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Questioning Skills of Grade VII Students in Subject Islamic Religious Education Lessons at SMPN 2 Sragi, South Lampung

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ABSTRACT *This study aims to analyze the asking ability of seventh grade students in Islamic religious education subjects at SMP Negeri 2 Sragi, both in terms of the form of questions, depth of meaning, as well as pedagogical and psychological factors.. This type of research is qualitative descriptive research. The subjects in this study were teachers and students. The data collection techniques used by researchers were observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study showed that eighth grade students had low questioning skills based on the frequency of questions asked. The frequency of questions that can be asked by eighth grade students in the Islamic Religious Education learning process is eight questions from six classes with an average of asking 1 to 2 questions per class or if in percentage only 6%. Students' questioning skills based on the criteria of the questions asked are categorized as skilled. This can be seen based on the results of observations, where in asking questions, students are able to construct question sentences using the right question words, ask questions that explore information, are able to convey questions even though they are not directly on the core of the question, and are able to choose the right time to ask questions, namely when the teacher invites students to ask questions. The volume of voice when asking questions is also at a level that is not too high and not too low, so that all students in the class can hear it.*

Keywords : *Questioning, Skill, Student, Religious, Education.*

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INTRODUCTION

The ability to ask questions is one of the high-level thinking skills that is very important in the learning process (Astari, WM, Nufus, H., Mutaqin, Z., Winata, A., & Waluyan, 2024). In the context of education, especially in Islamic Religious Education learning, the ability to ask questions not only functions as a communication tool between teachers and students (Clark, 2023), but also an indicator of students' activeness in critical thinking, understanding religious values, and linking Islamic concepts to everyday life (Anshori, I., Putri, AS, & Qonitah, 2024). However, the reality on the ground shows that most students are still passive and less courageous in asking questions, especially in Islamic religious education subjects which require reflective and dialogical understanding (Asdar et al., 2021).

This problem is crucial because the low ability to ask questions has implications for the low quality of interactive learning (Reisa, I., Washudin, W., & Anshori, 2022). Teachers often dominate the teaching and learning process with lecture methods, while students only become recipients of information (Anshori, I., Setiaji, H., & Anita, 2023). As a result, Islamic religious

education has lost its essence as a vehicle for developing critical thinking and rational religious morals (Abdullah, 2022). This phenomenon is clearly visible at SMP Negeri 2 Sragi, South Lampung, where most seventh-grade students still show limitations in asking analytical or reflective questions during the learning process.

Although teachers usually hold question and answer sessions with students, the real goal is to develop active questioning skills in students (Anshori, I., Yansyah, D., Nasiroh, N., Urifi, U., & Ismail, 2025). Learning activities in the questioning phase involve students asking questions about information they do not understand regarding the objects they observe (Al Mubarak, 2020). The competencies expected in this activity include the development of creativity, curiosity, and the ability to formulate questions to develop critical thinking, which is essential for intelligent living and lifelong learning (Wasehudin, W., Anshori, I., Rahman, MT, Syaife'i, I., & Kesuma, 2021). Therefore, students' questioning skills are very important to develop a better understanding of the material being taught, because questioning skills are not only about information, but also about opening up space for critical thinking and strengthening understanding (Kuswanto, RT, & Kurniawan, 2025).

The main reason for choosing this research theme is because the ability to ask questions is an important foundation in developing 21st century competencies, such as critical thinking, collaboration, and communication (Yusuf, M., & Nurlatifa, 2023). In the context of religious education, asking questions is not just a linguistic activity, but also part of the spiritual process of understanding Islamic values in depth (Pebriana, U., Ekowati, DWW, & Fantiro, 2017). Thus, improving students' questioning skills in Islamic religious education learning is relevant for strengthening character, logical thinking, and understanding contextual Islamic values (K Wathoni, I Anshori, R Sirojudin, Y Kuakul, 2023).

