



**HISTORY EDUCATION AS A FOUNDATION FOR THE CRITICAL THINKING OF
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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Abstract

History education is not only concerned with the aspect of the time dimension but there are other things that can be taken from the value of history. This research is descriptive qualitative research using a combination of literature study methods and historical methods. The combined research model of James Schreiber and Kimberly Asner-Self regarding literature review studies with Kuntowijoyo's model of historical research studies. The researcher used steps from historical studies and a literature review to make this research seen from a more contemporary angle. Data analysis uses the historical method by criticizing the sources that will be used in writing. The research instrument in this paper is the researcher who collects the main focus and collects sources. The purpose of this study is to analyze and describe the important role of history education that can help become the foundation of students' critical thinking skills at the primary school level in Indonesia. The results of this study explain that history education needs to be given to students at the primary school level. Primary school students can be said to have the ability to interpret, analyze, evaluate, infer, and explain an event, especially in simple history education. The development of critical thinking skills in history education can be done by improving the good narrative skills of history teachers by inviting students to dive into the past. Teachers can visit places that have high historical heritage value and provide factual explanations in the context of the present. History education can help elementary school students understand an event that is not only about time but also important as a foundation for students' critical thinking to recognize events as a whole and be able to understand situations and information related to the environment around students.

Keywords: *History Education, Critical Thinking, Elementary School*

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INTRODUCTION

The field of study known as history focuses on events that occurred in the past. According to Decree Number 56/M/2022 issued by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, it would seem that

the study of history at the primary school level is included as a component of the topic of Natural and Social Sciences, which is introduced in class III (Kemdikbud, 2022). The application of learning about history, which is included in the Natural and Social Science curriculum, is included in the

Merdeka curriculum. Learning history is learning that can help people live their lives today because of experiences from the past, and it can benefit future generations through the value of having nationalist spirits in each person (Pramayogi, Puji, & Hartanto, 2019). Learning history itself is learning that can help humans live their lives now because of experiences from the past. According to a different school of thought, studying history is synonymous with teaching and learning activities that provide students with an overview of the way of life in ancient cultures and delve further into the significance of significant events (Yuhardi & Meri, 2022).

Along with the progression of the times, historical awareness has become an essential component that needs to be considered in the educational process. This is necessary so that it can continue to strengthen national ideology and a sense of love for the motherland in the spirit of togetherness living in inter-national life (Susanti, 2019). People may benefit in their day-to-day lives from the information they get from studying history, particularly concerning the national roots that contribute to the continued vitality of the nation's unity. History education in schools is one of the strategic steps to create harmony and foster national awareness, especially for elementary school students (Kartodirdjo, 2014). If national knowledge is not based on

strong historical roots, it will interfere with human daily life. To strengthen this national knowledge, history education in schools is one of the strategic steps to create harmony and foster national awareness.

Students are expected to develop their capacity for critical analysis as a natural byproduct of their history study. The ability to think analytically and critically will help one understand how events in the past relate to one's life in the present and how one's life will develop in the future. In addition, it is anticipated that studying history will assist in the development of intellectual capabilities and skills in comprehending a continuous process or a process of change that may occur in the surrounding community throughout the course of time (Utomo, 2020). In line with the findings of Utomo's study, the findings of other researchers were examined, which showed that history might help students become material for reflection that aids in social life by employing interpretation and transforming concepts received in previous settings and bringing them to contemporary situations. Utomo's findings did this. According to Hein and van Dooren's research, the process that students gain from previous knowledge may assist in increasing critical thinking to help identify acceptable answers (Hein & van Dooren, 2020).

The above explanation led to the developing research questions that will be addressed in this investigation. One of these questions is as follows: Why should students in elementary school be required to study history? How can primary school students increase their ability to think critically by studying historical events? Based on these two research questions, the aims of the research that are to be accomplished are to analyze and explain the significant role that studying history plays in contributing to the development of student's critical thinking abilities at the elementary school level.

METHOD

The research in question is of the descriptive qualitative kind. This study uses various research methods, including studies based on literature reviews and studies based on historical research. According to James Schreiber and Kimberly Asner-Self, a literature review is a comprehensive and critical analytical review that looks at ideas, theories, and other research on specific topics or things that lead to research questions that have previously been owned by researchers (James Schreiber, 2011). This review examines particular subjects or objects that lead to research questions previously owned by researchers.

