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Character Education as a Pillar of Morality for Generation Z : Bibliometric Analysis (2019-2024)

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A B S T R A C T

This research aims to identify and analyze trends in the research on Character Education as a Pillar of Morality for Generation Z (2019-2024) as well as explore opportunities for further research development. Using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, 210 relevant publications were found in the Scopus, Taylor and Francis, and Publish or Perish indexed databases, with 44 documents from the 2019-2024 period selected and analyzed. The literature review process follows PRISMA guidelines to ensure the quality of the results, and the data is analyzed using VOSviewer 1.6.20 software. The results show a steady increase in character education publications as a pillar of generational morality, although there was a small decline in 2022. Indonesia is the country with the largest contribution, followed by Turkey and the United States. This study also found that character education is more effective when integrated with experiential-based learning methods and moral reflection. Qualitative methods are the most commonly used approaches, with the main themes including character education, Islamic religious education, character, and education. This analysis shows the development of character education studies with a more holistic approach that includes Islamic values, culture, and pedagogy to form individuals with high morality.

1. Introduction

Education character Shaping the morals of the younger generation based on religious values and universal ethics. However, globalization and modernization are challenging moral integrity with the development of permissive cultures, individualism, and shifting social values. In this context, Islamic character education becomes a fortress for individuals with integrity, moral awareness, and social responsibility (Yusri et al., 2023). Komalasari & Yakubu (2023) found that Islamic character education in schools not only increases students' moral awareness, but also reduces deviant behaviors such as bullying and other social offenses. In addition to strengthening religious aspects, this education forms a disciplined, tough, and responsible character.

The importance of character education in learning is based on the need for a strong moral foundation in the midst of globalization that brings various ethical challenges. Parents, especially in Indonesia, express their worries and anxieties after observing the phenomenon of character or moral deterioration in children. Islam as a holistic religion pays great attention to the formation of noble morals through education (Sarwadi & Nashihin, 2023). Imtihanudin & Mariana (2021) shows that schools that implement Islamic character education experience an increase in discipline, honesty, and empathy of students. This success occurs because spiritual values are not only taught in theory, but also applied in social interactions, school activities, and ethical decision-making.

However, the implementation of character education still faces obstacles, especially in integrating Islamic values into the curriculum systematically and applicatively. Curriculum oriented to cognitive aspects often lacks emphasis on affective and psychomotor dimensions in the formation of students' character. Urfa et al., (2024) revealed that some teachers had difficulty delivering this material due to the lack of comprehensive guidelines and lack of training. As a result, the implementation of character education is still sporadic and less directed. Therefore, a more effective strategy is needed in integrating Islamic values into the curriculum as well as intensive training for educators so that teaching is more systematic and applicative.

Academic interest in character education is increasing rapidly. For example, the results of research from Musyawir et al., (2024) recorded a surge in publications from 2019 to 2024, with a focus on the effectiveness of learning methods, their impact on student behavior, and implementation challenges in various social and cultural contexts. This study shows that character education is not only a national issue, but also part of the global academic discourse that is increasingly taken into account in education policy. In addition, character education contributes significantly to the social and cognitive development of students (Alimron et al., 2023). Fahrudin et al., (2021) found that students with Islamic character education were more ethical in resolving conflicts, more socially caring, and more resilient than those who did not receive similar education. Islamic values-based character also helps students face life's challenges, including in the world of work, where integrity, ethics, and responsibility are the main factors for professional success.

In addition to academic mapping, bibliometric analysis is also important in understanding policy implications related to character education. Many Muslim countries, including Indonesia, have adopted Islamic-based character education policies as part of the national education system as part of a human development strategy based on religious values (Awwaliyah & Baharun, 2018). In Indonesia, this policy is manifested in the form of strengthening character education (PPK) and the Pancasila student profile (P5) project which is integrated into the primary and secondary education curriculum (Lubis & Karnati, 2022). Studies conducted by Sukmara et al., (2025) stated that Islamic character education policies implemented in various schools have a significant impact on increasing moral awareness, ethics, and the development of students' religious attitudes.

Raudiyah & Santiani (2024) emphasized that character education is a key element in building a generation with integrity. The increased attention of academics and education practitioners encourages innovation in curriculum development, teaching methods, and technology integration to optimize its implementation. Therefore, this study not only explores the research trends of character education in the last five years, but also formulates optimal strategies to strengthen its implementation at various levels of education. Thus, this research makes a significant contribution in efforts to strengthen the morality of future generations in the midst of changing social dynamics. The main objective of this study is to explore global research trends related to Character Education as a Pillar of Generation Z Morality: Bibliometric Analysis (2019-2024). The specific objectives of this study include:

RQ 1: What are the trends of publications, citations, contributors, and countries that contribute to Character Education research?
RQ 2: How is the visualization of the trend of Character Education research in learning?
RQ 3: What research methods are used in the study of Character Education?
RQ 4: What are the top five Character Education articles in the last five years?

2. Methodology

Search Design

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method and the PRISMA protocol to assess research on Islamic character education as a pillar of generational morality, with the help of Covidence software to review articles based on publication standards, databases, and inclusion and exclusion criteria (Dinter et al., 2021). The data used were articles indexed in Scopus, obtained from Taylor & Francis, Publish or Perish 8, and Mendeley Reference. The study includes publications between 2019 and 2024 to capture the latest trends in educational technology and ensure the relevance of the findings to current challenges.

A total of 210 publications relevant to the keywords used were found in the three databases. Bibliometric analysis is applied to identify, track, and map the relationships between various fields of knowledge, topics, publications, authors, and scientific knowledge streams related to this research (Oliveira et al., 2019). This analysis is important to understand trends in research results, identify influential authors or institutions, and assess the development of the scientific field over time (Lazarides et al., 2023). The selected data is analyzed and visualized using VOSviewer version 1.6.20 to illustrate patterns and relationships in the data, as shown in figure 1.

