



The Urgency of the *Tafhim* Method from the Perspective of Muhammad Abduh: Its Relevance for Improving Students' Critical Skills

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Abstract

This research is motivated by problems related to learning methods that focus on memorization to hinder the development of student's critical thinking skills. Muhammad Abduh criticized it by proposing the concept of renewal related to learning methods of the times. This study aims to describe the tafhim method in learning Muhammad Abduh's perspective and analyze its relevance for improving students' critical thinking skills. This research is a type of library research, using descriptive-qualitative research methods with a philosophical-historical approach. The data collection technique uses documentation, listening, and note-taking techniques. The data analysis technique uses content analysis techniques. The result of the research is that Muhammad Abduh said that the memorization method must be equipped with a logical method and can increase understanding such as the tafhim method. This tafhim method consists of several learning models: concept understanding, question and answer, practice and experience, and discussion. The tafhim method proposed by Muhammad Abduh is relevant to the context of contemporary education. Through these methods, students can express their understanding in depth to improve their critical thinking skills.

Keywords: *Tafhim* Method; Muhammad Abduh; Critical Thinking

Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh problem terkait metode pembelajaran yang berfokus pada hafalan sehingga menghambat perkembangan kemampuan berpikir kritis siswa. Muhammad Abduh mengkritiknya dengan mengusulkan konsep pembaharuan terkait metode pembelajaran yang sesuai dengan perkembangan zaman. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan metode tafhim dalam belajar perspektif Muhammad Abduh dan menganalisis relevansinya bagi peningkatan kemampuan berpikir kritis siswa. Penelitian ini termasuk jenis penelitian kepustakaan, menggunakan metode penelitian deskriptif-kualitatif dengan pendekatan filosofis-historis. Teknik pengumpulan datanya menggunakan teknik dokumentasi, simak dan catat. Teknik analisis datanya menggunakan teknik analisis isi. Hasil dari penelitian yaitu Muhammad Abduh mengatakan bahwa metode hafalan harus dilengkapi dengan metode yang logis dan dapat menambah pemahaman seperti metode tafhim. Metode tafhim ini terdiri dari beberapa model pembelajaran yaitu pemahaman konsep, tanya jawab, latihan dan pengalaman, serta diskusi. Metode tafhim yang diusulkan Muhammad Abduh relevan dengan konteks pendidikan kontemporer. Melalui metode tersebut, para siswa dapat menuangkan pemahamannya secara mendalam sehingga kemampuan berpikir kritisnya meningkat.

Kata Kunci: Qur'an; Kulit; Sains

INTRODUCTION

Education is the main pillar in shaping the character and intellect of a nation. In this context, religious education has a strategic role as the vanguard in producing the next generation of the nation who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have noble morals, solid moral values, and high integrity.¹ Religious education is actually the foundation for building spiritual, social, and cultural awareness that is able to face the challenges of the times. However, the world of education is currently faced with increasingly complex challenges, one of which is the learning evaluation system which tends to still focus on memorization and written exams. Quoting Bateson's opinion, memorization or memorization is considered a form of learning at the lowest level. Indeed, the ability to memorize has its own place in the educational process, especially to internalize basic information that supports further learning. However, memorization alone will not make a significant contribution to the development of learners if the memorized information is not used to understand, analyze, and think critically.² Therefore, this evaluation system is considered incapable of measuring critical thinking skills and skills of 21st century students.

