

Raudhatul Athfal Teachers' Perceptions of a Love Based Curriculum in Bengkulu

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Abstract

Curriculum change depends partly on how teachers interpret its purposes and translate them into classroom practice. This study examines Raudhatul Athfal teachers' perceptions of a love-based curriculum in Bengkulu, focusing on understanding, acceptance, and implementation readiness. A qualitative descriptive design combined semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation. Sites were selected through a staged lottery across three districts; the findings draw on educator accounts from eight Raudhatul Athfal. Data were analysed through reduction, display, and verification, with source and technique triangulation. Teachers generally valued compassion, empathy, emotional safety, and character formation, but differed in how they understood the curriculum's relationship with Kurikulum Merdeka. Some perceived a useful reinforcement of existing practice, while others questioned the need for change. Limited and uneven training, administrative demands, facilities, and parental expectations constrained readiness. The study contributes an account of the gap between agreement with curricular values and confidence in implementation. The findings support staged, practice-oriented professional learning and clarification of curricular integration, while not establishing the curriculum's effects on children.

Keywords: Perception; Curriculum; Compassion; Readiness; Raudhatul Athfal

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INTRODUCTION

A curriculum can be welcomed in principle while remaining difficult to implement. Teachers may agree that education should cultivate compassion, empathy, and emotional security but still be uncertain about what a new curricular label requires them to change. This distinction is especially relevant in early childhood education, where relationships and everyday routines already carry much of the educational experience. Understanding teacher perceptions therefore requires more than asking whether a curriculum sounds beneficial. It requires examining how teachers interpret its purpose, its relationship with existing practice, and the support needed to enact it.

This study addresses that issue among Raudhatul Athfal, or RA, educators in Bengkulu. RA institutions provide early childhood education within an Islamic educational setting. Teachers in the study discussed a love-based curriculum, commonly termed Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta or KBC, in relation to their experience of Kurikulum Merdeka. Their accounts frequently centred on kindness, empathy, emotional safety, religious values, and character

formation. At the same time, they questioned whether these principles represented a distinct curriculum or an explicit reinforcement of values already present in their teaching.

Perception is relevant because educational actors do not interpret a change only through its written formulation. Prior experience, expectations, available information, and workplace conditions influence what the change appears to mean. Walgito (2002) provides the study's psychological reference for perception. In an educational setting, this perspective directs attention to the different meanings teachers attach to the same proposal. A favourable response may reflect an understanding of the concept, a general professional commitment to children, confidence in the institution, or acceptance of an expected requirement.

Curriculum theory also highlights the relationship between intended purposes and enacted practice. Ornstein and Hunkins (2018) locate curriculum within broader questions of foundations, principles, and implementation. For this study, the important implication is that curriculum cannot be reduced to a name or a list of admirable values. Teachers need to understand how purposes relate to daily plans, learning experiences, adult roles, and assessment. Uncertainty at those points may persist even when the underlying educational values are widely accepted.

Recent Indonesian research included in the study addresses teacher perceptions of curricular implementation at different educational levels. Nuraeni et al. (2025) focus on early childhood educators' perceptions of Kurikulum Merdeka, while Ningsih (2023) examines perceptions in primary education. Marlina et al. (2024) consider teacher perception and adaptation to curricular change. These sources provide useful points of comparison because they place teachers' interpretation and adjustment within implementation. They do not, however, establish how the love-based concept was understood by the Bengkulu participants.

Readiness includes more than willingness. Teachers may need practical guidance, opportunities to discuss examples, and time to adapt planning and records. Institutional support and resources can also affect what is feasible. Triasmanto and Dewi (2019), writing in *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Pendidikan*, examine determinants of curriculum implementation in a different curricular context. Their work provides an implementation perspective for this article without implying identical conditions. The present study examines how support and constraints were experienced in RA settings rather than treating approval as evidence of readiness.

