

CASE-BASED LEARNING IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION: A PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR STRENGTHENING STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING

Received 12-05-2026	Revised 17-06-2026	Accepted 21-06-2026
DOI: 10.28944/maharot.v10i1.2598		

Muhamad Basyrul Muvid
Universitas Dinamika, Surabaya, Indonesia
muvid@dinamika.ac.id

Keywords: Case-Based Learning; Critical Thinking; Islamic education

Abstract

Twenty-first-century learning requires instructional approaches that promote critical, innovative, and creative thinking through contextual and student-centered learning. However, Islamic Education remains largely dominated by conventional teaching practices that have not yet optimally fostered students' critical thinking skills. This study aims to develop a conceptual and pedagogical framework for Case-Based Learning (CBL) in Islamic Education to strengthen students' critical thinking skills. Using a library research approach, this study reviewed scholarly sources from Google Scholar, ERIC, academic books, reputable journal databases, and relevant scientific publications. The literature was analyzed through qualitative content analysis involving source selection, data reduction, categorization, comparison, interpretation, and conceptual synthesis. The analysis was guided by Constructivist Learning Theory, Experiential Learning Theory, Critical Thinking Theory, and the philosophical foundations of Islamic education associated with Al-Ghazali and Al-Attas. The synthesis indicates that CBL in Islamic Education can strengthen critical thinking by integrating cognitive, affective, and Islamic value dimensions through contextual real-life cases. The proposed framework guides students to identify problems, analyze causal factors, evaluate contextual situations, reflect on Islamic ethical principles, and formulate reasoned solutions systematically. These processes facilitate the development of higher-order thinking and critical thinking skills while strengthening students' moral and religious awareness. The originality of this study lies in its integrative conceptual synthesis that connects CBL principles, twenty-first-century critical thinking competencies, and Islamic educational values within a coherent pedagogical framework. Unlike previous studies that have generally examined Case-Based Learning, critical thinking, or Islamic Education separately, this study provides a comprehensive framework that links contextual case analysis with Islamic ethical reflection and value-based decision-making. Thus, this study contributes theoretically and pedagogically to the development of

contextual, student-centered, reflective, and value-based Islamic Education learning in the twenty-first century.

©MAHAROT: Journal of Islamic Education

This work is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)

INTRODUCTION

The rapid transformation of the twenty-first century has significantly changed educational and learning paradigms. Technological advancement, globalization, digital disruption, and the increasingly complex demands of the VUCA era (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity) require educational institutions to prepare graduates with critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and problem-solving skills (OECD, 2023; World Economic Forum, 2023). In practice, however, learning in many educational institutions, including Islamic Education, is still dominated by teacher-centered approaches that prioritize memorization and theoretical understanding over contextual problem-solving (Zhao, 2022). Consequently, students often struggle to develop the critical thinking and analytical abilities needed to respond to contemporary social and religious issues. This condition reveals a gap between the demands of twenty-first-century learning and the reality of instructional practices in Islamic Education classrooms.

To respond to these practical challenges, learning approaches need to shift toward student-centered, contextual, and experiential models that enable learners to actively construct knowledge. The constructivist paradigm emphasizes that students learn more effectively when they are directly involved in analyzing real-life situations and solving authentic problems (Hmelo-Silver, 2023). Educators are therefore required not only to master subject content but also to possess pedagogical competence in selecting learning methods that stimulate thinking and active participation (Fallon, 2020; Nikola, 2021). In this context, Case-Based Learning (CBL) is relevant because it facilitates students in examining cases, identifying problems, evaluating causes, and proposing solutions critically and systematically (Yoo & Park, 2022). Through this process, learning becomes more meaningful and can strengthen students' higher-order thinking skills.

The uniqueness of this study lies in its focus on developing a conceptual framework for CBL in Islamic Education that is specifically designed to strengthen students' critical thinking. Recent studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of case-based and problem-based learning approaches in fostering higher-order thinking skills.