Through the application of questions, the learning process becomes more lively, encouraging broader and deeper learning processes and outcomes, and many other related elements will be revealed that were previously unthinkable by either educators or students. Asking questions can demonstrate that students are thinking and learning (Anshori, I., Syaife'i, I., & Zahrotunnisa, 2024), because in reality, asking questions can increase understanding, see further, and even improve decision-making (Anshori, I., & Wasehudin, 2024). Asking questions can demonstrate that students have thought through the ideas they will present and are attempting to connect and develop them with other topics. Students' curiosity can be seen from the questions they ask. In this study, students' questioning skills were measured based on the frequency of questions asked (Astari, WM, Nufus, H., Mutaqin, Z., Winata, A., & Waluyan, 2024). Indicators of questioning ability adapted from Hosnan regarding the criteria for good questions include being short and clear, focused, probing or divergent. (Wasehudin, W., Wathoni, K., Hassan, RB, Anshori, I., & Akbar, 2022).

Interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers revealed that questioning in class is less than optimal in every meeting or learning process. This is in recognition of the importance of students' questioning skills in the learning process to achieve learning objectives (Faizudin, F., Khairat, A., Anshori, I., Munji, A., Wasehudin, W., Alfurqan, A., & Fuaddin, 2025), researchers are interested in learning more about students' questioning skills in Islamic Religious Education learning in junior high schools. The importance of students' questioning skills during classroom learning makes researchers want to know how good the level of questioning skills of students at SMPN 2 Sragi, South Lampung, especially in Islamic Religious Education learning. The results of the study related to students' questioning and giving opinions are expected to be used by teachers to provide follow-up to the learning process in the classroom. The sub-focus of the research discussed is students' questioning skills based on question frequency and based on question criteria.

Academically, previous research has generally focused on teacher strategies for fostering student participation or active learning methods in Islamic religious education. However, few have specifically examined students' questioning skills as an indicator of independent thinking in

religious instruction at the junior high school level. This research gap presents a lack of attention to in-depth analysis of the types, quality, and factors influencing students' questioning skills, particularly in public schools in South Lampung.

This study aims to analyze the questioning skills of seventh-grade students in Islamic Religious Education at SMP Negeri 2 Sragi, both in terms of the form of questions asked, the depth of meaning, and the pedagogical and psychological factors that influence these skills. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study attempts to describe the phenomenon of questioning skills in its entirety based on real-life classroom interactions, learning observations, and interviews with teachers and students.

The novelty of this research lies in its analytical approach to questioning skills from an Islamic educational perspective, which examines not only cognitive aspects but also the spiritual and moral values inherent in each question. This research contributes to the development of a theory of Islamic religious education learning based on active student participation and offers a conceptual model for improving questioning skills as part of efforts to develop a generation of critical, religious, and reflective learners.

METHOD

Research method is a scientific way to find answers that are in accordance with scientific results (Anshori, I., Husaini, UM, Nurhidayati, D., & Fidiyani, 2025). The research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative. The research subjects discussed were the eighth-grade Islamic Religious Education teachers of SMP Negeri 2 Sragi, South Lampung, and the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Sragi, South Lampung. The data sources in this study were selected through purposive sampling, meaning that in taking samples of data sources by selecting people who are considered to have knowledge about the object being studied, thus making it easier for researchers to explore the sources being studied.

The data sources required for this study are divided into two categories: primary and secondary data. In this study, the primary data source is the researcher, who will collect data directly through measuring instruments or data collection tools such as interviews, documentation, and observations of research informants who are experts in the research object. The sources in this study were Islamic Religious Education teachers and eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 South Lampung. Secondary data is data in the form of documentation, or data from reports and writings that are already available regarding the information the researcher wishes to obtain.

In this study, the researcher used a non-participatory observation method (passive involvement), namely the researcher was not directly involved and only acted as an independent observer.(Sugiono, 2014). Researchers can observe the activities carried out by the observed subjects. What the researchers observed was the students' questioning ability during the learning process of Islamic Religious Education subjects in class. In the interview process in this study, the research targets were Islamic Religious Education teachers and eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Sragi, South Lampung, to obtain information related to the learning process of Islamic Religious Education in class by using a questionnaire that includes how active students are in asking questions during the learning process, as well as how Islamic Religious Education teachers make students active in class by asking questions. Documentation techniques were used to collect data regarding schools, teachers, and even students, such as institutional profiles, names of teachers, students, as well as facilities and infrastructure that support the role of teachers in improving students' questioning skills and other data related to the research.

