



Implementing Qur'an-Hadith learning to foster students' critical thinking skills

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of Qur'an-Hadith learning grounded in the values of tafakkur and tadabbur in QS Ali Imran: 190-191, which are closely related to the development of students' critical thinking skills. This research was conducted to address the need for learning models in Islamic education that not only transfer religious knowledge but also foster higher-order thinking skills among vocational school students. The main purpose of this study is to explore how the study of the Qur'an and Hadith can be integrated into classroom activities to strengthen students' analytical and reflective thinking, particularly in the context of health vocational education. Using a qualitative descriptive method, data were collected through observation, interviews, and document analysis involving PAI teachers and students at SMK Sentra Medika. The findings reveal that integrating Qur'anic values with reflective learning strategies, such as discussion-based activities, mindful learning, and contextual analysis, effectively encourages students to connect Qur'anic messages with real-life experiences and ethical issues in the health field. The study concludes that appropriately designed Qur'an-Hadith instruction can significantly contribute to the development of critical thinking skills and support the formation of spiritually and intellectually balanced learners.

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji implementasi pembelajaran Al-Qur'an-Hadis berbasis nilai-nilai tafakkur dan tadabbur dalam QS Ali Imran: 190-191, yang erat kaitannya dengan pengembangan keterampilan berpikir kritis siswa. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk menjawab kebutuhan akan model pembelajaran dalam pendidikan Islam yang tidak hanya mentransfer ilmu agama tetapi juga menumbuhkan keterampilan berpikir tingkat tinggi di kalangan siswa sekolah kejuruan. Tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana pembelajaran Al-Qur'an-Hadis dapat diintegrasikan ke dalam kegiatan kelas untuk memperkuat kemampuan berpikir analitis dan reflektif siswa, terutama dalam konteks pendidikan kejuruan kesehatan. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan analisis dokumen yang melibatkan guru PAI dan siswa di SMK Sentra Medika. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an dengan strategi pembelajaran reflektif seperti kegiatan diskusi, pembelajaran penuh kesadaran, dan analisis kontekstual secara efektif mendorong siswa untuk menghubungkan pesan-pesan Al-Qur'an dengan pengalaman hidup nyata dan isu-isu etika di bidang kesehatan. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa pembelajaran Al-Qur'an-Hadis yang dirancang dengan tepat dapat berkontribusi secara signifikan terhadap pengembangan keterampilan berpikir kritis dan mendukung pembentukan peserta didik yang seimbang secara spiritual dan intelektual.

Kata Kunci: berpikir kritis; pembelajaran al-qur'an-hadis; pendidikan Islam vokasional; tafakkur dan tadabbur

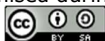
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INTRODUCTION

Education in this era is essential for producing a superior generation capable of addressing contemporary challenges by mastering four key skills: critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. In line with the principles of the Kurikulum Merdeka, educators are encouraged to implement innovative learning strategies that hone students' cognitive abilities, particularly critical thinking. However, traditional, teacher-centered learning often leaves students passive and hinders the development of these abilities. Particularly in Islamic Religious Education or Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI), a key challenge is the decline in student interest and understanding. Therefore, engaging and relevant methods are needed (Mukti & Prima, 2025).

The evolving demands of 21st-century competencies position critical thinking as a core ability that students must possess to filter information, solve problems, and act adaptively in both the workplace and daily life. In the context of religious education, strengthening critical thinking is essential to integrating faith and reason, enabling students to understand, analyze, and apply the values of the Qur'an and Hadith in their historical and cultural contexts. Recent studies have shown that the Islamic educational tradition actually provides a strong foundation for developing critical thinking, and its role needs to be contextualized within contemporary learning practices (Ramadhan & Arsyad, 2025).

The importance of PAI in shaping students' character is reinforced by implementing a contextual, interactive, and integrative learning approach. Teachers are expected to present material within students' real-life contexts, actively engage them through various methods, and integrate PAI with other subjects. This approach aims to enable students to connect religious teachings with the realities of everyday life and critically understand them (Faisal et al., 2024).

In vocational high schools (SMK), particularly those emphasizing vocational competencies such as SMK Sentra Medika, PAI, and the study of the Qur'an and Hadith, students often encounter practical challenges: an emphasis on memorization, limited relevance of religious material to vocational contexts, and a lack of pedagogical strategies that promote reflection and critical analysis. These conditions may reduce students' textual and applied understanding of the Qur'an and Hadith, necessitating the implementation of learning techniques that bridge the gap between religious values and the higher-order thinking skills required in the healthcare workforce (Setiadi et al., 2025). Learning the Qur'an and Hadith plays a crucial role in shaping students' morals. Therefore, teachers must consistently master the material and the use of learning models. However, the Indonesian education system continues to face various challenges, particularly in developing students' critical thinking skills (Aisyah, 2024).

