

# Love Curriculum in Islamic education: Fostering Tolerance and Religious Moderation

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## Abstract

**Keywords:**  
Love-Based  
Curriculum,  
Pesantren,  
Tolerance and  
religious moderation.

This study explores the implementation of the Love Curriculum, with a particular focus on its integration at Pesantren Al-Amien Prenduan. Using a qualitative approach with document analysis, field observations, and semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, the study investigates how the Love Curriculum's nine core values empathy, compassion, tolerance, justice, respect, humanity, cooperation, responsibility, and creativity are practiced within pesantren education. The findings reveal that Al-Amien embeds these values not only in formal classroom learning but also in dormitory life, communal worship, and student organizations, creating an environment that nurtures students' intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth. The novelty of this study lies in its examination of how pesantren education, traditionally rooted in Islamic values, adapts and operationalizes a state-issued curriculum to promote religious moderation, multiculturalism, and the Profil Pelajar Pancasila. Unlike previous studies that analyze tolerance education primarily in public schools, this research demonstrates that pesantrens can serve as unique models for integrating love-based pedagogy with religious and national identity. The study concludes that the Love Curriculum at Al-Amien contributes to countering intolerance, strengthening national commitment, and cultivating inclusive, socially responsible graduates thereby offering a replicable model for Indonesian and global Islamic education in the era of rapid social change.

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## Abstrak

**Kata kunci:**  
Kurikulum Berbasis  
Cinta,  
Pesantren,  
Toleransi dan  
moderasi agama.

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi implementasi Love Curriculum, dengan fokus pada integrasinya di Pesantren Al-Amien Prenduan. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui analisis dokumen, observasi lapangan, dan wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan guru dan santri, penelitian ini meneliti bagaimana sembilan nilai inti Love Curriculum – empati, kasih sayang, toleransi, keadilan, penghormatan, kemanusiaan, kerja sama, tanggung jawab, dan kreativitas – diimplementasikan dalam pendidikan pesantren. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Al-Amien menanamkan nilai-nilai ini tidak hanya dalam pembelajaran formal di kelas tetapi juga dalam kehidupan asrama, kegiatan ibadah bersama, dan organisasi santri, menciptakan lingkungan yang mendukung perkembangan intelektual, moral, dan spiritual siswa. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada bagaimana pendidikan pesantren, yang secara tradisional berakar pada nilai-nilai Islam, menyesuaikan dan mengoperasionalkan kurikulum negara untuk mempromosikan moderasi beragama, multikulturalisme, dan Profil Pelajar Pancasila. Berbeda dengan penelitian sebelumnya yang lebih banyak menganalisis pendidikan toleransi di sekolah umum, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pesantren dapat menjadi model unik dalam mengintegrasikan pedagogi berbasis cinta dengan identitas agama dan kebangsaan. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa Love Curriculum di Al-Amien berkontribusi dalam menanggulangi intoleransi, memperkuat komitmen kebangsaan, dan membentuk lulusan yang inklusif serta bertanggung jawab secara sosial – sehingga menawarkan

Article history:  
Received: 02-10-2025  
Revised 13-12-2025  
Accepted 15-01-2026

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*model yang dapat direplikasi untuk pendidikan Islam di Indonesia maupun secara global di era perubahan sosial yang cepat.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Indonesian religious education has faced increasing moral and social challenges, including rising intolerance, bullying, religious exclusivism, digital violence, and declining social empathy among youth. These issues are exacerbated by rapid digitalization and an education system that remains heavily oriented toward cognitive outcomes, often neglecting affective and ethical dimensions. Religious education, which ideally functions as a moral compass, has been criticized for becoming overly doctrinal and formalistic, resulting in a growing disconnect between religious instruction and lived social realities (A. Ismail et al., 2024; M. Rahman et al., 2025). In response to these challenges, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia introduced the Love-Based Curriculum (LBC) as a national policy aimed at reorienting religious education toward love, compassion, solidarity, and ecological responsibility (Fauzi et al., 2025; Rokhimawan et al., 2025; Sari, 2025).

