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Internalizing Love-Based Curriculum Values in Akidah Akhlak Learning: Strategies and Challenges in Madrasah

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the strategies used in internalizing Love-Based Curriculum values in Akidah Akhlak learning at MTs Cijawura Kota Bandung. A qualitative case study design was employed involving one Akidah Akhlak teacher, one madrasah leader, and five students from Grades VII and VIII. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. The findings show that Love-Based Curriculum values were internalized through integrated pedagogical strategies combining value-based lesson planning, differentiated and joyful learning, dialogical interaction, teacher role modeling, habituation, reflection, and behavioral observation. The internalized values covered spiritual, personal, social, intellectual, environmental, and national dimensions. The process was strengthened by institutional support, religious habituation, positive madrasah culture, teacher exemplarity, and student participation. Inhibiting factors were related to limited learning time, student diversity and discipline, as well as external influences from peers, family backgrounds, and social media. These findings indicate that the internalization of Love-Based Curriculum values requires an integrated educational environment that connects classroom learning, teacher role modeling, madrasah culture, and continuous moral habituation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Values education has become an important part of contemporary education because schools are expected not only to develop students' cognitive competence but also to foster moral responsibility, social sensitivity, and spiritual awareness. In Islamic education, this orientation is closely related to the formation of *akhlak*, as religious learning is intended to

develop faith, morality, worship practices, and social behavior. Madrasahs therefore play an important role in integrating religious values into classroom learning, habituation, teacher-student relationships, and school culture. Previous studies indicate that character formation becomes more meaningful when religious values are supported by teacher role modeling, habituation, school leadership, and learning experiences that connect moral knowledge with students' daily lives [1]–[6].

The emergence of the Love-Based Curriculum or *Kurikulum Cinta* strengthens this orientation in madrasah education. Its official basis refers to the *Panduan Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta* issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia [7]–[9]. Kurikulum Cinta is not designed as a separate subject but as a pedagogical spirit that is integrated into intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. It emphasizes love, compassion, tolerance, humanity, and the development of meaningful relationships between students, teachers, society, and their environment. In the context of this study, its values are operationally understood through six interconnected dimensions, namely love for Allah, love for oneself, love for others, love for knowledge, love for the environment, and love for the nation [10]–[12].

Kurikulum Cinta is particularly relevant to Akidah Akhlak because this subject is directly concerned with faith, moral conduct, self-control, social responsibility, and the development of students' relationships with Allah and others [13]–[15]. Therefore, Akidah Akhlak learning provides an important context for translating love-based values from religious concepts into students' attitudes and everyday practices. The internalization of these values requires more than verbal explanation. It involves pedagogical practices that allow students to experience and reflect on moral values through meaningful classroom interaction, teacher role modeling, habituation, storytelling, reflection, and other contextual learning experiences. Operationally, value internalization in this study refers to the process through which love-based values are integrated into learning and gradually reflected in students' awareness, attitudes, interactions, and daily behavior. [16], [17].

However, the internalization of moral and religious values remains challenging. Previous studies indicate that character education can become overly normative, textual, and teacher-centered, resulting in a gap between students' knowledge of moral concepts and their actual behavior. The process is also affected by limited learning time, diverse student characteristics, family and peer environments, and the growing influence of digital and social media culture. These conditions suggest that value internalization cannot depend solely on curriculum documents or classroom explanation. It requires teacher strategies that are responsive to students' experiences and a supportive educational environment that reinforces moral values inside and outside the classroom [18], [19].

Although previous studies have examined Islamic character education, religious habituation, and value internalization in madrasahs, relatively few studies have specifically explored how Love-Based Curriculum values are internalized through Akidah Akhlak learning at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level. Existing studies tend to discuss Islamic values and character formation more generally without examining in depth how love-based values are planned, practiced, experienced by students, and supported or constrained by the madrasah environment. This gap is particularly important because the effectiveness of

Kurikulum Cinta depends not only on its normative principles but also on how teachers translate those principles into everyday pedagogical practices.

MTs Cijawura Kota Bandung was selected purposively as the case because it provided a relevant and bounded context for examining the integration of Kurikulum Cinta values into Akidah Akhlak learning and the institutional environment surrounding the process. Preliminary observations indicated that love-based values had begun to be incorporated into classroom learning and madrasah habituation programs. Rather than presenting these preliminary observations as findings, they served only as the contextual basis for selecting the case and conducting a more systematic investigation.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the internalization of Love-Based Curriculum values in Akidah Akhlak learning at MTs Cijawura Kota Bandung. Specifically, the study addresses the following research questions: (1) What strategies are used by the Akidah Akhlak teacher to internalize Love-Based Curriculum values? (2) How are Love-Based Curriculum values internalized in Akidah Akhlak learning? (3) What supporting and inhibiting factors influence the internalization of Love-Based Curriculum values at MTs Cijawura Kota Bandung? By addressing these questions, this study is expected to contribute to the development of Islamic education practices that integrate cognitive, affective, reflective, humanistic, and transformative dimensions.

