Application of the Problem-Solving Method to Improve Critical Thinking Abilities in Social Studies Learning for Elementary School Students

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Abstract

Teaching, one of which is the problem-solving learning mein social studies learning in elementary schools places more emphasis on social sciences in studying social phenomena and problems that occur in society. Problems that occur today are that there are still many arguments that social studies learning is rote learning. However, in reality from social studies learning there are phenomena that can be explored by students, so that students can find real problems in the environment to use as learning and can improve students' ability to think critically in responding to these problems. Optimal development of critical thinking skills requires interactive classes. In order for learning to be interactive, the learning design must be attractive so that students can be actively involved in the learning process. Learning that develops critical thinking skills involves students as thinkers, not as someone being taught. The teacher acts as a mediator, facilitator and motivator who helps students in learning and not tthod where through the Problem-Solving method it is hoped that it can facilitate understanding of the subject matter provided and later can improve the quality of the learning process which can then improve students' critical thinking in social studies learning. This research aims to analyze the application of the problem-solving method to improve critical thinking abilities in elementary school students' social studies learning. The method used in this research is the literature study method. The results of the research show that the application of the Problem-Solving learning method emphasizes students' ability to solve a problem. In this way, students' critical thinking skills will continue to be trained.

Keywords: *Social Sciences, Critical Thinking, Problem-solving Method.*

INTRODUCTION

In general, teaching and learning activities are carried out by students in learning units. Based on this, the learning process is built to develop and improve students' critical thinking abilities, as well as increasing the ability to construct new knowledge as an effort to improve the best mastery of subject matter, especially social studies learning.

Social studies can be interpreted as the study of humans which is studied by students at primary and secondary school levels. Social Sciences is not a scientific field or academic discipline, but rather a field of study of social phenomena and problems (Sapriya, 2014: 7). Social studies have an important influence on students' intellectual, emotional, cultural and social development, which is able to improve critical thinking, attitudes and responsible behavior as individuals, community members, citizens and citizens of the world.

In social studies learning, the teacher acts as a motivator and facilitator and is able to guide and direct students to utilize the learning resources available around them.

Based on these components, social studies learning in elementary school places more emphasis on social sciences in studying social symptoms and problems that occur in society. The current problem is that there are still many arguments that social studies learning is rote learning. However, in reality, from social studies learning there are phenomena that students can explore, so that students can find real problems in the environment to use as learning and can improve students' ability to think critically in responding to these problems. With social studies subjects in elementary schools, students are expected to have knowledge and insight into the basic concepts of social sciences and humanities, have sensitivity and awareness of social problems in their environment, and have the skills to study and solve these social problems.

According to Paul in (Rositawati, 2018), critical thinking ability is a way of thinking that is considered unique but has a specific purpose so that a person can structuredly determine intelligence standards and apply criteria in thinking, construct thoughts, then direct them according to predetermined standards and

evaluate how effective the results of thinking are towards the objectives of the criteria and thinking standards (Afriansyah et al., 2020). The ability to think critically is one of the mathematical abilities that must be perfected in implementing mathematics learning (Rudianti, Aripin, & Muhtadi, 2021; Cahyani, Fathani, & Faradiba, 2023).

In fact, students' critical thinking abilities in some educational institutions in Indonesia are still categorized as low. This has been shown by research conducted by (Nuryanto, Zubaidah, & Diantoro, 2018) that critical thinking abilities are relatively low, reaching only 40.46%. However, the factors that influence the low levels in these schools are that learning is still dominated by teachers so that they do not train their students' critical thinking skills. The lack of critical thinking skills was also conveyed by (Hayati & Setiawan, 2022) that the critical thinking skills of elementary school students are relatively low. This is caused by students not being able to draw critical conclusions and using terms they do not understand and are ambiguous, resulting in misperceptions of the material being explained. So, it can be interpreted that critical thinking skills are still included in the cognitive abilities that must be optimized in mathematics learning (Rizti & Prihatnani, 2021; Ristiani & Maryati)

In learning, critical thinking skills are also very important. Students who can use these skills tend to be better able to understand and solve problems, and do better on tests and exams. Therefore, critical thinking skills need to be instilled from an early age. In a global work environment, critical thinking skills are very important in making decisions that have a big impact on the organization or company. Employees who have these skills can make smarter and more timely decisions, and identify and solve problems in more creative and innovative ways.

