Beyond Tolerance: Reframing Interfaith Harmony Through *Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta (KBC)* in Indonesia

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Abstract

Interfaith harmony remains a critical challenge in Indonesia's plural society, where intolerance persists despite normative policy frameworks. Existing scholarship has rarely provided a systematic conceptual model linking Islamic compassion-based values to

measurable indicators of harmony. Addressing this gap, this study examines the Ministry of Religious Affairs' *Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta (Love-Based Curriculum, KBC)* and its relevance to strengthening tolerance, acceptance of difference, non-violence, and interreligious harmony. A qualitative descriptive design was employed, combining a systematic literature review of policy documents, peer-reviewed journal articles, and theoretical works. Data were extracted using a structured template and coded deductively around the values of *mahabbah*, *rahmah*, and *amanah*, and inductively to capture emergent themes. The analysis followed PRISMA guidelines to ensure transparency and rigor. Findings indicate three key contributions. First, KBC provides a coherent normative foundation that integrates spiritual, social, and ecological dimensions of education. Second, the values of *mahabbah* and *rahmah* are conceptually linked to empathy, tolerance, and conflict resolution, while *amanah* reinforces ecological responsibility and shared moral accountability. Third, the framework demonstrates that religious moderation can emerge as an outcome of KBC, moving beyond doctrinal instruction toward dialogical and inclusive practices. This study concludes that KBC offers a novel conceptual framework for embedding affective and ethical values into education. Future research should empirically test its implementation to assess its effectiveness in fostering sustainable interfaith harmony and social cohesion.

Keywords: *Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta (KBC)*, interfaith harmony, social cohesion, humanistic education, value-based curriculum framework

ABSTRAK

Kerukunan antarumat beragama tetap menjadi tantangan krusial dalam masyarakat majemuk Indonesia, di mana intoleransi masih bertahan meskipun telah tersedia kerangka kebijakan normatif. Kajian sebelumnya jarang menyajikan model konseptual yang sistematis yang menghubungkan nilai-nilai berbasis cinta dalam Islam dengan indikator harmoni yang terukur. Untuk mengisi kekosongan tersebut, penelitian ini menelaah Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta (KBC) yang digagas Kementerian Agama serta relevansinya dalam memperkuat toleransi, penerimaan perbedaan, anti-kekerasan, dan kerja sama antaragama. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain deskriptif kualitatif dengan tinjauan sistematis terhadap dokumen kebijakan, studi akademik dan karya teoretis. Data diekstraksi menggunakan templat terstruktur dan dikodekan secara deduktif berdasarkan nilai mahabbah, rahmah, dan amanah, serta secara induktif untuk menangkap tema-tema baru. Analisis mengikuti pedoman PRISMA guna memastikan transparansi dan ketelitian. Temuan menunjukkan tiga poin utama. Pertama, Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta menyediakan landasan normatif yang koheren dengan mengintegrasikan dimensi spiritual, sosial, dan ekologis pendidikan. Kedua, nilai mahabbah dan rahmah terkait secara konseptual dengan empati, toleransi dan resolusi konflik; sedangkan amanah memperkuat tanggung jawab ekologis dan akuntabilitas moral bersama. Ketiga, kerangka ini menunjukkan bahwa moderasi beragama dapat muncul sebagai hasil dari pedagogi berbasis cinta, melampaui pengajaran doktrinal menuju praktik dialogis dan inklusif. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta menawarkan kerangka konseptual baru untuk mengintegrasikan nilai afektif dan etis dalam pendidikan. Penelitian lanjutan perlu menguji implementasinya secara empiris guna menilai efektivitasnya dalam membangun kerukunan antarumat beragama dan kohesi sosial yang berkelanjutan.

INTRODUCTION

Interfaith harmony is a fundamental prerequisite for social stability in multicultural societies. Global frameworks such as UNESCO's *Global Citizenship Education* emphasize peace, empathy, and responsibility as essential values for sustaining cohesion in diverse contexts (UNESCO, 2017). Theories of intergroup

contact highlight that prejudice reduction requires not only normative endorsement but also meaningful, value-laden social interaction under supportive institutional conditions (Allport, 1954). Similarly, Putnam (2000) underscores that social cohesion depends on the cultivation of bridging ties that connect individuals across religious and cultural boundaries.

Indonesia, as a nation characterized by profound religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity, has long articulated tolerance and respect for difference as normative principles within its national ideology and policy frameworks. Nevertheless, empirical reports continue to document persistent forms of intolerance, including within educational institutions that are expected to function as primary arenas for civic and ethical formation (SETARA Institute, 2023). These findings indicate that social harmony cannot be sustained solely through formal regulations or curricular prescriptions but depends on the internalization of affective and ethical values that shape everyday social interactions and intergroup relations (Li, 2025; Verkuyten, 2018). In response, the Ministry of Religious Affairs introduced the *Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta/KBC* (Love-Based Curriculum) as a policy initiative to address intolerance by fostering the internalization of love, understood as empathy, compassion, respect for human dignity, and peaceful coexistence (Fauzi, 2024; Qoumas, 2024).

