



Qur'anic and Prophetic Foundations of Critical Thinking: Toward an Islamic Epistemological Framework for Contemporary Education

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Abstract

Critical thinking is widely recognized as a core educational competence. Yet, its conceptualization in Islamic education remains predominantly informed by contemporary pedagogical and psychological approaches, with limited attention to its Qur'anic and Prophetic epistemological foundations. This study examines how the Qur'an and Prophetic tradition conceptualize critical thinking and how their intellectual and ethical principles inform an Islamic epistemological framework for contemporary education. Employing qualitative library research and thematic content analysis, the study analyzes selected Qur'anic verses, Prophetic traditions, and recent scholarship on critical thinking, Islamic education, and epistemology. The findings identify four interconnected dimensions of Islamic critical thinking: rational discernment (*ta'addul*), reflective examination (*tafakkur*), deep interpretive contemplation (*tadabbur*), and critical verification (*tabayyun*), as well as ethical responsibility in the acquisition and application of knowledge. The Qur'an provides the primary epistemological orientation by encouraging reflection, rational judgment, examination of evidence, and verification. At the same time, the Prophetic tradition complements it through knowledge seeking, intellectual humility, honesty, responsible communication, and accountability. The study argues that critical thinking within Islamic epistemology is not value-neutral or limited to cognitive performance; rather, it integrates rational inquiry with moral and spiritual formation. Accordingly, the study proposes a framework in which revelation provides normative orientation, reason facilitates analytical interpretation, and ethical reflection guides the application of knowledge. This framework offers implications for inquiry-based, contextual, collaborative, and technology-enhanced Islamic education.

Keywords:

Critical Thinking, Qur'anic and Prophetic Tradition, Islamic Epistemology, Islamic Education

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Introduction

The unprecedented advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed how individuals access, interpret, and disseminate information.¹

¹ Syahri Harendi, "Epistemic Injustice in Islamic Religious Education: A Critical Literature Review in the Digital Media Context," *Islamic Journal of Teaching and Learning* 2, no. 2 (2026): 80–89,

Digital platforms provide unlimited opportunities for learning and communication; however, they also facilitate the rapid spread of misinformation, disinformation, and unverified content.² Consequently, learners are expected not merely to consume information but to evaluate its credibility, distinguish factual evidence from subjective opinion, and formulate rational judgments. In this context, critical thinking has become one of the most essential competencies in twenty-first-century education because it enables learners to analyze information objectively and make informed decisions based on evidence rather than assumptions.³ These conditions indicate that education should no longer emphasize knowledge acquisition alone but also focus on developing learners' intellectual capacity to respond critically to contemporary societal challenges.

Critical thinking is generally understood as a reflective and rational cognitive process that guides individuals in determining what to believe and what actions to take.⁴ Facione conceptualizes critical thinking as a multidimensional construct consisting of interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation, all of which support sound reasoning and responsible decision-making.⁵ Similarly, critical thinking enables learners to evaluate the information they read, hear, and experience while reflecting on their own reasoning processes. Accordingly, contemporary educational systems increasingly recognize that successful learning outcomes should be measured not only by academic achievement but also by learners' capacity to think analytically, solve problems creatively, and make reflective judgments in diverse situations.⁶

<https://jtlm.staiku.ac.id/index.php/jt/article/view/33>; Putri Adona et al., "Wacana Transformasi Digital dan Epistemologi Pendidikan Islam," *Fitrah: Jurnal Studi Pendidikan* 17, no. 1 (2026): 65, <https://doi.org/10.47625/fitrah.v17i1.1331>.

² Mustofa and Muhammad Shohib, "Reaktualisasi Strategi Pedagogi Qur'ani Rasulullah Dalam Mengembangkan Kemampuan Berpikir Kritis Peserta Didik Pada Era Post-Truth," *Jurnal Pendidikan Madrasah* 2, no. 1 (2024): 268, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpm.2026.267-278>; M A Rohim, M Y A Bakar, and A Mas'ud, "Digital Literacy in Islamic Education: An Integrative Multidisciplinary Strategy to Counter Radicalism and Disinformation on Social Media," *Journal of Science and Education (JSE)* 6, no. 2 (2026): 1424, <https://doi.org/10.58905/jse.v6i2.725>.

³ L Zakiah and I Lestari, *Berpikir Kritis Dalam Konteks Pembelajaran* (Bogor: Erzatama Karya Abadi, 2019), 7; W Suciono, *Berpikir Kritis* (Indramayu: CV. Adanu Abimata, 2021), 18.

⁴ Sabik Gidafian Hafidz, "Critical Thinking Ability in Islamic Education: Trends, Pedagogical Approaches, and Research Gaps — A Systematic Literature Review," *6Journal of Islamicate Studies* 6, no. 1 (2023): 33, <https://doi.org/10.32506/jois.v6i1.938>.

