

A Reconstruction of the Epistemology of Islamic Education through the Integration of the Turats Tradition and Critical Thinking Skills

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Abstract. Current trends in Islamic education indicate a decline in intellectual performance. History shows that early Islamic scholars were able to develop their critical thinking skills to such a depth that they attained the rank of mujtahid mutlak, whereas in contemporary Islamic education, the teacher's authority is regarded as the ultimate limit of the pursuit of knowledge. This condition indicates a shift in the Islamic scholarly tradition, particularly in the process of acquiring and developing knowledge derived from the Qur'an, Hadith, ijma', and qiyas, as formulated in various classical texts. The objectives of this study are 1) to identify the epistemological foundations of Islamic education contained within the classical Islamic texts, 2) to identify the role of critical thinking skills in reconstructing the epistemology of Islamic education, and 3) to analyze a model of the epistemology of Islamic education constructed through the integration of the classical Islamic texts and critical thinking skills. This study employs a qualitative approach in the form of field research. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and document analysis. Data were analyzed using the Milles-Huberman analytical model through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study show that (1) the epistemological foundation of the Islamic classical tradition is built through the integration of bayani, irfani, and burhani epistemologies; (2) critical thinking skills serve as instruments of reconstruction through the process of identifying, verifying, analyzing, evaluating, and contextualizing Islamic knowledge; and (3) the integration of these two elements produces a reflective, critical, and contextual epistemological model of Islamic education through the stages of fahm, naqd, tarjih, tajdid, and tatbiq.

Keywords: *Reconstruction, Epistemology, Islamic Education, Classical Islamic Texts, Critical Thinking Skills.*

Abstrak. Fenomena yang terjadi dalam pendidikan Islam saat ini menunjukkan adanya penurunan performa intelektual. Sejarah mencatat bahwa para ulama terdahulu mampu mengembangkan kapasitas berpikir kritis secara mendalam hingga mencapai derajat mujtahid mutlak, sementara pada konteks pendidikan Islam kontemporer meletakkan otoritas guru sebagai batas akhir pencarian ilmu. Kondisi ini mengindikasikan adanya pergeseran dalam tradisi keilmuan Islam, khususnya dalam proses memperoleh dan mengembangkan pengetahuan yang bersumber dari Al-Qur'an, Hadis, ijma', dan qiyas sebagaimana terformulasikan dalam berbagai kitab turats. Tujuan penelitian ini yakni 1) untuk mengetahui fondasi epistemologis pendidikan Islam yang terkandung dalam tradisi kitab turats, 2) untuk mengidentifikasi fungsi critical thinking skills sebagai rekonstruksi epistemologi pendidikan Islam, 3) untuk menganalisis model epistemologi pendidikan Islam yang terbangun melalui integrasi tradisi kitab turats dan critical thinking skills. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis field research. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan studi dokumentasi. Data dianalisis menggunakan model analisis Milles Huberman melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan Kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa (1) fondasi epistemologis kitab turats dibangun melalui integrasi epistemologi bayani, irfani, dan burhani; (2) critical thinking skills berfungsi sebagai instrumen rekonstruksi melalui proses identifikasi, verifikasi, analisis, evaluasi, dan kontekstualisasi pengetahuan keislaman; dan (3) integrasi keduanya menghasilkan model epistemologi pendidikan Islam yang reflektif-kritis-kontekstual melalui tahapan fahm, naqd, tarjih, tajdid, dan tatbiq. Penelitian ini adalah menawarkan model integratif yang menghubungkan tradisi kitab turats dengan critical thinking skills untuk merespons tantangan pendidikan Islam di era digital.

Kata Kunci: *Rekonstruksi, Epistemologi, Pendidikan Islam, Kitab Turats, Critical Thinking Skills*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education, by its very nature, is not merely oriented toward the transfer of knowledge from teacher to student, but also aims to shape individuals capable of critical thinking, independence, and responsibility in the advancement of scholarship. The Islamic intellectual tradition, dating back to the classical period, demonstrates that the process of education and the development of knowledge take place through the activities of reading, memorizing, understanding, critiquing, discussing, and examining various sources of

knowledge.[1] The Qur'an and Hadith serve as the primary sources for building this scholarly tradition, which was subsequently developed through *ijma'* and *qiyas*, as well as various methods of reasoning formulated by the scholars. They did not merely passively receive knowledge from teachers but also engaged in critical analysis of existing opinions. This process enabled the emergence of various disciplines and schools of thought that flourished within the Islamic tradition. In fact, some scholars attained a level of scholarship that allowed them to engage in independent *ijtihad*, reaching the rank of *mujtahid mutlak*. This capability demonstrates that the Islamic educational tradition of the past provided ample space for the development of students' critical thinking, argumentation, and intellectual abilities. [2]

