

INTEGRATION OF THE ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN BUILDING A RELIGIOUS CULTURE AT MTS AT-TIBYAN DELI SERDANG

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Abstract

This study aims to explore and analyze how the integration of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum can build a religious culture at MTS At-Tibyan Deli Serdang. By understanding the role of PAI in shaping students' character and religious values, this research is expected to provide constructive recommendations for the development of a more effective and relevant curriculum.

This study uses a qualitative method. Data collection was carried out through observation, interviews, and document studies. The informants include the headmaster, the curriculum vice-principal, and PAI teachers. In analyzing the data, the researcher used qualitative analysis through steps of data presentation, data reduction, and drawing conclusions.

The results of this study show that: 1) The integration of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum at MTS At-Tibyan combines theory and practice, both in religious teaching and students' daily life. Through regular worship, the integration of Islamic values into general subjects, and an asrama-based learning model, MTS At-Tibyan has successfully created a generation that is not only academically intelligent but also has a strong religious character. This approach plays an important role in building a religious culture in the school, making PAI the foundation in shaping students' personalities in line with Islamic teachings. 2) The integration of the PAI curriculum at MTS At-Tibyan has had a significant impact on shaping the religious culture in the school. The holistic approach, which combines religious theory and its practical application in daily life, as well as the asrama-based teaching model and educators' role modeling, has succeeded in establishing religious habits. MTS At-Tibyan has not only shaped a generation with strong religious knowledge but also instilled Islamic values in their daily lives, creating a deep and sustainable religious culture both inside and outside of school. 3) The integration of the PAI curriculum at MTS At-Tibyan faces challenges related to students' inadequate diniyyah understanding and their adaptation to asrama life. To address these challenges, MTS At-Tibyan applies a comprehensive strategy, including intensive guidance for students who need a deeper understanding of diniyyah and gradual adjustment for those who are living in the asrama for the first time. Collaboration among the school, caretakers, teachers, and parents plays a key role in creating an environment

that supports students' spiritual and academic development, ensuring the effective implementation of the PAI curriculum and the formation of strong religious character in the younger generation.

Keywords: *Curriculum Integration, Religious Culture, Islamic Religious Education*

Introduction

Religious education plays a central role in shaping children's character, starting from family education as the foundation for education in schools. The Qur'an, particularly in Surah Luqman, emphasizes the importance of teaching creed (aqidah), Islamic law (shari'ah), and ethics (akhlaq). Its verses provide profound guidance on how to educate children, including instilling moral values and the methods to do so. Parents hold a crucial role in guiding children to build a strong religious foundation from an early age, ensuring they are not left to seek guidance on their own when they grow older.

However, many communities have not fully realized the importance of religious education in children's lives. A lack of proper guidance and direction aligned with children's developmental stages often leads to personality disruptions. The absence of well-integrated religious education in school curricula also contributes to the erosion of Islamic identity among the younger generation. It is essential to develop a curriculum that addresses these challenges by providing relevant

and effective religious education from an early age.

The Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in schools such as Mts At-Tibyan Deli Serdang aims to foster a religious culture by teaching religious values both theoretically and practically. Additionally, this curriculum promotes tolerance and social awareness, which are vital in a pluralistic society. At Mts At-Tibyan, flagship programs such as Arabic language proficiency and Quran memorization (hifzul Quran) are prioritized, supported by the teaching of Islamic sciences and the national curriculum. This approach creates synergy between religious education and general knowledge.

This study aims to analyze the integration of the PAI curriculum in building a religious culture at Mts At-Tibyan. Its findings are expected to provide recommendations for developing a more effective curriculum in shaping students' character. With an integrative approach, this school is envisioned to serve as a model for other institutions in merging religious values with scientific knowledge, fostering an environment that supports students' spiritual and moral development.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach as outlined by Strauss and Corbin, which focuses on exploring life stories, behaviors, organizational functions, and social movements. It specifically uses a descriptive-analytical case study method to analyze the integration of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in fostering a religious culture at MTS At-Tibyan. Case study research allows for in-depth investigation of a particular organization or phenomenon within a narrow scope, providing detailed insights.