Studies in humanistic education consistently highlight the integration of cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions as a foundation for empathy, ethical awareness, and social responsibility (Bers, 2025; Li, 2025; Weishar, 2025). Bers (2025) highlights the importance of humanism in informatics education, stressing that ethical and digital non-violence are critical outcomes of value-based pedagogy. Li (2025), by contrast, situates mindfulness curricula as mechanisms for reducing violence and fostering prosocial dispositions, thereby linking affective practices directly to conflict mitigation. Weishar (2025) extends this perspective by underscoring the humanistic approach as a foundation for anti-violence education, emphasizing the necessity of embedding compassion into learning environments.

Although these studies share a commitment to humanistic integration, they differ in their emphasis. Bers (2025) focuses on technological contexts, Li (2025) on psychological mindfulness, and Weishar (2025) on philosophical humanism. This divergence illustrates the versatility of humanistic education but also reveals a lack of systematic connection to religiously grounded values such as *mahabbah* and *rahmah*. Within Islamic educational thought, Hayat et al. (2025) argue that *rahmah* and *mahabbah* possess firm Qur'anic grounding and function as ethical bridges linking knowledge, spirituality, and virtuous social action. Yet, while Hayat et al. (2025) provide theological justification, they stop short of operationalizing these values into measurable indicators of interfaith harmony.

A second cluster of literature addresses interfaith harmony and social cohesion through theoretical and empirical lenses. Allport (1954) and Putnam (2000) provide foundational theories: intergroup contact and social capital. Allport (1954) emphasizes that prejudice reduction requires equal-status contact under supportive conditions, while Putnam (2000) stresses the cultivation of bridging ties as essential for civic trust and cohesion. These theories have been widely applied in educational contexts but often remain abstract in relation to curricular design. Contemporary studies attempt to operationalize these theories within religious education. Jackson (2014) advocates dialogical and inclusive pedagogies in religious education, arguing that curricula must foster intergroup encounters rather than reinforce boundaries. Hendek (2024) similarly highlights teacher training as a mechanism for cultivating acceptance of differences, while Korhonen (2023) emphasizes openness and the adoption of innovation in educational settings. These perspectives converge on the necessity of dialogical engagement but differ in their focal points: Jackson (2014) on pedagogy, Hendek (2024) on teacher formation, and Korhonen (2023) on institutional innovation.

Empirical studies in Indonesia further contextualize these theoretical insights. Muhtar et al. (2025) document interfaith collaboration and cultural adaptation, while Sumertha et al. (2025) explore shared sacred spaces as organic sites of harmony. Subiyantoro et al. (2025) examine interactions between religion and humanism, linking tolerance to broader social practices. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that social cohesion is strengthened through collaborative practices, inclusive policies, and interfaith encounters. However, they remain descriptive, focusing on practices without systematically connecting them to curricular values. Rozaki and Izudin (2025) reinforce this point by showing how pesantren peacebuilding contributes to social resilience, yet their analysis does not extend to curricular frameworks.

The contrast between foundational theories and empirical studies reveals a persistent gap. While Allport (1954) and Putnam (2000) provide theoretical justification for intergroup harmony, and Indonesian studies illustrate lived practices, neither strand adequately bridges values-based curricula with measurable indicators of harmony.

The main research problem addressed in this study is the absence of a conceptual framework that systematically links KBC values to established theories of interfaith harmony, social identity, and social cohesion. Therefore, this study aims to: (1) analyze the theoretical construction of love-based values within religious education, (2) map these values onto established indicators of tolerance, acceptance of difference, non-violence, and interreligious cooperation, and (3) explain their potential contribution to fostering inclusive and harmonious educational environments.

This study aims to make a novel contribution by developing a conceptual mapping model that systematically connects Islamic love ethics (*mahabbah*, *rahmah*, and *amanah*) within the KBC (Love-Based Curriculum) to key indicators of interfaith harmony and religious moderation. Unlike prior normative approaches, this research advances values-based education toward analytical integration by bridging classical social theory, contemporary educational research, and Islamic ethical principles. The theoretical contribution lies in establishing a coherent framework for analyzing values-based curricula. At the same time, the practical impact is the provision of a foundation for empirical testing in educational settings to strengthen interfaith harmony and social cohesion.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design, combined with a systematic and transparent literature review, and reported in accordance with PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) principles. Methodologically, a scoping-oriented qualitative evidence synthesis is positioned closer to conceptual mapping and framework development than to meta-analytic systematic review, since the objective is not statistical effect-size estimation. PRISMA functions as a reporting and transparency guideline rather than as a claim of exhaustive causal synthesis. This design enabled the interpretation and contextualization of philosophical, conceptual, and normative meanings embedded in policy documents and scholarly literature on the Love-Based Curriculum and its contribution to interfaith harmony.

The primary analytical framework of this study was interfaith harmony, operationalized through four indicators: tolerance, acceptance of differences, non-violence, and interreligious social cooperation. These indicators served as the main lens for assessing the relevance and implications of curricular values. As a secondary alignment framework, the four pillars of religious moderation promoted by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, e.g., national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture, were employed to contextualize the harmony indicators within Indonesia's religious and educational policy landscape. A conceptual mapping matrix was developed to highlight areas of convergence, overlap, and distinction between the harmony indicators and moderation pillars, allowing analytical integration rather than simple normative alignment. The matrix and its conceptual justification are presented in Appendix F.

The review centered on the Love-Based Curriculum issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Directorate General of Islamic Education, 2025). It examined its conceptual relationship with indicators of interfaith harmony. Primary sources consisted of official policy and regulatory

documents, including: (1) the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education No. 6077 of 2025, and (2) official policy texts on religious moderation issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Scholarly interpretations of these policies (e.g., Qoumas, 2024) were treated as secondary conceptual literature rather than binding regulatory texts.