In the 21st century, education is no longer only measured based on mastery of subject matter, but also from the extent to which students are able to develop critical thinking skills. In this era, the rapid flow of information requires individuals to not only be passive recipients of information, but also to be able to evaluate, analyze, and interpret every information received critically.³ This critical thinking ability is also the main key in the world to face various problems in daily life. Therefore, educators are expected to be able to develop deep critical thinking skills in each of their students. In this era, effective and up-to-date educational methods are needed in accordance with future needs. One of the figures who contributed his thoughts to the world of Islamic education is Muhammad Abduh.⁴ Muhammad Abduh was a Muslim reformist and intellectual who lived in the late 19th century. Abduh made various reforms, one of which is the concept of balance in Islamic education by integrating traditional science (religion) with modern science (general).⁵

In the world of education, Abduh also emphasizes the importance of a deep understanding method in learning so that education not only focuses on knowledge transfer through memorization, but also focuses on forming students' intellectual and moral capacities through analysis and reflection.⁶ This method is considered relevant to the needs of contemporary

¹ Andri Sutrisno, "Re-Orientasi Pendidikan Islam Perspektif Muhammad Abduh Dan Relevansinya Di Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Madura," *Jurnal Perspektif* 15, no. 2 (2023): 131–43.

² Muhammad Yasser and Muhtarom Muhtarom, "Kritik Metode Hafalan Dalam Agenda Pembaruan Pendidikan Islam Muhammad Abduh," *Jurnal Mathlul Fattah: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Studi Islam* 14, no. 2 (2023): 1–32.

³ Arindra Ikhwan Nur Huda and Muhammad Abduh, "Peningkatan Keterampilan Berpikir Kritis Siswa Melalui Model Problem Based Learning Pada Siswa Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Basicedu* 5, no. 3 (2021): 1547–54.

⁴ M. Faishal Khoirurrijal, Abdul Rahim Karim, and Ishom Fuadi Fikri, "Refleksi Pemikiran Muhammad Abduh Dalam Pembaruan Pendidikan Islam," *Ta'dibuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 4 (2023): 334–49.

⁵ Samsul Bahri and Erni Qomariyah, "Reformasi Manajemen Kelembagaan Dan Kurikulum Pendidikan Muhammad Abduh Di Mesir," *Journal Publicuho* 6, no. 3 (2023): 1156–66.

⁶ Yasser and Muhtarom, "Kritik Metode Hafalan Dalam Agenda Pembaruan Pendidikan Islam Muhammad Abduh."

education, which is currently faced with global challenges such as the digital revolution, unstoppable information flow, and social and economic complexity. The deep understanding-based learning method is believed to stimulate critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills in students. Research related to Muhammad Abduh's educational thinking has been done quite a lot before. One of them is an article entitled Implementation of Moral Education at Elementary School Age Based on the Concept of Muhammad Abduh. This article examines the concept of moral education offered by Abduh along with its main principles. This research also explores how the concept can be applied to elementary school-age children, which is a critical period in character and moral formation. This study emphasizes that moral education is not only important in instilling basic Islamic values, but also relevant to form a generation that has high morality in facing life's challenges.⁷

Another recent research is an article entitled Reform of Islamic Education Worldview: A Historical, Philosophical, and Sociological Review of Muhammad Abduh. This article explores Abduh's thinking holistically from three main dimensions: historical, philosophical, and sociological. This research aims to introduce a more inclusive and progressive worldview of Islamic education in accordance with the needs of modern times. With a comprehensive approach, this article offers a model of Islamic education that is not only oriented to the past, but also visionary, seeks to answer the challenges of globalization, and strengthens the relevance of Islamic education on the world stage.⁸ Another relevant research is an article titled "Muhammad Abduh's Thoughts in Islamic Education Reform and Its Relevance to Islamic Education Management." This article specifically discusses the Islamic educational reform thought initiated by Muhammad Abduh, focusing on how these ideas can be implemented in the world of contemporary education. In its study, this article highlights the various challenges faced by modern Islamic education, especially in maintaining the relevance of Islamic values and morals in the midst of rapid modernization, globalization, and social change. This article underlines that Abduh's thinking offers a relevant solution to overcome the challenges of Islamic education, such as the crisis of moral and moral values.⁹

This study also examines Muhammad Abduh's educational thought, but has a different focus and approach compared to previous studies. If most of the previous research focused more on aspects of Islamic education reform in general, moral education, or integration between religious science and general science, this research will specifically highlight the *tafhim* method or understanding in the learning process initiated by Muhammad Abduh. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the *tafhim* method as one of the learning approaches that can encourage the improvement of students' critical thinking skills. In the context of contemporary education, the ability to think critically is one of the main skills that must be possessed by

⁷ Tama Erlanda and Ellya Roza, "Implementasi Pendidikan Akhlak Pada Usia Sekolah Dasar Berdasarkan Konsep Muhammad Abduh," *Hikmah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 2 (2023): 130-41.

