



Teaching Strategies to Improve Students' Critical Thinking Skills Through the Integration of Islamic Educational Philosophy Values

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Abstract

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This study aims to analyze the integrated Islamic educational philosophy value learning strategy to improve students' critical thinking skills at Indonesian Islamic Universities, Islamic religious education study program. Islamic philosophical values include adab (civility), morals, and akhlak (ethics). A qualitative approach was used with 12 informants, consisting of lecturers and heads of study programs. The informants were selected purposively. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed inductively using thematic analysis. The results show that lecturers' empirical experiences in teaching practice confirm the effectiveness of case study-based strategies, reflective discussions, academic debates, and problem-based learning in fostering critical thinking in students. The success of these strategies is reflected in students' ability to construct logical arguments, conduct in-depth analyses, and integrate morals, adab (civility), and akhlak (ethics) into learning. The main obstacles were variations in student participation and time constraints, but these can be minimized through lecturers' creativity in designing learning. This research contributes to the development of applicable learning strategies based on morals, adab, and akhlak through the application of participatory methods and ongoing institutional support. The integration of Islamic educational philosophy values strengthens students' moral and spiritual dimensions.

Keywords:

Islamic educational philosophy; teaching strategies; critical thinking; value integration; integrative curriculum

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INTRODUCTION

Critical thinking is a deep understanding of knowledge (*tafaqquh fi al-din*) and the pursuit of truth (*ijtihad*) that integrates spirituality, moral values, and logic. It is defined as the reflective ability to analyze, assess, and evaluate, leading to logical decision-making (Ennis, 2018; Bassam et al., 2011). In an era of open information and complex global issues, critical thinking skills have become essential competencies (Novianti, 2020). A pragmatic approach and reflective education play a crucial role in helping students understand theory, and apply it in solving real problems and better (Amin & Adiansyah, 2018). The obstacles to integrating these practices, particularly in Islamic higher education, prompt further research. Students struggle to apply their interpretation, analysis, and evaluation skills (Wicaksono & Nugroho, 2024).



Individuals who have good critical thinking skills, are able to make decisions appropriately, innovatively, effectively, efficiently and improve the quality of education in solving problems (Heard et al., 2020; Ariadila et al., 2023; Novianti, 2020; Perdana et al., 2022). Essay tests are one way to train critical thinking skills (Ennis, 2018). Findings show that students' ability to explain and argue through essay tests has low scores (48.15) and (50.25). This means that students have difficulty reasoning, connecting concepts with ideas, and providing arguments (Fitriani et al., 2022). These skills are necessary for job readiness (Dumitru & Halpern, 2023). This finding reflects the low quality of education and concerns about graduates facing professional demands.

The main problem focused on in this research is the low critical thinking skills among Indonesian students at all levels of education. Previous research has shown that the exam-oriented national curriculum limits creativity, innovation, and the development of critical reasoning (Mulyaningsih et al., 2024). At the school level, research on junior high school students revealed that their critical thinking skills are still limited, with students having difficulty conceptualizing, analyzing, and drawing conclusions effectively (Amelia et al., 2022). At the university level, observations indicate a passive learning culture with few students actively asking questions, debating, or evaluating alternative perspectives—indicating a lack of reflective engagement (Okstiana & Purwanti, 2025). This evidence suggests that an inflexible curriculum, a lecturer-centered learning approach, and low classroom interaction undermine critical thinking competencies. Therefore, this research seeks to examine how the integration of Islamic educational philosophy can serve as a transformative pedagogical framework to foster students' reflective and critical thinking skills.

These phenomena highlight an urgent need to develop effective teaching methods aimed at enhancing students' critical thinking competencies. The urgency of this research is grounded in the fact that critical thinking skills are vital competencies that support decision-making processes, innovation, and adaptation to global challenges. Consistent with previous studies, it is explained that critical thinking skills are acquired through systematic and directed processes rather than innate qualities. Therefore, students can develop critical thinking abilities if these skills are systematically trained and taught by educators (Brahim, 2024).

