



Strengthening Islamic Values-Based Critical Thinking in the Educational Curriculum: A Case Study at Darul Khoirot Integrated Bilingual Junior High School

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the need for Islamic secondary education to prepare students who are able to think critically, reflectively, and remain rooted in Islamic values. Critical thinking is often understood as a purely cognitive skill, whereas in the Islamic educational tradition it needs to be associated with manners, the search for truth, moral responsibility, and the courage to dialogue. This study aims to analyze the strategy of strengthening critical thinking based on Islamic values in the curriculum of Darul Khoirot Integrated Bilingual Junior High School, a formal school under the foundation of modern Islamic boarding schools that maintains mastery of the yellow book. The research method uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data is collected through interviews, learning observations, and curriculum documentation, then analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The results of the study show that strengthening critical thinking is carried out through the integration of formal curriculum, bilingual learning, halaqah of the yellow book, habituation of discussion manners, and reflective assignments. In conclusion, the Darul Khoirot model shows that critical reason can be developed without separating the intellectual and spiritual dimensions.

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INTRODUCTION

21st century education faces increasingly complex demands as society lives in a fast, open, and often unverified flow of information. In this situation, students

are not only able to master the subject matter but also need to have the ability to assess arguments, distinguish facts and opinions, and make decisions responsibly. Critical thinking is important for the wider community because it determines the quality of citizens' participation in social, religious, and national life. The reason is that weak critical reasoning can make the younger generation easily accept hoaxes, extremism, or an instant mindset. Various studies confirm that active learning and problem-based learning are effective in improving students' critical thinking skills (Abrami et al., 2015; Wardani & Fiorintina, 2023). Thus, education needs to place critical thinking as a core competency.

The general problem behind this study is the still strong learning orientation on memorization, procedural compliance, and completion of administrative tasks. In many classrooms, students are often asked to repeat answers that are considered correct without enough opportunity to ask questions, compare sources, or build arguments. In Islamic education, this condition can cause misunderstandings as if critical thinking is contrary to respect for the authority of science. In fact, the Islamic tradition has a long history of questioning, *munazharah*, *ijtihad*, and information verification. Research on Islamic education shows that the development of critical reasoning can actually strengthen religious understanding when guided by the values of honesty, tolerance, and moral responsibility (Alkouatli, 2018; Altinyelken, 2021). Therefore, this problem is important to solve through an integrative curriculum design.

The phenomenon on the ground shows that pesantren based schools face a double challenge. On the one hand, Islamic boarding schools are required to maintain Islamic scientific authority, learning the yellow book, character development, and student discipline. On the other hand, formal schools under pesantren must meet national curriculum standards, digital literacy, language skills, and students' readiness to face academic competition. Darul Khoirot Integrated Bilingual Junior High School is in this position because it carries a

modern pesantren system but still maintains the mastery of the yellow book as a scientific identity. This phenomenon is interesting because the integration of formal schools, bilingualism, and the tradition of the yellow book has the potential to be a fertile space for strengthening critical thinking. However, this potential is not automatically realized if the curriculum has not been designed consciously, systematically, and measurably.

Previous literature has discussed a lot of critical thinking in general education and Islamic education. A meta-analysis by Abrami shows that explicit, dialogical, and problem-based learning strategies have a positive influence on critical thinking skills (Abrami et al., 2015). The study of Tohani and Aulia confirms that 21st century learning is related to the development of 4C skills, including critical thinking (Tohani & Aulia, 2022). In the context of Islamic education, Altinyelken explained that non-formal Islamic education can be a space for the formation of critical reasoning if students are given the opportunity to interpret religious experiences reflectively (Altinyelken, 2021). Meanwhile, Alotaibi shows the importance of the role of Islamic education teachers in developing higher-order thinking (Alotaibi, 2025). The literature provides the foundation that critical thinking is not just a secular agenda but can be intertwined with Islamic pedagogy.