Meanwhile, the development of contemporary Islamic education faces various challenges in preserving this intellectual tradition. One observable phenomenon is the tendency to position the teacher as the primary authority or even the ultimate authority in the process of seeking and developing knowledge.[3] The knowledge conveyed by the teacher is sometimes accepted as definitive without being followed by a process of dialogue, the testing of arguments, the comparison of various perspectives, or efforts to discover and develop new ideas. Such conditions have the potential to make students more oriented toward the reception of knowledge than toward the process of creating, developing, and critically evaluating knowledge. This phenomenon indicates a gap between the classical Islamic scholarly tradition and contemporary Islamic educational practices. The Islamic intellectual tradition has a long history of developing critical thinking skills through mastery of primary sources, understanding the various opinions of scholars, and the ability to analyze and derive legal rulings. Meanwhile, in contemporary educational practice, there is still a tendency toward reproductive learning, in which students are required more to understand and repeat information that has been provided than to develop the ability to question, analyze, and construct knowledge independently. [4]

This issue becomes even more important when considered in relation to the study of the *turats*. The *turats* is part of Islam's intellectual heritage, encompassing various forms of thought, methods of reasoning, scholarly debates, and the results of the scholars' *ijtihad*. [5] Understanding the *turats* should not be limited to the ability to read and memorize the contents of the texts, but should also include the ability to understand the context of the scholars' thought, analyze the arguments used, compare various opinions, and develop ideas based on Islamic scholarly methodology. If the teacher's authority is positioned as the ultimate limit in the pursuit of knowledge, there is a risk of intellectual stagnation. Students may become overly reliant on authoritative opinions, thereby lacking the motivation to conduct research, critically examine an opinion from an academic perspective, or develop arguments based on Islamic sources. The teacher-student relationship should be an integral part of both the transmission and development of knowledge, where discussion, critique, comparison of opinions, and the testing of arguments are essential components of a seeker of knowledge's intellectual journey. [6]

Ideally, teachers should serve as mentors, facilitators, and guides for students in their pursuit of knowledge, rather than as the sole source of truth that stifles the exploration and development of knowledge. Islamic education must strike a balance between respect for scholarly authority. Based on this discussion, a more in-depth study is needed regarding shifts in scholarly traditions within Islamic education, particularly concerning critical thinking skills and the role of the teacher's authority in the process of seeking knowledge. Such a study is essential to assess the extent to which contemporary Islamic education still upholds the character of the Islamic intellectual tradition—one that is open to dialogue, criticism, *ijtihad*, and the advancement of knowledge. Furthermore, this research is expected to contribute to efforts to reconstruct a model of Islamic education that not only produces students who master religious knowledge but also possess the ability to think critically, independently, and argumentatively, and are capable of continuously expanding the body of Islamic scholarly knowledge.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach in the form of field research. The qualitative approach was chosen because the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of phenomena occurring in their natural context, particularly as they relate to the experiences, actions, perspectives, and processes taking place among the research subjects. Field research allows the researcher to obtain data directly from primary sources through interaction with research subjects and observation of actual conditions in the field. In the research process, the researcher serves as the primary instrument, directly involved in the collection, interpretation, and analysis of data. Research data consists of primary and secondary data. Primary data is obtained through observations and interviews with informants related to the research focus, while secondary data is obtained from various documents, archives, reports, records, and other written sources relevant to the research subject. Informants are selected purposefully, taking into account their involvement, knowledge, and ability to provide information that meets the research needs. [7]

Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and a review of documents. Observations were used to directly observe various activities, conditions, and phenomena related to the research focus so that the data obtained came not only from informants' statements but also from empirical conditions in the field. In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain information regarding experiences, understandings, perspectives, and practices related to the phenomenon under study.[8] Meanwhile, documentary analysis was used as supporting data by examining relevant documents and written sources. The collected data were then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model, which comprises three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification. During the data reduction stage, the data were selected, categorized, focused, and simplified based on their relevance to the research focus.[9] The reduced data is then presented in the form of narrative descriptions, matrices, or thematic groupings so that patterns and interrelationships among the findings can be identified. The next stage involves drawing conclusions and conducting verification, which is carried out continuously throughout the research process to ensure that the conclusions reached have a sufficient empirical basis. The validity of the data is strengthened through triangulation of sources and techniques—that is, by comparing information obtained from various informants and checking the consistency between the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. [10]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The epistemological foundations of Islamic education as found in the classical Islamic tradition

Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that examines theories of knowledge. From the perspective of knowledge, there are two ways to acquire epistemology: knowledge obtained incidentally—without intention, will, or effort and knowledge acquired through curiosity. The second type of knowledge is considered so important because it is based on reason and empirical evidence. [11].

In Islamic philosophy, there are three types of epistemological methodologies: Bāyānī, Irfānī, and Burhānī. The classical Islamic texts (turats) provide an integrative epistemological foundation for building and developing Islamic education. The scholarly tradition found in the turats is not only oriented toward the transmission of religious knowledge but also represents a specific perspective on the sources, processes, and validity of knowledge [12]. Based on an analysis of the characteristics of the Islamic scholarly tradition, these epistemological foundations can be categorized into three main strands: Bayani, Irfani, and Burhani epistemology. These three represent three crucial dimensions in the construction of Islamic knowledge: revelation as the normative source, spiritual experience as the source of inner understanding, and reason as the rational instrument for comprehending and testing knowledge. The works of the turats cannot be viewed merely as the intellectual legacy of past scholars but also as an epistemological treasure trove containing patterns of knowledge formation and learning that are relevant to Islamic education.[13] The integration of these three epistemologies demonstrates that Islamic education within the turats tradition is directed not only toward shaping individuals with religious knowledge but also toward fostering individuals capable of understanding, internalizing, taking responsibility for, and actualizing that knowledge in their lives. [14]

Bayani epistemology is the foundation that places revelation specifically the Qur'an and the Sunnah—as the primary sources of Islamic knowledge. In the tradition of the Islamic classical heritage (turats), the bayani approach is evident through the vigorous practice of reading, interpreting, explaining, and transmitting knowledge from one generation to the next.[15] This process does not stop at literal acceptance but evolves through reasoning mechanisms such as qiyas, istidlal, and tasybih to connect foundational principles (ushul) with branch issues (furu'). Historically, this pattern has developed since the time of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and was continued by the Companions, the Tabi'in, and subsequent generations through the process of interpretation and the development of religious understanding as the primary guide. From the perspective of Islamic education, the epistemology of bayani provides a normative foundation that safeguards the continuity of teachings, scholarly authority, and the transmission of Islamic values to students. However, research findings also indicate that the dominance of the bayani approach can become less responsive if an understanding of the text is not accompanied by consideration of social and cultural contexts and the evolution of the times. The strength of the bayani approach in preserving the authenticity of doctrinal sources must be complemented by the ability to contextualize, so that classical Islamic texts (kitab turats) do not merely serve as objects for the reproduction of knowledge but can also become sources of thought capable of addressing contemporary issues in Islamic education. [16]

Irfani epistemology provides a spiritual and transformative dimension to the foundations of Islamic education as contained in the turats tradition.[17] Unlike bayani, which relies on texts, irfani places inner experience as one of the paths to acquiring knowledge through a process of spiritual contemplation and closeness. Its epistemological instruments include the qalb, dhawq, wijdan, basirah, and intuition, while the process of attaining this knowledge is carried out through riyadhah and mujahadah. In the turats tradition, this

approach is primarily reflected in works that discuss Sufism, ethics, etiquette, and spiritual cultivation.[18] Knowledge from the irfani perspective is not considered complete if it stops at mere cognitive mastery; rather, it must bring about changes in attitude and behavior. Therefore, irfani epistemology makes a significant contribution to Islamic education in developing character, spirituality, and the internalization of values. Students are not only guided to understand concepts of goodness but also to internalize and manifest them in their behavior. Irfani views education as a process of holistic human transformation—a process that connects knowledge with inner awareness and the cultivation of moral character. Within this framework, the classical Islamic texts (turats) establish that the success of Islamic education cannot be measured solely by intellectual ability but must also be assessed by the quality of one's manners, spiritual maturity, and the ability to actualize Islamic values. [19]