In practice, PAI learning in schools is often dominated by memorization and lectures, thus under-motivating students to think critically. Critical thinking is an essential skill for students in the 21st century. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey results indicate that Indonesian students' critical thinking and literacy skills remain below the OECD average, with many students having difficulty understanding and evaluating

information. This condition indicates the need for learning that encourages higher-order thinking skills, including through a literacy approach (Swanto & Darlis, 2025).

QS. Ali Imran: 190-191 invite humans to observe (*nazhara*), reflect (*tafakkur*), and remember the signs of Allah's greatness scattered throughout the activities of creation of the heavens and the earth, thereby implicitly emphasizing the importance of intellectual reflection and rationality within the Qur'anic tradition. Many modern and thematic interpretations view these verses as a normative basis for critical thinking education: not only as a spiritual call, but also as Qur'anic legitimacy for systematic intellectual activities such as observation, analysis, and reflection (Alawiyah et al., 2025). Therefore, these verses provide a conceptual foundation for the design of Qur'an-Hadith learning that cultivates students' critical thinking skills.

Although various studies have examined the educational values contained in QS. Ali Imran: 190-191, particularly in relation to reasoning, contemplation (*tafakkur*), spirituality, and Islamic character research that explicitly integrates the meaning of these verses into the teaching and learning practices of Al-Qur'an-Hadith education at the vocational high school level, especially within vocational contexts such as health vocational schools, remains very limited. These verses contain values related to critical and scientific thinking, spirituality, monotheism, and morality and character, and should also be understood as the foundation of an intellectual education that integrates rationality and spirituality (Qutub, 2023; Shalihuddin et al., 2025).

This literature review indicates a research gap: few empirical studies examine how the values of *tafakkur* or *tadabbur* (reflection) are embedded in QS. Ali Imran: 190-191 can be implemented in Qur'an-Hadith learning in vocational high schools, particularly in studies that integrate religious, pedagogical, and contextual dimensions with students' prospective work or professional fields (e.g., the health sector). This research seeks to address this gap by analyzing and applying verse-based Qur'an-Hadith learning to strengthen students' critical thinking skills.

Based on this review, the unique contribution of this study can be explicitly formulated as follows. First, this study seeks to address the empirical gap by developing and testing a Qur'an-Hadith learning model that operationalizes the values of *tafakkur/tadabbur* as articulated in QS. Ali Imran: 190-191 into concrete pedagogical activities specifically designed for the context of Health Vocational High Schools. Second, it integrates the measurement of changes in students' critical thinking skills (HOTS) with an assessment of the relevance of professional practice in the health sector, a combination of interpretive pedagogical approaches, and vocational competency evaluation that is rarely found in the existing literature. Thus, this study not only highlights the verse's theoretical significance as a foundation for intellectual education but also offers an implementation model and empirical evidence demonstrating how the verse can serve as a pedagogical tool to strengthen vocational high school students' critical thinking in a professional context. The focus of this study is the interpretation of QS. Ali Imran: 190-191 regarding critical thinking in relation to learning, specifically the Qur'an-Hadith theme, for students in grades X, XI, and XII at SMK Kesehatan Sentra Medika.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical Thinking as a 21st-Century Competency Requirement

Critical thinking skills are among the key competencies students must possess in the 21st century. This ability is essential for students to filter information, solve problems, and make rational decisions in everyday life and the workplace. In Islamic education, critical thinking serves as a bridge between faith and rationality, enabling students to understand, analyze, and apply the values of the Quran and Hadith in context, rather than simply memorizing texts. Recent research confirms that the Islamic educational tradition has a strong theological foundation for developing critical thinking skills and is relevant to contextualizing modern learning (Ramadhan & Arsyad, 2025).

