

Applying the Contextual Teaching and Learning Model to Enhance 21st Century Skills in Fikih Learning: A Case Study in Madrasah Aliyah

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ABSTRACT

The limited application of varied, contextual teaching methods in Fikih learning has led to a gap in students' ability to connect religious concepts with real-life situations, limiting the development of 21st-century skills. This study investigates the implementation of the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) model in Fikih education at Madrasah Aliyah and its effectiveness in enhancing students' critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews with a principal, one Fikih teacher, and students, as well as document analysis. Data were analyzed using thematic coding and triangulation to ensure validity. Findings reveal that CTL was implemented through key stages including constructivism, inquiry, questioning, learning communities, modeling, reflection, and authentic assessment. Students showed improved engagement, deeper understanding of Fikih concepts, and increased ability to relate them to contemporary social issues. Challenges identified include varying student abilities and time constraints, which were addressed through differentiated instruction, teacher creativity, and stakeholder collaboration. The study concludes that CTL is an effective pedagogical model for Islamic education, particularly in fostering 21st-century competencies in Fikih learning. It highlights the need for continuous professional development for teachers, integration of authentic assessments, and the use of real-life contexts in religious instruction. Broader implementation of CTL is recommended to support holistic student development in Madrasah environments.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Fikih, as an integral part of Islamic religious education in Madrasah Aliyah, has a crucial role in shaping students' understanding and religious character. The low understanding and ability of fiqh teachers in teaching with varied methods and fiqh learning methods are often trapped in textual approaches and memorisation, making them less relevant to the challenges of contemporary life. This results in students having difficulty applying fiqh principles in a dynamic and complex social context. Therefore, there is an urgent need to integrate 21st-century skills into fiqh learning, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication. These skills are important to equip learners to be able to analyse problems, innovate in finding solutions, work together in teams, and convey ideas effectively.

CTL is a learning approach that links subject matter to the real-world context of learners, enabling them to learn through direct and relevant experiences (Ester et al., 2023). Previous research shows that CTL is effective in improving learning outcomes and learner motivation in various subjects, including Islamic religious education. In the context of fiqh learning, CTL can be implemented by connecting the concepts of Islamic law with social, economic and cultural issues that learners face daily. Thus, learners not only memorize fiqh rules, but also understand their implications and relevance in their lives (Mulia, 2020).

CTL emphasizes learning that links material to the context of students' real lives, so that the learning process becomes more meaningful and applicable. (Simatupang & Sari, 2019). This approach allows learners to actively participate, explore experiences, and develop skills that are in line with the needs of the 21st century. Some previous studies have shown that CTL is effective in increasing students' motivation and learning outcomes in various subjects, including Islamic religious education (Kismatun, 2021). Although the potential of CTL in improving fiqh learning has been recognized, empirical research on the specific implementation of CTL in developing 21st century skills in Madrasah Aliyah is still limited (Satrial et al., 2024). Previous research shows that CTL is effective in improving learning outcomes and learner character in Islamic religious education, including in Qur'anic materials, Hadith, and Islamic history (Sabarudin et al., 2023).

Previous research that reviews the importance of the 21st-century skills framework in the context of modern education, including Islamic education. The first journal highlights the development of a 21st-century skills framework that can be applied in project-based learning, which is relevant to the application of the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) model that emphasises the linkage of subject matter to the real context of students so as to improve these skills effectively (Muhamad Arif, 2023). The second journal asserts that the development of 21st century skills standards for science teachers in Indonesia through the integration of various international frameworks indicates the need for teacher adaptation and training in applying learning models that are contextual and relevant to the needs of the times, which parallels the needs of fiqh teachers in this study to develop students' 21st century skills through CTL (Aisyah Ali, Singgih Bektiarso, Auldry F. Walukow, 2024). The third journal examines the implementation of 21st century skills in modern pesantren that integrate Islamic values with the development of critical, creative, and collaborative skills, as well as the use of technology as an effective strategy, which is in line with the purpose of this study to apply the CTL model in fiqh learning to improve 21st century skills while maintaining Islamic values (Nabila, Farid, Magfiroh, Hafizhah, & Khomsah, 2024).

This research opens opportunities for the development of Islamic education that is more adaptive and progressive in the modern era. This research is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of innovative learning models that are relevant to the needs of modern Islamic education. The results of this study can be used as a guide for teachers and policy makers in designing fiqh learning that is more effective, contextual, and oriented towards developing 21st-century skills. In addition, this research is also expected to enrich the repertoire of research on CTL and Islamic education, and provide inspiration for further research.

