

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MINISTRY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS' LOVE-BASED CURRICULUM IN COUNTERING RADICALISM IN INDONESIA'S DIGITAL AGE

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyze the urgency of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) as a comprehensive strategy to counter digital radicalism in Indonesia. This is a literature review in which data was collected from various sources, including books and articles on relevant topics. The research findings indicate that with a significant digital population, particularly among adolescents, there is a high vulnerability to extremist propaganda disseminated through social media. Unique characteristics of digital radicalism, such as rapid spread, targeting of specific demographics, and the formation of echo chambers, accelerate the dissemination of extremist ideologies among students. Based on the analysis, KBC has the potential to minimize this vulnerability by building psychosocial and cognitive resilience. KBC integrates universal values such as empathy, tolerance, and compassion to counter narratives of hatred and polarization. This curriculum emphasizes holistic character education, digital literacy, and ethics, empowering students to think critically and filter information responsibly. The position of the Love-Based Curriculum is highly relevant as a counter-narrative because it actively promotes positive values that are essential in combating radical ideologies. Thus, the Love-Based Curriculum is a strategic step toward realizing a more peaceful and just world.

Keywords: Love-Based Curriculum, Radicalism, Digital Age

Abstrak

Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis urgensi Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta (KBC) dari Kementerian Agama sebagai strategi komprehensif untuk menanggulangi radikalisme digital di Indonesia. Jenis tulisan ini adalah studi pustaka yang mana pengumpulan data melalui berbagai sumber, baik buku maupun artikel dengan topik yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dengan populasi digital yang signifikan, terutama di kalangan remaja, terdapat kerentanan tinggi terhadap propaganda ekstremis yang tersebar melalui media sosial. Karakteristik unik radikalisme digital, seperti penyebaran cepat, penargetan demografi spesifik, dan pembentukan echo chamber, mempercepat diseminasi ideologi ekstrem di kalangan pelajar. Berdasarkan analisis, KBC berpotensi meminimalkan kerentanan ini dengan membangun resiliensi psikososial dan kognitif. KBC mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai universal seperti empati, toleransi, dan kasih sayang untuk melawan narasi kebencian dan polarisasi. Kurikulum ini menekankan pendidikan karakter yang holistik, literasi digital, dan etika, memberdayakan peserta didik untuk berpikir kritis dan menyaring informasi secara bertanggung jawab. Posisi KBC sangat relevan sebagai kontra-narasi karena secara aktif mempromosikan nilai-nilai positif

yang esensial dalam melawan ideologi radikal. Dengan demikian, KBC merupakan langkah strategis untuk mewujudkan dunia yang lebih damai dan adil.

Kata Kunci: Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta, Radikalisme, Era Digital

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has transformed nearly every aspect of human life, including the ways in which individuals communicate, learn, work, and build social relationships. These changes have given rise to a generation that has interacted with digital technology since birth—a group that Prensky (2001) refers to as *digital natives*. This generation has grown up in an environment saturated with the internet, social media, smart devices, and various forms of digital communication technology. Unlike previous generations that experienced a transition from the analog to the digital world, the digital native generation does not require a lengthy adaptation process because technology has been an integral part of their lives from an early age. In the Indonesian context, students born in 2010 or later can be categorized as the digital native generation because they grew up alongside the rapid development of information and communication technology, which has become increasingly accessible through various digital devices.

The characteristics of the digital native generation demonstrate a high proficiency in operating technology, quickly searching for information, building virtual social networks, and utilizing various digital applications for both educational and entertainment purposes (Prensky, 2001). However, this technological proficiency is not always accompanied by emotional maturity, critical thinking skills, and ethical awareness in using digital media. This situation makes young people vulnerable to various risks in cyberspace, including exposure to misinformation, hate speech, intolerance, and radical ideological propaganda. As noted by Livingstone and Helsper (2010), the high intensity of internet use among young people can increase their likelihood of being exposed to risky content if not accompanied by strengthened digital literacy and adequate supervision.

