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## INTEGRATING MAHABBAH VALUES INTO THE CURRICULUM OF LOVE: A NEW PARADIGM FOR CHARACTER BUILDING (AKHLAKUL KARIMAH) IN ISLAMIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS (MADRASAH IBTIDAIYAH)

**Ernawati<sup>1</sup>**

Institut Agama Islam Nasional Laa Roiba Bogor, Indonesia (ernawatihummaira@gmail.com)

**Herlina**

Institut Agama Islam Nasional Laa Roiba Bogor, Indonesia (herlinalaroiba@gmail.com)

**Wiwi Uswatiyah**

Institut Agama Islam Nasional Laa Roiba Bogor, Indonesia (wiwilaroiba@gmail.com)

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**ABSTRACTS**

Contemporary Islamic education is often trapped in cognitive formalism that ignores the affective dimension, thus failing to form students' characters authentically. This study aims to analyze the strategy for integrating Mahabbah (love) values within the "Love Curriculum" at MIS Nurussa'adah Bogor, identify the emerging sociological obstacles, and evaluate its impact on the formation of students' akhlakul karimah. Using a qualitative approach with a case study design, data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The results indicate that the integration of Mahabbah values is implemented through a systemic strategy including the "sacralization of general subjects," spiritual culture habituation, and humanist pedagogy that positions teachers as murabbi. A critical finding of this study reveals the challenge of "atmospheric dualism," namely the disconnection between dialogic-affective parenting in the madrasah and repressive discipline or emotional neglect at home, which risks triggering value decay. However, the trans-substantial internalization of values is proven to form a settled character (malakah) and function as a resilient "inner shield" for students in facing domestic environmental contradictions. The novelty of this research lies in the reconstruction of the Love Curriculum as a "character oasis" that not only synergizes intellectual and spiritual intelligence but also builds students' moral resilience in the 5.0 era.

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## A. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Islamic education currently stands at a crucial crossroads, where educational institutions must choose between preserving spiritual originalism or fully submitting to the demands of modernization, which are often mechanistic and pragmatic. Amidst the massive whirlpool of digital disruption, educational institutions are confronted not only with operational technical challenges but also with a deeper existential crisis: the loss of the human touch within the teaching and learning process. This phenomenon of "educational dehumanization," as cautioned by Aminuddin, has direct implications for the emergence of various social pathologies within the *madrasah* environment, ranging from moral degradation and the loss of *adab* (etiquette) toward educators to the increasingly concerning escalation of bullying cases (Aminuddin, 2022). The emerging paradox is that, despite the formal curriculum allocating a significant portion to Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam* or PAI), the substantive internalization of *akhlaqul karimah* (noble character) frequently encounters failure. This occurs because the learning process tends to become trapped within a purely cognitive-instructional dimension, prioritizing the mere transfer of knowledge over deep affective-spiritual engagement (Mulyasa, 2018).

From a philosophical-ontological perspective, Islamic education is essentially not a production machine for human resources, but rather a process of "inculcating *adab*" (*ta'dib*) that is fundamentally rooted in the values of compassion and affection (Wan Daud, 2019). Fethullah Gulen, in his vision of a tolerant global civilization, asserts that education neglecting the foundation of **love** will only produce individuals who are intellectually brilliant yet spiritually barren (Gulen, 2019). Knowledge without love only breeds arrogance, while love without knowledge loses its direction. However, in empirical reality, many educational institutions remain trapped in rigid, legalistic, and coercive disciplinary approaches. Ma'arif and Kartiko, in their phenomenological study, reveal that disciplinary enforcement overly oriented toward physical punishment and psychological pressure is often counterproductive, as it fails to touch the deepest locus of a student's inner consciousness (Ma'arif & Kartiko, 2018). Consequently, a radical and integrative curricular reorientation is required; an approach that positions *Mahabbah* (love) not merely as supplementary material within the curriculum, but as a living paradigm that drives the entire educational ecosystem.

