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REORIENTING ARABIC LANGUAGE LEARNING IN MADRASAHS THROUGH THE CINTA FRAMEWORK: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the characteristics of relevant studies on the Love-Based Curriculum (Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta); how KBC values are integrated into the objectives, materials, approaches, and assessment of Arabic instruction; and the indicators and instruments used to evaluate implementation and its effects. Scopus, SINTA, and Google Scholar (first 200 results per query) were searched with English and Indonesian terms combining KBC, Arabic, and madrasah, covering publications from January 2016 to January 2026. Peer-reviewed empirical studies and qualitative document analyses in Indonesian, English, or Arabic were eligible, and quality was appraised with the MMAT 2018. Forty publications were included (published 2020-2026; 17 in 2025-2026) and were analyzed through thematic content analysis and narrative synthesis. Only three explicitly addressed KBC. No study systematically mapped the Panca Cinta pillars onto instructional components, and reported outcomes centered on motivation, engagement, and perceptions rather than objectively measured language competence. No validated instrument was found that jointly assesses Arabic proficiency, empathic interaction, anxiety, and ethical behavior. Evidence that love-based learning conditions improve Arabic proficiency therefore remains insufficient. Future research should prioritize empirical field studies at each madrasah level and the development of valid affective assessment instruments.

Keywords: Love-Based Curriculum; Panca Cinta; Arabic language learning; madrasah; affective assessment; systematic literature review.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji karakteristik penelitian yang relevan tentang Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta; bagaimana nilai-nilai KBC diintegrasikan ke dalam tujuan, materi, pendekatan, dan penilaian pembelajaran bahasa Arab; serta indikator dan instrumen yang digunakan untuk mengevaluasi implementasi dan dampaknya. Penelusuran literatur dilakukan melalui basis data Scopus, SINTA, dan Google Scholar (200 hasil pertama untuk setiap kueri) dengan menggunakan istilah pencarian dalam bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia yang mengombinasikan kata kunci KBC, bahasa Arab, dan madrasah. Penelusuran mencakup publikasi sejak Januari 2016 hingga Januari 2026. Kriteria inklusi meliputi penelitian empiris yang telah melalui proses penelaahan sejawat serta analisis dokumen kualitatif yang diterbitkan dalam bahasa Indonesia, Inggris, atau Arab. Kualitas penelitian dinilai menggunakan Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) 2018. Sebanyak 40 publikasi berhasil diidentifikasi dan dimasukkan dalam kajian, dengan rentang tahun terbit 2020–2026, termasuk 17 publikasi yang diterbitkan pada 2025–2026. Data dianalisis melalui analisis isi tematik dan sintesis naratif. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa hanya tiga publikasi yang secara eksplisit membahas KBC. Tidak ditemukan penelitian yang secara sistematis memetakan pilar-pilar Panca Cinta ke dalam komponen pembelajaran. Selain itu, hasil yang dilaporkan lebih berfokus pada motivasi, keterlibatan, dan persepsi peserta didik daripada pengukuran kompetensi berbahasa secara objektif. Tidak ditemukan pula instrumen tervalidasi yang secara terpadu mengukur kemahiran berbahasa Arab, interaksi empatik, kecemasan, dan perilaku etis. Dengan demikian, bukti empiris yang menunjukkan bahwa kondisi pembelajaran berbasis cinta dapat meningkatkan kemahiran berbahasa Arab masih belum memadai. Penelitian selanjutnya perlu memprioritaskan studi lapangan empiris pada setiap jenjang madrasah serta pengembangan instrumen penilaian aspek afektif yang valid.

Kata Kunci: Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta; Panca Cinta; pembelajaran bahasa Arab; madrasah; penilaian afektif; tinjauan literatur sistematis.

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INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs launched the Love-Based Curriculum (*Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta*, KBC) on 24 July 2025 to strengthen value formation in madrasah education, with Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education No. 6077 of 2025 serving as its implementation guideline (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam, 2025). KBC does not replace the Merdeka Curriculum; rather, it is inserted into all subjects (Republika, 2025). Its values are articulated in five pillars known as *Panca Cinta*: love for God and the Prophet, love of knowledge, love for oneself and others, love for the environment, and love for the homeland (Rosyad, 2026). This orientation is consistent with the national education objectives set out in Law No. 20 of 2003, which places faith, piety, and noble character alongside learners' competence. Its reach is substantial: the Ministry of Religious Affairs reports more than 9.1 million students in Islamic elementary, lower secondary, and upper secondary madrasahs (JPNN, 2025).

