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## AN EVALUATION OF THE MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE IMTAQ PROGRAMME IN FOSTERING STUDENTS' CHARACTER: A QUALITATIVE STUDY AT MTSN 1 PALEMBANG

Iswadi<sup>1</sup>

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia (123iswadi456@gmail.com)

Duski Ibrahim

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia (duski\_uin@radenfatah.ac.id)

Helen Sabira Adib

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia  
(helensaberaadib\_uin@radenfatah.ac.id)

Indah Wigati

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia  
(indahwigati\_uin@radenfatah.ac.id)

Maryamah

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia  
(maryamah\_uin@radenfatah.ac.id)

| Kata Kunci:                                                                          | ABSTRAK                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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| Program IMTAQ, Kesisambungan Program, Manajemen Pendidikan, Karakter Siswa, Madrasah | <p><b>Latar Belakang:</b> Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh pentingnya program pembinaan Iman dan Taqwa (IMTAQ) sebagai instrumen strategis dalam meningkatkan mutu pendidikan dan membentuk karakter religius siswa di madrasah. Namun, implementasi program IMTAQ di MTs Negeri 1 Kota Palembang masih menghadapi kendala manajerial, terutama pada aspek perencanaan, keterbatasan bahan ajar, dan belum optimalnya sistem evaluasi. <b>Tujuan Penelitian:</b> Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kesisambungan program pembinaan IMTAQ, metode pembelajaran yang diterapkan, serta kontribusinya terhadap pembentukan karakter siswa. <b>Metode:</b> Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi kondensasi data, penyajian data, serta penarikan kesimpulan dan verifikasi. <b>Hasil:</b> Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kesisambungan program IMTAQ ditentukan oleh empat aspek manajerial, yaitu perencanaan, pengorganisasian, pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi. Secara kualitatif, pembinaan IMTAQ berkontribusi terhadap pembentukan karakter siswa yang ditunjukkan melalui tiga indikator utama, yaitu (1) religiusitas, berupa pembiasaan berdoa, membaca Al-Qur'an, dan mengikuti kegiatan keagamaan; (2) kedisiplinan, yang tercermin dalam kepatuhan mengikuti jadwal kegiatan, ketepatan waktu, dan keterlibatan dalam pembiasaan ibadah; serta (3) integritas, yang terlihat melalui</p> |

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence author

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pembiasaan sikap tanggung jawab, kejujuran, dan perilaku santun dalam interaksi di lingkungan madrasah. Namun, keterbatasan bahan ajar, lemahnya perencanaan, dan evaluasi yang belum sistematis menyebabkan pemantauan konsistensi perilaku siswa belum optimal. **Kesimpulan:** Program pembinaan IMTAQ berperan dalam membangun karakter religius siswa melalui pembiasaan nilai-nilai keagamaan yang terintegrasi dalam budaya madrasah. Penguatan manajemen program, penyediaan bahan ajar, serta penerapan evaluasi berbasis indikator perilaku diperlukan untuk memastikan kesinambungan pembinaan dan mengukur perkembangan karakter siswa secara lebih sistematis.

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**Keywords:**

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IMTAQ Program,  
Program  
Sustainability,  
Educational  
Management, Student  
Character, Madrasah

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**ABSTRACTS**

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**Background:** This study is motivated by the importance of the Iman dan Taqwa (IMTAQ) development program as a strategic instrument for improving educational quality and fostering students' religious character in madrasahs. However, the implementation of the IMTAQ program at MTs Negeri 1 Kota Palembang continues to face managerial challenges, particularly in planning, the availability of teaching materials, and the effectiveness of the evaluation system. **Purpose of the Study:** This study aims to analyze the continuity of the IMTAQ development program, the learning methods employed, and its contribution to students' character development. **Methods:** This study employed a qualitative approach, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. **Results:** The findings indicate that the continuity of the IMTAQ program is determined by four managerial aspects: planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation. Qualitatively, the IMTAQ program contributes to students' character development, as reflected in three main indicators: (1) religiosity, demonstrated through the habituation of praying, Qur'an recitation, and participation in religious activities; (2) discipline, reflected in compliance with activity schedules, punctuality, and participation in regular worship practices; and (3) integrity, manifested through the habituation of responsibility, honesty, and respectful behavior in interactions within the madrasah environment. However, limitations in teaching materials, inadequate planning, and unsystematic evaluation have hindered the optimal monitoring of students' behavioral consistency. **Conclusion:** The IMTAQ development program plays a role in fostering students' religious character through the habituation of religious values integrated into the madrasah culture. Strengthening program management, providing adequate teaching materials, and implementing behavior-based evaluation indicators are necessary to ensure the continuity of the program and systematically measure students' character development.

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## A. INTRODUCTION

Education is a systematic process aimed at developing human potential in a holistic manner, encompassing cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects. From an Islamic educational perspective, the aims of education are not limited to the acquisition of knowledge, but also encompass the formation of religious character grounded in the values of faith and piety (IMTAQ). IMTAQ represents the integration of iman (belief in God) and taqwa (spiritual awareness manifested through daily behaviour), which forms the foundation for shaping a well-rounded Muslim individual. Therefore, IMTAQ development programmes in educational institutions, particularly madrasahs, play a strategic role in fostering a generation that is not only intellectually outstanding but also possesses moral and spiritual integrity. In this context, the success of Islamic education is measured not only by academic achievement but also by the ability of educational institutions to consistently instil Islamic values into the behaviour of their pupils.

In recent decades, there has been a growing focus on character education, both at national and global levels. This focus is linked to various social phenomena that highlight the challenges in shaping the moral development of the younger generation, such as deviant behaviour, low social ethics, and the weakening of the application of religious values in everyday life. Character education is therefore no longer viewed as a supplementary element, but rather as an integral part of the educational process. Lickona (1992) emphasises that character education must be implemented systematically through habit formation, role modelling, and the creation of a supportive school culture. This view is in line with that of Berkowitz (2011), who emphasises that effective character development requires a whole-school approach, rather than relying solely on formal classroom learning. Both perspectives indicate that character development requires integration between educational objectives, teaching practices, educators' behaviour, and the institutional environment.

