



A Comparative Analysis of Critical Thinking in Western and Islamic Education: Implications for Contemporary Islamic Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

Critical thinking is an important skill in education, but its conceptualization varies across Western and Islamic paradigms. This study aims to compare the concepts, criteria, and objectives of critical thinking in Western and Islamic education. The research method used is a qualitative literature study by examining primary and secondary sources from Western and Islamic studies, and analyzing them systematically thematic. The main findings reveal that Islamic critical thinking "*tafakkur*" and "*ulul albab*" integrating reflection "rational-religious (*al-Diny al-Aqlany*)" because in it there is *tadabbur* and *tadzakkur*, while Western critical thinking emphasizes "rationality-progressivism". Critical thinking aims to enable a person to understand themselves, their environment, and their world, so they can make good decisions, solve problems, and produce something new. Meanwhile, in Islam, purpose *tafakkur* and *ulul albab* is "*ma'rifat*". *Ma'rifat* is the knowledge of knowing Allah, knowing oneself, knowing the world, and knowing the afterlife. In Islam critical thinking is not only sharp mind, but also sharp awareness of the heart so that it becomes wiser. Although critical thinking from a Western and Islamic perspective tends to differ in concepts, criteria, and objectives, integration between the two is very important. Synergy between Western and Islamic education is needed to design a holistic curriculum that is responsive to the challenges of contemporary Islamic pedagogy.

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1. Introduction

Critical thinking is the goal of intellectual education and one of the basic skills that must have for students (Ulwan, 1992). Galinsky in "Mind in the Making" states that critical thinking is one of the essential life skills for students (Galinsky, 2010). Critical thinking skills are important for students because upon graduation, they will face different and far more complex problems in the future. Students with critical thinking will undoubtedly be successful in the future (Facione, 2013).

Stobaugh explains that people who have critical thinking skills are better able to understand their lives and are able to make good decisions (Stobaugh, 2013). Critical thinking is necessary not only in college but also in careers and other life issues. Without critical thinking, students cannot effectively analyze various information, draw logical conclusions, make decisions, or create new innovations (Stobaugh, 2013). Critical thinking is so important that Jr. Martin Luther King, as quoted by Peter A. Facione, expressed the phrase "Nothing in all the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity." (Facione, 2013).

Islam strongly encourages its followers to think critically and Islam encourages people to pay attention to natural phenomena and to reflect on Allah SWT's creations. Islam encourages people to pay attention to the heavens, the earth, and the soul, as well as all of Allah's creations in the universe (Sofandi, 2000). Islam in the Qur'an surah Ali Imran (3): 191 invite humans to think and reflect on natural phenomena with the aim of obtaining new knowledge through various experimental efforts and scientific research.

During the golden age of Islam, Muslims, through their critical thinking activities as outlined in the Qur'an, allowed the light of knowledge to radiate from Islamic lands and ultimately illuminate European countries. The spirit of critical thinking in the Islamic world shed much light on the darkness of Europe and also stimulated a spirit of scientific thought and research. These activities ultimately gave rise to the Renaissance in Europe (Sofandi, 2000).

In education, critical thinking skills are both an effort and a result of the educational process, and educators have a significant responsibility to develop students' critical thinking skills. Embedding critical thinking in the curriculum helps prepare students for learning, aids their careers, and helps them meet test or exam standards (Stobaugh, 2013). This is very important for universities, especially in improving work and preparing the workforce, making life decisions, and increasing student motivation. (Stobaugh, 2013).

Critical thinking has been explored in numerous articles. However, each study has distinct characteristics. These studies include the research by Susana Widyastuti's "Fostering Critical Thinking Skills through Argumentative Writing" (Widyastuti, 2018). This study explains the importance of developing students' critical thinking skills. Critical thinking is developed through writing skills and emphasizes the role of language as a means of thinking, assessing, and evaluating. Furthermore, research by Muhammad Fauzan Al Fayumi, "Measuring Critical Thinking of Vocational High School Students in Basic Programming Learning Through WGCTA," is presented (Al Fayumi, 2025). This study reveals that critical thinking skills are essential in learning. The research findings indicate that the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal (WGCTA) is relevant for measuring and training students' critical thinking skills in basic programming, such as analyzing code, recognizing assumptions, drawing logical conclusions, and evaluating arguments. Furthermore, Sulthon Fathoni's research, "Reforming Islamic Education in Iran: Creating an Emancipated and Creative Generation," is presented (Fathoni, 2022).

