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## **The Role of Love-Based Education in Improving the Communication Ethics of KPI Students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang**

*Peran Pendidikan Berbasis Cinta dalam Meningkatkan Etika Komunikasi Mahasiswa KPI UIN Imam Bonjol Padang*

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### **Abstrak**

Pendidikan berbasis cinta merupakan pendekatan pedagogis yang menempatkan kasih sayang, empati, dan hubungan emosional yang tulus antara pendidik dan peserta didik sebagai fondasi utama proses pembelajaran. Pendekatan ini dipandang memiliki relevansi yang signifikan dalam membentuk etika komunikasi mahasiswa, khususnya di program studi Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam (KPI). Mahasiswa KPI sebagai calon komunikator Islam profesional dituntut memiliki etika komunikasi yang berlandaskan nilai-nilai agama dan kemanusiaan. Artikel ini mengkaji peran pendidikan berbasis cinta dalam meningkatkan etika komunikasi mahasiswa KPI UIN Imam Bonjol Padang melalui telaah teoretis dan empiris. Pembahasan mencakup tiga aspek utama, yaitu konsep dan kerangka teoretis pendidikan berbasis cinta dalam Islam, hubungan antara pendidikan berbasis cinta dan pembentukan etika komunikasi, serta implementasi pendidikan berbasis cinta dalam pembelajaran di program studi KPI. Temuan kajian ini menegaskan bahwa pendidikan berbasis cinta secara efektif mendorong terbentuknya etika komunikasi yang empatik, jujur, dan bertanggung jawab pada mahasiswa KPI, yang merupakan kompetensi esensial bagi seorang komunikator Islam yang profesional dan berintegritas.

**Kata Kunci:** pendidikan berbasis cinta; etika komunikasi; KPI; UIN Imam Bonjol Padang

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**Abstract**

*Love-based education is a pedagogical approach that places affection, empathy, and sincere emotional bonds between educators and students as the primary foundation of the learning process. This approach is considered to have significant relevance in shaping the communication ethics of university students, particularly those enrolled in the Islamic Communication and Broadcasting (KPI) study program. KPI students, as future professional Islamic communicators, are expected to possess communication ethics grounded in religious and humanistic values. This article examines the role of love-based education in improving the communication ethics of KPI students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang through a theoretical and empirical review. The discussion covers three main aspects: the concept and theoretical framework of love-based education in Islam, the relationship between love-based education and the formation of communication ethics, and the implementation of love-based education in the KPI study program's learning environment. The findings affirm that love-based education effectively fosters empathetic, honest, and responsible communication ethics among KPI students, which are essential competencies for a professional and integrity-driven Islamic communicator.*

**Keywords:** *love-based education; communication ethics; KPI; UIN Imam Bonjol Padang*

**Introduction**

The formation of character and communication ethics among university students has become an increasingly urgent concern in contemporary higher education discourse (Jonathan Kera, Daniel Wong, 2024). In the context of Islamic higher education institutions (PTKIN) in Indonesia, this challenge is even more pronounced, as graduates are expected not only to be academically competent but also to embody the ethical and moral standards prescribed by Islamic values. The Islamic Communication and Broadcasting (Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam/KPI) study program at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang occupies a particularly strategic position in this regard, as its graduates are destined to become communicators, broadcasters, journalists, and public figures who will directly influence public discourse and shape the moral fabric of society (Hasan, 2019). The manner in which these future communicators speak, write, broadcast, and interact is thus a matter of profound educational and societal importance.

Despite the centrality of communication ethics in Islamic teaching, empirical observations and various studies indicate that lapses in communication ethics

among young people, including university students, remain a persistent challenge. The proliferation of hoaxes, hate speech, cyberbullying, and irresponsible communication on digital platforms reflects a broader ethical deficit that the educational system must urgently address (Wahyudi, 2020). In the Islamic tradition, communication ethics, referred to as *akhlaq al-kalam* or *adab al-kalam*, is not merely a set of external rules but an expression of one's inner spiritual and moral condition. This understanding suggests that improving communication ethics cannot be achieved through rule-enforcement alone but requires a transformation of the inner self, which love-based education is uniquely positioned to facilitate.

