

Mental-Based Summative Assessment: Reconstructing Character Evaluation At Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri

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Abstract : Character and mental education remain difficult to assess through conventional summative evaluation because most school assessment systems prioritise cognitive achievement and written tests. This problem becomes more critical in Islamic boarding schools, where students' character is shaped through continuous religious, social, organisational, and dormitory life. This study aims to analyse how Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri reconstructs summative assessment to evaluate students' mental and character development through the Mental Personality instrument. This study employed a descriptive qualitative case study using participatory observation, document analysis of the Mental Report Card, and relevant literature on mental education, character education, and authentic assessment. The findings show that mental-based summative assessment at Gontor Putri is operationalised through 16 observable indicators covering spiritual, social, personal resilience, and gender-responsive domains. Assessment is conducted through public speaking, scouting, organisational duties, worship discipline, and 24-hour dormitory life, then validated through collective deliberation among educators and supervisors. This study implies that character assessment can become more systematic and accountable when abstract values are translated into behavioural indicators and assessed through authentic, continuous observation.

Keywords : Summative Assessment, Mental Education, Character, Authentic Evaluation

Abstrak : Pendidikan karakter dan mental masih sulit dinilai melalui evaluasi sumatif konvensional karena sebagian besar sistem asesmen sekolah memprioritaskan capaian kognitif dan tes tertulis. Masalah ini menjadi lebih penting di pesantren, ketika karakter santriwati dibentuk melalui kehidupan keagamaan, sosial, organisasi, dan asrama yang berlangsung secara berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis bagaimana Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri merekonstruksi asesmen sumatif untuk mengevaluasi perkembangan mental dan karakter santriwati melalui instrumen Mental Personality. Penelitian ini menggunakan studi kasus kualitatif deskriptif melalui observasi partisipatif, analisis dokumen Mental Report Card, serta kajian literatur terkait pendidikan mental, pendidikan karakter, dan asesmen autentik. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa asesmen sumatif berbasis mental di Gontor Putri dioperasionalkan melalui 16 indikator teramati yang mencakup ranah spiritual, sosial,

ketahanan personal, dan responsif gender. Asesmen dilakukan melalui muhadharah, kepramukaan, tugas organisasi, disiplin ibadah, dan kehidupan asrama 24 jam, kemudian divalidasi melalui musyawarah kolektif pendidik dan pembimbing. Penelitian ini mengimplikasikan bahwa asesmen karakter dapat menjadi lebih sistematis dan akuntabel ketika nilai abstrak diterjemahkan menjadi indikator perilaku serta dinilai melalui observasi autentik dan berkelanjutan dalam konteks pendidikan pesantren modern.

Kata Kunci : *Asesmen Sumatif, Pendidikan Mental, Karakter, Evaluasi Autentik*

INTRODUCTION

Education in the contemporary era faces a complex challenge. Many formal education systems still place strong emphasis on cognitive achievement, academic grades, and measurable subject mastery. This orientation is important, but it does not fully represent the broader purpose of education. Education should not only develop knowledge and technical competence. It should also shape character, self-discipline, moral awareness, emotional resilience, social responsibility, and spiritual maturity. In this sense, education needs an assessment system that can capture not only what students know, but also how they behave, respond, lead, serve, and live with others. The concept of character education stresses the formation of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Character becomes meaningful when values appear in consistent behaviour, not only in verbal understanding. Authentic assessment strengthens this idea because it evaluates learners through real tasks, actual performance, and observable behaviour. Wiggins (1990) argues that authentic assessment requires students to demonstrate competence in meaningful contexts. Ashford-Rowe, Herrington, and Brown (2014) also explain that authentic assessment should reflect real-world complexity, require judgement, and involve performance that has practical relevance. Therefore, character assessment should not rely only on written tests, self-reports, or general attitude descriptions. It requires continuous observation and clear behavioural indicators.

Mental education has a central position in the educational philosophy of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri. Triyawan and Putri (2020) explain that mental education at Gontor is not limited to classroom instruction. It is embedded in the entire life system of the pesantren. Public speaking, scouting, organisational responsibility, worship discipline, language discipline, dormitory life, and social interaction function as daily educational spaces. The pesantren views mental skill as a primary educational target because intellectual ability and job skill will not be sufficient without self-confidence, obedience, discipline, sincerity, resilience, and responsibility. The main problem lies in the evaluation of mental and character development. Conventional summative assessment often measures learning outcomes through written examinations at the end of a learning period. This model is useful for assessing cognitive mastery, but it cannot fully capture character growth. A student may obtain high academic scores but still lack discipline, initiative, manners, leadership, or social sensitivity. This gap creates the need for a more comprehensive summative assessment model that can assess behavioural evidence in real educational settings.

Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri offers an important alternative through the Mental Personality instrument, also called the Mental Report Card. This instrument translates abstract character values into 16 observable indicators. These indicators cover worship, Qur'an recitation, obedience, discipline, communication, dedication, leadership, initiative, promptness, manners, motivation, health and neatness, maturity, responsiveness, creativity, and women-related character formation. The assessment is not conducted through a single written test. It is built from accumulated observation across 24-hour pesantren life. The state of the art in character assessment shows a growing shift from cognitive and paper-based evaluation to authentic, performance-based, and context-based assessment. Studies on authentic assessment indicate that character, higher-order thinking, and social behaviour can be assessed more effectively when learners perform real tasks in meaningful settings. However, many studies still focus on classroom-based instruments,

school subjects, or general character rubrics. Fewer studies examine how Islamic boarding schools construct summative character assessment through full-day educational life and institutional discipline.

This study addresses that research gap by analysing how Gontor Putri reconstructs summative assessment into a mental-based evaluation system. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the operationalisation of mental education into 16 behavioural indicators and its analysis of 24-hour life-based assessment as a form of authentic summative evaluation. Unlike general attitude assessment, this model integrates religious discipline, social interaction, leadership training, organisational performance, and dormitory behaviour into one structured assessment system. The urgency of this study rests on the need to develop more accountable character evaluation in educational institutions. Many schools promote character education, but their assessment systems often remain descriptive, unsystematic, and weakly documented. By examining the Mental Personality instrument at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri, this study contributes to the development of a character assessment model that is more concrete, observable, authentic, and institutionally integrated.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design with a case study approach. The research was conducted at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri, Mantingan, Indonesia, an Islamic boarding school that implements a 24-hour educational system through classroom learning, dormitory discipline, religious practice, organisational training, and co-curricular activities. The main focus of this study was the mental-based summative assessment system known as the Mental Personality instrument or Mental Report Card. The research subjects included female students who participated in daily pesantren activities, while the institutional actors involved in the assessment process consisted of homeroom teachers, dormitory supervisors, student care officers, and activity supervisors. The research procedure included identifying the conceptual basis of mental education, analysing the Mental Personality instrument, observing students' behaviour in daily activities, classifying the 16 mental indicators into broader assessment domains, and interpreting the assessment mechanism as an authentic summative evaluation model.

Data were collected through participatory observation, document analysis, and literature review. Participatory observation was used to examine students' behaviour in public speaking, scouting, worship discipline, dormitory life, language discipline, and organisational duties. Document analysis was conducted on the Mental Personality instrument to identify its indicators, grading system, and assessment structure. Relevant literature was used to strengthen the analysis of mental education, character education, authentic assessment, and pesantren-based evaluation. The instruments used in this study were an observation guide, a document analysis sheet, and a thematic coding guide. The data were analysed using descriptive-analytical techniques through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The 16 indicators were grouped into four main domains: spiritual, social, personal resilience, and gender-responsive character formation. Research credibility was strengthened through source and method triangulation by comparing observation data, assessment documents, and relevant academic literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reconstruction of Summative Assessment from Cognitive Evaluation to Mental Evaluation

The findings show that Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri reconstructs summative assessment from a cognitive-academic model into a mental and behavioural assessment model. In many formal education systems, summative assessment refers to evaluation conducted at the end of a learning period to determine students' mastery of academic competencies. At Gontor Putri, however, summative assessment is not limited to subject knowledge. It also measures the stability, discipline, confidence, social responsibility, and spiritual quality of female students. This reconstruction reflects a broader understanding of educational outcomes. The pesantren does not treat character as an additional component outside the curriculum. Character is positioned as the core outcome of education. Therefore, the assessment system must also evaluate whether students have internalised institutional values in their daily behaviour. This approach is consistent with

Triyawan and Putri (2020), who explain that mental education at Gontor aims to prepare students to face real life with confidence, discipline, and resilience.

