

The Role of Teachers In Developing Critical And Creative Thinking Skills of Class Vii Students In Akidah Akhlak Subjects At Mts Riyadhul Ulum Sungai Pinyuh, Mempawah Regency, West Kalimantan

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Abstract: *This study aims to describe the role of teachers in developing critical and creative thinking skills of seventh grade students in Akidah Akhlak subject at MTs Riyadhul Ulum Sungai Pinyuh, Mempawah Regency, West Kalimantan. The problem discussed in this study includes identifying teacher strategies in stimulating students' critical thinking skills through analysis of teaching materials and problem solving, as well as teacher efforts in encouraging student creativity through innovative tasks and utilization of diverse learning media. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with data collection techniques through observation of the learning process in the classroom, in-depth interviews with Akidah Akhlak teachers, and documentation of learning tools. The results showed that teachers play an active role in developing students' critical thinking skills through asking open-ended questions, encouraging students to analyze naqli and aqli arguments, and providing tasks that require evaluation and synthesis of information. In developing creativity, teachers apply strategies such as project assignments that involve making Islamic artwork, utilizing technology in material presentations, and giving students freedom in expressing their understanding of Akidah Akhlak concepts. Nevertheless, the study also identified challenges in implementation, such as time constraints and the heterogeneity of students' abilities. The implication of this research is the importance of continuous professional development of teachers in integrating learning strategies that are oriented towards developing students' critical and creative thinking skills in Akidah Akhlak subjects.*

Keywords: *Teacher Role, Critical Thinking Ability, Kreatif*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan peran guru dalam mengembangkan kemampuan berpikir kritis dan kreatif siswa kelas VII pada mata pelajaran Akidah Akhlak di MTs Riyadhul Ulum Sungai Pinyuh, Kabupaten Mempawah, Kalimantan Barat. Masalah pembahasan dalam penelitian ini meliputi identifikasi strategi guru dalam menstimulasi kemampuan berpikir kritis siswa melalui analisis materi ajar dan penyelesaian masalah, serta upaya guru dalam mendorong kreativitas siswa melalui tugas-tugas inovatif dan pemanfaatan media pembelajaran yang beragam. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi proses pembelajaran di kelas, wawancara mendalam dengan guru Akidah Akhlak, dan dokumentasi perangkat pembelajaran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru berperan aktif dalam mengembangkan kemampuan berpikir kritis siswa melalui pemberian pertanyaan-pertanyaan terbuka, mendorong siswa untuk menganalisis dalil naqli dan aqli, serta memberikan tugas yang menuntut evaluasi dan sintesis informasi.

Dalam mengembangkan kreativitas, guru menerapkan strategi seperti penugasan proyek yang melibatkan pembuatan karya seni Islami, pemanfaatan teknologi dalam presentasi materi, dan pemberian kebebasan siswa dalam mengekspresikan pemahaman mereka terhadap konsep Akidah Akhlak. Meskipun demikian, penelitian juga mengidentifikasi tantangan dalam implementasi, seperti keterbatasan waktu dan heterogenitas kemampuan siswa. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah pentingnya pengembangan profesional guru secara berkelanjutan dalam mengintegrasikan strategi pembelajaran yang berorientasi pada pengembangan kemampuan berpikir kritis dan kreatif siswa pada mata pelajaran Akidah Akhlak.

Kata kunci: Peran Guru, Kemampuan Berpikir Kritis, Kreatif

Introduction

A 21st century education requires learners to have a set of essential skills to deal with the complexities of modern life. Two of these are critical and creative thinking skills (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2015). Critical thinking enables students to objectively analyze information, identify assumptions, evaluate arguments, and draw reasoned conclusions (Facione, 2011). Meanwhile, creative thinking encourages students to generate new, innovative, and solutive ideas to the problems faced (Robinson, 2011). These two abilities are not only important for academic success, but also for active participation in society and lifelong self-development.

In the context of Islamic education, the subject of Akidah Akhlak has a strategic role in shaping the character and personality of students based on Islamic values. However, Akidah Akhlak learning is often still dominated by memorization methods and provides less space for the development of higher-level thinking skills such as critical and creative thinking (Asy'ari, 2018). In fact, the values of Akidah Akhlak, which are rich in wisdom and morality teachings, should be a strong stimulus to develop students' ability to analyze moral situations, evaluate actions, and produce creative solutions in accordance with Islamic principles.