Secondary sources included peer-reviewed national and international publications addressing curriculum innovation, value-based and humanistic education, interfaith harmony, social cohesion, and religious moderation. International articles were retrieved primarily from the Scopus database, while national and open-access journals were accessed via DOAJ and OJS platforms. The international literature included studies published between 2023 and 2025 by Aneas (2024), Aure (2025), Bers (2025), Brink (2025), Cao et al. (2025), Carlson (2024), Cho (2023), Docking (2025), and Dröse (2025), among others. This timeframe was selected to ensure that the analysis reflected recent developments in education policy, religious moderation, and interfaith studies. Seminal theoretical works published before 2023 were selectively included to strengthen conceptual grounding, particularly regarding intergroup contact, social cohesion, identity, and global citizenship.

Literature searches were conducted in Scopus, DOAJ, OJS, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs' official portal. Key search terms included: love-based curriculum, value-based curriculum, humanistic education, religious education, interfaith harmony, social cohesion, and religious moderation. Complete search strings for each database are documented in Appendix C. Inclusion criteria comprised: (1) peer-reviewed empirical or conceptual studies and official policy documents; (2) explicit relevance to curriculum, education, or learning processes; (3) discussion of love- or compassion-related values (e.g., *mahabbah*, *rahmah*, and *amanah*) or interfaith harmony indicators; and (4) publications in English or Indonesian with accessible full texts. Exclusion criteria included: opinion pieces or editorials lacking analytical grounding; studies outside educational or socio-religious contexts; publications without explicit linkage to interfaith harmony or value-based education; and duplicate records.

The literature selection followed standard PRISMA stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. Records were initially identified across all databases, after which duplicates were removed. Titles and abstracts were screened for relevance, followed by full-text assessment. At the full-text stage, articles were excluded due to: (1) absence of explicit interfaith harmony indicators, (2) non-educational focus, or (3) insufficient conceptual or methodological clarity. A PRISMA flow diagram reporting numerical results at each stage, along with reasons for exclusion, is provided in Appendix A, together with the PRISMA checklist.

A structured data extraction template was applied to all included sources, covering bibliographic information, the contextual setting, educational level, the conceptualization of love or compassion, the indicators of interfaith harmony addressed, proposed mechanisms or pathways, the type of evidence (policy, empirical, or conceptual), and policy relevance. Coding followed a hybrid strategy: deductive coding based on predefined constructs (*mahabbah*, *rahmah*, and *amanah*; four interfaith harmony indicators), complemented by inductive thematic coding to capture emergent concepts. Coding was conducted by a single coder with iterative consistency checks to enhance coherence. The extraction template and codebook are included in Appendix E.

Data synthesis employed an interpretive-descriptive thematic approach, systematically linking extracted themes to interfaith harmony indicators and secondarily aligning them with the moderation pillars. This approach differs from a narrative review in that it employs explicit extraction fields, coding rules, and conceptual mapping procedures. Given the study's emphasis on conceptual integration rather than empirical generalization, no formal critical appraisal tools (e.g., CASP or MMAT) were applied. Instead, each source was categorized by the strength of the evidence (policy, conceptual, or empirical) to provide minimal yet transparent quality signaling.

In total, 48 sources met the inclusion criteria. The analysis resulted in a conceptual framework demonstrating that the Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta (KBC) functioned not only as a formal policy instrument but also as a pedagogical approach capable of fostering tolerance, acceptance of differences, non-violence, and interfaith social cooperation. Table 2 presents a synthesized thematic mapping of key findings as an illustrative subset, while the complete list of included studies is provided in Appendix B.

Table 2.

Summary of Studies and Their Relevance to Moderation/Harmony

Author–Year	Journal / Source	Quartile / Indexing	Core Focus of Study	Relevance to Moderation / Harmony
Allport (1954)	*The Nature of Prejudice* (Book)	Foundational Theory	Intergroup contact theory	Reduction of prejudice through equal-status contact
Putnam (2000)	*Bowling Alone* (Book)	Foundational Social Theory	Social capital & civic decline	Bridging social capital & social cohesion
Jackson (2014)	*Signposts* (Council of Europe)	International Policy Framework	Religious education pedagogy	Dialogical & inclusive RE practice

