

# Implementation of Cooperative Learning Methods in Fiqh Subjects to Build Students' Critical Thinking at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Gamping

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## ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the implementation of the Cooperative Learning method in Fiqh learning and how its implementation can shape the critical thinking of students at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Gamping. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing data collection techniques that include interviews, observations, and documentation. The research subjects consisted of two Fiqh teachers and three students in grades 2 and 3. The results of the study show that the Cooperative Learning method is effective in increasing students' active participation, analytical skills, argumentation, and understanding of Fiqh materials. Strategies such as small group formation, discussions, presentations between groups, and the use of jigsaw and brainstorming approaches have been proven to encourage students to think critically. Despite obstacles such as individual differences and material characteristics, these were successfully overcome through a differentiated approach and the teacher's role as a facilitator. The findings suggest that the implementation of cooperative learning methods significantly enhances both understanding of Fiqh material and the development of critical and collaborative thinking, aligning with the demands of 21st-century learning. This study contributes to the pedagogical approach in Islamic education, particularly in fostering critical thinking and collaboration among students.

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## INTRODUCTION

Critical thinking skills are essential in the educational context, as they enable students to reason logically, analyze problems, and make informed decisions. These skills not only enhance students' ability to answer questions more accurately but also help them to solve problems efficiently and develop their full potential. Furthermore, critical thinking is vital in students' social lives, and therefore, it is crucial to cultivate these skills from an early age. Developing critical thinking is accompanied by improvements in other skills and attitudes, as noted by Nadhiroh S (2023).

The role of teachers is pivotal in fostering critical thinking among students. Teachers can employ various teaching strategies that are engaging and not centered solely on the teacher or restricted to textbooks and worksheets. In an ideal learning environment, students should be actively engaged in the learning process, enabling them to develop their knowledge and critical thinking abilities (Aulia, H., Nurhalimah, A., Mandailina, V., Mahsup, Syaharuddin, Abdillah, 2023).

Learning management systems that prioritize critical thinking help students recognize their potential, analyze problems, and explore new information, which in turn strengthens their skills for tackling real-life challenges (Liwaful, Liwaful, Mubaroqah, & Pairin, 2022).

Fiqh, a core component of Islamic Religious Education, demands not only rote memorization but also a deep understanding of sharia law provisions. Fiqh encourages students to think critically and engage with concepts that are relevant to modern societal changes. As noted by Ibrahim (2019), fiqh, in its essence, involves understanding and reflection. Therefore, critical thinking is indispensable for mastering fiqh, especially in today's dynamic world. Teachers can employ cooperative learning methods to enhance active participation and foster critical thinking, thereby promoting a deeper understanding of Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) material. This approach encourages students to engage in group work, learn from their peers, and find information from various sources, thus increasing their confidence and analytical skills (Najmina, 2017).

However, in Indonesia, education often remains teacher-centered, with students merely listening while the teacher explains concepts. This approach limits students' opportunities to develop critical thinking (Dewi, M. R., Mudakir, I., & Murdiah, 2016). To develop critical thinking, teachers must transform their role from being the sole source of knowledge to that of facilitators who manage diverse learning resources for students. According to Law No. 14 of 2005, teachers are tasked with educating, guiding, and evaluating students, which emphasizes their responsibility to foster independent thinking and problem-solving (Afsari, S., Safitri, I., Harahap, S.K., & Munthe, 2021).

SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Gamping is committed to quality education, producing a generation with noble character and competitive knowledge. One of the school's core missions is to implement PAIKEM (Active, Creative, Effective, and Fun Learning) through the 6C framework, which includes critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, compassion, and computational skills. According to Anugerahwati (Montessori, V. E., Murwaningsih, T., 2023), these 21st-century soft skills are integral to fostering well-rounded students. Cooperative learning is highly aligned with the 6C principles, as it emphasizes collaboration, communication, empathy, and shared responsibility—all of which are essential for developing critical thinking.