Burhani epistemology serves as the rational foundation that complements the bayani and irfani dimensions in the tradition of the turats. The burhani approach regards reason, logic, and argumentation as the primary instruments for acquiring and testing the truth of knowledge.[20] Its epistemological process is carried out through the systematic formation of concepts (tasawwur) and proof or verification (tashdiq) based on logical relationships between concepts and propositions. The presence of burhani epistemology demonstrates that the Islamic scholarly tradition not only provides space for the authority of texts and spiritual experience but also acknowledges the importance of intellectual activity in developing knowledge. In the context of Islamic education, burhani epistemology serves as the foundation for developing critical, analytical, systematic, and argumentative thinking skills. Students are encouraged not only to accept knowledge but also to understand the basis of its arguments, test its validity, and provide well-reasoned justifications. Burhani functions as a tool for developing critical thinking in understanding both texts and reality. The integration of burhani with bayani also allows religious texts to be read in a more reflective and contextual manner, while its connection to irfani ensures that rationality does not lose its moral and spiritual orientation. This demonstrates that the tradition of the turats has the potential to build an educational model that combines the authority of revelation with the ability to think. [21]

Based on these four descriptions, it can be concluded that the epistemological foundation of Islamic education in the tradition of the classical texts (kitab turats) is built through the integration of bayani, irfani, and burhani epistemologies, which represent revelation, spiritual experience, and rationality. Bayani provides a normative foundation through the Qur'an and Sunnah and maintains the continuity of scholarly tradition; irfani provides a spiritual dimension through contemplation, purification of the soul, and the internalization of values; while burhani provides a rational framework for systematically analyzing, testing, and developing knowledge. These three epistemologies, in essence, need not be pitted against one another but can be viewed as three complementary dimensions in building a holistic Islamic education. While bayani addresses questions regarding the sources and normative foundations of knowledge, irfani elucidates the dimensions of spiritual experience and the transformation of values, and burhani provides the tools for developing arguments and contextualizing knowledge. Therefore, the classical Islamic texts (turats) can be understood not merely as a scholarly heritage to be transmitted, but as an epistemological foundation that can be reconstructed and developed to meet the needs of contemporary Islamic education. The integration of bayani, irfani, and burhani ultimately leads to a paradigm of Islamic education that is both textual and contextual, rational and spiritual, and oriented toward the mastery of knowledge and the cultivation of moral character. . [22]

The Role of Critical Thinking Skills in the Epistemological Reconstruction of Islamic Education

The development of the digital space has transformed the epistemological landscape of Islamic education, particularly in terms of sources, authority, and the process of acquiring religious knowledge. Religious authority, which was previously concentrated in educational institutions, among scholars, in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), and within specific religious institutions, is now becoming decentralized as Islamic knowledge can be accessed through social media, websites, video-sharing platforms, and various other digital spaces.[23] Students can access sermons, fatwas, religious studies, and interpretations from diverse schools of thought, organizations, and countries in a very short amount of time. These changes indicate that Islamic education no longer faces the problem of limited access to knowledge, but rather the problem of an abundance of information and a diversity of epistemic authorities. Under these conditions, critical thinking skills serve a strategic function as an instrument for the epistemological reconstruction of Islamic education, as they enable students not to passively accept religious information, but rather to engage in the processes of identifying, analyzing, verifying, evaluating, and reflecting on the information they receive. Changes in the knowledge ecosystem in the digital age demand a shift in Islamic education from a paradigm of knowledge transmission toward a paradigm that emphasizes students' ability to construct and validate knowledge. [24]

Critical thinking skills in the epistemological reconstruction of Islamic education can transform students' roles from recipients of knowledge to active epistemic agents. In the conventional learning paradigm which

focuses on the delivery of material and rote memorization students tend to be positioned as recipients of information from teachers or learning sources deemed authoritative. This model becomes inadequate when students encounter the digital space, which simultaneously provides a wide variety of sources of religious knowledge. Students need the ability to question information sources, identify arguments, compare various perspectives, and assess the alignment of a particular opinion with Islamic scholarly foundations. Critical thinking in this context does not mean granting the freedom to reject all religious authority, but rather building critical epistemic authority that is, the ability to understand why certain information is trustworthy, how arguments are constructed, and what scholarly foundations are employed. The epistemological reconstruction of Islamic education does not eliminate the roles of teachers and scholars, but rather transforms the nature of their relationship from being merely sources of knowledge to becoming guides who help students develop the ability to independently evaluate and understand knowledge. [25]