⁵ Peter Facione, *Critical Thinking: A Statement of Expert Consensus for Purposes of Educational Assessment and Instruction (The Delphi Report)*. (American Philosophical Association. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED315423, 1990), 6, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED315423>.

⁶ Zakiah and Lestari, *Berpikir Kritis Dalam Konteks Pembelajaran*.

Within the Indonesian educational system, the cultivation of critical thinking is consistent with the national objectives of education. Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System emphasizes that education should develop learners who are faithful, knowledgeable, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible citizens. These objectives are further reflected in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which encourages inquiry-based learning, reasoning, and independent thinking. Nevertheless, educational practice continues to face significant challenges because classroom instruction often prioritizes memorization and teacher-centered knowledge transmission over encouraging learners to interpret, analyze, and evaluate information independently. Such conditions limit students' opportunities to develop higher-order thinking skills required in contemporary education.⁷

From the perspective of Islamic education, the development of critical thinking is not merely a pedagogical objective but also a religious imperative deeply rooted in the epistemology of Islam.⁸ The Qur'an repeatedly invites human beings to observe, contemplate, reason, verify information, and derive wisdom from both revelation and empirical reality. Concepts such as *tafakkur* (reflection), *tadabbur* (deep contemplation), *ta'aqqul* (reasoning), *tabayyun* (verification), and *ulul albab* (people of understanding) collectively demonstrate that intellectual inquiry constitutes an inseparable component of Islamic teachings.^{9,10} One of the most representative Qur'anic foundations is Surah Az-Zumar (39:18), which praises those who carefully listen to various opinions and follow the best among them. This verse illustrates an intellectual process involving critical evaluation before accepting information, a principle that closely aligns with the contemporary understanding of critical thinking.¹¹

The Prophetic traditions further reinforce this intellectual orientation by encouraging Muslims to pursue knowledge, employ reason responsibly, and verify information before making judgments. Rather than separating faith from rational

⁷ "Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 Tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional Pasal 3".

⁸ Hellen Tiara and Danu, "Epistemology of Islamic Education: Criticism and Alternative Solutions," *Heutagogia: Journal of Islamic Education* 3, no. 1 (2023): 110, <https://doi.org/10.14421/hjie.2023.31-09>.

⁹ Khoirul Umam Addzaky, Uswatun Hasanah, and Zaki Faddad Syarif Zain, "Developing Wasathiyah Epistemology: A Literature-Based Study of Moderate Islamic Knowledge in The Post-Truth Era," *Heutagogia: Journal of Islamic Education* 4, no. 2 (2024): 200, <https://doi.org/10.14421/hjie.2024.42-05>.

¹⁰ Rahmaisya Surbakti et al., "The Thought of Ibn Taymiyyah as a Framework for Critical Thinking in Islamic Education in the Post-Truth Era," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 4 (2026): 1425, <https://doi.org/10.69900/ag.v6i4.649>

¹¹ Markaz Tafsir Riyadh, "Tafsir Al-Mukhtashar Surat Az-Zumar Ayat 18," <https://tafsirweb.com/8680-surat-az-zumar-ayat-18.html>

inquiry, Islamic teachings integrate intellectual reflection with ethical responsibility and spiritual consciousness.¹² Integrating Hadith into contemporary education enriches learners' spiritual, moral, and ethical development while simultaneously fostering critical thinking and a deeper understanding of Islamic values, enabling them to respond wisely to the complexities of modern society without losing their religious identity.^{13,14} Furthermore, Islamic education possesses a rich epistemological tradition rooted in concepts such as *ijtihad*, *naqd*, and *tafakkur*, demonstrating that critical reasoning is an inherent component of Islamic intellectual heritage rather than an imported educational construct.¹⁵ Consequently, critical thinking in Islamic education should not be interpreted merely as a cognitive competence but as a comprehensive process integrating intellectual reasoning, moral integrity, and accountability before Allah.¹⁶ This perspective broadens the concept of critical thinking beyond secular educational discourse by emphasizing that rational inquiry should ultimately contribute to ethical behavior, responsible decision-making, and societal well-being.¹⁷

Despite the close relationship between Islamic teachings and critical thinking, previous studies have predominantly examined critical thinking from instructional and psychological perspectives. Existing research has largely focused on learning models, classroom strategies, instructional media, and pedagogical interventions aimed at improving students' cognitive performance. While these studies have made substantial contributions to educational development, relatively limited attention has been paid to examining how the values embedded in the Qur'an and Hadith can

¹² Mustafa Hassan, Zaid Ibrahim, and Amira Ali, "The Prophetic Pedagogy: Implementing Al-Ghazali's Principles of Moral Psychology for Character Education in Islamic Schools," *Islamic Studies in the World* 2, no. 6 (2025): 53–57, <https://research.adra.ac.id/index.php/islamicstudies/article/view/3018>

¹³ Abdul Kodir, "Integrating Hadith Into Education: Bridging The Gap Between Traditional Islamic Scholarship and Modern Learning," *Diroyah : Jurnal Studi Ilmu Hadis* 7, no. 2 (2023): 2021–2035, <https://doi.org/10.15575/diroyah.v7i2.25118>

