CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: A Qualitative Research Method

This research is utilizing a qualitative research method that is divided into two major phases: the first phase involved a Content Analysis procedure and the second phase involved a Curriculum Evaluation to test its theoretical validity. Due to its qualitative nature, the research design is described as an 'emergent' research design.

Research Procedure

The research procedure is divided into two major phases:

Phase One: Content Analysis Research

Phase Two: Curriculum Evaluation

Phase One: Content Analysis Research

Content analysis is a research method that permits a researcher to study human behavior unobtrusively, without being directly involved with people or situations. It is an indirect study of human behavior through an analysis of their written or unwritten communications. In relation to the written texts, it consists of both: the manifest and the latent content underlying the texts. Accordingly, the researcher will analyze both the manifest content and the latent content of the selected texts. The manifest content i.e., the surface structure of the message will be analyzed through the countable words and expressions of the primary sources. While the latent content, which refers to the deep structural meaning of the message, will be studied through the secondary sources and supportive documents that interprets the underlying meaning of the texts. In order to explore the latent or the interpretative understanding, the manifest or literal understanding

of the texts will be accompanied by the analysis of its context, authorship, audiences, intention and purposes, the author's interests, genre, style and tones as well as its presentation and appearance. In every content analysis process, six questions need to be addressed:

1. Which data are analyzed?

2. How are they defined?

3. What is the population from which they are drawn?

4. What is the context relative to which the data are analyzed?

5. What are the boundaries of the analysis?

6. What is the target of the inferences?

Hence, there are four stages in the process of content analysis:

Stage One :   Decides the sources of data

Stage Two :   Samples the sources

Stage Three: Develops a coding scheme for the material being analyzed

Stage Four: Decides how to measure the content of the material

Stage One: Sources of Data

The materials chosen will respectively support theoretical framework of two selected scholars in this research: Ibn Miskawayh and al-Ghazali. The two selected texts chosen for this purpose were *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq wa Tathīr al-A'rāq* of Ibn Miskawayh and *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* of al-Ghazali. These two texts represent Muslims scholarly literature on ethics and character development. The analysis will be thus focusing on their discourses on educational ethics and character, particularly on the ethical aspects of child education.

Stage Two: Sampling

The researcher will employ purposive sampling to determine the representative documents in order to fulfill the research objectives. For this purpose, chapters on Ethics discussed in the two classical Arabic texts have been chosen. Researcher will be focusing on the comparison between the two samplings:

1. Ibn Miskawayh's discourse on 'Ethics' (*al-Khuluq*) in Second Chapter of his *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq;*

2. Al-Ghazali's discourse on 'Disciplining the Soul, Refinement of Character and Curing the Sickness of the Heart' (*Kitāb riyādat al-nafs wa tahdhīb al-akhlāq wa mu'ālajat amrād al-qalb*) in his third volume of *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn.*

Stage Three: Developing A Coding Scheme

The researcher will be utilizing an *emergent coding* system where categories are developed in line with emerging theory and analysis. With the emergent coding, categories are established following some preliminary analysis of the data. A coding scheme is supposed to be formulated based on four major components of education: objective, content, method and evaluation of certain curriculum. However due to limited timeframe, the researcher will only concentrate on the two components: the objectives and the curriculum content of children's character education. Hence, in first phase of this research, the coding scheme is formulated to answer the first question:

Phase One:

RQ 1: What are the objectives and curriculum content for children's character development proposed by Ibn Miskawayh and al-Ghazali?

The above Research Question (RQ) is further divided into two sub-research questions (SRQ):

SRQ 1: What are the objectives and curriculum content for children's character development proposed by Ibn Miskawayh in *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq wa Tathīr al-A'rāq*?

SRQ 2: What are the objectives and curriculum content for children's character development proposed by al-Ghazali in *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*?

The above question suggests categories for analysis that will be broken down into smaller coding units. The researcher will further identify the coding units or terminologies from the texts that will fit into each category namely: the Objectives (of curriculum content) and the Curriculum Content. However, due to emerging nature of our content analysis research, these coding categories are flexible. They will be progressively expanded, enhanced and systematized throughout the analysis process.

Table 3

Sample of the Coding Categories for Character Education in Tahdhīb and Ihyā'

Objectives	Contents
Khuluq (Character)	*Adab* (Ethics)
Fadā'il (Virtues)	*'Ilm* (Knowledge)
*Hikma (*Wisdom)	*Sharī'a* (Religious Law)
Sa'āda (Happiness)	*Ta'dīb* (Discipline)
	Ta'līm (Learning)
	I'tiyād (Habit Formation)

Stage Four: Semantic Analysis of Content Materials

Since the objective of this research is to design a curriculum content for children's character education, the quantification of content materials is not applicable. Hence, the researcher opts for a qualitative or non-frequency analysis of the research. This is due to the need of in-depth linguistic and semantic analysis of the Arabic classical texts. The attempt is made to identify and examine the main elements i.e. terminologies that will fit into the above coding categories. The terminologies will be defined and further verified by authoritative translations and commentaries of the texts. In this case, the common word-frequency count technique or the quantitative measurement of terminologies will be inapplicable since it neglects the whole conceptual framework, the context, the latent content and the unwritten understanding of the Arabic classical texts. Therefore, the researcher opts for a semantic content analysis approach for this research which extends far beyond the word-frequency counts.

Data Collection

A checklist (instead of questionnaire or survey form) is required for data-collection exercise at this stage, since it is an unobtrusive kind of research. Unobtrusive measures are data-collection procedures that involve no intrusion into the naturally occurring course of events. In most instances, it requires some form of recordkeeping. In this case, the content analysis research will primarily based on the two classical Arabic texts. These textual analyses will be further supported by authoritative translations and commentaries. These major sources are categorized into three categories:

i. Two classical Arabic texts as primary sources:

- Second discourse on Ethics (*al-Khuluq)* in *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq wa Tathīr al-A'rāq* by Ibn Miskawayh.

