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A SUFISTIC LOVE-BASED CURRICULUM MODEL FOR DEVELOPING STUDENTS' RELIGIOUS MODERATION AT MTSS AL-MA'RUF PASAR KAMBANG

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh krisis karakter dan fenomena intoleransi beragama yang menuntut transformasi sistem pendidikan Islam menuju arah yang lebih inklusif dan humanis. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis landasan filosofis, religius, psikologis, pedagogis, dan sufistik dari Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta (KBC) serta merumuskan model internalisasi nilai mahabbah dalam mengembangkan moderasi beragama siswa di MTsS Al-Ma'ruf Pasar Kambang. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus eksploratif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam terhadap kepala madrasah, guru, dan siswa, serta studi dokumentasi, yang kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa KBC dibangun di atas lima fondasi integratif yang menempatkan nilai *mahabbah* sebagai ruh pendidikan. Proses internalisasi nilai tersebut diformulasikan ke dalam *Sufistic Mahabbah Internalization Model (SMIM)* yang mencakup tahapan *receiving*, *understanding*, *experiencing*, *internalizing*, dan *manifesting*. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa proses internalisasi tersebut berkontribusi pada pengembangan karakter moderasi beragama siswa yang mencakup dimensi *tasamuh*, *tawazun*, *i'tidal*, *musawah*, *syura*, dan *rahmah*. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa implementasi KBC dengan perspektif tasawuf merupakan kerangka kerja kontekstual yang mampu menyatukan aspek intelektual dengan kedalaman spiritual sekaligus berfungsi sebagai instrumen preventif edukatif terhadap kecenderungan intolerans.

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Keywords:	ABSTRACTS
Love-Based Curriculum; Sufism; Mahabbah Internalization; Religious Moderation; SMIM.	<p>This research is motivated by the character crisis and religious intolerance, necessitating a transformation of the Islamic education system toward a more inclusive and humanistic direction. The purpose of this study is to analyze the philosophical, religious, psychological, pedagogical, and Sufistic foundations of the Love-Based Curriculum (LBC) and to formulate a model for internalizing the value of mahabbah to develop students' religious moderation at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf Pasar Kambang. This study employs a qualitative approach with an exploratory case study design. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews with the principal, teachers, and students, and documentation, which were then analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings indicate that the LBC is built upon five integrative foundations philosophical, religious, psychological, pedagogical, and Sufistic that position the value of mahabbah as the spirit of education. The internalization process is formulated into the Sufistic Mahabbah Internalization Model (SMIM), comprising stages of receiving, understanding, experiencing, internalizing, and manifesting. The findings suggest that this internalization process may contribute to the development of students' religious moderation, encompassing the dimensions of tasamuh, tawazun, i'tidal, musawah, syura, and rahmah. The study concludes that implementing LBC with a Sufism perspective provides a contextual educational framework capable of unifying intellectual aspects with spiritual depth and serves as a preventive instrument for addressing tendencies toward intolerance.</p>

A. INTRODUCTION

Islamic education in Indonesia currently bears a strategic responsibility in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually excellent but also possesses a spiritual, emotional, and social balance. In the midst of a multicultural societal reality, social heterogeneity should be understood as a national asset; however, in reality, it often triggers polarization and radicalization that threaten national stability (Taufikurrahman & Zahranah, 2023). The phenomenon of fading national identity values—such as friendliness, tolerance, and mutual cooperation—is now being replaced by collective competition, mutual suspicion, and inter-group conflict (Taufikurrahman & Zahranah, 2023). This condition is exacerbated by the vulnerability of educational institutions to the infiltration of exclusive ideologies, where tendencies toward intolerant attitudes among some students toward differing beliefs have been observed (Wahid Foundation, 2022; Faruq, 2025). Beyond the issue of religious intolerance, educational institutions are expected to prepare students with empathy, social resilience, ethical awareness, and inclusive citizenship.

However, the current curriculum system often faces challenges in addressing these character crises. The dominance of an educational paradigm that overemphasizes purely cognitive achievements risks causing "dehumanization," wherein the teaching and learning process loses its affective and spiritual dimensions (Aisyah & Zainal, 2026; Faruq, 2025). To respond to this crisis, the Ministry of Religious Affairs introduced a policy innovation through the Love-Based Curriculum (Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta / KBC) (Hidayati & Maula, 2025). Philosophically, KBC is a pedagogical framework that places the value of love (mahabbah) at the heart of the entire learning process to create an affective climate through respect for student dignity (Nadlir, 2025; Taabudillah et al.,

2026). The implementation of KBC is intended to serve as a strengthener and the "spirit" that revives transcendental values within every educational activity to fully humanize human beings (Putri & Rohma, 2025; Hilmy, 2025). Learnings in KBC are assessed not only through academic achievements but also through the development of empathy, compassion, responsibility, and social engagement, reflecting a paradigm shift from knowledge transmission to value transformation.

