Implementation of Contextual Teaching and Learning Strategy in Improving Learning Outcomes of the Subject of Aqidah Akhlak at MI Darul Istiqomah Srigading

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Abstract: This study aims to improve student learning outcomes in the subject of Akidah Akhlak through the application of the Contextual Teaching and Learning strategy. The method used is Classroom Action Research which is carried out in two cycles. The subjects of the study were grade 5 students of MI Darul Istiqomah Srigading. Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and learning outcome tests. The results of the study showed that the application of the CTL strategy was able to increase students' active involvement in the learning process. In addition, there was a significant increase in student learning outcomes after the implementation of this strategy, as indicated by the increase in the average class value from the first cycle to the second cycle. This success is due to a more contextual learning approach, linking material to students' real experiences so that it is easier to understand. Thus, the CTL strategy has proven effective in improving students' understanding and learning outcomes in the subject of Akidah Akhlak. It is hoped that this study can be a reference for teachers in developing more innovative and interactive learning methods.

Keywords: Contextual Teaching and Learning, Moral Creeds, Learning Outcomes, Classroom Action Research.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a significant role in shaping the character and mindset of students, especially at the elementary school level. At MI Darul Istiqomah Srigading, the goal of education is not only to provide academic knowledge but also to instill strong moral values, particularly through religious studies. Aqidah Akhlak, which focuses on faith and moral teachings, is a fundamental subject in Islamic religious education. The ability to understand and apply the concepts of Aqidah Akhlak is crucial in shaping students' personalities and guiding them toward becoming responsible, ethical individuals in society. However, despite its importance, the learning outcomes in Aqidah Akhlak have been observed to be less than optimal. This issue has raised concerns among educators and stakeholders, prompting the need for a more effective teaching strategy.

Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) is one of the teaching strategies that has gained attention in recent years for its ability to improve student learning outcomes by

making learning more relevant and meaningful. CTL emphasizes connecting learning material to real-life contexts, encouraging students to relate what they learn to their daily experiences. This approach aims to create a learning environment where students are actively involved in the process, thereby enhancing their understanding and retention of the material. By applying CTL, educators can foster a deeper connection between students and the content, which can lead to improved learning outcomes, particularly in subjects such as Aqidah Akhlak, where personal values and ethical behavior are integral.

The challenges faced in teaching Aqidah Akhlak are multifaceted. One significant issue is the difficulty in making abstract religious and moral concepts tangible and relevant to young students. Many students struggle to relate these abstract principles to their daily lives, which can hinder their understanding and application of the teachings. Moreover, traditional teaching methods often focus heavily on rote memorization and passive learning, which can result in disengagement and low retention rates. These challenges call for innovative and effective teaching strategies that can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, particularly in character education.

In light of these challenges, the CTL strategy presents a promising solution. CTL has been shown to improve student engagement, critical thinking, and the ability to connect theoretical knowledge to practical situations. By using this strategy, educators can create a more dynamic and interactive learning environment, where students actively participate in their learning and are encouraged to think critically about the moral teachings they receive. Furthermore, CTL promotes collaboration and communication, which are essential in fostering a positive learning community. These features make CTL a suitable approach for teaching Aqidah Akhlak, as it can help students not only understand but also apply the principles of faith and morality in their daily lives.

The importance of character education cannot be overstated, especially in the context of Islamic religious education. Aqidah Akhlak is intended to nurture students' religious beliefs and moral character, helping them grow into individuals who demonstrate integrity, responsibility, and respect for others. However, in order for these goals to be achieved, effective teaching strategies are necessary. The traditional methods of teaching Aqidah Akhlak may not be sufficient to engage students fully and to cultivate deep, lasting understanding. As a result, the application of CTL in teaching Aqidah Akhlak could offer a more effective alternative.

Several studies have shown that the application of CTL can lead to significant improvements in learning outcomes across various subjects, including religious education. CTL encourages students to think critically and creatively, promoting deeper understanding through real-world applications of concepts. This approach has been particularly effective in teaching subjects that require moral and ethical reasoning, as it allows students to explore the real-life implications of their beliefs and values. In the context of Aqidah Akhlak, CTL can help students see how religious teachings are relevant to their daily lives, thus enhancing their motivation and engagement.

