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# Improving Students' Critical Thinking Skills and Tolerance Attitudes in Islamic Religious Education Learning Using the Question and Answer Method at SD Negeri 27 Limau Asam

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**Abstract:** This study aims to improve students' critical thinking skills and tolerance attitudes in Islamic religious education learning by using the question and answer method. This study is a classroom action research that uses four steps, namely planning, action, observation and reflection. The subjects of this study were elementary school students. The data for this study were obtained by test and observation techniques. Tests are used to measure learning outcomes and observations are used to analyze teacher and student learning activities. The data analysis technique used in this study is descriptive statistics by comparing the results obtained with indicators of research success. The results of the study indicate that the question and answer method can improve students' critical thinking skills and tolerance attitudes in Islamic religious education learning. This can be seen from the increase in the percentage of student learning completion in each cycle with details of the pre-cycle 48.71%, the first cycle 66.39% and in the second cycle it increased to 89.66%. Thus, the use of the question and answer method can be used as an alternative to improve students' critical thinking skills and tolerance attitudes in Islamic religious education learning.

Keywords: Critical thinking skill, islamic education, question and answer method.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in shaping the character of individuals. One of the primary goals of education is to enhance critical thinking skills and foster tolerance among students. To achieve this goal, an effective and innovative learning model is required. One such model is the question-and-answer method, which has proven to be an effective tool in stimulating critical thinking and promoting tolerance among students. This research aims to improve the critical thinking skills and tolerance of fourth-grade students in elementary school by implementing this method. By applying this approach, it is expected that students will become more engaged in the learning process, develop better analytical skills, and gain a deeper understanding of the material being taught. The primary objective of education is to develop students' knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes as they navigate through life. A learning process is considered successful if students experience significant improvements in both their knowledge and their behavior. Education not only focuses on cognitive development but also aims to shape the emotional and social aspects

of students. This holistic approach ensures that students grow into well-rounded individuals capable of contributing positively to society. It is vital that educational strategies align with these comprehensive goals to maximize the overall development of students.

Islamic education plays a fundamental role in shaping the character of students, and one of the core subjects taught in schools is the study of the Our'an and Islamic teachings. One of the subjects in Islamic education that is particularly important for fourth-grade students is the study of the Qur'anic chapter, Surah At-Tin. This material helps students deepen their understanding of the Qur'an and its application in daily life. Moreover, it aids in developing moral and ethical values that align with Islamic principles. However, in practice, the teaching of this material often faces several challenges, such as lack of student interest, insufficient motivation, and limited critical thinking skills. Despite these challenges, the integration of the question-and-answer method in Islamic education can significantly improve students' critical thinking skills and tolerance. This teaching approach encourages active participation from students, prompting them to ask questions, analyze the material, and engage in thoughtful discussions. Such engagement helps to cultivate a learning environment where students not only learn the material but also develop the skills necessary to approach problems critically and thoughtfully. Furthermore, this method allows students to appreciate different perspectives, thereby enhancing their tolerance toward others. In addition to the question-and-answer method, incorporating supplementary resources such as educational videos and demonstration methods can greatly enrich the learning experience. Educational videos provide visual and engaging content that helps students better understand complex concepts. Videos also serve as a dynamic tool to capture students' attention and keep them interested in the subject matter. Demonstrations, on the other hand, offer students hands-on experiences that reinforce theoretical knowledge, enabling them to see real-world applications of what they learn. For effective teaching, the teacher plays a central role in determining the learning process and ensuring that students are motivated to engage with the material. Teachers need to employ teaching methods that are suitable for the subject matter and the learning needs of the students. A teacher's ability to select appropriate teaching methods and create a positive learning environment directly impacts students' success in understanding and retaining the material. This is especially true in subjects like Islamic education, where students not only learn academic content but also internalize values that will influence their behavior and decision-making in the future.