From the perspective of Islamic education, the development of religious character has a deeper dimension as it relates to the process of internalising spiritual values and the cultivation of good manners. Al-Attas (1991) and Akbar & Alkhadafi (2025) emphasise that Islamic education must be capable of shaping civilised individuals (*insan adabi*), that is, individuals who possess a balance between knowledge, morality and spirituality. This principle is closely linked to the management of Islamic education, which views the administration of education as a planned process aimed at achieving educational objectives grounded in Islamic values. Within this framework, planning must be directed towards setting objectives for character development; organising towards the allocation of responsibilities and resources; actuating towards setting a good example and instilling religious values; and controlling towards monitoring the achievement of educational objectives. Thus, the IMTAQ character-building programme is not merely an additional activity, but an integral part of the madrasah education system that requires systematic and sustainable management.

Nevertheless, various studies indicate that the implementation of the IMTAQ character-building programme in schools and madrasahs has not always been optimal. Some programmes remain largely ceremonial and have not been fully integrated into the learning system or institutional culture. Weaknesses in programme management such as inadequate planning, inconsistent implementation, and the absence of a comprehensive evaluation system are factors that can hinder the programme's

effectiveness. These issues highlight a gap between the ideal concept of religious character education and the reality of its implementation. From the perspective of Islamic educational management, this situation indicates that the success of a programme is not determined solely by the existence of religious activities, but also by the institution's ability to manage all programme components in an integrated manner.

Research by Fitriani & Saumi (2018) shows that the internalisation of character values through the IMTAQ programme can proceed effectively if supported by adequate facilities and the active involvement of the entire school community. However, the study also revealed that external factors, such as the family and social environment, can act as barriers to the process of shaping pupils' character. Meanwhile, Kholis (2017) found that learning based on religious values contributes to the character development of pupils, particularly through role modelling and consistent practice. Both studies highlight the importance of environmental support and the process of habit formation in character education. When linked to the principles of Islamic educational management, these findings reinforce the urgency of organising resources, involving the entire madrasah community, and implementing consistent programmes as prerequisites for the internalisation of religious values.

At the international level, Chadija et al. (2026) examined how Islamic schools in Western countries develop a school culture grounded in religious values on a sustainable basis. The findings of this study indicate that the success of character education depends heavily on the continuity of the programme and its integration into the institutional culture. Furthermore, Elias et al. (1997), through the concept of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), emphasised the importance of programme continuity in shaping pupils' prosocial behaviour and sense of responsibility. \*Education\* (2019) also affirmed that character development is a global agenda requiring the support of policy, school culture, and a sustainable education system. This literature provides a foundation for understanding that the continuity of character education must be viewed as the result of the integration of institutional policies, organisational culture, and programme implementation. In the context of madrasahs, this principle can be translated into the management of the IMTAQ programme, which integrates Islamic values with educational management functions.

Nevertheless, there are differing perspectives regarding the most effective approach to character development. Some viewpoints emphasise the role of a structured formal curriculum, whilst others prioritise informal learning through school culture, role modelling, and social interaction. These differences indicate that character education cannot rely entirely on a single approach. Rather, it requires the integration of formal learning, behavioural conditioning, role modelling by educators, and institutional management. Within the framework of Islamic educational management, this integration demands alignment between programme planning, the division of responsibilities, the implementation of activities, and continuous evaluation so that the values of faith and piety do not remain merely at the level of knowledge, but are manifested in the actual behaviour of the learners.

In the context of IMTAQ development programmes, sustainability is a crucial aspect. Programme sustainability can be understood as a programme's ability to continue to be implemented, adapted, and to provide long-term benefits as part of an institutionalised education system. Scheirer (2005) states that programme sustainability is influenced by various factors, including leadership support, the programme's

alignment with organisational needs, and the institution's capacity to manage the programme effectively. Meanwhile, Al-Haddad & Kotnour (2015) emphasise that a programme's success depends heavily on the organisation's ability to manage change and integrate innovation into its institutional structure. Both of these perspectives can be linked to the principles of Islamic educational management, particularly the functions of planning and organising as the foundation for sustainability, implementation as a mechanism for the internalisation of values, and evaluation as an instrument for programme control and improvement. Thus, the sustainability of IMTAQ development is not only related to the regularity of activity implementation but also to the madrasah's managerial capacity to maintain the quality and relevance of the programme.

In practice, a number of IMTAQ development programmes in madrasahs still face challenges in meeting these principles of sustainability. Programmes are often carried out without thorough planning, lack clear implementation standards, and are not supported by a structured evaluation system. Consequently, it is difficult to systematically monitor the programmes' effectiveness in achieving the objective of fostering religious character in pupils. Furthermore, limited teaching materials and reliance on teachers' improvisation can hinder the consistency of programme implementation. From the perspective of Islamic education management, these issues reflect a lack of optimal integration between planning, organisation, implementation and supervision. Therefore, analysis of the IMTAQ programme should focus not only on the religious activities carried out, but also on the managerial mechanisms that enable the programme to run consistently and sustainably.

This phenomenon was also observed in the implementation of the IMTAQ development programme at State Madrasah Tsanawiyah 1 in Palembang. Although this programme has great potential to support the quality of education and the development of religious character, its implementation still faces challenges in terms of management. Weaknesses in systematic planning, organisation, implementation and evaluation pose a potential obstacle to the programme's effectiveness. This situation indicates that the success of IMTAQ development is determined not only by the relevance of the objectives and religious content, but also by the quality of the programme's governance. Therefore, a study is required to link programme management practices with the process of internalising religious values in the lives of pupils.

