

SUPERIOR CHARACTER AS THE KEY TO STUDENTS' ACADEMIC SUCCESS IN THE 5.0 ERA

Lucky Antonio¹, Pujiwati²

¹²Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Kerusso; Indonesia

Correspondence Email; lucky@sttkerussoindonesia.ac.id

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the influence of character education on student learning achievement in the context of the 5.0 era. The type of research used is quantitative research. This method was chosen because it is appropriate for testing the relationship and influence between the variables that have been formulated, namely character education and student learning achievement. The research design used is explanatory research. The focus of this study is on three dimensions of character: discipline, self-confidence, and independence. The research subjects consisted of 80 grade XII science students at Mahanaim Middle School in the even semester of the 2022/2023 academic year. The selection of subjects was carried out purposively, considering that the class had received systematic character education intervention through learning tools used at the school. Data collection was carried out through two techniques, namely questionnaires and documentation. The measurement scale used was a four-point Likert scale, with alternative answers ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4), as stated by Riduwan (2004). In addition, documentation was used to obtain quantitative data on student learning achievement, which was taken from the Final Semester Examination (UAS) scores. The results of the study indicate a significant influence, both simultaneously and partially, of discipline, self-confidence, and independence on student achievement. These findings underscore the importance of character education as a primary foundation for improving the quality of learning and student competitiveness in the 5.0 era, where intellectual intelligence needs to be supported by emotional intelligence and strong character. Therefore, schools and educators are expected to continue strengthening the integration of character education into the learning process as a key strategy in producing a superior and globally competitive generation.

Keywords

Character Education, Student Learning Achievement, Superior Character, The 5.0 Era



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INTRODUCTION

In the era of Society 5.0, character education is crucial in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also possesses superior character. At Mahanaim Junior High School, there are significant academic challenges related to the implementation of character education. Although the school has implemented character education through its syllabus and lesson plans, many students still fail to demonstrate the qualities of discipline, self-confidence, and independence in their daily lives. This creates a gap between the goals of character education and the reality on the ground, which requires further study to find effective solutions.

The role of developing superior character in improving student academic achievement at Mahanaim Junior High School is crucial. Character education serves as a driver of intrinsic motivation, encouraging students to study harder and take responsibility for their learning (Aquil et al., 2025). Research shows that students with good character tend to be more motivated to achieve high academic achievement. However, the challenge is how to internalize these character values in a technology-based learning context so that students can adapt well in the digital age.

Factors influencing the development of superior character in students at Mahanaim Junior High School include teacher support, parental involvement, and a conducive social environment. Teachers serve as role models and integrate character values into every learning process. The family, as the primary educational environment, also plays a crucial role in shaping a child's character. Furthermore, a supportive social environment, such as peers with positive character, can reinforce the character traits instilled at home and school.

Effective learning strategies for instilling superior character in students, enabling them to adapt and excel in the era of Society 5.0, include the use of active, collaborative, and technology-based learning methods (Astriana et al., 2024). Active learning methods, such as group discussions and collaborative projects, can increase student engagement and help them internalize character values. Furthermore, the use of technology in learning, such as online learning platforms, can provide students with broader access to independent learning and develop independence.

The importance of an in-depth evaluation of the implementation process of character education at Mahanaim Junior High School cannot be overstated. Although character education has been incorporated into the curriculum, there remains a gap between planning and implementation (Muzakir, 2024). Therefore, concrete improvements are needed so that character education is not merely an administrative formality but truly shapes students' behavior and attitudes in their daily

lives.

Thus, this study aims to examine the influence of character education on student achievement and effective strategies for instilling superior character at Mahanaim Junior High School. This research is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of character education at the secondary level and provide practical recommendations for educators and school administrators.