Strengthening mechanisms for validating and verifying religious knowledge, including critical thinking skills. The flow of digital information allows various religious opinions to circulate without always being accompanied by explanations regarding their sources, methods, context, and scholarly authority. In such situations, students are likely to accept information based on its popularity, the number of followers, the appeal of its presentation, or the frequency of its appearance on social media, rather than on the strength of the argument or the credibility of the source. Critical thinking skills serve as an epistemological tool for examining information through fundamental questions: where does the information come from, who is presenting it, what is the basis of the argument, what is the context of the opinion, are there comparative sources, and to what extent can the conclusions drawn be justified? This process ensures that PAI learning activities do not stop at “knowing what,” but evolve toward “knowing why” and “knowing how.” From this perspective, critical thinking becomes a vital mechanism for maintaining the quality of Islamic knowledge while preventing students from becoming trapped by partial information, baseless religious claims, or understandings divorced from their epistemological and historical contexts. [26]

Critical thinking skills are also essential for reflectively connecting the Islamic classical texts (turats) to the context of real life. Islamic education must not only teach what is contained in the texts but also develop students' ability to understand the relevance and application of Islamic values in an ever-changing reality. In this regard, critical thinking serves as a bridge between normative knowledge and current issues. Students can be guided to analyze issues such as social diversity, social media ethics, tolerance, cultural change, technological developments, and other social issues by using Islamic principles as the foundation for their analysis. A dialogic, contextual, and problem-based approach to Islamic Education (PAI) facilitates this process because students are not merely required to find answers but also to explain their reasoning, consider various perspectives, and evaluate the consequences of a given choice. Critical thinking serves to reconstruct the epistemological framework of Islamic education from a textual-reproductive model toward a textual-contextual one, so that Islamic knowledge can be understood in depth without losing its connection to the sources of the teachings. [27]

The integration of rational, normative, and reflective dimensions in the Islamic educational process also requires critical thinking.[28] Critical thinking should not be understood as a form of rationality that stands apart from Islamic values, but rather as the ability to use reason responsibly in understanding sources and reality. In this context, critical thinking can serve as a space for dialogue among the epistemologies of bayani, burhani, and irfani. The bayani dimension provides a normative foundation through the Qur'an and Sunnah; the burhani dimension offers logical tools for analyzing and testing arguments; while the irfani dimension provides reflective depth and spiritual awareness so that the thinking process remains grounded in moral orientation. This integration is essential so that critical thinking in Islamic education does not merely result in the ability to refute or question an opinion, but rather in the ability to weigh, understand, evaluate, and make decisions wisely. Critical thinking does not function as a tool for deconstructing Islamic teachings, but rather as an instrument for building a more mature, argumentative, contextual, and responsible understanding of religion. [29]

The pedagogical reconstruction of Islamic education urgently requires critical thinking, particularly through changes in the teacher's role, teaching methods, the learning environment, and assessment. Teachers no longer function merely as conveyors of information, but as facilitators and mediators who guide students to explore issues, ask questions, examine arguments, and draw conclusions based on evidence and Islamic scholarly principles. This process can be developed through problem-based learning, case studies, open discussions, inquiry-based learning, text analysis, academic debates, and activities to verify religious information in digital spaces. The classroom environment also needs to be cultivated as a space for dialogue that allows differing opinions to be examined in an argumentative and ethical manner. Meanwhile, the evaluation of Islamic Education (PAI) learning needs to shift from a focus on rote memorization toward assessing students' abilities to analyze, evaluate, provide reasoning, solve problems, and reflect on an issue. This pedagogical reconstruction ultimately positions critical thinking not merely as one of the learning

competencies, but as an epistemological method that influences the entire process of knowledge production and validation in Islamic education. [30]