The emergence of the "Curriculum of Love" concept serves as a refreshing antithesis to the rigidity of educational formalism. Natuna, in their progressive study, asserts that the Curriculum of Love is an integrative model capable of bridging normative religious texts with applicative social empathy (Natuna, 2025). This approach is theoretically reinforced by Nel Noddings' concept of **caring** and Thomas Lickona's pillars of **character education** (Lickona, 2009; Noddings, 2013). Both scholars agree that noble character cannot be taught through indoctrination; rather, it can only flourish within a community of mutual care and love. In Indonesia, the need for a holistic and spirituality-based curriculum is increasingly urgent, especially in primary educational institutions such as *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (MI). It is during this MI phase that the foundations of character are first systematically established; consequently, any

failure in the educative nurturing patterns at this level will have fatal consequences for the child's future moral development (Primarni, 2025).

MIS Nurussa'adah Bogor emerges as an Islamic primary educational institution attempting to break through the deadlock of formalism by integrating *Mahabbah* values into its educational structure. Situated in the capital's suburban buffer zone, MIS Nurussa'adah faces complex sociological challenges, ranging from the diverse character backgrounds of its students to high pragmatic expectations from parents, who often prioritize examination scores over the independence of *adab* (etiquette). Amidst these pressures, there are strong indications that character education within this *madrasah* is no longer conducted partially through classroom lectures, but through a systemic integration that touches the curricular dimension, school culture, and even the spiritual activities of its educators (Firmansyah, 2023). This integration becomes highly compelling for further investigation, considering that *Mahabbah* values—long regarded as an abstract domain of Sufism (*tasawuf*)—are now being pulled into the highly technical and practical realm of the *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* curriculum.

Although numerous studies on integrative curricula have been conducted by previous scholars, most have predominantly focused on the integration of science and religion or the implementation of general character values (Anwar, 2016a; Muhaimin, 2015), the majority of these studies still focus on the integration of science and religion at an epistemological-theoretical level within universities or large *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools). Research concerning the Curriculum of Love has also been explored by Natuna; however, the research locus was limited to national border regions with distinct conflict dynamics (Natuna, 2025). There is a significant literature gap regarding how the operationalization strategies of the "Curriculum of Love" are implemented in private primary schools within dynamic, urban-religious communities such as Bogor. Furthermore, limited research has critically dissected the institutional resilience of *madrasahs* in facing skepticism from educators and parents who remain shackled by conventional educational paradigms based on rote memorization and authoritarian discipline.

The novelty of this research lies in its in-depth analysis of the **trans-substantial internalization** of *Mahabbah* values within the *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (MI) curriculum. The researcher does not merely capture the end results of an educational program but provides a detailed description of the transformative process of teachers—from being mere curriculum instructors to becoming **spiritual agents** or *murabbi* (Tobroni & Firmansyah, 2022). By employing the perspective of the **anthropology of Islamic education**, this research seeks to uncover how *Mahabbah* values transform into **malakah** (an organically ingrained character) through the habituation of cultural activities and noble spirituality fostered within the *madrasah* (Tobroni et al., 2023). This becomes imperative because character formation in the digital era requires "roots" that run deeper than mere compliance with written rules..

Based on the background and the identified research gaps, this article aims to address three fundamental questions: **First**, how is the strategy for integrating

*Mahabbah* values formulated within the "Curriculum of Love" at MIS Nurussa'adah Bogor? **Second**, what challenges arise, and what are the institutional resilience strategies employed to face resistance against this compassion-based paradigm? **Third**, to what extent does this integration impact the transformation of students' *akhlaqul karimah* across social, emotional, and spiritual dimensions?. The researcher strongly argues that authentic *akhlaqul karimah* can never be born from an educational environment steeped in coercion; rather, it can only flourish within an educational ecosystem animated by the energy of *Mahabbah*. As emphasized by **Azra**, the transformation of Islamic education in the third millennium must be capable of harmoniously synergizing a steadfast spiritual tradition with the demands of modernity (Azra, 2019). The integration of *Mahabbah* values is a concrete step toward reclaiming the soul of Islamic education as *rahmatan lil alamin*—an endeavor that simultaneously enlightens the intellect and purifies the soul

