

The Implementation of a Love-Based Curriculum Through Habituation and Teacher Role Modeling Strategies at Ra Asy-Syuhada'

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Abstract

The implementation of a Love-Based Curriculum in early childhood education requires learning strategies that enable children to experience religious and character values through concrete daily activities. This study aims to describe the implementation of a Love-Based Curriculum through habituation and teacher role modelling strategies at RA Asy-Syuhada'. This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach. Data were obtained through an interview with an educator at RA Asy-Syuhada' concerning the understanding, implementation, supporting factors, obstacles, and assessment of Panca Cinta values. The findings indicate that the Love-Based Curriculum has been integrated into daily learning activities through five main dimensions of love: love for Allah and His Messenger, love for knowledge, love for oneself and others, love for the environment, and love for the homeland. Habituation is implemented through prayer before learning and eating, Duha prayer, Tilawati learning, maintaining cleanliness, arranging personal belongings, sharing learning materials, group activities, respecting friends, and introducing national and regional culture. Teacher role modelling appears through teachers' efforts to consistently direct children toward respectful, caring, disciplined, independent, and responsible behavior. The implementation contributes to the emergence of discipline, responsibility, independence, affection, respect, cooperation, and solidarity among children. However, the sustainability of the program is strongly influenced by the consistency of teachers and parents, who may function as supporting or inhibiting factors. The study concludes that habituation and teacher role modelling constitute important mechanisms for transforming the values of a Love-Based Curriculum from abstract concepts into children's everyday behavior.

Keywords: *Love-Based Curriculum, Panca Cinta, Habituation, Teacher Role Modelling, Early Childhood Education.*

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A. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is a critical stage in children's development, as habits, attitudes, and values begin to form through repeated experiences and interactions with their surroundings. At this stage, education should extend beyond academic achievement to include the development of religious and moral values, social-emotional competencies, independence, responsibility, and positive social interactions. Young children primarily learn through concrete experiences, imitation, repetition, and habituation. Therefore, educational values need to be translated into observable and meaningful behaviors that children can practice in their everyday lives.

One approach relevant to these developmental needs is the Love-Based Curriculum (*Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta/KBC*), which places love, compassion, and care at the center of the educational process. Within this framework, love extends beyond emotional affection and encompasses relationships with Allah, His Messenger, knowledge, oneself, others, the environment, and the nation. Consequently, education is expected not only to transmit knowledge but also to facilitate children's understanding and practice of these values through meaningful daily experiences. In early childhood education, the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum requires developmentally appropriate strategies that enable children to experience these values through concrete actions and social interactions.

At RA Asy-Syuhada', the Love-Based Curriculum is integrated into daily learning activities and habituation practices. Based on interview findings, its implementation begins when children arrive at school and continues throughout their daily routines, including greeting and shaking hands with teachers, organizing personal belongings, participating in *fresh morning* activities, reciting short chapters of the Qur'an and daily prayers, learning hadith, performing the Duha prayer, and participating in Qur'anic learning through the Tilawati method. The values of the Five Loves (*Panca Cinta*) are also reflected in activities that encourage children to explore knowledge, care for the environment, help and respect their peers, and develop an appreciation for their cultural and national identity. These practices indicate that the curriculum is embedded in children's overall educational experiences rather than delivered as an isolated learning activity.

Two interrelated strategies are particularly relevant to this implementation: habituation and teacher role modeling. Habituation provides repeated opportunities for children to practice positive behaviors, while teacher role modeling allows them to observe and imitate the behaviors demonstrated by educators. Although these strategies offer opportunities to foster compassion, empathy, and social responsibility, their implementation requires more than encouraging children to comply with classroom rules. It also requires attention to whether children gradually demonstrate genuine care, empathy, and prosocial behavior in their interactions with others. Furthermore, the effectiveness of these strategies depends on the consistency of teachers' actions, the quality of the learning environment, and the continuity of behavioral guidance and evaluation.

Against this background, this study examines the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum through habituation and teacher role modeling at RA Asy-Syuhada'. Specifically, it focuses on how these strategies are incorporated into daily educational practices and how they support the development of compassion, empathy, and prosocial behavior among young children. By examining these practices within the context of an Islamic early childhood education institution, the study seeks to provide a contextual understanding of how love-based educational values can be translated into children's everyday experiences.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The Love-Based Curriculum in Early Childhood Education

The Love-Based Curriculum (*Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta*, KBC) emphasizes compassion, care, respect for others, and moral character development as integral components of the educational process (Cahyati et al., 2022). In early childhood education, this approach is relevant because children's development is strongly influenced by their social environment, everyday experiences, and interactions with adults and peers (Anatacia et al., 2026).