The relationship between KBC and Kurikulum Merdeka is therefore treated here as a matter of participant interpretation. Some interview questions framed the issue as a transition from one to the other, but that framing does not establish the formal status of either within policy. The study does not infer that a complete replacement had occurred. Instead, it asks how educators understood continuity, reinforcement, and change. This boundary is important because reporting teacher beliefs as authoritative policy descriptions would misrepresent the nature of the evidence.

The interview material contains both positive and hesitant views. A summary stating only that teachers welcomed the curriculum would omit concerns about training, administration, family expectations, and conceptual overlap. It would also obscure educators who valued compassion but preferred to retain an existing curricular structure. Those positions are substantively important because they identify what implementation support must address. Doubt can signal uncertainty about educational design rather than opposition to caring relationships or character formation.

The gap between support and enactment has empirical support beyond the local case. A study of early childhood curriculum fidelity found that teachers' initial perceptions were associated with aspects of implementation, while stress and centre climate had less consistent relationships (Clayback et al., 2023). Research on directors' and teachers' experiences of a school-readiness programme also treats implementation as an organisational process (Hunter & Bierman, 2021). These findings make it important to examine acceptance

together with practical capacity, rather than use approval as a substitute for evidence that teachers know what to change.

Recent work on KBC offers a closer comparison. A study of mathematics teachers in madrasah settings identified uneven conceptual understanding, planning difficulties, and training needs (Agusta & Setiawan, 2026). Although its learners and subject differ from early childhood education, its readiness concerns overlap with those explored here. A qualitative RA study in Pekanbaru describes the integration of Panca Cinta through routines, modelling, play, and social interaction (Seprya, 2026). Together, these studies suggest that a useful account must connect the curriculum's values with concrete educational activity while retaining institutional differences.

The local inquiry is also relevant to broader evidence on professional learning. Novice educators describe diverse professional-development experiences (Hooper et al., 2023), and providers in an inclusive early childhood programme value support embedded in practice (Pfeiffer et al., 2022). Research on cultural adaptation of preschool social and emotional learning highlights teachers' own pedagogical cultures as part of implementation (Norman et al., 2024). These comparisons support an examination of how existing practice shapes the meaning of a new curriculum, not an assumption that the same training or language will be interpreted identically across institutions.

The study consequently asks how RA teachers perceived the love-based curriculum, how they understood its central ideas, and what shaped their confidence in implementation. The contribution is an account of the relationship between values, understanding, and readiness across the participating institutions. By preserving differences rather than flattening them into a single positive judgement, the article provides a more useful basis for professional learning and school-level planning. Its findings concern educator perspectives and local conditions, not measured effects on children or a representative estimate of opinion across the city.

METHODS

Research Design and Context

A qualitative descriptive design explored how RA educators in Bengkulu understood and evaluated the love-based curriculum and their readiness to use it. The study examined meanings and experiences through semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation. Discussion of KBC was situated within participants' experience of Kurikulum Merdeka. A consistent fieldwork date range was not specified in the research record. References to curricular transition are analysed as participant interpretations rather than proof of formal policy replacement.

Participants and Sampling

Site selection was described through a staged lottery: three districts were drawn from Bengkulu's nine districts, namely Gading Cempaka, Selebar, and Singaran Pati, followed by a similar procedure for institutions. The findings contain accounts associated with eight RA institutions: Plus Ja-alHaq, Nurul Huda, Al Hilal, Misbahul Khair, Syagaf Aflah, Syakirah, Al Azhar, and Mutiara Bunda. Teachers supplied the main perspectives, supported by institutional heads. A definitive roster of distinct interviewees was not provided. Eight institutions are therefore not equated with eight participants or a statistically representative city sample.

Instruments and Materials

The semi-structured interview guide addressed understanding, appraisal, and responses to curricular change. Topics included perceived benefits, compatibility with existing teaching, training, institutional culture, facilities, administrative demands, parental expectations, and future needs. Observation addressed the learning environment and teacher–child interaction. Documents included plans, portfolios, photographs, and developmental records. Table 1

summarises the domains and the evidence sought through each method. No validated attitude score or implementation-readiness scale was administered.