In addition to managerial aspects, the sub-optimal evaluation system is a significant issue in the implementation of the IMTAQ programme. Evaluation is an essential component of educational management as it serves to measure the achievement of objectives, identify weaknesses in implementation, and formulate corrective measures. In the context of character education, evaluation must not merely assess the implementation of activities but must also consider behavioural indicators that reflect the internalisation of religious values, such as discipline, responsibility, honesty, and consistency in practising religious habits. This is in line with the principle of control in Islamic educational management, which positions evaluation as a mechanism to ensure alignment between planned objectives and actual outcomes. Without a clear evaluation system, the sustainability of the IMTAQ programme will be difficult to maintain and its contribution to the development of pupils' character cannot be adequately monitored.

In light of these issues, this study aims to analyse the sustainability of the IMTAQ development programme and its implications for the character development of pupils at MTs Negeri 1, Palembang. Specifically, this study examines the four functions of programme management namely, planning, organising, implementation and evaluation and their relationship to the process of internalising the values of faith and piety within pupils. This focus is based on the understanding that Islamic educational management is not only oriented towards achieving administrative objectives but also towards managing the educational process that supports the formation of civilised individuals, as emphasised by Al-Attas (1991) and Akbar & Alkhadafi (2025). Consequently, this study employs programme management as an analytical framework to understand how religious values are translated into planned and sustainable educational practices.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to developing an understanding of the IMTAQ development programme as an integrated and sustainable religious character education system. This study does not view IMTAQ merely as a series of religious activities, but as an educational ecosystem involving madrasah culture, teacher role modelling, the cultivation of religious behaviour, institutional support, and evaluation mechanisms. Theoretically, this study links the character education perspectives of Lickona (1992) and Berkowitz (2011), Al-Attas's (1991) and Akbar & Alkhadafi's (2025) concepts of Islamic education, as well as Scheirer's (2005) framework for programme sustainability and Al-Haddad & Kotnour's (2015) framework for change management. This synthesis is used to explain the relationship between programme governance, the cultivation of religious values, and the formation of pupils' character. In practical terms, the research findings are expected to serve as a basis for evaluation and recommendations for madrasahs and stakeholders in strengthening the quality of IMTAQ development programme management.

Unlike previous studies, which placed greater emphasis on the internalisation of character values through facilities and the involvement of the school community (Fitriani & Saumi, 2018), the instilling of values and exemplary behaviour in religious education (Kholis, 2017), and the integration of character education into institutional culture (Chadija et al., 2026), this study specifically examines the continuity of the IMTAQ development programme through the integration of the four functions of educational management namely, planning, organising, implementing and evaluating within the context of state madrasahs. The research gap lies in the need for a deeper understanding of how the quality of programme governance influences the consistency of guidance implementation and the process of internalising students' religious character, particularly in the face of limited teaching materials and a sub-optimal evaluation system. The uniqueness of this research lies in the development of a managerial perspective that integrates the principles of Islamic education, character education theory, and the concept of programme sustainability to analyse IMTAQ not merely as a religious activity, but as a system for fostering religious character that is managed in a planned, organised, implemented, and continuously evaluated manner. Focusing on MTs Negeri 1 in Palembang, this research is expected to make a contextual contribution to the development of a more systematic, adaptive, and student-centred model for managing the IMTAQ programme.

## **B. METHOD**

### **Research Design and Approach**

This study employs a qualitative approach of a descriptive nature. This approach was chosen as it aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation and sustainability of the Faith and Piety (IMTAQ) development programme, as well as its implications for the character development of pupils within the natural context of the madrasah. A qualitative approach enables the researcher to explore the experiences, perspectives, interactions and social practices of the research subjects within their context (Creswell, 2003; Moleong, 2018). A research method is essentially a systematic and planned procedure for acquiring knowledge and addressing research questions (Sugiyono, 2020).

A qualitative descriptive design was used to comprehensively describe how the IMTAQ development programme is planned, organised, implemented and evaluated, as well as how these processes relate to the development of students' religious character. This study focuses on phenomena that occur naturally without any treatment or manipulation of the research subjects. Consequently, the research findings are expected to provide a contextual understanding of the continuity of the IMTAQ programme as part of the character education system in madrasahs.

### **Research Subjects and Informant Selection**

The research subjects included madrasah headteachers, Islamic Religious Education teachers, religious activity coordinators, and pupils involved in the IMTAQ programme (Moleong, 2018). Informants were selected using purposive sampling, which involves the deliberate selection of informants based on the consideration that they possess the knowledge, experience and direct involvement in the implementation of the programme under study (Creswell, 2003).

Madrasah headteachers were selected to obtain information regarding policy, planning, institutional support and programme evaluation. Islamic Religious Education teachers and religious activity coordinators served as sources of information regarding the implementation of activities, guidance strategies, the instilling of religious values, and operational constraints. Meanwhile, pupils were involved to gain perspectives on their experiences of participating in the programme, their level of engagement in activities, and the religious behaviours instilled within the madrasah environment.

The selection of informants from these various groups was intended to obtain diverse perspectives so that the phenomenon of the IMTAQ programme's sustainability could be understood more comprehensively.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

Data collection was carried out using three main techniques: observation, in-depth interviews and documentation. These three techniques were employed to obtain comprehensive data on the IMTAQ programme management process and its contribution to the development of pupils' character.

#### **a. Observation**

Observations were carried out in person to monitor the implementation of IMTAQ activities and the development of pupils' character within the madrasah environment (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The focus of the observations included the regularity of activity implementation, student engagement, discipline, punctuality, the

cultivation of religious practices, teachers' exemplary behaviour, and social interactions that reflect religious values. The observations were also aimed at identifying the alignment between programme planning and its practical implementation.

**b. In depth Interviews**

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach to gather in-depth information regarding the planning, organisation, implementation and evaluation of the IMTAQ programme (Kvale, 2009). The interview questions covered the programme's objectives, the division of responsibilities, coaching methods, the availability of teaching materials, implementation challenges, evaluation mechanisms, and the informants' perceptions of changes in pupils' behaviour. The semi-structured format enabled the researcher to develop follow-up questions based on the informants' answers, thereby ensuring that the information obtained was more in-depth and contextual.

