

DEVELOPING AN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM TO STRENGTHEN STUDENT CHARACTER

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Abstract

This study aims to develop the content of the Islamic Religious education curriculum conceptually to strengthen students' character in Madrasah Tsanawiyah. This research was based on a literature review, utilizing documentation techniques to collect data from printed documents and soft files. Data analysis techniques are applied in two stages: during data collection and determining the relationships between the collected data. The results of the study indicate that the development of the content of the Islamic education curriculum to strengthen the character of students can be done through four stages, namely: 1) the stage of determining the objectives of developing the content of learning materials and what characters will be strengthened, 2) the stage of determining the learning experiences that students will obtain, 3) the stage of organizing the developed content of materials, and adjusting it to the flow of materials in the curriculum, 4) the stage of determining the indicators of success in strengthening student character through the development of content in the curriculum. These various stages can serve as an alternative for educators to develop relevant content that strengthens students' character in Madrasah Tsanawiyah.

Keywords: character, curriculum development, Islamic religious education

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum development for educational units is the process of planning and compiling a curriculum by a curriculum development team to produce teaching materials and guidelines that can be used to achieve national educational goals (Muhammad Imam Khosyiyin et al., 2023; Muhammad Rouf et al., 2020). This process is comprehensive and complex (Sandy T. Soto, 2015). It is essential because it serves as the basis for directing all learning activities to run in a planned, productive, and aligned manner with educational goals. Through curriculum development, educational units can adapt content, strategies, and learning methods to the needs of students and societal developments (Merfat Ayesh Alsubaie, 2016; Moh.Isom, 2022; Windy Hastasasi et al., 2024). A well-developed curriculum will balance knowledge, skills, and attitudes, forming competent and character-based students. Furthermore, the curriculum development process also provides space for schools to innovate and adapt learning to local potential, technological advances, and global demands (Bustanul Arifin & Abdul Mu'id, 2024; Dinda Rizki Andini & Muhammad Sirozi, 2024). Thus, curriculum development is not merely an administrative responsibility but also a strategic effort to create relevant, adaptive, and meaningful learning for all students.

Curriculum development must focus, among other things, on the development of learning materials (Ade Ilfah a et al., 2024; Siti Sintya Alfatul Ariva & Sri Lestari,

2024), because materials are the core of the learning process and directly influence students' competency achievement. Without materials that are relevant, structured, and appropriate to the needs of the times, the curriculum will lose its function as a practical learning guide. Learning materials must be developed systematically, considering student characteristics, learning objectives, and the social and cultural context in which education occurs. Furthermore, the materials must also foster critical and creative thinking skills and character values that support the formation of a holistic personality. In the context of rapid technological and information development, the development of learning materials must also be adaptive to digital innovation (Darwanto & Venty Meilasari, 2022; Sulistyowati et al., 2024), so that students not only master theory but can also apply it in real life. Therefore, focusing on material development in the curriculum development process is a strategic step to ensure that learning is relevant, meaningful, and can answer current and future educational challenges.

The material development process must be aligned with essential guidelines to ensure the material is genuinely practical, relevant, and aligned with educational objectives. First, material development must be guided by the applicable curriculum as the primary reference in determining the direction, scope (Maya Sri Rahayu et al., 2023; Nur Satriani et al., 2024), and the depth of the material to be taught. Second, material development needs to consider student characteristics, such as their level of cognitive development, sociocultural background, and learning needs, so that the material can be adapted and easily understood. Furthermore, the material developed must be relevant to developments in science and technology (Unik Hanifah Salsabila et al., 2021), and contain moral values and character that support the development of students' personalities. Material development also needs to balance knowledge, skills, and attitudes that can be applied in real life. This is crucial because education aims to develop students' intellectual intelligence and personalities with noble character, responsibility, and integrity. Therefore, the process of developing materials needs to be carried out carefully, especially in inserting values such as honesty, discipline, cooperation, tolerance, and a sense of responsibility through a learning context that is relevant and close to students' daily lives, so that learning is not only cognitive, but also touches the affective and psychomotor domains, thus producing a generation that is intelligent intellectually, emotionally, and morally. Other guidelines that are no less important are maintaining the accuracy and truth of information (Muhammad Azhar et al., 2024; Wahyu Putri1 et al., 2022), using trusted learning sources (Kinan Kinanti Intan Dyana et al., 2024; Oki Purwanti et al., 2023), and presenting materials interestingly and contextually to increase students' learning motivation. By adhering to these guidelines, teachers can develop learning materials that are not only informative but also educational and meaningful for students.

