

**The Influence of Achievement in the Character Habituation Program on Students' Grades at Makarios Junior High School, West Jakarta, during the 2023/2024 Academic Year**

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*Pedagogy: A Case Study of Character-based Approach*

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*"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward."*

**- Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV)**

**ABSTRACT**

This research investigates the impact of the *Character Habituation* program on student *academic performance* at *Makarios Christian School* at *Junior High* level during the *2023/2024 academic year*. Character education has emerged as a critical element in the development of students' ethical principles, conduct, and educational achievement. This investigation utilized a comparative analytical framework to evaluate the influence of character habituation approach on individual student performance and the broader academic milieu, using Bandura's (1977) *Social Learning Theory* and Pearson's (1901) theory of *Correlation* analysis. The findings indicate that: **1)** The investigation revealed that students who regularly engaged in the Character Habituation program generally attained superior academic grades. This observation implies a moderate positive effect of the program on student performance. **2)** Students who engaged in the program continued to encounter academic obstacles, whereas a select few who abstained from participation still achieved elevated grades. This suggests that additional variables, such as individual academic capabilities or learning difficulties, also play a significant role in influencing academic outcomes. **3)** The outcomes from the Pearson correlation study suggested a moderate positive connection ( $r = 0.45$ ) tying program involvement to educational achievement, illustrating that although the program aids in academic results, it is not the only major contributor. The implications of these findings are anticipated to inform educational policy by emphasizing the significance of character habituation programs in promoting comprehensive student development, proposing that the incorporation of moral and social principles into the educational curriculum can enhance both academic results and enduring values.

**Keywords:** *Character Habituation, Character Education, Pedagogy, Students' Achievement, Social Learning*

**INTRODUCTION**

Character education has become a critical focus within the educational system, emphasizing the need to foster moral and ethical development alongside academic achievement. The "*Character Habituation*" program at *Makarios Christian School Junior High*, implemented during the *2023/2024 academic year*, serves as a key initiative aimed at cultivating principles such as accountability, self-discipline, competency, and regard for others

among students. The program's structured activities, validated by parents and monitored by homeroom teachers, aim to enhance both ethical development and academic performance.

The integration of character education in schools has been shown to significantly influence students' motivation, discipline, and critical thinking skills, which are crucial for academic success. Previous research has demonstrated that character education programs can improve both behavior and academic outcomes by promoting values such as discipline and respect (Battistich & Watson, 2009). However, a critical issue observed in many schools today is the rise in disruptive behaviors and the increasing gap between student behavior and academic performance. For instance, a recent survey on academic dishonesty among Indonesian university students highlighted significant ethical concerns, revealing that students often rationalize dishonest behavior due to perceived pressures and subjective norms (Theory of Planned Behavior, TPB).

Located in West Jakarta, Indonesia, Makarios Christian School Junior High, an Adventist school under the Seventh-Day Adventist Church Education Foundation, embraces ten core values—'*Faith in God,*' '*Respect,*' '*Responsibility,*' '*Self-Control & Moderation,*' '*Honesty & Integrity,*' '*Kindness & Compassion,*' '*Contentment & Thankfulness,*' '*Patience & Perseverance,*' '*Peace & Humility,*' and '*Loyalty & Commitment*'—as the foundation of its character education curriculum. These values are integral to the school's *Integrated Faith Learning (IFL)* approach, which is designed to instill character through both academic and extracurricular activities.

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory provides an essential perspective for understanding how the Character Habituation program influences students' academic outcomes. Bandura (2021) posits that learning occurs within a social context through processes of observation, imitation, and modeling. According to Bandura, children shape new behaviors and attitudes by observing individuals in their context, especially authority figures and peers who model both constructive and destructive behaviors. The Character Habituation program relies on this concept, suggesting that students who observe and internalize positive behaviors from their teachers and peers are more likely to experience academic success.