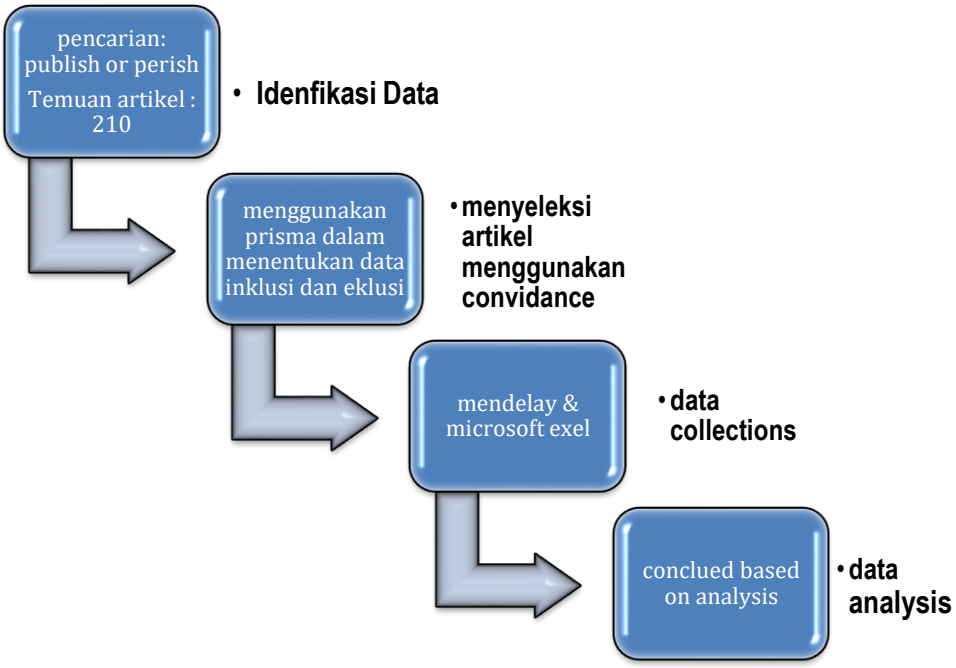


Figure 1. Search process

Search Strategy

As a first step in the literature review, the search strategy is based on an online database. The articles for this study were found using the keyword search method, which is the most commonly used and examined literature search method. Keyword search is defined as a document search that contains user-defined keywords. This method makes use of the full-text search filter to search for terms that are in the full-text index, with the goal of finding relevant documents. In the search process, the researcher also applied filters to databases such as Taylor & Francis, Publish or Perish 8, and Mendeley references indexed in Scopus. The following data search strategy will be explained in the Table 1 below:

Table. 1 Database Search Strategy

Filter	**Description**
Year	2019-2024
Subject area	Education
Search string	"Character Education" OR "Islamic Character" AND "Islamic Ethics" OR "Moral" AND "Islamic Value"
Source type	Journal
Language	English
Document type	Article *(Open access)*
Rank type	Indexed by Scopus

A total of 210 publications related to the keywords used were found in the three databases. These search results are exported in RIS and CSV formats for use in the selection and data collection process, applying inclusion and exclusion criteria and guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA).

Data Selection Criteria

Inclusion and exclusion criteria are used to determine which articles can be included in the study. This criterion is known as the eligibility criterion and is very important in selecting relevant articles. The inclusion criteria include the attributes that the article must have to be accepted, while the exclusion criteria identify articles that do not qualify. Example of data selection of inclusion and exclusion criteria in the table 2 below:

Table 2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Title and content of the article	Related to Character Education	Have irrelevant titles
Year	Publications from 2019 to 2024	Publication outside the specified time frame
Types of publications	Journal articles only.	Non- empirics reviews, editorials, and studies
Language	English	Other
Article study area	Education	Other
Participants	Students and Educators	Other
Accessibility	Full-text or open-access articles	Paid articles
Journal Index	Only articles that are indexed by Scopus	Other

Data Selection Process

Relevant and indexed articles in the Scopus database are selected using Covidence software to ensure the data obtained is accurate. The literature mapping was carried out on November 8, 2024 and consisted of three stages, namely identification, screening, and inclusion. The article selection follows the PRISMA diagram as shown in Figure 2.

The first stage in the article selection process is identification, which aims to detect duplicate documents. In this study, of the 210 documents obtained through Taylor & Francis, Publish or Perish 8, and the Scopus indexed Mendeley Reference, no duplication was found so all documents passed the identification stage. The next stage is screening, where 106 articles are further screened. This process consists of two stages, namely initial selection based on titles, keywords, and abstracts, which resulted in 60 articles that met the inclusion criteria, while the other 46 articles were excluded.

Furthermore, a follow-up selection was carried out by reading the full text of 60 articles that passed the previous stage. At this stage, 15 articles had access types that did not meet the inclusion criteria, and 1 article encountered an error in the document settings. The last stage is inclusion, which is reporting the number of articles that meet the eligibility criteria. Based on the selection carried out, 44 articles were obtained that were used in the data extraction process using Excel, which were then further analyzed with citations and appropriate bibliographic information.