- Second chapter of the third volume of *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* - concerning Disciplining of the Soul and Refinement of Character written by al-Ghazali.

ii. Authoritative translations of the above classical texts as secondary sources:

- *Refinement of Character,* a translated version of *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq,* written by Zurayk (1968) published by American University of Beirut.

- *Al-Ghazali on Disciplining of the Soul and Breaking the Two Desires: Books XXII and XXIII of The Revival of The Religious Sciences*, a translated version of *Kitāb Riyādat al-Nafs & Kitāb Kasr al-Shahwatayn* translated by Winter (1995) and published by The Islamic Texts Society of Cambridge.

iii. Authoritative commentaries of Ibn Miskawayh and al-Ghazali's ethical thought in order to achieve its semantic validity:

- *Ithāf al-Sādat al-Muttaqīn bi Sharh Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* written by Sayyid al-Zabidiy (d. 1205 A.H.).

- *Ethical Philosophy of Miskawayh,* a doctoral dissertation of M. Abdul Haq Ansari presented to Aligarh Muslim University in 1962.

- *Ethics of al-Ghazali*: *A Composite Ethics in Islam,* a revised version of a doctoral dissertation presented to University of Edinburgh in 1972 and published in 1978 by Muhammad Abul Quasem.

Data Analysis

There are two general categories of content analysis: conceptual analysis and relational analysis. As far as the data analysis of this research is concerned, it belongs to the second category i.e. relational analysis which has also been identified as semantic analysis. The focus of relational analysis is to study the semantic or meaningful relationships among the concepts in a text or 'ideational kernels' that can be thought of as symbols which acquire meaning through their connections to other symbols. The relational or semantic analysis of this research aims at achieving the semantic validity of the subject matter. In this case, the words or other coding units need to possess similar connotations in order for the classification to have a semantic validity.

In this research, our semantic analysis throughout the primary texts will be focusing on the second major component of curriculum - the curriculum content of character education. This coding formula is based on the categorical distinctions which define units by their membership in a class or category. Based on this coding formula, the objectives and curriculum content will be later divided into their sub-categories. For instance: one of the curriculum content is the teaching of *adab* (ethics) which can be further divided into its sub-categories: *adab* in relation to the Creator and *adab* in relation to the fellow human beings. These categorical distinctions will not ignore the meaningful semantic associations of the vocabularies throughout the texts. It will simultaneously analyze the conceptual relationships of the term *adab* and other important key-terms such as *'ilm* (knowledge), *'amal* (action), *ikhlās* (sincerity) etc. Network of semantic associations throughout the texts will comparatively represent a worldview which finally becomes a guideline to form certain contextual ideas. In this case, Ibn Miskawayh and al-Ghazali's worldview of ethics

and character education will be a guideline for the researcher to design a curriculum for children's character development.

It is hoped that the semantic analysis of the subject matter will finally serve as a guideline for designing a curriculum that focuses on the formation and development of character of our young Malaysian generation. This analysis aims at deriving a curriculum content for children's character development especially in relation to the Malays – the most affected group in relation to social transformation in Malaysia.
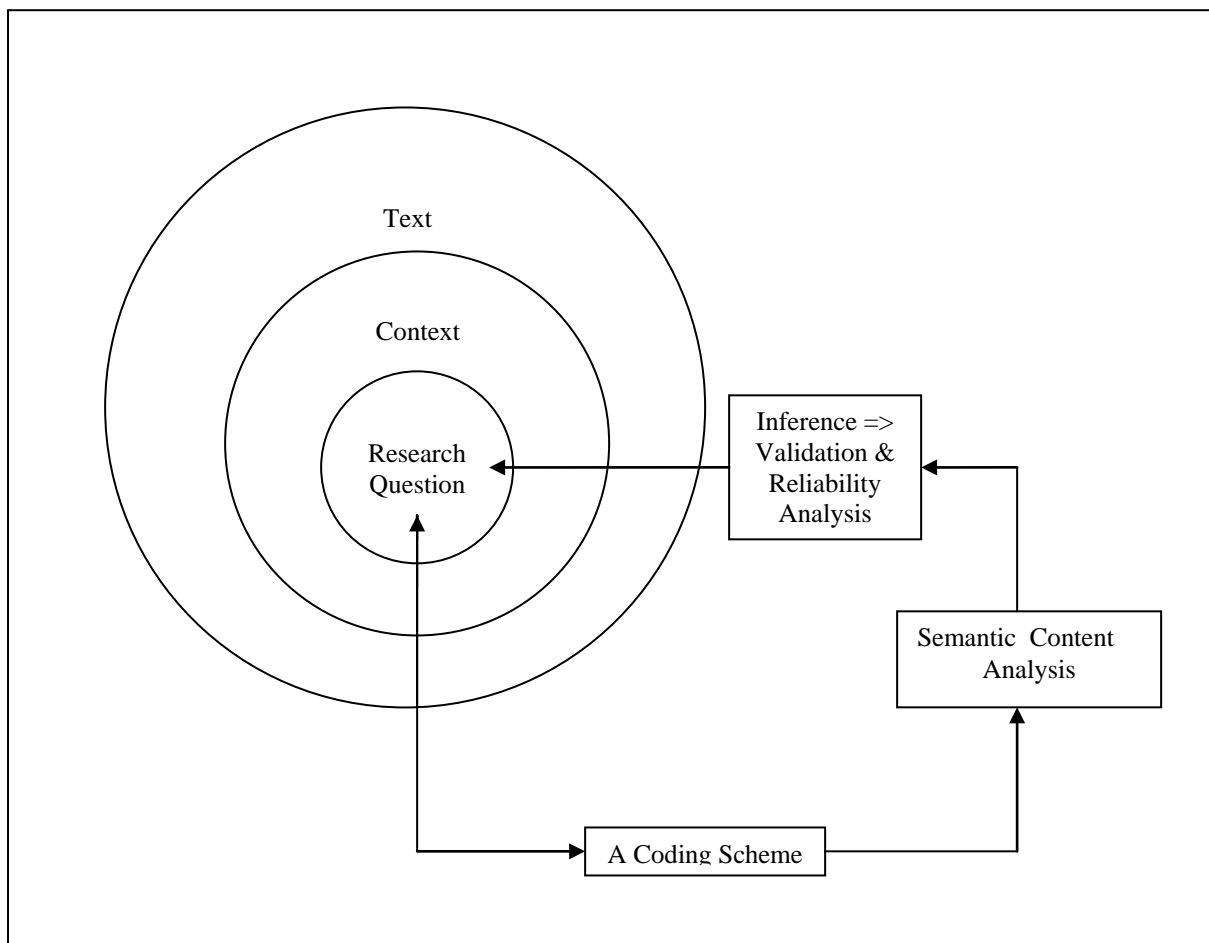

