

Implementation of Intellectual, Emotional, *and* Spiritual Quotient-Based Learning in the Love-Based Curriculum at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Rokan Hilir

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Abstract

This study examines how Intellectual, Emotional, and Spiritual Quotient (IESQ)-based learning is implemented within the love-based curriculum (*Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta*, KBC) at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Rokan Hilir, the first junior-secondary madrasah in its district to couple KBC with an explicit IESQ instructional framework. Prior KBC research has concentrated on senior-secondary and boarding-school settings and has not documented how a love-based curriculum is coupled with a structured IQ–EQ–SQ design at the junior-secondary level, where emotional self-regulation and spiritual reasoning are still forming. Using a qualitative single-site case study, data were gathered through in-depth interviews with seven purposively selected informants the Head of Madrasah, three teachers, and three students (one per grade level) together with non-participant classroom observation and document review, and analysed with the Miles and Huberman interactive model; credibility was established through source and method triangulation and member checking. The findings show that IESQ-based learning is operationalised systematically rather than incidentally across three stages: integrated planning (objectives, materials, methods, media, and evaluation each mapped to IQ, EQ, and SQ), active and reflective classroom practice (discussion and problem-solving for IQ, cooperation and emotion management for EQ, prayer and reflection for SQ), and authentic, multi-instrument evaluation. Implementation is supported by leadership commitment, teacher competence, and a religious–humanist school culture, and constrained by uneven teacher understanding of IESQ, limited time and administrative load, and unsupportive family or digital environments. The study contributes a stage-specific, classroom-level operationalisation of IESQ within KBC at the junior-secondary level and offers madrasahs a transferable template for cultivating learners who are intellectually capable, emotionally mature, and spiritually grounded.

Keywords: love-based curriculum; IESQ; emotional intelligence; spiritual intelligence; Islamic character education.

Introduction

Education is not only tasked with transferring knowledge but also with shaping the whole character of students through the parallel development of their intellectual, emotional, and spiritual capacities. Twenty-first-century schooling faces increasingly complex demands, marked by moral degradation, identity confusion, and rising individualism among adolescents.¹ These pressures are not confined to secular contexts: even within Indonesian madrasahs, character-formation strategies are being strained by the disruptions of the Society 5.0 era, which cut across technological, social, cultural, and institutional dimensions of school life.² A related strand of evidence traces part of this strain to excessive digital-device use itself: smartphone and social-media engagement has been empirically linked to weaker emotional clarity and heightened anxiety among students, alongside reduced face-to-face social interaction.³ Madrasahs, as Islamic educational institutions, are therefore expected to cultivate the whole person intellectually capable, morally upright, and spiritually grounded rather than cognitive competence alone.⁴

One response to this demand is the deliberate integration of Intellectual Quotient (IQ), Emotional Quotient (EQ), and Spiritual Quotient (SQ) into classroom practice.⁵ This integrated framework, referred to here as IESQ, aims to balance cognitive ability, emotional regulation, and spiritual awareness rather than treating them as separate outcomes.⁶ Emotional intelligence in particular has been characterized as a distinct capacity for recognizing and managing one's own and others' emotions, a capacity

¹ Achmad Faisol, "Pendidikan Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ) Dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Islam," *AL-ASHR* 1, no. 1 (2016): 102–24.

² A Zuhri et al., "How Madrasahs Build Students' Character in Indonesia's Society 5.0 Era: Emerging Challenges," *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 1 (2026): 166–86, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v9i1.412>.

³ Francisco Manuel Morales Rodríguez et al., "Influence of Smartphone Use on Emotional, Cognitive and Educational Dimensions in University Students," *Sustainability* 12, no. 16 (2020): 6646, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12166646>.

⁴ Sutarman, Heru Kurnianto Tjahjono, and Tasman Hamami, "The Implementation of Holistic Education in Muhammadiyah's Madrasah Indonesia," *Dinamika Ilmu* 17, no. 2 (2017): 191–203, <https://doi.org/10.21093/di.v17i2.856>.

⁵ Refda Petorena, Ahmad Suradi, and Moch Iqbal, "Penerapan Emosional Spiritual Questiont (ESQ) Pada Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Journal of Social Science Research* 3, no. 5 (2023): 2972–79.

⁶ Arni Amanda Patahuddin and Ruslan, "Evaluasi Pelaksanaan Program Training ESQ (Emotional Spiritual Quotient) Pada Peserta Didik Di Pondok Pesantren," *Jurnal Basicedu* 8, no. 5 (2024): 3538–48, <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v8i5.8187>; Ardiana Puspitacandri et al., "The Effects of Intelligence, Emotional, Spiritual and Adversity Quotient on the Graduates Quality in Surabaya Shipping Polytechnic," *European Journal of Educational Research* 9, no. 3 (2020): 1075–87, <https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.9.3.1075>.

increasingly treated as inseparable from cognitive achievement rather than subordinate to it.⁷ International scholarship situates this triad as more than a normative ideal for religious schooling: emotional and spiritual intelligence have been argued to be prerequisites for the ethical judgment that future leaders and professionals will need as they navigate increasingly complex social and organizational environments.⁸ Alongside IESQ, a *love-based curriculum* grounded in compassion, sincerity, respect, and the formation of noble character has emerged in Indonesian Islamic education, most recently formalized in national policy as *Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta* (KBC), a framework that explicitly links the values of divine love (*maḥabbah*) and moderation (*wasatīyyah*) to institutional and pedagogical practice.⁹ Such a curriculum concerns not only what students learn but how they are treated in the learning process.¹⁰

Empirical work on IESQ-based character education indicates that its holistic implementation raises students' learning motivation, sense of responsibility, and religious awareness.¹¹ Consistent with this, research within Madrasah Tsanawiyah settings finds that teachers who consistently apply an IEQ–SQ approach are better able to engage students' affective dimensions and sustain meaningful learning.¹² At the same time, globalization and digitalization compound the challenge: beyond the risks already noted, the madrasah curriculum is increasingly called upon to function as a moral counterweight, integrating religious values with digital-literacy instruction in daily practice.¹³ A love-based curriculum is well positioned to absorb this counterweight function, since it

⁷ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (New York: Bantam Books, 2020).

⁸ Joanna Samul, "Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence of Future Leaders: Challenges for Education," *Education Sciences* 10, no. 7 (2020): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10070178>.

⁹ M Novita et al., "Spiritual and Value-Based Islamic Educational Leadership in Indonesia: A Hermeneutic Inquiry into Love, Moderation, and Institutional Management," *Munaddhomah* 7, no. 2 (2026): 336–53, <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v7i2.2571>; M Mukhibat et al., "Development and Evaluation of Religious Moderation Education Curriculum at Higher Education in Indonesia," *Cogent Education* 11, no. 1 (2024): 2302308, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2302308>.

