

Implementation of Growth Mindset in Islamic Education and Its Impact on Character Development of Students at MTs. Muhammadiyah Pekanbaru

Baidarus

Universitas Muhammadiyah Riau, Indonesia

bayu@umri.ac.id

Radhiyatul Fithri

Universitas Muhammadiyah Riau, Indonesia

radhiyatulfithri@umri.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of a growth mindset in Islamic education at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Muhammadiyah 1 and 2 Pekanbaru and its impact on character development among students. A qualitative descriptive approach was used in this research. Data collection techniques were conducted through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. The results of the study indicate that the growth mindset is applied in teaching through the reinforcement of Islamic values that support the mental and emotional development of students. Positive impacts found include increased self-confidence, patience, perseverance, and reliance on Allah in facing academic and non-academic challenges. Additionally, there is an improvement in critical and creative thinking skills, which play a role in character development. Overall, the implementation of the growth mindset has proven to contribute significantly to the character development of students at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Muhammadiyah 1 and 2 Pekanbaru.

Keywords: *Growth Mindset, Islamic Education, Character.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi pola pikir bertumbuh dalam pendidikan Islam di Madrasah Tsanawiyah Muhammadiyah 1 dan 2 Pekanbaru serta dampaknya terhadap pembentukan karakter siswa. Pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pola pikir bertumbuh diterapkan dalam pembelajaran melalui penguatan nilai-nilai keislaman yang mendukung perkembangan mental dan emosional siswa. Dampak positif yang ditemukan meliputi peningkatan sikap percaya diri, kesabaran, ketekunan, serta tawakkal kepada Allah dalam menghadapi tantangan akademik dan non-akademik. Selain itu, terdapat peningkatan kemampuan berpikir kritis dan kreatif yang berperan dalam pembentukan karakter siswa. Secara keseluruhan, implementasi pola pikir bertumbuh terbukti memberikan kontribusi signifikan terhadap pembentukan

karakter siswa di Madrasah Tsanawiyah Muhammadiyah 1 dan 2 Pekanbaru.

Kata Kunci: Pola Pikir Bertumbuh, Pendidikan Islam, Karakter.

Introduction

A growth mindset is the belief that an individual's basic qualities can develop through certain efforts (Srihastuti & Wulandari, 2021) . There are several key characteristics of this mindset (Dweck, 2019): First, the belief that intelligence, talent, and character can grow through effort and hard work, rather than being solely determined by genetics. Second, the ability to accept challenges and tackle them with dedication. Third, maintaining optimism and a forward-looking perspective even when facing failure. Fourth, viewing effort positively. Fifth, the ability to learn from criticism. Sixth, learning from others and being inspired by their success.

Various experts in the field of mindset theory have stated that a growth mindset can lead to positive outcomes in various areas, ranging from weight loss to success in business (Dweck, 2019) and peace in the Middle East. In the field of education, in particular, this mindset theory has a significant influence and is even described as "a revolution that is transforming education" (Macnamara & Burgoyne, 2022), with the growth mindset being a key component.

In this context, the growth mindset, popularized since 1999 (Younger, et al., 2024.) by Carol Dweck, posits that a person's intelligence and abilities are not static, but can develop through effort and the right strategies. Research has shown that students with a growth mindset (Claro, et al., 2016) are better able to overcome challenges (Sik & Cummins, 2024) and are more open to continuous learning processes (Rina, et al., 2019) compared to students with a fixed mindset (A, et al., 2022). This adaptive perspective fosters resilience and perseverance, which are essential traits for long-term academic and personal success.

However, the application of the growth mindset concept in the context of Islamic education has not been widely studied. In fact, Islamic education has a long tradition of integrating moral and spiritual values that are highly relevant to the growth mindset concept (Lisa, et al., 2024). For instance, the concepts of *tawakkal* (trusting in Allah after making an effort) and *ikhtiar* (maximum effort) in Islamic teachings align with the principles of the growth mindset (Zeeb, et al., 2020) . Despite this, research linking the growth mindset with character development in Islamic education remains limited, and further exploration is needed to understand how the growth mindset can be effectively applied in Islamic education.

According to data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Anon., 2023), there are more than 25,000 Islamic schools spread across Indonesia, with over 6 million students. These schools are not only responsible for educating students academically but also for shaping their character in accordance with Islamic values. However, a survey conducted by the Research and Development Center for Religious Education (2022) showed that more than 60% of Islamic schools in Indonesia still prioritize conventional learning approaches, which focus more on memorization and mastery of material rather than character development, critical thinking, and the growth mindset.