⁸ Abdul Halim and Adib Masykuri, "Pembaruan Pendidikan Islam Worldview: Tinjauan Historis, Filosofis Dan Sosiologis Muhammad Abduh," *Journal of Islamic Educational Development* 1, no. 1 (2024): 1-11.

⁹ Baharuddin, Muhammad Syakhil Afkar, and Muhammad Resky, "Pemikiran Muhammad Abduh Dalam Pembaruan Pendidikan Islam Dan Relevansinya Terhadap Manajemen Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Ilmiah Gopal Education* 5, no. 3 (2024): 2226-40.

students to face the challenges of the complex modern world. This study seeks to explain how the tafhim method, which emphasizes deep understanding, analysis, and reflection, is relevant to develop these critical skills.

Thus, the main purpose of this study is to describe the concept of the tafhim method in the perspective of Muhammad Abduh comprehensively. Furthermore, this study will also analyze the relevance of these methods in the current educational context, especially in improving students' critical thinking skills. With this approach, this research is expected to contribute to novelty, both in academic literature and in educational practice. In addition, the results of this study are also expected to provide practical recommendations for educators in designing learning strategies that not only focus on knowledge transfer, but also prioritize the development of critical thinking skills in students. This will make the tafhim method relevant not only as the intellectual heritage of Muhammad Abduh, but also as a solution to the needs of modern education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a type of literature research using descriptive-qualitative research methods to explain in detail the concept of educational reform by Muhammad Abduh regarding the method of understanding in learning and seeking its relationship with students' critical abilities. This research uses a philosophical-historical approach with documentation techniques, observation and note-taking techniques to collect data that are relevant to Muhammad Abduh's concept of thinking about educational methods and other supporting literature. The literature study method is also applied in this study to analyze various reliable and relevant literature references to the research topic. The data analysis technique used in this study is a content analysis technique consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to produce new findings. The data sources in this study include primary data sources derived from the study of Muhammad Abduh's concept of educational thought and secondary data sources derived from journals, books, and other literature related to learning methods in Islamic education. This research seeks to show that the ideas or ideas of philosophical figures can still be applied in the context of today's times.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A Glimpse of Muhammad Abduh's Life

Muhammad Abduh was a very influential Islamic reformer, born around 1849 AD in the village of Mahallat Nashr, Syubkhait Regency, Buhairah province, Egypt. He was the son of Abduh ibn Hasan Khairullah, a farmer of Turkish descent who was also known as the imam in his village. His mother's name was Junainah bint Uthman al-Kabir, coming from the lineage of scholars who continued to Umar bin Khattab.¹⁰ Before he was 10 years old, Muhammad Abduh had begun to be taught by his parents to read and write until he was proficient. Then he started his basic

¹⁰ Halim and Masykuri, "Pembaruan Pendidikan Islam Worldview: Tinjauan Historis, Filosofis Dan Sosiologis Muhammad Abduh."

education by memorizing the Qur'an and managed to complete it at the age of 12.¹¹ After completing the memorization, Abduh was sent by his father to Thanta to continue his education at the Sheikh Ahmadi Mosque in 1862. There he studied the science of tajweed al-Qur'an. He was dissatisfied with the teaching method that placed a lot of emphasis on memorization, so he decided to return to his hometown after about two years in Thanta with the intention of following in his father's footsteps to become a farmer.¹² In 1865 she married at the age of 16. But after 40 days of marriage, her parents again encouraged her to continue her education in Thanta. In the middle of his journey, Abduh changed his direction to the residence of his uncle, Sheikh Darwisy Khadr, in the village of Khanisha Urin.¹³