Within this policy context, Arabic language learning faces documented problems, although the available evidence remains local in scale (Amrullah et al., 2022). A study at MTs Miftahul Khair Hartaco in Makassar reported that teachers' instructional methods (68.8%), difficulty writing and connecting Arabic letters (67.5%), and limited facilities (65%) were the most frequently reported factors behind students' learning difficulties (Wandira, 2023). At MAN 5 Jombang, difficulty with grammatical rules (*qawā'id*) was recorded at 79% (Aini, 2022). Both findings derive from small samples at a single site and therefore cannot be generalized (Rifa'i et al., 2023). Nevertheless, a similar pattern emerges in policy analysis, which describes Arabic instruction in madrasahs as still dominated by cognitive–structural approaches, with little attention to affective and empathic dimensions, and as tending to foster the perception that Arabic is difficult and rigid (Aulia et al., 2024). Given this thin evidence base, however, it remains unclear how systemic the problem is.

KBC offers a framework for redirecting this orientation, and research has begun to examine its application to Arabic (Laili, 2024). Betu (2023) concludes that KBC can rehumanize Arabic learning in MTs, but its effectiveness depends on teachers' pedagogical readiness, technical guidance, and a more holistic evaluation system. Maskuri et al. (2025) observe that KBC implementation remains largely at the level of concepts and policy, whereas operational learning models for Arabic have not been systematically formulated. They propose a model with four characteristics: objectives that combine the four language skills with the internalization of love-based values; materials that integrate linguistic texts with Qur'anic values; a compassionate pedagogy; and the assessment of learning processes, attitudes, and development. Field reports point in a similar direction: teachers' integrative strategies in Arabic classes have been linked to students' motivation and character. In contrast, Arabic teachers' readiness at one Islamic elementary madrasah was judged good but still in need of training and guidelines (Abdurahman & Zulfiqri, 2025). In *Akidah Akhlak* instruction at the elementary level, reported obstacles include teachers' incomplete understanding of KBC, limited instructional time, and inadequate facilities (Fata et al., 2024).

Taken together, however, the existing contributions share the same limitations. They consist of policy document analysis (Prasetya et al., 2025), a model formulated through descriptive library research (Rahman Bidita, 2018), or case studies of single institutions. Based on the authors' preliminary search, no review to date has (a) applied a systematic protocol with replicable selection criteria and quality appraisal, (b) mapped how the *Panca Cinta* values are operationalized in the objectives, materials, methods, and assessment of Arabic instruction, or (c) synthesized how their

effects are measured (Said et al., 2025). Yet an evaluation system is identified as one condition for KBC's effectiveness (Basori et al., 2025) and remains a weak point in the existing literature.

This article addresses that gap through a systematic literature review reported in accordance with PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021). Its novelty lies in shifting the focus from whether a love-based approach is beneficial to how it is operationalized and measured in Arabic learning in madrasahs. Accordingly, the review is guided by three research questions. First, it examines the characteristics of studies that address integrating KBC values (*Panca Cinta*) into Arabic learning in madrasahs. Second, it investigates how these values are integrated into the objectives, materials, approaches, and assessment of Arabic instruction. Third, it identifies the indicators and instruments used to evaluate implementation and its effects, as well as the gaps that remain in developing valid, measurable indicator standards. The findings are directed toward a framework of implementation indicators that can be tested in subsequent research.

METHOD

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) following the three-phase procedure of Kitchenham and Charters (Lim et al., 2021), namely planning, conducting, and reporting, and is reported in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 statement (Page et al., 2021). Before screening began, a review protocol was drawn up specifying the research questions, eligibility criteria, search strategy, appraisal instrument, and data extraction form [and was registered at (repository, identifier). The review addressed three research questions: RQ1 concerned the characteristics of studies on the integration of KBC values (*Panca Cinta*) into Arabic learning in madrasahs; RQ2 concerned how these values are integrated into the objectives, materials, approaches, and assessment of Arabic instruction; and RQ3 concerned the indicators and instruments used to evaluate implementation and its effects.

Studies were selected according to the criteria in Table 1.