Data collection involved both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was obtained through interviews with the headmaster and teachers at MTS At-Tibyan, as well as observations and field notes. Secondary data included organizational documents, historical records, and infrastructure information. The researcher served as the primary instrument, conducting participant observations, guided interviews, and documentation reviews to ensure comprehensive data collection.

Data analysis followed a systematic process involving data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. After gathering data through interviews, observations, and documents, the researcher organized and summarized key findings, identifying themes and patterns. The final step was interpreting these

findings to draw conclusions about how the PAI curriculum integration contributes to a religious culture at MTS At-Tibyan. This process ensures a clear and meaningful presentation of results.

Theoretical Foundation

Religious Culture

1. Definition of Religious Culture

Improving the quality and standard of living to achieve self-realization and fulfillment is part of cultural events. The process of discovering personal identity, self-esteem, dignity, initiative, and independence, as well as fostering creativity, is crucial in creating a sustainable society (Ishomuddin, 1996). Religious education covers three aspects: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Thus, it is not just about providing knowledge but also instilling habits of obedience to religious practices in children (Abdul Majid, 2005).

Religiosity manifests not only through rituals but also in everyday activities influenced by supernatural beliefs, whether visible or internal. To enhance students' religiosity, stages in fostering faith and piety are essential, with family, school, and society playing a crucial role in reinforcing religious values (Suhaimin, 2006).

School culture, shaped by psychological experiences—social, emotional, and intellectual—affects

students' values, attitudes, habits, and behaviors. Positive school culture, influenced by religious teachings, creates a competitive and comparative advantage, benefiting both the school and its members by promoting ethical and spiritual values (Muhaimin, 2006).

2. Strategy for Developing Religious Culture

Muhaimin suggests three levels for developing religious culture: the values held, daily practices, and cultural symbols. At the values level, there must be collective agreement on religious principles, fostering loyalty among school members. Daily practices reflect these values through behavior, and cultural symbols should align with religious teachings (Muhaimin, 2006).

Muhaimin also highlights three strategies: power strategy, persuasive strategy, and normative re-educative strategy, which involve authority, persuasion, and education to shift mindsets. Effective implementation of these strategies requires cooperation among all school members, creating an environment conducive to religious culture. Developing religious culture in schools should be a conscious effort, not just a requirement, to ensure values are internalized (Tafsir, 2004).

Curriculum

1. Definition of Curriculum

Etymologically, curriculum comes from the Greek word *curere*, which evolved into the noun *curriculum*. The term was first used in athletics, referring to a racecourse or the distance a runner or chariot must travel to reach the finish line (Asep Herry Hermawan, 2011). In French, *courir* means "to run." With the development of educational theory and practice, the term *curriculum* shifted to mean the body of knowledge or subjects that students must complete to achieve a certain level, degree, or diploma.

In the context of education, discussions about the curriculum are not simple due to the many different literatures and interpretations that have emerged. The term *curriculum* has developed over time, being formulated with various meanings. Traditionally, curriculum has been understood as the subjects taught in schools, a definition that is still widely accepted in Indonesia today. In line with this, Nana Sudjana views the curriculum as a systematically organized learning program provided by educational institutions to achieve educational goals (Nana Sudjana, 1995). S. Nasution, in his book *Kurikulum dan Pengajaran*, emphasizes that the curriculum is a plan designed to facilitate the teaching and learning process under

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the guidance and responsibility of the school or educational institution and its teaching staff (S. Nasution, 2006). Oemar Hamalik defines the curriculum as a plan for providing learning opportunities to guide students towards the desired behavioral changes and assess how these changes have occurred (Oemar Hamalik, n.d.). According to the Indonesian National Education System Law (Law No. 20 of 2003), curriculum is defined as a set of plans and arrangements regarding the goals, content, materials, and methods used as guidelines for conducting learning activities to achieve specific educational objectives. Furthermore, Article 36, paragraph (3) states that the curriculum should be developed according to the educational level and type, within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, considering factors such as religious faith, noble character, intelligence, student interests, regional and environmental diversity, national and regional development needs, the world of work, developments in science, technology, arts, religion, global dynamics, national unity, and values of nationalism. This passage emphasizes that the curriculum must take into account various aspects of student development and societal progress, addressing the challenges of global life while

aligning with the desired quality of humans at each educational level.