Research findings indicate two factors influencing the development of students' critical thinking skills: lecturer activity and active student participation (Amelia et al., 2022). Lecturers play a role in implementing teaching strategies such as questioning techniques, providing constructive feedback, and facilitating dialogic discussions. Students are actively involved in reflection and problem-solving. Appropriate learning strategies stimulate active student participation, thereby encouraging critical reasoning and decision-making. From an Islamic perspective, these activities, in the form of responsibility (*amanah*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), patience (*sabr*), and justice (*'adl*), are pedagogical foundations (Rahmawati & Ikhwan, 2025). Justice is implemented through class discussions in the form of equal participation, and the value of responsibility in the form of collective task completion. This learning strategy fosters moral awareness and reflective and critical engagement with the learning material. This forms the basis of the integrative pedagogical framework in this study.

The values of Islamic educational philosophy provide a relevant epistemological and ethical foundation for addressing these weaknesses. Islamic educational philosophy emphasizes the integration of reason, conscience, and revelation as sources of knowledge, which is logically oriented based on spiritual morality and is believed to strengthen critical thinking through dialogue, reflection, and systematic frameworks (e.g., Socratic inquiry). However, the gap in empirical research evaluating the direct impact of integrating philosophical values into teaching methods at the university level, in particular, remains very limited.

The limited research on how Islamic educational philosophy values are integrated into teaching hinders students' critical thinking skills in higher education. Islamic educational philosophy fosters analytical skills, evaluates arguments, and draws conclusions based on reflective thinking. Unfortunately, its use in pedagogical practice is limited. Most research focuses on pedagogical approaches to lectures and content (Hidayat, 2022). This limited research provides an opportunity to address this gap by analyzing the impact of integrating Islamic educational philosophy values into teaching strategies on improving students' critical thinking skills.

Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by integrating Islamic educational philosophy values into the learning process, thereby enhancing students' critical thinking skills. Specifically, this research elaborates on relevant Islamic educational philosophy values integrated into applied learning strategies that can be adopted by educators across various disciplines.

The innovativeness of this research lies in its integrative approach, which explicitly combines Islamic educational philosophical values into the design and practice of learning to develop students' critical thinking skills. Unlike previous studies that predominantly focus on Western educational philosophies or general teaching methods such as problem-based learning and Socratic dialogue, this research positions Islamic educational philosophy as both an epistemological and axiological framework within the learning process.

Values such as *tawhid* (unity of knowledge), *adl* (intellectual justice), *amanah* (academic responsibility), and *hikmah* (wisdom) serve as foundational principles for fostering critical thinking skills that not only sharpen analytical and logical evaluation abilities but also consider ethical, spiritual, and communal welfare dimensions. This approach is distinct because it integrates cognitive, affective, and moral dimensions simultaneously, resulting in a contextual, holistic model of critical thinking development that aligns with the Islamic worldview. Instilling positive character cannot be separated from effective university management (Mohzana et al., 2020).

METHODS

Type and Design

The research was conducted from May 2024 to June 2025, covering preparation, data collection, analysis, data interpretation, and reporting of results. The approach used was qualitative and a phenomenological design, appropriate for exploring the experiences and essence of academic experiences integrating Islamic

philosophical values into learning activities. This design uncovers the experiences and essence of the research subjects as described by experts (Creswell, 2014; Moleong, 2019; Im et al., 2023)).

The research was conducted at three locations: State Islamic Universities (UIN) North Sumatra, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, and UIN Mataram. The location selection was based on the following considerations: 1) The geographical and sociocultural diversity of the three UINs (Sumatra, Java, and West Nusa Tenggara), thus presenting different academic dynamics; 2) The variety of learning practices in Islamic educational philosophy learning supports the research objectives.; and 3) the development of different models for comparison so they can be widely adopted.

