E-ISSN: 3031-8629
P-ISSN: 3032-3258

Halaman 5726-5736
Volume 3 Nomor 4 Tahun 2026

Implementation of Love-Based Curriculum in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah: Operational Obstacles and Strategic Solutions

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Abstract

This study investigates the operational obstacles and formulates strategic solutions for implementing the Love-Based Curriculum (*Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta*/KBC) and the eight dimensions of graduate profiles across Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) in Magelang Regency. Utilizing an evaluative descriptive mixed-methods design, data were collected through an interactive pre-test quiz involving 30 primary teachers and a survey distributed to 45 MI teachers, supplemented by qualitative interviews with principals and supervisors. Quantitative findings revealed high baseline theoretical knowledge among teachers, with an average accuracy of 90%. However, empirical survey analysis uncovered a significant operational gap: 86.7% of participants reported an insufficient operational understanding of KBC and its graduate profile dimensions. Major implementation barriers included inadequate structured professional development (77.8%), excessive administrative burdens (82.2%), and low student critical thinking engagement (77.8%). To bridge this policy-practice divide, the study proposes the SMART strategic framework (Spiritual, Mindful, Artistic, Responsive, Tailored) to facilitate continuous Teacher Professional Development and simplify administrative procedures in Islamic primary education settings.

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Keywords : *love-based curriculum, graduate profiles, madrasah ibtidaiyah, primary education, teacher professional development*

INTRODUCTION

National education in Indonesia currently faces a complex multi-dimensional crisis. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results highlight an ongoing learning deficit, characterized by below-average reading and mathematics scores compared to international benchmarks (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). Concurrently, issues such as educational dehumanization, verbal and physical bullying, and moral decline persist within primary and secondary education. The historical reliance on administrative formalism and rigid cognitive metrics has frequently overshadowed the holistic role of education as a humanizing process.

Primary education serves as a critical developmental stage for establishing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor foundations. In alignment with the *Indonesia Emas 2045* vision, national human resources require not only academic competence but also adaptability, ethical grounding, and mental-spiritual balance rooted in empathy (Fatimah & Prihantini, 2023). Responding to this imperative, the Ministry of Religious Affairs issued Director General of Islamic Education Decree No. 6077/1503 of 2025 regarding the Guidelines for the Love-Based Curriculum (*Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta*/KBC) (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2025a). KBC introduces a humanistic-transcendental framework designed to cultivate learning environments through *Panca Cinta* (Five Loves): love for God and the Prophet, knowledge, the environment, self and others, and the homeland (Ifendi, 2025). In parallel, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Regulation No. 10 of 2025 outlines eight graduate profile dimensions: faith, citizenship, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, independence, health, and communication (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, 2025).

Despite these policy frameworks, implementing KBC in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) presents operational challenges, particularly in rural contexts such as Magelang Regency, where infrastructure and training access vary (Surat Edaran Kantor Kementerian Agama Kabupaten Magelang, 2025). Primary data indicate persistent gaps in operationalizing character-focused pedagogy, excessive administrative duties, and limited targeted guidance. Recent research by Mukaromah et al. (2025) highlights that Islamic primary schools frequently encounter structural friction when transitioning toward love-based paradigms due to insufficient operational modules. Similarly, Khoeriyah (2024) observed that curriculum transitions in primary madrasahs are often hindered by teacher adaptation

delays and administrative overload. Therefore, this study aims to: (1) evaluate the baseline conceptual understanding of MI teachers regarding KBC and graduate profile integration, (2) identify specific operational, technical, and administrative obstacles encountered during implementation, and (3) formulate an adaptive, strategic framework to support continuous Teacher Professional Development (TPD).

METHOD

This research employed an evaluative descriptive mixed-methods design conducted during the first quarter of 2026 in Magelang Regency (Sukestiyarno, 2020). The design integrated quantitative measurements of baseline pedagogical knowledge with qualitative evaluations of operational obstacles (Afifuddin & Saebani, 2018; Arikunto, 1998; Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1982).