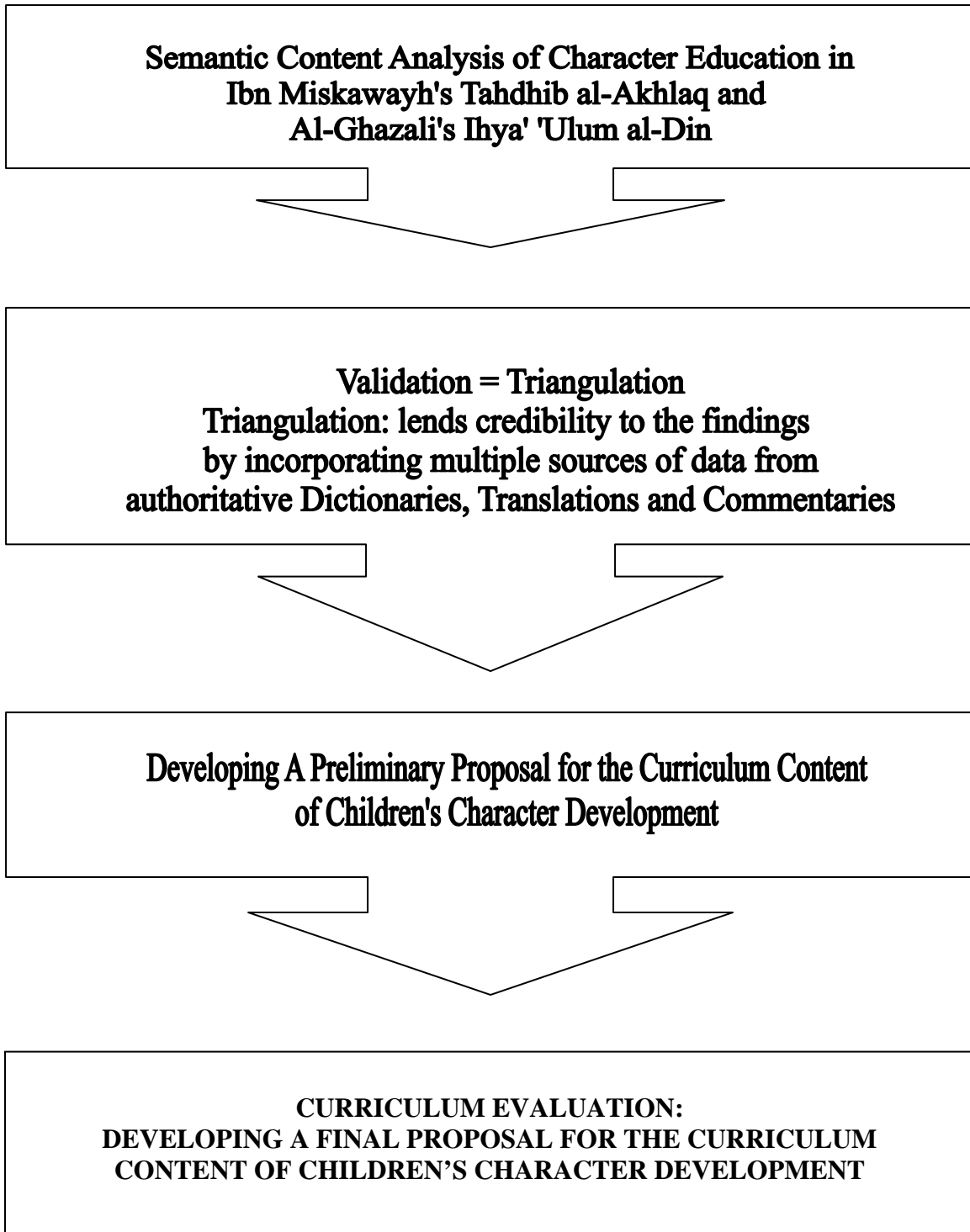*Figure 6.* The Semantic Content Analysis: A Research Design

Validity and Reliability Analysis

It is important to note that a methodology is employed in the service of a research question. As such, validation of inferences made on the basis of data from one analytic approach demands the use of multiple sources of information. In content analysis research, validation takes the form of triangulation. Triangulation lends credibility to the findings by incorporating multiple sources of data, methods, investigators, or theories. In this research, the analysis of primary texts will be validated by multiple sources of references, namely:

a. Authoritative Arabic and English Dictionaries such as *Tāj al-'Arūs*; *Lisān al-'Arab*; *Mu'jam Mufradāt li Alfāz al-Qur'ān*; *Al-Mawrid*; *Hans-Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*;

b. Translations of *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* and *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* mainly *The Refinement of Character* translated by Zurayk (1968) and *Al-Ghazali on Disciplining of the Soul and Breaking the Two Desires: Books XXII and XXIII of The Revival of The Religious Sciences* translated by Winter (1995).

c. Commentaries of *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* and *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* by al-Zabidiy (1989), al-Ansari (1964) and A. Quasem (1978).