Critical thinking serves as an instrument for the epistemological reconstruction of Islamic education because it transforms the way students acquire, examine, understand, and apply religious knowledge. This reconstruction shifts from a model that emphasizes transmission to one of knowledge construction, from acceptance to verification, from rote memorization to analysis, and from textual understanding to textual-contextual understanding. However, this reconstruction does not mean abandoning the authority of revelation and the Islamic scholarly tradition. On the contrary, critical thinking is precisely what is needed to ensure that the process of understanding revelation and the turats is carried out responsibly, argumentatively, and in accordance with scholarly principles. Islamic education in the digital age must position critical thinking as an epistemological competency that enables students to possess both digital and religious literacy simultaneously, to distinguish between information and knowledge, to assess the credibility of sources, to understand the diversity of interpretations, and to adopt a religious stance that is critical, reflective, moderate, and responsible. With this approach, Islamic Education (PAI) can be reconstructed into an educational program that not only transmits Islamic knowledge but also shapes epistemic subjects capable of seeking, testing, understanding, and applying Islamic knowledge in a relevant manner within a pluralistic and complex digital society. [31]

An epistemological model of Islamic education developed through the integration of the classical Islamic texts (kitab turats) and critical thinking skills

The epistemological model of Islamic education built through the integration of the classical Islamic texts (turats) and critical thinking skills demonstrates a dialectical process between the transmission of Islamic knowledge and the construction of knowledge through critical thinking activities. The tradition of the classical Islamic texts (turats) essentially provides a knowledge base, a conceptual framework, religious arguments, and scientific methodologies developed by scholars in response to various issues within specific historical contexts. However, in the context of contemporary Islamic education, the classical Islamic tradition (turats) should not merely be treated as a text to be read, understood, and reproduced; rather, it must be presented as a source of knowledge that can be engaged in dialogue with reality. It is at this point that critical thinking skills become relevant, as the ability to think critically enables students to interpret, analyze, evaluate, infer, and reflect on the knowledge derived from the texts of the turats. The integration of the two produces an epistemological framework that does not pit tradition against modernity but rather uses tradition as the foundation for critical dialogue to generate knowledge relevant to the needs of the times. The epistemological model of Islamic education, built through the integration of the classical Islamic tradition (turats) and critical thinking skills, can be understood as an integrative epistemological model that connects the Islamic scholarly heritage with critical thinking skills in understanding and responding to contemporary issues. This process can be outlined through the stages of fahm, naqd, tarjih, tajdid, and tatbiq. [32]

The “fahm” stage is the initial process in developing students’ ability to understand an issue while grasping the ideas, concepts, arguments, and underlying rationale found in classical Islamic texts. Understanding at this stage is not merely focused on the ability to read, translate, or identify information contained in the text, but encompasses an effort to comprehend the meaning embedded within the text as a whole. Students need to understand how an opinion is constructed, the issues underlying it, the arguments used, and how one concept relates to another within the scholars’ framework of thought. Fahm is a crucial stage because critical thinking skills cannot develop optimally if students do not yet have an adequate understanding of the subject matter to be analyzed. Errors in understanding the text at the initial stage can lead to errors in the processes of critique, evaluation, and drawing conclusions in subsequent stages. [32]

The process of fahm is also closely related to tadzakkur, which is the activity of bringing back into the learners’ consciousness the knowledge, values, intellectual experiences, and principles of Islamic scholarship that have been passed down by previous generations. Tadzakkur is not merely the mechanical recall of information, but rather the process of reconnecting acquired knowledge with the intellectual heritage that has become part of the Islamic scholarly tradition. Through tadzakkur, students are encouraged to realize that the classical texts (kitab turats) are intellectual products born from the struggles of scholars in addressing specific issues within particular social, cultural, and scholarly contexts. This awareness provides students with a historical and epistemological foundation for understanding texts in a more balanced manner. Fahm supported by tadzakkur enables students not only to know the content of the text but also to understand its context, purpose, values, and the underlying intellectual framework. Ultimately, this stage serves as the initial foundation for the development of critical thinking skills, particularly in the ability to identify problems, interpret information, clarify concepts, and establish a conceptual foundation before engaging in a more in-depth analytical process. [33]

After students have gained sufficient understanding through the *fahm* stage, the learning process continues to the *naqd* stage. *Naqd* relates to the activity of *tafakkur*—that is, the process of thinking reflectively, deeply, and critically about knowledge or arguments that have already been understood. At this stage, students are no longer positioned merely as recipients of information or followers of a particular opinion, but as active learners capable of questioning, analyzing, and testing ideas through argumentation. *Tafakkur* provides space for students to reflect on various opinions found in the classical texts by considering the structure of the arguments, the assumptions used, the basis for drawing conclusions, and the relevance of those opinions to the issues being studied. The *naqd* process is not directed solely at finding flaws in tradition, but rather at fostering an intellectual attitude capable of engaging in critical dialogue with the Islamic scholarly heritage. [34]