Various factors contribute to the lack of critical thinking skills among students, including the use of unvaried learning models that do not suit student characteristics (Zain, U. N. I., Affandi, L. H., & Oktaviyanti, 2022). Anisa also found that ineffective teaching methods hinder the development of students' talents, interests, and thinking abilities. This issue results in lower learning outcomes, as students fail to engage in deep analytical thinking (Anisa, A. R., Ipungkarti, A. A., & Saffanah, 2021). Research by Susilawati, indicated that a significant percentage of students fall into lower categories of critical thinking skills, with only a small portion exhibiting adequate or high-level critical thinking (Susilawati, E., Agustinasari, A., Samsudin, A., & Siahaan, 2020).

This situation underscores the need for educational reforms that prioritize developing critical thinking skills, which are crucial for students to succeed both academically and in life. Critical thinking skills enable students to solve problems, analyze issues, and make reasoned conclusions, as described by Cahyono (Cahyono, 2016). Furthermore, critical thinking is integral to the Competency Standards for Graduates in junior and senior high schools, as it empowers students to evaluate and prioritize information and make informed decisions. In today's competitive job market, the demand for individuals who can think critically and solve complex problems is growing, and such skills are crucial for students' future success (Astutik, P., & Hariyati, 2021).

This study aims to bridge the gap in the literature by examining how the implementation of cooperative learning in Fiqh education at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Gamping can enhance students' critical thinking skills. This research is significant not only for developing active learning strategies but also for providing practical insights for teachers and educational institutions on designing methods that foster collaboration, deep understanding, and critical thinking in the context of Islamic education. Through this approach, schools can better prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century by cultivating high-level thinking competencies that are essential for success in modern life (Syafitri, E., Armanto, D., & Rahmadani, 2021). Critical thinking also nurtures creativity, problem-

solving skills, and self-confidence, enabling students to face life's challenges with greater resilience and competence.

## METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, which is considered appropriate for exploring complex social phenomena such as the implementation of Cooperative Learning and its effect on students' critical thinking in Fiqh subjects. This method enables researchers to capture natural interactions, learning dynamics, and the cognitive processes of students in their natural context (Creswell, 2014). The research was conducted at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Gamping, utilizing purposive sampling, which involved two Fiqh teachers and three students from grades 2 and 3 who were actively involved in Cooperative Learning sessions.

Data were collected over a period of four weeks through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis (such as lesson plans and student worksheets). Interviews were designed to be both flexible and guided, ensuring the collection of rich data. To analyze the data, this study employed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles, M. B., & Huberman, 2020).

To enhance the credibility and validity of the findings, the study employed triangulation of data sources (teachers, students, and documentation), methods (interviews, observation, and documentation), and analyst perspectives through peer debriefing and expert validation. This approach ensures a deeper understanding and minimizes researcher bias in interpreting the impact of Cooperative Learning on students' critical thinking development.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Implementation of Cooperative Learning in Fiqh Subjects at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Gamping

The cooperative learning method is the proper approach to apply to students, as it aims to train and develop their critical thinking. This method not only focuses on the outcome of learning but also emphasizes the learning process itself, particularly in terms of social interaction, teamwork, and the development of students' communication skills. In this cooperative learning method, students develop a positive attitude of interdependence, enabling practical group work to take place. This situation encourages each member of the group to take responsibility seriously and actively learn, ensuring that all tasks, both individual and group, are completed effectively. This critical thinking is formed when students engage in discussions in small groups that encourage analysis activities. Students also learn to exchange ideas from different perspectives. They are faced with solving problems together.

Furthermore, students are required to play an active role in explaining the material they have learned from their small group to other groups. Critical thinking in the learning process aims to help students develop a structured and intelligent mindset for connecting various concepts to solve problems (Umam, 2018). This statement is in accordance with what was expressed by RYA, one of the Fiqh teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Gamping:

*"Of course, the implementation of this method can build students' critical thinking, especially for Fiqh lessons, but there is something that needs to be underlined, learning using the cooperative learning method is not applied every time learning, because in my personal opinion the use of the cooperative learning method itself cannot be used in every discussion, it can only be applied in certain discussions, which if students can discuss the material."* (RYA interview, April 22, 2025)

Indeed, this cooperative learning approach needs to be tailored to the material being taught, as it is considered that not all Fiqh subjects in junior high school are suitable for its implementation. Similar views and opinions were also experienced and felt by AU as a Fiqh teacher at the school; he also said the same thing:

*"Cooperative learning in fiqh learning is quite effective, because it can increase the activeness of students, train students to cooperate and interact with their classmates, but the implementation of cooperative learning cannot be applied to all fiqh materials, such as the practice of prayer and*

*ablution, which prioritizes practice. For materials that can be used using this cooperative learning method, such as the laws of fiqh, which are indeed very suitable for discussion, question, and answer."* (AU Interview, April 25, 2025)

As for the interviews conducted by the researcher with several 3rd and 2nd grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Gamping, named ANH, KSH, and DP, they argued that the cooperative learning method is considered more fun, exciting and not boring:

*"We find it more exciting, feel new and easier like that, and we also find it easier to understand the material."* (ANH interview, May 3, 2025)

*"It is fun, we are also told to learn the material ourselves, and we can also teach other friends."* (KSH interview, May 7, 2025)

*"I think with this method it is easy to understand the material, because it may be the explanation from other groups that is quite difficult to understand."* (DP interview, May 7, 2025)

What is interesting about the implementation of the cooperative learning method in Fiqh subjects at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Gamping is that this method is only given to students in grades 2 and 3 of junior high school. In contrast, for grade 1, it only uses ordinary small group work, this policy is taken considering the age of the different students, in other words adjusting to the capacity of the students themselves. Of course, with the hope that the material taught will be absorbed to the maximum, the two fiqh teachers are of the same opinion on this matter, AU revealed that *"if the 1st grade of junior high school is still fairly difficult to condition, maybe because they are in the transition phase from elementary to junior high school"* (AU interview, April 25, 2025). With the right approach, teachers can guide students in facing various challenges and encourage their growth holistically or comprehensively (Sianturi, N. P., Diarang, A., Loho, H., Rasjid, A., Agama, I., & Manado, 2024). Studies show that teachers who understand the stages of students' cognitive development can develop more effective learning strategies, such as implementing problem-solving methods and group discussions to encourage critical thinking skills (Santrock, 2020).

AU chose the cooperative learning method in Fiqh learning because it facilitates teachers in conveying material thoroughly. The cooperative learning method is also considered to make the classroom more lively, as students become more active and can play a good role. Additionally, they can learn independently by analyzing the material provided using this method. It is in line with RYA's view as a Fiqh teacher that:

*"What is clear is that this cooperative learning method makes the class more lively, of course it is different when the students only listen to me speak or use the lecture method, with the cooperative learning method I can create a more lively learning atmosphere, even though with a longer duration, but students become more active and play a role both in their own group2 and when explaining to other groups."* (RYA interview, April 22, 2025)

As for the responses from ANH, KSH, and DP students who took the Fiqh subjects taught by RYA and AU, who showed a positive attitude towards their teacher's statement, the three stated that they justified the statement made by their teacher:

*"Of course, we feel more active when teachers apply this cooperative learning method."* (ANH interview, May 3, 2025)

*"Being active, we can move instead of continuing to sit; we can also explain to other groups, so we do not feel sleepy."* (KSH interview, May 7, 2025)

*"Of course, we feel more active, we are required to be able to master the material and explain the material to other groups."* (DP interview, May 7, 2025)

The steps to apply the cooperative learning method to Fiqh subjects at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Gamping generally show similarities in their implementation. Both RYA and AU, as educators, have almost similar views and responses regarding the process of implementing the method, namely:

- a. Divide the class into small groups.
- b. Each group studied a different sub-chapter, all within the same chapter.
- c. Choosing the role of the chairman in each group.
- d. Study the material in each group.

- e. When they feel that they understand, students can report to the teacher.
- f. After the teacher ensures that each group member thoroughly understands the material, each group can teach the other group about the concepts they have learned.
- g. The teacher re-discusses the material more lightly.

The selection of the chairperson in each group can be chosen randomly or determined by the teacher. The primary difference between the implementation of RYA and AU lies in the election of the group leader. The two teachers have different views on this matter. RYA conducts a random selection of the chairman in the hope of fostering the *leadership* spirit in the selected students. The spirit of *leadership* should be instilled in students from an early age, enabling them to prepare well for modern times (Hidayatul Ula, n.d.). Meanwhile, the AU selects group leaders from students who have above-average scores, with the hope that they will be able to effectively lead their group members, resulting in more productive discussions.