Character education has been extensively studied, with numerous research efforts highlighting its impact on various aspects of student life, including academic performance. For instance, a meta-analysis on the relationship between character education and academic achievements revealed a moderate yet significant impact on students' performance, underscoring the integral role character education plays in academic success (*Meta-analysis, 2021*). Another study corroborated these findings, indicating that character education contributes to higher levels of educational outcomes, fostering virtues such as love, integrity, compassion, and self-discipline (*Meta-Analysis, 2017*).

Research conducted at *SMP Negeri 1, Seyegan* demonstrated that students who participated in character education programs exhibited higher learning motivation, better discipline, and enhanced critical thinking abilities, contributing to improved academic performance. Similarly, a study at *SMA Sandikta, Bekasi City* found that character education significantly impacted students' academic achievements in social studies, improving

grades and fostering a positive learning environment (Influence of Character Education on Learning Achievement, 2024).

Bandura's Social Learning Theory is particularly relevant in understanding the impact of the Character Habituation program at *Makarios Christian School Junior High*. The theory emphasizes that learning is enhanced when students observe credible and relatable models who demonstrate the desired behaviors. This process of vicarious reinforcement, where students observe the consequences of others' behaviors, can significantly influence their learning and, ultimately, their academic performance.

## **METHOD**

The *Character Habituation* program at *Makarios Christian School Junior High* involved a series of daily activities that students were required to complete at home. These activities, which include holy book reading, personal prayer, household chores, limited screen time, timely sleep, acts of kindness towards parents, polite speech, seeking parental blessings, healthy eating, and regular exercise, are designed to instill Christlike values, healthy habits, and academic discipline in students. The Character Habituation Program at Makarios Christian School Junior High includes a series of daily activities that students are expected to complete at home. Each student was required to fill out a Google Form daily, reporting their completion of the Character Habituation activities. Homeroom teachers then reviewed these submissions every morning to monitor students' engagement with the program. The data collected from these reports formed the basis of this study, which sought to analyze the relationship between the frequency of students' participation in the program and their academic performance.

This study employed a quantitative research method, using Bandura's *Social Learning Theory* (1977) and *correlation* analysis theory by Pearson (1901) to determine the strength and significance of the relationship between students' participation in the *Character Habituation* program and their *academic achievements*. "*The coefficient of correlation provides a quantitative assessment of the relationship between two variables, offering a means to predict the behavior of one variable given the value of the other*" (Pearson, 1901, p. 565). The academic performance data included students' average grades, which were then compared with the frequency of their Character Habituation submissions. Bandura's Social Learning Theory was incorporated to examine how students' exposure to role models, such as parents and teachers, who consistently demonstrated and reinforced the Character Habituation activities, influenced their academic performance. Meanwhile, the Pearson correlation was used to predict how student engagement in character habituation could be associated with their academic achievement. "*The Pearson correlation coefficient measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables*" (Schober, Boer, & Schwarte, 2018, p. 1763). It highlights the purpose of Pearson correlation, directly applicable to the study's goal of analyzing the relationship between student participation in the Character Habituation program and their academic performance. The analysis involved data from a sample of 66 students from grades 7-9 at *Makarios Christian School Junior High* during the 2023/2024

*academic year*. Each student was required to fill out a Google Form daily to report their participation in the Character Habituation activities. Homeroom teachers reviewed these reports every morning to monitor student engagement in the program. The data collected from these reports served as the basis for this study, which aimed to analyze the relationship between the frequency of student participation in this program and their academic performance.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. Results

The empirical evidence derived from the Character Habituation program highlights a notable trend: individuals who systematically recorded their participation in the program demonstrated an enhanced average academic performance in comparison to their peers who either rarely engaged or opted out completely. In particular, students in grades 7 through 9 who habitually completed and reported their Character Habituation endeavors consistently achieved scores that surpassed the class mean or positioned themselves among the highest-performing individuals.