2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was considered appropriate because this study aimed to understand in depth the strategies used by madrasah teachers in internalizing the values of the Love-Based Curriculum in Akidah Akhlak learning. Qualitative research allows researchers to explore meanings, experiences, practices, and social interactions within their natural context, particularly when the phenomenon under study is closely related to educational values, classroom culture, and participants' lived experiences [20], [21]. Meanwhile, the case study design was used because this research focused on a specific case, namely the internalization of Kurikulum Cinta values in Akidah Akhlak learning at MTs Cijawura Kota Bandung. A case study is suitable for examining a bounded educational phenomenon in detail by involving multiple sources of data such as interviews, observations, and documents [22]–[24].

The research was conducted at MTs Cijawura Kota Bandung in April 2026. The madrasah was selected purposively because it provided a relevant context for examining the integration of Kurikulum Cinta values into Akidah Akhlak learning. The madrasah had incorporated love-based values into classroom learning and supported character formation through religious and social habituation programs, including dhuha prayer, congregational prayer, tahlilan, 5S culture, cleanliness activities, and daily discipline. These practices provided an institutional context in which classroom-based value internalization could be examined together with the wider madrasah culture.

The participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement and ability to provide relevant information about the research focus [25], [26]. The informants consisted of one Akidah Akhlak teacher, one madrasah leader represented

by the assistant head of madrasah, and five students from Grades VII and VIII. The Akidah Akhlak teacher held a Bachelor's degree in a field relevant to Islamic education, had at least three years of teaching experience, and taught Akidah Akhlak in both Grades VII and VIII. The teacher was selected as the key informant because of his direct involvement in planning and implementing Akidah Akhlak learning. The madrasah leader was involved to provide information regarding institutional policy, school culture, supervision, and support programs. The five student informants were selected from approximately 60 students in Grades VII and VIII based on their good academic performance and involvement in student organizational activities, including OSIS. They were involved as supporting informants to describe their learning experiences, responses to the teacher's strategies, and perceptions of value internalization in Akidah Akhlak learning.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observation, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Indonesian. The Akidah Akhlak teacher was interviewed once for approximately 30 minutes. The interviews explored the teacher's understanding of Kurikulum Cinta, instructional strategies, forms of value internalization, supporting and inhibiting factors, and students' responses to the learning process. With participants' permission, the interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed into written form, and organized for qualitative analysis. The interview transcripts were subsequently examined together with observation and documentation data.

Classroom observations were conducted twice in April 2026, with each observation lasting approximately 30 minutes. The observations focused on Akidah Akhlak learning activities, including teacher-student interaction, classroom atmosphere, instructional strategies, student participation, teacher role modeling, reflection, and forms of habituation related to the internalization of Kurikulum Cinta values. Observation notes were used to record relevant classroom events and to compare classroom practices with information obtained from the interviews.

Documentation was used to complement the interview and observation data. The documents examined included learning plans, teaching materials, teaching modules, madrasah programs, and other documentation related to religious and character habituation activities. These documents were analyzed to identify how Kurikulum Cinta values were incorporated into lesson planning, classroom activities, and madrasah programs, as well as to strengthen the interpretation of data obtained from interviews and observations.

The researcher acted as the main instrument in the research process. To support systematic data collection, interview guidelines, observation notes, and documentation guidelines were used. The interview guidelines were developed according to three research focuses: the strategies used to internalize Kurikulum Cinta values, the forms of value internalization in Akidah Akhlak learning, and the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting the internalization process.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. The coding process was primarily deductive because the initial codes were developed from the three predetermined research focuses. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentation data were first read and grouped according to

relevant codes. Related codes were then organized into broader thematic categories, including teacher strategies, forms of value internalization, supporting factors, inhibiting factors, and students' responses. Data display was conducted by presenting these themes in systematic narrative form. Conclusion drawing and verification were carried out by identifying patterns and comparing the consistency of findings across different data sources [27], [28]. [29], [30].