In every implementation of a policy, there must be challenges, not only the challenge of policy decisions in government, but also in education; there are often many obstacles that need to be addressed to find solutions. The implementation of cooperative learning also experiences several obstacles and challenges. The following are the challenges and solutions that the researcher got through interviews with RYA and AU as Fiqh teachers. The challenges that the two teachers often experience include:

- a. Less active classes will still be asked to discuss as much as possible in their respective groups, and then the teacher can add individual assignments at the end.
- b. Teachers must act as facilitators for students to maintain a conducive learning environment.
- c. Teachers can go around to each group to make sure they have a good discussion.
- d. Teachers can request summaries from each group to ensure that each group is working on the assigned task.

However, every problem must have a solution to overcome it. The following solutions can maintain the effectiveness of the implementation of cooperative learning in Fiqh subjects, including:

- a. Less active classes will still be asked to discuss as much as possible in their respective groups, and then the teacher can add individual assignments at the end.
- b. Teachers must act as facilitators for students to maintain a conducive learning environment.
- c. Teachers can go around to each group to make sure they have a good discussion.
- d. Teachers can request summaries from each group to ensure that each group is working on the assigned task.

As for the challenges felt by students in the implementation of the cooperative learning method, which tend to be different when compared to the views of their teachers, the challenges experienced by ANH, KSH, and DP are:

*"Challenges do not come from teachers, challenges come from friends who are not able to explain the related material, our level of understanding depends on how other groups explain, but if there are students who have difficulties or feel that they are lacking in explaining the material, usually the teacher guides and asks to repeat to explain"* (ANH interview, May 3, 2025)

*"When other groups explain, it is hard to understand."* (KSH interview, May 7, 2025)

*"When there is a foreign language or it is difficult to understand, it becomes a challenge for us"* (DP interview, May 7, 2025)

Not only to Fiqh teachers, SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Gamping also provides full support to each subject teacher to apply the cooperative learning method when learning takes place, as conveyed by RYA, a Fiqh teacher, that:

*"There is indeed a demand from the school for the creation of lesson plans so that every time teaching to use a cooperative method, or small groups for discussion, but in reality not every time learning uses the discussion, group, or cooperative learning method"* (RYA interview, April 22, 2025)

Of course, this adjusts to the material being taught. Meanwhile, the form of support that AU feels Fiqh teachers require, in addition to creating lesson plans, is the provision of adequate

facilities, including TV and audio equipment in each class, which supports the implementation of this cooperative learning method. The advancement of information technology and globalization requires teachers to develop competencies relevant to the 21st century. These competencies include critical thinking skills, creativity, collaboration, communication, and digital literacy (Manik, 2024). AU added that:

*"In today's modern era, students are required to be more active and teachers are only facilitators."*  
(AU interview, April 25, 2025)

The cooperative learning method requires many students to discuss, which makes them feel more valued for their opinions. Discussions also help build students' critical thinking. The group discussion method emphasizes the active involvement of students, promoting increased participation, critical thinking, knowledge mastery, material understanding, and comprehensive learning (Pradika, 2019). Some success indicators related to changes in student behavior according to RYA and AU in Fiqh subjects during the implementation of cooperative learning include:

- a. The students are more enthusiastic and active in the discussion.
- b. The students do not sleep from the beginning to the end of the lesson.
- c. Students are encouraged to focus on learning and find solutions on how to explain the material to other groups.