The hypothesis raised in this study is that the application of the CTL model will effectively improve students' 21st-century skills in learning fiqh, so that students become more active, creative, and able to work together and communicate well.

This research aims to fill the gap by exploring in depth how the CTL model can be adapted and applied in fiqh learning to develop learners' 21st-century skills. The key questions to be answered are:

- a. What is the process of planning and implementing the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) model in learning Fikih at Madrasah Aliyah?
- b. How can the CTL model develop students' critical thinking skills and creativity in learning Fikih at Madrasah Aliyah?
- c. What are the challenges faced by teachers and students in active engagement during CTL-based Fikih learning at Madrasah Aliyah?
- d. How are assessment and reflection practices carried out in CTL-based Fikih learning to measure and improve students' 21st-century skills?

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Approach

This research uses a qualitative approach with the aim of exploring in depth the implementation of the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) model in developing 21st-century skills in fiqh learning at Madrasah Aliyah. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is relevant to understand social phenomena naturally and holistically, explore the meaning of participants' experiences, and produce rich and in-depth descriptions of the process and results of the implementation of the CTL model. This research focuses on an in-depth understanding of how teachers and learners experience and interpret the application of the CTL model in the context of fiqh learning. This approach allows researchers to identify nuances, complexities, and dynamics that may be missed by quantitative approaches.

2.2 Research Subjects

The subjects of this research include a principal, a male fiqh teacher who teaches in class XI and three students in class XI at Madrasah Aliyah who have implemented the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) model in learning. The selection of subjects is based on the consideration that they have direct experience and are relevant to the research focus. The number of subjects will be determined purposively, taking into account variations in characteristics such as teaching experience, grade level, and learners' backgrounds. Inclusion criteria also included subjects' willingness to actively participate in the research, provide honest and in-depth information, and provide access to relevant data and documents.

In this study, ethical considerations are very important to maintain the integrity and trust of the research participants. Firstly, informed consent must be obtained from all learners and related parties before the research is conducted, with a clear explanation of the purpose, procedures, benefits, and risks of the research so that they can give informed and voluntary consent. Secondly, the confidentiality of participants' data must be strictly maintained by ensuring that personal identities and information are not disseminated without permission, and the research results are presented anonymously to protect participants' privacy. In addition, in accordance with Islamic education ethics that emphasise respectful relationships between teachers and students, researchers should treat participants fairly, be non-discriminatory, and maintain interaction ethics during the learning process and data collection, in accordance with the principles of Islamic education ethics that prioritise noble morals and respect in the education process at Madrasah Aliyah.

2.3 Implementation of Research Procedures

This research procedure involved several main stages, starting with preparation and licensing, which included submitting a research proposal, obtaining permission from relevant parties (schools, teachers, learners), and building good relationships with participants. The next stage is data collection, which is conducted through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Classroom observations will focus on teacher and learner interactions, the use of the CTL model, and the manifestation of 21st-century skills in learning fiqh. In-depth interviews will be conducted with teachers and learners to explore their experiences, perceptions and reflections regarding the implementation of the CTL model and its impact on the development of 21st century skills. The documentation study will involve analysing lesson plans, teaching materials, learner assignments, and other documents relevant to the research focus.

The coding procedure was carried out by organising and labelling qualitative data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation during the fiqh learning process. Codes or themes were obtained through the data reduction stage, namely detailing and compiling important concepts that emerged from interview transcripts, observation notes, and supporting documents, making it easier for researchers to identify patterns and meanings relevant to the application of the Contextual Teaching and Learning model and the development of 21st century skills. Coding was done manually by the researcher using open coding techniques to find initial categories, then axial coding to connect the categories, and selective coding to determine the central theme of the research. In this study, the coding process emphasised systematic and in-depth manual analysis based on the researcher's understanding of the context of fiqh learning at Madrasah Aliyah.

2.4 Use of Materials and Instruments

In this study, researchers will use several instruments to collect data systematically and comprehensively. The main instruments include classroom observation guidelines, which contain a list of indicators relevant to the implementation of the CTL model and 21st century skills; Interview guidelines, which contain open-ended and in-depth questions to explore participants' experiences and perceptions; and document checklists, which are used to identify and analyze documents relevant to the research focus. In addition, researchers will also use voice and video recorders to document interviews and classroom observations, as well as field notes to record observations and reflections during the data collection process.

