

Integrating a Love-Based Curriculum and Pedagogical Deep Learning for Character Transformation in Indonesian Islamic Senior High Schools

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ABSTRACT. The rapid growth of digital technology has intensified moral challenges in Islamic education, including bullying, cyberbullying, and declining reflective and ethical reasoning among students. Although previous studies have established relationships between religiosity, character education, and student behavior, they have largely remained correlational or conceptual, providing limited evidence on how value-based curricula can be pedagogically operationalized to achieve observable character transformation. This study analyzes the integration of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) and deep learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) to foster character transformation among Madrasah Aliyah students. A qualitative multi-case study was conducted across three Madrasah Aliyah using participatory observations, semi-structured interviews, and curriculum document analysis. The findings indicate that integrating KBC values through deep learning pedagogies positively transformed the school climate by increasing student engagement, reflective understanding of religious teachings, and meaningful participation in collaborative learning. The study also documented substantial reductions in bullying behaviors alongside increased student social participation and empathy. These changes were associated with the alignment of compassion-based curriculum values and deep learning strategies that promote critical reflection, ethical dialogue, contextual problem-solving, and prosocial behavior. The study contributes theoretically by demonstrating how value-based education can be operationalized through deep learning pedagogy, providing empirical evidence of value internalization and proposing an integrative model explaining the relationship between pedagogical processes and character transformation. The findings further highlight that the successful implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum depends not only on curriculum policy but also on teacher readiness and sustained institutional support for reflective and dialogical learning.

Keywords: Love-Based Curriculum, deep learning pedagogy, Islamic education, character education, madrasah

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of information technology has significantly reshaped the moral landscape of Islamic education, particularly in relation to students' social interactions within digital environments. Recent studies indicate an increasing prevalence of bullying, symbolic violence, and cyberbullying among adolescents, especially within online peer interactions (Almaziyah et al., 2025; Bay et al., 2025; Ganesini & Brighi, 2015; Husna et al., 2025; Ma et al., 2024; Mokodompit et al., 2025; Sharma & Gera, 2025; Shobihah, 2025; Syaifuddin & Ahwan, 2024). Rather than merely reflecting isolated behavioral incidents, these phenomena represent broader challenges in the moral and character formation of students in contemporary madrasah contexts. (Al-Turif & Al-Sanad,

2023; Budiyo et al., 2024; Ismawati, 2023; Nursyam et al., 2025) emphasize that bullying in digital spaces tends to be more persistent and difficult to detect, intensifying its psychological impact on students. This condition is further aggravated by low literacy competence among Indonesian students, as reflected in the 2022 PISA results (Amir et al., 2023; Arianto et al., 2025; Hidayat et al., 2026; Huda et al., 2024; Kartiko et al., 2026; Nurqamar & Nur, 2022), which indicate limitations in critical thinking, reflective judgment, and ethical decision-making. Consequently, character education in madrasah cannot be treated merely as a normative discourse but must be addressed as an empirical and pedagogical challenge that directly affects students' moral development and the overall learning climate.

Within this context, a growing body of research has examined the relationship between religiosity and students' social behavior. Empirical findings by (Nisa et al., 2025; Saputra et al., 2025; Sholihah et al., 2025; Yusdiana et al., 2026) demonstrate that higher levels of religiosity are associated with lower tendencies toward cyberbullying among Madrasah Aliyah students. Complementary studies highlight the importance of madrasah climate and Islamic personality in shaping students' prosocial behavior and reducing aggressive tendencies (Astuti & Winarti, 2026; Ataman et al., 2024). In parallel, other scholars have emphasized the need to redesign Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning objectives, materials, and methods so that they are more responsive to digital-era moral challenges (Faqihuddin & Muflih, 2024; Hakim et al., 2025; Wijaya et al., 2025). However, most of these studies remain correlational or conceptual, focusing on the relationship between religiosity and behavior without sufficiently explaining how religious values can be pedagogically operationalized within classroom practices to generate observable character transformation. At the policy level, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has introduced the KBC as a strategic framework to address moral degradation and humanitarian concerns within madrasah education (Kartiko et al., 2025). The KBC emphasizes compassion, respect for human dignity, and sustainability as foundational values of Islamic education (Cahyati et al., 2025). Preliminary findings suggest that the implementation of the KBC can foster more conducive learning environments and strengthen humanistic relationships between teachers and students (Avisar & Yondler, 2025; Harmonis & Mukarromah, 2026; Lubis, 2025; Shalihin et al., 2026). Nevertheless, existing studies primarily describe policy implementation or teacher perceptions, and have not yet examined how KBC values can be systematically integrated into specific pedagogical strategies to ensure value internalization rather than remaining at the level of normative discourse.