The cooperative learning method employed in Fiqh learning is highly effective in fostering students' critical thinking. Based on the observations made by the researcher, the teacher required students first to discuss concepts that were difficult to understand in a group setting before seeking clarification from the teacher. With this, students are trained to think critically to find answers independently and not always depend on teachers. The results of the observation made by the researcher are in line with RYA's response as a Fiqh teacher:

*"If there are unfamiliar words or words that are difficult to understand, I am obliged to discuss them in their own group, only when one group does not understand, then it is allowed to ask the teacher."* (RYA interview, April 22, 2025)

This encourages them to find solutions together, strengthen teamwork, and build a sense of responsibility for the learning process. Meanwhile, the Air Force added:

*"Presentation activities and question and answer sessions between groups also encourage students to express their opinions, formulate meaningful questions, and respond to the views of other groups logically and openly."* (AU interview, April 25, 2025)

Discussions like this enrich students' understanding of the material, develop their argumentation skills, and broaden their horizons to various viewpoints. Thus, this method not only fosters critical thinking but also enhances the understanding of Fiqh material in a more in-depth and contextual manner. The implementation of active, innovative, creative, and effective Fiqh learning strategies helps students develop their critical thinking. Without employing reasonable and appropriate strategies, students will struggle to learn Islamic jurisprudence, commonly referred to as fiqh.

## **B. The Effectiveness of Cooperative Learning Builds Students' Critical Thinking in Fiqh Subjects at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Gamping.**

The ability to think critically in Fiqh subjects is essential, considering the Fiqh material in junior high school, which discusses numerous laws that occur in daily life. Fiqh is the result of the *ijtihad* of mujtahidin scholars, which allows for changes and differences of opinion in various issues (Komarudin, P., & Hidayat, 2019). Fiqh is often considered the result of thinking that arises from the interaction and dynamics of human life, as expressed by Cicero in Latin: *Ubi societas ibi ius*, meaning "where there is a society, there are laws" (Hilal, 2012). The ability to think critically is essential, especially in Fiqh learning, because Fiqh science is dynamic, diverse, and continually evolving to keep pace with the times. Fiqh is a human endeavor that can evolve, is fundamental, the law can change, and has many varieties, originating from the *ijtihad* of jurists as a result of

human understanding formulated by the Mujtahid (Nurhayati, 2018). As stated by RYA as a Fiqh teacher:

*"Critical thinking is not only necessary in fiqh, but also in all subjects, as well as in daily life. Without critical thinking skills, a person tends to receive information without analyzing or understanding its meaning and context well."* (RYA interview, April 22, 2025)

Meanwhile, AU as a Fiqh teacher, said the importance of critical thinking in fiqh lessons is:

*"It is essential, especially for contemporary fiqh materials that require students to think about how to solve problems using fiqh law in the modern era, so it is essential for students to think critically."* (AU interview, April 25, 2025)

In the context of Fiqih, critical thinking becomes even more important. It happens because humans are dynamic creatures, constantly evolving and learning from their experiences. As a result, humans, including Muslims, need to develop Islamic law that is relevant to the changing times, particularly in addressing contemporary issues that arise in today's society. Fiqh is not only limited to classical texts, but must also be able to respond to the development of the times, new problems, and modern situations that require relevant legal solutions. Therefore, various contemporary problems need to be solved through *ijtihad* activities. *Ijtihad*, resulting from the combination of human reasoning and revelation on the one hand, and social reality on the other, has demonstrated the elasticity and dynamics of Fiqh (Mustofa, 2019). Therefore, critical thinking enables students to analyze problems in depth and find solutions that align with the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). With this approach, students will be better prepared to face real-world challenges, both in understanding religious law and in solving problems analytically, based on the values in Fiqih.

In the implementation of a learning method, a qualified classroom strategy or management is, of course, necessary to enhance the effectiveness of the learning method. According to Syamsuar (Sholeh, 2023), with the right education strategy and management, a supportive environment can be created, innovation encouraged, and learning effectiveness increased. In cooperative learning, there are various effective strategies to trigger students' critical thinking. The two teachers proposed two effective strategies for cooperative learning. The RYA, as a Fiqh teacher, suggests the use of the *Jigsaw* approach, where students are divided into small groups and each group is given a different piece of material to learn. Afterwards, they gather to share their understanding with other groups. The *jigsaw method* is one of the models in the cooperative learning approach, which encourages students to be active and help each other in mastering the subject matter (Asda, Y., Madrasah, G., Negeri, A., Banda, M., Pocut, 2022). This approach requires that each student not only take responsibility for the material they are studying, but also for the learning outcomes that result from it. However, it must also be able to communicate information clearly to their peers, which encourages them to think critically and analyze the material more deeply.