In an Islamic perspective, the concept of love (*mahabbah*) is not merely an emotional expression, but an epistemological and ontological principle that binds the relationship between God, humans, and the universe (Faruq, 2025; Putri & Rohma, 2025; Rivauzi et al., 2026). The theological foundation of KBC is deeply rooted in the value of universal compassion (*rahmah universal*), which reaffirms the prophetic mission to bring benefits to the entire universe (Rafi et al., 2025; Rivauzi et al., 2026). This theory is reinforced by the Sufism (*tasawuf*) paradigm, which views internal purification (*tazkiyatun nafs*) as the primary foundation for the formation of noble character and religious moderation (Al-Ghazali, 2011; Mukhlisin, 2023). Sufism offers a unique approach through spiritual transformation to create an inclusive inner balance (Pratama et al., 2025; Rivauzi et al., 2026; Rivauzi et al., 2025). By integrating Sufistic dimensions, character education does not merely stop at the formation of outward behavior, but rather initiates from an inner transformation through the purification of the self (Adib, 2025; Rahmah & Cahyadi, 2026).

Studies on the Love-Based Curriculum have been widely conducted across various educational levels, ranging from Early Childhood Education emphasizing the ethics of care (Dinata et al., 2025), Madrasah Ibtidaiyah integrating eco-theology and nationalism (Arham, 2025), to Higher Education focusing on students' religious moderation character (Nurhilaliyah & Anam, 2025). Several studies have also explored models of value internalization through reflective writing activities (Alsi et al., 2026), deep learning approaches (Taabudillah et al., 2026), and the mechanisms of spiritual traditions such as *suluk* as character reinforcers (Sari et al., 2026). Nevertheless, the majority of previous studies remain oriented toward general pedagogical approaches, and it is relatively rare to specifically integrate the Sufism perspective as a spiritual basis in forming religious moderation at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level.

This study aims to fill that gap by focusing its inquiry on the Sufistic Love-Based Curriculum Model for Developing Students' Religious Moderation at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf Pasar Kambang. The uniqueness and novelty of this research lie in formulating the Sufistic Mahabbah Internalization Model (SMIM) and demonstrating how the internalization of *mahabbah* values contributes to the development of students' religious moderation. Unlike general character education frameworks, the novelty of SMIM lies in how distinctive Sufistic mechanisms serve as the active engines of the internalization stages (Receiving, Understanding, Experiencing, Internalizing, and Manifesting). Specifically, *uswah* (teacher's exemplary role as a *murabbi*) acts as the gateway for receiving values (Nata, 2016; Langgulang, 2003), *riyadhah* (repeated spiritual exercises and worship) serves as the medium for experiencing values (Al-Ghazali, 2011), *muhasabah* (intensive self-reflection and inner dialogue) drives the internalizing stage (Mulyasana, 2022; Alsi et al., 2026), and *mujahadah* (earnest spiritual struggle to govern the ego) guides the manifesting stage (Lickona, 2017). Through these integrated Sufistic mechanisms, SMIM operates as an emerging case-derived framework that facilitates the development of religious moderation, encompassing the dimensions

of *tasamuh*, *tawazun*, *i'tidal*, *musawah*, *syura*, and *rahmah* (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019).

B. METHOD

1.Design

This qualitative study employs an exploratory case study design at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf Pasar Kambang, West Sumatera, conducted over a six-month period.

2.Participants

Using purposive sampling, the study involved 15 participants selected based on their direct involvement in the Love-Based Curriculum (LBC) policy and execution. The informants comprised:

- a. The School Principal (1) and The Vice Principal of Curriculum (1).
- b. Islamic Education (PAI) Teachers (4), representing *Aqidah Akhlak*, *Fikih*, *Al-Qur'an Hadis*, and *Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam* (SKI).
- c. Supportive Teachers (2), consisting of one *Bahasa Indonesia* teacher and one Guidance and Counseling (BK) teacher.
- d. Students (7), representing Grades VII, VIII, and IX.

2.Data Collection

Data collection was carried out integratively through three primary qualitative methods:

- a. Observation: Conducted through 24 structured classroom observation sessions (4–6 sessions per religious subject) to record teacher-student interactions, alongside daily unstructured observations of the school's hidden curriculum, including morning greetings, congregational prayers, and social interactions.
- b. Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually, lasting 45–60 minutes for administrators and teachers, and 30–45 minutes for students.
- c. Documentation: Analyzed materials included the School Operational Curriculum (KOSP), 6 lesson plans (RPP), learning journals, the student code of conduct, and attitude rubrics.