Every teacher, including Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, plays a crucial role in developing learning materials as part of the curriculum development process in educational units. As direct implementers of learning, teachers deeply understand students' needs, characteristics, and developmental levels, enabling them to adapt materials to be more relevant and meaningful. In curriculum development, teachers serve as implementers and developers, capable of interpreting and translating learning outcomes and objectives into contextual materials aligned with the values intended to be instilled. For Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, this role becomes even more crucial because material development focuses not only on cognitive aspects but also on instilling religious, moral, and spiritual values that form the basis for character formation in students (Musbaing, 2024; Nurul Asma & Hasrian Rudi Setiawan, 2025). Thus, teachers actively contribute to ensuring that the curriculum

implemented in schools is truly capable of shaping students who are knowledgeable, moral, and ready to face the challenges of the times without losing their identity and noble values. This is specifically the material at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level, where at this level, students are in a transition period from children to adolescents, so that character strengthening becomes very important to form a strong and moral personality (Agus Rahmadi et al., 2014; staff ahli Kemenko PMK, 2024; Weni Nur Wendari et al., 2016). Therefore, material development needs to be directed to increase knowledge and instil moral values, discipline, responsibility, and respect for oneself and others.

Strengthening character in madrasah through PAI subjects has been carried out by several previous researchers, including: 1) research on the application of character education in the perspective of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Madrasah Tsanawiyah in accordance with Law Number 20 of 2003 (Husaini, 2024), 2) research on the application of a holistic integrative approach through curriculum insertion in PAI subjects to strengthen national character (Aan Hasanah, 2022), 3) research on the efforts of PAI teachers in private MTs to strengthen character by selecting and integrating character content in all basic competencies, and has been carried out since the preparation of the planning (RPP) (Ahmad Salim, n.d.) 4) research on the role of Islamic Religious Education subjects in helping form student character, one of which is done by maximizing the delivery of PAI material in class (Muhammad Yunanda Yano Putra & Nurman Ginting, 2023). None of these studies has specifically focused on strengthening students' character in Islamic Junior High Schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) through developing content within the Islamic Religious Education curriculum. This aspect is crucial, as Madrasah Tsanawiyah students are transitioning from childhood to adolescence, requiring character strengthening. Furthermore, every Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subject teacher at Islamic Junior High Schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) can carry out this content development process as part of their responsibility to contribute to curriculum development. Therefore, this research is essential and strategic to conduct, as it can provide an alternative for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subject teachers at Islamic Junior High Schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) to play an active role in curriculum development while strengthening student character.

METHOD

This research was conducted using qualitative methods and based on a literature review. According to Ridley (Mutia Hanifah & Purwanti Pratiwi Purbosari, 2022), a literature review involves reading, collecting, recording, sorting, and managing the acquired literature. This management is carried out by connecting references related to the research topic. The literature used includes:

Table 1. Primary and Supporting Literature

No	Type of Library	Literature Theme		
		Curriculum Development and Learning	Educational Character	Islamic Religious Education
1	Printed Books	3	2	1
2	e-books	4	1	-
3	Journal Articles	42	14	11

Documentation techniques are used to extract data, both printed and soft files. Data analysis techniques are carried out through 2 steps (Milya Sari & Asmendri, 2020): an analysis stage during data collection, and an analysis stage after the collected data has been analyzed to determine their relationships. The analysis during data collection aims to assess the relevance, quality, and contribution of various literature on curriculum development, learning content development, Islamic religious education, and character education to the research focus. After data collection, the researcher analyzes the data to identify patterns, themes, and conceptual relationships from the literature to strengthen the research results and conclusions.