Data saturation in research is achieved when data obtained from various sources and methods no longer add significant new information regarding the application of contextual learning models and the development of 21st century skills in fiqh students. The triangulation strategy is explicitly carried out by using method triangulation, which combines data collection techniques such as observation, interviews and documentation to verify the validity of the data; source triangulation by involving various informants such as teachers, students and madrasah principals to get diverse perspectives; and theory triangulation by comparing field findings with contextual learning theory and 21st century skills framework to reduce bias and increase the credibility of research results.

2.5 Data Collection

Data collection will be conducted intensively and continuously over a period of time, with the aim of obtaining rich, in-depth and representative data. Classroom observations will be conducted periodically to observe the fiqh learning process using the CTL model. In-depth interviews will be conducted individually with teachers and learners to explore their experiences, perceptions and reflections. Documentation studies will be conducted in parallel with observations and interviews to complement and strengthen data obtained from other sources. Researchers will ensure that all data collected is well-documented, systematically organized and confidential.

2.6 Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique used in this research is qualitative content analysis, which involves the process of organizing, coding, and interpreting data to identify key themes and patterns relevant to the research focus. Data collected from observations, interviews, and documentation studies will be analyzed by triangulation to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. The data analysis process will be iterative and reflective, involving the researcher in a cycle of reading, coding, interpreting, and revising codes and themes until it reaches data saturation. The results of data analysis will be presented in the form of rich and in-depth narrative descriptions, accompanied by direct quotes from participants to strengthen the researcher's interpretation.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research process carried out on May 14, 2025, by using data collection techniques, namely interviews, observation, and documentation. Researchers get data that provides information related to the problems that are identified.

3.1 Planning and Implementation of Contextual Teaching and Learning in Fiqh at Madrasah Aliyah

Researchers conducted research with the process of interviews and observations to Mr. B, the fiqh subject teacher at MA, Mr. A, as the principal of MA, and also several representatives of MA class X students so as to get some results. Researchers obtained information about how the implementation of the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) learning model in fiqh learning in MA.

3.1.1 Learning Fiqh at Madrasah Aliyah

Teaching and learning activities in fiqh subjects in class X MA are carried out once a week and for the time allocation is two lesson hours in each class. In Fiqh learning, teachers carry out activities based on learning tools that have been prepared previously. The learning process is inseparable from the learning planning process that has been arranged in such a way beforehand, such as the use of learning models. The learning model chosen can be based on learning objectives and materials. This is in accordance with the results of an interview with Mr. A, as the principal of MA, he said in his interview that, good learning is learning in accordance with teaching tools, namely syllabus and lesson plans. The implementation and evaluation plans are balanced and in accordance with planning. That is a good learning. If there is planning, there is actuating, and evaluation that is not synchronized, it means that something is wrong, maybe in the planning activities or maybe the implementation or maybe the evaluation must be wrong. So if the lesson plan is well prepared, the implementation is good, and the evaluation is good, the results must also be good. The application of applying learning approaches and theories that are in accordance with the conditions of students will greatly help the mental readiness of our students to gain an understanding of the material in learning (Nofrianti & Arifmiboy, 2021).

The opinion of the MA head is also the same as what Fiqh teachers usually apply in every lesson that will take place. Where every lesson is carried out based on the learning tools that have been prepared. Mr. B, as the fiqh subject teacher, expressed his opinion in the interview that "The learning process runs as it should, such as following the learning tools that have been previously made, such as the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), syllabus, and essential material that has been determined by the Ministry of Religion. Fiqh is a subject related to the implementation of daily worship, so when the learning process takes place it is highly desirable for students to follow well and carefully. Because later the lessons learned will affect how students carry out every worship. Both mahdhah and ghairu mahdhah worship. The learning model is defined as a step or learning pattern that the teacher applies so that learning outcomes and objectives can be achieved. Based on the results of the interview, the application of a learning model is given flexibility to the teacher who teaches because the principal is only a facilitator and provider of input.

This opinion is in line with the interview with the MA principal, that today is the era of democracy, there are dozens or maybe even hundreds of learning methods, the teacher will adjust the situation of the students and class conditions. Between learning that is carried out in the afternoon or morning it is different, if learning is carried out at noon, the condition of children's enthusiasm may have diminished and want to go home immediately. Therefore, the selection of learning methods is given flexibility to the teacher. As the Head of Madrasah, he gave input to the teachers regarding the selection of the learning model.

