

Implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching in Private Islamic Education Learning through Action Research

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received July 27, 2026

Revised August 22, 2026

Accepted September 2, 2026

Keywords: Culturally Responsive Teaching; Action Research; Islamic Religious Education; private tutoring.

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to describe the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) in private Islamic Religious Education (IRE) tutoring, analyze students' responses, identify challenges encountered during implementation, and evaluate improvements in teaching practices through action research. This study employed a qualitative approach using the Kemmis and McTaggart Action Research model, which consisted of two cycles involving planning, action, observation, and reflection. The participants included an Islamic Religious Education tutor, 3–5 private tutoring students, and parents as supporting informants. Data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, documentation, and reflective journals, and were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings revealed that the implementation of CRT enhanced students' engagement, learning motivation, and self-confidence during the learning process. Students became more actively involved in connecting Islamic Religious Education content with their everyday experiences, while improvements introduced in the second cycle, including the use of more creative learning media and contextual examples, further optimized the learning process. Nevertheless, the effective implementation of CRT requires continuous professional development for tutors, particularly in understanding students' characteristics and designing culturally responsive learning experiences. Overall, CRT proved to be an effective pedagogical approach for creating more contextual, inclusive, and student-centered learning in private Islamic Religious Education tutoring.

1. INTRODUCTION

The significant progress in 21st-century education demands a learning process that is not only oriented toward mastery of the material but also capable of accommodating the diverse characteristics of learners (Arifin & Mu, 2024). This diversity includes cultural backgrounds, languages, family values, learning experiences, socio-economic conditions, and the ways in which students build their understanding of knowledge. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), diversity is an important aspect that needs to be considered because the learning objectives not only aim to develop cognitive aspects but also to shape character, religious attitudes, and students' abilities to actualize Islamic values in their daily lives (Amalina et al., 2026). Therefore, PAI learning requires strategies that can connect the teaching materials with students' life experiences, making the learning more contextual, meaningful, and relevant to their social environment. One of the approaches deemed capable of addressing this need is Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). Geneva Gay (2018) defines CRT as a teaching approach that utilizes the experiences, cultural identities, and knowledge possessed by students as a foundation for designing effective learning (Pattiasina, P. J., et al). In line with this, Ladson-Billings, G. (1995) explains that culturally responsive teaching not only aims to improve academic achievement but also to develop cultural competence and critical

consciousness among students (Willy Prasetya, 2025). Thus, culture is positioned as a learning resource that enriches the process of knowledge construction, rather than as a hindrance to learning (Fitri et al., 2018). In Islamic Religious Education, CRT principles have strong relevance because Islamic values are always practiced within diverse social and cultural contexts (Nabila Hasna, Endis Firdaus, 2024). The delivery of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material linked to family experiences, community traditions, religious habits, or the realities of students' lives allows the learning process to be more closely connected to their lives (Djollong et al., 2026). This approach not only helps students understand religious concepts more concretely but also encourages the internalization of Islamic values through experiences they directly encounter (Setiabudi, 2026). On the other hand, the application of CRT has the potential to enhance student engagement, build more positive relationships between tutors and learners, and create a learning environment that values diversity (Warda et al., 2025).