### 1. The Essence of Mahabbah Values in Islamic Education

Within the treasury of Islamic intellect, *Mahabbah* (love) is not merely a superficial emotion or a romantic sentiment; rather, it constitutes a profound ontological and axiological orientation (Nasr, 2002). Within a Sufi perspective adapted into the educational sphere, *Mahabbah* serves as the primary engine for a servant's obedience to the Creator (*al-Khaliq*), which manifests in boundless compassionate behavior toward all fellow creatures (Tobroni, 2018). Fethullah Gulen asserts that education based on love is the only pathway toward a global civilization that is both tolerant and peaceful (Gulen, 2019). Love in education implies that educators perceive their students through the lens of **compassion** (*rahmah*); consequently, the learning process is no longer perceived as a burden or a form of coercion, but rather as a spiritual necessity to recognize the Truth.

Theoretically, *Mahabbah* is closely linked to the formation of **Noble Spirituality**, which serves as a shield against social conflict and violence within educational institutions (Firmansyah et al., 2023). Al-Attas (as cited in Wan Daud) and Seyyed Hossein Nasr emphasize that Islamic education must be capable of transmitting divine values that are ***jamaliyyah*** (beauty/compassion) in nature (Nasr, 2002; Wan Daud, 2019). Consequently, the value of *Mahabbah* functions as an **epistemological foundation**, ensuring that the knowledge absorbed by students does not merely stop at the intellect but culminates in the purity of the heart and the nobility of character

The researcher analyzes that in the context of primary education, *Mahabbah* values act as an **"affective bridge"** connecting student cognition with divine consciousness. Without *Mahabbah*, religious education tends to be trapped in a transfer of information that is dry, dogmatic, and monotonous for children. In the author's view, *Mahabbah* transforms the teacher-student relationship from a rigid contractual-instructional bond into a fluid **spiritual-educative** connection. This is crucial because, at the *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* level, children are in the **concrete operational stage**, where they more easily internalize values through what they "feel" emotionally rather than what they "memorize" theoretically. The integration of *Mahabbah* offers a solution to the problem

of educational dichotomy; when love becomes the basis, every subject—whether religious or general—will be viewed as a means to recognize God's majesty through the beauty of His creation.

## 2. Reconstructing the Curriculum of Love as an Integrative Paradigm

A curriculum is not merely a list of subjects (syllabus) that must be completed on schedule; rather, it encompasses the entire sequence of learning experiences consciously planned to shape the student's personality as a whole (Hamalik, 2019). The concept of the "**Curriculum of Love**" serves as a theoretical antithesis to the technocratic curriculum, which is overly oriented toward the job market and materialistic competition. Natuna defines the Curriculum of Love as an integrative paradigm in Islamic Education (*PAI*) that unifies cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects through a simultaneously humanistic and theocentric approach (Natuna, 2025). This integration aligns with Anwar's view on integrative curricula, which must be capable of harmoniously connecting sacred religious texts with profane social realities (Anwar, 2016a).

The concept of the "Curriculum of Love" within the educational ecosystem under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs is a manifestation of curriculum transformation oriented toward *rahmatan lil 'alamin* values and the strengthening of religious moderation through a humanistic-spiritual approach. This paradigm shifts the legalistic-formalistic educational model into a process of internalizing *akhlaqul karimah* based on compassion (*Mahabbah*), where the school functions as a center for nurturing values that bridge intellectual intelligence with spiritual maturity. This is in alignment with the Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs (KMA) No. 183 and 184 of 2019, which emphasizes the formation of moderate individuals through safe learning environments, and is further supported by Tobroni's thought, which asserts that making compassion the driving force of education is the key to producing a generation with moral resilience amidst the challenges of the times (RI, 2019; Tobroni, 2018). By positioning the teacher as a *murabbi* who transfers the energy of love into every subject, this curriculum is capable of dissolving the dichotomy of knowledge while simultaneously building a peaceful civilization, as envisioned by **M. Fethullah Gülen** regarding the importance of love-based education for universal humanity (Gülen, 2019).