This study shows that the selection of a learning model that fiqh teachers apply is based on each subject matter. In addition, Fiqh teachers strive to change learning models every time they change chapters or themes. Based on the results of the interview that, in madrasah there are several models or methods used by teachers, depending on each chapter or subject matter. Such as lectures, discussions, questions and answers and demonstrations. Including in fiqh lessons, so there must be practice for each discussion of the theory if it is finished. Whether it is individual or group practice, it can be adjusted later. In addition, the teacher also tries to rotate the learning model used, so that the interest, enthusiasm, and attention of students to the learning process can follow properly, not easily bored only with the model that is adjusted to the conditions that occur. Before implementing learning activities in the classroom, after opening the class, the Fiqh teacher first explains to students about the learning tools that have been prepared. Especially for learning materials, objectives and learning models that will be applied so that students will follow the learning process according to the planned learning flow.

The statement above is based on the results of an interview with Mr. B, that "Previously, the learning tools that I had made, I studied again to adjust to the material that I would teach in class. Later this material will be suitable if I apply this model or not. Furthermore, when I have determined the model, I will first explain to students about the learning model that I will apply. So from the beginning students will understand the learning objectives to be achieved."

3.1.2 Implementation of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) Learning Model in Improving 21st Century Skills in Fiqh Learning at Madrasah Aliyah

Fiqh learning at MA is carried out based on the learning tools that have been made. At the time of the research, Mr. B, as the subject teacher, applied the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) learning model. Before learning begins, the Fiqh teacher first explains to students about the learning model to be applied so that students understand and make it easier for teachers and students in the learning process in class. This is in accordance with the statement of Mr. Kasan based on the results of the interview as follows: "Before the application of the model, I first explain or provide understanding to students regarding the CTL learning model that will be implemented, so that students understand so that later in the learning process students more easily understand what and how the material I provide."

Based on the statement expressed by the fiqh teacher, statements from several students of class X MA also said that every learning process will begin, the Fiqh subject teacher first conveys the learning model that will be applied. One of the students, namely C, stated that, before learning was carried out, the teacher explained about the subject matter, learning model and learning objectives. Learner C's opinion was also confirmed by learner D that the fiqh teacher conveyed the learning model to be used. Learner E continued the statement, E explained in his interview that, teachers always provide information or convey about the learning model to be used. After the delivery of the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) learning model from the fiqh teacher to students, the next stage is the learning implementation process carried out in accordance with the chosen model. In Islamic education, contextual learning is important to produce capable, competent, and professional human beings, starting from the lowest education level by integrating Qur'anic references and contextual approaches in classroom learning (Hakim et al., 2020).

Based on interviews with Fiqh teachers, it can be inferred that the learning process begins with the preparation of student worksheets, which are distributed to previously formed groups for discussion

and presentation. During the presentation session, each group is required to pose questions related to the material, while other groups respond, thereby fostering interactive dialogue. At the conclusion of the presentations, the teacher and students collaboratively formulate the key takeaways of the lesson. Within the implementation of the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) model, these worksheets function as a facilitative tool, enabling students to explore the subject matter and demonstrate their developing competencies. This approach encourages greater student engagement and autonomy, particularly when learning materials are connected to students' everyday experiences. Such practices align with the core components of 21st-century skills, especially critical thinking and collaboration. Consequently, teachers who implement the CTL model undertake thorough and systematic preparation to ensure its effective execution in the classroom.

In summary, the implementation of the CTL model encompasses several interconnected stages, beginning with lesson planning through the preparation of a Lesson Plan (RPP), followed by instructional delivery and evaluation. These stages are structured in accordance with the essential components and characteristics of CTL, including the development of students' critical thinking skills, the provision of motivation, the optimal use of instructional media, the application of inquiry-based learning, the formation of discussion groups, reflection on learning outcomes, and the conduct of authentic assessment (Rahmawati et al., 2021).

3.2 *Development of Critical Thinking and Creativity in Fiqh at Madrasah Aliyah*

Before CTL learning is applied, Fiqh teachers have made learning stages in accordance with the principles or components of CTL learning itself. Mr. B, as the Fiqh teacher, applies the following stages during CTL learning :