¹⁴ I Walidi et al., "The Pedagogical Internalization of Hadith on Communication Ethics: An Islamic Educational Strategy for Countering Digital Disinformation and Cyberbullying," *Fitrah: Journal of Islamic Education* 7, no. 1 (2026): 127–30, <https://doi.org/10.53802/fitrah.v7i1.1556>

¹⁵ Khairil Ikhsan Siregar, Aldo Redho Syam, and Muhammad Alif, "Glocalizing Islamic Education: Prophetic Hadith Values and Educational Transformation in a Contemporary Pesantren," *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education* 10, no. 2 (2026): 397–401, <https://doi.org/10.35723/ajie.v10i2.309>

¹⁶ Asman, Musa Asy'arie, and Mahasri Sobahiya, "The Epistemology of Prophetic Thinking: Its Relevance to the Aims of Islamic Education," *Iseedu Journal of Islamic Education Thoughts and Practices* 10, no. 1 (2026): 50–52, <https://doi.org/10.23917/iseedu.v10i1.15009>

¹⁷ Nada Septiyanti, "The Role of Islamic Education in Fostering Critical Thinking Ability : A Systematic Literature Review," *Journal of Islamicate Studies* 6, no. 2 (2023): 71–76, <https://www.journal.islamicateinstitute.co.id/index.php/jois/article/view/940>; Moh. Sholeh Baharis And Muh. Syahril Sidik Ibrahim, "Mulla Sadra's Integrative Epistemology: Reason, Intuition, And Revelation," *Al-A'raf Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Filsafat* 23, no. 1 (2026): 130–32, <https://doi.org/10.22515/ajpif.v23i1.12124>.

serve as an epistemological foundation for cultivating critical thinking skills. Recent scholarship has argued that Islamic knowledge should be reconstructed upon an epistemological framework grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah, emphasizing the harmonious integration of revelation and reason as the basis for knowledge construction rather than merely as sources of ethical guidance.¹⁸ Similarly, approach the integration of the Qur'an and Hadith primarily at the practical or curricular level, whereas their deeper epistemological integration as the foundation of Islamic knowledge remains insufficiently explored.¹⁹ They further argue that revelation should function as the central epistemological axis, with reason operating as an interpretative instrument rather than an independent source of truth.²⁰ Consequently, discussions concerning critical thinking frequently remain detached from the rich intellectual tradition of Islamic education, even within Islamic educational institutions.²¹

This gap indicates the need to develop a more integrative educational perspective that positions the Qur'an and Hadith not merely as sources of religious instruction but also as comprehensive foundations for intellectual development.²² Integrating Qur'anic and Hadith values into educational practice enables learners to develop critical thinking that is intellectually rigorous, ethically responsible, and spiritually grounded. Such integration is particularly relevant to contemporary Islamic education because it harmonizes modern educational competencies with Islamic epistemological principles, thereby producing learners who can respond wisely to increasingly complex global challenges.

¹⁸ Tatang Muh Nasir et al., "Foundation and Epistemology of Islamic Education in Indonesia. Khazanah Pendidikan Islam," *Khazanah Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 2 (2024): 76–80, <https://khazanah.uinsgd.ac.id/index.php/kp/article/view/22304>

¹⁹ Redi Zulpianto et al., "Epistemology of Islamic Education: Revelation, Reason, and Empirical Knowledge Perspective," *Jurnal Al Burhan* 6, no. 1 (2026): 662–65, <https://doi.org/10.58988/jab.v6i1.865>

²⁰ Siti Nurhayati et al., "The Integration Of Reason And Revelation In Islamic Educational Philosophy As The Epistemological Foundation Of Islamic Education," *International Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 1 (2026): 15–16, <https://doi.org/10.64540/et3c7q04>; Nasywa Nidaul Azmi et al., "The Relationship Between Revelation and Reason in Islam: An Integrative Framework for Knowledge Construction and Worldview Formation," *Sahaja: Journal Sharia and Humanities* 5, no. 1 (2026): 4–5, <https://doi.org/10.61159/sahaja.v5i1.657>.

²¹ Dertha Mukhtar, Charles, and Rifka Haida Rahma, "The Building of an Epistemological Paradigm: Integration of the Qur'an and Hadith as the Foundation of Contemporary Islamic Knowledge," *The Future of Education Journal* 4, no. 8 (2025): 4517–4523, <https://journal.tofedu.or.id/index.php/journal/article/view/1020>

²² Nurzamsinar, Sudirman, and Abd Wahid, "Reconstructing Integrative Islamic Epistemology For the Development of Islamic Education," *Al-Mudarris : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 2 (2026): 431–35.

Therefore, this article aims to examine the integration of Qur'anic and Hadith values in the development of critical thinking skills. By synthesizing contemporary theories of critical thinking with Islamic educational principles, this article seeks to demonstrate that the cultivation of reflective, analytical, and responsible thinking has long been embedded within the Qur'an and the Sunnah, offering a comprehensive framework for strengthening critical thinking in modern educational contexts.