Finally, the above validation and reliability process will lead to a guideline for developing a curriculum content for children's character development module. In the second phase of this research, the proposed curriculum content will be further evaluated and analyzed. The curriculum evaluation exercise will be based on the Stake Countenance Model of Evaluation (1967).

Semantic Content Analysis of Character Education in
Ibn Miskawayh's Tahdhib al-Akhlaq and
Al-Ghazali's Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din

Validation = Triangulation
Triangulation: lends credibility to the findings
by incorporating multiple sources of data from
authoritative Dictionaries, Translations and Commentaries

Developing A Preliminary Proposal for the Curriculum Content
of Children's Character Development

CURRICULUM EVALUATION:
DEVELOPING A FINAL PROPOSAL FOR THE CURRICULUM
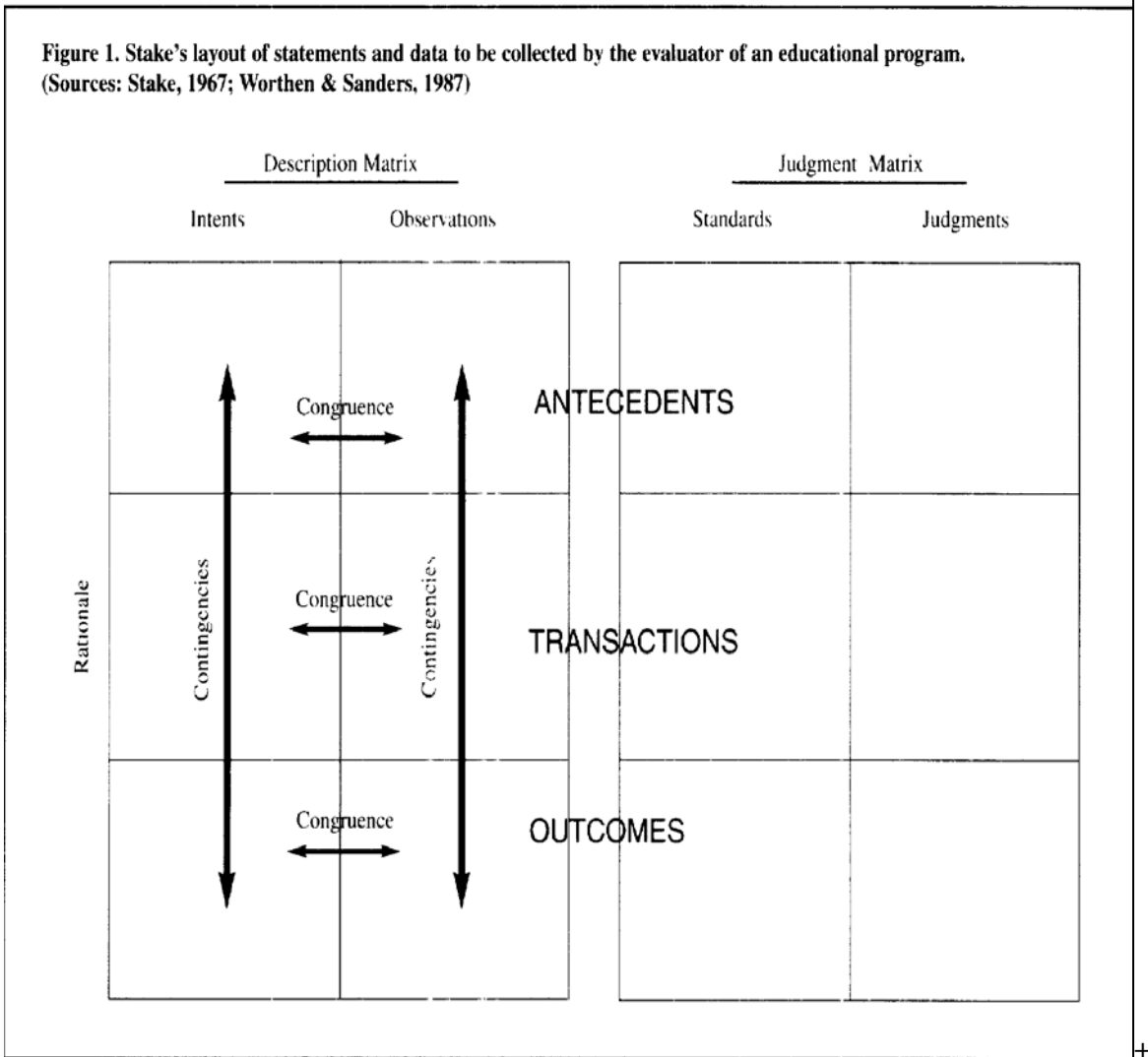CONTENT OF CHILDREN'S CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Figure 7. Flow of Data Analysis : Phase 1

Phase 2 : Curriculum Evaluation

In most educational research, it is not possible to conduct a true experimental research. The research designs that do not include random assignment are known as 'quasi-experimental designs'. They are used when true experimental designs are not feasible. The quasi-experimental approach recognizes that the researcher cannot dictate circumstances and needs to take the role of observing events 'as they naturally occur'.

