

A Literature Review: Integrating Multicultural Values into the Love Curriculum

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRAK
Volume: 4 ISSN: 2963-5489 KEYWORDS Multicultural Education, Love Curriculum, Inclusivity, Islamic Education, Tolerance Values	Indonesia’s cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious diversity are both a valuable asset and a challenge in building a harmonious society. In this context, multicultural education serves as a strategic approach to foster inclusive, tolerant, and respect for differences. On the other hand, Love Curriculum initiated by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs places values such as compassion, empathy, and responsibility as the foundation of character building for students. Although both share similar goals, the integration of multicultural education and the Love Curriculum has not been widely explored within a unified conceptual framework. This study aimed to explore the potential integration of multicultural education values into the Love Curriculum to strengthen the humanistic and inclusive dimensions of Islamic education. This research used is a literature review method, analyzing relevant sources on multicultural education theory, the Love Curriculum, and humanistic curriculum models. The findings showed that there is strong overlap of values between the two, including tolerance, empathy, appreciation of diversity, and social justice. Such integration is seen as a transformative approach to Curriculum development that emphasizes not only cognitive and spiritual aspects but also the emotional and social growth of students. This research provides both theoretical and practical contributions in designing Islamic education that is more responsive to the challenges of a pluralistic society and the character crisis among younger generations.

1. Introduction

Indonesia is a country that rich in cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious diversity. This diversity is not only a source of national strength but also carries strategic value in shaping national identity. However, pluralism also poses challenges for Indonesian society in dealing with differences. An adaptive and inclusive attitude is therefore required so that the society can adjust and accwpt the realities of life in a multicultural context.

At this stage, multicultural education can be seen as a gift and blessing for the universe, due to its role in maintaining harmony, sustainability, and continuity of life with the spirit of competing in goodness. This form of education encourages healthy and creative competition amid differences. Multicultural education can also be analogized as a journey to the top of a mountain, from which individuals gain a broader perspective and avoid being trapped in narrow ways of thinking. Additionally, it can be interpreted as a spiritual and faith-based process of aligning with the divine order of the universe,

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recognizing the diversity and vastness of God’s grace in a complex and dynamic life. Ultimately, this leads to real social piety, contributing to the creation of a harmonious life while rejecting all forms of violence, oppression, and narrow-minded fanaticism (Fitrah Sugiarto, 2023). Islamic religious education plays a strategic role in shaping the character and religious understanding of students. In an increasingly diverse society, this education faces significant challenges. One of the main challenges is how to instill values of tolerance, mutual respect, and the ability to live peacefully amid differences in belief. Therefore, Islamic religious education not only serves as a means to deepen Islamic teachings but also as a medium to cultivate awareness of the importance of respecting diversity and fostering peace. By strengthening universal values such as tolerance and appreciation for differences, Islamic education has the potential to make a real contribution to building harmony and interfaith unity in a pluralistic society (Yasin & Rahmadian, 2024).

Through the implementation of multicultural education, students can develop open-mindedness, understand cultural and religious diversity, and appreciate the unique contributions each culture offers to social life. By integrating these values into the education system, Indonesia has the opportunity to foster a harmonious society, one that respects differences and strengthens unity in diversity as a foundation for national progress. The urgency to develop multicultural education in Indonesia is becoming increasingly evident, especially in responding to the character crisis faced by the millennial generation. Through learning about cultural diversity and instilling values of tolerance and mutual understanding, education can play a crucial role in fostering empathy, respect for differences, and reducing prejudice and discrimination among students (Adelia, 2024). Love is the primary force that drives humans to do good and avoid evil. Love is not merely an emotional feeling, but a spiritual power that can guide human actions. In Islamic education, love is understood as a moral development effort that aims to shape students who are not only academically intelligent but also noble in character (Mahda et al., 2025). The Love Curriculum is designed as a long-term strategy to shape students who excel not only in academics but also in empathy, tolerance, and a strong sense of national identity (Collins et al., 2021).

Although numerous studies have explored multicultural values and the concept of a love-based curriculum separately, there remains a gap in integrating these two approaches into a cohesive curriculum framework. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by deeply exploring the values of multicultural education and the principles of the love curriculum. Through this approach, it is expected to generate new perspectives and relevant conceptual formulations for integrating multicultural values into the love curriculum, thereby strengthening the dimensions of inclusivity, humanization, and harmony in the educational process. This study also aims to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of a curriculum that is responsive to diversity.

2. Literature Review

Qamariah & Anwar (2025) identified three fundamental dimensions of a love-based Curriculum: its philosophical foundation rooted in the Islamic concept of *rahmatan lil ‘alamin* (mercy to all creation), a pedagogical emphasis on emotional intelligence, and practical challenges in implementation. Integrating humanistic values with Islamic education principles shapes a framework that strengthen character building, while also addressing contemporary educational challenges such as digital and social fragmentation. (Qamariah and Anwar, 2025).