According to a different point of view, a literature review study is a method that can be used by gathering sources related to the research topic and then analyzing those sources using descriptive analysis methods so that it can not only descriptively compile facts but can also provide an understanding and explanation of the research complex (Kulakat, Utami, & Wibowo, 2021). The researcher used the research model from Kuntowijoyo and their own to make their investigation into this topic more exhaustive. According to Kuntowijoyo, the writing process consists of a total of five distinct stages: the first of which is subject selection, followed by source collecting, source critique, interpretation, and finally, writing (Kuntowijoyo, 2003). Using Kuntowijoyo's technique enables the writer to view genuine instances of historical evidence, which may serve as a reflection for teachers and students about an occurrence that occurred in the context they are now studying. In addition, using Kuntowijoyo's research model assists in acquiring a wider variety of data sources, which can then be analyzed because it utilizes one of the processes: source criticism. The author uses this mix of models to generate writing that is both thorough and constructed in a modern style. The writing is based on sources that have been put through a

verification process, and it is written in an analytical-descriptive manner.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

History Education

The word "history" derives from the Arabic words "syajara," which means "to happen," "syjarah," which means "tree," and "syjarah an-nasab," which means "genealogical tree." History is derived from these words. In contrast, the word "history" comes from the Greek word "istor," which translates to "smart people" (Kuntowijoyo, 2013). According to Prayogi, history is a branch of the humanities that takes people and other aspects of society as its study target. It has narrative and descriptive qualities that call for using language to communicate effectively (Prayogi, 2021).

In addition, students in primary schools are taught about history as part of their curriculum. According to Kuntowijoyo, students are already acquainted with studying history by the time they are in primary school. According to Kuntowijoyo, students in primary school are exposed to a historical perspective via the lens of an aesthetic perspective, which emphasizes the significance of the values of love for struggle, heroes, country, and nation (Kuntowijoyo, 2013). The Merdeka Curriculum incorporates lessons on history throughout the study of several subjects, including science. Studying history at the

primary school level requires using a wide range of reference materials. It may assist students in developing their digital literacy despite the ease with which they can access technology and the internet (Hidayanti, 2021). This will allow students to avoid misinformation found on the internet.

History is the study of human beings, and it is believed to help students, particularly at the primary school level, to have the capacity to think critically about obtaining the information that is received. This is because history is a study that analyses people. The field of education will be confronted with a new set of issues as a direct result of the emergence of an age in which it is simpler than ever to get one's hands on various forms of technology, such as researching the internet. One of the obstacles that must be overcome is teaching students to have linguistic skills and the capacity to criticize the sources of information that is gained. This skill will facilitate the acquisition of historical knowledge

Critical thinking skills

According to Syafitri, critical thinking is a process that incorporates reasoning and may assist students in developing quality thought processes, which in turn can lead to improved levels of learning on their part (Syafitri, Armanto, & Rahmadani, 2021). Many different points of view on what constitutes critical thinking

may be found among philosophers. According to a philosopher like John Dewey, critical thinking is persistent thinking, which is produced by thinking continuously and forms accumulative in a person (Dewey, 1910). Critical thinking is developed by thinking continuously and forms accumulative in a person. The authors Bailin and Siegel provide their thoughts about critical thinking as a normative notion to ensure that thinking is evaluated based on relevant standards or criteria and seen as being of high quality. They also propose the notion that, within the framework of critical thinking, there exists the idea of a criterion component that is owned by individuals in order for it to become a tool for determining appropriate criteria, such as requiring evidence so that each individual can use the assessment component with clear reasons (Dinsmore & Fryer, 2023).

A person's ability to observe, feel, wonder, imagine, draw conclusions, have information, perform experiments, consult his ideas, identify and analyze arguments, evaluate, and decide is another indicator of critical thinking abilities (Ericson, 2022). This skill may help a person become a critical thinker who can present explanations for choices chosen and be open to differences in conclusions and other people's perspectives (Romadhon, 2019).

This ability may also help a person develop stronger opinions on various topics.