Sheikh Darwisy Khadr is a spiritual teacher of the Syadzili order. He continues to water Abduh with various kinds of knowledge, with more fun learning methods. Through him, Abduh began to love science again with a new and passionate spirit.¹⁴ After gaining motivation, Abduh continued his secondary education and finally managed to become a student of Al-Azhar University in Cairo in 1866. But at that time, al-Azhar was in a backward and stagnant condition. The method used still emphasizes memorization and the content of the subject still only covers Islamic religious sciences and Arabic.¹⁵ There Abduh studied some science but he felt not completely satisfied with the education provided, because many lecturers refused to criticize theological materials. Among his most memorable teachers in al-Azhar was Sheikh Jamaluddin al-Afghani, a reformist figure who had a great impact on Abduh's thinking so that he became his loyal disciple. Al-Afghani uses critical teaching methods, encouraging discussion and question-and-answer.¹⁶ Muhammad Abduh completed his studies in 1877 with the predicate of *mumtaz* and obtained the title of al-'Alim, so he had the right to become a lecturer at al-Azhar University teaching *mantiq* and *kalam* science using the discussion method in teaching.¹⁷

In 1879, the Egyptian government threw Abduh out of Cairo because he was considered involved in a movement against the government of Khadewi Taufiq. But a year later, he was allowed to return to Egypt and was appointed editor of the official Egyptian newspaper "al-Waqa'i al-Misriyah" thanks to the efforts of prime minister Riyad Pasha.¹⁸ In 1882, he was involved in the

¹¹ Muh. Yahya Al-Farizi, M. Makbul, and Risdah Fahuuddin, "Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam Menurut Muhammad Abduh," *Bacaka: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 1, no. 1 (2021): 39-52.

¹² Juhri Jaelani, "Modernitas Kehidupan Beragama Dalam Perkembangan Pendidikan Islam: (Studi Analisis Pemikiran Muhammad Abduh)," *Civilization Research: Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (2023): 168-87.

¹³ Sutrisno, "Re-Orientasi Pendidikan Islam Perspektif Muhammad Abduh Dan Relevansinya Di Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Madura."

¹⁴ Yasser and Muhtarom, "Kritik Metode Hafalan Dalam Agenda Pembaruan Pendidikan Islam Muhammad Abduh."

¹⁵ Khoirurrijal, Karim, and Fikri, "Refleksi Pemikiran Muhammad Abduh Dalam Pembaruan Pendidikan Islam."

¹⁶ Rz Ricky Satria Wiranata, "Konsep Pemikiran Pembaharuan Muhammad Abduh Dan Relevansinya Dalam Manajemen Pendidikan Islam Di Era Kontemporer (Kajian Filosofis Historis)," *AL-FAHIM: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 1 (2019): 113-33.

¹⁷ Yasser and Muhtarom, "Kritik Metode Hafalan Dalam Agenda Pembaruan Pendidikan Islam Muhammad Abduh."

¹⁸ Irwansyah Suwahyu, "Telaah Terhadap Konsep Pembaharuan Pendidikan Islam Muhammad Abduh," *Al-Tarbawi Al-Haditsah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (2022): 1-8, <https://doi.org/10.24235/tarbawi.v7i1.10112>.

Urabi Pasha rebellion which caused him to be imprisoned and exiled abroad, initially Beirut then moved to Paris. During his exile, he reunited with al-Afghani in 1884 and together published the magazine "Urwah al-Wutsqa" but the magazine did not last long.¹⁹ Abduh was allowed to return to Egypt in 1888 through the efforts of his colleagues and in 1899 was appointed Mufti of Egypt but was not allowed to teach. In 1894 he was appointed a member of the committee at al-Azhar University, where he began to realize his ideas of reform in the Islamic education system.²⁰ He made improvements in the curriculum, administration, and welfare of teachers, encouraged the addition of modern subjects in education and improved the quality of teaching. The positive impact of the renewal includes an increase in the number of students tested each year and the success rate of their graduation.²¹ He held the position of mufti until his death on July 11, 1905 at the age of 56. Despite his late death, he is remembered as a living Islamic reformer and thinker.