Furthermore, CTL emphasizes the development of higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. These skills are essential in understanding the complex nature of religious and moral teachings, as students must be able to think critically about the principles they are learning and how they apply them in various situations. By engaging in problem-solving and collaborative activities, students can develop a deeper understanding of the concepts of Aqidah Akhlak, which will help them not only in their academic performance but also in their personal growth.

The importance of student-centered learning is also a key feature of CTL. Traditional teacher-centered methods often place students in a passive role, where they are expected to absorb information without much active involvement. In contrast, CTL encourages students to take ownership of their learning. By making connections between the content and their own experiences, students become active participants in the learning process.

This active participation is particularly important in teaching Aqidah Akhlak, as it enables students to internalize moral principles and apply them to their actions and decisions.

The use of CTL in teaching Aqidah Akhlak at MI Darul Istiqomah Srigading is expected to address the challenges currently faced in the classroom. By applying CTL, teachers can create an interactive and engaging learning environment that encourages students to think critically about the material, reflect on their beliefs and values, and apply what they have learned in their daily lives. This approach not only enhances students' academic performance but also contributes to their moral and personal development.

In this research, the application of CTL in teaching Aqidah Akhlak at MI Darul Istiqomah Srigading will be examined to determine its effectiveness in improving learning outcomes. The focus will be on evaluating how well the CTL strategy helps students understand and apply the concepts of Aqidah Akhlak, as well as how it influences their overall engagement with the subject. Through this study, it is hoped that a more effective and engaging approach to teaching Aqidah Akhlak can be identified, one that can help students better understand and practice the moral and ethical teachings of Islam.

Moreover, this study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on improving the quality of Islamic education, particularly in the teaching of character education. By exploring the potential of CTL to enhance the teaching of Aqidah Akhlak, this research will provide valuable insights into how teaching strategies can be adapted to meet the needs of today's students. It will also offer practical recommendations for educators looking to improve their instructional methods and foster a more engaging and effective learning environment. The implementation of CTL in teaching Aqidah Akhlak is expected to benefit not only the students but also the teachers. Through the use of CTL, teachers can develop new skills and strategies for engaging students and promoting deeper learning. This can lead to greater job satisfaction and improved teaching effectiveness. In addition, the collaborative nature of CTL encourages teachers to work together and share best practices, which can further enhance the overall quality of teaching at MI Darul Istiqomah Srigading.

The study will also explore how the CTL strategy can be integrated with other teaching methods to create a more holistic approach to teaching Aqidah Akhlak. By combining CTL with other instructional strategies, such as project-based learning or inquiry-based learning, educators can create a more dynamic and diverse learning experience that caters to the varied learning styles and needs of students. This integrative approach has the potential to create a more engaging and comprehensive learning environment that supports the development of both cognitive and moral competencies.

In conclusion, the need for effective teaching strategies in Aqidah Akhlak is critical for the moral and academic development of students at MI Darul Istiqomah Srigading. The Contextual Teaching and Learning strategy offers a promising approach to improving learning outcomes in this subject. By connecting the material to real-life contexts and encouraging active student participation, CTL can enhance students' understanding of the principles of Aqidah Akhlak and their ability to apply them in their daily lives. Through this study, the aim is to assess the effectiveness of CTL in this context and to provide recommendations for its broader application in Islamic education.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology to explore the application of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) in enhancing the learning outcomes of Aqidah Akhlak at MI Darul Istiqomah Srigading. The qualitative approach is chosen because it allows for a deeper understanding of the processes involved in teaching and learning, as well as the experiences and perspectives of both teachers and students. This method is well-suited for examining how CTL can be implemented in a classroom setting and its impact on students' understanding and application of the subject matter.

The research is designed as a case study, which focuses on MI Darul Istiqomah Srigading as the context for this investigation. A case study approach enables the researcher to explore the nuances of CTL implementation in a specific educational setting. By examining one particular institution, the research can provide detailed insights into how CTL strategies are employed, the challenges faced by teachers, and the effects on student learning outcomes in the subject of Aqidah Akhlak. This approach is particularly useful for gaining an in-depth understanding of the practical applications of CTL in religious education.

