
Discussion Methods and Critical Thinking in Fiqh Learning at MTs

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Abstract: This article aims to describe in depth the discussion process in Fiqh learning in class IX MTs, as well as to analyze the impact of implementing this method on students' critical thinking skills. The method used is a qualitative descriptive approach, in this case the data is obtained through observation techniques, interviews and document studies. This study resulted in findings that the discussion process was carried out in two stages, namely the first small group discussion and the second large group discussion which previously began with presentations from several groups. The discussion process has a relationship in the development of students' critical thinking skills, this is due to several things contained in the discussion process, namely Students Are Actively Involved in Learning, Questions Asked, In-Depth Analysis, Argumentation and Diverse Arguments. This study confirms that the discussion method is a good option in learning activities which has good value in the development of students' critical thinking.

Keywords: discussion method, fiqh learning, critical thinking

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Introduction

Education is a crucial aspect in shaping the character and personality of Indonesia's young generation. The primary goal of education is to produce individuals who possess not only extensive knowledge but also the ability to think critically and analytically, and apply that knowledge in their daily lives (Althafullayya, 2024). One of the most important branches of knowledge in developing religious understanding in the younger generation is the study of Islamic jurisprudence, which studies Islamic laws related to worship, social interactions, and morals (Kamilah et al., 2025). At the secondary school level, including MTs, Fiqh learning aims to provide students with a deep understanding of Islamic teachings that are not only limited to theory, but can also be applied in everyday life (Hanik et al., 2025).

By grade IX, students are expected to be able to not only memorize and understand Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) laws, but also analyze, think critically, and discuss various topics related to Islamic teachings. However, in reality, in many cases, the Fiqh learning process in many madrasas, including MTs (Islamic junior high schools), still prioritizes a more traditional approach and focuses on memorization (Fadholi et al., 2024). This approach can limit students' understanding of the broader context and sometimes make learning monotonous and less engaging.

At the same time, students' critical thinking skills are not well developed because they tend to accept information without analyzing it deeply (Garside, 1996). This refers to the results of the 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), where Indonesian students only ranked 64 out of 65 participants (W. S. P. Sari et al., 2017). Of the six levels tested, Indonesian students only achieved level two in solving real-world contextual problems. This demonstrates the low critical thinking skills of Indonesian students, including in Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh). The latest results, announced on December 5, 2023, show Indonesia ranked 68th out of 81 countries. Despite the increase in the number of participants, these results indicate no significant change in students' critical thinking skills from 2012 to 2023 (Harman, 2026). Therefore, the discussion method can be used to develop students' critical thinking skills (Maulidah & Yunus, 2023; Muhammad & Adam, 2024; Widiastuti & Kania, 2021).

The urgency of addressing this issue lies in the need to synchronize teaching methodology with students' cognitive characteristics. Implementing learning strategies that focus on individual abilities is crucial to minimizing barriers to understanding, given the variability in comprehension levels among students. This issue must be addressed immediately by finding learning methods that are appropriate to students' abilities (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). There needs to be alignment between the methods used and students' comprehension levels to ensure the material isn't too difficult to grasp, given that each student has a different level of understanding (Ubaidila & Izzatul Yuanita, 2021).

To address this issue, one learning method that can be implemented is the discussion method. This method allows students to be more actively involved in the learning process, develop their speaking skills, and share their perspectives on a topic. In discussions, students are not only provided with information but also encouraged to think critically and analyze existing issues, as well as find solutions together (Sholikhah & Syah, 2024; Szabo & Schwartz, 2011). Discussions can also enrich students' insights because they can hear perspectives from their friends, which in turn can develop reflective and analytical thinking skills (Noprial lubis, 2023).

Classroom discussions serve as an effective platform for students to broaden their thinking beyond the confines of textbooks. When interacting with peers, students are exposed to unique perspectives stemming from their individual differences in background, experience, and perspective. This exchange of ideas allows students to view a problem from various perspectives they may have never considered before, thus enhancing their understanding of the material (J. Fuad et al., 2016; N. Sari et al., 2025).

Furthermore, exposure to diverse opinions naturally stimulates the development of analytical and reflective thinking skills. When hearing differing opinions, students are challenged to reevaluate their own thinking and compare it with the arguments of their peers. This mental process encourages them to go beyond accepting information at face value, but also to engage in internal validation, seek connections between ideas, and construct logical counterarguments. This is an important foundation for developing students' intellectual independence (Ngadha et al., 2023; Siswantara, 2025).