Previous studies have examined the Love-Based Curriculum primarily from policy, philosophical, or pedagogical perspectives. Scholars highlight its grounding in the Islamic concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, its emphasis on emotional intelligence, and its potential to foster tolerant, humanistic, and socially responsible learners (Ifendi, 2025; Qamariah & Anwar, 2025). Parallel to this, Western humanistic educational thought—particularly Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi's pedagogy of love—has long emphasized holistic education that integrates intellect, emotion, and moral character through affection, care, and experiential learning (Sellars & Imig, 2022). Similarly, classical Islamic educational thought, especially that of al-Ghazali, underscores moral purification, sincerity, empathy, and spiritual discipline as the core aims of education (Jalaldeen & Al-Hidabi, 2025). Although these traditions share striking philosophical resonances, they are rarely analyzed together within contemporary curriculum discourse.

Despite the growing body of literature, a significant research gap remains. Existing studies tend to examine the Love-Based Curriculum either normatively or conceptually, without systematically linking it to both Western humanistic pedagogy and classical Islamic educational thought. Moreover, empirical investigations into how these philosophical foundations are translated into concrete educational practices particularly within *pesantren* as indigenous Islamic institutions are still limited. As a result, the Love-Based Curriculum risks being understood merely as a policy innovation rather than as an integrative pedagogical model with deep philosophical roots and lived institutional expressions.

This article addresses this gap by examining the philosophical compatibility and pedagogical coherence between the Love-Based Curriculum, Pestalozzi's humanistic education, and al-Ghazali's ethical-spiritual educational framework. It further explores how these convergent philosophies are operationalized in everyday educational practices within Pesantren Al-Amien Prenduan, a pesantren known for its emphasis on discipline, equality, affection-based teacher-student relationships, and multicultural coexistence. Through this case, the study demonstrates how love-based pedagogy is not merely theoretical but embedded in the pesantren tradition through spiritual discipline (*riyādah*), moral exemplarity, and holistic guidance.

By integrating contemporary curriculum policy, Western humanistic pedagogy, and classical Islamic educational thought, this study offers a novel conceptual and empirical contribution to the discourse on religious education reform in Indonesia. It positions the Love-Based Curriculum as an integrative pedagogical model with strong philosophical legitimacy and practical relevance, capable of responding to contemporary moral, social, and educational challenges while remaining deeply rooted in both Islamic and humanistic traditions.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design using a field research approach (Cassell & Symon, 2004) conducted at Pesantren Al-Amien Prenduan, Sumenep, Madura. Data were collected from primary sources, including in-depth interviews with policymakers, pesantren leaders, teachers, and students, as well as participant observation during teaching and learning activities that reflect the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum. Secondary data were also obtained from relevant documents, such as official policy guidelines, institutional reports, and supporting literature on educational reform, religious moderation, and multicultural education in Indonesia.

The data analysis was carried out through several stages. First, data reduction was conducted by selecting, simplifying, and categorizing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documents (Chand, 2025) related to the Love-Based Curriculum in Pesantren Al-Amien Prenduan. Second, data display was organized in descriptive narratives to map three key dimensions: (1) the philosophical foundations and core values of the Love-Based Curriculum, (2) its actual educational and sociocultural (3) the challenges and opportunities encountered in its implementation. Third, conclusion drawing and verification were undertaken by interpreting the displayed data, connecting patterns, and confirming findings through triangulation across sources – interviews, observations, and documentation.

Operationally, this study examined the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum through three interconnected units of analysis. First, it analyzed the value framework of love-based education as understood and interpreted by pesantren stakeholders, focusing on key values such as compassion, equality, discipline, empathy, and spiritual devotion. Second, it investigated the pedagogical practices

through which these values are operationalized in daily educational activities, including teacher–student interactions, disciplinary systems, learning independence, and multicultural engagement within the pesantren environment. Third, it explored the institutional and cultural mechanisms that support or constrain the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum, including leadership patterns, communication models, pesantren traditions, and students’ lived experiences.

## RESULTS

### *Results*

#### **Operationalizing the Love-Based Curriculum**

Practically, the values of the Love-Based Curriculum implemented at Al-Amien Prenduan Pesantren, according to Suryadi (2025), are reflected in how empathy is instilled through a one-year community service program. Students are deployed to villages to teach Qur’an recitation in surau or madrasah, assist communities in social activities, and serve in religious affairs. This trains students’ sensitivity to both the social and spiritual needs of the community. The program is designed to nurture empathy by allowing students to gain direct experience from their environment. One teacher explained during an interview that participation in this program is a mandatory requirement for graduation, indicating the institutional seriousness in embedding empathy as a core educational value (Najmi, 2025).

“This community service program is mandatory for all students, and no one is allowed to graduate from the pesantren without joining it, because it is in the villages that they learn to listen, to feel, and to live together with the real social and spiritual realities of the community.” (Najmi, 2025).

