



## Correlation Between Critical Thinking and Reading Ability and Literacy among University Students

Miftakhul Ilmi Suwignya Putra<sup>1</sup>, Mujiyanto Solichin<sup>2</sup>, Amrulloh<sup>3</sup>, Mukhlisin<sup>4</sup>, Arifin<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>Universitas Pesantren Tinggi Darul Ulum Jombang

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### ABSTRACT:

This study aims to determine the relationship between critical thinking skills and reading skills in Islamic Education students at UNIPDU. The theory used in this study is Jean Piaget's theory of Constructivism. The study population was 122 Islamic Religious Education students at UNIPDU who were categorized as fond of Reading, marked by frequent visits to the library/reading room. The research sample was 70 students. This study uses a quantitative approach with a *correlational design*. The variables of this research are critical thinking ability as the independent variable and Reading ability as the dependent variable. The data collection technique uses a test for each respondent who is the research sample. The data analysis technique uses *product moment*. The analysis results show a positive relationship between critical thinking skills and Reading ability in UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students, although the relationship is low.

**Keywords:** critical thinking, reading skills, literacy culture.

### Introduction

The opening of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia contains the objectives of the Indonesian nation, one of which is to educate the nation's life. For this reason, the Indonesian government established a National Education System regulated in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. Article 3 of the law reads, "National Education functions to shape dignified national character and civilization in order to educate the nation's life...".

AlferdBined (in Efendi, 2005:51) says that intelligence consists of 3 components: the ability to direct actions or thoughts. From this opinion, one's intelligence can be seen in how one thinks. Ramlani (2007:14) says that thinking has meaning as an effort/way to solve a problem. One of the thinking activities is critical thinking. One of the more interesting things in an educated society is critical thinking. According to Ennis (in Nurulhuda et al., 2013: 11), critical thinking must stay away from things that are hasty/careless and doubtful and must be open. Then Enis (in Yudiana, 2015: 13 ) suggests several aspects of critical thinking that can be concluded, namely: 1) analyze and evaluate a problem, 2) seek clarity of information calmly (thoroughly, in detail). 3) open-minded (accepting new knowledge, suggestions, and criticism) is not selfish with previous knowledge.

Apart from Ennis, several figures gave statements about critical thinking, including Ruggiero. According to Ruggiero (B. Johnson, 2007:187), critical thinking is an activity that helps solve a problem and make a decision.

According to Lai 2011 (in Safrida, 2018: 11), critical thinking is the skill to analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and make conclusions using reasoning. Meanwhile, Wanda Teays 2006 (in Arifa, 2015: 52) says critical thinking is an activity to build or set aside opinions, examine data and facts, read in more detail, and make personal interpretations that are clear and full of defense. The result is being able to think more thoroughly."

Shendy (2018: 41), in his research, describes the difference between critical and uncritical people. Critical people are willing to explore information, identify, and understand problems well. They are very detailed about a problem, so they can sort out which one is the cause and so on.

Based on some of the explanations regarding critical thinking, it can be concluded that critical thinking is the ability to think deeply to evaluate, analyze, consider the truth, and more thoroughly explore information so that carelessness does not occur in absorbing information.

Critical thinking is closely related to students because students are known as educated people pursuing higher education. This is supported by several opinions, such as Hastarjo (1999: 1), who said, "one of the goals of higher education is to develop students' critical thinking skills." A similar opinion from Suparni (2016: 41) says that "one of the potentials that should be formed and needs to be developed in higher education is critical thinking." This statement is also supported by Nuzulia et al. (2018: 35), who say this critical thinking activity is necessary for undergraduate program graduates. This is also contained in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 49 of 2014 concerning National Higher Education Standards. Article 6 of the regulation reads, "graduates of the undergraduate program are required to have general skills, namely applying logical, critical, systematic, innovative thinking...".

Islamic Religious Education Study Program is one of the Study Programs that has learning outcomes with specific skill parameters to be able to organize and solve Islamic religious education problems through participatory critical thinking and action in the policy process. This is in line with Indriani's opinion (2019:22), which says that Islamic Religious Education plays an important role in forming good citizens. To be able to become good citizens, students must think critically.

As a result of the thinking activity, a question will arise because asking is part of the thinking process. These questions complement the knowledge, find solutions to problems, and correct information. According to Moore and Parker 1986 (in Sulistyowati, 2015: 220) that critical thinking is an activity that requires many supporting skills, including reading and writing skills.

Based on this opinion, one of the efforts that must be made to complete the answer to a question is reading. Reading activity is an effort to increase knowledge, find a solution to a problem, and correct information. The reading culture of the Indonesian people can be said to be low. This can be based on research that several world institutions, including UNESCO, have carried out. The research results obtained a figure of 0.001%, meaning that per 1000 Indonesians, only one person reads a book (quoted from Sindonews.com, 2009). The research " *Most Littered National In The World*" shows that Indonesia's reading ranking is very bad, ranking 60 out of 61 countries worldwide. ( quoted from Detiknews.com, 2009).