Tafhim Method According to Muhammad Abduh Abduh

Muhammad Abduh is a progressive-modernist Islamic thinker.²² He has given a lot of useful relics for the world of education. Abduh often conveys his ideas for renewal through his da'wah activities, but that does not mean that he does not have written works. One of his most monumental works is the "Risalah At-Tauhid", in which he emphasizes the importance of critical thinking and *ijtihad*, as well as rejecting *taqlid* that limits freedom of thought. Abduh also argued that Islam is a rational teaching, Allah endows people with reason so that they have freedom to think.²³ According to him, Islam is not contrary to the West, so Muslims are also allowed to learn from the West but must still adhere to the principles of true Islamic teachings.²⁴

Muhammad Abduh argued that education should lead to the formation of character and critical thinking. He said that the dominant memorization method used in learning must be equipped with a logical method in order to increase students' understanding in depth.²⁵ So he tries to combine the memorization method with a more rational and interactive approach, so that education can be more effective in forming intellectually and spiritually intelligent individuals. Abduh wants every student not only to receive and memorize knowledge, but also to be able to understand and deepen that knowledge analytically, factually and extensively into a broader

¹⁹ Iskandar Usman, "Muhammad Abduh Dan Pemikiran Pembaharuannya," *Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 2, no. 1 (2022): 70-87.

²⁰ Khoirurrijal, Karim, and Fikri, "Refleksi Pemikiran Muhammad Abduh Dalam Pembaruan Pendidikan Islam."

²¹ Erlanda and Roza, "Implementasi Pendidikan Akhlak Pada Usia Sekolah Dasar Berdasarkan Konsep Muhammad Abduh."

²² Abdul Malik Usman and Mardan Umar, "Modernisasi Pendidikan Islam; Telaah Pemikiran Muhammad Abduh," *Jurnal Ilmiah Iqra'* 15, no. 2 (2021): 237-58.

²³ M. Fadholi, Muhammad Aziz, and Hery Purwanto, "Dimensi Rasional Dalam Pemikiran Muhammad Abduh 1849-1905 (Studi Bidang Pendidikan, Politik Dan Sosial-Keagamaan)," *Al Hikmah: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 9, no. 2 (2019): 246-59.

²⁴ Fatkhur Rohman, "Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam Muhammad Abduh," *Jurnal Raudhah* 4, no. 1 (2016): 86-96.

²⁵ Muhammad Jamaluddin, Moh Laili, and Moh Zaiful Rosyid, "Rekonstruksi Pendidikan Islam Dalam Perspektif Muhammad Abduh," *JIE (Journal of Islamic Education)* 4, no. 1 (2019): 99-112.

context.²⁶ Therefore, Abduh developed a method of deep understanding which is also called the *tafhim* method. The *tafhim* method is a learning approach that emphasizes a deep understanding of a concept or subject matter. This *tafhim* method is a method that prioritizes logical and critical thinking, where students are invited to ask questions, argue, and build their own knowledge. This is in accordance with the modern teaching concept which emphasizes the ability to critically analyze all information obtained.²⁷ In this *tafhim* method, Abduh offers several effective learning models as follows.

