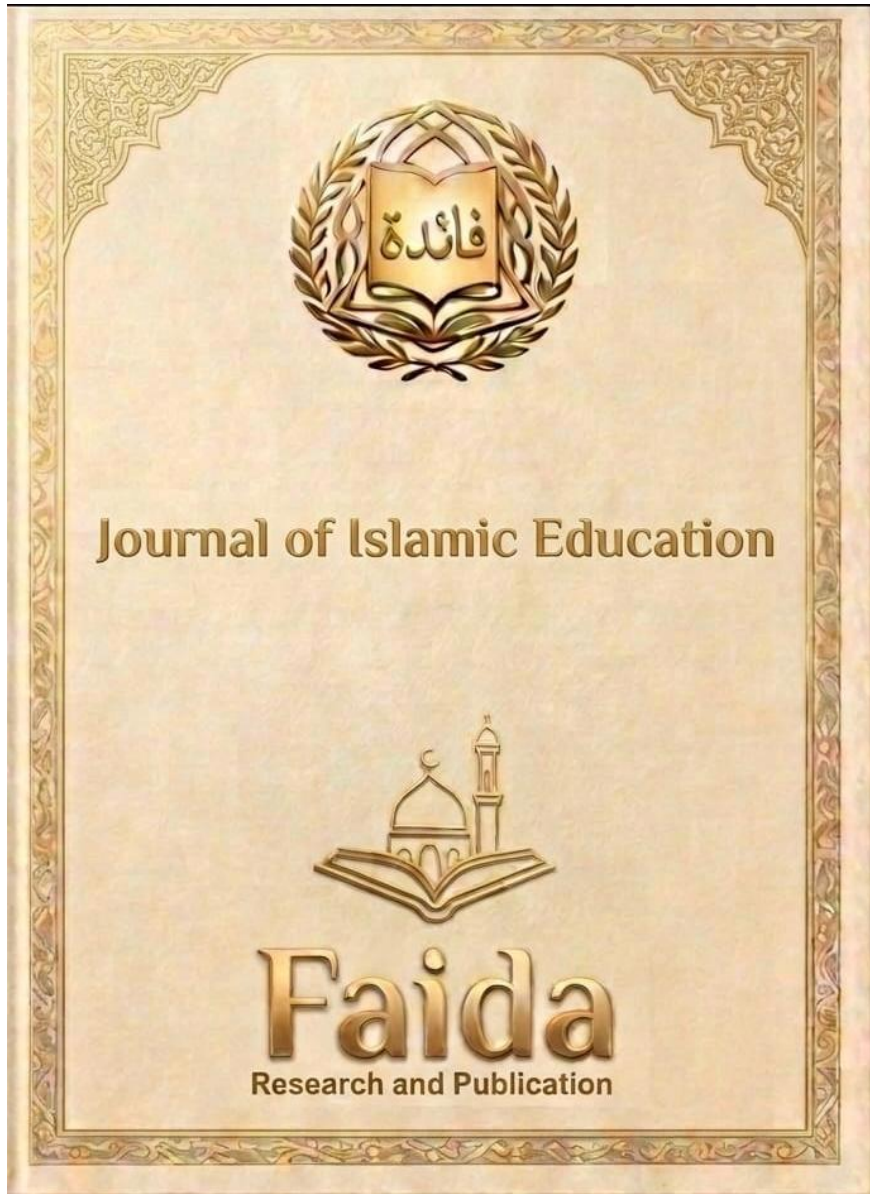




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EVALUATION OF RELIGIOUS-ECOLOGICAL CHARACTER-BUILDING PROGRAM IN CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AT SMAN 1 JEMBER

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to evaluate the implementation of a religious-ecological character strengthening program conducted through co-curricular activities at SMAN 1 Jember using the Four-Level Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model. The research addresses the growing need for a comprehensive evaluation framework in character education, particularly one that moves beyond participation and satisfaction to examine behavioral change and institutional transformation. A qualitative case study design was employed to explore the processes of value internalization and character transformation within the school context. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis involving the principal, vice principal for student affairs, teachers, program coordinators, and students engaged in co-curricular religious-ecological activities. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, with coding guided by the four Kirkpatrick levels: reaction, learning, behavior, and results. The findings indicate a staged transformation of religious-ecological values. At the reaction level, students showed strong emotional engagement and active participation. At the learning level, students developed an integrated understanding of religious teachings and ecological responsibility. At the behavior level, these values were reflected in consistent religious discipline and environmental care practices. At the results level, these practices contributed to the institutionalization of a religious-ecological culture within the school. The study concludes that the Kirkpatrick Model serves not only as an evaluation framework but also as an explanatory model of character transformation from individual engagement to institutional culture.