3.2.1 **Constructivism**

Constructivism in CTL learning needs to be applied in order to construct or build the knowledge and skills that students have. Based on interviews conducted by researchers with MA fiqh subject teacher Mr. B, about the constructivism stage, he said that: *"For the first stage, in building meaningful learning concepts for students. The teacher guides students to get a meaningful concept of what is learned. At this stage, students observe the discussion sheet that has been provided, then understand what the teacher wants students to do based on the discussion sheet."* Furthermore, the researcher also asked questions to class X students in accordance with Mr. B's statement, namely regarding the stage of constructivism in CTL learning to obtain further data results. Learner C revealed that when the discussion sheet was given by the teacher, he felt a little confused. But after C reread the discussion sheet, he managed to understand the purpose of the discussion sheet. A similar statement was also given by learner D who stated that the purpose of the discussion sheet was that learners worked by following the steps that had been written in each number on the discussion sheet. Based on the interview, in learning that applies 21st century skills, communication between students and teachers is needed in learning activities. Students will be able to interpret information in their minds, only in the context of their own experiences and knowledge, in their needs, backgrounds and interests (Lalu Sayuti, Silfia Hanani, 2024).

3.2.2 **Inquiry**

As one of the core parts of the CTL learning stage, it is at this discovery stage that the knowledge and skills that students already have from the construction stage are expected to be based on the results of students' own findings. Based on interviews conducted by researchers with MA fiqh subject teacher Mr. B, about finding (inquiry), he expressed his opinion that: *"For the second stage, in guiding students to find their learning experiences, students are accustomed to being creative, especially in their own learning experiences."* Discovering activities if associated with 21st century skills, namely Creativity. Contextual learning approaches in Islamic education encourage students to analyze real-life problems, fostering creativity and critical thinking aligned with 21st-century skills (Hakim et al., 2020).

3.2.3 Questioning

In Contextual learning, questioning can be done to develop learners' curiosity. Thus, students will become more trained to think and be independent. Based on interviews that have been conducted by researchers with Mr. B, as a MA fiqh subject teacher, about the questioning stage, based on the results of interviews with Mr. B, that: *"For the third stage, after students discuss, then the teacher guides students to usually ask questions. Through this questioning, the classroom learning atmosphere will feel more alive and foster the enthusiasm of students to dig deeper (Critical Thinking)."* CTL learning activities are designed to develop students' critical thinking so that learning activities are more meaningful and encourage students to express opinions and curiosity (Rahmawati et al., 2021).

3.2.4 Learning Community

Learners can apply the learning community through exchanging knowledge with friends, sharing their knowledge with friends which can be done through discussions between friends or between groups. Based on interviews that researchers have conducted with Mr. B, as a MA fiqh subject teacher, he said that: *"For the fourth stage, the discussion of the student sheet plays a role in practicing student cooperation, where it is sought that each student learns from each member of the heterogeneous group."*

3.2.5 Modelling

Modeling is intended to be an example of learning. With the presence of this model, it is hoped that students can easily absorb the learning material that has been taught by the teacher by imitating what is modeled. Based on interviews conducted by researchers with Mr. B, as a MA fiqh subject teacher, he said that: *"For the fifth stage, in the presence of a model as an example or illustration of learning. When students are discussing, the teacher also provides a learning medium in the form of a video that is shown to be applied to the discussion sheet that has been provided."*

3.2.6 Reflection

When the learning process ends, it is necessary to reflect. Reflection is sought in order to review, provide analysis, and evaluate the material that has been learned. Based on interviews that researchers have conducted with Mr. B, as a MA fiqh subject teacher, about the reflection stage, he said: *"For the sixth stage, after the discussion stage ends the next step is to reflect. In this case, the teacher and students discuss what has been discussed to remind the students of the knowledge they have gained. In addition, so that students can bring the knowledge and experience gained to the real problems faced in everyday life."*

3.2.7 Authentic Assessment

The final stage in learning the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) model is to provide actual assessment. Giving or collecting values is done from data on the development of students' learning such as demonstrations, discussions, and written test results. Based on the results of interviews that have been carried out, Mr. B said that: *"At this stage of assessment, the teacher gives an assessment to students during the discussion, which starts from the first stage to the sixth stage to find out the achievement of students."*

The following is a summary table of each component of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) along with student responses from interviews related to the implementation of the CTL model in fiqh learning at madrasah aliyah to improve 21st-century skills:

Table 1. Students' Perceptions of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) Components in Fiqh Instruction: Evidence from Interview Findings

CTL Components	Student Responses (Interview Results)
Konstruktivisme	"When the discussion sheet was given by the teacher, I felt a little confused. But after re-reading the discussion sheet, I managed to understand the purpose of the discussion sheet."
Inquiry	"the purpose of the discussion sheet is for us to work by following the steps that have been written on each number on the discussion sheet." "We are often invited to find solutions to fiqh problems and relate them to everyday life, so learning fiqh feels more fun and challenging."
Questioning	"Teachers often ask open questions during discussion activities, so we are encouraged to think critically and express our opinions."
Learning Community	"Group discussions make us share our understanding and learn to work together."
Modeling	"the teacher directly modelled worship practices such as prayer, or giving alms, so it was easier for us to imitate and understand the procedures."
Reflection	"At the end of each lesson, we are invited to recall what we have learnt and how to apply it in our daily lives."
Authentic Assessment	"Assessment activities are not only through exams, but also worship practices and project assignments."