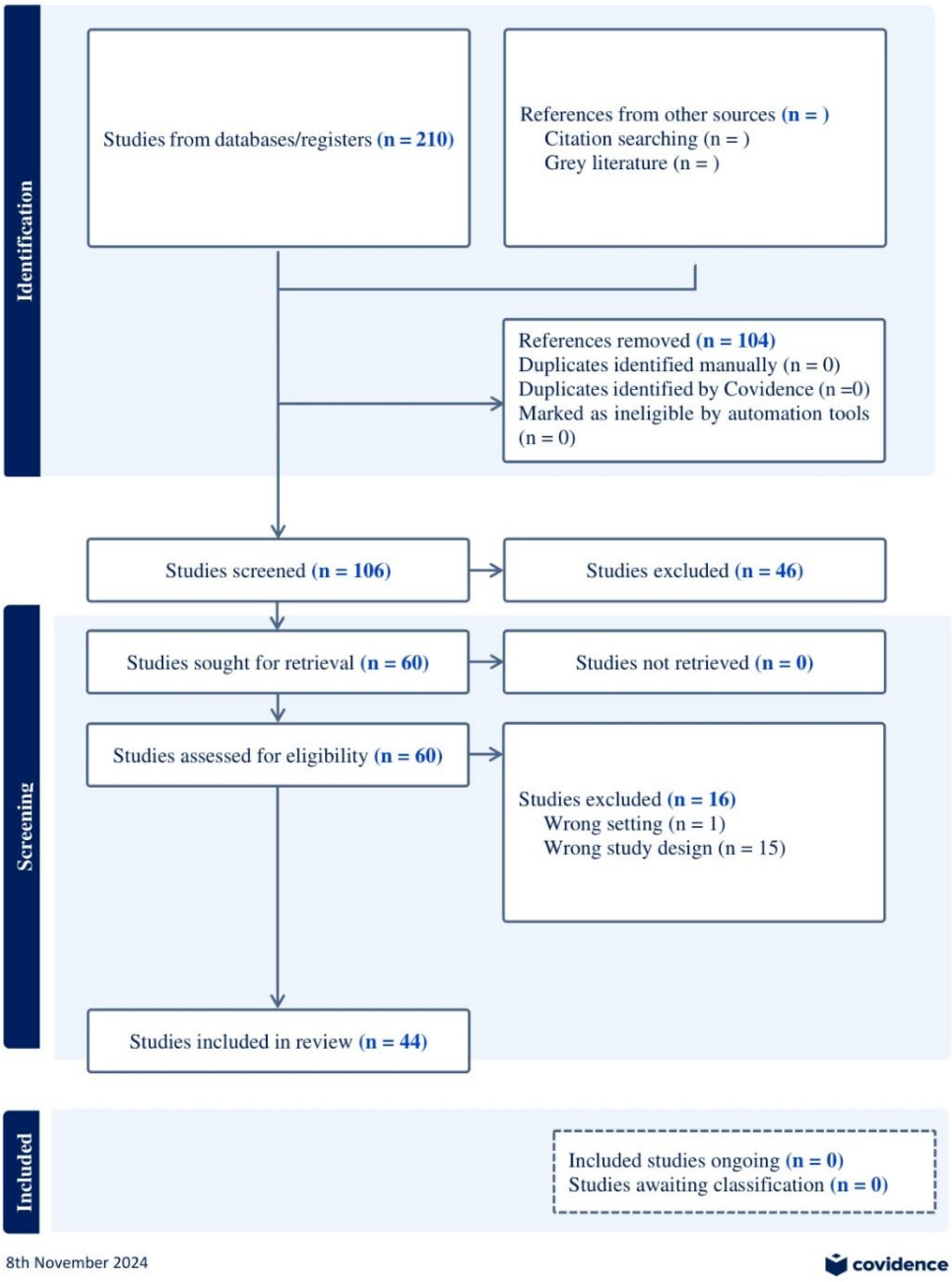


Figure 2. PRISMA Diagram

Data Analysis

All article data collected and meet the criteria selected in Covidence are then compiled in Mendeley to complete an incomplete bibliography, then downloaded in RIS format to be used in analysis using VOSviewer. In addition, to facilitate the data coding process, the researcher also uses Excel to create a tabulation of data consisting of Title, Researcher, Year of Publication, Country, Source, Affiliation,

Number of Citations, Researcher Keywords, Publisher, Research Method, Research Objectives, and Research Results (Shabira et al., 2024)

3. Result and Discussion

In recent years, character education has been very influential in the development of the era of globalization, especially in the field of education. This research aims to analyze and explore trends in publications, citations, journal contributions, visualize trends, and identify gaps and potential areas for further development related to character education in learning in various countries. The graph below illustrates research trends on character education from 2019 to 2024, as shown in Figure 3 below.

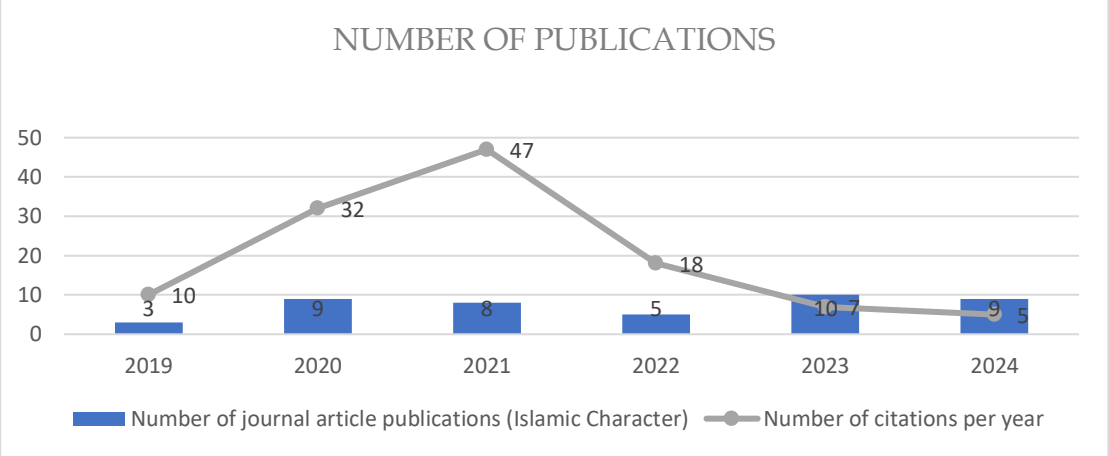


Figure 3. Publication and Citation Trends

Based on a graph in the journal *article Character Education as a Pillar of Morality for Generation Z: A Review of the Literature and Bibliometrics*, the number of journal publications on Islamic character education has fluctuated in the last five years. In 2019, there were three publications which increased rapidly to nine in 2020. This number was relatively stable in 2021 with eight publications, then decreased to five in 2022. However, there was an increase again in 2023 with ten publications, before declining again to five in 2024. Meanwhile, the number of citations per year shows a different pattern. Citations increased drastically from ten in 2019 to 32 in 2020, then reached a peak in 2021 with 47 citations. After that, the number of citations decreased significantly, dropping to 18 in 2022, then continuing to decline to 10 in 2023, and only five in 2024. This trend suggests that even as publications continue, the attractiveness or relevance of research in academic studies is beginning to decline.