Ultimately, the ability to critically process others' perspectives will hone the analytical acumen so essential in real life. Students learn how to synthesize overlapping information into a solid conclusion (Kalelioğlu & Gülbahar, 2014; Rizki, 2024). Beyond the cognitive aspect, this practice also fosters humility and open-mindedness, as students realize that truth often has many facets. Thus, discussion is not merely a learning method, but a means of developing the character of a resilient and wise thinker (Elisabethangreiny & Saragih, 2025; Suryadinata & Anirah, 2025).

At MTs Terpadu Riyadul Badiah, there has been no in-depth study of how the discussion process is applied in Fiqh learning in Grade 9. Furthermore, the relationship between the application of discussion methods and students' critical thinking skills in understanding Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) material has not been widely explored. Yet, integrating group discussions into Islamic jurisprudence learning has significant potential to activate students' cognitive abilities and shift their paradigm from mere memorization to critical understanding (Astuti et al., 2025). In fact, critical thinking skills are very necessary to help students understand the various laws of Fiqh which often have different interpretations, as well as to connect Islamic teachings with the developments of the times and the challenges of life faced by the younger generation (Ali, 2024; Falaah et al., 2025). In this article, Critical thinking enables students to not only memorize the laws of Fiqh, but also understand the *illat* (legal reasons) and wisdom behind differences of opinion (*ikhtilaf*), thus avoiding blind fanaticism.

This study aims to delve deeper into the process of implementing the discussion method in Fiqh learning at MTs, and to determine the extent to which the discussion method is related to students' critical thinking skills in understanding and applying Fiqh knowledge. By understanding the relationship between the discussion process and critical thinking skills, it is hoped that more effective ways can be found to improve the quality of Fiqh learning, as well as to shape a young generation that not only masters religious knowledge but also has thinking skills that can help them face complex problems in everyday life.

Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach (Basri et al., 2025; Prastowo, 2012), to reveal and describe the phenomenon of the discussion process in Fiqh learning for grade IX at MTs Terpadu Riyadul Badiah Karang Kencana Kuningan, West Java. The author collected data through observations at the research site, observing the application of discussion methods in Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) learning and identifying its relationship to critical thinking skills. Additionally, interviews were conducted with the Fiqh teacher and 11 ninth-grade students at the Islamic Junior High School (MTs). This aimed to obtain perspectives from both sides: the teacher and the students.

This approach was chosen to implement discussion methods and develop students' critical thinking skills. Data collection techniques in this study were conducted through method triangulation, which included participant observation, in-depth interviews with key informants, and documentation studies relevant to the research topic. Data analysis followed the stages of Miles and Huberman, which include data reduction, data presentation, and verification and conclusions (Huberman & Miles, 2002; Ridder, 2014). To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses triangulation techniques, extended observation, increased persistence, and member checking.

Results and Discussion

The research conducted has successfully uncovered various data related to the discussion process in ninth-grade Fiqh learning. This data includes an analysis of the relationship between the discussion process and the development of students' critical thinking skills.

Class IX Teaching and Learning Process Using Discussion Method

The discussion method is a learning method that involves more active interaction among students and allows them to participate in learning by offering to share their ideas, views, and understanding. Learning using the discussion method will greatly enable students to actively participate in learning, building knowledge, deepening understanding, and strengthening critical thinking skills (Yang et al., 2021; Yuni et al., 2024).

In the learning process using the discussion method, of course there are stages that must be carried out as stated in research that has been carried out by Halimatussadiyah and friends (Halimatussadiyah, 2022; Halimatussadiyah et al., 2024). In the study, citing Mulyati's opinion, the stages of a discussion process in learning are explained, namely: Delivering the introduction, objectives, and setting the setting; Directing the discussion; Organizing the discussion; Ending the discussion; Conducting a short question and answer session about the discussion process (Rini & Mimi Mulyani, 2022).

Research on the ninth-grade Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) learning process at Islamic junior high schools (MTs) using discussion methods found that the discussion stages involved were slightly different. As explained by Darmawan, the Fiqh teacher, the discussion stages at MTs are as follows (Darmawan, *interview*, 2025).

1. Preparation

Initially, the teacher selects a discussion topic relevant to the Fiqh curriculum to facilitate learning using the discussion method. This is done one week in advance. Before the discussion begins, students are given the opportunity to prepare by reading materials related to the topic. This way, students can understand basic concepts and have a strong foundation for discussion.