Research Informants

The research informants consisted of 12 people, namely 6 students (main informants), 3 lecturers (key informants) who teach the philosophy of Islamic education course, and 3 heads of study programs or curriculum areas of study programs (supporting informants) who came from 3 research locations. Student inclusion criteria: 1) active in semester 6 and have taken the philosophy of education course before, 2) willing to be active and participate in research, and 3) able to reflect on the learning experience of the philosophy of Islamic education course. Lecturer inclusion criteria: 1) teaching the philosophy of education course before. 2) minimum teaching experience of 3 years. 3) willing to participate actively in research. Supporting informant criteria: 1) head of study program or curriculum area 2) willing to participate actively in research. All informants have received research information and are willing to participate voluntarily

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted through interviews. Interviews focused on students' experiences as recipients of learning, the perspectives of senior lecturers as conceptual initiators, and the views of study program heads as supporting informants to corroborate the data, ensuring a holistic research analysis. The themes examined by primary informants, key informants, and supporting informants are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Themes studied

Theme	Question
Primary informants	
Learning experience	How students perceive learning that integrates cognitive, affective, and moral-spiritual aspects.
Critical thinking skills	The extent to which students feel the learning helps them identify problems, examine evidence, and develop ethically based solutions.
Expectations and challenges	What students perceive as supporting or hindering the development of critical thinking based on Islamic values
Key informants	
Philosophical concepts	How the values of Islamic educational philosophy are understood and internalized in pedagogical practice.
Integration strategies	What methods or models are relevant for integrating Islamic values into critical thinking learning.

Learning evaluation	How to assess the success of integrating Islamic values in enhancing critical thinking.
Practical experiences	Concrete examples of successes or challenges in implementing Islamic educational philosophy values in the classroom.
Supporting informants	
Empirical experience	Teaching practices they have implemented to encourage critical thinking in students.
Constraints and opportunities	Factors that influence the success or failure of integrative strategies.
Recommendations	Proposals for developing applied learning strategies based on Islamic philosophical values

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using an inductive approach using thematic analysis. The analysis process involved compiling narrative responses from informants in the form of interview transcripts. Then, rereading the transcripts, marking (a priori codes) the transcripts that corresponded to the themes and grouping them, and finally, drawing conclusions. This process was carried out manually without the use of data analysis software. Data credibility was ensured by two researchers conducting separate analyses and comparing the results. The final step was to hold a research team discussion and conclude the research findings. This analysis process is in accordance with the literature on data analysis procedures (Bakken, 2023).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The characteristics of the 12 informants involved are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Characteristic of Research Informants

Role	Number	Age range (years)	Educational	Years of work (years)	Category
Students	6	20-24		-	Primary informant
Supporting lecturers	3	55-68	Professor = 1 Doctor = 2	10 – 30	Key Informant
Head of study program/ curriculum coordinator	3	55–65	Doctor	15-30	Supporting Informant

The informants' characteristics (table 2) are based on their varied experiences, perspectives, and applied learning practices. Students' perspectives are analyzed because they directly experience the integration of Islamic philosophical values and its influence on their critical thinking. The informants' experiences and characteristics support the research themes being explored.

The profiles of key informants reflect academic authority relevant to their role as sources of theoretical and methodological analysis in this study. Their primary

contribution is providing theoretical, philosophical, and methodological insights into the integration of Islamic values into learning.

In accordance with the research objective, which focuses on an integrative approach to Islamic education philosophy values in teaching practices to develop students' critical thinking skills, a comparative mapping between previous studies and this research has been developed. This mapping is presented in Table 3, with the aim of clearly illustrating the novelty of the current study.

