



Integrating Deep Learning and a Love-Based Curriculum to Enhance Meaningful Learning in Islamic Primary Education

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Abstract: This study explores how deep learning can be integrated with a love-based curriculum to enhance meaningful learning in Islamic primary education. Although scholars have widely discussed deep learning as a student-centered approach and linked love-based education to character and relational development, limited empirical research has explored how schools combine these two educational approaches to promote meaningful learning. Using a qualitative case study design, the researchers conducted the study at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 3 Jember, Indonesia. They collected data through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis involving the school principal, teachers, students, and parents. The researchers analyzed the data using an interactive model consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that integrating deep learning with a love-based curriculum fostered more active participation, deeper contextual understanding, reflective thinking, and collaborative meaning-making among students. At the same time, the values of empathy, care, respect, and emotional support fostered a safe, positive classroom climate that strengthened students' motivation, confidence, and social interaction. Instructional leadership, teacher collaboration, and parental involvement supported the implementation of this approach. This study contributes to the development of an integrative pedagogical framework that connects cognitive engagement with affective and relational values in Islamic primary education. The findings suggest that caring relationships and value-oriented classroom practices can strengthen meaningful learning when they support student-centered pedagogy.

Keywords: Deep Learning; Islamic Primary Education; Madrasah Ibtidaiyah; Love-Based Curriculum; Meaningful Learning; Student-Centered Learning.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi integrasi deep learning dan kurikulum berbasis cinta untuk meningkatkan pembelajaran bermakna dalam pendidikan dasar Islam. Meskipun deep learning telah banyak dibahas sebagai pendekatan pembelajaran yang berpusat pada siswa, dan pendidikan berbasis cinta dikaitkan dengan pengembangan karakter serta relasi pedagogis, masih terbatas kajian empiris yang menjelaskan bagaimana kedua perspektif tersebut dapat diintegrasikan dalam praktik pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif yang dilaksanakan di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 3 Jember, Indonesia. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan

analisis dokumen yang melibatkan kepala madrasah, guru, siswa, dan orang tua. Data dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif yang mencakup kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa integrasi deep learning dan kurikulum berbasis cinta mendorong partisipasi aktif, pemahaman kontekstual, berpikir reflektif, dan konstruksi makna secara kolaboratif di kalangan siswa. Pada saat yang sama, nilai empati, kepedulian, penghargaan, dan dukungan emosional menciptakan iklim kelas yang aman dan positif sehingga memperkuat motivasi, kepercayaan diri, dan interaksi sosial siswa. Implementasi pendekatan ini didukung oleh kepemimpinan instruksional, kolaborasi guru, dan keterlibatan orang tua. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan kerangka pedagogis integratif yang menghubungkan keterlibatan kognitif dengan nilai afektif dan relasional dalam pendidikan dasar Islam. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran bermakna dapat diperkuat ketika pedagogi yang berpusat pada siswa didukung oleh relasi yang penuh kepedulian dan praktik kelas yang berorientasi pada nilai.

Kata kunci: Deep Learning; Pendidikan Dasar Islam; Madrasah Ibtidaiyah; Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta; Pembelajaran Bermakna; Pembelajaran Berpusat Pada Siswa.

Introduction

The rapid transformation of twenty-first-century education has reshaped expectations for primary education systems. Learning is no longer understood merely as the transmission of knowledge, but as a holistic process that enables students to think critically, construct meaning, collaborate with others, and apply knowledge in real-life contexts. In this regard, meaningful learning has become an important educational orientation because it encourages students to connect new information with prior experiences and use their understanding in authentic situations (Napitupulu et al., 2025). However, in many classroom contexts, learning practices remain dominated by teacher-centered instruction, memorization, textbook dependence, and completion of the curriculum. Such practices often result in superficial learning experiences and limit students' ability to develop deeper understanding, reflective thinking, and long-term knowledge application (Rohman et al., 2026).

In Indonesia, educational reform through the Merdeka Belajar policy has emphasized flexibility, student-centered learning, and the integration of character education into classroom practice. This policy seeks to prepare students who are not only academically competent but also morally grounded, socially aware, and adaptive to changing educational and social demands (Maharani et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the implementation of this reform at the school level remains uneven. Many teachers still face challenges in shifting from conventional instruction to more innovative, participatory, and student-centered approaches (Oktaviana et al., 2025; Syah et al., 2025). As a result, classroom learning in many primary schools continues to prioritize cognitive achievement while giving limited attention to students' affective, relational, and social development.