Author–Year	Journal / Source	Quartile / Indexing	Core Focus of Study	Relevance to Moderation / Harmony
UNESCO (2017)	*Global Citizenship Education*	UN Policy Framework	Global ethics & citizenship	Peace, tolerance, and global responsibility
Verkuyten (2018)	*Ethnic Identity* (Book)	Foundational Social Psychology	Ethnic identity & diversity	Inclusive identity & intergroup harmony
Aneas (2024)	*Religions*	Scopus Q1	Muslim women's participation	Tolerance & inclusion
Aure (2025)	*Int. Journal of Management Education*	Scopus Q1	Humanistic pedagogy	Dialogue & non-dogmatic learning
Bers (2025)	*Education and Information Technologies*	Scopus Q1	Humanism in informatics	Ethics & digital non-violence
Brink (2025)	*European Journal of Engineering Education*	Scopus Q1	Agile curriculum	Civic professionalism
Cho (2023)	*Irish Educational Studies*	Scopus Q2	Cross-national RE	Interfaith tolerance
Dirjen Pendis (2025)	MoRA Decree	Policy Document	Love-Based Curriculum	Ethical moderation framework
Docking (2025)	Routledge Book Chapter	Indexed Book	Curriculum innovation	Empathy & value-based learning
Dröse (2025)	*ZDM Mathematics Education*	Scopus Q1	Instructional innovation	Collaborative moderation
Fahmi et al. (2025).	*Nazhruna*	SINTA 2	Multicultural Islamic education	Social cohesion
Fauzi (2024)	*JPAI*	SINTA 2	Islamic curriculum reform	Peace education
Hanafi (2025)	*British Journal of Religious Education*	Scopus Q1	Minority Islamic education	Minority moderation
Hanifah (2023)	*Harmoni*	SINTA 2	Cross-faith interaction	Social cohesion
Hayat et al. (2025).	*JLKa*	SINTA 2	Sufi ethics	Anti-violence
Hendek (2024)	*Religions*	Scopus Q1	Teacher training	Acceptance of differences
Jayadi (2025)	*JITC*	Scopus Q2	Cross-religious cohesion	Community harmony
Junaedi (2022)	*Harmoni*	SINTA 2	Moderation critique	Normative moderation

Author–Year	Journal / Source	Quartile / Indexing	Core Focus of Study	Relevance to Moderation / Harmony
Kosim et al. (2025).	*JPAI*	SINTA 2	Tolerance education (minority)	Peaceful coexistence
Kondrla (2023)	*JECS*	Scopus Q2	Curriculum philosophy	Plural values
Korhonen (2023)	*Computer Science Education*	Scopus Q1	Innovation adoption	Openness
Lapis (2025)	*Religions*	Scopus Q1	Global RE policy	Policy moderation
Li (2025)	*Scientific Reports*	Scopus Q1	Mindfulness curriculum	Anti-violence
Marshall (2025)	*Journal of Beliefs and Values*	Scopus Q2	Sustainability in RE	Global ethics
SETARA Institute (2023).	*Kondisi KBB 2022* (Report)	Policy / NGO Report	Freedom of religion/belief monitoring	Empirical baseline for tolerance & social harmony
Mardhiah (2025)	*Petita*	SINTA 2	Moderation in PTKI	National commitment
Muhlisin (2023)	*QIJIS*	Scopus Q2	Government moderation policy	Inclusivity
Muhtar et al. (2025).	*JPAI*	SINTA 2	Interfaith collaboration	Cultural adaptation
Mustolehudin et al. (2024)	*Harmoni*	SINTA 2	Local spirituality	Cultural acceptance
Muzayanah et al. (2025)	*Edelweiss AST*	Scopus Q2/Q3	Multicultural education	Harmonization
Nasution et al. (2025).	*Pharos J. Theology*	Scopus Q2	Interfaith greetings	Pluralism sensitivity
Qomusuddin et al. (2025).	*Harmoni*	SINTA 2	Moderation determinants	Moderation pillars
Qoumas (2024)	*QIJIS*	Scopus Q2	National moderation policy	Nationalism & tolerance
Rozaki & Izudin (2025)	*Ulumuna*	Scopus Q2	Pesantren peacebuilding	Social resilience
Setiyanto (2024)	*Harmoni*	SINTA 2	Moderation discourse	Nationalism
Stek (2025)	*JPSM*	Scopus Q1	Competency curriculum	Ethical citizenship
Subiyantoro et al. (2025)	*Multidisciplinary Science Journal*	Scopus Q2	Religion–humanism	Tolerance
Sumertha et al. (2025)	*Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*	Scopus Q2	Shared sacred spaces	Organic harmony

Author–Year	Journal / Source	Quartile / Indexing	Core Focus of Study	Relevance to Moderation / Harmony
Tamburini (2024)	*Journal of Asian & African Studies*	Scopus Q1	Digital Islam	Discursive tolerance
Thoyib et al. (2024)	*Journal of Al-Tamaddun*	Scopus Q2	Student tolerance	Interfaith respect
Wang et al. (2025)	*Multidisciplinary Reviews*	Scopus Q1	Organizational climate	Social cohesion
Weishar (2025)	Routledge Book Chapter	Indexed Book	Humanistic approach	Anti-violence

Source: Processed by researchers

Table 2 demonstrates that the analyzed literature contributes to a multidimensional understanding of religious moderation across three interrelated domains: the strengthening of humanistic values, curriculum innovation, and interfaith harmony. Within the humanistic cluster, studies underscore the significance of dialogue, empathy and ethics as foundational elements for cultivating moderate attitudes. Research on curriculum innovation highlights the importance of reflective and flexible learning designs that foster tolerance and inclusivity. Meanwhile, scholarship on interfaith interaction reveals that social cohesion and the acceptance of differences are nurtured through collaborative practices, inclusive policies, and the creation of spaces for interfaith encounters.

FINDINGS
### Paradigm Shift in Contemporary Islamic Education

This study reveals a significant paradigm shift in contemporary Islamic education from a predominantly normative and doctrinal orientation toward a more humanistic and socially responsive approach. Traditional curricula that emphasized memorization, textual transmission, and doctrinal conformity have been widely criticized for their limited capacity to prepare students to engage constructively with diversity, manage intercultural encounters, and respond ethically to social tensions in plural societies. Recent scholarship consistently underscores the need for curriculum reform that integrates character formation, empathy, and social competence as core educational outcomes rather than supplementary moral objectives.