**c. Documentation**

Documentation is used to supplement and confirm data obtained from observations and interviews (Bowen, 2009). The documents examined include IMTAQ activity records, programme implementation schedules, planning documents, teaching materials, madrasah policies, and available evaluation documents. Documentation serves to provide administrative evidence of the programme's continuity and supports analysis of the alignment between written policies and their implementation in practice.

**Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis utilised the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which comprises three main components: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles et al., 2014).

The choice of the Miles and Huberman model was based on the characteristics of qualitative research, which requires a systematic, iterative and interconnected analytical process from data collection through to drawing conclusions. This model enables researchers to organise complex data into more focused information without losing the context and meaning of the informants' experiences. The analysis process is conducted interactively, allowing preliminary findings to be revisited through additional data or re-examination of empirical evidence.

In this study, the three stages of analysis were operationalised as follows:

**a. Data Reduction**

Data reduction was carried out by selecting, focusing, simplifying and organising the data obtained through observation, interviews and documentation. The data was classified according to the main themes of the research, namely planning, organisation, implementation, evaluation, programme sustainability, and the development of pupils' religious character. Relevant information was coded and grouped to identify patterns, similarities, differences, and issues that arose during the implementation of the programme.

**b. Data Display**

The reduced data is presented in the form of narrative descriptions, thematic matrices and groupings of results based on the research focus. The presentation of the data is designed to illustrate the relationship between the functions of IMTAQ

programme management and indicators of pupils' character development, such as religiosity, discipline, responsibility, honesty and politeness. This stage helps the researcher to understand the interrelationships between themes and to identify findings relevant to the research objectives.

### c. Conclusion Drawing and Verification

Conclusions were drawn by interpreting patterns and relationships between themes based on the research data as a whole. Preliminary conclusions were verified by reviewing observation notes, interview transcripts and supporting documents. The verification process aimed to ensure that the resulting interpretations were supported by empirical evidence, consistent with the research context, and capable of addressing the research questions concerning the sustainability of the IMTAQ programme and its implications for pupils' character development.

### Research Methodological Flowchart

To clarify the research procedures, the methodological framework has been systematically outlined, from data collection through to drawing conclusions and verification.

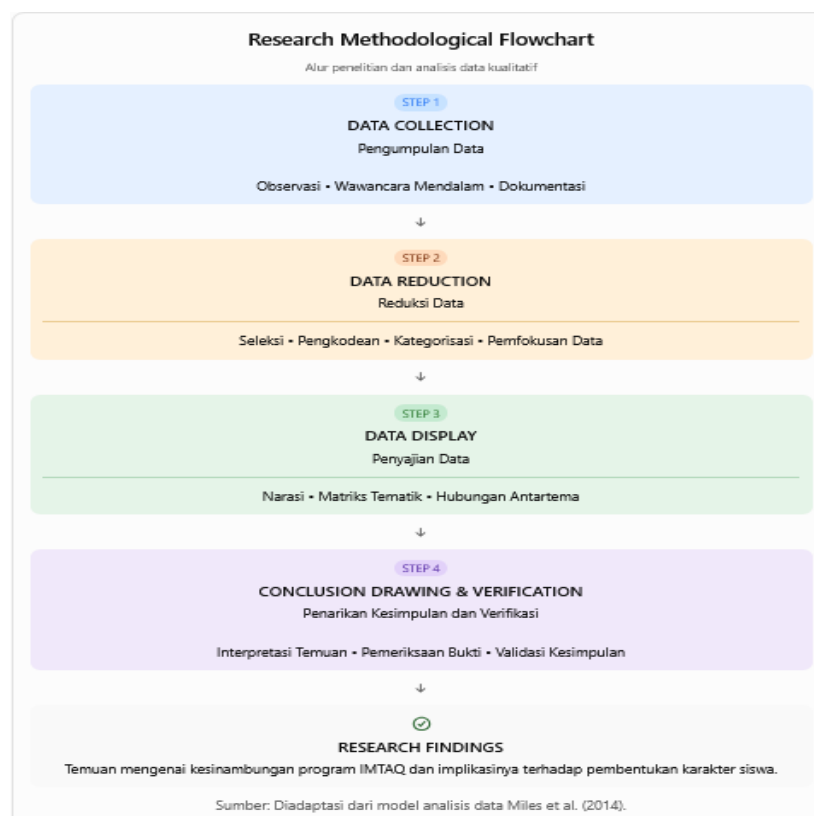


Figure 1. Research Data Analysis Flowchart

In operational terms, the analytical process is interactive. Data obtained during the collection phase can be processed and presented immediately, whilst provisional conclusions can be revisited should new information come to light. Consequently, the analytical process is not understood as a series of entirely separate, linear stages, but rather as a cycle of interrelated steps.

## **Data Validity and Triangulation**

To ensure the validity of the data, this study employed source triangulation and methodological triangulation (Denzin, 2017). Triangulation was chosen because it enables the researcher to examine the consistency of information through the perspectives of informants and different data collection techniques. In qualitative research, triangulation serves to strengthen the credibility of findings by testing the consistency between various pieces of empirical evidence, rather than merely gathering similar information.

### **a. Source Triangulation**

Source triangulation was carried out by comparing information obtained from the headteacher of the madrasah, teachers of Islamic Religious Education, religious activities coordinators, and pupils. The comparison was conducted to identify both similarities and differences in perspectives regarding the planning, implementation and continuity of the programme, as well as changes in pupils' behaviour. For example, information provided by the headteacher regarding the programme's timetable and policies was compared with accounts from teachers and pupils regarding its practical implementation.

### **b. Method Triangulation**

Methodological triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of observations, interviews and documentation relating to the same phenomenon. Information regarding the regularity of activity implementation, for example, was examined through direct observation, informants' accounts, and documents such as timetables or activity records. Meanwhile, information regarding the development of pupils' character is analysed through observed behaviour, experiences recounted by informants, and available supporting documentation.

