

## Comparative Analysis of Textbooks of Moral Beliefs Class VII MTs Between the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum

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### Abstract

Changes in national curriculum policies require substantial adjustments to the quality and relevance of textbooks as the main means of learning. This study aims to analyze comparatively the textbook of Moral Faith class VII Madrasah Tsanawiyah which is used in the 2013 Curriculum (K13) and the Independent Curriculum (IKM). The research was conducted with a qualitative approach through a literature study of two textbooks, using a multicomponent approach that includes five main aspects: content, language, presentation, thematic concepts, and evaluation. The results of the study show that K13 books are conceptual and memorization-oriented with a linear approach, while IKM books are more contextual, communicative, and support active learning through the integration of character values and digital features such as QR codes. IKM books also show excellence in presenting materials that are relevant to students' lives and supporting the development of 21st century skills. The conclusion of this study emphasizes that the Independent Curriculum book is more responsive to the needs of modern students and more effective in supporting the internalization of the values of faith and morals. These findings contribute to the development of religious textbooks as evaluation and reference materials in designing learning materials that are integrative, applicative, and in line with the spirit of the latest curriculum-based character education.

**Keywords:** Comparative Analysis; Curriculum 13; Independent Curriculum; Multicomponent

### Abstrak

*Perubahan kebijakan kurikulum nasional menuntut penyesuaian substansial terhadap kualitas dan relevansi buku teks sebagai sarana utama pembelajaran. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis secara komparatif buku teks Akidah Akhlak kelas VII Madrasah Tsanawiyah yang digunakan dalam Kurikulum 2013 (K13) dan Kurikulum Merdeka (IKM). Penelitian dilakukan dengan pendekatan kualitatif melalui studi pustaka terhadap dua buku teks, menggunakan pendekatan multikomponen yang mencakup lima aspek utama: isi, kebahasaan, penyajian, konsep tematik, dan evaluasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa buku K13 bersifat konseptual dan berorientasi pada hafalan dengan pendekatan linear, sedangkan buku IKM lebih kontekstual, komunikatif, dan mendukung pembelajaran aktif melalui integrasi nilai-nilai karakter dan fitur digital seperti QR code. Buku IKM juga menunjukkan keunggulan dalam menyajikan materi yang relevan dengan kehidupan siswa serta mendukung pengembangan keterampilan abad ke-21. Simpulan penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa buku Kurikulum Merdeka lebih responsif terhadap kebutuhan peserta didik modern dan lebih efektif dalam mendukung internalisasi nilai akidah dan akhlak. Temuan ini berkontribusi bagi pengembang buku teks keagamaan sebagai bahan evaluasi dan rujukan dalam merancang materi pembelajaran yang integratif, aplikatif, dan selaras dengan semangat pendidikan karakter berbasis kurikulum terbaru.*

**Kata Kunci:** Analisis Perbandingan; Kurikulum 13; Kurikulum Merdeka; Multikomponen

## Introduction

Moral Faith Education has a strategic position in the Islamic education system because it includes learning about aspects of beliefs (faith) and behavior (morals) which are the foundation for the formation of students' character (Mahfuzh & Bunyamin, 2024). In the context of madrasas, this subject not only aims to transfer theological knowledge, but also serves as a medium to inculcate essential spiritual and ethical values in the midst of the complexity of the challenges of the times (Sumanto et al., 2024). The relevance of the subject of Moral Faith is even higher when it is associated with the need to build the moral resilience of the younger generation in the face of the negative influence of globalization and technology.

The transformation of the curriculum from the 2013 Curriculum (K13) to the Independent Curriculum (IKM) has affected the approach, structure, and content of the subject matter, including Moral Faith. The Merdeka curriculum is designed to encourage flexible, contextual, and student-centered learning, thus demanding textbooks that are able to facilitate active, reflective, and meaningful learning experiences (Nurhadi et al., 2024). This raises the need to critically evaluate the effectiveness and suitability of textbooks in supporting the goals of the new curriculum. As stated by Wiwi Utami et al., (2024), The conformity of textbooks with learning outcome standards is very important so that the learning process runs in harmony with the direction of national education policies.

