

Exploring Character Building in Junior High School: Literature Review from Scopus Database

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to investigate how character education is implemented at the junior high school (SMP) level by conducting a thorough literature review using the Scopus database. The approach is a review of the literature that involves examining academic papers over the past ten years that are relevant to character education in junior high schools. The findings of the study demonstrate the significance of character education in forming junior high school students' moral principles and personalities. The inclusion of character values in the curriculum, mentorship programs, extracurricular activities, and parental involvement are a few of the successful tactics that have been found. The primary obstacles encountered include variations in student backgrounds, scarce resources, and inconsistent implementation. This study also shows how crucial it is for communities, families, and schools to work together in a holistic manner in order for character education to be successful. In conclusion, a thorough and long-lasting strategy is needed for character education in junior high schools. For the purpose of creating successful character education programs at the junior high school level, researchers, educators, and policymakers can benefit greatly from the insights this study offers.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi implementasi pendidikan karakter di tingkat Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP) melalui tinjauan literatur sistematis dari database Scopus. Metode yang digunakan adalah literature review dengan menganalisis artikel-artikel ilmiah terkait pendidikan karakter di SMP yang diterbitkan dalam 10 tahun terakhir. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan karakter di tingkat SMP memiliki peran penting dalam membentuk kepribadian dan nilai-nilai moral siswa. Beberapa strategi efektif yang teridentifikasi meliputi integrasi nilai-nilai karakter dalam kurikulum, program mentoring, kegiatan ekstrakurikuler, dan keterlibatan orang tua. Tantangan utama yang dihadapi adalah konsistensi implementasi, keterbatasan sumber daya, dan perbedaan latar belakang siswa. Studi ini juga mengungkapkan

bahwa pendekatan holistik dan kolaboratif antara sekolah, keluarga, dan masyarakat sangat penting untuk keberhasilan pendidikan karakter. Kesimpulannya, pendidikan karakter di SMP memerlukan pendekatan yang komprehensif dan berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan berharga bagi pendidik, pembuat kebijakan, dan peneliti dalam mengembangkan strategi pendidikan karakter yang efektif di tingkat SMP.

INTRODUCTION

Character education is one of the important aspects in the formation of students' personalities, especially at the junior high school (SMP) level (Herman et al., 2022; Shavkatovna, 2021; Zukin, 2024). At this age, students are in a transition phase from childhood to adolescence, so they need more intensive and directed character development. Character education aims to develop moral, ethical, and social values that will become the basis for student behavior in everyday life (Herman et al., 2022; Shavkatovna, 2021; Zukin, 2024). In this context, schools have a strategic role in implementing an effective and sustainable character education program.

Character education in junior high schools is often associated with various learning approaches and methods that focus on developing positive values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, cooperation and empathy (Herman et al., 2022; Shavkatovna, 2021; Zukin, 2024). Literature from the Scopus database shows that various models and strategies have been implemented in different countries to achieve this goal. These studies provide a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness and challenges faced in implementing character education in schools.

The process of establishing moral principles, ethics, and constructive actions in pupils is known as character education.

This education seeks to mold children's characters with integrity, accountability, and empathy for others starting in the first grade. Students are taught qualities that will shape their character, such as tolerance, discipline, and honesty, through a variety of curriculum-integrated activities and programs. One cannot undervalue the significance of character education in the early grades. Children are in a crucial stage of developing their personalities at this age. They start to form behavioral patterns that will persist into adulthood and start to comprehend the idea of right and evil. It is anticipated that pupils who are raised with strong moral principles would develop into people with strong emotional and social intelligence in addition to their academic intelligence.

Furthermore, character education in the primary school is crucial in fostering a supportive and encouraging learning environment. The classroom environment becomes more peaceful when students comprehend and put ideals like responsibility, cooperation, and respect for one another into practice. Students' academic performance will consequently increase and the learning process will be supported more successfully. Strong character education in elementary school will also lay the groundwork for producing a future generation of well-mannered and capable individuals.