Nevertheless, the data further reveals certain anomalies. There existed students who, notwithstanding their involvement in the activities, either neglected to submit their reports or exhibited hesitance in doing so. Additionally, a few students who did not engage in the program still achieved high grades, likely due to their pre-existing academic abilities. Conversely, some students who regularly submitted their reports did not perform as well academically, which could be attributed to underlying learning difficulties.

These findings suggest that while the Character Habituation program has a positive impact on academic performance for the majority of students, other factors such as inherent academic abilities and individual learning challenges also play a significant role. Bandura's (1977) assertion that "*social learning is enhanced when students perceive the model as competent, credible, and relatable*" underscores the importance of the perceived credibility and relatability of role models in the effectiveness of the program. In addition,

Pearson correlation analysis was chosen for this study because it is a widely used method for measuring the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two continuous variables. "*Correlation coefficients between 0.40 to 0.59 represent moderate positive correlations, indicating a linear relationship where increases in one variable are associated with increases in the other*" (Mukaka, 2012, p. 70). In this context, Pearson correlation was used to determine whether there is a relationship between the frequency of participation in the Character Habituation Program and students' academic performance (*measured by their average grades*). "*The measure of correlation expresses the tendency of the deviations of two variables from their respective means to vary together in a linear fashion*" (Pearson, 1901, p. 561). It underscores that the student participation in the Character Habituation Program varies in relation to their academic performance.

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis revealed a correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.45. With a sample size of 66 students, this result indicates a moderate positive correlation between the frequency of participation in the Character Habituation Program and their academic achievement. In other words, there is a tendency for students who participate more frequently in the program to achieve higher academic performance. In the study, the Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.45, indicating a moderate positive relationship between program participation and student grades. This aligns with Mukaka's interpretation, helping readers understand the result. Here are the particulars:

**Table 1. Data Sample**

<b>Sample Name</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Total CH Submission</b>	<b>Average Score 23/24</b>
Sample 1	7	7	84
Sample 2	7	30	90
Sample 3	7	5	87
Sample 4	7	27	91
Sample 5	7	20	91
Sample 6	7	15	92
Sample 7	7	21	91
Sample 8	7	<b>27</b>	88
Sample 9	7	2	81
Sample 10	7	3	88
Sample 11	7	1	85
Sample 12	7	25	91
Sample 13	7	4	76
Sample 14	7	2	83
Sample 15	7	6	85
Sample 16	7	16	92
Sample 17	7	4	82
Sample 18	7	1	85
Sample 19	7	25	91
Sample 20	7	3	83
Sample 21	7	4	83



Sample 22	7	1	82
Sample 23	7	26	86
Sample 24	7	<b>7</b>	81
Sample 25	8	6	87
Sample 26	8	17	89
Sample 27	8	2	81
Sample 28	8	<b>32</b>	92
Sample 29	8	1	85
Sample 30	8	18	90
Sample 31	8	23	93
Sample 32	8	2	84
Sample 33	8	10	89
Sample 34	8	30	94
Sample 35	8	<b>78</b>	93
Sample 36	8	26	91
Sample 37	8	5	85
Sample 38	8	9	83
Sample 39	8	31	87
Sample 40	8	21	87
Sample 41	8	9	83
Sample 42	8	33	90
Sample 43	8	23	83
Sample 44	8	12	84
Sample 45	8	1	83
Sample 46	8	26	85
Sample 47	8	4	75
Sample 48	8	16	86
Sample 49	9	5	89
Sample 50	9	5	96
Sample 51	9	24	94
Sample 52	9	45	97
Sample 53	9	6	83
Sample 54	9	5	92
Sample 55	9	17	90
Sample 56	9	4	91

Sample 57	9	5	95
Sample 58	9	5	89
Sample 59	9	5	96
Sample 60	9	5	94
Sample 61	9	5	97
Sample 62	9	6	83
Sample 63	9	5	92
Sample 64	9	13	90
Sample 65	9	18	91
Sample 66	9	38	95

## 2. Interpretation

A correlation coefficient of 0.45 indicates a moderate association between the two variables, signifying that an enhancement in participation in the Character Habituation Program is typically correlated with an augmentation in academic performance, albeit the association is not exceptionally robust. This could imply that even though the program supports students' academic progress, there are further factors that are essential in determining educational outcomes.