However, some studies still have limitations. Many critical thinking studies in Islamic education are in the form of literature reviews, learning experiments on certain subjects, or bibliometric studies that have not yet described institutional dynamics in depth. Research on the yellow book also often focuses on learning management, bandongan methods, or digital adaptation, rather than on how the yellow book tradition is used to build the ability to ask questions, reason postulates, and formulate ethical arguments (Ihsan & Muali, 2020; Widodo et al., 2023). Thus, there is a research gap regarding the strengthening of critical thinking based on Islamic values in the formal school curriculum under the foundation of modern Islamic boarding schools. This gap is important because the curriculum

is a strategic space to unite visions, materials, methods, and learning evaluations.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the practice of integrating critical thinking, Islamic values, bilingualism, and the mastery of the yellow book in one educational unit. Different from research that places critical thinking as a single learning method, this article sees it as a curriculum ecosystem that involves goals, school culture, the role of teachers, classroom activities, and pesantren habituation. The state of the art of this research is to offer a reading that critical thinking in pesantren based schools does not need to be understood as the courage to criticize without limits, but as the ability to weigh information with manners, postulates, logic, and benefits. This perspective is relevant for Islamic educational institutions that want to be adaptive to the changing times but do not lose the roots of the scientific tradition.

Based on this background, the research problem is formulated as follows: how is the strengthening of critical thinking based on Islamic values integrated into the educational curriculum of Darul Khoirot Integrated Bilingual Junior High School, and what factors support or hinder its implementation? The current argument of this study is that critical thinking can grow strongly if the curriculum not only adds question-and-answer activities, but builds an academic culture that values truth-searching, source verification, civilized dialogue, and moral reflection. The contribution of this article is to provide an empirical and conceptual overview for integrated Islamic schools, modern Islamic boarding schools, and curriculum developers to be able to design critical and religious learning. Thus, this research has theoretical and practical benefits for the development of contemporary Islamic education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design because it aims to understand in depth the practice of strengthening critical thinking based

on Islamic values in a certain institutional context. The case study was chosen because Darul Khoirot Integrated Bilingual Junior High School has a distinctive character as a formal school under the foundation of a modern Islamic boarding school that still maintains the mastery of the yellow book. The research location is focused on Darul Khoirot Integrated Bilingual Junior High School as a meeting space for the national curriculum, bilingual learning, pesantren coaching, and classical scientific traditions. The selection of the location was based on the consideration that the school has an integrated educational design that is relevant to examine the relationship between critical reason, Islamic manners, and book learning. The research focus is directed at the curriculum, learning process, academic culture, and experiences of educational actors.

Data collection techniques include interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with school principals, deputy heads of curriculum, Islamic Religious Education teachers, bilingual subject teachers, pesantren coaches, and students. The interviews were directed to explore the informants' understanding of critical thinking, Islamic value integration strategies, and curriculum implementation challenges. Observations were carried out on classroom learning activities, yellow book discussions, daily habits, and student reflection activities. Documentation includes teaching tools, activity schedules, bilingual teaching materials, evaluation notes, and pesantren programs. The three techniques are used in a complementary manner so that the data is not only sourced from verbal statements, but also from real practices and institutional documents.

Data analysis is carried out through three stages, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing as commonly used in qualitative research (Miles et al., 2014). Data reduction is carried out by sorting out relevant information about curriculum strategies, learning practices, and Islamic values that underlie critical thinking. The data display is arranged in the form of a

thematic matrix, a narrative of results, and an informant table so that the pattern of findings is easy to read. Conclusions are drawn inducively by paying attention to the relationships between categories. The validity of the data is maintained through source triangulation, technical triangulation, limited member checking, peer discussion, and sufficiency of references. In addition, the researcher pays attention to research ethics by maintaining the confidentiality of the identity of the student informant and using interview excerpts as necessary.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Operationally, strengthening critical thinking based on Islamic values at Darul Khoirot Integrated Bilingual Junior High School can be understood as a curricular process to train students to analyze information, test reasons, formulate arguments, and take a stance guided by Islamic manners. Key sub-findings in the field include five indicators, namely courage to ask polite questions, ability to compare sources, thoroughness of understanding of the text, ethical reflection on problems, and willingness to accept corrections. These indicators do not stand alone, but emerge through the integration of formal learning, pesantren activities, and daily habituation. Thus, critical thinking is not positioned as a value-free skill, but as an intellectual skill directed at the search for truth and benefit.