Research on the development of critical thinking in PAI, in general, also indicates that PAI has significant potential to shape higher-order cognitive skills. High school students' critical thinking skills in PAI subjects remain moderate. Therefore, teachers should design learning activities that encourage analysis, evaluation, and argumentation (Yolanza dan Mardianto, 2022). The professional competence of PAI teachers, including mastery of instructional and assessment methods, positively affects students' critical thinking skills (Akhyar et al., 2024). The development of a Qur'an Hadith module (with the theme "religious tolerance") based on a contextual approach at MAN 5 Hulu Sungai Tengah is effective in improving students' critical thinking skills (analysis, evaluation, and logical conclusions) (Nisa & Muhtadi, 2025). The group using Collaborative Concept Mapping (CCM) showed a significant increase in critical thinking skills compared with Individual Concept Mapping (ICM) and conventional methods for learning the Qur'an-Hadith among MTs students (Ratnawati, 2022).

However, most of these studies still view PAI in general and rarely examine how specific verses from the Qur'an are used as the main framework in systematically developing critical thinking skills in the classroom. Previous studies on QS. Ali Imran: 190-191 remain largely theoretical and have not been applied in practice. In contrast, studies on the development of critical thinking in PAI rarely relate it directly to these verses, particularly in vocational schools. Thus, this study extends the function of Qur'anic verses beyond merely normative studies to contextual pedagogical models oriented toward strengthening 21st-century competencies.

Quran and Hadith Learning in Vocational High Schools

PAI at the vocational high school level has distinct characteristics because it must align with students' vocational contexts. In health-based vocational schools such as SMK Sentra Medika, Quran and Hadith learning is not only required to convey understanding of the text but also to connect religious values with professional ethics and the healthcare work context (Harwati, 2021). However, various studies indicate that Quran and Hadith learning in vocational high schools continues to face challenges, including the predominance of memorization methods, the lack of relevance of the material to the workplace, and the absence of learning strategies that foster reflection and critical analysis (Setiadi et al., 2025).

The Quran and Hadith subjects essentially guide students to understand, internalize, and practice Islamic teachings as articulated in their primary sources. This learning includes the ability to read the Quran, understand its meaning, interpret verses, and practice Hadith to reinforce Islamic values (Hamli, 2023).

QS. Ali Imran: 190-191 as the Foundation for Critical Thinking in Islam

QS. Ali Imran: 190-191, contains an explicit call to see, observe, and reflect on the signs of Allah's greatness in the creation of the heavens and the earth. Many contemporary scholars view the activities of *Nazhar*, *Tafakkur*, and *Dhikr* in this verse as the normative basis for critical thinking education in Islam. This verse directs humans to engage in intellectual reflection through observation, analysis, and the drawing of conclusions about natural phenomena (Alawiyah et al., 2025).

Classical exegetical studies also reinforce the critical value of this verse. According to al-Qurtubi's interpretation, the verse commands humans to reflect on the signs of divinity as a proper exercise of reason. The hadith of Aisha (r.a.) recounts how the Prophet Muhammad SAW wept after receiving the verse and said that woe to anyone who reads it without contemplation, demonstrating the importance of deep thought in understanding Allah's verses (Yunita et al., 2024). Recent research indicates that meditation positively affects cognitive and psychological development, including physiological relaxation, increased focus, and improved mental health (Yani et al., 2022). Thus, meditation strengthens students' critical thinking skills during the learning process.

The Nature of Critical Thinking from an Educational Perspective

Various experts have defined critical thinking as a process of rational reflection to determine what to believe or do. Critical thinking is a form of logical thinking that places greater emphasis on decision-making. The components of interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference are central to critical thinking. Critical thinking is also a disciplined process that combines observation, experience, and reasoning to inform action. There are six main components of critical thinking: character, criteria, arguments, reasoning, perspective, and procedures for applying criteria (Syafitri et al., 2021). These models provide a conceptual foundation for analyzing how Qur'an-Hadith learning can develop students' critical thinking skills.

Concepts of the Qur'an and Hadith in PAI Learning

Linguistically, the Qur'an comes from the word "*qara'a*" which means to collect or read. Abdul Wahhab Khalaf defines the Qur'an as the word of Allah, which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW through Gabriel (Jibril in Arabic) and is a guide to human life, which is continuously protected from change (Harmoni, 2020). Meanwhile, hadith is everything that is attributed to the Prophet SAW, in the form of his words, actions, and decrees. In the learning context, the Qur'an-Hadith serves to develop students' Islamic literacy skills, including reading with *tartil*, understanding the content of verses, studying tajwid, tafsir, and *asbabun nuzul* in proportion to students' developmental stage. Effective learning of the

Qur'an and Hadith requires integrating textual understanding with contextual reflection so that its values can be applied in students' daily lives and the world of work (Saiful, 2025).