Various studies show that the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching has a positive impact on increasing student motivation, participation, learning interactions, and the creation of an inclusive learning environment (Umi Nadhiroh, 2024). However, most of these studies were conducted in formal education contexts, such as elementary schools, secondary schools, and madrasahs, using descriptive research designs, surveys, or case studies that focused on the learning conditions that had already taken place. As in the research conducted by Dewi Nurhasanah Nasution on the implementation of CRT in elementary schools, which showed increased activity and interest in learning using qualitative research methods (Nasution, D. N, 2023). The study on the application of CRT in private Islamic Religious Education learning is still relatively limited, whereas the characteristics of private learning differ from classical learning. Interactions that occur individually or in small groups allow tutors to recognize the characteristics of learners more deeply, enabling learning strategies to be tailored to the needs, experiences, and cultural backgrounds of each learner (Wulandari et al., 2026). In addition to the limitations of the research context, there are still few studies that examine how teaching practices are gradually improved through the application of Culturally Responsive Teaching. Most previous research has been more oriented toward measuring the outcomes of CRT implementation rather than the process of changes in teaching practices carried out by educators. However, the implementation of a learning approach does not always run optimally in the initial stages and often requires a process of evaluation, reflection, and continuous refinement based on real classroom experiences. Therefore, a research approach is needed that not only describes the implementation of CRT but also facilitates the systematic improvement of teaching practices. Based on these conditions, this research uses Action Research as a methodological approach. Action Research is an approach aimed at improving learning practices through a cycle of actions that includes the stages of planning, action, observation, and reflection as proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart in 1988. This approach provides researchers with the opportunity to innovate in learning, directly evaluate its implementation, and make improvements based on the reflection results from each action cycle (Universitas et al., 2026). Thus, the research not only produces findings on the effectiveness of CRT implementation but also documents the process of changes in learning practices that occur during the research period.

In this study, the researcher acts as an Islamic Religious Education tutor who directly designs, implements, observes, and reflects on the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching principles in private tutoring. This position allows the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of learning, students' responses to the actions taken, obstacles that arise during implementation, and the improvement strategies needed to enhance the quality of learning in the next cycle. Thus, reflection in this research does not stand as the main objective of the study, but rather becomes an integral part of the action research process used to continuously improve learning practices. The focus of the research is directed toward the process of implementing

Culturally Responsive Teaching in private Islamic Religious Education through a series of systematically conducted actions. This research aims to examine how the principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) are applied in the learning process, how students respond to the actions taken, the obstacles that arise during the implementation of these actions, and how the reflection results from each cycle are used as a basis for improving learning practices in the next cycle. Based on this focus, the research problem formulation is: (1) how is Culturally Responsive Teaching implemented in private Islamic Education learning through action research; (2) how do students respond to the application of CRT in each learning cycle; (3) what obstacles are faced during the implementation of actions; and (4) how are the reflection results from each cycle used to refine Islamic Education learning practices. In line with these problem formulations, this research aims to describe the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching in private Islamic Education learning, analyze students' responses to the learning actions provided, identify various obstacles that arise during the implementation of actions, and produce improvements in learning practices through the reflection process conducted in each action research cycle.

Theoretically, this research integrates two main perspectives. The first perspective is the Culturally Responsive Teaching theory developed by Gay, G. (2018) and Ladson-Billings, G. (1995), which places students' culture as the foundation for designing meaningful, equitable, and empowering learning. The second perspective is the concept of Action Research developed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), which emphasizes that the improvement of learning quality is carried out through a cycle of actions involving planning, implementation, observation, and continuous reflection (Badara, A., Lio, A., & Rifa'ie, M 2026). The integration of these two perspectives provides a conceptual framework for understanding how CRT principles can be systematically applied and refined in the practice of Islamic Religious Education. Previous research on Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) generally focuses on implementation in formal school environments and general subjects, while studies on the application of CRT in private Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning are still very limited. This condition indicates a gap in research context because the characteristics of private learning, which are more flexible, personal, and centered on the individual needs of students, have not been extensively explored through the CRT perspective. Additionally, most previous studies have used descriptive, case study, or qualitative research approaches, thus emphasizing the identification or presentation of learning practices (Ilmiah & Indonesia, 2025). As in other fields of education, a literature review was conducted to examine student motivation through the CRT approach, and it was concluded that there was a significant increase in student learning motivation through this approach (Pradiarti, 2025). Those studies have not yet extensively utilized Action Research as an approach that allows teachers or tutors to make continuous improvements in learning through the stages of planning, action, observation, and reflection in each cycle. The next gap lies in the conceptual aspect. Previous research tends to examine CRT and Action Research as two standalone approaches. There are still few studies that integrate both in the context of PAI learning to produce a learning implementation model that is responsive to the cultural diversity of students while also being adaptive through a process of reflection and continuous improvement.