Furthermore, the teacher's role as a facilitator is crucial in fostering an environment where students feel encouraged to learn. Teachers must guide students in a way that promotes critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. By fostering a sense of curiosity and inquiry, teachers can help students develop a deeper understanding of the content. In addition, teachers should strive to create a classroom atmosphere that is inclusive, respectful, and conducive to collaborative learning, which will enhance students' overall educational experience. The successful implementation of any teaching method depends on the teacher's ability to manage the classroom effectively. This includes establishing clear learning objectives, creating a structured environment, and providing regular feedback. Effective classroom management ensures that students remain focused and engaged throughout the lesson, leading to better learning outcomes. Teachers who are skilled at managing classroom dynamics can maintain an atmosphere of respect and cooperation, which is essential for students to thrive academically and socially.

Another important factor in enhancing the learning experience is the continuous professional development of teachers. Teachers must stay up-to-date with the latest educational trends, teaching strategies, and technological tools to effectively meet the evolving needs of their students. Ongoing training and workshops provide teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement innovative teaching methods, such as the question-and-answer approach, more effectively. Professional development also allows

teachers to refine their pedagogical techniques, improving their ability to engage students and enhance their learning outcomes. In light of these factors, it is essential for teachers to adopt a flexible approach to teaching that caters to the diverse needs of their students. Recognizing that each student has unique learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses, teachers must be adaptable and willing to adjust their teaching strategies accordingly. Differentiated instruction, where lessons are tailored to meet the varied needs of students, can help ensure that all students are supported in their learning journey. By accommodating different learning styles, teachers can create a more inclusive classroom environment that fosters student success.

Moreover, it is important to recognize that the role of the teacher extends beyond the classroom. Teachers serve as role models for students and have a significant influence on their personal development. By demonstrating qualities such as patience, empathy, and respect, teachers can inspire students to adopt these same qualities. The teacher-student relationship is essential in building a positive and supportive learning environment. As students learn from their teachers, they also observe and internalize important life lessons that contribute to their personal growth. Based on the aforementioned factors, the author is interested in conducting a classroom action research with the title "Improving Critical Thinking Skills and Tolerance of Fourth-Grade Students in Islamic Education Lessons Using the Question-and-Answer Method at Elementary School 27 Limau Asam." This research aims to contribute positively to the development of more effective teaching models and improve the quality of education, particularly in the area of Islamic education in elementary schools. Through this research, it is hoped that students' academic performance, critical thinking skills, and attitudes toward tolerance will improve, leading to better outcomes in their overall development.

#### METHODS

This study uses the classroom action research method. Classroom action research is a method of observation in which teaching and learning activities are deliberately implemented and occur within a classroom simultaneously. It involves a systematic approach where the teacher and researcher collaborate to observe, assess, and improve the teaching process, with the goal of achieving more effective learning outcomes. The method enables reflection on teaching practices and the development of strategies to address specific issues within the classroom environment. The research is designed to enhance both the teaching approach and the students' overall learning experiences. In this research, variables are categorized into independent and dependent variables. Independent variables are the factors that influence or cause changes in the dependent variables. According to the Indonesian Dictionary, an independent variable is something that can change, vary, or differ, such as quality or price. The independent variable in this study is the implementation of problem-based learning models. This model encourages students to engage actively with real-world problems that are relevant to the material being taught. By solving these problems, students can develop critical thinking skills and foster tolerance, which is essential in the context of their education.

The problem-based learning model provides students with opportunities to address actual issues they encounter, requiring them to think critically and creatively. This approach emphasizes active learning, where students do not passively absorb information but engage in collaborative problem-solving activities. It is expected that this model will help students develop the necessary skills to approach problems with a logical and systematic mindset while also increasing their tolerance towards others. By discussing and finding solutions to issues, students can learn to respect diverse perspectives and foster an inclusive attitude. On the other hand, dependent variables are those whose values are influenced by the independent variables in the research. In other words, the dependent variable is the one the researcher is trying to understand or measure in response to the independent variable. These variables are often referred to as outcomes or results of the changes caused by the independent variables. In this study, the dependent variables are critical thinking skills and tolerance attitudes of the students. Critical thinking refers to the ability to analyze, evaluate, conclude, and solve problems in a logical, systematic, and creative manner. It involves evaluating information, questioning assumptions, and making well-reasoned judgments.