Parallel to this development, the deep learning approach has emerged as a pedagogical orientation that emphasizes meaningful understanding, reflective engagement, and contextual application of knowledge. Deep learning has been shown to enhance student engagement and relational understanding, particularly when learning activities are linked to real-life issues and critical dialogue (Aridan et al., 2025; Fitrah et al., 2025; Handayani et al., 2025; Heung & Chiu, 2025; Pahrudin et al., 2025). Despite its potential, deep learning in Islamic education contexts is often treated as a standalone methodological innovation and has rarely been positioned as a pedagogical instrument for operationalizing value-based curricula such as the Love-Based Curriculum, especially within Islamic Religious Education at the Madrasah Aliyah level.

These conditions indicate a significant research gap. Although studies on religiosity, character education, and deep learning have developed separately, integrative empirical research examining how the Love-Based Curriculum can be implemented through deep learning strategies to transform students' character remains limited. More specifically, previous studies have not investigated how KBC values are translated into classroom-level pedagogical practices, how deep learning functions as a mediating mechanism for value internalization, and what forms of measurable character transformation emerge from such integration (Apriliya & Nadlir, 2026; Fahrudin et al., 2026; Sari, 2025). This lack of integrative analysis limits the understanding of how value-based curriculum policies can be operationalized into meaningful learning experiences that produce observable behavioral and attitudinal change. To address this gap, the present study

investigates the integration of the KBC as an axiological framework with deep learning as an operational pedagogical strategy in Islamic Religious Education at the Madrasah Aliyah level. Although prior research has explored the potential benefits of character education and deep learning separately, there remains a lack of empirical studies examining how these two frameworks can be integrated effectively within the context of Islamic education. Existing studies primarily focus on either the theoretical aspects of value-based curricula or the pedagogical potential of deep learning without fully exploring how value internalization through deep learning can lead to observable character transformation. Additionally, previous research has often treated value-based education as a normative concept, without examining how specific pedagogical strategies mediate the integration of these values in real classroom settings. This study aims to fill this gap by empirically exploring how KBC values can be operationalized through deep learning to transform students' character in terms of empathy, social responsibility, and moral resilience. The research is guided by the following questions: (1) How is the integration of the Love-Based Curriculum and deep learning implemented in Islamic Religious Education learning at Madrasah Aliyah? (2) How does this integration contribute to students' character transformation, particularly in terms of empathy, social responsibility, and moral resilience? (3) What pedagogical mechanisms mediate the relationship between value internalization and observable behavioral change within the madrasah environment?

The novelty of this study lies in its effort to move beyond conceptual discussions of value-based education by providing empirical evidence of how KBC values can be operationalized through deep learning pedagogy to produce meaningful character transformation. By examining the interaction between values, pedagogical processes, and student behavior within real classroom settings, this study proposes an integrative model that explains how compassion-based values are internalized through dialogical, reflective, and contextual learning practices. In doing so, the research contributes to the development of Islamic education pedagogy by demonstrating that the effectiveness of value-based curricula depends not only on policy formulation but also on the design of learning strategies that enable critical reflection, ethical dialogue, and contextual application of religious teachings in students' everyday lives.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative multiple-case study design to investigate the implementation of the integration of the KBC and deep learning in Islamic Religious Education across three Madrasah Aliyah in Bandar Lampung (Sardana et al., 2023). The selected sites included MAN 1 Bandar Lampung, MA Al-Hikmah, and MAN 2 Bandar Lampung, representing urban, pesantren-based, and science-oriented madrasah contexts respectively. Across the three institutions, the total student population reached approximately 1,250 students during the 2023-2025 period, providing a comprehensive institutional context for examining changes in character formation and school climate.