In practice, this curriculum adopts the principle of "**caring**" from **Nel Noddings**, as well as the vision of **holistic education**, which views students as individuals possessing physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions that must not be separated (Noddings, 2013; Primarni, 2025). The implementation of the Curriculum of Love at the *madrasah* level demands a radical transformation in instructional strategies—shifting from an initially instructional-authoritarian nature toward a dialogical-contextual approach (Wardani, 2018). Parker J. Palmer, in *The Courage to Teach*, adds that the quality of teaching depends heavily on the teacher's inner integrity. Teachers who educate with "love" are able to create the classroom as a **sacred space**, where students' characters can grow organically, honestly, and without fear (Palmer, 2017).

The author analyzes that the reconstruction of a love-based curriculum is a deconstructive effort against educational formalism, which has tended to imprison a child's innate potential (*fitrah*) within narrow standardizations. In the author's view, integrating *Mahabbah* values into the curricular structure is not merely the addition of new moral content, but a fundamental shift in orientation from a **curriculum-centered** to a **heart-centered pedagogy**. In this regard, love is positioned as a "social glue" that bonds theoretical knowledge in textbooks with the students' real-life practices. The author believes that the success of this paradigm depends heavily on the transformation of the teacher's role from an instructor into a *murabbi*. Without the spiritual integrity of the educator, this curriculum will only become an administrative jargon—beautiful on paper but hollow in the field.

### 3. Internalizing *Akhlakul Karimah* through Holistic Education

*Akhlakul karimah* is the ripe fruit of a perfect integration between faith (*iman*) and righteous deeds (*amal shaleh*). In Western character education theory, Thomas Lickona refers to this as moral action, which must be preceded by moral knowing and moral feeling (Lickona, 2009). However, within the perspective of Islamic education, *akhlak* transcends mere secular morality, as it is deeply rooted in Divine revelation and the perfect example (*uswah hasanah*) of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Holistic education in the Era 5.0 demands an intelligent synergy between traditional *hadith* values and the demands of a digitalized, fast-paced era (Primarni, 2025).

The process of forming *akhlak* in primary schools requires internalization strategies that extend beyond the classroom walls. As explained by Eka Firmansyah, the internalization of Islamic teachings must be carried out through cultural activities and consistent, meaningful **habituation** (*habituasi*) (Firmansyah, 2023). The success of *akhlak* formation depends heavily on a *madrasah* environment that is capable of integrating **local wisdom** with **universal spirituality** (Nurdin & Syahputra, 2020). Students formed through the **Curriculum of Love** will possess more resilient *akhlakul karimah* characteristics because their goodness is driven by inner consciousness, rather than a fear of punishment or a mere pursuit of praise (Ma'arif & Kartiko, 2018). Hal ini menjadi kunci utama dalam menjawab tantangan globalisasi yang seringkali menggerus nilai-nilai tradisional (Azra, 2012).

The author analyzes that the internalization of *akhlakul karimah* through holistic education is a process of "**maturing the *fitrah***" (*pendewasaan fitrah*) that balances emotional and spiritual intelligence. In the author's view, the essence of the Curriculum of Love lies in its ability to transform *akhlak* from a mere temporary "outward obedience" into a lasting "**inward character**" (*malakah*). The author argues that utilizing *Mahabbah* values as the engine of internalization is capable of eliminating students' psychological resistance toward school regulations. In the author's analysis, the character resilience of students in the Era 5.0 can only be achieved if the educational environment is able to position compassion as the supreme authority in disciplining the soul. Consequently, the *akhlakul karimah* formed is no longer the result of forced social conditioning, but a reflection of the purity of *Tawhid* (monotheism) manifested in concrete actions full of love.