Stake Countenance Model of Educational Evaluation

In second phase of this research therefore, the researcher will adopt a 'quasi-experimental' approach for the Curriculum Evaluation purposes. The researcher will utilize Stake Countenance Model (1967) to evaluate the proposed curriculum for children's character development. Robert Stake's Countenance Model also known as 'responsive evaluation' was originally formulated for curriculum studies in the late 1960's. It aims to capture the complexity of an educational innovation or change by comparing the intended and observed outcomes at varying levels of operation. The congruence between the intentional and the observational accounts provides the basis for judging the success or otherwise of the innovation, whilst at the same time allowing for the recording of unintended outcomes. Stake's Countenance Model of evaluation suggested matrices for descriptive and judgmental data to support the study of an evolving program across time, looking at the antecedents, transactions, as well as the intended and unintended outcomes of the program – See Figure 8.

Figure 1. Stake's layout of statements and data to be collected by the evaluator of an educational program.
(Sources: Stake, 1967; Worthen & Sanders, 1987)

Description Matrix   Judgment Matrix

Intents   Observations   Standards   Judgments

Congruence   ANTECEDENTS

Rationale

Contingencies   Congruence   Contingencies   TRANSACTIONS

Congruence   OUTCOMES

Figure 8. Stake's Countenance Model of Evaluation
Source: Stake, 1967; Worthen & Sanders, 1987 (p.7)

In the process of evaluation, data of the description and judgment of a program will be recorded and distinguished between the antecedent (before the evaluation), the transaction (during the evaluation) and the outcome data (after the evaluation). An antecedent is any condition existing prior to teaching and learning which may relate to the outcomes. The students and teachers' aptitudes, previous experiences, interest and willingness are some of the examples of complex antecedents.

The transactions are the countless encounters of students with teachers, student with student, author with reader, parent with counselor – the succession of engagements which comprise the process of education. For instance, the presentation of films, a class discussion, the working of homework problem, an explanation on the margin of a term paper, and the administration of a test. Meanwhile, the outcomes are referred to the consequences of educating – immediate and long-range, cognitive and conative, personal and community-wide. They include measurements of the impact of instruction on teachers, administrators, counselors, and others; for instance, the wear and tear of equipments, effects of the learning environment, cost incurred etc. (Stake, 1967). Antecedents, transactions and outcomes are the elements of evaluation statements shown in Figure 8 to have place in both description and judgment.

Stake's model of evaluation is built on two matrices. The first one is the Description Matrix: which includes (a) Intents of the program; and (b) Observations. The category listed as Intents refers to the goals set by the developers that are expected to be mastered by the participants before they leave the program. Observation indicates the descriptive facts collected by evaluators to assess whether the program intention is realized and whether significant unintended events occur. The second one is the Judgment Matrix which comprises of: (a) Standards; and (b) Judgments. The Standards, as referred to the model schematic constitutes the rules or guidelines against which the quality or value of the program and its outcomes are measured. The Judgments are statements of the effectiveness of a program and its components upon completion of the evaluation process.

Data Collection

In this research, data for curriculum evaluation will be gathered through various sources including:

a. Course Description

b. Students' Biographical Data

c. University Prospectus

d. Semi-structured Interview

e. Participant Observation

The Course Description, Students' Biographical Data and the University Prospectus will be analyzed basically to study the Intended Antecedents, Transactions and Outcomes while Semi-structured Interview and Participant Observation will be utilized to analyze the Observed Antecedents, Transactions and Outcomes.

In the evaluation process, the researcher will be directly involved as an educator and evaluator simultaneously. The evaluation process is planned to be accomplished within one semester or 10 weeks of the 'Parenting and Household Management' leadership co-curricular program organized by the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). In the first place, participants' biographical data will be collected to identify participants' personal and educational background, their basic knowledge about parent education, children's development, besides issues on ethics and morality. Then, a pre-test in the form of semi-structured interview will be conducted.

The next stage – beginning from first weekly meeting, a Curriculum Evaluation exercise will be adopted to evaluate feasibility of new course outline for Children's Character Development developed by the researcher during the first phase of this research.

The new curriculum content will be evaluated among the participants during the weekly meeting sessions. Finally, during the last meeting session (the 10th week), a post-test interview will be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum content.

