of KBC, so strong leadership support is needed to shift this paradigm (Tammen et al., 2018).

Therefore, the success of the Love-Based Curriculum at MAN 1 Tulungagung depends heavily on the KBC Core Team's strategies for mitigating weaknesses and capitalizing on opportunities. The team must design workshops and Professional Learning Community (KBC) sessions that explicitly teach how to integrate caring values into lesson planning and classroom management (Bismuth & Merzel, 2025). Externally, the madrasah can benefit from strong support from the Committee and parents who care about holistic character education, making them partners in strengthening the KBC outside the madrasah environment. Conversely, major challenges such as the influence of technology and social media that have the potential to erode the KBC values must be addressed with a structured digital literacy program and strengthening student well-being (Hidayatullah et al., 2025). With a thorough context analysis, the KBC can go beyond a mere project to become a madrasah culture that produces graduates who are not only academically excellent but also spiritually and emotionally mature.

The development of learning materials and resources is a crucial phase in the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) at MAN 1 Tulungagung, ensuring that the philosophy of caring and spirituality is concretely realized in the classroom. The KBC Core Team is responsible for leading this process, starting with an analysis of specific and contextual material needs, ensuring that the developed teaching materials not only meet the cognitive competency standards of the national curriculum but also strengthen the affective and psychomotor dimensions that are the core of the KBC. This process involves converting standard materials into Teaching Modules or thematic learning tools that integrate the values of compassion, empathy, and rahmatan lil 'alamin (blessings for the universe) (Pratiwi & Shidqi, 2025).

The development of these materials was collaborative and conducted within a Professional Learning Community (KBC) among group teachers, where they jointly designed learning scenarios that provided space for student reflection, social project-based activities, and the use of non-cognitive assessments, all supported by diverse

learning resources – not only textbooks, but also inspirational stories, real-life cases, and digital resources. The end result of this development was personalized learning resources relevant to the madrasah environment, which consistently strengthened students' identities as individuals with noble character and high social awareness, thus ensuring transformative and holistic learning quality (Mappaenre et al., 2023).

Practically, the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum. Monitoring the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) at MAN 1 Tulungagung focuses on the accountability of the planning carried out by each subject teacher. The most fundamental initial step is to ensure that each subject teacher is able to prepare a Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) or Teaching Module at the beginning of the new school year that explicitly integrates the values of the Love-Based Curriculum, such as love for Allah and the Prophet, love for oneself, love for nature, empathy, compassion, self-reflection, and student well-being, into learning objectives, core activities, and assessments (David Azizi et al., 2026). This preparation process should not be merely an administrative formality but should serve as a forum for teachers to translate the KBC philosophy into concrete pedagogical action. Teachers must be able to demonstrate how to allocate time and select methods, such as project-based learning that prioritizes social awareness or discussion techniques that build caring (Zuhri et al., 2026). have been included in the planning. Monitoring by the KBC Core Team will then focus on checking the syllabus and lesson plans, ensuring the presence of measurable affective success indicators and contextual learning resources, which are vital prerequisites for ensuring the designed curriculum is truly student-centered and holistically integrated (Rohman et al., 2026). Thus, the lesson plan/teaching module becomes a key document and initial measuring tool that ensures the consistency of KBC implementation across all subjects before implementation in the classroom begins.

Another significant dimension of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) at MAN 1 Tulungagung is its emphasis on environmental stewardship as an expression of religious devotion. The value of *cinta alam* (love for nature), one of the five principles of *Panca Cinta*, is operationalized through programs such as school greening, waste management, and collective efforts to maintain cleanliness in classrooms and prayer areas. These practices not only align with Islamic teachings on caring for the environment but also cultivate a sense of responsibility and empathy among students. Observations revealed that students actively participated in tree planting and cleanliness campaigns, which fostered awareness that caring for nature is part of their religious character formation. This integration illustrates how curriculum planning transcends procedural stages and becomes a lived experience that shapes students' moral and spiritual identities (Tobing, 2026; Mau & Miftahuddin, 2025). In this way, the KBC bridges theoretical ideals of holistic education with tangible outcomes in students' daily lives, reinforcing the notion that love for Allah must be manifested through love for His creation.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the planning of the Love-Based Curriculum (LBC) in Aqidah Akhlak learning at MAN 1 Tulungagung is carried out through a systematic and collaborative process involving curriculum governance, institutional

context analysis, stakeholder participation, and the integration of the Panca Cinta values into curriculum documents, learning resources, and classroom practices. The curriculum planning process consists of establishing a curriculum core team, formulating short-, medium-, and long-term programs, conducting curriculum socialization and professional development workshops, analyzing the madrasah context, developing learning materials, and continuously monitoring implementation. These stages ensure that curriculum planning is not merely administrative but functions as a strategic mechanism for embedding compassion, empathy, responsibility, environmental awareness, and spiritual values into students' character formation.

The principal scientific contribution of this study lies in extending the conventional curriculum management framework by identifying madrasah context analysis as a distinct and indispensable stage preceding curriculum implementation. Unlike previous curriculum planning models that primarily emphasize planning, implementation, and evaluation, this study demonstrates that contextual institutional analysis serves as the critical bridge connecting curriculum design with the unique characteristics, needs, and capacities of Islamic educational institutions. This finding contributes to the development of a more adaptive and value-oriented curriculum planning model suitable for contemporary madrasah education.

Practically, the Love-Based Curriculum provides an innovative framework for integrating religious values with holistic character education while maintaining alignment with the Merdeka Curriculum. The findings suggest that curriculum reform in Islamic schools should prioritize collaborative governance, contextual planning, and continuous professional development to ensure that educational transformation is reflected not only in academic achievement but also in students' moral, social, emotional, and spiritual development. Future research is recommended to evaluate the long-term impact of the Love-Based Curriculum across different educational settings using comparative and mixed-method approaches to strengthen the generalizability of this curriculum model.

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