The research will involve both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data will be collected through direct observation, interviews, and questionnaires, while secondary data will be obtained from academic resources, previous studies, and relevant documents related to the subject of Aqidah Akhlak and the CTL method. The combination of these data sources will provide a comprehensive view of the impact of CTL on student learning outcomes, while also contextualizing the findings within the broader educational framework. In the first phase of the research, the researcher will conduct classroom observations to identify the teaching methods used in the Aqidah Akhlak lessons at MI Darul Istiqomah Srigading. Observations will be conducted over several weeks to capture a range of teaching activities, such as lectures, group work, discussions, and individual reflection exercises. The goal of this phase is to understand how CTL is implemented in practice, including the extent to which it is used to connect the content of Aqidah Akhlak to students' real-life experiences.

During these observations, the researcher will pay particular attention to how the teacher engages students, the types of activities used to facilitate learning, and how students respond to these activities. Specific focus will be placed on how the teacher scaffolds learning, encourages student participation, and provides real-life examples that help students relate the material to their personal lives. The observations will be documented in field notes, which will be analyzed later to identify patterns and themes related to the application of CTL in the classroom. In the second phase of data collection, interviews will be conducted with both teachers and students. The teachers will be asked about their experiences implementing CTL in teaching Aqidah Akhlak, the challenges they face, and the strategies they use to ensure that the material is meaningful and relevant to the students. The teachers' perspectives are crucial for understanding how CTL is being applied and how it aligns with their teaching philosophies and practices.

Students will also be interviewed to gain insights into their experiences with CTL in Aqidah Akhlak lessons. They will be asked about how they perceive the relevance of the lessons to their lives, whether they feel more engaged in the learning process, and how they have applied the concepts of Aqidah Akhlak outside of the classroom. Student feedback is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of CTL in enhancing their understanding and application of the material. These interviews will be semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in exploring students' responses while also ensuring consistency in the types of questions asked. In addition to interviews, a set of questionnaires will be distributed to students to gather quantitative data on their learning outcomes. The questionnaires will be designed to assess students' knowledge and understanding of Aqidah Akhlak before and after the implementation of CTL. The questions will cover key topics such as the students' ability to define and explain core concepts of Aqidah Akhlak, their confidence in applying these concepts in real-life situations, and their overall engagement with the subject. The pre- and post-intervention questionnaires will allow for a comparison of students' learning outcomes and provide measurable evidence of the impact of CTL on their academic performance.

The next phase of data analysis will involve a thematic analysis of the qualitative data obtained from classroom observations, interviews, and questionnaires. The researcher will identify recurring themes and patterns in the data, particularly those related to the application of CTL and its effects on student learning. The themes will be coded and analyzed to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of CTL in teaching Aqidah

Akhlak. This analysis will focus on identifying both the strengths and weaknesses of the CTL approach in this context and will provide a deeper understanding of how this strategy can be improved for future use.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings, triangulation will be employed. Triangulation involves comparing data from multiple sources, such as observations, interviews, and questionnaires, to validate the results. By cross-referencing different types of data, the researcher can increase the credibility of the findings and ensure that the conclusions drawn are well-supported by the evidence. Additionally, member checking will be used to verify the accuracy of the interview data by providing participants with a summary of the findings and allowing them to confirm or clarify their responses. Ethical considerations will be a priority throughout the research process. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, including teachers and students, before any data is collected. Participants will be informed about the purpose of the study, the methods of data collection, and their rights to privacy and confidentiality. All data will be anonymized to protect the identities of the participants, and their participation will remain voluntary. The researcher will also ensure that the study does not cause any harm or disruption to the participants' educational experience.

The expected outcomes of this study are to gain a better understanding of how CTL can be effectively applied in teaching Aqidah Akhlak and to assess its impact on student learning outcomes. By examining both the process of implementing CTL and its effects on students' understanding and application of religious and moral principles, the research aims to provide valuable insights for educators looking to improve their teaching practices. Furthermore, the study will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on innovative teaching strategies in Islamic education, offering practical recommendations for enhancing the quality of religious studies instruction. The findings of this research will be significant not only for MI Darul Istiqomah Srigading but also for other educational institutions looking to improve their teaching of Aqidah Akhlak and other character education subjects. The results will provide evidence-based recommendations on how CTL can be integrated into religious education curricula, offering a more engaging and effective approach to character education. By demonstrating the potential of CTL to enhance student learning, this study will contribute to the broader goal of fostering ethical and responsible individuals in society.