This phenomenon is in line with the findings Sirait, (2023) which shows that character education has a significant impact on the morality of students, but its implementation still faces challenges in terms of academic recognition and sustainability of studies. Although character education is increasingly being considered, its effectiveness in the academic world needs to be strengthened through more in-depth and applicative research (Guefara et al., 2023). To increase

academic impact, it is necessary to improve the quality of research and disseminate research results in reputable journals that have a wide reach. Thus, the study of character education is not only growing in the number of publications, but it is also increasingly recognized and referenced in global academic discourse. The following are the results of the highest number of publications related to character education in this study are presented in the Table 3 below:

Table 3. The Highest Number of Publication Citations

Writer	Citation
M.I. Munandar	20
M. Taufik	12
Sokip	10
A. Mujahir	8
N.A. Memon	6

Table 3 presents the authors with the highest number of citations in the study *Character Education as a Pillar of Generation Z's Morality: A Review of the Literature and Bibliometrics* shows the five authors with the highest number of citations, namely M.I. Munandar (20 citations), M. Taufik (12 citations), Sokip (10 citations), A. Mujahir (8 citations), and N.A. Memon (6 citations).

This number of citations reflects the academic influence of each author in studies related to Islamic character education. citation is an important indicator in assessing the relevance and contribution of a work in the academic realm (Lindgreen et al., 2020). Study by Kousha & Thelwall, (2024) asserts that the number of citations can reflect the influence of a study in the scientific community, although other factors such as journal accessibility and topic relevance also affect citation rates.

In this context, the dominance of citations obtained Munandar & Newton, (2021) indicates that his work has a significant impact on the discussion of Islamic character education. Moral foundations are important in shaping the personality of the younger generation, which is strengthened by religious values (Taufik, 2020). Therefore, research that examines the integration of Islamic values in character education tends to receive more attention, as seen in the citation pattern of this article. From a bibliometric perspective, the citation analysis also reflects academic networks and researcher collaborations in related fields.

This phenomenon is in line with the findings Yu et al., (2019), which reveals that frequently cited research generally has strong thematic relevance and is often used as a reference in further studies. Therefore, the results of citations in this journal can be the basis for the development of further research related to character education and its implementation in the formal and non-formal education system. The results of the journals that contributed the most to character education in this study are summarized in the Table 4 below.

Table 4. Most Contributed Journals

Journal	Number
Journal of Eurasian Education Research	2
Journal of International Innovation, Creativity and Change	2
Futura Islamic Scientific Journal	2
Nazhruna: Journal of Islamic Education	2
Ulumuna	2

Table 4 highlights the journals that contributed the most to the publication of Character education in the field of learning between 2019 and 2024. The five leading journals with the largest contributions are the Eurasia Journal of Education Research, the International Journal of Innovation Creativity and Change, the Islamic Scientific Journal Futura, Nazhruna: The Journal of Islamic Education, and Ulumuna, which published two articles each. The dissemination of articles in various journals shows that character education is not only the concern of academics in the Islamic sphere, but also has a place in journals that have a broader focus such as innovation and creativity in education.

This reflects the increasing urgency of character education in shaping the morality of the younger generation, in line with the role of character education in building strong ethics and moral values (Bahri et al., 2022). Furthermore, research in these journals confirms that Islamic character education is not just a theory, but has become part of educational practice that can be measured and evaluated. Research conducted by Sulhan & Hakim, (2023) emphasizing the importance of education that not only produces students with high academic ability, but also with strong character, which can contribute to the development of the nation and society at large. Thus, this study confirms that Islamic character education has high relevance in the context of contemporary education, both theoretically and practically, and can create civilized, virtuous, and high-integrity individuals. The Country findings and the highest number of articles from this study are presented in the Figure 4 below.

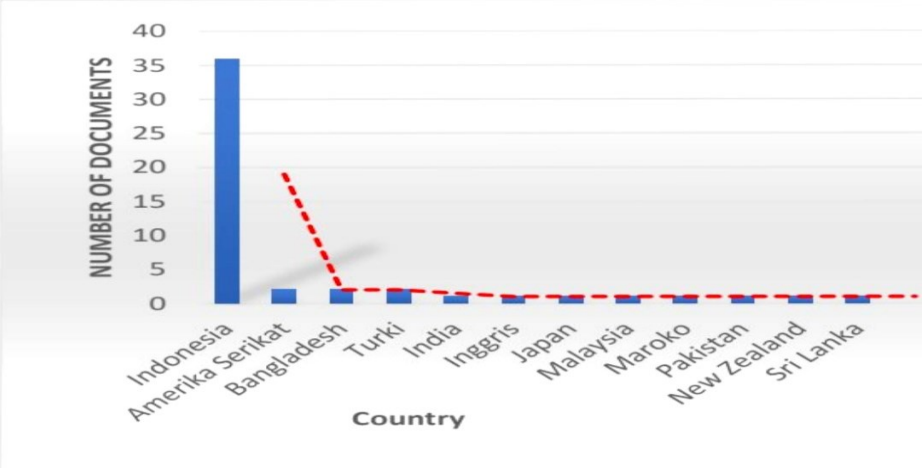


Figure 4. Countries and Number of Article Publications

Figure 4 shows that the distribution of article publications related to Character Education is dominated by Indonesia with a total of 36 documents. This number is very far compared to other countries such as the United States and Bangladesh which each have only two publications. Other countries, such as Turkey, India, the United Kingdom, Japan, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, New Zealand, and Sri Lanka, have only one publication each.

Indonesia's dominance in publications on Character Education shows that this topic is a major concern in the academic context in the country. This can be attributed to the majority of Indonesia's Muslim population as well as national education policies that emphasize character formation based on Islamic values. Nahriyah, (2024) mentioned that the integration of character education in the Indonesian education system has become the main agenda in improving the moral quality of the younger generation. Conversely, the low number of publications from other countries, including those from the Western world, may reflect a lack of focus on specific studies related to Character Education in their academic environment. However, some studies in the United States and the United Kingdom still discuss the concept of moral education in a broader framework, such as in research Prabowo & Ilyas, (2021) which highlights the importance of character-based education in shaping individuals who have moral integrity. Overall, this data indicates that the study of Character Education is more developed in countries with significant Muslim populations, especially Indonesia. The following will explain the visualization of collaboration between the authors as presented in Figure 5 below