Keywords: Islamic Education; Character Education; Religious-Ecological Character; Co-Curricular Activities; Kirkpatrick Model; Program Evaluation

1. INTRODUCTION

Character education is one of the strategic priorities in the 21st-century education system because it focuses not only on academic achievement but also on the development of students' attitudes, values, and sustainable behavior. In a global context, interest in character education is growing in tandem with the rise of various social and ecological issues that demand a generation possessing both moral awareness and environmental responsibility. Education is no longer understood as merely a process of knowledge transfer, but rather as a transformative effort capable of shaping individuals of good character who are reflective and responsible toward their social and environmental surroundings. In the Indonesian context, character building is gaining increasing legitimacy through national education policies that position faith, piety, and social responsibility as integral components of the competencies that graduates must develop through both instructional and co-curricular activities.

In line with these developments, co-curricular activities are now positioned as a strategic vehicle for strengthening students' character through more contextual and meaningful learning experiences. The latest policy, as outlined in Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 13 of 2025, emphasizes that character building is one of the primary functions of co-curricular activities, including the integration of religious values and environmental awareness into school activities. Various studies show that character education delivered through intracurricular, cocurricular, and extracurricular activities can positively contribute to the development of students' behavior (Wulandari et al., 2025).

However, the implementation of character education programs in various schools still faces challenges because their success is often measured solely by program implementation, student participation rates, or administrative documentation, without assessing the resulting changes in values, behavior, or the school's culture.

These issues point to fundamental weaknesses in the evaluation of character education programs in educational settings. The evaluation models currently in use generally focus on participants' reactions and satisfaction, while the dimensions of behavioral change and institutional impact have not been comprehensively analyzed. In fact, according to Kirkpatrick, the effectiveness of an educational program cannot be assessed solely based on positive responses from participants; rather, it must be traced to the occurrence of learning, behavioral change, and outcomes that have an impact on the organization. A number of previous studies using the Kirkpatrick Model have been dominated by evaluations at Level 1 (Reaction) and Level 2 (Learning), both in the context of government official training and other competency development programs (Susanty, 2022). Meanwhile, research that simultaneously evaluates all four levels of the Kirkpatrick model in the context of character education in secondary schools remains relatively limited, particularly studies examining the relationship between individual value transformation and the sustainable development of school culture.

This research gap becomes increasingly significant when considered in the context of efforts to strengthen religious-ecological character in schools. Religious-ecological character is a form of integration between spiritual piety and ecological responsibility that views concern for the environment as part of the practice of religious values. In practice, the development of this kind of character requires not only a cognitive learning process but also the internalization of values, social conditioning, and institutional cultural support that allows these values to evolve into collective norms. Preliminary observations at SMAN 1 Jember indicate that the school has developed various co-curricular programs that combine ritual piety—such as congregational prayer and the custom of shaking hands—with ecological piety through the Adiwiyata program, waste management, and environmental conservation activities. However, there is currently no empirical evidence explaining how these programs translate into sustainable student behavior or school culture.

Program evaluation itself is a systematic process for assessing the quality, effectiveness, and impact of a program based on its established objectives. In the field of education, evaluation serves not only as a tool for measuring outcomes but also as a means of understanding the relationship between planning, implementation, and the changes brought about by a program. Various evaluation models have been developed to meet these goals, including the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) Model, Discrepancy Evaluation Model, Goal-Free Evaluation, and Kirkpatrick Four-Level Evaluation Model. The CIPP model developed by Stufflebeam is decision-oriented through the analysis of the context, inputs, processes, and product of the program, while the Discrepancy Model introduced by Provus emphasizes the identification of gaps between standards and actual performance. In contrast, Scriven's Goal-Free Evaluation seeks to identify the entire impact of a program without being tied to a predetermined formal goal. Despite their respective advantages, these models have not explicitly explained the causal relationship between participant experiences, learning processes, behavior change, and organizational impact that are the main focus of this study.

