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Culturally Responsive Teaching and Critical Thinking in Elementary Social Studies: A Quasi-Experimental Study

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Abstract: This research aims to examine how the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching affects the critical thinking skills of fourth-grade students in Social Studies at SD Negeri 054915. The research design is quasi-experimental with a nonequivalent control group design. The sample consisted of 43 students from two classes, divided into two groups: the experimental class (n = 23), which was taught using the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach, and the control class (n = 20), which was taught using traditional learning methods. Information was collected through pre-tests and post-tests that had been tested for validity and reliability. The research findings indicate that this method has an impact on students' critical thinking skills in Social Studies. Based on hypothesis analysis using an independent t-test, the significance value (sig. 2-tailed) was 0.000 < 0.05, meaning that H0 was rejected and Ha was accepted. Therefore, the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach was proven effective in improving students' analytical thinking skills in Social Studies education at the elementary school level. The control group, which did not use the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach, had an average (mean) score of 64.20, according to the data analysis. In contrast, the students in the experimental class, who were taught using the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach, achieved an average score of 74.52. These findings indicate that the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach has a significant impact on improving students' critical thinking skills. By linking the learning material to students' cultural backgrounds, the learning process becomes relevant, motivating, and encourages students to analyze information more deeply. The novelty of this research lies in the specific application of the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach in the Social Studies subject, particularly in the topic of cultural diversity, to develop critical thinking skills based on Ennis' indicators. These findings provide supporting evidence for this approach as an effective learning strategy, and it is recommended that Culturally Responsive Teaching be more widely integrated into Social Studies education, with future research involving larger samples and long-term measurements.

Keywords: Critical Thinking, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Social Studies

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A. Introduction

Education is a planned process to guide individuals in developing their physical, spiritual, cognitive, and social potential. This education aims to help students develop their potential, form a character that is faithful and devoted to God Almighty, possess polite and respectful behavior, as well as responsibility in accordance with values and norms, master knowledge, and improve critical thinking skills to solve problems or offer good and appropriate ideas (Hidayat & Abdillah, 2019).

Social Studies (IPS) plays a vital role in integrating various social science disciplines to examine the social phenomena and issues that develop within the community (Syahfitri et al., 2022). Social Studies education not only emphasizes the transfer of concepts but also the formation of attitudes, values, and social skills that are relevant to the students' context (Yusnaldi, 2019). Thus, Social Studies becomes a strategic subject for fostering social sensitivity and critical thinking skills among students (E. Susanti & Henni, 2018).

Critical thinking skills, as one of the essential abilities of the 21st century, encourage students to develop the 4Cs: critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity and innovation, communication, and collaboration (Redhana, 2019). Critical thinking is the ability to assess information, formulate arguments, and draw logical conclusions. According to Ennis (Linda & Lestari, 2019), critical thinking is an introspective process that focuses on choices or behaviors. Walker (Hakim & Nasution, 2019) explains that critical thinking skills involve the ability to assess evidence, connect information, and reason systematically. For elementary school students, critical thinking is crucial for building an understanding of the social environment, solving problems, and facing the challenges of modern life. Thus, critical thinking skills can be enhanced through interactive learning methods that allow students to explore knowledge independently (Amaliya & Nirwana, 2024). Overall, critical thinking emphasizes that this skill can only develop if students are given the opportunity to evaluate information, question assumptions, and relate concepts to real-life experiences in the learning process. However, the Qur'an emphasizes that humans should use their rational minds to think, observe the surrounding nature, take lessons from it, and consider all of Allah's creations in order to achieve a deeper and more meaningful understanding. One of the Qur'anic verses that serves as a foundation for using one's reasoning to think in order to understand all information and consider it from various perspectives is found in Surah Ali 'Imran (3:190-191), which says:

اِنَّ فِيْ خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّاُولِى الْاَلْبَابِۙ ١٩٠ الَّذِيْنَ يَذْكُرُوْنَ اللّٰهَ قِيَامًا وَّقُعُوْدًا وَّعَلٰى جُنُوْبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ فِيْ خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِۚ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هٰذَا بَاطِلًاۚ سُبْحٰنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ١٩١

The meaning is: "Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, there are signs for those who use reason-those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, or lying down, and reflect upon the

creation of the heavens and the earth, saying, 'Our Lord, You did not create this in vain. Glory be to You! Protect us from the punishment of the Fire".

