



Program Management Responses to the ‘Curriculum of Love’ Policy at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang: A Case Study of PGMI

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Abstract

The ‘Curriculum of Love’ is a contemporary Islamic educational paradigm that emphasizes compassion, religious moderation, and respect for human dignity. The success of its implementation depends on the understanding and response of educational institutions, particularly those involved in implementing policies at the program level. This study aims to analyze the response of the PGMI Study Program at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang to the ‘Curriculum of Love’ policy and to describe its manifestation in academic practice. The study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through interviews with three informants the head of the study program, the secretary of the study program, and a PGMI lecturer as well as document analysis. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model through data condensation, data presentation, and the drawing and verification of conclusions. The results indicate that the program administrators responded positively to the ‘Curriculum of Love’ policy because its substance aligns with the vision, academic culture, and educational traditions that have developed within the PGMI program. These values have manifested through the practice of reading the Qur’an, a love of knowledge, concern for the environment, mutual respect, and love for the homeland, even though they have not yet been explicitly incorporated into the curriculum documents. The uniqueness of this study lies in the finding that the implementation of the ‘Curriculum of Love’ has been taking place substantively through the academic culture before it was formalized in the institution’s curriculum documents.

Keywords: Curriculum of Love, PGMI, policy response, curriculum implementation, Islamic education

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INTRODUCTION

مقدمة

The curriculum is the primary instrument for achieving educational goals because it serves as a guide for the entire learning process and the development of competencies. The curriculum functions not only as a collection of subjects but also as a means of shaping the knowledge, skills, and values expected of students (Jannah, 2023). In the context of Islamic education, the curriculum serves not only as a means of knowledge transfer but also as a medium for the internalization of humanistic, moral, and spiritual values (Amin dkk., 2024). Thus, the success of education cannot be measured solely by academic achievement but also by the ability of educational institutions to shape students of good character who possess social sensitivity and are able to appreciate diversity (Mustafida dkk., 2023). In line with these needs, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia introduced the concept of the “Curriculum of Love” as an educational paradigm that emphasizes the strengthening of the values of compassion,

empathy, tolerance, respect for diversity, and religious moderation in the educational process (Danil dkk., 2025).

The "Curriculum of Love" has evolved as an Islamic educational paradigm that places love as the foundation for building relationships between humans and God, fellow human beings, the environment, and the nation (Makhzuniyah dkk., 2026). Through this approach, education focuses not only on academic achievement but also on fostering a humanistic, inclusive, and civilized character. Thus, (Danil dkk., 2025). This indicates that the existence of the "Curriculum of Love" policy must be viewed not merely at the formal level of the document but also in terms of the process of translating its values into educational culture and practice.

A key issue in implementing this policy is how it is received and interpreted by actors at the implementation level. From a policy implementation perspective, a policy's success is determined not only by its substance but also by the understanding, acceptance, disposition, and commitment of implementers in translating the policy into educational practice (Agustian dkk., 2025). Therefore, attention to the responses of implementing actors is crucial for understanding how a policy is translated from the policy level into a more specific institutional context. In higher education, one such context is at the study program level, which deals directly with the management of academic activities and institutional culture.

In the context of higher education, academic programs play a strategic role because they are academic units responsible for organizing academic activities and developing an academic culture in line with the characteristics of their respective disciplines (Dina dkk., 2023). Program chairs and administrators not only perform administrative functions but also play a role in translating educational policy directions into academic practice in alignment with the program's characteristics (Ansori dkk., 2021). This position makes program directors key actors in observing how the "Curriculum of Love" policy is received and responded to at the academic unit level. Therefore, research on the responses of program directors can provide insight into the process of translating policy from the educational policy level into a more specific academic context.