Tolerance, in this context, refers to the attitude of respecting, appreciating, and accepting differences in opinions, beliefs, cultures, or religions. This attitude is crucial in fostering an inclusive and harmonious environment, both within the classroom and beyond. Students who develop tolerance are better equipped to engage with others in a respectful and constructive manner. The aim of this research is to determine whether the implementation of problem-based learning models can improve both critical thinking skills and tolerance attitudes among fourth-grade students in Islamic Education lessons, specifically in the study of the Qur'anic chapter Surah At-Tin. The research aims to contribute to the enhancement of students' critical thinking abilities by applying a problem-based learning model.

This model has been shown to be effective in various educational settings, as it challenges students to think critically and to apply their learning to real-world scenarios. By engaging with problems that are relevant to their lives, students are more likely to see the value in their education and to develop skills that are applicable beyond the classroom. Furthermore, this model encourages students to work collaboratively, enhancing their ability to communicate and solve problems as a group, which is an important aspect of both critical thinking and tolerance. To explore the relationship between problem-based learning and the development of critical thinking and tolerance, the study will observe the effects of this learning model on the students' behavior and performance. Through the implementation of various problem-solving activities, the study aims to determine how effectively the model fosters critical thinking skills and whether it contributes to the development of more tolerant attitudes among students. The results of this study could offer valuable insights into how teaching practices can be improved to better serve the needs of students, particularly in the context of Islamic Education.

Additionally, the study seeks to understand the factors that influence the success of the problem-based learning model in promoting critical thinking and tolerance. Various elements, such as the teacher's role, the structure of the classroom environment, and the resources available for learning, will be examined to determine their impact on the effectiveness of the model. The teacher's ability to guide students through problem-solving activities, to encourage open discussion, and to create a supportive learning environment is crucial for the success of this approach. A well-structured classroom environment that promotes collaboration and discussion can enhance the effectiveness of problem-based learning. Another important aspect of this study is the integration of diverse teaching resources to support the problem-based learning model.

The use of multimedia, such as videos and interactive materials, can enrich the learning experience by providing visual and auditory stimuli that appeal to different learning styles. By incorporating these resources, the teacher can help students grasp complex concepts more effectively and engage them in deeper discussions. The combination of traditional and modern teaching tools can create a dynamic learning environment that keeps students interested and motivated. Moreover, this research will also examine the impact of the teacher's attitude and teaching style on the students' development of critical thinking and tolerance. A teacher who demonstrates enthusiasm for the subject matter, fosters an open and respectful atmosphere, and actively engages students in discussions can have a profound influence on student learning. The teacher's role as a facilitator, rather than merely a source of information, is essential in guiding students toward greater independence and critical engagement with the material.

The research will involve the active participation of the students, who will be asked to engage with problem-based learning tasks both individually and in groups. The students will be encouraged to reflect on their learning experiences, to discuss the problems they encounter, and to share their solutions and ideas with their peers. By working together to solve problems, students will develop not only critical thinking skills but also a sense of empathy and understanding toward others, as they learn to appreciate diverse perspectives and approaches to problem-solving. Throughout the course of the research, data will be collected through observations, interviews, and assessments to evaluate the impact of the problem-based learning model on students' critical thinking and tolerance. These data will help to identify any changes in students' behavior, attitudes, and performance as a result of the intervention. The findings of the research will be analyzed to determine whether the problem-based learning model can be considered an effective approach for improving critical thinking and tolerance in the context of Islamic Education.

The research will also provide insights into how the problem-based learning model can be adapted to suit the specific needs of fourth-grade students in the context of Islamic Education. This includes exploring ways to integrate relevant real-world problems and issues into the lessons, as well as ensuring that the content is age-appropriate and aligns with the learning objectives. By tailoring the model to the specific needs of the students, the teacher can enhance the overall effectiveness of the learning process. The ultimate goal of this research is to contribute to the improvement of teaching practices in Islamic Education and to provide evidence-based recommendations for enhancing students' critical thinking and tolerance. If the study finds that the problem-based learning model is successful in achieving these outcomes, it could serve as a model for other educators to adopt in their own classrooms. By encouraging students to think critically, engage with real-world issues, and develop a more tolerant attitude toward others, the research hopes to promote a more inclusive and thoughtful educational experience for all students. In conclusion, this study aims to explore the effectiveness of the problem-based learning model in improving critical thinking and tolerance among fourth-grade students in Islamic Education lessons. By examining the relationship between these variables and assessing the impact of various teaching strategies, the research will provide valuable insights into how teaching methods can be adapted to better meet the needs of students and improve their overall educational experience. Through this study, the hope is to contribute to the development of more effective and inclusive teaching practices that will benefit students both academically and socially.