This verse illustrates how Allah SWT emphasizes the importance of using reason and critical analysis to understand His creation. Allah invites humans to reflect and observe the many ways in which His greatness is manifested throughout the universe. This is where critical thinking becomes essential. Critical thinking means using one's intellect diligently to understand the meaning and purpose behind all events and creations. The individuals who are mentioned in this verse as those who remember Allah are not merely passive recipients of information, but rather actively engage their minds to seek the truth, question, and draw conclusions with a clear heart. Through critical thinking, one comes to the realization that none of Allah's creations are in vain. However, currently, Social Studies (IPS) education still faces various challenges. The low level of students' critical thinking skills is caused by traditional teaching methods that are less relevant to the demands of the 21st century. According to the results of the 2018 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) study, which involved 78 countries, Indonesia ranked 72nd. This result indicates that students' critical thinking skills in Indonesia are still relatively low and need to be improved (Rofi'ah & Rokhmaniyah, 2021).

Critical thinking skills are not innate; these skills can be taught through learning assessment methods (Miswari et al., 2020). Teachers can help students develop their critical thinking skills by providing learning opportunities that promote environmental awareness. Critical thinking skills are very important for students because they are beneficial in many aspects of their lives, both inside and outside the classroom. This skill encourages students to take an active role in their education (Kusuma et al., 2024).

Pierce & Associates (Kaniati et al., 2018) state that critical thinking requires a range of skills, including: 1) drawing conclusions from observations; 2) identifying assumptions; 3) deductive reasoning; 4) logical interpretation; and 5) expressing strong and weak arguments. Many experts have established a set of indicators for critical thinking skills due to the importance of these skills in learning. According to Ennis (Hamidah et al., 2023), five critical thinking skills have twelve sub-indicators, which are as follows:

1. Provide a brief explanation (basic clarification) that includes sub-indicators such as focusing questions, evaluating the argument of the question, and posing and answering questions;
2. Observing and considering observation reports, as well as the reliability of sources, is a sub-indicator of developing core skills (basic support);
3. Making inferences (inferring) includes sub-indicators such as defining and considering the results of deduction, defining and considering the results of induction, and determining and evaluating considerations;

4. Providing further clarification (advanced clarification) includes sub-indicators such as defining, considering a definition, determining an action, and identifying assumptions; and
5. Determining strategies and tactics includes sub-indicators such as decision-making and interacting with others.

According to Wahidin (Anisa & Siregar, 2024), learning that incorporates critical thinking provides several benefits, including making the learning process more successful because this knowledge is more deeply ingrained in the students' memory and can increase their interest and enthusiasm in learning. Critical thinking is intended to help students develop scientific characteristics and problem-solving skills, both in academic and practical contexts. Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation conducted in July 2025 with the fourth-grade teacher at SDN 054915 Perkotaan, the learning process is still dominated by lectures, student interaction is less inclusive due to cultural differences, and students are not yet able to apply critical thinking skills when examining social issues. These findings highlight a mismatch between the demand for critical thinking skills and the still conventional learning practices.

The Culturally Responsive Teaching approach places students' cultural diversity at the center of the learning process. By connecting education to culture, the goal is to help students better understand the lessons explained by the teacher (Fitriah et al., 2024). According to Gay (Rahmawati et al., 2020), culturally responsive teaching is an approach that utilizes the diverse cultural backgrounds, past experiences, and learning preferences of students to create more relevant learning opportunities. By applying this method, students can gain new perspectives on their surroundings within their own sociocultural context. The goal of culturally responsive teaching is for students to better recognize and appreciate culture as part of their identity, while also improving critical thinking skills, increasing student engagement, enhancing learning outcomes, and helping students easily understand concepts, thus achieving learning objectives (Sari et al., 2023). This approach views cultural diversity as a pedagogical strength that can enhance student engagement and support the development of critical thinking skills. The Culturally Responsive Teaching approach includes the following elements: 1) respecting the cultural traditions of various ethnic groups; 2) developing deep relationships with each student; 3) using various learning concepts to accommodate different learning styles; 4) helping students recognize, understand, and appreciate their own culture and other cultures; and 5) integrating intercultural information, resources, and skills to be taught in an educational setting. Furthermore, El-Fadillah (Azizah & Faturrahman, 2024) explains how to implement the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach as follows:

1. The instructor assesses students' initial understanding of the lesson material by asking brief questions;
2. Students from various cultural backgrounds are divided into several groups by the teacher;

3. The teacher presents the lesson material, connecting it to culture;
4. The instructor illustrates how the lesson material relates to students' everyday lives through storytelling;
5. A question-and-answer session is conducted to expand students' understanding based on what they already know. Students debate the issue and answer the teacher's questions;
6. Group experiments are conducted to enhance students' understanding; and
7. Group experiments are conducted to further improve students' understanding.