This model was used because it enables researchers to analyze qualitative data systematically while maintaining the richness and complexity of field data.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the research, this study applied credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was strengthened through triangulation of sources and techniques by comparing data from the Akidah Akhlak teacher, the madrasah leader, students, observation, and documentation. Transferability was supported by providing a clear description of the research context, participants, and learning setting. Dependability was maintained by documenting the research process, including data collection procedures, data organization, and the stages of analysis. Confirmability was strengthened by ensuring that the findings were based on field data rather than the researcher's personal assumptions [31], [32]. Through these procedures, the study attempted to produce findings that are credible, transparent, and accountable in explaining the internalization of Kurikulum Cinta values in Akidah Akhlak learning at MTs Cijawura Kota Bandung.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Teachers' Strategies in Internalizing Love-Based Curriculum Values in Akidah Akhlak Learning

The first finding of this study shows that the strategy of the Akidah Akhlak teacher in internalizing Love-Based Curriculum values at MTs Cijawura Kota Bandung was carried out through a combination of affective, reflective, dialogical, and habituation-based approaches. The teacher did not understand Kurikulum Cinta as an additional subject matter, but as a pedagogical approach that places love, compassion, emotional safety, and moral awareness at the center of classroom interaction. In this context, the teacher positioned Akidah Akhlak learning not only as a process of transmitting religious knowledge, but also as a process of touching students' hearts so that Islamic values could be accepted, reflected upon, and practiced in daily life.

The teacher explained that Kurikulum Cinta is closely related to the spirit of rahmah and the concept of Islam as rahmatan lil 'alamin. According to the teacher, the main purpose of this curriculum is not only to make students understand religious concepts cognitively, but also to encourage them to become honest, polite, and morally responsible because of inner awareness rather than fear of punishment. The teacher stated:

> *"Kurikulum Cinta is not merely additional material, but a pedagogical approach that places compassion (rahmah) as the main foundation in the interaction between teachers and students. In the madrasah context, this curriculum is in line with the concept of rahmatan lil 'alamin. Learning does not only pursue cognitive completion, such as memorizing religious*

texts, but also seeks to make the values of faith and morality enter students' hearts through role modeling and a safe, comfortable learning environment."

This statement indicates that the teacher's strategy began with a humanistic understanding of religious learning. Akidah Akhlak was not taught as rigid doctrine, but as a living value that must be connected with students' emotional, moral, and social experiences. Therefore, the teacher attempted to create a classroom atmosphere that was warm, safe, and open before delivering moral messages. This strategy is important because the internalization of values requires emotional readiness, not merely intellectual explanation.

In lesson planning, the teacher internalized Kurikulum Cinta values by inserting behavioral indicators into learning materials. The teacher considered what kind of "love value" could emerge from each topic in Akidah Akhlak. For example, when discussing the attributes of Allah, such as Ar-Rahman, the teacher connected the concept with the practice of compassion toward classmates. The teacher explained:

"I plan the lesson by inserting behavioral indicators into each material. I think about what kind of love can emerge from this topic. I also make sure that the classroom atmosphere begins with a positive emotional condition so that the message of love can be received well by students."

This finding shows that internalization was designed from the planning stage. The teacher did not wait until the end of the lesson to give moral advice, but integrated values into the learning objectives, materials, classroom atmosphere, and expected student behavior. The madrasah leader also confirmed that the school encouraged teachers to include Kurikulum Cinta values in teaching modules, lesson plans, and other learning documents. This institutional support strengthened the teacher's strategy because value internalization was not treated as an individual initiative only, but also as part of the madrasah's learning direction.

The teacher's main instructional strategies were differentiated learning and joyful learning. Differentiated learning was used to accommodate students' different interests, learning needs, and classroom participation. Meanwhile, joyful learning was used to create a pleasant learning atmosphere so that moral values could be accepted without making students feel judged or lectured. The teacher stated:

"The strategies I use are differentiated learning and joyful learning. I try to accommodate the diversity of students' interests by giving choices in the discussion process and creating a pleasant atmosphere so that moral values are more easily accepted without students feeling lectured."

This finding indicates that the teacher understood value internalization as a process that must be seen in students' actual behavior. Therefore, the success of learning was not measured only by students' ability to answer questions, but also by their ability to demonstrate politeness, empathy, discipline, care, and respect in school life.