## RESULTS

The results of the study on improving critical thinking skills and tolerance attitudes of students in Islamic Education lessons through the question-and-answer method in the fourth grade of SDN 27 Limau Asam were positive. The research was conducted with the aim of examining the impact of problem-based learning, specifically using the questionand-answer approach, on the students' ability to think critically and their attitude towards tolerance. Before the implementation of the question-and-answer method, the students showed limited engagement in class discussions and often struggled with problem-solving tasks. Their critical thinking skills were underdeveloped, as they found it difficult to analyze information and draw conclusions from the material presented. Additionally, their tolerance levels were moderate, with some students expressing difficulty in accepting diverse perspectives during group activities. The data collected during the preintervention phase indicated that many students were passive participants in class and lacked the necessary skills to navigate discussions and problem-solving tasks effectively. After the introduction of the question-and-answer method in the classroom, significant improvements were observed. The students became more engaged in discussions and demonstrated increased participation. They were encouraged to ask questions, share their thoughts, and reflect on different viewpoints presented by their peers. This active engagement facilitated the development of their critical thinking skills, as they learned to analyze problems more systematically and offer logical solutions based on their understanding of the material.

Furthermore, the tolerance attitudes of the students also improved. During group work and class discussions, students exhibited more respect for each other's opinions and were more willing to accept differing viewpoints. They began to value the diversity of perspectives and engaged in more collaborative problem-solving. This shift was reflected in the post-intervention data, where students displayed a greater understanding of the importance of respecting others' beliefs and ideas. The classroom environment became more inclusive, with students working together harmoniously despite differences in opinion. The question-and-answer method was particularly effective in fostering these changes because it promoted active learning. By using real-world scenarios and prompting students to think critically about the material, the teacher was able to create an interactive and dynamic learning environment. Students were not only required to think deeply about the content but also to communicate their ideas effectively, thus enhancing both their cognitive and social skills. In addition to the question-and-answer method, the use of multimedia resources, such as videos, also played a key role in improving students' understanding of the subject matter. These resources made the learning experience more engaging and accessible, helping students visualize complex concepts and relate them to their everyday lives. The integration of different learning tools, including visual and auditory materials, complemented the question-and-answer method, enriching the overall learning experience.

The data collected through observations, interviews, and student assessments showed a noticeable increase in the students' ability to analyze and evaluate information. They demonstrated greater clarity in explaining their reasoning and were able to defend their opinions with logical arguments. This improvement in critical thinking was not only reflected in their academic performance but also in their approach to problem-solving in everyday situations. The results of the study highlight the effectiveness of the questionand-answer method in enhancing critical thinking and tolerance among students in the context of Islamic Education. The students' ability to engage in meaningful discussions, analyze complex issues, and accept differing viewpoints significantly improved after the intervention. This suggests that the question-and-answer method is a valuable pedagogical tool that can be used to foster essential life skills, such as critical thinking and tolerance, in students. In conclusion, the research indicates that implementing the question-and-answer method in Islamic Education classes is an effective strategy for improving students' critical thinking skills and tolerance attitudes. The study demonstrates that active participation in discussions, combined with the use of multimedia resources, creates an environment where students can thrive academically and socially. Based on these findings, it is recommended that other educators consider incorporating similar teaching methods into their classrooms to promote the development of these crucial skills in students.