FINDINGS

Developing an Islamic Religious Education curriculum content to strengthen students' character can be done through four stages:

1. Determining the objectives for developing learning content and the character traits to be strengthened

Teachers of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subject groups need to establish objectives for developing learning content to strengthen students' character, as these objectives serve as the primary foundation for determining the direction, content, and strategies for meaningful learning. In Islamic education, learning aims to increase cognitive religious knowledge and foster attitudes, values, and behaviors that reflect noble morals in everyday life (Ayatullah, 2020; Tatik Safiqo, 2020). By establishing clear and focused objectives, teachers can ensure that each material developed is directly relevant to student character development, such as values of honesty, discipline, responsibility, and social awareness. This objective also helps teachers in choosing appropriate learning methods (Isnawardatul Bararah, 2022; Jajang Setiawan et al., 2025) For example, through role models, habituation, or reflection of Islamic values in real life, so that learning is theoretical and applicable. Furthermore, establishing material development objectives oriented toward strengthening character allows teachers to evaluate student attitudes and behavior changes due to learning more measurably. Thus, setting objectives toward strengthening character is a strategic step to ensure Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning truly shapes a generation of believers with virtuous morals and the ability to implement Islamic values in their personal and social lives.

Determining the objectives of developing learning material content aimed at strengthening student character needs to be followed by systematic steps so that the formulated objectives are efficient and relevant to the needs of students. The first step is to analyze character values (Kepala Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Kemendiknas, 2011), especially values pertinent to the teaching material, for example, the values of honesty, responsibility, cooperation, discipline, and tolerance, which are then adjusted to the basic competencies and learning outcomes in the curriculum. Through this analysis, teachers can understand which characters need to be strengthened according to the class context and school environment. Next, teachers need to examine the vision, mission, and objectives of education, especially in the context of the educational unit, so that the formulation of character strengthening objectives is in line with the direction of the academic policy of the educational unit, especially strengthening the profile of graduates (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Dasar Dan Menengah Republik Indonesia No 13 Tahun 2025, 2025; Suyanto, 2025), and in accordance with the Islamic values that are the basis of learning in the Islamic Religious Education cluster. Teachers also need to adjust objectives to the characteristics of students (Ina Magdalena et al., 2023; Janawi, 2019), and the environmental context

(Feliks Rejeki Sotani Zebua, 2023), so that the learning process can touch the reality of students' lives and be more easily implemented in their daily lives. The next step is to formulate objectives for developing learning material content, emphasizing learning outcomes not only on knowledge but also on the internalization of character values in students' attitudes and behavior (Kemendikbud Ristek, n.d.-a; Ristek, 2022a, 2022b). After the objectives are formulated, teachers integrate them into the teaching module so that every activity, method, media, and evaluation is oriented towards building student character. This step-by-step procedure can help direct the objectives of developing Islamic Religious Education material content in shaping students' characters with noble morals and strong faith.

A practical example of determining the objectives of developing the content of PAI learning materials (Akhmad Fauzi, 2020), which is directed at strengthening student character, is as follows:

Table 2. Determining the objectives of developing the content of PAI learning materials