Method

This study employed a qualitative library research design to examine the integration of Qur'anic and Hadith values into the development of critical thinking skills in Islamic education. Library research was selected because the study aimed to analyze, synthesize, and interpret concepts derived from primary Islamic sources and contemporary scholarly literature, rather than to collect empirical field data. The primary sources consisted of selected Qur'anic verses and authentic Hadith relevant to critical thinking, including concepts such as *ta'aqqul* (reasoning), *tafakkur* (reflection), *tadabbur* (deep contemplation), and *tabayyun* (verification). Secondary sources comprised books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and recent scholarly publications on critical thinking, Islamic education, and Islamic epistemology published primarily between 2021 and 2026.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic content analysis. The analysis involved four stages: (1) identifying Qur'anic verses, Hadith, and scholarly literature related to critical thinking; (2) categorizing the data into major themes, namely the Qur'anic foundations of critical thinking, Prophetic ethical values, epistemological integration of the Qur'an and Hadith, and educational implications for contemporary Islamic education; (3) comparing and synthesizing the perspectives of classical Islamic teachings and contemporary educational scholarship; and (4) constructing a conceptual framework that explains how the integration of Qur'anic and Hadith values contributes to the development of critical thinking skills. Through this analytical process, the study sought to develop a comprehensive understanding of critical thinking from an Islamic educational perspective and to highlight its relevance to contemporary educational practices.

Result and Discussion

Qur'anic Foundations of Critical Thinking

The Qur'an presents critical thinking not merely as an intellectual skill but as an essential characteristic of human beings in fulfilling their role as *khalifah*

(vicegerents) on earth.²³ Rather than encouraging blind acceptance, the Qur'an repeatedly invites believers to observe natural phenomena, contemplate revelation, evaluate evidence, and verify information before reaching conclusions. This epistemological orientation demonstrates that reasoning (*ta'aqqul*), reflection (*tafakkur*), deep contemplation (*tadabbur*), and verification (*tabayyun*) are integral components of the Qur'anic worldview.²⁴ Consequently, critical thinking in Islam should be understood as a holistic cognitive and spiritual process in which intellectual inquiry is inseparable from moral responsibility and divine guidance. Contemporary studies further affirm that the Qur'an provides a comprehensive framework for critical thinking by encouraging healthy skepticism, rational inquiry, objectivity, and evidence-based judgment in responding to contemporary social challenges.²⁵

One of the clearest manifestations of this Qur'anic epistemology is the principle of *tabayyun*, which emphasizes verification before accepting or acting upon information. Allah commands:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ

O you who believe! If a wicked person comes to you with news, verify it, lest you harm people out of ignorance and then become regretful for what you have done (Qur'an 49:6).

This verse establishes verification as an ethical and intellectual obligation, requiring believers to evaluate the credibility of information before forming judgments or taking action. In today's digital environment, where misinformation and disinformation spread rapidly across social media, *tabayyun* functions as a timeless epistemological principle that promotes information literacy, objectivity, and responsible decision-making. Qur'an 49:6, together with Qur'an 17:36 and Qur'an 39:18, forms a comprehensive Qur'anic framework for critical thinking by

²³ Rabi'atul Adawiah and Halimatus Sakdiah, "A Comparative Analysis of Critical Thinking in Western and Islamic Education: Implications for Contemporary Islamic Pedagogy," *Syamil: Journal of Islamic Education* 13, no. 2 (2025): 259–273, <https://journal.uinsi.ac.id/index.php/syamil/article/view/10570>.

²⁴ Ahmad Nilnal Munachifdlil Ula et al., "Qur'anic Pedagogy and Critical Thinking: Bridging Revelation and Modern Educational Philosophy," *Daar El-Makrifah: Journal of Islamic Religious Education* 2, no. 01 (2026): 169–170, <https://e-journal.ibama.ac.id/index.php/jpai/en/article/view/377>.

²⁵ Qithrotun Nida Aulia, Sholahuddin Al Ayubi, and Salim Rosyadi, "Critical Thinking dalam Al-Qur'an: Studi Tafsir Tematik dan Implementasinya Di Era Digital," *Al-Fahmu: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 4, no. 1 (2025): 133–139, <https://doi.org/10.58363/alfahmu.v4i1.473>.

emphasizing verification, rational evaluation, open-mindedness, and evidence-based reasoning in the digital era.²⁶

The Qur'an further strengthens this intellectual orientation through repeated appeals to human reason. Expressions such as أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ("Will you not use your reason?") appear throughout the Qur'an, indicating that reasoning is not merely permitted but expected as part of religious consciousness. Rather than separating revelation from rational inquiry, the Qur'an positions reason as the interpretative instrument through which divine guidance is understood and contextualized. This relationship demonstrates that Islamic epistemology rejects the dichotomy between faith and rationality, integrating both within a unified structure of knowledge.²⁷ Similarly, scholars argue that Islamic epistemology is constructed upon the methodological integration of the Qur'an and Hadith, in which revelation serves as the highest source of truth while reason functions as the instrument for interpretation and contextual application.