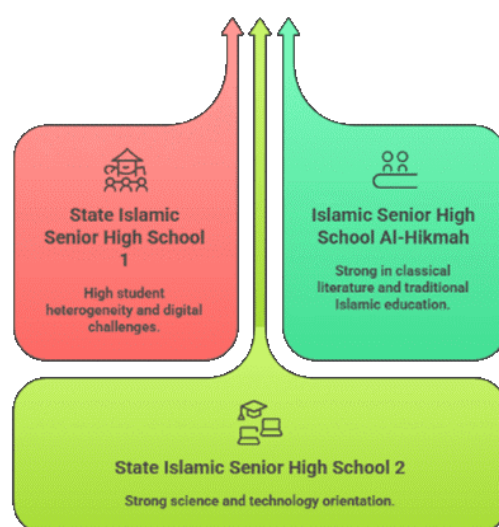


Figure 1. Research Settings across Diverse Madrasah Contexts

Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the implementation of KBC and deep learning practices. A total of 12 key informants were selected, including 3 madrasah principals, 3 curriculum coordinators, 4 Islamic Religious Education teachers, and 2 guidance and counseling teachers. Additionally, 30 students were chosen to represent diverse academic and behavioral backgrounds, capturing a wide range of experiences related to character development within the madrasah environment. Participant recruitment continued until data saturation was achieved, indicated by the recurrence of similar themes across interviews and classroom observations without the emergence of substantially new insights.

Data collection was conducted through prolonged classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis (Pilcher et al., 1990). Classroom observations focused on teacher-student interaction patterns, the implementation of dialogical and reflective learning, and the integration of KBC values within deep learning activities such as project-based learning and critical discussions. Semi-structured interviews explored participants' perceptions of KBC implementation, pedagogical strategies, and observed changes in student behavior and madrasah climate. In addition, institutional documents including curriculum plans, learning modules, and guidance and counseling reports on bullying cases and student behavior were analyzed to triangulate findings.

Data analysis followed the interactive qualitative analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). Coding procedures were conducted through iterative cycles of open coding, axial coding, and thematic synthesis to identify patterns related to value internalization, pedagogical processes, and character transformation. (Ryan, 2012) Cross-case analysis was then performed to compare findings across the three madrasah settings. and analytical rigor were ensured through methodological triangulation (observations, interviews, and documents), source triangulation across different participant groups, and peer debriefing among researchers to refine thematic interpretations (Meydan & Akkaş, 2024). Data collection and analysis were conducted concurrently until thematic saturation and interpretive consistency were achieved across cases.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Changes in Bullying Indicators and Madrasah Climate

The findings indicate substantial changes in bullying indicators and overall madrasah climate during the 2023–2025 period following the implementation of the KBC integrated with deep learning practices. Quantitative data were derived from Guidance and Counseling (BK) reports and institutional student surveys across three participating madrasah, encompassing a total institutional population of approximately 1,250 students. Table 1 presents a comparison of key indicators before and after the implementation period.

Table 1. Comparison of Statistics on Bullying Cases and School Climate (Average of Three Islamic Senior High Schools)

Indicator	2023 (Pre-Implementation)	2025 (Post-Implementation)	Change
Report of physical bullying	15 cases/semester	3 cases/semester	–80%
Cyberbullying report	28 cases/semester	12 cases/semester	–57%
Report of silent bullying (exclusion)	Not registered	8 cases/semester	–
Student sense of security index	65% (sufficient)	92% (very good)	+41%
Participation in social activities	40%	85%	+112%

Source: Processed data from BK reports and student surveys (2023 – 2025).