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

No	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
1	Addresses the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC), its *Panca Cinta* values, or an explicitly love-based or compassion-based pedagogy (Aisyatunnadiya et al., 2025)	Not set in Arabic learning, or not in a madrasah or equivalent Islamic school
2	Set in Arabic language learning at Islamic elementary, lower secondary, or upper secondary madrasahs (MI, MTs, MA) (Zurqoni et al., 2020)	General character or values education with no love-based framing and no Arabic context
3	Reports at least one of: how values are integrated into objectives, materials, or methods; assessment indicators or instruments; learning outcomes (motivation, character, language skills)(Jumadi et al., 2024)	Theses, dissertations, conference proceedings, book chapters, editorials, news items, and policy documents themselves
4	Peer-reviewed journal article reporting an empirical study (qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods, or research and development) or a qualitative document analysis(Morgan, 2022)	Duplicate reports of the same study (the most complete report was retained)
5	Published between [January 2016] and [month year of search]	Full text not accessible

6	Written in [Indonesian, English, or Arabic]	Scored below the quality threshold (see Quality appraisal)

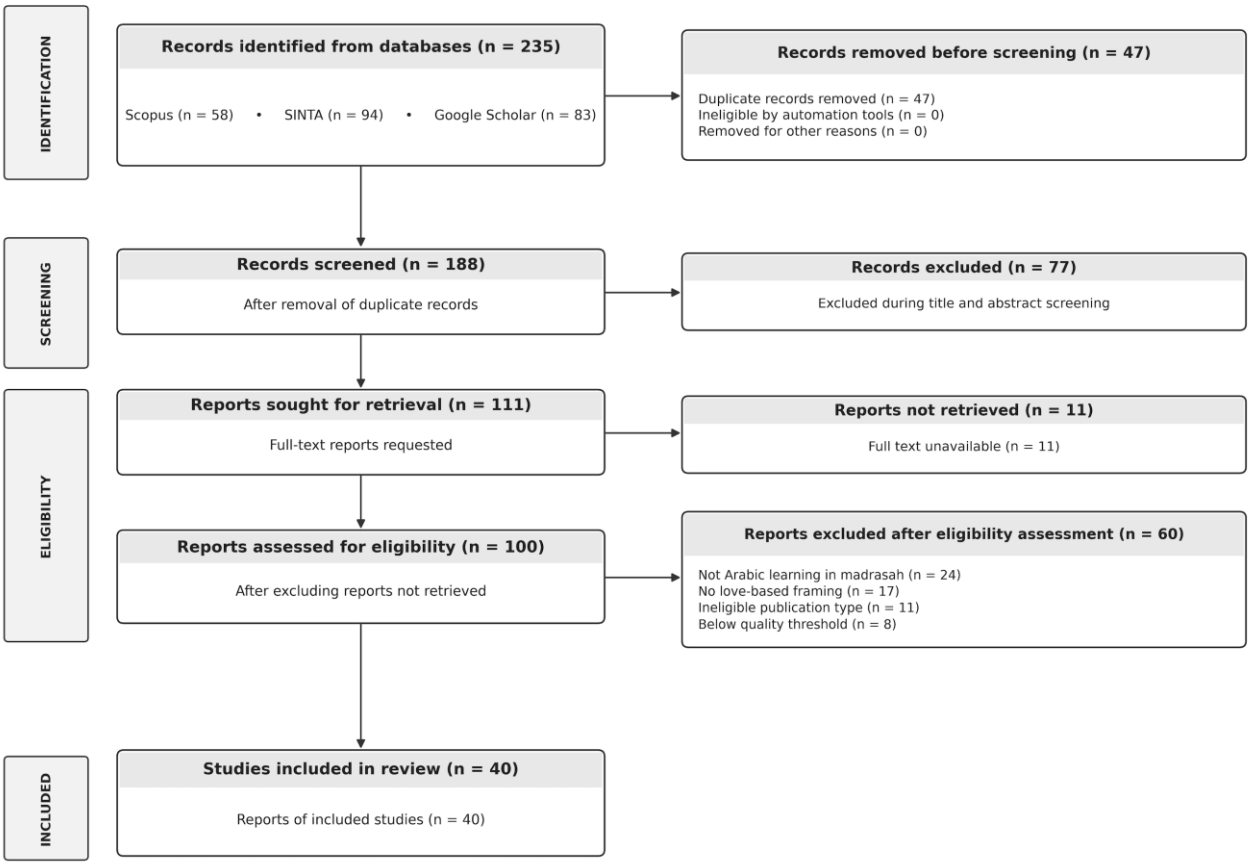
Three sources were searched: Scopus, SINTA [via the SINTA/Garuda portal], and Google Scholar. Google Scholar was queried through Publish or Perish, and the first 200 results per query, ranked by relevance, were screened. The last search was conducted on date. Search terms were built from three concept blocks (KBC, Arabic, and madrasah) in English and Indonesian. Terms for indicators and effectiveness were deliberately omitted from the strings to avoid missing studies that report them only in the full text; these criteria were applied at the eligibility stage (3). The exact strings are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Search strings by database

