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DEVELOPING GROWTH MINDSET IN SENIOR PAUD LEADERSHIP: ADAPTATION STRATEGIES FOR DEEP LEARNING CURRICULUM IN DIGITAL ERA

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Abstract

The digital era has brought fundamental transformations to early childhood education (PAUD), demanding responsive curriculum adaptation and leadership. This study aims to analyze the role of the growth mindset in senior PAUD leadership in adapting the deep learning curriculum in the digital era through a systematic literature review. The findings indicate that a growth mindset serves as a crucial catalyst enabling PAUD leaders to implement transformational leadership and managerial functions effectively to address digital challenges, such as teachers' low digital literacy, limited technological infrastructure, and policy gaps. The resulting adaptation strategies include enhancing teachers' digital competencies, providing adequate infrastructure, and integrating holistic, play-based learning principles into the deep learning curriculum. The implications offer practical guidance for developing PAUD leadership and theoretical contributions to aligning growth mindset, transformational leadership, and curriculum innovation within PAUD settings.
Keywordl: growth mindset; curriculum; leadership

Abstrak

Era digital telah membawa transformasi mendasar pada pendidikan anak usia dini (PAUD), yang menuntut adaptasi kurikulum dan kepemimpinan yang responsif. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran pola pikir pertumbuhan (growth mindset) dalam kepemimpinan senior PAUD dalam mengadaptasi kurikulum pembelajaran mendalam di era digital melalui tinjauan literatur sistematis. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pola pikir pertumbuhan berfungsi sebagai katalis penting yang memungkinkan para pemimpin PAUD untuk menerapkan

kepemimpinan transformasional dan fungsi manajerial secara efektif untuk mengatasi tantangan digital, seperti rendahnya literasi digital guru, keterbatasan infrastruktur teknologi, dan kesenjangan kebijakan. Strategi adaptasi yang dihasilkan meliputi peningkatan kompetensi digital guru, penyediaan infrastruktur yang memadai, dan pengintegrasian prinsip-prinsip pembelajaran holistik berbasis permainan ke dalam kurikulum pembelajaran mendalam. Implikasinya menawarkan panduan praktis untuk mengembangkan kepemimpinan PAUD dan kontribusi teoritis untuk menyelaraskan pola pikir pertumbuhan, kepemimpinan transformasional, dan inovasi kurikulum dalam lingkungan PAUD.
Kata kunci: Kata kunci: pola pikir berkembang; kurikulum; kepemimpinan

A. INTRODUCTION.

1. Contents of the Introduction

The digital era has brought about paradigm-shifting transformations across various sectors, including Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PAUD). These changes demand that PAUD institutions not only adapt to technology but also revise their curriculum approaches and leadership practices. Amid technological disruption and demands for adaptive and personalized learning, the role of senior PAUD leadership becomes crucial as change agents. Success in addressing challenges (such as limited infrastructure and low digital literacy among educators) greatly depends on the vision and strategies of school leaders (Windayani & Sudarma, 2025) (Umar et al., 2024).

One educational innovation emerging in response to digital-era needs is the adoption of deep learning. This method offers the potential to analyze children’s development comprehensively and generate learning plans that are more personalized—representing a major shift from traditional curriculum. However, implementing deep learning in PAUD still faces challenges, including teachers' pedagogical readiness, technological infrastructure gaps, and the need for adaptive management systems (Sariah & Nugraha, 2024).

To lead this complex adaptation process, senior PAUD leadership must be grounded in a transformative mindset. Carol Dweck’s concept of the Growth Mindset offers a vital framework: the belief that abilities and intelligence can be developed through effort and dedication (Meila et al., 2025). Applied to leadership, this mindset fosters readiness for change and views challenges (such as implementing deep learning) not as barriers but as learning opportunities. In the PAUD context, this affects leaders' adaptability and motivates teachers to improve performance and innovate, ultimately enhancing children's learning agency (Elyana & Agustiningrum, 2025).