The Love-Based Curriculum (KBC), formally institutionalized by the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education No. 6077 of 2025, is a major curricular innovation in Islamic education. The findings indicate that this curriculum repositions educational objectives beyond cognitive attainment by systematically cultivating religious moderation, social cohesion, and peaceful coexistence. Rather than functioning as an auxiliary moral framework, the value of love is structurally embedded as the central organizing principle guiding curriculum design, instructional strategies, and learning outcomes.

Core Dimensions of the Love-Based Curriculum

A central finding of this study is the identification of three interrelated value dimensions that form the structural foundation of the Love-Based Curriculum: *Mahabbah Ilahiyah*, *Rahmah Insaniyyah*, and *Amanah Khalifah*. As illustrated in Figure 1, the curriculum integrates these dimensions to encompass students' spiritual, social, and ecological development. Each dimension is operationalized through project-based learning, dialogical engagement, moral reflection, and concrete social action.

The internalization of these values functions as a causal mechanism that mediates the development of prosocial behavior. Evidence suggests that students exposed to these dimensions demonstrate increased tolerance, empathy, and the capacity to manage differences and reduce social conflict. Specifically, *Mahabbah Ilahiyah* strengthens spiritual awareness and ethical self-regulation, *Rahmah Insaniyyah* fosters empathy and constructive intergroup relations, and *Amanah Khalifah* enhances ecological responsibility and shared moral accountability.
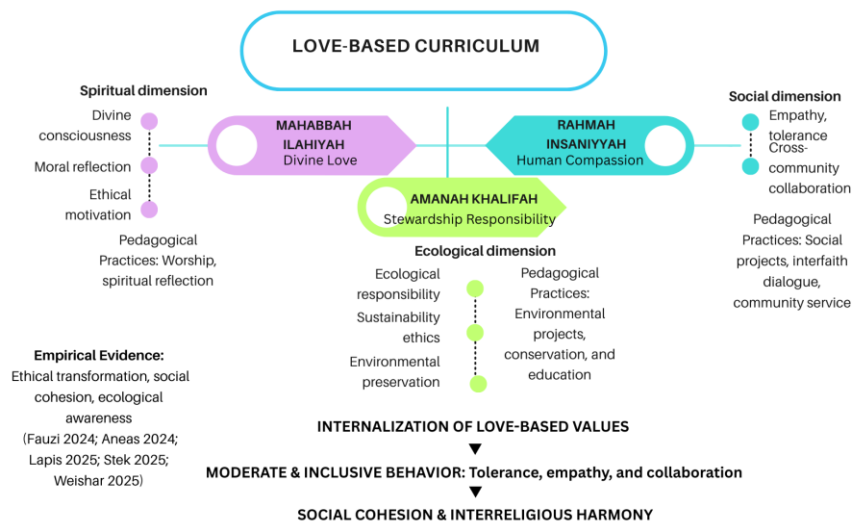
source: compilation by researchers
Figure 1. Love-based Curriculum

Figure 1 illustrates that the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) operates through three interrelated value dimensions: *Mahabbah Ilahiyah*, *Rahmah Insaniyyah,* and *Amanah Khalifah*. These dimensions encompass the spiritual, social, and ecological aspects of student development and are implemented through project-based pedagogy, dialogical engagement, moral reflection, and concrete social action. Once internalized, these values function as moral and social motivations that mediate the formation of prosocial behavior. The outcomes include enhanced

tolerance, empathy, and the ability to manage differences and reduce conflict, which directly contribute to interfaith harmony and social cohesion in pluralistic contexts.

The diagram shows that *Mahabbah Ilahiyah* strengthens students' spiritual awareness and moral motivation by transforming religious knowledge into reflective and ethically grounded practice. This dimension extends beyond ritual observance by emphasizing internal moral commitment and ethical self-regulation. Educational practices that integrate spiritual reflection, meaningful worship, and self-awareness consistently foster ethical behavior and inclusive religious attitudes.

The results further indicate that *Rahmah Insaniyyah* plays a critical role in cultivating empathy, social interaction skills, and conflict-resolution capacity. Learning experiences centered on collaboration, interfaith engagement, and participatory activities are consistently associated with improved inclusive attitudes and positive intergroup relations. This dimension directly supports the development of religious moderation by embedding respect, care, and tolerance within routine educational interactions.

Religious Moderation as an Outcome of Love-Based Learning

The findings confirm that religious moderation emerges both directly and indirectly from love-based learning experiences. In this context, moderation is not limited to teaching tolerance in a normative sense but emphasizes the application of love as a guiding principle in fundamental social interactions.
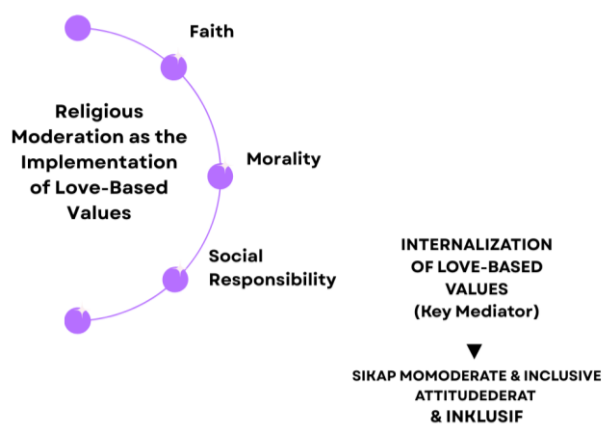
source: compiled by researchers

