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Grateful Personality Development of Junior High School Students in East Kalimantan

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Abstract

A grateful personality is one of the essential elements in the personality development of students. This personality is reflected in verbal and deeds as a manifestation of acknowledgment in the heart for the blessings. This personality encourages students to appreciate and repay the kindness of others. This study aims to determine the level of gratitude of junior high school students in East Kalimantan. This study used a mixed-method approach. Respondents in this study were 714 people. The mean test results showed that the level of students' gratitude at Junior High Schools in East Kalimantan was very high, with an average score of 4.6. The teacher's strategies in instilling a grateful personality are with advice, exemplary, assignments, habituation, and activity programs at school. The methods are by providing materials (lectures, advice, discussions, and questions and answers related to gratitude), exemplary by providing examples of the values of gratitude, giving demonstration tasks, and practice in gratitude, giving the task of making a list of good things that have been felt and should be grateful for every day, habituation to good things (instilling the nature of gana'ah, giving appreciation and motivation, presenting a sense of empathy around oneself, inviting self-introspection, giving charity, helping others, spreading smiles, greetings, visiting friends or teachers who are sick or grieving), and school programs (dhuha and dzuhur prayers in congregation, reading the Qur'an, praving before starting lessons, and giving sadagah every Friday at school). The results of this study may have an implication to become a policy regulation for schools to support the development of a grateful personality for students of Junior High School.

Keywords: character grateful personality, gratitude, moral

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A. Introduction

Morals are an essential part of realizing the goals of Islamic education. Therefore, it needs to develop morals to create civilized human beings. By morals, humans can accentuate themselves as creatures created by Allah in a state of *fī aḥsani taqwīm* (the best form). Without morals, humans will lose their identity and become *asfala sāfilīn* creatures (Rajab, 2011). In psychology, the term morality is known as character or personality.

One of the moral teachings in Islam is gratitude. In the Qur'an, the terms of al-Syukr and all its derivations are repeated in 76 verses in 35 surahs (30.70% of the 114 surahs of the Qur'an). All these terms indicate and mean gratitude (Muin, 2017). The intensity and quantity of these words indicate that gratitude is one of the important teachings in Islam. Furthermore, the word gratitude in the Qur'an mostly uses *fi'il muḍāri'*. This word emphasizes that gratitude must be done continuously and kept processing. From the educational aspect, this word implies that the process of gratitude values must be done continuously.

In Islamic teachings, gratitude means being grateful for the favors bestowed by Allah SWT, or the goodness done by others. Hence, gratitude educates people in recognizing the giver of grace, which is Allah, and the value of gratitude, in the heart, verbally, and in deed. Gratitude verbally is done by 'acknowledging' what is bestowed in pleasure, gratitude by heart in the form of tranquility and peace obtained by doing noble deeds continuously. Therefore, Allah calls himself *al-Syakīr* and *al-Syakūr*, and also names grateful people with these two names. Allah characterizes grateful people with His Nature and names them with His name (Rajab, 2011).

From a social perspective, gratitude has many benefits for social life. The benefits are growing a sense of happiness, full of hope (optimistic), always inspiring, forgiving, and always enthusiastic (Froh et al., 2009). The results of research conducted by Algoe et al. (Algoe et al., 2013), Algoe (Algoe, 2012), Bartlett and DeSteno (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006) and Lin and Yeh (Lin & Yeh, 2013), show that gratitude has an essential role in building harmonious social relationships in life.

People with a grateful personality have a perspective on a world full of blessings and goodness. This view encourages people to be grateful and cultivate positive emotions that encourage them to do good things. Therefore, grateful people have selfconstruction of good acts done by others (Elfers & Hlava, 2016). It is related to the function of gratitude as a moral barometer, moral motive, and reinforcement (McCullough et al., 2001).

The view above shows that the gratitude personality is essential in the lives of teenagers. A gratitude personality will form a psychologically, socially, and emotionally prosperous person. Therefore, it needs practical efforts to develop a gratitude personality, especially during adolescence. It is because adolescence is an unstable phase in which a person tries to find his/her identity.