Based on this gap, this research aims to fill the literature void by examining the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching in private PAI learning through an Action Research approach. This study not only describes the application of CRT but also develops a contextual, adaptive implementation model focused on improving the quality of learning through a systematic action cycle. Thus, this research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of culturally responsive pedagogy as well as practical contributions for PAI teachers and tutors in designing more inclusive, contextual, and student-centered learning. The novelty of this research lies in three aspects. First, the study examines the implementation of Culturally Responsive

Teaching in the context of private Islamic Religious Education learning, which has been relatively rare in previous research. Second, the study employs Action Research, not only describing learning practices but also demonstrating the process of improving practices through systematic action cycles based on reflections from each cycle. Third, the research integrates the concept of CRT with action research in the context of Islamic Religious Education learning, resulting in an implementation model that is contextual and adaptive to the characteristics of the learners. The research findings are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of culturally responsive pedagogy studies, as well as serve as practical references for Islamic Religious Education teachers and tutors in designing more contextual, inclusive, and student-centered learning.

2. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with an Action Research design. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to deeply understand the process of implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, while also examining the changes that occur during the learning process. Meanwhile, the action research design is used because it is oriented toward the continuous improvement of learning practices through a series of planned, implemented, observed, and systematically reflected actions. This action research refers to the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which consists of four stages in each cycle: planning, action, observation, and reflection (Islam and Antasari 2025). This model was chosen because it provides space for researchers to conduct continuous evaluation of the learning process, allowing each action taken to be refined based on the reflection results from the previous cycle. In this study, the researcher acts as an Islamic Religious Education tutor who directly designs learning tools, implements the CRT-based learning process, observes the course of the actions, and reflects on the results of the actions as a basis for improving learning in the next cycle. Thus, the research not only produces a description of the implementation of CRT but also documents the process of systematically changing teaching practices.

The research was conducted on private tutoring activities in Islamic Religious Education. The selection of the location is based on the consideration that private tutoring provides an opportunity for tutors to implement more personalized and responsive teaching to the characteristics of the students. The research subjects were selected using purposive sampling technique, which is the selection of subjects based on their relevance to the research objectives. The research subjects include: The researcher acting as a tutor for Islamic Religious Education; Students who regularly attend private lessons, totaling 5 students; Parents of the students as supporting informants to obtain information regarding changes in learning behavior, student engagement, and the effectiveness of learning from the family's perspective. The involvement of various data sources aims to obtain a comprehensive picture of the implementation of CRT principles in PAI learning. The research is conducted in two cycles, with each cycle following the action research stages according to Kemmis and McTaggart. Planning at the planning stage begins with the identification of student characteristics, including socio-cultural background, learning needs, previous learning experiences, and learning styles. Based on the results of the identification, the researcher developed Islamic Religious Education learning tools based on Culturally Responsive Teaching, which include learning objectives, materials, teaching strategies, media, and contextual evaluation forms. In addition, the researcher also prepared research instruments in the form of CRT implementation observation sheets, interview guidelines, reflection note formats, and documentation tools as data collection tools during the research period.