Despite extensive literature on transformational leadership in PAUD, digital-era leadership strategies, and deep learning implementation challenges, there remains limited synthesis specifically examining the role of the Growth Mindset in senior leadership within the context of adapting deep learning curricula (Herlina et al., 2024). This research aims to fill that gap through a comprehensive

literature review and formulate effective adaptation strategies for senior PAUD leadership in cultivating a Growth Mindset to support deep learning implementation in the digital era.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a library research method with a qualitative approach that is exploratory and descriptive in nature. This design was chosen to construct a comprehensive, in-depth, and conceptual understanding of the dynamic interconnections between the growth mindset, senior leadership in Early Childhood Education (PAUD), and deep-learning–based curriculum adaptation strategies within the context of digital transformation. This method does not involve the direct collection of empirical field data; instead, it focuses on critical analysis of existing academic texts to identify, analyze, and synthesize current knowledge, patterns of thought, and gaps in the literature. Accordingly, this study aims to develop a solid theoretical framework and formulate strategic recommendations based on a synthesis of credible academic evidence.

The implementation of this research follows systematic and rigorous stages to ensure analytical validity and depth. First, the identification of literature sources was carried out by surveying various indexed academic databases, primarily Google Scholar, Scopus, and ERIC (Education Resources Information Center). Searches were conducted using combinations of strategic keywords such as “growth mindset teacher leadership,” “early childhood education leadership,” “deep learning curriculum adaptation,” “digital era in PAUD,” and “senior educator leadership.”

Second, the selected literature underwent a strict screening and evaluation process based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. The key criteria included: (a) prioritizing literature published within the last five years to ensure relevance to current digital contexts; (b) high topical relevance to the research focus; and (c) academic quality, assessed through journal impact factors, author reputation, and methodological rigor.

Third, the selected literature was subjected to in-depth thematic content analysis. At this stage, the researchers conducted coding, categorized findings, and explored patterns, themes, causal relationships, and conceptual contradictions across sources.

Fourth, the final stage involved integrative synthesis, in which the analytical findings were combined and connected to formulate a coherent conceptual framework and effective, implementable curriculum adaptation strategies, while also identifying directions for future research.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study employs a literature review (library research) method to synthesize the complex interrelationships between the Growth Mindset (GM) in senior Early Childhood Education (PAUD) leadership and the strategic adaptation

of the Deep Learning Curriculum (PM) in the digital era. Through an extensive review of scholarly works, the analysis uncovers a strong, multidimensional, and synergistic linkage among these three core variables. The findings demonstrate that a Growth Mindset not only shapes leaders' attitudes and behaviors in responding to digital transformation but also serves as a foundational driver for implementing effective curriculum adaptation strategies. Likewise, the demands of the Deep Learning Curriculum further reinforce the need for leadership approaches grounded in openness to learning, continuous improvement, and collaborative innovation. Collectively, these interactions form an integrated conceptual framework that outlines the essential components required for successful adaptation within PAUD institutions amid ongoing technological and pedagogical shifts.

1. Growth Mindset and Its Relevance to the PAUD Ecosystem

Growth Mindset (GM) is defined as the belief that abilities and intelligence can be developed through effort, dedication, and experience—contrasting with a Fixed Mindset, which assumes that abilities are innate and unchangeable (Boylan et al., 2018) (Rusyiana & Marpaung, 2023). In the context of Early Childhood Education (PAUD), the concept carries significant implications:

a. For Children

The integration of mindset theory into early learning practices can support children in optimizing their performance and developing a sense of agency over their own learning processes. By internalizing the belief that abilities can grow with effort, children are more likely to persist when encountering challenges, engage more deeply with learning activities, and cultivate habits that promote lifelong learning (Catalano et al., 2024).

b. For Educators and Leaders

GM is highly relevant for teachers and school leaders because it shows a positive correlation with Readiness for Change and Teacher Leadership—two critical components needed to navigate ongoing curriculum reform and technological transformation (Rusyiana & Marpaung, 2023). A leader or educator with a growth-oriented mindset is more inclined to adopt new pedagogical approaches, embrace innovation, and persist through the difficulties inherent in implementing deep learning and digital tools. However, the literature also reveals inconsistencies in PAUD teachers' understanding of mindset theory and in their perceived ability to apply GM principles in practice (Boylan et al., 2018). This variation underscores the need for targeted professional development to ensure

that teachers not only comprehend the theory but are also equipped to integrate it effectively into learning environments (Aminah, 2024).