The pandemic period requires extra attention for parents and teachers on the value of gratitude. The current situation requires all components to manage and harmonize psychological aspects that can interfere with immunity, such as impatience, dissatisfaction, envy, jealousy, and selfishness. Every Muslim in this situation is required to actualize the values of Islamic teachings in the form of attitudes, words, and behavior to create optimism, enthusiasm, and self-confidence, which will form strong immunity in a person. One of these values is gratitude for all the blessings that Allah has given.

Gratitude values are very important in shaping one's emotional stability, especially for teenagers (Hardianti et al., 2021). These values when internalized will form a person who is always able to appreciate and respect the kindness of others. This value also encourages a person to do kindness towards others. In addition to being associated with positive changes intrapersonally or within oneself, gratitude also brings benefits to interpersonal relationships with others. Among them, an attitude of gratitude can lead to motivation to behave prosocially or help others and also feel the existence of social support from others (Satria et al., 2019).

The studies that became the inspiration of this research include one that discusses gratitude through a clinical approach carried out by Emmons & Stern entitled: "Gratitude as a psychotherapeutic intervention". In the perspective of clinical psychology, gratitude can be used as an alternative therapy for several diseases or psychological disorders. Gratitude values can be applied by the habituation method (Emmons & Stern, 2013). Malik Madany in an article entitled "Gratitude in the Perspective of the Qur'an" (Madany, 2018) mentioned that referring to the opinion of ar-Ragib al-Isfahani, gratitude includes three kinds, namely gratitude of the heart (*syukr al-qalb*), verbally (*syukr al-lisan*) namely praising God for a blessing, and with other body parts (*syukr sair al-jawarih*).

A study discussing gratitude and its relation to social relationships, was conducted by Gordon, et al., entitled "To Have and to Hold: Gratitude Promotes Relationship Maintenance in Intimate Bonds". This article discussed gratitude and efforts to improve and maintain close relationships, through a risk regulation perspective (Gordon et al., 2012).

Based on the description of the values of gratitude, its benefits and contributions to personal and social development, the researchers were interested in conducting a more in-depth study on the gratitude level of students and the methods used by teachers in instilling the values of gratitude, especially during the pandemic.

B. Literature Review

1. Grateful Personality in Positive Psychology

Gratitude is a part of human personality. It is because gratitude is associated with well-being and happiness in life, mental health, and life satisfaction. Gratitude is also related to close social relationships and physical health (Wood et al., 2007). Gratitude as a personality has a positive outlook (Elfers, 2016) and appreciates the values of kindness done by others (Emmons & Stern, 2013). These attitudes and perspectives will form a person who continuously tries to be grateful in every situation (McCullough et al., 2002). Therefore, grateful people always feel that life is full of good things and always try to appreciate everything in their life (Elfers & Hlava, 2016).

Gratitude as a personality is a positive emotion that is responsive to the good things done by others (Elfers & Hlava, 2016). Therefore, people with a grateful personality tend to react positively to the kindness received. Grateful people have a high sensitivity to feeling kindness. Positive emotions of gratitude encourage someone to repay the kindness done by others (moral agent) (McCullough et al., 2001).

2. Gratitude in Islam

A gratitude personality (a grateful personality) is synonymous with the word $syak\bar{u}r$. People who are in this category are people who can implement the

values of the spirituality of gratitude in every aspect of life. Implementing these values will form a character and personality that has stability in gratitude (Samawi & Hariyanto, 2013). In the Qur'an, this personality is called *'abdan syakūran* (a grateful servant). This character is formed from the hard work of a servant in following the nature of the Most Grateful God, that is, *as-syakūr* (Mujib, 2017).

Grateful people have several characteristics, such as always acknowledging God and His grace, being amazed and obedient to God's commands, understanding the function of grace that has been bestowed, and doing kindness (Shihab et al., 2011). Meanwhile, according to Abdul Mujib, people who have gratitude are always grateful for the blessings and the grace in their hearts, words, and deeds. Grateful people also think that this life is full of good things (Mujib, 2017).

