

# Character Education and Related Trend Variables

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## Abstract

Various studies have been conducted to examine the effectiveness of character education in various contexts, including schools, families, and communities. However, as the scope of studies on character education has expanded, there is a need to understand how research trends in character education have developed over time. This study aims to analyse bibliometric trends in character education variables using data from scientific publications available in academic databases. This study uses a qualitative approach by combining bibliometric methods and systematic literature reviews (SLR) to analyse research trends and understand the importance of character education in learning. The results show that character education plays a crucial role in shaping students' morals and ethics from an early age through the support of the curriculum, schools, families, and communities, as well as the application of cultural values. Character education is an important aspect in the formation of individual personality. Character education can serve as a means of building environmental awareness among learners. Variables closely related to character education include Character Strengths, Virtue Ethics, Positive Education, Critical Thinking, Affective and Social Outcomes, Environmental Consciousness.

**Keywords:** *Bibliometric Analysis; Character Education; VOSviewer; Trend Variables; Network Visualisation*

## Introduction

Character education is a deliberate process designed to help individuals understand, appreciate, and apply fundamental ethical values in everyday life. Character education can be defined as 'a deliberate effort to help humans understand, care for, and apply core ethical values' (Mainuddin et al., 2023). Character education aims to instill positive values that shape the mentality and behaviour of individuals. Character education is very important in laying the foundation of moral values for further personal development (Hardiansyah & Mas' Odi, 2022). Therefore, character education not only teaches moral values, but also habits and role modelling that must begin at an early age. This is very important to foster a generation that is able to make a positive contribution to society and the nation (Ichsan & Hadiyanto, 2021). This definition highlights the importance of awareness and active participation in shaping good character, which is not only beneficial for the individual, but also for society as a whole (Lubis et al., 2023).

The concept of character education has continued to evolve over time, especially in responding to the challenges posed by the digital era and the Industrial Revolution 4.0. Character education has become increasingly important because it plays a significant role in shaping students' morals and ethics amid rapid technological advancements. The challenges students face today are becoming more complex, influenced by various external sources, including social media and technological progress, which affect their thinking patterns and

behavior. Therefore, character education needs to not only teach basic moral values but also adapt to the dynamics and changes occurring around students.

Character education has become crucial in preventing the moral degradation that is increasingly evident among students. Character education can serve as an effective antidote to the decline in moral quality that can occur due to the negative influence of external environments (Munawarsyah et al., 2024). Therefore, character education must be applied strategically and sustainably, utilizing methods and approaches relevant to the needs of today's students. In this way, character education will remain relevant and make a significant impact on shaping individuals with good personalities who are capable of facing the challenges of the times.

Along with the rapid advancement of technology, the methods and approaches used in character education must continuously adapt. Character education should not only rely on traditional methods but must also consider technological developments and the way students learn in the digital era. This is important so that character education can effectively shape students with strong character. Implementing a concept of character education that aligns with the current digital conditions is essential to ensure that students not only have academic skills but also strong moral values (Ramadhani et al., 2024). The integrating moral values into the relevant digital context, character education can serve as a tool for shaping a generation that is not only intelligent but also ethical and able to adapt to the times.

Character education is expected to be a solution to preserve the noble values of national culture in the midst of the rapid flow of globalisation. Character education is an alternative solution to strengthen cultural values so that they are not lost or replaced by foreign influences (Dermawan et al., 2024). Therefore, character education must be integrated into the formal and informal education curriculum, as well as into the practice of daily community life. This can be done by integrating character education into various subjects (Feranina & Komala, 2022).