2. Role of Senior PAUD Leadership in Embedding Growth Mindset

Senior leaders play critical roles in shaping work environments that support teacher development (Meila et al., 2025).

a. Leadership Style

Transformational Leadership has been identified as an effective leadership model for early childhood education institutions because it inherently promotes growth, development, and achievement (Horațiu Catalano et al., 2024). The literature review further asserts that the Growth Mindset is directly linked to Transformational Leadership, as both emphasize continuous improvement, openness to change, and the pursuit of higher levels of performance. Leaders who embody a Growth Mindset tend to inspire others through their vision, resilience, and willingness to embrace challenges traits that align closely with the core dimensions of transformational leadership (Horațiu Catalano et al., 2024).

b. Practical Strategies:

PAUD leaders who successfully enhance teacher motivation and performance under this leadership style typically implement practical strategies such as modeling exemplary behavior, providing verbal encouragement through compelling and inspiring visions, and fostering an environment that supports innovation among teachers (Siti Aminah, 2024). By consistently demonstrating professional integrity, articulating meaningful goals, and empowering teachers to experiment and develop new instructional approaches, transformational leaders are able to cultivate a positive organizational climate that encourages creativity, professional growth, and sustained commitment to improving learning outcomes.

3. Challenges and Adaptation Strategies in Deep Learning Curriculum

The Deep Learning Curriculum (PM) in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is defined as an approach that aligns with children's natural learning processes, emphasizing play, exploration, and discovery (Elyana & Agustiningrum, 2025). It is built upon three core components: mindful learning, meaningful learning, and joyful learning, which together aim to promote deep and developmentally appropriate learning experiences.

Its implementation, however, is strongly shaped by challenges emerging in the digital era, requiring PAUD leaders to apply managerial functions effectively (Elyana & Agustiningrum, 2025). The main challenges identified in the literature (Faiqoh Meila et al., 2025) include:

a) Low digital literacy among teachers;

b) Limited technological infrastructure;
c) Misalignment between technology use and holistic, play-based PAUD principles;
d) Lack of government regulations on AI and insufficient child data protection policies.

Relevant leadership strategies to address these challenges include strengthening teachers' digital competencies, ensuring adequate technological infrastructure, and fostering collaboration with parents (Windayani & Sudarma, 2025).

4. Group Mindset Leadership and Its Application in Education

Group Mindset (GM) leadership is a transformational leadership approach that prioritizes a collective mindset over individual authority. This approach is rooted in the principles of collaboration, equal participation, and a shared focus on achieving synergistic collective goals. In educational settings, the concept aligns with the ideals of teacher leadership, which are strengthened by collaboration and a growth mindset (the belief that abilities can be developed through effort and learning) (Umar et al., 2024). GM serves as a framework for building collective professional capacity, enabling each team member to feel empowered to contribute to continuous improvement and innovation (Yuniwati et al., 2025).

5. Growth Mindset–Based Adaptation Strategies for Senior Leadership

The synthesis of findings highlights that a Growth Mindset (GM) in senior PAUD leadership serves as a key catalyst for successful adaptation of the Deep Learning Curriculum (PM) in the digital era. Leaders who possess a GM are able to effectively integrate transformational leadership principles with managerial functions to address emerging challenges (Andika et al., 2020).

6. Core Characteristics of Group Mindset Leadership

Group Mindset (GM) leadership shapes not only interaction patterns but also the creation of a dynamic and adaptive organizational culture (Prawiyogi & Rosalina, 2025).

a. Sustained and Intensive Team Collaboration:

At the heart of GM is the establishment of professional learning communities, in which teachers actively form networks to share knowledge, reflect on practice, and jointly develop more effective instructional strategies. Such collaboration breaks classroom isolation and transforms individual experiences into collective organizational assets (Rusyiana & Marpaung, 2023).

b. Active Participation and Equity:

GM emphasizes that leadership is a function accessible to all members, not solely those in formal positions. Teachers are encouraged to influence peers and even school leadership to improve student outcomes. This principle of equity ensures that all voices are valued, fostering ownership of school decisions and policies.

c. Open and Transparent Communication:
A GM-oriented environment is sustained through honest, constructive, and multidirectional communication. This communication style is critical for aligning perceptions, managing conflict productively, and building trust. When combined with a Growth Mindset, communication becomes a form of developmental feedback rather than judgment, enabling continuous learning within the team.
d. Empowerment for Innovation and Risk-Taking:
Grounded in trust and collaboration, GM empowers teachers to experiment, innovate, and learn from failure without fear. Growth Mindset is the driving force behind this characteristic, reframing challenges as learning opportunities and making innovation a cultural norm.