3. Personality Aspects of Gratitude in Islam

a. Characters

These characters are spiritual values contained in the meaning and implementation of the teachings of gratitude in everyday life. For example, a grateful person has a trustworthy character. This meaning emphasizes that gratitude means using the trust of Allah's grace to conform to their bestowed purpose.

b. Temperament

People with a grateful personality have a patient temperament, such as being humble, feeling satisfied with their efforts' results, and feeling self-sufficient. The example is the character of $qan\bar{a}'ah$, which is feeling satisfied with the results of the efforts made (Shihab, 1994).

c. Attitude

A grateful personality is reflected in the attitude of individuals who respond positively to particular objects or events. The example is an optimistic attitude. Grateful people have an optimistic attitude towards Allah's blessings. This attitude will create happiness and inner peace (az-Zuhaili, 2013).

d. Emotional stability

Stable emotions are a picture of individuals who have a gratitude personality. Spiritual values such as amanah, qanā'ah, tawāḍu', tawakal, istiqāmah, and optimism, are a description of a person's spirituality in responding to Allah's grace. These spiritual values are manifestations of spiritual and emotional intelligence. This intelligence will make individuals more flexible in seeing the unity behind differences, avoiding narrow-minded, fanatical, and exclusive views (Zohar & Marshall, 2007).

e. Responsibilities

A gratitude personality is reflected in the aspect of high responsibility in grateful people. The example is the character of trust. The character of trust is related to attitudes and behavior in carrying out duties and responsibilities towards oneself, the environment (nature, social, culture, and country), and God Almighty (Kesuma et al., 2013).

f. Sociability

The example is the character of *tawāḍu'*. This character has a humble attitude, is not arrogant, and respects and appreciates others. This attitude is a form of social piety that arises because of the spiritual piety that exists within a person. It conforms to Lukman's testament that his son should always be humble and polite to humans, regarding polite speech, not to be like a donkey

(Q.S. Luqmān, 31:19). The attitude of *tawāḍu'* also leads a person to have a communicative character: polite speaking and behaving (Kesuma et al., 2013).

4. Grateful Personality Development in Islamic Education

a. Tazkiyah Strategy

This strategy emphasizes efforts to purify the heart back to its nature and be free from heart diseases that are destructive to the sanctity (Suparlan, 2015). This strategy can be done by following God's command and trying to avoid God's prohibitions (Baharuddin, 2007).

b. Tazyīnah Strategy

The tazyīnah strategy is a strategy that emphasizes efforts to make people's hearts always full of kindness, which is based on a strong faith (Shihab, Tafsīr al-Miṣbāḥ, Volume 12, 2011). This process must be carried out on the heart (qalb) because it is unstable (Suparlan, 2015).

c. Tadabburah Strategy

The tadabburrah strategy is related to implementing the values of gratitude by understanding the verses of the Qur'an and the verses of the Kauniyah about wisdom and guidance to be grateful for Allah's blessings. In the Qur'an, it is explained the teachings of gratitude, which include: commands, wisdom, benefits, and procedures for being grateful for Allah's blessings. These teachings are found in the stories of prophets and religious people such as the prophets Ibrahim, Mūsā, Dāūd, Nūḥ, Sulaimān, and Luqmān (Gunawan, 2014) (Tafsir, 2014).

d. Tarabbutah Strategy

The strategy of tarabbutah or affirmation (Suparlan 2015) emphasizes efforts to strengthen people's hearts and consistently be grateful for Allah's blessings, not easily tempted by things that will make a person deny (kufr) Allah's grace. This strategy can be done by exemplary, giving advice, discussing, understanding (Bastaman, 2005), appreciation and applying, and habituation.

C. Method

This research was field research using a mixed method approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods. This research used quantitative methods as the main research method (primary) and qualitative research methods as support (secondary). This strategy is a concurrent embedded strategy (Creswell, 2012), in which the mixed method strategy applies one stage of data collection to a mixed reinforcement in which the second method strengthens the first method (Sugiyono, 2013). Quantitative data was related to the level of gratitude of students, while qualitative data was related to the teacher's method of developing gratitude values.



Figure 1 Concurrent Embedded

The population in this study was all junior high school students in East Kalimantan, consisting several regencies/cities: Samarinda city, Balikpapan city, Kutai Kartanegara regency, Bontang city, Kutai Timur city, Kutai Barat regency, Berau regency, and Mahulu regency. Based on data of *Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Pendidikan Dasar dan Pendidikan Menengah Kementerian dan Kebudayaan Provinsi Kalimantan Timur 2021* there were 107,469 students, consisted of 55,181 male students and 52,288 female students.

