

CONTEXTUAL PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING IN PANCASILA EDUCATION: TEACHERS' STRATEGIES FOR CRITICAL THINKING IN MADRASAH IBTIDAIYAH

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ABSTRACT

The development of critical thinking skills has become an important objective of Pancasila Education in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. However, learning practices in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah are still often teacher-centered and provide limited opportunities for students to engage in problem analysis, argumentation, and decision-making. This study aimed to explore the implementation of contextual Problem Based Learning (PBL) in Pancasila Education and its contribution to the development of students' critical thinking skills. A qualitative case study design was employed at MIS Ar Raudlah Sukorambi Jember. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving the principal, Pancasila Education teacher, and fifth-grade students. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, while data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The findings reveal that teachers designed contextual PBL through five interconnected strategies: formulating learning objectives, selecting authentic problems, organizing collaborative learning, providing scaffolding, and conducting reflection. The implementation of contextual PBL facilitated the development of critical thinking skills reflected in the indicators of clarification, evidence-based reasoning, inference, explanation, and decision-making based on Ennis' framework. The study also identified institutional support, teacher competence, authentic problems, and student collaboration as supporting factors, while limited instructional time, diverse student abilities, and classroom dynamics emerged as challenges. These findings highlight the importance of integrating contextual learning and problem-based instruction to foster critical thinking in Islamic elementary education.

Keywords: *Critical Thinking, Ennis Framework, Contextual Learning, Pancasila Education, Problem Based Learning*

A. Introduction

21st-century education demands that students not only master knowledge but also develop critical thinking, problem-solving,

collaboration, and rational decision-making skills (Maulidah, 2021; Rakhmawati, 2021). In the Indonesian context, these demands are a crucial part of the implementation of the

Independent Curriculum, which places critical reasoning skills as one of the dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile (Alanur et al., 2023; Istiqomah et al., 2023; Jamilah et al., 2021). Therefore, Pancasila Education plays a strategic role in shaping students who are able to analyze information, evaluate arguments, and make responsible decisions in social life (Annisa & Dewi, 2024; Astika, 2024).

These abilities are at the heart of critical thinking, which Robert Ennis defines as a reflective and rational thought process directed at deciding what to believe or do (Novandi et al., 2025; Sapitri & Meiliasari, 2026; Verawati et al., 2023). Ennis identifies indicators of critical thinking as including structured interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, and explanation. Pancasila education, with its contextual material and its roots in real-life values, should be a conducive environment for the development of these abilities.

However, Pancasila Education learning practices in Islamic Elementary Schools (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) do not fully support the development of students' critical thinking skills. Learning remains teacher-centered and emphasizes

mastery of material rather than analysis and argumentation (Gumilar et al., 2024; Istiqomah et al., 2023). Students are rarely encouraged to independently evaluate information, construct evidence-based arguments, or reflect on their decisions. As a result, the critical thinking indicators outlined in Ennis's framework have not been systematically stimulated through the learning process (Alanur et al., 2023; Pertiwi & Dewi, 2024).

One approach that has the potential to address these issues is Problem-Based Learning (PBL). This learning model places authentic problems as the starting point of learning, encouraging students to conduct investigations, seek information, analyze alternative solutions, and make decisions based on the evidence obtained (Park et al., 2016; Tiwari et al., 2006). Each stage of PBL provides space for students to develop critical thinking skills through activities such as identifying problems, evaluating information, drawing conclusions, and defending arguments. The effectiveness of PBL is maximized when combined with the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach, which connects learning materials with students' real-

life experiences (Atmaja, 2024; Hidayah & Ulfah, 2020; Yulianto et al., 2024). The integration of PBL and CTL allows students to learn the concepts of Pancasila Education through problems close to their lives, making the learning process more meaningful.

Various studies have shown that PBL contributes to improving students' critical thinking skills, learning outcomes, creativity, and collaborative skills (Choi et al., 2022; Kurniadi & Cahyaningrum, 2023; Yuerlita et al., 2021). Other studies have examined the implementation of contextual learning, character education, and the reinforcement of Pancasila values at various levels of education (Atmaja, 2024; Farohah & Tirtoni, 2024; Sutrisno, 2023). However, most research still focuses on measuring the effectiveness of learning models on students' learning outcomes and critical thinking skills. Studies explaining teacher strategies in designing learning, implementing contextual PBL based on Ennis' critical thinking framework, and factors influencing its implementation in Pancasila Education learning in Islamic Elementary Schools (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) are still limited.