Data Analysis

As far as the curriculum development stages is concerned, there are two kinds of evaluation: formative and summative evaluation. If the curricular material is not yet ready for distribution to classroom teachers, then the evaluation is formative. On the other hand, the summative evaluation deals with the evaluation of an existing curriculum – whether it fits to an existing school program and objectives. In the summative evaluation, the intended antecedents, transactions and outcomes of certain curriculum are analyzed – whether it is consistent with the resources, standards and goals of the school. Therefore it requires as much attention to the school as to the new curriculum. Since the proposed curriculum in this research is still in its formative stage, the researcher will emphasizes on the Descriptive Matrix, instead of the Judgment Matrix. A formative evaluator is more interested in the congruence between the Intended and the Observed Antecedents, Transactions and Outcomes (as listed in Figure 9), as a basis for guiding the development of present or future programs. In this research therefore, the congruence between the Intended Objectives and the Observed Objectives will be firstly analyzed. Similarly, the congruence between the Intended and the Observed Curriculum Content; as well as the Intended and the Observed Outcome will be further analyzed (see Figure 11). If the Intended Objectives, Content and Outcome initially outlined by the participants are achieved, the researcher will further study their strength and weakness. Finally, a new proposal for the Curriculum Content of Children's Character Development will be finalized (see Figure 12).
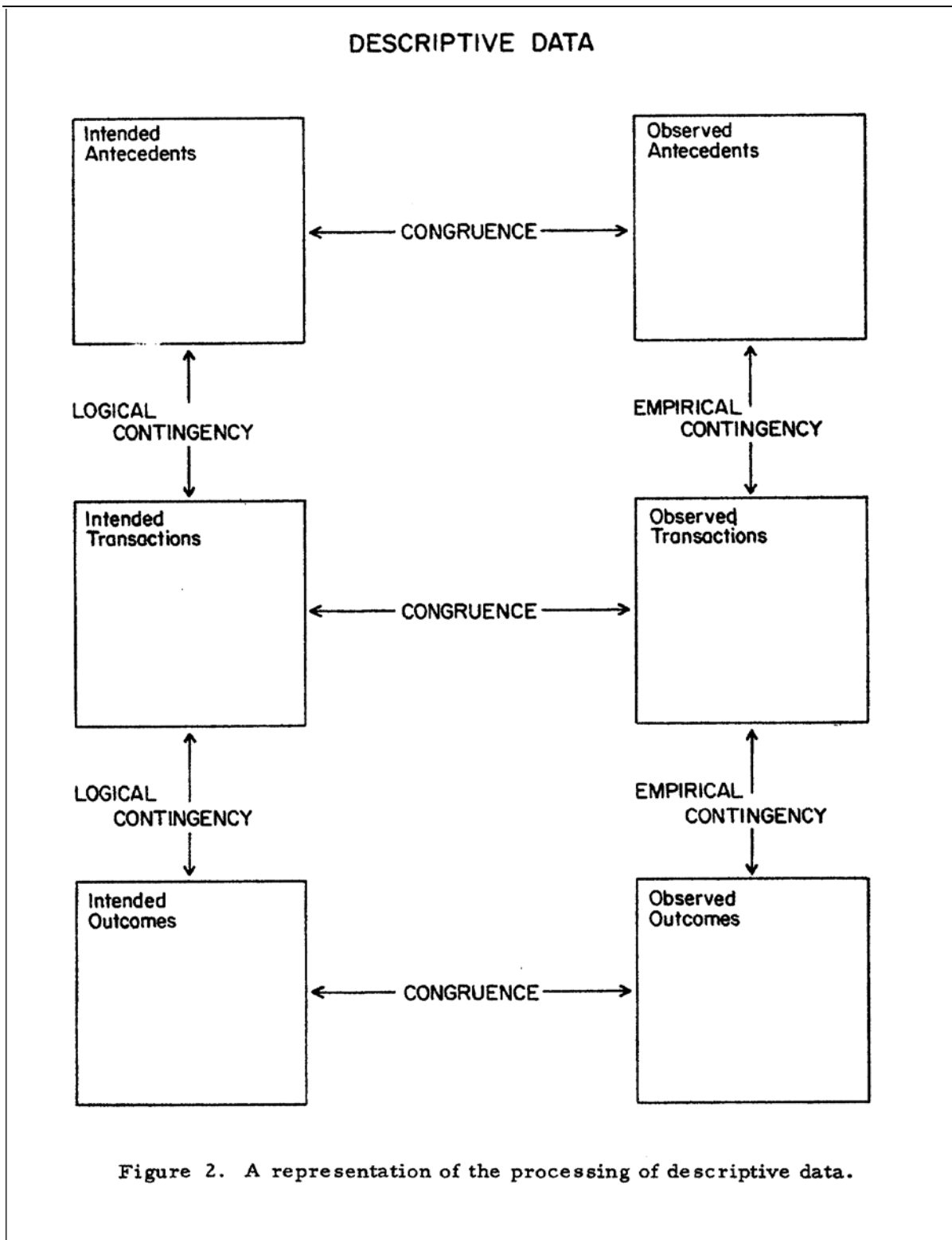
DESCRIPTIVE DATA

| Intended Antecedents | ←— CONGRUENCE —→ | Observed Antecedents |

LOGICAL CONTINGENCY

EMPIRICAL CONTINGENCY

| Intended Transactions | ←— CONGRUENCE —→ | Observed Transactions |

LOGICAL CONTINGENCY

EMPIRICAL CONTINGENCY

| Intended Outcomes | ←— CONGRUENCE —→ | Observed Outcomes |

Figure 2. A representation of the processing of descriptive data.
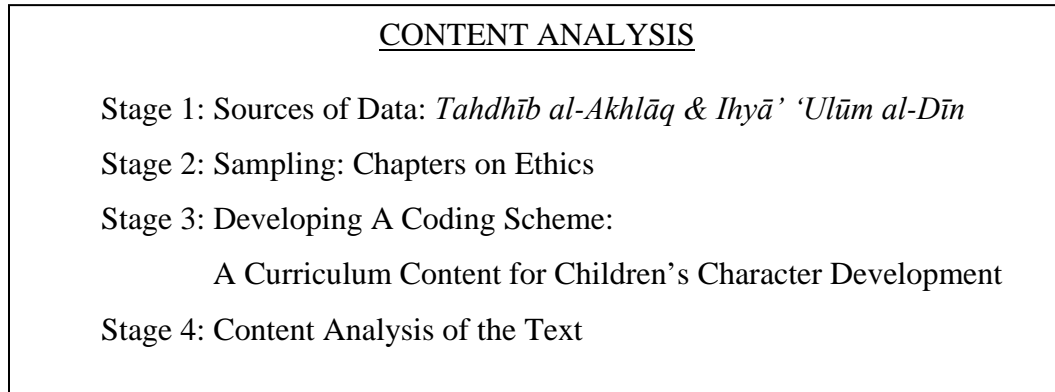
Figure 9. Phase 2: Curriculum Evaluation Model: Description Matrix

Source: Stake, 1967 (p.10)

SUMMARY OF DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

PHASE 1: CONTENT ANALYSIS

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Stage 1: Sources of Data: *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq & Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*