Meanwhile, AU, as a Fiqh teacher, suggested using *brainstorming* as an effective approach strategy. In this method, teachers ask trigger questions designed to open up discussions and stimulate students' critical thinking. Aytac Gogus, as cited in Al-Samarraie and Hurmuzan (2018), Notes That *Brainstorming* is one of the techniques to foster group creativity, where ideas and thoughts are shared spontaneously among members to achieve a solution. AU, as a Fiqh teacher, explained:

*"The first question asked will trigger new questions from other learners, prompting them to dig deeper and think more critically about the material being discussed."* (AU interview, April 25, 2025)

The methods or strategies used by these two Fiqih teachers in assessing the effectiveness of cooperative learning methods, such as:

- a. Assess the level of understanding of each group related to the material from each sub-chapter that has been studied.
- b. Assess the level of activity of each group member in the discussion.

c. The results of the discussion or when students present to other groups.

The argumentation and analysis skills of students are significantly developed when teachers apply the cooperative learning method. In the observations conducted by researchers, students were seen working together in groups to study and discuss material, which allowed them to share their opinions, ask questions, and present their arguments. In the process of implementing this cooperative learning, students are encouraged to think more deeply about the topics discussed, including those related to Fiqh principles, which often require a complex understanding and critical analysis. RYA, as a Fiqh teacher, said:

*"This method further increases students' thinking and increases curiosity. The cooperative learning method helps students who are usually less focused become more focused. Because they are required to be able to convey and explain the material to their friends."* (RYA interview, April 22, 2025)

Meanwhile, the AU added:

*"This method is indeed quite helpful to improve the critical thinking skills of students; it is just that, for junior high school students, in terms of argumentation and analysis, they are not so deep. It is based on the fact that the fiqh material studied is still simple."* (AU interview, April 25, 2025)

The students also felt the same way with the responses of their two Fiqh teachers, ANH and KSH, revealing that:

*"It was quite helpful, because we were asked to study the material ourselves, then summarize the material, and we were asked to explain it to other groups"* (ANH interview, May 3, 2025)

*"Yes, of course, we are asked to understand the material more deeply, and we also have to discuss and try to explain to other groups in our own language"* (KSH interview, May 7, 2025)

The improvement of students' thinking skills through the cooperative learning method has increased significantly, which aligns with the researcher's findings from observations and interviews. When the researcher observed that students became more enthusiastic when the teacher divided them into small groups, and the class became more active instantly, it was because the implementation of the cooperative learning method was more engaging and less monotonous. (Syarnubi, 2022) Students became more enthusiastic and active when divided into small groups, engaging in intense discussions that included asking and answering questions. Active learning is a learning process that allows students to engage in more learning activities through close interaction with the subject matter, encouraging them to build and consolidate their own understanding (Imamah, n.d.). Compared to other methods, this cooperative learning method encourages students to think more critically, as it involves a range of learning activities, including analyzing material, reading, discussing, writing, presenting, and asking questions. It is in line with the response of the AU as a Fiqh teacher that:

*"So this method involves many learning activities, so that critical thinking skills are considered to have improved quite significantly compared to using other methods."* (AU interview, April 25, 2025)

The responses of ANH, KSH, and DP as students are also in line with their teachers' responses that:

*"All group members are more active, this is because one group is only filled with 3 to 4 people, and each group member must have a role to explain to the other groups. It encourages students to master the material that has been shared."* (ANH interview, May 3, 2025)

*"This method makes me think more critically, because we have to find our own material, then explain it to other groups, and try to understand the explanations from other groups"* (KSH interview, May 7, 2025)

*"I think this method is enough to make me think critically, because I read more and look for material myself"* (DP interview, May 7, 2025)

An indicator of the effectiveness of the cooperative learning method in fostering students' critical thinking in Fiqh subjects at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Gamping is that the implementation of cooperative learning methods shows students becoming more actively involved in the thinking



process. They not only accept and understand the material, but also begin to dig deeper, ask questions, and relate the material to real-life situations they encounter in everyday life. Critical thinking is a process of exploring, analyzing, combining, and formulating information to expand one's way of thinking, increase creativity, and encourage the courage to take risks (Surya, E., Syahputra, E., Simbolon, M., & Manullang, n.d.).