One approach that is widely discussed in the literature is the integration of character education into the learning curriculum. This approach emphasizes that character education should not be a separate subject, but should be integrated into all subjects. Teachers are expected to incorporate character values in the daily learning process, so that students can internalize these values through various contexts and situations (Herman et al., 2022; Shavkatovna, 2021; Zukin, 2024). Scopus research shows that this approach has great potential in shaping students' character holistically.

In addition to integration in the curriculum, extracurricular activities are also considered an important tool in character education in junior secondary schools. Activities such as scouts, sports, arts and student organizations provide opportunities for students to develop social and leadership skills. Through these activities, students can learn about cooperation, responsibility and respecting differences (Burke, 2008; Nelsen et al., 2011). Studies in the Scopus database show that active involvement in extracurricular activities is positively correlated with students' character development (Aliu & Aigbavboa, 2023).

The role of teachers in character education has also become the main focus of various studies. Teachers not only serve as teachers, but also as role models and mentors for students. In the Scopus literature, many studies highlight the importance of training and professional development for teachers to improve their competence in teaching character values. Teachers who have a good understanding and skills in character education are able to create a learning environment that is conducive to students' character building.

The research entitled "Exploring Character Building in Junior High School: Literature Review from Scopus Database" fills an important gap in the literature by systematically analyzing various approaches to character building at the junior high school level based on studies published in the Scopus database. While previous research such as studies by Suryantari (2022) and Rasidah (2024) have discussed character formation at the elementary and high school levels, there is still a lack of comprehensive understanding of the strategies and impacts of character formation specifically for middle school students. This research also differentiates itself by utilizing in-depth analysis of the Scopus database.

The challenges in implementing character education in junior secondary schools cannot be ignored. Several studies identified barriers such as lack of support from the school, limited resources, and lack of understanding from teachers and students about the importance of character education (Asif et al., 2020; Schwartz et al., 2019; Susilo et al., 2022). This article will explore various solutions that have been proposed in the literature to overcome these challenges and provide recommendations for the development of more effective character education programs.

Based on a literature review from the Scopus database, this article will provide in-depth insights into various aspects of character education in junior secondary schools, including approaches, strategies and challenges. Thus, it is hoped that this article can serve as a reference for educators, researchers and policy makers in developing and implementing a comprehensive and effective character education program at the junior secondary education level.

METHOD

This study uses the literature review method to explore character education in junior secondary schools based on sources from the Scopus database. The literature review method was chosen because it allows researchers to identify, assess and interpret all relevant research findings related to the topic (Booth et al., 2021; Linnenluecke et al., 2020; Mohamed Shaffril et al., 2021; Popenoe et al., 2021). The literature review provides a comprehensive understanding of the issues, approaches, and results of previous research, and helps identify knowledge gaps that can be further researched.

The data collection process was carried out by accessing the Scopus database, which is recognized as one of the leading and most trusted databases in the field of scientific research. The literature search was conducted using the keywords "Character Building" and "Junior High School". These keywords were chosen because they specifically describe the focus of this research: character education in junior high school students. The literature search was conducted on June 18, 2024, to ensure that the data obtained were up-to-date and relevant.

The keyword search yielded 11 relevant documents. These documents were then downloaded and analyzed to identify the main themes, methodologies used, and key findings related to character education in junior high schools. The analysis process was conducted systematically by reading and categorizing the content of each document, so that a clear picture could be obtained of how character education is implemented and what factors influence it.

In this analysis, researchers used a descriptive approach to describe the research results found in the literature. The descriptive approach allows researchers to present information in detail and systematically about various aspects of character education that have been researched by previous experts. Each finding was analyzed in the context of the implementation of character education in junior secondary schools, including teaching strategies, teacher involvement, student participation in extracurricular activities, and the challenges and solutions faced in its implementation.