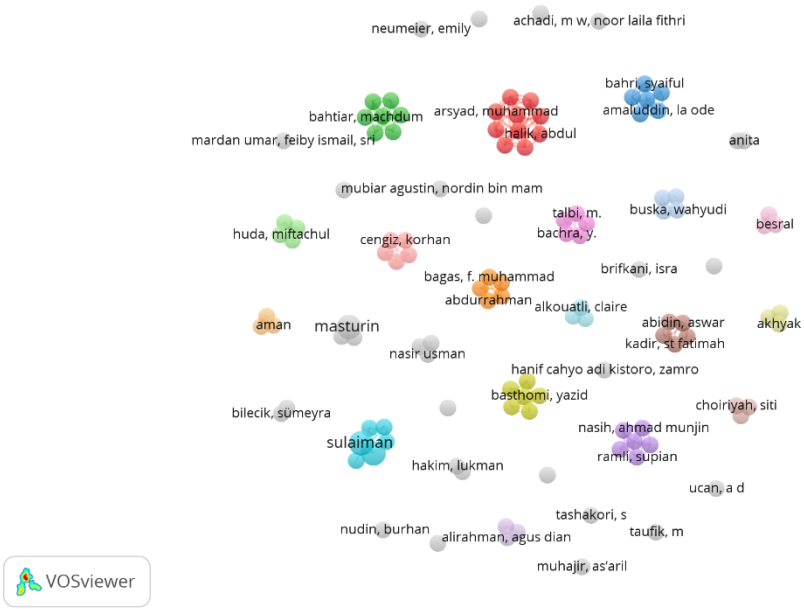


Figure 5. Visualize Collaboration between Authors

Figure 5 illustrates the network of collaboration among the authors in the Character Education research over the past five years, generated through VOSviewer with 118 researchers and 406 co-authorship links. The image produced from VOSviewer is a visualization of the collaboration network between writers in research related to

Islamic Character Education. In this visualization, each point (node) represents an author, while the relationship between points indicates collaboration between authors in scientific publications (Xu & Chang, 2020). Different colors indicate clusters that reflect a tendency toward collaboration within a particular research community.

From the visual analysis, it can be seen that there are several main author groups that have a high level of collaboration, indicated by the nodes that are interconnected in the form of denser color clusters. For example, names such as Muhammad Arsyad, Abdul Halik, and Korhan Cengiz form certain clusters, while Sulaiman and Miftahul Huda also form their own research clusters. On the other hand, there are some writers who are more isolated, which indicates that they tend to work independently or have less cross-writer collaboration.

Leoni et al., (2024) emphasized that the structure of scientific collaboration networks has a great influence on the dissemination of knowledge and innovation in a field of research. The closer the relationship between writers, the more likely it is that there will be an exchange of ideas and the maturation of academic concepts in Character Education. In addition, the existence of several research clusters shows that the topic of Character Education has a variety of study focuses, depending on the perspective and approach used by each group of writers.

Some may focus more on aspects of Islamic-based moral education, while others may examine the implementation of character education policies in the formal education system (Tabroni et al., 2022). Overall, this analysis shows that Character Education is a field that has significant development, with a fairly wide academic collaboration among various authors. This is also in line with the high level of scientific collaboration can improve the quality and visibility of research in the global academic community.

Of the 44 articles analyzed, 156 keywords were identified in the Character Education study. To ensure statistical validity, the researchers set a minimum threshold of one occurrence for each term, resulting in 156 keywords. Bibliometric analysis of Islamic Character Education shows that "Character Education" is the keyword with the highest number of appearances (11 times) and has a total link strength of 36. This indicates that research related to character education has a very strong connection in this study, and is often the main focus in academic discourse.

In addition, the keyword "Islamic Education" appeared 7 times with a total link strength of 23, which shows that the concept of education in general is also an important part of this study. Other relevant keywords were "Islamic" (3 times, 18 links strength), "Education" (4 times, 13 links strength), and "Pedagogy" (3 times, 12 links strength). This confirms that the pedagogical approach in Islamic education is a significant study in the literature analyzed. The results of this collaboration show that there are keywords that often appear as summarized in the Table 5 below,

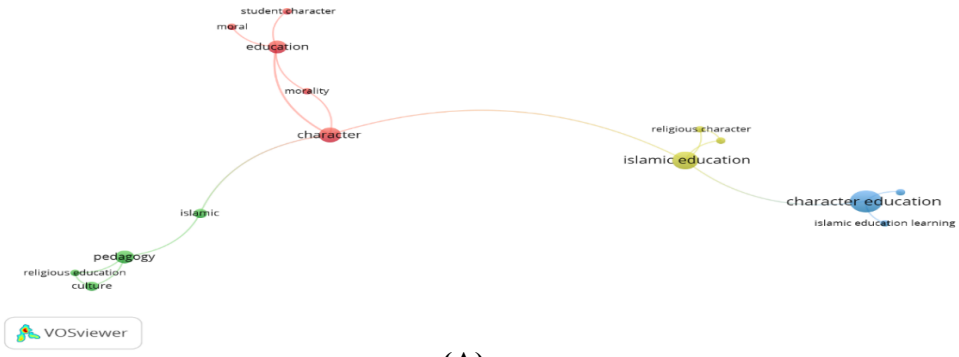
Table 5. Frequently Occurring Keywords

Keywords	Occurences	Total link strength
Character Education	11	36
Islamic Education	7	23
Islam	3	18
Education	4	13
Pedagogical	3	12
Pedagogi Islam	1	11
Muslim educators	1	11
Pedagogical Studies	1	11
Character	5	15
Religious Character	1	3
Islamic Moral Values	1	5
Islamic Religious Education	1	5
Moral Development	1	5
Educational Paradigm	1	5
Character Islam	1	4
Moderate Character	1	4
Morality	1	4
Strengthening Character Education	1	4
Character Building	1	3
Character development	1	3
Character Value	1	3
Islamic Religious Education and Character	1	2