This table shows that each component of CTL received positive responses from students, especially in encouraging critical thinking skills, collaboration, communication, and creativity which are the core 21st century skills.

3.3 Challenges and Solutions in Student Engagement in the CTL Model at Madrasah Aliyah

Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) learning runs by following the existing learning components. However, when in the learning process it is possible that problems will be found, which can also affect the course of contextual learning.

3.3.1 Challenges

The problems faced when implementing the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) learning model in improving 21st century skills in fiqh learning in MA as explained by Mr. B as a MA fiqh subject teacher that: For the problem of this Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) learning model, it mostly affects students. For example, not all students can easily adjust and develop their abilities with the use of this contextual learning model. The knowledge gained by students will be different and uneven, because the abilities of students vary. Meanwhile, the problem in applying this model is not efficient enough because it requires a rather long time in the learning process. Like when students work on group discussion sheets, students need time to first explore the material, make observations, discuss the results of observations, only after the results of the discussion are presented in front of the group. Student motivation and active participation are crucial, but teachers often face difficulties in maintaining consistent engagement due to varying student abilities and limited resources (Rahmawati et al., 2021). Moreover, children often play and forget about their schoolwork." A grade X student also conveyed his statement regarding the problem of implementing the CTL model from the interview results that according to him when the CTL model is used, quiet students are difficult to work with. Interest in learning plays a significant role in student engagement, and CTL positively influences this interest, which in turn affects learning outcomes." (Alif Achadah, Sigit Dwi Laksana, Anisah Triyuliasari, Agni Tyas Nursata Chandra, 2025).

The problem regarding the implementation of CTL learning was also expressed by student E that there were difficulties when all students were required to actively apply the theory given by the teacher

and develop it into the real world. Likewise, apart from the two students, student D as a grade X student also conveyed his difficulties when the teacher implemented CTL learning that the difficulty was not being able to answer questions asked during the discussion. Despite the benefits of CTL, challenges such as low student independence and engagement were found, with some studies indicating no significant correlation between student independence and learning outcomes when CTL is applied (Sabarudin et al., 2023).

3.3.2 Solutions to problems that occur Existing

Problems should be resolved immediately by finding solutions. Based on an interview conducted by the researcher with Mr. B as a MA fiqh teacher, he said: "To overcome the problems faced by students, it can be done by paying more attention and getting to know students, as a teacher you can consider what steps must be taken to equalize the level of student understanding. So that students' understanding and skills in fiqh learning materials can be improved better. For the issue of time efficiency, I have to plan the learning process carefully so that it does not take too long and can continue to the next learning material on time."

3.4 Assessment Practices and Reflections

Assessment practices in the implementation of CTL in Madrasah Aliyah show a significant shift from the traditional approach that focuses on summative tests to authentic assessment that measures understanding of concepts, application of knowledge, and development of 21st century skills. The Fikih teacher, Mr B, explained, "In the past, assessment only centred on written exams at the end of the semester. Now, we emphasise more on process assessment, such as students participation in discussions, their ability to complete projects, and how they apply fiqh concepts in real case studies". This is in line with CTL principles that emphasise authentic assessment. Contextual learning integrates spiritual reflection and worship practices, strengthening not only cognitive but also affective and character development aspects of students (Alif Achadah, Sigit Dwi Laksana, Anisah Triyuliasari, Agni Tyas Nursata Chandra, 2025). Education not only helps students learn new things but also helps them develop their mental attitude or character, morals, and soul, a sense of virtue and politeness and prepares them for a holy, sincere, and honest life (Ahida et al., 2024). Educators are obliged to create students who can have three intelligences, namely intellectual intelligence, emotional intelligence, and must also improve and maintain spiritual intelligence (Yusri Yaldi, Silfia Hanani, Zulfani Sesmiarni, 2024).