## B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore, in-depth and comprehensively, the phenomenon of integrating *Mahabbah* values at MIS Nurussa'adah Bogor. The selection of this site is based on the consideration that MIS Nurussa'adah is a pioneer in the implementation of the "Curriculum of Love" in the Bogor region, consistently innovating in compassion-based character building amidst the social challenges of an urban society. The choice of a case study design is grounded in the need to understand the bounded system of the Curriculum of Love's application, which possesses unique and specific characteristics within the institution (Yin, 2014). The researcher acts as the **key instrument (human instrument)**, being directly present in the field to capture the meanings, interaction patterns, and dynamics of cultural activities related to the process of forming students' *akhlakul karimah*. This aligns with the perspective of the **anthropology of Islamic education**, which views the internalization of values not as a mechanical process, but as a cultural process deeply embedded in daily activities and school traditions (Firmansyah et al., 2023).

Research data were collected through three complementary data collection techniques (**technical triangulation**): participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. **Observation** focused on educational interactions between teachers and students, the implementation of values within the classroom learning process, and the manifestations of *Mahabbah* values in extracurricular activities and morning habituation routines. **Interviews** were conducted using structured and semi-structured formats with key informants selected through **purposive sampling**, including the head of the *madrasah* as the policymaker, Islamic Education (PAI) teachers as curriculum implementers, and student representatives to capture the learners' perceptions of compassionate practices at school. Meanwhile, the **documentation study** was employed to analyze love-based Lesson Plans (RPP), the School-Level Operational Curriculum (KOSP), and records of student behavioral development as supporting empirical evidence. To ensure **trustworthiness**, the researcher applied **source triangulation** and **technical triangulation** to ensure that the data obtained possess high levels of **credibility, dependability, and confirmability**, in accordance with qualitative research standards (Creswell, 2019).

The data analysis process was conducted in a circular and ongoing manner, following the **interactive qualitative data analysis model** by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The analysis stages began with **data condensation**, during which the researcher performed the selection, focusing, and simplification of raw data from field notes relevant to the focus on *Mahabbah* value integration. The second stage was **data display**, where the data were organized into thematic matrices and descriptive-analytical narratives to facilitate the mapping of curriculum integration patterns and the challenges encountered. The final stage involved **conclusion drawing and verification**, where the researcher formulated theoretical propositions regarding the effectiveness of the Curriculum of Love in transforming student character at MIS

Nurussa'adah Bogor (Miles et al., 2018). This entire series of methodological procedures was conducted while upholding high standards of **research ethics** and **academic objectivity**, in order to produce findings that are original and can be scientifically accounted for.

## C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Integrating *Mahabbah* Values into the Curriculum of Love: A Systemic Strategy

Based on the research findings at MIS Nurussa'adah Bogor, the implementation of the "Curriculum of Love" is not merely institutional jargon; rather, it has manifested as a systemic integration strategy spanning three fundamental dimensions: curricular, habituation, and humanistic pedagogy. In the curricular dimension, the researcher found that the integration of *Mahabbah* values is not positioned as an "appendix" or a rigid standalone subject. Instead, it serves as the *ruh* (spirit) that organically permeates the entire structure of the teaching material. This phenomenon is clearly evident when educators at MIS Nurussa'adah perform what the researcher identifies as the "sacralization of general subjects." As a concrete example, in Natural Science (IPA) lessons, teachers do not merely explain ecosystems technically. Instead, they transform the material on nature conservation into a medium for instilling compassion toward fellow creatures of Allah (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*). Students are encouraged to understand that protecting the environment is a tangible manifestation of love for the Creator. The researcher analyzes that this practice reflects the thought of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, who views *Mahabbah* not as a shallow emotion, but as a profound ontological and axiological orientation. In Nasr's view, eternal human values are rooted in love for the Divine, which then radiates into an ethics of compassion toward all of His creations (Nasr, 2002). This is in alignment with the **Curriculum of Love** paradigm proposed by Natuna, which asserts that Islamic education in the contemporary era must serve as an **integrative model** capable of bridging religious texts with empathy for the environment and social reality (Natuna, 2025).