One approach that can be used to thoroughly analyze textbooks is the multi-component approach. This approach includes five main aspects, namely content, language, presentation, thematic concepts, and evaluation. Through this framework, textbooks are not only seen in terms of substance, but also how the material is delivered, the relevance of the themes raised, and the evaluative instruments used. The study with this approach allows researchers to assess the extent to which textbooks are able to meet the needs of holistic, contextual, and character-oriented learning.

The urgency of this research is also strengthened by social realities that show moral degradation among adolescents. Research Achmadin et al., (2024) shows that although the Independent Curriculum has made efforts to integrate moral values relevant to the Society 5.0 era, the challenge in internalizing values remains a real problem in the student environment. This underscores the importance of having a textbook that is not only informative but also transformative. Ahya et al., (2024) emphasized that effective textbooks can be a strategic instrument in the formation of religious and social character of madrasah students.

Previous research maps also show that studies that comprehensively compare the Akidah Akhlak textbooks in these two curricula are still very limited. Kusumawati, (2021) identify that the lack of evaluation of pedagogical approaches and textbook content is an obstacle in optimizing PAI learning in madrasas. Therefore, this article is here to fill this gap by presenting a comparative analysis of the two textbooks of Moral Faith class VII MTs used in the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum.

The main problem in this study is how the difference in structure, approach, and content of the Akidah Akhlak textbook in the two curricula affects the effectiveness of learning. Therefore, this article aims to conduct a comparative study using a multi-component approach to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each book in supporting the achievement of contextual and transformative Akidah Akhlak education goals.

Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of scientific studies in the field of Islamic education, especially in the development of teaching materials. Practically, the results of this study can be used by curriculum developers, book writers, and teachers in designing Akidah Akhlak teaching materials

that are more responsive to the needs of 21st century students. With this background, this article will review the effectiveness and relevance of two textbooks of Akidah Akhlak grade VII MTs through a multi-component approach as an effort to improve the quality of religious education in madrasas.

## **Method**

This research is a qualitative research with a library research approach that aims to analyze comparatively two textbooks of Moral Faith class VII Madrasah Tsanawiyah used in the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum. The analysis is focused on assessing the content and structure of the book based on a multicomponent approach to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each book in supporting the learning of Akidah Akhlak that is relevant to the context of the 21st century. The main data source comes from two textbooks of Akidah Akhlak grade VII MTs, namely the book published by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia for the 2013 Curriculum and the book published by Erlangga in 2023 for the Independent Curriculum. In addition, official curriculum documents, scientific journals, and relevant Islamic educational literature are used as secondary data sources to strengthen content analysis and contextualization of findings. The data collection technique is carried out through documentation studies, namely by collecting, reading, identifying, and recording important information from both textbooks and other supporting sources. Each component that is the focus of the analysis is carefully examined to see how the book conveys the material, uses language, presents content, relates learning themes, and provides evaluation instruments. Data analysis was carried out with a multicomponent approach, covering five main aspects: (1) content, including the accuracy, scope, and relevance of the material; (2) linguistics, reviewed from readability, coherence, and linguistic rules; (3) presentation, seen from the visual structure, interactivity, and attractiveness of the media; (4) thematic concepts, analyzed from the integration of themes, indicators, and cross-subjects; and (5) evaluation, which includes formative, summative, and three-domain assessments (cognitive, affective, psychomotor). Each component is analyzed through the stages of identification, categorization, interpretation, and evaluation. The validity of the data is strengthened by triangulation of literature sources and intersubjective analysis by comparing the findings with previous academic studies to ensure the objectivity and depth of the study on the effectiveness of textbooks in learning Akidah Akhlak.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **1. Contents Components**

The content component refers to the substance of the material presented in the textbook, including the scope of the topic, the depth of the discussion, and its relationship to the learning objectives. In the 2013 Curriculum book, the material on Moral Faith is structured in the form of thematic chapters that contain the main teachings of Islam such as the attributes of Allah, Asmaul Husna, faith in angels, and commendable morals. The material in the K13 book is also more normative and conceptual. For example, the discussion of the obligatory attributes of Allah SWT on pages 26-35 in the book K13 is presented in the form of definition, division of attributes, and naqli postulates. However, it is less associated with the daily lives of students. Although systematic, the presentation of the material emphasizes more on normative aspects and memorization of basic religious concepts. This approach still does not touch the applicative aspects related to the dynamics of student life in the contemporary era.