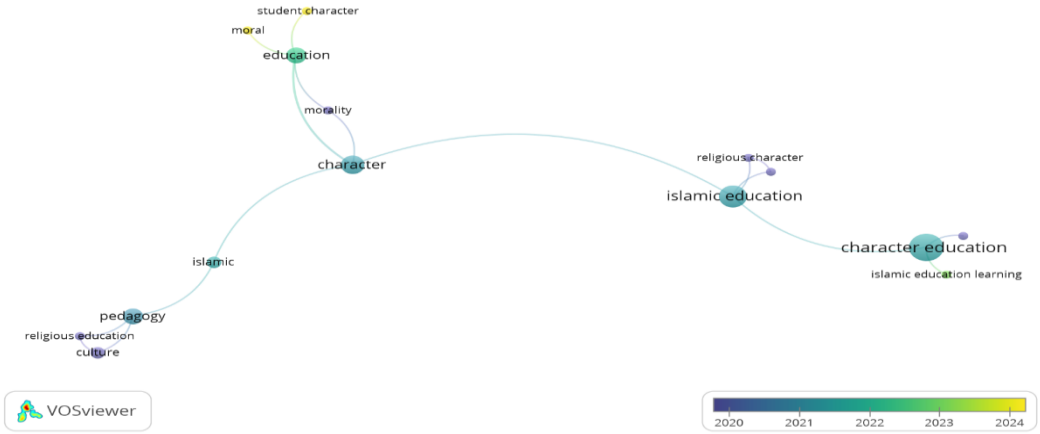
Khobir, (2021) revealed that character education has a major role in shaping individual morality through a systematic approach in the educational environment. Moreover Shulla et al., (2020) highlighting the importance of moral values in character-based education to build individuals who have strong moral integrity. In the context of Islam, Sapozhnykov, (2023) emphasizing that Islamic education aims to form human character based on the values of monotheism and noble morals, which is in line with the high frequency of the appearance of the keywords "Islamic Moral Values" and "Islamic Character" in this analysis.

In addition, the emergence of keywords such as "Islamic Education" (2 times, 8 links strength) and "Moderate Character" (1 time, 4 links strength) shows that there are efforts in academic studies to balance the concept of Islamic education with a moderate and inclusive character approach. This is in line with the idea of Islamic Wasathiyah developed in some recent research, where Islamic education is directed to inculcate moral values without extremism and remain adaptive to the development of the times (Almahira, 2024).

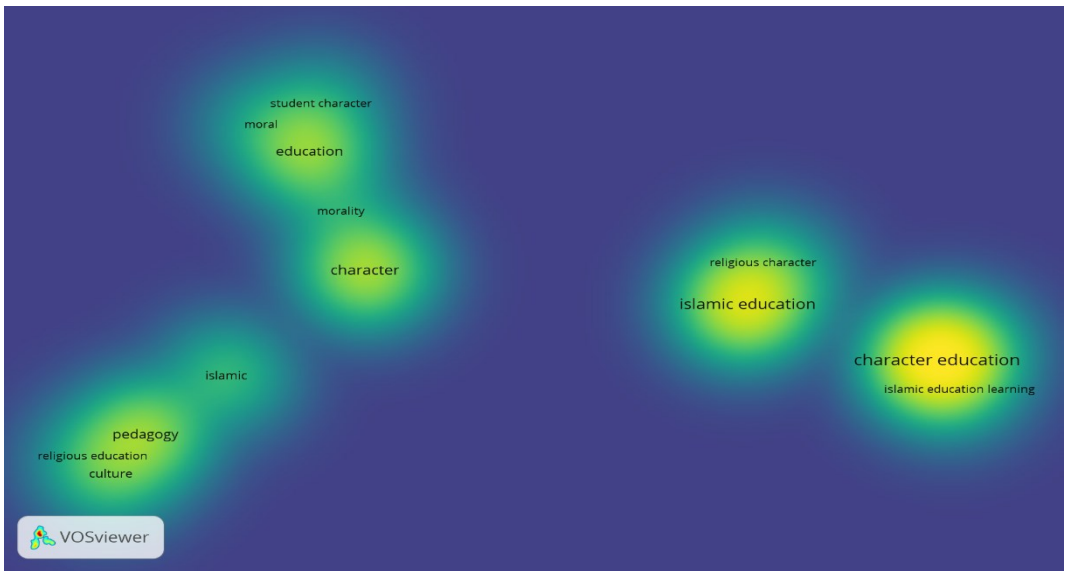
Overall, this data shows that the study of Islamic Character Education is still very oriented towards character education in general, with Islam as the moral and pedagogical foundation. However, there is still an opportunity for further research to explore specific aspects of Islamic character education, such as the integration of Islamic values in modern curricula or the role of Muslim educators in shaping more contextual and applicative Islamic values-based characters. These are the results of the keyword visualization which will be explained in the Figure 6 below.



(A)



(B)



(C)

Figure 6. (a) Co-emergence of network visualizations, (b) Co-emergence of overlay visualizations, (c) Co-emergence of density visualization

Of the 163 keywords identified, there were 100 keywords that were significantly interrelated. As a result, only these keywords are used in the Co-occurrence of Keywords visualization (figure A). a major cluster in related research that demonstrates the close relationship between these concepts. The green cluster highlights the role of pedagogy and culture in character education, while the red cluster shows the interconnectedness between character, morality, and education et al as the main elements in the formation of moral individuals. Meanwhile, the yellow cluster emphasized that Islamic education and religious character have a significant influence in building the morality of the younger generation. The blue cluster shows that character education is at the core of various studies in this literature.

The relationship between concepts in this visualization shows that Islamic education plays a key role in character development. Keywords such as *Pedagogi Islam* and *Islamic Education* indicates that Islamic teaching methods are an aspect that is widely studied in relation to moral formation. In addition, there is a close relationship between *Character education* and *Islamic Education* It is clear that character education in Islam has a distinctive approach and is oriented towards spiritual values and social ethics. Zumzianah, (2024) emphasizing that effective character education must have a systematic and integrated moral approach in the curriculum. Islamic-based character education not only focuses on the transfer of religious knowledge, but also shapes the ethics and morality of students. Study by Shulla et al., (2020) stating that the influence of Islamic education on the morality of the younger generation shows that an Islamic-based educational approach can promote better moral awareness and social behavior.

The implication of the results of this study is that character education in Islam needs to be further developed by considering pedagogical, cultural, and religious approaches holistically. Islamic religious education is not only the teaching of religious knowledge, but also the main means of forming individual character based on strong moral values. Therefore, a more comprehensive approach based on Islamic values is needed in an effort to create a generation with integrity and high moral and social awareness.

Figure (b) shows the relationship between the various main concepts in this study, with clustering by theme and time period. There are several main clusters in the keyword network that are displayed. The purplish-blue cluster focuses on *pedagogy* and *culture*, which shows that pedagogical and cultural aspects are important elements in Islamic character education. The yellow cluster connects the concepts *of student character*, and *morality*, indicating that moral values are the main foundation in character education. Meanwhile, the light blue cluster highlights the role of *Islamic education* and *religious character*, indicating that Islamic education is not only aimed at the transfer of religious knowledge, but also at shaping the moral character of individuals. The light blue-green cluster at the far right shows the close relationship between *character education* and the overall aspect of Islamic education.