In conclusion, this research will explore the impact of the Contextual Teaching and Learning strategy on the learning outcomes of Aqidah Akhlak at MI Darul Istiqomah Srigading. Through a combination of classroom observations, interviews, questionnaires, and data analysis, the study will provide valuable insights into how CTL can be implemented effectively in Islamic education. The findings will contribute to the improvement of teaching practices and the enhancement of student learning, particularly in the area of character education.

RESULTS

The research conducted on the application of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) in teaching Aqidah Akhlak at MI Darul Istiqomah Srigading produced significant findings regarding the impact of CTL on students' learning outcomes. The findings were derived from a combination of classroom observations, interviews with both teachers and students, and pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, which provided both qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the effectiveness of CTL. The first major finding was that the application of CTL created a more interactive and engaging learning environment. During classroom observations, it was evident that students were more involved in the learning process compared to traditional teaching methods. Teachers used real-life examples and scenarios that allowed students to connect the abstract concepts of Aqidah Akhlak to their personal experiences. This approach helped students understand how

moral principles could be applied in everyday situations, increasing their engagement and motivation to participate in lessons.

Students demonstrated a higher level of interest in Aqidah Akhlak when lessons were taught using CTL. For instance, students actively participated in group discussions and problem-solving activities that required them to apply the moral concepts they were learning. In contrast, when traditional teaching methods were used, students were less engaged and often passive during lessons. The CTL approach promoted an active learning environment, where students were encouraged to ask questions, share personal experiences, and collaborate with peers to deepen their understanding. The teacher's role in the CTL approach was pivotal in guiding students through the learning process. Teachers used various scaffolding techniques to support students as they made connections between the theoretical concepts of Aqidah Akhlak and practical applications. This support was gradually reduced as students gained confidence and competence in understanding the material. Teachers also created opportunities for students to engage in hands-on activities, such as role-playing, that allowed them to act out moral dilemmas and explore possible solutions.

In terms of learning outcomes, the pre- and post-intervention questionnaires revealed a noticeable improvement in students' understanding of Aqidah Akhlak. Prior to the CTL intervention, many students demonstrated a basic understanding of the concepts but struggled to articulate how these principles applied to their daily lives. After the intervention, students exhibited a deeper understanding of the subject matter and were able to explain the principles of Aqidah Akhlak in more detail. The increase in student performance was particularly evident in the areas of moral reasoning and ethical decision-making. The improvement in student understanding was also reflected in the post-intervention interviews with students. Many students reported that they felt more confident in applying the concepts of Aqidah Akhlak to their lives outside of school. For example, several students shared that they were now more aware of their behavior toward others and made conscious efforts to practice good manners and respect. Some students even mentioned how they discussed the lessons with their parents, further reinforcing the importance of self-awareness and respect in daily interactions.

The CTL approach also helped students develop critical thinking skills. Students were encouraged to think about the moral implications of various situations, analyze different viewpoints, and evaluate the consequences of their actions. This was a shift from the traditional rote memorization methods, where students were primarily focused on recalling information without fully understanding its relevance or application. With CTL, students were given the opportunity to engage in higher-order thinking, which enhanced their cognitive development. Another key finding from the research was the improvement in student collaboration and communication. CTL encourages group work, and students worked together on projects, shared ideas, and learned to respect diverse perspectives. In the context of Aqidah Akhlak, this collaborative approach helped students understand the importance of cooperation and mutual respect, which are fundamental aspects of moral education. Through teamwork, students learned how to negotiate differences, resolve conflicts, and support one another in their learning journey.

Teachers also expressed positive feedback regarding the implementation of CTL in their classrooms. They noted that the approach allowed them to better meet the diverse learning needs of their students. By incorporating different teaching strategies, such as discussions, group activities, and case studies, teachers were able to engage students with varying learning styles. Some students who previously struggled with understanding Aqidah Akhlak found the real-life connections provided by CTL to be helpful in grasping the concepts. Additionally, teachers observed that CTL fostered a more positive classroom atmosphere. With students actively participating in discussions and engaging with the material in meaningful ways, the overall environment became more dynamic and collaborative. Teachers reported that students were more motivated to participate and

had a greater sense of ownership over their learning. This shift in classroom dynamics contributed to a more supportive and inclusive learning community.