The first informant, a deputy head of curriculum, stated, "We don't want children to be just smart at answering questions. They should be able to explain why an answer is correct, where it comes from, and what the consequences will be if applied." This statement shows that schools are starting to shift the orientation of evaluation from just the final result to the reasoning process. The researcher's interpretation is that the Darul Khoirot curriculum provides space for argumentation, not just the reproduction of knowledge. In the teaching tool, teachers are encouraged to add analytical questions such as cause and effect,

comparison of opinions, and reflection on values. This shows that critical thinking is developed through the habit of explaining reasons responsibly.

The second informant, a yellow book teacher, explained, "When reading the text, our students asked not to jump to conclusions. They must understand the meaning of the words, the context of the discussion, the opinions of the scholars, and then relate them to the present life." This quote shows that the tradition of the yellow book can be an important medium for critical thinking. The researcher's interpretation shows that book learning not only serves to preserve scientific heritage, but also to train epistemic prudence. Students learn that religious conclusions require linguistic tools, context, scientific sanad, and manners towards differences. In this way, the yellow book becomes a means of practicing textual analysis and thinking ethics.

The results of interviews with bilingual teachers reinforced these findings. The teacher mentioned that the use of bilingual encourages students to not only translate terms, but also interpret meanings contextually. For example, the terms evidence, reason, claim, and conclusion are used in simple discussions so that students get used to building arguments. At the same time, teachers associate the term with the value of tabayyun, scientific mandate, and the responsibility of speaking. The researcher's interpretation is that bilingualism expands students' access to global discourse, while Islamic values give ethical direction to the use of knowledge. This combination creates a bridge between 21st century competence and pesantren traditions.

Learning observations showed that teachers used spark questions, small group discussions, presentations, and clarification of sources as quite prominent patterns. In one activity, students are asked to read a short text, identify the main idea, write down a critical question, and then present a conclusion by mentioning the reason. The teacher does not directly justify or blame the answer, but asks other students to respond in polite language. The researchers' interpretation

shows that the classroom is not entirely teacher-centered, although the teacher's authority remains strong as a guide. This model shows a balance between student participation and value direction.

Restatement of the findings shows that strengthening critical thinking in Darul Khoirot moves through three main paths. First, the cognitive path, which is training in understanding problems, analyzing texts, and structuring arguments. Second, the affective-spiritual path, namely the habit of questioning, humility in learning, and willingness to accept correction. Third, the social-curricular pathway, namely school cultural support, pesantren schedules, and teacher collaboration. The data pattern shows that critical thinking does not emerge as a separate program, but as a learning culture that is inserted into various activities. Thus, the strength of this model lies in integration, while the challenge lies in the consistency of implementation between teachers and between subjects.

Table 1. The Influence of Informant Ideals on Strengthening Critical Thinking Based on Islamic Values

Informant Position	Interview Excerpts	Indicator
Principal	We understand critical thinking as the ability of children to weigh information but still maintain manners and do not feel the most correct.	Institutional vision; manners of thinking; Truth-seeking
Waka Curriculum	The teaching tool is directed for students to explain reasons, compare sources, and make conclusions that can be accounted for.	Curriculum integration; argumentation; Process Evaluation
Good Teacher	In religious discussions, students are allowed to ask questions, but they must learn how to ask	Scott; dialogue ethics; The Basis of Evidence

	polite questions and use a clear basis.	
Yellow Book Teacher	Reading books trains children to be thorough, because one word can affect legal understanding and attitude.	Text analysis; thoroughness; Scientific Tradition
Bilingual Teacher	English helps students get to know global terms such as claims and evidence, then we connect them with scientific mandates.	Global literacy; evidence-based reasoning; Trust Value
Students	We are more daring to ask if the teacher gives an example that it is okay to have different opinions, as long as it is polite and there is a reason.	Courage to ask; participation; Civilized Dialogue

The table above shows that strengthening critical thinking stems not from a single actor, but from a configuration of institutional roles. The principal provides value guidance, the curriculum translates that guidance into teaching tools, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Islamic Education (Yellow Book) teachers maintain the foundation of Islamic knowledge, bilingual teachers provide access to global literacy, and students feel the impact by having the courage to ask questions. This pattern emphasizes that critical thinking based on Islamic values requires curricular leadership and pedagogical example. If it is just a slogan, students will not see the connection between critical thinking and manners. However, when all actors convey a consistent message, critical thinking becomes an academic habit.