Material in the Creed and Morals Course for Grade 7	Determination Analysis		
	Character value	Graduate Profile Dimensions	Characteristics of Student Development
Islamic Creed	1. Religious 2. Social Concern 3. Honest 4. Hard Work 5. Discipline 6. Independent	a. Faith and Devotion to God Almighty b. Collaboration c. Communication	➤ Cognitive ➤ Social ➤ Emotional
Attributes of Allah	1. Religious 2. Honest 3. Hard Work 4. Discipline 5. Curiosity	a. Faith and Devotion to God Almighty b. Critical Reasoning	➤ Cognitive ➤ Social ➤ Emotional
Repentance, Obedience, Consistency, and Sincerity	1. Religious 2. Responsibility 3. Honest 4. Hard Work 5. Discipline 6. Independent 7. Curiosity	a. Faith and Devotion to God Almighty b. Independence c. Critical Reasoning d. Communication	➤ Cognitive ➤ Physical ➤ Social ➤ Emotional
Etiquette of Prayer and Dhikr	1. Religious 2. Responsibility 3. Discipline 4. Independent 5. Social Concern	a. Faith and Devotion to God Almighty b. Collaboration c. Critical Reasoning d. Communication	➤ Cognitive ➤ Physical ➤ Social ➤ Emotional
The Exemplary Life of Prophet Sulaiman A.S.	1. Religious 2. Responsibility 3. Discipline 4. Independent 5. Creative 6. Curiosity	a. Faith and Devotion to God Almighty b. Critical Reasoning c. Citizenship	➤ Cognitive ➤ Social ➤ Emotional

Source: researcher documentation and data processing

After going through various analytical steps, the objectives for developing the learning content for the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subject group are formulated to strengthen students' character. Examples include the following:

Table 3. Objectives for developing learning material content

Materials in the Creed and Morals Course for Grade 7	Examples of objectives for developing learning material content
Islamic Creed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Developing content on the meaning and manifestation of faith in Allah SWT is intended to foster spiritual awareness and a sense of responsibility for all actions, promoting a religious, honest, and disciplined character in daily life. b. Developing content on Islam, faith, and goodness will enable students to demonstrate social awareness, tolerance, and responsibility when interacting within the school and community.
Attributes of Allah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The development of content on the attributes of obligatory, impossible, and jaiz (obligatory, impossible, and jaiz) for Allah is intended to serve as a foundation for strengthening faith, fostering a sense of responsibility and honesty in daily life. b. The development of content on the attributes of obligatory, impossible, and jaiz (obligatory, impossible, and jaiz) for Allah is intended to enable students to internalize the values of these attributes of God to develop a disciplined, honest, and religious character in their daily behavior.
Repentance, Obedience, Consistency, and Sincerity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The development of content on Repentance, Obedience, Istiqomah, and Ikhlas (sincerity) is intended to serve as a spiritual foundation that fosters religious attitudes, honesty, and responsibility in worship and behavior. b. Developing content on Repentance, Obedience, Istiqomah, and Ikhlas is intended to enable students to internalize these values and develop honest, religious, responsible, and independent characters in their daily lives.
Etiquette of Prayer and Dhikr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The development of content on the etiquette of prayer and dhikr is intended as a form of respect for Allah, fostering discipline, religiosity, and responsibility in worship. b. The development of content on the etiquette of prayer and dhikr is intended to enable students to internalize the values of the etiquette of prayer and dhikr to develop religious, responsible, and independent characters in their daily live
The Exemplary Life of Prophet Sulaiman (peace be upon him)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Developing content on the qualities of the Prophet Sulaiman (peace be upon him), such as wisdom, justice, and patience, is intended to serve as a foundation for developing a religious, responsible, and hard-working character. b. Developing content on the qualities of the Prophet Sulaiman (peace be upon him) is intended to enable students to internalize the Prophet Sulaiman's exemplary behavior to develop a sense of responsibility, religiousness, and independence in their daily lives

Source: researcher documentation and data processing

2. The stage of determining the learning experiences students will gain, especially those related to character building.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers need to determine the learning experiences students will gain when developing learning materials. This is because learning experiences are a crucial aspect that can influence student learning outcomes (Dendodi et al., 25 C.E.; Dika Kurniawan et al., 2024; Majid Sadoughi & S. Yahya Hejazi, 2023). Furthermore, learning experiences serve as the primary bridge between the knowledge taught and the character development expected to be realized through the development of learning materials. In the context of character building, learning experiences are not merely academic activities, but also a series of activities designed to foster Islamic values in students' attitudes and behaviors. By establishing learning experiences in a planned manner, teachers can ensure that each learning activity focuses on understanding religious concepts and provides opportunities for students to internalize, practice, and develop values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, tolerance, and social awareness. For example, students learn to apply Islamic teachings in everyday life through religious project activities, worship simulations, reflective discussions, or cooperation in social activities (Kuunu Ghurron Muhajjalina, 2025; Mulyadi TA & Muslim, 2025). Determining appropriate learning experiences also helps teachers create an active, contextual, and meaningful learning environment in which students are not only recipients of information but also actors in character formation. Therefore, learning experiences consciously and purposefully designed by Islamic Religious Education teachers are key to ensuring that the development of learning materials truly strengthens students' character, forms noble morals, and fosters faith and piety, reflected in concrete actions.