¹⁰ Sawaluddin et al., *Strategi Guru Agama Islam Dalam Membentuk Karakter Anak: Teori Dan Aplikasi Dalam Kurikulum Merdeka*, vol. 11 (Jakarta: Kencana, 2024).

¹¹ Abd. Wahib, "Integrasi Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Intellectual, Emotional and Spiritual Quotient Dalam Bingkai Pendidikan Islam," *TADRIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 16, no. 2 (2021): 479–94, <https://doi.org/10.19105/tjpi.v16i2.4758>.

¹² Akromah, Sri Haryanto, and Ngarifin Shidiq, "Upaya Guru Meningkatkan Kecerdasan Emosional Dan Spiritual Peserta Didik Melalui Pembelajaran Akidah Akhlak Di Madrasah Tsanawiyah," *Hikmah: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 1, no. 3 (2024): 57–78, <https://doi.org/10.61132/hikmah.v1i3.114>.

¹³ Mulyawan Safwandy Nugraha and Wahyu Andi Saputra, "Kurikulum Madrasah Sebagai Penyeimbang Dampak Negatif Perkembangan Teknologi Digital," *TSAQOFAH: Jurnal Penelitian Guru Indonesia* 4, no. 5 (2024): 3797–3810, <https://doi.org/10.58578/tsaqofah.v4i5.3643>.

foregrounds the caring relationship between teacher and student and thereby creates room for emotional and spiritual sensitivity to grow rather than atrophy under digital pressure.¹⁴

Empirical research on the Love-Based Curriculum itself, however, remains recent and concentrated outside the junior-secondary level. Kesuma et al. examined the integration of KBC with deep-learning pedagogy for character transformation across three Madrasah Aliyah, documenting reduced bullying and increased prosocial engagement, but treated KBC primarily through a pedagogical-deep-learning lens rather than an explicit IQ–EQ–SQ framework.¹⁵ Hamdanah et al. analyzed KBC through the lens of inter-religious instruction in an Islamic boarding school, focusing on moderation and tolerance rather than the tripartite intelligence dimensions this study addresses.¹⁶ Neither study examines how a love-based curriculum is coupled with an explicit IESQ instructional design, and neither is situated at the Tsanawiyah (junior-secondary) level, where students’ cognitive, emotional, and spiritual developmental trajectories differ meaningfully from those of older adolescents in Madrasah Aliyah or pesantren settings. This gap matters because instructional strategies validated for older students cannot be assumed to transfer directly to early adolescence, a stage in which emotional self-regulation and spiritual reasoning are still forming.

Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Rokan Hilir, as the first secondary Islamic educational institution in its district, offers a relevant site to examine this coupling: a religious environment and madrasah culture emphasizing moral and spiritual values provides a foundation for a curriculum intended to educate while also fostering love, empathy, and devotion.¹⁷ Yet implementation is not guaranteed to be straightforward. Three constraints recur in the literature: limited understanding among some educators of

¹⁴ Umi Arifah Rahmawati and Sulis Rokhmawanto, “Implementasi Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ) Dalam Keteladanan Kepemimpinan Jawa Di Madrasah,” *An-Nidzam: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Dan Studi Islam* 9, no. 1 (2022): 37–54, <https://doi.org/10.33507/an-nidzam.v9i1.553>.

¹⁵ Guntur Cahaya Kesuma et al., “Integrating a Love-Based Curriculum and Pedagogical Deep Learning for Character Transformation in Indonesian Islamic Senior High Schools,” *Munaddhomah* 7, no. 3 (2026): 657–70, <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v7i3.2915>.

¹⁶ Hamdanah et al., “Exploring Inter-Religious-Based Instruction in Islamic Boarding School: Loved-Based Curriculum Perspectives,” *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 17, no. 1 (2026): 276–306.

¹⁷ Ahmad Hanif Fahrudin et al., “Love Curriculum in Islamic Education: Fostering Tolerance and Religious Moderation,” *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education* 7, no. 2 (2026): 338–55, <https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v7i2.2519>; M A Ma’arif et al., “Shaping Students’ Moderate Islamic Character at Madrasah,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 2 (2024): 323–35, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v10i2.34029>.

how to translate the IESQ framework into daily practice;¹⁸ a dense national curriculum that often leaves insufficient flexibility for developing emotional and spiritual dimensions alongside cognitive ones;¹⁹ and a shortage of teacher training and evaluation instruments capable of comprehensively assessing EQ and SQ outcomes, as distinct from cognitive achievement.²⁰

This study addresses the gap identified above by examining, at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Rokan Hilir: (RQ1) how Intellectual, Emotional, and Spiritual Quotient-based learning is enacted within the love-based curriculum, and how this pattern of enactment extends the pedagogical-deep-learning and inter-religious-dialogue accounts of KBC documented at the Aliyah and pesantren levels; (RQ2) what factors support and inhibit that implementation, and how these factors interact to shape the extent to which the curriculum's holistic aims are realized in practice rather than remaining aspirational; and (RQ3) what instructional design underlies it, and how this design translates the abstract IQ–EQ–SQ construct into concrete, assessable classroom practice at a developmental stage not previously examined in the KBC literature. In doing so, the study aims to describe how such learning is planned, enacted, and evaluated, and to identify the conditions that enable or constrain it. Beyond the specific site, the study is intended to contribute conceptually to holistic Islamic education theory by clarifying how an IESQ framework and a love-based curriculum interact at the junior-secondary level a combination not yet documented in the KBC literature and to offer madrasahs practical guidance for cultivating learners who are intellectually capable, emotionally mature, and spiritually grounded in the spirit of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

Research Method

This study employs a qualitative field-research design framed as a single-site case study. Field research was chosen because it allows data to be obtained directly at the research site, enabling the phenomenon to be described within its natural, real-life

¹⁸ Jumal Syaifuddin, "Pengembangan Kecerdasan Emosional Dan Kecerdasan Spiritual Dalam Pendidikan Karakter Siswa," *Jurnal Multidisiplin Ilmu Akademik* 2, no. 2 (2025): 94–100, <https://doi.org/10.61722/jmia.v2i2.4162>.

¹⁹ Agus Samsul Nahar et al., "Transformasi Kurikulum Madrasah: Strategi Integrasi Kecerdasan Spiritual Dalam Kurikulum Fiqih Di Madrasah Tsanawiyah," *Cross-Border Journal of Islamic Studies* 6, no. 1 (2024): 15–20, <https://doi.org/10.37567/cbjis.v6i1.2853>.