Initial observations at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 3 Jember also reflected this issue. Teachers generally organized learning activities around lesson planning and subject content delivery. Students often acted as passive recipients of information, while classroom interaction remained formal and instructional. The classroom still offered limited opportunities for inquiry, reflection, dialogue, and collaborative meaning-making. Although students achieved acceptable academic results, they still needed

support to explain concepts independently, relate learning to daily life, and express their ideas confidently. These initial conditions highlight the need for a pedagogical approach that enhances cognitive engagement while strengthening emotional security, relational closeness, and value-based learning.

One relevant approach to address this issue is deep learning. Deep learning emphasizes students' active engagement in understanding concepts, relating ideas, reflecting on learning processes, and applying knowledge across contexts. [Biggs and Tang \(2011\)](#) explain that deep learning occurs when students are intrinsically motivated to seek meaning, relate ideas, and actively construct knowledge. Similarly, [Hattie \(2012\)](#) argues that effective learning requires visible thinking processes in which students become aware of how they learn and how they build understanding. In this sense, deep learning moves beyond memorization by encouraging learners to construct meaning through reflective, mindful, and contextual learning experiences ([Feriyanto & Anjariyah, 2024](#); [Dumiyati et al., 2025](#); [Khofifah et al., 2025](#); [Nafi'ah & Faruq, 2025](#)). Therefore, deep learning provides an important foundation for developing conceptual understanding, critical thinking, and meaningful knowledge construction in primary education.

However, cognitive strategies alone cannot produce deep learning. Meaningful learning also requires a supportive emotional and relational classroom climate. In this context, a love-based curriculum offers an important pedagogical perspective by emphasizing compassion, empathy, respect, care, and emotional support throughout the learning process.

[Velasquez et al. \(2013\)](#) and [Wentzel \(2022\)](#) argue that education should be grounded in caring relationships that support students' well-being and development. In Islamic education, these values are closely related to the principle of rahmah, which positions compassion as a foundation for nurturing intellectual, moral, emotional, and spiritual growth. Thus, a love-based curriculum provides an affective and relational basis for strengthening students' motivation, confidence, and sense of belonging in the classroom.

Integrating deep learning with a values-based curriculum closely aligns with the mission of Islamic primary education, in which madrasahs seek to foster academic competence alongside character development and moral formation. [Chanifudin et al. \(2025\)](#) and [Sutiana & Nugraha, \(2025\)](#) emphasize that value-based education in madrasahs should foster students who are intellectually capable and morally responsible. By integrating deep learning with love-based values, classroom practice can become both intellectually challenging and emotionally supportive. Such integration enables students to engage deeply with academic content while also developing empathy, respect, responsibility, and positive social interaction.

Previous studies have provided important insights into deep learning, character education, and emotionally supportive learning environments. [Kusumastuti et al. \(2019\)](#) showed that reflective learning strategies can improve students' conceptual understanding in primary education. [Feriyanto and Anjariyah \(2024\)](#) highlighted the relevance of meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning in strengthening student engagement. [Dumiyati et al. \(2025\)](#) and [Nafi'ah & Faruq, \(2025\)](#) found that interactive and meaningful learning strategies can enhance collaboration and creativity. [Durlak et al. \(2011\)](#) and [Reyes et al. \(2012\)](#) emphasized the importance of emotionally supportive learning environments for improving student motivation and participation. Meanwhile, [Khofifah et al. \(2025\)](#) demonstrated that teacher leadership

and modeling play an important role in implementing deep learning within Islamic primary schools.

Although these studies are valuable, most of them discuss deep learning and love-based or character-oriented education as separate dimensions. Research on deep learning generally focuses on cognitive engagement, conceptual understanding, and student-centered strategies. At the same time, studies on love-based or character education tend to emphasize moral formation, teacher-student relationships, and affective development. Few empirical studies have examined the integration of these two perspectives into a single pedagogical framework, particularly in Islamic primary education. This gap underscores the need for an integrative model that links cognitive engagement with affective and relational values to promote meaningful, holistic learning.