To ensure the validity and reliability of this literature review, researchers applied strict inclusion and exclusion criteria in selecting the documents analyzed. Only documents that were published in accredited scientific journals and had direct relevance to the topic of character education in junior secondary schools were included in the analysis. In addition, the researcher also cross-checked the references cited in each document to ensure that the information presented was accurate and reliable. Thus, the results of this literature review are expected to make a

significant contribution to the understanding and development of character education at the junior secondary school level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Documents by Year

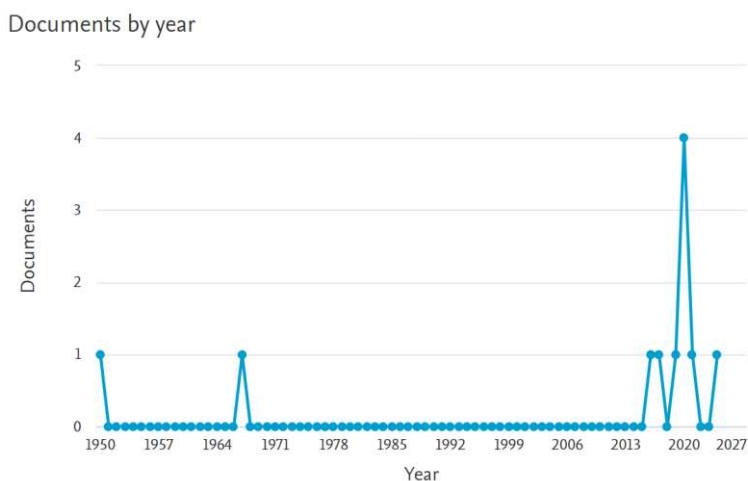


Figure 1. Documents by Year

Literature search results from the Scopus database with the keywords "Character Building" and "Junior High School" showed variations in the number of published documents by year. From a total of 11 documents found, the distribution of publications by year gives an idea of the attention and intensity of research related to character education in junior high school throughout the last few decades.

In 2024, 1 document was published, indicating recent research on this topic. Another document was found in 2021, suggesting that while there is ongoing interest, the intensity of research may not be constant every year. The year 2020 saw the highest number of publications, with 4 relevant documents. This may reflect increased attention to character education in junior secondary schools in that period, perhaps driven by changes in education policy or increased awareness of the importance of character building among adolescents.

In 2019 and 2017, 1 document was published each, indicating sporadic but consistent research over the past few years. The year 2016 also saw one publication, adding to the data on character education research conducted earlier in the decade.

Interestingly, there were two very old documents, one from 1967 and another from 1950. This suggests that although the topic of character education in junior secondary schools has been a concern for a long time, the intensity of research in those years was not as great as in the most recent period. Publications from these years provide a valuable historical perspective, showing how the concept and practice of character education may have evolved over time.

Overall, the distribution of these documents reflects a varied pattern in character education research in junior secondary schools. While some years show a spike in the number of studies, other years show fewer but persistent studies. This data suggests that the topic of character education continues to be an important area in the field of education, with continued interest from researchers albeit with fluctuating intensity.

Documents by Source

Table 1. Documents by Source

Source	Documents
Advances In Science Technology and Engineering Systems	1
Cogent Education	1

Eurasia Journal of Mathematics Science and Technology Education	1
International Journal of Engineering and Advanced Technology	1
International Journal of Innovation Creativity and Change	1
Japanese Journal of Educational Psychology	1
Journal of Physics Conference Series	1
Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability	1
Man In India	1
Nassp Bulletin	1
Proceedings - 2017 International Conference on Innovative and Creative Information Technology: Computational Intelligence and IoT	1

The results of analyzing the number of documents by year show variations in the distribution of publications related to character education in junior secondary schools. In 2024, one document was published, reflecting recent research in this area. The year 2021 also showed one document, reflecting the persistence but less intense interest in that year.

The year 2020 was the most productive, with four documents published. This may reflect a significant increase in attention and research efforts towards character education in junior secondary schools in that year. This surge could be due to changes in education policy, increased awareness of the importance of character building among adolescents, or global events affecting the education system.

In other years, such as 2019, 2017 and 2016, there was one document each that showed sporadic but consistent research. This shows that although not always the main focus, character education has received attention from researchers in various time periods. Documents published in 1967 and 1950 show that character education in junior secondary schools has been a concern for a long time. Although the intensity of research at that time was not as great as in recent decades, publications from these years provide an important historical perspective and show the evolution of character education concepts and practices over time.

