

## Implementation of Practical Religious Skills Assessment in Fiqh Learning on the Topic of Thaharah in the Merdeka Curriculum

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**Abstract.** This study examines the implementation of practical Thaharah assessment within the context of the Merdeka Curriculum at the junior secondary school level. Employing a qualitative approach with a comparative case study design, the research was conducted at MTs An-Nur 1 and MTs An-Nur 3 in Malangbong, Garut. Research subjects included Islamic studies teachers, school principals, and relevant instructional and assessment documents. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, and were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings reveal that the quality of rubric design and the consistency of assessment implementation play a crucial role in enhancing students' religious practice skills. MTs An-Nur 1 demonstrated a high level of implementation fidelity, with assessments embedded in routine instruction, immediate feedback, and well-documented student portfolios. In contrast, MTs An-Nur 3 conducted assessments in a more administrative and less reflective manner. The success of assessment practices at MTs An-Nur 1 was supported by internal factors such as teacher competence, a strong religious school culture, instructional leadership, and adequate infrastructure. The study concludes that the effectiveness of authentic assessment in religious education depends on three key components: instrument validity, implementation consistency, and a supportive school ecosystem. These findings highlight the importance of community-based collaboration and instructional leadership in transforming assessment into a formative and character-building process, rather than a mere administrative procedure.

**Keywords:** Authentic Assessment, Thaharah, Implementation Fidelity, Religious Education, Merdeka Curriculum, Instructional Leadership, School Culture.

### 1 Introduction

In the era of the *Merdeka Curriculum*, Islamic religious education is required not only to deliver normative knowledge but also to instill spiritual competence and practical worship skills relevant to daily life [1], [2]. This paradigm shift from rote

memorization to competency based learning presents new challenges, particularly in assessment. Evaluation must extend beyond the cognitive domain to authentically capture both affective and psychomotor dimensions [3]. In the context of *fiqh* instruction, especially concerning the topic of *thaharah* the foundation of ritual purity in Islam a purely theoretical assessment approach has proven inadequate [4]. Many *madrasahs* still rely heavily on written tests or procedural memorization, while practical skills such as *wudu*, *ghusl*, and *tayammum* demand concrete and contextualized performance-based assessment [5].

As value based educational institutions, *madrasahs* play a strategic role in bridging curriculum ideals with instructional realities [6]. Within the framework of the *Merdeka Curriculum*, teachers are granted autonomy to design assessments tailored to student needs and local contexts [7]. However, this autonomy is often not supported by systematic development of valid and applicable authentic assessment instruments. As a result, there is a gap between the philosophical spirit of *Merdeka Belajar* and the actual assessment practices in the field. Challenges such as limited facilities, lack of teacher training, and unclear standards for practical skill assessments hinder consistent and meaningful implementation[8].

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of authentic assessment in religious education [9]–[12], but most have remained general in focus or limited to *pesantren* and general school settings. Research specifically addressing practical evaluation of *thaharah* in formal *madrasah* settings that implement the *Merdeka Curriculum* remains scarce. Comparative mapping of the implementation of worship skills assessment among *madrasahs* with similar characteristics has also been minimal. For instance, MTs An-Nur 1 and MTs An-Nur 3 two private institutions in Garut Regency, both with ‘A’ accreditation and a strong Islamic educational culture offer compelling cases for comparative analysis. These *madrasahs* provide an opportunity to investigate how *thaharah* skill assessments are designed, implemented, and utilized in fostering students' religious character.

The novelty of this study lies in its in-depth exploration of the implementation process of worship practice assessment within *fiqh* instruction, focusing specifically on the topic of *thaharah* under the umbrella of the *Merdeka Curriculum*. The research not only examines the instruments used but also analyzes how these assessments align with the holistic education paradigm that emphasizes life skills, values, and spiritual habituation. It further highlights managerial and contextual factors that influence the success of authentic assessments, including teacher preparedness, the role of school leadership, and students' responses to practice-based evaluation

By conducting a comparative case study of MTs An-Nur 1 and MTs An-Nur 3, this research aims to: (1) map the patterns and practices of *thaharah* skill assessment implemented by *fiqh* teachers in both institutions; (2) identify supporting and inhibiting factors in the application of religious practice assessments; and (3) develop a contextual, applicable assessment model for *thaharah* skills that aligns with the principles of *Merdeka Belajar* and the *Pancasila Student Profile*. Through this approach, the study seeks to make a concrete contribution to the development of Islamic religious education assessment systems that not only measure but also shape students, as part of a broader transformation toward more authentic, reflective, and impactful religious education.

