

How are Critical Thinking Skills and Integration of IPS Problems in Elementary Schools?

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ABSTRAK

Berpikir kritis merupakan salah satu kemampuan berpikir yang harus dimiliki oleh siswa dalam pembelajaran abad-21. Hanya saja kenyataan dilapangan menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan berpikir kritis masih tergolong rendah. Adapun tujuan dari penelitian ini yakni untuk mengidentifikasi permasalahan pembelajaran IPS di sekolah dasar. Penelitian ini tergolong kedalam jenis penelitian pre-eksperimental design dengan desain penelitian one shot case study. Subjek dalam penelitian ini yakni siswa kelas 5 sekolah dasar. Pengumpulan data dalam penelitian dilakukan metode tes, dengan instrument penelitian berupa tes kemampuan berpikir kritis. Data yang diperoleh dalam penelitian kemudian dianalisis menggunakan metode analisis deskriptif kuantitatif. Hasil analisis penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tingkat keaktifan siswa, daya ingat siswa, penerapan IPS dalam kehidupan sehari-hari, kemampuan identifikasi fenomena, dan hasil belajar tuntas masih berada di tingkat rendah. Selanjutnya, kemampuan berpikir kritis siswa dari indikator klarifikasi dasar, menilai dukungan dasar informasi, menarik kesimpulan, klarifikasi tingkat lanjut, dan menerapkan model pemecahan masalah juga masih berada di tingkat rendah dengan rata-rata 44,9%. Penelitian pendahuluan ini akan dilanjutkan ke penelitian selanjutnya untuk mengetahui pengaruh model pembelajaran berbasis masalah terhadap kemampuan berpikir kritis siswa.

ABSTRACT

Critical thinking is one of the thinking skills students in 21st-century learning must possess. The reality on the ground shows that the ability to think critically is still relatively low. This study aims to identify social studies learning problems in elementary schools. This research belongs to the pre-experimental research design with a one-shot case study design. The subjects in this study were 5th-grade elementary school students. Data collection in the study was carried out by the test method, with the research instrument being a critical thinking ability test. The data obtained in the study were then analyzed using quantitative descriptive analysis methods. The research analysis results show that the level of student activity, student memory, the application of social studies in everyday life, the ability to identify phenomena, and the complete learning outcomes still need to be improved. Furthermore, students critical thinking skills from basic clarification indicators, assessing basic information support, drawing conclusions, advanced clarification, and applying problem-solving models are also still at a low level, with an average of 44.9%. This preliminary research will be continued into further research to determine the effect of problem-based learning models on students' critical thinking skills.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the important factors for humans in life. It is because education can produce generations of intellectual insight, positive character, and skills, to become agents of change in dealing with the times (Pane & Dasopang, 2017; Zakaria et al., 2021). Therefore, the quality of education must continue to be improved to achieve educational goals optimally. Improving the quality of education must be connected to the learning process. It is in line with implementing the 2013 curriculum, which is contextual and integrated with thematic learning to stimulate cognitive development in students (Abad et al., 2021; Sujana, 2019). One subject taught in elementary schools in thematic learning is social studies. IPS (social science) is a subject that studies the social life of society based on studies of geography, economics, history, sociology, and state administration (Andari et al., 2019; Sari et al., 2018; Widodo et al.,

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2020). Learning social sciences is done by displaying the community's daily life to prepare each student to face life-base on the experience gained (Sahira et al., 2022; Wiluya & Khastini, 2022). The purpose of social studies learning is to shape students into citizens who can socialize with the community and have confidence in social and physical strength so that they can become responsible citizens (Jumriani et al., 2021; Marhayani, 2018).

It is just that the reality on the ground shows that social studies learning outcomes of students still need to be higher. Students' low social studies learning outcomes tend to be caused by teachers needing to properly understand the meaning of social studies learning in the 2013 curriculum. This limitation triggers teachers to prefer using conventional learning models in teaching and learning activities in the classroom. This results in learning that supports students to think critically still needs to be improved. Teachers are more likely to encourage students to find the correct answer to a problem than to encourage the development of new ideas or thinking skills. Problems regarding critical thinking skills in Indonesia show that students need to be able to filter the information obtained (Khairiyah & Faizah, 2020; Romadhon & Nanda, 2019). Students who lack critical thinking skills will more easily believe and accept the truth or information the teacher provides (Febrianti, 2020; Ilham & Hardiyanti, 2020). Because the teacher is considered an insightful and highly knowledgeable person, he should be used as a role model. Too few schools still teach students to think critically and deeply. Schools often focus on students giving correct answers rather than encouraging students to develop their thinking skills and develop new ideas. Teachers should improve learning by emphasizing that students think critically. Critical thinking skills require an atmosphere of continuous learning and training. Knowledge, skills, and teacher attitudes in developing critical thinking skills are needed to train students' basic thinking skills (Suratmi & Sopandi, 2022).