²⁰ Mohammad Rofiq, "Implementasi Nilai-Nilai Karakter Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Melalui Konsep ESQ Learning," *MITRA PGMI: Jurnal Kependidikan MI* 6, no. 2 (2020): 139–57, <https://doi.org/10.46963/mpgmi.v6i2.131>.

context.²¹ The qualitative approach is used to understand in depth how Intellectual, Emotional, and Spiritual Quotient (IESQ)-based learning is implemented within the love-based curriculum at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Rokan Hilir, focusing on the meanings, experiences, and perspectives of informants rather than on standardized measures.²²

The site was selected purposively rather than by convenience. As noted in the Introduction, empirical research on the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) has so far concentrated on senior-secondary and boarding-school settings, Kesuma et al. at three Madrasah Aliyah and Hamdanah et al. at an Islamic boarding school,²³ leaving the junior-secondary (Tsanawiyah) level unexamined despite its distinct developmental demands. Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Rokan Hilir was selected because it is, to the researchers' knowledge, the first Tsanawiyah in its district to formally combine the love-based curriculum with an explicit IESQ instructional framework, making it an information-rich case for addressing RQ1–RQ3.

Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants conducted at the madrasah on 4 March 2026, complemented by non-participant classroom observation and document review on the same field research day. The interviews proceeded sequentially throughout the day, from the Head of Madrasah in the morning to the teacher and student participants (see Table 1).

The informants comprised the Head of Madrasah, three teachers, and three students purposively selected one from each grade level (VII, VIII, and IX) because of their direct involvement in implementing IESQ-based learning. To protect confidentiality, particularly that of the student participants, who are minors, informants are identified throughout the Results by role-based codes rather than by name, following standard ethical practice in qualitative research on Islamic schools.²⁴ The informant profile is summarized in Table 1.

²¹ Hardani and et al., *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif & Kuantitatif* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Ilmu, 2020).

²² Uma Sekaran and Roger Bougie, *Research Methods for Business: A Skill-Building Approach* (United Kingdom: Wiley, 2020).

²³ Hamdanah et al., "Exploring Inter-Religious-Based Instruction in Islamic Boarding School: Loved-Based Curriculum Perspectives."

²⁴ Herson Anwar et al., "Strategic Management of Pancasila and Rahmatan Lil'alamin Values in State Islamic Senior High Schools," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 14, no. 1 (2026): 275–98, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v14i1.2381>.

Table 1.
Informant profile and coding

Code	Role	Grade / note	Interview
HM	Head of Madrasah	—	09:00 WIB
T1	Teacher	—	09:30 WIB
T2	Teacher	—	10:00 WIB
T3	Teacher	—	10:30 WIB
S1	Student	Grade VII	11:00 WIB
S2	Student	Grade VIII	11:30 WIB
S3	Student	Grade IX	12:00 WIB

Secondary data were drawn from documents relevant to the study madrasah profiles, curriculum documents, teaching modules and lesson plans (RPP), educator and student records, and documentation of facilities and infrastructure.

Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews with the Head of Madrasah, teachers, and students elicited information on the planning, implementation, and evaluation of IESQ-based learning within the love-based curriculum. Non-participant classroom observation was conducted without the researcher taking part in the activities of the participants,²⁵ providing a direct view of how teachers integrated the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions into instruction. Documentation covered curricula, teaching modules, learning tools, madrasah programs, activity photographs, and other administrative records relevant to the research focus.²⁶

Data were analyzed qualitatively using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction involved selecting, simplifying, grouping, and focusing on data relevant to each research question; the reduced data were then organized into descriptive narratives and tables, reported in the Results by research question, to clarify relationships among categories and identify patterns.²⁷

To strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings, credibility was addressed through triangulation of sources and methods: the coded informants' accounts (HM, T1–T3, and S1–S3) were cross-checked against classroom observation and documentary evidence, following triangulation strategies used in comparable qualitative studies of Islamic-

²⁵ Fathor Rasyid, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif Dan Kuantitatif: Teori, Metode, Dan Praktek* (Kediri: IAIN Kediri Press, 2022).

²⁶ Nursapia Harahap, *Penelitian Kualitatif* (Medan: Wal Ashri Publishing, 2020).

²⁷ Syafrida Hafni Sahir, *Metodologi Penelitian* (Yogyakarta: KBM Indonesia, 2022).

school practice.²⁸ Dependability and confirmability were supported by the credibility, transferability, consistency, and verifiability criteria applied in qualitative case studies of religious education practice.²⁹ Findings were repeatedly verified during the field research period by cross-checking interview data, observations, and documentation against one another, and preliminary findings were returned to the key informants for member checking to confirm their accuracy before the analysis was finalized.³⁰

Results

Implementation of IESQ-Based Learning within the Love-Based Curriculum (RQ1)

The implementation of IESQ-based learning within the love-based curriculum at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Rokan Hilir is a pedagogical innovation aimed at a holistic, humanist, and transformative educational process. It emphasizes not only students' intellectual ability as academic achievement but also the development of emotional and spiritual intelligence as the foundation for character, morals, and personality maturity. Within the love-based curriculum, learning is conceived as an educational-interaction space that foregrounds compassion, respect for students' dignity, empathy, and the internalization of divine values in every activity.

As an Islamic educational institution, the madrasah pursues learning oriented not only toward the transfer of knowledge but also toward the transfer of values and attitudes, integrating strategies that develop critical and analytical thinking (intellectual quotient), strengthen emotional awareness and social skills (emotional quotient), and instill spiritual awareness and religious values (spiritual quotient) in daily practice.

The Head of Madrasah explained that IESQ-based learning is realized by strengthening practices that prioritize a humanist, religious, and participatory approach:

“In its implementation, we encourage teachers not only to teach but also to guide and educate students as a whole. Learning must develop students' thinking skills, help them manage their emotions, and instill spiritual values in every learning activity” (HM).

²⁸ Nur Kholik Afandi and Zurqoni, “Teachers' Strategies in Cultivating Gratitude Character through Islamic Education and Local Cultural Practices in Primary Schools: A Qualitative Approach,” *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 2 (2026): 445–60, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v9i2.444>.

²⁹ Şefika Mutlu, “The Opinion of Teachers of Religious Culture and Ethics Course about Subject-Based Classroom Application,” *Cumhuriyet İlahiyat Dergisi* 23, no. 3 (2019): 1209–34, <https://doi.org/10.18505/cuid.597911>.

³⁰ Fenti Hikmawati, *Metodologi Penelitian* (Depok: PT RajaGrafindo Persada, 2020).

He framed this holistic orientation explicitly as the basis of the love-based curriculum, grounded in exemplarity and compassion:

“We stress that teachers must be role models in attitude and behaviour. The approach used must be compassionate not only demanding, but also understanding the student’s condition. This is the basis of the love-based curriculum” (HM).