In the 21st century, students are required to master the skills of communication, collaboration, critical thinking and problem-solving, as well as creativity and innovation as a means of achieving success (Septikasari & Frasandy, 2018; Ashi et al, 2019). Problem-solving and critical thinking skills are very important to master, because they are one of the important competencies that must be possessed in entering 21st century life (Daryanto et al, 2017). Problem-solving ability is a student's ability to find a solution to a problem and implement it in real life. Lack of problem-solving abilities has a negative impact on students in mastering understanding of concepts and subject matter.

In a lesson, the teacher must adapt the learning model that will be used, of course this model must be commensurate with the teaching material. This will affect students, one of which is students' skills in critical thinking. In social studies learning, the appropriate model is Problem Based Learning (PBL) because it will make learning more active. In line with the thoughts of Herzon, Budijanto, & Utomo who explain that the Problem Based Learning model has stages, namely students are faced with a problem which will later be answered by summarizing various answers from the group (Herzon, H et al., 2018). So, by using this PBL model students can think critically about the problems they face.

According to Qomariyah, learning that embeds problems in life will make students think critically and make learning more meaningful (Qomariyah, E, 2017). By establishing a problem-based learning model, students will be able to develop skills, improve memory and increase self-confidence. Apart from that, students are guided to be able to think critically and improve their analytical skills so as to form independent character.

"The problem-solving method is the use of methods in learning activities by training students to face various problems, whether personal or individual problems or group problems to be solved alone or together" in (J. Pendidikan et al., 2015). It is very clear that children will solve their problems using simple methods. Children's ability to solve problems (problem-solving) can also improve their cognitive abilities both in their ability to think and their creativity in solving their own problems, they still need help from parents or teachers in applying problem-solving to everyday problems. Abu Ahmadi (2005) in (Utami et al., 2017) said that in solving new problems faced, the ability to think is needed.

Therefore, it is natural that schools are responsible for preparing students by using problem-solving methods in teaching various subjects. This method focuses activities on students. So, it is different from the lecture method which prioritizes the teacher. At this level, students learn to solve problems, respond to stimuli that describe or evoke problematic situations, using various rules that they have mastered. According to John Dewey (in Abu Ahmadi, 2005) quoted from (Utami et al., 2017) learning to solve this problem takes place as follows: the individual realizes the problem when he is faced with a situation of doubt and ambiguity so that he feels difficulty.

The problem-solving method is a method that is faced with a problem condition and must find a number of ways to solve the problem. In this case, students must have the ability to classify laws and relate them to the environment. Learning Aqidah Akhlak is one of the curricula taught at the secondary level of education, which has a big influence on student behavior, both in life at school and outside school.

According to researchers, the problem-solving method is a method used by teachers in teaching and learning activities to train students to face various real problems, through a process of searching for data to draw conclusions. So, it can improve student learning outcomes.

There are various kinds of learning methods that are suitable to be applied to social studies learning, one of which is the problem-solving method using series of image media because this method has several advantages, including: directing students to think scientifically, critically and analytically and students will be able to act actively and independently in facing problems. real world. Apart from that, media support in learning is very important, one of which is series image media. Serial image media has advantages, including: clarifying the presentation of the message so that it is not too verbal, able to overcome limitations of space, time and sensory power, able to overcome the passive nature of students so that children will be more active and allow interaction between students and the learning environment.

According to Istiqoma (2015), the problem-solving learning method is a learning method or procedure to achieve certain goals that solves a problem and is not just a teaching method but also a method of thinking for students to solve problems (Muh. Rasyid, 2020). Meanwhile, according to Polya (2002) problem-solving learning methods have the advantage that students can practice analytical and critical thinking skills; familiarize students with facing problems; be a stimulus to develop students' thinking patterns actively, creatively and comprehensively; provide opportunities for students to implement the knowledge they have in the real world.

The advantages of the problem-solving method are: a) Making school education relevant to life, especially the world of work, b) The teaching and learning process through problem-solving can accustom students to face and solve problems skillfully, when facing problems 17 in family life , socializing, and working in the future, an ability that is very meaningful for human life, c) Stimulates the development of students' abilities creatively and comprehensively, because in the learning process students carry out a lot of mental processes by highlighting problems from various aspects in order to find solutions.