One form of authentic assessment applied is group project assignments. Student C said, "We were given the task of making a proposal for a social activity in accordance with fiqh principles, from budget planning to activity implementation. This is very challenging, but also exciting because we can learn firsthand how fiqh is relevant in everyday life." The Fikih teacher also added, "Through this project, I can assess students' ability to collaborate, communicate, think critically, and solve problems, in addition to their understanding of fiqh concepts." Student D also said that "With projects like this, it is easier for us to understand the material because it is directly practised, not just memorised."

In addition to projects, portfolio assessment is also used to collect student work, such as research reports, presentations, and self-reflection. Student E explained, "After each lesson, we are asked to write about what we have learnt, what we are still confused about, and how we will apply that knowledge in life. This helps us to better understand the material." The Fikih teacher revealed that this self-reflection provides valuable feedback for teachers to improve teaching methods and provide more personalised support to students.

However, the implementation of authentic assessment also encounters some challenges. Mr B as the Fikih teacher admitted that, "Initially, it was rather difficult to change the mindset of students and parents who were still fixated on test scores as the only indicator of success. In addition, authentic assessment requires more time and effort than traditional assessment." To overcome this, teachers conducted socialisation to students and parents about the purpose and benefits of authentic assessment,

and developed clear and transparent assessment rubrics. In addition, collaboration with other teachers and the utilisation of technology also help ease teachers' workload in conducting assessments. Authentic assessment aligned with CTL involves objective evaluation of each student according to their abilities, including reflection and drawing conclusions from learning outcomes (Rahmawati et al., 2021).

Based on the above description, assessment practices in the implementation of CTL in Madrasah Aliyah have undergone a positive transformation, with a greater focus on developing students' 21st century skills. Self-reflection becomes an integral part of the learning process, providing valuable feedback for students and teachers to continuously improve the quality of Fikih learning. Reflection practices in Islamic education encourage self-assessment and continuous improvement, supporting the development of critical and creative skills (Hakim et al., 2020).

Discussion

The implementation of CTL in Fikih learning at Madrasah Aliyah (MA) is in line with the theory of constructivism, which states that students construct knowledge through experience and active interaction (Mulia, 2020). In this context, the teacher acts as a facilitator who provides relevant learning resources and guides students in linking Fikih material with real life (Puningsi, 2024). This finding is in line with previous research that shows the effectiveness of CTL in improving PAI learning outcomes. What is new about this study is the specific focus on improving 21st century skills (critical, creative, collaborative, communicative) in Islamic education. However, there are variations in the results of CTL implementation depending on the subject and context. Islamic pedagogy supports this approach, emphasising the integration of knowledge with amal (practice), linking theory with real applications. The application of CTL encourages students to think critically through analysing case studies and solving contextual problems, as well as developing creativity through innovative projects that apply Fikih knowledge in new situations (Qorih et al., 2023).. Research entitled *Innovative Teaching Strategies for the 21st Century Learner* discusses various teaching methods that are adaptive to technological developments and the dynamics of the world of work, such as project-based learning (PBL), flipped classroom, and the use of digital technology (Giska Enny Fauziah, 2024). This is supported by 21st century skills theory, which emphasises the importance of the 4Cs (Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, Creativity). An innovative scientific approach is adopted in this implementation, in contrast to the conventional rote method. These findings reinforce the need for Islamic education to adapt to the times and equip students with relevant skills to face global challenges (Mulyawan Safwandy Nugraha, 2020).

Limited time, resources and heterogeneity of students' abilities are the main challenges in implementing CTL. Some students may need more time to adapt to active and independent learning. Previous research also noted cultural resistance and lack of teacher training as potential barriers. To overcome this, teachers need to develop differentiation strategies, utilise technology and collaborate with local communities to enrich the learning context (Puningsi, 2024). In Islamic education management in the 21st century, this study examines Islamic education management in the context of the 21st century, focusing on the challenges and opportunities faced. The results showed that the main challenges include: (1) the need for technology integration in learning, (2) demands for curriculum development that is relevant to global needs, (3) improving the quality and competence of teaching staff, and (4) competition with secular education systems (Loso Judijanto, 2024).

In addition, assessment practices in CTL have shifted from summative to formative, measuring the process and product of student learning holistically. Self-reflection becomes an integral component, providing valuable feedback to students and teachers for continuous improvement. This approach is in line with the principles of authentic assessment in CTL and self-regulated learning theory, which empowers students to take responsibility for their learning (Puningsi, 2024). What is new in this study is the application of authentic assessment that measures 21st century skills in the context of Fikih learning.