This preparation process is crucial because it helps students develop critical and analytical thinking skill (Kanmaz, 2022), and improve their ability to apply Fiqh concepts in everyday life. By understanding the material related to the discussion topic, students can actively participate in discussions and solve problems related to Fiqh. As expressed by Rendika Pratama, one of the ninth grade students in section A, this preparation is very important to support the discussion process that will be carried out because it allows students to delve deeper into the material to be discussed, so that at least students have an overview of the material to be discussed (Rendika Pratama, *interview*, 2025).

With thorough preparation, discussions can be more productive and effective, as students have sufficient knowledge to actively participate. Teachers can facilitate discussions more effectively, allowing students to gain maximum benefit from the learning process.

2. Group Formation

The teacher forms small groups by selecting students who are evenly matched in terms of ability and activeness to ensure smooth discussions. In this process, students are divided into small groups of 4-5 students, allowing them to interact and discuss more effectively. Each group is assigned a pre-selected discussion topic, allowing them to focus on the same material and achieve the established learning objectives. This way, students can maximize the benefits of the discussion and group collaboration process.

In small groups, students can share ideas and opinions, and solve problems related to the discussion topic. They can learn from each other and improve their critical and analytical thinking skills. The teacher can monitor each group's progress and provide assistance as needed, ensuring a smooth and effective learning process. By forming small groups, students can improve their teamwork, effective communication, and problem-solving skills. They can gain valuable experience in collaborating with others and enhance their ability to achieve shared goals.

3. Group Discussion

In the discussion process, students work in groups to discuss a pre-selected topic. Each group member is given the opportunity to share their opinions and ideas, ensuring they gain maximum benefit from the discussion process.

In group discussions, students can share their knowledge and experiences, as well as solve problems related to the discussion topic. They can learn from each other and improve their critical and analytical thinking skills. Group discussions can also help students improve their skills in effective communication and teamwork.

According to Hafidz Arya Maulana, a student who was once appointed as group leader, by providing each group member with the opportunity to share opinions and ideas, group discussions can be more productive and effective. Students can gain a deeper understanding of the discussion topic and improve their ability to apply the concepts they have learned. Through group discussions, students can become more active and motivated in the learning process (Arya Maulana, *interview*, 2025).

4. Presentation of Discussion Results

After the group discussions are complete, each group presents their findings to the class. This presentation provides an opportunity for each group to share their thoughts and ideas with the class. This allows students to gain a broader understanding of the discussion topic and benefit from the ideas of other groups.

The teacher provides opportunities for other groups to provide responses and questions, making the learning process more interactive and dynamic. Other groups can offer constructive comments, questions, or suggestions, providing the presenting group with valuable feedback.

Presenting discussion results can also help students improve their ability to communicate effectively and present their ideas clearly and confidently. This allows students to become more confident in expressing their opinions and ideas, as well as improving their ability to collaborate with others. Through presentations, students can gain valuable experience in sharing knowledge and ideas with others.

5. Evaluation and Reflection

Evaluation and reflection are the final stages of the discussion process and are crucial for ensuring that students have maximally benefited from the learning process. Teachers evaluate the discussion process and its outcomes to determine the extent to which students have understood the material and achieved the learning objectives.

During the evaluation process, teachers can assess students' abilities to think critically, analyze problems, and express opinions. They can also determine whether students have achieved the established learning objectives. In the context of learning evaluation, the educator's role is to conduct the assessment. The purpose of this assessment is to determine the extent to which the learning has been well-received by students. Evaluation is also useful as a barometer for determining whether a learning method is worth maintaining or needs to be reviewed (A. J. Fuad, 2023).

Additionally, students are given the opportunity to reflect on what they have learned from the discussion. This reflection can help students gain a deeper understanding of the material covered and improve their ability to apply the concepts they have learned.

Through evaluation and reflection, teachers can determine the effectiveness of the learning process and make necessary adjustments to improve the quality of future instruction. Students can also

benefit from the reflection process by enhancing their independent learning skills and developing their critical and analytical thinking skills (Aarar, 2024).

6. Conclusion

In the closing stage, the teacher provides conclusions and a summary of the discussion to ensure students clearly understand the material covered. The teacher summarizes the key points discussed and emphasizes key concepts that students need to remember. Furthermore, students are given the opportunity to ask questions and clarify any remaining unclear points. This allows students to obtain clarification and further explanation on any material they may still be unsure about.

This closing process is crucial because it helps students gain a more complete and accurate understanding of the material covered. The teacher also ensures that students have achieved the established learning objectives and are ready to move on to the next topic. By providing opportunities for students to ask questions and clarify any unclear points, the teacher can create an open and supportive learning environment, allowing students to feel comfortable expressing their questions and concerns.