Based on research by Nurlaela et al. (2019) entitled "APPLICATION OF THE PROBLEM-SOLVING METHOD TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING ABILITY IN SOCIAL SCIENCE LEARNING" it is known thatIn the learning process, there is a need for learning planning, one of which is a learning model to help teachers realize the achievement of learning objectives. The use of methods in learning is highly prioritized in order to create enthusiasm for learning, motivation to learn, and stimulate students to play an active role in the learning process. Through the Problem-Solving method, it is hoped that it will facilitate understanding of the subject matter provided and will later be able to improve the quality of the learning process which can then improve students' critical thinking in social studies learning. The problem-solving method is a way of presenting lessons by encouraging students to look for and solve problems or issues in order to achieve teaching goals. This method was created by an American

educational expert named John Dewey. This method is called the problem method, while Crow & Crow in their book Human Development and Learning call this method the problem-solving method. The problem-solving method is a method of learning activities by training students to face various problems, both personal problems and group problems to be solved individually or collectively with the aim of training students' skills in thinking critically.

Based on the background description above, researchers are interested in studying "APPLICATION OF THE PROBLEM-SOLVING METHOD TO IMPROVE CRITICAL THINKING ABILITY IN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' Social Studies LEARNING" with the aim of collecting facts to obtain answers to the research so that it can provide benefits to researchers.

METHOD

The research method used in this research is literature study. According to Sugiyono (2018) the literature study process will involve the following steps. (a) Source Identification: Researchers will identify literature sources that are relevant to the topic of applying problem-solving methods to improve critical thinking skills in elementary school social studies learning. In this case, the literature sources used are scientific articles available online. (b) Source Selection: The researcher will evaluate the identified literature sources to ensure that they are appropriate to the research focus. Searching for sources in this research uses 1 type of database, namely Google Scholar. The search keywords used were "Application of problem-solving methods to improve critical thinking skills in elementary school social studies learning", "Application of problem-solving methods to improve critical thinking skills in elementary school social studies learning" to obtain relevant articles. After filtering the articles, scientific articles were obtained that discussed the application of problem-solving methods to improve critical thinking skills in elementary school social studies learning (c) Literature Analysis: Researchers will analyze the selected literature carefully, identifying the main findings and relevant theories in Application of

problem-solving methods to improve critical thinking skills in elementary school social studies learning. (d) Synthesis of Findings: at this stage, the researcher will synthesize the findings from the literature that has been analyzed to form a more complex understanding regarding the application of problem-solving methods to improve critical thinking skills in elementary school social studies learning. The population in this study are scientific articles that discuss the application of problem-solving methods to improve critical thinking skills in elementary school social studies learning, while the samples in this study are articles selected for further review.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Social Studies Learning

With social studies subjects in elementary schools, students are expected to have knowledge and insight into the basic concepts of social sciences and humanities, have sensitivity and awareness of social problems in their environment, and have the skills to study and solve these social problems.

Social Sciences (IPS) is an integration of various branches of social sciences, namely: sociology, history, geography, economics, politics, law and culture. Social science is formulated on the basis of reality and social phenomena. Based on the description stated above, it can be stated that the social studies included in this study/research are "a subject that examines social life whose material is based on the study of history, geography, economics, sociology, anthropology and state administration". Thus, the Social Sciences studied in this research also have the same meaning as social studies (Eka Yusnaldi, 2019:6).

Social studies learning which is the implementation of social studies education in schools must be carried out to achieve the goals of social studies education itself. Therefore, social studies learning must be taught by teachers who are qualified in the field of social studies, namely with a social studies educational background, not from a scientific discipline as is currently the case in most schools, namely social studies learning is taught or taught by teachers

who do not have an educational background. IPS, but from other scientific disciplines. However, in terms of applying learning concepts, in this case social studies learning, the teacher's level of maturity, competence and experience must be taken into account, so that the objectives of any learning will certainly be achieved. As explained by Suyono and Harianto (2013: 2), the level of maturity, competence and experience of a teacher is still needed in situations that place greater emphasis on the application of learning concepts.

The existence of social studies subjects from elementary school level to first level schools aims to enable students to gain knowledge and insight into various basic concepts of social sciences and humanities, so that the output results in the future students have awareness of various problems in the environment to provide benefits in overcoming social problems in particular. The implementation of social studies learning is not only the transformation of a concept but also places more emphasis on the field of education, so that you gain additional knowledge about attitudes and behavior, values and good character. This social field is more about relationships between people in their environment.