## 2 Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a comparative case study design [13]. A qualitative approach was chosen as it allows for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of implementing religious practical skill assessments (*Thaharah*) within its complex and natural social and pedagogical contexts. The case study design enabled an in-depth exploration of two *madrasahs* that share similar characteristics but demonstrate different patterns of assessment implementation. The study focused on MTs An-Nur 1 and MTs An-Nur 3 in Malangbong Subdistrict, Garut Regency, selected purposively based on their level of readiness and the uniqueness of their assessment practices [14], [15].

The research subjects consisted of *fiqh* teachers, school principals, and relevant instructional documents. Informants were selected purposively, considering their direct involvement in the planning, execution, and evaluation of *Thaharah* practical skill assessments. The research focused on providing a detailed description of the strategies, challenges, and successes in implementing authentic assessments within the context of the *Merdeka Curriculum*.

Data were collected using methodological triangulation techniques, including participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Participatory observation was conducted to capture real-time *Thaharah* practice activities, including teacher-student interactions and the use of assessment instruments during actual learning situations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and principals to explore their perceptions, strategies, and challenges in implementing authentic assessments. Document analysis covered lesson plans (*Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran* or RPP), skill assessment rubrics, and accreditation reports to evaluate the consistency between planned documents and the actual implementation of assessments [16], [17].

In this study, the researcher served as the primary instrument, responsible for data collection, field interaction interpretation, and the construction of analytical narratives. To support a systematic procedure, auxiliary instruments such as interview guides, observation sheets, and document analysis formats were also used [18], [19].

To ensure data validity, the study adhered to the four qualitative validity criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was maintained through source and method triangulation, as well as member checking with key informants. Transferability was achieved through rich contextual descriptions, while dependability and confirmability were supported by systematic and reflective research documentation (audit trail) [20].

Data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach through three main stages: theme identification, meaning categorization, and contextual interpretation. The analysis process was conducted concurrently with data collection to maintain sensitivity to field dynamics. An inductive procedure based on grounded theory was used to draw meaningful patterns from open data, ensuring that the analysis results authentically represent the lived experiences of each *madrasah*.

The study was conducted from February to June 2025, encompassing the preparation, field data collection, analysis, and reporting stages. Through this approach,

the study aims to provide empirical contributions to the development of relevant, applicable, and contextually grounded religious skill assessment practices that align with the spirit of the *Merdeka Curriculum*.

### 3 Results

#### 3.1 Assessment Instrument Design and Validity

Based on the findings at MTs An-Nur 1, the *fiqh* teacher has developed a relatively comprehensive rubric for assessing practical *Thaharah* skills. The rubric outlines students' observable behaviors when performing *wudu*, *tayammum*, and *ghusl*, covering step-by-step procedures, movement completeness, and conformity with Islamic legal guidelines. The analyzed rubric document indicates a systematic effort to break down each student action into specific performance indicators. However, affective components such as awareness of personal cleanliness after *wudu*, spiritual intention, and reverence (*khushu'*) were absent. In contrast, the teacher at MTs An-Nur 3 employed a much simpler rubric, consisting solely of a checklist for physical movements without any assessment of students' understanding of worship's meaning or religious attitudes.

This difference in rubric structure reflects the varying levels of teacher comprehension regarding the framework of authentic assessment under the *Merdeka Curriculum*. On one hand, MTs An-Nur 1 demonstrates a shift toward performance-based assessment design. Nevertheless, a critical gap remains: the absence of affective indicators results in an imbalance within the instrument. When the psychomotor domain dominates while the cognitive and affective domains are neglected, the instrument suffers from a lack of content validity. In the context of *fiqh* education, *Thaharah* is not merely a technical skill but a holistic spiritual competence encompassing understanding, internal disposition, and physical execution.

According to assessment design theory, a well-constructed authentic assessment must evaluate the entire construct of the learning objectives. Students must not only perform *wudu* correctly, but also comprehend its spiritual significance and exhibit cleanliness, orderliness, and discipline in daily worship. If the assessment instrument fails to include cognitive and affective indicators, the evaluation becomes biased and fails to reflect holistic competence. This directly impacts instructional interventions, as teachers lack comprehensive data to design appropriate follow-up actions [21].

In an interview, the *fiqh* teacher at MTs An-Nur 1 stated that the focus on technical aspects was due to time constraints and the convenience of direct observation in the classroom:

“If we add attitude-based components, the assessment becomes more subjective and time-consuming, and the time is limited,” (Interview, June 15, 2025).