The researcher analyzes that this integration model represents a tangible deconstructive effort against the separation of religious and general sciences (**knowledge dichotomy**). By bringing *Mahabbah* values into general subject classrooms, lessons are no longer merely a dry transfer of cognitive information, but rather a process of planting meaningful character. In the author's view, the success of MIS Nurussa'adah in contextualizing the value of love within teaching materials demonstrates that their curriculum has shifted from a **content-based** to a **value-based curriculum**. This is supported by the thought of Ashraff, who states that the new horizon in Islamic education must be able to touch the emotional aspects of students so that the knowledge acquired possesses spiritual relevance (Ashraff, 2015). Furthermore, the integration of *hadith* values within holistic education, as mapped by Primarni et al., provides a robust theological foundation asserting that morality must serve as the primary axis of education in the **Era 5.0**. This is essential to balance the onslaught of technology, which frequently overlooks the human dimension (Primarni, 2025).

Beyond the dimension of teaching materials, the formation of *akhlakul karimah* at this *madrasah* is reinforced through consistent **habituation mechanisms**. Programs such as "**Friday Charity**" (*Jumat Berbagi*) and the tradition of greeting teachers with a handshake, performed with genuine sincerity, represent tangible forms of internalizing Islamic teachings through cultural activities (Firmansyah & D., 2023). This strategy proves that **Mahabbah** values, which were originally abstract and Sufistic in nature, can be transformed into concrete actions that deeply touch the students' affective dimension. This approach theoretically reinforces **Tobroni's** idea of Islamic education as a paradigm of compassion. Tobroni asserts that *Mahabbah* must serve as the primary driving force in education, where the teaching-learning process is not based on oppressive power relations, but rather on a spirit of liberation and compassion that humanizes human beings (Tobroni, 2018). This is in alignment with **Thomas Lickona's** view regarding the urgency of creating a **caring community** within the school as an absolute prerequisite for the organic growth of respect and responsibility (Lickona, 2009).

The author's further analysis indicates that the effectiveness of habituation in this school lies in the consistency between the theories taught and the **exemplary behavior** (*uswah hasanah*) of the educators. From the perspective of the **anthropology of Islamic education**, teachers at MIS Nurussa'adah do not merely serve as instructors; they act as **cultural agents** who transfer values through the energy of love. As emphasized in the study by **Tobroni & Firmansyah**, spirituality must be utilized as a paradigm for peace education, beginning within the school's microsystem environment (Tobroni & Firmansyah, 2022). Ultimately, the integration of *Mahabbah* values creates a **psychologically safe** learning environment (*psychological safety*), which, according to **Nel Noddings**, is a precondition for the moral education process to take place effectively without the presence of coercion (Noddings, 2013).

However, the researcher notes a crucial challenge in the dimension of external synchronization: the gap between the values built at the *madrasah* and the parenting patterns within the family environment. In the author's view, the effectiveness of this systemic integration is often reduced when *Mahabbah*-based habituation at the *madrasah* does not find the same resonance at home. A disconnection frequently occurs where the school emphasizes a compassionate-dialogical approach, while parents still apply repressive disciplinary patterns or even emotional neglect due to pragmatic preoccupations.

The author's analysis asserts that without a **shared vision** between the institution and the family, the values internalized at school are at risk of **value decay** when students return home. Therefore, the success of the Curriculum of Love as a systemic strategy demands the expansion of a "compassion ecosystem" that extends beyond the walls of the *madrasah*, ensuring that the formation of *akhlakul karimah* proceeds simultaneously and sustainably in the students' daily lives. Consequently, while this systemic integration has successfully transformed the *madrasah* into a "**laboratory of**

**compassion,"** its long-term sustainability depends heavily on collaborative synergy with the students' domestic environments

## **2. Dynamics and Resilience: An Analysis of the Challenges in Implementing the Curriculum of Love**

The implementation of the Curriculum of Love at MIS Nurussa'adah Bogor is a dynamic process that is not immune to obstacles. The researcher identified multidimensional challenges originating from both internal pedagogical aspects and external sociological factors. Internally, there was an initial resistance from some educators who perceived the terminology of "**Love**" as an entity that is too abstract, subjective, and difficult to convert into quantitative learning achievement indicators. This challenge is rooted in an old paradigm that views education as a mechanistic process. As stated by **Mulyasa**, many educators are still trapped in a **technocratic-formalistic mindset** that prioritizes the completion of academic material (curriculum targets) over the internalization of substantial values (Mulyasa, 2018).