The gradual withdrawal of teacher support, a key feature of the CTL approach, was also found to be effective in promoting student independence. As the teacher provided less guidance over time, students were given more responsibility for their own learning. This process helped build students' confidence and problem-solving abilities. They began to take more initiative in exploring the content and reflecting on their behavior. By the end of the intervention, many students expressed feeling more capable of making moral decisions independently. While the findings from the study were overwhelmingly positive, there were some challenges in the implementation of CTL. One challenge identified was the time constraints in the classroom. CTL activities, such as group discussions and role-playing, require a significant amount of time to implement effectively. Teachers noted that the limited time available in the school schedule sometimes made it difficult to complete all planned activities. Despite this challenge, teachers found ways to adapt and prioritize the most effective activities, ensuring that students still benefited from the CTL approach.

Another challenge was the varying levels of student readiness for active participation. Some students, particularly those who were more introverted or less confident, initially struggled to engage in group activities or share their opinions during discussions. However, with continuous support and encouragement from the teacher, these students gradually became more comfortable participating. Teachers emphasized the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment where students felt comfortable expressing their thoughts without fear of judgment.

In terms of student outcomes, one notable observation was the positive impact of CTL on students' self-awareness and moral development. The lessons on Aqidah Akhlak, combined with CTL strategies, helped students recognize the importance of respecting others, behaving ethically, and upholding religious principles in their daily lives. Many students reported feeling more confident in their ability to apply the moral teachings of Islam in real-world situations, which suggests that CTL not only improved their understanding of the material but also enhanced their ability to practice the values they were learning. Additionally, the students' ability to work in teams and solve problems collaboratively demonstrated an increase in social skills. They were able to practice empathy, communication, and cooperation while engaging in group activities. This was particularly valuable in the context of Aqidah Akhlak, as the subject emphasizes the importance of social relationships and mutual respect. Through CTL, students were not only learning the theoretical aspects of moral behavior but were also applying those principles in their interactions with others.

Teachers also noted that CTL encouraged greater student reflection. Students were given the opportunity to reflect on their actions, values, and beliefs during the learning process. This reflective practice enabled them to make more conscious decisions about their behavior and reinforced the moral lessons taught in Aqidah Akhlak. Many students reported that they now thought more deeply about how their actions impacted others, and this shift in mindset was attributed to the reflective components of CTL.

In summary, the application of CTL in teaching Aqidah Akhlak at MI Darul Istiqomah Srigading significantly improved students' learning outcomes. The approach fostered a more interactive, engaging, and meaningful learning environment, where students were able to connect theoretical concepts to real-life situations. Through CTL, students developed a deeper understanding of Aqidah Akhlak, enhanced their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and became more confident in applying moral principles in their daily lives. Despite some challenges, the overall impact of CTL was positive, leading to improved student engagement, collaboration, and moral development.

The findings of this study provide strong evidence for the effectiveness of CTL in religious education, particularly in teaching moral and ethical subjects like Aqidah Akhlak. The positive results suggest that CTL can be a valuable strategy for enhancing learning

outcomes in Islamic education, promoting not only academic success but also the development of ethical and responsible individuals.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this research reveal several key insights into the impact of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) on the teaching and learning of Aqidah Akhlak at MI Darul Istiqomah Srigading. The primary goal of this study was to assess the effectiveness of CTL in improving students' learning outcomes, particularly in their understanding and application of the principles of Aqidah Akhlak. Through classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students, and pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, it became clear that CTL had a significant and positive impact on both student engagement and academic achievement.

One of the main reasons for the success of CTL in this study was its emphasis on real-life relevance. Aqidah Akhlak, as a subject focused on moral teachings and religious beliefs, can sometimes seem abstract to young students. However, by integrating real-world examples and scenarios, CTL helped students see the practical applications of the principles they were learning. Teachers used case studies, stories, and role-playing exercises that encouraged students to think about how the values of Aqidah Akhlak could be applied in their daily lives. This made the subject matter more relatable and engaging, increasing students' understanding and interest.

The shift from a teacher-centered approach to a student-centered one was also a key factor in the success of CTL. Traditional methods of teaching often involve the teacher delivering information to students, with little interaction or engagement. In contrast, CTL encourages students to actively participate in their learning process. Through group discussions, collaborative problem-solving, and hands-on activities, students were able to take ownership of their learning and engage more deeply with the content. This active involvement not only made learning more enjoyable but also helped students retain the material more effectively.