**Table 2. Scale of Pearson Correlation Coefficient**

Size of Correlation	Interpretation
0.80 to 1.00 (-0.80 to -1.00)	Very high positive (negative) correlation
0.60 to 0.79 (-0.60 to -0.79)	High positive (negative) correlation
0.40 to 0.59 (-0.40 to -0.59)	Moderate positive (negative) correlation
0.20 to 0.39 (-0.20 to -0.39)	Low positive (negative) correlation
0.00 to 0.19 (-0.00 to -0.19)	Negligible correlation

Considering the Pearson correlation result of 0.45, it can be concluded that there is a moderate relationship between student participation in the Character Habituation Program and their academic achievement. This suggests that the program had a positive impact, though it did not entirely determine students' academic outcomes. Other factors such as inherent academic abilities, learning environment, and personal circumstances of the students likely also contributed significantly to their academic performance. *"The Pearson correlation assumes that the relationship between variables is linear and that the data are homoscedastic, meaning the variability in scores for one variable should be roughly the same at all values of the other variable"* (Laerd

Statistics, 2015). This highlights an important limitation of Pearson correlation. The study notes that other factors might affect grades, which could mean the relationship was not perfectly linear for all students. Understanding this limitation is key to interpreting the 0.45 correlation found in the paper. *"When two variables are perfectly correlated, the deviations from their mean values will always occur in a fixed proportion, indicating a precise linear relationship between them"* (Pearson, 1901, p. 563). It emphasizes the concept of linearity, which Pearson's theory relies on. In the study, this indicates that an increased involvement of students in the character development program is correlated with an enhancement in their academic performance.

Therefore, while it is necessary to advocate for proactive student participation in character education, educators ought to deliberate on further strategies and support to elevate students' academic success. Further studies could be conducted to explore additional factors that may influence this relationship and to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of the Character Habituation Program.

The results of this study align with previous research indicating a positive correlation between character education and academic performance. The Character Habituation program, by fostering a structured routine that emphasizes Christlike behavior, healthy living, and academic discipline, contributes to students' overall academic success. The program's holistic approach, which integrates character development into daily life, creates a supportive environment that enhances students' motivation, discipline, and academic focus.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory further elucidates how the Character Habituation program may be influencing students' academic outcomes. The theory highlights that vicarious reinforcement, where students observe the consequences of others' behaviors, can significantly influence learning. This suggests that students who observe positive reinforcement for character-driven behaviors are more likely to emulate these behaviors, thereby improving their academic performance. However, the variability in individual student outcomes highlights the complexity of the relationship between character education and academic achievement. Factors such as prior academic abilities, learning difficulties, and personal circumstances can influence the effectiveness of character education programs. Therefore, while the Character Habituation program is beneficial for most students, it should be complemented with additional support for those with unique challenges to ensure that all students can benefit from the program.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Character Habituation program at Makarios Christian School Junior High has proven to be an effective tool for enhancing students' academic performance by fostering Christlike behavior, healthy living, and academic discipline. The positive correlation between students' participation in the program and their academic achievements underscores the importance of character education in the holistic development of students.

Incorporating Bandura's Social Learning Theory, this study has demonstrated that observational learning, role modeling, and vicarious reinforcement are key components in the success of the Character Habituation



program. The findings suggest that students are more likely to adopt positive behaviors and attitudes when they consistently observe and engage with credible role models who reinforce these behaviors.

However, the study also reveals that individual differences, such as pre-existing academic abilities and learning challenges, can impact the effectiveness of character education programs. As such, it is recommended that the program be tailored to address the diverse needs of students, providing additional support where necessary to maximize its impact on academic performance.

The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of evidence supporting the integration of character education in schools, particularly in fostering academic excellence alongside moral and ethical development.



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