Social studies learning develops students to form citizens who have broad knowledge, have values, can behave well and can play a role in community life by upholding a democratic system which is studied from social, economic, historical, geographical and humanities aspects which are interconnected and complement each other, this refers to the source of the National Council for The Social Studies (Chapin, in Ichas, et al, 2006). The functions of social studies learning include:

1. Providing basic knowledge, both to continue to a higher level of education and to apply it in everyday life.
2. Develop skills in developing social studies concepts.
3. Instill a scientific attitude and train students in using scientific methods to solve the problems they face.
4. Make students aware of the power of nature and all its beauty so that students are encouraged to love and glorify their creator.
5. Fostering students' creative and innovative powers.
6. Helping students understand new ideas or information in the field of Science and Technology (IPTEK).
7. Cultivate oneself and develop students' interest in social studies (Ishack in Winataputra, 2007).

Social studies education is currently faced with efforts to improve the quality of education, especially the quality of Human Resources (HR), so that the existence of social studies education can truly develop understanding of concepts and critical thinking skills.

Critical thinking

Critical thinking is a thinking skill that uses basic thinking processes, to analyze arguments and generate insight into each meaning and interpretation, develop coherent and logical reasoning patterns, understand the assumptions underlying each position, provide a reliable presentation model, summary and convince.

According to Van Gelder & Wilingham (in Kauchak, 2012), critical thinking can be defined in various ways, but the essence of this definition includes a person's ability and tendency to make and carry out assessments of conclusions based on evidence, so critical thinking is very important because it is used to make decisions for the right reasons.

Critical thinking is the ability to observe, analyze and evaluate previously acquired knowledge based on logical reasoning (Nashar, 2021).

According to Richard W. Paul, quoted by Fisher (2011), critical thinking is an intellectually disciplined process where a person actively and skillfully understands, applies, analyzes, synthesizes and evaluates various information collected or taken from his experiences, observations, reflections, reasoning, or communication carried out by Shoffa et al., (2022) stated that critical thinking is a mental activity carried out to evaluate the truth of a statement. The indicators of critical thinking ability are: (1) providing a simple explanation (elementary clarification); (2) building basic skills (basic support); (3) concluding (inference);

(4) provide further explanation (advance clarification); (5) organize strategies and tactics (strategies and tactics).

The purpose of critical thinking is to put more emphasis on students having a deep understanding, understanding, studying and expressing an event or solving a problem and making decisions.

According to Susanto (2013: 125) indicators in critical thinking related to subject matter are:
1. Provide a simple explanation, which includes: a) focusing the question; b) analyze questions; and c) ask and answer about an explanation or challenge.
2. Build basic skills, which include: a) considering whether sources are trustworthy; b) observe and consider a report on the results of the observation.
3. Concluding, which includes: a) deducing and considering the results of the deduction; b) induce and consider the results of the induction; and c) create and determine the value of the consideration.
4. Provide further explanation, which includes: a) defining terms and considering definitions in three dimensions; b) identify assumptions.
5. Organize strategies and tactics which include: a) determining actions; b) interact with other people.

In critical thinking, students are required to use certain appropriate cognitive strategies to test the reliability of ideas, solve problems, and overcome shortcomings. This ability is important to develop in students, considering that critical thinking skills influence learning achievement and help students understand social studies concepts in depth, especially regarding social problems in the local environment.

Problem-solving method

The problem-solving method or Problem-solving is one of the methods used in the teaching and learning process by training students to deal with existing problems, both individual problems and group problems that can be solved independently or together (Utami et al., 2017). According to (Pudjawan & Ganesha, 2017) one of the learning methods, in this case Problem-solving, is the method used to develop and implement students' understanding or abilities by actively thinking in order to find a way out or resolve a problem. Problem-solving is not just a teaching method, but a thinking method (Lestari, 2020). Because through problem-solving, children try to learn to think in other ways, starting with identifying problems, solving them, and drawing conclusions (Sutarmi & Suarjana, 2017). Even though this method is not easy, students must be trained to always think creatively. Problem-solving methods can be given individually or in groups and are designed to foster creative thinking in children (Pramestika et al., 2020).

The problem-solving method is learning that solves problems through scientific, rational and systematic methods from the results of thinking to obtain essential knowledge and concepts from learning material to find a solution to a problem.