The study sample comprised two primary respondent groups. The first group included 30 MI teachers who participated in an interactive digital pre-test assessing core conceptual knowledge, including Problem-Based Learning (PBL), mindful learning, transcendental integration, pedagogical analogies, and the 3M framework (*Memahami*, *Mengaplikasi*, *Merefleksi*) which are consisting of understanding, applying, and reflecting (Suyanto, 2025). The second group comprised 45 MI teachers across multiple districts in Magelang Regency who completed a comprehensive implementation survey. Qualitative triangulation was conducted through semi-structured interviews with three school principals and one madrasa supervisor from the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Data collection utilized three validated instruments (Astuti & Bandur, 2018): an interactive 10-item multiple-choice quiz evaluating pedagogical knowledge, a mixed closed- and open-ended questionnaire addressing eight implementation dimensions (operational understanding, graduate profiles, transcendental integration, critical thinking, local art integration, competitive culture, workshop availability, and administrative workload), and document analysis of lesson plans and reflection journals. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentage distributions, accuracy means, and completion times. Cognitive processing efficiency during the assessment was calculated using the following formula:

$$\mathrm{E} = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \left(\frac{A_i}{T_i}\right) \mathrm{x}\ 100$$

Where E represents the Understanding Efficiency Index, A_i represents the accuracy score for item $_i$, and T_i represents the average response time per item in seconds. Qualitative data

from open-ended responses and interviews underwent data reduction, thematic categorization, context interpretation, and source triangulation (Afifuddin & Saebani, 2018).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The quantitative evaluation of baseline theoretical understanding among 30 MI teachers demonstrated strong foundational familiarity with modern pedagogical concepts. Out of 300 total response instances (30 participants across 10 items), participants achieved 260 correct answers, 9 incorrect answers, and 31 unattempted items, yielding an overall mean accuracy of 90% with an average completion time of 3 minutes and 43 seconds per session. Itemized analysis details are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Analysis result per Question Item of KBC Pre-Test and Deep Learning (N=30)z

No	Material/Pre-Test Question Focus	Question Type	Accuracy	Average Time
1	PBL steps for deep learning	Multiple choice	93%	00:00:24
2	Discussion with notable figure	Multiple choice	90%	00:00:20
3	Student involvement in deep learning	Multiple choice	90%	00:00:20
4	Basic principles of mindful learning in the classroom	Multiple choice	86%	00:00:23
5	Appropriate learning goals matching KBC principles	Multiple choice	86%	00:00:17
6	Integration of environmental action (tree) and transcendental values	Multiple choice	90%	00:00:16
7	Teacher's analogy as 'farmer' in KBC concept	Multiple choice	90%	00:00:22
8	Digital learning strategy with limited devices	Multiple choice	90%	00:00:36
9	Utilization of interactive quizzes for remediation	Multiple choice	90%	00:00:33
10	Formation of 3M learning experience plans	Multiple choice	93%	00:00:29

As shown in Table 1, the highest accuracy rates (93%) occurred on items regarding Problem-Based Learning (Item 1) and the 3M learning experience (Item 10). Conversely, lower accuracy rates were observed for mindful learning (86%, Item 4) and KBC principle integration (86%, Item 5). These outcomes indicate that while educators possess theoretical familiarity with active learning terminology, operationalizing these concepts into context-specific classroom indicators presents challenges (Muqtada, Nurjanah, Nurhasanah, &

Agustyaningrum, 2023; Rosa, Destian, Agustian, & Wahyudin, 2024).

Despite high baseline quiz scores, the operational survey of 45 MI teachers revealed noticeable implementation gaps. Table 2 details participant responses across the eight evaluation dimensions.

Table 2. Distributions of Respondents' Responses towards 8 Dimensions of KBC Implementation (N=45)

No	Evaluation Dimension	Main Response Categorization	Total	Percentage
1	KBC operational understanding	Do not fully understand yet	39	86.7%
2	8 dimensions of graduate profile	Do not fully understand yet	39	86.7%
3	Transcendental integration	Not difficlut/ well conducted	31	68.9%
4	Students' critical thinking	Students face difficulty	35	77.8%
5	Arts and Magelang local wisdom	Not yet/ technical problems and funding	26	57.8%
6	Competition culture effect	Does not hinder (balanced)	35	77.8%
7	Workshop availability	Need more intensive workshops	35	77.8%
8	Teachers' administrative burdens	Excessive, reduces instructional time	37	82.2%

The empirical results indicate four primary implementation barriers:

Policy and Technical Disconnection: A total of 86.7% of respondents reported incomplete operational understanding of KBC and its graduate profile dimensions. Qualitative feedback highlighted limited dissemination and a lack of standardized technical modules (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2025b). As noted by one teacher: *"Limited socialization from the ministry leaves us uncertain when designing learning instruments and evaluating new dimension indicators"*.