Another pattern that appears is the relationship between cognitive indicators and moral indicators. Interview excerpts not only contain the words

analyze, compare, or conclude, but also emphasize manners, trust, manners, and the basis of evidence. This shows that the Darul Khoirot model does not place critical thinking as an activity of refuting teachers, but as a process of seeking the truth in the right way. The description of the data shows a synthesis between the tradition of pesantren and the demands of modern education. The strength of this synthesis lies in its ability to reduce the dichotomy between general science and religious science. The obstacle is that teachers need continuous training so that these indicators can be translated into consistent assessment rubrics.

Discussion

Previous research has emphasized that critical thinking is effectively developed through explicit, dialogical, and problem-based strategies. Abrami explained that critical thinking learning is more successful when teachers consciously teach reasoning strategies, rather than just expecting the ability to grow naturally (Abrami et al., 2015). Wardani and Fiorintina also show that problem-based learning can build students' critical thinking skills through the process of identifying problems and finding solutions. In the context of Darul Khoirot, the strategy appears in the question of triggers, presentations, clarification of sources, and reflection of values. However, these findings add a dimension that has not always been seen in the general educational literature, namely that the process of reasoning is framed by Islamic manners (Wardani & Fiorintina, 2023). Thus, critical thinking is not only understood as the ability to evaluate arguments, but also as a moral discipline in using reason.

The theoretical implication is the need to extend the concept of critical thinking from the cognitive realm to the ethical-spiritual realm. The practical implication is that teachers need to formulate analytical questions that at the same time guide students to maintain language, intentions, and social responsibility when expressing opinions. In classroom practice, this strategy

needs to be read as a change in learning culture, not just a change in teaching techniques. Teachers who ask high-level questions shift students' relationships with knowledge: from receivers of information to responsible interpreters. However, this shift requires psychological readiness, because some students are used to considering the teacher's answers as the only operational truth in the classroom. Therefore, critical learning must be built gradually through example, practice, and feedback.

Islamic values act as a fence so that the courage to think does not turn into intellectual arrogance. In the tradition of manners, one can test an opinion, but one cannot demean the owner of an opinion. This perspective is important for Islamic boarding schools because it maintains a continuity between respect for teachers and independence of thinking. Thus, the integration of critical thinking and Islamic values is not a pragmatic compromise, but a pedagogical synthesis that has a strong epistemological basis. In addition, teachers need to distinguish between low questions and high questions. Low questions demand memory, while high questions demand reason, evidence, relationships, and evaluation.

In the framework of Islamic education, high questions do not eliminate memorization, because memorization remains the raw material for reasoning. What needs to be changed is the order of learning: memorization is given meaning, meaning is tested by example, and examples are morally reflected. At the school policy level, these strategies should be outlined in academic calendars, classroom supervision, and teacher deliberation forums. The forum can be used to review sample questions, discuss student responses, and improve rubrics. In this way, teachers do not work alone, but rather build a community of practice. Community practices are important because curriculum changes often fail not because of weak ideas, but because there is no regular mentoring (Fathih et al., 2021). In the context of Islamic boarding schools, teachers' deliberations are also in line with the *bahtsul masail* tradition, which is a collective, referral-based, and

benefit-oriented discussion of problems (Ja'far, 2025).

This research also shows the importance of student involvement as a curriculum subject. Students need to be given the opportunity to assess their own learning process through a reflection journal, weekly questions, or notes of changes in understanding. This kind of reflection helps students realize that critical thinking is not just an activity during class discussions, but the habit of examining oneself, weighing reasons, and refining conclusions. In Islamic education, this custom is close to muhasabah, which is the awareness to judge thoughts and actions honestly. Therefore, this research encourages schools to see the curriculum as a space for the formation of ways of thinking, not just a list of materials. A good curriculum should be reflected in teacher questions, student assignments, evaluation patterns, and a culture of daily conversation. This step is important so that the school's vision can be translated into a real, consistent, and evaluative learning experience together by all school residents. Thus, the continuity between vision, process, and evaluation can be maintained more intact. on an ongoing basis. once.