As shown in Table 1, the reported cases of physical bullying decreased by 80%, from 15 to 3 cases per semester, and cyberbullying reports declined by 57%, from 28 to 12 cases per semester. The student sense-of-security index increased by 41%, from 65% (sufficient) to 92% (very good), and participation in social activities more than doubled, increasing by 112%, from 40% to 85%.

These quantitative improvements suggest a positive shift in school climate towards a safer and more participatory environment. However, the results should be interpreted with caution. While the observed changes indicate a favorable trend, it is important to consider other contextual factors that may have contributed to these improvements. In addition to the integration of the KBC and deep learning, the period also saw the introduction of several parallel initiatives, including increased teacher awareness of student well-being, enhanced peer counseling initiatives, and strengthened guidance and counseling systems. These efforts may have interacted with the KBC-deep learning integration, potentially contributing to improvements in bullying detection, reporting, and prevention.

In analyzing these results, it is essential to acknowledge that while the quantitative data demonstrate a shift in key school climate indicators, the full impact of KBC and deep learning cannot be directly attributed to these changes. The qualitative findings, derived from classroom observations and interviews, provide further insights into the mechanisms that may have driven these improvements. For example, the introduction of dialogical and reflective learning practices, as part of the deep learning approach, may have fostered a greater sense of empathy and social responsibility among students. These qualitative factors complement the quantitative findings, suggesting that the combination of KBC and deep learning likely contributed to both a safer environment and increased student engagement. However, the precise relationship between these variables requires further investigation, as the current study cannot establish causal links between the interventions and the observed improvements in school climate.

The emergence of “silent bullying” cases in 2025, which had not previously been formally recorded, illustrates not necessarily an increase in bullying behavior but an enhanced institutional capacity to identify previously hidden forms of exclusion and psychological aggression. This finding indicates improved reporting sensitivity and a more open school climate rather than a straightforward behavioral increase. Therefore, the quantitative changes presented should be

understood as indicative of a broader transformation in madrasah climate and monitoring practices rather than solely as direct outcomes of the KBC–deep learning intervention.

Learning Practices: Critical Discussion and Value Reflection

Classroom observations in Aqidah and Akhlak learning revealed the integration of deep learning strategies through critical dialogue and reflective questioning designed to connect religious values with students' lived experiences in digital environments. Across the three madrasah, a total of 18 classroom observation sessions were conducted over one semester. From these sessions, recurring patterns of dialogical interaction and reflective engagement were identified through thematic coding. The classroom dialogue presented below is not an isolated case but a representative excerpt selected from multiple observation transcripts that demonstrated consistent patterns of value-oriented discussion across sites.

The following excerpts from class interactions are direct observation data recorded during the learning process: Teacher: *"Look at the netizen comments on this screen. Do you think the writers of these comments felt guilty when they typed them?"*

Student A: *"Maybe not, sir. Because he feels anonymous, not face to face."* Teacher: *"That's right. Then, if you were in the position of the victim who received thousands of notifications of abuse, what would happen to your soul?"*

Student B: *"It's devastating, sir. You could become depressed or even suicidal."*

Teacher: *"So, can typing be as sharp as a knife? Where is our compassion as Muslims if our fingers become the ones who assassinate others?"*

This excerpt was selected based on its alignment with the dominant themes identified during coding, namely empathy development, perspective-taking, and moral reflection related to digital behavior. Similar dialogical patterns were observed in all three madrasah, although with varying levels of intensity depending on teacher facilitation style and classroom dynamics. The selection of illustrative excerpts followed a maximum variation strategy to ensure that examples reflected common pedagogical practices rather than exceptional or isolated events.