The results of comparing these two forms of triangulation are used to identify consistency in the data, explain discrepancies in the information, and strengthen the interpretation of the phenomena under study. Should any inconsistencies be found, the researcher re-examines the data and the context of the information before drawing conclusions. Thus, triangulation serves as a mechanism for data quality control to ensure that the research findings have an empirically sound and accountable basis.

## **Theoretical Foundation of Character Education**

This study is also underpinned by a conceptual framework of character education and religious guidance that emphasises the importance of habit formation, role modelling, and a conducive educational environment in shaping pupils' character. This framework is used to understand how the values of faith and piety are translated into everyday behaviour through IMTAQ guidance activities.

In this study, religious character development was analysed using qualitative indicators, including the habit of practising religious activities, discipline in following the programme, responsibility, honesty, and politeness in social interactions. These indicators were used as categories of analysis to link programme management practices with the process of internalising character values among pupils.

Recent studies indicate that a structured approach to learning and guidance based on religious values can foster pupils' motivation, engagement and character

development. Consequently, this study identifies the continuity of programme management as a key aspect in understanding how religious practices can be sustained and integrated into the culture of madrasahs.

## **C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

Based on the research findings obtained through field observations, in-depth interviews and documentation, it was found that the implementation of the IMTAQ programme at MTs Negeri 1 Palembang contributes to the development of students' moral values and religious character. The research findings indicate that this contribution is reflected in the regular conduct of religious activities, the cultivation of religious behaviour, the development of Qur'anic reading skills, and pupils' involvement in spiritual development activities.

However, the programme's effectiveness has not yet been fully optimised, as managerial constraints remain, including uneven teacher involvement, inconsistent supervision, the absence of standardised disciplinary measures, and the lack of systematic programme evaluation. Consequently, the research findings not only highlight the benefits of IMTAQ activities but also demonstrate the relationship between the quality of programme management and the sustainability of students' character development.

### **Implementation of the IMTAQ Program as an Instrument for Character Development**

The research findings indicate that the IMTAQ programme is a religious development initiative designed to instil values of faith and moral character in pupils. According to the documentation, the programme's activities include weekly routines such as Yasinan and Kultum, as well as occasional events such as short-term Islamic boarding school programmes and celebrations of major Islamic holidays.

Based on observations, IMTAQ activities are carried out collectively every Friday morning before lessons begin. Pupils gather in a playground or designated room to take part in a set programme of activities. Generally, the activities take place in a conducive atmosphere, although some pupils were observed to be unfocused and chatting with their peers.

Interviews with the IMTAQ coordinators revealed that these activities are not intended merely as ceremonial events, but rather as a means of instilling religious values into daily life. Teachers emphasised that character development cannot be achieved through formal learning alone, but must be reinforced through regular, practical and applicable activities.

These findings indicate that the IMTAQ programme has a clear structure of activities and development objectives. However, the regularity of the activities has not yet been fully matched by consistent supervision and evaluation. Therefore, the programme's success must be understood through two interrelated dimensions: the implementation of activities and the quality of management that supports their continuity.

### **Yasinan Activities as a Medium for Religious Value Internalization**

Based on the observations, the Yasinan sessions are held regularly and led by teachers on a rota basis. Pupils participate collectively in the recitation of Surah Yasin and short verses. These sessions not only emphasise reading skills but are also aimed at fostering an understanding of and appreciation for the values of the Qur'an.

Interviews with the supervising teachers revealed that the Yasinan sessions aim to train concentration, calm the mind, and bring pupils closer to Allah SWT. Teachers also emphasised the importance of reflecting on the meaning of the verses as part of character building.

However, observations found that not all teachers were involved in the sessions, meaning that supervision of the pupils was not yet optimal. This situation is evident from the fact that some pupils are not taking the activity seriously and tend to play around whilst it is taking place.

Interviews with pupils also revealed that there are sanctions for those who do not participate in the activity or arrive late, but these are not consistently enforced. These findings indicate that the Yasinan sessions have provided a space for spiritual cultivation, but are not yet fully supported by a uniform system of supervision and behavioural control.

Consequently, the success of the Yasinan sessions cannot be judged solely by the conduct of the Qur'an recitation; it is also necessary to consider discipline, student engagement and the consistency of teacher supervision.

### **The Role of the PTHQ Program in Improving Students' Religious Competence**

The findings from documentation and interviews indicate that the madrasah runs a PTHQ programme as part of its efforts to improve pupils' ability to read and write the Qur'an. This programme is compulsory for new pupils and forms part of basic religious education.

Based on observations, PTHQ activities are carried out on a scheduled basis under the guidance of competent teachers. Pupils with advanced skills are also encouraged to help classmates who are still experiencing difficulties. This practice demonstrates a collaborative approach to the learning process.

However, interview results indicate that the number of participants in the Qur'an recitation extracurricular activity has declined and that the activity is not very popular amongst pupils. One of the factors identified is the non-compulsory nature of the activity, resulting in a tendency for low student engagement.

This finding highlights a difference in participation levels between the compulsory PTHQ programme and the optional extracurricular Qur'an recitation programme. From a managerial perspective, this situation indicates that the designation of the activity's status, motivational strategies, and the organisation of participants are factors that need to be considered in order to ensure the programme's sustainability.

Consequently, the contribution of the PTHQ to religious competence needs to be supported by strategies to increase interest, so that the programme not only reaches students who are required to take part in the activity but also encourages voluntary participation in the development of religious skills.

## The Effectiveness of Kultum Activities in Character Development

Based on the findings of the observation, the Kultum sessions were held after the recitation of the Qur'an and formed an important part of the IMTAQ programme. The material presented related to religious values, moral conduct and the students' spiritual motivation.

Interviews with the mentors revealed that the delivery of the Kultum sessions utilised several approaches to values education, namely the doctrinal, rational, affective and exemplary approaches. This variety indicates that moral guidance is carried out through the imparting of knowledge, the strengthening of emotional awareness, and the provision of behavioural examples.