To address this gap, the present study explores the implementation of a deep learning-oriented love-based curriculum at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 3 Jember. This study addresses four research questions: how teachers implement deep learning principles in classroom practice; how they integrate love-based values into the learning process; how the integration of deep learning and love-based values supports meaningful learning; and what factors support the implementation of this integrated approach. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of an integrative pedagogical framework that combines cognitive and affective dimensions of learning. Practically, it provides insights for teachers, school leaders, and policymakers in designing learning environments that are student-centered, emotionally supportive, and value-oriented.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design to explore the implementation of a deep learning-oriented love-based curriculum in fostering meaningful learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 3 Jember, Indonesia. A case study design was appropriate because the study focused on understanding a specific educational practice within its natural school context. The research was conducted over four months, from January to April 2025, allowing the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of classroom practices, teacher-student interactions, and the integration of cognitive and affective dimensions in learning.

The researchers selected Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 3 Jember purposively because the school integrates general and religious education. This context suited the study because meaningful learning in madrasah education requires cognitive engagement alongside moral, emotional, and relational development. The participants consisted of one school principal, six classroom teachers from Grades IV to VI, 20 students, and five parents. The researchers selected them through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the teaching and learning process, familiarity with curriculum implementation, and ability to provide relevant information on deep learning and love-based values.

Table 1. Participants and Data Sources

| Participant | Number | Selection Criteria | Data Collection Technique | Purpose of Data |
|------------------|--------|---|---|---|
| School principal | 1 | Responsible for school leadership and curriculum implementation | Semi-structured interview and document analysis | To obtain information about school policy, leadership support, and curriculum direction |

| | | | | |
|--------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Classroom teachers | 6 | Teachers of grades IV–VI directly involved in classroom instruction | Semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis | To explore instructional strategies, integration of love-based values, and classroom practices |
| Students | 20 | Students actively involved in observed learning activities | Semi-structured interviews and classroom observations | To understand students' learning experiences, engagement, confidence, and participation |
| Parents | 5 | Parents whose children participated in the learning process | Semi-structured interviews | To obtain information about students' learning behavior and character development outside the classroom |
| Learning documents | Lesson plans, teaching materials, students' work, and school documents | Documents related to curriculum and classroom learning | Document analysis | To support triangulation and verify the consistency between planned, implemented, and perceived practices |

The researchers collected data through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Classroom observations focused on instructional strategies, student engagement, teacher–student interactions, and the integration of deep learning and love-based values in classroom practice. The researchers interviewed the school principal, teachers, students, and parents to explore curriculum implementation, learning experiences, emotional support, and supporting factors. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes. With participants' consent, the researchers audio-recorded and transcribed the interviews for analysis. Document analysis covered lesson plans, teaching materials, students' work, and school policy documents to compare the planned curriculum, observed practices, and participants' perceptions.

The researcher served as the primary instrument, supported by observation protocols, interview guides, and documentation sheets developed in line with the research objectives. These instruments focused on five main aspects aligned with the study findings: initial learning conditions, the implementation of deep learning principles, the integration of love-based values, the development of meaningful learning, and the supporting factors for implementation.

