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IMPROVING CRITICAL THINKING THROUGH ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL CONTROVERSIES IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT NURURRODHIYAH ISLAMIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini didorong oleh rendahnya tingkat keterampilan berpikir kritis siswa di MTs Nururroddhiyah Kota Jambi. Kondisi ini tercermin dalam kemampuan siswa yang terbatas untuk menganalisis masalah, kesulitan dalam membuat keputusan, kerentanan terhadap pengaruh informasi, kurangnya kepercayaan diri dalam menyampaikan pendapat, kreativitas yang kurang berkembang, dan pemahaman materi pembelajaran yang dangkal. Studi ini bertujuan meningkatkan keterampilan berpikir kritis siswa melalui analisis kontroversi sosial. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah Classroom Action Research (CAR), yang dilakukan dalam dua siklus, masing-masing terdiri dari tahap perencanaan, pelaksanaan tindakan, observasi, dan refleksi. Subjek penelitian adalah 30 siswa kelas VIII A di MTs Nururroddhiyah Kota Jambi. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi, wawancara, kuesioner, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data dilakukan melalui pengurangan data, tampilan data, dan pengambilan kesimpulan. Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa penerapan analisis kontroversi sosial secara bertahap meningkatkan keterampilan berpikir kritis siswa. Perbaikan ini tercermin dalam meningkatnya partisipasi aktif mahasiswa dalam diskusi, kemampuan mereka untuk menyajikan argumen logis yang didukung oleh bukti Islam (dalil), keterbukaan mereka terhadap pendapat yang berbeda, dan kemampuan mereka mengaitkan ajaran Islam dengan isu sosial terkini. Oleh karena itu, metode analisis kontroversi sosial efektif sebagai strategi pembelajaran untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berpikir kritis dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam.

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Keywords:	ABSTRACTS
Critical Thinking: Islamic Religious Education: Classroom Action Research.	<p>This study was motivated by the low level of students' critical thinking skills at MTs Nururroddhiyah Kota Jambi. This condition is reflected in students' limited ability to analyze problems, difficulty in making decisions, susceptibility to being influenced by information, lack of confidence in expressing opinions, underdeveloped creativity, and superficial understanding of learning materials. This study aims to improve students' critical thinking skills through social controversy analysis. The research method employed was Classroom Action Research (CAR), conducted in two cycles, each consisting of planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection stages. The research subjects were 30 students of class VIII A at MTs Nururroddhiyah Kota Jambi. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Data analysis was carried out through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of social controversy analysis gradually improved students' critical thinking skills. The improvement was reflected in the increased active participation of students in discussions, their ability to present logical arguments supported by Islamic evidence (dalil), their openness to differing opinions, and their ability to relate Islamic teachings to current social issues. Therefore, the social controversy analysis method is effective as a learning strategy to enhance critical thinking skills in Islamic Religious Education.</p>

A. INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education plays a vital role in the educational process because it not only provides an understanding of Islamic teachings but also helps shape students' attitudes, character, and behavior. This education is expected to produce students who possess a sound understanding of their faith and are able to apply that knowledge in addressing various life challenges. In line with the increasingly complex demands of education, critical thinking has become one of the most important skills to develop in the learning process. Critical thinking is the ability to understand an issue in depth, identify relevant information, analyze various opinions, weigh evidence and reasoning, and draw well-founded conclusions. This ability is necessary so that students do not merely passively receive information but are able to process it and form opinions based on rational considerations. (Abdul Majid, 2017).

Critical thinking refers to a person's ability to systematically and logically analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to make sound and rational decisions. This skill is crucial in scientific research because it helps researchers not only to accept information at face value, but also to question it, test it, and draw conclusions based on valid evidence. According to Muchlisin Riadi, critical thinking is a person's ability to analyze ideas or concepts logically, reflectively, systematically, and productively to help formulate, evaluate, and make decisions regarding what one believes or intends to do, thereby successfully solving a problem at hand (Fauzi et al., 2023).