Research on the development of critical and creative thinking skills in Akidah Akhlak is urgent for several reasons. First, there is a gap between the demands of the 21st century curriculum that emphasizes higher-order thinking skills and the Akidah Akhlak learning practices that tend to be traditional (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013). Second, previous research shows that Muslim students' critical and creative thinking skills still need to be improved (Hasanah et al., 2019).

This indicates the need to identify more effective learning strategies in the context of Islamic education. Third, teachers as the spearhead of education have a central role in implementing innovative learning approaches and stimulating students' thinking skills (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Therefore, an in-depth understanding of the role of teachers in developing students' critical and creative thinking skills in Akidah Akhlak subjects is crucial.

Relevant research conducted by Fatimah (2020) shows that the use of problem-based learning models can improve students' critical thinking skills in Islamic Religious Education subjects. Meanwhile, research by Anwar (2021) found that the project learning approach can stimulate students' creativity in understanding religious concepts. However, research that specifically examines the role of teachers in developing these two abilities simultaneously in the context of Akidah Akhlak subjects at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level, especially at MTs Riyadhul Ulum Sungai Pinyuh, Mempawah Regency, West Kalimantan, is still limited.

Research Problems

Based on the background and rationale above, the main problems in this study are: How is the role of teachers in developing critical and creative thinking skills of seventh grade students in Akidah Akhlak subject at MTs Riyadhul Ulum Sungai Pinyuh, Mempawah Regency, West Kalimantan?

Alternative Solutions and Selected Solutions

Alternative solutions to improve students' critical and creative thinking skills in Akidah Akhlak learning include the application of various innovative learning models and approaches, such as Problem-Based Learning, Project-Based Learning, Inquiry-Based Learning, and the use of interactive and diverse learning media. Each approach has the potential to stimulate students' thinking skills in different ways.

The solution chosen in this study is to analyze the role of teachers directly in implementing learning strategies that have the potential to develop students' critical and creative thinking skills. The focus on the role of the teacher is based on the assumption that the teacher is a key factor in the transformation of learning practices in the classroom. By understanding how teachers design, implement, and evaluate Akidah Akhlak learning that is oriented towards developing critical and creative thinking skills, it is hoped that best practices can be identified that can be replicated and improved. This research will explore in depth the specific strategies used by teachers, the challenges faced, and the efforts made to overcome these challenges in the context of class VII Akidah Akhlak subjects at MTs Riyadhul Ulum Sungai Pinyuh.

Research Methods

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive approach to explore in depth the role of teachers in developing critical and creative thinking skills of seventh grade students in Akidah Akhlak subject at MTs Riyadhul Ulum Sungai Pinyuh, Mempawah Regency, West Kalimantan.

The qualitative approach allows researchers to understand this complex phenomenon from the perspectives of teachers and students in the natural context of the learning classroom. The data collected in this study is qualitative, which

includes narrative descriptions of observations of teacher and student behavior, transcripts of in-depth interviews, as well as document analysis of learning tools.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process is carried out through a series of complementary techniques. Participant observation was conducted in the classroom during the Akidah Akhlak learning process. The focus of observation included teacher teaching strategies that have the potential to stimulate critical (e.g., asking open-ended questions, encouraging analysis) and creative thinking (e.g., assigning innovative projects, using diverse media), interactions between teachers and students, and student responses that indicate both abilities. Detailed and systematic field notes were made during observations. Furthermore, in-depth interviews were conducted with the seventh grade Akidah Akhlak teacher who was selected as the key informant. Semi-structured interview guidelines were used to explore the teacher's understanding of the concepts of critical and creative thinking, the specific strategies implemented to develop them, the challenges faced in implementation, and the teacher's evaluation of the effectiveness of these strategies. The interviews were recorded with the informants' permission and transcribed for analysis. Finally, documentation was conducted on various relevant documents, including lesson plans, student worksheets (LKS), examples of student assignments, and teacher evaluation notes related to the development of critical and creative thinking skills.

Data Analysis Procedure

The qualitative data collected was analyzed systematically through several stages. The initial stage was verbatim transcription of the interview recordings to produce full text. Then, data reduction was conducted, where data was selected, focused on the research questions, simplified, and abstracted through the identification of relevant units of information. The next step was coding, where units of information were labeled or coded based on themes that emerged from the data (open coding), followed by grouping interconnected codes (axial coding), and finally integrating the main categories to build a coherent descriptive narrative (selective coding). The data interpretation process was conducted to provide meaning and in-depth understanding of the research findings, linking them to the conceptual framework and research context. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, data triangulation was conducted by comparing and contrasting information from observations, interviews and documentation to identify patterns and consistencies in the data.