3.Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed through concurrent stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification through a systematic coding process:

1. Initial Coding: Extracting primary codes from transcripts (e.g., warm greetings coded as *emotional security*).
2. Category Development: Clustering codes into Sufistic categories (e.g., grouping reflection under *Muhasabah*).
3. Thematic Synthesis: Mapping developmental spiritual patterns of the students.
4. Model Construction: Formulating the five distinct stages of the Sufistic Mahabbah Internalization Model (SMIM): *Receiving*, *Understanding*, *Experiencing*, *Internalizing*, and *Manifesting*.

4.Trustworthiness and Member Checking

Data validity was maintained through source, technique, and time triangulation. To prevent researcher bias, a member-checking session was conducted where transcribed interviews and the SMIM model diagram were reviewed and verified jointly by the School Principal, Vice Principal of Curriculum, and the *Aqidah Akhlak* teacher. They confirmed that the findings and the six moderation dimensions (*tasamuh*, *tawazun*, *i'tidal*, *musawah*, *syura*, and *rahmah*) accurately represented the madrasah's empirical reality.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Finding

a) The Concept of Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) from a Sufism Perspective

Based on the research findings at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf Pasar Kambang, it was revealed that the concept of the Love-Based Curriculum (*Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta / KBC*) is understood as an integrative educational system that positions the value of *mahabbah* (compassion/love) as the guiding spirit (*ruh*) across the entire educational process. This concept is not limited to mere administrative documents; rather, it extends to creating a madrasah atmosphere that respects human dignity to cultivate *insan kamil* (the perfect human). The primary focus of KBC at this site is to revitalize the orientation of Islamic education so that it maintains a balance between intellectual excellence and spiritual depth.

The implementation of this systemic concept was emphasized by the Principal of MTsS Al-Ma'ruf Pasar Kambang during an interview session:

"When we speak about the Love-Based Curriculum, what we mean is not simply adding material about love or compassion into the lessons. What we are building is the entire educational system. It starts from how teachers greet students in the morning, the way teachers teach, how conflicts are resolved, to how the madrasah builds a culture of mutual respect. All of that is part of the curriculum."

The concept of KBC in this madrasah is firmly built upon five main foundations, as summarized in the following table:

Table 1. The Five Foundations of the Love-Based Curriculum at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf

Foundation	Conceptual Description	Field Finding Indicators
Philosophical	Education as a humanization process to form <i>insan kamil</i> (the perfect human).	Egalitarian educational interactions that respect student dignity.
Religious	Manifestation of universal <i>rahmah</i> (mercy) as a prophetic mission.	Habituation of worship (<i>dhikr</i> , prayer) and teachers as <i>murabbi</i> figures reflecting Divine love.
Psychological	Fulfillment of emotional needs (safety, being valued, and accepted).	Low-pressure learning environment (safe space) and emotional bonding.
Pedagogical	Student-centered paradigm prioritizing dialogue.	Use of active-dialogic methods positioning students as learning subjects.
Sufistic	Inner transformation through soul purification (<i>tazkiyatun nafs</i>) based on <i>mahabbah</i> .	Integration of routine spiritual practices to form spiritually mature characters.

The findings presented in Table 1 demonstrate that the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf Pasar Kambang is founded upon five interrelated dimensions that collectively shape its educational philosophy and implementation. Rather than functioning as separate components, the philosophical, religious, psychological, pedagogical, and Sufistic foundations operate as an integrated framework that guides both classrooms learning and the broader culture of the madrasah. This integration indicates that KBC is implemented not merely as a curriculum document but as a comprehensive educational system emphasizing holistic student development.

b) Implementation of Sufistic Mahabbah Values in Learning

The implementation of Sufistic *mahabbah* values at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf Pasar Kambang is carried out systematically through integration into all curriculum

components, ranging from planning (Lesson Plans / *RPP*), the classroom execution process, to the evaluation system that touches upon the affective domain. The researcher found that the value of compassion is manifested through the creation of a warm educational relationship between the teacher as a *murabbi* (spiritual mentor) and the students as active subjects, ensuring that the learning material no longer feels dry and doctrinaire.

This approach was confirmed by the *Aqidah Akhlak* (Islamic Theology and Ethics) teacher during an interview regarding how student errors are handled:

"I always try to show compassion first... For example, when a student makes a mistake, I do not immediately scold them in front of the class. I invite them to speak privately so they can understand their mistake without feeling humiliated."