Table 1. Summary of Teachers' Strategies in Internalizing Love-Based Curriculum Values

No.	Strategy	Main Finding	Interpretation
1	Humanistic understanding of Kurikulum Cinta	The teacher viewed Kurikulum Cinta as a rahmah-based pedagogical approach, not merely additional material.	Value internalization began from the teacher's understanding that learning must touch students' hearts and moral awareness.
2	Value-based lesson planning	The teacher inserted behavioral indicators and love values into Akidah Akhlak materials and learning documents.	Internalization was planned intentionally from the beginning of instruction.
3	Differentiated and joyful learning	The teacher used differentiated learning and joyful learning to accommodate students' diversity and create a pleasant classroom atmosphere.	Moral values were made easier to accept through inclusive and enjoyable learning.
4	Dialogical classroom interaction	The teacher used discussion, question-and-answer activities, and respectful responses to students' opinions.	Students were encouraged to participate actively and reflect on moral issues.
5	Role modeling	The teacher demonstrated polite speech, proper manners, and daily adab in classroom interactions.	Students learned values through visible examples, not only verbal explanation.
6	Habituation	Students were accustomed to praying, greeting, reading religious texts, keeping the classroom clean, and using polite expressions.	Repeated practices helped transform values into daily habits.
7	Storytelling and moral reflection	The teacher used stories of prophets and moral figures, followed by reflection questions.	Stories helped students develop empathy and connect moral values with real-life situations.
8	Behavioral evaluation	The teacher evaluated value internalization through observation of students' attitudes, speech, and social interaction.	The success of internalization was measured through behavioral change, not only cognitive achievement.

3.2. Forms of Internalization of Love-Based Curriculum Values in Akidah Akhlak Learning

The second finding of this study shows that the internalization of Love-Based Curriculum values in Akidah Akhlak learning at MTs Cijawura Kota Bandung was manifested in several forms of love, namely love for Allah, love for oneself, love for others, love for knowledge, love for the environment, and love for the nation. These values were not taught only as abstract concepts, but were connected to students' daily behavior through religious explanation, teacher role modeling, habituation, classroom reflection, and madrasah culture. In this context, Akidah Akhlak learning became a strategic space for transforming theological understanding into moral awareness and practical behavior.

The first form of internalization was love for Allah. The Akidah Akhlak teacher explained that this value was developed through a living understanding of tawhid. Students were guided to understand Allah not only as the One to be feared, but also as the Most Compassionate and the Most Loving. Therefore, worship was introduced not merely as an obligation, but as a form of gratitude, sincerity, and awareness of Allah's mercy. The teacher stated:

> *"In Akidah Akhlak, this value is internalized through a living understanding of tawhid. I teach that Allah is not only the One to be feared, but also the Most Compassionate. We love Allah by carrying out His commands out of gratitude, not merely out of obligation, so that every act of worship is performed with awareness and sincerity."*

This finding shows that the internalization of love for Allah was directed toward building students' spiritual consciousness. Students were encouraged to connect faith with daily life, such as praying, being grateful, relying on Allah, and improving worship practices. Student responses supported this finding. Some students stated that Akidah Akhlak learning made them more aware of prayer, worship, gratitude, and self-reflection. One student stated that learning Akidah Akhlak often made him reflect on whether his actions were already in accordance with what the teacher had taught. Another student explained that the lesson reminded her of the afterlife and encouraged her to improve herself. Thus, love for Allah was internalized through religious understanding, worship habituation, and personal reflection.

The second form was love for oneself. The teacher interpreted love for oneself as an effort to protect the body, soul, and potential entrusted by Allah. Students were guided to avoid bad behavior, such as lying, laziness, lack of discipline, and irresponsibility, because such behavior would harm themselves. Honesty, discipline, responsibility, and self-confidence were taught as expressions of appreciation for the potential given by Allah. The teacher explained:

> *"Love for oneself is an effort to protect the trust given by Allah, namely the body and the soul. I guide students to avoid bad behavior such as lying or being lazy because it will harm themselves. We emphasize that discipline and honesty are forms of respecting the potential Allah has given."*

This value was also reflected in students' responses. Students mentioned that the teacher taught them to be honest, disciplined, responsible, confident, patient, and able to avoid bad behavior. One student gave a concrete example of honesty by not cheating when completing worksheets or preparing for tests. Another student mentioned discipline through wearing the uniform according to the schedule and bringing the required books. These responses show that love for oneself was not understood as selfishness, but as moral responsibility for one's own behavior, discipline, and personal growth.

The third form was love for others. The teacher internalized this value through the concept of ukhuwah Islamiyah and the prophetic teaching of loving others as oneself. Students were taught to respect, help, speak politely, avoid mocking others, and maintain good relationships with parents, teachers, and friends. The teacher stated that moral behavior toward others is a reflection of faith. This value was also strengthened through classroom interaction, group discussion, respectful communication, and teacher advice. Students confirmed that they were taught tolerance, respect, politeness, and care for friends. One student stated that the teacher reminded students not to speak harshly to parents, teachers, and friends, while another student said that the learning made her more aware of the importance of respecting and caring for others. This indicates that love for others was internalized through both religious explanation and social practice.