Table 1. Inquiry domains and complementary evidence

Domain	Interview focus	Supporting evidence
Understanding	Meaning of KBC and relationship with existing practice	Observation of routines and planning documents
Appraisal	Perceived relevance, benefits, agreement and doubt	Teacher and head perspectives across institutions
Readiness	Training, confidence, facilities and administrative needs	Institutional accounts and available documents
Response	Motivation, anticipated difficulties and support priorities	Comparison of convergent and divergent accounts

Note. The domains organise qualitative inquiry and do not constitute a scored readiness scale.

Procedure and Data Collection

Educators were invited to explain their views in response to a common set of topics, with scope for elaborating experience and concerns. Teacher accounts were compared across institutions and considered alongside supporting perspectives from heads. Observation and documents contextualised the interview material. Responses about training sometimes differed across questions; these differences were retained as uncertainty about training exposure and depth, rather than resolved by assigning unverified attendance counts. A fixed interview duration, recording protocol, or observation frequency was not documented.

Data Analysis

Analysis used data reduction, display, and conclusion verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Responses were organised around value agreement, conceptual understanding, continuity with existing practice, preparation, and enabling or constraining conditions. Source triangulation compared educators and institutions, while technique triangulation considered interviews, observation, and documents. Divergent responses were preserved alongside positive views. Although an isolated methodological sentence mentioned SPSS, no corresponding statistical output was reported; the present analysis remains qualitative and does not introduce numerical estimates of teacher opinion.

Ethical Considerations

Individual educator names are omitted, while institutional labels distinguish the contextual positions represented in the interview material. Statements are reported as perspectives rather than judgements of professional competence. No ethics-review identifier or detailed consent procedure was available in the documentation, and no undocumented ethical process is asserted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Figure 1 distinguishes agreement with curricular values from the conceptual clarity and practical support needed for readiness. The relationship is an analytical synthesis of educator accounts, not a predictive model.

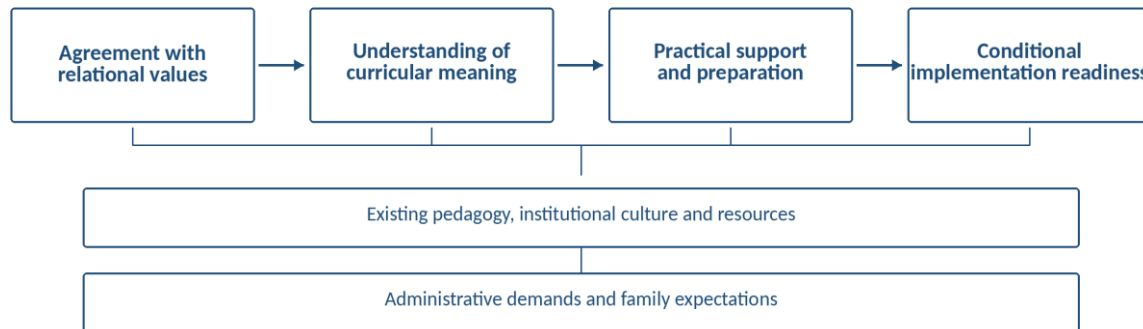


Figure 1. Conditions connecting value agreement with implementation readiness

Broad Agreement With Compassion and Emotional Safety

Across the interviews, educators frequently valued the curriculum's emphasis on compassion, empathy, and character. Teachers linked these principles with the needs of young children to feel safe, comfortable, respected, and happy during learning. Some saw the approach as a way to strengthen warm relationships and reduce a narrow focus on academic attainment. Others emphasised that loving children and their work was already part of being a teacher.

The accounts from Plus Ja-alHaq highlighted openness to character formation and a comfortable learning atmosphere. Participants associated the approach with empathy and opportunities for children to feel valued. Misbahul Khair accounts similarly emphasised caring for children and connecting that care with religious values. These perspectives show that acceptance was often grounded in a professional and moral understanding of teaching, rather than a technical description of curricular documents.