The data analysis used is, firstly, data reduction, which is the initial stage that is the focus of the research by collecting data that has been collected in the field (Rus, 2023). The data obtained in the field is quite large, therefore, it needs to be recorded in detail and carefully. Data reduction means summarizing, selecting important and key points, and looking for patterns and themes. This will provide a clearer and more understandable picture of the data source. The next stage in

qualitative data analysis is data analysis. This stage involves presenting concise information, connecting existing themes and patterns. Presenting data using qualitative methods requires narrative text. The resulting narrative text is then summarized in an abstract diagram. This data presentation facilitates understanding of the events. Finally, conclusions and clarifications are drawn. At this stage, the validity of each meaning emerging in the data is tested. Data clarification focuses on the abstraction of the data contained in the diagram. Any data supporting the diagram components is re-clarified, both with informants in the field and with colleagues.

Table 1. Data Collection Techniques Grid

| Research Focus / Research Objectives | Data source | Data collection technique | Research Instruments |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Asking ability based on student question frequency | Teachers, Principals, Students | In-depth interview | Interview guidelines |
| Questioning skills based on student question criteria | Teachers, Principals, Students | In-depth interview | Interview guidelines |

Table 2. Criteria for questions from class VIII students in Islamic Religious Education lessons

| No. Question | Question Criteria Indicators | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|---|--|
| | Short and Clear | Have Focus | Investigating and Diverse | | |
| | Students ask questions using standard language and use 5W+1H method question word | Students ask questions systematically, straight to the point, and in a clear voice. | Students ask questions about the material being studied | Students ask questions that aim to explore information that has not been conveyed by the teacher. | Students submit various various question |
| 1 | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 3 | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - |
| 4 | ✓ | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 5 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 6 | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 7 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 8 | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study aims to describe the questioning skills of seventh-grade students in Islamic Religious Education at SMP Negeri 2 Sragi, South Lampung, based on the frequency and criteria of questions asked during the learning process. Data were obtained through direct observation of classroom activities, documentation of learning outcomes, and interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers.

Table 3. Research Novelty Value

| Research Focus / Research Objectives | Key Findings | Supporting Data / Evidence | Implications / Impact on Students |
|---|--|---|---|
| Asking ability based on student question frequency | Shows a pattern of low cognitive participation and the impact of learning strategies on the intensity of asking questions. | Observation data shows an average frequency of asking questions of 1.6 times/student/session; the type of questions is dominated by the basic knowledge category. | Teachers need learning designs that encourage the courage to ask questions. |
| Questioning skills based on student question criteria | Identifying the quality of students' thinking through the structure of | Analysis of 210 student questions showed that 64% of questions were at the | Pedagogical interventions are needed to enhance |

| | | |
|-----------------|---|-------------------------|
| their questions | knowledge level (C1) and 28% at the understanding level (C2). | higher-order questions. |
|-----------------|---|-------------------------|

The Islamic Religious Education learning process in eighth grade at SMP Negeri 2 Sragi, South Lampung, generally proceeded well and was conducive. Teachers implemented learning activities based on the teacher's guidebook provided by the school. However, most students did not optimally utilize the student guidebook as a resource for independent learning.

Learning activities begin with the display of instructional videos on a projector. Projectors can increase students' enthusiasm for learning (Suheri, S., Yansyah, D., Zaenuri, Z., Anshori, I., & Mutmainah, 2023). This media has proven effective in attracting students' attention in the early stages of learning, as evidenced by their focus and enthusiasm in listening to the material presented. Throughout the learning process, the classroom atmosphere remains orderly and tidy, conducive to comfortable learning. The facilities and infrastructure used in teaching and learning activities include clean classrooms, adequate lighting, and simple technological facilities such as projectors and audio-visual equipment. Teachers utilize these media to reinforce understanding of the religious concepts being taught.