The Mental Personality instrument becomes the main evidence of this reconstruction. It transforms mental education from an abstract ideal into a structured evaluation system. The instrument makes it possible for educators to assess character through observable behaviour rather than through general impressions. This is important because character assessment often becomes weak when indicators are too broad, subjective, or unsystematic. By using specific indicators, Gontor Putri attempts to make character evaluation more measurable and accountable. This finding supports the principle of authentic assessment. Authentic assessment requires students to demonstrate values and competencies in real contexts. In the case of Gontor Putri, students are not only asked to explain discipline, leadership, or obedience. They must practise these values in daily life. Their punctuality, manners, willingness to serve, courage to speak, ability to lead, consistency in worship, and responsiveness to duties become concrete assessment evidence. This shows that the Mental Personality instrument functions as a summative assessment tool based on authentic behavioural performance.

Components of the Mental Personality Instrument

The analysis of the Mental Personality instrument shows that the assessment contains 16 behavioural indicators. These indicators represent the pesantren's effort to operationalise mental education into observable and assessable components. The indicators do not stand separately. They form an integrated structure that links spiritual awareness, social maturity, personal resilience, and gender-responsive character formation. The spiritual domain includes worship, Qur'an recitation or memorisation, and obedience. This domain becomes the foundation of mental formation because the pesantren views spirituality as the source of moral discipline. Worship assesses the consistency and quality of students' religious practice. Qur'an recitation or memorisation assesses students' interaction with the Qur'an as a source of spiritual formation. Obedience assesses the students' willingness to follow religious rules, institutional regulations, and directions from educators. A strong score in this domain indicates that students have developed spiritual awareness as the basis for responsible behaviour.

The social and interpersonal domain includes communication, manners, leadership, dedication, and responsiveness. These indicators assess how students interact with others and contribute to the community. Communication is evaluated through activities such as public speaking, where students show confidence, language ability, and rhetorical skill. Manners are assessed through daily interaction with teachers, seniors, peers, and guests. Leadership is observed through organisational activities, scouting, and group responsibilities. Dedication measures sincerity and willingness to serve without expecting material reward. Responsiveness assesses students' sensitivity to environmental needs and social problems. The personal resilience domain includes discipline, initiative, promptness, maturity, health and neatness, motivation, and creativity. This domain reflects the internal strength required to live in a disciplined boarding school environment. Discipline assesses compliance with institutional rules and daily schedules. Initiative measures the ability to act without waiting for direct instruction. Promptness assesses agility and readiness to respond to duties. Maturity refers to emotional control and wise behaviour in facing problems. Health and neatness show awareness of personal hygiene and physical order. Motivation reflects students' persistence in learning and serving. Creativity assesses their ability to produce useful ideas and solutions in organisational and dormitory activities.

The gender-responsive domain includes women-related character formation or An-Nisa'iyah. This indicator reflects the specific educational orientation of Gontor Putri as a female pesantren. It assesses feminine manners, ethical conduct, modesty, responsibility, neatness, and the readiness of students to become future educators in family and society. This domain does not reduce women's role to domestic identity. Instead, it frames female character as a combination of moral dignity, resilience, leadership, and social responsibility. The classification of these indicators shows that the Mental Personality instrument has a multidimensional structure. It does not assess character through one general category. It breaks character into specific domains that can be observed across different educational activities. This structure increases the clarity of assessment and helps educators identify which aspects of students' mental development need further guidance.

The 24-Hour Life-Based Assessment Mechanism

The most distinctive finding of this study is that mental-based summative assessment at Gontor Putri is built on 24-hour life-based observation. The pesantren treats all aspects of daily life as educational space. Students learn not only in classrooms, but also in dormitories, mosques, fields, organisations, language environments, and co-curricular activities. This system provides rich and continuous data for assessing character. Public speaking or muhadharah functions as an assessment space for communication, courage, confidence, initiative, and language discipline. Students deliver speeches in Arabic, English, and Indonesian. Supervisors observe the quality of content, language, delivery, confidence, and readiness. This activity gives direct evidence of students' mental courage. A student who can stand before an audience, organise ideas, and deliver speech confidently demonstrates more than linguistic competence. She also demonstrates self-control, preparation, and psychological readiness.

Scouting functions as an assessment space for discipline, leadership, dedication, teamwork, and resilience. Through scouting, students face structured tasks, outdoor activities, group responsibilities, and command-based discipline. Their ability to respond quickly, follow instructions, lead peers, and complete tasks becomes assessment evidence. This supports the pesantren's philosophy that mental strength is formed through practice, not merely through advice. Dormitory life functions as a behavioural laboratory for obedience, worship, manners, promptness, cleanliness, neatness, and social sensitivity. Students follow a daily schedule marked by bells, prayer times, study routines, language rules, and dormitory regulations. The dormitory system enables educators to observe whether students maintain discipline without constant classroom supervision. This is important because authentic character appears in repeated behaviour, especially when students face routines, restrictions, and social interaction.