Figure 2. Religious Moderation as an Implementation of the Value of Love,

Figure 2 conceptualizes religious moderation within the Indonesian Islamic tradition as a balanced integration of three fundamental aspects: faith commitment, moral responsibility, and social engagement. This perspective moves beyond passive tolerance, framing moderation as an active and participatory process that requires students to build social harmony, respect pluralism, and counter extremist tendencies (Qoumas, 2024; Muhlisin, 2023). Education plays a critical role in

shaping moderate attitudes, primarily by integrating love-based pedagogical strategies into daily learning experiences. Cho (2023) emphasizes that contextual adaptation is essential, as teachers and institutions must align moderation messages with cultural, historical, and community needs. Thus, religious moderation is not a static doctrine but a dynamic practice shaped through reflection, dialogue, and ethical action.

The integration of moderation values into love-based learning occurs through three core dimensions: *Mahabbah Ilahiyah* (spiritual love), *Rahmah Insaniyyah* (human love), and *Amanah Khalifah* (ecological and social responsibility). Each dimension contributes uniquely to the development of moderation. *Mahabbah Ilahiyah* nurtures reflective and morally grounded religious practice, transforming spiritual knowledge into ethical behavior and internal motivation. *Rahmah Insaniyyah* fosters empathy, social competence, and conflict-resolution skills, enabling constructive engagement with diverse communities. *Amanah Khalifah* instills responsibility for the environment and social systems, extending moderation to ethical stewardship of ecological and social landscapes. Together, these dimensions provide students with a holistic model of moderation that integrates spiritual, social, and environmental ethics.

Empirical findings from selected literature also confirm that students engaged in love-based learning demonstrate higher levels of tolerance, openness to differences, and resilience against extremist tendencies. Project-based learning, interfaith initiatives, and structured reflective dialogue serve as mechanisms for translating abstract moral principles into lived experiences. For example, participation in interreligious community service or environmental conservation projects enables students to internalize cooperation, empathy, and ethical responsibility. These activities contribute to the formation of a "habitus of moderation," where repeated engagement reinforces moral motivation and behavioral norms consistent with interfaith harmony.

Nevertheless, several constraints were identified in practice. First, teacher capacity remains limited, particularly in humanistic, interfaith, and value-based pedagogy. Many educators are trained primarily in doctrinal instruction and lack exposure to experiential or reflective teaching methods. Second, resistance persists within communities and institutions that prioritize normative religious practices over innovative approaches, manifesting as skepticism toward project-based activities or reluctance to engage in interfaith collaborations. Third, operational teaching modules are insufficient, leaving teachers without practical guidance for integrating love-based learning into classroom instruction. Fourth, standardized instruments to measure the internalization of values such as love, empathy, and moderation are lacking, making systematic evaluation inefficient.

These challenges highlight that curricular innovation alone is insufficient. Effective cultivation of religious moderation requires structural reinforcement, sustained professional development, mentoring programs, and continuous evaluation mechanisms. Teacher training must equip educators with skills to facilitate interfaith dialogue, guide ethical reflection, design value-based learning activities, and manage pluralistic classrooms. Practical modules and operational guides are needed to translate curriculum principles into classroom practice, while standardized evaluation tools should combine qualitative and quantitative measures to assess students' internalization of moderation.

Contextual adaptation is also critical. Sociocultural dynamics, local religious interpretations, and community norms influence how love-based values are internalized. Embedding curriculum activities within familiar cultural contexts reduces resistance, enhances relevance, and increases the likelihood of genuine value internalization. Experiential and project-based learning strategies, such as interfaith collaboration, environmental conservation, and community service, offer students opportunities to practice moderation and empathy in real-world contexts. Evidence indicates that community-based and digital learning platforms integrating ethical reflection and interfaith dialogue significantly enhance tolerance, social awareness, and empathy (Mustolehudin et al., 2024; Setiyanto, 2024).

This study identifies a cause-and-effect relationship between love-based learning and the development of moderate attitudes. Students who engage deeply in experiential, value-driven activities demonstrate measurable increases in prosocial behavior, resilience to extremist ideologies, and willingness to participate in interfaith dialogue. Internalization of values is mediated by reflective practices, social interaction, and moral reasoning, showing that love-based learning operates at both cognitive and affective levels. Despite positive outcomes, structural and resource limitations remain. Schools require support for teacher capacity building, access to contextualized teaching modules, and flexible implementation guidelines. Resistance from communities and institutions must be addressed through engagement, policy clarity, and demonstration of tangible benefits. Monitoring, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms are essential to ensure that the curriculum fosters measurable social and moral outcomes.

In sum, the findings underscore that religious moderation is both an outcome and a mechanism of love-based curriculum. By integrating *Mahabbah Ilahiyah*, *Rahmah Insaniyyah*, and *Amanah Khalifah*, students could develop a holistic understanding of moderation that spans spiritual, social, and ecological domains. Love-based learning cultivates interfaith harmony, social cohesion, and ethical responsibility. Effective implementation depends on teacher capacity, operational modules, contextual adaptation, and robust evaluation systems.