Character education in Indonesia is not only the responsibility of schools, but also involves families and communities (Suryana & Muhtar, 2022). Character education will be successful if the four components above can work synergistically, cooperatively, supportively, or reinforcing each other (Damayanti, 2022). This perspective underlines the need for a holistic approach, where every element in a child's life contributes to character building. Character education is not only the responsibility of educational institutions, but also involves the family and society as a whole (Prihatmojo & Badawi, 2020). Character education is a collective effort that requires the participation of all elements of the nation to achieve the desired goal (Saud, 2015). This is in line with the view who state that character education must be instilled from an early age to shape a generation that has good moral values and character (Triyanto, 2020). The synergy between parents and teachers is also very important in shaping children's character. The collaboration between parents and teachers has a positive impact on children's character education (Cahyani & Fadly, 2024). The post-pandemic context, the increased role of parents as the primary educators in character development (Nugroho, 2022).

Character education is often more associated with the formation of individual morals and ethics, while studies exploring the link between character education and social awareness and environmental care are still minimal (Budiarti, 2019). The era of globalisation, character education can be an important instrument in shaping social awareness, environmental care, and national values. Thus, systematic research is needed to explore in more depth the role of

character education in building social awareness and environmental sustainability. The bibliometric methods can also be used to analyse trends in character education research over time (Rozali & Muhtar, 2022). There has been no comprehensive study using bibliometric analysis to identify publication patterns and dominant topics in character education studies. There has not been much research mapping how these concepts develop in academic literature. Therefore, the bibliometric approach can be used to identify the main variables and trends in character education research that are developing globally. Bibliometric analysis allows researchers to identify publication patterns, emerging research topics, collaborative networks, and conceptual developments in character education studies (Haryoko, 2024). The bibliometric research in character education provides valuable insights into developments, challenges, and opportunities in this field. Based this method, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of character education and propose more appropriate recommendations for future education policies. The bibliometric approach can help in understanding how character education is incorporated into the curriculum (Cholifah, 2024). The researchers can identify strengths and weaknesses in the implementation of character education. This study aims to analyse the relationship between character education and social awareness and environmental care with the SLR & using method bibliometric to analyse trends in character education using data from academic databases. Through this analysis, a comprehensive understanding of the direction of research in character education can be obtained, including dominant topics, methodologies applied, and potential areas for future research. The findings of this study are expected to be a valuable reference for academics and education practitioners in understanding the dynamics of character education research and developing more effective learning strategies in line with scientific advances.

The novelty of this research lies in the use of a bibliometric approach to comprehensively analyze trends in character education research, which has not been widely explored so far. This study not only focuses on the formation of individual morals and ethics but also examines its relationship with social awareness, environmental care, and national values, which remain underexplored in existing literature. The *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) method and bibliometric analysis, this research aims to identify publication patterns, dominant topics, and conceptual developments in the field of character education, both globally and locally. Another novelty is the emphasis on the importance of integrating character education into both formal and informal education curricula that are relevant to technological advances and globalization. This study also explores how collaboration among various societal elements, such as families, schools, and communities, can strengthen the holistic implementation of character education. Through this analysis, the research provides new insights that can guide the development of future educational policies, as well as help educators and practitioners design more effective learning strategies to instill character values in the younger generation.

## **Method**

This study uses a qualitative approach by combining bibliometric methods and systematic literature reviews (SLR) to analyse research trends and understand the importance of character education in learning. The combination of these two methods enables more comprehensive research by utilising quantitative and qualitative analyses of relevant literature.

### ***Bibliometric Method***

The bibliometric method is used to analyse trends in scientific publications related to character education. The stages in this method include. Literature Search: using academic

databases such as Scopus with specific keywords such as 'character education. Quantitative Analysis: using software such as VOSviewer or Bibliometrics to map the relationship between literature, the number of publications per year, and the most influential authors and journals. Identification of Dominant Topics: grouping the main themes that emerge in related research based on bibliometric analysis.