At the Action Implementation stage, the researcher conducts the learning according to the prepared plan. The implementation of learning focuses on applying the principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching, including connecting Islamic Religious Education material with students' real-life experiences, using examples that are relevant to their social and cultural environments, building communication that respects diversity, and providing opportunities for students to share their experiences, opinions, and perspectives on the material being studied. The implementation of actions in the second cycle was carried out by improving the learning strategies based on the reflections from the first cycle, making the learning more aligned with the needs of the students. Next, observation was conducted simultaneously with the implementation of the action. The researcher observes the learning process to obtain information regarding the implementation of CRT principles, the level of student participation, the communication patterns between tutors and students, the use of learning media, as well as various obstacles that arise during the learning process. The data from the observations were reinforced through field notes, documentation of learning activities, students' work results, as well as feedback from both students and parents, thus providing a more comprehensive picture of the implementation of the actions. The reflection stage is conducted after the entire series of actions in each cycle has been completed. The researcher analyzes the results of observations, interviews, reflection notes, and documentation to evaluate the success of CRT implementation, identify supporting and inhibiting factors in learning, and determine aspects that need improvement in the next cycle. The results of the reflection in the first cycle are used as the basis for refining the planning and implementation of actions in the second cycle. Thus, each cycle becomes a learning process for the researcher to continuously improve the quality of learning practices.

Research data were collected using several techniques to obtain in-depth and complementary information. Participatory observation was conducted during the learning process. The researcher directly observes the implementation of CRT principles, student activities, interaction patterns that occur during the learning process, and student responses to the applied teaching strategies. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students and their parents. The interviews aimed to obtain information regarding students' learning experiences, perceptions of CRT-based learning, changes in learning motivation, and parents' responses to their children's development during private tutoring. The tutor's reflection notes are compiled after each session as a form of reflection on the learning process that has taken place. Reflection includes the achievement of learning objectives, the effectiveness of the strategies used, the challenges faced, student responses, and improvement plans for the next meeting. The success of the action is determined based on the achievement of consistent changes throughout the research process. Success indicators include the increased ability of tutors to apply the principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching, the increased active engagement of students during learning, the more contextual delivery of Islamic Religious Education material in accordance with students' experiences, the establishment of open communication that respects diversity, and reflection results showing that the improvements made in each cycle are able to overcome the obstacles found in the previous cycle. With that methodological design, the research not only produces a description of the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching but also

demonstrates the process of systematically changing Islamic Religious Education teaching practices through action cycles. The research findings are expected to provide a practical contribution in the form of a CRT implementation model in private tutoring that can be replicated or adapted in similar learning contexts.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This action research was conducted in two cycles referring to the stages of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The focus of the action is to implement the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach in Islamic Religious Education learning during private tutoring to enhance student engagement, interest, and motivation.

3.1 Cycle I Results

At the planning stage, researchers begin activities by identifying the characteristics of students as a basis for designing the learning plan. The identification includes study habits, interests, family environment, the way students understand the material, and daily experiences relevant to Islamic Religious Education (Ababil et al., 2025). This step becomes an important foundation in the application of CRT because learning is designed based on the characteristics and life context of the students, not merely focused on the delivery of material (Tasya, 2025). Based on the results of the identification, the researcher developed a lesson plan that integrates the principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching with Islamic Religious Education material. Additionally, the researcher utilized more engaging, contextual, and character-appropriate learning media. The use of varied media aims to create a more enjoyable learning experience, allowing students to feel valued, recognized, and have space to actively participate in the learning process (Nur et al., 2025). Based on the results of the identification, the researcher developed a lesson plan that integrates the principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching with Islamic Religious Education material. Additionally, the researcher utilized more engaging, contextual, and character-appropriate learning media. The use of varied media aims to create a more enjoyable learning experience, allowing students to feel valued, recognized, and have space to actively participate in the learning process (Nur et al., 2025). Observation results during the implementation of the action showed changes in students' learning behavior. Compared to the initial condition, students began to show the courage to share personal experiences related to Islamic Religious Education material. For example, when discussing the values of honesty, responsibility, or morality in daily life, the students spontaneously connect the material with their experiences at home or in their social environment. These findings indicate that the learning material is no longer understood as an abstract concept, but has been interpreted as part of the students' life reality. This encourages students to implement the discussions they perceive as relevant to their world because they are derived from their experiences and social interactions (Barokah et al., 2025).