As the main foundation of research, the Four-Level Kirkpatrick Model was developed by Donald L. Kirkpatrick and later refined with James D. Kirkpatrick through the New World Kirkpatrick Model. This model explains that the effectiveness of the program can be evaluated through four interconnected levels, namely reaction, learning, behavior, and results. The reaction level measures the participants' affective response to the program, the learning level assesses changes in knowledge, attitudes, and skills, the behavior level evaluates the transfer of learning into real practice, while the

results level measures the impact it has on the organization or the broader environment. From a character education perspective, the four levels form a transformation flow that shows how learning experiences can develop into sustainable behaviors and ultimately shape institutional culture. Therefore, the Kirkpatrick model is seen as more appropriate for evaluating religious-ecological character strengthening programs that are not only oriented to the learning process, but also to changes in school behavior and culture. In addition to the theory of program evaluation, this research is also based on the concept of religious-ecological character as a substantive framework that becomes the object of evaluation. The religious-ecological character is an integration of spiritual piety and ecological responsibility that places man's relationship with God, fellow humans, and the environment as an inseparable unit. In the perspective of Islamic education, this concept is rooted in the responsibility of humans as caliphs who are obliged to maintain the sustainability of nature while carrying out divine values in daily life. Thus, the formation of religious-ecological character is not enough through the imparting of knowledge, but requires a process of internalizing values, social habituation, and school cultural support that allows these values to develop into sustainable collective behavior.

Based on this comprehensive background, this study aims to evaluate a program for strengthening religious-ecological character through co-curricular activities at SMAN 1 Jember using the Kirkpatrick Four-Level Model, which includes reaction, learning, behavior, and results. This study not only seeks to assess the program's effectiveness but also to explain the character transformation process that occurs through the stages of affective engagement, value internalization, collective habit formation, and the institutionalization of school culture. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of research on character education program evaluation by expanding the interpretation of the Kirkpatrick Model within the context of religious-ecological education. Practically, the research findings are expected to serve as a foundation for schools and policymakers to design a character evaluation system that is more comprehensive, sustainable, and oriented toward changing school culture.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to evaluate the implementation of a religious-ecological character strengthening program in co-curricular activities at SMAN 1 Jember. A case study design was selected because the research aimed to explore comprehensively the processes, meanings, and outcomes associated with the implementation of the program within its real-life context (Yin, 2018). Qualitative case studies enable researchers to investigate complex educational phenomena holistically while capturing participants' experiences, interactions, and interpretations in natural settings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study focused on understanding how religious and ecological values were internalized, practiced, and institutionalized through school co-curricular activities based on the four levels of the Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model, namely reaction, learning, behavior, and results.

The research was conducted at SMAN 1 Jember, East Java, Indonesia, from February to May 2025. The site was selected purposively because the school has implemented various co-curricular programs integrating religious values and environmental awareness through school culture initiatives and the *Adiwiyata* program. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in planning, implementing, and experiencing the program (Patton, 2002). The informants consisted of the school principal, vice principal for student affairs, Islamic education teachers, program coordinators, homeroom teachers, and students actively participating in religious-ecological activities. The selection of informants followed the principle of information richness, ensuring that participants possessed adequate knowledge and experience relevant to the research objectives.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore participants' perceptions, experiences,

and evaluations regarding the implementation and outcomes of the program. Participant observations were carried out during religious and environmental activities to capture behavioral patterns and interactions within the school environment. Documentary evidence, including school policies, activity reports, program plans, photographs, and evaluation records, was used to strengthen data credibility and contextual understanding. To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied source triangulation, method triangulation, member checking, and prolonged engagement in the field (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). These procedures enabled cross-verification of findings and enhanced the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the data.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The analysis process was conducted continuously throughout data collection and interpretation. Data were first organized and coded according to themes derived from the four levels of the Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model. Subsequently, patterns, relationships, and emerging categories were identified to explain the process of character transformation from participants' reactions and learning experiences to behavioral changes and institutional impacts. The final stage involved interpreting the findings through the conceptual lens of religious-ecological character education and the Kirkpatrick Four-Level Evaluation Model to generate a comprehensive understanding of program effectiveness and its contribution to school culture development.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Synthesis of the Results of the Evaluation of the Religious-Ecological Character Strengthening Program Based on the Kirkpatrick Model