Syaripudin et al. (2025) reported that 92% of teachers agree on the importance of a love-based curriculum, though only 41% fully understand the concept. Although not officially implemented, values such as love for God, humanity, the environment, and the nation are being implicitly taught. However, a major challenge lies in the lack of official modules and training for educators, which has resulted in limited integration of these values. This study concluded that Love Curriculum has the potential to become transformative Curriculum innovation, provided that sufficient structural, pedagogical, and regulatory support is in place. (Syaripudin Sukiman and Hasna, 2025).

Kurniawan & Astutik (2025) highlighted that multicultural education fosters egalitarian, appreciative, and tolerant cultures by reflecting on historical cases of multiculturalism and its crises. Fostering an egalitarian, appreciative, and tolerant culture amid vast differences and diversity. By exploring various examples of multiculturalism and multicultural crises from the past, students can use them as reflection materials to weave, nurture, and preserve diversity, nationalism, national identity, and character building. (Kurniawan and Astutik, 2025).

3. Methodology

This study employs the library research method, a qualitative approach conducted by collecting, studying, and analyzing various relevant written sources to build conceptual arguments and conclusions. This approach was chosen because the focus of the research is not only collecting direct empirical data, but rather on theoretical exploration and the development of ideas related to the Love Curriculum and multicultural education.

4. Results and Discussion

Multicultural education comes from the word education and multicultural. Education is a process of developing a person's attitudes and behavior in an effort to help them mature through teaching, training, processes, actions, and methods that are educative. On the other hand, education is also the transfer of knowledge, or the transmission of knowledge. Etymologically, multicultural means many or diverse. Etymologically, culture comes from the Latin word *colere*, which means to cultivate, to work on, to fertilize, and to develop. This understanding evolved to mean that culture refers to all human efforts and activities to transform and develop nature. In Indonesian, the word *budaya* (culture) derives from the Sanskrit word *buddayah*, the plural form of *buddhi*, which means mind or intellect. Terminologically, the words education and multicultural refer to the process of developing all human potential while respecting plurality and heterogeneity as a consequence of cultural, ethnic, tribal, and religious diversity (Islam et al., 2017).

Multicultural education is a pedagogical approach that not only functions as a medium to recognize cultural diversity but also aims to instill a deep understanding of these differences. It represents a set of beliefs and interpretations that emphasize the importance of cultural and ethnic diversity in lifestyles, social experiences, personal identity, and educational opportunities for individuals and groups. Moreover, multicultural education is viewed as an idea, a movement, an innovation in the field of education, and a process of educational transformation aimed at reforming the structure of educational institutions. The goal is to ensure that all students including those with special needs and those from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds have equal access to academic achievement in schools. According to Banks, there are five essential dimensions of multicultural education that must be present: First, integration of multicultural education into the Curriculum. Second, construction of knowledge. Third, prejudice reduction. Fourth, equity pedagogy. Lastly, empowerment of school culture and social structure (Dharma, Waston, & Maksum, 2023). Multicultural education is a progressive approach to transforming education by thoroughly addressing deficiencies, failures, and discriminatory practices in the educational process (Supriatin & Nasution, 2017). Beyond mere recognition, multicultural education shapes students' personalities and attitudes so that they can appreciate, accept, and acknowledge the existence and value of every culture in society. Through this process, it is hoped that individuals who are inclusive, tolerant, and socially aware of the importance of living together in diversity will emerge. This type of education becomes increasingly relevant in the context of globalization and the heterogeneity of modern society, where the skills to interact harmoniously in a multicultural environment are essential. Education based on multiculturalism assumes that every student has equal opportunities to develop their full potential. Furthermore, it prepares students to actively engage in a culturally diverse society and equips educators to support the learning process effectively without questioning the cultural similarities or differences between teachers and students. Schools, in turn, are required to play an active role in eliminating all forms of oppression (Imam Bukhori, 2019).

Education grounded in multicultural principles is not only understood as an effort to create a sense of equality among students in developing their potential but must also concretely aim to form the perspective that differences are not a source of harm, but rather a potential that can generate collective good. In this context, all elements within the school environment, including educators and education staff, have a strategic role in realizing these values of equality. One concrete contribution is the integration of multicultural education values into the implemented curriculum. If the curriculum is systematically designed, well-directed, and consistently implemented, it will significantly impact not only students in shaping inclusive attitudes but also educators and staff in creating a fair, harmonious, and diversity-responsive learning environment.