This gap is important to examine in the context of MIS Ar Raudlah Sukorambi Jember. Based on initial observations, this madrasa has implemented Pancasila Education learning that utilizes real-world problems in the students' environment as learning resources. Teachers actively develop discussion, problem-solving, and reflection activities to connect Pancasila Education concepts to students' daily experiences. These characteristics make MIS Ar Raudlah Sukorambi Jember a relevant context to explore the implementation of contextual-based Problem Based Learning in developing students' critical thinking skills.

Based on this background, this study aims to explore the implementation of contextual-based Problem Based Learning in Pancasila Education learning in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Specifically, this study is directed to answer three research questions (RQ), namely: (1) what are the strategies of teachers in designing contextual-based Problem Based Learning in Pancasila Education learning in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah; (2) how is the implementation of contextual-based Problem Based

Learning in shaping students' critical thinking skills based on the Ennis framework; and (3) what are the supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of contextual-based Problem Based Learning in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Through a qualitative descriptive study, this study is expected to provide empirical contributions regarding the practice of contextual problem-based learning in supporting the development of critical thinking skills in Islamic elementary education.

B. Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen to gain a deep understanding of the implementation of contextual-based Problem Based Learning (PBL) in Pancasila Education learning in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. The case study design was used because the research focuses on phenomena that occur in a natural context, namely the planning process, implementation, and factors that influence the implementation of contextual-based PBL at MIS Ar Raudlah Sukorambi Jember. This research is specifically directed at exploring teacher

strategies in designing learning, implementing learning in developing critical thinking skills based on the Ennis framework, as well as supporting and inhibiting factors in learning implementation.

The research data consists of information regarding teacher strategies in designing learning, the implementation of contextual-based Problem Based Learning, the development of students' critical thinking skills, as well as supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of learning. The research data sources consist of primary and secondary data sources. Primary data sources were obtained from the principal of the madrasah, Pancasila Education teachers, and fifth-grade students of MIS Ar Raudlah Sukorambi Jember who were selected purposively based on their involvement in the learning process. Secondary data sources were obtained from teaching modules, student worksheets (LKPD), photos of learning activities, observation notes, and other supporting documents relevant to the research focus.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentation.

Interviews were conducted with the madrasah principal, teachers, and students to obtain information regarding planning, implementation, and factors influencing the implementation of learning. Observations were conducted during the Pancasila Education learning process to observe teacher and student activities, including the development of critical thinking skills based on Ennis indicators. Documentation was used to supplement the interview and observation data through analysis of teaching modules, student worksheets (LKPD), activity photos, and other learning documents. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation and technical triangulation by comparing information obtained from various sources and data collection methods.

Data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes data condensation, data presentation, and drawing and verifying conclusions. In the data condensation stage, researchers selected, focused, and organized data according to the research focus. The data presentation stage was carried

out through the preparation of matrices, display analysis tables, and narrative descriptions to facilitate interpretation of the findings. Furthermore, drawing and verifying conclusions were carried out continuously throughout the research process by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. The analysis focused on three main themes: teacher strategies in designing contextual-based Problem Based Learning, the implementation of learning in developing critical thinking skills based on the Ennis framework, and supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of learning.

To analyze the development of students' critical thinking skills during the implementation of contextual-based Problem Based Learning, this study employed the critical thinking framework proposed by Ennis. This framework served as a guideline for observation, data coding, and interpretation of research findings. The critical thinking skill indicators used in this study are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1 Critical Thinking Ability Indicators
Based on Ennis' Framework**

Indicator	Operational Description
Elementary Clarification	Ability to identify and clarify the problems faced.
Basic Support	The ability to use relevant information or evidence to support an opinion.
Inference	The ability to draw conclusions based on available information.
Advanced Clarification	The ability to provide explanations and arguments logically.
Strategies and Tactics	The ability to determine the appropriate action or solution to a problem.

C. Result and Discussion Result

1. Teacher Strategies in Designing Contextual Problem-Based Learning

The research results indicate that the successful implementation of contextual Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in Pancasila Education at MIS Ar Raudlah Sukorambi Jember begins with systematic lesson planning. Teachers not only develop learning materials according to the Independent Curriculum but also integrate contextual problems,

collaborative activities, scaffolding, and reflection into the learning process. This finding was obtained through triangulation of interviews, observations, and documentation, demonstrating consistency between classroom learning planning and implementation. To support these findings, documentation of the lesson planning process is presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Designing Contextual Problem Based Learning through the Preparation of Teaching Modules and Student Worksheets

Figure 1 shows that teachers prepare learning by developing teaching modules, selecting problems relevant to students' lives, and developing learning activities that encourage discussion and problem-solving. This documentation confirms that lesson planning is a crucial stage in the implementation of contextual-based PBL.