Evaluation Level	Key Findings	Empirical Indicators	Meaning of Findings
Reaction	Students show a positive response to the program	Enthusiasm for participating in religious and ecological activities, active participation in school activities	An affective attachment to religious-ecological values is formed
Learning	There has been an increase in understanding of the relationship between religion and environmental concern	Students' understanding of ecological responsibility as part of religious teachings	There is an internalization of religious-ecological values
Behavior	Behavioral changes appear in daily life	Discipline of worship, concern for cleanliness and school environment	Learned values are embodied in real action
Results	Formation of a religious-ecological school culture	Integration of religious and ecological values in school habits, rules, and programs	Values have been institutionalized into school culture

3.1 Positive Reactions of Students as the Foundation for Internalizing Values

The results of the study showed that the religious-ecological character strengthening program carried out through co-curricular activities at SMAN 1 Jember received a positive response from students. The acceptance can be seen from the enthusiasm of the participants in participating in various religious and ecological activities that are part of the school program. Activities such as congregational prayers, shaking hands, environmental community service, waste management, and various activities

supporting the Adiwiyata program are not perceived as additional burdens, but as activities that are relevant to the lives of students.

The results of interviews with several students show that religious and ecological activities organized by schools are seen as useful activities and close to their daily lives. Students revealed that these activities not only provide new experiences, but also help them understand the importance of connecting religious values with concern for the environment. This finding is strengthened by the results of observations that show the high involvement of students in various co-curricular activities, both related to worship habits and school environment preservation activities. The statement shows that students are not only participating in activities because of school obligations, but are beginning to view these activities as meaningful experiences. The results of the observation also show the high involvement of students in various religious and ecological activities that are carried out regularly.

These findings suggest that the reaction dimension in the Kirkpatrick Model is not only related to participants' level of satisfaction with the program, but also reflects an emotional attachment to the values instilled. In the context of character education, a positive response is an important prerequisite for the success of the value internalization process. Students who accept and interpret activities positively tend to be more open to the moral message and values contained in it. These findings are in line with Kirkpatrick's view that positive reactions increase the chances of effective learning. This reinforces Quinton et al. (2022) findings which show that the affective involvement of participants contributes to the success of the learning process and the transfer of learning outcomes. In addition, research by Engriyani and Rugaiyah (2022) shows that the success of educational programs is greatly influenced by the level of acceptance of participants to the activities carried out. Thus, the success of a character program is not enough measured by the level of attendance or participation of participants, but also by the extent to which the program is able to build an affective attachment to the values taught.

3.2 Learning as a Process of Internalizing Religious-Ecological Values

At the learning level, the study found a change in students' understanding of the relationship between religious values and ecological responsibility. Students no longer view environmental protection activities only as a social obligation, but begin to understand that caring for the environment is part of the implementation of religious teachings in daily life.

Based on the results of the interviews, the students showed a change in their perspective on the relationship between religion and the environment. Before participating in the program, some students view the activities of maintaining cleanliness and environmental preservation as a school obligation alone. However, after participating in various extracurricular activities, they began to understand that protecting the environment is part of their moral and spiritual responsibility as human beings. The findings suggest that the learning process not only results in increased knowledge, but also forms a deeper value awareness regarding the relationship between religiosity and ecological responsibility. The results of observations and documentation show that students began to associate environmental cleanliness activities with the religious values they learned at school.