As a comparison, the Independent Curriculum book shows a more contextual and transformative approach. Materials such as faith, Islam, and ihsan are not only explained

theoretically but are also linked to the social reality of the student. In the book, students are invited to reflect on the value of *ihsan* through real stories, social phenomena, and visualization of the value of *Asmaul Husna* which is associated with the conditions of the surrounding community. In addition, the aspects of the Pancasila Student Profile such as critical thinking, creativity, and fear of God are explicitly used as a reference in the structure of learning activities. This shows that the Independent Curriculum prioritizes the internalization of values holistically, not just transferring religious knowledge.

In terms of accuracy and validity of content, both books use authentic Islamic sources such as the Qur'an and hadith. However, the Independent Curriculum book has advantages in the way of delivering contextual and communicative postulates, such as in the discussion of the postulates of Q.S. *An-Najm*: 3–4 on page 10 (K13) which is descriptive, compared to the delivery of postulates accompanied by discussion and self-reflection activities in the Independent Curriculum. The Merdeka book is also more up-to-date, designed with the integration of technology and the orientation of the 21st century as shown on the introductory page of the Merdeka Curriculum book which mentions the orientation on strengthening literacy, teamwork, and reflective learning.

Both books demonstrate adherence to the principles of SARA-free, pornography, and gender bias when it comes to the protection of sensitive content. All narratives in both books focus on universal moral values, faith, and morals that uphold human dignity.

Overall, the adjustment of the content of the material in the Independent Curriculum allows the strengthening of character education that is more relevant to the needs of the 21st century. This is in line with the findings Assyifa et al., (2023) which emphasizes the importance of experiential learning to foster sustainable moral values. The Independent Curriculum textbook answers these challenges through a content approach that is more integrated with students' lives.

These findings are also reinforced by Murodah, (2022) which revealed that the implementation of K13 is still oriented towards cognitive understanding and has not fully accommodated the development of the contextual needs of madrasah students. On the contrary, the Independent Curriculum provides flexibility to teachers in developing teaching materials based on local and actual needs. This allows learning to be more relevant and applicable, not just an academic formality. The teaching materials developed within the framework of Freedom of Learning are even able to encourage more active student involvement through project-based activities and reflection on Islamic values in daily life (Annisyah, 2024).

To clarify the differences in the content characteristics of the two textbooks, the following is a summary in the form of a comparison table:

Table 1. Comparison of the Components of the Contents of the K13 Moral Faith Book and IKM

Aspects Analyzed	Curriculum 2013 (K13)	Independent Curriculum (IKM)
Material Coverage	Focus on classical theological and moral concepts, less associated with the student's context	The material is related to the real life of students and social phenomena
Depth and Relevance	Normative and conceptual, emphasizing more memorization	Contextual and applicative, encouraging reflection and value practice
Aspects of Inclusivity	Does not contain SARA, pornography, or gender bias	Equal: free from sensitive and discriminatory content

Character Orientation & 21st Century	Not yet integrated	Referring to the Pancasila Student Profile and character strengthening
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Thus, in terms of content components, it can be concluded that the Merdeka Curriculum provides advantages in terms of contextual relevance, depth of value, and flexibility of application that supports the transformation of Islamic education towards a more meaningful direction and responsive to the challenges of the times.

## 2. Language Component

The analysis of the linguistic aspects in the Akidah Akhlak textbook class VII MTs shows that there are significant differences between the 2013 Curriculum book and the Independent Curriculum in terms of readability, clarity of terms, sentence structure, completeness of glossary, use of punctuation, and communication style. The right linguistic aspect is very important in supporting students' understanding of religious concepts, as emphasized by (Tyas et al., 2024), that the structure of the language in the textbook that is in accordance with the cognitive stages of the students will facilitate the overall meaning of the material.