The authenticity of this relationship was also felt by the students, as expressed by one of them:

"The teachers here do not just explain the lessons, but they also often ask how we are doing... We feel more comfortable learning because we are not afraid of making mistakes."

Operationally, the teachers' strategies in enlivening the value of *mahabbah* in the madrasah are summarized in the following table:

Table 2. Implementation Strategies of Mahabbah Values in Learning at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf

Main Strategy	Implementation Forms & Activities	Character Goals & Output
Exemplary (<i>Uswah</i>)	Teachers display friendly, patient, and empathetic attitudes in daily interactions according to the 5S culture.	Building a sense of security and providing real figures for students to emulate.
Habituation (<i>Ta'wid</i>)	Routine practices of congregational prayer, dhikr, Friday charity, and mutual cooperation.	Transforming values from mere knowledge into permanent character habits.
Dialogue & Innovation	Use of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and open discussions that respect opinions.	Nurturing critical thinking, empathy, and cooperation without authoritarian pressure.
Reflection (<i>Muhasabah</i>)	Inner dialogue at the end of lessons to contemplate the wisdom of the material for daily life.	Encouraging inner transformation and deep self-awareness.

The findings presented in Table 2 indicate that the implementation of Sufistic mahabbah values at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf Pasar Kambang is realized through complementary instructional strategies that integrate cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of learning. Rather than relying solely on the delivery of religious knowledge, teachers intentionally cultivate compassionate interactions, habitual practices, reflective activities, and participatory learning experiences that enable students to internalize moral values in their daily lives. This finding demonstrates that the implementation of KBC extends beyond curriculum content to encompass the entire educational process and school culture.

c) The Process of Sufistic Mahabbah Internalization (The SMIM Model)

The process of internalizing Sufistic *mahabbah* values at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf Pasar Kambang is understood as a systematic inner transformation that alters students' ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. This internalization does not occur instantly; rather, it takes place through an educational ecosystem that allows students to undergo a gradual soul purification process (*tazkiyatun nafs*) through a blend of classroom learning, exemplary conduct, and spiritual practices.

This was emphasized by the *Aqidah Akhlak* teacher regarding the stages that the students experience:

"Initially, students are given an understanding of the importance of compassion according to Islamic teachings. After that, we invite them to practice it in their daily lives. Then, we evaluate through reflection so that they become aware of the changes that have occurred within themselves."

These systematic stages are formulated into the Sufistic Mahabbah Internalization Model (SMIM / *Model Internalisasi Mahabbah Sufistik* - MIMS) as follows:

Table 3. Stages of the Sufistic Mahabbah Internalization Model (SMIM) at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf

Stage	Sufistic Mechanism & Process	Suggested Empirical Indicators	Supporting Field Evidence (Quotes & Observations)
Receiving	Uswah (exemplary conduct of teachers as <i>murabbi</i>) and a compassionate madrasah climate (Nata, 2016; Langgulang, 2003).	Students recognize, accept, and show active interest in the compassionate learning environment; they feel emotionally safe and valued.	Principal Interview: The curriculum starts with how teachers greet students in the morning with the 5S culture, ensuring students feel welcomed and emotionally secure.
Understanding	Dialogic-reflective learning and exploring the theological-sufistic values of <i>mahabbah</i> (Faruq, 2025; Rivauzi et al., 2026).	Students can explain the conceptual meaning and importance of <i>mahabbah</i> and universal compassion (<i>rahmah</i>).	PAI Teacher Interview: Students are taught that learning religion is not merely about memorizing theological texts, but understanding the value of love and avoiding actions that harm others.
Experiencing	Riyadhah (repeated spiritual exercises) and social habituation (<i>ta'wid</i>) (Al-Ghazali, 2011; Langgulang, 2003).	Students actively participate in routine spiritual practices and cooperative social interactions.	Field Observation: Students participate in routine congregational Zuhur prayers, Dhuha prayers, Friday charity, and cooperative group learning (PBL).
Internalizing	Muhasabah (intensive self-reflection and inner dialogue) (Mulyasana, 2022; Alsi et al., 2026).	Compassionate and moderate values begin to influence students' personal reflection, conscience, and	Aqidah Akhlak Teacher Interview: At the end of lessons, students perform <i>muhasabah</i> to contemplate the moral wisdom of the

		autonomous decisions.	material and connect it to their daily behavior.
Manifesting	Mujahadah (earnest spiritual struggle to govern the ego/ <i>nafs</i>) (Lickona, 2017; Shihab, 2019).	Moderate, tolerant, and compassionate characters appear consistently, autonomously, and without strict teacher supervision.	Student Interview (Grade IX): Students resolve peer differences through dialogic discussion and compromise, stating that "different opinions do not mean enmity"