From the various perspectives above, it can be concluded that the curriculum is a set of learning plans that include goals, content, teaching materials, and methods, all of which are used to guide students toward the desired behavior and assess how much behavioral change has occurred in students.

2. Functions and Objectives of the Curriculum

Essentially, the curriculum functions as a guideline for implementing the learning process. The curriculum is prepared for students to provide new experiences that can be developed along with their growth, serving as a foundation for their ongoing life.

For school leaders, the curriculum functions as a guide to improving the learning environment to make it more conducive; to assist educators in improving the learning environment; to develop the curriculum; and to evaluate the progress of teaching and learning activities.

For teachers, the curriculum is used as a work guide in planning and organizing learning experiences for students; to evaluate the development of students in absorbing the experiences provided; and to organize activities and teaching methods.

For parents, the curriculum can

serve as a reference for guiding their children, ensuring that the learning experiences provided by parents align with those received by the child at school.

For the community, the curriculum can act as a bridge between the school and the local environment. By educating the community about the school curriculum, the school can benefit from receiving constructive feedback and suggestions that help improve the educational program, ensuring it produces a generation that meets the needs of society (Zainal Arifin, 2011). This includes local content within the curriculum, which incorporates environmental awareness in the learning program. For supervisors, the curriculum functions as a guide in conducting supervision. In the supervision process, supervisors will determine whether the school's programs, including the teaching processes conducted by teachers, align with the curriculum requirements. Based on the curriculum, supervisors can provide recommendations for improvements (Wina Sanjaya).

3. Components of the Curriculum

According to Ahmad Tafsir in his book *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*, he states that the curriculum consists of several components: 1) Objectives, 2) Content or Program, 3) Methods or Teaching-Learning

Process, 4) Evaluation. Each component in the curriculum is interconnected and not separate; they are integral parts of the curriculum (Ahmad Tafsir, 2013).

According to Lias Hasibuan, the components of the curriculum are integral and functional parts that cannot be separated from the curriculum system because each component plays a role in forming the curriculum system. In principle, the components consist of four types: 1) objectives, 2) content, 3) methods, and 4) evaluation.

A curriculum must have suitability or relevance. This relevance includes two aspects. First, the alignment of the curriculum with the demands, needs, conditions, and developments of society. Second, the alignment of the curriculum components, meaning the content aligns with the objectives, and the evaluation is consistent with the process, content, and objectives of the curriculum.

Islamic Religious Education

1. Definition of Islamic Religious Education

Islamic Religious Education is a conscious and planned effort to prepare students to recognize, understand, appreciate, believe in, be pious, have noble character, and practice the teachings of Islam from its primary sources, the Quran and

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Hadith, through guidance, teaching, training, and experience usage (Depdiknas, 2023).

Islamic Religious Education is physical and spiritual guidance based on Islamic laws aimed at shaping the personality according to Islamic standards, choosing and deciding, and acting based on Islamic values, and being responsible in accordance with Islamic principles (Ahmad D. Marimba, 2000).

Islamic Religious Education is education through the teachings of Islam, which involves guidance and nurturing of students so that after completing their education, they can understand, appreciate, and practice the teachings of Islam they have embraced thoroughly, making Islam their way of life for the safety and well-being of their life in this world and the Hereafter (Zakiyah Darajat, 2006).

It can be concluded that there is a common point that can be summarized as follows: Islamic Religious Education is the guidance provided by adults to students during their growth period to develop a true Muslim personality. In other words, Islamic Religious Education is a conscious effort made by educators to prepare students to believe in, understand, and practice Islamic teachings through predetermined guidance, teaching,

or training activities aimed at achieving set objectives.