First, understanding the concept. In this learning model, Abduh emphasized the importance of understanding the text being read. This means that students are required to understand the content and context of each new concept or knowledge. When students really understand a concept, it will be easier for them to analyze information, evaluate arguments, and solve problems. Therefore, this learning model involves the role of the teacher to explain the meaning and intent of the material read by students accompanied by their statements clearly.²⁸ So that they not only memorize, but also understand the content and context. This aims to increase students' interest in learning and prevent boredom in learning. Second, questions and answers. The next learning model is with questions and answers. This question and answer model will provide an opportunity for students to ask questions to the teacher. In this model, each student is welcome to ask various questions related to the material that still confuses them or does not understand them. Therefore, this learning model involves the role of the teacher to help provide concise and clear answers regarding all existing questions and must be able to satisfy the students who ask.²⁹ So that they will get a definite explanation for their incomprehension. This aims to avoid students from understanding that is only based on blind *taklid*. Third, Practice and Experience. Abduh believes that practical experience is very important in education. In this learning model, students will be trained and given a provision of knowledge that can be useful after they grow up. So here Abduh encourages teachers to practice a material on students in front of the class.³⁰ For example, in religious lessons on worship materials, a teacher must be able to demonstrate good and correct worship practices in front of the class. Then all the students had to pay attention to it and some students were asked to practice it again in front of their friends. So that students can learn through real examples in the process of implementing religious teaching obligations with full obedience. Fourth, Discussion. The discussion or *munazarah* learning model can be a critical means of exploring various views. All students are welcome to ask various questions which are then answered by other students who are more familiar with these questions. This not only encourages students to have the courage to speak up, but can also deepen

²⁶ Baharuddin, Afkar, and Resky, "Pemikiran Muhammad Abduh Dalam Pembaruan Pendidikan Islam Dan Relevansinya Terhadap Manajemen Pendidikan Islam."

²⁷ Wiranata, "Konsep Pemikiran Pembaharuan Muhammad Abduh Dan Relevansinya Dalam Manajemen Pendidikan Islam Di Era Kontemporer (Kajian Filosofis Historis)."

²⁸ Juni Prasetya, "Konsep Pendidikan Islam Muhammad Abduh Serta Implikasinya Terhadap Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia," *Ta'allum: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 2 (2018): 381-402.

²⁹ Prasetya.

³⁰ Sutrisno, "Re-Orientasi Pendidikan Islam Perspektif Muhammad Abduh Dan Relevansinya Di Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Madura."

their understanding of the materials they have learned. The purpose of Abduh reviving the learning model with this discussion is to evaluate or test arguments and theories with each other so that they are not influenced by blind taklids.³¹

The four learning models are teaching methods or methods used by Abduh when teaching at Al-Azhar University, Egypt.³² By observing some of these learning models, it can be understood that the teaching carried out by Abduh aims to provide a deep understanding and to his students. These learning models are called the *tafhim* method. Actually, Abduh never mentioned directly about this *tafhim* method, but he only emphasized the importance of providing deep understanding in every lesson given. Because according to him, learning that only emphasizes memorization will only damage students' reasoning power as he experienced when studying at Thanta.³³ So he tries to combine the traditional method, namely memorization, with a more modern method, namely deep understanding in learning.

Critical Thinking Skills

Critical thinking skills are an indispensable aspect to provide more precise direction in thinking and working, as well as to help provide more accurate information in determining the relationship between things and others. This skill development is an integration of various components of skill development, such as observation, analysis, reasoning, assessment, decision-making and persuasion.³⁴ This ability is considered very important because there are so many phenomena in human life that must be criticized, such as in terms of making decisions and solving problems. Beyer defines critical thinking as a method of thinking that is structured and used by a person to assess the validity of various things, such as statements, ideas, arguments, and research.³⁵ The characteristics of critical thinking according to Beyer are as follows.³⁶ Dispositions, the disposition of people who have the ability to think critically tend to be skeptical, open-minded, appreciate honesty, respect data and diverse opinions, respect clarity and precision, look for alternative points of view, and are ready to change their views if there is an opinion that is considered better. Criteria, critical thinking requires certain criteria or standards. To achieve this, it is necessary to find something worthy of being decided or believed. Although an argument can be based on a variety of sources of knowledge, each argument has a different standard. If you want to implement standardization, it must be based on relevance, accuracy of facts, sourced from reliable references, thorough, free from bias, free from logical errors, consistent, and through careful consideration.