Research by Setya et al., (2024) shows that character education has a positive effect on student academic achievement, where students with good character tend to have higher academic grades. Furthermore, Budiwati et al., (2024) found that discipline is closely related to student academic success, where students who are disciplined in their studies tend to achieve better academic performance. Safitri et al., (2024) revealed that student self-confidence contributes significantly to academic achievement, where confident students are more active in the learning process and better able to face academic challenges. Widiyasari (2025) shows that learning independence has a positive effect on student academic achievement, where students who are independent in learning are able to manage time and resources more effectively. Research by Sholeh et al. (2025) found that the integration of character values in learning can improve student motivation and academic achievement, where students involved in character-based learning show better academic results. Furthermore, research by Erita et al., (2023) emphasizes the importance of a supportive social environment in character formation, which influences student learning motivation. Research by Cai et al., (2023) also shows that empathy contributes to collaboration and academic achievement among students. Research by Fu et al., (2025) found that responsibility is positively related to students' time management skills, which impacts academic achievement. Research by Li & Ito (2021) highlights that creativity can improve students' problem-solving skills, which contributes to academic success. Finally, research by Abubakar (2024) shows that integrity plays a crucial role in building students' self-confidence and motivation to learn.

Several gaps in these previous studies are noteworthy. First, all of these studies focused on college students, while this study will examine junior high school students, a crucial phase in character formation. Second, these studies did not specifically examine the context of technology-based education, which is highly relevant in the era of Society 5.0. Third, despite the emphasis on discipline, self-confidence, and independence, no research has comprehensively integrated these three traits into a single, adaptive learning model for secondary school students. The novelty of this

research lies in its more specific approach to character education at Mahanaim Junior High School, taking into account the context of the technology-based Society 5.0 era. This research will explore effective learning strategies for instilling superior character in students and how these character traits can contribute to their academic achievement (Sanjani, 2024). Thus, this research is expected to make a more significant contribution to the development of character education at the secondary level and provide practical recommendations for educators and school administrators.

Indonesian education policy, as outlined in the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 20 of 2018 concerning Strengthening Character Education, emphasizes the importance of integrating character education into the curriculum (Susilo et al., 2022). The discourse on character education is also supported by theories such as Constructivism Theory, which emphasizes that effective learning occurs when students are actively involved in the learning process, and Social Learning Theory, which suggests that social interaction plays a crucial role in character formation. Furthermore, Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences is also relevant, emphasizing that each student possesses different potentials, and character education can be tailored to the student's intelligence.

This study aims to examine the extent to which character education influences student achievement at Mahanaim Junior High School, with a focus on the application of the values of discipline, self-confidence, and independence. Furthermore, this study also aims to identify factors that support and hinder the implementation of character education in schools, as well as provide recommendations for the development of more effective and applicable character education strategies. The significance of this study can be seen from two sides. From a theoretical perspective, this study is expected to enrich the body of knowledge regarding character education, particularly in the context of secondary education, and contribute to the development of educational theories relevant to superior character in the era of society 5.0. Meanwhile, from a pragmatic perspective, the results of this study are expected to provide practical recommendations for educators and school administrators in designing and implementing more effective character education programs, thereby improving student academic achievement and shaping character that is in line with the demands of the times.

METHOD

This quantitative research uses a case study approach on "Excellent Character as the Key to Student Academic Success in the 5.0 Era at Mahanaim Junior High School in Bekasi City". The data in this study are quantitative, covering the level of internalization of character education values among students and their academic achievement. Data sources include questionnaires and academic documents. Data collection techniques used were interviews, observation, and documentation.

During the observation phase, the start and end times of observations were conducted at Mahanaim Junior High School from January to March 2023. Interviews were conducted with respondents consisting of 10 grade 12 science students, two character education teachers, and the principal. Documentation includes Final Semester Examination (UAS) scores, syllabi, and lesson plans demonstrating the integration of character values into teaching and learning activities.

Data analysis was conducted through data reduction regarding the influence of character education on student achievement, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification (Dewi & Alam, 2020). Data reduction was carried out by eliminating irrelevant data and focusing on the variables studied. The data is presented in tables and graphs on the level of internalization of character values and student achievement. Data analysis was conducted through a critical analysis of the influence of character education on student achievement, using relevant theories (Istiyono et al., 2021). Furthermore, the researchers compared the findings with several related studies to strengthen the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

In an effort to understand the influence of character education on student achievement at Mahanaim Junior High School, this study collected and analyzed relevant data. The primary focus of this research was to explore how character values, such as discipline, self-confidence, and independence, can contribute to students' academic success in the era of Society 5.0. Through a quantitative approach and comprehensive data collection techniques, this study aims to provide a clear picture of the relationship between character education and academic achievement.