Beyond rational inquiry, the Qur'an cultivates reflective thinking through the concepts of *tafakkur* and *tadabbur*.²⁸ These concepts encourage believers not only to observe reality but also to contemplate its deeper meanings and implications.²⁹ Allah declares:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاجْتِذَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for people of understanding (Qur'an 3:190).

This verse directs human attention toward systematic observation, reflection, and the search for meaning within both revelation and creation. Such processes correspond closely with higher-order thinking skills, including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, which are central components of contemporary critical thinking theories.³⁰ Consequently, Qur'anic pedagogy encourages learners to become active

²⁶ Qithrotun Nida Aulia, Sholahuddin Al Ayubi, and Salim Rosyadi, "Critical Thinking dalam Al-Qur'an: Studi Tafsir Tematik dan Implementasinya di Era Digital," *Al-Fahmu: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 4, no. 1 (2025): 133–39, <https://doi.org/10.58363/alfahmu.v4i1.473>.

²⁷ Mukhtar, Charles, and Rahma, "The Building of an Epistemological Paradigm."

²⁸ Fitri Aulia et al., "Implementing Qur'an-Hadith Learning to Foster Students' Critical Thinking Skills. *Curricula: Journal of Curriculum Development* 4 (2): 1817-32. <https://doi.org/10.17509/curricula.v4i2.92564>.

²⁹ Aulia, Al Ayubi, and Rosyadi, "Critical Thinking dalam Al-Qur'an."

³⁰ Muslim Fikri and Elya Munfarida, "Konstruksi Berpikir Kritis Dalam Pendidikan Islam : Analisis Tafsir Maudhu' i Berdasarkan Al- Qur ' an," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam Al-Thariqah* 8, no. 1 (2023): 108–120, [https://doi.org/10.25299/al-thariqah.2023.vol8\(1\).11469](https://doi.org/10.25299/al-thariqah.2023.vol8(1).11469).

constructors of knowledge rather than passive recipients of information, fostering intellectual curiosity while maintaining ethical and spiritual awareness.³¹

The integration of these Qur'anic principles reaches its most comprehensive expression in Surah Az-Zumar (39:18), where Allah praises individuals who evaluate multiple viewpoints before accepting the most convincing one:

الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمْ الْأَوَّلُونَ

Those who listen to every word and follow the best of it. They are the ones whom Allah has guided, and they are people of understanding. (Qur'an 39:18)

This verse portrays a complete process of critical thinking involving attentive listening, comparative analysis, careful evaluation, reflective judgment, and informed decision-making. Rather than promoting unquestioning acceptance, the Qur'an encourages believers to assess different ideas critically before embracing the strongest and most beneficial perspective. Therefore, the Qur'anic conception of critical thinking extends far beyond cognitive competence by integrating rational inquiry with moral integrity, spiritual accountability, and the pursuit of truth. Collectively, the principles of *tabayyun*, *ta'aqqul*, *tafakkur*, and *tadabbur* demonstrate that critical thinking is deeply embedded within the Qur'anic worldview, offering a comprehensive epistemological foundation for developing intellectually rigorous, ethically responsible, and spiritually grounded learners in contemporary Islamic education.³²

Prophetic Values as The Ethical Framework of Critical Thinking

While the Qur'an establishes the epistemological foundations of critical thinking, the Prophetic traditions provide its ethical and practical framework by demonstrating how reasoning should be exercised in everyday life.³³ The Sunnah does not merely encourage intellectual inquiry but also cultivates honesty, objectivity, humility, verification, and moral responsibility in the pursuit of

³¹ Rizki Amalia Putri, Irwan Ahmad Akbar, and Hilyah Ashoumi, "Toward A Qur'anic Pedagogy Of Tafakkur: Reflective Thinking And Critical Thinking In Qur'an-Hadith Learning," *Alyss* 6, no. 4 (2026): 2198–2206.

³² Samsul Arifin, "Konsep Ulil Albab Dalam Al-Qur'an : Menantang Model Pendidikan Dogmatis Di Madura Melalui Pendekatan Tafsir Kontekstual Di Tingkat Pendidikan Dasar," *Al-Allam Jurnal Pendidikan*, 2026, 46–48.

³³ Hadiyanto et al., "Prophetic Education Dalam Hadis Nabi SAW: Integrasi Ilmu, Iman, Dan Akhlak Dalam Tujuan Pendidikan Islam Kontemporer," *Ta'wiluna: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an, Tafsir Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 3 (2025): 1721–23.

knowledge. Consequently, critical thinking in the Islamic tradition is not value-neutral; rather, it is inseparable from ethical conduct (*akhlaq*) and accountability before Allah. This distinctive characteristic differentiates the Islamic conception of critical thinking from many contemporary secular perspectives that frequently emphasize cognitive performance without adequately addressing the ethical dimensions of reasoning. Recent scholarship similarly argues that integrating Hadith into educational practice strengthens learners' spiritual, moral, and ethical development while fostering critical thinking and responsible decision-making.