The fourth form was love for knowledge. The teacher internalized this value by emphasizing that seeking knowledge is an act of worship and a religious obligation for every Muslim. Students were taught that adab comes before knowledge and that respecting teachers is one of the keys to gaining the blessing of knowledge. The teacher explained that students were encouraged to ask questions and discuss not merely for grades, but because they should seek truth and wisdom. This finding was supported by students' responses. Some students stated that the teacher motivated them to learn, respect teachers, and understand that knowledge is important, but adab must always accompany it. One student explained that the teacher often told stories of pious people to motivate students to love knowledge. This shows that love for knowledge was internalized through motivation, respect for teachers, discussion, storytelling, and the integration of adab in learning.

The fifth form was love for the environment. The teacher connected this value with the concept of humans as khalifah on earth. Students were taught that humans have a responsibility to care for, manage, and preserve the earth wisely rather than destroy it. In classroom practice, this value was internalized through simple habits such as cleaning the classroom, throwing garbage in the proper place, tidying the learning environment, and participating in school cleanliness programs. Students confirmed that the teacher often reminded them to maintain classroom cleanliness before learning began. One student stated that the teacher always asked students to check whether there was trash around them and throw it away before starting the lesson. Another student said that she became more concerned about cleanliness because "cleanliness is part of faith." This finding shows that environmental love was internalized through direct habituation and religious meaning.

The sixth form was love for the nation. The teacher connected Akidah Akhlak learning with the value of hubbul wathan minal iman, namely love for the homeland as part of faith. Students were taught that discipline, obeying rules, respecting differences, maintaining unity, and loving the homeland are part of moral responsibility as Muslims and citizens. The madrasah also supported this value through flag ceremonies, discipline enforcement, school rules, and national day commemorations. Student responses showed that the value of love for the nation was introduced, although some students stated that it was taught only occasionally. This indicates that the internalization of national love existed in Akidah Akhlak learning and madrasah culture, but still needs to be strengthened more consistently in classroom activities.

Table 2. Forms of Internalization of Love-Based Curriculum Values in Akidah Akhlak Learning

No.	Love-Based Value	Main Finding	Interpretation
1	Love for Allah	Students were guided to understand Allah as the Most Compassionate and to worship Him with gratitude, sincerity, and awareness.	Spiritual values were internalized through tawhid, worship habituation, prayer, gratitude, and self-reflection.
2	Love for oneself	Students were taught honesty, discipline, responsibility, self-confidence, patience, and avoidance of bad behavior.	Self-love was understood as protecting the trust of Allah and developing personal moral responsibility.
3	Love for others	Students were taught tolerance, politeness, respect, empathy, helping others, and maintaining good relationships.	Social love was internalized through ukhuwah, teacher advice, group interaction, and respectful communication.
4	Love for knowledge	Students were motivated to learn, ask questions, discuss, respect teachers, and prioritize adab before knowledge.	Love for knowledge was connected with worship, truth-seeking, and the blessing of learning.
5	Love for the environment	Students were accustomed to cleaning the classroom, throwing away trash, and caring for the madrasah environment.	Environmental love was internalized through religious meaning and daily cleanliness habits.
6	Love for the nation	Students were taught discipline, obedience to rules, respect for differences, unity, and love for the homeland.	National love was integrated into Akidah Akhlak through religious-national values and madrasah culture.
7	Behavioral change	Students reported becoming more confident, responsible, respectful, religiously aware, and caring toward the environment.	Internalization produced gradual changes in students' moral awareness and daily behavior.

These findings indicate that the internalization of Kurikulum Cinta values in Akidah Akhlak learning was carried out through the integration of spiritual, personal, social, intellectual, environmental, and national values. This finding is consistent with Nst and Al-Husna (2025), who show that the Love-Based Curriculum in Akidah Akhlak learning emphasizes compassion, moral awareness, and the formation of noble character. It also supports Mahfud and Zahriyah (2025), who argue that Islamic value internalization plays an important role in building students' morality and ethics. In addition, Mappaenre et al. (2022) explain that character education in madrasah is strengthened through religious habituation, school culture, and teacher guidance. Similarly, Asif et al. (2020) emphasize that moral education should help learners develop ethical awareness and responsible behavior. Therefore, the findings of this study affirm that love-based values in Akidah Akhlak learning can function as a bridge between religious understanding and moral practice in students' daily lives.