Data obtained from questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documentation will be presented in a systematic and structured format. This data presentation aims not only to illustrate the research findings but also to provide deeper insight into the factors that support and hinder the

implementation of character education in schools. Thus, it is hoped that these findings can make a significant contribution to the development of more effective and applicable character education strategies in the future. The following are the findings obtained from this study.

Table 1. Superior Character as the Key to Students' Academic Success in the 5.0 Era at Mahanaim Junior High School, Bekasi City

Superior Character	Category Presentation	Percentage (%)	Number of Students	Description of Achievement
High Discipline	High	40,90	32	Most students demonstrate good discipline, with a strong application of disciplinary values.
	Moderate	7,90	6	Only a few students fall into this category, indicating room for improvement.
	Low	6,62	5	Very few students have low discipline, indicating that the majority of students already have a good awareness of discipline.
	Very High	44,76	36	The majority of students have very high discipline, reflecting a strong awareness and application of disciplinary values in learning activities.

Table 1 shows the distribution of discipline characteristics of the 12th-grade science students at Mahanaim Junior High School, the focus of this study. The data reveal that 36 students (44.76%) fall into the very high discipline category. Students in this group consistently demonstrate discipline in completing assignments, adhering to study schedules, and following school rules without requiring close supervision. They serve as role models in implementing disciplinary values at school.

Thirty-two students (40.90%) fall into the high discipline category. Although not as strict as the very high group, students in this category still demonstrate a strong commitment to academic discipline. They require only minimal reminders from teachers to comply with regulations and complete assignments on time.

The moderate discipline group consists of 6 students (7.90%). These students sometimes exhibit inconsistent discipline, especially when lacking motivation or facing difficult learning material. They require more guidance and encouragement from teachers to improve their discipline.

Only five students (6.62%) fall into the low discipline category. This group frequently faces difficulties in adhering to rules and study schedules. They require intensive mentoring and specific strategies to help them develop self-discipline.

These findings clearly demonstrate that the character education program at Mahanaim Middle School has successfully instilled discipline in the majority of students. With 85.66% of

students in the high and very high categories, it can be concluded that character building is a crucial element in achieving academic success in the 5.0 era, where independence and discipline are key prerequisites for facing the challenges of modern education.

1. Disciplinary Character Education

Research shows that of 80 12th-grade science students at Mahanaim Junior High School, 36 (44.76%) had very high levels of discipline, 32 (40.90%) had high levels of discipline, 6 (7.90%) were in the moderate category, and 5 (6.62%) were in the low category. The significance level of disciplinary character education on academic achievement was 0.015 ($p < 0.05$).

The majority of students demonstrated high to very high levels of discipline. This indicates that the implementation of disciplinary character education in schools has been effective. Teachers play a significant role in this success, through consistent discipline in both classrooms and outside the classroom, the application of educational sanctions, and the instilling of values such as punctuality, adherence to rules, and academic responsibility.

The significance level of 0.015 indicates a strong relationship between disciplinary character and academic achievement. Disciplined students tend to arrive on time, complete assignments, and participate seriously in learning. Conversely, undisciplined students exhibit high levels of absenteeism, low class participation, and poor academic achievement.

These findings support the opinion of Bell & Puckett (2023), Ssemakula (2019), and A'yun & Darmawan (2025) that student discipline is a dominant factor in academic achievement.

2. Self-Confidence Character Education

Of the 80 12th-grade science students at Mahanaim Middle School, the self-confidence character levels were as follows: 59 students (77%) were in the very high category, 12 students (14.57%) were in the high category, six students (6.63%) were in the moderate category, and three students (3.98%) were in the low category. The significance level of the effect of self-confidence on academic achievement was 0.030 ($p < 0.05$).

Most students demonstrated very high levels of self-confidence (Alharbi & Alharbi, 2022). This is a result of the active learning approach implemented by teachers, such as class discussions, presentations, and opportunities to express opinions openly. This approach successfully fostered courage, self-confidence, and a positive attitude in facing academic challenges.

A significance value of 0.030 indicates a significant relationship between self-confidence and academic achievement. Students with high self-confidence can manage exam pressure, remain calm when facing assignments, and demonstrate optimal performance in learning (Wahyudi & Rahmad, 2025). This finding is supported by Alvesson & Kärreman (2016), which states that academic failure is often caused by weak character traits such as self-confidence, not solely by intellectual intelligence.