In addition, student engagement during the learning process has also increased. Students have started to actively ask questions, answer the tutor's questions, and show enthusiasm when asked to solve problems related to the learning material. The increased participation indicates that the CRT approach is capable of creating a more inclusive learning environment and providing a sense of security for students to express their ideas and experiences (Maryati, I., & Putri, S. 2025). However, reflections at the end of the first cycle indicate that the implementation of CRT still faces several obstacles. The researcher realized that as a private tutor, more in-depth efforts are needed to explore the characteristics of students before the learning process begins. Each student has different family backgrounds, experiences, learning habits, and ways of understanding the material, so tutors need to make continuous adjustments. Additionally, connecting each Islamic Religious Education material with the students' life context requires creativity, experience, and adequate mastery of the subject

matter (M Mahbubi, 2024). The reflection results in a recommendation that private tutors need to continuously develop creativity in selecting learning strategies, media, and contextual examples that align with the students' lives. Thus, the implementation of CRT should not only be an approach applied occasionally, but should become an integrated part of every learning process (Azizan, N. 2024).

Table 1. Cycle 1 Summary Chart

Aspect	Cycle 1
Learning motivation	Quite visible
The courage to ask questions	Already appeared
Self-confidence	Still need a tutor's encouragement.
Connecting material with experience	Still limited/not yet optimal
Role of Tutor	Providing stimulus
Internalization of PAI values	Not yet consistent

3.2 Results of Cycle II

Improvements in the second cycle were made based on the reflections from the first cycle. The researcher better prepared the learning by selecting more creative media, enriching contextual examples, such as teaching hijaiyah letters according to the child's preferred character and using media that captures the child's attention, not just using hijaiyah letter books, and providing more space for students to share experiences during the learning process. Evaluation in the second cycle was conducted through interviews with students and parents. The interview results show that students feel a more enjoyable learning atmosphere compared to before. They feel more comfortable asking questions, expressing opinions, and discussing Islamic Religious Education material because the learning is connected to their daily experiences and what they enjoy. This condition has resulted in increased learning motivation, self-confidence, and interest among students in participating in private lessons. Here is an excerpt from the interview transcript that was obtained:

Informant: Student (S) Researcher: What is your opinion about the learning that has been conducted?
Student (S): I prefer it because the tutor often gives examples that I have experienced myself. So, I find it easier to understand the material. Researcher: What kind of examples?
PD: When we learned about responsibility, I was asked to talk about my chores at home. So I remembered that helping my parents is also part of responsibility.
Researcher: Do you feel braver when studying?
PD: Yes. I am no longer afraid to ask questions if I don't understand, because the tutor always listens to my story first before explaining the material.

A similar perspective was also expressed by the parents of the students. According to them, the child shows higher enthusiasm for participating in learning, finds it easier to recount the material that has been studied, and begins to relate the values of Islamic Religious Education to daily activities at home. These findings indicate that the implementation of CRT not only impacts the learning process in private classes but also influences the internalization of the values learned in daily life.

Informant: Parents of Students Time: After the implementation of Cycle I
Researcher: Have you noticed any changes after your child participated in the learning?
Parent: Yes, there is a change. Now the child is more enthusiastic when it's time to study. Usually, before the tutor arrives, he has already prepared the books and often asks, "What are we learning today?"
Researcher: How is the child's understanding of the material being studied?
Parent: In my opinion, the child finds it easier to recount what they have learned. After finishing studying, he often talks about what the tutor explained. Sometimes he also gives examples from activities he has experienced himself or from animations he likes.
Researcher: Does the material being studied seem to be applied in daily life?
Parent: Yes. For example, after learning about honesty, he once admitted on his own that he accidentally spilled water in the living room. When learning about responsibility, he started reminding himself to tidy up books and help clean up toys without having to be asked often.

Researcher: In your opinion, what makes the child more interested in learning?

Parent: The child said the tutor often connects the lessons with stories he experiences. So he feels that the lessons are close to everyday life and easier to understand.