In addition, data from the 2021 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) shows that Indonesian students, including those from Islamic schools, still rank

low in scientific thinking, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills (Anon., 2023). These abilities are important indicators of the application of the growth mindset (Vestad & Edvin, 2023). This reflects a gap in the educational approaches applied in Islamic schools, where character development through the growth mindset still does not receive adequate attention.

On the other hand, research conducted by Carol Dweck (Yeager & et.al, 2019.) in the National Study of Learning Mindsets, which tested the effects of a brief online growth mindset intervention on high school students in the United States, showed significant results. The hypothesis test revealed that a short growth mindset intervention (less than one hour) could improve the performance of low-achieving students. This finding reinforces the idea that the application of a growth mindset can have a positive impact, even in a relatively short period of time.

Based on these data and findings, it is clear that there is an urgent need to integrate the growth mindset into Islamic education in Indonesia. This approach is not only important for improving students' academic achievements but also for shaping students' character to be resilient, responsible, and adaptable to change. This study aims to address this need by examining strategies for implementing the growth mindset in Islamic education and analyzing its impact on character development. By integrating this approach, it is hoped that an educational environment will be created that not only educates academically but also shapes a generation with strong character, based on Islamic values.

Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, conducted at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Muhammadiyah 1 and 2 Pekanbaru. The research subjects consist of 28 Islamic Education teachers, 210 students from grades VII to IX selected purposively, school principals, madrasah managers, and parents of students. The data collection techniques used are in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation (Sugiyono., 2017), aimed at exploring the practices of implementing the growth mindset and its impact on students' character development. The collected data will be analyzed using thematic analysis, where relevant themes will be identified and compared to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. The results of this analysis will then be concluded (Mohajan, 2018) to provide a deeper understanding of the application of the growth mindset in the context of Islamic education and its impact on character development in students.

Results and Discussion

This study aims to examine the implementation of the growth mindset in the context of Islamic education and its impact on character development at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Muhammadiyah 1 and 2 Pekanbaru. Using methods such as in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation analysis, this research successfully identified several key findings that provide in-depth insights into the application of the growth mindset in Islamic education and its influence on students' character development at both madrasahs.

Implementation of the Growth Mindset in Islamic Education

The growth mindset in Islamic education can be implemented through:

Firstly, Integration of the Growth Mindset in the Curriculum and Learning Process

The research findings indicate that the implementation of the growth mindset at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Muhammadiyah 1 and 2 Pekanbaru has been well integrated into both the curriculum and the learning process, particularly in Islamic Education subjects. Based on interviews with Islamic Education teachers, they revealed that the core principles of the growth mindset—maximal effort (ikhtiar) and surrendering to Allah (tawakkul)—are highly relevant to Islamic teachings and have been applied in the learning activities. For instance, Mrs. H, the Aqidah Akhlak teacher at MTs Muhammadiyah 1, explained that:

"We teach students to view failure as part of the learning process. Often, they feel disappointed when they do not succeed in exams or assignments. However, by reminding them that everything should be done to the best of their ability and the outcome is entrusted to Allah (tawakkul), they become more patient and persistent in their efforts."

Furthermore, in interviews with students, they stated that the concept of tawakkul helps them remain calm when facing exams or academic challenges. This shows how the application of the growth mindset not only impacts the cognitive aspect but also the emotional and mental well-being of students. One student, A (a grade IX student at MTs Muhammadiyah 2), said:

"When I find it difficult to solve exam questions or study well, I remember my teacher's advice to keep trying and then leave the result to Allah. It makes me feel calmer and not afraid of failing."

The data from participatory observation also revealed how growth mindset-based learning is directly applied in teaching activities through interventions that are integrated into the school culture and classroom practices. During observations in the Aqidah Akhlak class at MTs Muhammadiyah 2, for example, it was evident that the teacher provided opportunities for students to share their experiences about the difficulties they faced in learning and how they overcame them. In class discussions, students were asked to talk about the challenges they encountered in the learning process and the strategies they used to overcome them. This approach aligns with the principles of the growth mindset, which emphasizes the importance of self-reflection, where students are encouraged to view failure as part of the learning process that can be overcome with effort and a positive attitude.