Stage 2: Sampling: Chapters on Ethics

Stage 3: Developing A Coding Scheme:

      A Curriculum Content for Children's Character Development

Stage 4: Content Analysis of the Text

A CURRICULUM CONTENT FOR CHILDREN'S CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT:
AN OUTLINE

PHASE 2:

CURRICULUM EVALUATION

Stake Countenance Evaluation Model

Formative Evaluation = Descriptive Matrix
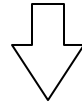
FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS
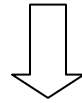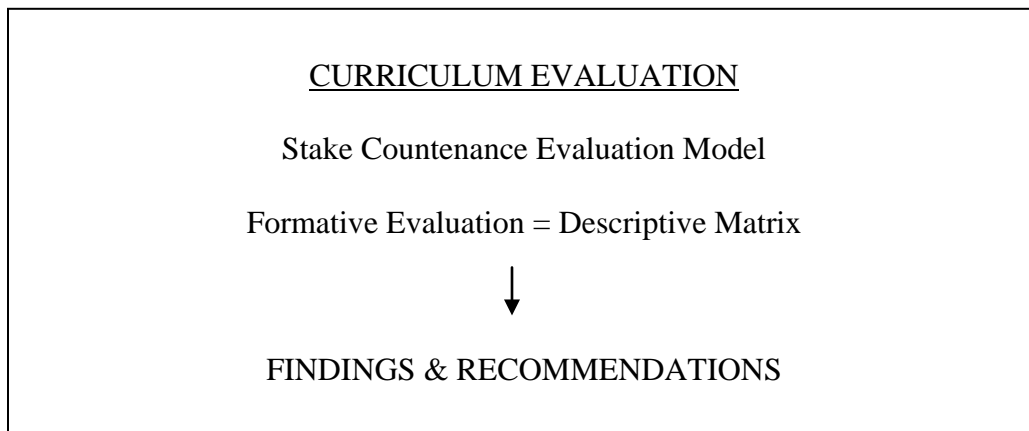
PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL: A CURRICULUM CONTENT FOR CHILDREN'S
CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Figure 10. Data Analysis Procedure

PHASE 1:
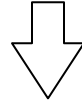**CONTENT ANALYSIS**

Stage 1: Sources of Data

    1. *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq wa Tathīr al-A'rāq*

    2. *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*

Stage 2: Sampling: Chapters on Ethics

    1. *Fasl fī Ta'dīb al-Ahdāth wa'l Sibyān* (Chapter on Education of Children and Youngsters)

    2. *Kitāb Riyādat al-Nafs wa Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq wa Mu'ālajat Amrād al-Qalb* (Chapter on Disciplining the Soul, Refinement of Character and Treatment of Spiritual Diseases)

Stage 3: Developing A Coding Scheme

    Curriculum Content for Children's Character Development
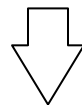
Stage 4: Content Analysis of the Text

    An outline of Curriculum Content for Children's Character Development Based on *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* and *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*

Figure 11. Data Analysis Procedure of Phase 1: Content Analysis

PHASE 2:

CURRICULUM EVALUATION

Pre-Test | Post-Test

| Intended Objectives of Curriculum Content | ← Congruence → | Observed Objectives of Curriculum Content |

↓ | ↓

| Intended Curriculum Content | ← Congruence → | Observed Content of Curriculum |

↓ | ↓

| Intended Outcome of Curriculum Content | ← Congruence → | Observed Outcome of Curriculum Content |
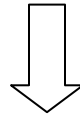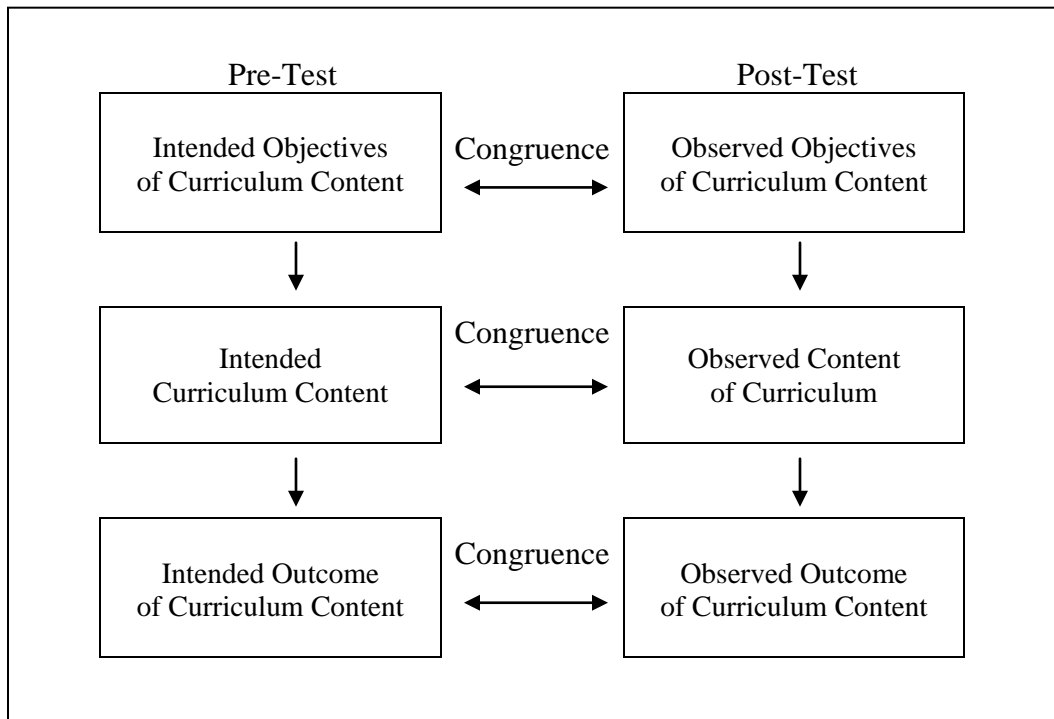
CONGRUENCE ANALYSIS:
A Congruence Analysis between the Intended and the Observed Objectives,
Curriculum Content and Outcome
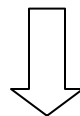
FINAL PROPOSAL:
Curriculum Content for Children's Character Development