In the 2013 Curriculum book, the sentence structure is long and formal, with an expository style that emphasizes more on one-way delivery of material. The use of terms such as *shirk jaly*, *shirk khafy*, and *taufiqi* (pp. 9, 13) is not balanced with contextual explanations or glossaries. As a result, grade VII students who are new to theological concepts have the potential to experience confusion in understanding the meaning of the term. In addition, it was found that the use of punctuation marks was not in accordance with the rules of academic writing, such as the sentence "Pay attention to the following picture !!" (pp. 26, 45, 46) that use exclamation points excessively and are not in accordance with the principles of formal language.

On the other hand, the Independent Curriculum book presents sentences that are shorter, communicative, and easier for students to understand. The language styles in this book are dialogical, interactive, and reflective questions that encourage students' cognitive engagement. Another advantage is the existence of a glossary at the end of the book that contains important terms in simple language, so that it really helps students understand the meaning of key words independently.

Both books seek to present nuances of emotional communication through illustrations and questions relevant to daily life. However, the Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes a two-way communication style, especially through projects, discussions, and personal reflection that stimulates empathy and active participation. This approach is in accordance with the principles of constructivism that places students as active subjects in learning (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978).

These findings are supported by research Qomaruzzaman, (2018), which found that the 2013 Curriculum textbooks tended to be less inclusive and still contained ambiguity of meaning. Meanwhile, Annisyah, (2024) stated that the choice of diction in the Merdeka book is more in accordance with the development of students' language and more stimulates discussion and critical reasoning. Thus, in terms of language, the Independent Curriculum book shows excellence in supporting conceptual understanding and effective learning interactions.

## 3. Presentation Components

The delivery of material in textbooks is essential for learning success because the way information is delivered greatly affects students' understanding and interest in learning. The analysis of the presentation of material concepts is carried out with the aim



of making the book easy to understand, attracting attention, and increasing the desire to learn (Fahlepy & Tumin, 2025). Analysis of the presentation of concepts shows that a function can be displayed through various forms of representation, such as definitions, mathematical equations, narrative descriptions, as well as in table and graph formats (Nursidrati et al., 2022).

The K13 book presents material that starts from the definition, postulates of the Qur'an or hadith, accompanied by examples, and ends with evaluation questions. There are images that are illustrative but less interactive. The Merdeka book presents contextual narratives, case studies, project activities, and self-reflection. Visual presentations such as tables, illustrated images, and infographics are widely used. In the book Akidah Akhlak Curriculum Merdeka, the aspect of perception is consistently presented at the beginning of each chapter as an important part of the presentation component. This perception is designed to build a bridge between the student's initial knowledge and the new material to be learned. In the opening part of the first chapter, there are contextual images that describe situations or phenomena that are close to students' lives, accompanied by some reflective questions. For example, in the chapter on Commendable Morals to Allah on page 41, an illustration of a teenager who is putting money into an infaq box is displayed, followed by questions such as: "What behavior should be shown when doing activities in the picture so that Allah SWT can be accepted?". The main purpose of this apperception is to arouse students' awareness and curiosity before entering the core material. This approach also fosters the ability to think critically and builds relevance between the concept of faith and real-life experiences.

One of the advantages also in the presentation of the Independent Curriculum Moral Faith book is the existence of a QR code feature that is inserted consistently at the end of each chapter. This feature is an important part of the presentation component, as it supports flexible and technology-based learning access. Students are taken to remedial and enrichment questions that are tailored to their learning outcomes in chapters related to QR codes. QR codes expand the scope of learning from the classroom to the digital world, allowing students to learn on their own as per their needs.

The presentation model in the Independent Curriculum as explained by Kolb, (2014) Supporting experiential learning (experiential learning). By integrating hands-on experience into learning, the book enhances students' affective and cognitive engagement, making it a more effective means of learning. Presentations like this support the paradigm shift from content-based learning to competency-based learning. In the context of religious education, it is important to bridge the understanding of the concept of beliefs and morals and its implementation in students' daily lives.

These findings are supported by a study Annisyah, (2024) who found that the variety of material presentation in the Independent Curriculum textbook increased students' active participation in PAI learning and facilitated character development through reflection and value projects. Further, Murodah, (2022) emphasized that the rigidity of the structure in K13 books is an obstacle in developing high-level thinking skills (HOTS), while the Independent Curriculum opens up space for this through interactive, contextual presentations.