In recent years, the phenomenon of digital radicalism has become a serious concern in various countries, including Indonesia. Advances in information technology have been exploited by extremist groups to disseminate their ideologies through social media, video-sharing platforms, online forums, and instant messaging apps (Conway, 2017). Digital transformation has shifted the patterns of radicalism dissemination—which were previously conducted conventionally—to become more massive, rapid, and difficult to detect. The internet enables radical groups to reach a broader audience without being constrained by time or space. Through social media algorithms, provocative content can even go viral and create an “echo chamber” that reinforces certain beliefs without any verification process or critical dialogue (Sunstein, 2018).

Students and adolescents have become one of the primary targets for the dissemination of radical ideology in the digital age. Adolescence is a developmental phase characterized by the search for self-identity, the need for social recognition, and a tendency to explore various worldviews perceived as intriguing or offering new meaning (Erikson, 1968). In

such situations, various narratives disseminated through digital media can influence adolescents' perspectives on religion, society, and the state. Weimann (2014) explains that extremist groups often exploit the psychological vulnerabilities of the younger generation by offering a sense of belonging, group identity, and life goals perceived as meaningful. Consequently, some adolescents may become entangled in a gradual radicalization process through seemingly ordinary digital interactions that are, in fact, heavily laden with ideological content.

Digital radicalism does not always manifest directly as violent acts. This phenomenon can emerge through the spread of hate speech, intolerance, discrimination, rejection of diversity, and the formation of exclusive attitudes that contradict democratic and humanitarian values (Neumann, 2013). In an educational context, the emergence of intolerant attitudes among students can disrupt inclusive learning processes and potentially trigger social conflicts within school environments and the broader community. Additionally, increased exposure to disinformation, digital propaganda, and various forms of information manipulation can hinder the development of students' critical thinking skills (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

The vulnerability of the younger generation to various digital threats is further exacerbated by the low level of digital literacy among the Indonesian public. Findings from various studies indicate that students' abilities to verify information, identify hoaxes, understand digital ethics, and manage cybersecurity still require significant strengthening (Gilster, 1997; Belshaw, 2014). In fact, digital literacy is not merely about technical skills in using technological devices but also encompasses cognitive, social, emotional, and ethical abilities in utilizing technology responsibly. Without these competencies, students risk becoming both victims and perpetrators of the dissemination of radical and destructive content.

This phenomenon indicates that social media and the internet can no longer be viewed as neutral spaces. Various digital platforms have now become arenas for narrative battles involving diverse political, ideological, economic, and religious interests. In such circumstances, education plays a strategic role in building individual resilience against various forms of negative influence emerging in the digital space. Education functions not only as a means of knowledge transfer but also as an instrument for character development, the reinforcement of humanistic values, and the cultivation of students' critical thinking skills (Freire, 1970).

In response to these challenges, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia introduced the Love-Based Curriculum in 2025 as one of the strategies to strengthen students' character within schools and madrasahs. This curriculum was developed based on an educational paradigm that places the values of love, respect for diversity, religious moderation, humanity, and tolerance as the primary foundations of the learning process. This approach aligns with humanistic educational ideas that emphasize

the holistic development of human potential, encompassing intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects (Rogers, 1969; Maslow, 1970).

The Love-Based Curriculum seeks to instill an awareness that diversity is a social reality that must be accepted and respected. Through this approach, students are encouraged to understand religious teachings inclusively, appreciate differences, develop social empathy, and build harmonious relationships with fellow human beings. These values are strongly relevant to efforts to prevent radicalism because radicalism fundamentally stems from exclusive, intolerant mindsets and a rejection of diversity (Banks, 2015). Thus, the Love-Based Curriculum can be viewed as a form of educational *counter-narrative* that seeks to present an alternative understanding of religion that is moderate, peaceful, and humanistic.

Furthermore, this curriculum supports the objectives of Islamic religious education, which are not only oriented toward enhancing religious cognitive aspects but also toward fostering noble character, social responsibility, and national consciousness. This orientation aligns with the national educational goals as mandated by the Indonesian education system, namely to shape individuals who are faithful, God-fearing, possess noble character, are creative, independent, democratic, and responsible. Therefore, the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum is not only relevant in the context of religious education but also makes a strategic contribution to strengthening the nation's social resilience amid the rising challenges of digital radicalism.