In addition to empathy, students are also educated with a strong sense of compassion (Najmi, 2025). Compassion is embedded in every pesantren activity, particularly in the teacher–student and peer relationships, which are grounded in values of affection expressed through respect, sharing, patience, and mutual care (Mahmudah, 2025). The homeroom teacher is regarded as a second parent, symbolizing the emotional closeness and moral responsibility inherent in the student–teacher bond (Suryadi, 2025).

“This relational approach reflects a deliberate pedagogical choice in which emotional attachment is positioned as a foundation for effective moral and character education. This compassionate educational atmosphere is reinforced through daily life in the dormitories, where education takes place continuously over a 24-hour cycle (Najmi, 2025).

As one teacher explained during the interview, “students here are educated with affection; discipline is given through care and guidance, not through violence or fear strengthening Pancasila values and national identity at Malang Tunggal Ika activity” (Mahmudah, 2025). Such a two-way communication pattern enables students to internalize discipline as a form of moral responsibility rather than external coercion. Consequently, the pesantren environment fosters a culture of compassion that

minimizes aggression and hostility, while strengthening emotional security, mutual respect, and the internalization of love-based values as the core of the educational process.

Furthermore, the value of tolerance at Al-Amien Pesantren is not only taught in classrooms through formal curricula but also strengthened through self-development activities designed by the institution. For example, the habituation of foreign language use creates space for intercultural tolerance and openness to diversity.

“The students’ practice of using foreign languages serves as a form of tolerance education. In addition, there are many self-development activities that cultivate tolerance, such as Nusantara cultural demonstrations. The pesantren also upholds the principle of “standing above all groups,” meaning that it does not affiliate with any political party or social organization but remains open to all (Suryadi, 2025);(Rasul, 2025).

### **Justice, Equality, and Humanity in Love-Based Pesantren Education**

Justice and equality are fostered through student deliberation forums and student organizations, which serve as platforms for students to learn fair leadership. Equality is well implemented in that there is no classification between wealthy and poor students—everyone receives the same rights and responsibilities (Najmi, 2025). Students from officials’ families are accepted equally alongside those from farming families (Mahmudah, 2025). They are united by the values of justice and equality. This is not only a concept but a factual practice within the pesantren. Even students from disadvantaged backgrounds receive cross-subsidies so that they can continue their education at the pesantren (Suryadi, 2025).

In this pesantren, justice and equality are not only taught as concepts but practiced in everyday life. There is no distinction between students from wealthy families and those from poor or farming backgrounds; everyone has the same rights, responsibilities, and opportunities to lead through student forums and organizations. Even students from disadvantaged families are supported through cross-subsidies so they can continue their education here.” (Najmi & Suryadi, 2025).

To express the aspect of humanity, Al-Amien Prenduan Pesantren organizes social actions such as community service, blood donation, and disaster relief programs (Maulidi, 2025). Beyond nurturing humanity within individual students, these social action programs cultivate a broader humanitarian spirit among the student body. Humanity is shaped both through students’ community service and through other activities within the pesantren itself.

To cultivate humanity, we do not rely only on classroom teaching. We involve students directly in social actions such as community service, blood donation, and disaster relief programs, so that they learn to care, to feel the suffering of others, and to act collectively for humanitarian purposes. Through these activities, a sense of humanity grows not only within individual students but also as a shared spirit of the pesantren community. (Maulidi, 2025)

The teaching model at Al-Amien Prenduan Pesantren differs from that of formal educational institutions. Teachers are not merely transmitters of knowledge but also role models of compassion, moral guides, and facilitators of life values. The teaching approach practiced in this pesantren demonstrates how the Love-Based Curriculum becomes alive in daily practices rather than remaining a mere policy document (Suryadi, 2025).

First, teachers instill empathy through experiential learning methods. Students are directed to engage in community service, such as teaching Qur’an recitation at surau, assisting in social programs, and addressing the community’s religious needs. Thus, teaching does not stop at the classroom but extends into real-life interactions that develop students’ social and spiritual sensitivity (Mahmudah,2025).

Second, teachers emphasize compassion in the educator-student relationship. Teachers are regarded as second parents who guide students with care and two-way communication. Education takes place 24 hours a day in the dormitories, and every interaction is colored by respect, concern, and togetherness. This approach creates a warm, inclusive learning atmosphere, free from violence or hatred (Mahmudah, 2025).