Although this research focuses on Islamic education reform in Iran, which aims to produce an emancipated and creative generation, the Iranian government has launched a series of initiatives to encourage critical thinking and creativity in its education system. Islamic education reform in Iran fosters a culture of critical thinking, creativity, and innovation among students. Also relevant is research by Sasmita et al. (2022), entitled "Critical Thinking on Social Studies Learning for Elementary School Students. In the research article it is revealed that Critical thinking skills are crucial for students to face the challenges of modern life. This article explains the importance of teachers developing models and implementing classroom learning innovations to enhance critical thinking skills, and the role of teachers in facilitating learning so that children develop critical thinking.

In contrast to the above study, this article specifically examines the differences between critical thinking from a Western and Islamic educational perspective. Although critical thinking is widely studied in a Western context, its Islamic equivalent "*tafakkur*" is still under-explored in a comparative framework, as well as its implications for contemporary Islamic pedagogy. Through this article, the author analyzes the comparative concepts, criteria, and objectives of critical thinking from the perspective of Western and Islamic education, and integrates them within the framework of contemporary Islamic pedagogy.

2. Method

This scientific article was written using a literature review method with a qualitative approach. The primary reason for conducting qualitative research is its exploratory nature (Ali, H., & Limakrisna, 2013). Library research is a series of research activities involving collecting library data, reading, recording, and managing research data. (Zed, 2024).

Data collection was conducted using relevant theories from various references in the form of books, reputable scientific articles, and less reputable scientific articles. The main sources include works Imam Al-Ghazali "*Thya 'Ulumuddin*" Juz IV and Peter A. Facione "Critical Thinking: What It Is and Why It Counts". Secondary sources include Ibrahim al-Faqi's work "*Qumwatu al-Tafkir*", Rebecca Stobaugh, "Assessing Critical Thinking in Middle and High Schools", and reputable scientific articles. All relevant references were reviewed explorative and analyzed thematically to identify recurring themes from various perspectives, both Western and Islamic. Subsequently, these themes were compiled and discussed in depth, followed by comparisons to reveal the main results or findings of the research.

3. Finding and Discussion

Finding

a. Critical Thinking in Western Theory

Thinking is a process of intellectual activity and describes the function of the brain (Galinsky, 2010). There are many terms for thinking. There is the term logical thinking (Jawaf, 2021), reflective (philosophical) thinking (Aulia, 2015), holistic thinking (Ismail, et al., 2022), creative thinking (Fathoni, 2023), critical thinking (Rohman, et.al, 2014), and others.

Logical thinking is the process of reasoning about an object by emphasizing the rules of logic. Reflective thinking, on the other hand, is the process of reasoning about

an object by connecting various opinions in a holistic, comprehensive, and in-depth manner. Critical thinking, on the other hand, is the process of reasoning about an object by considering its positive and negative aspects, advantages and disadvantages, good and bad, opportunities and challenges (Rohman, et al., 2014). Critical thinking is one of the higher-order thinking skills that needs to be developed in education in the 21st century (Unwakoly, 2022).

There are many definitions of critical thinking. Western experts such as Stobaugh (2013), explain that critical thinking is the ability to analyze, identify knowledge, and find creative solutions to a problem. Halpern explains that critical thinking is using cognitive abilities or strategies to improve desired outcomes. It is used to describe more focused, reasoned, and purposeful thinking (Halpern, et al., 2021). Critical thinking encompasses problem-solving, formulating conclusions, calculating probabilities, and making decisions (O'Hare & McGuinness, 2009).

According to Kelvin, a critical thinker can be considered as an intelligent person. A critical thinker can ask key questions, evaluate evidence for ideas, argue for problems logically and objectively, and express ideas and conclusions clearly and precisely (Seifert & Sutton, 2009).