The Prophetic emphasis on seeking knowledge represents one of the primary foundations for intellectual development. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ

Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim (Ibn Mājah, no. 224).

This hadith demonstrates that intellectual inquiry is regarded as a religious obligation rather than merely an academic pursuit. The obligation to seek knowledge implies an active process of questioning, investigating, evaluating evidence, and continuously expanding one's understanding. Contemporary studies emphasize that the educational integration of Hadith encourages learners not only to acquire knowledge but also to develop reflective and critical reasoning that addresses contemporary challenges while remaining firmly grounded in Islamic values.³⁴

The ethical dimension of critical thinking is further reflected in the Prophet's prohibition against accepting or transmitting information without verification. The Prophet ﷺ said:

كَفَى بِالْمَرْءِ كَذِبًا أَنْ يُحَدِّثَ بِكُلِّ مَا سَمِعَ

It is enough falsehood for a person to relate everything he hears (Muslim, no. 5)

This narration establishes a moral principle that complements the Qur'anic concept of *tabayyun*. Rather than accepting information uncritically, Muslims are instructed to evaluate the credibility, authenticity, and consequences of information before communicating it to others. In the contemporary digital environment, where misinformation spreads rapidly across social media, this Prophetic guidance

³⁴ Kodir, "Integrating Hadith Into Education: Bridging The Gap Between Traditional Islamic Scholarship and Modern Learning," 2021–2023.

promotes media literacy, responsible communication, and evidence-based judgment. Accordingly, critical thinking from an Islamic perspective involves not only analytical reasoning but also ethical responsibility regarding the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge.

Another important Prophetic principle concerns intellectual humility and the willingness to acknowledge the limits of one's knowledge. The Prophet ﷺ stated:

مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُفَقِّهْهُ فِي الدِّينِ

When Allah intends good for someone, He grants him understanding of the religion (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, no. 71; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, no. 1037).

This hadith indicates that genuine understanding (*fiqh*) is not merely the accumulation of information but the ability to comprehend, analyze, and apply knowledge wisely and responsibly. Such understanding requires intellectual humility, openness to learning, and continuous reflection rather than dogmatic certainty. These characteristics closely correspond to contemporary dispositions of critical thinking, including open-mindedness, intellectual integrity, and reflective judgment, while remaining firmly rooted in Islamic spirituality.

The Prophetic traditions therefore complement the Qur'anic foundations of critical thinking by integrating cognitive competence with ethical responsibility. Rather than separating reasoning from morality, the Sunnah demonstrates that sound judgment must be accompanied by honesty, justice, humility, and accountability before Allah. This integration produces a holistic conception of critical thinking in which intellectual excellence serves not only the pursuit of knowledge but also the realization of ethical conduct, social justice, and human well-being. Consequently, the Qur'an and Hadith together establish a comprehensive Islamic framework for critical thinking that harmonizes rational inquiry, moral character, and spiritual consciousness.

Epistemological Integration of the Qur'an and Hadith in Developing Critical Thinking

The development of critical thinking in Islamic education requires more than merely incorporating Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions into learning activities. It demands an epistemological framework that systematically integrates revelation (*wahy*) and reason (*'aql*) as complementary sources of knowledge.³⁵

³⁵ Nasir et al., "Foundation and Epistemology of Islamic Education in Indonesia," 72–73.

Unlike the secular epistemological paradigm, which generally relies upon rationalism and empiricism as independent foundations of knowledge, Islamic epistemology positions divine revelation as the ultimate source of truth while recognizing reason, empirical observation, intuition, and reflection as legitimate instruments for understanding and contextualizing that truth.³⁶ Consequently, critical thinking in Islam should not be understood as unrestricted skepticism or autonomous rationality; rather, it is a disciplined intellectual process that operates within the moral and theological framework established by the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Recent studies emphasize that the Qur'an consistently encourages humanity to think, contemplate, investigate, and read, indicating that intellectual inquiry is an essential component of Islamic education rather than an external addition.

The epistemological foundations of Islamic education differ fundamentally from Western epistemological traditions. While Western educational philosophy has historically developed through the schools of rationalism and empiricism, Islamic epistemology is constructed through the complementary interaction of bayānī (textual reasoning), burhānī (demonstrative reasoning), and 'irfānī (intuitive and spiritual knowledge). These three epistemological approaches do not compete with one another; instead, they collectively establish a holistic process of knowledge construction in which revelation provides normative guidance, reason performs analytical interpretation, and spiritual awareness nurtures ethical consciousness. This integrated epistemological structure enables Islamic education to reform contemporary educational practices without abandoning its theological foundations, thereby maintaining harmony between intellectual development and Islamic idealism.³⁷