Although various studies have addressed the phenomenon of digital radicalism and anti-radicalism education strategies separately, research specifically linking the urgency of the Love-Based Curriculum to efforts to prevent digital radicalism remains relatively limited. Most studies have focused more on aspects of digital literacy, religious moderation, or deradicalization without comprehensively linking them to the love-based education paradigm. This research gap highlights the need for studies that integrate educational perspectives, digital literacy, religious moderation, and deradicalization within a single, comprehensive analytical framework. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the characteristics of digital radicalism, analyze the concepts and philosophy of the Love-Based Curriculum, and evaluate the theoretical relevance of this curriculum as an educational strategy for building the resilience of the digital native generation against various forms of propaganda and radical ideologies in the digital age.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using the *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) method to analyze the urgency of the Love-Based Curriculum as an educational strategy for addressing digital radicalism among the digital native generation. The SLR method was chosen because it allows researchers to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize various relevant research findings, thereby yielding a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon (Kitchenham & Charters, 2007; Snyder, 2019). This approach is also suitable for examining the conceptual relationships between digital

radicalism, digital literacy, character education, religious moderation, and the Love-Based Curriculum based on published academic sources.

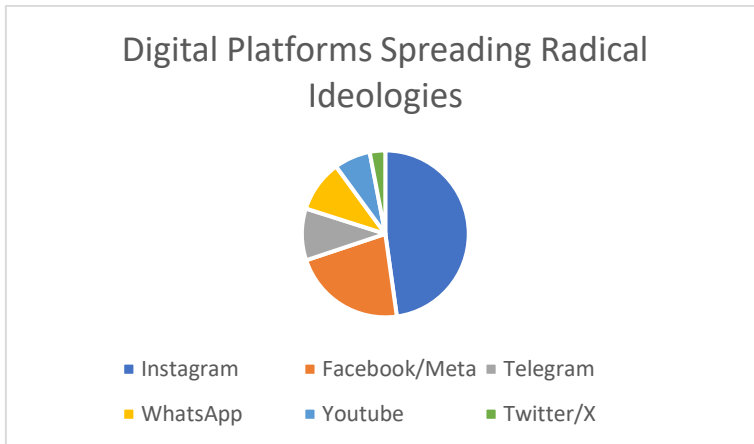
The research process was carried out in several stages. The first stage involved formulating research questions focused on the characteristics of digital radicalism, the concept of the Love-Based Curriculum, the theoretical relevance of this curriculum to efforts to prevent digital radicalism, and its position within the discourse of *counter-narratives* and deradicalization. The second stage involved a literature search across various scientific databases, such as Google Scholar, Scopus, Dimensions, Crossref, and Garuda. The keywords used included “digital radicalism,” “digital native,” “counter-radicalization,” “religious moderation,” “love-based curriculum,” “character education,” and “digital literacy.”

The third stage involved the selection of articles based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. The selected articles were scientific publications in Indonesian and English published between 2015 and 2025, directly relevant to the research theme, and available in full text. Meanwhile, irrelevant, duplicate, or non-peer-reviewed articles were excluded from the analysis. The next stage is data extraction, which includes research identity, research objectives, methods, main findings, and theoretical implications. Subsequently, the data is analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns, themes, and conceptual relationships emerging from the various literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

To ensure the validity of the research, the researcher applied the principles of transparency, traceability of sources, and critical synthesis as recommended in systematic literature review research (Xiao & Watson, 2019). The results of the analysis were then presented in narrative form to explain the urgency of implementing the Love-Based Curriculum as a relevant educational approach in building students’ resilience against the influence of digital radicalism in the information society era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A review of the literature indicates that the development of digital technology has transformed the patterns of radicalism dissemination from a conventional model to a digital one that is faster, more widespread, and harder to control. Social media has become a new arena for extremist groups to spread propaganda, recruit members, build group identity, and influence the mindset of the younger generation. Digital radicalism differs from conventional radicalism because it leverages anonymity, social media algorithms, and the ability to spread information virally. This situation makes students classified as digital natives more vulnerable to exposure to radical narratives compared to previous generations. Research findings indicate that Indonesia’s high internet penetration—exceeding 171 million users—combined with extremely high social media usage, creates an environment where various forms of radical propaganda can proliferate on a massive scale. This vulnerability is further exacerbated because most young users lack adequate digital literacy skills to verify information and distinguish between valid information and manipulative propaganda.