3.3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Internalization of Love-Based Curriculum Values

The third finding of this study shows that the internalization of Love-Based Curriculum values in Akidah Akhlak learning at MTs Cijawura Kota Bandung was influenced by several supporting and inhibiting factors. The supporting factors included madrasah policy, religious habituation programs, a positive school culture, teacher role modeling, student enthusiasm, peer support, and institutional supervision. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors included limited learning time, diverse student characteristics, inconsistent student discipline, students' low self-awareness, the influence of peers, and exposure to social media. These findings indicate that the internalization of values is not only determined by the teacher's classroom strategy, but also by the wider educational ecosystem surrounding students.

The first supporting factor was the madrasah's institutional support. The Akidah Akhlak teacher explained that MTs Cijawura provided a supportive environment for internalizing Kurikulum Cinta values through religious and literacy habituation programs. These included school ceremonies, dhuha prayer, congregational prayer, tahlilan, and other routine activities. The teacher stated:

> *"The main support from MTs Cijawura is the existence of a routine ecosystem of worship and literacy habituation, such as ceremonies, dhuha prayer together, and tahlilan. In addition, the madrasah gives me freedom to innovate in developing enjoyable learning models in the classroom."*

This statement shows that the madrasah provided both cultural and pedagogical support. Religious habituation created an environment where values taught in Akidah Akhlak were reinforced through daily practices. At the same time, the freedom given to teachers allowed them to develop creative learning strategies, such as joyful learning, differentiated learning, storytelling, reflection, and discussion. Therefore, the internalization of Kurikulum Cinta values was strengthened because classroom learning was supported by school culture.

The madrasah leader also confirmed that institutional support was provided through policies, programs, supervision, and the development of a positive madrasah culture. The madrasah encouraged teachers to integrate Kurikulum Cinta values into lesson plans, teaching modules, and classroom activities. In addition, the madrasah supported the internalization process through 5S culture, congregational zuhur prayer, classroom cleaning, weekly environmental service, daily discipline, and religious habituation. The madrasah leader explained:

> *"The support given by the madrasah to Akidah Akhlak teachers in internalizing Kurikulum Cinta values includes policy support, facilities, habituation programs, and cooperation among all members of the madrasah community in building a positive culture."*

This finding indicates that the internalization of values became more effective when it was embedded in the collective culture of the madrasah. The values of love, compassion, respect, discipline, cleanliness, and responsibility were not only taught in the

classroom, but also practiced through daily school routines. Therefore, the madrasah functioned as a moral ecosystem that strengthened students' character formation.

The second supporting factor was teacher role modeling. The Akidah Akhlak teacher stated that the ability of teachers to provide concrete examples is a key factor in the success of Kurikulum Cinta internalization. The teacher emphasized that patience, polite speech, sensitivity to students' emotional conditions, and sincere attention to students are essential in helping students receive moral messages. The teacher explained that students are more likely to accept values when teachers demonstrate them in real behavior. This finding was supported by students' responses. Several students described the teacher as kind, friendly, smiling, firm, polite, motivating, and not easily angry. These characteristics made students feel more comfortable receiving advice and participating in learning.

The third supporting factor was students' positive response and participation. The Akidah Akhlak teacher stated that students generally showed high enthusiasm when learning was delivered through interactive and participatory methods. Students were more open to advice and more willing to cooperate in groups when the teacher created a warm and enjoyable classroom atmosphere. Student interviews also showed that many students felt Akidah Akhlak learning was enjoyable, clear, and related to daily life. One student stated that values were easier to understand when they were connected with everyday experiences. Another student explained that the teacher's way of talking about experiences made advice easier to receive. These responses indicate that student openness became an important supporting factor in the internalization process.

The fourth supporting factor was peer support. Some students stated that their classmates supported them in behaving well, being disciplined, and respecting one another. Peer support helped create a classroom atmosphere that was more conducive to value internalization. However, the findings also show that peer influence was not always positive. Some students said that classmates were supportive only sometimes, while others stated that there were friends who did not always support good behavior. This means that peer relationships functioned as both a supporting and inhibiting factor, depending on the dominant behavior within the student group.