Steps that can be taken to overcome this can be done by creating a culture of good literacy and character education. According to Hariyati et al. (2018: 92), Literacy culture is a habit of thinking followed by reading and writing activities. Then the results of the process can be work and knowledge. Literacy culture can be achieved if there are supporting facilities and infrastructure. In terms of Reading literacy, the required facility is a library. Meanwhile, according to Roesminingsih and Lamijan (2016: 253), character education aims to shape children's character to become good citizens.

If the culture of literacy and character education is implemented properly, the Indonesian nation's interest in Reading will also increase, which will also affect the Indonesian nation's reading ability. This opinion is based on the results of research conducted by Khofifah (2015), EkaOktaviani (2017), and RinRahayu (2018) that interest in Reading is related to the ability to read comprehension.

Reading is one of the activities in teaching and learning because it can find new information. Several experts have defined Reading, including Trigan (2015: 7). Reading is a process readers use to get a writer's message. Meanwhile, according to Bonomo (in Somadayo, 2011: 5), the notion of Reading is a process of picking and understanding the meaning or meaning in written language (*Reading is bringing* ). A similar opinion was also expressed by Soedarso 2005 (in Nawati, 2018: 174). Reading is an activity of understanding the content of the Reading.

Based on the explanation regarding the study of reading above, it can be seen that reading ability is the ability to understand the contents of the Reading properly and correctly so that the meaning of Reading can be obtained after the reading activity is carried out. The intended meaning can be in the form of the main idea or main idea of the Reading, concluding the Reading, and being able to capture the intended content in the Reading.

The Islamic Religious Education study program is one of the study programs at the Faculty of Islamic Religion UNIPDU, which teaches scientific *logic* courses that aim to think systematically and correctly. The course is expected to help Islamic Religious Education students think more critically about unclear information. *Character* education courses are also taught to form good character in students, one of which is the character of liking to read. Apart from that, the Islamic Religious Education Study Program has a literacy culture because there is a reading room/library. On this basis, the researcher wanted to find out whether there is a relationship between critical thinking skills and the reading ability of UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students.

To find out about this, the researchers made observations that were carried out in November-December 2022. The results of the observations were also based on the book attendance list of visitors to the library/reading room of the Faculty of Islamic Religion UNIPDU obtained 73 students out of the total number of Islamic Religious Education students class of 2019-2022 as many as 347 students. This number is used as the study population. In this study, it was ascertained that the respondents were considered to have a reading ability that was characterized by a habit of fond of Reading by visiting the library/reading room of the Faculty of Islamic Religion UNIPDU as the closest reading facility.

On the other hand, when lectures are in class, it is also very rare for students to ask questions. This illustrates that students' critical thinking skills are lacking. This can also be seen from the questions that arise; most of them use the question word what. Therefore, this study will reveal whether there is a relationship between critical thinking skills and the reading ability of UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students.

The weakness of this study was that in determining the study population, only students who had visited the library/reading room were chosen. The researcher ignored Islamic Religious Education students who read in other libraries and students who read through digital Reading sources such as *e-books, e-journals, etc.*

The theory chosen to discuss the formulation of the problem is constructivism theory. This theory is a cognitive learning theory. One of the pioneers of this theory is Jean Piaget (2009: 86). Constructivism assumes that knowledge is constructed through experience that can be obtained through learning and that learning must be in a realistic setting. Then Jean Piaget (Dahar, 1989: 159) said that this theory of Constructivism emphasizes finding knowledge built according to reality or reality. From these two definitions, it can be concluded that constructivism theory argues that knowledge is built by oneself based on reality or events and even experience.

According to Piaget (in Sigit, 2013: 35), construction processes are connected sequentially: 1) *schemata* are observations of the surrounding environment. 2) *assimilation* is the grouping and collection of new information obtained from observations. 3) *accommodation*, which is information that has been grouped and collected and then understood and confirmed to be used as new knowledge 4) *equilibration*, the process of incorporating new experience or knowledge into existing knowledge in the mind so that new knowledge is formed.

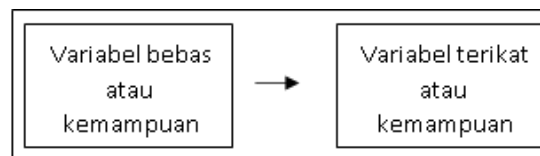
This theory was chosen because it is suitable to be used to help answer the formulation of the problem. Constructivism theory explains that the knowledge possessed by humans is the result of the formation of humans themselves. In this study, what is meant by building knowledge is how to use critical thinking skills and reading skills. Both of these abilities are used to build knowledge to become owned knowledge. Then building knowledge by Reading is an effort to understand the contents of a text so as to gain knowledge.