Organisational activities, especially student organisations, provide assessment evidence for leadership, responsibility, initiative, dedication, and maturity. Students are given roles that require them to manage peers, coordinate activities, solve problems, and make decisions. These activities help educators identify students who show leadership potential, emotional stability, and accountability. The organisation becomes a space where students are trained to be ready to lead and ready to be led. This mechanism shows that the assessment data are not taken from isolated events. They are collected from repeated observation across multiple contexts. This strengthens the validity of the assessment because mental quality is not judged from one moment. It is judged from patterns of behaviour across time, place, and activity. This approach is more suitable for character assessment than a single written test.

Grading Mechanism and Deliberative Validation

The Mental Personality instrument uses a qualitative ordinal scale rather than a numerical scale. The grades consist of B for Good, S for Fair, and K for Poor. This grading system aims to describe character quality in a concise but meaningful way. A Good predicate indicates that a student consistently demonstrates positive behaviour related to the assessed indicator. A Fair predicate indicates that the student has met the minimum standard but still needs further development. A Poor predicate indicates that the student requires special attention and guidance in a specific mental aspect. The use of qualitative predicates fits the nature of character assessment. Character development is not always suitable for a numerical scale because behaviour is contextual and multidimensional. A number may give a false impression of precision if the assessment process lacks behavioural evidence. The B, S, and K system allows educators to focus on qualitative judgement supported by observed patterns.

The grading process is strengthened through collective deliberation. Mental grades are not determined by one teacher alone. They are discussed by parties who interact with students in different contexts, including homeroom teachers, dormitory supervisors, student care officers, and activity supervisors. This mechanism reduces the risk of individual bias because each assessor contributes evidence from different settings. It also reflects the communal nature of pesantren education, where student development is monitored collectively. This deliberative process can be understood as a form of internal validation. Before the grade is recorded in the Mental Report Card, educators compare behavioural evidence, discuss student progress, and identify dominant patterns. This process makes the assessment more accountable than a single subjective impression. It also

allows educators to connect assessment with guidance. When a student receives a Fair or Poor predicate in a specific indicator, the result can become a basis for mentoring, correction, and character development.

The findings of this study align with previous research on authentic assessment and character education. Authentic assessment studies argue that students' values and competencies should be evaluated through real tasks and observable performance. Ayuningrum, Ngazizah, and Ratnaningsih (2024) show that authentic assessment integrated with character education can improve learning outcomes and character development. Faizah *et al.* (2019) also emphasise that character assessment should be grounded in observable behaviour and valid assessment instruments. The present study supports these findings by showing that character can be assessed more meaningfully when students are observed in actual educational practices. The findings also confirm previous studies on Gontor Putri as an institution that forms character through daily life. Islami *et al.* (2020) report that leadership character at Gontor Putri is developed through sincerity, simplicity, self-reliance, *ukhuwah Islamiyah*, and freedom of thought. Waskito *et al.* (2016) also highlight that *pesantren* tradition contains strong character values that shape students' personality and social responsibility. This study extends those findings by focusing specifically on the assessment system. It does not only describe how character is formed. It explains how character is evaluated through a structured summative instrument.

Compared with general school-based character assessment, the Gontor Putri model offers a more integrated system. Many schools assess character through teacher notes, attitude descriptions, or self-assessment forms. These methods can be useful, but they often have limited observation time and weak behavioural documentation. Gontor Putri has a broader assessment environment because students live in the *pesantren* for 24 hours. This enables educators to observe character in academic, religious, social, organisational, and dormitory contexts. This study also contributes to the literature on summative assessment by expanding its meaning. Summative assessment is often associated with final academic testing. The Gontor Putri model shows that summative assessment can also be used to evaluate accumulated behavioural development. In this model, final assessment does not mean a single final test. It means a cumulative judgement based on continuous observation over a learning period.