Nevertheless, the tutor's reflection at the end of the second cycle indicates that there are still challenges that need to be addressed. The researcher realizes that the implementation of CRT requires continuous competency development, particularly in seeking more innovative learning media, expanding references on culturally responsive teaching strategies, and deepening the literature on CRT to make its application more systematic and optimal in each session. Research findings indicate that the application of Culturally Responsive Teaching in private Islamic Religious Education lessons can enhance student engagement during the learning process. The improvement is evident from the students' courage in sharing personal experiences, the increased frequency of asking and answering questions, and the emergence of interest in solving various problems presented by the tutor. This result aligns with Geneva Gay's thinking, which emphasizes that learning that connects material with students' experiences and backgrounds will create a more meaningful learning process because students feel their identities and experiences are valued as part of the learning (Azzahra & Darmiyanti, 2024). Additionally, the increased motivation of students reinforces Gloria Ladson-Billings' view in her research on building inclusive and equitable schools that culturally responsive teaching not only aims to improve academic achievement but also to build positive relationships between educators and students through the recognition of their identities, experiences, and social contexts (Marlini T, 2025). In this study, a closer relationship between tutors and students becomes one of the factors that encourages students to be more confident in actively engaging in the learning process.

The research findings also indicate that the success of CRT implementation heavily depends on the tutor's ability to recognize the characteristics of the learners. Identification of students' learning habits, family environment, interests, and experiences becomes the initial step that determines the success of developing learning strategies (Huda, 2024). This shows that the pedagogical competence of a tutor not only includes mastery of Islamic Religious Education material but also the ability to comprehensively understand the character of students so that learning can be designed contextually and relevantly (M Mahbubi, 2024). The role of the family environment is also the most influential because the educational understanding from parents, which serves as the initial capital for students, is present in the optimal learning process. Data has shown that educational communication within the family significantly influences the religiosity of Muslim students, as empirically proven (Khofifah Arro'uf, Munawar Rahmat 2024). Thus, the successful implementation of this approach requires many roles that serve as the foundation for shaping students in private learning to be meaningful and relevant to their daily lives. On the other hand, the reflection results from both cycles indicate that the implementation of CRT is not an instant process. Tutors are required to continuously develop creativity in selecting learning media, enrich examples that are relevant to the students' life contexts, and deepen their understanding of CRT concepts through various scientific sources. This demand is in line with the growing and rapid development of the education world, which increasingly requires the application of learning models ready to face the real world, by directing students toward great expectations, the challenges they will face in the future world, and the skills they must master, especially in the field of PAI (Parhan et al., 2024). Thus, this research emphasizes that the success of CRT implementation is not only influenced by the characteristics of the learners but also by the tutors' commitment to continuously reflect and improve their teaching practices.

Here is one example of an innovative model that the researcher has implemented:

Cycle: I Material: Introduction to Hijaiyah Letters (ا-ب) The lesson begins by asking the students about their favorite cartoon characters. The student enthusiastically answered that he liked the character Lightning McQueen from the animated film Cars. Based on this information, the tutor then

displayed several cards featuring Lightning McQueen, Mater, and other characters from the film Cars. On each picture, a large hijaiyah letter was attached, such as ا (Alif) on the picture of Lightning McQueen, ب (Ba') on the picture of Mater, and ت (Ta') on the picture of Cruz Ramirez.

When the media was shown, the student smiled and immediately approached the picture cards. He mentioned the character's name several times before paying attention to the hijaiyah letters on the picture. The tutor then asked the students to read the letters on each card. The students appeared more enthusiastic compared to the previous session. When they successfully read the letters correctly, the student asked the tutor to show the next picture while saying, "The one with McQueen again, Sis." During the activity, the student repeated the reading of the hijaiyah letters several times without being asked. He also tried to remember the letters by associating them with his favorite characters, for example, saying, "If McQueen is Alif, then Mater is Ba." The tutor provides reinforcement and invites the students to repeat all the letters in order using the illustrated cards.