The findings presented in Table 3 illustrate that the Sufistic Mahabbah Internalization Model (SMIM) represents a sequential and transformative process through which students gradually internalize the values of mahabbah. The model demonstrates that character formation is not achieved through isolated instructional activities but through a continuous progression beginning with exposure to positive educational experiences and culminating in the manifestation of compassionate behavior as an intrinsic personal disposition. This progression reflects the integration of cognitive understanding, spiritual experience, and behavioral practice within the educational environment.

d) Forms of Religious Moderation Based on Sufistic Mahabbah (The RMMBS Model)

The religious moderation that develops at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf Pasar Kambang is not shaped by mere conceptual indoctrination, but rather grows as a logical consequence of continuous *mahabbah* value internalization. This form of moderation manifests in students' daily character, which is inclusive, peaceful, and responsible.

The Principal explained the philosophy behind forming this moderation:

"We never teach moderation solely as a theory. We prefer to build a culture of compassion. When children are accustomed to respecting one another, helping each other, and not easily blaming others, they are actually learning to become moderate individuals."

The manifestations of this moderation are categorized into six primary dimensions:

Table 4. Dimensions of Sufistic Mahabbah-Based Religious Moderation at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf

Dimension	Manifestation of Student Behavior in the Field
Tasamuh	Respecting differences of opinion and not easily blaming others.
Tawazun	Balance between academic responsibilities, worship, and social life.
I'tidal	Acting fairly and objectively in resolving conflicts between friends.
Musawah	Treating everyone equally regardless of economic or social status.
Syura	Prioritizing dialogue and deliberation in student organizations.
Rahmah	Showing empathy and willingness to help anyone in need

The findings presented in Table 4 indicate that religious moderation at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf Pasar Kambang is expressed through observable behavioral dispositions that

emerge from the sustained internalization of Sufistic mahabbah values. Rather than emphasizing moderation as a purely theoretical construct, the madrasah cultivates an educational culture in which compassion, respect, and spiritual awareness become the foundation for students' interactions with others. Consequently, religious moderation is reflected in everyday practices and social relationships rather than being limited to cognitive understanding of religious concepts.

e) Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Implementation

The successful implementation of KBC at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf is influenced by the dynamic interaction between various internal and external factors. The researcher found that the religious-humanistic madrasah ecosystem serves as the primary asset, yet social environment disruptions remain a palpable challenge.

The Principal highlighted a crucial contemporary challenge in this era: "The biggest challenge now is the influence of social media. Children receive a wealth of unfiltered information, requiring the madrasah to provide more intensive guidance and accompaniment."

Table 5. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of LBC Implementation at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf

Category	Key Factors	Impact on Implementation
Supporting	Visionary leadership, consistent teacher exemplarity, and religious madrasah culture.	Strengthens the stability of value internalization and creates a positive hidden curriculum.
	Strong synergy between the madrasah, parents, and the community.	Ensures consistency in student character building outside the madrasah environment.
Inhibiting	Massive negative influence of social media and unfiltered internet content.	Risks reducing spiritual reflection capacity and triggering intolerance through hate speech.
	Heterogeneity of family backgrounds and variations in teachers' sufistic competence.	Requires differentiated strategies and continuous teacher training.

The findings presented in Table 5 reveal that the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) is shaped by the interaction of enabling and constraining factors operating both within and beyond the madrasah environment. The success of curriculum implementation depends not only on well-designed educational programs but also on the consistency of institutional culture, leadership, teacher commitment, and support from families and the wider community. These findings indicate that the sustainability of Sufistic mahabbah internalization requires a collaborative educational ecosystem in which all stakeholders share common values and responsibilities.

2. Discussion

a) The Concept of Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) from a Sufism Perspective

The findings suggest that the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf Pasar Kambang represents a holistic educational paradigm in which Sufistic mahabbah functions as the philosophical and pedagogical foundation of curriculum implementation. Rather than positioning compassion merely as a moral value, the curriculum integrates theological, psychological, and pedagogical dimensions into a

unified educational framework that promotes the balanced development of students' intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and social capacities. This indicates that KBC extends beyond curriculum administration to become a transformative educational culture aimed at cultivating *insan kamil* (the perfect human).

The finding regarding KBC as "the entirety of the learning experience" is aligned with the theory proposed by Azyumardi Azra (2019), who asserts that Islamic education should not only serve as a means of knowledge transfer but as a vehicle for forming a moderate character and a noble personality. This view is reinforced by Quraish Shihab (2019), who states that a moderate character will only emerge if the educational process is able to touch the dimensions of the heart and the gentleness of the soul. Furthermore, the integration of character building through a consistent ecosystem corresponds with Thomas Lickona's (2017) thought, which emphasizes that strong character requires the integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action carried out continuously.