Database	Language	Search string
Scopus	English	TITLE-ABS-KEY (("love-based curriculum" OR "curriculum of love" OR "panca cinta" OR "compassionate pedagogy" OR "love-based") AND (arabic) AND (madrasa* OR "Islamic school*")) AND PUBYEAR > 2015 AND DOCTYPE (ar)
Scopus	Indonesian	TITLE-ABS-KEY (("kurikulum berbasis cinta" OR "kurikulum cinta" OR "panca cinta") AND ("bahasa arab") AND (madrasah)) AND PUBYEAR > 2015
Google Scholar	English	"love-based curriculum" OR "panca cinta" OR "compassionate pedagogy" Arabic madrasah
Google Scholar	Indonesian	"kurikulum berbasis cinta" OR "kurikulum cinta" OR "panca cinta" "bahasa Arab" madrasah
SINTA	Indonesian	kurikulum berbasis cinta bahasa Arab; kurikulum cinta pembelajaran bahasa Arab madrasah; panca cinta bahasa Arab
SINTA	English	love-based curriculum Arabic madrasah

Records were exported to Mendeley, and duplicates were removed automatically and then manually. Selection proceeded in three steps: screening titles and abstracts against Table 1, retrieving full texts, and assessing full texts for eligibility, with the reason for each exclusion recorded. Screened all records independently, and disagreements were resolved by discussion (Cohen's $\varkappa$) The selection process is shown in the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram (Figure 1), which was produced with [the PRISMA2020 Shiny application (Walker et al., 2024). Forty studies met all criteria and were included in the synthesis.

Figure 1. *PRISMA 2020 flow diagram*



The methodological quality of each included study was appraised with the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) version 2018 (Hong et al., 2018), which provides five criteria for each of the qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods designs. Each criterion was scored 1 (yes) or 0 (no or cannot tell), giving a total of 0 to 5. [Studies scoring below 3 were excluded from the synthesis (6). Quality scores were also used to weigh the strength of evidence when themes were interpreted.

We developed and piloted a standardized extraction form on [five] articles. It recorded bibliographic details and journal indexing; educational level and region; research design and sample; the *Panca Cinta* pillars addressed; the way values were integrated into objectives, materials, methods, and assessment; the indicators and instruments used; reported outcomes; stated limitations; and the quality score.

Extracted data were analyzed through thematic content analysis (Qaissi, 2024). Coding combined deductive codes, derived from the five *Panca Cinta* pillars and the four instructional components (objectives, materials, methods, assessment), with inductive codes that emerged from the data. Codes were grouped into themes and reviewed against the extracted data. The indicators identified were organized in a synthesis matrix crossing *Panca Cinta* pillars with instructional components, which forms the basis of the indicator framework proposed in this article. Given the heterogeneity of designs and outcome measures, we did not conduct a meta-analysis; instead, we synthesized reported effects narratively under three outcome groups: motivation, character, and language competence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following bibliographic normalization of the provided matrix, 40 unique publications were identified for analysis based on publication year, thematic focus, research design, geographical context, language of instruction, and explicit connections to the Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta (KBC), also referred to as the Kurikulum CINTA in several publications (Nurmatias et al., 2025). The analysis employed descriptive mapping and thematic-comparative synthesis to examine patterns in the findings, discrepancies across studies, limitations of the available evidence, and implications for Arabic language learning in madrasahs (Ghufron et al., 2025).