The first strategy implemented by teachers at MIS Ar Raudlah Sukorambi Jember was to formulate learning objectives based on the learning outcomes of Pancasila Education. Learning objectives are not only oriented towards mastery of the material, but also on students' ability to analyze problems encountered in everyday life. The teaching modules used demonstrate the relationship between learning objectives, problem-solving activities, and expected learning outcomes. This finding aligns with Alanur et al. (2023) and Fauzi (2022) who emphasized that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum requires learning planning oriented towards developing student competencies, and supports Sutrisno's (2023) view on the importance of Pancasila Education in developing thinking and decision-making skills.

The second strategy is to select contextual problems relevant to students' lives, such as group work, responsibility, and tolerance among peers. Using authentic problems helps students connect Pancasila Education concepts to real-life experiences they encounter in the school environment. This finding supports research by

Atmaja (2024), Hidayah and Ulfah (2020) which shows that contextual learning enhances the meaningfulness of learning because students understand the material through experiences relevant to their lives.

The next strategy is to organize collaborative learning through the formation of heterogeneous study groups. Students are given the opportunity to discuss, exchange opinions, and develop solutions to given problems. This activity encourages social interaction while developing communication and critical thinking skills. This finding aligns with Yuerlita et al. (2021) and Choi et al. (2022), who assert that collaboration in problem-based learning contributes to active student engagement in the problem-solving process.

Furthermore, teachers provide scaffolding through prompting questions, simple directions, and mentoring during the discussion. Teachers do not provide direct answers but help students find solutions through their own thinking processes. This finding supports Yuerlita et al. (2021) who explain that the teacher's role in PBL is as a facilitator, helping students develop

critical thinking skills through a directed inquiry process.

The final strategy is to conduct reflection at the end of the lesson. The teacher invites students to summarize the discussion results and connect them to relevant Pancasila values. Reflection helps students understand the rationale behind decisions made and strengthens their understanding of the material learned. This finding supports research by Farohah and Tirtoni (2024) and Astika (2024), which shows that reflection plays a crucial role in strengthening students' internalization of values and character development.

The research findings above indicate that the success of the contextual-based Problem-Based Learning design at MIS Ar Raudlah Sukorambi Jember is determined by the teacher's ability to integrate learning objectives, authentic problems, collaboration, scaffolding, and reflection into a series of interrelated lessons. These five strategies are an important foundation in creating more meaningful Pancasila Education learning that is oriented towards developing students' critical thinking skills.

2. Implementation of Contextual Problem Based Learning in Developing Students' Critical Thinking Skills Based on Ennis' Framework

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of contextual Problem Based Learning (PBL) in Pancasila Education learning at MIS Ar Raudlah Sukorambi Jember provides space for students to develop critical thinking skills through learning activities that depart from real problems in the school environment. Teachers utilize various situations close to students' lives, such as cooperation in study groups, discipline in class, responsibility for shared tasks, and tolerance among friends as learning resources. Through the process of problem identification, group discussions, presentations, and reflection, students not only understand Pancasila Education material, but also learn to analyze problems, provide reasons, and determine solutions to the problems faced. Based on the results of triangulation of interviews, observations, and documentation, the development of students' critical thinking skills can be identified through indicators of elementary clarification,

basic support, inference, advanced clarification, and strategies and tactics as stated by Ennis.

Fifth-grade students at MIS Ar Raudlah Sukorambi Jember discussing issues related to responsibility and cooperation in carrying out group assignments. In this activity, students were asked to identify the causes of the problems, discuss various alternative solutions, and determine the action that best aligns with Pancasila values. This discussion activity became one of the main areas for the development of students' critical thinking skills during the learning process. Findings regarding the development of students' critical thinking skills are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2 Implementation of Contextual-
Based PBL in Developing Critical
Thinking Skills Based on the Ennis
Framework**