Third, teachers cultivate tolerance through cultural and linguistic habituation. The use of foreign languages (Arabic and English) is not only an academic skill but also a bridge to openness toward diversity. Teachers guide students in cultural activities such as Nusantara cultural demonstrations, which strengthen the spirit of pluralism. The pesantren also upholds the principle of “standing above all groups,” affirming its openness to all segments of society without affiliation to any political party or mass organization (Suryadi, 2025).

**Table 1.** Practices of the Love-Based Curriculum at Al-Amien Prenduan

Value	Forms of Implementation	Source
Empathy	- One-year community service program. - Teaching Qur’an recitation in surau/madrasah. - Assisting in social and religious activities. - Mandatory for graduation.	Suryadi (2025), Najmi (2025)
Compassion	- Teacher–student relationships based on care and two-way communication. - Homeroom teacher as a second parent. - 24-hour dormitory education marked by respect and togetherness.	Najmi (2025), Mahmudah (2025), Suryadi (2025)
Tolerance	- Habituation of foreign language use (Arabic & English) as an intercultural bridge. - Nusantara cultural demonstrations. - Principle of “standing above all groups” (no party/organizational affiliation).	Rasul (2025), Suryadi (2025)
Justice & Equality	- Student organizations as a platform to learn fair leadership. - No classification between rich and poor. - Equal treatment for students of officials and farmers. - Cross-subsidy for disadvantaged students.	Najmi (2025), Mahmudah (2025), Suryadi (2025)
Humanity	- Social action programs: community service, blood donation, disaster relief. - Humanity nurtured through community service and internal pesantren activities.	Maulidi (2025)
Role of Teachers	- Teachers as role models of compassion, moral guides, and facilitators of life values. - Experiential teaching approach based on empathy, compassion, and culture.	Suryadi (2025), Mahmudah (2025)

## Discussions

### Contextualizing Pestalozzi's Ideas in Al-Amien Prenduan

The implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum at Al-Amien Prenduan Pesantren embodies the operationalization of Pestalozzi's educational philosophy (Pestalozzi, 1898). within the Islamic and pesantren context. By employing an experiential learning approach, fostering affectionate teacher-student relationships, integrating the dimensions of head, heart, and hand, and grounding moral education in lived experiences of love, the pesantren illustrates that a humanistic pedagogy rooted in compassion proves more effective than indoctrinative models of instruction.

Pestalozzi, (1898) wrote a book entitled *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*. In this book, he outlined the philosophical foundations of education that he proposed. Practically, he emphasized that children learn best not through rote memorization but through concrete experiences. Second, education must follow the natural laws of development—moving from the simple to the complex, from the near to the distant. Third, teachers and parents must teach with love, patience, and respect for the uniqueness of each child

Pestalozzi emphasized the role of the mother as the child's first educator. Young children learn language, morality, and affection through daily interactions with their parents. The core principles of Pestalozzi's method are summarized as *Head, Heart, and Hand*—education must develop the mind, the emotions, and practical skills. Children learn by observing, feeling, and touching the world around them before moving on to abstract concepts and practical activities. For Pestalozzi, moral and religious values are cultivated through experiences of love and care, rather than rigid indoctrination. Regarding the teacher-child relationship, Pestalozzi viewed the teacher not as someone who fills an empty vessel, but as a loving companion. A teacher must understand each child as a unique individual (Pestalozzi, 1898).

Al-Amien Prenduan Pesantren resonate strongly with Pestalozzi's pedagogical ideals as reinterpreted by Sellars & Imig, (2022)). In their study *Pestalozzi and Pedagogies of Love: Pathways to Educational Reform*, Sellars and Imig emphasize Pestalozzi's rejection of rigid, memorization-based education and his advocacy for pedagogical practices grounded in love, care, and human relationships. This vision finds practical expression in Al-Amien's Love-Based Curriculum.

The study by Sellars & Imig, (2022) entitled *Pestalozzi and Pedagogies of Love: Pathways to Educational Reform*, highlights the forward-looking ideas of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. He rejected rigid traditional forms of education that focused solely on memorization or intellectual ability. Instead, he proposed a new vision that education should be built upon love, care, and human relationships. According to Pestalozzi, children develop optimally when education touches the heart, mind, and hand simultaneously, meaning a balance between intellectual intelligence, emotional sensitivity, and practical skills. This idea proved highly influential, not only in his own time but also for generations thereafter.