The first important interpretation is that mental assessment becomes possible when abstract values are translated into observable indicators. Terms such as discipline, dedication, initiative, and maturity are abstract. Without operational indicators, these values can be interpreted differently by each teacher. The Mental Personality instrument reduces this problem by assigning specific behavioural dimensions to the assessment. This makes character more assessable without reducing its moral complexity. The second interpretation is that the environment plays a decisive role in authentic character assessment. Character cannot be assessed properly if the institution does not provide real situations where character is tested. Gontor Putri provides these situations through its structured life system. Public speaking tests confidence and communication. Scouting tests discipline and resilience. Dormitory life tests obedience and manners. Organisational tasks test leadership and responsibility. The environment produces behavioural evidence that supports assessment.

The third interpretation is that mental education at Gontor Putri is cumulative. Students do not develop mental skills through one subject or one programme. They develop them through repeated practice across daily activities. This cumulative process explains why summative assessment is relevant. The final predicate reflects accumulated observation of repeated behaviour. It does not only represent temporary performance. The fourth interpretation is that the Mental Personality instrument links assessment and guidance. Assessment is not merely administrative reporting. It becomes a tool for identifying students' strengths and weaknesses. Students with weak discipline can receive guidance in time management. Students with weak communication can be encouraged through speech practice. Students with weak initiative can be trained through organisational responsibility. In this sense, summative assessment also supports formative improvement. The fifth interpretation is that gender-responsive assessment at Gontor Putri reflects institutional identity. The *An-Nisa'iyah* indicator shows that the *pesantren* designs character formation according to the educational needs of female students. This does not contradict

leadership formation. Instead, it integrates religious values, ethical conduct, feminine dignity, resilience, and social contribution. The female-specific domain gives the assessment model a contextual character that differs from general school assessment.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of character assessment theory by showing that summative assessment can be reconstructed through authentic, continuous, and behavioural evaluation. It supports the view that character education needs assessment instruments that translate values into observable indicators. It also extends the concept of authentic assessment into the context of Islamic boarding school education, where learning occurs through full-day life and institutional culture. Practically, this study offers a model for schools and pesantren that seek to assess character more systematically. Educational institutions can adapt the Mental Personality model by identifying core character values, transforming them into observable indicators, linking indicators to real activities, training assessors, and documenting behavioural evidence. This model can help schools avoid vague attitude assessment and build a more accountable character evaluation system.

For teachers and student supervisors, the study highlights the importance of collaborative assessment. Character judgement should not rely on one evaluator. It should involve multiple educators who observe students in different contexts. This collaborative mechanism can reduce bias, enrich evidence, and support more accurate guidance. For policymakers, the study suggests that character education policy should include stronger guidance on assessment design. Schools need practical models for evaluating character, not only broad moral slogans. Policy should encourage institutions to develop rubrics, observation systems, evidence-based reporting, and follow-up guidance for students.

This study has several limitations that should be understood as opportunities for further development. First, the study focuses on one institution with a distinctive pesantren culture. Therefore, the findings provide deep contextual understanding rather than broad statistical generalisation. This focus is appropriate for a qualitative case study because the aim is to explain the assessment model in depth. Second, the study relies mainly on observation and document analysis. These data sources are suitable for examining the structure and implementation of the Mental Personality instrument. However, future studies can strengthen the findings by adding interviews with students, teachers, dormitory supervisors, and alumni. Such interviews can provide richer insight into how students experience the assessment process. Third, the study has not tested the reliability of the B, S, and K grading system statistically. This does not weaken the descriptive value of the findings, but it opens space for future research. Further studies can develop rubrics, inter-rater agreement procedures, or mixed-method validation to strengthen the psychometric quality of the instrument.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri has reconstructed summative assessment into a mental-based and behaviour-based evaluation system. The Mental Personality instrument enables the pesantren to assess students' character development through 16 observable indicators covering spiritual, social, personal resilience, and gender-responsive domains. The assessment is implemented through authentic and continuous observation in public speaking, scouting, organisational duties, worship discipline, and 24-hour dormitory life. This finding answers the research objective by showing that mental and character education can be evaluated systematically when abstract values are translated into concrete behavioural indicators and supported by a structured educational environment.

Future research should examine the reliability, validity, and transferability of the Mental Personality instrument in different pesantren and school contexts. Practitioners should adapt this model by preparing clear rubrics, training assessors, documenting behavioural evidence, and using assessment results for student guidance. Policymakers should support character education with stronger assessment frameworks that integrate cognitive achievement, authentic behaviour, and student development records. Through these steps, character assessment can become more objective, meaningful, and useful for improving educational quality.

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