The findings on the integration of the yellow book as a critical thinking medium enriched the study of Islamic boarding schools. Ihsan and Muali emphasized the importance of curriculum management of the yellow book so that learning takes place in a directed manner, while Widodo showed that Salafi Islamic boarding schools are able to adapt to online media in teaching books (Ihsan & Muali, 2020; Widodo et al., 2023). Chairi also discussed the development of the bandongan method to improve students' understanding. Different from this study, this study shows that the yellow book is not only an object of preserving traditions, but also a pedagogical tool to train text analysis, prudence in drawing conclusions, and appreciation for the diversity of scholars' opinions (Chairi, 2019). The conformity with literature lies in the recognition that the yellow book remains the core of the identity of the pesantren itself, while the difference lies in the

emphasis on its critical function in the formal school curriculum.

Theoretically, these findings support the idea that classical tradition can be an epistemic source for 21st-century education. Practically, the book teacher needs to design activities that do not stop at translation and grammatical meaning, but move towards the question of why, how, and what their relevance is. This is important because learning the yellow book is often misunderstood as a repetitive activity that only emphasizes reading and translating skills. Instead, the research data shows that the process of reading the book contains high-level thinking steps: identifying sentence structure, understanding the meaning of terms, weighing the context, recognizing differences of opinion, and drawing careful conclusions. If these steps are made explicit in the teaching tool, the yellow book can become a critical thinking laboratory typical of Islamic boarding schools. Teachers can add activities such as comparing two lectures, looking for an opinion, or discussing the relevance of the rules to contemporary problems. These activities do not have to turn the book into a subject for free debate but simply open up a space for direct questions.

Thus, book learning still maintains sanad, authority, and adab, while giving students the experience of reasoning. This is the point of Darul Khoirot's important contribution: tradition is not passively maintained, but is brought to life as a source of reflective learning. Strengthening the critical function of the yellow book can also be done through a reading portfolio. Students not only record the meaning of *gandul* or translate, but also write down questions, key terms, differences of opinion, and ethical lessons from the text. This kind of portfolio helps teachers see the development of students' reasoning over time. Thus, the assessment of the book not only measures the fluency of reading, but also the depth of understanding and the prudence of concluding.

The findings on bilingualism show that strengthening critical thinking in modern Islamic boarding schools can take place through the intersection of global

literacy and local-Islamic values. Literature on 21st-century skills places communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking as important competencies to deal with social change (Tohani & Aulia, 2022). In this study, bilingual learning provides students with conceptual vocabulary such as claims, evidence, reason, and conclusions, while Islamic values provide a frame for *tabayyun*, *amanah*, and dialogue manners. Compatibility with literature lies in the importance of language as a means of accessing information and building arguments. The difference is that Darul Khoirot does not make bilingualism a symbol of modernity alone, but as a tool to expand horizons that are still controlled by moral orientation.

The theoretical implication is the need for a critical thinking model that is sensitive to language, culture, and religion. By practical implication, bilingual teachers can develop bilingual argumentative glossaries, simple source reading exercises, as well as reflective assignments that ask students to relate global terms to Islamic values. Bilingualism in this context also has strategic value because students live in a cross-lingual information environment. Many scientific, technological, and socio-religious discourses circulate in English, while the meaning of values and character formation prevail strongly through Indonesian, Arabic, and *pesantren* traditions. When teachers teach argumentative terms in English and then relate them to the concept of *tabayyun*, students learn that global literacy should not be detached from moral responsibility. This is different from the bilingual approach that only pursues linguistic performance.

The Darul Khoirot model is closer to meaningful bilingualism, which is the use of language as a tool of thinking, not just a means of communication. The curricular implication is the need for the integration of academic vocabulary in cross-subject assignments. For example, students may be asked to write claims, evidence, reasons, and conclusions in two languages, then add a reflection on Islamic values. In this way, critical thinking grows through repetitive and

contextual language practices. In the long run, a bilingual approach that is integrated with Islamic values can strengthen the profile of graduates. Graduates are not only able to speak in a foreign language, but also be able to read sources, examine arguments, and express opinions responsibly. This kind of profile is relevant to the needs of contemporary Muslim societies facing global information flows. Modern Islamic boarding schools can be a space for the moderation of knowledge: open to world developments, but still selective based on values.