Naqd activities also encourage students to develop critical thinking skills through a series of systematic intellectual exercises. Students can be guided to question a particular opinion, compare the arguments of various scholars, identify the assumptions underlying a line of thought, distinguish between facts and interpretations, and assess whether an argument has a logical connection between its premises and conclusions. At this stage, the existence of differing opinions within the classical Islamic texts (*kitab turats*) can actually be utilized as a learning resource to cultivate critical thinking skills. Students can observe that an Islamic issue often has more than one perspective and that each opinion has an argumentative structure that must be understood before it can be evaluated. *Naqd* through *tafakkur* fosters a learning process that is dialogical, reflective, and argumentative. Students do not merely passively accept the authority of the text but learn to offer intellectual responses to the text based on understanding, questions, and well-reasoned arguments. The tradition of classical Islamic texts serves as a productive space for developing analytical, evaluative, interpretive, and argumentative skills—which are central components of critical thinking. [35]

The critical process in the *naqd* stage then leads to the *tarjih* stage, which is related to the activity of *ta'aqqul*. While *naqd* emphasizes the ability to analyze and examine various viewpoints, *tarjih* is a subsequent process of weighing various intellectual alternatives and determining which viewpoint or argument possesses the most adequate level of strength and relevance. In this context, *ta'aqqul* is the conscious, systematic, and argumentative use of reason in processing the information that has been obtained. Reason is used to examine the relationship between premises and conclusions, assess the consistency of arguments, evaluate the relevance of a particular opinion to the issue at hand, and consider the consequences of specific intellectual choices. *Ta'aqqul* demonstrates that the use of reason in the Islamic scholarly tradition is not an activity that stands apart from the texts, but rather serves as an instrument for understanding, evaluating, and developing thought rooted in that tradition. [36]

From the perspective of developing critical thinking skills, the *tarjih* stage plays a crucial role because it teaches students not only to identify various viewpoints but also to evaluate those viewpoints rationally and responsibly. Students can be guided to develop evaluation criteria, identify the strengths and weaknesses of each argument, consider the quality of the premises, examine logical consistency, and assess the suitability of a viewpoint within the context of the issue. Therefore, *tarjih* cannot be simply understood as the act of choosing a preferred opinion but rather as an epistemological decision-making process grounded in argumentative reasoning. This skill is an important form of critical thinking because students are required to provide reasons why one opinion is considered stronger than another. At this stage, students learn to form judgments based on evidence and argumentation, rather than on preconceptions, personal biases, or uncritical acceptance. *Ta'aqqul* serves as the epistemological foundation that integrates rational thinking with the values and principles of Islamic scholarship. [37]

After going through the process of understanding, critique, and *tarjih*, the next stage is *tajdid*. *Tajdid* can be understood as the process of renewing, developing, and reconstructing knowledge based on the results of a critical reading of the intellectual heritage that has been studied. Renewal in this context does not mean abandoning, negating, or severing ties with the classical texts (*kitab turats*), but rather re-examining that heritage so that it can be understood and developed in accordance with the needs of an ever-changing context. The integration of *tafakkur* and *tadabbur* enables students not only to critique existing ideas but also to explore their meanings, implications, and potential for development in addressing new challenges. *Tajdid* becomes a transformative process that connects the intellectual heritage of the past with the realities of contemporary life. [38]

In this process, students are guided to synthesize classical thought with contemporary issues. They are not only required to know what earlier scholars have said, but also to question how those principles or ideas can be understood in the context of today's social, cultural, technological, economic, and human development. This process demands higher-order thinking skills, as students must connect various concepts, discover patterns, identify gaps between theory and reality, and formulate potential avenues for intellectual development. At this stage, critical thinking skills evolve from analytical and evaluative abilities toward synthesis and intellectual creativity. Students learn that tradition is not merely something to be preserved

statically, but can serve as a source of inspiration for generating new ideas that remain connected to the fundamental principles of Islam. Tajdid provides a space for generating alternative ideas, formulating new lines of thought, and developing contextual approaches to problem-solving without losing its epistemological roots in the Islamic scholarly tradition. [39]