This illustrates that the selection of rubric indicators is influenced not only by pedagogical considerations but also by practical constraints encountered in the field. However, this rationale may lead to a dilution of the comprehensive essence of *fiqh* assessment, which ideally integrates all educational domains.

To strengthen content validity, rubric development should follow a series of scientific procedures. First, competency blueprinting is needed to ensure coverage of all taxonomic domains (cognitive, affective, psychomotor). Second, expert review should involve *fiqh* lecturers and educational assessment experts to examine the alignment between indicators, learning objectives, and Islamic values. Third, pilot testing on a sample of students can evaluate rubric clarity and inter-rater consistency. Finally, iterative revisions should be conducted to enhance instrument precision and applicability.

Documentation from MTs An-Nur 1 showed no evidence of external validation or systematic pilot testing. As such, the existing rubric remains a functional draft that does not fully meet competency-based educational assessment standards. In contrast, rubric development models in vocational or technical practice assessments (Arifin & Kristanto, 2022) have already integrated both performance criteria and work attitude values. Religious practice rubrics in *madrassahs* have yet to reach such depth. Yet, spiritual values and consistent worship habits are integral components of the *Pancasila Student Profile*, particularly the dimension of faith and devotion to God Almighty.

This condition highlights the urgent need to equip *fiqh* teachers with training in authentic instrument development grounded in an integrative curriculum approach. Teachers must recognize that an instrument is not merely a formal measurement tool but also a vehicle for character education that internalizes religious values in the learning process. With a valid and holistic rubric, teachers can provide more targeted feedback not only on technical aspects of worship but also on students' spiritual attitudes and values.

As part of a *madrassah's* internal quality assurance system, the development of religious skill assessment instruments should be a collaborative effort involving teachers, vice principals, and curriculum teams. From a school management perspective, this reflects an instructional leadership approach that promotes data-driven improvements in teaching quality. When rubrics are collaboratively developed and standardized, the assessment process becomes more transparent, objective, and impactful in shaping students' religious character. This aligns with the goals of the *Merdeka Curriculum*, which places character education and spirituality at the core of learning.

Therefore, the validity of *Thaharah* practical assessment instruments is central to ensuring the effectiveness of comprehensive *fiqh* education. Rubrics that focus solely on physical movements without addressing meaning and spiritual attitude risk reducing the value of religious education. To address this challenge, commitment is needed from teachers, school leadership, and policymakers to develop an integrated assessment system in line with the spirit of *Merdeka Belajar* liberating learning from mere formality toward the authentic formation of religious individuals.

### **3.2 Level of Fidelity in the Implementation of Thaharah Practice Assessment**

Based on observations and interviews conducted at the two research sites, significant differences were identified in the consistency of implementing religious skill assessments, particularly for *Thaharah*. At MTs An-Nur 1, the *fiqh* teacher regularly

conducted *wudu* demonstrations and assessed each student's performance using a prepared checklist. These assessments were not limited to formal examinations but were also integrated into regular learning activities. In contrast, at MTs An-Nur 3, practice assessments were only carried out during the end-of-semester exams, with no formative daily or weekly evaluations accompanying the learning process.

Documentation from MTs An-Nur 1 revealed a learning schedule that specifically allocated time for worship practice and student observation. Teachers recorded assessment results in individual portfolios and used the data to provide immediate feedback. One teacher stated:

“Every week we have practical sessions. Each student comes forward to be evaluated on their movements. Afterwards, I give notes and suggestions.” (*Fiqh* Teacher, MTs An-Nur 1, interview, June 17, 2025)

Conversely, a teacher at MTs An-Nur 3 explained that most of the class time was used for theoretical content, with practical assessment only conducted once per semester:

“We assess practice during the final exam only, because it's difficult to allocate time if every week we have to do practice sessions for everyone.” (*Fiqh* Teacher, MTs An-Nur 3, interview, June 18, 2025)

This contrast reflects a variation in the level of implementation fidelity, i.e., the degree to which authentic assessments are carried out in accordance with the design of the *Merdeka Curriculum*. High fidelity implies that assessments are not merely formalities but reflect pedagogical principles that support meaningful and continuous learning. In this regard, MTs An-Nur 1 demonstrated relatively high fidelity, whereas MTs An-Nur 3 exhibited low fidelity.