Figure 12. Data Analysis Procedure of Phase 2: Curriculum Evaluation

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                    │    DATA ANALYSIS     │
                    └──────────────────────┘
                               │
                    ┌──────────────────────┐
                    │      PHASE 1:        │
                    │  CONTENT ANALYSIS    │
                    └──────────────────────┘
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| *Fasl fi Ta'dīb al-Ahdāth wa'l Sibyān* TAHDHIB AL-AKHLĀQ | *Kitāb Riyādat al-Nafs wa Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* IHYĀ' 'ULUM AL-DĪN |

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              ┌──────────────────────────┐
              │  CURRICULUM CONTENT:      │
              │  PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL     │
              └──────────────────────────┘
                          │
              ┌──────────────────────────┐
              │      PHASE 2:             │
              │  CURRICULUM EVALUATION    │
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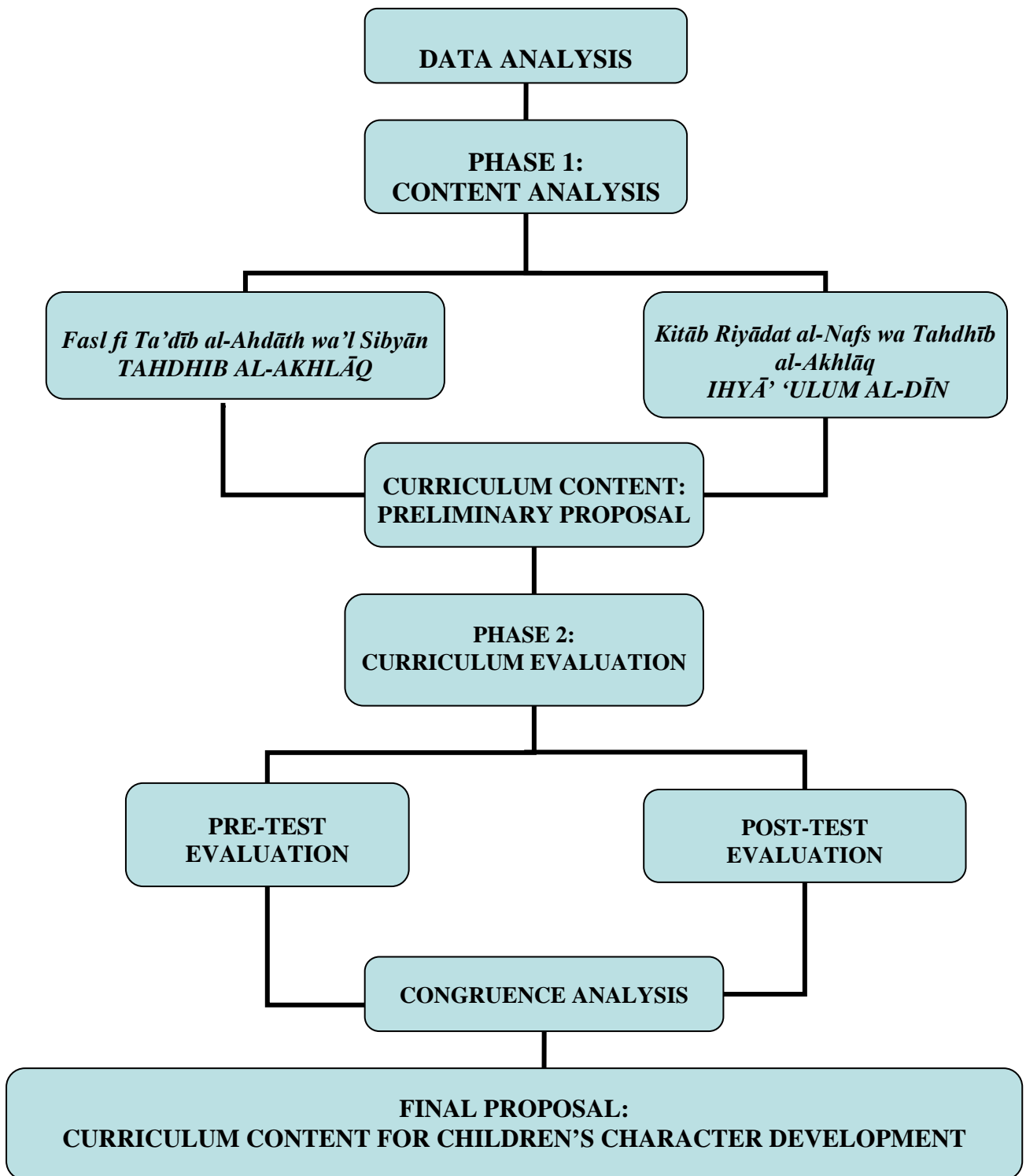
| PRE-TEST EVALUATION | POST-TEST EVALUATION |

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              ┌──────────────────────────┐
              │  CONGRUENCE ANALYSIS      │
              └──────────────────────────┘
                          │
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              FINAL PROPOSAL:                                   │
│  CURRICULUM CONTENT FOR CHILDREN'S CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT       │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 13. Data Analysis Procedure:

Developing A Curriculum Content for Children's Character Development