Results and Discussion

1. The Teacher's Role in Improving Critical Thinking Ability of Class VII Students at MTs Riyadhul Ulum Sungai Pinyuh, Mempawah Regency, West Kalimantan.

a. Teacher's Role as an Educator

Observations at MTs Riyadhul Ulum show that teachers consistently carry out their role as educators by recalling previous subject matter as a foundation for new understanding. Lesson preparation is always based on a systematically designed Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), which indicates a structured effort to achieve the learning objectives that have been set. Furthermore, an interview with Mrs. Wulan revealed that the role of educators is not only limited to delivering material according to lesson plans, but also involves the ability to adapt to dynamic classroom situations. She emphasized the importance of flexibility in the delivery of material to be relevant to the conditions and needs of students at that time. In addition, the use of learning media in the form of videos and other visual aids is an integral strategy in attracting students' attention and increasing their active involvement during the learning process. This shows the teacher's effort to create a more interesting and thought-provoking learning experience for students.

b. Teacher's Role as Demonstrator

As demonstrators, teachers at MTs Riyadhul Ulum realize the importance of being role models for students. Observations show that teachers not only convey material verbally, but also try to show how these concepts can be applied or relied upon in a broader context. Mrs. Wulan in her interview emphasized that the responsibility for improving students' critical thinking skills does not lie solely with one or two teachers, but is the collective responsibility of all educators. She emphasized the importance of teachers having higher-order thinking skills and maturity in thinking in order to be a good example for students. In addition, she also highlighted the importance of building relationships based on compassion and mutual trust between teachers and students as a strong foundation for an effective learning process. In the context of learning methods, Mrs. Wulan puts her hope in the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model as an approach that can encourage students to actively ask questions, discuss, and present the results of their thinking, thus increasing engagement and enthusiasm for learning which ultimately contributes to the development of critical thinking skills.

c. Teacher's Role as Class Manager

Effective classroom management is a prerequisite for creating a comfortable and conducive learning atmosphere, which in turn supports the development of students' critical thinking skills. Observations at MTs Riyadhul Ulum show that teachers actively lead learning activities in

accordance with the time allocation set in the schedule. In addition, teachers consistently encourage students to actively participate in discussions and other learning activities, and often ask questions that aim to keep students engaged and stimulate their thinking. The interview with Mrs. Wulan underlines that a teacher needs to have the ability to master classroom dynamics and ensure that all students are actively involved in the learning process. She explained that teachers proactively encourage students to ask questions related to material they have not understood, participate in group discussions, and interact with peers and teachers. Furthermore, teachers actively monitor the learning process and provide the facilitation needed by students. The use of question and answer techniques and giving constructive feedback are strategies implemented to increase student participation. Ms. Wulan emphasized that good classroom management is very important because a comfortable and orderly learning environment has a significant influence on the effectiveness of the learning process and ultimately, on students' critical thinking skills.

d. The Teacher's Role as Facilitator

As a facilitator at MTs Riyadhul Ulum, teachers show initiative in using various teaching aids and learning tools, including carefully designed lesson plans, to create a more active and interesting teaching and learning process for students. Observations show that teachers try to create a conducive classroom atmosphere by linking the subject matter with students' daily experiences and their surrounding environment. In addition, the use of various learning media is a strategy to increase students' enthusiasm and interest in learning. Ms. Wulan emphasized that these learning media play an important role in making lessons more interesting and motivating students to engage more deeply. As a form of appreciation for students' efforts and progress, Ms. Wulan also routinely gives out awards, which aim to recognize students' efforts in learning and motivate them to continue improving their academic performance.

e. The Role of Teachers as Mentors

Observations at MTs Riyadhul Ulum Sungai Pinyuh highlighted the crucial role of teachers in guiding students, especially those who have difficulty in understanding material or developing critical thinking skills. One example revealed was a student in class VII who showed a significant difference in ability compared to his peers. In this situation, Mrs. Wulan showed the initiative to provide special assistance and guidance to the student with the aim of improving his critical thinking skills. Interviews with Ms. Wulan confirmed that she often takes a personal approach and provides repeated guidance to students who face obstacles in understanding

the subject matter. She has high hopes that through continuous guidance and encouragement, the student will be able to improve her critical thinking skills on par with her classmates.