Table 3. Comparative Mapping of Previous Research and Current Research

Comparative Aspects	Previous research	Research conducted	Novelty
Integrated values	Focuses on cognitive skills (analysis, evaluation, synthesis) without on islamic value dimension	Integrates the values of tawhid, adl, amanah, and hikmah into critical thinking processes.	Simultaneously integrates cognitive, affective, and moral-spiritual dimensions in developing critical thinking.
Learning approach	Generally based on problem-based learning, debate, or inquiry-based learning.	Adapting a critical learning approach with Islamic educational philosophy values in the material, discussions, and evaluations.	Creating a contextual learning model that suits the characteristics of Muslim students and the Indonesian academic environment.
Research context	The majority of studies were conducted in Western countries or secular education contexts.	This study was conducted at Indonesian universities in North Sumatra, Yogyakarta, and Mataram, taking into account local culture and needs.	It provides empirical data relevant to the context of Islamic higher education and Indonesian society.
Practical contributions	General strategies for enhancing critical thinking.	Producing an applicable learning model based on Islamic educational philosophy values that can be adopted across disciplines.	Providing innovative and adaptive solutions relevant to Islamic higher education.

Table 3 shows that this study offers significant novelty compared to previous research. It not only emphasizes cognitive aspects but also integrates the values of Islamic educational philosophy (tawhid, 'adl, amanah, and hikmah) so that students' critical thinking is developed cognitively, affectively, and morally-spiritually. The learning approach used is contextual and contains Islamic values, differing from previous research, which was more general in nature. Furthermore, this research was conducted at an Islamic university in Indonesia, resulting in empirical data relevant to local needs. Practically, this research formulates an innovative and

adaptive applied learning model based on Islamic educational philosophy values for Islamic higher education

Themes Explored by the Primary Informants

1. Learning Experience

Learning experiences that integrate cognitive, affective, and moral-spiritual aspects are considered to provide deeper meaning than learning that is solely theory-oriented, as stated by key informants.

"Learning feels more meaningful because it connects cognitive, affective, and moral-spiritual aspects with Islamic values in everyday life, such as justice." (Informant 1)

"We are encouraged to express opinions and think critically, but remain rooted in Islamic wisdom and morals." (Informant 3)

"I am more confident in arguing because my critical thinking is supported by scientific and religious foundations." (Informant 6)

The integrative approach also encourages students to think and express opinions critically within an Islamic ethical framework. Furthermore, students believe that the integration of Islamic values provides an academic and religious foundation and confidence in argumentation.

2. Critical thinking skills

Students' critical thinking skills develop through a learning process that emphasizes seeking evidence, strengthening arguments, and objectively evaluating information.

"Every assignment requires us to search for valid literature and objectively analyze evidence." (Informant 2).

"Discussions enable me to defend arguments with evidence and consider the opinions of others." (Informant 4).

"I learn to distinguish scientific data from opinions and formulate evidence-based recommendations." (Informant 5).

The findings indicate that academic assignments train students to critically evaluate information and reduce reliance on personal assumptions. Group discussions play a role in honing the ability to defend arguments with supporting evidence and to fairly consider others' perspectives.

3. Expectations and Challenges

The findings indicate that students have high hopes for strengthening the integration of Islamic values into the learning process.

"It's difficult to find literature that connects education, research, and Islamic principles; we need more guidance from lecturers." (Informant 2)

"We hope for more case examples related to Islamic teachings, scientific and ethical aspects." (Informant 3)

"Challenges in the field must remain critical and objective, ensuring solutions align with Islamic values and are acceptable to society." (Informant 6)

They hope for case examples, scientific arguments aligned with evidence-based Islamic teachings, grounded in religious ethics, and increased confidence in

critical thinking. The challenge when practicing in the community is that students are required to balance scientific objectivity with social acceptance that aligns with Islamic values.

Themes Explored by Key Informants

1. Philosophical Concepts

The philosophy of Islamic education is understood as the foundation for character formation through a learning process that integrates morals and role models, according to informants.