Teachers described how this principle is enacted across the three dimensions. For the intellectual dimension, one teacher emphasized active methods:

“In learning we use discussion, group work, question-and-answer, and problem solving to develop students’ thinking skills. We also try to build a comfortable classroom atmosphere so that students can express their opinions” (T3).

For the emotional dimension, another teacher described an interpersonal, non-punitive approach to managing student relationships:

“We do not focus only on the material; we pay attention to how students interact, cooperate, and manage their emotions. When conflict arises between students, we resolve it through dialogue and guidance” (T2).

For the spiritual dimension, a third teacher described habituation and reflection:

“Each lesson usually opens with a prayer, and the material is often linked to religious values. At the end, we give a reflection or moral lesson (hikmah) so that students can take spiritual meaning from it” (T1).

Students corroborated these accounts. One student highlighted the space created for participation:

“The teacher often invites us to discuss and gives us the chance to express our opinions, so we are more active in learning” (S3, Grade IX).

Taken together, the interview evidence indicates that IESQ-based learning at the madrasah is enacted through the integration of active methods, a humanistic approach, emotional coaching, and internalization of spiritual values in every activity, functioning not only as knowledge transfer but as holistic character formation. These accounts are corroborated by the curriculum documents and classroom observations summarized in Tables 2–4, consistent with the triangulation procedure described in the Method. The integrated pattern echoes evidence that deliberately combining intellectual, emotional, and spiritual quotients yields higher-quality graduates when the three are cultivated together rather than in isolation.³¹

³¹ Puspitacandri et al., “The Effects of Intelligence, Emotional, Spiritual and Adversity Quotient on the Graduates Quality in Surabaya Shipping Polytechnic.”

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors (RQ2)

Implementation is shaped by the interplay of internal and external factors that can either optimize the program or, if unmanaged, reduce its effectiveness. Three supporting factors were most salient. First, the commitment of madrasah leadership to a holistic, character-oriented direction was reported as the foundation for a school culture that sustains the integration of intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence.³² This leadership-centered account is consistent with evidence that faith-inspired principal leadership drives teacher professionalism in Indonesian madrasahs,³³ and with value-oriented models of human-capital development in which institutional commitment not curriculum text alone determines whether value-based programs are internalized.³⁴

“The main factor supporting IESQ implementation is the madrasah’s commitment. We have a clear vision that education must form students wholly, so all our policies and programs are directed to support this” (HM).

Second, teacher competence and readiness to enact a humanistic, integrative approach were reported as decisive: teachers with a pedagogical grasp of IESQ can more readily internalize the three dimensions in day-to-day teaching, while their exemplary attitude, communication, and interaction model the values the curriculum intends to transmit.³⁵ Third, a religious and humanist school culture habituation of worship, discipline, empathy, and compassionate interaction reinforces the internalization of IESQ values beyond the classroom, throughout the daily life of the madrasah.

Alongside these, several inhibiting factors were identified. The most frequently reported was the uneven understanding of the IESQ concept among teachers: not all teachers share the same conceptual and technical readiness to translate IESQ values into practice, so implementation varies across teachers and subjects. The Head of Madrasah acknowledged this directly:

“Not all teachers have the same understanding of the IESQ concept and how to apply it in learning. Some can already integrate it well, but others still need further guidance” (HM).

³² Opik Taupik Kurahman et al., “Implementasi Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Berbasis Cinta: Suatu Pendekatan Kualitatif Humanistik,” *ALMUSTOFA: Journal of Islamic Studies and Research* 2, no. 2 (2025): 26–42.

³³ Adiyono et al., “Faith Inspired Leadership and Teacher Professionalism in Madrasah Principals in Indonesia,” *Kharisma* 5, no. 2 (2026): 377–94, <https://doi.org/10.59373/kharisma.v5i2.90>.

³⁴ Nurfuadi et al., “Value-Oriented Model of Human Capital Development in Islamic Schools: Integrating Islamic Ethics and Total Quality Management,” *Munaddhomah* 7, no. 3 (2026): 639–56, <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v7i3.2579>.

³⁵ Ma’arif et al., “Shaping Students’ Moderate Islamic Character at Madrasah.”

A second constraint was the limitation of facilities, time, and administrative load: integrating IESQ requires creativity and planning time, yet teachers face limited instructional time, administrative demands, and dense curriculum targets, so emotional and spiritual development cannot always be optimized in every session:

“We have to complete the material targets, prepare the teaching administration, and at the same time apply the IESQ concept. Sometimes this makes it difficult to divide our time optimally” (T3).

A third constraint lay outside the school: when the family or social environment does not reinforce the values cultivated at the madrasah, the internalization of emotional and spiritual intelligence is weakened. Differences in parenting, a less supportive social environment, and the negative influence of digital media can undermine the consistency of character formation beyond the madrasah. Optimizing implementation therefore requires strengthening institutional policy, improving teacher competence, sustaining a conducive school culture, and collaborating with families and communities.

IESQ-Based Instructional Design (RQ3)

Instructional design determines the direction and success of the educational process. In this madrasah, design is oriented not only toward cognitive achievement but also toward the affective and spiritual dimensions central to character formation, integrating IQ, EQ, and SQ holistically across planning, implementation, and evaluation.³⁶

Planning. Teachers prepared systematic learning tools lesson plans/teaching modules (RPP), syllabi, and annual and semester programs but the distinctive feature is the deliberate integration of the three intelligence dimensions into every planning component, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2.
IESQ-based learning planning: themes, subthemes, and illustrative evidence

No.	Planning component (theme)	Subtheme / indicator	Illustrative quote
1	Learning objectives mapped to IQ, EQ, SQ	HOTS-oriented cognitive targets; social-attitude and empathy indicators; religious-value indicators	“When preparing teaching modules or lesson plans, we are directed to design learning objectives that target not only cognitive aspects, but also attitude, empathy, cooperation, and students’ spiritual values” (T1)

³⁶ Nur Chanifah et al., “Designing a Spirituality-Based Islamic Education Framework for Young Muslim Generations: A Case Study from Two Indonesian Universities,” *Higher Education Pedagogies* 6, no. 1 (2021): 195–211, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23752696.2021.1960879>.