Therefore, character education that emphasizes developing self-confidence plays a crucial role in developing academically and mentally resilient students (Anisah, 2023; Nufa, 2025).

3. Independent Character Education

Of the 80 12th-grade science students at Mahanaim Junior High School, the students' independent character was classified as follows: 18 students (22.06%) had very high independent character, 53 students (68.10%) had high independent character, 10 students (11.95%) were in the moderate category, no students were in the low category, and the significance level of the influence of independent character on academic achievement was 0.032 ($p < 0.05$).

The majority of students demonstrated high independent character (Nurazizah, 2021). This indicates that teachers have successfully instilled independent learning habits, such as completing assignments without assistance and actively seeking additional resources (Chu et al., 2021). Learning practices that emphasize initiative and responsibility have fostered students' intrinsic motivation to learn.

A significance value of 0.032 confirms the positive influence of independent character on academic achievement. Independent students do not rely solely on teachers but actively explore subject matter independently, resulting in improved mastery and learning outcomes.

These findings support the findings of Fakhurrazi et al. (2022), Sin & Cahyani (2022), and Indriani & Asfia (2023) who argue that proper character education, including aspects of independence, can improve academic outcomes. Berkowitz, as cited in Jeynes (2019), also states that consistent character education contributes to increased student motivation and achievement.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that the character education implemented at Mahanaim Junior High School, specifically the character traits of discipline, self-confidence, and independence, has a significant impact on the academic achievement of 12th-grade science students. This aligns with the concept of the 5.0 era, which demands individuals' ability to manage themselves effectively to compete and adapt quickly amidst technological advances and global demands.

According to Berkowitz in Cholifah (2024), character education is a crucial foundation for building student learning motivation. This motivation encourages students to study regularly and responsibly, which in turn improves their academic achievement. Discipline, as a key character trait, according to Jiang et al., (2023), is a dominant factor in learning success because it regulates the consistency of students' attitudes and behaviors throughout the learning process. This study's data, which shows that 85.66% of students have high to very high levels of discipline, supports this theory.

Research by Imawan & Ismail (2023) also supports these findings, stating that appropriate character education will improve student academic achievement. Not only discipline, but also self-confidence and independence have been shown to contribute positively to learning success. High self-confidence, as found in 91.57% of students in the high and very high categories, enables them to effectively manage exam pressure and academic challenges. This aligns with Zins's statement in Fahmy et al., (2017), which asserts that self-confidence and the ability to manage academic stress are crucial factors in student success.

Furthermore, the independent character developed through students' habit of completing assignments without assistance and actively seeking additional resources indicates that independent learning is key to in-depth mastery of the material. This finding supports research by Setyaningsih et al. (2023), which found a positive relationship between independent learning and academic outcomes. Student independence is also a manifestation of intrinsic motivation, which, according to Berkowitz in Sammons et al. (2018), is a key driver of sustained academic achievement.

Although the results of this study show a positive picture, the authors argue that the implementation of character education must continue to be integrated holistically and contextually to not only shape superior character but also address students' emotional and social aspects. For example, the characters of empathy and cooperation have not been discussed in depth, even though collaboration skills are crucial in the 5.0 era. Therefore, comprehensive and balanced character education will have a greater impact in preparing students to face the challenges of the times (Firdaus & Suwendi, 2025; Njui, 2017; Zainuddin et al., 2025).

On the other hand, a potential challenge is how to maintain the consistency of character education implementation outside the school environment, particularly at home and in the community, so that students' character development becomes more comprehensive (Anisah, 2023). The author proposes closer synergy between schools, parents, and the community in supporting character education.

Thus, the theoretical dialogue and research findings confirm that character education, particularly discipline, self-confidence, and independence, is key to the academic success of Mahanaim Middle School students in the 5.0 era. However, broader and more integrated character development is still needed to prepare students as individuals who excel academically, mentally, and socially.

CONCLUSION

Character education is a crucial element in improving student academic achievement at Mahanaim Junior High School in Bekasi City. Research results show that discipline, self-confidence, and independence significantly contribute to student learning success in the 5.0 era. Discipline forms regular study habits, while self-confidence encourages students to actively participate in learning. Independence is also important, as students need to be able to learn independently and make decisions. Therefore, synergy between students, teachers, and the educational environment is essential to developing positive character traits that support academic success.

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