This context is relevant to the Elementary Madrasah Teacher Education Program (PGMI) at Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University in Malang, which has a mandate to prepare prospective elementary madrasah educators who are professional, of good character, and grounded in Islamic values. This is reflected in the program's vision and academic objectives, as well as in its mission to produce graduates who are competent, professional, and grounded in Islamic values. Based on the results of observations and initial interviews conducted by the researcher, it was found that a number of values aligned with the substance of the "Curriculum of Love" were already present in the academic life of the PGMI program before the policy was formally introduced. These preliminary findings indicate an alignment between the values of the "Curriculum of Love" and the academic culture that had already developed within the PGMI program. However, this alignment does not automatically reveal how the policy is understood by the program administrators or what opportunities exist for its implementation within the context of program development. This situation serves as a crucial empirical context for further examining the program's response to the "Curriculum of Love" policy.

A number of previous studies have shown that the "Curriculum of Love" has had many positive impacts on character building and religious moderation. The study found that a "Curriculum of Love" based on local wisdom is capable of fostering religious moderation among students by strengthening the values of empathy, compassion, openness, and respect for diversity. The study (Fatiroh & Sukhoiri, 2025) on the effectiveness of the "Curriculum of Love"

in Islamic Religious Education shows that the implementation of this curriculum successfully shapes students' character so that they better appreciate differences and exhibit greater tolerance. Meanwhile, the study (Dzulfiqar, 2025) emphasizes that the "Curriculum of Love" can serve as a solution to address the challenges of intolerance and exclusivism through the integration of humanistic values and religious moderation into the educational process. Previous research has largely been dominated by studies focusing on conceptual aspects, instructional implementation, and student character development at the elementary and secondary education levels. Nevertheless, research specifically examining how actors at the program-level in Islamic higher education institutions understand and respond to the "Curriculum of Love" policy remains limited. This gap highlights the importance of examining the implementation of the "Curriculum of Love" not only from the perspective of instructional application but also from the perspective of institutional responses at the program level.

Based on this context and this gap, this study focuses on the response of the PGMI Study Program at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang to the "Curriculum of Love" policy, as well as the manifestation of its values in academic practice. This study aims to answer two research questions: (1) How does the PGMI Study Program interpret the "Curriculum of Love" policy?, and (2) How is this policy manifested in the academic culture and practices of the PGMI Study Program at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang? Through these questions, this study is expected to enrich the analysis of Islamic education policy implementation by demonstrating how a policy is understood and responded to at the program level, particularly when the substance of the policy aligns with an academic culture that has previously developed institutionally.

METHOD

منهج

This study was designed using a qualitative approach with a case study methodology. The choice of a qualitative approach is based on the need to comprehensively identify how the administrators of the PGMI Study Program at UIN Malang respond to the "Curriculum of Love" policy. The case study design is considered most appropriate because this study focuses on a specific phenomenon, namely the process of interpreting, responding to, and assessing the relevance of the "Curriculum of Love" policy in the context of developing elementary madrasah teacher education. This aligns with Creswell's (2016) view, which emphasizes that a qualitative approach is appropriate for identifying and understanding the perspectives of individuals and groups in responding to a social reality or humanitarian issue (Rusandi & Muhammad Rusli, 2021).

The data sources for this study fall into two categories: primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from key informants, including the Head of the PGMI Study Program, the Program Secretary, and faculty members who contributed to the curriculum design and development process. Secondary data was sourced from various relevant supporting references, such as the "Curriculum of Love" policy document published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the study program profile, the study program's vision and mission documents, scientific articles, books, and previous research findings related to the research focus.

Data collection was conducted through interviews and document review. Interviews were used to obtain information regarding the understanding, perspectives, and responses of the program administrators toward the "Curriculum of Love" policy. Document review involved analyzing documents related to the "Curriculum of Love" policy and institutional information about the study program as supporting data to reinforce the interview findings.