Student Critical Thinking Engagement: While 68.9% of teachers reported no major difficulties integrating transcendental values due to established religious routines, 77.8% identified low student critical thinking as a significant constraint. Passive learning habits and low reading engagement hinder the transition toward deeper inquiry (Hattie, 2008; Smith & Colby, 2007).

Resource and Local Wisdom Integration: Integrating local culture (e.g., Borobudur ceramics or Krendes dance) remains limited for 57.8% of respondents, primarily due to insufficient module resources and budget constraints. This finding echoes Pradita, Jannah,

Hanif, Afiq, and Nazilah (2025), who demonstrated that integrating local cultural media requires structured digital and physical supplementary tools. Conversely, 77.8% indicated that academic competition does not inherently impede collaborative learning when managed effectively.

Administrative Demands and Professional Development: Administrative requirements represent a major barrier, with 82.2% of teachers reporting that extensive documentation reduces time available for active instructional planning. Additionally, 77.8% expressed a need for practical, practice-oriented workshops. Modern educational technology and simplified workflows are needed to relieve this administrative pressure (Yustiasari Liriwati, 2023).

These empirical findings align with observations by Mukaromah et al. (2025), who noted that curriculum implementation challenges often stem from discrepancies between macro-level policy design and micro-level classroom readiness. High theoretical scores (90%) do not automatically translate into operational execution without structured support systems. Furthermore, as highlighted by Widiastuty et al. (2025) and Samadi, Rifai, Nurishlah, and Mulyana (2024) regarding Teacher Professional Development (TPD), educational transitions require adaptive support ecosystems.

To address these systemic gaps, this study proposes the **SMART Strategic Framework**:

- **Spiritual Integration (S):** Developing cross-disciplinary guidebooks that systematically connect general academic subjects with *Panca Cinta* values (Ifendi, 2025).
- **Mindful Pedagogy (M):** Implementing active learning strategies, including digital interactive tools and Problem-Based Learning, to encourage student participation (Smith & Colby, 2007; Suyanto, 2025).
- **Artistic & Local Wisdom (A):** Curating accessible resource catalogs centered on regional heritage (such as Magelang pottery and traditional arts) for co-curricular activities (Pradita et al., 2025).
- **Responsive Administrative Simplification (R):** Streamlining lesson plan structures into functional 2-to-3-page templates to reduce administrative overhead (Khoeriyah, 2024).
- **Tailored Capacity Building (T):** Establishing local learning communities within Teacher Working Groups (*Kelompok Kerja Guru*/KKG) to conduct targeted, practice-based instructional workshops (Widiastuty et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers in Magelang Regency demonstrate high baseline theoretical knowledge regarding the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC), evidenced by a 90% mean accuracy score on conceptual assessments. However, operational execution encounters substantial challenges, with 86.7% of educators reporting inadequate technical clarity, 82.2% identifying administrative workloads as a constraint on instructional preparation, 77.8% requesting structured professional development, and 77.8% observing low critical thinking engagement among students. To bridge this gap between policy intent and classroom practice, the SMART strategic framework (Spiritual, Mindful, Artistic, Responsive, Tailored) provides a structured approach emphasizing administrative simplification, localized professional development through Teacher Working Groups (KKG), and the integration of regional cultural heritage. Stakeholders—including the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Magelang Regency, school supervisors, and KKG coordinators—are encouraged to adopt simplified lesson planning templates and establish continuous, practice-oriented training modules to support effective curriculum implementation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors express their gratitude to the Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat (LPPM) Universitas Tidar for financial support under the *Penelitian Stimulus Asisten Ahli* scheme (DIPA Untidar, Fiscal Year 2026). Special appreciation is extended to the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Magelang Regency, school supervisors, principals, and participating Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers across Magelang Regency for their cooperation during data collection.

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