One excerpt from the observed class discussion occurred when students spoke about how they overcame difficulties in understanding Fiqh material. A student, B, explained:

"At first, I had difficulty memorizing the prayers in Fiqh, but after continuing to try and rereading them every day, I found it easier to remember them. I also made an effort to focus more while studying because I believe that consistent effort will yield results."

This approach allows students to engage in self-assessment, recognize the process they go through when facing challenges, and realize that their abilities can develop through consistent effort. In addition to strengthening academic skills, this approach also helps students develop emotional resilience, especially in dealing with failure or difficulties. Ultimately, this has a positive impact on their academic outcomes, mental health, and social functioning (Burnette, et al., 2023). Thus, learning does not

only focus on achieving results, but also on developing character and sustainable life skills.

Furthermore, at MTs Muhammadiyah 1, teachers employ problem-solving methods that encourage students to find solutions to the difficulties they encounter in learning. During a Quran-Hadith lesson, when some students struggled to understand the interpretation of certain verses, they were encouraged to discuss in groups and seek a shared understanding. The teacher then guided them to utilize available resources, such as reading deeper interpretations and discussing with their classmates.

Secondly, School Leadership Strategies

The school principal plays a key role in developing a growth mindset and shaping students' character within Islamic education. Through exemplary leadership, collaboration, and the implementation of effective management strategies, the principal can enhance the quality of education and foster a generation with strong character, in accordance with Islamic principles.

In addition to interviews with teachers and students, interviews with the school principals also provided a broader perspective on the application of the growth mindset in the context of Islamic education. The principals, Mr. A and Mr. B (Principals of MTs Muhammadiyah 1 and 2), explained that:

“At MTs Muhammadiyah 1, we strongly support the implementation of the growth mindset because we see that the values within this mindset align closely with Islamic teachings, such as the concepts of ikhtiar (effort) and tawakkal (trusting in Allah). We believe that success is not only measured by exam results or academic achievements but more by the effort made by students and how they learn from failure. To support this, we have implemented various programs that foster the development of a growth mindset in students. One of the programs we have implemented is the formation of study groups focused on collaboration. In this way, students can help and support one another in the learning process, encouraging them to continue developing and not fear facing difficulties. Additionally, we focus on creating a supportive environment where students feel valued and given space to grow according to their abilities. We also build strong relationships between teachers, students, and parents through open communication, such as holding regular meetings with parents to discuss students' progress, both academically and in terms of character.”

“At MTs Muhammadiyah 2 Pekanbaru, we regularly hold training and workshops for teachers to update the teaching strategies they use. In this regard, we also emphasize the importance of being role models for students. Teachers are expected not only to teach but also to demonstrate positive attitudes such as hard work, patience, and commitment. Additionally, we apply teaching methods that encourage students to think critically, solve problems, and continuously innovate.”

Based on the interviews above, both schools demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting the integration of the growth mindset within the Islamic education system applied at the madrasahs, with a focus on collaboration, character development, and a learning process that prioritizes effort and the process itself, rather than solely academic results. Both schools also emphasize the importance of teachers as role models and fostering close relationships with parents to support students' progress. This approach highlights the importance of holistic education, which includes both academic and

character development, in shaping students who grow comprehensively (Cholid & Rokimin, 2024) and see also (Badillo, 2018).

Additionally, interviews with parents also provide valuable insights regarding the implementation of the growth mindset outside the school environment. Mrs. C (parent of an eighth-grade student at MTs Muhammadiyah 2) shared her perspective on the growth mindset applied at her child's school:

"As a parent, I feel greatly helped by the growth mindset approach implemented at school. When my child experiences failure in exams or certain subjects, he no longer feels hopeless. He knows that failure is just part of the learning process, and he works harder to improve his results. At home, I also teach the same principle, which is that effort is the key to achieving goals, and we must always surrender to Allah. I have seen my child become more independent and no longer afraid to try again, even after failing."

This statement demonstrates how the values of the growth mindset taught at school can also be applied at home, creating consistency in the development of the student's character between the school and home environments. It also indicates that collaboration between teachers and parents is crucial in strengthening the implementation of the growth mindset, as well as supporting the holistic development of the student's character.

Through participatory observations in the classroom, it can be concluded that growth mindset-based learning places greater emphasis on the learning process and personal development rather than focusing solely on the final outcome. This approach creates a supportive environment where students are encouraged to continuously develop emotionally and intellectually, with the understanding that challenges are an integral part of the process towards progress.