Data analysis in this study followed the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, which comprises three stages: data condensation, data presentation, and drawing and verifying conclusions (Rusandi & Muhammad Rusli, 2021). During the condensation stage, the study selected and categorized data directly relevant to the research focus. The results of this selection are then presented in a narrative format, accompanied by the identification of dominant themes that emerged from the interview process. In the final stage, conclusions are drawn, followed by an iterative verification process to gain a deep and comprehensive understanding of the responses of the PGMI Study Program administrators to the "Love" Curriculum policy.

RESULT

نتائج

Based on the results of interviews with the administrators of the PGMI Study Program, two main findings emerged. First, the administrators of the PGMI Study Program responded positively to the "Curriculum of Love" policy because the substance of the policy was viewed as aligning with the values that have developed within the program's academic culture. Second, values aligned with the Panca Cinta have been manifested in various academic practices and routines, even though the "Curriculum of Love" policy has not yet been explicitly positioned as a separate component within the curriculum, according to the informants.

Responses from the PGMI Program Administrators to the "Curriculum of Love" Policy

Interview results indicate that the "Curriculum of Love" policy has received a positive response from the PGMI program administrators. The informants viewed the substance of this policy as not entirely new to the PGMI environment. Values such as compassion, religiosity, respect for others, a love of knowledge, concern for the environment, and patriotism were seen as already aligning with the educational ethos that has long been developed within the program.

The Chair of the PGMI Program stated that:

"For us, the 'Curriculum of Love' is not something entirely new. When viewed in terms of its substance, the values it embodies have actually long been part of the PGMI learning culture; therefore, this policy serves more as a reinforcement than a change."

This statement indicates that acceptance of the policy did not arise solely due to instructions from the Ministry of Religious Affairs but was also influenced by the alignment between the policy's substance and the values that have already taken root at the program level. Thus, the "Curriculum of Love" is perceived as a policy that reinforces existing educational practices, rather than one that demands a fundamental shift in the educational orientation of the PGMI program. In this context, the alignment of values between the "Curriculum of Love" policy and the PGMI academic culture is one of the reasons program administrators have expressed a supportive stance toward the policy.

The administrators' understanding of the policy's substance also played a significant role in their response. The Secretary of the PGMI program stated:

"We follow developments in the Ministry of Religious Affairs' policies and understand that the 'Curriculum of Love' is not a new curriculum, but rather an educational paradigm that emphasizes compassion, tolerance, and humanistic, so that, indirectly, the 'Curriculum of Love' is relevant to the PGMI curriculum."

This understanding was gained through various forums, including outreach sessions, seminars, and academic discussions regarding the Ministry of Religious Affairs' policy. These

findings indicate that the administrators' positive response is not merely an acceptance of the term "Curriculum of Love," but is also grounded in an understanding of the policy's substance as an educational paradigm that emphasizes the values of compassion, tolerance, and humanity.

The Application of the Five Dimensions of Love in the Academic Culture of the PGMI Program at UIN Malang

The administrators' positive response to the "Curriculum of Love" is also evident in various academic practices that align with the values of the Five Dimensions of Love. Based on interview results, these values have been identified in the culture and academic activities of the PGMI Program, although they are not always explicitly referred to by the term "Curriculum of Love." In other words, the research findings reveal a discrepancy between the formalization of policies and the manifestation of those policy values. The values later formulated in the "Curriculum of Love" were already present in various academic practices before the policy was formally introduced.

a. Love for Allah

In terms of love for Allah, this is manifested through religious practices in the academic environment, such as reciting the Qur'an before class begins, group prayers, congregational prayers, and a traveling Qur'an recitation program. As stated by the secretary of the PGMI study program:

"Every classroom is equipped with a copy of the Qur'an, and students are encouraged to read the Qur'an before class begins. The traveling Qur'an recitation sessions are also a regular weekly activity as part of our spiritual practices."