These findings align with Prensky’s (2001) perspective on the “digital native” generation, who are highly familiar with technology but do not necessarily possess the reflective skills needed to critically assess the information they receive. Livingstone and Helsper (2010) also explain that high internet access among young people increases their exposure to various digital risks if not accompanied by adequate digital literacy skills. In this context, digital radicalism spreads not only through the direct dissemination of extremist ideologies but also through the spread of hate speech, intolerance, disinformation, and social polarization, which gradually shape students’ perspectives toward other groups.

This study found that social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Telegram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Twitter/X serve as the primary channels for disseminating radical content. Data from the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT) in 2024 indicates the presence of 180,954 instances of radical content spread across various digital platforms, with Instagram ranking highest. This finding suggests that social media no longer functions merely as a communication tool but has evolved into an arena for ideological conflict that requires serious monitoring and educational intervention.

Based on a synthesis of various literature, low digital literacy is one of the main factors increasing the vulnerability of the younger generation to digital radicalism. Gilster (1997) explains that digital literacy is not only related to the ability to use technology but also encompasses the ability to critically evaluate, understand, and utilize information. In the context of this study, these abilities are particularly crucial because most radical propaganda leverages information manipulation, emotional narratives, and the exploitation of religious or social identities to capture the attention of the younger generation. Therefore, efforts to prevent digital radicalism cannot rely solely on security-based approaches but must also incorporate educational strategies capable of fostering students’ cognitive and moral resilience.

Subsequent research findings indicate that the Love-Based Curriculum developed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs holds strong relevance in addressing these challenges. This curriculum stems from the awareness that diversity is a social reality that must be accepted and respected. Its underlying philosophy is rooted in the values of love, humanity, tolerance, religious moderation, and respect for human dignity. This

curriculum views education not merely as a process of knowledge transfer, but as a means of shaping individuals who are whole intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

These findings demonstrate that the Love-Based Curriculum has a foundation aligned with the humanistic educational theory developed by Rogers (1969). According to humanistic theory, the purpose of education is to help students develop their full potential as whole human beings. Education focuses not only on academic aspects but also on the development of empathy, self-awareness, social responsibility, and respect for fellow human beings. From this perspective, the Love-Based Curriculum serves as an instrument for building a more inclusive and tolerant character in students, enabling them to reject various forms of ideology that conflict with humanistic values.

The study's findings also indicate that the Love-Based Curriculum is closely linked to the concept of multicultural education. Banks (2015) explains that multicultural education aims to foster understanding, appreciation, and respect for cultural, religious, and social identity diversity. These values are clearly reflected in the Love-Based Curriculum, which emphasizes the importance of tolerance, dialogue, respect for differences, and religious moderation. Through this approach, students are expected to understand that differences are not a threat but rather a source of social richness that must be managed positively.

Another finding emerging from this study is the strong theoretical relevance between the Love-Based Curriculum and efforts to counter digital radicalism. This curriculum has the potential to serve as a preventive tool because it seeks to build students' psychological, social, and cognitive resilience against various forms of extremist propaganda. The values of compassion, empathy, tolerance, and appreciation for diversity—which form the core of the Love-Based Curriculum—directly contradict the values espoused by radical groups, such as hatred, exclusivism, discrimination, and violence. Thus, the stronger the internalization of these values of love within students, the less likely they are to accept the radical narratives proliferating in digital spaces.

From the perspective of deradicalization theory, these findings demonstrate that the Love-Based Curriculum can function as both a preventive and curative strategy. As a preventive strategy, this curriculum helps students develop critical thinking skills and digital literacy so they can identify and reject radical content. As a curative strategy, this curriculum offers a more positive alternative narrative through the instillation of universal humanistic values. This approach aligns with the concept of *counter-narrative* proposed by Briggs and Feve (2013), which involves efforts to present alternative narratives that can weaken the appeal of extremist ideologies.