#### **4. Thematic Concept Components**

The thematic concept in the Akidah Akhlak textbook is an important aspect that reflects the integration between the learning content and the context of students' lives. According to Majid, (2019) The integrative thematic learning approach is carried out by linking a number of subjects in a planned, continuous, and systematic manner. This learning model allows for cross-subject integration, allowing educators to relate the

content of material from one field of study to another, as well as relate it to real experiences experienced by students in daily life and the surrounding environment.

The results of the analysis of the book *Akidah Akhlak Class VII MTs Curriculum 2013* Ministry of Religion and the Independent Curriculum book show significant differences in thematic concepts. It is mainly concerned with competency mapping, theme-subtheme structure, and integration between subjects. The mapping of Core Competencies (KI) and Basic Competencies (KD) in K13 is listed at the beginning of the book and in each chapter (see pages 3 and 25). However, this book does not clearly present learning indicators, so teachers need to interpret their own from the available KD to develop operational learning objectives. In contrast, in the Independent Curriculum, learning goals and achievements are explicitly described in concrete activities such as projects, reflections, and discussions.

On the other hand, in the Independent Curriculum book, the KI-KD approach has been replaced by learning objectives and learning outcomes (CP) that are formulated in a practical and contextual manner. This goal is described in the form of real learning activities, such as projects, reflection on values, and group discussions, so that the achievement indicators become more measurable and oriented towards strengthening student competence as a whole. This is in line with the spirit of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes differentiated learning, as well as developing critical, creative, and collaborative thinking skills.

In terms of subject integration, the Independent Curriculum book shows excellence because it inserts activities that involve writing, speaking, and critical thinking skills, so that it can be connected to Indonesian, PPKn, and even Cultural Arts lessons. For example, on page 38, students are asked to make a Mind Mapping about the nature of Mandatory, Impossible, and Jaiz for Allah Swt., another example is on page 73, students are asked to make a poster about prayer manners and dhikr that can be related to visual skills lessons. K13 books, on the other hand, are still disciplinary in nature and have not shown an explicit connection with other subjects.

The thematic approach in IKM implements transdisciplinary principles in character education. As stated by Munawir et al., (2024), Effective moral education is one that is able to instill value through themes that are relevant to the real world of students. This finding is also in line with the view Annisyah, (2024) which states that the learning theme in the Independent Curriculum is designed to build character competencies through experiential learning and problem-solving. Therefore, the thematic approach in IKM makes a significant contribution in strengthening the internalization of the values of faith and morals as a whole.

## **5. Evaluation Components**

This component includes the types and forms of assessments in textbooks, both formative and summative, which aim to measure the achievement of students' competencies. The aspects assessed also include the integration of textbook content with the provisions of the current curriculum (Khairunnisa & Mayrita, 2019). Competency-based evaluation in the context of character education not only assesses the final results, but also assesses the thinking process, attitudes, and skills of students during learning. According to Wiggins & McTighe, (2005), Effective evaluation in character education should be authentic, namely assessing students' ability to apply values in real life, not just memorizing concepts. This is important so that the moral values instilled can be fully and sustainably internalized.

The results of the analysis of the book *Akidah Akhlak class VII Curriculum 2013* and the Independent Curriculum show that there are fundamental differences in the way

learning evaluation is carried out, both in terms of process and scope. Each chapter ends the evaluation in the form of multiple-choice questions and short descriptions in the 2013 curriculum book as on pages 19-21, which emphasizes more on the assessment of learning outcomes. On the other hand, the Independent Curriculum book states that evaluation is carried out throughout the learning process, either implicitly through activities and explicitly through the final project of each chapter. Students are asked to read, speak, and write in each chapter before they deliver the results of their reflections as shown on page 32. This process shows that formative evaluations are incorporated into learning activities, which helps teachers gradually track student progress. Evaluation is carried out both at the beginning of the chapter and in the middle of the chapter in the form of a lighter question and at the end of the chapter as a reflection. The evaluation of Merdeka books is more varied and comprehensive, such as project assignments, reflective journals, and peer assessments. This evaluation covers cognitive, affective, and skill aspects, and supports cross-subject learning.