Table 1. Distribution of the Characteristics of the 40 Unique Publications

Dimension	Category	n	Percentage
Publication year	2020–2022	9	23.7%
	2023–2024	12	31.6%
	2025–2026	17	44.7%
Main theme	Curriculum orientation and design	10	26.3%
	Arabic as a language of faith: spirituality and identity	8	21.1%
	Technology, gamification, and innovative methods	11	28.9%
	Teachers, educational ecosystems, and evaluation	9	23.7%
Research design*	Primary empirical studies involving participant data, performance, or interventions	21	55.3%
	Literature- and document-based reviews, systematic literature reviews (SLRs), meta-analyses, or bibliometric studies	11	28.9%
	Conceptual and theoretical studies	6	15.8%
Geographical context*	Indonesia (explicitly identified)	20	52.6%
	Other countries: the United Kingdom, Russia, Tanzania, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka	5	13.2%
	Cross-national or unidentified contexts	13	34.2%
Subject focus	Specifically focused on Arabic	20	52.6%
	Other languages, Islamic education, or character education in general	18	47.4%
Connection to KBC	Explicitly addresses KBC	3	7.9%

The distribution of publication years indicates growing scholarly interest in this topic. A total of 17 publications (44.7%) appeared in 2025–2026; following deduplication, 16 were published in 2025 and one in 2026 (Zurqoni et al., 2020). This pattern suggests that discussions of curriculum reorientation, affective values, and instructional innovation are gaining momentum, although the evidence base remains relatively recent. Promising findings should not yet be interpreted as evidence of an established model or sustained impact, particularly because some studies have not been replicated across different contexts and periods.

Thematic analysis shows that technology, gamification, and innovative methods formed the largest category, with 11 publications (28.9%), followed by curriculum orientation and design, with 10 publications (26.3%) (Jumhana et al., 2025). Spirituality and identity accounted for eight publications (21.1%), while teachers, educational ecosystems, and evaluation comprised nine publications (23.7%). This distribution indicates that instructional innovation has received

considerable attention, whereas developing indicators and evaluation systems requires further investigation. Methodological innovation alone does not explain how the values of love are conceptualized, implemented, and measured as components of a curriculum.

The most evident research gap is the limited direct engagement with KBC: only three publications (7.9%) addressed it explicitly. Rahmaini (2023) examined KBC in Arabic language learning through a literature and policy document review, proposing it as a complementary approach. . (2025) discussed the value of love in curriculum management. In contrast, Aisyatunnadiya et al. (2025) presented teachers' and students' perspectives on implementing a love-based curriculum. Consequently, most arguments in this review synthesize related literature, including studies on motivation, religious identity, gamification, teacher competence, and assessment, rather than providing direct evidence of KBC effectiveness.

Based on a recoding of research methods into broad categories, 21 publications (55.3%) were primary empirical studies involving participant data, performance, or interventions; 11 publications (28.9%) were literature- or document-based studies, including systematic reviews, meta-analyses, bibliometric analyses, and reviews of literature and policy. Six publications (15.8%) were conceptual and theoretical studies. These figures should not be interpreted as a quantitative-versus-qualitative distribution because methodological subtypes were not consistently documented across all entries. Explicitly reported methods included experimental or quasi-experimental designs (Haynes et al., 2021), mixed methods, and qualitative approaches involving interviews, observations, or case studies (Adu et al., 2022). Geographically, 20 publications (52.6%) explicitly focused on Indonesia, five (13.2%) examined other national contexts, and 13 (34.2%) addressed cross-national contexts or did not specify a particular geographical setting. Furthermore, 20 publications (52.6%) examined Arabic specifically, whereas 18 (47.4%) addressed other languages, Islamic education, or character education more broadly. Accordingly, generalizations to Indonesian madrasahs must account for differences in target languages, educational systems, infrastructure, and students' socioreligious backgrounds.

Arabic as a Language of Faith: Spirituality, Identity, and Meaning

The eight publications addressing spirituality and identity indicate that Arabic serves functions beyond everyday communication in several Islamic educational settings. Gent & Muhammad (2019), drawing on qualitative data concerning Muslim children in the United Kingdom, demonstrates that sacred language practices, particularly through Qur'anic learning and memorization, may foreground linguistic form and performance while retaining social and religious significance for practitioners. Balraj et al (2020), highlight the relationships between linguistic forms, religious meaning, and worldview formation. Meanwhile, Ghufron et al. (connect Arabic language learning in madrasahs with the negotiation of socioreligious identity and a sense of belonging to a faith community.

In curriculum development, . (2020) advocate developing Arabic for Religious Purposes to address learning needs related to reading classical Islamic texts. Wardani & Shodiq (2025), link religious values to communication ethics and students' speech acts, while Hajar (2025), identify spiritual motivation as a potential factor in strengthening persistence in Arabic language learning among non-native learners. Taken together, these findings suggest that language competence should be assessed in contexts that are meaningful to students, including worship, religious texts, and ethical interaction. Nevertheless, religious competence must be operationalized through measurable indicators to ensure that assessments of linguistic ability are not replaced by judgments of piety that lack clearly defined criteria.