There is also an opinion that critical thinking is a skill in metacognition. Metacognition is understood how to think for yourself. Woolfolk explains that metacognition includes four types of skills, namely: (1) problem-solving skills; (2) decision-making skills; (3) critical thinking skills; (4) creative thinking skills. (Woolfolk, 1997).

Paulo Freire stated that critical thinking is thinking that views reality as a process and change, not a static entity. Critical thinking is thinking that does not separate the self from action, but constantly grapples with worldly issues without fear of risk. (Freire, 2008; 83)

b. Critical Thinking in Islam

What is the Islamic concept of critical thinking? In Islam, the term critical thinking is comes from Arabic, namely *fakara/fakkar* means to think about the matter or to think (Yunus, 1990). Words rooted in "think" (*fakara/fakkar*) mentioned in Al-Qur'an 18 times, rooted in the word "understand" (*faqaha*) 20 times, and has its roots in the word "science" (*'aluma/allama*) was mentioned 864 times (Salahuddin & Alkrienciehie, 2013). Rooted in the word "*aqala*" is mentioned approximately fifty times (49 times) in the Qur'an, thirteen of which are questions of protest that lead to scientific study, such as "Have you no reason?" This is quoted from Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 164. (Departemen Agama, 1415)

Many verses of the Qur'an discuss the levels of human thinking such as: the contemplators (*yatafakkarun*), a wise person (*ya'qilun*), people who understand (*ulil albab*), the believer (*mu'minin*), a knowledgeable person (*'alimin*), a person who remembers/is aware (*yadzakkarun*), the person who listens to the truth (*yasma'un*), a person who is sure (*yuqinun*), people who test the truth/understanding (*yafqahun*), are people who have used their minds to obtain knowledge that comes from the verses of the Qur'an (*qauliyah*) and natural verses (*kauniyah*). (Adawiah, 2016).

Words *tafakkarun* or *tafakkur*, *ta'qilun* or *ta'qqul*, *yafqahun* or *tafaqquh* etc., which are used in the Qur'an to refer to different levels of human intellectual perception, some

of which are necessary for others. (Muthahhari, 2008). The people mentioned in the Qur'an are people who have used their minds critically or thought critically.

According to Sheikh Mutawalli al-Sya'rawi as quoted by Ibrahim al-Faqi, reason is a measure or tool for filtering various options and choosing the best for the welfare, future of oneself and one's family (al-Faqi, 2007). Through reason, humans can distinguish between what is halal (permissible) and what is haram (forbidden), what is beneficial and what is not, and what is positive and negative. With reason, a person can choose what is relevant to them and be responsible for that choice.

Ibrahim al-Faqi delivered a wise saying from classical Indian philosophy: "You are where your reason leads you today. In the future, your destiny will be determined by where your reason takes you." (al-Faqi, 2007). Of course, this expression is true, because words, feelings, and even actions are the work of reason, namely thinking.

In Islam, humans are required to have knowledge, have the ability to think critically or "intellectually". The term critical thinking in Islam is called "*tafakkur*" or "*ulul albab*". Definition *tafakkur* expressed by Imam Al-Ghazali is identical to the definition *ulul albab* as depicted in the surah of the Qur'an *Shad* verse 29: "*The Book (Al-Quran) that We have sent down to you is full of blessings so that they can appreciate its verses and so that people of sound mind can learn a lesson.*"

Ulul albab taken from the word *labba-yalubbu* which means intelligent and clever (Yunus, 1990). Expression *ulul albab* is mentioned 16 times in 16 verses of the Al-Qur'an (Salahuddin & Alkriencieh, 2013). The commentators interpret *ulul albab* as people who are intelligent and think, or people who have a clean and bright mind; people who have common sense and are clean (Salahuddin & Alkriencieh, 2013). *Ulul albab* in Islam, they are considered to be intellectuals of high standing.

c. Critical Thinking Criteria in Western and Islamic Theories

Critical thinking has various characteristics or traits. Hassoubah explains that critical thinking can be easily achieved if a person possesses the attitudes and abilities that characterize a critical thinker (Hassoubah, 2004). Here are some criteria for critical thinking according to experts.