According to implementation research theory, fidelity consists of several dimensions: adherence (content alignment), dosage (frequency), quality of delivery, and participant engagement [22], [23]. The findings show that MTs An-Nur 1 was more consistent in fulfilling these dimensions, especially in terms of assessment frequency and delivery quality, while MTs An-Nur 3 implemented assessments sporadically and with limited depth.

From a pedagogical perspective, continuous assessment is crucial in shaping students' religious habits. When conducted regularly and coupled with feedback, assessment serves not only as a measure of achievement but also as a medium for value internalization and spiritual reflection. Hwang refers to this as *instructionally embedded assessment* assessments that are integrated within the learning process and have a long-term impact on behavior change. In the context of *Thaharah*, this means students do not merely learn how to perform *wudu*, but also develop the habit of maintaining ritual purity in daily life.

Conversely, ceremonial or purely administrative implementation risks reducing assessment to a mere formality. This contradicts the spirit of the *Merdeka Curriculum*, which emphasizes reflective, contextual, and transformative learning. When assessments are confined to end-of-semester exams without follow-up, teachers lose the opportunity to identify student weaknesses early and provide timely intervention.

Low implementation fidelity also reflects a lack of structural support, including insufficient time allocation, inadequate teacher training, and classroom management

that does not accommodate ongoing evaluation. This indicates the need for intervention by school leadership and curriculum supervisors to ensure that religious practice assessments are implemented not only as administrative obligations but as pedagogical strategies that contribute to the formation of students' religious character.

Thus, the fidelity of authentic *Thaharah* assessments is a critical indicator of the effectiveness of *Merdeka Curriculum* implementation. *Madrasahs* that successfully integrate assessments consistently and reflectively are more likely to foster strong religious character in students. In contrast, institutions that conduct assessments sporadically require support and mentoring to develop an assessment system that is more contextualized, continuous, and meaningful both spiritually and pedagogically.

### 3.3 The Impact of Authentic Assessment on Students' Skill Improvement

Analysis of portfolio documents and teacher assessment records revealed a significant improvement in *Thaharah* practice skills among students at MTs An-Nur 1. Over the course of one semester, students' average scores increased by 25%, particularly in the areas of movement sequence, accuracy of practice, and the display of reverence (*khushu'*) during worship. This improvement was not limited to high-performing students but was also evident among those with moderate and lower initial abilities, indicating an equitable impact of consistently and systematically implemented authentic assessments.

In contrast, students at MTs An-Nur 3 demonstrated an average improvement of only 10% during the same period. This difference closely correlates with the assessment implementation model. At An-Nur 3, practice assessments were only conducted during end-of-semester exams, without formative evaluation or reflective processes throughout the semester. Teachers did not regularly observe students' performance, leaving no opportunity for immediate intervention or correction. As a result, students' skill development progressed more slowly and less purposefully.

The assessment model at An-Nur 1 reflects a *feedback loop* mechanism, wherein students receive immediate feedback following practice sessions and are guided to correct mistakes directly. This process enables the development of worship skills through consistent positive reinforcement. Castaneda et al argue that feedback loops are a key component of effective formative assessment, as they offer students the opportunity to learn from mistakes without waiting for final evaluations [24].

Furthermore, the assessment approach at An-Nur 1 aligns with the principles of Competency-Based Learning (CBL). In CBL, assessment functions not only as a measurement tool but also as a means to ensure that every student reaches the targeted competencies through demonstrated performance. Authentic assessment, in this case, serves a dual role: as a learning tool and as a benchmark for competency attainment. Teachers are not merely asking "can the student perform?" but also "how did they reach that level?"

A supporting factor that enhanced the impact of assessment at An-Nur 1 was the favorable physical condition of the school. Clean water was consistently available, the *wudu* facilities were spacious and hygienic, and supporting materials such as soap and hand dryers were readily accessible. This well-organized environment facilitated

smooth and comfortable worship practices, enabling students to focus on their religious duties without technical disruptions.

Conversely, MTs An-Nur 3 faced major infrastructure limitations. Long queues at *wudu* stations, soap shortages, and frequent water supply interruptions made it difficult to conduct *Thaharah* practices effectively. Teachers struggled to manage assessment schedules, and students lacked adequate space and time to perform the rituals correctly. These conditions negatively impacted both the quality of observation and the frequency of feedback that teachers could provide.

Supriyadi found that *madrasahs* with limited religious practice facilities often face obstacles in conducting practical religious assessments, particularly in terms of continuity and objective observation. Similarly, Garnett emphasized that a conducive physical context including availability of facilities, spatial comfort, and infrastructure stability is a fundamental requirement for valid and sustainable performance-based assessments. When such infrastructure is lacking, the potential of authentic assessment cannot be fully realized, as teachers are unable to conduct observations according to pedagogical standards.