³¹ Baharuddin, Afkar, and Resky, "Pemikiran Muhammad Abduh Dalam Pembaruan Pendidikan Islam Dan Relevansinya Terhadap Manajemen Pendidikan Islam."

³² Saifuddin Qudsi, "Pemikiran Pendidikan Muhammad Abduh Dan Proses Modernisasi Pesantren Di Indonesia," *Dirosat: Journal of Islamic Studies* 1, no. 1 (2016): 13–26, <https://doi.org/10.28944/dirosat.v1i1.5>.

³³ Atika Zuhrotus Sufiyana and Fatimatus Zahro, "Pemikiran Pendidikan Muhammad Abduh," *Vicratina: Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan* 4, no. 3 (2020): 208–15.

³⁴ Hardika Saputra, "Kemampuan Berfikir Kritis Matematis," *Perpustakaan IAI Agus Salim* 2, no. 3 (2020): 1–7.

³⁵ Ely Syafitri, Dian Armanto, and Elfira Rahmadani, "Aksiologi Kemampuan Berpikir Kritis," *Journal of Science and Social Research* 4, no. 3 (2021): 320–25.

³⁶ Syafitri, Armanto, and Rahmadani.

Arguments, arguments are statements or propositions that are based on data. Critical thinking skills include the activity of recognizing, evaluating, and stringing arguments. Reasoning, thinking or reasoning is the ability to draw conclusions from one or more premises. This process involves testing the relationships between various statements or data. Point of view, a point of view is a way of seeing or interpreting the world, which plays a role in shaping meaning. People who think critically will consider a phenomenon from a variety of different perspectives. Procedures for applying criteria, the process of applying critical thinking is complex and gradual. This stage includes the formulation of the problem, the determination of the decision to be taken, and the identification of various possibilities that exist.

Critical thinking skills are a structured process to solve problems by involving mental activities. A critical thinker will always look for and explain the relationship between the problem being discussed and other relevant issues. According to R.H. Ennis, there are 12 indicators in the aspect of critical thinking skills, namely formulating problems, analyzing arguments, asking and answering questions, assessing the credibility of information sources, making observations and assessing observation reports, making deductions and assessing deductions, making inducements and assessing inducements, evaluating, defining and assessing definitions, identifying assumptions, making decisions and implementing, and interacting with others.³⁷ Therefore, the ability to think critically is a very valuable and important asset to be owned by every individual, especially the younger generation of the nation's successors. In the context of education, the importance of having critical thinking skills for students is to evaluate the evidence of assumptions and logic that are the basis of other people's statements, to uncover the truth of every abundant information every day, as well as to analyze problems systematically by facing various challenges in a structured way, formulating creative and innovative questions, and planning original learning designs.³⁸

The Relevance of the *Tafhim* Method to Improving Critical Thinking Skills

According to Abduh, education aims to develop cognitive aspects (intellect), affective aspects (moral), and psychomotor aspects (skills).³⁹ Critical thinking is one of the aspects needed in the development of human skills in the 21st century. In the context of education, critical thinking skills can help students improve their understanding of the material being studied so that this ability is a tool that can be used in constructing student knowledge.⁴⁰ One way to improve critical thinking skills is with a certain learning model. The learning model contains at least three processes, namely material mastery, material internalization and transfer of learning.⁴¹ This is in accordance with the *tafhim* method developed by Abduh. This method consists of several learning models that have strong relevance to the development of students' critical

³⁷ Saputra, "Kemampuan Berfikir Kritis Matematis."

³⁸ Huda and Abduh, "Peningkatan Keterampilan Berpikir Kritis Siswa Melalui Model Problem Based Learning Pada Siswa Sekolah Dasar."