These practices demonstrate that the internalization of religious values within the PGMI environment is not limited to religious coursework but is also embodied through daily academic routines. Thus, religious values become an integral part of the academic culture that students experience repeatedly.

b. Love of Knowledge

Commitment to knowledge is reflected through the promotion of a culture of literacy, scholarly discussions, student research, and various academic activities that foster the advancement of science and technology, enabling future teachers to keep pace with increasingly advanced technological developments. As expressed in an interview:

"We encourage students to actively read, write, and conduct research; sometimes students collaborate with faculty members. Additionally, there are training programs, such as creating digital learning materials, to help teachers become tech-savvy."

These practices demonstrate that a love of learning is not merely understood as mastery of course material, but also as an academic attitude that encourages students to continue learning, seek knowledge, conduct research, and develop their competencies.

c. Love for the Environment

The value of environmental stewardship is embodied through the Environmental Education (PLH) course, greening activities, and fostering habits of maintaining campus cleanliness. A faculty member stated that:

"Students not only learn environmental concepts but are also encouraged to maintain classroom cleanliness and participate in environmental awareness activities as part of character development."

According to the informant, Environmental Education (PLH) instruction is not only focused on conceptual understanding of the environment but also provides students with practical experiences to develop creativity in utilizing materials that could otherwise become waste. One such activity is the practice of turning coffee grounds into aromatherapy candles.



Figure 1. The practice of turning coffee grounds into aromatherapy candles as part of Environmental Education instruction for PGMI students

This activity demonstrates that environmental awareness is not merely conveyed as knowledge but is also realized through students' learning experiences and hands-on practice. Thus, the dimension of love for the environment within the context of the "Curriculum of Love" is evident through learning that connects knowledge with concrete action.

d. Love for Human

Compassion for fellow human beings is manifested through a culture of mutual respect, collaborative learning, and community service activities. These conditions show that the value of humanity in the "Curriculum of Love" is not merely about teaching material on tolerance and compassion but is also embodied through patterns of interaction in academic life. This is particularly important in the context of the PGMI program because students are being prepared as future educators who will eventually work with students from diverse backgrounds and with varied personalities.

e. Love for the Homeland

Love for the homeland is manifested by strengthening the values of religious moderation and a sense of national identity, as well as through various student activities that foster a sense of responsibility as citizens. Thus, overall, the research findings indicate that the implementation of the "Curriculum of Love" values in the PGMI program at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang has taken place substantively through academic culture and teaching practices, even though these values have not yet been explicitly integrated into the program's curriculum documents.

Table 1. Matrix of Findings on Responses to and Manifestations of the "Curriculum of Love" Values

Theme	Key Findings	Analytical Interpretation
Responses to Policy	Administrators responded positively and viewed the "Curriculum of Love" as aligned with the values that have developed at PGMI	Demonstrates an implementer disposition that supports policy implementation
Love for Allah	Recitation of the Qur'an, prayer, and group Qur'an study during academic activities	Religious values are internalized through habitual practice
Love for knowledge	Reading, discussion, research, scholarly work, and the development of digital competencies	A love of knowledge is embodied as an academic culture
Love for the environment	Environmental education and practices for utilizing materials that could become waste	Environmental values are embodied through learning experiences and practical application
Love for others	Mutual respect, cooperation, compassion, and social activities	Humanistic values are embodied through academic and social interactions
Love for the homeland	Religious moderation, national identity, and student activities	National values are integrated into the character development of prospective teachers

DISCUSSION

مناقشة

The “Curriculum of Love” is an educational policy initiated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia as an effort to instill the values of compassion, tolerance, and humanism in the learning process (Syah dkk., 2025). This policy is not only oriented toward the achievement of academic competencies but also emphasizes character development based on the principles of Panca Cinta (Rafi dkk., 2025). In the context of this study, the positive response from the administrators of the PGMI Study Program indicates that the substance of the Curriculum of Love is viewed as consistent with the academic culture, scholarly vision, and educational practices that have long been developed at the PGMI program at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. This situation illustrates that acceptance of a policy is more easily fostered when the values it promotes align with the existing characteristics and culture of the organization.