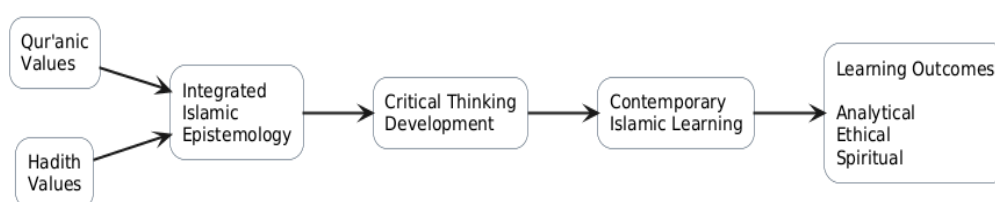


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Integrating Qur'anic and Hadith Values in Developing Critical Thinking Skills

³⁶ Muhamad Restu Fauzi and Muhammad Chirzin, "Epistemology of Islamic Education in the Qur'an and Its Urgency in the Development of Islamic Education," *Nadwa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 17, no. 1 (2023): 75–80, <https://doi.org/10.21580/nw.2023.17.1.15069>.

³⁷ Fauzi and Chirzin, "Epistemology of Islamic Education in the Qur'an and Its Urgency in the Development of Islamic Education."

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual integration proposed in this study. The framework demonstrates that Qur'anic and Hadith values collectively establish an Islamic epistemological foundation, which shapes critical thinking and is subsequently translated into contemporary Islamic educational practices to produce analytically competent, ethically responsible, and spiritually grounded learners.

Within this framework, the Qur'an and Hadith function as inseparable epistemic authorities. The Qur'an establishes universal principles and values, whereas the Sunnah explains, contextualizes, and operationalizes them in human life. Therefore, revelation does not restrict critical inquiry but instead provides normative boundaries that direct reasoning toward truth, justice, and human welfare. Such integration prevents critical thinking from degenerating into relativism or excessive skepticism because intellectual freedom remains guided by ethical responsibility and divine values. In this sense, critical thinking is not merely the ability to analyze arguments or solve problems, but also the capacity to distinguish truth from falsehood through a balanced interplay among textual evidence, rational judgment, empirical observation, and moral reflection. This understanding reflects the holistic nature of Islamic epistemology, where knowledge is simultaneously intellectual, spiritual, ethical, and practical.

The integration of revelation and reason also provides an important conceptual contribution to contemporary Islamic education. The foundations of Islamic education encompass theological, philosophical, psychological, sociological, and scientific dimensions that collectively shape the educational process. Accordingly, knowledge cannot be separated from values because every intellectual activity ultimately aims to strengthen faith, cultivate righteous character, and contribute to social well-being. This holistic orientation distinguishes Islamic education from educational models that primarily emphasize cognitive achievement while neglecting ethical and spiritual formation. Consequently, the development of critical thinking in Islamic educational institutions should not only improve learners' analytical abilities but should simultaneously cultivate wisdom (*ḥikmah*), justice (*'adl*), trustworthiness (*amānah*), and social responsibility as integral outcomes of intellectual development.³⁸

From this perspective, the integration of Qur'anic and Hadith values produces a comprehensive model of critical thinking that begins with revelation as the normative foundation, proceeds through rational reflection and empirical investigation, and culminates in ethical action and social responsibility. The Qur'anic

³⁸ Nasir et al., "Foundation and Epistemology of Islamic Education in Indonesia."

concepts of *ta'aqqul*, *tafakkur*, *tadabbur*, and *tabayyun*, together with the Prophetic values of seeking knowledge, verification, justice, humility, and accountability, constitute interconnected stages within the Islamic process of knowledge construction. Rather than functioning as isolated virtues, these principles collectively shape an epistemological model in which critical thinking becomes an act of worship (*'ibādah*) as well as an intellectual responsibility. Therefore, the epistemological integration of the Qur'an and Hadith offers a distinctive conceptual framework for developing critical thinking skills that are intellectually rigorous, ethically responsible, spiritually grounded, and socially transformative, thereby providing an alternative paradigm for contemporary Islamic education.³⁹

Educational Implications for Developing Critical Thinking in Islamic Education

The implementation of Inquiry Learning demonstrates that critical thinking in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) develops most effectively when students actively investigate, formulate questions, analyze evidence, and construct conclusions independently rather than merely receiving information from teachers. This inquiry-oriented approach transforms PAI learning from a teacher-centered process into a reflective learning experience where students connect Islamic teachings with real-life situations. As a result, learners become more capable of interpreting religious values analytically while strengthening their problem-solving abilities and reflective judgment in accordance with Islamic principles.⁴⁰

The Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach further strengthens critical thinking by linking Islamic concepts with students' everyday experiences. Rather than emphasizing memorization of religious content, CTL encourages learners to understand, evaluate, and apply Islamic values within authentic social contexts. This contextualization increases student participation, improves conceptual understanding, and enables learners to develop critical thinking through meaningful learning experiences that integrate cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions.⁴¹

³⁹ Nasir et al., 79–80; Fauzi and Chirzin, "Epistemology of Islamic Education in the Qur'an and Its Urgency in the Development of Islamic Education," 86–87..