### ***Systematic Literature Review (SLR)***

The systematic literature review is conducted to explore in more depth the concept and implementation of character education based on the results of bibliometric analysis. The stages in an SLR include. Literature Selection: Literature obtained from bibliometric analysis is filtered based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, such as year of publication (last 1 year), relevance to the topic, and research methodology. Qualitative Analysis: Selected literature is analysed to identify approaches, implementation strategies, and the impact of character education in various contexts. Synthesis of Findings: Compiling the main findings from various studies into a narrative that provides a comprehensive understanding of trends and implementation of character education.

This combination of bibliometric and SLR methods allows the research to not only understand the development of character education trends quantitatively, but also to explore more in-depth findings qualitatively. The research can provide more systematic insights into understanding the influence and application of character education in various contexts. In this research entitled 'Character Education and Related Trend Variables', inclusion and exclusion criteria are very important to ensure the relevance and quality of the data analysed. The following are the criteria that can be used.

Inclusion Criteria: a) Document Type: Journal articles, conference proceedings, and books relevant to character education. b) Field of Study: Publications in the fields of education, psychology, sociology, or other fields relevant to character education. c) Keywords: Studies that explicitly discuss character education, Publication Period: Articles published within a certain time frame (2015-2025) to get the latest trends. d) Accessibility: Articles that are available in full-text or at least have sufficiently informative abstracts. e) Language: Publications in English or other languages that can be understood by researchers. f) Research Methods: Studies using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods related to character education and trend variables.

Exclusion Criteria: a) Publication Type: Editorials, letters to the editor, comments, or opinion papers without strong research data. b) Topic Incompatibility: Studies that do not specifically discuss character education or directly related variables. c) Language: Articles in a language that the researcher cannot understand and for which an adequate translation is not available. d) Duplication: Articles that have already been included in previous analyses or are the same publication in different versions. e) Limited Access: Articles that are inaccessible or are only available in abstract form without sufficient information for analysis.

## **Results & Discussion**

### ***Importance of Character Education***

The importance of character education in the context of education in Indonesia cannot be underestimated. The involving parents, schools, and the community, character education can be effectively implemented to shape a generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also has good character and morals. This is in line with the goal of national education, which is

to create people who are faithful, pious, and of noble character. The importance of implementing character education in education is in line with previous research, which can be seen in Table .

**Table 1.** *Relevant Research Discussing The Importance Of Implementing Character Education In Education*

Author/ Year/ Journal	Method	Conclusion
(Ramadhani et al., 2024)/ International Journal of Graduate of Islamic Education	Literature review	Character education shapes ethical students through the curriculum, the support of schools, families, and communities to instill moral values such as honesty and responsibility.
(Haryoko, 2024)/ Eduvest	Literature review	Character education is important for millennials to strengthen their understanding of Pancasila and maintain cultural values in the era of technology and social media.
(Cholifah & Faelasup, 2024)/ 2024/ Journal of Scientific Research, Education, and Technology/Journal of Scientific Research, Education and Technology	library research	Parents play a central role as the main role model for children, while interactions within society provide important social experiences. Collaboration between all elements of the educational environment is key to creating individuals who have a strong and quality character and are able to contribute positively to society.
(Munawarsyah et al., 2024)/ Deleted Journal	Qualitative research	Character education is important in the Society 5.0 Era to shape ethical individuals who use technology wisely
(Lubis et al., 2023)/ <i>Education &amp; Learning</i>	library research	The importance of character education in schools to shape positive student attitudes and overcome moral degradation due to the influence of parents and social media.

Based on Table 1, it can be concluded that character education plays a crucial role in shaping students' morals and ethics from an early age through the support of the curriculum, school, family, and community, as well as the application of cultural values. The era of technology and Society 5.0, character education strengthens the understanding of Pancasila, preserves cultural values, and equips students with the ethics to use technology wisely. In addition, character education helps to overcome moral degradation due to the influence of social media and the environment, so that students can have a positive and responsible attitude in social life.

Character education can serve as a means of building environmental awareness among students. Through character education, students are taught values such as responsibility, care, and empathy for the environment. This is in line with the opinion who states that good character education can shape individuals who are not only academically intelligent but also have high social and environmental awareness (Fatmah, 2018).