## Method

This study uses a quantitative approach because the data obtained is in the form of numbers (Sugiyono, 2013: 23). The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between critical thinking skills and the reading ability of Islamic Religious Education students, so the research design used was a correlation. The independent variable (independent variable) in this study is the ability to think critically, and the dependent variable (the dependent variable) is the ability to read.

The variable operational definition of critical thinking ability is the ability to think deeply so that you are able to evaluate, analyze, consider the truth, and more thoroughly explore information so that carelessness does not occur in absorbing information. This is done to obtain information clarity, an answer, or a more appropriate solution to a problem. While Reading ability is the ability to understand the contents of the Reading properly and correctly so that the meaning of Reading can be obtained after the reading activity is carried out. The intended meaning can be in the form of the main idea or main idea of the Reading, concluding the Reading, and being able to capture the intended content in the Reading.

The relationship between the dependent variable/independent variable and the independent variable/dependent variable in this study is illustrated in the following figure:



Gambar 1. hubungan antar variabel

This research is located in the Islamic Religious Education Study Program, Faculty of Islamic Religion, UNIPDU. The population of this study was students of Islamic Religious Education who were considered to have the ability to read because they often visited the library. This population is based on observations of researchers conducted in November–December 2019 in the library/reading room of the Faculty of Religion of Islam, UNIPDU, and the visit list book of the library/reading room. Based on these observations, the study population consisted of 87 PPKn students. According to Suharsimi (2013: 130), the population is the total number of research subjects. The total population determines the number of samples that will be used as research respondents. The sample, according to Sugiyono (2016: 81), is part of the number and characteristics of the population. Determination of the sample using the Slovin formula with a confidence level of 95%, namely 0.05, as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{N(d)^2 + 1}$$

description:

n: Number of samples N : total population d : precision value (95 confidence level, which is 0.05)

$$n = \frac{N}{N(d)^2 + 1} = \frac{87}{87(0,05)^2 + 1}$$

$n = 70.2$  rounded up to 70.

So the sample of this study was 70 Islamic Religious Education students at UNIPDU who joined the study population.

In this study, the sampling technique used was *Probability Sampling*. According to Sugiyono (2015: 84), this technique provides equal opportunities for each population that is used as a sample. Then the sampling was carried out using the *Random Sampling technique* because the sample was randomly selected from as many as 70 students who joined the population.

Data collection is done utilizing a test. According to Arikunto (in Dadang, 2015: 48), a test is a tool in the form of questions used to measure the abilities, skills, and knowledge of individuals or groups. The test is open, so respondents can freely answer according to their thoughts. The researcher also prepared an assessment rubric to provide a score regarding the respondents' answers. The data collection carried out by means of the test was carried out on 17-21 February 2020.

The tests presented for data collection materials are made according to the indicators of each variable. There are three indicators for critical thinking skills: 1) deepening information, the sub-indicator is being able to make questions to get clearer information. 2) analyzing, the sun indicator is breaking down information into things that are easy to understand. 3) evaluating the sub-indicator is being able to provide the best solution to a problem. Then in the reading ability variable, there is one indicator, namely taking the meaning of Reading. This indicator has three sub-indicators: 1) being able to get the main idea. 2) be able to conclude reading results with their own language, which is simpler and easier to understand. 3) able to understand the contents of the Reading.

From each of these variables, there are three items to determine critical thinking skills (each sub-indicator has 1 question) and students' reading ability (each sub-indicator has 1 question). After the data were obtained through the distribution of the tests, the next step was to process the data. At this data processing stage, the researcher obtains detailed data in the form of the maximum score and minimum score as well as the tendency of the scores for each research variable, namely the ability to think critically and read.

Regarding the details of the data on critical thinking skills, the maximum (highest) score obtained is 91 and the minimum (lowest) score is 27. As for Reading ability, the maximum score is 75 and the minimum score is 17. In addition, the trend in the score of each variable is also obtained. The trend of this score is based on calculations according to SaifuddinAzwar (2014: 135). The results are as follows:

Table 1. The results of calculating the tendency to score critical thinking skills and reading skills in UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students

Category	Critical thinking ability score	Reading ability score
Tall	79-91	72-75
Currently	52-79	57-72
Low	27-52	17-57

In table 1 it is known that the tendency of the score for critical thinking skills is in the high category if the score obtained by the respondents scores 79-91. The score is in the medium category if many students score 52-79. The score is in a low category if many students score 27-52.