According to Fisher, critical thinking is the ability to provide interpretation and evaluation, and to be active in observation, communication, information and argumentation (Fisher, 2008). Then Fisher explained the criteria for critical thinking by having six abilities, namely being able to: (1) identify problems, (2) collect various relevant information, (3) compile a number of alternative solutions to problems, (4) draw conclusions, (5) express opinions, and (6) evaluate arguments (Fisher, 2008).

Ellen Galinsky explains that critical thinking encompasses all skills: focus in the pursuit of knowledge, self-control in defining problems and setting goals, considering alternative solutions and evaluating evidence, making connections, providing insights to influence others, and communication skills. Critical thinking also involves thinking about one's own thoughts by reflecting, analyzing, reasoning, planning, and evaluating (Galinsky, 2010).

Facione also explained that there are six criteria from critical thinking skills, namely: (1) Interpretation; (2) Analysis; (3) Evaluation; (4) Inference; (5) Explanation; (6) Self-regulation. Facione emphasized that critical thinking occurs when a person has the ability to interpret a problem, analyze it, then is able to assess an opinion, can draw conclusions

or take the right decision, is able to provide a convincing explanation and has an awareness of his/her own abilities (Facione, 2013).

Meanwhile, F. Lau stated that a critical thinker is someone who is able to do the following: (1) Understand the logical relationships between ideas; (2) Formulate ideas concisely and precisely; (3) Identify, construct, and evaluate arguments; (4) Evaluate the pros and cons of decisions; (5) Evaluate evidence against hypotheses; (6) Detect inconsistencies and common errors in reasoning; (7) Analyze problems systematically; (8) Identify the relevance and importance of ideas; (9) Justify one's beliefs and values. (10) Reflect on and evaluate one's thinking abilities (Lau, 2011).

Therefore, if you want to get used to critical thinking, the minimum you have to do is: (1) Take action to collect evidence; (2) Get used to thinking logically; (3) Be skeptical or not believe anything before finding strong evidence.

So what are the criteria for critical thinking in Islam? In Islam, critical thinking is termed "*tafakkur*" and "*ulul albab*". *Tafakkur* has two criteria, namely *tadabbur* and *tadzakkur*. According to Imam Al-Ghazali, *tafakkur* is "bringing two kinds of knowledge from within the heart so that from them a third fruit can be produced." (Al-Ghazali, 1431 H). The merger between *tadabbur* and *tadzakkur* produces *tafakkur*.

Ulul albab has the following characteristics:

1. *Ulul albab* are people who are serious about seeking knowledge, confirming and believing in revelation.
2. People who pay attention, observe and think about nature by always reciting *dhikr* and praying to Allah.
3. Person has wisdom and brings much goodness.
4. People who are able to understand and justify God's revelation, and take lessons from it.
5. People who carry out the obligations of worship and fear Allah SWT.
6. People who implement Allah's law and learn from it.
7. People who can take *Ibrah* from stories in the Koran, from stories of people who believe, and from stories of people who disobey Allah SWT.
8. People who are critical, able to distinguish between what is halal and what is haram, steadfast and not influenced by bad things even if they are attractive.
9. People who receive guidance, be critical and be able to filter the words and thoughts of others, follow the good and avoid the bad.
10. People who fulfill Allah's promises, maintaining friendship, fearing Allah's punishment, being patient, upholding prayer, giving donations, and understanding good and bad.
11. People who are carrying out preaching, delivering messages and warnings and teaching monotheism for the sake of Allah. (Salahuddin & Alkrienciehie, 2013., Herawati, 2015).

According to Abu Azmi Azizah as quoted by Salahuddin and Alkrienciehie, *ulul albab* are people who have a clean, intelligent and brilliant mind (*džawil al'uqul as-salimah wa ash-shibah wa al-munirah*) (Salahuddin & Alkrienciehie, 2013). *Ulul albab* is a person who spends most of his time doing *dhikr* to God and do *tafakkur* namely thinking and contemplating with all the abilities of reason and senses about the creation of Allah SWT.

d. The Purpose of Critical Thinking in the Perspective of Western and Islamic Education

Critical thinking is a skill and it is important to improve it with the aim that students are able to solve problems and make good decisions in everyday life (Saiz & Rivas, 2023). According to Lau, the purpose of critical thinking is to facilitate careers, communicate ideas, make decisions, analyze and solve problems. Critical thinking skills are very necessary to avoid failure in life, towards the desired happiness. Critical thinking is not only for work, but also for living a meaningful life and planning for the future. This is as the Greek philosopher Socrates (469-399 BC) put it: "A world unthink able is a world not worth living." (Lau, 2011) .