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative case study design to examine in depth the implementation of QS. Ali Imran: 190-191 in Al-Qur'an-Hadith learning and its contribution to the development of students' critical thinking skills at SMK Sentra Medika. This approach was chosen because it enables researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the events under study and to depict their reality, resulting in more objective and contextual data. The research subjects included PAI teachers and students in grades X, XI, and XII majoring in Nursing and Pharmacy. This study involved eight key informants selected through purposive sampling. The informants consisted of two Qur'an Hadith teachers, one school principal, one curriculum coordinator, and four students. The selection of this information was based on their direct involvement and relevance to the implementation of Qur'an Hadith learning to foster students' critical thinking skills. The Qur'an Hadith teachers were chosen because they are primary actors in designing, implementing, and assessing instructional strategies that integrate critical thinking with Qur'an Hadith learning. The school principal and curriculum coordinator were selected for their roles in formulating academic policies, supporting pedagogical innovation, and overseeing the implementation of the curriculum related to the development of critical thinking. The students were purposively selected for their active participation in Qur'anic and Hadith studies and for their ability to reflect on their learning experiences, thereby encouraging analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of Qur'anic and Hadith texts.

Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that all informants possessed rich, relevant, and in-depth knowledge of the instructional practices and learning experiences under investigation, thereby enabling a comprehensive understanding of how Qur'an Hadith learning is implemented to foster students' critical thinking skills. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis (lesson plans, teaching materials, and student worksheets). The instruments included interview guidelines to explore learning strategies and experiences, observation sheets to record classroom interactions, critical-thinking indicators (analysis, evaluation, reflection), and document-analysis rubrics to assess the integration of QS. Ali Imran: 190-191 values in lesson planning.

To ensure data validity, this study applied data triangulation, method triangulation, and time triangulation. Data triangulation was conducted by comparing information from teachers, students, and documents; method triangulation was conducted by matching the results of interviews, observations, and documentation, while time triangulation was conducted through data collection on different days and grade levels. Data analysis follows the Miles and Huberman model in their book, "Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook" through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. This process demonstrates a clear relationship among research design, data collection procedures, instrument use, and the analytical framework, thereby ensuring methodological consistency and enhancing the validity and credibility of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The research results were derived from interviews and the author's analysis. In the 13 chapters of the teaching materials used by PAI teachers, which cover Quranic jurisprudence, Islamic jurisprudence (SKI), and Islamic creeds (*Akidah Akhlak*), the author examined only one topic: the Qur'an and Hadith. Here, the researcher focused on a single chapter or theme: critical thinking, as identified in QS. Ali Imran: 190-191. The results of this study point to learning methods and PAI teaching techniques for the Qur'an and Hadith, as interpreted through the theme of critical thinking in QS. Ali Imran: 190-191.

Given the challenges students there face, SMK Sentra Medika employs a discussion-based learning approach to teach critical thinking. They are trained to analyze the learning topic specifically, QS. Ali Imran: 190-191, on critical thinking. They are directed to reflect on God's creation and to meditate on the universe He created, which they then apply to their experience. Students have shared their experiences. They sought to reflect on why humans must work hard and what hard work entails. One form of "hard work" in Islam is spiritual hard work. Then they connected it to their experiences. According to the school agenda, they performed the Dhuha prayer, which is a form of physical exercise. In addition, there is worldly hard work, one example of which is working professionally. As prospective healthcare workers, they have an obligation to work professionally. They are not permitted to discriminate against patients on the basis of race, religion, culture, or ethnicity, and all patients receive the same standard of care. This is an example of the application of meditation (thinking) in everyday life. The lesson plan also states the learning objectives for this chapter: reading and memorizing QS. Ali Imran: 190-191 and the Hadith on critical thinking, explaining the contents of QS. Ali Imran: 190-191 and the Hadith on critical thinking; and implementing the values of the verses and the Hadith.

As explained in the research results above, the value of PAI in QS. Ali Imran: 190-191 is related to intellectual and spiritual intelligence. Therefore, teachers employ strategies to determine appropriate learning methods and models for students. From there, teachers use discussion methods to train students' cognitive abilities. In this section, the author briefly explains how discussion methods impact students' cognitive abilities. The first step is for teachers to assess students to determine what problems they are experiencing. The assessment revealed that students at SMK Sentra Medika had difficulty understanding and analyzing the material. After that, the teacher used a "peer tutoring" technique, grouping students into active and passive categories. In the teaching materials, on the first page, there is a sub-chapter "*Tafakur*", where students are directed to reflect on God's creation, all the blessings, and extraordinary events that occur in this universe.