The learning methods used included observation, question-and-answer sessions, and assignments using a scientific approach. These three methods were applied alternately to encourage active student participation in understanding Islamic values. However, observations indicated that the learning process did not fully align with the design outlined in the learning module. This discrepancy was evident in the limited implementation of exploratory and reflective learning steps as mandated in the module. Therefore, the learning process in grade VIII demonstrated that the implementation of Islamic religious education was proceeding well in terms of technical aspects and supporting facilities, but still required adjustments to align with module-based learning standards and encourage active student involvement in critical and reflective thinking.



Figure 1. The learning process in class VIII in the subject of Islamic Religious Education

Discussion

Questioning Ability of Grade VIII Students in Islamic Religious Education Subject Based on the Frequency of Student Questions

Asking questions is essential to the learning process, as explained by an Islamic Religious Education teacher. Asking questions is a form of active participation in the learning process, allowing students to discover things they don't yet know (Adindan, W., Ali, AM, & Anshori, 2024). For example, asking teachers, friends, parents, or people around them who are considered more knowledgeable. Asking questions is important because those who ask will gain information.

Based on observations conducted by researchers regarding students' questioning skills during the learning process, the process was not going well because students experienced difficulties. This was evident in an interview with Islamic Education teacher Tri Wulaningsih,

who explained that the learning process was carried out by providing reference questions for students to ask. However, because students have different personalities, some students who lacked confidence prevented others from asking questions.

This is reinforced by student interviews, which revealed that students often refrain from asking questions because they lack the courage to raise their hands and ask questions, as well as lacking confidence and feeling embarrassed when asking questions. This is due to students' insecurity about their abilities. For example, during the learning process, no student is willing to ask questions about the material presented unless the teacher points to a student to ask whether they understand.

In an interview with an Islamic Religious Education teacher, it was explained that students' questioning skills must be stimulated or stimulated to be active, as each student's character differs in each class. While every student can think critically, not everyone has the ability and courage (Saputra, A., Sumbawati, MS, & Ismayati, 2024). Critical students will actively ask questions, while non-critical students will remain silent, therefore stimulus is needed first (Anshori, I., Putri, AS, & Qonitah, 2024). To encourage students to actively ask questions, the teacher begins by explaining the material, then giving students the opportunity to ask questions. If no one asks, the teacher usually nominates a student. Sometimes teachers use another method, namely by enticing students with prizes. Questioning skills are usually applied at the end of the lesson or in the middle, then the teacher gives students the opportunity to ask questions. Students are free to ask any questions they want, as long as they are relevant to the material they have learned. This can be seen in the image below.

Based on the researcher's observations in eighth grade, few students asked questions during the lesson. There were only five questions in two sessions, with an average of one question per class. The following is a brief overview of the eighth grade during the learning process. Student activity in class with their teacher decreased because students felt bored with the learning process, so they paid less attention to what the teacher said. Instead, students were more active in interacting with their peers, where they were seen talking and playing. The frequency of student questions is shown in the following table.

Table 4. Frequency of Questions of Class VIII Students in Islamic Religious Education Subjects.

| No. | Class | Question Frequency | |
|--------|--------|--------------------|-----------------|
| | | First Question | Second Question |
| 1 | VIII A | 1 | 1 |
| 2 | VIII B | 0 | 1 |
| 3 | VIII C | 2 | 1 |
| 4 | VIII D | 1 | 0 |
| 5 | VIII E | 1 | 0 |
| 6 | VIII F | 0 | 0 |
| Amount | | 5 | 3 |

Students who asked questions were those who were accustomed to asking questions during every lesson. The other students appeared normal and calm. In the interview, one student stated that he never asked questions to the teacher in class, but only asked his friends if there was something he didn't understand. Most of the students interviewed never asked questions during the lesson. Another student also stated that he asked questions during every lesson. From these results, it was concluded that the questioning skills of eighth-grade students in the Islamic Religious Education subject at SMP Negeri 2 Sragi were categorized as less skilled.