f. The Role of the Teacher as a Motivator

Motivation provided by the teacher has a very significant influence in improving students' thinking skills. Strong motivation from teachers can trigger enthusiasm for learning and ultimately improve students' thinking skills. Mrs. Wulan emphasizes her role as a motivator in Akidah Akhlak subject by trying to provide learning facilities needed by students. In addition, she also tries to always be active and creative in delivering subject matter to keep it interesting and relevant to students. She encourages students to actively ask questions about material that has not been understood, participate in group discussions, and present the results of their group work in front of the class. Classroom observations show that the teacher uses various forms of rewards, such as giving applause and praise for students' participation and answers, as one way to motivate them. Furthermore, documentation of the vision and mission of MTs Riyadhul Ulum also shows the aim to motivate both students and teachers in achieving the common educational goals that have been set.

g. Teacher's Role as Evaluator

Learning evaluation is a very important component for both teachers and students. The evaluation process includes assessment of various aspects, including students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Teachers at MTs Riyadhul Ulum conduct various types of assessments, ranging from daily assessments, midterm assessments, end-of-semester assessments, to formative non-test assessments. Classroom observations show that teachers routinely give sudden quizzes to students. The purpose of these quizzes is to encourage students to think independently and relate to previously learned subject matter. An interview with Ms. Wulan confirmed that evaluation, including quizzes, plays an important role in stimulating students' deep thinking and measuring their level of understanding and critical thinking. Ms. Wulan explained that she uses various forms of quiz questions designed to assess students' knowledge, skills and attitudes as a whole.

2. Factors that support teachers in improving students' critical thinking skills in Akidah Akhlak lessons at MTs Riyadhul Ulum, Sungai Pinyuh, Mempawah Regency, West Kalimantan

Teachers have a dominant role in efforts to improve students' critical thinking skills through daily interactions in the classroom. The effectiveness of

learning in developing this ability is influenced by various factors, both from within the student and from the external environment. Factors such as the influence of social media, the condition of the learning environment, and the level of intelligence of students also play a role in this process. A lack of internal support from students or a lack of openness in the classroom atmosphere can be a barrier to the development of critical thinking skills.

Conversely, activities such as active reading and participating in effective communication tend to improve these abilities. An interview with Mrs. Wulan at MTs Riyadhul Ulum showed that psychological, physiological factors, the level of students' learning independence, as well as the quality of interaction in the classroom also have a significant influence on students' critical thinking skills. She emphasized that the teacher's role in facilitating the development of this ability is influenced by the complex interaction of various interrelated factors.

a. Psychological Factors

In the psychological aspect, the development of students' critical thinking skills is influenced by their intellectual development, level of learning motivation, and the level of anxiety they may feel in the learning process. Mrs. Wulan explained that external factors such as the influence of social media and the surrounding environment, as well as internal factors such as students' intelligence level, also contribute to their critical thinking ability. She gave an example that if there is an external push or desire to think critically, but it is not balanced with internal support or willingness from within the student, then their thinking ability will tend to be limited due to lack of balance. He also added that the willingness to think often arises as a student's response to conditions or situations outside of themselves. Without an active response from within the student, the willingness to think will also be significantly reduced.

b. Physiological Factors

Students' physical condition is a basic need that has an influence on their cognitive abilities, including critical thinking skills. Mrs. Wulan explained that the presence of physical disorders in students can directly affect their ability to think, especially in situations that require deep and structured thinking. Students who are physically impaired may have difficulty concentrating and thinking quickly and effectively. Therefore, she emphasized that good and excellent physical condition is one of the foundations that support students' ability to understand the subject matter and solve various problems faced in the learning process.

c. Learning Independence Factor

Students' learning independence plays an important role in fostering their critical thinking skills and active participation in the learning process. Mrs. Wulan explained that each student has a different level of learning independence, which is often influenced by their personality. She observed that students who have a diligent personality tend to show a higher level of independence in learning, which is reflected in their initiative to seek information, ask questions, and complete tasks independently. In contrast, students who tend to have less diligent personalities often show lower levels of independence and are less active in the learning process. These variations in personality significantly affect students' level of independence in learning and ultimately, their ability to develop critical thinking.