The Reading ability score is in the high category if the respondents get a score of 72-75. The score is in the medium category if many students get a score of 57-72. The score is in a low category if many students score 17-57. The trend in Reading ability scores can be seen in the following figure:

After processing the data, the researcher conducted a prerequisite analysis test, including normality and linearity tests. The normality test in this study used the *Kolmogorov-Smirnov* test, which aims to determine whether data distribution is normally distributed. The normality test here uses the computer-assisted SPSS program version 25. From this test, *the Asymp.Sig results are obtained. (2-tailed)* of 0.082. According to Singgih (2002: 393), regarding the basis for making decisions on the normality test in SPSS, if the probability is (more than)  $> 0.05$ , then it is normally distributed. If the probability is (less than)  $< 0.05$ , then it is not normally distributed. Thus it can be said that the data in this study are normally distributed because *Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed)* obtained is  $0.082 > 0.05$ .

Besides that, the researcher also conducted a linearity test to determine whether the relationship between the two variables was linear. The linearity test was carried out using the SPSS version 25 computer to obtain a *Sig.*

*Deviation from linearity* 0.244. According to Priyatno (2010: 46), if the significance of *linearity* (more than)  $> 0.05$ , the relationship between these variables is linear. If *linearity* (less than)  $< 0.05$ , the relationship between variables is not linear. So based on the *Sig. The deviation from linearity* obtained was  $0.244 > 0.05$ , so it can be said that there is a linear relationship between critical thinking skills and reading skills in Islamic Religious Education students at UNIPDU.

From the results of the prerequisite test analysis, namely the normality test and the linearity test, it is feasible to test the hypothesis by means of the *product-moment* correlation test because the data distribution is normal, and there is a linear relationship between variables. The hypothesis is that there is a relationship between critical thinking skills and reading skills in Islamic Religious Education students at UNIPDU.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *The critical thinking skills of UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students*

Based on calculating the data obtained from the distribution of tests regarding critical thinking skills to Islamic Religious Education students at UNIPDU, who were 70 research samples. In this critical thinking ability test, there are three questions. If all three questions are answered perfectly, then a score of 99 will be obtained because each item has a maximum score of 33. Based on the critical thinking ability test that has been carried out, the maximum score obtained by the research sample students is a score of 91, and the minimum score of 27. From the existing scores, it can be seen that the trend of the scores that have been obtained from the 70 students. Based on the calculation of the tendency score for the critical thinking ability of Islamic Religious Education students, the results of the calculation of the tendency score are adjusted to table 1, along with the level of tendency:

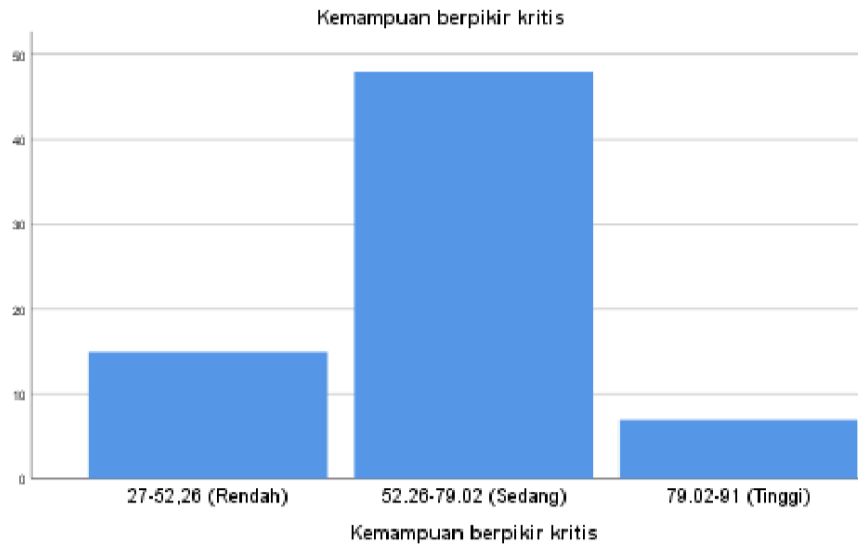


Figure 2. Bar chart diagram of the trend of critical thinking ability scores of UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students

Based on Figure 2 above, the tendency of the critical thinking ability scores of UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students from a sample of 70 students is likely at a moderate level. Because of the 70 students, 48 students scored between 52.26-79.02 or 68.6%. Those who obtained low scores between 27-56.26 were 15 students (21.4%). While those who obtained high scores between 79.02-91 were 7 students (10%). The Bar chart diagram shows that the moderate score (52.26 -79.6 ) has the highest position, namely 68.6%, compared to the low and high scores.