Student indicators can be said to think critically, one of which is when students can respond to questions from the teacher quickly and put forward statements or questions following the learning material being taught (Ridwan & Nasrulloh, 2022). Another indicator regarding the development of critical thinking skills is when students can produce an interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and conclusion, accompanied by explanations and considerations such as evidence, contextual, methodological, criteria, or contextual, which form the basis of an assessment to ensure existing credibility (Murphy, Ogata, & Schoute, 2023).

Another opinion states that indicators of critical thinking are when students can interpret, analyze, evaluate, infer, and explain information. A student can make a reasonable interpretation when writing the questions asked clearly and precisely. Indicators regarding analysis are considered complete if students can write down the initial steps to help solve a problem, identify existing problems, and have the courage to investigate the truth of an event or information. Evaluation can help students know and write down the overall steps to solve problems or problems around them. Inference can assist students

in concluding based on facts arranged logically, and explanations can assist in examining and strengthening the reasons for conclusions (Sumargono, Basri, Istiqomah, & Triaristina, 2022).

The capacity to think critically in the 21st century is one of the skills included in the 4C framework. It is now receiving much attention because of its significance in education and society. The capacity to think critically is helpful in day-to-day life because it enables a person to identify the steps that need to be done while respecting the existing distinctions. The field of education will also benefit from having this talent. Teachers must have a solid foundation in critical thinking abilities to demonstrate to students the value and utility of this ability in education and provide examples of how they may use these skills.

History helps students develop their critical thinking abilities

Students who take history classes develop the ability to think critically and rationally, which enables them to view the evolution of society and humanity as a whole in the past as an integral part of living a sustainable life. This helps students prepare for the increasingly complex challenges they will face (Benny Syahputra & Noviansyah, 2021). According to a second school of thought, studying history enables students to cultivate their historical thinking abilities, which serve as the

foundation for developing students' thinking skills in logic, creativity, innovation, and inspiration (Puspawati & Winarti, 2021).

Students taking history classes might benefit from being encouraged to develop their critical and analytical abilities. A person or group may be at the stage of comprehending knowledge that has gone through a process of verifying or filtering information that has been known or believed if they have learned the cognitive ability to think critically and analytically. This is a cognitive process that can be developed via learning. According to Murphy, the inspection process is achieved by doing a series of systematic assessments of the object of thought while providing unambiguous assertions, explanations, and evidence supporting the object of thought (Murphy et al., 2023). When one studies history, one will not only learn about the passage of time in the past, but one will also learn about all elements of human existence, including emotions, logic, and a variety of other topics. Students will better understand the psyche of individuals who lived in the past, which will help them better grasp how they behaved and what choices they made. Students may utilize their capacity for empathy as a tool in studying history (Utami, 2019). This will allow them to better comprehend the decisions and actions of individuals in the past.

When primary school students are learning history, their teacher should encourage them to look about and get a feel for the neighborhood. At the primary school level, teachers may use the information on local knowledge to generate fascinating historical study material. This can be done using the available content. For instance, if a history teacher is stationed in Singkawang, then familiar sights and landmarks, such as the 1001 Ai roundabout monument in Singkawang, serve as a springboard for learning about history. The 1001 Ai Monument in Singkawang is a mixture of a serving hood with a sea horse and 3 sculptures above the winnowing, representing the many ethnic communities that live in Singkawang city, such as Malay, Dayak, and Chinese (Hartini, 2018).

The statue in Singkawang is not just considered a building. However, history teachers may give knowledge and cultivate critical thinking skills in students by giving information that behind a statue, there is the meaning and historical worth behind it. This can be done by informing students of a monument's significance and historical value. By giving students explanations such as how diverse groups that already reside in the region evolve, teachers can assist students in developing an appreciation for the diversity in Singkawang. Students will benefit from doing this if they get an

understanding of the many cultures that are represented in Singkawang. In 1930, the Dayak, the Malay, and the Chinese were the dominant ethnic groups who made the Singkawang region of West Kalimantan their home. The Singkawang region is one of the regions that make up West Kalimantan. According to Somers, the Chinese sub-ethnic groups most heavily represented in the Singkawang area that year were the Hakka and the Teochiu people (Somers, 2008).