Two interpretive limitations warrant particular attention. First, findings on memorization do not fully support the assumption that memorization is inherently a source of pedagogical problems. Rosowsky (2023), instead demonstrates the formative role of sacred language practices, while Walsh et al (2022), identifies repetition as a learning principle that remains relevant. Accordingly, the issue to be evaluated is not memorization itself, but whether it is accompanied by comprehension, meaningful language use, feedback, and an emotionally safe learning environment. Second, findings concerning the identities of Muslim children in the British diaspora cannot be directly extrapolated to students in Indonesian madrasahs. Differences in the status of Arabic as a heritage language, a language of sacred texts, or a foreign language within the school curriculum may shape learning objectives, motivation, and the forms of support required.

The claim that spiritual motivation is the "primary determinant" of learning success also requires a proportionate interpretation. Jaakkola (2020) presents a conceptual-theoretical analysis; therefore, their argument is better treated as a proposition requiring empirical testing than as evidence of a causal relationship. Future research should examine whether spiritual motivation is associated with learning persistence, engagement, religious-text reading proficiency, or communicative competence, and whether these relationships remain evident after accounting for initial proficiency and learning context.

Technology, Gamification, and Innovative Methods: Conditional Effectiveness

Technology and innovative methods constitute the largest thematic category in the corpus, although the interventions and outcome measures vary considerably. Regarding gamification, Özdemir (2025) reports that Kahoot supports motivation, participation, and learning outcomes, whereas Malik (2025), finds that combining gamification with blended learning is associated with students' emotional engagement in madrasahs. However, the systematic review and meta-analysis by Li et al (2024), present a more cautious picture: gamification can strengthen intrinsic motivation, perceived autonomy, and relatedness, but its effects on competence are not necessarily substantial. Sadeghi et al (2022), likewise report that 85% of students in the reviewed studies perceived gamification as effective for motivation and vocabulary comprehension. This figure, however, reflects students' perceptions rather than a standalone measure of objective gains in competence.

These differing findings should not necessarily be interpreted as direct contradictions. The studies may differ in populations, intervention duration, research design, target skills, and outcome measures. Increased engagement does not invariably translate into a commensurate improvement in competence, particularly when games reward response speed or frequency rather than deeper language processing. Gamification should therefore be regarded as a supportive instructional design whose effectiveness depends on the alignment between game mechanics and linguistic objectives, the quality of feedback, and opportunities for meaningful language use.

Evidence on interactive media indicates potential for more direct learning gains, although interpretation still requires caution. (2025) report an increase in mean listening comprehension scores from 48.61 to 81.39 following the use of Lumio, a gain of 32.78 points. This finding provides a positive indication of the potential of interactive media for teaching maharah istima' (listening skills), including in madrasahs with limited access to language laboratories. Nevertheless, pretest–posttest scores alone cannot disentangle the media's effects from other factors, such as additional practice, repeated exposure to instructional materials, or novelty effects, particularly when no comparison group or long-term follow-up is available. Thus, this finding supports Lumio's potential but does not provide direct evidence of KBC effectiveness.

Other interventions demonstrate that innovation does not necessarily require digital devices. Rohanda et al (2025), report that the traditional Indonesian game Engklek can help reduce difficulties in learning nahwu (Arabic grammar) among beginner-level students. Nasir et al (2024), show that Arabic-to-Roman transliteration can help non-Muslim learners overcome initial barriers associated with script recognition and pronunciation. However, transliteration should serve as a transitional scaffold rather than a substitute for Arabic script acquisition. Andrä et al (2020), find that gestures and pictures can strengthen foreign-language vocabulary retention over several months, while Phoeun & Sengsri (2021), report benefits of the flipped classroom for English communicative skills. Evidence from languages other than Arabic may inform instructional design. Still, the transferability of these findings must be tested against Arabic's distinctive characteristics and the needs of madrasah learners.

Digital technology may also expand opportunities for independent learning. Haq et al (2024), discuss the potential of mobile applications to provide flexible access to Arabic learning materials for non-native learners in Sri Lanka. Zubaidi et al (2025), report an accuracy rate of 89.6% for ChatGPT-4 on a specific Arabic morphological identification task using tailored prompts. However, tool accuracy is not equivalent to student learning outcomes. A model's ability to identify morphological forms does not demonstrate that its use improves language acquisition, retention, or communicative competence. AI use also requires teachers to verify its outputs, particularly when context, cultural nuances, and language-use ethics matter.