In addition to reading, memorizing, and analyzing QS. Ali Imran: 190-191, the teacher delivered material on the branches of Qur'anic science, including tajweed. Regarding the application of the tajweed material studied there, sourced from the teacher's tajweed book, after which the teacher wrote the rules for reading each word in the verse on the board, followed by students who wrote and read together. For the application of the Qur'anic material here, namely, the science of interpretation. They were not instructed to interpret

using tafsir books. Their understanding is insufficient to interpret the text in detail using tafsir books. They understand the verse through the textbook's content. Then they apply it to their everyday experiences.

Although several studies have examined Qur'an-Hadith learning and various efforts to develop critical thinking skills in PAI, the existing literature presents diverse approaches and differing levels of empirical support. Some studies propose learning models oriented toward contextual relevance and the development of higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), such as a context-based Qur'an-Hadith module designed to enhance students' critical thinking abilities (Nisa & Mubtadi, 2025). The relevant Qur'anic learning approach in this case, the Living Qur'an approach, can enhance students' critical thinking skills (Maisyanah et al., 2024). However, this study does not explicitly relate its findings to QS. Ali Imran: 190-191, or in the context of health-related vocational education in vocational high schools.

On the exegetical side, *tahlili* analyses of QS. Ali Imran: 190-191 positions these verses as a foundation for intellectual education that integrates reason and spirituality (*tafakkur/tadabbur*) (Sofia, 2021). However, such tafsir studies tend to remain normative and theoretical, without providing concrete pedagogical steps for integrating these concepts into the PAI curriculum. Meanwhile, several studies focusing on SMK highlight the practical challenges of connecting religious content with vocational contexts and workplace demands, thereby underscoring the need for learning designs that integrate religious material with the development of professional competencies (Purnomo & Mukhlisin, 2025).

Next, there is the branch of science of *asbabun nuzul*. To understand the *asbabun nuzul* verses, students are instructed to rely solely on the textbook materials. Alternatively, typically based on their real-world experiences. To understand this verse, they can also relate it to biology. Only then will students understand the verse's content, including the purpose of the creation of the heavens and the earth, and of all living creatures in them. Students can also provide examples of attitudes that reflect the practice of the verse in their daily lives, whether or not they have experienced it personally. According to the author, this method is exciting because it encourages students to think critically and analyze problems. This is relevant to the author's research topic, regarding the meaning or interpretation of Q.S Ali Imran: 190-191 on critical thinking. To develop critical thinking among SMK Sentra Medika students, teachers employ the discussion method. There is also a model used, namely the mindful learning model. Mindful learning is a teaching method that goes beyond meditation and breathing techniques. This approach focuses on developing self-awareness, full presence during learning, and students' ability to regulate emotions and attention. The goal is to create students who are not only intelligent (cognitively focused) but also emotionally stable and ready to face various challenges in the learning process (Ulandari & Efendi, 2025).

At SMK Sentra Medika, PAI teachers implement active and reflective Quran-Hadith learning to foster students' critical thinking. This is evident when students actively engage in group discussions on QS. Ali Imran: 190-191, where they are asked to analyze the relationship between the verses and natural phenomena around them. These findings indicate that discussion-based learning in PAI significantly improves students' analytical and evaluation skills.

Moreover, teachers' application of a scientific approach, encompassing observation, data collection, and reflective analysis, creates opportunities for students to engage with Qur'anic verses more rationally. By guiding students to examine natural phenomena to foster reflective reasoning, learners demonstrate an enhanced capacity to relate empirical evidence to the underlying messages of the verses, indicating the emergence of higher-order thinking skills (Chalis et al., 2022).

The Quran and Hadith teacher explained that she designed the lesson with the specific goal of fostering students' critical thinking skills. She stated, "Critical thinking in this context means encouraging students to not only memorize verses of the Quran or Hadith, but also to understand their meaning, explore the values contained within, and relate them to everyday life." The strategies used included repeated recitation, storytelling, group discussions, and prompting questions that stimulate analysis and reflection. The teacher also developed lesson plans that focused on critical thinking activities, using an active learning approach and simple media such as *murottal* (recitation of the Quran), videos, and PowerPoint presentations (Aziz et al., 2025).

In practice, students are guided to relate verses to their experiences, such as professional ethics and spiritual endeavors. Mindful learning activities and peer tutoring discussions significantly strengthen critical thinking. When students are asked to relate verses to their life experiences, for example, regarding professional ethics in the health sector, they can identify moral issues, compare experiences, and draw reflective conclusions. This demonstrates that learning the Qur'an and Hadith is not merely a matter of memorizing texts but rather a conceptual endeavor that systematically integrates religious values and rational thinking.