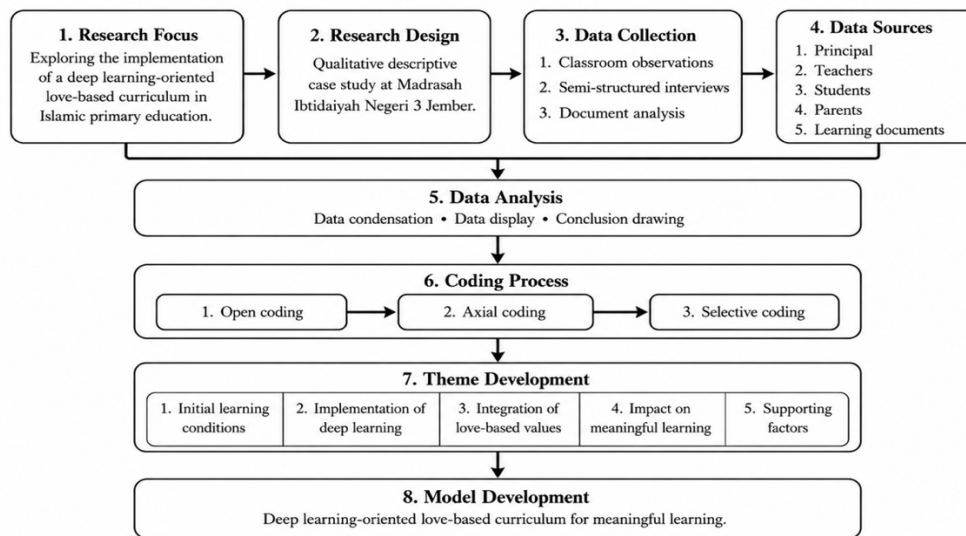


Figure 1. Research Procedure and Qualitative Data Analysis Flow

Figure 1 illustrates the study's inductive qualitative process. The researchers gathered data from multiple sources through observations, interviews, and document analysis. They analyzed the data through data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, and a three-stage coding process. The resulting themes provided the basis for developing a deep learning-oriented love-based curriculum model.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. To strengthen analytical transparency, the coding process used open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. This process enabled the researcher to move systematically from raw data to categories and major themes, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Coding Procedure and Theme Development

| Coding Stage | Analytical Process | Examples Codes/Categories | of | Resulting Themes |
|------------------|--|---|--|--|
| Open coding | Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were read repeatedly to identify meaningful units related to classroom practices, student engagement, teacher-student interaction, and value-based learning. | Memorization, participation, orientation, learning, contextualization, empathy, reinforcement, safety, confidence, parental support | passive content collaborative positive emotional | Initial codes related to cognitive, affective, relational, and contextual learning practices |
| Axial coding | Similar codes were grouped into broader analytical categories by identifying relationships among patterns found across interviews, observations, and documents. | Teacher-centered practice, surface learning, engagement, construction, interaction, classroom climate, home-school partnership | practice, active meaning caring supportive | Broader categories explaining how instructional and relational practices shaped learning experiences |
| Selective coding | Major themes were developed by integrating categories that best explained the implementation of a deep learning-oriented love-based curriculum. | Integration of deep learning strategies, love-based values, meaningful learning, and supporting factors | | Five major themes: initial learning conditions, implementation of deep learning, integration of love-based values, impact on meaningful learning, and supporting factors |

The researchers developed the deep learning-oriented love-based curriculum model inductively from the themes generated through data analysis. They did not predetermine the model before analysis; rather, the model emerged from a systematic interpretation of recurring patterns in observations, interviews, and documents. The researchers continuously compared empirical findings with relevant theoretical perspectives to ensure analytical rigor and conceptual alignment.

The researchers ensured trustworthiness through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. They strengthened credibility through prolonged engagement, triangulation of data sources and methods, and member checking with selected participants. They supported dependability through an audit trail that documented the research process, data collection procedures, coding process, and analytical decisions. They maintained confirmability through reflective field notes and systematic comparison between raw data and emerging interpretations. They addressed transferability by providing a detailed description of the research context, participants, and learning practices.

The researchers maintained ethical considerations throughout the research process. They obtained informed consent from all adult participants, while the school and parents or guardians approved students' participation. They informed participants about the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of their involvement, and their right to withdraw. They ensured confidentiality by anonymizing participants' identities and using coded references in their reporting. They used all data solely for research purposes.

Result

1. Initial Conditions of Learning Practices at MIN 3 Jember

This sub-section presents the initial condition of learning practices before the implementation of the Deep Learning-Oriented Love Curriculum. It focuses on identifying the dominant instructional approaches, student participation, and the general characteristics of classroom interaction. Understanding the baseline condition is essential to highlight the gap between conventional practices and the expected meaningful learning environment.