The practices of the Love-Based Curriculum at Al-Amien Prenduan Pesantren further illustrate the enduring relevance of Pestalozzi's legacy as the *Father of Pedagogy* (Nazirwan, 2019), Pestalozzi emphasized that children learn best through object-based lessons and intuitive or sensory learning, rather than rote memorization. This principle resonates with Al-Amien's strong reliance on experiential education, where students engage in real-life contexts such as community service, teaching, and social action. These activities provide intuitive and sensory engagement with society, mirroring Pestalozzi's belief in education through lived experiences.

Pestalozzi is popularly known as the Father of Pedagogy (Nazirwan, 2019) (Kasüschke & Reinhard, 2025); (Meirieu, 2025), He contributed significantly by emphasizing the importance of object-based lessons and intuitive/sensory learning rather than mere memorization. Children were taught through real-life experiences. He developed intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and moral education for children. Cognitive skills were cultivated through experimentation rather than simple transmission of information. He introduced a system of grouping based on ability (*poverty-grading*) in schools, where students with different capacities were placed according to their learning potential. Pestalozzi also advocated for education to be accessible to all members of society, regardless of social class or gender. His works had a major influence on the development of kindergarten systems and the emergence of child-centered pedagogy.

Interestingly, Pestalozzi's ideas are now gaining even stronger ground as they have been validated by modern research. Neuroscience and child development psychology have demonstrated that affection, security, and positive emotional relationships are indeed fundamental to children's social, emotional, and intellectual development. In other words, this paper affirms that Pestalozzi's thought on love-based pedagogy is not merely idealistic, but has proven to be relevant as a foundation for educational reform up to the present day (Sellars & Imig, 2022).

Hmelak & Samai, (2021) explain that several major figures in the field of education—such as Socrates, Steiner, Montessori, and Komensky—strongly emphasized the importance of love and respect for children in the educational process. They taught that educating is not only about imparting knowledge but also about protecting children mentally and spiritually. Their ideas are considered significant because they serve as an enduring model for the development of educational theory. In essence, education should always be grounded in the values of love and respect for human beings. Al-Amien centers its pedagogy on experiential community service and daily practices that integrate head, heart, and hand. Its holistic model—intellectual, emotional, moral, and social—mirrors Pestalozzi's vision of balanced development. Moreover, Al-Amien's principles of justice, equality, and cross-subsidies parallel Pestalozzi's call for inclusive education accessible to all, regardless of class or gender. In both traditions, education is not indoctrination but a humanistic process rooted in love, care, and lived experience.

The Love-Based Curriculum at Al-Amien Prenduan reflects Pestalozzi's idea that education flourishes in a family-like environment (Hmelak & Samai, 2021). Teachers act as "second parents," and the dormitory system creates an atmosphere of care and affection essential for learning. While Pestalozzi saw love as fostering obedience through emotional dependence, Al-Amien frames love within Islamic values of *rahmah* and *ukhuwah*, aiming not only at respect and obedience but also at empowering students' intellectual, social, and spiritual growth for the betterment of society.

The Love-Based Curriculum at Al-Amien Prenduan resonates with Shih, (2022) view that love must be central in education, beginning from early childhood. Shih emphasizes that teachers should embody love, foster affectionate teacher-student relationships, and provide children with freedom, dialogue, and opportunities to practice loving behaviors rather than being subjected to indoctrination. Similarly, Al-Amien develops a family-like atmosphere where teachers act as "second parents," education is relational and affectionate, and santri are encouraged to engage in communal life, social service, and cultural activities. This environment nurtures respect, care, and empathy while granting students agency and space to grow as unique individuals. Thus, Al-Amien contextualizes Shih's principles within the pesantren tradition, showing that love-based pedagogy can be practiced not only in early childhood but also in adolescent and young adult education.