Overall, the distribution of these documents reflects a diverse pattern in character education research in junior secondary schools. While some years show an increase in the number of studies, other years show fewer but persistent studies. These data suggest that the topic of character education continues to be an important area in the field of education, with continued interest from researchers albeit with fluctuating intensity.

Documents by Affiliation

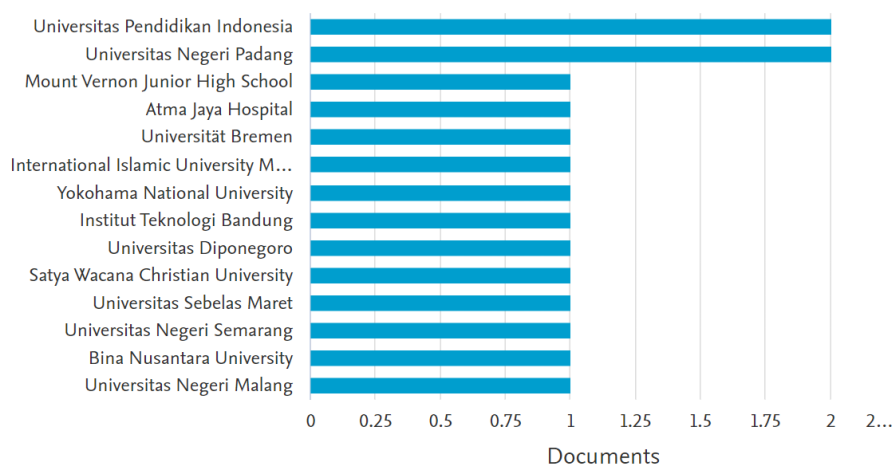


Figure 2. Documents by Affiliation

The results of the analysis of the number of documents by affiliation show the diversity of institutions contributing to research on character education in junior secondary schools. Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia and Universitas Negeri Padang each produced two documents, indicating the significant role of these two institutions in character education research. The active involvement of these two universities reflects their commitment to character education development and research in Indonesia.

In addition, there was one document produced by various other institutions, including Mount Vernon Junior High School, Atma Jaya Hospital, Universität Bremen, International Islamic University Malaysia, Yokohama National University, Bandung Institute of Technology, Diponegoro University, Satya Wacana Christian University, Sebelas Maret University, Semarang State University, Bina Nusantara University, and Malang State University. This diversity of affiliations shows that research on character education in junior high schools attracts academics from different types of institutions, ranging from secondary schools, universities, to hospitals.

International institutions such as Universität Bremen, International Islamic University Malaysia and Yokohama National University show that this topic is also gaining attention at the global level. This indicates that character education in junior secondary schools is an issue that has broad relevance and is recognized for its importance in various countries.

The participation of various leading universities in Indonesia, such as Bandung Institute of Technology, Diponegoro University, and Sebelas Maret University, shows that research on character education is not only limited to education faculties but also attracts interest from various disciplines. This may reflect the multidisciplinary approach needed to comprehensively understand and develop character education.

Overall, the distribution of documents by affiliation shows extensive collaboration and contributions from various institutions within and outside the country. This diversity enriches research on character education in junior secondary schools with various perspectives and approaches, and demonstrates a collective commitment to improving the quality of character education for junior secondary school students.

Documents by Country

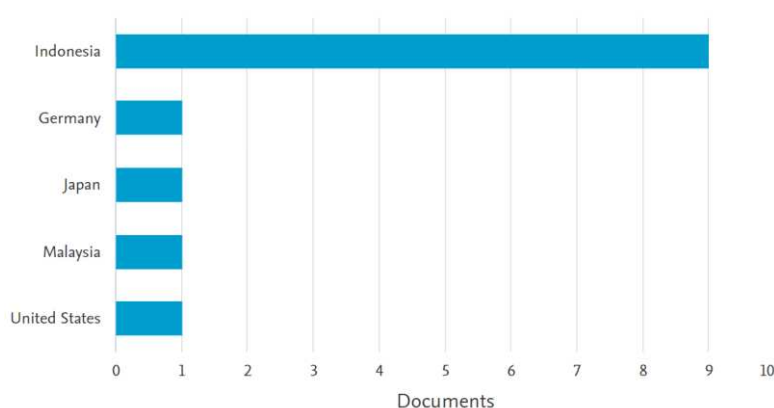


Figure 3. Documents by Country

The results of the analysis of the number of documents by country show the dominance of contributions from Indonesia in research on character education in junior high schools (SMP). From a total of 11 documents found, 9 documents came from Indonesia. This reflects the strong attention and commitment of researchers and institutions in Indonesia to the development and implementation of character education at the junior secondary level.