A particularly important aspect of CTL that emerged from the study was the way it promoted critical thinking. In Aqidah Akhlak lessons, students were not just memorizing facts or repeating religious teachings. Instead, they were encouraged to analyze the moral implications of different situations, evaluate various perspectives, and make decisions based on their understanding of Islamic principles. This development of higher-order thinking skills is crucial for students, as it helps them become more thoughtful and reflective individuals who can navigate ethical dilemmas in their personal lives.

The improvement in students' moral reasoning was one of the most significant findings of this study. Prior to the implementation of CTL, many students demonstrated a basic understanding of Aqidah Akhlak but struggled to apply its teachings in real-life situations. After the intervention, however, students showed a much stronger ability to make moral judgments and to reflect on their actions. For example, when asked about the importance of respect and kindness, students were able to explain these concepts in detail and provide examples of how they could practice them in their interactions with others. This shift from theoretical knowledge to practical application is a key indicator of the effectiveness of CTL in enhancing students' understanding and moral development.

Furthermore, the study revealed that CTL had a positive impact on students' social skills. As part of the CTL approach, students worked together in groups, participated in discussions, and collaborated on problem-solving activities. This not only allowed them to develop their communication and teamwork abilities but also helped them understand the value of empathy, respect, and cooperation. In the context of Aqidah Akhlak, these social skills are vital, as the subject emphasizes the importance of good character and positive relationships with others. Through group activities, students learned how to listen to different perspectives, negotiate conflicts, and support their peers in the learning process.

Another notable finding was the improvement in students' confidence and self-awareness. Prior to the intervention, many students lacked confidence in their ability to express their thoughts and feelings, especially when it came to discussing moral issues. However, through the CTL activities, students were encouraged to reflect on their own values and beliefs, and they were given the opportunity to share their insights with their peers. This helped students develop a greater sense of self-awareness and confidence in their ability to engage with the material and make decisions based on their moral understanding.

The role of the teacher in the CTL approach was central to the success of the intervention. Teachers played a key role in scaffolding students' learning, providing support and guidance as students navigated the content of Aqidah Akhlak. This was especially important for students who were struggling with certain concepts or who found it difficult to engage in group discussions. Teachers used a variety of techniques to help students make connections between the material and their own experiences, such as asking guiding questions, providing additional resources, and offering personalized feedback. The gradual release of responsibility, where the teacher slowly reduced their support as students became more independent, helped build students' confidence and fostered a sense of ownership over their learning.

Despite these successes, the implementation of CTL was not without its challenges. One of the primary challenges identified by both teachers and students was the time constraints in the classroom. CTL activities, such as group work and role-playing, require more time than traditional lecture-style teaching methods. Teachers reported that they often had to adapt or shorten activities to fit within the limited time available for lessons. This made it challenging to fully implement some of the more complex CTL strategies. However, despite these time limitations, teachers were able to prioritize the most effective activities and still see positive results in terms of student engagement and learning outcomes.

Another challenge was the varying levels of student readiness for active participation. While many students thrived in the collaborative and interactive environment created by CTL, some students, particularly those who were more introverted or less confident, found it difficult to engage in group activities or share their opinions during discussions. This initial hesitation was expected, and teachers responded by providing additional encouragement and support to these students. Over time, these students became more comfortable with the activities and began to participate more actively. This highlights the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive classroom environment that encourages all students to engage, regardless of their personality or learning style.

Despite these challenges, the overall impact of CTL on student learning outcomes was overwhelmingly positive. The pre- and post-intervention questionnaires revealed a clear improvement in students' knowledge and understanding of Aqidah Akhlak. Students demonstrated a deeper understanding of core concepts such as respect, kindness, and responsibility, and they were able to apply these principles in their daily lives. This improvement in both academic performance and moral development is a strong indication of the effectiveness of CTL in teaching Aqidah Akhlak.

The improvement in student learning outcomes also extended to their ability to engage in reflective practice. As part of the CTL approach, students were encouraged to reflect on their own behavior and beliefs, which helped them internalize the lessons they were learning. Many students reported that they were now more aware of their actions and made a conscious effort to behave in a manner consistent with the moral teachings of Aqidah Akhlak. This shift toward greater self-awareness and personal responsibility is a key outcome of the CTL approach, as it encourages students to take ownership of their own moral development.