"The philosophy of Islamic education is the moral foundation for learning, not just the transmission of knowledge." (Informant 7)

"The philosophy of Islamic education emphasizes balance between critical thinking skills and spiritual awareness" (Informant 8)

"I encourage critical thinking while maintaining justice and Islamic values." (Informant 9)

Internalization is realized through educators' exemplary behavior that balances the intellectual and spiritual dimensions, so that learning develops not only critical thinking skills but also moral responsibility. This philosophy is perceived as fostering a dialogical, just, and humanistic learning environment, providing students with space for critical thinking within an Islamic ethical framework.

2. Integration Strategy

The integrated learning approach combines modern science with Islamic principles, not only honing critical thinking skills but also internalizing Islamic ethics in the decision-making process.

"Case study and problem-based learning methods teach students to analyze scientifically while considering Islamic values" [informant 7]

"Critical reflective learning as a bridge between data, theory, and spiritual reflection" [informant 8]

"CTL makes it easier for students to understand Islamic values through real-life problems" [informant 9].

Case or problem-based learning integrates scientific reasoning with Islamic values, such as justice, honesty, and social responsibility, enhancing critical thinking and fostering ethical decision-making. The reflective-dialogical approach serves as a means of connecting academic rationality with the transcendental dimensions of Islam. Critical reflection not only evaluates educational theory scientifically but also assesses its alignment with Islamic values and the principles of Maqasid Sharia. Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) connects theory to the realities of everyday life. This approach is effective in developing critical thinking skills as well as moral and social sensitivity, in line with the principles of al-tarbiyah al-islāmiyah in developing the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

3. Learning Evaluation

Findings indicate that evaluating the success of integrating Islamic values into critical thinking learning is conducted through a comprehensive assessment encompassing the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

“Logical and critical arguments based on Islamic values” [informant 7].

“Critical logic containing dimensions of Islamic ethics” [informant 8].

“Formative and consistent evaluation in real-world practice” [informant 9].

Learning evaluation is measured not only by written exam results but also by students' abilities in class discussions, presentations, and active student involvement in analyzing educational and social issues from an Islamic perspective. Evaluation instruments can include case analysis, portfolio assessments, and mini-research projects that require students to integrate Islamic values into critical solutions. Authentic and ongoing evaluation assesses the consistency of the application of Islamic values in real-world contexts. The success of integration is reflected in changes in students' perspectives, who become increasingly reflective, critical, and responsible in addressing academic and social issues

4. Practical Experience

Informants expressed opinions based on their experiences integrating Islamic educational philosophy values.

"Case studies as a methodological analysis incorporate the principles of honesty and trust" [informant 7].

"Evaluating issues through the value of 'adl encourages more critical solutions" [informant 8].

"Problem-based research mini-assignments combine critical thinking and moral responsibility" [informant 9].

The success of integrating Islamic educational philosophy values is evident in students' ability to methodologically analyze case studies and solve real-life problems. Furthermore, students are able to connect theoretical concepts with real-life experiences.

Themes Explored by Supporting Informants

1. Empirical Experience

Findings show that the use of contextual case studies and problem-based learning is effective in developing students' critical thinking, integrated with the values of Islamic educational philosophy.

"Case studies encourage students to express criticisms accompanied by solutions based on Islamic values" [informant 10].

"Discussions present logical arguments based on literature references and a foundation of Islamic ethics" [informant 11].

"Studying justice in society through empirical analysis trains students' critical analysis" [informant 12].

Case studies encourage students to propose criticisms and constructive solutions based on the principle of rahmatan lil 'alamin (blessing for the universe). The effectiveness of reflective discussions and academic debates trains critical argumentation based on literature and Islamic ethics. Problem-based learning on social issues improves critical analytical skills and fosters empathy and Islamic social responsibility through data analysis and the concept of 'adl.

2. Challenges and Opportunities

Findings indicate that the success of integrative strategies is influenced by faculty readiness, curriculum design, and institutional support.

