

Integration of Hindu Values as an Approach in the Development of the Love Curriculum in Hindu Early Childhood Education Institutions

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Abstract: This study examines the integration of Hindu values into a love-based curriculum in early childhood education (PAUD) and identifies strategies and challenges in its implementation. The value components integrated are Prema (compassion), Dharma (responsibility), Ahimsa (non-violence), and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (we are brother). The research design used is a case study, with data collection techniques including in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. Furthermore, the data is analyzed through the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, with steps of data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification, carried out simultaneously. Findings show that the integration of Hindu values is applied through a structured curriculum, learning and play activities, in teaching methods, teacher modeling, and the arrangement of a Balinese culture-based school environment. The main strategies include storytelling about Balinese folklore, strengthening values through habits, and teacher role models. The challenges of this strategy include the lack of Hindu value-based teaching materials, inadequate teacher training, and the impact of social media on children's behavior. This research emphasizes the importance of improving teacher competence, developing contextual learning resources, and building strong partnerships between schools and families, as well as maintaining character education based on religious and cultural values.


1 INTRODUCTION

Character education is a fundamental concern within global education systems, including in Indonesia. One of its key expected outcomes is the cultivation of a loving character in children (Nugroho & Sari, 2023). The primary aim of character education is to develop a generation that is emotionally healthy, morally grounded, and empathetic toward others and the environment an effort that must begin in early childhood (Santoso, 2022). At the foundational level of education, curriculum serves as the main reference point for developing essential competencies across cognitive, social, emotional, and motor domains. Therefore, curriculum development must move beyond academic content and increasingly prioritize values of love, security, and emotional well-being (Wulandari, 2024). A love-based early childhood

education (ECE) curriculum, grounded in religious values, particularly Hindu values is recognized as a strategic approach to instilling strong character and empathy from an early age (Putra & Dewi, 2023).

However, the current reality reveals that education often places excessive emphasis on cognitive development while neglecting the affective domain. This imbalance has contributed to moral decline, increased violence among students, and low levels of social concern (Inayah et al., 2025). Furthermore, globalization and digitalization have significantly transformed children's social behavior, including their ethical dispositions, necessitating an adaptive education system that not only addresses cognition but also fosters character development (Iksal et al., 2024; Andrews, 2021). Insufficient attention to ethical aspects leaves children vulnerable to negative influences, such as misinformation and consumerist behavior (Nasution, 2024). In light of

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these challenges, character education rooted in religious values—as moral and ethical foundations—must be deliberately integrated into the learning process at all levels, including early childhood education.

Hindu values embedded in the curriculum are designed with a flexible approach that is responsive to children's needs and the dynamics of technological and informational change (Rasmani et al., 2021). The implementation of a curriculum that reflects local wisdom aligns well with the "Freedom to Learn" policy in Indonesia, thereby enabling the development of a more contextual and effective ECE curriculum (Rahayu et al., 2024; Simanungkalit et al., 2024). Previous research underscores the importance of curriculum management that leverages local sociocultural potential to support children's holistic growth (Andini et al., 2024; Azizah, 2021; Zahra et al., 2024). Studies on curricula incorporating Islamic values have also demonstrated that learning strategies aligned with children's characteristics can enhance the effectiveness of character education (Nasution, 2024). Similarly, in Hindu-based early childhood education institutions, curriculum development must reflect the cultural and spiritual traditions of the community in which they operate.

In Indonesia, the national early childhood curriculum adheres to the Ministry of Education's policy promoting holistic and integrative development, encompassing education, health, nutrition, and child protection (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). However, a key challenge in its implementation lies in the limited integration of local cultural and spiritual values, which are essential to the identity and worldview of the community (Putri & Suarni, 2023). Integrating values into the curriculum is therefore a crucial area for further exploration. A pedagogical approach based on value integration incorporates moral, cultural, and spiritual elements throughout the educational process, with the ultimate goal of shaping positive character and behavior (Lovat & Toomey, 2020). This approach does not treat values as supplementary material but positions them as a core component of the learning experience.

Contemporary models of values-based pedagogy emphasize contextual moral education, where value transmission is grounded in the child's cultural and social environment (Miller & Lee, 2022). This approach resonates with Vygotsky's theory of social interaction, which posits that children's moral development is shaped by their interactions with others and their surrounding sociocultural context. Multiple studies have confirmed that children who are engaged in learning environments that emphasize

love and social empathy exhibit enhanced development in areas such as emotional regulation, prosocial behavior, and empathy (Kim et al., 2023). Moreover, the integration of love-based values contributes to the creation of a positive classroom climate, where children feel safe, accepted, and appreciated—an essential condition for optimal development.