Learning experiences designed by Islamic Religious Education teachers based on the development of learning material content to strengthen character, at least need to be aligned with: 1) Learning objectives that cover the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Dion Ginanto et al., 2024; Kemendikbud, n.d.; Kemendikbud Ristek, n.d.-b) Learning experiences must help students achieve the targeted abilities, not just enjoyable activities. 2) Character values that are to be instilled, so that students not only know, but also want and can apply these values in life (Kepala Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Kemendiknas, 2011; Thomas Lickona, 1991). 3) Differentiation and Individual Differences, especially different learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) (Ahmad Syauky et al., 2025; Eka Darma Putra Telaumbanua & Agnes Renostini Harefa, 2024; Tatia M. Bengngu et al., 2025), so that all students can participate and develop optimally. 4) The Principle of Student Activeness and Participation, so that it can encourage students to be active mentally, emotionally, and physically, and foster personal involvement and responsibility in learning (Khairun Nissa & Jihan Hidayah Putri, 2021; Rahmawati Ramli et al., 2024). This can be achieved through, among other things, discussions, simulations, role-playing, project-based learning, and problem-based learning. 5) Students' real lives, because good learning experiences always originate from or are close to the realities of students' lives at school, in their families, and in their communities (Jumadil Hamid et al., 2024; Lulut Suhermi et al., 2025).

Examples of student learning experiences related to the development of the Islamic Creed (Faith, Islam, and Ihsan) content contained in the Grade VII Akidah Akhlak textbook and aimed at strengthening character are as follows:

- a. First learning experience: Students deepen their understanding of the Islamic Creed (Faith, Islam, and Ihsan) by screening The Story of the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him).

Table 4. Analysis of learning activities, learning aspect, and character

Analysis		
Learning Activities	Learning Aspects	Character
Students discuss in small groups the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the meaning of faith reflected in the story? 2. How can faith be applied in everyday life as a student? 3. Then, each group writes down the results of their discussion and presents them to the class. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cognitive Aspect: Students understand the meaning of faith, the pillars of faith, and real-life examples. 2. Affective Aspect: Students develop a more profound sense of awe and belief in Allah SWT. 3. Psychomotor Aspect: Students can express their understanding through discussions and presentations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Religious 2. Honest 3. Responsible

Source: researcher documentation and data processing

- b. Second learning experience: Students carry out a small project on the theme "Doing Good with Sincerity" to implement the concept of Ihsan.

Table 5. Analysis of learning activities, learning aspect, and character

Analysis		
Learning Activities	Learning Aspects	Character
Students can create: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A food-sharing activity for the school janitor. 2. A classroom cleanliness schedule as a form of worship with the Ihsan value. Teachers assess students' processes and attitudes during the activity, not just the final result.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cognitive Aspect: Students understand the meaning of ihsan, which is doing good as if seeing Allah. 2. Affective Aspect: Students develop empathy, sincerity, and social awareness. 3. Psychomotor Aspect: Students apply Islamic values through discussions and presentations in real-life situations. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Religious 2. Disciplined 3. Responsible 4. Independent 5. Creative