⁴⁰ Putri Amelia, "Implementation of Inquiry Learning Strategy in Improving Students' Critical Thinking Skills in Islamic Religious Education Subject," *Educationist Journal* 2, no. 2 (2025): 87–92, <https://jurnal.uinsyahada.ac.id/index.php/Educationist/article/view/15428>

⁴¹ Wandu Syahrul Mu'min, Ai Rohayani, and Wahyu Ginanjar, "Penerapan Pendekatan Contextual Teaching and Learning dalam Pembelajaran PAI dan Implikasinya terhadap Kemampuan Berpikir Kritis Siswa," *Epistemic : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan* 4, no. 1 (2025): 90–95, <https://doi.org/10.70287/epistemic.v4i1.212>

The integration of Blended Learning into Islamic Religious Education provides a learning environment that combines face-to-face interaction with digital learning resources to cultivate higher-order thinking skills. Through online exploration, collaborative discussion, and classroom reflection, students learn to evaluate multiple sources of information, construct logical arguments, and contextualize Islamic teachings within contemporary issues. Consequently, blended learning supports both digital literacy and critical thinking while preserving the ethical orientation of Islamic education.⁴²

Similarly, the implementation of digital textbooks expands opportunities for students to develop critical thinking by providing interactive, case-based, and contextual learning resources. Digital learning materials encourage students to analyze religious issues, formulate evidence-based arguments, and engage with multicultural perspectives through technology-supported learning. Beyond improving higher-order thinking skills, digital textbooks also facilitate inclusive Islamic education that promotes empathy, tolerance, and reflective reasoning within diverse educational environments.⁴³

Another instructional model with significant implications is Project-Based Learning (PjBL), which enables students to apply Islamic teachings through authentic projects addressing real-world problems. By engaging in collaborative investigation, project planning, and reflective evaluation, students simultaneously develop critical thinking, communication, creativity, and collaboration while internalizing Islamic values and character. This learning model demonstrates that higher-order thinking skills and character formation can be developed simultaneously through meaningful educational experiences.⁴⁴

Collectively, these contemporary instructional approaches demonstrate that the integration of Qur'anic and Prophetic values into Islamic Religious Education requires pedagogical practices that actively engage learners in inquiry, reflection, contextual analysis, collaboration, and authentic problem-solving. Critical thinking

⁴² Febrianto Hakeu et al., "Implementation of the Blended Learning Model in Islamic Religious Learning Studies to Improve Students' Critical Thinking Skills in the Digital Era," *Andragogi : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Agama Islam* 7, no. 2 (2025): 142–145, <https://doi.org/10.33474/ja.v7i2.24405>

⁴³ Hani Subakti, Muhammad Nasir, and Mohammad Salehudin, "Implementation of Digital Textbooks in Islamic Religious Education to Develop Critical Thinking Skills of University Students," *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education* 7, no. 1 (2025): 155–160, <https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v7i1.2479>

⁴⁴ Fitriyanti, Eprianto, and Sirozi, "The Implementation of Project-Based Learning in the Development of 21st-Century Skills and Critical Thinking Skills in Islamic Religious Education," *JKPI: Jurnal Konseling Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 2 (2026): 267–70, <https://jurnalalkhairat.org/ojs/index.php/jkpi/article/view/1636>

therefore should not be viewed merely as a cognitive outcome but as a holistic educational process that integrates intellectual competence, ethical responsibility, and spiritual consciousness, enabling Islamic education to prepare learners who are capable of addressing contemporary challenges while remaining firmly grounded in Islamic values.

Conclusion

The integration of Qur'anic and Hadith values provides a comprehensive epistemological foundation for developing critical thinking within Islamic education. The Qur'an establishes the intellectual principles of *ta'aqqul*, *tafakkur*, *tadabbur*, and *tabayyun*, while the Prophetic traditions complement these principles by emphasizing ethical reasoning, intellectual humility, honesty, and responsibility in the pursuit and application of knowledge. Together, they demonstrate that critical thinking in Islam extends beyond cognitive competence to encompass moral integrity, spiritual consciousness, and accountability before Allah.

Furthermore, the integration of revelation and reason offers a distinctive Islamic framework for critical thinking that differs from purely secular approaches by harmonizing intellectual inquiry with ethical and spiritual values. This epistemological perspective can be effectively translated into contemporary Islamic Religious Education through inquiry-based, contextual, collaborative, technology-enhanced, and project-based learning approaches that actively engage students in meaningful reflection and problem-solving. Therefore, developing critical thinking by integrating Qur'anic and Hadith values not only strengthens students' analytical abilities but also cultivates individuals who are intellectually rigorous, ethically responsible, spiritually grounded, and capable of responding wisely to the challenges of contemporary society.

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The author agrees to be accountable for all aspects of this work.

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