From the perspective of policy implementation as outlined by George C. Edwards III, this situation reflects a positive disposition among implementers that is, an attitude of acceptance and support for the policy because it is viewed as relevant to the organization’s needs and characteristics (Hidayat dkk., 2026). In this study, the administrators’ disposition was evident in their positive acceptance of the “Curriculum of Love,” as it was viewed as aligned with the existing values of the PGMI Study Program at UIN Malang. In other words, the disposition or attitude of the implementers is one of the key determinants of the policy’s successful implementation. This aligns with studies on the “Curriculum of Love,” which positions compassion, respect for humanity, and religious moderation as the foundations of contextual Islamic education (Fatiroh & Sukhoiri, 2025). However, the findings of this study place a different emphasis. The main issue is not merely whether administrators accept the policy, but why the policy was relatively easily accepted. The research results indicate that this acceptance is linked to the alignment between the policy’s substance and the educational practices that had already developed within the program.

In the context of this study, the administrators’ stance emerged not merely due to government policy but because of the alignment between the substance of the ‘Curriculum of Love’ and the organization’s established culture. Thus, policy implementation occurs through the reinforcement of existing practices (*policy reinforcement*), rather than through drastic institutional changes. This differs from other studies that position the “Curriculum of Love” as a new paradigm of Islamic education oriented toward a humanistic approach (Qamariah & Anwar, 2025), whereas this study demonstrates that, in the context of the PGMI program at UIN Malang, acceptance of an educational policy is influenced not only by the policy socialization process but also by the degree of alignment between the values promoted by the policy and the organizational culture that has developed within the institution. This situation has led the “Curriculum of Love” to be perceived as a reinforcement of existing educational practices, rather than as a new paradigm demanding fundamental change.

The positive response from the program administrators ultimately went beyond mere acceptance of the policy; it was also reflected in educational practices within the PGMI program. Their supportive stance toward the “Curriculum of Love” encouraged them to maintain and strengthen various academic and institutional cultural activities aligned with the values of compassion, religious moderation, and respect for humanity. Therefore, the implementation of the Kurikulum Cinta at PGMI UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang can be understood as a process of internalizing values, manifested through various learning practices and academic culture that

have developed within the study program.

This application is clearly evident in the incorporation of the Panca Cinta values into various academic activities, beginning with the value of love for Allah, which is manifested through religious practices. This demonstrates that these practices serve as strategic means to instill spiritual values in students so that these values become internalized in their daily attitudes and behaviors. From a character education perspective, habit formation is an effective strategy for shaping students' character through real-life experiences carried out consistently and repeatedly (Rahmatilla dkk., 2025). This finding is also consistent with the concept of the "Curriculum of Love," which places love for God as the primary foundation for character development, as a strong spiritual dimension serves as the foundation for fostering compassion toward fellow human beings, concern for the environment, love for the nation, and enthusiasm for the advancement of science (Lismijar, 2026).

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In the PGMI program at UIN Malang, the commitment to environmental stewardship is realized through the Environmental Education (PLH) course, greening initiatives, waste management, and fostering habits of maintaining campus cleanliness. These findings indicate that environmental (ecological) education in the PGMI program is not only oriented toward transferring ecological knowledge to students as part of the character development of prospective teachers but also fosters a moral responsibility toward environmental sustainability as part of humanity's mandate as stewards of the Earth. This aligns with the concept of the "Curriculum of Love" in madrasahs, which emphasizes that concern for the environment is an integral part of pedagogical transformation that connects learning with students' real-life experiences (Maulida & Darnoto, 2025)

The value of love for fellow human beings is realized through the establishment of academic relationships that uphold mutual respect, empathy, cooperation, and appreciation for diversity on campus. Interactions between faculty and students are built on the foundation of dialogue and a humanistic approach, so that the learning process is not only oriented toward the transfer of knowledge but also toward character development and the strengthening of humanistic values. These findings indicate that pedagogical relationships in the PGMI program are built on a foundation of respect for human dignity. This aligns with the humanistic educational paradigm and the objectives of the "Curriculum of Love," which places compassion, empathy, and respect for others as the primary foundations of education (Nurvayanti dkk., 2025).