DISCUSSION

Reinterpreting the Paradigm Shift in Contemporary Islamic Education

The findings indicate that contemporary Islamic education in Indonesia is undergoing a discernible shift from a predominantly normative and doctrinal orientation toward a more humanistic approach that prioritizes character formation, empathy, and social competence. This transformation reflects a growing awareness that doctrinal transmission alone is insufficient for addressing the complexities of social interaction in a religiously and culturally plural society. In contexts marked by diversity, education that emphasizes rigid normativity may inadvertently restrict students' capacities for dialogue, cooperation, and mutual understanding.

Within this broader transformation, the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) introduced by the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education No. 6077/2025 should be interpreted with caution. Rather than serving as evidence of direct pedagogical impact, it is more accurately understood as a policy-level conceptual articulation that aligns with ongoing humanistic and moderation-oriented trajectories in Islamic education (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam, 2025). Its significance lies not in deterministic claims of effectiveness but in its symbolic and normative function: making love an explicit curricular value rather than an assumed moral by-product of religious instruction. This articulation resonates with classic theories of prejudice reduction and social cohesion, which emphasize the importance of sustained value orientation and social interaction in shaping attitudes (Allport, 1954; Putnam, 2000).

Dimensions of Love as Conceptual Mechanisms

To interpret how values are internalized within this paradigm shift, the findings are analytically understood through three interrelated dimensions: *Mahabbah Ilahiyah*, *Rahmah Insaniyyah*, and *Amanah Khalifah*. These dimensions are not proposed as causal variables but as conceptual mechanisms that explain the moral logic underpinning educational practices.

Mahabbah Ilahiyah reflects a reorientation of spirituality from ritual compliance toward reflective moral awareness. In contrast to several international models of religious education that prioritize intercultural competence with minimal theological grounding (Jackson, 2014; UNESCO, 2017), the Indonesian case illustrates a form of theologically grounded humanism. Here, divine orientation serves as a source of motivation for ethical responsibility rather than a boundary of exclusivity. This finding aligns with perspectives that argue religious meaning-making can reinforce ethical agency when interpreted inclusively (Fauzi, 2024; Hayat et al., 2025).

Rahmah Insaniyyah corresponds with global scholarship on empathy-based and participatory education, which highlights the role of perspective-taking and dialogical learning in reducing prejudice (Aneas, 2024; Verkuyten, 2018). Unlike secular civic models, empathy in Indonesian Islamic education is explicitly framed within religious discourse. This demonstrates how global pedagogical principles are locally reinterpreted through culturally resonant moral languages. Comparative studies in England, Japan, and Italy similarly emphasize collaborative and interfaith initiatives as vehicles for inclusion, though often without theological framing (Lapis, 2025). The Indonesian case contributes to the literature by showing that religious narratives can function as resources rather than obstacles for inclusive education.

Amanah Khalifah extends the notion of love beyond interpersonal relations to encompass social and ecological responsibility. While sustainability-oriented religious education has gained increasing international attention (Marshall, 2025; Stek, 2025), the Indonesian articulation embeds environmental ethics within the religious concept of stewardship. This framing strengthens moral coherence by linking spirituality, social responsibility, and ecological care within a single ethical horizon, rather than treating them as separate curricular concerns.

Religious Moderation as a Pedagogical Orientation

The findings further suggest that religious moderation functions not as a discrete instructional topic but as an applied pedagogical orientation emerging from reflective, experiential, and participatory learning processes. Within this framework, the Love-Based Curriculum operates as a conceptual scaffold that supports moderation values without asserting predetermined outcomes.

This orientation differs from international contexts where moderation is often framed primarily as civic competence or policy compliance (Cho, 2023; Hanafi, 2025). Indonesian Islamic education situates moderation within a moral and spiritual continuum, positioning it as both a religious disposition and a civic virtue. This dual positioning enriches theoretical discussions by demonstrating that moderation need not be reduced to secular tolerance nor confined to doctrinal compromise (Muhlisin, 2023; Qoumas, 2024).

Importantly, this study avoids claims of direct causality. Instead, it identifies associative patterns suggesting that sustained engagement in value-oriented learning environments corresponds with higher expressions of tolerance, empathy, and social responsibility (Mardhiah, 2025; Qomusuddin et al., 2025). These associations reinforce the argument that moderation emerges through long-term pedagogical culture rather than through isolated instructional interventions.

The analysis of interfaith harmony reveals both convergence and divergence between Indonesian and international contexts. Consistent with global findings, repeated collaborative practices, dialogue, and community engagement contribute

to trust-building and social cohesion (Putnam, 2000; Lapis, 2025). However, Indonesia's pluralistic religious landscape introduces specific sensitivities related to doctrinal interpretation, local cultural norms, and institutional authority structures (Nasution et al., 2025; Thoyib et al., 2024).

Within this context, love functions as a mediating social value rather than a direct causal force. It shapes interactional norms, communication styles, and ethical expectations, thereby influencing how interfaith encounters are navigated. Evidence from Indonesian Islamic education suggests that interfaith collaboration and moderate practices can enhance social resilience, although outcomes remain contingent on teacher competence, institutional support, and community acceptance.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that the Love-Based Curriculum provides a coherent conceptual framework for linking Islamic ethical values, e.g., *mahabbah*, *rahmah*, and *Amanah*, to key indicators of interfaith harmony, namely tolerance, acceptance of differences, non-violence, and social cooperation. These findings directly answer the research problem by showing that love-based values can be systematically mapped onto measurable dimensions of religious moderation and social cohesion, thereby positioning the curriculum as a normative and pedagogical foundation for fostering inclusive educational environments in Indonesia's plural society.