However, the observations and interviews also revealed that there are as yet no standardised rules regarding sanctions for pupils who do not participate in the sessions. Sanctions still depend on the initiative of the mentors, such as asking pupils to produce a summary or write about a specific text. Furthermore, documentation indicates that programme evaluation has not been carried out systematically and is only discussed in general terms at the start of the academic year.

These findings suggest that whilst the Kultum programme employs a variety of pedagogical approaches, it is not yet supported by an adequate system of monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, the effectiveness of Kultum needs to be assessed not only on the basis of the delivery of material, but also on the basis of student engagement, consistency of implementation, and follow-up mechanisms.

## Summary of Main Research Findings

To present the research findings in a systematic manner, the key findings have been summarised according to the type of activity, implementation methods, observed outcome indicators and managerial constraints.

**Table 1. Summary of IMTAQ Program Implementation and Research Findings**

| Types of Activities      | Implementation Methods                                                                         | Observed Qualitative Outcomes/Indicators                                                                               | Managerial barriers                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Yasinan</b>           | Collective recitation of Surah Yasin and short verses, led by the teacher                      | Cultivating the habit of reading the Qur'an, strengthening spiritual values, and participation in religious activities | Not all teachers are involved; supervision is sub-optimal; sanctions for tardiness are not yet consistent           |
| <b>PTHQ</b>              | Scheduled lessons with guidance from the teacher and support from peers                        | Developing Qur'anic literacy skills and collaborative learning                                                         | Quantitative data on skills improvement is not yet available; learning outcomes assessment needs to be strengthened |
| <b>Kultum</b>            | Delivery of religious material through doctrinal, rational, affective and exemplary approaches | Understanding of religious values, confidence in public speaking, polite behaviour, and mutual respect                 | There are no standardised sanctions or routine evaluations                                                          |
| <b>Intensive Islamic</b> | Occasional religious guidance activities                                                       | Strengthening of religious experiences                                                                                 | Specific outcome data and success indicators have not                                                               |

|                                                        |                                                      |                                                                                               |                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>boarding school course</b>                          |                                                      | through intensive guidance activities                                                         | been systematically documented                                      |
| <b>Commemoration of major Islamic holidays</b>         | Collective religious activities                      | Strengthening of religious experiences and involvement in madrasah culture                    | Specific evaluation indicators are not yet available                |
| <b>Extracurricular activities in Qur'an recitation</b> | Optional activities outside the compulsory programme | Development of interest and competence in the art of reciting the Qur'an amongst participants | A decline in the number of participants and low participation rates |

Source: Field observations, interviews, and school documentation (2026).

Based on Table 1, there are three main findings. Firstly, the IMTAQ programme has provided a mechanism for fostering religious habits through routine activities and practical religious education. Secondly, the observed outcomes include a deeper understanding of religion, polite behaviour, respect for teachers and peers, and the confidence to speak in public. Thirdly, the sustainability of the programme still faces challenges in terms of supervision, standardisation of implementation, participation and evaluation.

### **Impact of the IMTAQ Program on Students' Behavioral Changes**

Based on interviews with pupils, the IMTAQ programme has had a positive impact on their behaviour. Pupils stated that these activities helped to improve their understanding of religion, fostered polite behaviour, encouraged respect for others, and boosted their confidence in public speaking.

Observations also revealed several indicators of positive behaviour, namely that pupils were more disciplined in participating in activities, showed respect towards teachers, and were becoming increasingly accustomed to taking part in religious activities. Meanwhile, interviews with teachers revealed that the IMTAQ programme plays a role in instilling values of faith, shaping Muslim character, and directly training pupils in religious practices. These findings indicate that the programme's contribution can be identified through three dimensions of character:

1. Religious commitment: engagement in reading the Qur'an and religious activities.
2. Discipline: adherence to timetables and rules governing activities.
3. Social character: politeness, respect for others, responsibility, and the confidence to communicate.

However, as pre- and post-programme assessments are not yet available, the extent of the changes in character cannot yet be expressed as a percentage or in terms of a causal relationship. Therefore, the research findings are best interpreted as an indication of the programme's contribution to character development, based on qualitative evidence.

### **Managerial Constraints in the Implementation of the IMTAQ Program**

The research identified several key obstacles to the implementation of the IMTAQ programme, namely:

1. Teachers' involvement in activities is not yet uniform.
2. Supervision of pupil discipline is not yet consistent.
3. There are as yet no standardised guidelines for imposing sanctions.
4. Programme evaluation has not yet been carried out on an ongoing basis.

5. Pupil participation in non-compulsory extracurricular activities remains low.

The findings of the documentation review indicate that programme evaluation is generally discussed at the start of the academic year and is not yet supported by routine monitoring mechanisms. This situation highlights a gap between the implementation of activities and the quality of programme management. The programme is already underway and has clear developmental objectives, but it is not yet fully equipped with operational standards, success indicators and structured evaluation mechanisms.

Overall, the research findings indicate that the IMTAQ programme at MTsN 1 Palembang contributes to the development of pupils’ religious character through the regular practice of religious activities and hands-on learning experiences. However, the programme’s sustainability and effectiveness still require strengthened management, particularly in the areas of supervision, standardisation and evaluation.

**Discussion**  
**IMTAQ as an Integrated Religious Character Education Program**

The research findings indicate that the IMTAQ programme at MTsN 1 Palembang serves as a means of internalising values of faith through direct experience. Regular activities such as reciting the Qur’an, Yasinan, and Kultum provide students with the opportunity to practise religious values within the madrasah environment.

This finding is consistent with Alam et al. (2025), who state that Islamic education becomes more meaningful when religious values are taught through direct practice, rather than merely through the delivery of theory. From the perspective of student interviews, the IMTAQ programme helps to boost confidence in public speaking and fosters polite behaviour and mutual respect (Student Interview Data, 2026). This finding relates to Lickona’s (1992) view that character education encompasses three dimensions: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action.