From a temporal perspective, the data show that research on *Pedagogies* and *culture* has been growing since 2019, followed by a study on *Islamic Education* in the following years, and then *Character education* which is more dominant in the latest research, especially in 2022–2023. This reflects a trend that the study of character education is increasingly oriented towards a more comprehensive approach, which integrates Islamic values, morality, and pedagogical methods. Effective character education must be structured and systematic in building the morality of students (Alhamuddin et al., 2022).

Moslimany et al., (2024) shows that Islamic religious education contributes significantly in shaping personality and character based on ethical and moral values and Islamic education has a direct impact on the social and ethical awareness of the younger generation, which is in line with the findings in this bibliometric analysis. Overall, this analysis shows that character education is an ever-evolving study, with a multidimensional approach that includes cultural, moral, and pedagogical aspects. The latest research trends confirm that character education is not only theory-based, but must also be implemented in the education system more holistically. Thus, Islamic education can continue to be the main pillar in building a generation with high character and morals.

Figure (c) illustrates the frequency and strength of the relationship between keywords, this pattern shows high-frequency areas characterized by bright yellow, as well as lower-frequency areas that are green and blue. This distribution provides insight into how the key concepts in this study are interrelated and develop. From the image, it can be seen that there are several major density centers. The first density is in the concept *Pedagogies*, *religious education*, and *culture*, which indicates that pedagogical approaches as well as cultural elements play an important role in Islamic character education.

The second density is centered on *Education, Morality* and *character*, indicating that the dimensions of education and morality are very dominant in this study. The third density lies in the *Islamic Education* that are closely related to *Religious character*, showing that Islamic education is seen as the main instrument in the formation of religious character. Meanwhile, the last density focused on *Character education and Islamic Education Learning* shows that character education as a broad concept remains a major topic in the literature.

In terms of research implications, this pattern confirms that character education is not only built on the principles of individual morality but is also influenced by pedagogical methods and evolving cultural values. Komariah & Nihayah, (2023) To generate people with Character education must be carried out systematically and continuously in order to produce individuals who have high moral awareness. Islamic education is not just a process of knowledge transfer, but furthermore, it functions as a medium of character formation based on spiritual values, and Islamic-based education has a significant impact in increasing the moral and social awareness of the younger generation.

This analysis shows that in recent years, the study of character education has been developing with a more holistic approach. Character education is not only seen from the cognitive aspect but also how Islamic values, culture, and pedagogy can shape individuals who have high morality. Thus, this research provides a strong basis for the development of a more comprehensive character education model based on Islamic values.

In Character Education research, various research methods are used to collect and analyze data. Careful planning, selection of the right research methods, careful data collection, proper data analysis, and transparent reporting are essential to improve the validity of scientific research findings (Mandasini, 2022). The 44 selected articles from 2019 to 2024 reveal the various research methods commonly used in the study of Character Education, as well as trends in their use in recent years, as shown in Figure 7.

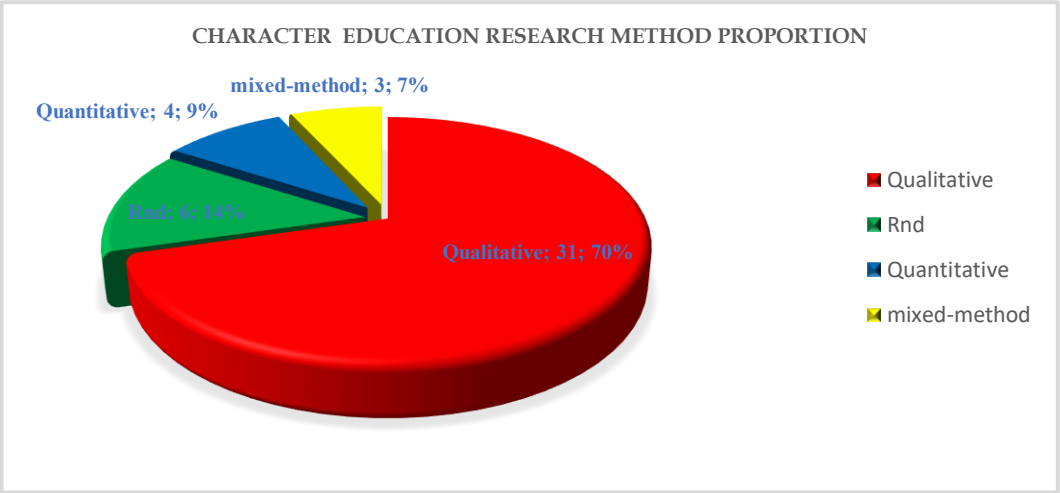


Figure 7. Proportion of Character Education Research Methods

Based on the diagram shown, research on character is more dominated by a qualitative approach, with a proportion of 70% (31 studies). This method is often used to explore the deeper aspects of moral values and character in Islam, as practiced by the Choli, (2019) It shows that character education is more effective when it involves a process of self-reflection and contextual learning, where students' understanding of Islamic values is developed through discussion, personal experience, and practice in daily life. Through literature analysis, interviews, or case studies become widely used techniques to dig deeper and deeper data. This approach allows for a more comprehensive exploration of the concepts of character education.

Meanwhile, the Research and Development (R&D) method occupies the second position with 14% (6 studies). This approach shows a focus on developing models or instruments in character education, which aims to produce more applicative learning products, such as learning modules or Islamic-based character education media. For example, research conducted by Kartika et al., (2025) develop Islamic-based character education learning modules designed to increase students' moral awareness. This study shows that by using the RND method, researchers can design interventions that are more targeted and relevant, as well as test the effectiveness of the product in a real context.

Quantitative methods accounted for only 9% (4 studies), which suggests that numerical and statistical data-driven approaches were less commonly used in these studies. This may be due to the difficulty in measuring aspects of morality and character with valid and reliable quantitative instruments. Quantitative research often uses questionnaires or surveys to collect data from large samples (Kittur, 2023). Yuningsih & Yusuf, (2024) Using a quantitative approach to measure the influence of character education on students' attitudes and behaviors in schools, using survey instruments to collect data from more than 500 students. The results show a significant relationship between character education and improved student behavior, which can be seen as empirical evidence that quantitative methods can provide a strong overview of the effects of character education on a larger population.