Love-based education, or what scholars have variously termed pedagogy of love, care-centered education, or affective pedagogy, draws on a rich intellectual tradition spanning both Western and Islamic scholarship (Muhsyanur and Mustapha, 2023; Muhsyanur, 2024b, 2024a; Santalia et al., 2025). In the Western tradition, Nel Noddings' (2005) ethics of care posits that authentic educational relationships must be grounded in genuine caring and attentiveness to the needs of the learner. Paulo Freire's (2000) pedagogy of love argues that true education is an act of love, a courageous and creative effort to name and transform the world in solidarity with others. In the Islamic tradition, the concept of love-based education finds its deepest roots in the Quranic concept of *rahmah* (compassion) and in the prophetic model of teaching, where the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) consistently demonstrated unconditional love, patience, and empathy toward his students and interlocutors (Al-Attas, 1979).

The relevance of love-based education to communication ethics is particularly evident when examined through the lens of Islamic communication philosophy (Muhsyanur et.al, 2024; Muhsyanur, 2023, 2025). According to Hefni (2015), Islamic communication ethics is built upon six fundamental principles derived from the Quran: *qawlan sadidan* (truthful speech), *qawlan ma'rufan* (kind and appropriate speech), *qawlan balighan* (effective and impactful speech), *qawlan maisuran* (gentle and accessible speech), *qawlan kariman* (dignified

speech), and qawlan layyinan (soft and tender speech). Each of these principles embodies a dimension of love, respect, and empathy toward the listener that resonates deeply with the core tenets of love-based education. When students internalize the values of love-based education, they are simultaneously cultivating the inner disposition necessary to practice these Quranic principles of communication.

Several empirical studies support the positive relationship between affective and caring educational environments and students' ethical development. Research conducted by Noddings (2012) demonstrates that students who experience caring relationships with their educators are more likely to develop prosocial behaviors, including ethical and respectful communication patterns. A study by Berkowitz and Bier (2014) further shows that character education programs rooted in caring school communities produce students with stronger moral reasoning and more ethical interpersonal communication skills. In the Indonesian context, Muhaimin (2015) emphasizes that Islamic higher education institutions possess a distinctive opportunity to cultivate love-based educational environments that nurture both intellectual and moral development simultaneously.

This article aims to comprehensively examine the role of love-based education in improving the communication ethics of KPI students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang. The discussion is organized around three principal themes: first, the conceptual and theoretical foundations of love-based education within the Islamic educational tradition; second, the relationship between love-based education and the formation of communication ethics in higher education settings; and third, the practical implementation of love-based educational principles within the KPI study program at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang and its implications for students' communication ethics. It is hoped that this article will offer meaningful contributions to the academic discourse on Islamic pedagogy and communication ethics, as well as practical guidance for educators and institutional policymakers.

## **Discussion**

## 1. Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations of Love-Based Education in the Islamic Tradition

Love-based education, when examined within the Islamic intellectual tradition, is far more than a pedagogical technique; it constitutes a fundamental ontological and epistemological stance regarding the relationship between educator, student, and knowledge. The concept of love (mahabbah) in Islam occupies a central position in both Sufi metaphysics and classical Islamic pedagogy. Al-Ghazali, in his seminal work *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, argues that the teacher-student relationship must be animated by sincere love and compassionate guidance, drawing an explicit analogy between a good teacher and a caring parent who nurtures not only the intellect but also the soul of the student (Al-Ghazali, trans. Winter, 2016). This holistic vision of education, which integrates cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions, provides the classical foundation upon which contemporary Islamic love-based education is built.

In the modern Islamic educational discourse, the concept of love-based education has been elaborated by several prominent scholars. Wan Daud (1998) argues that the Islamic concept of *adab*, which encompasses proper conduct, respect, and loving deference to God, knowledge, and others, constitutes the essential framework for Islamic education. When education is infused with *adab*, the relationship between teacher and student naturally becomes one of mutual love, respect, and care, which in turn creates the optimal conditions for genuine learning and character formation. Similarly, Langgulong (2003) emphasizes that Islamic education must prioritize the development of the heart (*qalb*) alongside the intellect, because it is from the purified heart that ethical and loving communication naturally flows. These perspectives collectively affirm that love is not incidental but intrinsic to the Islamic educational enterprise.