Discussion

Interpretation of QS. Ali Imran: 190-191

In the following discussion, the author examines the interpretation of QS. Ali Imran: 190-191. The interpretation used is that of Al-Qurtubi. The interpretation states that this verse is the beginning of the closing verses of QS. Ali Imran, where Allah SWT commands us to observe, reflect on, and draw conclusions from the signs of God. These signs cannot exist except by the Living, the Sustainer, the Pure, the Savior, the All-Rich, and the One who needs nothing in the universe. By holding this belief, they demonstrate genuine conviction rather than merely following the crowd. In the verse that reads: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ "There are signs for people of understanding." This is one of the functions of reason given to all humans, namely, so that they can use this reason to reflect on the signs that Allah SWT has given.

Then, the interpretation of this verse is explained in the hadith of the Prophet from Aisyah r.a. It was reported from Aisyah that she said: When this verse was revealed to the Prophet SAW, he immediately got up and prayed. Moreover, when the time for the fardhu prayers arrived, Bilal came to give the call to prayer. However, before he could chant it, he heard the Prophet SAW crying, then Bilal approached him, and Bilal asked,

"O Messenger of Allah, why are you crying, even though Allah has guaranteed you to erase all your sins, past or future,"

The Prophet SAW answered,

"O Bilal, can't I be a servant who is good at being grateful? This night Allah SWT revealed a verse to me... namely:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَآخِثَاتِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ١٩٠

Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are signs for people of understanding,"

The Prophet SAW continued,

"It is truly a loss for those who read it but do not meditate on it,"

The author concludes that this verse emphasizes that every human being should reflect on and meditate on all of God's creation on earth. By practicing meditation, humans can experience several benefits. For example, a Muslim can readily attain the stage of meditation by reciting the verses of the Qur'an and understanding their meaning. Listening to or reading the Qur'an, compared with music, has a therapeutic and calming effect on individuals. There are also prior studies in which participants were assessed for physiological status. They were given recitations of verses from the Quran. The physiological changes observed include skeletal muscle relaxation, increased blood flow, stabilization of heart rate, and regulation of body temperature. Furthermore, listening to Quranic recitations can provide a sense of inner peace, reduce stress, and improve mental health. These activities can help individuals achieve emotional calm, physical health, and increased focus. Through this increased focus, meditation can train students to think critically in the learning process (Yani et al., 2022).

In addition, meditation can stimulate the five senses, including auditory stimulation from hearing birds chirping, wind blowing, and other natural sounds, thereby positively influencing psychological well-being and increasing human affection for the natural world. Therefore, hearing natural sounds can stimulate a person's auditory abilities, which can improve or shape the development of their (students') ideas. Meditation while listening to the audio described above can also stimulate brainwave activity. If it is related to medical science, the human brain emits waves that we do not feel. Waves originating from the brain are conscious and unconscious. Brain waves have extraordinary power that can do anything. Human brain waves can penetrate all objects without obstacles or problems and travel at super speed over infinite distances (Soltani, 2023). If someone does brain wave therapy by listening to calming audio, it can overcome various mental illnesses, including helping to overcome PTSD and alleviating symptoms of depression (see: <https://www.alodokter.com/informasi-terapi-gelombang-otak-ini-perlu-anda-ketahui>).

In addition to cognitive aspects, critical analysis-based Quran-Hadith learning also strengthens students' affective and spiritual aspects. When students are confronted with moral or social issues and then analyze them using specific verses and hadith, they learn to connect the text to reality. This ability is a form of reasoned faith, namely faith supported by rational argumentation and in-depth understanding. This type of learning process is crucial in modern Islamic education, as it helps students understand religion comprehensively, rather than merely through textual study. This finding aligns with the views of Al-Naquib al-Attas and Abdullah Saeed in their book called "Islam and secularism", who emphasize the importance of developing critical reasoning in Islamic education to address global dynamics and contemporary moral challenges.