These activities are one of the signs that this method can encourage the development of critical thinking skills. One of the unique and prominent indicators of the effectiveness of the cooperative learning method in shaping students' critical thinking skills that the researchers found is the emergence of follow-up questions that are both unique and still relevant to real life. This phenomenon generally occurs when learners engage in small group discussions, which encourages them to explore the material more actively. There are several examples from RYA related to this indicator. He revealed that:

*"When I delivered material about aqiqah, especially about the provision of the number of animals slaughtered for boys and girls, various unique and critical questions arose from the student group, such as; What are the provisions if the child born is twin? If the twins are male and female, are the rules different for them? What should be done if the parents are not economically able to carry out aqiqah?" (RYA interview, April 22, 2025)*

These questions reflect the students' efforts to understand the material in a contextual and applicable manner. Asking questions can be considered a form of concern, active response, and engagement in interaction with the given subject matter (Hariyadi, 2014). It is evidence that cooperative learning methods provide students with an opportunity to develop critical reasoning through interaction, collaboration, and open discussion among group members.

However, not all students exhibit the same level of participation in the process of implementing the cooperative learning method; some still appear passive or lack confidence in expressing their opinions. It is this insecurity or feeling of insecurity that ultimately makes a child feel the need to hide their true identity behind a 'mask' so that others cannot see the other side they want to conceal (Andariska, O., & Fitriani, 2022). Therefore, a special strategy is needed from teachers to encourage the active involvement of all students in learning activities. To overcome students who tend to be passive or lack confidence in expressing their opinions, Fiqh teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Gamping usually apply several supportive and gradual approaches, as follows:

- a. For students who feel embarrassed or reluctant to speak in public, they are allowed to be accompanied by their close friends when expressing opinions or making presentations. This assistance is temporary and aims to build confidence slowly. Confidence is a crucial element in the development of students' personalities, as it is a driving and determining factor in the way students behave (Awaliyani, S., & Ummah, 2021).
- b. In group discussion activities, teachers often pair less active students with friends who are more communicative and accustomed to expressing their opinions. This strategy aims to create a supportive learning environment that encourages passive learners to become actively involved.
- c. If any student appears unfocused or does not participate in the discussion, the teacher will approach them directly and ask relevant questions about the material. This personalized approach is expected to arouse curiosity and increase their involvement in the learning process.

The implementation of the cooperative learning method in fiqh subjects challenges students to think critically, as this method indirectly triggers a competitive spirit within each group. In Islam, the concept of competitive culture is known as *fastabiqul khairat*, which translates to "competing in goodness." Everyone in an institution must adopt this competitive culture if it is to develop well (Latif Nawawi, 2021). Through this method, students feel responsible for themselves, and each group strives to excel in obtaining grades from teachers compared to other groups. It is where the competitive spirit between groups is formed; in other words, students compete in their academic performance. AU as a Fiqh teacher, explained that:

"Every group wants to be the best group. From the competitive nature between these groups, they will be challenged to be superior to other groups, so from here their critical thinking begins to form." (AU interview, April 25, 2025)

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of the cooperative learning method significantly contributes to the development of students' critical thinking skills in fiqh learning at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Gamping. Through a collaborative learning approach, students are not only actively engaged in discussions and idea exchanges but are also trained to analyze information, express opinions logically, and evaluate problems systematically. The effectiveness of this method is evident from increased student participation, the emergence of contextual critical questions, and their ability to connect lesson content with real-life situations. Implementation strategies, such as small group formation, sub-topic division, and role rotation, provide students with opportunities to strengthen their reasoning and higher-order thinking skills.

The contribution of this research lies in reinforcing the theoretical foundation that Islamic studies, particularly fiqh, can be integrated with 21st-century learning strategies that emphasize collaboration, communication, and problem-solving. Furthermore, this study presents a practical pedagogical model that can be adapted and replicated in other Islamic schools by taking into account student characteristics and curriculum content. Teachers play a vital role as facilitators in shaping a supportive and adaptive learning climate. Future studies are encouraged to investigate the long-term effects of this method on students' problem-solving abilities and the practical application of Islamic jurisprudence in contemporary contexts.

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