2	Contextual, values-integrated materials	Subject content deliberately linked to Islamic values and students' daily life	"Every lesson is often linked to daily life and how we should behave well toward others, so the learning feels more meaningful" (S2, Grade VIII)
3	Active, collaborative methods	Discussion, problem-based learning, and reflection specified as method choices from the planning stage	"In planning we decide on learning methods that can develop discussion, reflection, group work, and problem solving. So from the start, every learning activity is designed to contain an IESQ element" (T2)
4	Varied instructional media	Visual, digital, and Qur'anic media selected to support the three dimensions jointly	Reported through document review of lesson plans and teaching modules rather than direct interview testimony
5	Holistic evaluation specified at the planning stage	Tests, observation, and practice designated as evaluation modes before instruction begins	Reported through document review of lesson plans (see Table 4 for the corresponding evaluation-stage interview evidence)

Implementation. The planned design is enacted across introductory, core, and closing activities. Introductory activities (prayer, Qur'an reading, motivation) build mental and spiritual readiness, reflecting compassion as the core of the love-based curriculum, consistent with evidence that a positive classroom climate shapes learning readiness.³⁷ Core activities are active, collaborative, and reflective discussion, problem-solving, and analysis (IQ); cooperation, communication, and emotion management through group work (EQ); and religious values through reflection and teacher example (SQ). Closing activities reinforce values and motivation through reflection on cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions, as summarized in Table 3.

Table 3.
IESQ-based learning implementation: themes, subthemes, and illustrative evidence

Learning stage (theme)	IESQ dimension	Subtheme	Illustrative quote
Introduction	SQ, EQ	Prayer and Qur'an reading build spiritual readiness before instruction begins	"Every lesson is usually opened with a prayer, and the material is often linked to religious values" (T1)
Core	IQ	Discussion, group work, and problem-solving develop analytical thinking	"In learning, we use discussion, group work, question-and-answer, and problem solving to develop students' thinking skills. We also try to build a comfortable classroom atmosphere so

³⁷ John Hattie, *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement* (routledge, 2008).

			students can express their opinions” (T3)
Core	EQ	Non-punitive, dialogue-based conflict resolution manages student emotion and interaction	“We do not focus only on the material; we pay attention to how students interact, cooperate, and manage their emotions. When conflict arises between students, we resolve it through dialogue and guidance” (T2)
Closing	EQ, SQ	Reflection and moral lesson (<i>hikmah</i>) reinforce values at the end of each lesson	“At the end we give a reflection or moral lesson (<i>hikmah</i>) so that students can take spiritual meaning from it” (T1)

Evaluation. Assessment is authentic and holistic, evaluating cognitive, affective, and spiritual achievement in real contexts rather than cognitive outcomes alone, consistent with evidence that authentic, multi-instrument evaluation captures student competence more validly than conventional tests.³⁸ The IQ dimension is assessed through written tests, analysis tasks, and higher-order thinking (HOTS) items, which develop analytical and reflective capacity beyond conventional items,³⁹ while EQ and SQ are assessed through observation, attitude journals, peer assessment, and reflection on worship and social interaction, as summarized in Table 4. This design operationalizes a spirituality-based framework of Islamic education in which cognitive, emotional, and spiritual growth are assessed as complementary rather than competing outcomes.⁴⁰

Table 4.
IESQ-based learning evaluation: themes, subthemes, and illustrative evidence

No.	Dimension (theme)	Aspects assessed / subtheme	Instruments	Illustrative quote
1	IQ (cognitive)	Concept understanding, critical thinking, problem-solving	Written tests, HOTS items, assignments	“We assess students not only from test results, but also from their attitudes in class, how they interact with friends, and their discipline and responsibility” (T1)
2	EQ (affective)	Attitude, empathy, cooperation, communication	Observation, attitude journals, peer assessment	“Teachers don’t only assess from exams, but also from our daily attitudes, such as discipline, honesty, and how we get along with friends” (S3, Grade IX)

³⁸ Abatihun Alehegn Sewagegn and Boitumelo Molebogeng Diale, “Authentic Assessment as a Tool to Enhance Student Learning in a Higher Education Institution,” in *Handbook of Research on Prevention and Intervention Strategies for Gifted and Talented Students*, 2020, 256–71, <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-2314-8.ch013>.

³⁹ I Wayan Widana, “Higher Order Thinking Skills Assessment towards Critical Thinking on Mathematics Lesson,” *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 2, no. 1 (2018): 24–32, <https://doi.org/10.29332/ijssh.v2n1.74>.

⁴⁰ Chanifah et al., “Designing a Spirituality-Based Islamic Education Framework for Young Muslim Generations: A Case Study from Two Indonesian Universities.”

3	SQ (spiritual)	Faith, morals, worship practice	Observation, practice, reflection	“The evaluation we conduct doesn’t only look at students’ cognitive scores, but also their attitudes, behavior, and spiritual development, because the goal of learning at this madrasah is to form students who are balanced in knowledge, morals, and faith” (HM)
4	Integration (love)	Humanist attitude, social bonds, comfort of learning	Teacher observation, student reflection	“After learning, we usually do a reflection to see whether the learning objectives were achieved, especially in the emotional and spiritual aspects of students. If not yet optimal, we try to improve it in the next session” (T3)

Discussion

Taken together, the findings on implementation (RQ1), supporting/inhibiting factors (RQ2), and instructional design (RQ3) indicate that Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Rokan Hilir has operationalized an IESQ framework within its love-based curriculum in a manner that is systematic rather than incidental, spanning planning, classroom practice, and evaluation. The sections below interpret each set of findings against prior scholarship, situate the study relative to the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) literature identified in the Introduction, and set out the study’s theoretical and practical contributions, limitations, and directions for future research.

Implementation of IESQ-Based Learning (RQ1)

The finding that IESQ implementation at MTsN 1 Rokan Hilir spans introductory, core, and closing activities is consistent with a holistic education paradigm in which intellectual competence is necessary but not sufficient: emotional and spiritual intelligence have been argued elsewhere to be prerequisites for the ethical judgment increasingly demanded of learners and future professionals alike.⁴¹ From an Islamic education perspective, reason, emotion, and spirituality occupy complementary rather than competing positions reason as an instrument of thought, emotion as a regulator of conduct, and spirituality as the source of meaning a framing consistent with prior conceptual work on holistic Islamic pedagogy.⁴² The planning-stage evidence in Table 1,

⁴¹ Samul, “Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence of Future Leaders: Challenges for Education.”

⁴² Mariani, “Pendidikan Holistik Dalam Islam: Studi Terhadap IQ, EQ, Dan SQ,” *Tarbiyah Islamiyah: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Agama Islam* 11, no. 1 (2021): 1–13, <https://jurnal.uin->

showing IQ, EQ, and SQ deliberately built into learning objectives, materials, and evaluation criteria, echoes earlier findings that integrated Islamic learning models incorporating all three dimensions can be operationalized systematically rather than remaining aspirational.⁴³

At the implementation stage, the student-centered, reflective activities documented in Table 2 discussion, group work, and habituation of religious practice align with constructivist accounts of learning as an active, socially embedded process and with humanistic accounts that treat the emotional quality of the teacher–student relationship as central to learning itself, rather than as a background condition.⁴⁴ This is consistent with research on secondary-level IESQ development, which similarly finds that spiritual and emotional competencies are cultivated through direct experience reflection, habituation, and religious practice rather than through content delivery alone.⁴⁵

The evaluation practices in Table 3, which assess attitude, worship practice, and social interaction alongside cognitive tests, correspond to prior calls for authentic, non-cognitive-inclusive assessment in values-based Islamic education,⁴⁶ and align with findings that emotional- and spiritual-quotient training measurably improves service-quality and developmental outcomes in educational settings more broadly.⁴⁷ At the same time, some caution is warranted: multiple-intelligence frameworks adjacent to IESQ have occasionally been applied loosely in the Indonesian Islamic-education literature,⁴⁸ and

antasari.ac.id/index.php/tiftk/article/view/4780; Chanifah et al., “Designing a Spirituality-Based Islamic Education Framework for Young Muslim Generations: A Case Study from Two Indonesian Universities.”