Apart from Indonesia, there were contributions from several other countries, each producing one document. These countries are Germany, Japan, Malaysia and the United States. The participation of Germany with one document shows that the topic of character education is also a concern in Europe, although with less intensity than Indonesia.

Documents from Japan indicate an interest in character education in the context of East Asian education systems known for their disciplinary approach and collective values. Malaysia, as a neighboring country of Indonesia, also shows interest in character education, which may reflect cultural similarities and the educational challenges faced. Contributions from the United States show that the issue of character education in junior secondary schools is also relevant in the context of Western education, where a focus on individual development and democratic values is often the main concern.

Overall, this distribution of documents by country shows that while Indonesia leads in terms of the number of studies on character education in junior secondary schools, the topic is also attracting global attention. Contributions from different countries enrich the understanding of character education by bringing different perspectives and approaches, and reflect the universal importance of character development among adolescents.

Documents by Subject Area

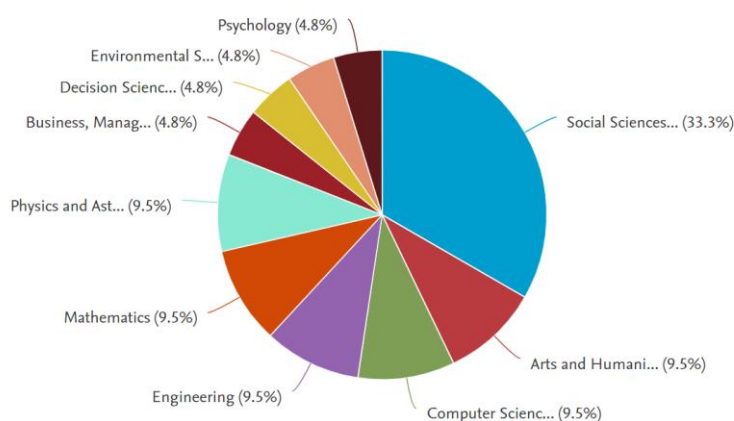


Figure 4. Documents by Subject Area

The results of the analysis of the number of documents by field of study show that research on character education in junior secondary schools covers a wide range of disciplines. Most of the documents are in the Social Science field, with a total of 7 documents. This dominance reflects the relevance of character education to social studies, including sociology, anthropology and education, which focus on individual development in the context of society. The Arts and Humanities field has 2 documents, indicating an interest in cultural and ethical aspects of character education. This field often examines moral and aesthetic values that are important in student character building.

The fields of Computer Science, Engineering, Mathematics, and Physics and Astronomy have 2 documents each. Contributions from these fields show that character education is not only relevant in social and humanities contexts but also in more technical disciplines. Research in these fields may focus on the integration of character values in the teaching of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) subjects, such as teamwork, professional ethics, and problem solving.

The Business, Management and Accounting field contributed 1 document, indicating that character education is also important in the context of developing future leadership skills and business ethics. The Decision Sciences field also has 1 document, which may explore how ethical decision-making can be taught to students.

The field of Environmental Sciences with 1 document suggests that character education also includes aspects of environmental awareness and responsibility. One document from the field of Psychology shows attention to the psychological development and mental health aspects of character education, which are important for understanding how values and attitudes are formed in students. Overall, the distribution of documents by field of study shows that character education

in junior high school is a multidisciplinary topic. This diverse research enriches the understanding of character education from various perspectives and approaches, and shows how broad the application of character education is in various fields of study.