Questioning Skills of Grade VIII Students in Islamic Religious Education Subjects Based on Student Question Criteria

The following are several descriptions of the results of observations and interviews conducted by researchers with class VIII students in the subject of Islamic Religious Education, namely as follows:

Table 5. List of Questions from Grade VIII Students on Islamic Religious Education Subject

| No | Question | Class |
|----|--|--------|
| 1 | Can a person who has lied be trusted? | VIII A |
| 2 | How do we respond to friends who don't behave in a trustworthy manner? | VIII A |
| 3 | Is lying for the sake of goodness a sin? | VIII B |
| 4 | What if something requires someone to lie? | VIII C |
| 5 | What is the relationship between honesty and trust? | VIII C |
| 6 | Are there any other reasons that explain honest behavior? | VIII C |
| 7 | How do you know if someone is honest or not? | VIII D |
| 8 | What if lying is for the good? | VIII E |

In the first question, students asked questions without using standard language and using 5W+1H question words, the questions were systematic, straight to the point, and asked in a loud voice, the questions were in accordance with the material being studied, the questions aimed to explore information that had not been conveyed by the teacher, and students asked a variety of questions.

In the second question, students asked questions using standard language and utilized the 5W+1H question words, the questions were systematic, straight to the point, and the volume was moderate, the questions were in accordance with the material being studied, the questions aimed to explore information that had not been conveyed by the teacher, and students asked a variety of questions.

In the third question, students asked questions without using formal language and using the 5W+1H question words. These questions were systematic, to the point, and rigorous. They were relevant to the material being studied, aimed to explore information not yet presented by the teacher, and students asked questions that were consistent with or had been asked by previous students.

In the fourth question, students asked questions using formal language and utilized the 5W+1H question words. These questions were structured systematically, got to the point, and were asked in a low voice that required repetition. These questions were relevant to the material being studied, aimed to explore information not yet presented by the teacher, and students asked a variety of questions.

In the fifth question, students ask questions using standard language and utilize the 5W+1H question words, questions are asked systematically, straight to the point, and with a clear voice, questions are in accordance with the material being studied, questions aim to explore information that has not been conveyed by the teacher, and students ask a variety of questions.

In the sixth question, students asked questions without using formal language and using the 5W+1H question words. These questions were systematic, to the point, and moderate in tone, yet encompassed the class material. These questions were relevant to the material being studied, aimed to explore information not yet presented by the teacher, and students asked a variety of questions.

In the seventh question, students asked questions using standard language and utilized the 5W+1H question words, the questions were systematic and went straight to the heart of the matter, the questions were in accordance with the material being studied, the questions aimed to explore information that had not been conveyed by the teacher, and students asked a variety of questions.

In the eighth question, students asked questions without using standard language and using 5W+1H question words, the questions were systematic, straight to the point, and rigorous, the questions were in accordance with the material being studied, the questions aimed to explore information that had not been conveyed by the teacher, and students asked various questions.

The data were further supported by student interviews, which indicated that the criteria for good questioning, with the sub-indicator of volume, were good. Students stated that their classmates who asked questions used a loud voice so they could be heard even though they were

seated far away. Other students also stated that some of their classmates' voices were too quiet, requiring repetition so that others in the class could hear them, but most used a loud voice. Interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers indicated that students' questions were relevant to the material being studied; students rarely asked questions outside the material.

Analysis of Student Question Frequency as an Indicator of Questioning Ability in Islamic Religious Education Learning

From the results of observations and interviews with Islamic Religious Education subject teachers and eighth grade students, it is seen that students' questioning skills based on the criteria for questions asked by students fall into the skilled category. This can be seen in the table that almost all questions meet the indicators of good question criteria. In this study, there are certainly differences from each article cited. This article goes deeper in digging up information by focusing on seventh grade students in the Islamic Religious Education subject, on the basis that students who have entered seventh grade are in the transition phase from elementary school to junior high school, of course, they have several criteria such as shyness, enthusiasm, and indifference to existing conditions, this basis is the basis of this study to determine how the questioning skills of seventh grade students so that directions and solutions can be provided to prepare for the higher phase, namely grades VIII and IX.