In a contemporary light, these findings strengthen the curricular managerial paradigm of Aisyah & Zainal (2026), where *mahabbah* and *rahmah* function as pioneering principles in curriculum policy design to prevent it from getting trapped in rigid technocratic hegemony. Ontologically, the philosophical foundation at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf aligns with the mechanism of universal *sympathea* (mutual love) expounded by Faruq (2025), which asserts that the relationship between God, humans, and nature is a unified whole bound by the principle of Divine love. Moreover, the integration of the Sufistic dimension at this madrasah supports Adib's (2025) idea regarding the urgency of systematically placing Sufism within the curriculum to build robust spirituality at the Islamic Junior High School level. The strengthening of the psychological aspect also shares coherence with the *ethics of care* approach in the study by Dinata et al. (2025), which empirically proves that an atmosphere of compassion enhances students' sense of safety and social connectedness.

b) The Implementation of Sufistic Mahabbah Values in the Learning Process

The findings demonstrate that the implementation of Sufistic mahabbah values at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf Pasar Kambang is realized through authentic educational relationships that position teachers not only as instructors but also as *murabbi* who guide students through compassion, exemplary conduct, and active-reflective learning (Nata, 2016; Langgung, 2003). The successful implementation of this model is highly determined by the quality of carefully planned educational interactions. This process directly aligns with the curriculum management principles expounded by Oemar Hamalik (2011), which emphasize that curriculum success lies in structured, value-oriented interactions that facilitate positive behavioral changes.

Furthermore, the dialogic and collaborative learning environments constructed in the classroom represent a vital paradigm shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning. This shift is deeply coherent with Mulyasa's (2013) curriculum theory, which positions student-centered learning as the key to unlocking students' autonomy, moral independence, and active engagement in character building. Within this execution, the *rahmah*-based teacher-student relationship is proven to be highly effective in minimizing student aggression and fostering emotional stability, which strongly supports the empirical findings of Fahrudin et al. (2026).

To operationalize these values, the integration of spiritual and social dimensions into lesson plans serves as an ethical framework that builds meaningful normative

awareness for students, reinforcing the instructional design principles highlighted by Negara (2026). Moreover, the use of innovative learning models like Problem-Based Learning (PBL) acts as a pedagogical bridge to actualize spiritual reflection and social responsibility simultaneously, aligning with the framework of Rahmah & Cahyadi (2026).

c) The Process of Sufistic Mahabbah Internalization (The SMIM Model)

The findings suggest that the Sufistic Mahabbah Internalization Model (SMIM) reflects a gradual and transformative process through which external religious values evolve into students' intrinsic beliefs and habitual behaviors. The sequential stages—from receiving and understanding to experiencing, internalizing, and manifesting—demonstrate that character formation is achieved through continuous interaction between cognitive comprehension, spiritual practice, and reflective self-awareness.

In a contemporary light, this five-stage model substantially strengthens the pedagogical-spiritual framework offered by Sari et al. (2026), wherein spiritual consolidation through structured experiences is highly crucial for integrating values into intrinsic consciousness. In the SMIM framework, this structured experience is manifested during the Experiencing stage through *riyadhah* (repeated spiritual exercises) and *ta'wid* (habituation), such as routine congregational prayers, *dhikr*, and peer social support, which solidify abstract moral values into daily bodily practices (Al-Ghazali, 2011; Langgulang, 2003).

Furthermore, the intensive reflective mechanism in the Internalizing stage directly aligns with the study by Alsi et al. (2026), which emphasizes that reflective activities assist the transformation of values from the cognitive domain to the affective domain. At MTsS Al-Ma'ruf, this reflection is operationalized through *muhasabah* (intensive self-reflection and inner dialogue), serving as an inner evaluation tool where students cleanse their hearts from negative traits and internalize empathy (Mulyasana, 2022; Alsi et al., 2026). This reflective approach is also highly relevant to the deep learning strategies expounded by Taabudillah et al. (2026), where students are encouraged to connect new spiritual ideas with real-life experiences to prevent fragmented understanding and theological rigidity.