Following reflective dialogue sessions, student reflection sheets were analyzed to identify recurring shifts in moral reasoning. The quoted student reflection represents a typical pattern found across reflection documents, where students reframed digital behavior not merely as rule compliance but as an ethical responsibility grounded in compassion and social awareness. These reflections were selected after cross-checking multiple student journals to ensure that the examples presented were representative of broader thematic trends rather than singular responses.

Improving the Quality of Learning and Student Engagement

Observational data indicate notable changes in student engagement and conceptual understanding following the integration of deep learning strategies into Islamic Religious Education. Table 2 summarizes the comparative characteristics of conventional and deep learning-based instructional practices observed across the three madrasah.

Table 2. Achievement of Islamic Religious Education Learning Quality Based on Deep Learning

Assessment Aspects	Conventional Method (Lecture)	Deep Learning Method (PjBL/Inquiry)	Information
Level of engagement	Passive (listening, taking notes)	Very active ($\pm 85\%$ of students involved in discussions)	Students are enthusiastic about discussing and arguing.
Conceptual understanding (SOLO)	Multistructural	Relational & extended abstract	Students are able to link arguments and context
Relevance of the material	Low	Tall	The material is linked to real problems
4C Skills	Underdeveloped	Growing rapidly	Critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication

The findings demonstrate increased student participation, with approximately 80–85% of students actively engaged in discussions and collaborative tasks during deep learning sessions. Conceptual understanding shifted from multistructural to relational and extended abstract levels, as students demonstrated the ability to connect religious concepts with real-life contexts. Nevertheless, these improvements should be interpreted within the broader pedagogical transformation occurring in the participating madrasah. Teacher professional development activities, collaborative lesson planning, and strengthened school leadership support for student-centered learning were also reported during the study period. These factors likely interacted with KBC-oriented deep learning practices in shaping improvements in engagement and learning quality.

Internalization of Ecological Awareness (Eco-Piety)

The findings indicate that the integration of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) with deep learning pedagogy was associated with the strengthening of ecological awareness as an integral dimension of students' religious consciousness, conceptualized in this study as eco-piety. Across the three participating madrasah, classroom observations, student reflections, and project documentation revealed recurring patterns in which environmental stewardship was framed not merely as an institutional rule but as a moral and theological responsibility rooted in Islamic teachings on *khalifah fil ardh* (human stewardship of the earth). While ecological awareness initiatives had previously existed in some form within the participating schools, the integration of KBC values with reflective and project-based learning practices appeared to intensify the connection between environmental action and religious meaning-making.

In MA Al-Hikmah, for instance, learning activities explicitly positioned environmental responsibility within an ethical and theological framework. Students were encouraged to reinterpret religious teachings not only in relation to ritual observance but also in relation to social and ecological responsibility. This pedagogical shift was observed across multiple project-based learning sessions and supported by interview data from teachers and students, indicating that ecological awareness increasingly became embedded within the broader framework of character education rather than treated as a peripheral activity.

One illustrative example of this internalization process is the Bank Sampah Berkah project, a student-led waste management initiative integrated into Islamic Religious Education learning. This case was selected not as an isolated success story but because it provided the most comprehensive documentation of implementation, including project records, student participation data, and measurable environmental outcomes. School archives indicate that unmanaged waste within the school environment decreased by approximately 60% during the project period. More importantly, the project integrated ecological ethics with social and religious values by engaging students in waste segregation, recycling, financial management, and the redistribution of proceeds for charitable activities. Through these practices, environmental stewardship (*ḥifẓ al-bi'ah*) was linked to social solidarity (*ukhuwwah ijtimaiyyah*), reinforcing the moral dimension of ecological action.

To minimize the risk of selective illustration, qualitative evidence presented in this section was derived from cross-case thematic coding of observation notes, interview transcripts, and student reflection journals collected across the three madrasah. Only examples that reflected recurring patterns across multiple data sources were included. Student reflections consistently articulated environmental care using religious moral language, framing eco-friendly practices as acts of worship (*ibādah*), expressions of responsibility before God, and forms of social compassion. These patterns suggest a qualitative shift in moral orientation from externally imposed environmental discipline toward internally motivated ethical commitment.