Stobaugh (2013) reveals that critical thinking is necessary not only in lectures, but also in careers and other life issues. Critical thinking aims to develop students' abilities to analyze various information effectively, draw logical conclusions, and create new innovations, understand life, and make good decisions (Stobaugh, 2013).

Critical thinking is important to deal with the complexities of today's real world, both with problem-solving strategies and decision-making strategies (Halpern & Dunn, 2021). Facione explains that the inability to think critically has consequences, such as: patient death, loss of income, ineffective law enforcement, loss of employment, chaotic communication, poor decision-making, financial mismanagement, domestic violence, repeated suicide attempts, drug addiction, academic failure, and others (Facione, 2013).

Saiz and Rivas explain that the primary goal of critical thinking is to solve problems in order to achieve personal well-being. Personal well-being refers to the ability to appreciate that one's life is meaningful (Saiz & Rivas (2023). Personal well-being is the feeling of satisfaction that comes from achieving economic and emotional independence, enabling a person to achieve their self-determined goals while recognizing that their life has meaning. Problem-solving provides a sense of control over their life, leading to peace of mind and satisfaction. (Flanagan, et al., 2023).

The ability to think critically is not a guarantee of being a responsible person, but the application of critical thinking can keep someone away from making wrong, immoral, and hasty decisions (Hassoubah, 2004). Through critical thinking, a person can understand their world, themselves, and their environment, enabling them to make sound decisions, solve problems, and produce something new. Reid and Anderson state that critical thinking is the foundation of education in the modern technological world (Reid & Anderson, 2011).

In Islamic education the goal of critical thinking is "*tafakkur*" and "*ulul albab*" is "*ma'rifat*". *Ma'rifat* is the science of knowing God, knowing oneself, knowing the world, and knowing the afterlife. With *ma'rifat*, love will arise for Allah SWT, thus bringing the pleasure and mercy of Allah SWT. with the aim of happiness in this world and the hereafter (Al-Ghazali, 1995). *Tafakkur* produce knowledge. This is as expressed by Imam Al-Ghazali (1431H) in *Ihya Ulumuddin*, that is:

“As for the fruit of thought, it is knowledge, *hal ihwal*, and deeds. But its special fruit is knowledge, nothing else. Yes, if knowledge succeeds in the heart, the condition of the heart changes. If the condition of the heart has changed then the deeds will follow the situation. Circumstances follow knowledge and knowledge follows thought. So, thoughts are the basis and key to all goodness. This is what it reveals to you about profits *tafakkur* and that *tafakkur* more important than *dhikr* and *tadzakkur*. Because *tafakkur* is that *dhikr* and the addition of *dhikr* of the heart is

better than the deeds of the limbs. In fact, the nobility of that deed is due to the presence of *dhikr* in it. So, *tafakkur* more important than a number of good deeds." (Al-Ghazali, 1431 H.).

Imam Al-Ghazali's statement is strengthened by the opinion of Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah, as quoted by Taufik Pasiak, that a person's thinking activities are interspersed with reflection in the form of *tafakkur*, will direct someone to the depth of the meaning of the object of knowledge (Pasiak, 2003). So by- *tafakkur* will acquire knowledge with the power of reason and by *tafakkur* will get *ma'rifat* with the main axis being the heart. *Ma'rifat* is the goal of the essence of *tafakkur*. In this education, it becomes a manifestation of character education or moral education (Cahyadi & Della, 2021). According to Iqbal, the first process in is a logical activity that emphasizes knowledge to obtain conclusions. In this way, the working power *tafakkur* involving the perception of reason through educational and teaching activities (Iqbal, 2013).

Ibrahim al-Faqi explained, "Thinkers are idea generators. Ideas lead to thinking, and thinking leads to focus. And focus leads to sensations (responses). Sensations and emotions lead to behavior. Behavior leads to success. Success is a reality of life. If you want to make a difference in your life, be a critical thinker." (al-Faqi, 2007).