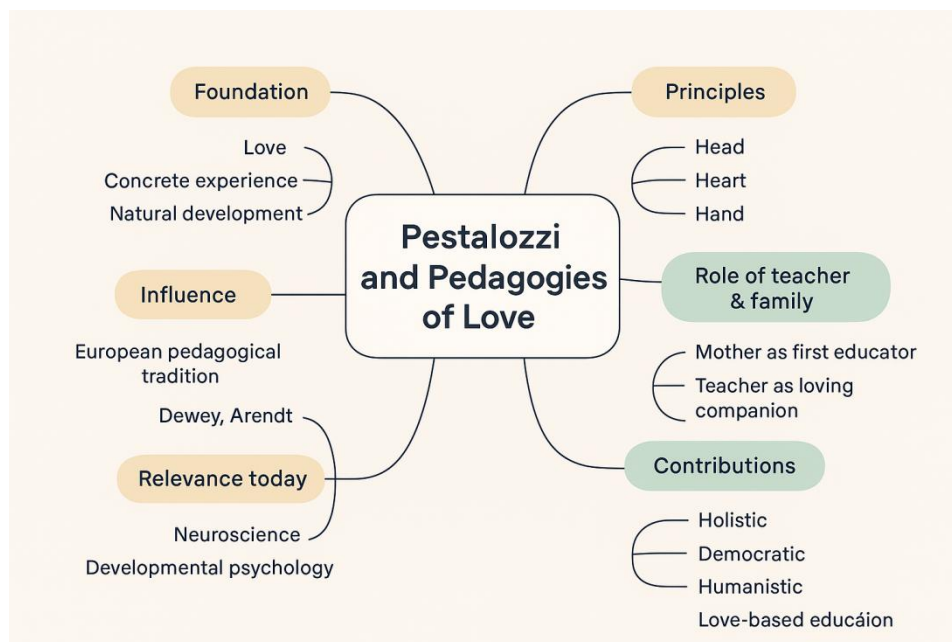
The practices at Al-Amien Prenduan align with Ramaila's (2025) view that teachers play a crucial role in fostering holistic student development. Teachers in the pesantren are not only transmitters of knowledge but also nurturers of emotional, social, and spiritual maturity. By acting as "second parents," fostering empathy and compassion, and respecting differences among students, they create a supportive and inclusive learning environment. In this way, Al-Amien demonstrates how love-based pedagogy can cultivate an educational setting that is equitable, empathetic, and conducive to students reaching their full potential (Ramaila, 2025)..

The studies by Shih, (2022) and Ramaila, (2025) complement each other. Shih, (2022) emphasizes that love is the foundation of early childhood education, beginning with loving teachers and then realized in teacher-child relationships. Ramaila, (2025) highlights the teacher's role in shaping students holistically—not only academically intelligent but also socially and emotionally mature. According to the author, their perspectives reinforce Pestalozzi's principle that education should be built on love. This aligns with Pestalozzi's *Head, Heart, and Hand* framework, where education must engage the cognitive, affective, and practical dimensions (Sellars & Imig, 2022); (Nazirwan, 2019) (Kasüschke & Reinhard, 2025); (Meirieu, 2025).

Education must align with human nature, balance knowledge with practical skills, and foster freedom as a democratic principle. At Al-Amien, students not only study religious and intellectual knowledge but also engage in social service, leadership training, and cultural activities, which develop their psychological and practical competencies. The pesantren's emphasis on tolerance, equality, and justice further mirrors the democratic orientation of Pestalozzi's pedagogy, showing that education is

not limited to knowledge transmission but functions as a holistic process of preparing learners to be socially responsible and democratically minded individuals (Clichici, 2025).

Based on the results of the study to determine that on Pestalozzi's principle that education should be built on love. This aligns with Pestalozzi's *Head, Heart, and Hand* framework, where education must engage the cognitive, affective, and practical dimensions (Sellars & Imig, 2022); (Nazirwan, 2019) (Kasüschke & Reinhard, 2025); (Meirieu, 2025).



**Figure 1.** Conceptual Map of Pestalozzi's Educational Thought (Pestalozzi, 1898).

Pestalozzi holds an important position in the Continental European pedagogical tradition because he emphasized that education must be rooted in love, family, and the child's real-life experiences. His ideas differ from rigid formal education models and instead provide the foundation for a Continental pedagogical view that sees education as a process of shaping the whole human being, not merely mastering knowledge. In the article by Kraus & Ylimaki, (2024), this tradition is compared with the American perspective (such as Dewey). According to the authors, Pestalozzi can be understood as one of the early figures who reinforced the philosophical, humanistic, and moral character within the European pedagogical tradition.