The discussions held by ninth-grade students in Fiqh learning at the integrated Islamic Junior High School (MTs) Riyadul Badi'ah are structured, making the process more organized and orderly, thus maximizing the results. Systematically, the discussions carried out by these students began with small group discussions consisting of 4 to 5 children, which according to Darmawan, this was done so that all students could be involved in the discussion process and also so that all students' ideas or views could be conveyed (Darmawan, *interview*, 2025). This is in line with research conducted by Ni Made Rusmiati who said that the small group discussion method can improve students' understanding due to several factors, including that students will be more focused on the material being discussed because small group discussions allow all students to be actively involved in learning so that the material presented can be well received (Made Rusmiati, 2022).

After the small group discussion is completed, it will be continued by presenting the results of the discussion from several groups to then be continued into a large discussion carried out by all class members in discussing one material with the aim of ensuring that the materials that have been discussed can be known by all students and in addition to that also to train the mental and good communication of the students. As conveyed by Siska Agustin, a student of Class IX section C who said that large group discussions certainly provide benefits for students in terms of mental because in terms of numbers more people listen and also in terms of communication because in addition to being able to convey arguments they can also see how other students communicate (Agustin, *interview*, 2025).

This refers to the collaborative learning theory approach, which emphasizes the importance of student interaction and cooperation to achieve learning goals. Through the sharing of ideas, perspectives, and arguments, this approach fosters broad insight, good communication, and a strong mentality (Ilham S & Amal, 2023).

This study also found data that the role of teachers in discussions at MTs Terpadu Riyadul Badi'ah has a very central role, from the results of the research conducted that the role of teachers in the discussion process includes: Teachers are responsible for preparing discussion topics that are relevant to the curriculum and student needs. Teachers must ensure that students understand the purpose of the discussion. Teachers convey the procedure or system of discussion. Teachers guide and direct students in the discussion process (I. P. Sari & Kasduri, 2025).

This is in line with research conducted by Shobrina Zulfiatunnisa and Lu'luil Maknun by citing Law No. 14 of 2005 that the role of teachers is to be responsible for students' learning by educating, directing and evaluating learning (Zulfatunnisa & Maknun, 2022). Likewise, research conducted by Sitti Rahma Gitta Gagulu revealed that in the discussion method used by teachers as an effort to overcome students' learning difficulties, teachers have a role in providing direction to students during the discussion process (Rahma Gita Gagulu, 2023). Research confirms that teachers play a crucial role and serve many functions in the learning process. Therefore, regardless of the method used including discussion teachers must be able to act as educators, guides, motivators, and meet all students' needs (Nurulita et al., 2023).

Discussion learning method and critical thinking skills

Research in the ninth grade of MTs Terpadu Riyadul Badiah revealed that the discussion method in Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) successfully improved students' critical thinking skills. The subject teacher reported significant progress after switching from the previous method to the discussion method (Darmawan, *interview*, 2025). This was also expressed by several ninth-grade students, who stated that learning using the discussion method provided development in terms of more structured communication and the ability to address the problems presented in greater detail.

This aligns with previous research, in which Yuni et al.'s study on the effectiveness of discussion learning highlighted various aspects that influence the quality of interactions and learning outcomes. The results revealed that effective discussions can improve students' ability to analyze information, evaluate arguments, and generate critical thinking. Factors such as the questions asked, student participation, and teacher support in facilitating discussions are key to achieving these results (Yuni et al., 2024).

This occurs because several aspects of the discussion process stimulate students' critical thinking. As explained by the Fiqh teacher, there are several triggering factors in discussions that can improve students' critical thinking, including:

1. Students are actively involved in learning

Active student engagement in learning is an important factor that can stimulate increased critical thinking skills. When students are actively involved in learning, they not only passively receive information but also actively and deeply process it. This allows students to better understand the concepts discussed and develop their critical thinking skills. Active student engagement in learning can begin with class discussions, where students can think deeply about the concepts discussed and ask relevant questions (AP et al., 2023). Teachers can facilitate class discussions by giving students the opportunity to defend their opinions and consider criticism from others. This way, students can develop their critical thinking skills and better understand the concepts being discussed (Wijayanto, 2025).