Among the various topics taught in Social Studies (IPS) is the topic of cultural diversity. This topic provides students with an opportunity to understand, appreciate, and reflect on their own culture as well as the culture of others. Through this approach, students become more enthusiastic about learning, feel valued, and are able to think more critically when observing differences in their surrounding environment. Several previous studies have shown that culturally responsive teaching can enhance learning activities, student engagement, and critical thinking skills. A study by (Safirah et al., 2024) found that the use of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model combined with the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach had an impact on the development of critical thinking skills in elementary school students. The research results showed that the experimental group obtained an average score of 85.72 on both the pretest and posttest, while the control group only achieved an average score of 58.44. The t-test yielded a t-value of 10.933 at a significance level of 0.000. These findings indicate that when the PBL paradigm and CRT techniques are combined, students' critical thinking skills improve drastically. These findings are also consistent with the research by Pujawati et al. (2024) titled "Implementation of the Culturally Responsive Teaching Approach to Train Critical Thinking Skills in Fourth-Grade Students at SD 2 Sidorejo Madiun." Student worksheets (LKPD) and cognitive tests were used as educational resources. The analysis showed that from Cycle I to Cycle II, students' critical thinking scores increased. The Wilcoxon test resulted in a significance value of 0.02 (<0.05) for the N-gain scores in the moderate to high range. This finding suggests that the CRT approach may gradually improve and expand students' critical thinking skills.

Based on previous research, it has been shown that the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach is highly effective in the learning process. Although several studies have proven the effectiveness of this approach, the gap highlights the need for more specific research to understand how the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach can be optimally applied in elementary school Social Studies education. Therefore, there is still a research gap that needs to be filled so we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the role of Culturally Responsive Teaching in enhancing critical thinking skills in Social Studies lessons. The novelty of this research lies in the application of the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach to the topic of cultural diversity, using Ennis' indicators to measure critical thinking skills, which is still rarely studied at the elementary school level. The aim of this study is to explain

the impact of using Culturally Responsive Teaching on the critical thinking skills of fourth-grade elementary school students.

B. Methods

This study was conducted at SD Negeri 054915, located in the Urban Village, Secanggang District, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra. The population consisted of 43 fourth-grade students. The sample consisted of two classes: Class IV-A, with 20 students, forming the control group, and Class IV-B, with 23 students, forming the experimental group. The sample distribution was determined through purposive sampling, which means selecting based on specific parameters such as class availability and student profile similarity (Nasution, 2020). This research is quantitative in nature and uses a quasi-experimental design with a nonequivalent control group design consisting of two groups without randomization (Neliwati, 2018). The experimental class received treatment through the implementation of the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach, while the control class used conventional learning. Both classes were given a pre-test to assess the students' initial critical thinking ability. Additionally, a post-test was given to both groups to assess how the approach influenced their critical thinking skills (Sugiyono., 2019). The research design plan is shown in the following table:

Table 1. Research Design Model

Class	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
Experiment	O_1		O_2
Control	O_3		O_4

Information:
O_1 = Pre-test results of the experimental student group's learning outcomes
O_2 = Hasil post-test experimental student group learning outcomes
O_3 = Pre-test results of the control group's learning outcomes
O_4 = Post-test results of the control group's learning outcomes
X = The experimental group was given the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach.