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also invited Muslims to reflect on the signs of Allah's greatness in all of His creation. Critical thinking about Allah's creation is considered more important than any other form of worship. Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Thinking for a moment is better than worshipping for a year." (Al-Ghazali, 1431 H.).

In Islam, critical thinking is not only aimed at solving life's problems, but also at understanding the true purpose and meaning of life. Therefore, developing and enhancing critical thinking skills is one of the primary goals of Islamic education.

Discussion

a. Comparison of Critical Thinking from the Perspective of Western and Islamic Education: Concepts, Criteria and Objectives of Education

Based on the concepts, criteria and objectives of critical thinking from the perspective of Western and Islamic education above, philosophically there are points of difference between the two, namely:

- 1) Rational-Progressivism. The Western school of educational philosophy emphasizes that education is not merely the provision of a body of knowledge to students, but also includes activities that lead to the training of students' thinking abilities, so that they can think systematically through scientific methods such as providing analysis, consideration, and drawing conclusions towards selecting the most feasible alternative for solving the problems faced (Muhmidayeli, 2005). Here, reason, empiricism, and the scientific method are the ultimate authority in determining critical thinking skills. Facione argues that failure to think critically in general can result in various kinds of failure (Facione, 2013). Thus, critical thinking skills are very necessary to avoid failure in life, towards the desired happiness.
- 2) Rational-Religious (*al-Diny al-Aqlany*). The Islamic school of educational philosophy, in addition to prioritizing the role of reason or the ability to think, also considers reason a source of knowledge and happiness. As explained by Al-Kindi, happiness is achieved through the achievement of rational desires, including research, reflection, differentiation, and understanding the essence of anything (Najati, 2002).

Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina argued that happiness is the achievement of final perfection for humans, and that is the level of reason *mustafad*, where it is ready to receive the emanation of all rational objects from the Active Intellect (Najati, 2002). Ibn Miskawaih believes that human happiness lies at the core of human behavior which is manifested through the ability to think, the ability to differentiate, and to take wisdom (Najati, 2002). Thus, according to them, thinking behavior is behavior that can bring happiness to humans (Najati, 2002). Happiness itself is the ultimate goal of Islamic education, namely happiness in this world and the hereafter. Here, the Quran and Hadith are the primary sources, supported by reason and empirical evidence in developing critical thinking. Critical thinking is a path to strengthening faith.

The opinion of Facione, Stobaugh, Halpern, et al., when compared with Islamic philosophers such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Sina, Ibn Miskawaih, Ibrahim al-Faqi, et al., above is basically in line with the opinion that critical thinking can lead to happiness, only the happiness referred to in Islam is not limited to the world, but also happiness in the afterlife.

The differences between critical thinking from the perspective of Western education and Islamic education can be seen briefly in the following table:

No	Aspect	Critical thinking	
		Western Education	Islamic Education
1	Term	<i>Critical Thinking</i>	<i>Tafakkur</i> or <i>uhul albab</i>
2	Concept	Rationality and empiricism. Critical thinking is the process of reasoning about an object by looking at the positive and negative sides, the profit and loss sides, the good and bad sides, the opportunities and challenges.	Integration of rationality, empiricism, and spirituality. Critical thinking is not only the process of reasoning about an object by looking at the positive and negative sides, the profit and loss sides, the good and bad sides, the opportunities and challenges. However, it is also a process of combination of <i>tadabbur</i> and <i>tadzakkur</i> .
3	Characteristics/ Criteria	Ability to provide interpretation, analyze, evaluate, infer, explain, self-regulate, identify problems, capable express opinions, capable collect various relevant information, capable compile a number of alternative problem solving, able to draw conclusions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Tadabbur</i> and <i>tadzakkur</i> ▪ The ability to reflect on all events, be able to think intelligently and cleanly, be able to be aware, be able to differentiate between halal and haram, be able to differentiate between what is beneficial and what is not, be able to differentiate between positive and