The final stage of this process is *tatbiq* the application or implementation of insights gained through understanding, critical analysis, reasoning, and knowledge renewal into real-life situations. *Tatbiq* is linked to *tadabbur*, a process involving the deep exploration of meaning, consideration of context, assessment of consequences, and a broader understanding of a concept's implications. At this stage, learners move beyond merely understanding texts, critiquing opinions, selecting stronger arguments, or generating new ideas; they are required to translate these intellectual outcomes into tangible actions and solutions. Knowledge derived from *turats* (classical texts) serves as a source of values and principles for interpreting contemporary issues. Thus, *tatbiq* functions as the stage of knowledge contextualization bridging intellectual insights with the concrete needs arising in the lives of individuals and society. [40]

Through the *tatbiq* (practical application) process, learners are trained to identify real-world issues, determine relevant principles or concepts derived from their studies, and formulate an application suited to the specific characteristics of the problem at hand. Application does not necessarily mean directly adopting an opinion from classical texts *turats* and applying it to a modern context; rather, it can involve identifying fundamental principles, grasping the underlying objectives and values, and translating them into solutions relevant to actual conditions. *Tatbiq* requires the ability to transfer knowledge, solve problems, make decisions, and evaluate the impact of implementing an idea. Critical thinking takes on a more practical dimension at this stage, as learners must demonstrate the real-world relevance of their reasoning. This process also illustrates that the study of classical texts need not be limited to the theoretical mastery of religious knowledge; instead, it can be directed toward cultivating the learners' ability to respond to life's challenges in a manner that is wise, well-reasoned, contextual, and responsible. [40]

These five stages essentially form a continuous, interconnected process rather than a series of isolated steps. *Fahm* establishes a foundational understanding of texts and issues; *naqd* cultivates the ability to question and evaluate various arguments; *tarjih* guides learners to make choices based on rational and argumentative considerations; *tajdid* fosters the capacity for synthesis and the generation of new ideas or formulations; and *tatbiq* directs the application of these ideas to real-world contexts. Viewed through the lens of critical thinking skills, this sequence demonstrates a progression of cognitive abilities ranging from understanding and analysis to evaluation, synthesis and idea generation, and finally, application and problem-solving.

The integration of *fahm* (understanding), *naqd* (critical analysis), *tarjih* (weighing/evaluating), *tajdid* (renewal), and *tatbiq* (application) with *tadzakkur* (remembrance), *tafakkur* (contemplation), *ta'aqqul* (rational reasoning), and *tadabbur* (deep reflection) constitutes a learning framework that fosters critical thinking skills while maintaining the learner's connection to the Islamic scholarly tradition. This framework positions classical texts (*turats*) not merely as sources of information to be understood and memorized, but as catalysts for intellectual dialogue texts to be read, critiqued, evaluated, developed, and applied. Through this approach, learners are not steered toward a dichotomy between preserving tradition and embracing renewal; instead, they are guided to use tradition as a foundation for constructing thought that is critical, rational, reflective, creative, and contextual. This process enables the study of classical texts to contribute to the development of learners who possess critical thinking abilities without losing their value orientation or their Islamic epistemological roots.

CONCLUSION

Research indicates that the *turats*(classical Islamic texts) tradition establishes an integrative epistemological foundation for Islamic education through the *bayani*, *irfani*, and *burhani* epistemologies. *Bayani* provides a normative basis rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah; *irfani* contributes a spiritual dimension through inner realization and character cultivation; and *burhani* offers a rational foundation through logical, critical, and argumentative thinking. These three approaches complement one another to shape an Islamic education that focuses not only on knowledge mastery but also on character building, spirituality, and the rational understanding of reality. In the context of the expanding digital landscape, critical thinking skills are essential to help learners verify, analyze, evaluate, and comprehend the increasingly diverse array of religious information.

The integration of the *turats*(classical Islamic texts) tradition with critical thinking skills shapes an epistemological model of Islamic education that is reflective, critical, and contextual, proceeding through the stages of *fahm* (understanding), *naqd* (critical analysis), *tarjih*(weighing and selecting views), *tajdid* (renewal of thought), and *tatbiq* (application). This model enables learners to comprehend the Islamic intellectual

heritage, critically evaluate various arguments, select perspectives based on sound reasoning, engage in intellectual renewal, and apply knowledge to address contemporary issues. Islamic education thus functions not merely as a process of transmitting knowledge from the past, but also as a process of knowledge construction that bridges the values found in turats with the needs of modern society, ultimately producing learners who are knowledgeable, critical, and civilized, and who are capable of responsibly actualizing Islamic values.

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