Source: researcher documentation and data processing

3. Organizing and aligning the developed material with the curriculum's flow.

Organizing the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subject material in a planned and systematic manner is crucial because it ensures the integration of learning content, the curriculum's flow, and the objectives of strengthening student character. Organizing the material allows teachers to create a logical, hierarchical, and interconnected learning sequence, enabling students to understand Islamic teachings holistically, not in isolation, and easily apply them to their daily lives (Nurul Anam, 2021; Syafrudin et al., 2023). By referring to the curriculum's flow, teachers can adjust the development of the material to align with the established learning outcomes, while also providing space for the integration of Islamic character values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and empathy. This process also assists teachers in selecting learning approaches, methods, and media relevant to students' needs, ensuring that learning is cognitive and fosters moral and spiritual awareness. Furthermore, good material organization supports consistency across learning topics, facilitates evaluation, and enables contextual, meaningful Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning oriented toward developing noble character. Therefore, organizing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material is not merely a matter of content development but also an integral strategy for realizing the fundamental goals of Islamic education: developing students with faith, knowledge, and noble character (Aklima et al., 2025; Muaddyl Akhyar et al., 2023)

Organizing the subject matter of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) to align with the curriculum and support student character building requires teachers to take several appropriate steps. The first step is to analyse the PAI curriculum document by studying the learning outcomes, objectives, and material flow established as official references. This analysis helps teachers understand the direction of learning and determine the scope and depth of the material to be developed (Dorothea Titu, 2025; Vitalia Januarti et al., 2023). Next, teachers need to identify Islamic character values relevant to the teaching material (Iwan Hermawan, 2020; Retno Dwi Lestari et al., 2021), such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, cooperation, social awareness, and tolerance, so that material development has a strong moral foundation. Afterward, teachers determine the relationships between learning materials by grouping interrelated themes, so that learning is integrated and not fragmented. Furthermore, teachers need to adapt the material to the context of students' lives and the school environment, so that the values taught are relevant, easy to understand, and can be applied in everyday life. Furthermore, teachers determine learning strategies (Maulana Akbar Sanjani, 2021; Sobri Sutikno, 2021), and appropriate assessments, emphasizing that not only measure knowledge (Faelasup & Aprianti Astuti, 2025; Nasrullah, 2025), but also the development of attitudes and behaviors that reflect Islamic character. Through these various steps, Islamic Religious Education teachers can comprehensively organise and align with the curriculum while making it a strategic tool for instilling the values of faith, piety, and noble character in students.

Here is an example of organising the content of the Islamic Creed (Faith, Islam, Ihsan) contained in the Grade VII Creed and Akhlak textbook, and adapted to the curriculum flow, and directed at strengthening character, as follows:

Table 6. Organizing the content of the Islamic curriculum to adapt to the curriculum flow, and directed at strengthening character

Order of Matter	Analysis
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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding Islamic Creed 2. Basics of Islamic Faith 3. The purpose of studying the Islamic Creed 4. Understanding Faith, Islam, and Ihsan 5. Relationship between Faith, Islam, and Ihsan <p>Example: Development of material content:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Function of the Islamic faith b. Characteristics of a person whose faith is strong 	<p>Character values include: religious, curiosity, honesty, and discipline.</p> <p>Real-life contexts, for example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Students demonstrate strong faith by being honest during exams, obeying school rules, and respecting teachers and friends. b. At home: students perform religious services on time, help their parents without being asked, and guard their words to avoid offending. c. In the social/digital environment, students are not easily influenced by hoaxes or content that undermines their faith and use social media wisely per Islamic values. <p>Learning Strategies, examples: synergetic teaching, jigsaw learning, STAD, role-playing</p> <p>Assessment, for example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Cognitive, in the form of a test with the following indicators: Correctly explaining the Islamic faith's meaning and stating the faith's function in life. Affective (Attitude) through observation, with the following indicators: Demonstrating belief in Allah through positive behavior (honesty, discipline, and respecting differences in beliefs politely). b. Psychomotor (Skills) through assessment of work (posters/videos), with the following indicators: Producing work that illustrates the importance of Islamic faith and explaining the content of their work confidently.
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Source: researcher documentation and data processing

4. The stage of determining indicators for the success of strengthening student character through curriculum content development