2. The foundations of Islamic Religious Education

The foundations of Islamic Religious Education can be viewed from several perspectives. The first is the religious foundation, which is derived from Islamic teachings found in the Qur'an and Hadith. According to Islamic teachings, carrying out Islamic Religious Education is a command from God and is considered an act of worship. Every effort, activity, and action aimed at achieving a goal must have a solid and strong foundation. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education must have a spiritual foundation, with the primary sources being the Qur'an and Sunnah.

The second foundation is the formal legal foundation, which refers to the legal framework governing the implementation of Islamic Education in schools or formal educational institutions in Indonesia. This foundation is divided into three parts: the ideal foundation, which is based on the philosophy of the state, particularly the first principle of Pancasila, which emphasizes belief in the One God; the constitutional foundation, based on the 1945 Constitution, which guarantees freedom of religion; and the operational foundation, which regulates the

implementation of Islamic Religious Education directly in schools, as outlined in various laws and regulations. The third foundation is the psychological foundation, which addresses the emotional and spiritual needs of individuals and society. People need a life guide, which is religion, as it provides comfort and tranquility by drawing closer to the Almighty.

3. The purpose of Islamic Religious Education

Islamic Religious Education has clear and planned goals, with foundations aimed at shaping a perfect individual who draws closer to Allah and attains happiness in both this world and the hereafter. The main goal of this education is to cultivate noble character, introduce virtues, and prepare individuals for life in both the world and the hereafter. Imam al-Ghazali believes that this education should guide students to understand and practice Islamic teachings comprehensively, using Islamic sources as the foundation of educational philosophy.

The goals of Islamic Religious Education are divided into general, ultimate, temporary, and operational objectives. The general goal is to achieve a balanced life between the world and the hereafter, while the ultimate goal is to realize a pious and righteous individual. The temporary goal

includes basic abilities such as knowledge and skills, while the operational goal focuses on practical achievements through educational activities. Overall, Islamic education aims to shape a balanced personality, paying attention to spiritual, intellectual, and beneficial worldly aspects.

Research Results

Integration of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum at MTS At-Tibyan: A Holistic Approach

At MTS At-Tibyan, the integration of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum is implemented through a holistic approach, which focuses not only on religious theory but also on its implementation in the students' everyday lives. This process is designed to shape a generation that is not only academically intelligent but also strong in faith and character. This integration involves two essential aspects: the diniyyah curriculum (religious studies) and the general curriculum, each complementing and supporting the achievement of broader educational goals.

One of the primary forms of PAI integration at MTS At-Tibyan is the practice of worship introduced within the diniyyah curriculum. Worship practices such as congregational prayers, reading the Qur'an, and observing voluntary fasts are not only taught as theories but are also made a

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regular part of the students' daily routines. The integration of worship aims to instill deep spiritual values, which are expected to strengthen the students' relationship with Allah. This practice enriches the students' religious knowledge while also shaping their character by teaching discipline, perseverance, and spiritual awareness. By making worship a part of daily activities, the school creates an atmosphere that supports the development of a more religious and focused personality in line with Islamic teachings.

Furthermore, MTS At-Tibyan integrates the general curriculum with Islamic values. Subjects such as biology and English are not taught separately from religious values but are linked to Islamic principles. For example, in biology, students are taught to appreciate Allah's creation through an understanding of biodiversity and the importance of environmental conservation. In English lessons, Islamic themes are often incorporated into speeches or discussions, allowing students to develop their language skills while deepening their understanding and practice of Islamic teachings in a broader context. This approach not only equips students with academic knowledge but also introduces them to ways of connecting scientific knowledge with religious life, adding value to the development of critical and spiritual thinking.

The dormitory-based learning model implemented at MTS At-Tibyan also plays a crucial role in the integration of the PAI curriculum. The dormitory serves as a place where students not only receive formal education but are also guided to implement religious values in their daily lives. In the dormitory environment, students are taught to maintain proper manners by wearing neat and clean Muslim attire and participating in worship practices such as congregational prayers and fasting together. This approach creates an atmosphere that supports character formation through role modeling and the reinforcement of religious habits. The activities in the dormitory indirectly teach students to internalize Islamic teachings in various aspects of life, from how they dress to their patterns of social interaction, all done consistently with Islamic principles.