These changes show that the learning process that occurs goes beyond the cognitive aspect. Students not only gain new knowledge about the environment, but also experience a transformation of the perspective on the meaning of religiosity. Religious values that were previously understood in the context of ritual developed into a moral consciousness that included responsibility for nature and the surrounding environment. This aligns with standard educational evaluation practices indicating that evaluations dominating at Level 1 (Reaction) and Level 2 (Learning) effectively capture real-time competence shifts in Indonesian institutions (Susanty, 2022; Engriyani & Rugaiyah, 2022).

These findings reinforce the concept of learning in the Kirkpatrick Model which includes changes in knowledge, attitudes, and skills. However, the results of the study show that in character education, the learning dimension is more accurately understood as the process of value internalization. These results are in line with several studies that show that learning associated with real experience is more effective in building moral awareness and attitude change than learning that is only cognitively oriented.

3.3 Collective Habituation as a Mechanism for Behavior Change

Evaluation at the behavior level shows that the internalization of values that occur in students has implications for behavioral changes that can be observed in daily life. These changes can be seen from the increase in discipline in religious activities, the growing concern for environmental cleanliness, and the increasing responsibility of students in maintaining school facilities.

The results of interviews with teachers, homeroom teachers, and activity supervisors show that changes in students' behavior are starting to be seen in various daily activities at school. The informant explained that students became more disciplined in carrying out religious activities, more concerned about environmental cleanliness, and showed higher responsibility for school facilities. The results of field observations also show that this behavior does not only appear during co-curricular activities, but has become part of daily habits carried out voluntarily by students. The observation also shows that students not only carry out these behaviors during co-curricular activities, but also in daily routines in the school environment.

The findings of the study show that the success of behavior change is greatly influenced by the existence of collective habituation built through school culture. Teachers, peers, school rules, and various daily routines serve as reinforcement systems that encourage students to maintain positive behavior consistently.

These results support the theory of learning transfer put forward by Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2006). The results of the study also expand on the findings of Tamsuri (2022) who stated that behavior level evaluation is often the most difficult aspect to achieve in various educational programs. In this study, behavioral changes can occur due to the support of a consistent and sustainable school environment. In addition, these findings reinforce the view that character formation is a social process that involves continuous interaction between individuals and their environment. Therefore, character education cannot be imposed only on teachers or certain subjects, but requires the involvement of all school residents.

3.4 Institutionalization of School Culture as a Program Impact

At the results level, the study found that the impact of the program was not only felt by students individually, but also reflected in the formation of a religious-ecological school culture. Religious values and environmental concern have become part of the norms, habits, and identity of the school that are carried out collectively by all school residents. Religious-ecological culture is seen in various aspects of school life, ranging from daily routines, discipline, school symbols, to various systematically integrated student development programs.

The results of interviews with principals, vice principals, and teachers show that religious and ecological values have become an integral part of school life. The informant explained that various programs that were initially designed as co-curricular activities gradually developed into a school culture that was reflected in discipline, daily routines, student habituation, and various school policies. These findings show that the impact of the program does not only occur at the individual level, but also contributes to the formation of institutional identities that are characterized by religious and environmental concerns.

The findings expand the meaning of level results in the Kirkpatrick Model. In the context of character education, the program's final outcome is measured not only from individual change, but also from the program's ability to shape an organizational culture that supports the sustainability of the values developed. This result is in line with Tamsuri's (2022) research which shows that the success of character education is marked by the formation of a school culture that supports the internalization of values in a sustainable manner. These findings also expand on Kirkpatrick's evaluation study that has been more widely used to measure the impact of organizational training, by showing that the highest impact in character education is the transformation of school culture (Imron et al., 2023).

3.5 Synthesis of Findings and Discussion

Based on the overall results of the study, it was found that the process of strengthening religious-ecological character takes place through interrelated stages. The process begins with a positive response of students to the program, then develops into the internalization of values, continues with habituation of behavior in daily life, and finally leads to the formation of a religious-ecological school culture.