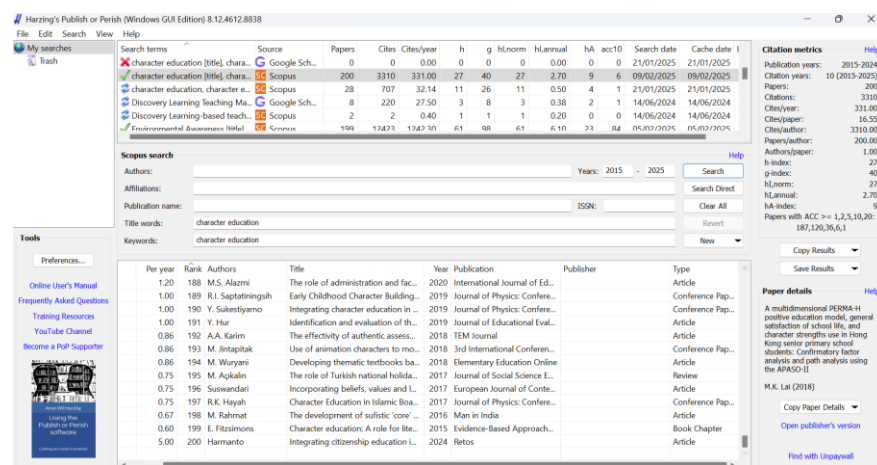
Character education is an important aspect in shaping individual personalities, especially among children and teenagers. The context of education in Indonesia, character education is not only the responsibility of schools, but also involves the role of parents and the community. This is important to ensure that moral and ethical values are well instilled in children, so that they can grow into responsible and noble individuals. Character education does not only teach right from wrong, but also forms good habits that will become part of the child's personality. This is in line with view that character education must be taught from an early age to shape a generation with good character (Beldag, 2016).

Character education cannot be separated from the social environment. Shaping students with character is not an easy task, but requires continuous efforts from all parties. Character education in schools must be carried out with a systematic and integrative approach, involving

all available resources, including families and communities. The role of parents in character education is also very crucial. Parents function as the first educators for children, who have a great responsibility in shaping children's character in this digital era. Research shows that collaboration between parents and schools is essential to achieve effective character education goals (Hardiansyah & Mas'odi, 2020). Parents are expected to set a good example and support the character education implemented at school.

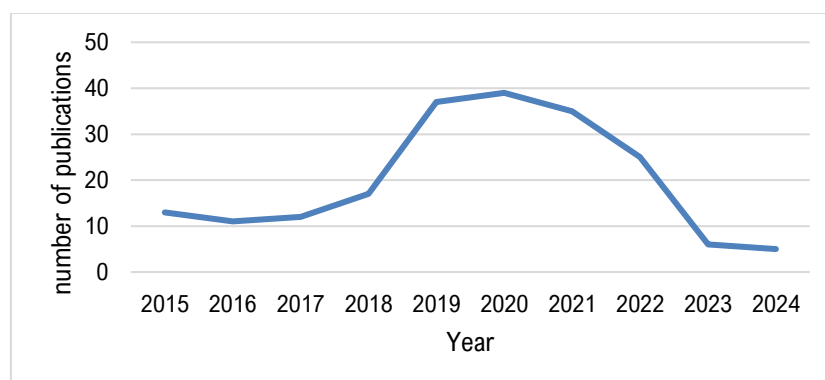
### ***Trend Variable in Character Education***

Character education can be studied in a more objective and data-based way, so that research in this field can be more focused and make a more significant contribution to the world of education through bibliometric analysis. Bibliometrics enable researchers to understand how character education research has developed over time, including increases in the number of publications and the main themes that have emerged.