While notable progress has been made in the development of holistic, values-integrated ECE curricula, several important gaps remain. Many existing studies focus on general aspects of ECE curriculum development and the application of character education but lack in-depth analysis of how religious values—particularly Hindu values—can be systematically and practically integrated into early childhood education. Religious teachings and local wisdom are crucial in shaping character (Putra & Dewi, 2023; Rasmani et al., 2021). Therefore, there is an urgent need for empirical studies that investigate the effectiveness of embedding affective and emotional values, such as love (*prema*), empathy, non-violence (*ahimsa*), and tolerance, in ECE curricula, all of which are central to fostering children's holistic development (Kim et al., 2023; Nasution, 2024).

Despite their importance, pedagogical strategies and adaptive learning approaches tailored to young children's developmental characteristics in the context of Hindu values remain underexplored. Yet the success of character education depends significantly on how values are communicated and internalized (Putra & Dewi, 2023; Nasution, 2024).

These gaps indicate a critical need for research focused on integrating core Hindu values—*Prema* (compassion), *Dharma* (responsibility), *Ahimsa* (non-violence), and *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (universal brotherhood)—into a love-based early childhood education curriculum. Such a curriculum must be contextual, culturally relevant to Balinese Hindu traditions, and grounded in pedagogical principles aligned with early childhood development.

By examining the implementation of these Hindu values within a love-based curriculum, this study aims to contribute to the creation of learning environments that are safe, joyful, and nurturing (Putra & Dewi, 2023). It is expected that this research will offer new insights into the design of practical and context-sensitive curricula that align with local Hindu cultural norms, thereby supporting children's optimal growth and holistic development. Ultimately, this study bridges theoretical discourse with practical application in developing a Hindu values-based early childhood education curriculum, offering meaningful

contributions to both academic literature and educational practice.

2 METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the processes and practices involved in integrating Hindu values into the learning activities at Widya Kumara State Hindu Kindergarten in Gianyar, Bali. This approach was chosen to enable an exploration of the perceptions, experiences, and interpretations of teachers and students regarding the implementation of Hindu religious values within the learning environment. The research setting was purposively selected based on its relevance to the study focus. Widya Kumara Kindergarten is situated in a rural area characterized by a strong adherence to traditional Balinese Hindu culture, making it an ideal context for observing the implementation of a love-based curriculum enriched with local wisdom. The participants included teachers, the school principal, and several students aged 5–6 years. Teachers and the principal were selected due to their direct involvement in curriculum planning and instructional practices, while students were involved to explore their lived experiences and perspectives on learning processes that incorporate Balinese Hindu religious values and cultural elements. Participant selection was conducted through purposive sampling, with specific criteria aligned to the research focus (Sugiyono, 2017).

Data collection techniques comprised in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. These multiple sources of data were intended to provide a comprehensive and triangulated understanding of the phenomena under study. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which includes four key components: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. This model was selected due to its systematic approach to qualitative data analysis and its capacity to facilitate the identification of recurring patterns and themes related to the integration of Hindu values in early childhood education.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings, source triangulation was employed. This involved comparing and cross-checking information obtained from interviews, observations, and document reviews. The triangulation process aimed to enhance the internal validity of the study by confirming the consistency and coherence of the data across different sources and methods.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Integration of Hindu Values in a Love-Based Curriculum

The findings of this study indicate that core Hindu values, *Prema* (compassion), *Dharma* (responsibility), *Ahimsa* (non violence), and *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (we brother), have been systematically integrated into the love based Early Childhood Education (ECE) curriculum through multiple implementation stages.

a. Formulation of Values as Curriculum Foundations

These Hindu values are explicitly embedded in the formal curriculum documents, including learning objectives, competency standards, and achievement indicators. For instance, *Prema* is translated into activities that encourage love and mutual assistance among peers; *Dharma* is instilled through age-appropriate responsibility tasks such as completing assignments or organizing toys; *Ahimsa* is introduced via non-violent methods and peaceful conflict resolution; and *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* fosters a sense of universal brotherhood. These findings align with Jannah & Sari (2022), who emphasize that religious values can effectively shape children's behavior and thinking from an early age. Nyoman et al. (2025) further assert that introducing *Dharma* helps children understand the foundational principles of *Catur Purusha Artha*, which harmonize material and spiritual life goals.

b. Integration in Learning Content and Daily Activities

The values are reinforced through daily routines such as sharing food (*Prema*), organizing personal belongings (*Dharma*), role-playing peaceful conflict resolution (*Ahimsa*), and collaborative play (*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*). These contextualized learning experiences ensure that values are practiced, not merely taught. This aligns with Lickona's (1996) assertion that character education is most effective when values are habituated in daily life, and with Noddings' (2005) emphasis on values being internalized through real, meaningful relationships. Research by Azizah & Suwandi (2022) also supports the claim that contextual learning significantly enhances value internalization in early childhood.