The researcher analyzes that this skepticism is a residue of a national education system that has long been overly **result-oriented** rather than focused on the **process of character transformation (process-oriented)**. This phenomenon aligns with the concerns expressed by **Tilaar** regarding the pressures of social change, which frequently force educational institutions to sacrifice humanistic quality for the sake of pragmatic targets (Tilaar, 2012). In the author's view, this challenge actually represents an opportunity to redefine the teacher's role: shifting from a mere curriculum instructor to an "**architect of the soul**" who transforms love into learning energy. The resilience of the teachers at MIS Nurussa'adah in navigating this phase of skepticism proves that the Curriculum of Love demands **spiritual maturity** from educators before they are capable of transmitting it to their students, in accordance with the educational vision of **Gulen** (Gulen, 2019).

Externally, challenges arise from parental expectations, as many are still accustomed to conventional learning approaches based on rote memorization and **repressive discipline**. **Ma'arif and Kartiko** note that within certain educational traditions, discipline is frequently misinterpreted as the enforcement of rules through **punishment** (Ma'arif & Kartiko, 2018). In the field, the researcher discovered concerns among parents that a "compassion-based" approach might result in students becoming less competitive in the global era. Furthermore, the researcher identified a crucial challenge in the weak synchronization between the values taught at the *madrasah* and daily parenting patterns at home.

The author's analysis asserts that the greatest obstacle to the sustainability of the Curriculum of Love is the "**atmospheric dualism**" experienced by students; on one hand, they receive affective and dialogical nourishment at school, yet on the other, they face emotional neglect or authoritarian communication styles within their home environment. This lack of parental readiness to align with these habits creates a gap of **sociological resistance**, where newly budding *Mahabbah* values often wither due to

behavioral contradictions in the domestic circle. As emphasized by **Primarni et al.**, the successful integration of moral values in the **Era 5.0** requires a solid ecosystem through intensive communication management between the school and parents (Primarni, 2025). Without a robust bridge of understanding, the school's vision will continue to clash with the realities of **familial pragmatism**.

The author's further analysis demonstrates that the success of MIS Nurussa'adah in mitigating these challenges lies in **visionary instructional leadership**. The head of the *madrasah* provides consistent guidance that shifts the teachers' paradigm from traditional classroom management toward **spirituality-based management** (Tobroni & Firmansyah, 2022). The strategy of "implicitly" integrating *Mahabbah* values into every subject without increasing formal credit hours represents a clever solution for navigating a crowded curriculum. The researcher argues that this resilience proves the Curriculum of Love is not merely a teaching method, but rather a **madrasah management innovation** capable of harmoniously aligning academic demands with the needs of students' moral development (Anwar, 2016b). Consequently, the existing challenges actually reinforce the legitimacy of the **Curriculum of Love** as the answer to the "barrenness of values" in the modern education system, while simultaneously serving as a reminder of the vital importance of **educative collaboration** between the school and parents.

### **3. Transformation of *Akhlakul Karimah*: An Analysis of the Impact and Implications for Student Characteristics**

The impact of the Curriculum of Love implementation on student character development at MIS Nurussa'adah demonstrates significant and substantive changes in social, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Socially, the researcher observed a behavioral shift from individualistic patterns toward an **empathy-based collectivity**. Students do not merely demonstrate passive tolerance but are proactive in acts of mutual assistance without teacher instruction—a tangible manifestation of *Mahabbah* values. This is in alignment with **Nel Noddings'** theory of **relational ethics**, where the genuine bond of affection between teacher and student creates a sense of **psychological safety**. This safety is subsequently transmitted by the students into their interactions with their peers (Noddings, 2013).