The implementation of love-based education therefore requires learning experiences that are safe, supportive, and meaningful, allowing children to understand and practice values through observable behaviors (Sahab et al., 2026). This perspective is consistent with Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational philosophy, which emphasizes guiding children's development in accordance with their nature and potential (Dewantara, 1977). The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 2020) similarly emphasizes developmentally appropriate practices and the importance of creating caring and equitable learning environments.

2. Habituation as a Strategy for Character Development

Habituation is a process through which children develop behavioral patterns by repeatedly engaging in activities within their everyday environments. In the context of the Love-Based Curriculum, habituation can be implemented through activities such as sharing learning materials, helping friends, expressing gratitude, apologizing, greeting others politely, and cooperating during classroom activities (Arief, 2023). Through repeated practice, children have opportunities to recognize and internalize positive social behaviors. However, habituation should not rely solely on rules or coercion. It needs to be supported by consistent guidance, age-appropriate explanations, and positive reinforcement.

Hurlock (1978) highlights the relationship between children's social development, experience, and interaction. Accordingly, habituation can support the development of prosocial behavior when it is implemented consistently and in accordance with children's developmental needs (Oktaviani & Rahmi, 2026).

3. Teacher Role Modelling and Social Learning

Teacher role modelling is another important strategy in implementing the Love-Based Curriculum. Young children frequently observe the behavior of adults and use these observations as references for their own actions (Muis et al., 2022). Bandura (1977), through social learning theory, explains that individuals can acquire behaviors by observing and imitating others. In early childhood education, teachers therefore serve not only as facilitators of learning but also as behavioral models who demonstrate compassion, patience, fairness, respect, and responsibility (Iswandi et al., 2024). When teachers communicate politely, listen to children, respond constructively to conflicts, and provide assistance with genuine care, they offer concrete examples of how love and respect can be expressed in daily interactions (Daher, 2025). The

effectiveness of role modeling consequently depends on consistency between teachers' verbal instructions and actual behavior.

4. Social-Emotional Development and Prosocial Behavior

The development of empathy, emotional regulation, and prosocial behavior is an important consideration in evaluating the implementation of love-based education. Prosocial behavior includes actions intended to benefit others, such as sharing, helping, cooperating, and providing comfort. Blewitt et al. (2020) highlight the relevance of social-emotional learning programs in early childhood education. Within the Love-Based Curriculum, these competencies can be encouraged through structured activities, supportive teacher-child interactions, and opportunities to resolve everyday social challenges (Dewi & Wati, 2026). For example, conflicts arising when children compete for toys can become opportunities to teach turn-taking, perspective-taking, peaceful problem-solving, and respect for others' needs. Such experiences allow children to practice empathy and social responsibility in situations that are relevant to their developmental stage (Fahrudin et al., 2026).

Importantly, positive character development should not be assessed solely through children's compliance with classroom rules or their ability to verbally explain moral values. Greater attention should be given to how children demonstrate these values in actual interactions (Li et al., 2026). Observations of spontaneous helping, willingness to share, appropriate expressions of apology, and respectful responses to peers can provide insights into children's developing social competencies. NAEYC (2020) emphasizes observation and documentation as important components of developmentally appropriate early childhood assessment. These practices can help educators identify individual progress and determine appropriate forms of support without unnecessarily comparing children with one another.

5. A Supportive Learning Environment and Family Partnership

The implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum also requires a learning environment that promotes emotional safety, fairness, and positive social relationships (Chandratreya, 2024). Children need to feel accepted and respected to develop confidence in expressing their feelings and interacting with others. Teachers should therefore respond to behavioral challenges through constructive guidance rather than humiliation or negative labelling (Syakhrani & Aslan, 2024). Consistency in applying classroom expectations is equally important, as children learn from both the rules established by educators and the ways in which those rules are practiced.

Furthermore, the development of positive behavior can be strengthened through cooperation between schools and families. Parents and teachers can reinforce similar values by encouraging children to express gratitude, apologize, help others, share responsibilities, and treat family members respectfully. Communication between educators and parents also provides opportunities to exchange information about children's behavior across different environments. NAEYC (2020) identifies reciprocal partnerships among educators, families, and communities as an important

element of effective early childhood education (Eden et al., 2024). In the context of RA Asy-Syuhada', collaboration between school and family can therefore support the continuity of habituation and role modeling practices.

Based on these perspectives, the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum at RA Asy-Syuhada' can be examined through the interconnected dimensions of habituation, teacher role modeling, children's social-emotional development, and the supporting educational environment. These dimensions provide a conceptual basis for understanding how love-based values are introduced, practiced, and reinforced in everyday educational activities.

C. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the experiences and practices involved in implementing the Love-Based Curriculum (Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta, KBC) at RA Asy-Syuhada'. Data were analyzed descriptively through several stages, including data organization, theme identification, categorization of information according to the dimensions of the Five Loves (Panca Cinta), interpretation of findings, and conclusion drawing. Data trustworthiness was strengthened by preserving information in accordance with the participants' accounts and relating it to the context of activities conducted at RA Asy-Syuhada'. This study did not use quantitative data; therefore, changes in children's character were described based on observations and developmental assessments reported by the participants rather than presented as percentages or statistical scores.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Love-Based Curriculum as an Educational Orientation at RA Asy-Syuhada'

The findings indicate that the Love-Based Curriculum (Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta, KBC) at RA Asy-Syuhada' is understood as a foundation that guides all educational activities to be carried out with love. Teachers do not view love merely as a learning theme, but as a principle underlying the ways children learn and interact. This understanding is reflected in the participants' explanations that everything undertaken in the learning process should begin with joy and love. Children are guided to develop love for Allah, His Messenger, their religion, parents, themselves, friends, family, and the environment. Thus, KBC has a broad scope because it connects spiritual, personal, social, ecological, and national dimensions.

The implementation of KBC is also not carried out separately from the existing curriculum. The participants explained that learning materials are consistently integrated with the values of love. For example, when the learning theme concerns plants, teachers do not merely introduce their shapes, colors, or benefits. They also guide children to understand that plants are creations of Allah and can provide benefits to both humans and animals.

2. Habituation as a Strategy for Internalizing Love for Allah and His Messenger

The first dimension that is most clearly reflected in the findings is love for Allah and His Messenger. This value is instilled through habitual worship and religious activities conducted regularly. Children are accustomed to reciting prayers before eating and studying, performing the Duha prayer, participating in Tilawati classes, reciting short surahs from the Qur'an, and learning hadith. The Duha prayer is not positioned solely as a ritual activity but is introduced as an expression of gratitude to Allah for the blessings of Islam, faith, and health. In this way, children are guided to connect acts of worship with the meaning of love and gratitude.

Tilawati activities are also an important component. Children are introduced to the Qur'an as the word of Allah. The habit of reading the Qur'an from an early age provides children with direct experiences of loving their religion through simple activities appropriate to their developmental stage.

3. Teacher Role Modeling and the Formation of a Culture of Love

Habituation cannot be separated from teacher role modeling. The findings show that the values of KBC are implemented from the moment children arrive at school. Children meet their teachers, greet them, and shake their hands. Teachers then guide children to put their belongings in the appropriate places and participate in the morning activities.

These situations demonstrate that teachers function as behavioral models. Children observe examples of how to greet others, show respect, maintain order, and participate in religious activities. Such role modeling is important because young children tend to learn through what they observe and experience. Teachers also serve as role models in fostering healthy social relationships. When a child does not bring the necessary learning materials, teachers encourage other children to share. When a child makes a mistake or has circumstances that differ from those of their peers, teachers guide the children not to mock or bully one another.

4. Fostering a Love of Knowledge through Questions and Exploration

A love of knowledge at RA Asy-Syuhada' is developed through activities that stimulate children's curiosity. Rather than immediately providing all the answers, teachers begin by asking prompting questions. One example can be seen when teachers introduce rambutan fruit. They invite children to identify its shape and color, ask where they can find the fruit and who created it, and then extend the activity by introducing numerical concepts using two rambutans, one held in the right hand and the other in the left. This activity demonstrates how a simple object can be developed into a multidimensional learning experience. Children observe, recall, respond, count, and connect the object to their everyday environment.

5. Developing Love for the Environment through Simple Habits

Love for the environment at RA Asy-Syuhada' is developed through simple actions closely related to children's daily lives. After performing the Duha prayer,

children are accustomed to putting away their own mukena (prayer garments). This habit promotes two values simultaneously: environmental responsibility and independence. Children are also encouraged to dispose of food wrappers and other waste in designated bins. Planting family medicinal plants (Tanaman Obat Keluarga, TOGA) as part of the culminating activity for the plant theme provides a concrete experience of the importance of caring for and protecting plants.

6. Fostering Love for Oneself and Others through Sharing, Helping, and Respect

The dimensions of love for oneself and others are reflected in interactions among children. When a child does not bring a pencil or other learning materials, classmates who have more than one are encouraged to lend their belongings. This activity demonstrates that sharing is not merely explained as a moral concept but practiced in real-life situations. The value of love is also expressed through cooperation. During group activities, children are guided not to compete over resources or seek to place themselves above others. Teachers also make efforts to prevent mocking behavior. Children are taught not to bully their peers when differences arise, such as when a child does not bring the required materials, wears the wrong costume, or does something differently from others.