Findings on the manners of asking questions and the ethics of dialogue are also relevant to the study of contemporary Islamic education. Altinyelken shows that Islamic education can be a space for critical thinking if youth are given the opportunity to reflect on their beliefs and experiences (Altinyelken, 2021). Alkouatli emphasized that Islamic pedagogy has a learning tradition that not only transmits information, but shapes Muslim subjects through the relationship between teachers, students, and science (Alkouatli, 2018). Alotaibi highlights the role of Islamic education teachers in improving higher-order thinking (Alotaibi, 2025). Darul Khoirot data confirms that teachers hold a central position as facilitators as well as guardians of manners. However, the study also shows a tension that needs to be managed: overly dominant teacher authority can limit students' questions, while the freedom to ask questions without manners can undermine a culture of respect. Therefore, the most productive model is not a completely independent class, but a class that is safe to ask questions and ethically clear.

The theoretical implication is that the concept of critical dialogue in Islamic education must include the dimensions of authority, trust, and character building. The practical implication is that schools need to create a civilized discussion guide and a participation assessment rubric that assesses the quality of reasons as well as the way to express opinions. On the other hand, dialogue ethics need to continue to be defined operationally so that they do not become abstract

concepts. Students need to know the difference between asking to understand, asking to test reason, and asking to drop. Teachers also need to distinguish between criticism of ideas and criticism of the personal. In Islamic learning, this distinction is very important because students are often confronted with texts of scholars, and respected traditions. If the teacher does not give guidance, students can become passive for fear of being perceived as disrespectful or otherwise become too free without the sensitivity of manners.

Therefore, accustoming academic sentences such as "according to the sources I read", "whether there are other possible interpretations", or "I understand the opinion, but would like to ask for an explanation" can help build a climate of dialogue. This simple practice makes adab not just moral advice, but communication skills that can be observed and assessed. Teachers also need a classroom language agreement so that students feel safe. For example, a teacher may assert that misreasoning is part of learning, while belittling friends is not part of the discussion. This deal seems simple, but it greatly determines the courage of the students. Critical thinking is difficult to grow in a class full of fear. On the other hand, a class that is psychologically safe and orderly in manners will make it easier for students to try, revise, and improve their thinking.

Critically, the findings of this study also show several implementation challenges. First, the integration of critical thinking is highly dependent on the competence of teachers; Teachers who are used to teaching lectures may have difficulty turning factual questions into analytical ones. Second, not all critical thinking indicators have been translated into measurable assessments, so evaluation still has the potential to return to memorization. Third, the burden of formal curriculum and pesantren can make reflection time limited. This challenge is in line with the study of Muniroh which places technology, globalization, and social change as factors demanding the renewal of Islamic education, and Aulia which emphasizes the need for critical thinking indicators in PAI learning

(Muniroh, 2024; Nur Aulia et al., 2024).

The contribution of this research is to show that strengthening critical thinking based on Islamic values requires a multi-level curriculum design: institutional vision, teaching tools, learning strategies, dialogue culture, and assessment. Theoretically, this research expands the discussion on the integration of knowledge and values in Islamic education. Practically, schools need to hold teacher training, learning supervision, critical question banks, and student reflection portfolios so that the strengthening of critical thinking does not stop at sporadic practice. The challenge does not diminish the value of the findings, but points to the need for stronger institutionalization. Schools need to ensure that critical thinking does not only appear in certain innovative teachers, but becomes a minimum standard of learning.

The way that can be taken is to compile a competency map of critical thinking based on Islamic values from grades VII to IX, make sample modules, prepare assessment rubrics, and conduct periodic reflections on teachers. Rubrics can contain the dimensions of clarity of claims, strength of evidence, relevance of reasons, depth of reflection of values, and manners of delivery. With such an instrument, students understand that grades are not only pronounced, but are assessed through academic behavior.

In addition, the principal's supervision needs to observe the quality of the teacher's questions, the variety of learning resources, and the participation of students. If this step is carried out consistently, Darul Khoirot can develop a curriculum model that is not only relevant locally, but can also serve as a reference for integrated Islamic schools and other modern Islamic boarding schools. Thus, the success of the program is not enough to measure the presence or absence of the term critical thinking in school documents. A more important measure is a change in daily practice: whether students ask questions more often with reasons, whether teachers provide room for clarification, whether learning resources are

compared, and whether differences of opinion are managed in manners. If these indicators seem consistent, then the curriculum really works as an educational experience, not just an administrative document.