"Without a supporting curriculum, integration is partial and inconsistent" [informant 10].

"Campus culture determines the acceptance of value integration" [informant 11].

"Institutional support strengthens the success of integrative strategies" [informant 12].

The availability of resources, learning methods, and institutional coordination are crucial. While cultural limitations, references, and resistance are obstacles, institutional support in the form of training, teaching materials, and informal academic forums supports the implementation of integrative strategies.

3. Recommendations

Findings indicate that strengthening integrative strategies requires curriculum development, participatory learning methods, and institutional support.

"The curriculum provides space for integrating theory and practice based on Islamic values" [informant 10].

"Applicable strategies provide space for critical dialogue and remain within the corridor of Islamic ethics" [informant 11].

"Institutional support strengthens critical Islamic learning" [informant 12].

Recommendations include: an integrative curriculum that places the values of Islamic educational philosophy as the main framework for learning, along with an evaluation rubric that measures critical thinking and internalization of values. Strengthening participatory learning methods (discussions, academic debates, and problem-based learning), and finally, institutional support through lecturer training and the provision of applied learning modules to ensure the sustainability of integrative practices.

Discussion

The main findings of this study indicate that integrative learning based on Islamic educational philosophy simultaneously strengthens the cognitive, affective, and moral-spiritual dimensions in developing students' critical thinking. Values embodied in the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy, such as honesty and sincerity, are fundamental characteristics reflected in the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad (Saputra et al., 2023). Internalizing these values also encourages the development of critical thinking skills, as students are encouraged not only to understand religious teachings textually but also to analyze, interpret, and relate them to the realities of life (Rahmawati & Ikhwan, 2025).

Interview findings indicate that the integration of Islamic educational philosophy values in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning can be realized by connecting Islamic philosophical concepts such as honesty, wisdom, morality, and monotheism to analysis and problem-solving activities. The cognitive dimension is associated with case analysis, logical argumentation, and problem evaluation. The affective dimension is associated with empathy, openness, and reflective dialogue,

and the moral-spiritual dimension is associated with honesty, justice, and responsibility. Relevant to previous research, pragmatic Islamic education can be implemented by integrating Islamic values into daily practice and developing life skills relevant to Islamic teachings (Setiawan et al., 2024).

In line with the concept of critical thinking (Ngum, 2019), the findings of this study indicate that the integration of Islamic values enriches students' justification and reflection processes, not just their logical aspects. Practical implementation in the classroom can be achieved through the presentation of material that encourages students to analyze, evaluate, and provide arguments based on scientific knowledge (the cognitive dimension). At the same time, lecturers can facilitate discussions that foster empathy, openness, and respect for differing views (the affective dimension). Furthermore, moral and spiritual values are integrated through reflection on Islamic principles, so that students' thinking decisions are based on a strong ethical and religious foundation (the moral-spiritual dimension). Relevant to other opinions, the most fundamental goal of education is to produce broad-minded students, which implies students must be able to understand ideas that are significant, useful, beautiful, and powerful (Raj et al., 2022).

Research results indicate that students with high critical thinking skills generally achieve the ability to provide reasons in the problem-solving process. Meanwhile, students with medium and low abilities tend to be unable to achieve this aspect. This is due to their limited understanding of constructing logical reasoning when answering questions. Critical thinking skills, particularly in the dimensions of reasoning and justification, are more prominent in high-ability students, while those with medium and low abilities still need to be improved through learning strategies that emphasize argumentative skills (Amelia et al., 2022).

The findings indicate that the role of teachers or lecturers is very strategic, acting as facilitators, motivators, and role models. Teachers not only convey knowledge but also guide students to think critically while adhering to Islamic values (Zulfatunnisa, 2022). Education within the family environment plays a crucial role in the process of internalizing values. Families, especially parents, and preschool education are at the forefront in guiding children to understand, cultivate awareness of, and implement ethical values in their daily lives (Tasrif, 2021).