7. Benefits of Implementing Group Mindset Leadership
Adopting GM principles generates significant positive impacts, particularly in school environments:

a. Increased Creativity and Innovation:
Collaborative knowledge exchange stimulates creative thinking and supports innovative solutions. Sharing best practices enriches the pedagogical repertoire of teachers (Tampubolon, 2022).
b. Higher Motivation and Commitment:
When teachers feel heard and valued, intrinsic motivation rises. Participation in decision-making leads to more informed decisions and stronger commitment to their implementation.
c. Enhanced Job Satisfaction and Team Performance:
A supportive and collaborative work climate improves job satisfaction and reduces burnout. Team synergy, facilitated by GM, ultimately enhances collective performance.
d. Development of Distributed Leadership Capacity:
GM serves as an incubator for teacher leadership by enabling teachers to strengthen facilitation, management, and influence skills (thereby expanding leadership capacity across the school).

8. Translating Growth Mindset into Managerial Functions
Senior PAUD leaders with a GM consistently view digital constraints (such as low teacher digital literacy or limited facilities) not as barriers but as challenges to be solved and resources to be improved . This is operationalized through the adaptation of key managerial functions:
a. Planning:
GM-oriented leaders formulate ambitious but realistic PM adaptation goals, prPAUDded by problem clarification, such as mapping teachers' digital competence needs.

b. Actuating:
They promote intellectual stimulation by encouraging innovation and experimentation, even amidst constraints. This reduces fear of failure during the implementation of new PM methods.
c. Controlling:
Senior leaders conduct monitoring that emphasizes teacher development, provide formal recognition, and address infrastructural barriers to ensure long-term job satisfaction.

9. Holistic Strategies for Deep Learning Curriculum Adaptation
Adapting the PM curriculum must be aligned with strengthening collective Growth Mindset, focusing on both technical and pedagogical challenges:
a. Digital Literacy:

Addressing low digital literacy among teachers through structured and continuous professional development.
b. Infrastructure:
Managing the provision and improvement of technological infrastructure to reduce digital gaps.
c. Pedagogical Alignment:
Ensuring that the integration of technology and PM remains consistent with holistic, play-based learning principles, and that PM materials are contextual, flexible, and exploratory.
A successful adaptation strategy occurs when senior leaders instill in teachers the belief that they are capable of developing new skills (GM) to implement new methods (PM), regardless of digital constraints.

Table 1. Comparison of PAUD Leadership Characteristics: Fixed vs. Growth Mindset

Aspect	Fixed Mindset Leadership	Growth Mindset Leadership	Sources
Core Mindset	Abilities are fixed; poor outcomes are permanent failures.	Teacher potential can grow; digital challenges are learning opportunities.	(Boylan et al., 2018)
Leadership Style	Transactional, compliance-focused.	Transformational, inspiring growth and innovation.	(Catalano et al., 2024)
Deep Learning Approach	Resistant; perceived as difficult or unsuitable.	Implements step-by-step using management functions and play-based principles.	(Elyana & Agustiningrum, 2025)

Response to Digital Challenges	Blames infrastructure gaps as reasons not to adapt.	Seeks strategic solutions, promotes innovation and competency building.	(Windayani & Sudarma, 2025)

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the literature reviewed, it can be concluded that the growth mindset serves as a critical foundation for senior PAUD leadership in addressing the challenges of adapting the deep learning curriculum in the digital era. Leaders who possess a growth mindset tend to adopt transformational leadership practices that promote innovation, motivation, and the professional development of teachers. They are also able to integrate key managerial functions (such as planning, implementation, and supervision) to overcome both technical and pedagogical barriers, including low digital literacy, limited technological infrastructure, and insufficient regulatory support.

Effective adaptation strategies include providing continuous professional development for teachers, ensuring adequate technological infrastructure, and maintaining alignment between deep learning implementation and the principles of holistic, play-based learning. Thus, strengthening the growth mindset at the leadership level not only enhances the institution's readiness to navigate change but also fosters a more adaptive, inclusive learning ecosystem that supports children's development in a comprehensive and meaningful way.

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