c. Pedagogical Approaches Aligned with Child Development

Experiential learning methods such as storytelling, singing, play-based activities, and social interaction were utilized to integrate values. These strategies are developmentally appropriate and enhance learning effectiveness. Noviyanti & Safira (2023) highlight the experiential approach as optimal for character formation in early childhood. The findings are consistent with the principles of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP), which promote active learning tailored to children's developmental stages (NAEYC, 1997; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

d. The Role of Teachers as Agents of Change

Teachers underwent training on integrating Hindu values into the learning process, including the use of culturally relevant educational tools and Balinese folklore. As role models, teachers exemplify these values in daily interactions. This approach resonates with social learning theory, which posits that children internalize behaviors through observing authoritative figures. Lumpkin (2008) and Saputra et al. (2021) both highlight the importance of pedagogical and cultural competence in effective character education grounded in local traditions.

e. Development of a Value-Based Learning Environment

The school environment is designed to reflect Hindu values through architectural elements, language use, traditional clothing, and religious symbols, fostering a spiritual and loving atmosphere. Purnomo et al. (2023) emphasize the significance of an ethical and inclusive school culture in supporting character development. This aligns with the Reggio Emilia philosophy, which regards the physical environment as the "third teacher," capable of inspiring interaction and reflection. Supporting evidence shows that well-designed environments—considering light, color, ventilation, and spatial ergonomics—can greatly enhance children's cognitive and affective development.

3.2 Strategies for Implementing Hindu Values in Learning

Storytelling, Narrative methods are used to introduce values through culturally relevant stories. For example, *Siap Selem* promotes love and protection, while *I Bawang teken I Kesuna* conveys honesty and the law of karma (*karma phala*). Harianti's (2021) study affirms that storytelling effectively

communicates moral and spiritual values due to its accessibility and relevance to children's lives.

Habituation and Exemplary Modeling, Daily habits such as greetings, handwashing, and helping peers are used to reinforce values through repetition. The teacher's and parents' roles as models are essential since children imitate adult behavior. A case study from Bali Q-Ta Kindergarten demonstrates how teacher modeling significantly shapes children's character. The traditional Balinese *nyatua* storytelling tradition also serves as a vehicle for transmitting compassion, honesty, and empathy. Folktales like *Men Tiwas teken Men Sugih* convey messages about sharing and justice, confirming the pedagogical relevance of folklore in character education (Pratiwi et al., 2021).

3.3 Challenges in Integrating Hindu Values into the ECE Curriculum

Despite successful integration, several challenges persist:

a. Limited Teaching Resources

There is a scarcity of Hindu-values-based teaching materials tailored to early childhood, limiting teachers' ability to design effective and age-appropriate learning experiences.

b. Lack of Teacher Training

Teachers often face difficulties in translating value-based curricula into practice due to insufficient training on value integration, particularly in adapting to digital and local cultural contexts (Hasibuan et al., 2022).

c. Influence of Globalization and Digital Media

Children are increasingly exposed to values from global media that may conflict with Hindu teachings. Educators must develop adaptive strategies that embrace technology while preserving cultural-spiritual substance.

d. Weak School-Family Synergy

Effective value internalization requires alignment between what is taught at school and practiced at home. The model of value transformation, transaction, and transinternalization must be applied collaboratively to ensure sustainability.

Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that includes teacher capacity-building, contextual media development, and strengthening school-family-community partnerships. As Sari & Yuliana (2020) suggest, the success of character

education is deeply influenced by community and family involvement.

4 CONCLUSIONS

This study confirms that the integration of Hindu values into a love-based Early Childhood Education (PAUD) curriculum can be implemented systematically and contextually through pedagogical practices tailored to children's developmental stages. Key values such as *Prema* (compassion), *Dharma* (responsibility), *Ahimsa* (non-violence), and *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (universal brotherhood) were successfully instilled through curriculum design, learning content, daily classroom activities, experiential learning methods (e.g., storytelling and play), teacher exemplars, and a school environment that reflects Balinese Hindu culture.

The most effective strategies include the integration of local folklore, daily value habituation, and teacher modeling. However, several challenges—such as limited teaching resources, inadequate teacher training, globalization-induced value shifts, and insufficient family engagement—must be addressed. Strengthening character education requires a holistic and adaptive model that incorporates the cultural-religious context, builds teacher capacity, and enhances collaboration with families and local communities.

Ultimately, this research provides practical and theoretical contributions to the development of a love-based, culturally relevant curriculum that supports children's holistic development and nurtures spiritual, moral, and social values grounded in Hindu philosophy.

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