Ultimately, the culmination of SMIM in the Manifesting stage represents the ultimate outcome of *mujahadah* (earnest spiritual struggle to govern the ego/*nafs*), which tames religious arrogance and manifests as an autonomous, moderate, and compassionate character (*akhlak mulia*) (Shihab, 2019; Lickona, 2017). This integrated model substantially enriches the character education theory proposed by Thomas Lickona (2012; 2017), which argues that strong character requires the integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action performed repeatedly. In the context of Islamic spiritual pedagogy, the integration of *mahabbah* and *tazkiyatun nafs* (soul purification) serves as the "spiritual bridge" that organically binds Lickona's three dimensions. Rather than leaving these dimensions as fragmented cognitive or behavioral components, Sufistic internalization ensures that moral knowledge (knowing) is felt deeply in the purified heart (feeling), which then spontaneously and consistently drives ethical, moderate, and tolerant behaviors (acting) in daily life, even in the absence of external monitoring (Al-Ghazali, 2011; Lickona, 2012; Lickona, 2017).

d) Forms of Religious Moderation Based on Sufistic Mahabbah (The RMMBS Model)

The findings reveal that religious moderation at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf Pasar Kambang emerges as a natural outcome of the continuous internalization of Sufistic mahabbah values rather than through normative instruction alone. The six identified dimensions collectively demonstrate that moderation is manifested in students' daily attitudes and social interactions, reflecting the integration of compassion, justice, balance, equality, dialogue, and empathy into their personal character. This finding suggests that religious moderation is strengthened when spiritual values become internal moral dispositions guiding students' behavior in diverse social contexts.

This finding reinforces the theory of Azyumardi Azra (2019), who asserts that Islamic education must function as a vehicle for forming a moderate character. It is also aligned with Quraish Shihab's (2019) view that moderation is an absolute necessity in a pluralistic society to create harmony through the attitude of *ummatan wasathan* (a just and balanced community).

Empirically, these findings support the research of Mujahidin (2024), which states that Sufistic values such as humility (*tawadhu*) effectively serve as a preventive shield against extreme behavior. The integration of the *Rahmah* dimension with social concern also aligns with Arham's (2025) model, which integrates eco-theology and nationalism within a love curriculum to strengthen moderate character. Furthermore, the success of this RMMBS model reinforces the findings of Suharni & Adisel (2026), who position the love-based curriculum as an instrument to enhance social cohesion within a pluralistic society.

e) Forms of Religious Moderation Based on Sufistic Mahabbah (The RMMBS Model) Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Implementation

The findings indicate that the effectiveness of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) is strongly influenced by the interaction between institutional strengths and external societal challenges. Internal factors such as visionary leadership, teacher exemplarity, and a supportive religious culture create favorable conditions for the internalization of Sufistic mahabbah, whereas digital disruption, family diversity, and variations in teachers' spiritual competence present significant obstacles to maintaining consistent character formation. These findings highlight that successful curriculum implementation requires continuous collaboration among schools, families, and the broader community.

In a Sufism perspective, character building requires a continuous process of *riyadhah* (spiritual exercises) and *mujahadah* (earnest striving). This aligns with Thomas Lickona's (2017) view that character requires the integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action performed consistently through habituation.

In a contemporary light, the inhibitor concerning variations in teacher competence is in line with Lubis's (2025) note regarding the importance of optimizing training institutions in the implementation of the love curriculum so that it does not merely remain a symbolic policy. The necessity of synergy with families reinforces the study by Kallabe et al. (2026), which emphasizes that the successful formation of an Islamic identity requires a robust synergy across the educational tri-center. Furthermore, the challenge posed by social media in hindering moderation is highly

relevant to the concerns of Sakur et al. (2026) regarding student moral degradation in the digital era, which calls for an adaptive curriculum reconstruction.

f) The Integrative Conceptual Framework of Sufistic Love-Based Curriculum

To provide a holistic and systemic overview of the theoretical and empirical contributions of this study, a comprehensive conceptual framework is formulated. This framework integrates the foundational pillars of the curriculum, the active spiritual engines, the stages of value internalization, and the resulting dimensions of religious moderation into a unified educational path.