Ennis Indicator	Synthesis Results	Pedagogical Contribution
<i>Elementary Clarification</i> <i>n</i>	Students are able to identify and clarify problems through case	Contextual problems help students understand the focus of the problem

	analysis related to everyday life.	before conducting an investigation.
<i>Basic Support</i>	Students use relevant experiences, information, and evidence to support opinions during group discussions.	Learning encourages the formation of arguments based on evidence and logical reasons.
<i>Inference</i>	Students are able to draw conclusions based on the results of discussions and information obtained during the learning process.	Problem-solving activities develop systematic reasoning and conclusion-making skills.
<i>Advanced Clarification</i> <i>n</i>	Students are able to explain the relationship between the chosen solution and Pancasila values and	Presentation s and group discussions strengthen the ability to explain and defend opinions critically.

	provide logical arguments.	
Strategies and Tactics	Students are able to determine alternative actions and choose the solution that is considered most appropriate to the problem they face.	Learning helps students develop rational decision- making and problem- solving skills.

Table 2 shows that each critical thinking indicator develops through distinct but interrelated learning activities. This development occurs gradually, from when students identify a problem to determining a solution to the problem being discussed.

Critical thinking skills begin to develop when students are confronted with problems relevant to their lives. In one lesson, the teacher presented a case study involving unequal group assignments, leading to conflict among group members. Observations showed that students actively identified the causes of the problem and asked various questions before determining a solution. This finding

demonstrates the development of elementary clarification indicators, namely the ability to clarify and understand the core of the problem. The results of this study align with Kurniadi and Cahyaningrum (2023), who stated that authentic problems in PBL encourage students to identify and initially analyze a problem.

The next development is seen in the basic support indicator. During the discussion, students not only expressed their opinions but also provided reasons based on their experiences and information. Some students linked their answers to their experiences working in groups, while others used information from the learning materials as the basis for their arguments. This finding indicates that students are beginning to use evidence and logical reasoning to defend their opinions. The results of this study align with Kurniadi and Cahyaningrum (2023), who demonstrated that Problem-Based Learning encourages students to construct arguments through problem analysis and the use of relevant information. This finding also supports the research of Choi et al. (2022) which asserts that collaborative activities in problem-based learning

contribute to the development of higher-order thinking skills and evidence-based reasoning.

Inference indicators emerge when students draw conclusions based on group discussion results. In several learning activities, students were able to determine the most appropriate solution after considering various alternatives that emerged during the discussion. The ability to connect information and draw conclusions demonstrates the development of students' reasoning skills. This finding supports research by Yuerlita et al. (2021), which showed that problem-based learning helps students develop their ability to analyze information and determine solutions rationally. Furthermore, Novitasari et al. (2024), Nababan and Sipayung (2023) explained that learning linked to real-life contexts makes it easier for students to build connections between experiences, information, and decision-making, thus making the conclusion-drawing process more meaningful.

Advanced clarification skills were evident when students presented their discussion results to the class. The teacher asked students to explain the reasons for their chosen solution and

relate it to relevant Pancasila values. Observations showed that students were able to explain the relationship between the chosen solution and the values of responsibility, mutual cooperation, and deliberation. This finding supports research by Atmaja (2024), which asserts that contextual learning helps students build more meaningful understanding through the connection between concepts and real-life experiences.

The final indicator, strategies and tactics, develops when students determine the actions to be taken to resolve the problem being discussed. During the reflection stage, students evaluate various alternative actions and select the solution deemed most feasible for implementation in everyday life. This ability demonstrates that students not only understand the problem but are also capable of making rational decisions. This finding reinforces the research findings of Novitasari et al. (2024) and Yuerlita et al. (2021), which demonstrate that problem-based and contextual learning can encourage students to develop problem-solving skills in real-life situations.

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of contextual-

based PBL at MIS Ar Raudlah Sukorambi Jember was able to facilitate the development of students' critical thinking skills gradually, starting from problem identification to decision-making. This process occurred because students were directly involved in investigating problems close to their lives, discussing them collaboratively, and reflecting on learning outcomes. This finding supports the view of Choi et al. (2022) that problem-based learning supported by collaborative interactions contributes to the development of students' higher-order thinking skills.

3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Contextual Problem Based Learning

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of contextual-based Problem Based Learning (PBL) in Pancasila Education learning at MIS Ar Raudlah Sukorambi Jember is influenced by various factors originating from the madrasah environment, teacher competency, student characteristics, and classroom learning dynamics. During the implementation of learning, teachers

not only act as facilitators who direct the discussion process, but also as managers of various conditions that arise during the learning activities. Field findings indicate that the successful implementation of contextual-based PBL is supported by the availability of a conducive learning environment, the use of problems close to students' lives, and active student involvement in discussion activities. However, the study also found several obstacles that require adaptive strategies from teachers so that learning objectives can still be achieved. To strengthen these findings, documentation of the learning implementation is presented in Figure 2.