Sujarwo et al. (2022), for instance, found that CBL promotes students' critical thinking by encouraging them to examine authentic social issues, engage in collaborative inquiry, and construct knowledge through real-life contexts. Yu and Zin (2023), through a systematic review, concluded that contextual learning models such as Problem-Based Learning enhance critical thinking when learning activities are intentionally designed around analysis, evaluation, and reflective thinking. In Islamic Education, Listrianti et al. (2025) reported that problem-based learning improves students' contextual understanding and critical thinking in fiqh learning by connecting religious concepts with real-life situations. Similarly, Siregar et al. (2025) developed a problem-based learning model in Islamic Religious Education and demonstrated its potential to strengthen students' critical thinking through authentic problem-solving activities. Although these studies confirm the effectiveness of student-centered and contextual learning, they primarily emphasize implementation outcomes and instructional effectiveness. Limited attention has been paid to constructing a comprehensive conceptual framework that systematically integrates case analysis, critical thinking processes, and Islamic ethical values within a unified pedagogical model. Therefore, this study addresses an important literature gap by formulating a contextual and systematic CBL framework for Islamic Education that connects real-life case analysis, critical thinking development, and Islamic value-based decision-making.

Theoretically, this study is grounded in constructivist learning theory, student-centered learning, and contextual learning approaches. Constructivism views learning as an active process in which students construct understanding through interaction with experiences and social realities (Fosnot, 2022). CBL aligns with this perspective because it positions students as active learners who engage in investigation, reflection, and problem-solving (Cen et al., 2021). In Islamic Education, this approach is important because learning should not merely transfer religious knowledge cognitively but should also integrate affective and psychomotor dimensions through contextual understanding of real-life issues (Halstead, 2021). Thus, CBL can become a transformative pedagogical approach that bridges Islamic values and contemporary educational demands.

This study argues that CBL in Islamic Education can foster students' critical thinking through systematic engagement with authentic cases and contextual problems. Critical thinking does not emerge instantly; rather, it develops gradually through analytical and reflective learning processes (Facione, 2020). Therefore, this study aims

to formulate a conceptual model of CBL-based Islamic Education that integrates cognitive, affective, and Islamic value dimensions while strengthening students' abilities to analyze problems, evaluate information, and formulate appropriate solutions in contemporary contexts.

Several recent studies have highlighted the effectiveness of CBL in improving students' critical thinking and active participation. Hidayati and Wisudariani (2023) found that CBL encourages open discussion and active engagement in classroom learning. Simbolon (2022; 2022) demonstrated that CBL significantly improves students' learning outcomes and analytical abilities. Chapakiya et al. (2025) explained that CBL supports active and discovery learning processes that enhance students' adaptability in solving real-life problems. Similarly, Sugiansyah et al. (2025) identified CBL as an effective strategy for strengthening critical thinking skills in higher education. Yoon and Kim (2024) also reported that case-based instruction improves students' analytical thinking and collaborative learning performance in higher education contexts. These studies indicate that CBL has strong potential to develop higher-order thinking skills.

Other recent studies support the relevance of CBL in Islamic Education contexts. Wijaya et al. (2023) revealed that students' thinking patterns in Islamic Religious Education courses can be shaped through CBL implementation. Shi et al. (2025) emphasized that case-based approaches promote student-centered learning and competency development. Arvianto et al. (2023; 2023) argued that critical thinking is an essential competency in the VUCA era because students are required to solve complex and uncertain problems creatively and analytically. Rahman (2024) further explained that contextual Islamic Education strengthens students' reflective and critical understanding of religious values in contemporary society. Nevertheless, previous studies have tended to focus on practical implementation and learning outcomes without comprehensively formulating the philosophical and pedagogical structure of a CBL-based Islamic Education model aimed specifically at developing critical thinking.

Based on the preceding discussion, this study differs from previous research by focusing not merely on CBL implementation but on the formulation of its conceptual, philosophical, and pedagogical framework within Islamic Education. The proposed framework is grounded in three complementary theoretical foundations: Constructivist Learning Theory, which emphasizes knowledge construction through active

engagement and social interaction; Experiential Learning Theory, which highlights learning through authentic experiences and reflective inquiry; and Critical Thinking Theory, which provides a framework for developing students' abilities to analyze, evaluate, interpret, and formulate reasoned judgments. These perspectives serve as the foundation for conceptualizing CBL as an instructional model that integrates contextual problem analysis, reflective learning, and Islamic ethical values.

The primary objective of this study is to formulate a conceptual framework for CBL in Islamic Education that systematically integrates case analysis, critical thinking processes, and Islamic value-based reflection to strengthen students' critical thinking skills. The urgency of this research lies in its theoretical contribution to enriching the discourse on contextual and student-centered Islamic Education and its pedagogical contribution in providing educators with a comprehensive framework for designing learning experiences that foster critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and meaningful engagement with contemporary issues. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to the transformation of Islamic Education toward more contextual, reflective, and critically oriented educational practices in the twenty-first century.