From the perspective of contemporary educational psychology, love-based education aligns closely with several well-established theoretical frameworks. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs identifies love and belonging as fundamental psychological needs that must be satisfied before individuals can fully engage in

higher-order learning and moral development. When students feel genuinely loved, valued, and respected by their educators, they are more open, vulnerable, and receptive to transformative educational experiences. Bowlby's (1988) attachment theory further suggests that secure attachment relationships, characterized by warmth, consistency, and care, form the emotional scaffolding upon which healthy social and moral development are constructed. Applied to the university context, these theories suggest that educators who model loving and caring relationships create the psychological safety necessary for students to take ethical risks and develop authentic communication virtues.

The prophetic model of communication provides perhaps the most compelling exemplar of love-based education in practice. The Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) interactions with his companions, as documented extensively in the hadith literature, consistently demonstrate the integration of love, wisdom, and ethical communication. His famous hadith, 'None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself' (Sahih Al-Bukhari), encapsulates the relational ethic of love that underpins both Islamic education and Islamic communication ethics. Research by Siddiqui (2015) on the prophetic pedagogical method identifies several recurring characteristics, including patience, individual attention, emotional sensitivity, and unconditional positive regard, that map directly onto the principles of contemporary love-based education. This alignment between the prophetic model and modern pedagogical theory reinforces the legitimacy and relevance of love-based education as an Islamic educational paradigm.

## **2. The Relationship Between Love-Based Education and the Formation of Communication Ethics**

The formation of communication ethics is fundamentally a moral development process, and moral development theory provides crucial insights into why love-based education is so effective in this domain. Kohlberg's (1984) theory of moral development posits that individuals progress through stages of moral reasoning from self-interest to principled ethical commitment, and that this

progression is significantly accelerated by exposure to warm, consistent, and intellectually stimulating moral educators. In the context of communication ethics, a student who has internalized the values of love and care is naturally inclined to communicate in ways that reflect those values, demonstrating honesty, empathy, respect, and responsibility toward their interlocutors. Love-based education thus functions as a moral incubator, cultivating the interior disposition from which ethical communication organically emerges.

Noddings' (2005) ethics of care provides a particularly rich theoretical lens for understanding the connection between love-based education and communication ethics. The ethics of care centers on the quality of relationships and the responsiveness of the communicator to the needs and vulnerability of the other. When students are educated in an environment of genuine care, they learn through modeling and habituation to listen attentively, speak responsibly, and respond with sensitivity to the emotional and communicative needs of others. In the KPI context, this translates directly into the cultivation of broadcasting and communication competencies that are not merely technically proficient but also ethically grounded, characterized by a deep respect for the audience's dignity, intelligence, and right to truthful information (Mulyana, 2014). Care-based communication, in this sense, is both an ethical orientation and a professional competency that love-based education is uniquely positioned to develop.

Empirical research consistently demonstrates that the quality of teacher-student relationships is a significant predictor of students' ethical communication development. A landmark study by Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, and Oort (2011) conducted across multiple countries found that positive, warm teacher-student relationships were strongly associated with higher levels of prosocial behavior and ethical interaction among students. In the Indonesian university context, Suyatno (2018) found that students who perceived their lecturers as caring, accessible, and emotionally supportive reported significantly higher levels of communication ethics, including greater honesty in academic communication, more respectful discourse in group discussions, and more responsible use of social media. These

findings underscore that love-based educational relationships are not merely pleasant additions to the academic environment but are substantively and causally connected to the development of communication ethics.

The integration of Islamic values into love-based education creates a distinctive and powerful framework for communication ethics formation that is particularly relevant for KPI students. Hefni's (2015) analysis of Quranic communication principles demonstrates that each of the six ethical communication principles in the Quran, from qawlan sadidan to qawlan layyinan, is rooted in an underlying orientation of love, respect, and concern for the well-being of the communicative other. When KPI students are immersed in an educational environment that consistently models and reinforces these Quranic values through love-based pedagogical relationships, they do not merely learn about communication ethics as an abstract subject matter; they experience, internalize, and embody it as a lived reality. This experiential and relational approach to ethics formation is far more durable and transformative than purely didactic approaches that rely on lectures and examinations alone (Berkowitz & Bier, 2014).