#### ***The reading ability of UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students***

Based on the calculation of the data obtained from the distribution of tests regarding the Reading ability of Islamic Religious Education students at UNIPDU, who became a sample of 70 studies. In this reading ability test, there are three questions. If all three questions are answered perfectly, then a score of 99 will be obtained because each item has a maximum score of 33. Based on the reading ability test that has been carried out, the maximum score obtained by the research sample students is 75, and the minimum score is 17. From the existing scores, it can be seen that the tendency of the score obtained is from 70 students. Based on the calculation of the trend score of Islamic Religious Education students' reading ability, the results of the calculation of the tendency score are adjusted to table 1, along with the level of tendency:

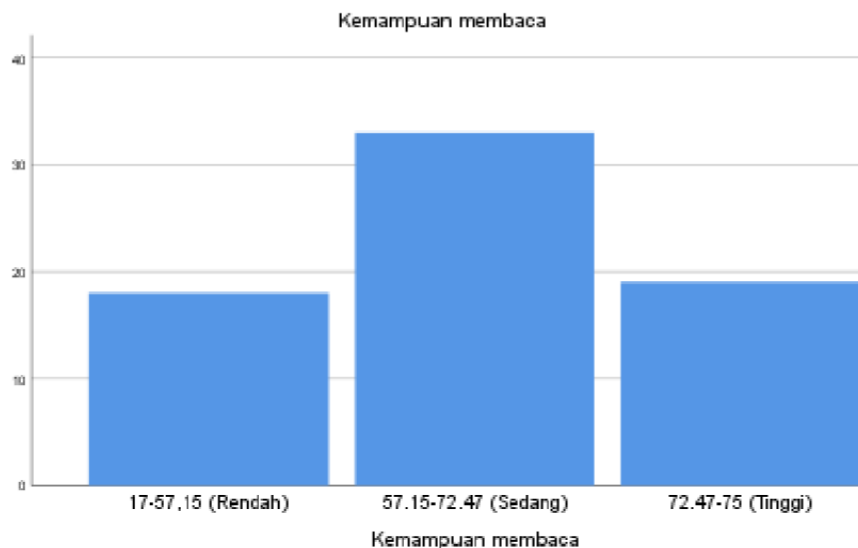


Figure 3. Bar chart diagram of the trend in Reading ability scores of UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students.

Based on Figure 3 above, it can be seen that the trend in Reading ability scores of UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students from a sample of 70 students tends to be at a moderate level. Because of the 70 students, 33 students scored between 57.15-72.47 or 46.5%. Those who received low scores between 17.57 -57.15 were 18 students (24.4%). While those who obtained high scores between 72.42-75 were 19 students (26.8 % ). The Bar chart diagram shows that the moderate score (57.15 -72.47 ) has the highest position, namely 46.5%, compared to the low and high scores.

### ***Correlation test of the relationship between critical thinking skills and the reading ability of UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students***

Correlation testing is used to determine the relationship between variables. The variables to be tested in this study are critical thinking ability as the independent variable (X) and Reading ability as the fixed variable (Y). The test is based on the data obtained based on the tests that have been given to the respondents. The results of calculating the correlation analysis of the *product moment* t using the SPSS version 25 computer are as follows:

Table 2. Correlation test results of critical thinking skills and reading abilities of UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Pearson correlation</b>
Critical thinking ability/ independent variable (X)	0.031	0.258
Ability read/dependent variable (Y)	0.031	0.258

Based on table 2 above, it can be seen that the results of the calculation of the *product-moment correlation test* obtained a significant number of 0.031. If seen based on taking the *product-moment* correlation in SPSS according to Machali (2015: 108), that is, if the probability or significance value is  $> 0.05$ , then there is a significant relationship, but if  $< 0.05$ , then it does not have an insignificant relationship. Because the significance number obtained from this calculation is 0.031 and the figure is  $> 0.05$ , it can be said that there is a significant relationship between the variable critical thinking ability as the independent variable (X) and the ability to read as the dependent variable (Y). This is in accordance with the hypothesis proposed, namely that there is a relationship between critical thinking skills and reading skills in Islamic Religious Education students at UNIPDU.

Then the *Pearson correlation value* obtained is 0.258. This figure is used to determine the nature of the relationship and the level of relationship between the variables, namely critical thinking skills and Reading ability. As for the nature of the relationship, it has a positive relationship because the *Pearson correlation* of 0.258 is a positive number.

The level of relationship is based on the correlation coefficient interpretation table according to Sugiyono (2013: 231) as follows:

Table 3. Interpretation of the correlation coefficient

<b>Coefficient Intervals</b>	<b>Relationship Level</b>
0.00 – 0.20	Very low
0.21 – 0.40	Low
0.41 – 0.60	Currently
0.61 – 0.80	Strong
0.81 – 1.00	Very strong

Source: Sugiyono, (2013:231).

*Pearson correlation* number of 0.258 is between the coefficient intervals at 0.21-0.40, indicating a low relationship level. So it can be interpreted that the level of correlation between the variables of critical thinking ability and the reading ability of UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students is low.

From the *Product-moment* correlation analysis above, it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between critical thinking skills and the reading ability of UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students, but the relationship level is low.