Several educators also connected emotional security with confidence and willingness to learn. The Syakirah perspective was particularly explicit that children should feel safe and emotionally settled before new concepts were introduced. Mutiara Bunda accounts stressed affection and being valued as important for young children's emotional development. These are meaningful descriptions of educators' educational priorities. The study did not independently measure changes in children's confidence, mental health, or learning outcomes.

This distinction matters because positive beliefs about an educational approach can resemble evidence of its effectiveness when summarised too strongly. Participants were explaining what they hoped for or considered appropriate. Their accounts support the finding that the approach had substantial value-level appeal. They do not establish that it had already produced all the developmental benefits mentioned.

Different Interpretations of Continuity and Change

The relationship with Kurikulum Merdeka produced more varied responses. Some teachers understood KBC as a complement or reinforcement, with the earlier structure remaining relevant while care and relationships received more explicit attention. The Syakirah account described the existing curriculum as being enveloped by the love-based approach. An Al Azhar perspective similarly viewed it as a possible enhancement of warm teacher-child relationships.

An educator at RA Syakirah described the approach as "Kurikulum Merdeka wrapped in KBC" (translated from Indonesian). In contrast, an educator at RA Nurul Huda argued that the existing curriculum already included emotional, spiritual, and religious-moral dimensions.

Together, these accounts make the continuity question visible rather than reducing acceptance to a single positive response.

Other accounts questioned the need for a curricular change. A Nurul Huda perspective argued that emotional, spiritual, moral, and child-centred dimensions were already available within Kurikulum Merdeka. Some supporting interviews expressed a preference for maintaining that framework and strengthening compassion through teaching practice. These views were not a rejection of affection or empathy. They concerned whether a different curricular formulation was necessary to achieve those aims.

The findings therefore reveal several meanings attached to the same language of transformation. For some educators, it suggested improvement through an additional relational emphasis. For others, it appeared to rename familiar practice. For others still, it raised questions about changing plans or administrative requirements. Without distinguishing these interpretations, general expressions of acceptance could conceal substantial uncertainty about what implementation involved.

Table 2 summarises these positions and the practical issues associated with them. The categories are an analytical synthesis of interview themes, not mutually exclusive teacher types or numerical subgroups. A single educator could endorse the values while questioning administrative implications or the need for a new label.

Table 2. Variation in educators' perceptions

Position or theme	Evidence in the accounts	Interpretation
Value agreement	Compassion, empathy, safety and character are valued	Broad moral and professional appeal
Perceived continuity	KBC understood as complementing or articulating familiar practice	Acceptance may rest on compatibility
Questioning change	Some educators prefer retaining existing curricular arrangements	Doubt concerns enactment and justification, not necessarily the values
Basic understanding	Central message understood, practical application less clear	Concept recognition differs from implementation knowledge
Conditional willingness	Educators express hope alongside uncertainty	Approval does not establish readiness

Note. Positions are not mutually exclusive and are not numerical participant categories.

Table 3 summarises conditions shaping readiness and the corresponding support priorities.

Table 3. Readiness conditions and support priorities

Condition	Reported experience	Priority indicated by the findings
Training	Uneven access, limited depth and varying usefulness	Staged practical learning with examples and follow-up
Institutional culture	General support, collegial discussion and foundation encouragement	Protect time and space for shared interpretation
Facilities	Adequacy differs across institutions	Identify needs in relation to planned activity
Administration	Planning and documentation may add workload	Clarify manageable records linked with teaching
Parent expectations	Some educators perceive tension with family preferences	Explain educational purposes and hear family concerns
Conceptual clarity	Different interpretations of continuity and change	Clarify how values relate to current plans and practice

Note. These are qualitative support priorities, not an implementation package evaluated in the study.

Some educators also differentiated between aspects of the curriculum. A participant could support character aims while preferring existing project and experiential methods, or welcome emotional emphasis while remaining unsure about daily planning. Such variation indicates that support was not always an all-or-nothing response. It also suggests that professional learning should address concrete components rather than assume that a general statement of agreement resolves implementation questions.