### **3. Implementation of Love-Based Education in the KPI Study Program at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang**

UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, as one of the leading Islamic state universities in Sumatra, carries a distinctive institutional mission to integrate Islamic values into every dimension of academic life. The KPI study program, in particular, has the dual mandate of producing graduates who are both professionally competent in the fields of communication and broadcasting and morally exemplary in their personal and professional conduct (Hasan, 2019). The implementation of love-based education in this context requires a systemic and intentional approach that permeates curriculum design, pedagogical practice, co-curricular activities, and institutional culture simultaneously. Several scholars have emphasized that isolated or tokenistic applications of love-based principles are insufficient; genuine

transformation requires the creation of a comprehensive caring community of learners at the institutional level (Noddings, 2012).

At the level of pedagogical practice, love-based education in the KPI program can be implemented through several concrete strategies that have been empirically validated in similar institutional contexts. Mentoring and advising systems, in which lecturers are assigned as personal mentors (*pembimbing akademik*) who engage students not only in academic matters but also in personal and moral development, create the relational conditions necessary for love-based education to take root. Research by Crisp and Cruz (2009) demonstrates that high-quality mentoring relationships in higher education, characterized by warmth, genuine interest, and consistent support, significantly improve students' academic engagement, personal development, and ethical decision-making. In the KPI context, when lecturers consistently model Islamic communication ethics in their own speech and interactions, the mentoring relationship itself becomes a living curriculum of love-based communication ethics.

The curriculum of the KPI study program at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang offers numerous entry points for the systematic integration of love-based educational principles. Courses in Islamic Communication Ethics, Quranic Communication, Dakwah Theory, and Broadcast Journalism can be redesigned to incorporate affective pedagogical approaches, such as reflective journaling, empathy exercises, collaborative storytelling, and service-learning projects, that engage students' hearts as well as their minds. Darder (2017) argues that transformative education must integrate what she calls 'the pedagogy of love,' which combines rigorous critical engagement with genuine emotional and relational investment in students' growth. In practice, this means that KPI lecturers who teach communication ethics should not only impart knowledge about ethical principles but should create learning experiences that allow students to feel the moral weight of communication, to practice ethical communication in safe and reflective environments, and to develop an enduring commitment to communicative justice and responsibility.

Assessment and evaluation practices within the KPI program also need to reflect love-based educational values in order to create a coherent and consistent ethical learning environment. Traditional examination-based assessment, which often incentivizes competitive and dishonest behavior, must be complemented by portfolio assessment, peer evaluation, and reflective self-assessment practices that reinforce the values of integrity, honesty, and mutual respect that are central to both love-based education and Islamic communication ethics. Biggs and Tang (2011) argue that constructive alignment between learning objectives, teaching methods, and assessment tasks is essential for genuine learning to occur. When the assessment of communication ethics in the KPI program is aligned with love-based pedagogical principles, assessing not only students' knowledge of ethical principles but also their demonstrated ethical behavior in simulated and real-world communication tasks, the curriculum achieves a coherent moral educational purpose that powerfully supports the development of authentic and durable communication ethics among KPI students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang.

## **Conclusion**

This article has argued that love-based education plays a foundational and transformative role in improving the communication ethics of KPI students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang. Drawing on the rich resources of both the Islamic intellectual tradition and contemporary educational theory, the discussion has demonstrated that love-based education, when implemented systematically and authentically, creates the relational, affective, and moral conditions under which genuine communication ethics formation can occur. The three pillars of this argument, namely the Islamic theoretical foundations of love-based education rooted in the concepts of mahabbah, rahmah, and adab; the empirically supported relationship between caring educational environments and ethical communication development; and the practical implementation strategies within the KPI study program, converge to affirm that love is not a soft or peripheral concern in professional communication education but is, in fact, its most essential and irreplaceable foundation. Moving forward, it is imperative that UIN Imam Bonjol

Padang's KPI study program deliberately and systematically institutionalizes love-based educational values across its curriculum, pedagogy, mentoring systems, and assessment practices, so that its graduates enter the field of Islamic communication not merely as technically skilled professionals, but as morally grounded, empathetic, and ethically committed communicators who reflect the highest ideals of Islamic rahmatan lil 'alamin.

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