7. Fostering Love for the Homeland through Cultural Awareness

Love for the homeland is introduced through activities suited to children's world. One such activity is a monthly assembly, during which children become familiar with *Indonesia Raya*, the Indonesian national anthem, and songs related to early childhood education. In addition, the school organizes an arts performance to commemorate Pamekasan Anniversary Day. Through this activity, children are introduced to regional dances, songs, and various forms of local culture. Wearing Marlena traditional attire on the first Thursday of each month is another way of introducing children to cultural identity.

8. Changes in Children's Character as an Outcome of Implementing Panca Cinta

According to the participants, several developments in children's character have been observed following the implementation of Panca Cinta. These include discipline, responsibility, affection for others, respect for peers, independence, group cohesion, and cooperation. Discipline has begun to emerge among most children, although progress is not yet uniform across all children. Independence is also particularly evident in Group B, where children are beginning to carry out several activities without always relying on their teachers.

9. Supporting Factors and Challenges in Implementation

The implementation of KBC at RA Asy-Syuhada' is supported primarily by teachers and parents. Teachers serve both as implementers and as role models in

shaping children's character. Parents play an important role in maintaining continuity of these habits at home. However, teachers and parents can also become barriers when they are inconsistent in applying these values. This indicates that the sustainability of KBC requires communication and cooperation between the educational institution and families.

10. Assessment of Children's Character Development

The implementation of KBC is evaluated through assessments of children's development. Teachers assess various developmental aspects daily, including religious and moral values, social-emotional development, language, physical and motor development, and cognitive development. Developmental progress is reported to parents every three months. Assessment at the early childhood education level does not rely solely on numerical scores but also uses developmental categories, such as "developing" and "developing very well".

Based on the overall findings, the implementation of KBC at RA Asy-Syuhada' can be understood as a process involving values, examples, habituation, experience, and character development. The values of Panca Cinta are translated into observable behaviors, creating opportunities for these values to become part of the school culture.

Table 1. Integration of Panca Cinta Values through Habituation and Role Modelling

Panca Cinta Value	Habituation/Role Modelling	Children's Experiences	Character Development
Love for Allah and His Messenger	Prayers, Duha prayer, Tilawati	Worship practices	Religious commitment, discipline
Love of knowledge	Prompting questions, exploration	Observing, thinking, responding	Curiosity
Love for the environment	Disposing of waste properly, tidying belongings, planting	Caring for the environment	Environmental awareness, independence
Love for oneself and others	Sharing, helping, cooperating	Group interactions	Caring, respect for others
Love for the homeland	Assemblies, national songs, regional culture	Learning about culture	National awareness, cultural appreciation

E. CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum (Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta, KBC) at RA Asy-Syuhada' is carried out in an integrated manner through habituation and teacher role modeling. KBC is not treated as a stand-alone activity but is embedded in various aspects of children's daily routines, from arriving at school and participating in *fresh morning* activities to reciting prayers and short surahs, learning

hadith, performing the Duha prayer, participating in Tilawati sessions, engaging in learning activities, maintaining cleanliness, and interacting with peers. The values of Panca Cinta are expressed through a range of concrete activities. Love for Allah and His Messenger is developed through habitual worship and Qur'anic learning. A love of knowledge is fostered through prompting questions and exploration. Love for the environment is developed through habits of maintaining cleanliness, organizing personal belongings, and planting. Love for oneself and others is expressed through sharing, helping, cooperating, respecting peers, and preventing mocking and bullying behaviors. Love for the homeland is introduced through assemblies, the national anthem *Indonesia Raya*, regional culture, Marlena traditional attire, arts performances, and exposure to cultural diversity. Habituation and teacher role modeling serve as important mechanisms for transforming abstract values into concrete behaviors. According to the participants, the character developments beginning to emerge include discipline, responsibility, independence, affection, respect for peers, group cohesion, and cooperation.

However, the success and sustainability of KBC implementation are strongly influenced by the consistency of teachers and parents. This study indicates that the Love-Based Curriculum in early childhood education can be developed not by adding complex learning materials, but by strengthening a school culture that expresses love through simple, repeated actions. Habituation and teacher role modeling serve as a bridge between the Panca Cinta values as a curricular concept and children's character as an educational outcome that can be observed in everyday life. It is therefore recommended that RA Asy-Syuhada' maintain consistent habituation practices and teacher role modeling throughout all school activities while strengthening communication with parents to ensure that Panca Cinta values are applied continuously at home. Teachers may also develop a more systematic documentation process for children's character development so that changes in behavior can be observed over time.

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