The findings from Al-Amien Prenduan Pesantren demonstrate that the Love-Based Curriculum is deeply aligned with Pestalozzi's pedagogical ideals and their contemporary interpretations. As emphasized by Pestalozzi and later expanded by scholars such as Sellars & Imig (2022), education grounded in love, care, and real-life experiences is more transformative than rigid, memorization-based models. Hmelak & Samai (2021) highlight Pestalozzi's vision of education as family-like and relational, a

principle mirrored in Al-Amien's dormitory system where teachers act as second parents. Shih (2022) reinforces the centrality of love, freedom, dialogue, and respect for children's uniqueness, which resonates with Al-Amien's emphasis on empathy, tolerance, and democratic participation in communal life. Similarly, Ramaila (2025) underlines the teacher's role in fostering holistic development, a role that pesantren teachers embody by nurturing students emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Clichici (2025) connects Pestalozzi's ideas to democratic education through freedom, practical skills, and human-centered learning, which parallel Al-Amien's practices of student leadership, cultural activities, and equal treatment across social backgrounds. Finally, Kraus & Ylimaki (2024) situate Pestalozzi in the Continental tradition of holistic, humanistic pedagogy, a legacy that Al-Amien contextualizes within Islam by integrating head, heart, and hand into a faith-based model of education. Taken together, these perspectives show that Al-Amien not only reflects but also extends Pestalozzi's philosophy into a contemporary Islamic framework, proving that love-based, holistic, and inclusive pedagogy can effectively shape balanced, compassionate, and socially responsible individuals.

### **Love Curriculum at Al-Amien contributes to building a more peaceful, tolerant, and civilized society**

The Love Curriculum, initiated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in 2025, as discussed by Ifendi, (2025) is built upon nine core values: empathy, compassion, tolerance, justice and equality, respect and humility, humanity, cooperation and collaboration, justice and responsibility, as well as self-confidence and creativity. Its implementation is formally regulated under the *Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education No. 6077 of 2025 on the Guidelines for the Love-Based Curriculum*, aiming to cultivate students with noble character, humanistic values, and inclusive personalities. This approach aligns with the philosophical foundations of Islamic education, one of which is humanism (Rustani et al., 2024).

Furthermore, in the context of Pesantren Al-Amien Prenduan, this curriculum not only revolutionizes the learning approach in madrasahs but also reinforces the pesantren's long-standing role as a center for character and personality formation. By embedding love-based values into the teaching and communal life, Al-Amien transforms its classrooms and dormitories into safe, inclusive, and supportive spaces for students' emotional, social, and spiritual growth. This integration reflects Al-Amien's philosophy of balancing intellectual, moral, and spiritual education, thereby demonstrating how pesantren can serve as models for shaping holistic and harmonious personalities. Ultimately, the Love Curriculum at Al-Amien contributes to building a more peaceful, tolerant, and civilized society, in line with both national ideals and Islamic humanistic traditions (Ifendi, 2025).

Mariyono, (2024) emphasizes the importance of a love-based curriculum in Indonesia as a multicultural nation that promotes tolerance, mutual understanding, and unity among diverse cultural groups in Indonesian education. He highlights the

need to overcome institutional barriers, encourage curriculum reform, and strengthen community engagement in order to build a more harmonious and inclusive Indonesian society where cultural diversity is valued and celebrated. However, in recent years, issues of intolerance have increased, marked by discrimination against minority groups, hate speech based on ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations (SARA), as well as the spread of hoaxes through social media (Langingi et al., 2025). The rise of intolerance has also been observed in several elementary schools in Indonesia (Rahmadonna et al., 2025).

Al-Amien has long emphasized tolerance, mutual respect, and unity across differences. The pesantren's Love-Based Curriculum does not only operate at the classroom level but also extends into the dormitory and community life, where students are trained to live inclusively and harmoniously regardless of social or cultural backgrounds. This model responds directly to the challenges highlighted by Langingi, Yani, & Hadja, (2025). regarding the rise of intolerance, discrimination, and hate speech in Indonesian society and schools. By nurturing empathy, promoting interfaith dialogue, and encouraging democratic participation among students, Al-Amien demonstrates how pesantren education can play a crucial role in countering intolerance and cultivating a more harmonious and inclusive Indonesian society .

The presence of the Love Curriculum (Pestalozzi, 1898), in the author's view, will strengthen *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) (M. F. Rahman et al., 2020) as the guiding principle of Indonesia, a nation characterized by multi-ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity. This is crucial because the growing practices of intolerance in Indonesia, as explained by Langingi et al., (2025) can be addressed through the implementation of multicultural education already practiced in Indonesia, the enforcement of firm government regulations, and the role of media in constructing positive narratives about diversity.