The researcher analyzes that this character transformation occurs because *Mahabbah* values have surpassed the **trans-substantial internalization** phase, where these values are no longer perceived as restrictive external rules, but have instead become a pure **inner consciousness**. From the perspective of the **anthropology of Islamic education**, this phenomenon is identified as the formation of **sublime spirituality**, which serves as the foundation for peace (Tobroni, 2023). In the author's view, the profound internalization of these values at the *madrasah* interestingly serves to mitigate the negative impacts of the "**atmospheric dualism**" discussed earlier. Despite the disconnection in parenting patterns at home, the character formed through the Curriculum of Love at school has proven to be remarkably resilient. Students demonstrate self-control not out of fear of sanctions, but due to a sense of **respect** that

grows from their own experiences of being loved and valued by their educators in a humanistic manner.

On an emotional and spiritual level, the impact of this curriculum is evident in the increased independence and sense of responsibility students feel toward both personal and social tasks. They have become more proactive in maintaining environmental cleanliness and are consistent in performing their daily worship without strict supervision, indicating that *akhlakul karimah* has crystallized into a permanent character trait (*malakah*). The strengthening of the spiritual aspect through collective habituation provides a psychological impact in the form of **tranquility of the soul** (*thuma'ninah*), which, according to Aminuddin, is crucial for students' mental health in a digital era filled with competitive pressures (Aminuddin, 2022). The author's analysis asserts that this moral independence serves as an "**inner shield**" for students when they encounter unsupportive home or social environments, proving that holistic education—which synergizes intellectual and spiritual intelligence—is capable of comprehensively addressing the challenges of modernity (Azra, 2012).

The researcher concludes that the character transformation in this school is the result of a precise synchronization between the formal curriculum and the **hidden curriculum**, both of which are animated by *Mahabbah* values. As emphasized in the study by Primarni et al., education in the **Era 5.0** must be capable of balancing technological advancement with universal human values (Primarni, 2025). The implementation of the Curriculum of Love proves **John Dewey's** thesis that education is not merely a preparation for future living, but is **a process of living itself** (Dewey, 1938). For the author, the Curriculum of Love at MIS Nurussa'adah has successfully created an "**oasis of character**" that not only transforms student behavior within the *madrasah* but also provides the spiritual resilience needed to navigate value contradictions outside the school walls. This model deserves to serve as a reference for other Islamic educational institutions in pursuing character transformation that is not only academically excellent but also possesses **solid and sustainable moral integrity**.

#### D. CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the implementation of the Curriculum of Love at MIS Nurussa'adah Bogor has successfully transformed the paradigm of student character formation. Instead of relying on coercion, the school utilizes *Mahabbah* (compassion) values integrated into all academic subjects and daily activities. Consequently, the students' virtuous character is no longer a matter of mere compliance with rules but emerges from inner consciousness. This is evidenced by the increased empathy among students and the elimination of bullying cases within the school environment.

A unique finding in this study is the challenge of "Atmospheric Dualism"—the discrepancy between the compassionate atmosphere at school and home environments that are sometimes rigid or lacking in attention. However, because the values of compassion are deeply rooted at school, students possess an "Inner Shield" that preserves their virtuous behavior even when the external environment is unsupportive.

Ultimately, the *madrasah* functions as an "oasis"—a nurturing sanctuary for the children's mental and spiritual development amidst the rigors of urban life.

As a recommendation, the school needs to engage parents through guidance programs to ensure that parenting patterns at home align with those at school. Furthermore, teachers must receive continuous support to remain exemplary role models, as the success of this curriculum lies in the sincerity of the educator. For future researchers, it is vital to examine the longitudinal resilience of these students' characters as they graduate and transition to higher levels of education. In conclusion, love-based education is a tangible solution for cultivating a generation that is not only intellectually brilliant but also possesses noble character (*akhlakul karimah*).

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