**Figure 1.** Collection of literature with the keyword 'character education' through publish or perish software

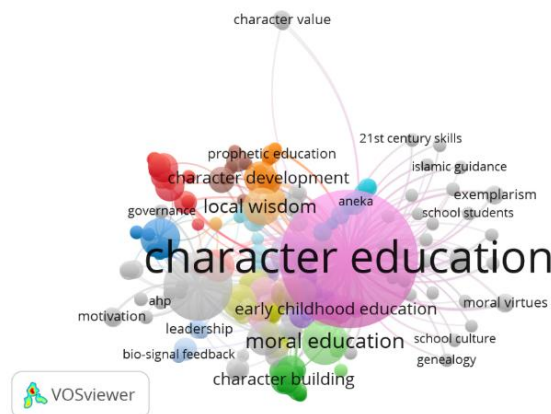
The bibliometric analysis began by searching for Scopus-indexed articles using the title words and keywords 'character education'. The keyword search was aided by the software Publish or Perish. Two hundred articles were found that discussed character education in the period 2015-2025. The collected articles were then saved in .Ris format. The collected data was then processed and analysed to determine the trend of publications related to 'character education'.



**Figure 2.** Trends in Publications Related to Character Education

Figure 1 shows the number of publications from 2015 to 2025. The peak in 2020 was 39 articles, then there was a downward trend until 2024 when there were only 5 Scopus-indexed

articles related to character education. Based on an analysis of publication trends from 2015 to 2024, it can be seen that the number of studies has increased significantly since 2018 and peaked in 2020 with more than 40 publications. This surge indicates an increase in academic interest in the topic under study, which is most likely influenced by external factors such as changes in academic policy, global research trends, or certain events that encourage further exploration, such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on various aspects of life, including character education. However, after reaching its peak, the number of publications began to decline gradually in 2021 and 2022, which could indicate a shift in research trends in another direction, saturation in the topics studied, or a reduction in funding and academic interest in this field. More drastic decline after 2022 to 2024 indicates that interest in this topic is waning or that research in this field has reached saturation point. This cycle reflects the evolution of academic interest, where a field of research can experience an increase in popularity before eventually fading. The innovative explorations or new approaches are needed that can enrich research in this field, such as meta-analyses or studies that link character education to other aspects that have not been widely researched. Thus, research on this topic can remain relevant and contribute to the broader development of science.



**Figure 3.** Network Visualisation

Bibliometric analysis enables network mapping and inter-conceptual relationships in character education research. The research looking trends, research gaps can be identified. This allows researchers to find topics that are still under-explored and propose more innovative and impactful studies for the development of character education. The visualisation of the resulting bibliometric map using VOSviewer shows that character education is the main topic in research related to character education, as indicated by its large size and central position in the keyword map. This research is largely related to the moral aspects and character building, which is reflected in its association with keywords such as moral education, character building, and moral virtues. The existence of concepts such as prophetic education and Islamic guidance indicates the influence of religious values in the development of individual character. Character education is also inseparable from the social and cultural context, as shown by the emergence of the word local wisdom, which indicates the importance of local wisdom in shaping character values.

Character education research is growing by integrating aspects of 21st century skills, which is reflected in the emergence of keywords such as 21st century skills, leadership, and school culture. This shows that character education does not only focus on traditional values, but also adapts to the needs of modern competencies such as critical thinking, communication, and leadership. The policy and implementation aspects, the word governance

indicates the involvement of regulation and governance in supporting character education, while the words motivation and bio-signal feedback show that psychology and technology-based approaches are starting to be used in character studies.