The sampling technique in this study used several steps. First was purposive area sampling. At this step, the sample was determined by the sampling area: Balikpapan city, Samarinda City, and Kutai Timur regency. To determine the sampling area was based on the consideration that these areas represented the research sample, both from the aspect of regional development, culture, and quality of education.

To determine the number of quantitative data sampling for each region of each regency/city was based on data from Dapodik Kaltim 2021. The number of junior high school students in Samarinda was 22,192, Balikpapan was 19,843 and Kutai Timur regency was 11,278. Based on these populations, the researcher determined the sampling using Isaac and Michael table guidelines with a sampling error rate of 10%. Based on the table, the number of samples for the students in Samarinda City was 270 students, Balikpapan City was 270 students, and Kutai Timur regency was 260 students.

The total population sampling was 803 students. However, the number of target sampling was only 714 students who answered the questionnaire. However, if the total population is 107,469, based on Issac and Michael's table for sampling error of 1% is 659 students, 5% is 347 students, and 10% is 270 students. According to the researcher, 714 students have represented the population. The data sources in qualitative data collection were selected for respondents who understood what was being asked, in this case, the Islamic religious education teachers or the teachers of religious subjects.

Data collection in this study used several techniques, including 1) Questionnaire. Questionnaires were given to respondents to explore data related to the gratitude level of students as an indicator of grateful personality. The questionnaire consisted of 14 questions, 6 related to gratitude in the aspect of heart, 3 in the aspect of verbal, and 5 questions in the aspect of action. The questionnaire used was a frequency scale test referring to Likert scale parameters. The answer choices were categorized as a frequency statement "always", "often", "sometimes", "rarely", and "never". 2) Interviews were conducted to Islamic Religious Education Teachers, especially for teachers of religious subjects. It was to find out the methods used by teachers in instilling and developing student gratitude values. Interviews were conducted using an interview guide instrument.

The data analysis technique used quantitative descriptive and qualitative analysis. The quantitative descriptive analysis used mean and percentage tests. Based on the mean of test results, the researcher categorized the students' level of gratitude with a class interval of 0.8. From the five alternative answers, the categorization of the level of gratitude is as follows:

No.	Score Interval	Category	
1	> 4.2 to 5.0	Very High	
2	> 3.4 to 4.2	High	
3	> 2.6 to 3.4	Medium	
4	> 1.8 to 2.6	Low	
5	1 to 1.8	Very Low	

Table 1 The Categorization of The Level of Gratitude

D. Findings and Discussion

1. Findings

The research finding is related to the results of quantitative data collection through questionnaires as primary data and instruments of the interview in qualitative data as secondary data.

a. The Gratitude Level of Junior High School Students in East Kalimantan

1) The Gratitude Level of Students in the Aspect of Heart

Based on the results of the questionnaire given to respondents related to expressions of gratitude by qalbu or heart, 457 or 64.0% of respondents answered "always", 225 or 31.5% of respondents answered "often", 30 or 4.2% of respondents answered "sometimes", 2 or 0.3 % answered "rarely", and no respondents answered "never". These results generally indicate that the level of gratitude in the aspect of the heart is in the very high-level category. It is the same as the average value (mean) of the questionnaire of 4.6 in the very high category. How respondents feel about a life that is full of good things can be seen in the following table:



Graph 1 The Gratitude Level of Students in The Aspect of Heart

2) The Gratitude Level of Students in the Aspect of Verbal

Based on the results of the questionnaire given to respondents related to verbal expressions of gratitude, 467 or 65.4% of respondents answered "always", 220 or 30.8% of respondents answered "often", 25 or 3.5% of respondents answered "sometimes", 2 or 0.3% of respondents answered "rarely", and none of the respondents answered "never". In general, these results indicate that the level of verbal gratitude is in the very high category. It is the same as the average value (mean) of the questionnaire of 4.6 in the very high category. How respondents feel about a life that is full of good things verbally can be seen in the following table:



Graph 2 The Gratitude Level of Students in The Aspect of Verbal

3) The Gratitude Level of Students in the the Aspect of Action

Based on the questionnaire results given to respondents related to the expressions of gratitude in the aspect of action, 513 or 65.4% of respondents answered "always", 158 or 22.1% of respondents answered "often", 41 or 5.7% of respondents answered "sometimes", 2 or 0.3% of respondents answered "rarely", and none of the respondents answered never. In general, these results indicate that the level of gratitude in the aspect of action is in the very high category. The questionnaire's average value (mean) is 4.7 in the very high category. How respondents feel about a life that is full of good things by actions can be seen in the following table:



Graph 3 The Gratitude Level of Students in The Aspect of Action

Based on the questionnaire given to respondents consisting of 14 questions in three aspects of gratitude: heart, verbal, and action, based on an interval value of (0.8), with 1 describing the lowest answer and 5 for the highest answer, it appears that 457 or 64% of respondents have a very high level of gratitude, 225 or 32% in the high category, 30 or 4% in the medium category, and 2 or 1% in the low category. Based on the average test (mean) result, the score is 4.6, and the level of gratitude for junior high school students in East Kalimantan is in the very high category.



Graph 4 The Gratitude Level of Junior High School in East Kalimantan

b. Teacher's Method in Developing Gratitude Values to Junior High School Students in East Kalimantan

The qualitative data collected are related to developing the gratitude values of junior high school students in East Kalimantan from Islamic Religious Education teachers and religious subject teachers. Based on data from 34 respondents, it can

be analyzed that the effective methods used by teachers in developing a grateful personality in junior high school students in East Kalimantan are:

- 1) The teachers provide materials such as lectures, advice, discussions, and questions and answers related to gratitude.
- 2) The teachers become role models who must give examples for students about the values of gratitude.
- 3) The teachers give presentation tasks and practice related to gratitude in the aspects of heart, verbal, and action.
- 4) The teachers give assignments such as to list good things that have been obtained/felt and should be grateful for every day.
- 5) Habituation (conditioning) by instilling the nature of qanaah, giving appreciation and motivation, a sense of empathy, self-reflection/introspection, giving charity, helping others, spreading the 3S (*Senyum, Salam, Sapa*), visiting friends or teachers who are sick or grieving.
- 6) School programs such as praying *dhuha* and *dzuhur* together, reading the Qur'an, praying before starting lessons, and giving *sadaqah* every Friday at school.

The methods done by respondents who are practitioners in the learning process are in line with the results of ethical research which in this case is in the formation of personality in general through giving lectures and advice, giving assignments and school programs so that it can become a positive habit and shape the character of students.

2. Discussion

Based on the results from 714 respondents in Samarinda City, Balikpapan City, and Kutai Timur regency, many respondents feel grateful about their life that is full of good things, which is in the average value (mean) of 4.1 in the high category. Many respondents feel that the goodness of life comes from God, with an average value (mean) of 4.8 in the very high category. Respondents feel the goodness of life coming from other people and are categorized as very good, which is in the average (mean) of 4.7 in the very high category. Respondents feel satisfied with the blessings bestowed by Allah; the average value (mean) of the questionnaire is 3.9 in the high category. Respondents are satisfied with the kindness done by others, which is in the average score (mean) of 4.1 in the high category. Many respondents have a very high appreciation for the kindness done by others, which is in the average value (mean) of 4.6 in the very high category.

These results are in line with the research by Listiandini, et al. stating that the gratitude constructs for the Indonesian people consist of three components, one of which is a sense of appreciation, namely a sense of appreciation for other people or God and life (Listiyandini et al., 2015). Gratitude is defined as the presence of the memory of what God has given in the form of outward and inner blessings (Tazaka, 2014). Gratitude is an expression of thanks for the blessings given by Allah SWT (Kusumastuti et al., 2017), accepting God's decisions both pleasant and unpleasant ones (Haryanto & Kertamuda, 2016), enjoying life by seeing the positive things in the process of a positive life one passed, respecting oneself to achieve positive goals as an effort to self-changing from the inside and having a view of life that God organized people's life (Rahmalia, 2018).

According to Malik Madani, referring to the opinion of ar-Ragib al-Isfahani, there are three aspects of gratitude: the gratitude of the heart/*syukr al-qalb*, gratitude verbally / *syukr al-lisan*, that is praising God as a blessing, and other parts of body or *syukr sair al-jawarih* (Primadiani, 2019).

a. The Gratitude Level of Students in the Aspect of the Heart (Qalbu)

The result analysis of students' answers in interpreting themselves on questions related to gratitude in the aspect of the heart revealed that 457 data of 714 or 64.0% of respondents answered "always." It means that the level of gratitude in the aspect of the heart is in the very high-level category, which is in the average value (mean) of 4.6.