Comparatively, what is new about this study is that it specifically links the implementation of CTL with the improvement of 21st century skills in the context of Fikih education in MA. Modern educational institutions today have implemented various programmes to develop critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and digital literacy skills (Nabila et al., 2024). These findings align with constructivism theory, Islamic pedagogy and 21st century skills theory which emphasise active, contextual and relevant learning. None of the findings directly contradict, but this study highlights implementation challenges that need to be addressed to maximise the effectiveness of CTL.

In 21st century skills theory, this finding is aligned with the concept of student-centered learning (Lestari & Masyithoh, 2023). CTL helps students develop skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and collaboration through activities that are relevant to the context of their lives. In Islam, education focuses not only on knowledge transfer, but also on character building and noble morals (Bahri, 2023). The implementation of CTL in Fikih allows students to relate religious teachings to social reality, thus strengthening their understanding and appreciation of Islamic values (Rohimah, 2025). This is in accordance with the principle of *ta'dib* (adab formation) in Islamic education. In the concept of developing critical thinking and creativity, 21st century skills theory focuses on the ability to think critically and creativity are two of the four main skills (4C) that are essential in the 21st century (Lestari & Masyithoh, 2023). CTL encourages students to analyse information, evaluate arguments and come up with innovative solutions to complex problems. In Islamic pedagogy, Islamic education encourages people to use their minds and reason optimally. CTL-based Fikih learning helps students develop critical thinking skills in understanding and applying Islamic law, and encourages creativity in finding solutions to contemporary problems that are relevant to Islamic values (Rohimah, 2025).

The 21st Century Skills Theory makes student engagement a key factor in successful 21st century skills-orientated learning. Challenges such as limited time and resources can hinder teachers' efforts in creating an engaging and interactive learning environment. In Islamic education, teachers are required to pay attention to students' individual differences and create an inclusive learning environment. To overcome the challenges of student engagement, teachers can use varied learning methods, utilise technology and establish effective communication with students (Rohimah, 2025).. Research on modernising islamic religious education: bridging tradition and 21st-century skills through curriculum and technology integration highlights the need for curriculum updates to incorporate 21st-century skills, professional development for educators, and investment in digital infrastructure. By adopting these measures, Islamic Religious Education can evolve to empower students as morally grounded critical thinkers, and global citizens, ensuring its relevance in the 21st century (Latifah & , Zamroni, hefniy, 2024). In addition, there are several alternatives for Islamic Education reform to welcome 21st century skills, including adjusting facilities and infrastructure, developing human resources, evaluating curriculum, and developing learning (Sinta et al., 2024).. Authentic assessment is also an important part of 21st century skills-orientated learning. It measures students' ability to apply knowledge and skills in real situations, not just memorising facts. According to Islamic pedagogy, self-reflection (*muhasabah*) is an important practice in Islam to evaluate oneself and improve oneself (Bahri, 2023). In the context of learning, reflection helps students to understand their strengths and weaknesses, as well as plan steps to improve learning achievement (Rohimah, 2025).

Although this study provides valuable insights into the implementation of CTL in Fikih learning in MA, there are several limitations that need to be considered. First, the research sample is relatively small and limited to a few specific MAs, so generalisation of the findings needs to be done with caution. Second, this study focuses more on the perspectives of teachers and students, without involving other parties such as parents or school committees. Thirdly, the context of CTL implementation may vary from one MA to another, depending on factors such as resources, school support, and student characteristics. Future research can be conducted with a larger and more diverse sample, involving more stakeholders, and considering contextual variations in CTL implementation (Muhammad Farhan Farizi, Andri Ardiansyah, 2025).

4. CONCLUSION

The key findings of the research related to the implementation of CTL model in learning Fiqh at Madrasah Aliyah proved to be effective in improving students' 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication, through a contextual approach that connects religious material with social reality and daily problems, although challenges such as time constraints, resources, and heterogeneity of students' abilities are still the main obstacles. The implication of this research in teaching activities is that teachers need to strengthen their role as facilitators by designing project-based activities, case studies and contextual simulations that actively engage students, as well as integrating technology and authentic assessment to monitor the development of 21st-century skills holistically. The government and educational institutions should provide continuous training for teachers in designing technology-based CTL learning, developing an adaptive curriculum that integrates religious values and 21st-century skills, and building collaboration with local communities to enrich the learning context. Future research directions include the need for more in-depth exploration of the effectiveness of CTL in other religious subjects in Madrasah Aliyah, the development of hybrid models (CTL-digital) to improve students' digital literacy skills, and longitudinal studies to measure the long-term impact of CTL on students' readiness to face global challenges.

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