The Impact of Growth Mindset on Character Development of Students.

The application of the growth mindset has a significant impact on the character development of students, particularly in enhancing resilience and a sense of responsibility. According to Combette et al. (2024), a positive growth mindset has a major influence on students' well-being and academic achievement. Students exposed to this concept are better equipped to face academic challenges as well as everyday life difficulties. This aligns with the views of Bardach et al. (2024), who state that adopting a growth mindset encourages students to engage with more challenging learning experiences and persist in the face of difficulties, thereby improving their overall performance.

Interviews with students A (Grade IX, MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Pekanbaru) and B (Grade VIII, MTs Muhammadiyah 2 Pekanbaru) revealed that the application of the growth mindset has increased their self-confidence in facing exams, difficult assignments, and other challenges beyond academics. They are confident that with effort and the right strategies, any difficulty can be overcome.

Student A stated, "I used to feel anxious when facing exams or difficult assignments, but now I feel more confident. I've learned that effort and the right strategies can help me overcome difficulties. So, even if the exam is tough, I know I can get through it with hard work and continuous learning."

Student B shared, "Yes, the growth mindset has helped me tackle many challenges, including personal problems or difficulties in learning. I no longer give up easily. For example, if I struggle to understand a lesson, I'll find other ways to learn or ask my friends or teachers for help."

In addition to increased self-confidence, the development of students' character is also evident in aspects such as self-discipline and collaboration. Students with a growth mindset tend to be more open to constructive criticism and better at working in teams. They also show greater independence in learning, problem-solving skills, and a commitment to continuous self-improvement. As noted by Powell dan McColl (2022), students with a growth mindset view challenges as opportunities to learn and grow.

Integration of Islamic Values in a Growth Mindset

The application of the growth mindset in Islamic education has successfully integrated the moral and spiritual values taught in Islam. The concepts of *tawakkal* (trusting in Allah after making efforts) and *ikhtiar* (maximum effort) (Faizah & Arifin, 2023) serve as the foundational principles supporting the idea that intelligence and abilities can develop through persistent effort accompanied by reliance on Allah.

Interviews with school principals and administrators revealed that the integration of Islamic values within the growth mindset has positively impacted the character development of students, not only making them resilient intellectually but also instilling noble moral values.

Principal A stated, "We have integrated the growth mindset into our curriculum and teaching activities at the madrasah. We see that the growth mindset aligns very well with Islamic values that teach ikhtiar (maximum effort) and tawakkul (relying on Allah). We encourage students to believe that their intelligence and abilities are not fixed but can be developed through effort and prayer. This greatly supports the development of students' character, making them not only intelligent but also possessing noble character."

Meanwhile, Principal B added, "We provide training for teachers to ensure they can integrate the growth mindset concept into every subject taught. Teachers not only impart academic knowledge but also instill values of resilience, patience, and the belief that maximum effort and tawakkul will bring the best results. We also hold regular discussions with students to talk about the challenges they face and how they can address them with a more positive approach based on effort."

Thus, the growth mindset is integrated with Islamic values in the curriculum, reinforcing the principles of *ikhtiar* and *tawakkul* in the learning process. This approach not only develops students' intellectual abilities but also shapes their noble character based on spiritual values. Furthermore, the application of the principle of *tawakkal* (Ghoni, 2016) provides students with tranquility when facing exams or life difficulties. They are taught not to fear failure, but rather to view failure as an opportunity to learn and grow. This creates a more positive learning culture, full of motivation, and aligned with Islamic values.

Challenges in Implementing Growth Mindset

Although the application of a growth mindset has shown positive impacts, this study also identifies several challenges in its implementation. One of the main challenges is the lack of deep understanding of the growth mindset concept among some teachers (Mesler, et al., 2021) and parents. Many teachers still tend to use conventional teaching methods, such as memorization, which do not provide enough space for students to develop critical thinking and self-reflection. However, the role of teachers in the classroom is a crucial contextual factor that significantly influences students' development and their engagement with the school environment. In other words, a teacher's mindset can directly impact students' achievement (Morgan, et al., 2024). This

means that the approach and beliefs that teachers have in the learning process can create a classroom climate that supports student growth and empowerment.