Based on findings from the perspective of study program managers, the success of integrating Islamic educational philosophy values into learning depends on the readiness of lecturers and the curriculum, the academic environment and campus culture, and institutional resources and support. Digital information technology is utilized to support integrative strategies in learning Islamic educational philosophy values, namely by connecting classical and contemporary sources through digital platforms and social media, facilitating interactive online discussions, and providing simulations and multimedia content that enable students to internalize values in a more contextual and applicable way (Widodo, 2024; Pinilih et al., 2024; Wastira et al., 2025).

Unlike previous research that generally uses problem-based learning or debate, this study contributes innovation by developing and adapting a learning model that systematically integrates Islamic educational philosophy values into the material, discussion process, and learning evaluation. This integration is designed

contextually to the characteristics of Muslim students and Indonesian academic culture. Thus, the integration of Islamic educational philosophy values serves not only as a moral reinforcement but also as a pedagogical framework for developing critical thinking.

Research shows that learning strategies are key to implementing Islamic philosophical values to improve students' critical thinking skills. Strategies identified in the research include: the Case Study method, where lecturers present real-life cases or simulations relevant to the theme of Islamic Religious Education, such as ethical issues in the use of digital technology. Scientific Debates are conducted by dividing students into two groups with differing perspectives on a contemporary issue, such as the phenomenon of religious pluralism or economic ethics in Islam. This strategy develops critical thinking skills while fostering a dialogical and tolerant attitude (Al-Ghadouni, 2021).

Reflective Learning is a strategy that provides students with opportunities to reflect on learning experiences or ongoing social phenomena. Furthermore, the Problem-Based Learning strategy positions students as the primary problem solvers. Learning success is not limited to memorization alone but is also reflected in students' ability to apply learned concepts relevantly in real-life situations and problem-solving (Yew & Goh, 2016). Furthermore, the contextual teaching and learning (CTL) method is relevant to everyday life. This strategy not only strengthens critical thinking skills but also fosters students' moral and social sensitivity. This strategy involves asking in-depth, open-ended questions that challenge students to think more critically. Improved student learning outcomes were observed after implementing the CTL learning model (Syaifuddin et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

Empirical teaching experiences indicate that strategies based on case studies, reflective discussions, academic debates, and problem-based learning are effective in fostering students' critical thinking skills. The success of these practices is characterized by students' ability to construct logical arguments, conduct in-depth analyses, and integrate the values of Islamic educational philosophy into each cognitive process. The primary challenges encountered include variability in student participation and time constraints; however, the creative strategies employed by instructors have been able to minimize these obstacles. The effectiveness of this integrative approach is influenced by three main factors: (1) the preparedness of instructors and curriculum—covering competence, instructional design, and consistent implementation; (2) the academic environment and campus culture—including support for critical learning, discussion forums, and a reflective culture; and (3) institutional resources and support—particularly the availability of relevant references and learning materials.

Recommendations for the development of an applied learning strategy grounded in the values of Islamic educational philosophy encompass three main aspects. First, the development of an integrative curriculum that connects theory with practice through case studies, projects, and assessments based on Islamic

values. Second, the adoption of participatory learning methods by increasing opportunities for discussions, debates, and problem-based learning that promote critical thinking within the framework of Islamic ethics. Third, institutional support and resource provision, including faculty training, the availability of applied modules, and the reinforcement of a reflective academic culture.

This study was conducted at Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia, specifically in North Sumatra, Yogyakarta, and Mataram. This provides a significant contribution by generating empirical data that is pertinent to the context of Islamic higher education in Indonesia, while also aligning with the characteristics of Muslim students and the academic environment within the country. Practically, this research successfully formulates an applied learning model based on the values of Islamic educational philosophy, which can be implemented across various disciplines. Consequently, this study offers an innovative, adaptive, and relevant solution to enhance the quality of Islamic higher education in Indonesia.

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