Table 3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Internalization of Love-Based Curriculum Values

No.	Factor	Main Finding	Interpretation
1	Madrasah policy and culture	The madrasah supported Kurikulum Cinta through policies, habituation programs, supervision, and positive school culture.	Institutional support strengthened the continuity between classroom learning and daily moral practice.
2	Religious habituation programs	Dhuha prayer, congregational prayer, tahlilan, 5S culture, classroom cleaning, and discipline programs supported value internalization.	Repeated religious and social practices helped transform values into habits.
3	Teacher role modeling	The teacher showed patience, polite speech, firmness, friendliness, and sensitivity to students' emotional conditions.	Students accepted moral messages more easily when teachers demonstrated values through real behavior.
4	Student participation	Students responded positively to interactive, enjoyable, and life-related learning.	Student openness supported the internalization of values in the classroom.
5	Peer support	Some classmates supported discipline, respect, and good behavior, although peer influence was not always consistent.	Peer relationships could strengthen or weaken the internalization process.
6	Limited learning time	Akidah Akhlak learning had limited time allocation, while materials and value internalization required deeper engagement.	Teachers needed efficient, selective, and creative strategies to optimize learning time.
7	Student diversity	Students had different levels of discipline, motivation, literacy, confidence, and self-awareness.	Value internalization required differentiated and personal approaches.
8	Social media and external environment	Students were influenced by digital content, peer culture, family background, and external social environments.	Moral values taught at madrasah could be challenged by values encountered outside school.
9	Efforts to overcome obstacles	Teachers used joyful learning, differentiated learning, direct reminders, personal approaches, evaluation, and parent cooperation.	Obstacles were addressed through classroom strategies and institutional collaboration.

These findings show that the internalization of Kurikulum Cinta values requires a supportive educational ecosystem. The role of the teacher is central, but the teacher cannot work alone. Value internalization becomes stronger when supported by madrasah leadership, religious habituation, school culture, peer interaction, parental involvement, and reflective evaluation. This finding is consistent with Ma'arif et al. (2024), who emphasize that madrasah culture and teacher role modeling are important in shaping students' moderate Islamic character. It is also supported by Trisnantari et al. (2026), who show that religious habituation can strengthen students' character in the digital era. In addition, Dávila-Villavicencio et al. (2024) highlight the importance of teacher care in students' learning experience, while Cheng (2022) argues that values education requires a broader ethical and institutional framework. Thus, the internalization of Love-Based Curriculum values at MTs Cijawura can be understood as a collective process involving teacher strategy, institutional culture, student participation, and continuous moral guidance.

3.4. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the internalization of Love-Based Curriculum values in Akidah Akhlak learning at MTs Cijawura Kota Bandung was not carried out merely through verbal instruction, but through an integrated pedagogical process involving lesson planning, classroom interaction, teacher role modeling, habituation, storytelling, reflection, and behavioral evaluation. This confirms that value internalization requires more than cognitive transmission; it involves affective engagement, moral experience, and repeated practice in students' daily lives. In this sense, the teacher's strategy reflects the principle that character education becomes effective when values are embedded in the whole learning process and supported by consistent moral practice [33]–[35]. The findings also strengthen the view that moral learning must connect knowledge, feeling, and action so that students do not only know what is good, but also feel committed to practicing it [36].

The teacher's understanding of Kurikulum Cinta as a rahmah-based pedagogical approach shows that love, care, and emotional safety are central in Akidah Akhlak learning. The teacher did not position students as objects of moral instruction, but as developing individuals who need to be approached with compassion, patience, and sincere guidance. This finding is consistent with the ethics of care, which emphasizes that education should be built on relational responsibility, attentiveness, and caring interaction between teachers and students. In the context of Islamic education, this caring relationship is important because Akidah Akhlak learning is not only concerned with doctrinal understanding, but also with the formation of moral consciousness and noble character through humane teacher-student relationships [37].

The use of differentiated learning and joyful learning in this study shows that the teacher attempted to make value internalization responsive to students' diverse characteristics. Students at the madrasah level have different levels of motivation, discipline, literacy, confidence, religious understanding, and social background. Therefore, values cannot be internalized through a single rigid method. This finding supports the idea that effective teaching should respond to students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles so that learning becomes more meaningful and inclusive [38]. Moreover, joyful and participatory learning can increase students' engagement because learners are more likely to receive moral messages when they feel emotionally safe, respected, and actively involved in classroom activities [39].

The findings also show that teacher role modeling was one of the most important strategies in internalizing Kurikulum Cinta values. The teacher's polite speech, patience, firmness, friendliness, and consistency in demonstrating daily adab became concrete examples for students. This confirms that students learn moral behavior not only from what teachers say, but also from what teachers do. Bandura's social learning theory explains that individuals learn attitudes and behavior through observation, imitation, and modeling [40]. In character education, teacher exemplarity is particularly important because moral values become more convincing when they are embodied in real actions. Therefore, the Akidah Akhlak teacher's role as a moral model is central to the success of love-based value internalization.