Research findings also indicate that the success of implementing the Love-Based Curriculum depends on various factors. The first factor is the readiness of teachers as the primary agents in the learning process. Teachers do not merely function as conveyors of content but also as role models in implementing the values of love, tolerance, and religious moderation. The second factor is a school environment that fosters a culture of dialogue, openness, and respect for diversity. The third factor is family and community

support in reinforcing the values taught at school. Without synergy between schools, families, and the community, the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum will struggle to achieve optimal results.

Other findings indicate that the Love-Based Curriculum holds strategic relevance in supporting the vision of Indonesia Emas 2045. Human resource development is insufficient if it focuses solely on technological mastery and the enhancement of academic competencies. Future generations also require a strong moral foundation to be able to use knowledge and technology responsibly. In this context, the Love-Based Curriculum aims to shape a generation that is not only intellectually superior but also possesses empathy, social awareness, and an understanding of the importance of living peacefully together in a diverse society.

Overall, the research findings indicate that digital radicalism poses a real challenge for Indonesia's digital native generation. The spread of radical propaganda via social media is increasing alongside advancements in information technology and low digital literacy among young people. In this situation, the Love-Based Curriculum offers a relevant and strategic approach through the reinforcement of humanistic values, tolerance, religious moderation, digital literacy, and character education. This curriculum serves not only as an educational tool but also as a means of building students' social and ideological resilience against various forms of radical influence emerging in the digital space. Therefore, the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum can be viewed as a potential educational model in supporting deradicalization efforts, strengthening national character, and building a peaceful, inclusive, and civilized Indonesian society.

CONCLUSION

The number of active social media users in Indonesia stands at approximately 167 million people, or 60.4 percent of the total population, with an average daily usage of more than 150 minutes across various digital platforms. A lack of understanding of the digital world among Indonesian students—despite the significant number of young internet users—leaves them more vulnerable to various types of harmful content, such as fake news, privacy violations, cyberbullying, and exposure to violent and pornographic content. Enhancing digital literacy is crucial so that the younger generation can accurately identify and filter information, as well as reject fake news and hate speech that frequently appear on social media.

Therefore, initiatives are needed to address this issue by strengthening humanistic values such as empathy, respect for diversity, and equitable justice for all—values that are rooted in love. In the Love-Based Curriculum, science is not merely understood as a compilation of information and formulas, but also as a path to wisdom and love for all of God's creation. By integrating the essence of love and tolerance into learning activities, this curriculum helps address various social issues such as conflict, discriminatory acts, and injustice manifested in various parts of the world. In this way, the Love-Based Curriculum

serves as a strategic step toward realizing a more prosperous, harmonious, and civilized world, lived out with a spirit of mutual love among all humanity.

Furthermore, reinforcing universal human values through this curriculum can build mental resilience capable of countering narratives of hatred and division that often circulate in the digital world. Character education integrated through a love-based curriculum can equip individuals with critical thinking skills and digital literacy, enabling them to discern potentially harmful information and foster a spirit of care for others. The Love-Based Curriculum approach clearly aims to instill values such as compassion, empathy, tolerance, and respect for diversity. This stands in stark contrast to the teachings of radicalism, which are often rooted in feelings of hatred, intolerance, and exclusivity. This holistic approach is grounded in the development of resilient character, encompassing intellectual, emotional, and moral dimensions. The effectiveness of implementing the Love-Based Curriculum can be evaluated through three key parameters that reflect fundamental aspects rooted in love and care for others. These parameters represent the ideal educational institution envisioned: a safe and tolerant learning environment conducive to the educational process; students experiencing comprehensive development both mentally and spiritually; and a dedication to the preservation of a sustainable, clean, and orderly ecosystem.

The role of the Love-Based Curriculum in this context is crucial as a strategy to counter negative narratives, as it actively promotes positive values such as tolerance, unity, and a sense of love for the homeland—values that are vital in confronting radical ideologies that often divide society. The implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum tangibly strengthens efforts to counter negative narratives and prevent radicalism by providing a learning framework that naturally instills the value of tolerance and reduces the likelihood of radicalism emerging, particularly among the millennial generation, who are easily influenced by extremist ideologies. A focus on multicultural Islamic education in public schools is also vital to provide students with a deep understanding of diversity, tolerance, and respect for differences—all of which are essential in fostering an inclusive understanding of religion and preventing the spread of radical ideologies.

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