Determining indicators for the success of strengthening student character (I Made Satya Madyana et al., 2021; Melia Yulanda et al., 2021) is a crucial aspect because it serves as a benchmark for assessing the extent to which learning objectives and character development have been achieved. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), indicators of success focus not only on the cognitive attainment of religious knowledge but also on the extent to which Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and social concern are internalized and reflected in students' actual behavior. With clear and measurable indicators (Aiman Faiz et al., 2022; Sutji Harijanti & Ni Gusti Putu Ayu Sakinah, 2021) Teachers can systematically monitor students' character development and adjust learning strategies to be more effective and contextual. Indicators also help teachers distinguish between academic success and character development, resulting in a more holistic learning evaluation. Furthermore, establishing success indicators allows for consistency between learning

objectives, materials, methods, and assessments, and provides a basis for continuous reflection and improvement of character-building programs. Through well-formulated indicators, teachers can ensure that curriculum content development truly contributes to the formation of students who are not only intellectually intelligent but also possess noble character and strong faith and can implement Islamic values in their daily lives.

Examples of instruments for measuring various indicators of the success of strengthening student character through developing content in the curriculum can be described as follows:

Table 7. Instruments for measuring multiple indicators of the success of enhancing student character through developing content in the curriculum

Order of Matter	Character Value Indicator Analysis
1. Understanding Islamic Creed	Religious, with the following indicators: a. Performing prayers on time (either at home or at school). b. Reciting prayers before and after learning activities. c. Greeting teachers/friends. d. Demonstrating good manners while studying.
2. Basics of Islamic Faith	
3. The purpose of studying the Islamic Creed	
4. Understanding Faith, Islam, and Ihsan	
5. Relationship between Faith, Islam, and Ihsan	
Example: Development of material content: a. Function of the Islamic faith b. Characteristics of a person whose faith is strong	Curiosity, with the following indicators: a. Asking teachers about things they don't understand about faith. b. Actively participating in group discussions regarding the function of faith in daily behaviour. c. Answering teachers' questions enthusiastically. d. Expressing one's own opinion about the importance of the Islamic faith. e. Actively participating in group activities (poster making)
	Honest, with the following indicators: a. Not telling lies even under challenging situations. b. Keeping promises and responsibilities in schoolwork. c. Acknowledging mistakes and striving for self-improvement.
	Discipline, with the following indicators: a. Performing prayers on time (either at home or at school). b. Reciting prayers before and after learning activities. c. Saying hello when meeting teachers/friends. d. Demonstrating good manners while studying.

Source: researcher documentation and data processing

DISCUSSION

The stages in developing the Islamic Religious Education curriculum to strengthen the character of Madrasah Tsanawiyah students demonstrate that various aspects have been taken into account, so each stage is interconnected and cannot be omitted. These stages, when viewed using the perspective adapted from Kemp (Gary R. Morrison et al., 2013; Supardi, 2020), can at least be described as follows:

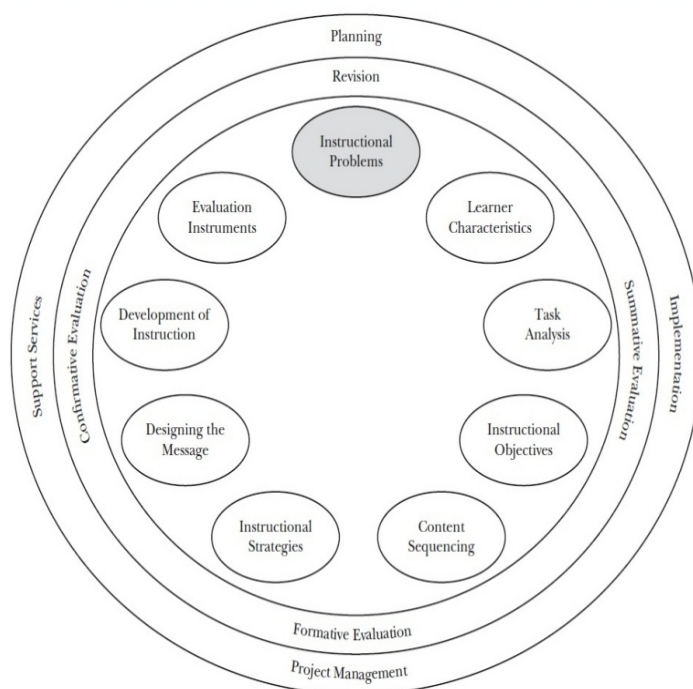


Figure 1. Components of the Instructional Design Plan

Source: Gary R. Morrison et al., 2013

From the perspective of the Instructional Design Plan theory, the four stages of developing learning content to strengthen the character of Madrasah Tsanawiyah students that have been constructed align with the theory. Of course, adjustments still need to be made, and there are still limitations in some areas that can be implemented. The outline is as follows:

Table 8. Analysis of the suitability of stages with the Instructional Design Plan Theory

No	Stages	Part of the Instructional Design Plan Theory
1	The stage of determining the objectives for developing the learning content and the character to be strengthened	a. Instructional Problem b. learner characteristics,
2	The stage of determining student learning experiences from the content development, especially in relation to character strengthening	a. Task analysis b. Instructional objectives
3	The stage of organizing the developed content according to the curriculum flow	a. Content sequencing b. Instructional strategies c. Designing the message

		d. Development of instruction
4	The stage of determining indicators for the success of strengthening student character from the content development	Evaluation instrument

The stages in developing the learning content of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) cluster that have been constructed, including setting objectives, determining learning experiences, organizing materials according to the curriculum, and determining success indicators, are theoretically able to provide a positive impact on strengthening student character in Madrasah Tsanawiyah. At the goal-setting stage, teachers not only formulate cognitive achievements, but also emphasize the character values to be formed, so that the direction of learning becomes more meaningful and oriented towards creating an Islamic personality. Furthermore, at the stage of determining learning experiences, students will be given experiences to actively engage in contextual activities such as reflection, worship practices, social projects, and value discussions, which bridge conceptual understanding with real experiences, so that character is not only taught, but experienced and internalized. Organizing the material content ensures that each content developed follows an integrated and continuous curriculum flow, thus facilitating the materials to be fully internalized by students. The success indicator determination stage allows teachers to assess how much students' attitudes, behaviors, and spirituality have changed due to character-based learning, not just from a knowledge perspective. These stages, if implemented consistently and reflectively, can create a PAI learning process that not only broadens religious insight but also fosters religious character, noble morals, resilience, and integrity, enabling Madrasah Tsanawiyah students to develop into individuals of faith, knowledge, and behavior consistent with Islamic teachings in their daily lives.

CONCLUSION

The development of Islamic education curriculum content to strengthen students' character can be done through four stages, namely: 1) the stage of determining the objectives of developing the learning material content and what characters will be strengthened, 2) the stage of determining the learning experiences that students will obtain, especially in relation to character strengthening, 3) the stage of organizing the developed material content, and adjusting it to the flow of material in the curriculum, 4) the stage of determining the indicators of success in strengthening students' character through the development of content in the curriculum. These four stages are carried out to ensure that strengthening character values for Madrasah Tsanawiyah students can be done by developing learning content in the PAI subject group. This is because all PAI groups that include the Qur'an Hadith, Aqidah Akhlak, Fiqh, History of Islamic Culture have a foundation of values that come directly from Islamic teachings, which essentially contain character-forming values such as faith, honesty, responsibility, discipline, tolerance, cooperation, and social concern. Through the development of contextual material content oriented towards students' real experiences, the Islamic Religious Education learning process not only functions as a means of transferring religious knowledge but also as a medium for internalizing values and habituating positive attitudes in everyday life. Thus, every teaching and learning activity in the Islamic

Religious Education cluster can be designed to instill and strengthen students' Islamic character in an integrated manner so that the goal of madrasah education to form a generation that is faithful, knowledgeable, and has noble morals can be realized in a real and sustainable manner.

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