d. The Interaction Factor

The interaction between teachers and students plays a crucial role in developing students' critical thinking skills. Mrs. Wulan explained that each class has unique characteristics and dynamics; some classes tend to be more active and responsive, while others are less active in interacting. She emphasized the importance for a teacher to understand these different characteristics and proactively address any communication barriers that may arise, with the aim of helping students think more critically. She observed that students who have a good level of interaction in the classroom tend to understand the subject matter faster, while students who lack interaction often have difficulty in grasping the concepts being taught. Therefore, Ms. Wulan concluded that teachers need to have creativity in delivering the subject matter and sensitivity in understanding the classroom situation so that effective interaction can be realized, which will ultimately support the development of students' critical thinking skills. In conclusion, she emphasized that various factors interact and influence students' thinking skills. Therefore, teachers must actively understand the conditions and circumstances of students and be able to respond to various situations that arise in the classroom appropriately to help them develop critical thinking skills, beyond just delivering subject matter.

e. Cooperation with Parents

In addition to the factors above, Mrs. Wulan also highlighted the importance of cooperation between teachers and parents in supporting the development of students' critical thinking skills. She explained that parents have a significant role in strengthening students' critical thinking skills in the home environment. Support and stimulation provided by parents at home, such as encouraging children to ask questions, discuss various issues, and find solutions to everyday problems, can make a positive contribution to the development of students' critical thinking skills at school.

Thus, the results of this study comprehensively identify the various roles of teachers and supporting factors that contribute to improving the critical thinking skills of seventh grade students in Akidah Akhlak subjects at MTs Riyadhul Ulum Sungai Pinyuh. In-depth understanding of these aspects is expected to be the basis for developing more effective learning strategies in the future.

The results showed that teachers at MTs Riyadhul Ulum Sungai Pinyuh played various interrelated roles in an effort to improve the critical thinking skills of seventh grade students in Akidah Akhlak subjects. The role as an educator and demonstrator emphasizes the importance of mastering the material, choosing the right method, and being a role model for students. This is in line with the research of Yestiani & Zahwa (2020) and Hanipah (2021) which highlighted teachers as teachers, innovators, and role models.

The teacher's role as classroom manager and facilitator creates a conducive learning environment and provides facilities that make it easier for students to be active and involved in the learning process. Giving questions, discussions, and using learning media are relevant to the findings of Maemunawati & Alif (2020) and Hanipah (2021) who emphasize the importance of facilities and positive interactions.

The role as a mentor and motivator shows the teacher's efforts in providing individualized attention to students in need and fostering enthusiasm for learning. This is supported by Memunawati & Alif's (2020) and Nazmi's (2018) research highlighting the importance of guidance and motivation in knowledge transfer and increased learning enthusiasm.

Finally, the role of evaluator ensures that teachers regularly assess students' understanding and learning effectiveness, in line with Kamal's (2019) opinion that evaluation aims to measure the achievement of learning objectives.

Furthermore, the research identified factors that support the teacher's role in improving students' critical thinking skills. Psychological, physiological, learning independence, and interaction factors show the complexity of developing critical thinking skills that are influenced by students' internal and external conditions. This finding is reinforced by interviews with teachers who are aware of the influence of these factors. In addition, cooperation with parents, as revealed in Muh Ashari Firmansyah's research (2023), is a significant external supporting element.

Overall, this study highlights the multidimensional role of teachers and various supporting factors in an effort to develop students' critical thinking skills in Akidah Akhlak subject at MTs Riyadhul Ulum Sungai Pinyuh. Teachers not only deliver material, but also create an interactive learning environment, motivate students, provide individualized guidance, and evaluate their understanding comprehensively. The success of the teacher's role is also supported by internal factors of students and cooperation with parents.

The research by Husnayain, Muashomah and Saputri (2023) provides valuable insights that can be applied in the context of developing critical and creative thinking skills in Akidah Akhlak at MT's Riyadhul Ulum Sungai Pinyuh. The study emphasizes the effectiveness of hands-on approaches in Islamic education, demonstrating how methods such as simulations and consistent practice significantly enhance students' understanding and internalization of religious concepts. This is particularly relevant to Akidah Akhlak, where students can benefit from applying moral and ethical principles to real-life scenarios through role-playing and problem-solving activities.

In addition, the research is consistent with constructivist and experiential learning theories that emphasize the importance of active student engagement in the learning process. In the context of Akidah Akhlak, this suggests that students should be encouraged to explore, question, and reflect on Islamic teachings rather than passively receive information. The role of the teacher, as highlighted in the study, is crucial in facilitating this active learning. Rather than being a mere transmitter of knowledge, the teacher should act as a guide, fostering an environment where students can think critically, express their ideas creatively, and develop a deeper understanding of Akidah Akhlak.