The implementation of patriotism is realized through the promotion of religious moderation, a sense of national identity, and various student activities that foster social responsibility and nationalism. These practices demonstrate that the development of national

character in the PGMI program is not separate from Islamic values but rather mutually reinforcing. This finding supports research indicating that reinforcing the values of religious moderation in education contributes to the development of a tolerant character and helps prevent the emergence of extremist attitudes in educational settings (Shofyan, 2022). In line with this, the “Curriculum of Love” paradigm views love for the nation as a manifestation of social responsibility that aligns with moderate and inclusive Islamic teachings (Lismijar, 2026).

Research findings indicate that values aligned with the “Curriculum of Love” have developed through academic practices and culture, even though they have not yet been fully and explicitly formalized in curriculum documents. This situation can be understood through the concept of the hidden curriculum that is, the values, norms, habits, and patterns of interaction that students learn through educational experiences outside the formal curriculum structure (Rohmad & Kolis, 2021). From this perspective, the academic culture of the PGMI program plays a crucial role in the process of internalizing values. Students learn values not only through course materials but also through what they observe, experience, and do in their academic lives. These findings align with those of (Warsah dkk., 2022) which indicate that the hidden curriculum can shape character through role modeling, habits, interactions, and organizational culture.

However, these findings also raise issues that require attention. Implementation that relies too heavily on informal culture is more vulnerable than practices that have received support through institutional mechanisms. When values are transmitted solely through habits and practices that are not systematically documented, the consistency of their implementation may vary across individuals, cohorts, or leadership periods (Hardiansyah & Mas’odi, 2020). This means that practices currently functioning well do not automatically guarantee the sustainability of implementation in the future. This vulnerability is significant because the hidden curriculum essentially operates through the environment and the actors who carry it out. This comparison provides a critical perspective on the findings of this study. A positive response from administrators is an important asset, but it cannot be equated with a guarantee of the sustainability of implementation.

The issue of sustainability is becoming increasingly important because the implementation identified in this study largely takes place through an academic culture that has already developed, but also depends on specific actors or on practices that have not yet been established. Changes in the leadership of the study program, shifts in the composition of the faculty, or changes in institutional priorities, for example, have the potential to affect the continuity of these practices if the values of the “Curriculum of Love” are passed down solely through experience and custom without documentation or mechanisms for regeneration. Therefore, institutionalization should be understood not as an effort to replace the existing academic culture, but as an effort to provide institutional support for ongoing practices (Nadlir & Erfansyah, 2024). Some relevant forms of institutionalization include proportionally incorporating the Panca Cinta values into academic documents, allocating space in the Course Syllabus (RPS) or relevant learning activities, documenting best practices, conducting orientation for new faculty members, and providing evaluation forums to assess the consistency of their implementation. Thus, the most appropriate strategy for the PGMI context is not to replace existing practices with a new set of procedures, but rather to transform existing practices into ones that are better documented, more focused, and sustainable

CONCLUSSION

خاتمة

A Program Coordinator for the PGMI program at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, interprets the "Curriculum of Love" as a policy aligned with established academic values and culture, thereby demonstrating a positive and accommodating response to the policy. The values of Panca Cinta have been manifested in various academic practices and institutional culture, although they have not yet been fully formalized in curriculum documents. This finding contributes theoretically by demonstrating that the positive disposition of implementers toward policy implementation can be strengthened by the alignment between the policy and existing institutional values, while the concept of the hidden curriculum explains the process of internalizing values through academic culture. Practically, academic programs need to map the Panca Cinta values into relevant curriculum documents and course syllabi, establish implementation indicators, document existing practices, and conduct periodic evaluations so that the sustainability of the "Curriculum of Love" does not depend on individuals or leadership changes.

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