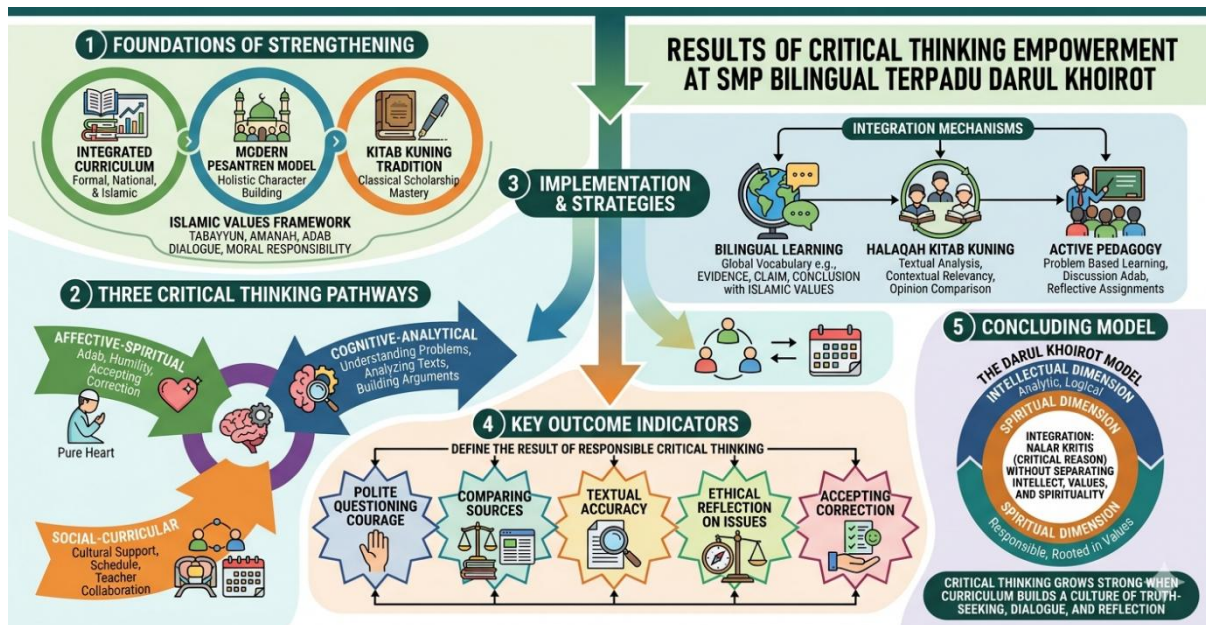


Figure 1. Empowering Critical Thinking Based on Islamic Values in an Integrated Curriculum

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the strengthening of critical thinking based on Islamic values at Darul Khoirot Integrated Bilingual Junior High School takes place through the integration of formal curriculum, bilingual learning, pesantren activities, and the tradition of the yellow book. The main findings show that critical thinking is understood not as the courage to criticize without limits, but as the ability to weigh information, formulate reasons, compare sources, and draw conclusions with manners. The prominent Islamic values in the process are tabayyun, scientific trust, humility, dialogue ethics, and the search for truth. With this model, students are trained to think more reflectively while also being morally responsible.

The implications of this research are theoretical and practical. Theoretically,

this article emphasizes that critical thinking in Islamic education needs to be understood as a cognitive-ethical competence, not just a logical skill. The tradition of Islamic boarding schools, especially the learning of the yellow book, can be an important source for the formation of critical reasoning because it trains linguistic accuracy, understanding of context, and respect for scientific authority. Practically, pesantren based schools can use these findings as a reference for designing a curriculum that connects 21st-century skills with Islamic values. This integration is important so that education modernization does not eliminate the roots of tradition.

This study has limitations because it uses a case study design on one institution so the results are not intended for statistical generalization. Findings are more accurately understood as contextual understandings that can inspire similar institutions. The next research is suggested to make comparisons between modern Islamic boarding schools, develop critical thinking assessment instruments based on Islamic values, or test the effectiveness of certain learning models more systematically. With further research, the concept of critical thinking in Islamic education can develop into a curriculum framework that is more operational, measurable, and still rooted in Islamic scientific traditions

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