These findings indicate that research related to character education continues to evolve with a variety of approaches and increasingly broad dimensions. However, there are still opportunities to further explore the relationship between character education and education policy, technology, and quantitative methods. Thus, these bibliometric results can serve as a basis for identifying evolving research trends, finding research gaps that have not been widely studied, and designing further studies that are more relevant to the challenges of character education in the modern era. Topics or keywords closely related to character education can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2. Keywords Related To Character Education**

<b>Selected Keywords</b>	<b>Occurrences</b>	<b>Total Link Strength</b>
Character Strengths	5	27
Virtue Ethics	5	22
Positive Education	3	15
Critical Thinking	2	13
Affective and Social Outcomes	1	7
Environmental Conscioisness	1	6

The table 2 shows a bibliometric analysis of keywords that frequently appear in character education research, with two main parameters: Occurrences (number of times the keyword appears in the analysed literature) and Total Link Strength (strength of the relationship between the keyword and other concepts in the research network). The keyword Character Strengths appears five times and has the highest total link strength (27), indicating that character building is one of the most frequently studied aspects of character education. This concept covers various positive qualities of individuals, such as perseverance, courage, honesty, and empathy, which play an important role in shaping personality and morals. The high correlation with other concepts shows that the study of character strengths is often linked to the virtue ethics and positive education approaches.

The keyword Virtue Ethics also has five occurrences, with a total link strength of 22. This shows that virtue ethics is one of the main approaches in character education, which emphasises the moral development of individuals based on good habits and noble values. The strong relationship with other keywords shows that this concept is often used in academic studies on moral education and personality development. The concept of Positive Education appears three times with a total link strength of 15, indicating that character education is increasingly being studied in the context of positive education. This approach focuses on developing mental well-being, happiness, and a balance between academic achievement and character building. Although it appears less frequently than Character Strengths and Virtue Ethics, its links with other concepts are strong, indicating that character education is beginning to develop towards a more holistic approach.

The keyword Critical Thinking appears in two studies with a total link strength of 13, indicating attention to how character education can contribute to shaping an analytical and reflective mindset. This shows that character education does not only focus on morals and ethics, but also on the critical thinking skills needed in social and academic life. The keyword Affective and Social Outcomes only appears once but has a fairly strong relationship (7), which shows that the affective and social aspects of character education have not been widely studied despite their high relevance. This could indicate that the impact of character education



on the social and emotional development of individuals is a potential area for further exploration. Meanwhile, Environmental Consciousness also only appeared once with a link strength of 6, indicating that studies on the relationship between character education and environmental awareness are still very limited. This shows that there are research gaps that can be explored further, especially in understanding how character education can increase concern for the environment and sustainability.

Based this analysis, it can be concluded that Character Strengths and Virtue Ethics are the two main concepts that dominate character education research, indicating that the main focus of research still revolves around moral approaches and strengthening individual character. Studies on Positive Education are beginning to gain attention, signalling a paradigm shift towards psychological and emotional well-being in character education. The aspects of critical thinking, affective and social outcomes, and environmental consciousness still receive insufficient attention in character education research. This suggests that there are opportunities for further research into how character education can contribute to the development of a society that is more aware of social and emotional values and environmental sustainability. Overall, this table reveals trends and potential research in the field of character education, as well as indicating areas that have been under-researched and could be the focus of future studies.

## Conclusion

Character education plays an important role in shaping the morals and ethics of students from an early age through the support of the curriculum, school, family, and society, as well as the application of cultural values. Character education is an important aspect in the formation of individual personality. Character education can be a means of building environmental awareness among learners. Variables closely related to character education include Character Strengths, Virtue Ethics, Positive Education, Critical Thinking, Affective and Social Outcomes, Environmental Consciousness. These related keywords or variables can be further researched to understand how these concepts are becoming increasingly important in various aspects of life, especially in education, individual development, and environmental sustainability. Studying Character Strengths, Virtue Ethics, Positive Education, Critical Thinking, Affective and Social Outcomes, and Environmental Consciousness is very important in shaping individuals who are ethical, critical thinkers, highly resilient, socially caring, and environmentally conscious. This is an opportunity for further research. This research is limited to a review of Scopus-indexed articles that discuss character education over the past 10 years. Suggestions for further research could review articles indexed by WoS, Semantic Scholar or Google Scholar with a wider range of years.

## Acknowledgment

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