In addition, the study's recommendations for curriculum development are relevant to improving the teaching of Akidah Akhlak. Integrating hands-on activities and emphasizing experiential learning can make the subject more engaging and relevant to students. This could include incorporating discussions on contemporary ethical issues, creative projects that allow students to express their understanding of Islamic beliefs, and activities that promote critical analysis of moral values. By using these strategies, educators can effectively cultivate critical and creative thinking skills among students in Akidah Akhlak.

Yasinta et al. (2023) argue that active citizen participation is fundamental to ensuring that public policies reflect the needs and aspirations of the community, a concept that has significant implications for the role of teachers in developing critical and creative thinking skills in Akidah Akhlak. The study emphasizes that active participation empowers individuals to influence decision-making processes and contribute to social justice. This empowerment is reflected in the classroom when teachers foster an environment where students are encouraged to actively engage with the material, question assumptions, and express their own perspectives, thereby developing critical thinking.

In addition, Yasinta et al. (2023) identify key factors that influence participation, such as education and access to information. These factors are directly relevant to the educational context of Akidah Akhlak, where teachers play a critical role in providing students with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary for critical and creative thinking. By creating opportunities for students to analyze information, engage in discussion, and solve problems, teachers not only enhance students' cognitive skills, but also cultivate a sense of agency and responsibility.

In addition, the study's focus on social justice aligns with the ethical dimensions of Akidah Akhlak. Teachers can draw on the principles of active participation and social justice to foster students' ethical awareness and commitment to the common good. By encouraging students to think critically about moral and ethical dilemmas, explore diverse perspectives, and express their understanding through creative media, teachers can empower them to become active, engaged citizens who contribute to a more just and equitable society.

The role of teachers in developing critical and creative thinking skills in Akidah Akhlak (Islamic Faith and Morals) for seventh grade students at MTs Riyadhul Ulum Sungai Pinyuh, Kabupaten Mempawah, Kalimantan Barat, can be significantly informed by the insights from the provided texts. First, Husnayain et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of practical approaches in Islamic education, such as simulations and social activities, to enhance students' understanding and engagement. This suggests that when teaching Akidah Akhlak, teachers should go beyond theoretical lessons and incorporate activities that allow students to actively apply their knowledge, thus fostering critical and creative thinking.

Secondly, Yasinta et al (2023) emphasize the importance of active civic participation and the role of education in empowering individuals. This implies that teachers should create a classroom environment that encourages students to actively participate, question, and express their ideas, which are essential components of critical and creative thinking. Third, Yulyana et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of child-friendly teachers who not only educate but also facilitate the emotional and social development of students. In the context of Akidah Akhlak, this means that teachers should adopt a nurturing approach that supports students in exploring ethical dilemmas and expressing their understanding creatively.

In conclusion, the texts collectively suggest that to effectively develop critical and creative thinking skills in Akidah Akhlak, teachers should use hands-on teaching methods, encourage active student participation, and create a supportive, child-friendly learning environment. The results showed that teachers at MTs Riyadhul Ulum Sungai Pinyuh played various interrelated roles in an effort to improve the critical thinking skills of seventh grade students in Akidah Akhlak subjects. The role as an educator and demonstrator emphasizes the importance of mastering the material, choosing the right method, and being a role model for students. This is in line with the research of Yestiani & Zahwa (2020) and Hanipah (2021) which highlighted teachers as teachers, innovators, and role models.

The teacher's role as classroom manager and facilitator creates a conducive learning environment and provides facilities that make it easier for students to be active and involved in the learning process. Giving questions, discussions, and using learning media are relevant to the findings of Maemunawati & Alif (2020) and Hanipah (2021) who emphasize the importance of facilities and positive interactions. The role as a mentor and motivator shows the teacher's efforts in providing individualized attention to students in need and fostering enthusiasm for

learning. This is supported by Memunawati & Alif's (2020) and Nazmi's (2018) research highlighting the importance of guidance and motivation in knowledge transfer and increased learning enthusiasm.