## **Discussion**

Critical thinking skills are included in the category of thinking at a higher order level (*higher order thinking*) to evaluate, analyze, consider the truth, and more thoroughly explore information so that carelessness does not occur in absorbing information. This is done to obtain information clarity, an answer, or a more appropriate solution to a problem.

The ability to read is an ability to understand the contents of the Reading properly and correctly so that the meaning of the Reading can be obtained after the reading activity is carried out. The intended meaning can be in the form of the main idea or main idea of the Reading, concluding the Reading, and being able to capture the intended content in the Reading.

Critical thinking ability can be seen from several indicators. First, get to know the information. Exploring the information can be done by asking a number of questions in order to obtain hidden information bias. The second analyzes the information. This can be done to understand information by simplifying or concluding in mind. The third evaluates finding a way out or a solution to a problem. Then the reading ability in this study is seen through several indicators. First, being able to get the main idea. This captures what is being discussed in a reading. The second concludes a reading and serves to simplify a reading using its own language so that the contents of a reading can be easily understood. The third is able to understand the contents of the Reading.

The results of the study, which describe the relationship between critical thinking skills and Reading abilities in Islamic Religious Education students at UNIPDU in this study are based on the acquisition of scores on tests distributed to each respondent, totaling 70 students. Then the data in the form of scores was carried out by prerequisite analysis tests, including the normality and linearity tests. In this study, the *prerequisite* tests used the SPSS version 25 computer to see whether it was normal or not. The normality test here uses the computer-assisted SPSS program version 25. From this test, the *Asymp.Sig results are obtained (2-tailed)* of 0.082. According to Singgih (2002: 393), regarding the basis for making decisions on the normality test in SPSS, if the probability is (more than)  $> 0.05$ , then it is normally distributed. If the probability is (less than)  $< 0.05$ , then it is not normally distributed. Thus it can be said that the data in this study are normally distributed because *Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed)* obtained is  $0.082 > 0.05$ .

Besides that, the researcher also conducted a linearity test to find out whether the relationship between the two variables was linear or not. The linearity test was carried out using the SPSS version 25 computer to obtain a *Sig.*

*Deviation from linearity* 0.244. According to Priyatno (2010: 46), if the significance of *linearity* is more than 0.05, then the relationship between these variables is said to be linear. If *linearity* is less than 0.05, the relationship between variables is not linear. So based on the *Sig. The deviation from linearity* obtained was  $0.244 > 0.05$ , so it can be said that there is a linear relationship between critical thinking skills and reading skills in Islamic Religious Education students at UNIPDU.

Seen from the tendency of each variable's *score*, each variable tends to score at a moderate level. This means that there is a correlation or relationship between critical thinking skills and reading skills. This is also in accordance with the results of the calculation of the *product-moment* correlation test, which obtains a significant number of 0.031 when viewed based on the SPSS calculation decision-making basis according to Machali (2015: 108), that is, if the probability or significance value is  $> 0.05$  then there is a significant relationship, but if  $< 0.05$ , it means that there is no significant relationship. Because the significance value obtained is 0.031 and the number is  $> 0.05$ , there is a significant relationship. The 0.258 *Pearson correlation* obtained from these calculations is in the coefficient interval of 0.21 -0.40, indicating a low relationship level. Based on these calculations, there is a relationship between critical thinking skills and Reading ability in Islamic Religious Education students at UNIPDU, but the level of relationship is low.

This study uses the constructivism theory, which assumes that knowledge is something that is built by oneself based on experience. Four construction processes are connected sequentially, starting from schemata, assimilation, accommodation, and equilibration. According to constructivist theory, the success of acquiring knowledge is marked by completing one by one process up to the *equilibrium stage*. It is because the *equilibration stage* is the final process of gaining knowledge. But before the process of equilibration, there is a process of *assimilation* and *accommodation*. Both play a role in the effort to acquire knowledge. If the two processes are incompatible, they will not reach *equilibrium*, meaning it fails to gain or build knowledge. Therefore, this study will see whether the *assimilation process*, characterized by critical thinking skills, is related to the *accommodation process*, characterized by Reading ability.

Knowledge in this study is illustrated as the result of collaboration between critical thinking skills and reading skills. Both of these abilities are ways to build knowledge. Building knowledge by thinking critically is done by digging or exploring information to obtain more information. While building knowledge with reading skills is done by finding the meaning contained in the Reading. The essence or meaning of the Reading can be used as knowledge.

This is in line with the construction theory of Piaget, namely the *assimilation* and *accommodation processes*. Both processes have an important role in gaining knowledge from experience. The assimilation process acts as an effort to gather information characterized by critical thinking skills. By thinking critically, information will be obtained. Then the accommodation process acts as an effort to understand the information obtained so that it can become knowledge characterized by Reading ability. By Reading, we will understand information and ensure its truth through existing reading sources so that the truth can be found, which can make a belief. The information obtained will turn into new knowledge that is owned.