Figure 2 Teacher Provides Guidance (Scaffolding) to Students during Group Discussion

Figure 2 shows a Pancasila Education teacher at MIS Ar Raudlah Sukorambi Jember providing

guidance to a group of students experiencing difficulty developing solutions to the problems being discussed. This documentation demonstrates that the success of PBL implementation is determined not only by the learning design but also by the teacher's ability to provide learning support tailored to the students' needs during the discussion process.

Madrasah support is a key factor in the implementation of contextual-based PBL at MIS Ar Raudlah Sukorambi Jember. Interviews revealed that the madrasah principal provides teachers with the freedom to develop more innovative learning through the development of teaching modules and the use of student-centered learning strategies. This support creates a conducive learning environment for problem-based learning. This finding aligns with Alanur et al. (2023) who asserted that the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum is strongly influenced by school institutional support for learning innovation.

The next supporting factor is teacher competence in designing and implementing learning. Teachers are able to integrate issues relevant to students' lives into learning activities,

making it easier for students to understand the context discussed. These findings indicate that the quality of PBL implementation is highly dependent on teachers' ability to select relevant learning strategies. These research findings support Kurniadi and Cahyaningrum (2023) who explained that the success of problem-based learning is influenced by teachers' ability to design meaningful learning experiences.

The use of contextual problems and student collaboration also strengthen the implementation of learning. Problems raised from students' daily experiences make it easier for them to engage in discussions and problem-solving processes. Meanwhile, group work provides opportunities for students to exchange ideas and build shared understanding. These findings support research by Atmaja (2024) and Novitasari et al. (2024), which shows that contextual learning can increase student engagement because the learning material is directly related to their real-life experiences.

On the other hand, the study also identified several inhibiting factors. Time constraints were the most common challenge, as problem

identification, discussion, presentation, and reflection required a relatively long time. Furthermore, varying levels of student confidence prevented all students from actively participating in group discussions. This situation suggests that the success of problem-based learning is influenced not only by the learning design but also by students' readiness to engage in active learning. These findings align with Gumilar et al. (2024), who explained that student engagement in active learning remains a challenge in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

Another obstacle is differences in student abilities and group dynamics. Observations show that some students are more dominant in expressing opinions, while others tend to be passive. To address this situation, teachers provide scaffolding, assign group roles in a more structured manner, and provide equal opportunities for each student to participate. These findings support Farohah and Tirtoni (2024), who emphasize the importance of teachers in creating an inclusive and participatory learning environment.

The results of this study indicate that the successful implementation of contextual-based PBL at MIS Ar Raudlah Sukorambi Jember is the result of the interaction between institutional support, teacher competence, the use of contextual problems, and student engagement. At the same time, various obstacles that arise can be minimized through adaptive pedagogical strategies. These findings demonstrate that PBL implementation depends not only on the learning model used, but also on the ability of teachers and the school environment to create learning conditions that support the development of students' critical thinking skills.

D. Conclusion

This study shows that the implementation of contextual Problem Based Learning (PBL) in Pancasila Education learning at MIS Ar Raudlah Sukorambi Jember is carried out through systematic learning planning, including the formulation of learning objectives, selection of authentic problems, organizing collaborative learning, providing scaffolding, and implementing reflection. The implementation of this learning

provides space for the development of students' critical thinking skills, which are demonstrated through the ability to identify problems, use evidence in arguments, draw conclusions, provide logical explanations, and determine solutions based on rational considerations in accordance with Ennis's critical thinking framework. The success of the learning implementation is supported by teacher competence, madrasah support, the use of contextual problems, and student collaboration, while time constraints, differences in student abilities, diverse self-confidence, and group dynamics are inhibiting factors that require appropriate pedagogical management. These findings confirm that the integration of PBL and contextual learning not only supports the understanding of the concept of Pancasila Education, but also contributes to the development of students' critical thinking skills in the context of Islamic basic education.

This study has limitations because it was conducted in one Islamic elementary school (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) with a focus on Pancasila Education, so the findings cannot be generalized to a broader context.

Furthermore, the study used a qualitative approach that focused on the learning implementation process without quantitatively measuring improvements in critical thinking skills. Therefore, further research is recommended involving more schools or madrasahs with different characteristics, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, and exploring the implementation of contextual-based PBL in other subjects to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the development of students' critical thinking skills. relevant.

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