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Furthermore, the research identified factors that support the teacher's role in improving students' critical thinking skills. Psychological, physiological, learning independence, and interaction factors show the complexity of developing critical thinking skills that are influenced by students' internal and external conditions. This finding is reinforced by interviews with teachers who are aware of the influence of these factors. In addition, cooperation with parents, as revealed in Muh Ashari Firmansyah's research (2023), is a significant external supporting element.

Overall, this study highlights the multidimensional role of teachers and various supporting factors in an effort to develop students' critical thinking skills in Akidah Akhlak subject at MTs Riyadhul Ulum Sungai Pinyuh. Teachers not only deliver material, but also create an interactive learning environment, motivate students, provide individualized guidance, and evaluate their understanding comprehensively. The success of the teacher's role is also supported by internal factors of students and cooperation with parents.

The research by Husnayain, Muashomah and Saputri (2023) provides valuable insights that can be applied in the context of developing critical and creative thinking skills in Akidah Akhlak at MT's Riyadhul Ulum Sungai Pinyuh. The study emphasizes the effectiveness of hands-on approaches in Islamic education, demonstrating how methods such as simulations and consistent practice significantly enhance students' understanding and internalization of religious concepts. This is particularly relevant to Akidah Akhlak, where students can benefit from applying moral and ethical principles to real-life scenarios through role-playing and problem-solving activities.

In addition, the research is consistent with constructivist and experiential learning theories that emphasize the importance of active student engagement in the learning process. In the context of Akidah Akhlak, this suggests that students should be encouraged to explore, question, and reflect on Islamic teachings rather than passively receive information. The role of the teacher, as highlighted in the study, is crucial in facilitating this active learning. Rather than being a mere transmitter of knowledge, the teacher should act as a guide, fostering an environment where students can think critically, express their ideas creatively, and develop a deeper understanding of Akidah Akhlak.

In addition, the study's recommendations for curriculum development are relevant to improving the teaching of Akidah Akhlak. Integrating hands-on activities and emphasizing experiential learning can make the subject more engaging and relevant to students. This could include incorporating discussions on

contemporary ethical issues, creative projects that allow students to express their understanding of Islamic beliefs, and activities that promote critical analysis of moral values. By using these strategies, educators can effectively cultivate critical and creative thinking skills among students in Akidah Akhlak.

Yasinta et al. (2023) argue that active citizen participation is fundamental to ensuring that public policies reflect the needs and aspirations of the community, a concept that has significant implications for the role of teachers in developing critical and creative thinking skills in Akidah Akhlak. The study emphasizes that active participation empowers individuals to influence decision-making processes and contribute to social justice. This empowerment is reflected in the classroom when teachers foster an environment where students are encouraged to actively engage with the material, question assumptions, and express their own perspectives, thereby developing critical thinking.

In addition, Yasinta et al. (2023) identify key factors that influence participation, such as education and access to information. These factors are directly relevant to the educational context of Akidah Akhlak, where teachers play a critical role in providing students with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary for critical and creative thinking. By creating opportunities for students to analyze information, engage in discussion, and solve problems, teachers not only enhance students' cognitive skills, but also cultivate a sense of agency and responsibility.

In addition, the study's focus on social justice aligns with the ethical dimensions of Akidah Akhlak. Teachers can draw on the principles of active participation and social justice to foster students' ethical awareness and commitment to the common good. By encouraging students to think critically about moral and ethical dilemmas, explore diverse perspectives, and express their understanding through creative media, teachers can empower them to become active, engaged citizens who contribute to a more just and equitable society.

The role of teachers in developing critical and creative thinking skills in Akidah Akhlak (Islamic Faith and Morals) for seventh grade students at MTs Riyadhul Ulum Sungai Pinyuh, Kabupaten Mempawah, Kalimantan Barat, can be significantly informed by the insights from the provided texts.

First, Husnayain et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of practical approaches in Islamic education, such as simulations and social activities, to enhance students' understanding and engagement. This suggests that when teaching Akidah Akhlak, teachers should go beyond theoretical lessons and incorporate activities that allow students to actively apply their knowledge, thus fostering critical and creative thinking.

Secondly, Yasinta et al (2023) emphasize the importance of active civic participation and the role of education in empowering individuals. This implies that teachers should create a classroom environment that encourages students to actively participate, question, and express their ideas, which are essential components of critical and creative thinking.

Third, Yulyana et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of child-friendly teachers who not only educate but also facilitate the emotional and social development of students. In the context of Akidah Akhlak, this means that teachers should adopt a nurturing approach that supports students in exploring ethical dilemmas and expressing their understanding creatively.