The main instrument in this study is a questionnaire, consisting of statements used to measure the students' critical thinking skills related to Social Studies material, functioning as the primary tool for this research. This instrument is designed based on critical thinking ability indicators. The validity and clarity of the instrument refer to the principles of measurement, which stipulate that an instrument must measure accurately and consistently (Syahrum & Salim, 2016). Before being used in the main research, the instrument was evaluated for its validity and reliability with students (from classes outside the sample), following the standard instrument development process. The sample consisted of twenty students from class V-B. Data for this study were collected through observations, treatment (experiments), and documentation. The collected data were then subjected to prerequisite tests, including homogeneity

and normality tests, which were initially performed to ensure that the data met the requirements for parametric testing. Once these requirements were satisfied, hypothesis testing was carried out using the Independent Sample t-Test to examine the significant difference between the experimental group and the control group. The purpose of this analysis is to determine the extent to which the implementation of the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach influences students' critical thinking skills in social studies education.

C. Results and Discussion

Validity Test and Reliability Test

1. Validity Test

The purpose of the validity test is to assess how well each question measures the parts that are the focus of the research. In this study, the instrument items consist of 20 statements containing 5 indicators of critical thinking skills according to Ennis. The validity test was conducted using Pearson Product Moment correlation, analyzed through SPSS version 26. The criterion for validity is that if the calculated r-value is greater than the r-table value, then the instrument is considered valid. The results of the validity test can be seen in the table below:

Table 2. Validity Test

Statement Number	r-count	r-table	Information
P1	O,792	0,443	Valid
P2	0,781	0,443	Valid
P3	0,813	0,443	Valid
P4	0,800	0,443	Valid
P5	0,849	0,443	Valid
P6	0,673	0,443	Valid
P7	0,727	0,443	Valid
P8	0,570	0,443	Valid
P9	0,513	0,443	Valid
P10	0,693	0,443	Valid
P11	0,753	0,443	Valid
P12	0,776	0,443	Valid
P13	0,732	0,443	Valid
P14	0,899	0,443	Valid
P15	0,838	0,443	Valid
P16	0,833	0,443	Valid
P17	0,598	0,443	Valid
P18	0,646	0,443	Valid
P19	0,856	0,443	Valid
P20	0,493	0,443	Valid

The analysis results presented in Table 2 above show that all 20 statements given to the respondents are considered valid. The results indicate that all calculated r-values

are greater than the r-table value (0.443). As a result, each statement meets the validity criteria and is suitable for use as a research instrument.

2. Reliability Test

The reliability test is conducted to ensure that the research instrument provides consistent and trustworthy results when used repeatedly. To analyze its reliability, the Cronbach's Alpha technique was used through SPSS version 26. The results of the reliability test can be seen in the table below.

Tabel 3. Reliability Test Results

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,951	20

The Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.951 based on the table provided. This value is much higher than the typical minimum reliability standard, which is usually $\alpha \geq 0.60–0.70$. Therefore, the instrument can be said to have a high internal consistency and is categorized as having "very high reliability." This means that the items in the instrument are able to measure critical thinking skills in a stable, consistent manner and can be used in the research.

3. Descriptive Analysis of Critical Thinking

This study was conducted in two classes: Class IV-A as the control group and Class IV-B as the experimental group. The research took place in the fourth-grade class at SD 054915 Urban Village. To collect data, the researcher provided observation sheets to the students. The primary data were taken from the pre-test and post-test. Both classes received different treatments: the control group was taught using traditional methods, while the experimental group was taught using the culturally responsive teaching method. The table below shows the results of the data analysis.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-Test and Post-Test Critical Thinking Ability Scores of Students in Experimental and Control Classes

Decriptive Statistics	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test Class Experiment	23	46	70	60,13	6,174
Post-test Class Experiment	23	60	86	74,52	7,440
Pre-test Control Class	20	47	72	59,60	6,253
Post-test Control Class	20	55	77	64,20	6,346

The data results above show that students' critical thinking skills significantly improved in the experimental class, as indicated in Table 4. The pre-test scores ranged from a minimum of 46 to a maximum of 70, with an initial average score of 60.13. After being given treatment with the implementation of the Culturally Responsive Teaching

approach, the post-test scores significantly increased, with an average (mean) of 74.52, with scores ranging from a minimum of 60 to a maximum of 86. Additionally, the control class showed only a slight improvement in scores. Although there was an increase in the average score from pre-test to post-test, the improvement was not as significant. The pre-test results had an average score (mean) of 59.60, with a range of scores from 47 to 72. The post-test results for the control class had an average score (mean) of 64.20, with a range from 55 to 77. The data on students' critical thinking skills were collected before and after treatment in both the control and experimental classes, as presented in Tables below:

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of Control Class

Pretest Interval	Frequency	Percentage	Posttest Interval	Frequency	Percentage
47 – 51	2	10%	55 -59	6	30%
52 – 56	5	25%	60 – 64	5	25%
57 – 61	7	35%	65 – 69	5	25%
62 – 66	3	15%	70 -74	3	15%
67 – 72	3	15%	75 – 79	1	5%
Amount	20	100%	Amount	20	100%
The highest score		72	The highest score		77
The highest score		47	The highest score		55

Table 5 shows that the critical thinking skills in the control class were relatively low before the pre-test. It indicates that 10% of students had scores in the range of 47-51, 25% had scores in the range of 52-56, and 35% had scores in the range of 57-61. Additionally, 15% of students had scores in the range of 62-66, while another 15% had scores in the range of 67-72. This distribution reflects that most students in the control class had scores in the lower to mid-range of critical thinking ability before receiving any treatment.

Table 6. Frequency Distribution of Experimental Class

Pretest Interval	Frequency	Percentage	Posttest Interval	Frequency	Percentage
46 -50	2	8.7%	60 - 64	2	8.7%
51-55	0	0%	65 -69	4	17.4%
56 -60	10	43.5%	70 - 74	5	21.7%
61 – 65	4	17.4%	75 -79	5	21.7%
66 – 70	6	26.1%	80 - 84	5	21.7%
71- 75	1	4.3%	85 - 89	2	8.7%
Amount	23	100%	Amount	23	100%
The highest score		70	The highest score		88
The highest score		46	The highest score		60

Table 6 shows that the critical thinking skills in the control class were still relatively low before the post-test. It indicates that 30% of students had scores in the range of 55-

59, 25% of students had scores in the range of 60-64 and 65-69, 15% of students had scores in the range of 70-74, and 5% of students had scores in the range of 75-79. This distribution reflects that despite some improvement, many students in the control class remained in the lower to mid-range of critical thinking ability before the post-test.

Prerequisite Analysis Test

1. Normality Test

The next stage of analysis is to check the homogeneity and normality of the data. This normality test is conducted to ensure that the data from both the experimental and control class samples are well-distributed, meaning they follow a normal distribution. The pre-test and post-test data from both classes will be checked. The testing process uses the Shapiro-Wilk method in SPSS 26 for Windows, as the sample size is less than 50. The data is considered normal if the significance value (Sig) is greater than or equal to 0.05. The following table shows the results of the normality test for the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group and the control group.

Table 7. Normality Test of Experimental Class and Control Class

		Shapiro-Wilk		
	Class	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Critical Thinking Skills Results	Experimental Class Pretest	,941	23	,185
	Experimental Class Posttest	,970	23	,681
	Control Class Pretest	,954	20	,436
	Control Class Posttest	,956	20	,460

**. This is a lower bound of the true significance.*
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The normality test table above shows that the experimental class resulted in a significance value of 0.185 for the pre-test and 0.681 for the post-test. Meanwhile, the control group yielded a significance value of 0.436 for the pre-test and 0.460 for the post-test. Since all the significance values (Sig) for both groups (both pre-test and post-test) are greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the data in this study are normally distributed.

2. Homogeneity Test

After the data from both groups were confirmed to be normal, the next step is the homogeneity test. This test is used to check whether the data from both groups have uniform variances or not. In the homogeneity test, the data is considered homogeneous if the significance value is greater than 0.05. However, if the value is less than 0.05, it indicates that the data are not homogeneous. This homogeneity test was conducted using the Levene Test in SPSS 26. The results of the test can be seen in the following table:

Table 8. Homogeneity Test of Experimental Class and Control Class

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Result	Based on Mean	,709	1	41	,405
	Based on Median	,737	1	41	,396
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	,737	1	40,995	,396
	Based on trimmed mean	,719	1	41	,401

The significance value for the data above, based on the average, is 0.405, which is higher than ($p = 0.405 \geq 0.05$). As a result, H0 cannot be rejected. In other words, the variances between the groups are considered homogeneous.