Figure 1. A model of religious-ecological character transformation based on Kirkpatrick's evaluation
Reaction (Affective Attachment) → Learning (Internalization of Values) → Behavior (Collective Habituation) → Results (Institutionalization of School Culture)

Cross-level analysis shows that the findings at each level of evaluation do not stand alone, but form a series of interconnected processes. The positive response of students to the program is the basis for a meaningful learning process. The learning then develops into the internalization of values that encourage behavior change. Behavioral changes that take place repeatedly and are supported by the school environment then develop into collective habits that ultimately shape the religious-ecological school culture. Thus, the relationship between levels in the Kirkpatrick Model in this study is dynamic and sustainable. The model shows that the four levels in the Kirkpatrick Model not only serve as an evaluation instrument, but can also be understood as stages of character transformation that take place gradually and continuously. These findings expand the use of the Kirkpatrick Model, which has been more widely applied in the context of training and human resource development, into a relevant framework to explain the process of character formation in the educational environment.

The findings of this study reinforce the results of Quinton et al. (2022) research which confirms the importance of participants' affective involvement in supporting learning success and transfer of learning outcomes. In addition, the results of this study are also in line with Engriyani and Rugaiyah (2022) who concluded that the effectiveness of educational programs is not only determined by the quality of implementation, but also by the level of acceptance of participants to the programs carried out. In terms of behavior change, the findings of this study support the results of Tamsuri's (2022) study which confirms that the level of behavior is an important indicator in assessing the success of an educational program, even though it is often the most difficult level to achieve. Meanwhile, the formation of a religious-ecological school culture reinforces Imron et al. (2023) findings that effective character education will ultimately result in sustainable changes in the culture of school organizations. Nevertheless, this study offers a new perspective by showing that the four levels of Kirkpatrick not only serve as an instrument of evaluation, but can also be understood as stages of character transformation that move from the individual level to the level of institutional culture.

Theoretically, this study offers a reinterpretation of the Kirkpatrick Model as a model of religious-ecological character transformation. Practically, the results of the study imply that the evaluation of character programs needs to be directed not only to the implementation of activities, but also to the resulting changes in school values, behaviors, and culture. Thus, schools can develop a more comprehensive evaluation system and are oriented towards the sustainability of the program. This

research is still limited to one research site, so generalization of findings needs to be done carefully. Therefore, further research can be carried out through multisite studies in public, private, and pesantren-based schools to test the applicability of the religious-ecological character transformation model produced in this study.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the religious-ecological character strengthening program implemented through co-curricular activities at SMAN 1 Jember runs effectively and forms a gradual and continuous character transformation process. Key findings indicate that the effectiveness of the program does not only stop at the level of reaction and satisfaction of students, but develops to changes in understanding, behavior, and the formation of school culture. The process shows that the Kirkpatrick Model of Four Levels can be used not only as an evaluation instrument, but also as a conceptual framework to explain the dynamics of internalizing values in character education.

Empirically, this study confirms that students' positive responses are the initial foundation that encourages active involvement in the process of learning religious-ecological values. In the next stage, there is an internalization of values that integrate spiritual awareness with ecological responsibility, which is then manifested in changes in daily behavior in the school environment. Furthermore, the consistency of these behaviors, which is strengthened by the school ecosystem, contributes to the formation of an institutionalized and sustainable religious-ecological school culture.

From a theoretical perspective, this study expands the understanding of the Kirkpatrick Model by placing it in the context of character education, specifically in explaining the causal relationship between learning experience, internalization of values, and the transformation of school culture. This model not only serves as an evaluative tool, but also as a model of value transformation that moves from the individual level to the institutional level.

Practically, the results of this study imply that the evaluation of character education programs needs to be designed comprehensively by going beyond administrative measurement and student satisfaction. Schools need to develop an evaluation system that is able to capture changes in values, behaviors, and their impact on institutional culture in a sustainable manner.

At the policy level, these findings affirm the importance of strengthening character education policies that focus not only on program implementation, but also on evaluation mechanisms that are able to measure the long-term impact on the formation of school culture. Therefore, the Kirkpatrick Model can be considered as an alternative evaluative approach in the development of character education policies in Indonesia.

For further research, a similar study is recommended to be carried out in a multisite context with a variety of school characteristics, such as public, private, and pesantren-based schools, in order to test the consistency of the transformation model found and to enrich the generalization of findings in the development of character education evaluations.

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