In the 2013 Curriculum Moral Faith textbook (K13), the evaluation is dominated by multiple-choice questions, short descriptions, and memorization of postulates and verses. The evaluation focuses on cognitive aspects, especially material mastery. Although there is practice questions at the end of the chapter, this evaluation does not fully encourage self-reflection, value appreciation, or in-depth attitude assessment.

Holistic evaluation like this is very important in moral education because it touches on the affective and psychomotor dimensions of students. In line with opinion (Dinata & Achadi, 2024), Evaluation in character education must reflect the values instilled in the learning process. SMEs through this evaluation model show a more comprehensive and in-depth approach. Evaluation is not just an academic measuring tool, but part of character and personality formation. The Independent Curriculum book offers a more in-depth, relevant, and relevant approach to the needs of 21st century education by organizing evaluations of the three domains (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor).

To provide a clearer and more concrete picture of the difference between the 2013 Curriculum Moral Faith textbook and the Independent Curriculum, the analysis was carried out using a multi-component approach. This approach aims to systematically examine various important aspects of textbooks, which include: content components, language, presentation, thematic concepts, and evaluation. Each component is analyzed comparatively to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each curriculum in supporting an effective, contextual, and relevant learning process to the needs of today's students.

The following is a comparison table that summarizes the results of the analysis.

Table 2. Comparison of the Five Components of the K13 and IKM Moral Faith Book

Component	Curriculum 2013 (K13)	Independent Curriculum (IKM)	Key Findings
1. Content	The material is structured based on a thematic approach with an emphasis on religious knowledge and character building. There are 10 main chapters.	More contextual, scientific approach and oriented towards the profile of Pancasila Students. The material totals 10 chapters with the integration of actual values.	IKM emphasizes the actualization of values in real life, not just memorization or understanding concepts.



2. Language	Language tends to be formal, structural, and rigid. Explanations are normative. Some terms are difficult for grade VII students to digest.	The language is communicative, simple, and interactive. There are many uses of question sentences, reflective invitations, and critical thinking stimulation.	IKM brings language closer to the world of students, increasing interest in reading and comprehension.
3. Serving	The presentation is linear and textual. Illustrations are limited, although there are tasks and practice questions.	Using many image illustrations, project-based activities, personal reflections, and being equipped with QR codes that provide access to additional materials such as enrichment and remedial questions.	IKM is more interesting in terms of visuals and active learning methods.
4. Thematic Concepts	It is arranged systematically per theme, but tends to be abstract and not very relevant to the current context of students.	The theme blends into the students' daily lives. Focus on character actualization in a social and global context.	The thematic concept of IKM is relevant to the times, and builds value awareness contextually.
5. Evaluation	The dominant evaluation model is in the form of multiple-choice questions and descriptions. Focus on the cognitive and affective aspects through memorization and comprehension of the text.	Evaluations are more varied: projects, portfolios, self-assessments, and reflection rubrics. Emphasizing psychomotor aspects and learning experiences.	The evaluation of SMEs encourages holistic assessment and processes, not just the final results.

## Conclusion

The conclusion of this study shows that the Akidah Akhlak class VII Madrasah Tsanawiyah textbook based on the Independent Curriculum has advantages over the 2013 Curriculum book in various aspects, especially in terms of contextual approaches, communicative language, interactive visual presentation, integration between subjects, and holistic and authentic evaluation. Meanwhile, the 2013 Curriculum still highlights normative, structural, and cognitive approaches that lack support for active, reflective, and collaborative involvement of students. These findings confirm that the ideal textbook should not only deliver material systematically, but also contextual, value-based, and adaptive to the challenges of the digital age. The use of active learning strategies and technological features such as QR codes has become relevant to strengthen character, literacy, and competence in the 21st century. The multicomponent approach in this study

has proven to be effective in evaluating textbooks thoroughly and can be a reference in the preparation and development of religious textbooks in madrasas. The author recommends that the development of textbooks in the future place more emphasis on character-based learning outcomes, cross-disciplinary thematic approaches, and opening participatory spaces between teachers and students. However, because this research is only a document study, advanced field-based research is needed to test the effectiveness of textbook implementation on the understanding of faith values and the formation of students' character in various social and cultural contexts of madrasahs.

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