3. Hypothesis Testing

After the normality and homogeneity tests were completed and the results were satisfactory, the data are considered ready for hypothesis testing. In this study, the hypothesis was tested using the Independent Sample t-Test to determine whether there was a significant difference between the experimental class taught using the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach and the control class taught using the conventional method. The significance value (Sig) serves as the main reference for decision-making. If the Sig value is less than or equal to 0.05, then there is a significant difference in critical thinking ability between students in the experimental group and those in the control group. In this case, H0 is rejected, and Ha is accepted. However, if the significance value (Sig) is greater than or equal to 0.05, then Ha is rejected, and H0 is assumed, indicating that there is no significant difference in critical thinking ability between the two groups. The table below presents the results of the hypothesis testing:

Tabel 9. Independent Samples Hypothesis Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Result	Equal variances assumed	,709	,405	-4,854	41	,000	-10,322	2,126	-14,616	-6,028
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,909	40,990	,000	-10,322	2,102	-14,568	-6,076

The significance value in the table above is 0.000, which is clearly much smaller than 0.05. This means there is a difference in critical thinking ability between the students in the experimental class, who were taught using the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach, and the students in the control class, who were still taught using conventional learning methods. Therefore, H0 is rejected, and Ha is accepted. It can be concluded that students' critical thinking skills in Social Studies are significantly

influenced by the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach.

The results of this study explain that the Culturally Responsive Teaching method is much more effective in improving students' critical thinking skills compared to conventional teaching methods. In the experimental class, the average pre-test score, which was initially 60.13, increased to 74.52 in the post-test after they learned using the culturally responsive teaching method.

The effectiveness of culturally responsive teaching in this study is closely linked to the characteristics of the approach, which places students' culture as a source of learning. In culturally responsive teaching, the teacher connects the material on cultural diversity with the cultural experience's students have, such as traditions, local languages, traditional clothing, typical foods, and local cultural values they are familiar with, as well as the cultural diversity present in their surroundings. This activity makes students feel connected to the learning material, thus increasing engagement, motivation, and interaction in the classroom. This aligns with the principles of constructivism, which state that new knowledge is more easily understood when it is linked to existing schemas that students already possess. As a result, students become more engaged in discussions, more critical in asking questions, and are able to provide stronger justifications in solving tasks or social issues.

The findings of this study are in line with the research by (E. Y. Susanti & Sari, 2024) in the Indonesian Journal of Educational Development, titled The Influence of Culturally Responsive Teaching on the Critical Thinking Ability in Grade IV Students of MIS YMPI Tanjung Balai. The results of their study showed a significant difference between the two groups, where the experimental group had an average score of 81.13, while the control group only reached 65.40. The t-test results, which yielded a significance level of 0.000, further illustrate the value of the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach in helping students develop their critical thinking skills. This study reinforces previous research showing that the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach enhances students' critical thinking abilities.

Overall, the results of this study demonstrate the effectiveness of the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach in improving critical thinking skills and how this approach can be applied to social studies education, which emphasizes the development of social and cultural competencies. Through culturally responsive teaching, students can view cultural differences as a valuable resource that can be critically examined and appreciated. Therefore, education becomes more relevant, contextual, and aligned with the needs of students in the 21st century. Educators can integrate these learning practices into the classroom by using teaching techniques that are culturally sensitive. In addition to benefiting students in various ways, culturally responsive teaching methods are highly relevant to the development of students' critical thinking skills in social studies.

D. Conclusions

The research conducted at SD Negeri 054915 Perkotaan meets the indications set for the study, and the pre-test and post-test scores increased in accordance with the data analysis and research conclusions. In the pre-test administered in the control class before the treatment, a total of 20 students obtained an average score of 59.60. After the treatment, which did not use the culturally responsive teaching approach, students obtained an average post-test score of 64.20. In the experimental class, 23 students had an average pre-test score of 60.13. After being tested again using the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach, the post-test average score was 74.52. This shows that students who received the treatment using the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach in Social Studies lessons had a higher average score compared to students who did not use the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach. Moreover, based on the results of the independent t-test, which showed a significance value (sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000 < 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a substantial correlation between the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach and students' critical thinking skills. By using a culturally sensitive teaching style as a guide, educators can integrate this learning approach into the teaching process. In addition to its various benefits, the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach is highly relevant to Social Studies lessons because it helps students develop their critical thinking skills, especially when dealing with content directly related to cultural diversity. Therefore, this research demonstrates that the Culturally Responsive Teaching style significantly improves students' critical thinking skills.

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