Research findings that reinforce Pestalozzi's perspective (Pestalozzi, 1898) can be seen in the study by Aprilianto et al., (2025) which examined students in Surabaya and Lamongan. The study revealed that many students developed tolerance through their daily experiences, which naturally encouraged coexistence and mutual respect. This indicates that a natural learning approach should be implemented in Indonesian educational institutions by fostering a school environment that actively supports tolerance. A similar reality is evident at Pesantren Al-Amien Prenduan, where tolerance and respect are cultivated not only through formal instruction but also through daily interactions in dormitory life, communal worship, and student organizations.

As well as the findings of Rahmadonna et al., (2025) shows that intolerance in schools arises partly because teachers, while claiming to practice tolerance rooted in Javanese culture, have not yet succeeded in fully translating these values into effective educational practices. A second contributing factor is that, in several cases, schools unconsciously restrict the rights of minority students and weaken the practice of tolerance education, often under the justification of efficiency and effectiveness. Third,

there is a need to strengthen teachers' and school leaders' deeper understanding of tolerance to address these issues. Moreover, more meaningful communication between teachers and parents is required. Therefore, cultivating compassion in children must begin at an early age, by fostering love-based relationships in which preschool teachers themselves embody and nurture a sense of love (Shih, 2022).

In addition, the impact of the Love Curriculum, according to the author, will also strengthen the implementation of religious moderation in schools and madrasahs. Indicators of religious moderation—such as national commitment, tolerance, rejection of violence, and accommodation of local culture (M. Rahman & Kizi, 2023) as well as the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Dewi, 2025) can simultaneously be reinforced through love-based pedagogy (Pestalozzi, 1898). At present, however, the implementation of religious moderation in schools and the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* continues to face challenges posed by advances in science, the era of globalization, and the increasingly rapid pace of social change (Akrim, 2023).

The pesantren has long emphasized values aligned with religious moderation, such as *hubb al-wathan* (love of the homeland), tolerance across differences, rejection of extremism, and appreciation of local traditions. These principles are embedded not only in classroom instruction but also in students' daily lives—ranging from interregional and intercultural dormitory life, democratic participation in student organizations, to cultural and artistic expressions that reflect both Islamic and Indonesian identities. By doing so, Al-Amien effectively integrates the spirit of religious moderation with the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, producing graduates who are nationally committed, tolerant, and socially responsible. This demonstrates that pesantren education, particularly with its love-based pedagogy, can serve as a strong model for actualizing religious moderation in the face of globalization and rapid societal change.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals a significant and previously underexplored finding that the Love Curriculum, inspired by Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi's philosophy of love-based education and aligned with Islamic humanistic values, is not merely implemented as a formal instructional framework at Pesantren Al-Amien Prenduan. Rather, it is deeply internalized as a lived educational practice embedded in students' daily lives, including dormitory routines, student organizations, and relational interactions among teachers, students, and parents. This experiential integration enables core values such as empathy, tolerance, and compassion to be directly practiced and internalized by students. Consequently, the pesantren has effectively strengthened religious moderation through national commitment, tolerance toward diversity, rejection of violence, and accommodation of local culture. This finding challenges prevailing assumptions that the success of value-based education depends primarily on formal curriculum design and regulatory frameworks.

This study contributes to the existing body of literature by confirming earlier research on the importance of humanistic and character-based education, while offering new empirical evidence from the pesantren context. It critically challenges the dichotomy between traditional Islamic education and modern humanistic pedagogy by demonstrating that pesantren can serve as dynamic spaces where Islamic, national, and humanitarian values are integratively enacted. Furthermore, this research advances scholarly discourse by introducing the concept of love-based lived pedagogy, which conceptualizes the Love Curriculum as an educational practice embodied in daily social relations, student leadership structures, and institutional culture, rather than as a policy-driven instructional model alone. This perspective enriches theoretical discussions in Islamic education, humanistic pedagogy, and studies on religious moderation.

This study is subject to several limitations. It is based on a single case study of Pesantren Al-Amien Prenduan, which limits the generalizability of the findings. The sample size is relatively small, and variations in educational levels, gender, age, and socio-economic backgrounds of students are not fully represented. Additionally, the qualitative approach employed does not allow for quantitative measurement of the Love Curriculum's impact on levels of tolerance, moderation, and humanistic attitudes. Future research is therefore needed to include a broader range of educational institutions, employ mixed-method approaches, and develop robust evaluative instruments to more comprehensively assess the effectiveness of the Love Curriculum and to inform evidence-based educational policymaking.

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