Table 3. Interview and Observation Data on Initial Learning Conditions

| No | Informant | Empirical Data | Code | Thematic Interpretation |
|----|-------------|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Principal | "Before, learning was mainly focused on completing the material according to the lesson plan. Teachers ensured that all topics were delivered, but there was limited emphasis on whether students deeply understood the concepts." | Content orientation | Surface learning focus |
| 2 | Teacher | "Students usually followed instructions, took notes, and answered questions from the book. However, many of them memorized the material without really understanding it, so they often forgot after the lesson." | Memorization | Limited conceptual depth |
| 3 | Observation | Students were observed sitting quietly, listening to the teacher, and writing notes. Interaction was minimal, and only a few students responded when asked questions. | Passive participation | Teacher-centered practice |
| 4 | Student | "We usually just listen to the teacher and write what is explained. Sometimes we | Instructional dependency | Low engagement |

memorize the material for tests, but it is difficult to understand it clearly.”

Table 3 shows that the initial learning practices at MIN 3 Jember were predominantly teacher-centered, with a strong emphasis on content delivery and curriculum completion. Students were positioned as passive recipients of knowledge, and learning activities rarely involved active engagement or critical thinking. This condition indicates a dominance of surface learning, with memorization prioritized over deep understanding. Such practices limit students' ability to construct meaning and apply knowledge in real-life contexts. Therefore, this initial condition underscores the need for a transformative approach that promotes meaningful learning through deep engagement and relational interaction.

2. Implementation of Deep Learning in Classroom Practices

This sub-section describes how deep learning principles were introduced and implemented in classroom practices. It focuses on instructional strategies, student participation, and the extent to which learning activities promote critical thinking, reflection, and contextual understanding.

Table 4. Interview and Observation Data on Deep Learning Implementation

| No | Informant | Empirical Data | Code | Thematic Interpretation |
|----|-------------|--|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | Teacher | “We started to use group discussions so students can exchange ideas. Instead of only explaining, we ask them questions that encourage them to think and relate the lesson to their daily experiences.” | Collaborative learning | Active engagement |
| 2 | Teacher | “Students are now encouraged to connect the material with real-life situations. This helps them understand the lesson more meaningfully rather than just memorizing.” | Contextualization | Meaning construction |
| 3 | Observation | Students actively discussed in groups, shared opinions, and presented their ideas in front of the class. Several students asked questions and responded to their peers. | Participation | Interactive learning |
| 4 | Student | “When we work in groups, I can understand better because my friends explain the lesson in different ways. I also feel more confident to speak when discussing with them.” | Peer learning | Collaborative meaning-making |

Table 4 indicates that the implementation of deep learning has led to significant changes in instructional practices. Teachers adopted interactive strategies, such as group discussions, questioning techniques, and contextual learning activities, encouraging students to engage in the learning process actively. Teachers provided students with opportunities to express their ideas, collaborate with peers, and relate learning materials to real-life situations. As a result, students participated more actively, and the learning process became more meaningful. Deep learning approaches can promote higher-order thinking and conceptual understanding.

3. Integration of Love Curriculum Values in Learning

This sub-section explains how love-based values, such as empathy, respect, and care, were integrated into the learning process. It highlights the roles of teacher-student

relationships and the classroom's emotional climate in supporting meaningful learning.

Table 5. Integration of Love-Based Values

| No | Informant | Empirical Data | Code | Thematic Interpretation |
|----|---------------------|--|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Teacher (Pak dulah) | "We try to approach students with patience and understanding. When they make mistakes, we guide them instead of blaming them, so they feel comfortable learning." | Empathy | Caring interaction |
| 2 | Principal | "Teachers are encouraged to build emotional connections with students. We believe that when students feel respected and valued, they become more engaged in learning." | Emotional support | Positive climate |
| 3 | Observation | Teachers used positive language, gave appreciation, and responded to students' answers with encouragement rather than criticism. | Positive reinforcement | Emotional safety |
| 4 | Student (Lova) | "The teacher is kind and listens to us. If we do not understand, we can ask questions without feeling afraid or embarrassed." | Trust | Safe learning environment |

Table 5 shows that integrating love-based values has created a positive, supportive classroom environment. Teachers demonstrated empathy, patience, and respect, which fostered trust and emotional security among students. This caring approach encouraged students to participate more actively and confidently in learning activities. The use of positive reinforcement and appreciation further enhanced students' motivation. These findings suggest that the Love Curriculum plays a crucial role in creating an emotionally conducive environment for meaningful learning.