			negative, be able to choose something that is relevant to oneself and be responsible for that choice, be able to think about the universe by constantly remembering God, be able to take lessons and wisdom.
4	Concept of Philosophy of Education	Rational-Progressivism	Rational-Religious (<i>al-Diny al-Aqlany</i>)
5	Benefits and goals of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Critical thinking can help a person solve problems, create new innovations, understand life, and make good decisions. ▪ Critical thinking is very necessary to avoid failure in life towards the desired happiness. Critical thinking is not only for work, but also for living a meaningful life and planning for the future. ▪ Ease and happiness of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The purpose of <i>tafakkur</i> dan <i>ulul albab</i> is <i>ma'rifat</i>. ▪ <i>Tafakkur</i> dan <i>ulul albab</i> produce knowledge, <i>hal ihwal</i>, and deeds. ▪ <i>Tafakkur</i> dan <i>ulul albab</i> is the key to all goodness because <i>tafakkur</i> is <i>dhikr</i> and the nobility of deeds is due to the presence of <i>dhikr</i> in them. ▪ <i>Tafakkur</i> dan <i>ulul albab</i> more important than any amount of deeds/worship. ▪ <i>Tafakkur</i> dan <i>ulul albab</i> can gain wisdom and insight. ▪ Strengthen your faith and gain happiness in life in this world and the hereafter

Critical thinking, from the perspective of Western education and Islamic education, shares similarities in encouraging individuals to think deeply, rationally, and reflectively. However, both have different philosophical foundations and values. Western education focuses on developing rational and critical abilities separately from religion, while Islamic education integrates intellectual aspects with spiritual and moral values as the foundation for critical thinking and broader educational goals.

Critical thinking from an Islamic perspective “*tafakkur*” and “*ulul albab*” emphasize existence *dhikr* to God. According to al-Ghazali, *dhikr* is an important thing even as the only technique used to focus the heart (*heart*) only to Allah (Al-Ghazali, 1431 H). In line with that, Ibn 'Ata'illah al-Iskandari explained that *dhikr* is the cleansing of the soul (*nafsi*) from inattention and forgetfulness (*ghaflah*) by turning the heart towards Allah continuously (Al-Iskandari, 2012). *Dhikr* is a multi-level process and all levels must be

passed. Starting with *dhiker lisan*, continued *dhiker* soul, continued with *dhiker* heart (*dziker qalb*) and finally become *dhiker rub* (*dhiker sirr*). This stage will produce various intelligences and the deepest awareness which is called spiritual awareness (Irham, 2016).

Agus Mustofa explains that consciousness is divided into two levels: microcosmic consciousness and macrocosmic consciousness. Microcosmic consciousness refers to human self-awareness, and macrocosmic consciousness refers to universal consciousness. At higher levels of consciousness, a person can engage in activities that lead to critical, analytical, rational, and logical thinking, resulting in increasingly focused and beneficial conclusions. If this level of consciousness continues, it will not stop at physical-intellectual awareness, but will lead to psychic-emotional awareness. For example, feelings of happiness, peace, love, tranquility, and so on. Awareness at this level of emotion touches on things that are difficult to prove scientifically, which are objective but subjective, or more precisely, ultra-objective (Mustofa, 2014). Even if observed, *dhiker* is a ritual activity that combines cognitive, affective, and psychomotor (Pasiak, 2012).

Based on this description, critical thinking from an Islamic education perspective "*tafakkur*" and "*ulul albab*" integrates more rational-spiritual reflection, while critical thinking in Western educational perspectives places more emphasis on rationality-progressivism. Despite the different perspectives, critical thinking remains one of the primary goals of education.

b. Implications of Critical Thinking for Contemporary Islamic Pedagogy

The progress of information and technology is now increasingly developing, so that the need for life is getting more complex and complicated. Therefore the increase in critical thinking is one of the main goals in curriculum of education. Critical thinking is the foundation of education in today's era of digital technological advancement.

The implications of critical thinking in the Western concept for pedagogy are to develop critical awareness "metacognitive". Metacognitive is a student's skill in regulating and controlling their thinking processes (Uno, 2015). The conscious application of metacognitive strategies is essential for critical evaluation of various information, resulting in better academic performance (Saiz & Rivas, 2023). Another implication is encouraging the birth of a student-centered learning approach that emphasizes dialogue, questions and answers, and students' ability to critically analyze the information received, so that learning methods become more varied, such as inquiry-based learning (Arifin et al., 2025), problem-based learning (Aboonq, 2015), flipped classroom (Latifah & Hadi Utama, 2024), argumentative writing (Widyastuti, 2018), and others.