METHODS

This study employed a library research approach to examine and synthesize scholarly discussions on CBL, Islamic Education, and critical thinking skills. Library research was selected because the study aimed to develop a conceptual understanding of how CBL can be integrated into Islamic Education to strengthen students' critical thinking based on existing theoretical and empirical literature. Rather than proposing a new learning theory, this research constructs a pedagogical framework through the synthesis of relevant educational theories, philosophical foundations, and previous research findings.

The analysis was guided by several theoretical and philosophical foundations. Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget and Vygotsky) served as the primary educational perspective, emphasizing that learners actively construct knowledge through interaction, inquiry, and engagement with authentic problems. Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb) was used to explain the importance of learning through experience, reflection, and contextual problem-solving. Critical Thinking Theory (Facione) provided the conceptual basis for understanding critical thinking as a set of

cognitive skills involving interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation. In addition, the study was informed by the philosophical foundations of Islamic education derived from Al-Ghazali's concept of integrating intellectual and moral development and Al-Attas' concept of ta'dib, which emphasizes ethical awareness, wisdom, and proper conduct. These theoretical and philosophical perspectives functioned as analytical lenses in interpreting and synthesizing the literature.

Data were collected through a systematic search of academic literature from Google Scholar, ERIC, Google Books, and other relevant scholarly sources. The search process used keywords such as "Case-Based Learning," "Islamic Education," "critical thinking," "student-centered learning," and related combinations in English and Indonesian. The selected sources consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, conference proceedings, and educational reports published primarily within the last ten years to ensure the relevance and currency of the discussion.

Following the literature search, the collected sources were screened based on their relevance to the research objectives. The selected literature was then classified into several thematic categories, including the theoretical foundations of CBL, critical thinking in education, constructivist and experiential learning perspectives, Islamic educational philosophy, and the application of contextual learning approaches in Islamic Education. Through this process, the researcher compared, interpreted, and mapped key concepts, arguments, methodologies, and findings from previous studies to identify recurring themes, conceptual relationships, and gaps in the existing literature.

The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis involving data reduction, interpretation, and conceptual synthesis (Zed, 2014). First, relevant information was selected and organized according to the focus of the study. Second, the identified concepts and findings were interpreted critically to examine the relationships among learning theories, critical thinking development, and Islamic educational values (Rukajat, 2018). Third, findings from various sources were synthesized by integrating insights from Constructivist Learning Theory, Experiential Learning Theory, Critical Thinking Theory, and Islamic educational philosophy. This synthesis generated a coherent pedagogical framework explaining how CBL can contribute to the development of critical thinking within Islamic Education. To enhance analytical rigor,

findings from multiple scholarly sources were continuously compared and cross-examined to ensure conceptual consistency and theoretical coherence.

The research stages consisted of: (1) identifying the research problem; (2) searching and collecting literature; (3) screening and selecting literature; (4) conducting thematic classification and categorization; (5) mapping theoretical and philosophical foundations; (6) conducting qualitative content analysis and interpretation; (7) synthesizing concepts; and (8) developing a pedagogical framework for integrating CBL into Islamic Education. The resulting framework represents an integrative conceptual synthesis derived from existing scholarship and theoretical perspectives rather than the formulation of a new learning theory.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings of this study were derived through a series of literature identification, selection, classification, and conceptual synthesis processes. Following the literature search conducted through Google Scholar, ERIC, Google Books, and other relevant academic sources, the collected publications were screened based on their relevance to the themes of Case-Based Learning (CBL), Islamic Education, critical thinking, student-centered learning, and contextual learning approaches. Sources that did not directly address these themes, lacked scholarly credibility, or were not aligned with the objectives of the study were excluded from further analysis.

After the screening process, the selected literature was classified into several thematic categories to facilitate analysis and conceptual synthesis. The categorization revealed that previous studies generally focused on five major themes: (1) the characteristics and implementation of Case-Based Learning; (2) the development of critical thinking and critical thinking skills; (3) constructivist learning approaches; (4) experiential and contextual learning; and (5) Islamic educational values and pedagogical principles. This thematic mapping enabled the researcher to identify conceptual relationships among the various strands of literature and to examine how they collectively contribute to the development of critical thinking within Islamic Education.