In the context of this study, the recitation of the Qur’an and short religious talks (Kultum) provide experiences of moral knowledge; reflection on values supports affective awareness; whilst the cultivation of religious behaviour provides a space for the application of values in action. Thus, the IMTAQ programme can be understood as a character education process that links religious knowledge, the internalisation of values, and behavioural practice.

**Comparison with Recent Empirical Studies**

To strengthen the findings of this study, the results were compared with three empirical studies published in 2023–2024, the full-text articles of which are available online.

**Table 2. Comparative Analysis with Recent Empirical Studies**

| Penelitian          | Fokus dan Metode                                                                                         | Temuan Utama                                                                                              | Hubungan dengan Penelitian Ini                                                               |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Najmi et al. (2023) | Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam dan pembentukan karakter religius siswa SMP; kualitatif, studi kasus | Pembelajaran berkontribusi terhadap karakter religius melalui proses pembelajaran dan internalisasi nilai | PAI Sejalan dengan temuan IMTAQ mengenai pembiasaan nilai religius melalui kegiatan langsung |

|                                         |                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Febriyanti &amp; Amrullah (2023)</b> | Pembentukan karakter religius melalui pembiasaan Islami di sekolah dasar; kualitatif fenomenologis      | Mengidentifikasi tujuh praktik pembiasaan yang mendukung pembentukan karakter religius                                                                | Memperkuat temuan bahwa pembiasaan merupakan mekanisme penting dalam internalisasi karakter                                  |
| <b>Mahira et al. (2024)</b>             | Implementasi pendidikan karakter untuk meningkatkan karakter religius siswa SMA; studi kasus kualitatif | Mengidentifikasi tujuh bentuk kegiatan, termasuk membaca dan menghafal Al-Qur'an, ceramah karakter, motivasi Islami, salat berjamaah, dan infak Jumat | Memiliki kesamaan bentuk kegiatan dengan IMTAQ, tetapi penelitian ini lebih menekankan persoalan kesinambungan dan manajemen |

Source: Najmi et al. (2023); Febriyanti & Amrullah (2023); Mahira et al. (2024).

Najmi et al. (2023) found that Islamic Religious Education contributes to the development of pupils' religious character through the learning process and the internalisation of values. These findings are consistent with this study, particularly regarding the role of Yasinan and Kultum activities as a means of instilling religious values.

However, there is a difference in focus. Najmi et al. place greater emphasis on Islamic Religious Education and its implications for religious character, whilst this study specifically identifies managerial issues that affect the sustainability of the programme, such as teacher involvement, inconsistent sanctions, and evaluations that are not yet systematic. This comparison demonstrates that the internalisation of religious values needs to be supported by institutional governance so that the implementation of character-building can take place consistently.

Febriyanti (2023) examined the formation of religious character through Islamic habit-forming practices in primary schools. The study identified seven habit-forming practices as part of the process of shaping pupils' religious character. These findings support the results of the study at MTsN 1 Palembang, which found that habit-forming practices through Yasinan, religious activities, and routine guidance serve as means of internalising values.

The difference lies in the emphasis on management aspects. This study found that the established habits were not yet fully supported by the equal involvement of teachers and a continuous evaluation system. Thus, this study expands the discussion on religious habit formation by highlighting the importance of supervision and evaluation in maintaining the consistency of programme implementation.

Mahira et al. (2024) identified seven forms of religious character education implementation, namely reading the Qur'an, memorising the Qur'an, commemorating major Islamic holidays, character education lectures, Islamic motivation, congregational Zuhur prayer, and Friday charity. These findings align with this study in the use of religious activities as a medium for character formation. The Yasinan, PTHQ and Kultum activities at MTsN 1 Palembang also demonstrate that religious guidance is carried out through direct practice, habit formation and the communication of values.

However, this study places additional emphasis on the gap between programme implementation and managerial readiness. Specifically, it was found that scheduled activities still face challenges regarding supervision, standardisation of sanctions and evaluation. This discrepancy highlights that analyses of character education must consider not only the variety of activities but also the mechanisms that enable these activities to be managed and sustained over the long term.

All three previous studies similarly demonstrated the role of religious learning and habit formation in character development. This study complements these findings by demonstrating that the continuity of IMTAQ development is linked to consistent supervision, clear implementation standards, and the existence of programme evaluation. This comparison constitutes the study's contextual contribution to research on the management of religious character education.

### **Multidimensional Pedagogical Approaches in IMTAQ Activities**

The results of the observations indicate that the delivery of short religious talks and opening addresses utilised doctrinal, rational, affective and exemplary approaches (Observation Data, 2026). These findings are consistent with those of Berkowitz (2011); Purwanto et al. (2023); and Javier et al. (2026), who emphasise that values education requires a multidimensional approach so that values can be deeply understood and internalised.

From the perspective of Bandura & Walters (1977), observational learning is a key mechanism in the formation of behaviour. In the context of this study, teachers not only deliver religious material but also serve as behavioural models that pupils can observe and emulate.

Furthermore, the findings regarding pupils' confidence in speaking in public suggest that Kultum can provide a space for the development of self-confidence and social communication. Thus, a variety of pedagogical approaches is one of the supporting aspects of the IMTAQ programme. However, its success still requires monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the values conveyed do not stop at understanding but are also reflected in behaviour.

### **Managerial Consistency and Discipline in IMTAQ Implementation**

One of the key findings of this study is the absence of standardised guidelines regarding sanctions for pupils who do not participate in IMTAQ activities. Based on interviews with supervisors, the application of sanctions still depends on the individual policies of each supervisor (Supervisor Interview Data, 2026). Some pupils stated that the sanctions imposed took the form of informal agreements, such as writing specific passages. This finding indicates that the management of discipline has not yet been fully standardised.

From an educational management perspective, Van Wyk & Pelsier (2014); Firza (2022); and Liu & Tangkin (2023) emphasise the importance of clear rules and consistent implementation for the success of a programme.

The situation at MTsN 1 Palembang shows that inconsistencies in the application of rules have the potential to lead to differences in pupils' experiences when participating in activities. Therefore, the development of standard operating procedures (SOPs) is a managerial necessity to clarify the responsibilities of supervisors, rules and regulations, guidance mechanisms, and follow-up measures for breaches.