The achievement of the equilibration stage marks the success of obtaining knowledge based on the construction process. Critical thinking skills characterize efforts to gain knowledge as an *assimilation process* and Reading skills as an *accommodation process*. This success is very dependent on the success of the *assimilation* and *accommodation processes*, whether the two processes are compatible or not.

The results of this study indicate that there is a relationship between critical thinking skills and reading skills. This means that the processes of *assimilation* and *accommodation* are interrelated and related. The ability to think critically, which functions to collect information, is balanced with the ability to read to find truth through a reading source, then new knowledge will be formed. This knowledge is knowledge obtained from the *assimilation process*, namely the ability to think critically, followed by the *accommodation process*, namely the ability to read, so that the equilibrium stage is reached, namely the stage of obtaining knowledge.

From these findings, the ability to think critically can affect reading ability because it is a series of interconnected processes. Critical thinking skills will stimulate reading skills so that the results of critical thinking will continue or encourage someone to do reading activities. Reading aims to find a truth about something previously criticized so that new knowledge will result from combining critical thinking and reading skills.

The results of this study are in accordance with the theory of Constructivism that there is a relationship between critical thinking skills and reading skills in Islamic Religious Education students at UNIPDU. The hypothesis is proven that there is a relationship between critical thinking skills and reading skills in UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students.

The relationship between critical thinking skills and reading ability also aligns with a literacy culture in UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students. Literacy can be interpreted as an activity or life skill that can make humans function optimally. Life skill in social life is solving a problem through

critical thinking activities. According to Oviliando et al. (2017: 641), literacy is not just the ability to read and write. Literacy can also mean technological literacy, critical thinking, politics, and sensitivity to the surrounding environment. So literacy will stimulate critical thinking as well as other activities. Hariyati et al. (2018: 92) also expressed a similar opinion that literacy culture can be interpreted as a habit of thinking followed by reading and writing activities. From this opinion, the existence of a literacy culture will stimulate a person to be used to thinking, which is followed by other activities to find out what was previously thought or to find answers to questions that have arisen in mind. Thinking activities that raise several questions are critical thinking activities. Finding an answer requires other activities, such as Reading, but when Reading is not just limited to ordinary Reading. If it is only limited to ordinary Reading, knowledge or information will not be absorbed into knowledge. Therefore reading skills are needed in carrying out these reading activities so that the meaning of Reading can be obtained properly and correctly.

Students, known as educated people because they are pursuing higher education, are also expected to become agents of change (*agent of change*), so they are always required to be critical. It is because being an agent of change is expected to provide changes in social life for the better. The good and bad impacts will occur in the future, as well as how to prepare the best solutions to overcome the negative effects that will occur in changes or innovations that will be implemented in social life. Therefore, students, as the nation's next generation, are expected to provide a change so that the life of the nation and state will be better. They are expected to have critical thinking to make a change.

The demands of students to always have critical thinking have been regulated in

Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (PERMENDIKBUD) Number 49 of 2014 Concerning National Higher Education Standards, in this regulation article 6 reads "graduates of the undergraduate program are required to have general skills, namely applying logical, critical, systematic, innovative thinking...". This indicates that critical thinking is needed for students as the next generation of the nation, who are expected to be able to bring about changes in the future. Because in terms of quality in undergoing education, it is also considered sufficient and has thoughts expected to bring about a change.

This demand applies to all Indonesian students, including students of the UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education study program who clearly have learning outcomes with special skills that must be possessed, namely critical thinking, one of the learning outcomes that must be achieved in the Islamic Religious Education study program is with the skills parameter specifically to be able to organize and resolve religious issues through participatory critical thinking and action in the policy process. This is also in line with Indriani's opinion (2019:22), which says that Islamic Religious Education plays an important role in forming good citizens. To be able to become good citizens, students must think critically.

The Islamic Religious Education study program graduates are expected to work as teachers or educators because it is an education-based study program with graduates who hold a Bachelor of Education (S.Pd). A teacher/educator must have several abilities to support this profession. One skill that must be possessed to support the teaching profession is the ability to think critically. Critical thinking will make solving a problem inside and outside the classroom easier and can develop material in teaching activities. Opinions that strengthen this statement are that prospective teachers/educators must also have the critical thinking, including Suparni (2016: 42). Suparni said that in addition to prospective educators, they must have four competencies, namely pedagogy (understanding of students), professional (mastery of material, understanding of material and delivery methods), personality (authority, maturity), and social (ability to communicate and get along with students). They are also expected to have critical thinking in solving problems.

UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students are prospective Islamic Religious Education teachers because they will hold a bachelor of education degree when they graduate. Therefore, they are expected to have several abilities, including critical thinking and reading skills. This study focuses on determining whether there is a relationship between critical thinking skills and reading skills in Islamic Religious Education students at UNIPDU. The researcher hypothesized that there was a relationship between critical thinking skills and Reading ability, and the respondents in this study were Islamic Religious Education students whose reading skills were considered good because they often visited the library. Thus the researcher assumes that the critical thinking of these students influences students with reading skills, so those who visit the library aim to read books to find a satisfying answer about what is being clarified. The researcher chose Islamic Religious Education students as samples because they also saw critical thinking skills and also reading skills in Islamic Religious Education students at UNIPDU who had been trained in the logic of scientific thinking and character education courses that had been taught.

However, after knowing that the level of relationship between critical thinking skills and reading skills in UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students is low, the researcher also realizes that in the rapidly advancing information technology era, everything is becoming more advanced and creative, including in the field of education. Technology in the field of education in the era of advances in information technology is marked by the existence of technology that supports education so that it can be carried out efficiently and easily. Educational facilities are experiencing rapid changes, such as with the presence of online-based library facilities such as the digital-based services of the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia. This service is generally available to all Indonesian citizens who need to borrow books *online*.

In addition, with the advancement of information technology, books have also changed into a digital form that can be carried everywhere. Now electronic-based books or better known as e-books, are available so that books become efficient and not *complicated*. Not only have books turned into *e-books*, but reading literature such as journals, magazines, and newspapers is also based in digital or electronic form.

With digital services such as the Library of the Republic of Indonesia, *e-books*, *e-journals*, and *online newspapers*, students do not have to bother going to the library to find the reading literature. However, with the digital electronic model, students can access *e-books* or *e-journals* wherever and whenever they want without having to visit a library or reading room and can read wherever they want to read books.



Reading sources already available online, *both e-books and e-journals* and digital libraries, can be accessed by students easily. Because almost all students have *gadgets* in the form of *smartphones* and laptops. These *gadgets* really help students to access the digital world available on the internet.

Almost all students currently have sophisticated *gadgets*, both *smartphones*, and laptops. UNIPDU students are no exception. Almost all students have *smartphones* or laptops, coupled with the free *Wi-Fi service* that the campus has provided in each of the existing departments, including the Islamic Religious Education department, which is one of the majors that has this service. Accessing the free *Wi-Fi service* is also very easy. Students only need to enter their NIM (Student Identification Number) and *password*. Thus, students who wish to obtain clear information or have a question whose answer has not been obtained correctly can search through *e-books* and *e-journals* available on the internet.

Conditions like these encourage students to prefer looking for sources of information via the internet rather than looking for books in the library. As a result, the number of student visits to the library is very small. Students who often ask questions or who are criticized when studying in class do not necessarily visit the available library. Some prefer to search the internet because it is easier to do.

Apart from that, with the existence of library visitors who do not always read books and look for sources of information that are needed or are being sought, Islamic Religious Education students who visit the library/reading room only visit for the purpose of finding a place to relax, sit around and work in groups. This is what acquires research results show the relationship between critical thinking ability and low reading ability because some of the respondents who visit the library or reading room do not aim to dig up information or seek clarification of information.

Then other factors affect the low relationship because many other factors affect reading ability. According to Tampubolon (2008: 241), reading ability is influenced by language skills. This means that what affects reading ability is not only critical thinking ability but thinking ability is only one of factors that can affect a person's level of Reading ability. This can also be seen by the results of the calculated *product-moment* correlation test, which shows that the nature of the relationship between the ability to think critically and the ability to read in Islamic Religious Education students is positive. This means that the level of thinking ability affects the level of reading ability as well.

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## CLOSING

### Conclusion

Based on the description of the results and discussion, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between critical thinking skills and reading skills in UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students. This is also in accordance with the theory used in this study, namely constructivism theory. This theory explains that in the formation of knowledge, several interconnected processes exist. From some of the existing processes, two important processes are related so that new knowledge is formed, namely the process of assimilation *and* accommodation. In this research, the *assimilation process* is characterized by critical thinking skills, and the *accommodation process* is characterized by Reading ability. With critical thinking skills balanced with reading skills, the knowledge/information sought will be obtained.

However, because the relationship level is low, it can be concluded that critical thinking skills are not the main factor influencing the reading ability of UNIPDU Islamic Religious Education students. Nonetheless, critical thinking is among many other factors affecting students' reading skills. This is proven by the nature of the positive relationship, as evidenced by the calculation of the correlation test.

The weakness of this research is that researchers only see students who attend the library/reading room, not paying attention to those who attend other libraries. Research also does not examine those who read on the internet.

### Suggestion

For similar research, it is hoped that it will also consider advances in information technology that have developed as it is today. In this era of information technology, many students who can read and have a penchant for reading also access Reading sources via the internet; therefore, for further similar research to be more selective in determining the population that is used as the research sample.

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