⁴³ Martoyo et al., “Efektivitas Model Pembelajaran Islami Terpadu Untuk Mengoptimalkan Kecerdasan IQ, EQ, Dan SQ Anak Usia Dini,” *Widya Balina: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Ekonomi* 10, no. 2 (2025): 255–63, <https://doi.org/10.53958/wb.v10i2.889>.

⁴⁴ Tarbiyah Usman, Bahraeni, and Nurhilaliyah, “Exploring Islamic-Oriented Cooperative Learning through Faith-Driven Collaboration among University Students in Islamic Education Courses,” *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 24, no. 9 (2025): 922–39, <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.24.9.44>.

⁴⁵ Fathurrahman Muhtar and Haziratul Qudsiyah, “Developing Intellectual Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence, and Spiritual Intelligence in Secondary School Level Students,” *Bulletin of Science Education* 4, no. 2 (2021): 228–35.

⁴⁶ Ruhul Yusuf, Muhammad Yaumi, and Muhammad Khalifah Mustami, “Implementation of Emotional and Spiritual Quotient in Islamic Religious Education in SMA Negeri 20 Pangkep,” *JICSA: Journal of Islamic Civilization in Southeast Asia* 10, no. 1 (2021): 28–64, <https://doi.org/10.24252/jicsa.v10i1.19504>.

⁴⁷ Mazni Saad et al., “Emotional and Spiritual Quotient for Sustainable Education’s Service Quality,” *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education* 12, no. 4 (2023): 1781–90, <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v12i4.25434>.

⁴⁸ Rudi Yongki, Nanda Putra, and Wahidah Fitriani, “Relevance of the Concepts of Multiple Intelligences, Spiritual Quotient, and Adversity Quotient in the Context of Human Potential Development for Islamic Education,” *Ya Sin* 5, no. 6 (2025): 7175–88, <https://ejournal.yasin-alsys.org/yasin/article/view/8592>.

this study's contribution is precisely that it documents IESQ operationalized stage-by-stage with concrete instruments (Tables 1–3) rather than invoked only at the level of policy language a distinction also emphasized in prior implementation studies of ESQ in formal Islamic religious education.⁴⁹

Relative to the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) literature specifically, this pattern extends rather than merely replicates existing findings. Kesuma et al. documented that coupling KBC with deep-learning pedagogy reduced bullying and increased prosocial engagement at the Madrasah Aliyah level, but examined the coupling primarily through a pedagogical-deep-learning lens rather than a structured IQ–EQ–SQ framework.⁵⁰ The present findings show that, at the junior-secondary level, KBC and IESQ can be coupled at a finer grain stage-by-stage within a single lesson (Table 2) and criterion-by-criterion within evaluation (Table 3) suggesting the coupling documented by Kesuma et al. at Aliyah level is not an artifact of older students' developmental stage but can be structured explicitly even earlier in secondary schooling.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors (RQ2)

The prominence of madrasah-head leadership as a supporting factor is consistent with transformational leadership theory, in which a clear vision, sustained motivation, and a commitment to values from institutional leaders shape the conditions under which pedagogical innovation can take hold.⁵¹ This finding also resonates with character-education research more broadly, which identifies institutional commitment and human-resource quality, not curriculum design alone, as decisive for whether value-based programs are internalized or remain nominal.⁵² Teacher competence emerged as a second

⁴⁹ Nurhasan Nudin, Zulfitria, and Latifah Rhamadona Mutaqqinasiht, "Implementasi Kecerdasan Emosional (EQ) Dan Kecerdasan Spiritual (SQ) Pada Pembelajaran PAI Di Sekolah," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 3, no. 2 (2024): 223–28, <https://doi.org/10.52434/jpai.v3i2.4124>.

⁵⁰ Kesuma et al., "Integrating a Love-Based Curriculum and Pedagogical Deep Learning for Character Transformation in Indonesian Islamic Senior High Schools."

⁵¹ Segundo R Cabana and Lenny F Cabana, "Influence of Professor Transformational Leadership on Student Emotional Intelligence: Case of the Faculty of Engineering at the University of La Serena (Chile)," *Formación Universitaria* 18, no. 2 (2025): 47–58, <https://doi.org/10.4067/S0718-50062025000200047>; Adiyono et al., "Faith Inspired Leadership and Teacher Professionalism in Madrasah Principals in Indonesia."

⁵² Yeni Fitriya Maylita Dwi Putri and Ivo Retna Wardani, "Tantangan Pendidikan Karakter Di MTs: Analisis Berdasarkan Faktor Pendukung, Faktor Penghambat Dan Solusinya Dalam Pembelajaran," *Misbah: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Keguruan* 1, no. 2 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.64454/misbah.v1i02.144>; Nurfuadi et al., "Value-Oriented Model of Human Capital Development in Islamic Schools: Integrating Islamic Ethics and Total Quality Management."

supporting factor, consistent with findings that teachers who combine subject mastery with a genuine pedagogical understanding of value-based frameworks are best placed to model rather than merely instruct the values a curriculum intends to transmit,⁵³ and with research showing that a compassionate, non-punitive teacher–student relationship is itself a condition for character formation to take root, distinct from any specific curricular content.⁵⁴

The uneven teacher comprehension of IESQ identified as an inhibiting factor mirrors a recurring finding in Indonesian character-education research: policy intent frequently outpaces teacher readiness, particularly where a values framework requires reinterpreting existing subject content rather than adding a discrete new subject.⁵⁵ Likewise, the constraints posed by limited time and administrative load echo findings that curriculum density is one of the most consistently reported barriers to non-cognitive dimensions of learning in Indonesian madrasahs, regardless of which values framework is being implemented.⁵⁶

Compared with the KBC literature, this supporting/inhibiting-factor structure both converges with and sharpens prior findings. Novita et al. situate KBC’s institutional viability in leadership that embodies divine love (mahabbah) and moderation (wasatiyyah) as guiding institutional values, arguing that leadership orientation not policy text is what makes KBC durable.⁵⁷ The present findings corroborate that leadership-centered account at the classroom level: madrasah-head commitment was reported not merely as institutional positioning but as a precondition teachers referenced directly when explaining why IESQ practices were sustained day to day. The present study extends Novita et al.’s institutional-leadership account by identifying teacher competence and

⁵³ Aimatul Khoiriyah et al., “Model Integratif Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Nilai-Nilai Qur’ani Dalam Penguatan Moral Dan Spiritualitas Pendidikan Islam,” *Innovasi: Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan* 11, no. 3 (2025): 517–26, <https://doi.org/10.64540/ar2gtv97>.