Understanding the Idea but Not Yet Its Enactment

Most detailed explanations referred to compassion, empathy, safe relationships, and character formation. However, several teachers described their understanding as basic or limited. Participants at Plus Ja-alHaq, Al Hilal, Syagaf Aflah, and Mutiara Bunda acknowledged that they still needed deeper information. Nurul Huda accounts also expressed uncertainty about what the curriculum would look like. These statements qualify the broader conclusion that teachers understood its essence.

The distinction is between recognising a central value and knowing how to operationalise it. An educator may readily explain why kindness matters but still be uncertain about integrating it into a plan, recording development, or adapting an activity. The interviews repeatedly pointed to this practical gap. Requests for training were therefore not simply requests for another introduction to the importance of care; they concerned how the idea should be applied.

Some teachers nevertheless described the concept as easy to understand. This did not always contradict their admission of limited knowledge. They could find the central message accessible while lacking detailed preparation. Other participants found the concept confusing or doubted its attractiveness in practice. These contrasting accounts show why familiarity with the wording should not be treated as a uniform level of curricular competence.

Understanding also appeared linked with previous institutional practice. Where educators felt that their school already emphasised warm relationships and character, KBC could appear compatible and manageable. This perceived fit supported confidence but did not establish that formal implementation requirements had been met. The study identifies perceived compatibility as a factor in readiness, not as an independently assessed indicator of institutional compliance.

Uneven Training and the Need for Practical Support

Training was one of the most prominent concerns. Several educators distinguished previous experience of Kurikulum Merdeka training from limited or absent KBC-specific preparation. Some reported online exposure, while others referred to planned activities rather than completed training. An Al Hilal perspective called for smaller, staged training groups, arguing that large city-wide gatherings could be less conducive to understanding.

The RA Al Hilal educator requested training “in several RA at a time, gradually,” explaining that a large city-wide gathering felt less conducive to understanding (translated from Indonesian). The excerpt identifies a preference for the form of preparation, not simply a request for more training events.

The interviews also contain inconsistent training statements. For example, an account associated with Plus Ja-alHaq first indicates no specific KBC training but later mentions an online session. A Syakirah response broadly affirms earlier participation, while another distinguishes the absence of basic training from having attended a session. These differences may reflect different formats or interpretations of training, but the evidence does not resolve them. The findings therefore do not classify institutions into exact attendance categories.

What remains clear is uneven depth and perceived usefulness. An Al Azhar account described a single online session as insufficiently helpful. A Misbahul Khair account associated training with practical support for administration. Other educators hoped that future activities would make implementation clearer. Together, these statements show why attendance alone

would be a weak measure of readiness. The relevance, clarity, and continuity of professional learning mattered to participants.

Teachers also expressed a preference for opportunities to learn from colleagues. Requests for experiences and examples suggest that implementation knowledge was expected to emerge through practical discussion as well as formal dissemination. The findings support the need for professional learning connected with planning and daily teaching. They do not establish which training format would produce the greatest improvement, because no training programme was evaluated comparatively.

Institutional Support and Resource Variation

School and foundation support was generally described positively. Participants referred to encouragement to attend training, collegial discussion, and a supportive work atmosphere. Some institutions described staff jointly exploring the new concept. Such accounts suggest that readiness was partly collective: teachers' willingness to learn could be reinforced when school leaders and colleagues made curricular discussion legitimate and feasible.

However, supportive statements did not imply identical conditions. Nurul Huda accounts identified facilities as insufficient, while Syakirah described provision as still being pursued. Other educators considered their facilities adequate, and a Misbahul Khair perspective suggested that the relational emphasis did not depend entirely on specialised equipment. These views indicate that resource needs were interpreted differently and should not be reduced to a single city-wide judgement.

The relevant relationship is between institutional encouragement and practical capacity. A school can endorse a curriculum while still lacking preparation, materials, or time for implementation. Conversely, teachers may see opportunities to begin relational practices using existing resources while seeking further guidance. The findings do not establish a minimum facility standard; they show variation in how educators perceived their readiness to act.

