

Critical Thinking Ability of Early Childhood Education

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Abstract. Verification and assessment of the issues encountered during the learning process are key components of critical thinking abilities, which enable kids to solve difficulties using convincing, logical, and rational arguments. When tackling issues in learning activities, students who possess critical thinking skills can comprehend the situation and provide acceptable and lucid conclusions and answers. Early childhood critical thinking is the main topic of this study. This study uses a quantitative method and is descriptive in nature. Research findings showed that PAUD Terpadu Unilak Golden School, with a critical thinking skills level of 67%, was included in the criterion as fairly good. Data gathering methods included observation, interview, and recording procedures.

Keywords: Critical thinking; Early Childhood Education

1 Introduction

The goal of Indonesian education should be to develop critical thinking skills, a global perspective, and a sense of pride in being Indonesian. Understanding and exploring an idea in depth, comparing it with other things, being curious, strategically analyzing information, asking questions and seeking out answers, searching for solutions and alternative solutions, forming judgments about other things, making decisions, having opinions, and being able to debate are all examples of critical thinking [1]. According to Pithers and Soden (2000: 239), critical thinking entails the capacity to understand potentially contentious knowledge, pose questions through independent research and questioning of existing knowledge, and be able to provide evidence to back up your claims. In the book *How We Think*, Dewey (1910:6) defines critical thinking as active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends.

According to [2, p. 62], another definition of critical thinking abilities is the cognitive process of carrying out precise and systematic problem analysis, accurately identifying problems, and locating information to design problem solving techniques. One of the most essential intellectual capital or basic abilities for everyone and a vital component of human development is critical thinking [3].

To formulate ideas, make inferences, and establish hypotheses, a person's critical thinking process evolves in accordance with their level of insight, knowledge, and learning experiences. According to [4], critical thinking necessitates the capacity for analytical and persuasive thought. According to research by Radulovic and Stancic (2017), critical thinking abilities also

help students solve significant and obvious challenges during their studies by presenting a variety of school types as a stimulus that might encourage critical thought. According to study findings (Florea & Hurjui, 2015), students with critical thinking abilities are able to address issues using arguments that are rational, logical, and compelling. which include verifying and evaluating problems encountered during the learning process.

There are a number of reasons why educators' critical thinking skills are still lacking in learning activities. The Ministry of Education and Culture's learning objectives and lesson plans do not specifically address these abilities, which deprives students' critical thinking abilities of the best possible stimulation. The environment is a child's rich and limitless source of learning, and it must be fully supported in order to foster critical thinking skills. The truth is that kids lack the self-assurance to ask teachers questions about anything they find strange or unclear. The purpose of this study is to shed light on the critical thinking skills of students in grades 5 and 6 at Integrated PAUD Unilak Golden School?

2 Research Methods

Descriptive research employing quantitative techniques is the methodology employed. This study searches for correlations between the variables under investigation and other variables, without comparing any particular variable to those in other samples. [5] said. Critical thinking ability is the variable that this study will explain. This study was carried out at the Unilak Golden School Integrated PAUD in June 2023. The methods of observation and recording that are employed to gather data are helpful in bolstering the findings of the research. This research's data analysis method was performed using the following formula:

$$\text{Value} = (\text{Score obtained}) / (\text{Maximum Score}) \times 100$$

The assessment criteria for observation results are determined by grouping them into four assessment criteria, namely poor, not good, fair and good (Arikunto, 2013). For more details, it is explained as follows: If the percentage is between 76% and 100% it is said to be "Good"; If the percentage is between 56% and 75%, it is said to be "fairly good"; If the percentage is between 40% and 55%, it is said to be "poor"; If the percentage is less than 40%, it is said to be "not good".

3 Results and Discussion

According to the critical thinking skills questionnaire results for kids in Unilak Golden School Integrated PAUD group B, the average shows fairly good scores in a number of areas. This indicates that, overall, with a percentage of 67%, it can be said that children in the 5–6 year old age range at the Unilak Golden School Integrated PAUD have fairly good critical thinking abilities in terms of gathering and processing idea information, analyzing and evaluating reasoning and procedures, as well as reflecting on ideas and thought processes. Youngsters' interactions with peers and adults seem to shape their critical thinking abilities [6]. Children who are given the chance to voice their thoughts, queries, and emotions will develop their critical thinking skills.

A person with critical thinking skills can solve problems in his or her life [7]. [8] concurs with this viewpoint, stating that one can organize, modify, enhance, or adjust one's thinking through critical thinking, which will enable them to solve problems and make wise decisions.

Children who possess critical thinking skills are challenged to think critically about issues that come up in life. These skills encompass cognitive, analytical, rational, and logical processes [9].

According to research findings [10], children's learning activities can be identified as exhibiting critical thinking when they actively observe objects, ask questions and share their opinions about what they see, formulate problems by making connections between causes and effects encountered during activities, conduct independent or group experiments to develop children's critical thinking abilities, solve problems encountered during the activity, and ultimately draw conclusions about the learning process.

4 Conclusion

It is possible to foster critical thinking abilities from a young age. Learning activities that are tailored to the needs of the students are rich in opportunities to stimulate critical thinking skills. The 67% critical thinking skills percentage is a very good criterion.

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