The success of digital strategies also depends on implementation conditions, emphasize that the effectiveness of the flipped classroom is influenced by infrastructure readiness and teachers' digital literacy. This observation challenges the assumption that technology alone can overcome inequalities in educational provision. Digital platforms can expand access only when students have adequate devices and connectivity and teachers can design activities that go beyond content distribution. Accordingly, the score of 81.39 in the Lumio study, the accuracy rate of 89.6% in the ChatGPT evaluation, and the perceived effectiveness rate of 85% in the gamification study measure different constructs and should not be combined to support a general claim that digital innovations achieve effectiveness rates above 80%.

Teachers, Learning Ecosystems, and Evaluation

The themes of teachers and learning ecosystems indicate that the success of value-based learning cannot be explained solely by curriculum documents or the instructional media employed. Xuan et al (2023), emphasize the importance of integrating professional competence, emotional sensitivity, and teachers' digital literacy. Polo & Cantillo (2024), identify teachers' commitment to empathy, although its implementation may be constrained by time limitations and student dynamics. Sukaesih & Subagyo (2025), highlight the gap between the policy direction of Islamic education and the availability of qualified teachers, while Šimek (2025), demonstrate the importance of support and collaboration among teachers, parents, and school leaders. Collectively, these findings suggest that compassionate pedagogy requires appropriate organizational conditions and adequate resources rather than relying solely on individual teachers' willingness.

The language-learning environment also determines whether values and communicative objectives can be meaningfully practiced. Zain et al (2025), demonstrate that implementing bilingualism and biliteracy depends on consistent language use in everyday activities, supported by a bi'ah lughawiyyah (language-rich environment). Al-Husna (2025), report that a humanistic classroom atmosphere is associated with students' intrinsic motivation and moral engagement in

the context of KBC. Although these findings support the relevance of the emotional learning environment, motivation and moral engagement cannot yet be equated with improvements in language proficiency. Meanwhile, Wahyuni et al (2023), report that psychological factors account for 60% of the contribution to Indonesian language learning. This figure reinforces the general importance of psychological dimensions in language education. Still, it cannot be directly applied as an estimate of the influence of psychological factors on Arabic language acquisition because the target language and research context differ.

Regarding assessment, Kabalmay et al (2025), identifies limitations in the facilitation of higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) in Arabic language assessment, whereas (Davuth & Behera, 2025), highlights the potential of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and authentic portfolios to clarify the alignment between learning outcomes and assessment in higher education. However, findings from higher education do not automatically establish these models' suitability for madrasahs. One notable gap in the corpus is the absence of validated instruments that simultaneously measure Arabic language competence, the quality of empathetic interaction, learning motivation or anxiety, and ethical behaviors relevant to KBC objectives. The absence of such instruments limits researchers' ability to distinguish changes in perceptions from measurable changes in competence or observable behavior.

Table 2 synthesizes the convergence, differences, and cross-thematic implications of the findings. Evidence concerning motivation, participation, and classroom climate appears more frequently than longitudinal or causal evidence regarding language achievement and the impact of KBC.

Table 2. Cross-Thematic Meta-Synthesis

Synthesis Issue	Convergence of Findings	Differences or Limitations of the Evidence	Implications
Curriculum orientation	Curricula need to be more communicative, contextual, and responsive to values; normative and text-based approaches are considered insufficient (Lerdpornkulrat et al., 2016).	Reform priorities vary across practical communication, spirituality, and higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). Memorization and repetition may also serve formative functions (Husna et al., 2025).	Integrate values gradually into learning objectives and experiences rather than adding them as a separate component.
Affect and motivation	A humanistic classroom climate, engagement, and motivation may support persistence in learning (Dincer et al., 2019).	Gamification can enhance motivation, but its effects on competence are not always proportional (Li et al., 2024). Some findings on psychological factors and learning are derived from contexts involving languages other than Arabic (Calafato, 2023).	The relationship between affect and language achievement requires direct empirical testing, including the potential mediating roles of anxiety and motivation.