4. Impact on Students' Meaningful Learning

The impact of the integrated model on students' learning outcomes across cognitive, emotional, and social domains. It examines how the combination of deep learning and love-based values contributes to meaningful learning experiences.

Table 4. Perceived Impact on Learning

| No | Informant | Empirical Data | Code | Thematic Interpretation |
|----|-------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Teacher | "Students are now able to explain concepts in their own words. They do not only repeat from the textbook but show better understanding during discussions." | Conceptual understanding | Deep learning outcome |
| 2 | Student | "Learning is more interesting because we can discuss and share ideas. It feels easier to understand compared to just listening to the teacher." | Motivation | Increased engagement |
| 3 | Parent | "My child is more confident now and often shares what they learned at school. They seem more active in expressing their opinions." | Confidence | Social development |
| 4 | Observation | Students actively participated in discussions, asked questions, and showed enthusiasm during learning activities. | Engagement | Active learning behavior |

Table 4 demonstrates that implementing the Deep Learning-Oriented Love Curriculum has meaningfully contributed to students' meaningful learning. Students showed better conceptual understanding, increased motivation, and enhanced participation in classroom activities. Moreover, the positive emotional environment

fostered students' confidence and communication skills. These findings confirm that meaningful learning involves not only cognitive gains but also emotional and social development.

5. Supporting Factors in Implementation

This sub-section discusses the factors that support the successful implementation of the model, including leadership, teacher collaboration, and parental involvement.

Table 5. Supporting Factors

| No | Informant | Empirical Data | Code | Thematic Interpretation |
|----|-------------|--|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Principal | "We support teachers through training and regular discussions so they can improve their teaching practices." | Leadership support | Instructional leadership |
| 2 | Teacher | "We often share experiences with colleagues and discuss strategies to improve learning in the classroom." | Collaboration | Professional learning community |
| 3 | Observation | Teachers engaged in informal and formal discussions about teaching practices and student learning. | Reflection | Continuous improvement |
| 4 | Parent | "We try to support the school program at home, especially in encouraging good behavior and learning habits." | Parental involvement | Homeschool partnership |

Table 5 highlights that multiple factors support the success of the Deep Learning-Oriented Love Curriculum. Strong leadership provides direction and motivation for teachers, while teacher collaboration fosters continuous improvement. Additionally, parental involvement ensures consistency between school and home environments. These factors collectively contribute to the model's sustainability and effectiveness.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that the implementation of a deep learning-oriented love-based curriculum contributed to the development of more meaningful, student-centered, and holistic learning in Islamic primary education. The main contribution of this study is to demonstrate that meaningful learning is shaped not only by cognitive engagement but also by affective and relational support. In the context of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 3 Jember, integrating deep learning strategies with love-based values created classroom practices that encouraged students to think, reflect, collaborate, and participate more actively while feeling emotionally safe, respected, and supported. This finding extends previous discussions of deep learning by showing that cognitive depth becomes more effective when supported by a caring, value-oriented classroom environment.

The shift from teacher-centered instruction to more interactive and student-centered learning represents an important transformation in classroom practice. Before the implementation of the integrated approach, teachers primarily emphasized content delivery, memorization, and curriculum completion, reflecting a surface-level approach to learning. Through group discussions, questioning strategies, contextual learning, and peer explanation, students were gradually encouraged to engage with learning materials more actively and meaningfully. This finding is consistent with the view that deep learning requires students to seek meaning, relate ideas, reflect on their learning processes, and apply knowledge across contexts (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Hattie, 2012). It also supports recent studies emphasizing that meaningful, mindful, and interactive learning strategies can strengthen student engagement, collaboration, and conceptual understanding (Feriyanto & Anjariyah, 2024; Dumiyati et al., 2025; Khofifah et al., 2025).

The findings further indicate that contextual learning played a central role in strengthening students' conceptual understanding. When teachers connected subject matter with students' daily experiences, learning became more accessible, relevant, and memorable. Students were able to explain concepts in their own words, relate lessons to real-life situations, and participate more confidently in classroom discussions. The findings reinforce the view that meaningful learning occurs when students link new information to prior knowledge and lived experiences (Ausubel, 2000; Napitupulu et al., 2025). In the context of madrasah education, contextual learning is particularly important because students' academic development is closely related to moral, social, and religious experiences. Therefore, meaningful learning in Islamic primary education requires pedagogical practices that connect knowledge with students' personal, social, and spiritual realities.