The Essence of Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is self-regulation in judging matters, resulting in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as in explanation, using evidence, concepts, methodologies, criteria, or contextual considerations as the basis for decision-making. Six characteristics that are associated with critical thinking in daily practice are as follows:

1. **Dispositions:** Someone with critical thinking skills is skeptical, very open, values honesty, respects various data and opinions, respects clarity and thoroughness, seeks out differing perspectives, and will change their stance when an opinion they deem sound. In daily practice, students should cross-check every piece of data, media, or knowledge they consume so they can develop multiple points of view on the matter/topic. Cross-checking can be done by providing them with various sources or media for comparison. Teachers can also encourage students to view the matter from another perspective or offer a metaphorical example to help them understand the material more easily.
2. **Criteria:** Critical thinking must have criteria or benchmarks. To reach that point, one must find something to decide or believe. Although an argument can be constructed from several sources, each will have different criteria. If we are to apply standards, they must be grounded in relevance, factual accuracy, source credibility, thoroughness, impartiality, freedom from logical fallacies, consistent logic, and mature consideration. Daily, teachers also need to guide students in distinguishing between trustworthy and untrustworthy sources. This is also related to media literacy, as students need to recognize the characteristics of hoaxes and false media as sources so they do not fall for misinformation.
3. **Argument:** An argument is a statement or proposition based on data. Critical thinking skills include recognizing, evaluating, and constructing arguments. After learning to search various sources and identify false/hoax sources, students should be trained to evaluate appropriate sources and construct an argument based on the information they have previously found.
4. **Reasoning:** This ability involves summarizing conclusions from one or more premises. The process involves examining the relationships between statements or data. After an argument and statements presented in multiple views or as separate topics, students need to be trained to synthesize the data into a single, well-structured topic with a logical sequence.
5. **Point of View:** A point of view is a way of viewing or interpreting the world, which determines the construction of meaning. A critical thinker will view a phenomenon from multiple perspectives. At this stage, students can reflect on their opinions and experiences and assign meaning to the topic that was previously analyzed. Thus, this will become a complete understanding within oneself rather than merely memorizing material that has already been searched for.
6. **Procedures for applying criteria:** The procedures for applying critical thinking are complex and procedural. These procedures include formulating the problem, determining the decision to be made, and identifying assumptions. Students' prior understanding can inform decision-making in their lives. In this case, in studying and understanding what God gives us in this world, they recognize that study is not merely about memorizing

material; it involves deep reflection and knowing how best to act in this life, based on the knowledge they have acquired through prior research (Syafitri et al., 2021).

Understanding the Qur'an Hadith

In language, *Qara'a* means "to collect, or collect" into one word "*Qur'an*" and "*Qira'ah*". Both are *masdar* (infinitive) taken from the past tense verb (*Fi'il Madhi*), namely *Qara'a-Qiraatan-Quranan*. The word *Qur'anah* in the verse above means *qiraatuhu*, namely the reading or way of reading it. There are various definitions of the Qur'an, including that of Abdul Wahhab Khalaf: the word of Allah, revealed to the Messenger of Allah through Gabriel (Jibril in Arabic). It becomes a law for humans, provides guidance, and serves as a means of approaching oneself and worshiping Allah. It is collected in the *mushaf*, beginning with Surah Al-Fatihah and ending with Surah An-Nas, conveyed to us mutawatir from generation to generation, both orally and in writing, and protected from alteration (Harmoni, 2020).

Furthermore, the Qur'an is termed as "the Word of Allah SWT, which is an eternal miracle to the Prophet Muhammad that humans cannot match, revealed to the heart of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, passed down to the next generation in *mutawatir*, when read, it is worth worship and has great rewards". The Qur'an is a revelation from Allah and, at the same time, a guide for human life. Many sciences were born of the Qur'an, both those directly related to it, such as Ulumul Qur'an and Tafsir, and those not directly related but inspired by the Qur'an, such as the natural sciences and economics. The Qur'an emphasizes the human need to hear, realize, reflect, live, and understand. Therefore, the Qur'an must be able to answer various problems that occur in society (Harmoni, 2020).

The term "*hadith*" has been widely used in Islamic studies to refer to the example and authority of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, or the second source of Islamic law after the Quran. However, the meanings of these two terms are not necessarily clear or easy to understand. Scholars from each discipline use these terms from different perspectives, resulting in distinct definitions. The word "*hadith*" denotes a narrative, conversation, or communication, whether oral or written. The plural form of "*hadith*", which is more popular among *muhaddith* scholars, is *ahadith*, compared to other forms, such as *hutsdan* or *hitsdan*. Arabs during the Jahiliyyah era used the word "*hadith*" to mean "conversation," as evidenced by their habit of referring to their "famous days" as a *hadith* (Harmoni, 2020).