This is in line with Vygotsky's constructivism theory, which holds that knowledge is influenced by situations and is collaborative (Dewi & Fauziati, 2021; Vygotsky, 1982). In the sense that knowledge is produced between people and the environment, which includes objects, tools, books, and the community in which people are located. This shows that acquiring knowledge can be achieved well through interaction with others in joint activities. Constructivism theory emphasizes students as active learners, so that in its application, Constructivism theory is often referred to as a student-centered teaching strategy (student-centered instruction). In a student-centered classroom, the teacher becomes a guide with the aim of helping students find their own meaning and not controlling all activities in the classroom (Dewi & Fauziati, 2021).

2. Questions Asked

Questions can stimulate increased critical thinking because they force students to think deeply and consider multiple perspectives. When students are faced with challenging questions, they must analyze the available information, consider various possibilities, and develop appropriate answers. The increased critical thinking triggered by questions can involve several steps (Prakoso et al., 2024). First, students must understand the questions posed and identify relevant information. Second, they must analyze that information and consider multiple perspectives. Third, they must develop appropriate answers based on their analysis.

This aligns with the inquiry-based learning approach, which, as Priansa explains, encourages students to ask questions and draw conclusions, actively engaging in discussions. Questions serve as catalysts for active and in-depth student engagement in the learning process. This approach allows students to take a greater role in the learning process by providing opportunities for independent knowledge development, which, in turn, contributes to improved critical thinking (Kholili, 2022).

3. In-depth Analysis

In-depth analysis in discussions can improve critical thinking skills because it allows students to better understand the concepts discussed and develop their critical thinking skills. In discussions, students can analyze the information presented, consider multiple perspectives, and develop sound conclusions. The analysis process in discussions involves several steps: Students must understand the topic being discussed and identify relevant information. Students must analyze that information and consider multiple perspectives. Students must develop sound conclusions based on the analysis they

have conducted and defend their opinions with strong arguments (Alfian & Nurchaerani, 2024; Andini et al., 2024; A. J. Fuad, 2020).

In-depth analysis in discussions significantly impacts students' critical thinking skills and independence. Through this approach, students are able to consider multiple perspectives to formulate accurate conclusions.

4. Arguing

Arguing in discussions can improve critical thinking because it allows students to defend their opinions with strong arguments and consider criticism from others. In discussions, students can share opinions and ideas, and consider different opinions to develop stronger arguments (Maisarah et al., 2025).

Arguing in discussions can provide several benefits for improving critical thinking. First, students can develop their ability to analyze information and consider multiple perspectives. Second, students can improve their ability to develop strong arguments and defend their opinions with sound logic. Third, students can become more independent in their thinking and develop their ability to consider criticism from others. Arguing in discussions also allows students to interact with other students and consider various opinions (Wibowo, 2024).

5. Diverse Arguments

Diverse arguments in discussions are an important factor that can improve critical thinking. When students engage in discussions that involve diverse arguments, they can consider different perspectives and develop their ability to analyze information (Roviati & Widodo, 2019; Sa'diyah et al., 2022). This allows them to understand the topic from different perspectives and develop stronger arguments. Diverse arguments in discussions can have a significant impact on students' critical thinking skills. By considering different opinions and developing strong arguments, students can develop strong critical thinking skills and become more independent in their thinking. Students can also improve their ability to analyze information and make informed decisions.

This aligns with the constructivist theory approach, which emphasizes the active role of students in constructing an understanding of what they learn. This is done by collecting and developing information, and connecting it to previous experiences. Consistent with Jean Piaget's perspective, constructivist theory emphasizes self-discovery learning, meaning learning is a process of independent discovery through interaction and observation of the environment (Suryana et al., 2022; Waite-Stupiansky, 2022).

Conclusion

Research at Riyadul Badiah Integrated Islamic Junior High School (MTs Terpadu Riyadul Badiah) revealed that the implementation of the discussion method in the ninth-grade Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) subject was carried out through a comprehensive structure, from the preparation stage to the closing stage. This process began with group formation, followed by a two-session discussion mechanism: small group discussions of 4-5 students and a large group discussion following the presentation session. These stages concluded with reflection and evaluation to ensure that the material was well-communicated and systematically organized.

The implementation of this discussion method has been proven to play a significant role in developing students' critical thinking skills through various supporting factors in the classroom. Active student involvement, courage in asking questions, and the ability to conduct in-depth analysis of diverse arguments are key to the effectiveness of this learning. Therefore, the discussion method at Riyadul Badiah Integrated Islamic Junior High School is not merely a means of interaction, but an effective learning strategy option for improving students' intellectual quality and analytical skills in understanding the laws of Fiqh.

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