A key finding of the study shows that love-based values, particularly empathy, care, respect, patience, and emotional support, strengthened deep learning. These values contributed to a safe classroom climate in which students felt comfortable asking questions, expressing opinions, and learning from mistakes. This argument is consistent with caring pedagogy, which emphasizes that educational relationships should be grounded in care, trust, and moral responsibility (Noddings, 2013; Velasquez et al., 2013). The findings also align with social-emotional learning research, which shows that students' emotional well-being, interpersonal competence, motivation, and academic performance can improve when learning environments provide emotional support and a sense of belonging (Durlak et al., 2011; Ruzek et al., 2016). Thus, love-based values in this study functioned not only as moral ideals but also as pedagogical resources that enabled students to engage more fully in the learning process.

The integration of cognitive and affective dimensions is the central novelty of this study. Previous studies have often discussed deep learning and character or love-based education separately. Studies on deep learning usually focus on conceptual understanding, active engagement, reflective thinking, and student-centered strategies. In contrast, studies on character or love-based education tend to emphasize moral formation, teacher-student relationships, and emotional development. The study shows that teachers can integrate these two dimensions into a single pedagogical model. In the context of Islamic education, this integration has important implications for strengthening the relationship between knowledge, character, and spirituality. The deep learning-oriented love-based curriculum supports the madrasah mission by encouraging students not only to understand academic content but also to internalize values such as empathy, responsibility, compassion, and social care. The findings reflect the holistic orientation of Islamic education, which emphasizes intellectual development alongside moral formation and spiritual growth (Halstead, 2004; Chanifudin et al., 2025).

The findings also show that teachers, school leadership, teacher collaboration, and parental involvement played important roles in supporting the model's implementation. Teachers not only function as transmitters of knowledge but also as facilitators, role models, and emotional supporters. Their ability to design interactive learning activities, encourage student participation, and build caring relationships shaped the quality of classroom interaction. At the institutional level, instructional leadership provided direction and motivation for teachers to improve classroom practices, while teacher collaboration created opportunities for reflection, shared learning, and continuous improvement. This finding is consistent with Hallinger (2011), who emphasizes the importance of leadership for learning in improving

teaching and learning processes. This is also supported by Sari et al., (2026) and Vescio et al. (2008), who show that professional learning communities can improve teaching practices and student learning. Parental involvement further strengthened the consistency of values between school and home, suggesting that meaningful learning requires a supportive educational ecosystem.