⁵⁴ Durrotun Ni’mah Nurul Mahruzah Yulia, Sutrisno, and Zumrotus Sa’diyah, “Pendidikan Karakter Sebagai Upaya Wujudkan Profil Pelajar Pancasila,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Citra Bakti* 10, no. 2 (2023): 430–42, <https://doi.org/10.38048/jipcb.v10i2.1204>.

⁵⁵ Melinda Pridayani and Ahmad Rivauzi, “Faktor Pendukung Dan Penghambat Pelaksanaan Program Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter Religius Terhadap Siswa,” *An-Nuha* 2, no. 2 (2022): 329–41, <https://doi.org/10.24036/annuha.v2i2.188>.

⁵⁶ Ahmad Syarif Arna Purtina and Fathul Zannah, “Inovasi Pendidikan Melalui P5: Memperkuat Karakter Siswa Dalam Kurikulum Merdeka,” *Pedagogik Jurnal Pendidikan* 19, no. 2 (2024): 147–52, <https://doi.org/10.33084/pedagogik.v19i2.7947>.

⁵⁷ Novita et al., “Spiritual and Value-Based Islamic Educational Leadership in Indonesia: A Hermeneutic Inquiry into Love, Moderation, and Institutional Management.”

school culture as two further, empirically distinct supporting conditions operating beneath the leadership layer a level of granularity a hermeneutic institutional analysis does not address.

Instructional Design (RQ3)

The three-stage instructional design documented in this study integrated planning, active/collaborative implementation, and holistic evaluation is consistent with research showing that holistically designed learning objectives improve learning quality precisely because they specify social and religious outcomes alongside cognitive ones, rather than leaving them implicit.⁵⁸ The contextualization of material to students' lived experience, evident in the planning data, aligns with contextual learning theory's emphasis on the material-experience relationship as a condition for transfer,⁵⁹ while the preliminary-stage spiritual activities (prayer, Qur'an reading) are consistent with evidence that a positive, spiritually grounded classroom climate meaningfully shapes subsequent engagement.⁶⁰

At the core-activity stage, the problem-based and collaborative elements observed here are consistent with evidence that problem-based learning strengthens higher-order thinking and engagement simultaneously,⁶¹ and the closing-stage reflection integrating cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions is consistent with research treating reflection as the mechanism through which value-based learning is internalized rather than merely performed.⁶² The evaluation model combining written tests, attitude observation, and religious-practice assessment (Table 3) corresponds to authentic-assessment scholarship arguing that multi-instrument evaluation captures student competence more validly than test scores alone,⁶³ and the specific use of HOTS-based cognitive items is consistent with evidence that such items develop analytical and reflective capacity beyond what conventional test items elicit.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ F Sogalrey and S W Ramadhan, "Emotional Intelligence and Learning Satisfaction in Higher Education: Evidence from Ikbis Students," *Management Dynamics & Global Business* 2, no. 1 (2026): 49–58.

⁵⁹ Nurhasnawati, Abd. Haris, and Sawaluddin, "The Concept of Educator Character: A Theo-Legalistic Study Based on the Qur'an, Hadith, and Indonesian National Education Law," *Hamdard Islamicus* 48, no. 3 (2025): 35–60, <https://doi.org/10.57144/hi.v48i3.998>.

⁶⁰ Hattie, *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*.

⁶² Laili Sulistiyan, Habiddin Habiddin, and Yahmin Yahmin, "HOTS & Problem-Based Learning (PBL) with Blended Learning," *J-PEK (Jurnal Pembelajaran Kimia)* 7, no. 1 (2022): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.17977/um026v7i12022p001>.

⁶³ Sewagegn and Diale, "Authentic Assessment as a Tool to Enhance Student Learning in a Higher Education Institution."

⁶⁴ Widana, "Higher Order Thinking Skills Assessment towards Critical Thinking on Mathematics Lesson."

The centrality of the love-based curriculum as an integrating value rather than a fourth, parallel competency alongside IQ, EQ, and SQ is consistent with research describing love-based curricula as enhancing psychological well-being and engagement precisely by changing the relational quality of instruction, not by adding new content.⁶⁵ This is consistent with broader evidence that emotional intelligence shapes learning outcomes and social relationships across subject areas,⁶⁶ and with arguments that spiritual intelligence contributes distinctly to character formation alongside not instead of emotional intelligence.⁶⁷

The comparison promised in the Introduction can now be drawn directly. Kesuma et al. found that KBC integrated with deep-learning pedagogy reduced bullying and increased prosocial participation at the Madrasah Aliyah level, working primarily through school-climate change rather than a codified instructional sequence.⁶⁸ Hamdanah et al. found that KBC, applied through inter-religious instruction in a pesantren setting, fostered tolerance and moderation through dialogic strategies rather than a tripartite intelligence framework.⁶⁹ Neither prior study documents planning, implementation, and evaluation instruments mapped explicitly onto IQ, EQ, and SQ dimensions, nor situates this coupling at the junior-secondary level. The present study's instructional design (Tables 1–3) therefore represents a more granular, stage-specific operationalization of KBC than previously reported, and consistent with Novita et al.'s institutional argument that KBC's coherence depends on leadership embodying *maḥabbah* and *wasatīyyah*⁷⁰ shows that this institutional value can be translated into a concrete, teachable, and

⁶⁵ Mursal Aziz, M Syukri, and Azwar Lubis, "Love-Based Curriculum in Islamic Education from the Perspective of the Qur'an and Psychology," *ICPIE: International Conference on Pesantren and Islamic Education*, 2025.

⁶⁶ Albertus Fenanlampir and Toho Cholik Mutohir, "Emotional Intelligence and Learning Outcomes: Study in Physical Education," *Journal Sport Area* 6, no. 3 (2021): 1–11, [https://doi.org/10.25299/sportarea.2021.vol6\(3\).6836](https://doi.org/10.25299/sportarea.2021.vol6(3).6836); Nouf Aljasir, "Emotional Intelligence and Engagement in Language Learning: A Mixed-Methods Exploration of Their Impact on English Language Proficiency," *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 14, no. 9 (2024): 2982–95, <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1409.34>.