Nevertheless, the study does not attribute these developments solely to the KBC–deep learning integration. Parallel institutional initiatives—such as strengthened school environmental programs, extracurricular activities, and teacher-led campaigns on sustainability were also present

in varying degrees across the participating madrasah. These contextual factors likely interacted with KBC-oriented deep learning practices in shaping students' ecological awareness. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of a synergistic relationship between value-based pedagogy and broader institutional efforts rather than as outcomes attributable to a single intervention.

For greater analytical clarity, Table 3 synthesizes the dominant transformation patterns in students' ecological perspectives and practices identified across the dataset. The table was constructed through iterative coding and cross-case comparison of qualitative data from all three madrasah, ensuring that the patterns presented represent common tendencies rather than isolated cases.

Table 3. Transformation of Students' Ecological Awareness through Eco-Piety-Based Learning

Aspect	Before Integration	After Integration
Perception of environmental care	Viewed as school rule or cleanliness obligation	Understood as religious responsibility (amanah)
Student involvement	Limited to cleaning schedules	Active participation in waste management projects
Moral motivation	External compliance	Internalized ethical and spiritual commitment
Link to social values	Minimal	Integrated with charity and social empathy
Sustainability of practice	Short-term and incidental	Continuous and student-initiated

The transformation patterns summarized in Table 3 indicate that ecological awareness evolved from compliance-based behavior toward an internally grounded ethical and spiritual commitment. While the intensity of implementation varied across sites, the shift toward integrating ecological responsibility with religious meaning-making emerged consistently across observations and participant reflections. These findings contribute to the growing discourse on Islamic education by providing empirical evidence that ecological awareness can be strengthened when religious values are operationalized through dialogical, reflective, and contextual learning processes. In this context, eco-piety represents not merely an environmentally responsible attitude but a multidimensional moral disposition integrating cognitive understanding, emotional engagement, and ethically grounded action.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the integration of the KBC and deep learning within PAI contributes to observable changes in the madrasah climate, student engagement, and character-related dispositions. The integration of these two pedagogical frameworks reflects a shift from traditional, transmission-oriented models of education to more meaning-making processes, where students construct ethical understanding through reflective and dialogical practices. These findings align with (Rigopouli et al., 2025) sociocultural theory, which posits that learning is a socially mediated process where students build knowledge and values through interaction with others. This study extends the theory by showing that values-based education can be successfully operationalized in the classroom through sustained, reflective dialogue and collaborative inquiry.

The shift in students' character dispositions observed in this study is consistent with research on constructivist pedagogy, which emphasizes the role of active learning in internalizing values (Apridayani & Waluyo, 2025; Li & Zhang, 2025; Tegegne et al., 2025). This study moves beyond the normative view of character education, which often treats values as static lessons to be taught, to a more dynamic process where students actively engage in moral reasoning through reflective discussions. Such practices help students connect abstract ethical principles, such as empathy and social responsibility, to real-world issues like cyberbullying and environmental responsibility. This finding is in line with (Tanipu et al., 2026; Wu et al., 2025), who argued that value internalization is more effective when students can relate moral concepts to their lived experiences.

In this study, reflective dialogue emerged as a key mediating factor in character formation. As students engaged in discussions about real-life issues, such as cyberbullying, their capacity for empathy and perspective-taking was enhanced, which led to a reduction in bullying behaviors and an increase in social participation. These results are consistent with (Elbertson et al., 2025), who found that classroom dialogues and discussions on moral issues lead to improvements in emotional intelligence and social-emotional learning. The dialogical approach also aligns with (Chu et al., 2024), who suggested that a positive learning environment fostered by reflective dialogue can significantly reduce aggressive behaviors and promote prosocial actions in students.