The implications of critical thinking in the Islamic concept for pedagogy can encourage the birth of integrative learning between faith and reason, where freedom of thought cannot be separated from the values of faith (Aziziah Ramli et al., 2018). When someone thinks critically, they not only gain information and solve problems, but also gain wisdom and insight. Critical thinking in Islam not only sharpens the mind, but also sharpens the conscience because there is *dhiker* in it to become wiser (Pasiak, 2003). This is as stated in Q.S. Al-Baqarah/2:269: "He (Allah) bestows wisdom on whom He wills. Whoever is blessed with wisdom, indeed he has been blessed with much goodness. No one can learn a lesson (from it), except *ulul albab*. *Ulul albab*, namely people who are

tafakkur about God's creation through various sciences and technologies, as well as *dhikrullah*.

While critical thinking approaches from a Western perspective tend to emphasize rationality and progressivism, Islamic critical thinking approaches emphasize rationality and spirituality. Integrating the two is crucial to provide a more meaningful dimension and fostering the development of Islamic pedagogy relevant to the challenges of the times.

Synergy between Western and Islamic education is needed to design a contextual curriculum that responds to the challenges of contemporary Islamic pedagogy. Curriculum reform and intercultural dialogue are key to developing a critical generation (Sahin, 2018). Strengthening the quality of teaching methodologies and digital learning media is considered a key lever for strengthening critical thinking at the university level (Jaramillo Gomez et al., 2025).

Contemporary Islamic pedagogy requires a transformation of Islamic education. Implementing transformative education requires several key strategies, including providing opportunities for critical thinking, which can be achieved through the introduction of new ideas or opinions, the use of current content, and reflective discussions among educators about their assumptions and beliefs (Sholeh et al., 2023).

A curriculum that integrates Western and Islamic critical thinking paradigms needs to be structured within the framework of Islamic values, so that it can shape individuals who not only think analytically, but also have high moral integrity in accordance with classical and contemporary Islamic traditions (Lestari et al., 2024). Here a holistic curriculum is essential to face the challenges of contemporary pedagogy.

4. Conclusion

Critical Thinking in Islam it is termed as "*tafakkur*" And "*ulul albab*". Critical thinking is considered a high-level skill in education. It is the foundation of education in today's era of digital technological advancement. Philosophically, critical thinking is highly relevant to the Western educational philosophy of "Rational Progressivism" and the Islamic educational philosophy of "Rational-Religious (*al-Diny al-Aqlany*)."

The criteria for critical thinking from a western perspective include: able to provide interpretation, able to analyze, able to evaluate, able to infer, able to explain, able to regulate oneself, and able to solve the problem. In an Islamic perspective, *tafakkur* and *ulul albab* has the following criteria: *tadabbur* and *tadzakkur*, able to reflect on all events, able to understand and be aware of them, able to differentiate between what is halal and what is haram, able to differentiate between what is beneficial and what is not, able to differentiate between positive and negative, able to think about the universe by constantly remembering God, and able to take lessons and wisdom from all events.

Critical thinking aims to understand the world, oneself, and one's environment so that one can make good decisions, solve problems, and produce something new. Islam's goal *tafakkur* and *ulul albab* is "*ma'rifat*". *Ma'rifat* is the knowledge of knowing Allah, knowing oneself, knowing the world, and knowing the hereafter. *Ma'rifat* arouse the love and pleasure of Allah SWT. In contemporary Islamic pedagogy critical thinking is not only sharp mind, but also sharp awareness of the heart so that it becomes wiser.

Although critical thinking from a Western and Islamic perspective tends to differ in concepts, criteria, and objectives, integration between the two is very important. Synergy between Western and Islamic education is needed to design a contextual

curriculum that is responsive to the challenges of contemporary Islamic pedagogy. Curriculum reform (holistic curriculum), innovation teaching methodology, and digital learning media are considered as reinforcements in enhancing critical thinking for contemporary Islamic pedagogy.

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