Thus, the integration of the PAI curriculum at MTS At-Tibyan is not limited to teaching religious theory in the classroom but also involves practical application in the students' daily lives, both in worship and social contexts. This process significantly contributes to the formation of a religious culture within the students, creating a generation that is not only intellectually educated but also possesses a strong, focused personality in living their lives according to Islamic teachings. This integration makes PAI an integral part of education that

shapes the character and lifestyle of students comprehensively.

The Impact of Integrating the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum on the Formation of Religious Culture at MTS At-Tibyan

The integration of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum at MTS At-Tibyan has a significant impact on shaping the religious culture within the school environment. The holistic approach applied focuses not only on the teaching of religious theory but also on the implementation of Islamic values in everyday life, involving all aspects of the students' lives, both inside and outside the classroom. One of the main strategies implemented is the dormitory-based teaching model, which facilitates the formation of religious habits in students' daily routines.

Within the dormitory environment, students at MTS At-Tibyan not only receive formal education but are also expected to practice Islam directly and practically. This model requires students to engage in acts of worship such as congregational prayers, reading the Qur'an, and observing other sunnah practices in their daily lives. In addition, students are guided to maintain proper manners and to wear neat Muslim attire, creating an atmosphere conducive to the formation of religious character. Through this routine, students not only learn religious theory

in the classroom but also directly experience and apply religious teachings in their social interactions and daily life. This supports the development of religious habits that are inseparable from the students' daily lives, making Islam a guiding principle in every aspect of their lives.

In addition to dormitory-based teaching, the integration of the PAI curriculum also focuses on the formation of effective role models in the learning process. The educators at MTS At-Tibyan play an essential role as role models in practicing religious teachings, demonstrating attitudes and behaviors that align with Islamic values. This role modeling is not limited to religious teaching but also extends to everyday life, including honesty, discipline, and patience, all of which are expected to be emulated by the students. This role-modeling-based teaching is carried out continuously and consistently, making the teachers role models who show how religious teachings can be applied in all aspects of life.

The importance of role modeling is evident in the interactions between students and teachers, as well as between students themselves. When educators show a high commitment to religious values, they not only teach but also inspire students to adopt the same principles. In the long term, this role-modeling pattern is expected to create a generation that not only understands

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religion theoretically but also lives it in practice, both at school and in society.

The positive influence of the integration of the PAI curriculum is clearly visible in the formation of the religious culture at MTS At-Tibyan. Students at this school are not only equipped with religious knowledge but also with life skills based on Islamic values. This religious culture is reflected in the attitudes and behaviors of the students, who are more disciplined in performing acts of worship, maintaining good morals, and interacting with others with love and respect. Therefore, the integration of the PAI curriculum at MTS At-Tibyan has a wide-ranging impact, not only on the academic aspect but also on the formation of character and a strong religious culture, making Islam the foundational basis for shaping noble character.

Through this integrated and continuous educational model, MTS At-Tibyan has successfully created an environment that supports the spiritual and character development of students. The formation of religious culture applied at this school is not limited to religious education but permeates every aspect of the students' lives, making Islamic values an inseparable guide for their daily lives.

Challenges and Solutions in the Implementation of the PAI Curriculum Integration at MTS At-Tibyan

The implementation of the integration of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum at MTS At-Tibyan certainly faces several challenges that must be addressed with the appropriate approach. This integration aims to combine religious teachings with everyday life, both in academic contexts and religious practice. However, there are several obstacles that could affect the effectiveness of the PAI curriculum, especially for students who are still in the process of adapting. Below are two main challenges along with solutions that can be implemented to overcome them:

Students Who Do Not Have a Deep Understanding of Religious Studies at Home

One of the main challenges faced by MTS At-Tibyan is the number of students coming from backgrounds with limited religious education. Some students may not have received adequate religious instruction at home or in their previous environments, making it difficult for them to follow the deeper aspects of the religious curriculum, such as proper worship practices, understanding of tafsir, or hadith. This condition can become a barrier to the integration process of the PAI curriculum, which requires them to

practice Islam comprehensively in their daily lives.