However, the enforcement of discipline within the IMTAQ programme should not be solely focused on the imposition of sanctions, but also on fostering students' awareness and sense of responsibility.

## Evaluation and Sustainability of the IMTAQ Program

The findings from documentation and interviews indicate that the evaluation of the IMTAQ programme has not been carried out systematically. Evaluation is only conducted in general terms at the start of the academic year, without routine monitoring (Documentation Data, 2026). This finding is consistent with the views of Shaperman (1989); Waters (2011); Syukur (2024); and Salim & Jaya (2024), who emphasise the importance of continuous evaluation in assessing programme effectiveness and supporting decision-making.

In the context of this study, the sub-optimal nature of evaluation means that madrasahs do not yet have an adequate documentation base to systematically assess pupils' character development. To strengthen the continuity of the programme, evaluation could be directed towards the following indicators:

| Evaluation Criteria         | Recommended Indicators                                          | Evidence that can be collected        |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Implementation</b>       | Consistency of the Yasinan and Kultum schedule                  | Activity timetables and journals      |
| <b>Participation</b>        | Pupil attendance and engagement                                 | Attendance registers and observations |
| <b>Discipline</b>           | Punctuality and adherence to school rules                       | Supervision notes                     |
| <b>Religious competence</b> | Progress in Qur'anic reading and writing skills                 | PTHQ assessment results               |
| <b>Social character</b>     | Politeness, responsibility and respect for others               | Teachers' observation notes           |
| <b>Sustainability</b>       | Implementation of follow-up actions based on evaluation results | Meeting minutes and improvement plans |

The table sets out recommended evaluation indicators based on research findings, rather than the results of measurements that have already been carried out. Therefore, the sustainability of the IMTAQ programme requires the integration of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. A structured evaluation enables madrasahs to identify activities that are being carried out consistently, recurring obstacles and programme development needs.

## IMTAQ and the Integration of Spiritual and Social Character

The IMTAQ programme at MTsN 1 Palembang is designed to develop pupils' faith and piety in a holistic manner, including social aspects such as tolerance and adaptability (Observation Data, 2026). This objective is in line with Nata's (2013) view regarding the balance between the relationship between humans and God (*hablum minallah*) and the relationship between humans and their fellow human beings (*hablum minannas*).

In this study, the *hablum minallah* dimension is reflected through the habit of reading the Qur'an and religious activities, whilst the *hablum minannas* dimension is evident through polite behaviour, mutual respect, and respect for teachers and peers. These findings are also consistent with Al-Attas (1991), who emphasised the importance of integrating knowledge, morality and spirituality in Islamic education. Thus, the development of IMTAQ is not only oriented towards the performance of religious rituals but also towards the formation of social behaviour that reflects Islamic values.

## **Theoretical and Practical Implications**

Theoretically, this study reinforces the link between character education and Islamic educational management. The findings indicate that habit formation, modelling, and religious experiences, as described by Lickona (1992), Berkowitz (2011), and Bandura & Walters (1977), require programme management support in order to be implemented consistently.

In practical terms, the research results indicate three priorities for the development of the IMTAQ programme:

1. Strengthening planning and standardisation: drawing up timetables, allocating responsibilities, and establishing standard operating procedures (SOPs) for activities and discipline training.
2. Enhancing supervision and participation: ensuring equitable teacher involvement and implementing strategies to increase pupils' interest in optional activities.
3. Developing continuous evaluation: utilising behavioural indicators and documenting activity outcomes to support programme improvement.

These implications demonstrate that the success of the IMTAQ programme is determined not only by the existence of religious activities, but also by the madrasah's ability to manage them as a continuous character-building system.

## **Research Contribution and Future Directions**

The main contribution of this study lies in its explanation of the relationship between the implementation of IMTAQ activities, the internalisation of religious values, and managerial constraints within the institutional context of a madrasah.

Unlike studies that merely describe the nature of religious activities or the benefits of character education, this study demonstrates that the routine implementation of such activities does not automatically guarantee the continuity of guidance. Teacher involvement, clear implementation standards, and continuous evaluation are key components that require attention.

For future research, it is recommended that a quantitative or mixed-methods approach be used to measure changes in student behaviour through standardised indicators. Comparative research across madrasahs could also be conducted to identify variations in IMTAQ programme management practices and institutional factors related to their sustainability.

Overall, the IMTAQ programme at MTsN 1 Palembang has contributed to the development of students' moral and religious character. However, strengthened management, standardisation of implementation, equitable supervision and systematic evaluation are required so that the programme's benefits can be monitored and sustained over the long term.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study shows that the Faith and Piety (IMTAQ) development programme at MTsN 1 Palembang plays a role in shaping the religious character of pupils through habit formation, setting a good example, lectures, discussions, storytelling and ongoing religious practice. The implementation of the programme, which is integrated with the madrasah's culture, supports the development of moral knowing, moral feeling and moral action, as reflected in the strengthening of pupils' religious attitudes and behaviour in their daily lives. The sustainability and effectiveness of this guidance are

further supported by the exemplary behaviour of teachers, the motivation of pupils, and the school and family environments. However, its implementation still faces managerial constraints, particularly regarding the evaluation system and programme standardisation, which are not yet optimal; consequently, the consistency and measurability of outcomes are not yet fully guaranteed. Therefore, madrasah administrators need to strengthen planning, establish implementation standards and character development indicators, and implement documented periodic evaluations involving teachers, pupils and parents. Strengthening coordination between madrasahs and families is also necessary to ensure that character development takes place consistently both within and outside the school environment. Thus, the IMTAQ programme has the potential to support holistic religious character education if managed in a targeted, sustainable and evaluation-based manner. Future research could utilise quantitative or mixed-methods approaches, as well as comparative studies across madrasahs, to measure character development more systematically and to examine the potential for integrating digital technology into IMTAQ development.

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