The data from interview descriptions revealed the methods used by teachers in developing the grateful personality of students in the aspect of the heart. Providing material (lectures, advice, discussions, and questions and answers related to gratitude), exemplary, and conditioning (Emmons & Stern, 2013) are effective methods in increasing students' sense of gratitude.

Gratitude of the heart (*syukr al-qalb*) that is praising God as a blessing, according to the Qur'an, people who are good at being grateful are very few (*Saba': 13*). To achieve this gratitude predicate, humans must always pray and try with all their might through various forms of good deeds. Gratitude for favors cannot be realized except after people recognize these favors (*An-Nahl: 18, Ibrahim: 34*) (Madany, 2018).

b. The Gratitude Level of Students in the Aspect of Verbal

Based on students' questionnaire analysis results related to verbal expressions of gratitude, 467 of 714 respondents, or 65.4%, answered "always." These results show that the level of verbal gratitude is in the very high-level category, which is in the average value (mean) of 4.6.

Emmons and Stern's research revealed that expressions of gratitude were able to help create mental health, life satisfaction, optimism, hope and affection, feelings of joy, enthusiasm, love, happiness, and optimism (Emmons & Stern, 2013).

The results of qualitative data revealed the methods used by religion teachers to develop the students' grateful personality in the verbal aspect. First is providing materials (lectures, advice, discussions, and questions and answers related to gratitude). Second is being role models for the students about the values of gratitude. Third is giving presentation tasks and practice related to gratitude. Finally is habituation or conditioning by instilling the nature of *qanaah*, giving appreciation and motivation, a sense of empathy, self-reflection/introspection, giving charity, helping others, spreading the 3S (*Senyum, Salam, Sapa*), and visiting friends or teachers who are sick or grieving.

In Emmons, RA, and McCullough's research entitled "Counting Blessings Versus Burdens: An Experimental Investigation of Gratitude and Subjective Well-Being in Daily Life", broadly speaking, gratitude can be applied through the habituation method. Grateful individuals will obtain physical, social and subjective well-being (Emmons & McCullough, 2003).

c. The Gratitude Level of Students in the Aspect of Action

Based on the questionnaire results related to expressions of gratitude in actions, it appears that the level of gratitude in action is in a very high-level category, with an average value (mean) of 4.7.

According to Emmons, gratitude training consists of four stages, namely keeping a gratitude journal containing notes that make one feel more grateful, writing a gratitude letter addressed to someone), doing a gratitude walk (recount all the things one is grateful for), and thanking everyone for everything (thanking God or others who help or do good) (Emmons, 2007).

These stages are generally implemented in the methods applied by the teacher in developing a grateful personality in the aspect of action, such as providing materials, being role models, giving demonstration tasks and practicing gratitude with actions, giving the task of making a list of good things that have been obtained/felt and should be grateful for every day, conditioning by instilling the nature of *qana'ah*, giving appreciation and motivation, presenting a sense of empathy around oneself, inviting reflection/self-introspection, giving charity, helping others, spreading the 3S (*Senyum, Salam, Sapa*), visiting friends or teachers who are sick or grieving, school programs such as *dhuha* and *dzuhur* in the congregation, reading the Qur'an, praying before starting lessons, and giving *sadaqah* every Friday at school.

E. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, it shows that 457 or 64% of respondents have a very high level of gratitude, 225 or 32% of respondents are in the high category, and 30 or 4% of respondents are in the medium category, and 2 or 1% of respondents are in the low category. Based on the calculation of the average test (mean), it was obtained a value of 4.6, meaning that the level of gratitude of junior high school students in East Kalimantan is in the very high category. The teacher internalizes gratitude values to create a grateful personality through several methods and strategies, including: 1) providing advice through lectures, discussions, and questions and answers related to gratitude, 2) giving presentation tasks, practicing gratitude with heart, verbal and actions, 3) teachers as role models, 4) conditioning, and 5) school programs such as *dhuha* and *dzuhur* prayers in the congregation, reading the Qur'an, praying before starting lessons, and giving charity every Friday at school. These results may have an implication to implement the methods to develop students' grateful personality as a part of personality development at school.

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