Finally, the mixed-method method has a proportion of 7% (3 studies). Although still low, this approach has the potential to provide a more holistic analysis by combining the advantages of qualitative and quantitative methods. This approach allows researchers to not only measure the extent to which certain variables are influential, but also to understand the context and meaning behind those numbers (Salim et al., 2024). The results of this study show that the blended approach provides a more holistic insight into the effectiveness of the program, by deepening the understanding of statistically measured character influences and exploring the underlying social dynamics. Thus, the mixed-method method provides the flexibility to respond to various research questions more effectively.

From this analysis, it can be concluded that research on characters is more exploratory and descriptive, with little attention to experimental or quantitative methods. However, the increasing use of R&D and mixed-method methods indicates that there are efforts to develop a more applicative and evidence-based approach to Islamic character education. This opens up opportunities for future research to use more mixed methods or evidence-based approaches to strengthen findings in the field of character education. The top five article trends on character education are summarised in the Table 7 below:

Table 7. Trends of the top five articles in Character Education in the last 6 years (2019-2024)

Writer	Heading	Findings	Recommendations
Jonathan Newton, Munandar	Indonesian teachers' pedagogical beliefs and classroom practices regarding culture and interculturality	Policy-Oriented Cultural Teaching, the Gap between Beliefs and Practices, and the Use of Intercultural Content	This study recommends encouraging character education based on an intercultural approach that is sensitive to socio-educational conditions in Indonesia.
M. Taufik	THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN STRENGTHENING CHARACTER EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION 4.0	character formation, integration of religiosity values**,** and the role of teachers and parents. These findings emphasize the importance of PAI in shaping a young generation that is not only academically competitive, but also has a strong and ethical character.	There is curriculum development, teacher training, parent and community involvement, follow-up research, and practical application. This recommendation is expected to make a positive contribution to strengthening the character of education through Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia
Sokip, Sulistyorini	Applying Islamic values in character education for secondary schools in Indonesia	significant and positive influence of most items of Islamic values in character education on student behavior.	for the development of Islamic education and culture. In addition, the results of this study are highly recommended for policy development and strategic guidelines to overcome the negative influence of several factors of Islamic values in character education on student behavior.
A. Muhajir	The inclusion of pluralism character education in Modern Islamic Boarding Schools in the Pandemic Era	The main challenge in developing Islamic pluralism-based character education in the UNIDA Gontor curriculum is the unequal ability of lecturers in compiling an effective character education	There is an increase in lecturer qualifications with training and development to optimize the tri dharma of higher education, as well as curriculum development in Prioritizing Character Education
N.A. Memon, Dylan Chown, Claire Alkouatli	Description and laws of Islamic character: Reflections of alumni of the Islamic Teacher Education Program	Character Education: Includes efforts to educate students through models of good behavior, development of noble morals, and muhasabah (self-reflection on moral behavior).	Development of Islamic Character Pedagogy: Character education that involves moral reflection (muhasabah) and the embodiment of Islamic values such as adab and akhlaq is recommended as the main focus of Islamic education.

Character education has a strategic role in shaping the morality of the younger generation, especially in the midst of the challenges of the digital era and globalization (Huda, 2022). Based on the analysis of several journal articles, it can be concluded that character education not only focuses on the transfer of moral values, but also emphasizes self-reflection, integration in the curriculum, and the active participation of educators and parents (Idris et al., 2023)

Munandar & Newton, (2021) highlighting the gap between beliefs and practices in the teaching of intercultural cultures by teachers in Indonesia. This shows that although teachers have a good understanding of cultural values and interculturality, their implementation in the classroom still faces structural and policy constraints. Meanwhile Taufik, (2020) revealed that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a crucial role in shaping the character of the younger generation through the integration of religious values and the involvement of parents and the community. However, the effectiveness of PAI is still influenced by the curriculum that needs to be updated as well as the pedagogical skills of teachers.

Further Sokip & Sulistyorini, (2019) proving that Islamic values taught in character education have a positive impact on student behavior. However, some aspects have the potential to have a negative influence, which shows the need for strategic policies in their implementation. In the context of Boarding school education, A. Mujahir, (2022) highlighting the main challenges in developing Islamic pluralism-based character, especially related to the unequal competence of lecturers and the lack of optimal Tri Dharma of Higher Education. This shows that character education in modern Islamic institutions still needs support in the aspect of qualification of educators and the development of a more inclusive curriculum. Memon et al., (2021) adding perspective that Islamic character education must involve moral contemplation (reflection)and strengthening the values of adab in learning practices. Teachers are expected not only as teachers, but also as models in building the noble character of students.

From these findings, it can be concluded that character education has great potential in building the morality of the younger generation, but there are still various challenges in its implementation. Bernal et al., (2023) shows that strengthening character education requires a comprehensive approach, including curriculum reform, teacher capacity building, and policies that support the integration of Islamic values in formal education. Therefore, collaboration between the government, educational institutions, and the community is a key factor in ensuring the success of character education as a pillar of morality for future generations.

4. Conclusion

The trend of publication of journal articles indexed in Scopus related to Character Education in learning during the period 2019-2024 shows significant fluctuations, Islamic character education plays a crucial role in forming individuals with strong morality, both in the context of formal and informal education. The number of journal articles on Character Education in learning is relatively stable, although

there was a slight decline in 2021 and 2022. "Teacher pedagogical beliefs in Indonesia and classroom practices regarding culture and interculture" is one of the most cited articles on Character Education in learning. Most of the publications come from Indonesia, Turkey, and the United States.

The most frequently used research method in the analyzed documents is the qualitative method. The main themes that are often researched include Character Education. Islamic Religious Education, and Character. This mapping analysis shows that there is a lack of integration in the curriculum, inconsistencies in implementation, as well as a lack of evaluation of the effectiveness of character education. These findings recommend that future research can focus more on the development of innovative teaching methods, measuring effectiveness, and the application of digital technology in Islamic character education while maintaining the integrity of spiritual values

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