⁶⁷ Shivani Raheja, Renu Gupta, and Gayatri Yadav, "Spiritual Intelligence, Happiness and Success of Students in Select Higher Education Institutions of University of Delhi," *Environment and Social Psychology* 9, no. 6 (2024): 1984, <https://doi.org/10.54517/esp.v9i6.1984>.

⁶⁸ Kesuma et al., "Integrating a Love-Based Curriculum and Pedagogical Deep Learning for Character Transformation in Indonesian Islamic Senior High Schools."

⁶⁹ Hamdanah et al., "Exploring Inter-Religious-Based Instruction in Islamic Boarding School: Loved-Based Curriculum Perspectives."

⁷⁰ Novita et al., "Spiritual and Value-Based Islamic Educational Leadership in Indonesia: A Hermeneutic Inquiry into Love, Moderation, and Institutional Management."

assessable classroom sequence at a developmental stage not previously examined in the KBC literature.

Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, this study contributes a stage-specific operationalization of the IESQ construct within a love-based curriculum, moving the KBC literature from institutional and school-climate accounts⁷¹ toward a classroom-level model in which planning, implementation, and evaluation instruments are each mapped onto IQ, EQ, and SQ dimensions. This addresses a gap identified in the Introduction: prior KBC scholarship has examined either deep-learning pedagogy at the senior-secondary level or inter-religious dialogue in pesantren settings, neither of which specifies how a tripartite intelligence framework is built into lesson-level design. The junior-secondary locus is theoretically significant because emotional self-regulation and spiritual reasoning are still forming at this developmental stage, making the instructional scaffolding documented here (Table 2) a distinct contribution rather than a restatement of Aliyah- or pesantren-level findings.

Practical Implications

For madrasah leaders, the findings suggest that sustaining IESQ implementation depends less on curriculum documents than on visible leadership commitment and structured teacher preparation concretely, in-service training that addresses the uneven conceptual readiness identified as an inhibiting factor (RQ2). For teachers, the planning and evaluation instruments in Tables 1 and 3 offer a transferable template objective-by-objective and criterion-by-criterion that other Tsanawiyah-level madrasahs adopting a love-based curriculum could adapt directly, rather than developing an IESQ instructional sequence from first principles. For policymakers, the persistent time and administrative-load constraint (RQ2) suggests that curriculum density, not teacher motivation, is the more tractable lever for improving IESQ implementation at scale.

Limitations

As a single-site qualitative case study, this study's findings are analytically rather than statistically generalizable, consistent with the limitations acknowledged in

⁷¹ Kesuma et al., "Integrating a Love-Based Curriculum and Pedagogical Deep Learning for Character Transformation in Indonesian Islamic Senior High Schools."

comparable single-institution character-education research.⁷² The primary data drew on the madrasah head, three teachers, and a purposively selected sample of three students, one per grade level; the informant base is accordingly small, and broader claims about implementation being uniform across the madrasah's full teaching staff should be read as indicative rather than exhaustive. The fieldwork was conducted over a single day of interviews within one semester and cannot speak to whether IESQ practices are sustained, strengthened, or diluted over a full academic cycle or across cohorts. Finally, because EQ and SQ were assessed through observation and self-report rather than validated psychometric instruments, the study describes how these dimensions are taught and evaluated in practice rather than measuring their magnitude or change over time a limitation consistent with the shortage of comprehensive EQ/SQ evaluation tools identified in the Introduction.

Future Research

Future research could usefully (1) compare IESQ–KBC coupling across Tsanawiyah, Aliyah, and pesantren settings within a single comparative design to test whether the stage-specific scaffolding observed here is developmental-stage-dependent, directly extending the comparison with Kesuma et al. and Hamdanah et al. drawn above; (2) follow a single cohort longitudinally across academic years to assess whether the supporting factors identified here (leadership, teacher competence, school culture) predict sustained rather than semester-bound implementation; and (3) develop and validate psychometric instruments for EQ and SQ specific to the Indonesian madrasah context, addressing the evaluation-tool gap this study and the Introduction both identify.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine how Intellectual, Emotional, and Spiritual Quotient (IESQ)-based learning is implemented within the love-based curriculum at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Rokan Hilir, what factors support and inhibit that implementation, and what instructional design underlies it. The evidence shows that IESQ-based learning is enacted systematically rather than incidentally. Across planning, classroom practice, and evaluation, the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions are deliberately built

⁷² N Huda, B S Widodo, and M Aseri, "Strategies for Strengthening Character Education in Islamic Boarding Schools Through Extracurricular Activities," *Munaddhomah* 5, no. 3 (2024): 354–66, <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v5i3.1397>.

into learning objectives, methods, media, and assessment, and are sustained through a humanistic, compassion-centred relationship between teacher and student that the madrasah treats as the core of its love-based curriculum (RQ1).

Implementation is supported by three mutually reinforcing conditions the leadership commitment of the Head of Madrasah, the pedagogical competence and exemplarity of teachers, and a religious–humanist school culture and is constrained by uneven teacher understanding of the IESQ concept, limited instructional time and administrative load, and family or digital environments that do not always reinforce the values cultivated at school (RQ2). The instructional design underlying these practices integrates the three dimensions at each stage of the lesson and assesses them through authentic, multi-instrument evaluation rather than cognitive testing alone (RQ3).

Taken together, these findings contribute a stage-specific, classroom-level operationalisation of IESQ within a love-based curriculum at the junior-secondary level a coupling not previously documented in the Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta literature, which had concentrated on senior-secondary and boarding-school settings. Practically, the planning and evaluation instruments reported here offer other Tsanawiyah-level madrasahs a transferable template for cultivating learners who are intellectually capable, emotionally mature, and spiritually grounded, in the spirit of *rahmatan lil 'ālamīn*. As a single-site qualitative case study conducted within one field-research period, the findings are analytically rather than statistically generalisable; comparative and longitudinal research, together with the development of validated EQ and SQ instruments for the madrasah context, would allow the model documented here to be tested and extended.

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Ethical Statement

This study was conducted with formal permission from the research site. Research permission was granted by MTsN 1 Rokan Hilir through an official research permit letter (Number: B-61/MTs.04.32/PP.005/02.2025). Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of the purpose of the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Author Contributions

Abdul Hadi Lubis: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft. Mas'ud Zein: Supervision, Validation, Writing – review & editing. Khairil Anwar: Data curation, Resources, Writing – review & editing

Declaration of Generative AI in Scientific Writing

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used ChatGPT (OpenAI) to improve language clarity, grammar, readability, and overall English expression. The tool was not used to generate research data, findings, analyses, or references. After using the tool, the authors carefully reviewed, edited, and verified the content as needed. The authors take full responsibility for the content, accuracy, interpretation, and integrity of the published article.

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