Habituation also appeared as a strong mechanism for value internalization. The routines of praying, greeting, reading religious texts, maintaining cleanliness, using polite language, and practicing discipline helped transform values into daily habits. This finding indicates that values become stronger when they are repeatedly practiced in a supportive environment. From the perspective of situated learning, moral learning does not occur only through abstract explanation, but through participation in a social context where values are practiced collectively [41]. In this study, the madrasah culture functioned as a community of practice where students repeatedly encountered and practiced religious, social, and moral values in classroom and school routines.

The forms of value internalization found in this study love for Allah, love for oneself, love for others, love for knowledge, love for the environment, and love for the nation show that Kurikulum Cinta has a multidimensional character. These values connect spiritual awareness, personal responsibility, social ethics, intellectual motivation, ecological care, and civic morality. This finding is important because Akidah Akhlak learning should not be reduced to memorizing religious concepts, but should help students understand how faith is expressed in personal and social life. Halstead explains that Islamic education aims to shape human beings whose knowledge, worship, morality, and social responsibility are integrated [42]. Similarly, moral education scholars emphasize that values education should develop ethical reasoning, empathy, responsibility, and social participation [43].

The madrasah's role in supporting Kurikulum Cinta internalization shows that value education cannot depend only on individual teachers. The findings indicate that religious habituation, 5S culture, congregational prayer, cleanliness programs, discipline routines, supervision, and school leadership created an ecosystem that strengthened classroom learning. This is consistent with ecological theory, which views student development as influenced by interconnected environments, including classroom, school, family, peer group, and wider social context [44]. Therefore, the internalization of love-based values becomes more effective when classroom strategies are supported by institutional culture and daily school practices.

However, the study also found several inhibiting factors, including limited learning time, diverse student characteristics, inconsistent discipline, low self-awareness, peer influence, and social media exposure. These obstacles show that value internalization is a gradual and contested process. Students receive moral messages from teachers and madrasah culture, but they are also influenced by family, peers, digital media, and broader social environments. This finding is relevant to contemporary discussions on moral education in the digital era, where students' behavior is shaped not only by school values but also by online interaction, digital language, and social media culture [45]. Therefore, Akidah Akhlak learning needs to engage more explicitly with students' digital realities, especially issues of online ethics, self-control, respectful communication, and responsible media use.

The students' responses in this study show that value internalization produced gradual changes in attitudes, such as becoming more confident, responsible, respectful, aware of worship, and concerned about cleanliness. However, some students also admitted

that applying good values was not always easy and had to be done gradually. This finding is important because it shows that moral change is not instant. Internalization requires time, consistency, personal reflection, social support, and repeated opportunities to practice values. Self-determination theory suggests that internalization becomes stronger when individuals experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the learning process. Thus, love-based Akidah Akhlak learning should continue to create conditions where students do not feel forced, but are guided to accept values through awareness, meaning, and personal commitment.

Overall, the findings of this study contribute to the understanding that Kurikulum Cinta in Akidah Akhlak learning can function as a humanistic and transformative approach to Islamic moral education. The teacher's strategy combined religious instruction, affective communication, role modeling, habituation, storytelling, reflection, and behavioral evaluation, while the madrasah strengthened the process through institutional culture and religious programs. Theoretically, this study confirms that value internalization is most effective when it connects cognition, affection, behavior, social environment, and institutional support. Practically, the study suggests that madrasah teachers need to design Akidah Akhlak learning that is not only doctrinal and textual, but also relational, contextual, reflective, and responsive to students' lived experiences in both offline and digital environments.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the internalization of Love-Based Curriculum values in Akidah Akhlak learning at MTs Cijawura Kota Bandung was carried out through integrated pedagogical practices that connected classroom learning, teacher role modeling, habituation, reflection, and madrasah culture. The findings show that value internalization was not determined solely by the teacher's instructional strategies, but by a broader educational ecosystem involving teacher exemplarity, institutional support, student participation, peer interaction, and family involvement. This indicates that the Love-Based Curriculum should be implemented as a holistic process in which classroom pedagogy and the social environment consistently reinforce students' moral awareness and daily behavior.

The internalization process was supported by positive madrasah policies and religious habituation, but it was also influenced by limited learning time, student diversity, discipline, peer relationships, family background, and social media exposure. Therefore, strengthening Love-Based Curriculum implementation requires continuous collaboration among teachers, madrasah leaders, students, and families.

This study is limited to one madrasah and involved one Akidah Akhlak teacher, one madrasah leader, and five student informants. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted within this specific context and cannot be broadly generalized to other madrasahs. Future studies should involve more madrasahs, more diverse informants, and longitudinal data to examine the development and sustainability of love-based value internalization over time.

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