In Islamic religious education, critical thinking skills play a vital role because students are not only exposed to conceptual religious material but also to various

real-life issues related to values, ethics, social matters, and religion. Students need the ability to understand these issues objectively, consider various perspectives, and relate them to the values of Islamic teachings. This is partly explained in the Quran, Surah Al-Imran, verses 190–191: (The Quran, 2019)

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩٠﴾ الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٩١﴾

“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of night and day there are signs (of Allah’s greatness) for those of understanding—those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, or lying down, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth (saying), ‘O our Lord, You did not create all this in vain. Glory be to You. Protect us from the punishment of Hell.’”(Ali Imran 190-191).

The relevance of this verse lies in its specific mention of “ulul albab” (those of understanding or deep insight) as those who not only remember God but also think about and reflect on God’s creation. Critical thinking here refers to understanding the purpose and wisdom behind creation, not merely observing it without meaning. Berdasarkan observasi awal dan hasil diskusi dengan beberapa tenaga pendidik di Madrasah Tsanawiyah Nururrudiyah, It was found that students’ critical thinking skills are still relatively low. This phenomenon can be observed through several indicators, including: students tend to be passive in the learning process, rarely ask questions, and have difficulty expressing their opinions or analyzing fiqh issues logically and argumentatively. Fiqh instruction, which should serve as a means of strengthening reasoning skills and understanding of Islamic law, often focuses instead on memorization of material and textual understanding without being accompanied by in-depth analytical skills. This low level of critical thinking may be caused by several factors, including: teaching methods that remain conventional (one-way lectures), a lack of diverse learning media, and the suboptimal implementation of teaching approaches that emphasize problem-based learning or group discussions.

This issue highlights the need for teaching approaches that provide students with broader opportunities to think critically, engage in discussion, analyze problems, and present arguments. Islamic religious education should be oriented toward activities that not only position the teacher as a source of information but also provide students with the space to build their understanding through the processes of inquiry and discussion. One approach that can be taken is to incorporate the analysis of social controversies as part of the learning process.

Through the analysis of social controversies, students can be guided to identify issues, understand information, seek relevant evidence, compare various opinions, analyze arguments, express their views, and draw conclusions. In this context, the teacher acts as a facilitator who guides the discussion and ensures that the discussion remains aligned with the learning objectives and the values of Islamic Religious

Education. Through this process, it is hoped that students will gain a more active learning experience and be able to develop critical thinking skills. To determine the extent to which the application of social controversy analysis can enhance students' critical thinking skills, systematic research must be conducted through Classroom Action Research, which enables teachers and researchers to implement instructional interventions, observe the process and outcomes, reflect on them, and make improvements in the next cycle. Thus, improvements in students' critical thinking skills can be observed by comparing the initial conditions, Cycle I, and Cycle II.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How can the application of social controversy analysis in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) instruction enhance students' critical thinking skills?
2. What factors support and hinder the development of students' critical thinking skills through social controversy analysis in Islamic Religious Education instruction?

B. METHOD

In this study, the researcher used a classroom action research design developed by Arikunto. The procedure used in this classroom action research took the form of a cycle that would take place over two cycles, where each cycle could consist of one or more meetings. At the end of the meeting, it is hoped that critical thinking can be improved through the analysis of social controversies in Islamic religious education. In this case, classroom action research has procedures that need to be considered. These procedures are useful for teachers who will carry out classroom action research. The classroom action research procedure follows Arikunto's theory (Iskandar & Narsim, 2015).

Furthermore, it is explained that the details of each action or measure are divided into several parts because a lesson consists of several subtopics or subject matters. Meanwhile, the four steps in one cycle are planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting.