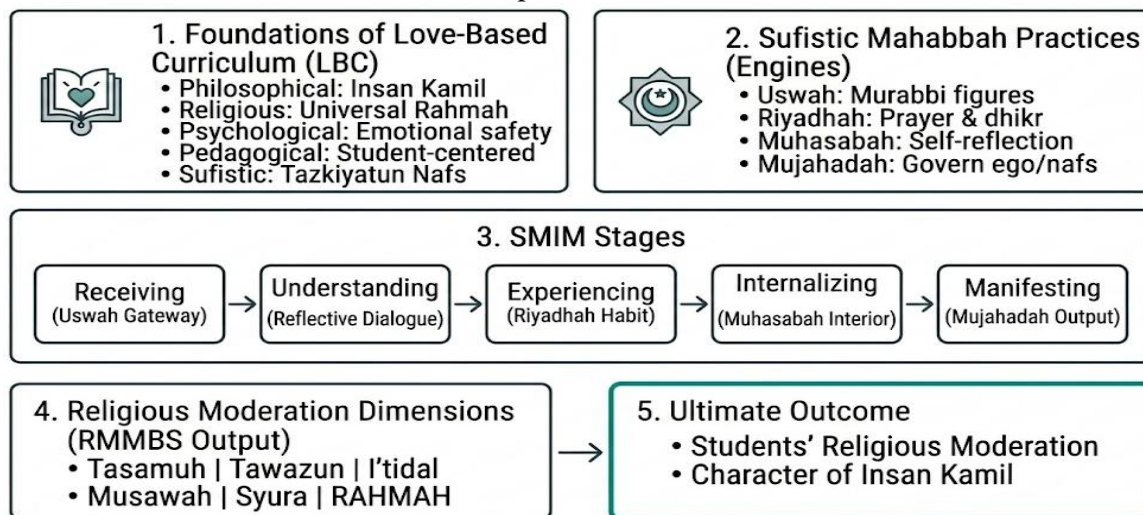


Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework of Sufistic Love-Based Curriculum for Developing Students' Religious Moderation

This diagram represents the core theoretical mechanism of the Love-Based Curriculum (LBC) in developing religious moderation through a Sufistic lens. At the foundational level, the LBC at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf Pasar Kambang is built upon five integrative pillars: philosophical, religious, psychological, pedagogical, and Sufistic foundations (Kemenag RI, 2025; Nadlir, 2025). These foundations do not operate in isolation but serve as the source of values that shape the school culture and instructional design (Nadlir, 2025; Inayah dkk, 2025).

To operationalize these foundations, specific Sufistic practices—namely *uswah* (exemplary conduct) (Nata, 2016), *riyadhah* (repeated spiritual exercises) (Al-Ghazali, 2011), *muhasabah* (self-reflection) (Alsi et al., 2026; Mulyasana, 2022), and *mujadahah* (striving against the ego) (Lickona, 2017; Shihab, 2019)—act as the spiritual engines that drive the value-internalization process. These spiritual engines actively propel students through the five sequential stages of the Sufistic Mahabbah Internalization Model (SMIM) developed in this study: *Receiving*, *Understanding*, *Experiencing*, *Internalizing*, and *Manifesting*. Through these stages, the abstract values of love (*mahabbah*) are gradually transformed from external educational inputs into students' intrinsic consciousness and autonomous behaviors (Al-Ghazali, 2011; Langgulung, 2003).

Consequently, the successful internalization of *mahabbah* naturally manifests in six key dimensions of religious moderation: *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawazun* (balance), *i'tidal* (justice), *musawah* (equality), *syura* (dialogue) (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019), and *rahmah* (universal compassion). Importantly, the framework positions *rahmah* not merely as a single dimension, but as the core spirit that binds and animates the other five dimensions. Ultimately, the harmonious integration of these dimensions

culminates in the development of students' authentic religious moderation, guiding them toward the ideal of *insan kamil* (the perfect human) who possesses intellectual excellence alongside profound spiritual and social maturity (Al-Ghazali, 2011; Kartanegara, 2018)

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum (LBC) at MTsS Al-Ma'ruf Pasar Kambang represents a systemic and humanistic innovation in Islamic education that positions the value of *mahabbah* (love and compassion) as its guiding spirit and operational ethical foundation. Conceptually, the LBC is constructed upon five integrative foundations—philosophical, religious, psychological, pedagogical, and Sufistic—which successfully unify intellectual dimensions with spiritual depth. The implementation of these values is carried out holistically through instructional strategies of exemplary conduct (*al-uswah*), habituation (*ta'wid*), innovative-dialogic learning based on Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and Project-Based Learning (PjBL), and reflective practices (*muhasabah*) that touch the affective domain of the students.

The primary finding of this research is the formulation of the Sufistic Mahabbah Internalization Model (SMIM), which encompasses five continuous stages: *Receiving*, *Understanding*, *Experiencing*, *Internalizing*, and *Manifesting*. The qualitative findings suggest that this model provides an emerging educational framework through which the internalization of *mahabbah* values may contribute to the development of students' religious moderation, encompassing the dimensions of *Tasamuh*, *Tawazun*, *I'tidal*, *Musawah*, *Syura*, and *Rahmah*. Despite facing challenges such as digital disruption and the heterogeneity of teacher competence, visionary leadership and a religious-humanistic madrasah culture serve as the primary supporting factors for the sustainability of this curriculum. Ultimately, rather than operating as a universally validated causal model, the SMIM offers a contextual, case-derived framework that demonstrates how Islamic spiritual traditions can be structurally integrated to nurture balanced, tolerant, and compassionate citizens in the pluralistic era.

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