Additionally, although most students are able to internalize the values of a growth mindset in their learning, some students struggle to apply these principles in their daily lives, especially when faced with social and academic pressures. This highlights the need for further efforts to provide intensive training for teachers (Herdian, et al., 2024) and parents on the importance of supporting the implementation of the growth mindset outside the school environment. This support is expected to help students build resilience, both in facing academic challenges and social pressures, so that the growth mindset can truly be integrated into their lives.

Relevance to Character Education in Indonesia

This study reveals the relevance of applying the growth mindset in supporting character education in Indonesia. Character education in Indonesia often focuses on the moral and ethical development of students. However, building strong character encompasses not only moral aspects but also the ability to face challenges, learn from failure, and develop self-confidence and the courage to try new things. In this context, a growth mindset can help students understand that success is not solely the result of innate ability, but also the result of consistent effort and perseverance (Mason, 2023). In this way, students can build stronger self-confidence and motivation to achieve their goals.

Various studies have shown that the low critical thinking ability of Indonesian students is influenced by collective cultural values, home education backgrounds, and the lack of relevant learning practices (Pratiwi, et al., 2021). The growth mindset could serve as an effective approach to building a more adaptive, creative, critical, and solution-oriented character in students. Additionally, the growth mindset plays an essential role in the development of students' social-emotional intelligence (Huang, et al., 2023). Students with a growth mindset are generally better at managing emotions because they view challenges and pressures as part of the learning process, not as threats. This approach aligns with the goals of character education in Indonesia, which aims to produce individuals who are academically intelligent as well as socially and emotionally intelligent, with a positive attitude toward the difficulties and challenges of life.

In addition to its impact on character development, the growth mindset is also relevant in honing problem-solving skills. Current education in Indonesia tends to prioritize memorization and mastery of academic material, which limits opportunities for the creative and innovative development of problem-solving skills. However, collaborative problem-solving skills are among the essential 21st-century skills needed to face global competition. These skills rely not only on cognitive knowledge but also on the social attitudes that support successful teamwork (Haris, et al., 2022). By applying a growth mindset, students are taught to approach problems constructively and explore various potential solutions.

In character education curricula, the growth mindset can be integrated into various subjects, such as religious and moral education, citizenship, and other general subjects. Teachers can apply this approach in each learning process, encouraging students to continue striving, develop creativity, and value the learning process rather than just the end result. Additionally, teachers need to provide feedback that supports the development of the growth mindset, such as appreciating students' efforts and progress rather than solely focusing on grades or final outcomes.

Thus, the implementation of the growth mindset in character education in Indonesia not only supports the development of students' academic potential but also shapes their character holistically (Kampa, 2023). This approach provides students with the space to grow personally, emotionally, and intellectually, enabling them to face life's challenges with a positive, creative, and responsible attitude. The application of the growth mindset is expected to be a solution in creating a more balanced educational system that prioritizes continuous learning processes, character development, and produces a generation that is intelligent, has integrity, and is ready to face future challenges.

Conclusion

Overall, this study demonstrates that the application of a growth mindset in Islamic education, particularly at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Muhammadiyah 1 and 2 Pekanbaru, has a positive impact on students' character development. Students who apply a growth mindset tend to be more capable of facing academic challenges and everyday life, more independent, and more open to continuous learning processes. The integration of Islamic values, such as *tawakkal* (trust in Allah) and *ikhtiar* (effort), within the growth mindset framework also provides a solid foundation for developing resilient and morally upright students.

However, challenges still exist in its implementation, especially related to the lack of comprehensive understanding of the growth mindset concept among educators and parents. This limitation may hinder the optimal application of the growth mindset in the educational environment. Therefore, this study recommends further training for teachers and parents to enhance their understanding, as well as the development of a more profound and integrated curriculum that incorporates the growth mindset in Islamic education in Indonesia.

With these measures in place, it is hoped that the growth mindset can be applied more effectively, contributing to the creation of a generation that is not only intellectually capable but also strong in moral character, competitive, and upright in conduct.

To optimize the implementation of a growth mindset in Islamic education, it is recommended to conduct regular training for teachers and parents to enhance their understanding of this concept, as well as the application of a curriculum that integrates the values of *tawakkal* and *ikhtiar*. Teachers should apply flexible and collaborative teaching methods, such as project-based learning, to encourage students to think critically and creatively. Additionally, strengthening collaboration between schools and parents is crucial to create a consistent environment that supports students. Finally, regular evaluations and reflections on the implementation of the growth mindset should be conducted to assess its impact on students' academic development and character, as well as for continuous improvement in its application strategies.

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