Therefore, the improvement of students' *Thaharah* skills is not solely determined by the assessment instrument itself, but also by the frequency of assessments, the quality of feedback, and the supporting conditions within the school environment. MTs An-Nur 1 demonstrates that consistent, responsive assessment practices supported by adequate infrastructure can make *fiqh* learning an effective means for developing deep and sustainable worship skills. In contrast, when assessments are sporadic and unsupported by appropriate physical and pedagogical contexts, their impact on skill development becomes significantly limited.

### 3.4 Factors Supporting the Implementation of Thaharah Practice Assessment

The implementation of Thaharah practice assessment at MTs An-Nur 1 was supported by several key internal and structural factors. Observations and interviews revealed that the success of assessment practices at this madrasah was not solely determined by the availability of assessment instruments or teaching schedules, but also by the active involvement of teachers, support from the school principal, and a strong religious culture embedded in the school environment. This combination of factors created a conducive ecosystem for the consistent application of authentic assessment.

The *fiqh* teacher at MTs An-Nur 1 demonstrated a high level of commitment to implementing practice-based assessment. This was evident in their routine efforts to design rubrics, conduct demonstrations, observe student practices, and provide direct feedback. In an interview, the teacher emphasized that practical assessment is an integral part of the teaching strategy, not just an administrative requirement:

“I schedule at least two practice sessions a month so that students get used to it and I can monitor their progress.” (Fiqh Teacher, MTs An-Nur 1, Interview, June 17, 2025)

Support from the principal also played a pivotal role. The principal of MTs An-Nur 1 actively facilitated practical learning activities by allocating dedicated time for teacher training and providing adequate worship practice spaces. Documentation from



the school's program plans indicated an integration between fiqh instruction and projects aimed at strengthening students' religious profiles. This reflects an alignment between the school's leadership vision and its classroom learning strategies. From the perspective of instructional leadership theory, school leaders who focus on learning actively foster an environment that supports both academic success and character development (Hallinger & Heck, 2010).

Beyond personal and leadership factors, infrastructure also contributed significantly. MTs An-Nur 1 offered clean, well-organized, and accessible wudu facilities. Clean water, soap, and hand-drying tools were consistently available, along with visual instructional guides placed near the practice area. This environment enabled assessment to be conducted objectively and efficiently. These findings align with Garnett's assertion that performance-based assessment requires a physical space conducive to accurate observation and comfortable learning [25].

School culture further reinforced the implementation of practice assessments. At MTs An-Nur 1, religious practices such as wudu, dhuha prayer, and daily supplication recitations were part of the scheduled school routine. This helped internalize spiritual values among students and normalized practical assessments as part of daily habits rather than burdensome tasks. This approach reflects the principle of embedded learning, in which learning occurs naturally through students' everyday activities[26].

Another supporting factor was the openness to professional development. The fiqh teacher at MTs An-Nur 1 actively participated in online training sessions and teacher working groups (KKG) focused on competency-based assessment strategies. In an interview, the teacher mentioned having adapted an assessment rubric from a Ministry of Education online training module and piloted it in class:

"I made some adjustments based on student conditions, but the basic structure came from the Merdeka Belajar training module," the teacher explained. This readiness to enhance professional skills aligns with the concept of teacher agency, which refers to the ability of educators to manage changes in teaching practices reflectively and adaptively.

Equally important was support from parents and the surrounding community, which reinforced the religious values taught at school. In madrasah parent communication forums, the importance of maintaining worship habits at home including wudu and personal cleanliness was regularly emphasized. This collaboration between home and school extended the impact of spiritual education beyond the classroom, strengthening assessment not only as a tool for measuring learning outcomes but as a vehicle for character formation.

With the combined presence of competent teachers, supportive leadership, adequate facilities, a strong religious school culture, and community partnership, the implementation of Thaharah practice assessment at MTs An-Nur 1 was carried out effectively. These findings suggest that authentic assessment in religious education requires more than well-designed instruments; it must also be supported by a comprehensive enabling ecosystem. Within the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, such systemic support is essential for ensuring that assessment serves as a truly transformative educational process not merely an administrative obligation.

## 4 Discussion

The research findings indicate that the design and implementation of Thaharah practice assessment at MTs An-Nur 1 align consistently with the principles of authentic assessment as outlined in the Merdeka Curriculum. The teacher has made substantial efforts to develop assessment rubrics that reflect the technical stages of ritual practice in accordance with Islamic guidelines. However, affective aspects such as students' spiritual awareness and religious attitudes are not yet fully accommodated in the assessment instruments. This imbalance between the psychomotor domain and the cognitive-affective domains points to a limitation in the content validity of the instruments used.