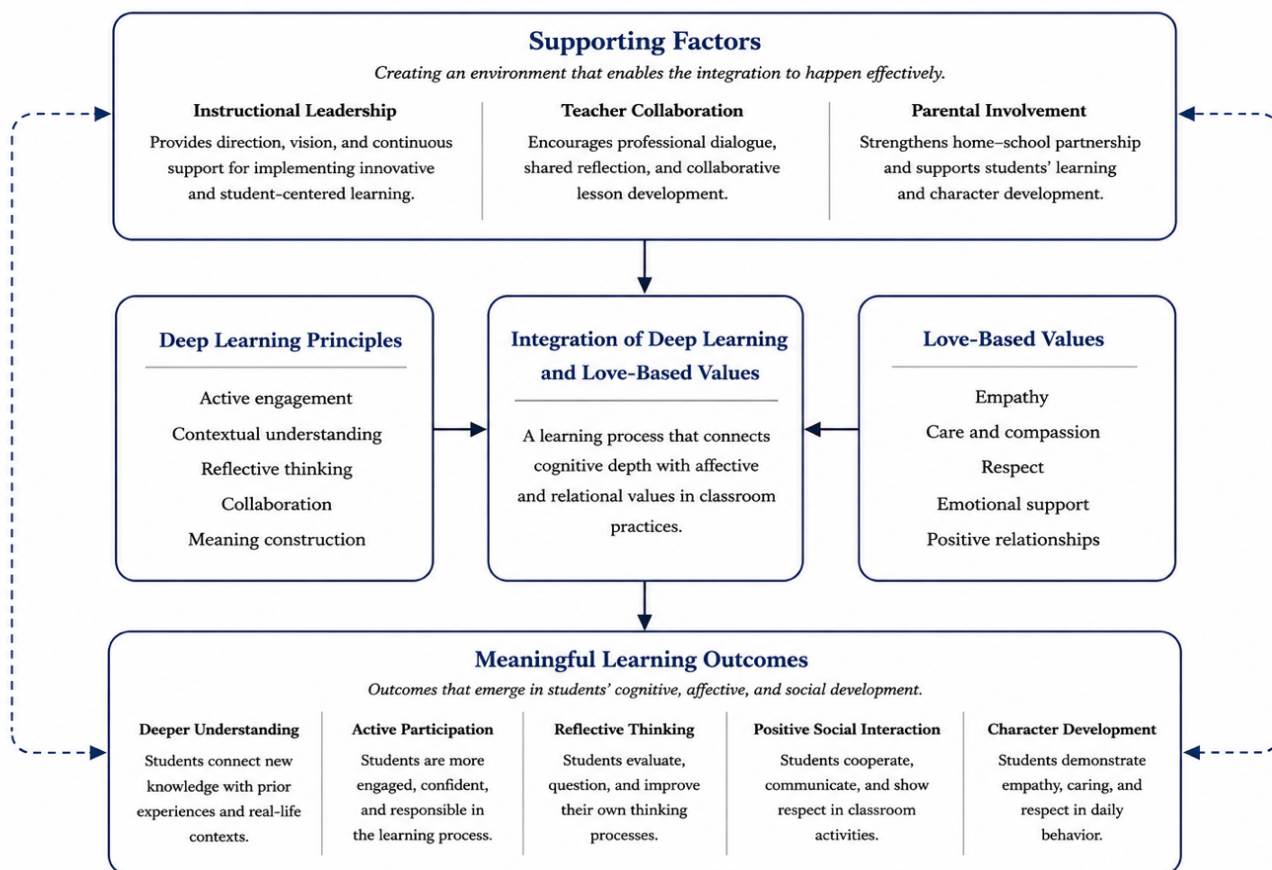


Figure 2. Deep Learning-Oriented Love-Based Curriculum Model

Based on the integration of the five themes identified through observations, interviews, and document analysis, the researchers developed a conceptual model of a Deep Learning-Oriented Love-Based Curriculum for Meaningful Learning. The model illustrates how deep learning principles and love-based values interact within a supportive educational ecosystem to foster meaningful learning outcomes.

Theoretically, this study develops an integrative pedagogical framework for Islamic primary education by showing how cognitive engagement, affective values, and relational practices can strengthen meaningful learning. Practically, the findings encourage teachers to combine discussion, reflection, contextualization, and collaboration with caring communication and respectful classroom relationships. School leaders can support this approach through professional development, collaborative teacher forums, and policies that promote both academic and character development. However, the findings remain limited to the study context because the research focused on a single madrasah and used qualitative data from observations, interviews, and documents. Future studies should examine the model in broader educational settings, compare its implementation across different madrasahs, and use mixed-method or longitudinal designs to investigate its long-term impact on students' cognitive, emotional, and social development.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of a deep learning-oriented love-based curriculum can enhance meaningful, student-centered, and holistic learning in Islamic primary education. The findings show that integrating deep learning strategies and love-based values encouraged students to develop stronger conceptual understanding, active participation, reflective thinking, and collaborative meaning-making. At the same time, the presence of empathy, care, respect, and emotional support created a positive classroom climate that strengthened students' motivation, confidence, and social interaction. These findings indicate that meaningful learning is shaped not only by cognitive engagement but also by affective and relational experiences in the classroom.

This study contributes to the development of an integrative pedagogical framework that connects cognitive and affective dimensions in Islamic primary education. Practically, the findings suggest that teachers need to combine interactive and contextual learning strategies with caring, respectful, and value-oriented classroom practices. School leaders should support this approach through instructional leadership, teacher collaboration, and continuous professional development, while parental involvement can strengthen the consistency of learning values between school and home. The study's focus on a single madrasah and its reliance on qualitative data limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should therefore test and refine the proposed model across diverse educational settings using quantitative, mixed-method, or longitudinal approaches.

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