Critical thinking is an individual way of thinking that encourages an informational approach that considers logic to solve a problem (Aprilianingrum & Wardani, 2021; Renatovna & Renatovna, 2021). Therefore, reforms in education require creating learning conditions that allow students to interact, assess the current situation, think independently, critically, and creatively and integrate problems in the environment around students. Critical thinking skills are one of the skills that are the focus of 21st-century learning that students must have in developing and honing their thinking skills. The statement clarifies that critical thinking has been recognized as one of the most important thinking skills and indicators of student learning quality (Alsaleh, 2020; Hidayat et al., 2022). In addition, critical thinking is one of the demands for students as a form of increasing skills. Developing critical thinking skills in students must be distinct from the teacher's efforts when carrying out learning activities in class. Various activities are carried out by students and teachers in learning activities to explore critical thinking skills. Improving learning skills by thinking critically can foster an attitude of analysis, obtaining information, and developing self-knowledge for students (Kamala, 2019; Meilana et al., 2020; Ulfa & Munastiwi, 2021).

Several studies that have been conducted previously revealed that students' critical thinking still needs to be improved or higher. Students need to be trained on indicators of the ability to think critically. Applied learning still needs to empower students' critical thinking abilities (Agnafia, 2019). The results of other studies reveal that high school students critical thinking skills are still relatively low. It is due to the need for more learning innovations carried out by teachers (Benyamin et al., 2021). The results of further research revealed that students' critical thinking skills in learning mathematics tended to vary depending on their learning style and motivation within themselves (Setiana & Purwoko, 2020). Based on some of the results of these studies, students' critical thinking skills are still relatively low, so they must be improved again. In previous studies, no studies specifically discussed analyzing critical thinking skills and integrating social science problems in elementary schools. So this research is focused on this study to identify social studies learning problems in elementary schools.

2. METHOD

This research belongs to the pre-experimental research design with a one-shot case study design. This method describes existing phenomena systematically, accurately, factually, and as they are. This data collection is used to gather initial information about learning problems and forms of teacher action when learning. The subjects in this study were 5th-grade students in elementary schools. The subjects in this study were within the scope of a cluster of six elementary schools. Data collection in the study was carried out by the test method, with the research instrument being a critical thinking ability test. The research instrument grid can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. The grid of Critical Thinking Skills Test Questions

No	Indicator	Sub Indicator	Question Items
1	Perform basic clarification	Make basic clarifications on the concepts presented, and look at the similarities and differences between one to two arguments	1
2	Assess basic information support	Proving as well as reasons for the credibility of information by providing supporting arguments	2
3	Draw a conclusion	Make conclusions correctly, logically, and based on the basis obtained	3
4	Perform advanced clarification	Identify the assumptions needed for a particular issue or condition	4
5	Implement strategies and tactics for solving problems	Formulate alternative solutions that will be carried out	5
Number of questions			5

Instrument validity in this study was carried out by construct validity and content validity. Construct validity was carried out by developing an instrument grid into question items. Next, a correlation analysis was carried out between item scores and total scores using the help of Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) 25 software. Content validity was carried out by consulting the indicators used in the instrument on expert judgment. The expert who assessed was a lecturer from a basic education study program. Content validity focuses on how much the test item covers the whole being measured. This research focuses on the learning model used by the teacher when conducting classroom learning on students' critical thinking skills and integrating everyday problems in social studies learning. The sample used was selected using a convenience sampling technique. Data is obtained from observations, interviews, tests, and study literature. The research data were analyzed, described, and connected with information related to the research focus. The analysis results are then interpreted according to the problems and research questions so that conclusions can be drawn.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Preliminary studies in this study include learning models commonly used by classroom teachers when thematic learning contains social studies subjects in elementary schools. The results of observations and interviews that have been conducted show that the learning model used by the teacher is a direct instruction model. The observation results also show that teachers use one of these learning models successively in applying learning models. The teacher selected the learning model because it considered several limitations in the class, such as limited learning resources, learning media, and learning time. Thus, the teacher is more likely to explain the material by presenting it in front of the class. The teacher occasionally writes on the blackboard and dictates important points of learning material for students to copy into their books. At the end of the lesson, the teacher allows students to ask questions. However, the students' responded at every opportunity to ask. No one raised their hand to ask. The description of the learning process using the direct learning model can be seen in [Figure 1](#).