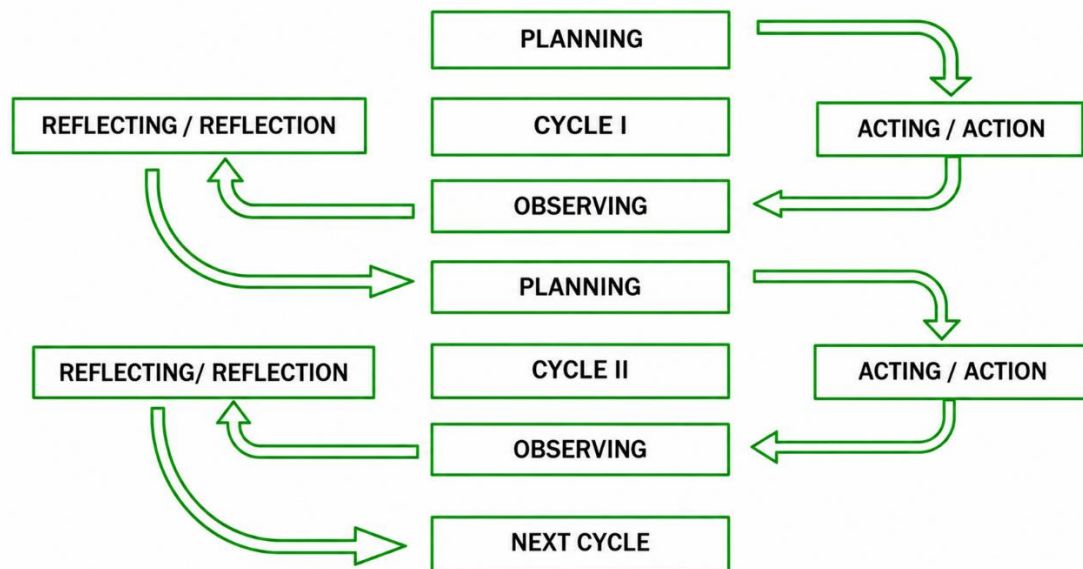


Figure 1
Cycle Flow Table

1. Planning.

Planning is the most important stage in learning. Everything must be done based on planning. At this stage, the researcher explains what, why, when, where, by whom, and how the action will be carried out. Ideally, action research is conducted in pairs between those involved in carrying out the action and those observing the process being carried out. At this stage, in order for the research results to be objective, collaboration is expected. Usually, self-observation allows for subjectivity.

2. Implementation.

Implementation of actions is the application of the design, which is carrying out actions in the classroom according to the plan that has been prepared in the planning stage. Before carrying out the actions, it is necessary to look back and see whether the problem formulation and hypotheses made are feasible or not.

3. Observation.

Observation is an activity carried out by an observer. The observer can be a colleague or the teacher themselves. At this stage, the implementing teacher records what happens little by little to obtain accurate data for the next cycle of improvement. Observation is carried out during the implementation of classroom actions by recording, documenting, and documenting the symptoms that arise during the implementation of the actions.

4. Reflection.

This is an activity to restate what has been done. At this stage, the teacher tries to find things that are considered satisfactory because they are in accordance with the design that still needs improvement. At the reflection stage, the researcher

needs to reveal the strengths and weaknesses. If the action research is carried out through several cycles, then in the final reflection, the researcher conveys the further research plan. Reflection must reveal the obstacles in the first stage and its shortcomings so that in the next stage the action research can be improved.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Data Analysis Results

The results of the data analysis revealed that, during Cycle I, the observational data collected throughout the learning process indicated that students' critical thinking skills were not yet at their full potential. After improvements were made in Cycle II, there was an increase in students' critical thinking skills. The data obtained are as follows Lembar Observasi. The observation sheet was used as a guide for observers in assessing students' critical thinking skills and teachers' instructional activities during the learning process. The processed results from the observation sheet were used by the researchers and observers as material for reflecting on the implementation of the interventions and as a reference for making improvements in the next cycle. The processed observation results in this study are as follows:

Table 1
Percentage of Students' Critical Thinking Skills Using the Controversy Analysis Method

Activities	Meeting I	Meeting II	Average
Pre-cycle	1,73	-	34,6%
cycle I	1,86	2, 46	60,93%
cycle II	3,06	3,93	97,66%

Table 1 shows that there was an increase in the critical thinking skills of students in Cycle I and Cycle II, indicating that teaching Islamic education using the controversy analysis method can enhance the critical thinking skills of 8th-grade A students at MTs Nururroddiyah in Jambi City during the learning process. The distribution of students' critical thinking skills in Cycle I and Cycle II is presented in the following diagram:

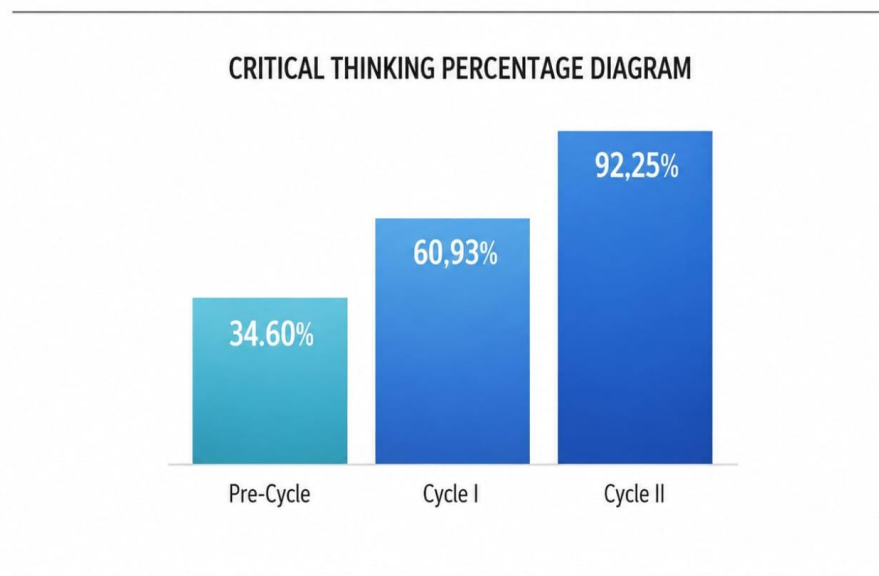


Figure 2
Percentage Chart of Students' Critical Thinking Skills Using the Controversy Analysis Method

Meanwhile, the results of teacher teaching observations obtained in this study are as follows:

Tabel 2
Percentage of teacher teaching activities using the controversy analysis method

Activities	Meeting I	Meeting II	Average
cycle I	2,85	4,25	79,85%
Cycle II	4,9	4,75	92,25%

As shown in Table 2, there was an increase in teachers' instructional activities between Cycle I and Cycle II. This indicates that teachers improved their ability to design learning activities using the controversy analysis method, thereby enhancing the critical thinking skills of students at MTs Nururroddhiyah in Jambi City during the learning process. The percentage of teaching activities conducted by teachers using the controversy analysis method in Cycle I and Cycle II is presented in the following diagram:

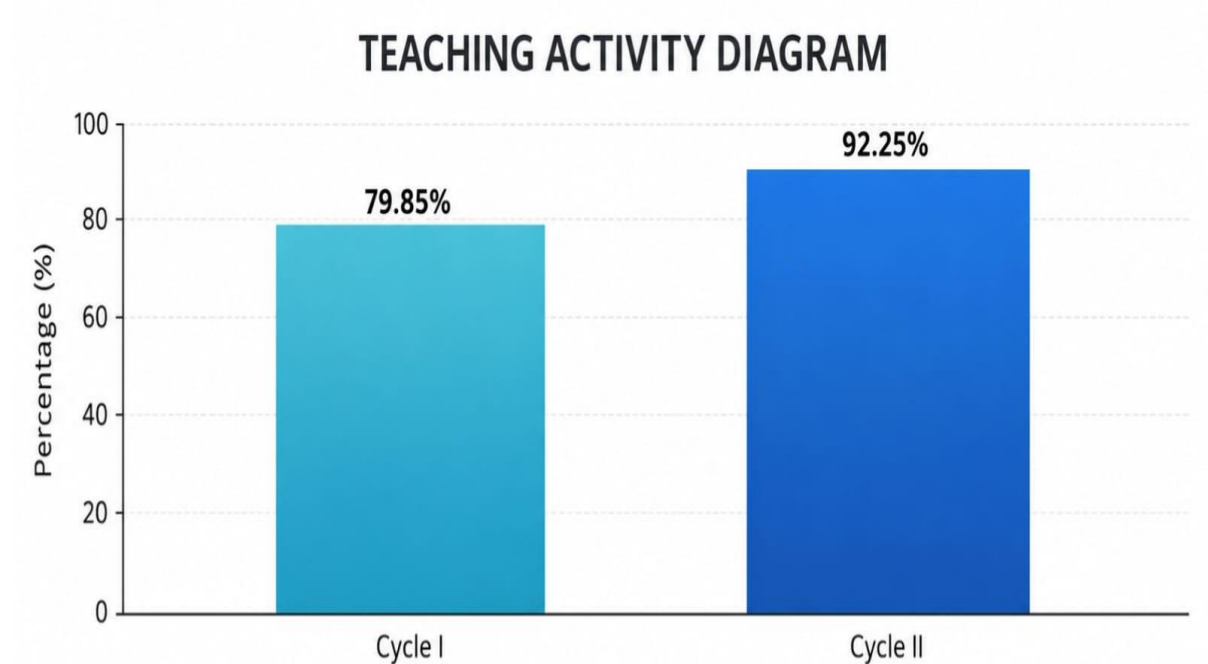


Figure 3

Diagram of a teacher's instructional activities using the controversy analysis method
Survey

This questionnaire was developed by a researcher conducting a study on student responses and measures of critical thinking in Islamic religious education using the controversy analysis method. The questionnaire, designed to assess students' critical thinking skills, was administered at the end of each cycle. The results of the students' responses to the learning process, as measured using the controversy analysis method, are presented in the following table:

Tabel 3

Results of a survey on student responses to the learning process
 using the controversy analysis method

Number of Items	Score	F
15	TS(1)	54
	S(2)	406
Total Amount		460
Interval		>50

As shown in Table 3, the results of the questionnaire completed by the students indicate that their responses to Islamic religious education using the controversy analysis method to enhance critical thinking skills can be categorized as positive or effective in improving the critical thinking skills of Class VIII A students.

Discussion

This research is a classroom action research (CAR) that aims to improve students' critical thinking skills by applying the controversy analysis method in class VIII A MTs Nururroddhiyah, Jambi City. The learning in this research was carried out by following the stages of applying the controversy analysis method that can improve students' critical thinking skills.

The results of the study show that students' critical thinking skills improved after the controversy analysis method was applied. Through learning using the controversy analysis method, students were able to explore the material, work together, and dare to express their ideas to their groupmates and in front of the class.

Learning activities using the controversy analysis method have shown effective results in the implementation of Islamic religious education learning in class VIII A MTs Nururroddhiyah in Jambi City. This can be seen from the increase in students' critical thinking skills, enabling them to think critically and build their own knowledge.

In addition, based on the results of observations during the study in class VIII A of MTs Nururroddhiyah in Jambi City, it is very clear how students' critical thinking skills improved before and after the controversy analysis method was applied. It can be seen that students' critical thinking skills increased from the pre-cycle to cycle I, reaching 60.93%, and continued to increase in cycle II to 97.66%. Meanwhile, with the increase in teaching activities by teachers applying the controversy analysis method, a similar thing happened in the results of the questionnaire measuring students' critical thinking skills. In cycle I, students' critical thinking skills scored 37.23% in the fairly active category, and in cycle II, they scored 76.4% in the very active category. The results of the student response questionnaire proved that the application of the controversy analysis method could improve the critical thinking skills of students in class VIII A at MTs Nururroddhiyah in Jambi City.

The impact on students from the application of the controversy analysis method was that students who initially did not think critically and were lazy in following the ongoing Islamic education learning process. Students who initially did not dare to express their opinions and present the results of group discussions are now very confident in completing the ongoing learning process. The use of the controversy analysis method can optimize Islamic religious education learning in class VIII A at MTs Nururroddhiyah in Jambi City.

CONCLUSION

Teaching Islamic Religious Education using the controversy analysis method can improve students' critical thinking skills based on the findings of the research conducted. In cycle I, the number of students in the fairly active category increased by 60.93%. However, 75% of students who were fairly active in learning had not been achieved in cycle I, and this research will be continued in cycle II. With an average of 97.66% in the very active category and more than 75% of students applying the controversy analysis learning approach in critical thinking, there was a very significant increase in cycle II. Based on the findings obtained, the use of controversy analysis learning in education

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