In conclusion, the texts collectively suggest that to effectively develop critical and creative thinking skills in Akidah Akhlak, teachers should use hands-on teaching methods, encourage active student participation, and create a supportive, child-friendly learning environment.

Conclusion

First, educational institutions are expected to facilitate training and continuous professional development for Akidah Akhlak teachers to strengthen their understanding and skills in implementing learning strategies that explicitly develop students' critical and creative thinking skills, such as problem-based learning, projects, and inquiry. Second, teachers are advised to consciously and systematically integrate activities that stimulate critical thinking in lesson planning and implementation, including asking open-ended questions, assigning case analysis, and encouraging students to put forward arguments based on naqli and aqli arguments. Third, schools need to create a learning environment that supports active interaction and constructive discussions between students and teachers, as well as providing diverse learning resources and media to trigger curiosity and exploration. Fourth, it is important to establish effective communication and cooperation with parents so that they can support the development of students' critical thinking skills at home through relevant activities. Fifth, future research can focus on developing more comprehensive assessment instruments to measure students' critical and creative thinking skills in Akidah Akhlak subjects, as well as exploring the influence of broader contextual and cultural factors on the development of these abilities.

The role of teachers in developing critical and creative thinking skills in Akidah Akhlak for seventh-grade students at MTs Riyadhul Ulum Sungai Pinyuh, Kabupaten Mempawah, Kalimantan Barat, is a multifaceted endeavor that can be significantly informed by the following insights: Firstly, the importance of practical application is a key theme. Husnayain et al. (2023) highlight that theoretical understanding in Islamic education is often insufficient without real-life application. This underscores the necessity for Akidah Akhlak teachers to design learning experiences that go beyond rote memorization, actively involving students in practical activities that stimulate critical thinking and creative problem-solving. Secondly, active student engagement is crucial. Yasinta et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of active citizen participation in public policy. This concept can be effectively translated into the classroom setting by advocating for active student involvement in the learning process. Such engagement is essential

for nurturing critical and creative thinking skills in Akidah Akhlak, where students should be encouraged to question, explore, and articulate their understanding of Islamic principles.

Thirdly, the teacher's role as a facilitator is pivotal. Yulyana et al. (2023) discuss the significance of child-friendly teachers in creating a supportive learning environment that fosters students' holistic development. Baroroh et al. (2023) further highlight the teacher's responsibility in managing the classroom and establishing a conducive learning atmosphere. These perspectives collectively emphasize the teacher's crucial role as a facilitator who not only imparts knowledge but also guides students, manages the learning environment, and supports the development of critical and creative thinking.

Fourthly, creating a conducive learning environment is identified as a key factor. Yulyana et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of a safe, comfortable, and inclusive space for learning. Baroroh et al. (2023) also stress the teacher's role in establishing a structured and supportive atmosphere. In the context of Akidah Akhlak, this kind of environment is crucial for fostering open discussions on ethical dilemmas, encouraging creative expression of understanding, and promoting critical reflection on moral and ethical issues. In summary, the texts collectively suggest that to effectively cultivate critical and creative thinking skills in Akidah Akhlak, teachers should adopt teaching methodologies that emphasize practical application, promote active student engagement, and create a supportive and well-managed learning environment.

The collective insights from the provided texts converge to underscore the multifaceted role of teachers in shaping effective educational environments and fostering student development. Teachers are consistently portrayed as more than mere instructors; they are critical facilitators who guide students through their learning journeys while nurturing their emotional and social well-being. A key element emphasized throughout the texts is the creation of a positive and nurturing learning environment. This includes creating a safe, comfortable, and inclusive space that supports students' holistic growth and enables them to fully engage in the learning process.

The importance of active student participation is another recurring theme, with the texts emphasizing that encouraging active participation is essential not only for academic understanding, but also for developing a sense of social responsibility and justice. The texts also advocate a balance between theoretical knowledge and practical application. This balance is seen as essential to help students internalize their learning and apply it effectively in real-life contexts.

Finally, effective classroom management is consistently identified as a fundamental aspect of the teacher's role. This includes a range of responsibilities, from managing time and the physical classroom environment to managing student behavior, all of which contribute to creating a structured and supportive learning atmosphere. In summary, these texts collectively argue that teachers are

instrumental in shaping a student's educational experience. This is accomplished by creating positive and well-managed classrooms, encouraging active student participation, and integrating practical applications of knowledge.

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