Solution: To address this challenge, MTS At-Tibyan can take the following steps:

- a) **Intensive Support Classes:** Implement an intensive training program for students who need additional understanding of religious teachings. These classes could be held separately outside of regular lessons, specifically to reinforce their religious foundation. The classes could focus on teaching proper worship practices, introducing the Qur'an in more depth, or providing advanced fiqh lessons.
- b) **Personalized Approach and Spiritual Guidance:** Utilize a more personal approach by caregivers and religious teachers to provide extra attention to students who struggle. Dormitory caretakers should ensure that each student receives deep spiritual guidance and is consistently mentored in applying religious teachings.
- c) **Empowering Families:** Involve parents in the process of teaching their children religious education at home by holding parenting sessions or seminars that emphasize the importance of religious instruction at home. This will strengthen the synergy between school education and religious learning at home.

Students Who Are Not Used to Dormitory-Based Learning Models

The second challenge is that some students are not accustomed to the dormitory-based learning model. Living in a dormitory requires students to be more independent, disciplined, and capable of managing their time and emotions, which may be difficult for some students who are living in a dormitory for the first time. Additionally, the dormitory model requires strict time management for worship and other activities, which may add stress or confusion during the initial adaptation phase.

Solution: Addressing this challenge requires a holistic and long-term approach to help students adapt to dormitory life, with the following steps:

- a) **Gradual Familiarization:** Begin with simpler, gradual stages where students are given opportunities to adapt to dormitory life slowly. Initially, caregivers can provide guidance on daily habits that need to be followed, such as sleep time, study time, prayer times, and maintaining personal hygiene and cleanliness.
- b) **Support from Caregivers and Teachers:** Dormitory caregivers play a crucial role in helping students adjust. Therefore, caregivers should be trained on how to provide motivation, discipline, and effective guidance while also being attentive to the students' psychological needs. In addition,

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teachers should serve as role models in their daily lives, demonstrating how to live with strong religious principles, motivating students to follow these examples.

c) **Routine Religious Activities:**

Integrating dormitory activities with regular and enjoyable religious activities, such as Qur'anic recitation together, religious studies, or charity activities, can help strengthen students' connection to the dormitory life. This not only aids their adaptation to dormitory living but also reinforces emotional bonds with fellow students, creating an atmosphere conducive to the development of strong religious character.

d) **Supportive Learning Facilities:**

To help students adapt to dormitory-based learning, the school can provide adequate facilities to support their learning activities. Comfortable study spaces, writing materials, and proper prayer areas will help create a conducive learning environment. Additionally, integrating religious learning with social activities like group discussions or practical activities will make learning more engaging and reduce any potential boredom.

Conclusion

1. The integration of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI)

curriculum at MTS At-Tibyan implements a holistic approach that combines both theory and practice, not only in the context of religious education but also in students' daily lives. Through regular worship practices, the integration of Islamic values in general lessons, and the dormitory-based learning model, MTS At-Tibyan has successfully created a generation that is not only academically intelligent but also has a strong religious character. This approach plays a key role in shaping a religious culture at the school, making PAI the foundation for developing students' personalities and lifestyles in accordance with Islamic teachings.

2. The integration of the PAI curriculum at MTS At-Tibyan has a significant impact on shaping the religious culture at the school, through a holistic approach that encompasses both religious theory and its implementation in everyday life. The dormitory-based teaching model and the role modeling implemented by educators create religious habits that integrate worship, morality, and politeness in students' routines. With this approach, MTS At-Tibyan has succeeded in shaping a generation that not only possesses strong religious knowledge but also practices Islamic values in their lives, both inside and outside the

- school, creating a deep and sustainable religious culture.
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 4. The challenges faced in the implementation of the PAI curriculum integration at MTS At-Tibyan can be addressed with a comprehensive strategy, namely intensive training for students who have not yet fully understood religious studies and gradual adaptation for students who are not accustomed to dormitory life. Through collaborative efforts between the school, caregivers, teachers, and parents, MTS At-Tibyan can create an environment that supports both the spiritual and academic development of students, ensuring the effective integration of the PAI curriculum and the formation of strong religious character in the younger generation.
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