Workplace atmosphere was also described as a support. Participants mentioned comfortable relationships, shared learning, and cooperation. These conditions could make it easier to discuss uncertainty without disrupting teaching. Yet the evidence remains based on reported experience, not a systematic organisational assessment. The appropriate conclusion is that educators recognised collegial and leadership support as relevant, with the strength and form of that support varying by institution.

Administrative Demands and Parent Expectations

Administrative work emerged as a distinct concern. A Misbahul Khair account separated the perceived ease of practising care from the difficulty of preparing the associated documentation while continuing to teach. This distinction is important: educators could support the pedagogical purpose and still experience implementation as burdensome if requirements were unclear or added to existing workload.

Daily planning was another point of hesitation in the supporting interviews. Some participants preferred retaining familiar planning arrangements and strengthening the relational approach within them. Others welcomed the opportunity to give greater attention to empathy, spiritual values, and positive interaction. These positions suggest that professional guidance needs to clarify how values relate to current planning and assessment, rather than assume that a new heading automatically generates different practice.

Parental expectations were raised particularly in the Nurul Huda account. The educator described difficulty balancing the proposed approach with what parents wanted from schooling. The accounts do not detail those expectations sufficiently to infer that parents opposed compassion or uniformly demanded academic instruction. The finding is narrower: at least one educator perceived a tension between curricular direction and family preferences that affected confidence in implementation.

This issue places communication with families alongside teacher preparation. If a curriculum is understood only through its label, parents and teachers may attach different expectations to it. Explaining how learning activities support children's development could help clarify those expectations. This is a practical implication of the reported tension, not evidence that a particular parent communication intervention was carried out or proved successful.

Acceptance Ranging From Commitment to Compliance

Motivation for acceptance varied. Some teachers emphasised children's needs, professional care, and character formation. Others highlighted compatibility with existing practice. At least one account referred directly to government expectations as the reason for applying the approach. These are different bases for implementation, even when all result in an outwardly positive response.

The distinction is relevant because compliance does not necessarily include understanding. An educator may be willing to follow a requirement while remaining uncertain about its content or benefit. Conversely, a questioning educator may have a strong commitment to the underlying values but seek clearer justification for changing established arrangements. The findings therefore challenge a simple equation between agreement and readiness.

Teachers' expectations were generally constructive. They hoped for better learning experiences, stronger character, happier relationships, and practical support. Yet those hopes coexisted with unresolved questions. The overall pattern is best described as favourable but conditional acceptance. The condition was not only additional information; it included clarity about continuity, useful preparation, manageable administration, and support within the institution and family context.

Discussion

Acceptance Understanding and Implementation Capacity

The main interpretive contribution is the separation of value agreement from readiness. This distinction is consistent with evidence linking teachers' early perceptions with curriculum implementation (Clayback et al., 2023) and with research on director and teacher experiences of introducing a school-readiness programme (Hunter & Bierman, 2021). In Bengkulu, compassion was widely acceptable, but educators still questioned what changed in plans, documentation, and classroom practice. A positive position therefore did not settle the practical content of implementation.

Indonesian comparison studies reinforce the relevance of those questions. Early childhood educators in another setting reported favourable views alongside conceptual and resource difficulties (Nuraeni et al., 2025). Research on adaptation (Marlina et al., 2024), kindergarten perceptions (Sumiyati, 2024), and primary-school implementation (Ningsih, 2023) also examines how curricular expectations are interpreted. A junior-secondary study adds evidence of generally favourable perception in a different population (Rahmi et al., 2024). The present case contributes a specific RA account in which continuity with an existing curriculum can produce both confidence and uncertainty.

The newer KBC literature offers a closer point of comparison. Uneven conceptual and planning readiness among madrasah mathematics teachers (Agusta & Setiawan, 2026) resembles some of the concerns raised here, but the age group and teaching context differ. The RA account of Panca Cinta (Sepriya, 2026) shows how intended values may be enacted through routines, modelling, play, and interaction. Taken together, these studies indicate why readiness needs to be examined through concrete educational activity rather than a choice between attractive curricular labels.