Figure 1. Teacher Documentation Teaching in Class

In addition to using the direct instruction learning model (direct instruction), teachers also use cooperative learning models (cooperative learning). The initial step that the teacher applies when learning is to prepare students and convey learning objectives. Next, the teacher demonstrates the learning material and guides students. Then, check understanding by giving feedback. Finally, students are given questions to become independent exercises. Sometimes the teacher also asks about learning material in the form of quizzes. Students who can answer will get additional points. At the end of the lesson, the teacher gives awards in several ways, such as giving stars in the student achievement box, giving appreciation with praise, organizing other students to give applause, and so on.

IPS learning is delivered by teachers based on theme books and material-deepening module books. After each presentation of material, the teacher always allows students to ask questions about material that needs to be understood. If anyone asks, the teacher is prepared to repeat the explanation of the material. The lack of learning models used by teachers also affects enthusiasm for learning. The learning model used by the teacher does not provide direct experience to students, so students are less able to hone critical thinking skills. Some students also stated that if students needed help understanding the material presented, then students did not follow and pay attention to the teacher's explanation. It also resulted in the class atmosphere needing to be more conducive. This learning model is used as a basis for discussing the initial abilities of students' critical thinking skills and integrating everyday problems in social studies learning. In addition to the problems in applying the learning model, it was also found that the questions given as evaluation material did not encourage and apply a grid of critical thinking skills. The teacher still uses the questions in the material immersion module book. Student learning outcomes with questions referring to critical thinking skills still show results of more than half the number of students still below average.

The following phenomena were found based on observations based on five indicators in critical thinking skills at the elementary school level. First, asking questions means making questions an initial habit of practicing critical thinking skills. However, in the field, students are less enthusiastic and critical in asking questions. When the teacher in learning activities allows students to ask questions, students are reluctant to ask. Second, point of view means having a more critical point of view. However, what happened was that students needed to be more able to convey their opinions and points of view on every issue the teacher gave. Third, being rational means having rational thoughts and logical reasons for everything he believes in. However, most students in the class prefer to directly believe and follow all the information that the teacher conveys. Fourth, finding out means having a high desire to discover so that gradually it can develop into broad knowledge. However, practice in the field found that students are more inclined to look for a donkey or an easy and fast answer to a problem. Finally, analysis means the ability to analyze facts. However, because learning is not given a problem, students have yet to carry out the analytical activity referred to here. Furthermore, to determine the level of critical thinking skills, research subjects were given questions to measure students' critical thinking abilities. The results of measuring students' critical thinking skills are presented in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Results of Critical Thinking Ability

Indicator	Percentage
Basic clarification	66,3%
Assess basic information support	36,5%
Draw a conclusion	53,8%
Advanced clarification	35,6%
Implement a problem-solving model	27,9%
Total	44,9 %

Based on the data above, it can be seen that students critical thinking skills, seen from the five indicators, are still rated at an average of 44.9%. First, seen from the aspect of basic classifying, students have a presentation of 66.3%. Second, seen from the aspect of assessing basic support, students have a percentage of 36.5%. Third, from the concluding aspect, students have a presentation of 53.8%. Fourth, seen from the aspect of clarifying the advanced level, students have a presentation of 35.6%. Finally, the fifth is seen by applying the problem-solving model. Students have a percentage of 27.9%. It shows the low ability of students in critical thinking.

Furthermore, several findings were obtained in the interview session conducted by the researcher with the students. The first finding showed that the level of student activity when the teacher taught using the direct instruction model obtained a student activity level of 31.7%. This percentage means that the level of student activity is still low. The activity referred to in this context is actively asking questions, actively answering, and actively following the flow of learning from the teacher. As much as

68.3% of students are not actively involved in the learning process in the ongoing class. The teacher still controls the class by presenting the material and students as listeners delivering the material. Some students said they preferred to remain silent in class rather than ask questions. In more detail, the percentage of student activity can be seen in [Figure 2](#).