The observed increase in silent bullying cases is an important finding, as it suggests that the improved openness and trust within the school environment have allowed students to report previously hidden forms of exclusion and psychological harm. This is in agreement with (Osborne, 2024), who emphasized that safe and inclusive environments encourage students to report bullying incidents that may otherwise go unnoticed. The increase in reporting does not necessarily indicate a rise in bullying behavior but rather improved sensitivity to subtle forms of bullying, which is a positive shift in the school climate. (Saleh et al., 2025) also highlighted that environments promoting dialogue and trust make students more comfortable in disclosing sensitive issues like bullying.

The development of eco-piety, where students internalized environmental stewardship as a religious responsibility, further supports the effectiveness of integrating religious values with experiential learning. The findings suggest that when environmental care is framed within the context of Islamic ethical teachings on human responsibility as khalifah (steward of the Earth), students view it not as an institutional rule but as a religious duty. This finding resonates with (Aprilianto et al., 2025; Marshall, 2025), who argued that religious teachings play a significant role in shaping students' environmental awareness when integrated with real-world problem-solving. (Hasanadka et al., 2025) also found that religious values can significantly enhance students' commitment to sustainability and ecological responsibility when they are connected to moral and spiritual teachings.

The study also proposes the Pedagogical Internalization Model of Love-Based Education (PIM-LBE), which positions deep learning as the primary vehicle for internalizing values from the KBC. This model suggests that dialogical reflection, critical inquiry, and contextual problem-solving enable the translation of normative values into meaningful ethical dispositions. This model builds on classical frameworks of character education (Fitzgerald, 2023), which have traditionally focused on moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. PIM-LBE introduces pedagogical mediation as a central element, asserting that character formation is not simply the result of exposure to curriculum content but arises from sustained engagement with interactive, reflective, and contextual learning. This extension of character education frameworks is supported by Gamage et al. (2021), who emphasized the role of pedagogical strategies in facilitating the internalization of values through meaningful learning experiences.

Empirical support for this model is found in the consistent patterns identified across the three participating madrasah, including increased empathy, social participation, ecological awareness, and openness in discussing sensitive social issues. These findings suggest that pedagogical design plays a crucial role in translating value-based curricula into lived ethical practices. These findings align with (Boakye-Yiadom et al., 2025; Ramadoni et al., 2026), who argued that project-based learning, when linked with real-life issues, enhances student engagement and the internalization of values. The implication of this study for Islamic education management is substantial, as it indicates that a positive madrasah climate and effective character formation cannot be achieved through policy directives or curricular documentation alone but require sustained dialogical and reflective pedagogical practices within the classroom.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the integration of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) and deep learning in Islamic Religious Education contributes to meaningful character transformation by fostering empathy, social responsibility, and ecological awareness through dialogical, reflective, and contextual learning. Unlike previous studies that primarily examined value-based education or deep learning as separate concepts, this research provides empirical evidence of how compassion-based curricular values can be operationalized through specific pedagogical strategies to produce observable behavioral change. The findings further reveal that character formation is mediated by reflective dialogue, critical inquiry, and project-based learning, enabling students to internalize religious values beyond normative compliance toward ethical awareness in everyday life.

The study contributes theoretically by extending the discourse on value-based education through an integrative pedagogical perspective, demonstrating that curriculum values become effective only when translated into meaningful learning experiences. Practically, the findings offer guidance for educators, madrasah leaders, and policymakers by highlighting the importance of strengthening teachers' competencies in reflective and dialogical pedagogy, as well as providing institutional support for contextual and project-based learning that connects Islamic values with contemporary social issues. These findings also offer a practical framework for implementing the Love-Based Curriculum across diverse madrasah settings.

This study is limited by its focus on three madrasah, the absence of a control group, and the relatively short implementation period, which restricts causal interpretation and the assessment of long-term sustainability. In addition, the observed outcomes may have been influenced by concurrent institutional programs and broader socio-cultural factors. Future research should therefore employ comparative, longitudinal, or mixed-method designs involving more diverse educational contexts to examine the sustainability of character transformation and to validate and refine the proposed pedagogical model across different institutional and cultural settings.

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