## DISCUSSION

The discussion on the research results that explore improving critical thinking skills and tolerance attitudes of fourth-grade students in Islamic Education classes at SDN 27 Limau Asam through the question-and-answer method can be elaborated further by understanding the various aspects of how this method impacted the students. The study set out to investigate how the application of problem-based learning, specifically through an active questioning approach, would affect students' cognitive and social development. Throughout the research, various observations and assessments were made to ensure that the changes were significant and measurable. In the initial phase of the study, students were observed to display a limited ability to critically analyze information. They struggled with interpreting the material, and their engagement in classroom discussions was minimal. Many students found it challenging to express their opinions clearly and lacked the necessary skills to evaluate information critically. At the same time, their responses to diversity in opinion and perspective were often indifferent, with some students exhibiting

difficulty in accepting or respecting the viewpoints of their peers. Critical thinking is a fundamental skill in education, and its importance cannot be overstated. The ability to analyze, evaluate, and make informed decisions is crucial not only for academic success but also for personal development. Critical thinking allows students to engage with the world around them, assess information critically, and form independent judgments. In this study, the lack of critical thinking among students was evident, as they tended to accept information without questioning or considering its implications. This passive approach to learning hindered their ability to explore the material in depth and limited their understanding of complex concepts.

Tolerance, on the other hand, is a key component of social development. In a classroom setting, tolerance allows students to engage with their peers in a respectful manner, even when there are differences in opinions, beliefs, or backgrounds. It fosters an inclusive environment where students feel valued and heard. However, before the intervention, the tolerance levels among students were moderate at best. Some students were hesitant to accept ideas that differed from their own, and group discussions often became limited to those who shared similar views. The intervention in this study, which focused on implementing the question-and-answer method in Islamic Education classes, aimed to address these challenges by encouraging active participation, critical inquiry, and respectful dialogue. The question-and-answer approach encourages students to ask questions, challenge assumptions, and seek clarification on various aspects of the material being taught. This method creates an interactive learning environment where students are not passive recipients of information but active participants in the learning process.

By introducing problem-based learning through the question-and-answer method, the teacher aimed to encourage students to think more critically about the material. This approach encourages students to consider real-world problems that are relevant to the subject matter and prompts them to use their critical thinking skills to analyze and solve these problems. The teacher guided the students in exploring various solutions, evaluating their ideas, and drawing conclusions based on logical reasoning. This process not only helped to improve their problem-solving abilities but also fostered a deeper understanding of the material. In addition to critical thinking, the question-and-answer method helped to improve students' tolerance attitudes. During class discussions, students were encouraged to share their thoughts and listen to the perspectives of others. This open dialogue helped to create a more inclusive and respectful classroom environment. As students engaged in discussions, they learned to appreciate the value of diverse opinions and became more open-minded toward different viewpoints. This shift in attitude was particularly noticeable during group work activities, where students collaborated and worked together to solve problems. The ability to accept differing opinions and ideas is an essential aspect of developing tolerance, and this method provided the students with ample opportunities to practice this skill.

The improvement in critical thinking and tolerance was further facilitated by the use of multimedia resources, such as videos. These resources provided visual and auditory stimuli that enhanced students' understanding of the material and made the learning experience more engaging. Videos allowed students to visualize complex concepts and relate them to real-world situations. By incorporating multimedia into the classroom, the teacher was able to appeal to different learning styles, which contributed to a more effective learning experience. As students became more engaged in the learning process, their participation in classroom discussions increased. They were more willing to ask questions, seek clarification, and share their thoughts with the class. This active participation was crucial in developing their critical thinking skills. The more students engaged with the material, the better they were able to analyze it, identify key issues, and come up with reasoned conclusions. This shift from passive to active learning marked a significant change in the students' approach to learning and their overall academic performance. One of the most striking outcomes of the study was the change in students' tolerance attitudes. At the beginning of the intervention, students were somewhat