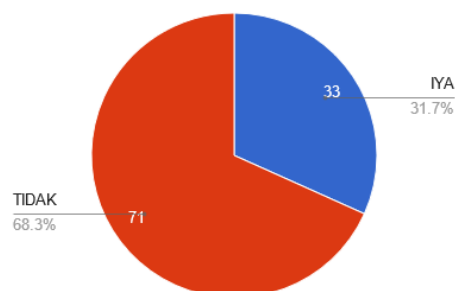


Figure 2. Diagram of Student Activity in Learning

The second finding shows that based on interviews with students regarding their ability to remember social studies learning material taught by the teacher with the learning model applied by the teacher, the memory level regarding social studies learning material is only owned by 45.2% of the students. This percentage means that the memory level regarding social studies learning material is still low. 54.8% of students felt they quickly needed to remember the social studies material they had learned. Students admit that social studies material has a very broad scope and is difficult to memorize and understand. Many names, dates, and phenomena are alien to students. Existing phenomena are often taken as examples from outside its scope. So what happens is students need help understanding. It shows students' memory's low ability to understand social studies learning concepts. In more detail, an overview of the percentage of students' memory abilities can be seen in [Figure 3](#).

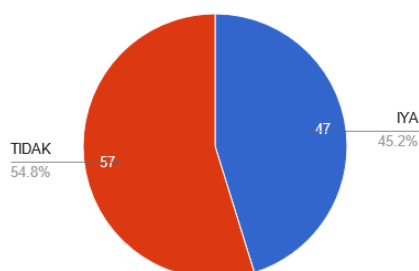


Figure 3. Students' Memory of Learning Materials

The third finding, based on interviews with students regarding the ability to apply IPS material in everyday life, shows that by using the direct instruction model, the level of students implementing IPS in everyday life is at a percentage level of 37.5%. This percentage means that more than half of the students need help to apply social studies material in everyday life. As much as 62.5% of students said they needed clarification about applying social studies learning in everyday life. This shows that many students still need to be able to apply social studies learning materials to solve problems related to everyday life. An overview of the percentage of IPS implementation in everyday life can be seen in [Figure 4](#).

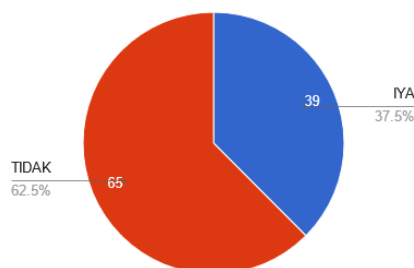


Figure 4. Application of Social Sciences in Everyday Life

The fourth finding, based on interviews with students regarding students' ability to identify problems and phenomena around them, shows that by using a direct instruction model, the student's level of identification is still at the level of 37.5%. This percentage means that students' ability to identify problems and phenomena around them still needs to improve. It is because learning activities are not contextual. The example given by the teacher is often taken from outside the students' daily environment. It shows that teachers need to encourage students to identify problems and phenomena that occur in students' lives. As a result, students' ability to identify problems and surrounding phenomena is low. 62.5% of students need help to identify problems and phenomena around them. An overview of the percentage of students' ability to identify surrounding phenomena can be seen in [Figure 5](#).

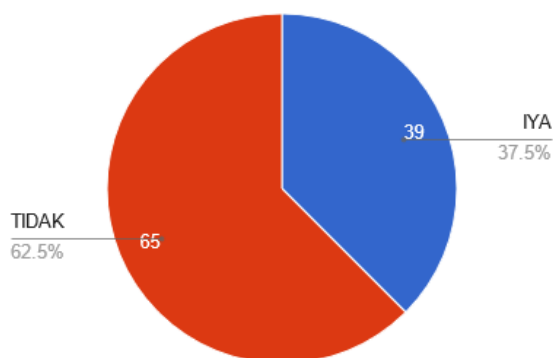


Figure 5. Students' Ability to Identify Surrounding Phenomena

The fifth finding is based on the results of interviews with students regarding the learning outcomes that students get in social studies learning content. After carrying out the learning process using the direct instruction model (direct instruction), student learning outcomes show that 51% of students still need to complete the minimum completeness criteria. This percentage means that the level of student learning outcomes is still low. The percentage description regarding the complete learning outcomes of the minimum completeness criteria can be seen in [Figure 6](#).