In the context of Authentic Assessment theory [27], meaningful assessment not only measures what students know or can do, but also how they apply understanding and values in real-life contexts. When assessments focus solely on technical execution, the spiritual value-oriented essence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is diminished. This supports critiques in the literature that conventional evaluation approaches often fail to capture students' development in attitudes and character especially within religious education settings.

From the implementation perspective, MTs An-Nur 1 demonstrated a higher level of fidelity compared to MTs An-Nur 3. This was evident in the frequency of practice-based assessments, the integration of assessments into routine learning, and the quality of direct feedback provided by the teacher. According to Implementation Research theory [22], [23], the success of educational policy implementation such as that of the Merdeka Curriculum is not merely judged by formal policy adoption, but also by fidelity of implementation (adherence), quality of delivery, and student engagement.

The difference in fidelity levels further illustrates that assessment practices do not always align with the curriculum designs outlined in policy documents. At MTs An-Nur 3, practice assessments were carried out incidentally and administratively, rather than as part of a reflective learning process. This demonstrates that the shift toward competency-based learning policies has not fully transformed into classroom practices. According to Policy Implementation Gap theory, the gap between policy design and practice is often caused by limited professional support, time constraints, or insufficient implementation capacity.

Furthermore, the impact of authentic assessment on students' skill development was more significant at MTs An-Nur 1. With a consistent formative approach, students received immediate feedback, allowing for real-time correction and reinforcement of competencies. This is in line with the principles of Competency-Based Learning [28], which emphasize that learning should focus on sustained, individualized mastery of skills. Within this framework, assessment is not merely a tool for measuring outcomes but is embedded as an integral part of the instructional strategy.

In addition to instrument design and frequency of implementation, successful assessment at MTs An-Nur 1 was also supported by structural factors, such as adequate facilities and strong school leadership. The school principal played a pivotal role in allocating time and space for practice sessions and ensuring the integration of religious

values within the school's broader educational programs. Within the framework of Instructional Leadership[29], leaders focused on learning foster environments that support professional development and the continuous improvement of student outcomes.

School culture and community engagement also played a vital role in reinforcing the Thaharah practice assessment. Routine religious activities, parental involvement in promoting worship habits at home, and consistent school policies supporting character education created a comprehensive learning ecosystem. This approach reflects the principle of Embedded Learning (Dewey, 1938), where learning is naturally integrated into students' daily lives and sustained over time.

Thus, this study affirms that religious practice assessment within the Merdeka Curriculum framework cannot be separated from three core components: (1) the quality of comprehensive instrument design, (2) consistency and accuracy of classroom implementation, and (3) the support of a holistic school ecosystem encompassing leadership, infrastructure, learning culture, and community involvement. When these three components operate synergistically, authentic assessment becomes a transformative educational process that shapes character, rather than a mere administrative tool for evaluation.

## 5 Conclusion

This study reveals that the implementation of Thaharah practice assessment within the context of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* is influenced by the quality of the assessment instrument design, the level of implementation fidelity, and the support of the school ecosystem. MTs An-Nur 1 demonstrated a more systematic, reflective, and consistent assessment practice compared to MTs An-Nur 3. The assessment rubric at An-Nur 1 accommodated psychomotor aspects in detail, although it did not fully address the affective and cognitive domains, which are essential in Fikih education. This imbalance indicates the need to strengthen content validity in instrument development.

In terms of implementation, the fidelity at MTs An-Nur 1 was reflected in the high frequency of assessments, the quality of immediate feedback, and active teacher involvement in observing student performance. Assessment was not limited to end-of-term evaluations but was embedded in the learning process. This had a direct impact on improving students' religious practice skills, as evidenced by the increased portfolio scores.

This success was supported by key enabling factors such as visionary school leadership, a strong religious school culture, adequate infrastructure, and community and parental involvement. These factors created an ecosystem that allowed authentic assessment to be carried out not merely as an administrative obligation but as a transformative form of character education.

Thus, to ensure that Thaharah practice assessments are truly effective in shaping students' spiritual competence, simultaneous efforts are required to improve instrument design, enhance teachers' capacity in conducting formative assessments, and build a supportive school environment. These three components are essential for meaningful

and contextual implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka, aligned with the values of Islamic education.

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