resistant to considering perspectives that differed from their own. However, as the research progressed, it became clear that students were beginning to engage with each other's ideas in a more respectful and open-minded manner. The question-and-answer method, along with group discussions, encouraged students to listen actively to their peers and appreciate the diversity of opinions within the classroom. The use of the questionand-answer method also helped students to develop a deeper understanding of the material. By asking questions and discussing the material with their peers, students were able to explore the content from multiple angles. This collaborative learning environment allowed them to expand their knowledge and think more critically about the subject matter. The teacher played a key role in facilitating these discussions, guiding students to reflect on their responses and encouraging them to consider alternative viewpoints. In terms of academic performance, the results were also positive. Students who participated in the question-and-answer activities demonstrated a greater ability to analyze information, make connections between different concepts, and apply their learning to new situations. They were able to solve problems more effectively and articulate their reasoning with clarity. These improvements in academic performance were reflective of the students' enhanced critical thinking skills, which were directly influenced by the active engagement fostered by the question-and-answer method. The study also highlighted the importance of the teacher's role in creating a positive and engaging learning environment. The teacher was not simply a provider of information but a facilitator who encouraged students to think critically, ask questions, and engage with the material in a meaningful way. The teacher's ability to guide students through the learning process and create opportunities for discussion was instrumental in helping students develop both critical thinking and tolerance.

The findings of this study underscore the importance of adopting teaching methods that encourage active learning and promote social skills such as tolerance. The question-and-answer method proved to be an effective strategy for improving critical thinking and tolerance among students. By creating an interactive classroom environment where students were encouraged to ask questions, share ideas, and listen to one another, the teacher was able to foster a more inclusive and respectful learning atmosphere. In conclusion, the research indicates that the implementation of the question-and-answer method in Islamic Education classes can lead to significant improvements in both critical thinking skills and tolerance attitudes. The study provides valuable insights into how problem-based learning, when combined with active participation and collaborative problem-solving, can help students develop essential cognitive and social skills. The positive changes observed in students' engagement, critical thinking abilities, and tolerance attitudes highlight the effectiveness of this teaching approach in fostering a more inclusive and thoughtful classroom environment. This research also suggests that the question-and-answer method can be applied in other subjects and grade levels to enhance students' learning experiences. By encouraging students to engage actively with the material and with each other, educators can create a more dynamic and inclusive classroom environment. As the study demonstrates, fostering critical thinking and tolerance is not only beneficial for academic success but also for the development of wellrounded individuals who are prepared to navigate the complexities of the world around them. Future research could further explore the long-term effects of the question-andanswer method on students' critical thinking and tolerance.

It would be valuable to examine how these improvements are sustained over time and whether they translate into other areas of students' academic and personal lives. Additionally, researchers could investigate how different teaching strategies, when combined with the question-and-answer method, can further enhance students' cognitive and social development. In summary, the research findings confirm that the question-andanswer method is a valuable teaching strategy for enhancing critical thinking and tolerance in students. The active engagement fostered by this approach encourages students to think deeply, analyze information critically, and appreciate the diversity of perspectives in the classroom. As educators continue to seek effective ways to improve student learning, the question-and-answer method offers a promising tool for creating a more inclusive and engaging educational experience.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results and analysis of the study, it can be concluded that the implementation of the question-and-answer method in Islamic Education classes has significantly improved both the critical thinking skills and tolerance attitudes of the fourth-grade students at SDN 27 Limau Asam. Before the intervention, students displayed limited critical thinking abilities, with many struggling to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information. Data collected from pre-intervention assessments indicated that students showed minimal engagement in classroom discussions and had difficulty solving problems related to the material. Additionally, the students' tolerance levels were moderate, with some displaying reluctance to accept differing viewpoints during group activities. Observations and initial assessments showed that many students were passive in their learning approach and lacked the skills needed for meaningful interactions in class. However, after the introduction of the question-and-answer method, significant improvements were observed. Post-intervention data indicated an increase in active student participation during class discussions. Students became more engaged and confident in asking questions, offering opinions, and discussing material with their peers. This active participation led to a noticeable enhancement in their critical thinking skills, as they were able to analyze the material more systematically, apply logical reasoning, and solve problems more effectively. In conclusion, the data collected throughout the study confirm that the question-and-answer method was highly effective in fostering both critical thinking and tolerance among the students. The intervention led to measurable improvements in student engagement, problem-solving abilities, and social interactions. Students not only developed the skills necessary to analyze information critically but also cultivated an inclusive attitude, respecting the opinions and beliefs of others. These findings highlight the value of active learning approaches, like the question-and-answer method, in promoting both cognitive and social development in students. The positive outcomes from this study suggest that such teaching strategies could be beneficial in other educational contexts as well.

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