Focus Study

Table 3. Focus Study

Author and Year	Title	Focus Study
Montessori et al. (2024)	Neglected values: civic disposition in junior high civic education during the pandemic	Focus study to investigate the neglect by teachers in building students' civic disposition during civic education learning in junior high schools in Padang, West Sumatra, Indonesia, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study uses mixed methods with a focus on factors such as teacher competencies, online learning, and assessment systems that influence such neglect. The findings of this study will provide insights into the impact of such neglect on students' character building and the existence of civic education as a value-based education in Indonesia.
Nida et al. (2021)	Indonesian Pre-Service Science Teachers' Views on Socio-Scientific Issues-Based Science Learning	The focus of this research study is to explore the views of prospective junior high school science teachers in Indonesia regarding teaching based on socio-scientific issues (SSIs). This study used questionnaire analysis to highlight their perceptions of the potential of SSIs in developing student competencies and character, as well as identifying challenges such as the interdisciplinary nature of SSIs, lack of familiarity, and curriculum constraints. Prospective teachers assess that SSIs can improve their pedagogical skills, but the relevance of SSIs in the context of character development is not as optimistic as their view of this need.
Prabawani et al. (2020)	Education for Sustainable Development Diffusion of Innovation of Secondary School Students	The focus of this research study is to explore the relationship between environmental knowledge, attitudes and behavior of junior high school students, as well as inhibiting factors as moderating variables. This research involved 320 participants from two junior high schools in Central Java, Indonesia, using Partial Least Square Smartpls v3.0 analysis. The findings show that although students' environmental knowledge is low, they show positive attitudes and behavior towards the environment. Students' knowledge influences pro-environmental attitudes and behavior, with inhibiting factors playing a significant role as moderating variables. This study suggests developing school programs to increase students' environmental awareness and analytical skills regarding the surrounding environment.
Amini (2020)	The effect of integrated science learning based on local wisdom to increase the student's competency	The focus of this research is to evaluate the effect of integrated science learning based on local wisdom on student competence in junior high school. This research uses a quasi-experimental method with research subjects as seventh grade students in Padang, Indonesia. The research results show that this learning significantly increases student competence, especially in students' knowledge and attitudes towards science learning. This study emphasizes the importance of integrating local wisdom in the curriculum to enrich students' learning experiences and build their character effectively.

Kuswardinah et al. (2020)	Home economics education: A subject for moral and character building in junior high school students in Indonesia	This focus study is to discuss academic arguments regarding the return of home economics subjects to the 2013 junior high school curriculum in Indonesia, as well as evaluating the feasibility of including ten values in the book material for this subject. The research involved 103 home economics teachers in Central Java using questionnaires and forum group discussions as data collection methods. The results showed that the majority of teachers supported the return of home economics (85% agreed or strongly agreed) and most also felt that the inclusion of ten grades in the book material was feasible (90% felt it was appropriate or very appropriate). This study supports the view that home economics subjects can help strengthen students' morals and character at the junior high school level.
Nuryanti et al. (2020)	The implementation model of character building in curriculum 2013 through the scout movement as a required extracurricular in primary and secondary education	The focus of this study is to evaluate the character education program through Scout extracurricular activities using a Research and Development (R&D) approach at the elementary and middle school levels. This research produced three models of implementing educational character prototypes: Block Model, Actualization Model, and Regular Model. The Block Model proved to be the most widely used (33.78%), followed by the Regular Model (17.57%) and the Actualization Model (6.75%). These findings emphasize the importance of strengthening Scout activities as an effective means of instilling character in students in West Java.
Mufatakhah & Rejekiningsih (2019)	Improving student's social solidarity value awareness through learning community-based mentoring	This focus study is to evaluate the contribution of integrated Islamic schools in increasing students' awareness of the value of social solidarity through learning community-based mentoring (BinaPribadi Islam/BPI) at SMPIT Nur Hidayah, Surakarta. This research uses a qualitative approach with case studies of seventh, eighth and ninth grade students. The results of the analysis show that mentoring activities at SMPIT Nur Hidayah adopt a peer group approach guided by the teacher. BPI implementation goes through seven continuous cycles such as investigation, action, data analysis, planning, action, reflection and evaluation. This activity helps increase awareness of the value of solidarity through environmental observations, camping activities, trips, as well as increasing the values of togetherness and empathy among students.
Wahyono et al. (2017)	Anomaly detection to evaluate in-class learning process using distance and density approach of machine learning	The focus of this study is to explore the use of k-Nearest Neighbor (k-NN) with a distance approach and local outlier factor (LOF) with a density approach for anomaly detection in class evaluation score datasets. The dataset used comes from a Character Development course conducted by a junior high school in Salatiga, Central Java. Experimental results show that the density-based LOF approach is superior in accuracy compared to the distance-based k-NN approach in detecting anomalous data in the dataset.
Mekarwati (2016)	Christian values-based character education: A case study in Bandung	The focus study of this abstract is to explore character education based on Christian values at SMPK 5 BPK PENABUR Bandung. This research uses a qualitative approach with case studies to understand the program, implementation and evaluation of character education at the school. Data was collected through observation,