After pointing out the differences, the teacher could come up with some follow-up questions to get students to contemplate the material in more depth. To limit the number of disputes in the surrounding environment, the educator may also explain the current situation, the relevance of learning history, and the need to live in tolerance within the framework of Unity in Diversity. This may all help (Marta, Merry, Kurniawan, Seftira, & Amanda, 2021). When students are given knowledge of history, they are invited to know about when an event occurred. They may also be inspired to know why this event is necessary to understand how the relationship of earlier events affects life in the present and other concerns that arise. When students are given knowledge of history, they are not only invited to know about when an event occurred but they are

also invited to know about why an event occurred. Students are not only encouraged to learn about the period in which an event took place but are also prompted to learn why this event is significant enough to be studied. The teacher must do a thorough investigation into the matter in order to promote critical thinking on the part of the students.

The goal of studying history is not only to educate students about the previous year's happenings so that they might become disinterested in the subject but also to equip them with a comprehensive grasp of the world in which they live. Previous research mentioned that history learning should also use contextual learning that can relate material to students' daily lives in order to find meaning in their lives (Asmara, 2019). Other research also mentions the important role of teachers in explaining history learning by providing meaning from past events (Putu et al., 2021). In addition, the teachers should direct the students to be able to interpret, analyze, evaluate, and infer from the current surrounding environment, as well as explain what they infer. These abilities help students grasp studying history more than simply memorizing the years. However, they can also help more readily understand history as a valuable event and can assist real-life students in understanding a

problem comprehensively so that they can adopt a solution based on facts that there is.

Ways to help improve students' critical thinking skills

At the primary school level, an emphasis should be placed on developing a sophisticated comprehension of historical knowledge. In one of Bologna's primary schools, a student related a story about a fantastic event they had. Students are allowed to visit locations rich in historical significance. Upon their return to the classroom or other educational setting, they are shown a photograph depicting the exact location in its earlier incarnation. It is anticipated that inviting students into the present scenario setting and exhibiting previous circumstances would boost their interest and critical thinking to raise questions and more curiosity about historical knowledge (Presti & Diaferio, 2019). This is done to facilitate students' ability to raise questions and curiosity about historical information. Students' knowledge of their immediate surroundings may be increased by studying historical content, which can be enhanced by traveling to sites rich in historic heritage values. This was also done by history teachers in Pontianak, who included learning about the cultural legacy of the *Duizen Vierkanten Paal* region, which is situated in Pontianak City (Firmansyah, 2021).

The growth of the times has led to an increase in the use of various ways that may aid in the learning process, including the study of history. It is envisaged that students would be able to further strengthen their critical thinking abilities via the use of more modern forms of digital media, which may give a narrative depiction of an event and serve as a vehicle for the growth of students' historical empathy (Tei & Baffoe-Arthur, 2022) . A different school of thought asserts that tales are often used as the vehicle for the transmission of information about historical knowledge. This is true for films and textual works that attempt to recreate historical events. According to Dondi, narration may help individuals grasp the world around them, and it may even become the primary tool they employ to comprehend the world around them (Dondi, 2019).

Their classroom teachers significantly aid the development of students' analytical and deductive reasoning abilities. History teachers can encourage students to engage in critical thinking in the context of history learning by using a variety of strategies. Previous research mentions the role of teachers who can select information to be one of the growth of critical thinking in students (Syah & Jaeni, 2023). History education is analogous to an event that occurred in the past. Teachers can

generate narratives that pique the interest of their students by using the strategies of reflection and being present in the circumstances according to happenings based on facts that already exist. In addition, the teacher has to be able to deliver historical information in the classroom while finding creative methods to link to the local community and environment. Both of these methods have the potential to inspire students to have critical thinking, and they should both be supported by the encouragement of a teacher who can bring every historical event into every element of life in the surrounding environment.

CONCLUSION

Knowing history, which is often associated with the challenge of knowing facts about specific events, has to undergo a paradigm shift and become one of the lessons that help students build a foundation for critical thinking. The ability to think critically is one of the skills that students need to have to keep up with the times, and it is also receiving much attention in the field of education right now. Studying history is one of the essential things that teachers can do to help children develop their analytical thinking abilities by having them observe their immediate surroundings. Teachers may be able to grasp history and

convey it to their students by using compelling and excellent narratives when presenting information and comparing studies to the surrounding environment. This allows teachers to demonstrate that students can connect the past to the present. Suggestions for future scholars are to investigate how successful it is and verify it in terms of field data about the significance of the relevance of the foundation for students' critical thinking taught and received through studying history.

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