A Literature Review: Integrating Multicultural Values into the Love Curriculum

The Love Curriculum was initiated by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs in 2024 as a transformative learning strategy based on the values of love. This curriculum is not a separate subject but is integrated into the entire learning process and school culture. The four main pillars forming the foundation of this curriculum include:

1. Love for God (*hablum minallah*),
2. Love for fellow human beings (*hablum minannas*),
3. Love for the environment (*hablum bil bi'ah*), and
4. Love for the nation and homeland (*hubbul wathan*).

These pillars are rooted in universal Islamic teachings and other noble religious values that emphasize balance between vertical (human–God) and horizontal (human–human/environment) relationships. The Love Curriculum is closely related to several curriculum theories that emphasize students’ social, emotional, and moral development. One of the most relevant theories is the Humanistic Curriculum Theory by Carl Ransom Rogers, a leading figure in humanistic psychology. The relevance of Rogers’ theory lies in the emphasis that the Love Curriculum focuses not only on academic achievement but also on character building through values such as compassion, empathy, tolerance, cooperation, responsibility, justice, and respect for others. This aligns closely with the principles of humanistic theory, which places students at the center of learning and encourages the development of a whole personality involving social and emotional aspects (Qathrun Nada & Listiana, n.d.). The Love Curriculum is an educational concept rooted in religious teachings that places love as the foundation for character formation. Love is viewed not merely as an emotion but as a spiritual force that drives humans to do good and avoid wrongdoing. In the context of Islamic education, love serves as the foundation for moral development that leads to both intellectual intelligence and noble character. This curriculum aims to foster empathy, respect for diversity, and prioritize compassion in students’ lives (Mahda et al., 2025). The Love Curriculum emphasizes students’ social, emotional, and moral development, grounded in compassion. It aligns with Carl Rogers’ Humanistic Curriculum Theory, which positions students as the center of learning and encourages the development of a complete personality. Rooted in religious teachings, especially in Islamic education, love is seen as a spiritual force that shapes noble character, nurturing empathy, tolerance, and respect for others.

The Love Curriculum plays an important role in shaping students’ character. Through this curriculum, students are trained to show care, tolerance, discipline, honesty, and responsibility. In daily life, they are encouraged to dispose of trash properly, respect friends from different backgrounds, and complete school assignments responsibly. The values of love instilled through this curriculum help students grow not only intellectually but also emotionally and spiritually (Arham, 2025).

A love-based curriculum is vital in creating a more inclusive learning environment. In traditional Islamic education systems, diversity among students is often overlooked. However, through an approach that emphasizes compassion and care, educators become more sensitive to students’ differences. They strive to understand and respect each individual regardless of social, economic, or cultural background (Dinata et al., 2025). The connection between the concepts and values of multicultural education and the aims of Islamic education lies in their shared vision of forming *insan kamil*, a complete human being who excels spiritually (pious) and intellectually while possessing noble character. Such individuals can build good relationships with God while maintaining harmonious relationships with fellow humans. This aligns with the human nature that desires peace, harmony, equality, and happiness, values that are also championed in multicultural education (Muzayaroh, 2021). The Love Curriculum, which places love and compassion at the core of the learning process, shares a profound alignment with the goals of Islamic education and the values of multicultural education. Both emphasize the formation of *insan kamil* individuals who are not only intellectually and spiritually intelligent but also possess noble character. The Love Curriculum supports the realization of individuals capable of maintaining good relationships with God and with others through values of compassion, empathy, and tolerance. These values are also central to multicultural education, which promotes peace, harmony, equality, and happiness.

Although there has not yet been a specific and in-depth study on the integration of multicultural education values and the Love Curriculum, literature reviews, critical analysis, and the examination of various relevant references lead to the conclusion that the two concepts share strong value-based connections. The values contained in the Love Curriculum, such as compassion, empathy, tolerance, and respect for others are highly consistent with the principles of multicultural education, which emphasize equality, respect for differences, and social harmony. Therefore, integrating the values of the Love Curriculum and multicultural education is highly relevant and has strong potential to be applied in the context of Islamic

education, in order to develop students who are not only intellectually and spiritually intelligent but also possess strong character and noble morals in social life.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that the integration of multicultural education values and the Love Curriculum hold strong potential in strengthening the dimensions of humanization, inclusivity, and character formation within Islamic education. Multicultural education emphasizes appreciation for diversity and the cultivation of tolerance, while the Love Curriculum highlights the importance of compassion, empathy, and responsibility as the foundation of learning. Through literature review, it was found that both share significant overlapping values and can complement each other in shaping well-rounded learners both intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, and socially. This integration is expected to serve as a transformative curriculum model capable of addressing the challenges of a pluralistic society and overcoming the character crisis among the younger generation. Further development through empirical research is highly recommended to examine its effectiveness in the context of formal education in Indonesia.

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