Learning with problem-solving aims to develop students' abilities by using thinking (ratio) as widely as possible to maximize their comprehension power. To train students' thinking skills, students will generally use the principles of rational thinking as a reference for gaining understanding in answering questions and problems (Galuh, 2020; Diva & Purwaningrum, 2023). Using logic to foster rational thinking allows for cause-and-effect analysis, drawing conclusions, and even creating laws (theoretical rules) and predictions.

The problem-solving method has the following objectives: a. Developing thinking power, especially to find the cause and effect and purpose of a problem. This method trains students in approaching methods and methods of taking steps in solving a problem. b. Fostering a sense of responsibility given to students, through written or oral reports, making summaries, submitting work results, etc. c. Developing knowledge in students to achieve practical knowledge and skills that are valuable or useful for daily life needs. This method provides the basics of practical experience regarding how to solve problems and these skills can be applied to deal with other problems in society. Problem-solving trains students to obtain information and cross-check the validity of that information from other sources, as well as problem-solving. train students to solve problems by thinking critically. So, by applying this problem-solving method

students can better understand how to solve problems that will be faced in real life or outside the school environment. Each learning method has its own advantages and disadvantages, as does the problem-solving learning method.

This learning method has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantages of the problem-solving method include: (1) training students to deal with problems or situations that arise spontaneously; (2) students become active and take initiative and take responsibility for themselves; and (3) the direction of education at school is relevant to real life. Meanwhile, the disadvantages of the problem-solving learning method are: (1) it requires a long time, meaning it requires a longer time allocation compared to other learning methods; (2) students who are passive and lazy will (3) find it very difficult to determine problems that really suit the student's level of ability; and (4) it is very difficult to organize learning materials. The learning steps using problem-solving learning for students (Jauhar & Nurdin, 2017; Wartini et al, 2018; Juniarti & Renda, 2018) are: (1) the teacher explains the learning objectives; (2) the teacher provides a problem that needs to be solved; (3) the teacher explains the correct problem-solving procedures; (4) students look for literature that supports solving problems given by the teacher; (5) students determine several solutions that can be taken to solve the problem; and (6) students report assignments given by the teacher.

The characteristics of the Problem-solving learning model according to (Sukarni, 2021) are: 1. Asking questions or problems. Rather than simply organizing specific academic principles or skills, problem-based learning organizes teaching around questions and problems that are both personally important and meaningful to the child. 2. Focuses on interrelationships between disciplines. Although problem-based teaching may be centered on a particular subject, the problems to be investigated have been chosen that are truly real so that in solving them students review the problem from many subjects. 3. Authentic inquiry. Problem-based teaching requires children to carry out authentic investigations to find solutions to real problems. 4. Produce products or work and exhibit them. Teaching based.

There are 4 steps in Problem-solving proposed by (Pinahayu, 2017): Understanding the Problem (Understand), Making a Problem-solving Plan (Plan), Solving the Problem According to Plan (Solve), Checking Again (Look Back). Pinahayu (2017) points out several advantages and disadvantages in the Problem-solving learning model as follows: 1. Problem-solving is a pretty good technique for better understanding the lesson content. 2. Problem-solving can challenge students' abilities and provide satisfaction in discovering new knowledge. 3. Problem-solving can increase students' activities. 4. Problem-solving can help students transfer their knowledge to understand problems in real life.

CONCLUSION

Social Sciences has a helpful role in preparing democratic citizens by instilling national and civic values which are supported by mastery of social science disciplines. With the aim that students can have knowledge and insight into the basic concepts of social sciences and humanities, have sensitivity and awareness of social problems in their environment, and have skills study and solve social problems. An activity through thinking about ideas or notions related to a given concept or problem as an activity of analyzing ideas or ideas in a more perfect direction.

Critical thinking can also be understood as the activity of analyzing ideas or ideas in a more specific direction, distinguishing them sharply, selecting, identifying, studying and developing them in a more perfect direction. Critical thinking is a form of thinking that needs to be developed in order to solve problems, formulate conclusions, collect various possibilities, and make decisions when using all these skills effectively in the right context and type. Critical thinking is also an evaluating activity, considering the conclusions to be drawn to determine several supporting factors for making decisions.

The learning process emphasizes students' mental processes optimally, not just learning which only requires students to just

listen and take notes, but requires students to be active in thinking. The Problem-solving method of learning emphasizes students' ability to solve a problem. In this way, students' critical thinking skills will continue to be trained.

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