Technology and methods	Interactive media and innovative instructional strategies can increase engagement or improve scores in specific language skills (He et al., 2024).	Outcomes depend on the indicators and research designs employed; infrastructure and digital literacy are essential prerequisites (Nell, 2019). AI tool accuracy is not equivalent to learning outcomes (Shunnar et al., 2025).	Technology evaluations should distinguish between perceptions, test results, retention, and transfer abilities. Teacher readiness and access to technology should also be reported.
Teachers and the learning ecosystem	Teacher competence, empathy, school–family collaboration, and a language-rich environment support learning implementation (Safitri, 2025).	Teachers' commitment may be constrained by limited time and resources, as well as misalignment between policy and the availability of qualified personnel (Bharali, 2024).	Institutional support and teacher training should accompany curriculum revision.
Assessment of learning outcomes	Assessment needs to extend beyond structural tests to include HOTS and authentic portfolios (Garcia, 2025).	The corpus contains no evidence of validated KBC-specific affective assessment instruments for madrasahs; the evidence concerning Outcome-Based Education (OBE) comes from higher education.	Multidimensional instruments need to be developed and tested for validity, reliability, and feasibility in madrasah contexts.

From an interpretive perspective, this pattern is consistent with Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which proposes that affective factors such as anxiety may influence the conditions under which learners process language input. In this review, the hypothesis serves as a framework for examining the possible relationships among a supportive classroom atmosphere, motivation, and participation. The patterns reported by Cornelissen & Werner (2025), are compatible with this explanation but do not establish a causal mechanism. The corpus contains no direct test of Arabic language anxiety as a mediator between KBC implementation and linguistic outcomes. Therefore, the claim that KBC "lowers the affective filter" should be treated as a testable hypothesis rather than an established mechanism.

The meta-synthesis also identifies an imbalance between evidence of affective benefits and evidence of language achievement. The only empirical article in the corpus that directly examines KBC implementation from the perspectives of teachers and students, namely Maulani et al (2025), reports intrinsic motivation and moral engagement rather than Arabic language proficiency test results. Hania et al (2025), provides an argument for KBC-based Arabic language learning. Still, these recommendations do not constitute a comparative evaluation of its effects. Accordingly, the most defensible conclusion is that values of love and compassion may help create more supportive learning conditions; however, the evidence that these conditions causally improve linguistic competence remains insufficient.

CONCLUSION

This systematic review examined how the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) and its Panca Cinta values are addressed in the literature on Arabic learning in madrasahs. Regarding RQ1, the 40 included publications form a growing but fragmented body of work concentrated in 2025-2026, and only three explicitly address KBC. Evidence on KBC is therefore largely inferred from adjacent research on motivation, religious identity, gamification, teacher competence, and assessment. Regarding RQ2, no study systematically maps the Panca Cinta pillars onto the objectives, materials, approaches, and assessment of Arabic instruction. The literature offers only tentative design principles: gradually integrating values into learning experiences, linking materials to worship and religious texts, fostering a humanistic, language-rich classroom climate, and pairing memorization with comprehension and feedback.

Regarding RQ3, reported outcomes center on motivation, engagement, and perceptions. Objectively measured language gains are rare, and no validated instrument jointly captures Arabic proficiency, empathic interaction, anxiety, and ethical behavior. The call for a paradigm shift toward more humanizing Arabic instruction should thus be read as an evidence-informed recommendation drawn from the reviewed literature, not as demonstrated KBC effectiveness.

Several limitations apply. The search covered only three sources, and Google Scholar screening was restricted to the first 200 results per query, so relevant studies and grey literature may have been missed. Language and publication-period restrictions may have had the same effect. Because KBC was launched only in July 2025, directly relevant evidence is scarce and recent. The corpus is heterogeneous in design, target language, country, and educational level, and it could not be disaggregated by madrasah level (MI, MTs, MA), which limits generalization to any single level. Diverse outcome measures precluded meta-analysis, and quality appraisal and thematic synthesis inevitably involved interpretive judgment.

For policymakers, KBC guidelines should be translated into subject-specific operational guidance for Arabic that pairs linguistic objectives with observable value indicators and includes teacher training in compassionate pedagogy, with pilot evaluations preceding large-scale implementation. For researchers, three priorities emerge: (a) empirical field studies (quasi-experimental, mixed-methods, or design-based) at each madrasah level, reported separately by level; (b) development and validation of affective assessment instruments for KBC-based Arabic learning; and (c) longitudinal tests of whether Arabic language anxiety and motivation mediate the relationship between KBC implementation and linguistic outcomes.

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