		interviews and document study. The research results show that SMPK 5 BPK PENABUR emphasizes values such as honesty, friendliness and integrity in shaping student character. Apart from that, this school also applies the value of compassion with a focus on humility, loyalty and self-control as the main values taught and implemented in the school community.
Shimizu (1967)	Analysis of Factors For Scholarly Achievement By Q-Technique	The focus of this study is to explore the factors that influence academic achievement in junior high school, differences in views about academic achievement, and methods for diagnosing junior high school conditions. This research uses a classification method of five categories: students, home and community environment, school material environment, teachers, and teaching methods. The study involved 15 junior high school principals in Kanagawa Prefecture and other educational figures. Factor analysis shows two main views regarding academic achievement (Factor E which emphasizes character building, and Factor F which focuses on exam preparation) as well as three factors of school conditions (Good Rural School, Bad Urban School, and Good Urban School).
Moore (1950)	How May Guidance Be Effective in the Junior High School?	The focus of this study is to explore administrative responsibilities in building an effective guidance program in middle schools. This research includes activities such as establishing guidance programs, planning education according to student needs, assigning responsibilities to trained counselors, supporting teachers in individualizing learning, using research and measurement programs, and facilitating good relationships with parents and the school community. This study also highlights the importance of group activities and the use of school resources for building health programs and implementing democracy.

Table 3 provides a comprehensive overview of various focus studies conducted in junior high schools, addressing critical aspects of education and character development. Montessori et al. (2024) examine the neglect of civic disposition building during the COVID-19 pandemic in Padang, Indonesia, emphasizing its impact on students' civic education. Nida et al. (2021) explore pre-service science teachers' perspectives on teaching socio-scientific issues (SSIs), highlighting challenges and potential benefits for student competencies and character development. Prabawani et al. (2020) investigate the relationship between environmental knowledge and students' attitudes, advocating for enhanced environmental education in Central Java. Amini (2020) evaluates integrated science learning based on local wisdom's effectiveness in improving student competencies, stressing cultural integration in education. Kuswardinah et al. (2020) discuss the reintroduction of home economics in Indonesian schools, focusing on moral and character development through essential values. Other studies like Nuryanti et al. (2020), Mufatakhah & Rejekiningsih (2019), Wahyono et al. (2017), Mekarwati (2016), Shimizu (1967), and Moore (1950) contribute insights into character education through Scout activities, Islamic school mentoring, anomaly detection in learning processes, Christian values-based education, factors influencing scholarly achievement, and effective guidance program administration, respectively. Together, these studies offer diverse perspectives and methodologies aimed at enhancing educational practices and fostering holistic student development in junior high schools.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussions, it is evident that character education in junior high schools encompasses a broad spectrum of approaches, challenges, and outcomes. The distribution of research documents by year underscores varying levels of interest and emphasis on character education over time, with peaks in 2020 reflecting heightened attention likely influenced by educational policy shifts and global events. The diverse affiliations of contributing institutions highlight a collaborative effort across academia, including universities, secondary schools, and international institutions, underscoring a multidisciplinary approach to character education. Moreover, Indonesia emerges as a focal point for research in this field, with significant contributions from various institutions indicating a robust commitment to advancing character education initiatives. These insights collectively emphasize the enduring importance of character education in junior high schools, fostering a comprehensive understanding and application of values crucial for student development and societal impact.

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