Implementation of Quran-Hadith Learning

The application of a scientific approach in lesson plans and learning activities, including observation, studying natural phenomena, and contemplation, demonstrates that teachers have integrated higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) into Quran-Hadith learning. This model is supported by prior research, which has found that a scientific approach can improve critical thinking skills by requiring students to identify problems, analyze data, and draw logical conclusions from Quranic verses. Thus, the implementation is not only oriented toward the transfer of religious knowledge but also toward the formation of systematic and reflective ways of thinking (Chalis et al., 2022).

The findings of this study align with studies showing that contextual and active learning approaches can improve students' critical thinking skills; for example, the development of contextual modules and the effectiveness of collaborative concept mapping, both of which have been reported to increase students' analytical and evaluative skills. However, unlike studies that emphasize general instructional design, this study focuses on operationalizing the value of *tafakkur-tadabbur* in QS. Ali Imran: 190-191 into explicit learning activities (guided discussions, mindful learning, professional case studies) provides a strong textual-spiritual framework to encourage reflective questioning and argumentation among students (Nisa & Mubtadi, 2025; Ratnawati, 2022).

Additionally, these results reinforce the effectiveness of the Living Qur'an approach in improving HOTS, but fill a gap by demonstrating the implementation of specific verses (QS. Ali Imran: 190-191) in the context of health vocational education, thereby adding text-specific and profession-related dimensions to the literature (Maisyanah et al., 2024). In line with the interpretive analysis, which places this verse as the basis for intellectual education, this study goes further by proving how this interpretation can be transformed into concrete learning steps that foster critical thinking indicators in vocational high school classes (e.g., the ability to analyze health ethics cases and make inferences based on texts) (Sofia, 2021; Qutub, 2023).

Furthermore, activities such as mindful learning and peer tutoring demonstrate that teachers encourage the internalization of the values articulated in QS. Ali Imran: 190-191 through a contextual learning process. Students not only understand the verses textually but also interpret their relevance to real-life experiences related to professional ethics, discipline, and moral responsibility in healthcare settings. This approach aligns with the notion that critical thinking from an Islamic perspective encompasses the ability to weigh life experiences, draw lessons from them, and connect them to the guidance of revelation. Thus, Qur'an-Hadith learning at this school has moved toward a more transformative model, combining mastery of religious texts with the development of intellectual skills and character.

On the challenge side, findings showing teachers' limited mastery of HOTS strategies and the curriculum's tendency toward memorization reinforce the findings regarding the difficulty of linking PAI with vocational competencies (Purnomo & Mukhlisin, 2025; Setiadi et al., 2025). Therefore, the contribution of this study is not only confirmatory-that is, but supporting the effectiveness of active methods-but also prescriptive, as it offers verse-based implementation steps that can be used as models for teacher training, lesson plan development, and the formulation of critical thinking assessment indicators in the context of professional study programs. The research also identified several obstacles, including:

1. Teachers have not fully mastered HOTS-based learning strategies.
2. The curriculum tends to focus on memorization rather than analysis.
3. Learning time is limited, so text analysis is often superficial.

However, with teacher training, project-based planning, and improved analytical teaching materials, these challenges can be overcome.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the integration of QS. Ali Imran: 190-191 into Qur'an-Hadith learning and its contribution to developing students' critical thinking skills in a health vocational school. The findings show that operationalizing the values of *tafakkur* and *tadabbur* through reflective discussion, contextual questioning, and mindful learning activities significantly encourages students to think analytically, interpret meaning deeply, and connect religious teachings with real-life and professional ethical issues. Students moved beyond memorization to higher-order thinking, demonstrating improved abilities in reasoning, evaluation, and moral judgment related to healthcare practices. These results confirm that Qur'an-Hadith learning can simultaneously strengthen spiritual awareness and cognitive skills when designed in a contextual and reflective manner.

Theoretically, this study extends previous research by transforming QS. Ali Imran: 190-191, from a primarily normative text into a practical pedagogical framework for developing critical thinking in vocational education. Practically, teachers are encouraged to implement structured reflective questions, vocationally relevant case studies, and discussion-based learning in Qur'an-Hadith lessons. Schools should support teacher training in HOTS-oriented strategies and integrate critical-thinking indicators into assessment. Future studies are recommended to employ quantitative or mixed-methods approaches, compare this model with other instructional strategies, and test it across different vocational contexts. Through this contribution, the study strengthens the integration of Qur'anic values, critical reasoning, and professional ethics in contemporary Islamic education.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest in the writing or publication of this article. All data, analysis, and content of the article were compiled independently and are guaranteed to be free of plagiarism. The author also confirms that this article is an original work that has not been published in other journals or scientific media.

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