Despite these contributions, the study is limited by its reliance on qualitative descriptive synthesis and conceptual mapping rather than empirical testing. The absence of standardized instruments to measure internalized values and the lack of classroom-level implementation data limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should employ mixed-method approaches, including longitudinal studies and experimental designs, to evaluate the effectiveness of love-based pedagogy in diverse educational contexts. Developing operational teaching modules and assessment tools will also be essential for translating conceptual frameworks into practical outcomes.

Several practical implications can be drawn from this study in order to strengthen the internalization of love and religious moderation in Islamic education. *Standardizing the Love-Based Curriculum across all levels* of Islamic education, from madrasah ibtidaiyah to religious universities, is essential to ensure consistency in promoting humanistic and inclusive orientations in learning practices. Equally important is *investment in teacher capacity development*, as educators serve not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as facilitators of the internalization of values. *Continuous professional training* should equip teachers with

competencies in reflective pedagogy, interfaith dialogue, and value-based learning design, which have been shown to strengthen empathy and tolerance. In addition, *the development of social project-based modules* offers students tangible opportunities to practice moderation and love through interfaith collaboration and experiential learning, supported by evaluative rubrics that measure soft skills and tolerant attitudes.

To ensure effectiveness, data-driven monitoring and evaluation frameworks must be established, combining quantitative instruments such as tolerance scales and empathy indices with qualitative methods, including interviews and observations. These mechanisms provide systematic feedback for curriculum improvement and highlight areas of strength and limitation. Furthermore, cross-community and institutional collaboration with religious leaders, NGOs, and civil society organizations is critical to extend the impact of moderation and love beyond the classroom, embedding these values into daily social practices. Collectively, these implications demonstrate that the Love-Based Curriculum is not merely a pedagogical concept but a strategic bridge for fostering peaceful, inclusive, and dialogical spaces within Islamic education. With the synergy of policy, practice, and academic research, the value of love can evolve into a foundational principle for building interfaith harmony, social resilience, and a more prosperous plural society.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. PRISMA Flow Summary

Identification: Records identified through database searching (Scopus, DOAJ, OJS, MoRA Portal) = 312; additional records from reference lists = 18 (total = 330). Screening: Records after duplicate removal using Mendeley = 276; records screened by title and abstract = 276; records excluded = 189 (irrelevant topic, non-education context). Eligibility: Full-text articles assessed = 87; full-text articles excluded = 40 (no explicit linkage to interfaith harmony indicators; not religious education context; insufficient methodological or conceptual detail). Included: Studies and documents included in synthesis = 47 (policy/legal documents = 7; peer-reviewed empirical studies = 18; peer-reviewed conceptual/theoretical studies = 17; grey literature/NGO reports = 5).

Appendix B. Search Strings and Databases

Scopus (TITLE-ABS-KEY): ("love-based curriculum" OR "value-based curriculum" OR compassion OR empathy OR mahabbah OR rahmah) AND ("religious education" OR "Islamic education") AND ("interfaith harmony" OR "social cohesion" OR tolerance OR "non-violence"). Search date: 15 August 2025; database version current as of search date.

DOAJ: (love-based OR compassion OR empathy) AND (religious education OR Islamic education) AND (interfaith OR tolerance).

OJS Nasional: (kurikulum cinta OR kurikulum berbasis nilai) AND (pendidikan agama) AND (kerukunan antarumat beragama OR toleransi).

Ministry of Religious Affairs Portal: Manual search using keywords: kurikulum cinta, moderasi beragama, kerukunan antaragama.

Appendix C. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion: (1) Peer-reviewed journal articles, official policy/legal documents, and conceptual/theoretical papers defining indicators or constructs; (2) English or Indonesian language; (3) Full text available; (4) Relevant to religious or humanistic education and interfaith harmony.

Exclusion: (1) Editorials or opinion pieces without analytical content; (2) Duplicate records; (3) Non-scholarly blogs or media articles; (4) Domains unrelated to education or interreligious relations.

Appendix D. Data Extraction Codebook

Fields extracted: bibliographic information; country/context; education level; conceptualisation of love/compassion; interfaith harmony indicators used; claimed mechanisms or pathways; type of evidence (empirical/conceptual/policy); policy relevance. Coding strategy combined deductive coding (mahabbah, rahmah, amanah; tolerance, acceptance of differences, non-violence, interfaith cooperation) with inductive theme identification, a single coder with iterative peer-audit checks conducted coding.

Appendix E. Mapping Matrix (Analytical Alignment)

Primary framework: Interfaith harmony indicators (tolerance; acceptance of differences; non-violence; interfaith cooperation). Secondary alignment: Four pillars of religious moderation (national commitment; tolerance; anti-violence; acceptance of local culture). The matrix maps conceptual overlap and functional equivalence between the two frameworks, providing conceptual justification for their alignment.

Appendix F. Evidence Strength Tagging

Given the conceptual-mapping objective, formal quality appraisal tools (e.g., MMAT/CASP) were not applied. Instead, each source was tagged by strength of evidence: empirical (high), conceptual/theoretical (moderate), and policy/normative (contextual). This tagging supports transparency without overstating methodological rigour.