Table 2. Summary Comparison Chart of Cycle 1 and Cycle II

Aspect	Cycle I	Cycle II
Learning motivation	Quite visible	Improving and consistently following the learning
The courage to ask questions	Already appeared	The more active you are in asking questions, discussing, and expressing opinions
Self-confidence	Still need a tutor's encouragement	More confident in presentations and discussions without much encouragement from the teacher
Connecting material with experience	Still limited/not yet optimal	Able to connect PAI material with experiences, local culture, and daily life
Role of Teacher/Tutor	Providing stimulus	Becoming a facilitator, mentor, and mediator who promotes contextual learning based on CRT
Internalization of PAI values	Not yet consistent	Appears more consistent through polite, tolerant, responsible behavior, and appreciation of diversity

Overall, the research results show that the application of the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach in private Islamic Religious Education tutoring positively contributes to the improvement of the quality of learning interactions, motivation, and student engagement. The reflection process conducted in each cycle also shows that action research provides space for tutors to continuously refine their teaching practices through ongoing evaluation. Therefore, CRT can be viewed as a relevant pedagogical approach to be applied in private PAI tutoring services, particularly in creating more contextual, inclusive, and meaningful learning for students.

4. CONCLUSION

This action research shows that the implementation of the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach in private Islamic Religious Education lessons positively contributes to the quality of the learning process. The implementation of CRT, which begins with the identification of student characteristics, the preparation of contextual learning tools, and the use of learning media that align with the needs and experiences of students, is capable of creating a more inclusive, meaningful, and student-centered learning environment. In Cycle I, the implementation of CRT showed initial positive changes, marked by increased student engagement in the learning process. Students began to bravely relate Islamic Religious Education material to their daily life experiences, actively ask questions, provide responses, and show enthusiasm in solving the given problems. Nevertheless, the reflection on this cycle reveals that the tutor still faces challenges in recognizing the characteristics

of students more deeply and consistently integrating the cultural context and students' experiences into each learning material. Therefore, the creativity of tutors in developing strategies and learning media becomes an important aspect that needs to be continuously improved. The improvements made in Cycle II resulted in a more optimal implementation of CRT. Based on the interview results, students and parents felt a change in the form of a more enjoyable learning atmosphere, increased learning motivation, and the growth of students' interest in Islamic Religious Education. Students become more confident in discussions and are able to interpret learning materials as part of their life experiences. These findings indicate that the application of CRT not only enhances learning engagement but also strengthens the pedagogical relationship between tutors and students, making the process of internalizing Islamic Education values more contextual and meaningful.

However, this study also emphasizes that the implementation of CRT is a process that requires continuous competency development. Tutors need to continuously enrich the literature on Culturally Responsive Teaching, develop creative and contextual learning media, and enhance their ability to identify students' characteristics so that every learning action becomes more responsive to their needs, experiences, and backgrounds. Thus, this research concludes that the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach is suitable for implementation in private Islamic Religious Education tutoring because it can enhance the quality of learning interactions, motivation, and student engagement. In addition to providing practical contributions for private tutors in designing more adaptive learning, this research also expands the study of CRT implementation in the context of non-formal education, particularly private tutoring services, which until now has been relatively limited in the literature on Islamic Religious Education. These findings open up opportunities for further research to develop a more comprehensive CRT implementation model by involving a more diverse range of research subjects and broader learning contexts.

Table 2. Cycle II Summary Chart

Aspect	Cycle II
Learning Motivation	Consistently increasing
The courage to ask questions	Actively asking questions without being prompted
Self-confidence	More confident in expressing opinions
Connecting material with experience	Spontaneously relate the material to everyday life
Role of a tutor	Acting as a facilitator for dialog and reflection
Internalization of PAI values	Visible in behavior at home based on parental interviews

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