Professional Learning as Translation Into Practice

Participants' requests for smaller and staged training are consistent with the need to connect information with practice. Studies of novice teachers' professional-development experiences (Hooper et al., 2023) and provider perceptions of embedded support (Pfeiffer et al., 2022) place usefulness and institutional involvement within that process. Trials of course and coaching approaches (Hu et al., 2022), online support for toddler educators (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2023), and a brief responsivity intervention (Brunsek et al., 2024) investigate different ways of strengthening professional action. They do not identify one universally suitable format for RA educators, but they support examining what teachers can enact after training.

A broader synthesis addresses professional learning through interaction quality (Egert et al., 2020), and a sustained Norwegian programme demonstrates change under a specific support model (Buøen et al., 2021). For Bengkulu, the implication is to connect training with examples, planning, enactment, and reflection. Attendance should not be treated as equivalent to conceptual clarity. The conflicting training answers are a reporting limit, but they also caution against assuming that every webinar, socialisation activity, and in-depth programme provides the same preparation.

Relational Values Within an Existing Pedagogical Culture

Cultural-adaptation research identifies teachers' pedagogical cultures as part of implementation (Norman et al., 2024). This is particularly relevant where educators feel that care and character already belong to their practice. Curriculum foundations concern how aims connect with educational experiences (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018), while perception is shaped by experience and interpretation (Walgitto, 2002). The findings suggest that professional dialogue can begin with existing routines and clarify where a new emphasis requires a different decision, rather than presume that a different label necessarily produces new teaching.

This also connects the curriculum with observable interaction. Guided-play evidence varies by outcome and guidance (Skene et al., 2022), and teachers' play orientations relate to assessment (Pyle et al., 2022). Social and emotional programme development emphasises alignment between aims and pedagogy (Blewitt, Morris, et al., 2020), while evidence about teacher outcomes remains uneven (Blewitt, O'Connor, et al., 2020). A broad quality synthesis similarly reports small, domain-specific associations (von Suchodoletz et al., 2023). These comparisons support translating compassion into identifiable practices while avoiding an unsupported claim that teachers' approval demonstrates benefits for children.

Institutional support remains part of that translation. Research on local-content curriculum implementation explicitly considers teachers' perceptions, practice, and support (Triasmanto & Dewi, 2019). The present case extends that relationship to RA educators discussing KBC. Its practical contribution is a set of connected needs: clarify the relationship with current teaching, make preparation useful, keep documentation manageable, support collegial discussion, and communicate educational purposes to families. Those implications arise from the accounts; they are not an evaluated implementation package.

Evidence Boundaries and Future Research

The study concerns perceptions, not the effectiveness of the curriculum. Teachers' expectations about character, confidence, or emotional wellbeing are evidence of what they value and anticipate. They cannot substitute for observations or assessments of children's development. Future work should examine how educators translate those expectations into interaction and how children experience the resulting practices.

Methodological reporting also needs strengthening. The staged lottery procedure should be distinguished from individual random sampling, and a final roster should clarify how many heads and teachers participated. A consistent fieldwork period and clearer documentation of triangulation would help readers assess the evidence. Inconsistent training

responses should be checked through follow-up or records before attendance patterns are quantified.

Despite these limits, the variation within the interviews is informative. Positive and doubtful accounts together reveal the difference between educational commitment and implementation confidence. Further research could follow the same institutions as professional learning and classroom practice develop. Such a design would help determine whether conceptual uncertainty decreases, which supports are useful, and whether declared acceptance becomes visible in everyday educational experience.

CONCLUSION

RA educators in the participating Bengkulu institutions generally valued the love-based curriculum's emphasis on compassion, empathy, emotional safety, and character. Their understanding and readiness were less uniform. Some interpreted the approach as reinforcement of Kurikulum Merdeka, while others questioned the need for change or lacked practical guidance. Training access, administrative demands, facilities, institutional support, and parental expectations shaped these responses.

The findings support staged, practice-oriented professional learning and clearer explanation of how the approach relates to existing planning and teaching. Acceptance should be examined alongside understanding and capacity rather than used as their substitute. The study provides a contextual account of educator perspectives; it does not establish city-wide opinion or measured benefits for children.

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