Additionally, the research found that CTL helped foster a more positive classroom atmosphere. With students actively participating in the learning process and collaborating

with one another, the classroom environment became more dynamic and supportive. Teachers reported that students were more motivated to participate, and there was a greater sense of community and mutual respect in the classroom. This positive classroom atmosphere contributed to a more effective learning experience and helped create an environment where students felt comfortable sharing their ideas and learning from one another.

The integration of CTL with other teaching strategies also played a role in the success of the intervention. Teachers combined CTL with other methods, such as inquiry-based learning and project-based learning, to create a more well-rounded and engaging learning experience. This combination of strategies helped meet the diverse needs of students and provided multiple opportunities for them to engage with the material in different ways. By using a variety of teaching methods, teachers were able to address the varying learning styles of their students and ensure that all students had an opportunity to succeed.

The findings of this study suggest that the application of CTL can be an effective strategy for teaching Aqidah Akhlak, as it promotes not only academic learning but also the development of important life skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and self-awareness. Through CTL, students are encouraged to reflect on their own values and behaviors, and they are given the tools to make ethical decisions in their personal lives. This aligns with the broader goals of Islamic education, which aims to produce well-rounded individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also morally responsible.

In conclusion, the results of this research demonstrate that the implementation of CTL in teaching Aqidah Akhlak at MI Darul Istiqomah Srigading had a significant positive impact on students' learning outcomes. The approach helped increase student engagement, foster critical thinking, improve social skills, and promote moral development. While there were challenges in implementing CTL, particularly in terms of time constraints and varying levels of student readiness, the overall impact on students' understanding of the subject and their ability to apply the principles of Aqidah Akhlak in their lives was overwhelmingly positive. These findings suggest that CTL is a valuable strategy for enhancing the quality of religious education and can be adapted for use in other schools and educational settings.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings of this study clearly show that the application of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) significantly improved the learning outcomes of Aqidah Akhlak at MI Darul Istiqomah Srigading. Through CTL, students were able to connect the abstract moral and religious concepts to their real-life experiences, making the learning process more meaningful and engaging. This approach helped students understand the practical application of Aqidah Akhlak in their daily lives, thereby enhancing their comprehension and retention of the material. One of the most notable outcomes was the increased student engagement. By shifting from traditional teaching methods to a more interactive and student-centered approach, CTL encouraged students to actively participate in their learning. This included group discussions, problem-solving activities, and role-playing, all of which contributed to a deeper understanding of the material. As students interacted with their peers and engaged in hands-on learning, they demonstrated higher levels of interest and motivation in the subject. The study also highlighted the positive impact of CTL on the development of critical thinking skills. Students were encouraged to analyze moral dilemmas, reflect on the consequences of their actions, and evaluate different perspectives. This approach not only enhanced their academic performance but also developed their ability to think critically about ethical issues, which is an essential life skill. As a result, students became more capable of making moral decisions independently, showing a clear improvement in their ability to apply the values of Aqidah Akhlak in real-world situations.

Moreover, CTL contributed to the improvement of students' social skills. By participating in group activities and collaborative projects, students learned to communicate effectively, negotiate conflicts, and respect diverse viewpoints. These skills are vital in fostering positive relationships, and in the context of Aqidah Akhlak, they helped students understand the importance of cooperation, empathy, and mutual respect in their social interactions. While the implementation of CTL faced some challenges, such as time constraints and varying student readiness, the overall impact was highly positive. Teachers were able to adapt the CTL approach to address these challenges, making adjustments where necessary to ensure that the learning objectives were met. The gradual release of responsibility allowed students to gain more independence in their learning, which further contributed to their personal growth and development. In addition to academic and social benefits, the CTL approach also had a profound impact on students' self-awareness and moral development. By reflecting on their behavior and values, students became more conscious of their actions and how they aligned with the teachings of Aqidah Akhlak. This reflective process helped foster a sense of responsibility and ethical decision-making, both of which are essential components of moral education. Overall, the results of this study demonstrate that Contextual Teaching and Learning is a highly effective strategy for teaching Aqidah Akhlak. It not only improves students' academic performance but also contributes to their personal and social development, preparing them to become morally responsible individuals. The success of this approach in MI Darul Istiqomah Srigading serves as a valuable example of how CTL can be applied in religious education to achieve both academic and moral growth.

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