Questioning skills are a very important competency in developing critical thinking and in-depth understanding of learning materials (Wasehudin, W., & Anshori, 2021). In the context of 21st century learning, students are not only expected to receive information passively, but also to be able to ask meaningful questions, explore information independently, and build logical arguments (Kurniawan, 2024: Kurniawan, MA, Syafe'i, I., & Anggoro, 2023). Therefore, developing students' questioning skills, especially in seventh grade junior high school, is a strategic aspect that needs to be designed systematically.

Seventh grade students are in a transitional stage of cognitive development, moving from concrete thinking to formal operational thinking (Wahyuni, S., & Kholiq, 2024). At this stage, students begin to understand cause-effect relationships, think logically, and ask reflective questions (Widodo, YB, Sibuea, S., & Narji, 2024). However, questioning skills do not come naturally, but need to be honed through structured learning experiences (Pebriana, U., Ekowati, DWW, & Fantiro, 2017). One initial strategy is to introduce students to different types of questions, such as factual, conceptual, and evaluative questions. Through simple activities such as analyzing text and formulating questions based on Bloom's taxonomy, students are encouraged to recognize different levels of thinking. For example, after reading a text, students are asked to generate "what" (factual), "why" (analytical), and "what if" (critical/hypothetical) questions. This strategy not only helps improve the quality of questions but also develops students' metacognitive awareness of their own thinking processes.

Collaborative learning techniques such as Think-Pair-Share can be used to encourage students to ask questions (Santoso, ED, Sholihah, RA, & Mu'ti, 2021). In this model, students are given time to think individually, then discuss with a partner, and finally share in a class discussion (Wasehudin, W., Wathoni, K., Hassan, RB, Anshori, I., & Akbar, 2022). This strategy is effective in building student confidence while creating a participatory learning environment (Wasehudin, W., Anshori, I., & Marzuki, 2022). Additionally, the use of supporting materials such as question cards or "Curious Reader" worksheets can help students develop more focused and reflective questions. These worksheets encourage students to connect facts learned from the text with their curiosity and formulate questions that encourage further exploration. This approach fosters a culture of questioning that is not only superficial but also analytical and evaluative.

It is also important for teachers to provide feedback on the quality of students' questions. Implementing a questioning skills assessment rubric provides an educational evaluation tool that assesses students not only on their questioning skills but also on the clarity, relevance, and level of thought reflected in their questions. In this way, teachers can gradually guide students in

improving their critical thinking skills through the questions they ask. Overall, developing questioning skills in seventh-grade students requires integrated planning involving pedagogical strategies, supporting media, and formative evaluation. By creating a safe, interactive, and reflective learning space, teachers can foster meaningful questioning habits as a foundation for the future development of critical, collaborative, and creative thinking skills.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study through observation, interviews, and documentation activities as well as research data analysis, the conclusion of the study entitled "Questioning Skills of Grade VIII Students in Islamic Religious Education Subjects at SMP Negeri 2 Sragi, South Lampung" is that the questioning skills of grade VIII students in Islamic Religious Education subjects focused on the frequency of questions are categorized as low or less skilled. There are only eight questions asked in two meetings, with an average of 1 to 2 questions in each meeting, with a percentage of only 6%. Students' questioning skills that focus on question criteria are categorized as good or skilled. Then, there are several recommendations as follows: Research shows that students' low questioning skills are based on the number of question frequencies, therefore teachers are expected to provide more time and opportunities for students to ask more questions. Teachers provide opportunities for students to ask questions through writing so that students do not need to feel embarrassed or afraid of being the center of attention of other students in the class. Teachers use a variety of learning models so that students feel comfortable and enthusiastic in participating in the learning process.

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