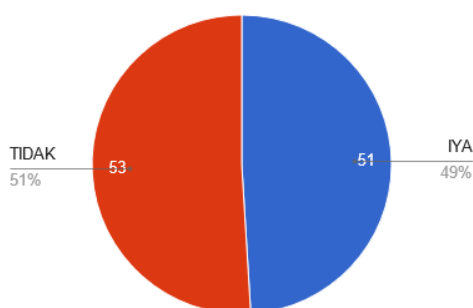


Figure 6. Completed Learning Outcomes of Minimum Completeness Criteria

Based on the results of problem identification when social studies content learning in elementary schools show that the learning process in class needs to apply the right learning model. The teacher's learning model needs to provide students with direct experience. Teachers still need to integrate the problems around students in social studies learning. It makes students less able to hone their critical thinking skills and integrate social studies issues. So that students do not have high critical thinking skills and are still trying to implement learning materials in life. To overcome this, further research is needed regarding appropriate learning models to improve critical thinking skills and the integration of social studies problems.

Discussion

The data analysis results show that students still need to gain high critical thinking skills and are still trying to implement learning materials in life. Whereas in the development of the 21st century, every student is required to have the ability to think critically to improve the quality of the resources they have ([Chai & Kong, 2017](#); [Khasanah et al., 2017](#)). Critical thinking ability is a pattern of thinking ability that every student must possess, this is because critical thinking ability influences the use of cognitive skills to

improve learning outcomes (Darmaji et al., 2020; Syahrial et al., 2019; Vong & Kaewurai, 2017). High critical thinking skills will be able to encourage students to solve a problem they face. It will also apply to solving problems and phenomena in students' lives now and in the future (Setyaningtyas & Radia, 2019; Sundari et al., 2018). Therefore, the teacher needs to know how much students' critical thinking skills are in each learning material.

Improving students' critical thinking skills can be done by applying appropriate learning models according to student needs. The learning model is designed systematically to create a meaningful learning process (Sahira et al., 2022; Wiluya & Khastini, 2022). Choosing the right learning model can optimize students' critical thinking skills. In this study, the teacher's role in influencing learning success is very important. As a good facilitator of learning, the teacher must understand what will be conveyed and prepare questions for discussion in class (Andari et al., 2019; Sari et al., 2018; Widodo et al., 2020). This preliminary study will be continued into further research to determine the problem-based learning model's effectiveness in improving students' critical thinking skills.

One field of knowledge that is closely related to the process of solving problems in everyday life is the field of social studies (Silveira et al., 2020). Achieving optimal process and critical thinking skills requires serious effort and a strong understanding of concepts (Dakabesi et al., 2019; Şener & Taş, 2017). Thus, the hope is that students have high critical thinking skills and can answer future challenges (Şener & Taş, 2017). Critical thinking requires more than just obtaining information. It can also include active learning, problem-solving, and decision-making and contains reflective thinking, analysis, deduction, and induction elements. Critical thinking skills that enhance individual abilities to interpret and understand world events and circumstances and their circles are one of the areas of research highlighted in the education system of various countries (Tohani & Aulia, 2022; Toheri et al., 2020). Critical thinking becomes a process in which students act as a center whose thinking is moved backward, raise awareness of problems, questions truth in context, and contributes to solving existing problems (Camacho & Christiansen, 2018; Kim et al., 2019).

The results obtained in this study align with previous research results, which also revealed that students' critical thinking skills still needed to be classified as lacking or low. This was because students needed to be trained on indicators of the ability to think critically. Applied learning still needs to be to empower students' critical thinking abilities (Agnafia, 2019). The results of other studies reveal that high school students critical thinking skills are still relatively low. This is due to the lack of learning innovations carried out by teachers (Benyamin et al., 2021). The results of further research revealed that students' critical thinking skills in learning mathematics tended to vary depending on their learning style and motivation within themselves (Setiana & Purwoko, 2020). Based on the data analysis results supported by previous research, students' critical thinking skills are still relatively low. They must be improved again.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the preliminary study research that the researchers have done, it can be concluded that there are various problems experienced by teachers and students in social studies content learning. These problems are related to the low level of students' critical thinking skills related to learning models that have yet to bridge everyday problems for analysis. It also results in student learning outcomes needing to be maximized.

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