³⁹ Andi Hidayat, "Pembaharuan Pendidikan Islam Menurut Muhammad Abduh," *Jurnal Mandiri: Ilmu Pengetahuan, Seni, Dan Teknologi* 2, no. 2 (2018): 369-84.

⁴⁰ Saputra, "Kemampuan Berfikir Kritis Matematis."

⁴¹ Saputra.

thinking skills. Here is the relationship between some of these models and critical thinking indicators. Learning models with conceptual understanding are relevant to critical thinking indicators, such as being able to analyze information in depth and understand the context of an idea or statement. In this learning, students are invited not only to memorize the text, but also to understand its meaning. By understanding the content and context of a text, students learn to identify relevant information, evaluate accuracy, and build a more logical basis of thought. It also trains them to think analytically and deeply, a key skill in critical thinking.

The learning model with direct questions and answers encourages students to dare to ask questions and make arguments based on their understanding. This process not only trains courage, but also helps students learn to listen to different viewpoints, evaluate different points of view, and formulate structured opinions. The discussions that arise from this method develop skills such as identifying assumptions, interpreting information critically, and evaluating diverse arguments. Through a learning model with practical exercises and experiences, students can learn directly and contextually. This will train them to make connections between theory and real practice. This practice teaches students to recognize problems, evaluate the best way to complete assignments, and reflect on the results achieved. For example, demonstrating the practice of worship in front of the classroom not only teaches students technical aspects, but also develops reflective thinking skills by evaluating the suitability of actions with religious teachings. This exercise encourages students to think systematically and take responsibility for their learning outcomes.

This learning model with discussion is particularly relevant to critical thinking indicators, such as testing arguments, evaluating the validity of theories, and avoiding biases or errors of thinking. In discussions, students are trained to get used to and dare to argue logically, support their opinions with strong evidence, and respect the views of others. This learning model encourages students to question assumptions, evaluate evidence, and avoid blind taklid, which is the core of critical thinking. This learning model with discussion can also serve to train the needs in facing 21st century challenges such as students' creativity, communicative and collaborative nature.⁴² The four learning models offered by Muhammad Abduh are overall relevant to various aspects to foster and improve students' critical thinking skills, such as analysis, evaluation, interpretation, and reflection. With the application of this model, students not only learn to understand and apply science, but also develop critical thinking skills that help them in facing real-world challenges. The challenges of education in this modern era are increasingly complex. With an abundance of information and technology that continues to develop, it requires humans to have the ability to think critically. This ability to think critically is very closely related to understanding. Through the application of this tafhim method, students can be actively involved in the learning process, such as discussions, questions and answers, and problem solving. So that the tafhim method developed by Abduh is very relevant to be applied in the current educational curriculum, where the learning approach in the 21st century emphasizes the ability to think

⁴² Moh Faizin, Kikan Sandius Tantri, and Tahniah Tasyirifiah, "Instrumen Pendidikan Islam: Memperkuat Institusi Kreatif, Komunikatif, Kolaboratif Menuju Tantangan Pada Abad 21 Perspektif Muhammad Abduh," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling (JPDK)* 4, no. 6 (2022): 12021–25.

critically, creatively, collaboratively, and communicate. Through several learning models offered by Muhammad Abduh, it can make students to pour out their understanding in depth so that they can improve their critical thinking skills.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the tafhim method developed by Muhammad Abduh has relevance for improving students' critical skills. This method emphasizes understanding concepts, questions and answers, exercises, examples, stories, and discussions. So that the method proposed by Muhammad Abduh not only encourages students to memorize the material, but also to think critically, analyze information, and build a deeper understanding. Thus, the tafhim method can be a solution to current educational challenges that require students to have the ability to think critically. Although this method has been proposed for a long time, its relevance remains strong in the context of education today. To improve the quality of education, it is recommended that educators adopt more tafhim methods in the learning process. In addition, further research is needed to develop and improve the tafhim method to be more in line with the characteristics of students and the demands of the times.

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