Theme	Focus of Discussion	Contribution to the Study
Case-Based Learning	Characteristics, procedures, and implementation of CBL	Provides the pedagogical foundation of the learning model

Critical Thinking	Analysis, evaluation, inference, and problem-solving skills	Explains the targeted cognitive outcomes
Constructivist Learning Theory	Knowledge construction through active learning and interaction	Explains student-centered learning processes
Experiential Learning Theory	Learning through experience and reflection	Supports contextual and real-world case analysis
Islamic Educational Philosophy	Integration of knowledge, ethics, and values	Provides the Islamic foundation of learning

Table 1. Thematic Mapping of the Reviewed Literature

The thematic analysis indicates that the conceptual foundations of CBL can be understood through several complementary theoretical perspectives. From the constructivist perspective, learning occurs when students actively construct knowledge through engagement with authentic problems and collaborative inquiry. This view supports the student-centered nature of CBL, in which learners are encouraged to explore information, analyze evidence, and formulate reasoned conclusions. From the perspective of Experiential Learning Theory, learning becomes meaningful when students engage with concrete experiences and reflect on them critically. Real-world cases therefore function not only as instructional materials but also as learning experiences that stimulate reflection, interpretation, and contextual understanding.

Furthermore, Critical Thinking Theory explains how case analysis encourages students to identify problems, evaluate information, formulate arguments, and justify decisions based on evidence. These processes correspond closely to the dimensions of critical thinking, including interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, and reflection. From the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy, the integration of contextual cases with Islamic values aligns with the educational thought of Al-Ghazali and Al-Attas, both of whom emphasize the integration of intellectual development, ethical awareness, and moral responsibility. Consequently, learning is directed not only toward cognitive achievement but also toward the development of value-based judgment and ethical decision-making. Based on the synthesis of the reviewed literature and the theoretical analysis above, several core characteristics of CBL in Islamic Education were identified. These characteristics reflect the convergence of constructivist learning principles, experiential learning processes, critical thinking development, and Islamic educational values.

Model Characteristics	Expected Learning Outcomes	Learning Impact
1. Student-centered	1. Ability to identify	1. Enhanced academic

learning 2. Promotion of independent learning and active participation 3. Integration of Islamic values with real-world contexts 4. Real-world problem-solving through authentic cases	problems 2. Ability to analyze sources 3. Ability to develop well-reasoned solutions 4. Ability to evaluate and reflect	competence 2. Fostered critical and analytical thinking 3. Strengthened contextual Islamic values 4. Improved scientific communication skills
---	--	--

Table 2. Conceptual Characteristics, Expected Learning Outcomes, and Educational Impacts of CBL in Islamic Education

In this context, CBL-based Islamic Education presents real-world problems or cases for students to identify. Students then search for information from various sources, analyze the problem, and formulate solutions, which are subsequently presented and followed by feedback and evaluation. This model fosters the development of students' critical thinking skills, as illustrated below:

Islamic Education → Case-Based Learning (CBL) → Real-Life Cases → Information Search → Analysis and Solutions → Presentation → Evaluation and Feedback → Students' Critical Thinking

The flowchart indicates that CBL-based Islamic Education is highly relevant to the development of students' critical thinking skills. Through critical thinking, students can engage in independent, active, and creative learning, which positively affects their learning outcomes. This relationship can be summarized as follows:

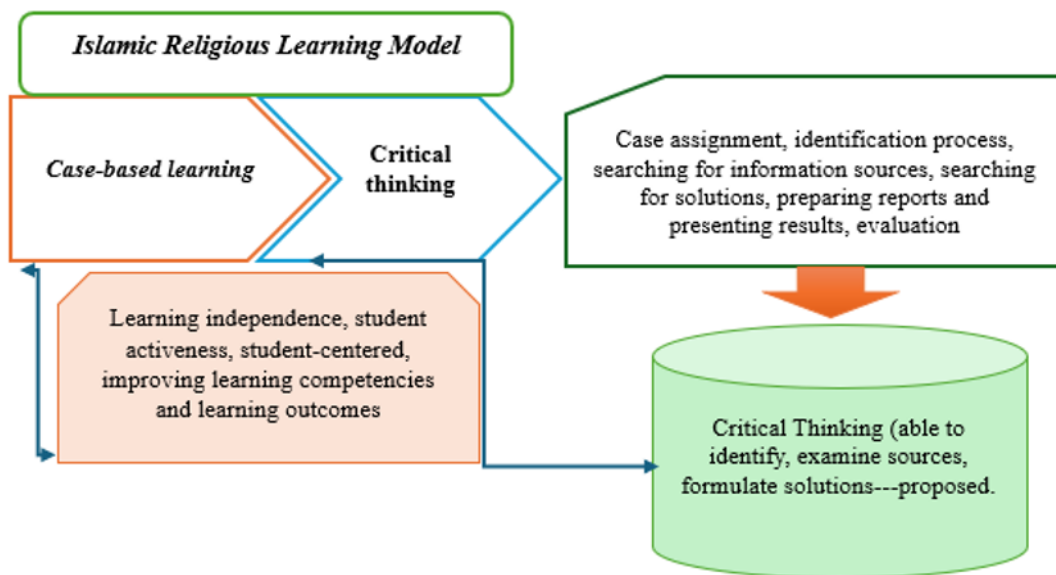


Figure 1. Scheme of the Case-Based Learning Model

Discussion

Case-Based Learning aims to contextualize learning and bridge the gap between theory and practice. This instructional approach has received widespread attention across academic disciplines because its learning process resembles authentic professional problem-solving contexts (Adams et al., 2026). CBL holds considerable promise for developing professional skills and promoting effective learning strategies in higher education institutions (Dzaiy & Abdullah, 2024). It has also shown potential for reforming education by shifting instructors' and students' mindsets toward more constructive and solution-oriented approaches to existing problems (Sisternans, 2020). In this sense, learning becomes not only conceptual but also contextual, which contributes to the development of graduate competencies needed in real-world settings (Yang et al., 2023).

Instructors who employ interdisciplinary case-based teaching methods can broaden students' perspectives in solving complex cases (Olfah, 2024). In response to new educational challenges, educators are gradually moving from merely introducing new teaching methods and subject matter to implementing active, interdisciplinary classroom instruction through case studies that they have developed (Dori & Herscovitz, 2005). Through this approach, the goal of fostering students' critical thinking skills can be realized. Critical thinking is central to problem-solving and the generation of innovations that are beneficial to society (Cahyani & Putri, 2019; Lase et al., 2025; McCuen, 2023).

Critical thinking is a major challenge for today's students because it is both a necessity to learn and a competitive advantage in the global arena. A learning process rooted in creativity and independence is essential for fostering a productive academic environment rather than one that remains merely imaginative (Sidiq et al., 2025). A productive academic environment can inspire students to engage actively, explore new ideas, examine various sources, and experiment with new approaches (Fратиwi et al., 2025). These activities accelerate students' ability to create and innovate, which is urgently needed in an era that demands sharp and deep thinking for analyzing problems and finding solutions (Sani, 2019).

A culture of critical thinking must be cultivated as a response to increasingly complex life challenges (Fauzan & Setiawan, 2023). Students are therefore expected to engage actively and comprehensively with reality as part of developing critical thinking.

Active engagement, independence, and critical thinking can support competencies, skills, and personal potential, ultimately leading to better learning outcomes (Widiastuti et al., 2022). Learning should not be one-directional; rather, it should involve reciprocal interaction between teachers and students. An engaging learning process helps students understand concepts more effectively and enhances their learning activities and related skills. Thus, CBL can refine the learning process and support higher-quality learning outcomes (Z. A. B. Siregar et al., 2026).

Conceptually, the CBL-based Islamic Education learning model emphasizes contextual, experience-based, and student-centered learning that focuses on the development of critical thinking through the analysis of real-world cases. This conceptual framework can be implemented in the learning process through the following approach:

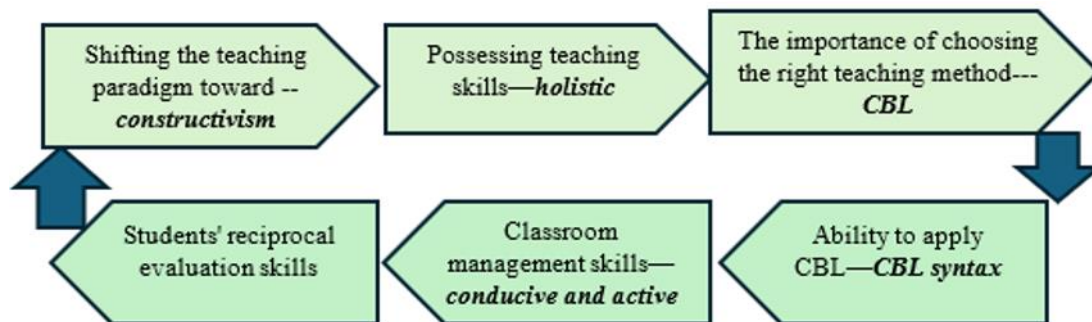


Figure 2. Diagram of CBL Implementation in Learning

The discussion above shows that CBL represents a transformative pedagogical approach for fostering students' critical thinking through contextual and inquiry-oriented learning experiences. The case-based approach encourages students to investigate the background of a problem, identify causal factors, evaluate evidence, and formulate logical solutions through reflective and analytical thinking. Such learning processes require students to engage in deeper cognitive activities rather than merely memorize theoretical concepts. Research in educational journals explains that authentic case analysis can strengthen students' metacognitive awareness, problem-solving abilities, and reflective judgment because learners are directly confronted with complex and realistic situations that require analytical interpretation and collaborative thinking (Dolmans et al., 2022; Kyndt et al., 2023). Contextual problem-solving activities have also been recognized as effective strategies for developing higher-order thinking skills

and independent learning habits essential for twenty-first-century education (Børte et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the effectiveness of CBL is closely related to lecturers' pedagogical orientation and their ability to facilitate meaningful learning interactions. CBL requires a paradigm shift from teacher-centered instruction toward facilitative and student-centered learning practices that encourage dialogue, inquiry, reflection, and collaborative knowledge construction. Contemporary educational studies emphasize that lecturers play a strategic role as learning facilitators who design authentic learning environments capable of stimulating students' thinking processes and intellectual autonomy (Ellis & Steadman, 2022; Tight, 2023). Therefore, implementing CBL in Islamic Education requires a practical and systematic instructional framework that guides lecturers in integrating contextual cases, reflective discussions, and Islamic values into classroom learning. Through such an approach, CBL can function not merely as a teaching method but as a comprehensive pedagogical model for strengthening students' critical thinking and adaptive competencies in addressing contemporary educational and social challenges.

Therefore, a systematic and well-structured CBL-based Islamic Education learning model needs to be implemented and pilot-tested to produce meaningful learning outcomes for students, as illustrated in the following figure:

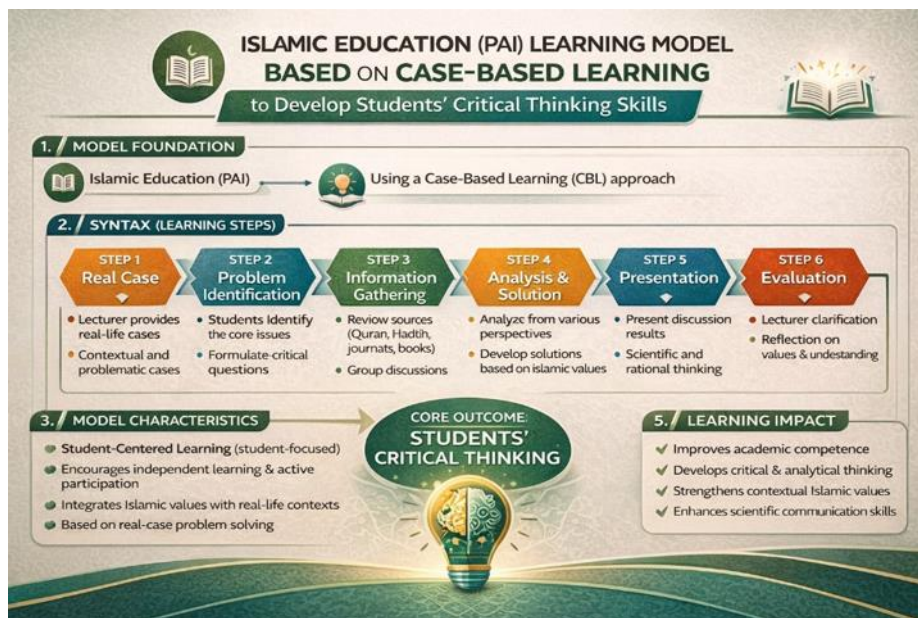


Figure 3. Design of a CBL-Based Learning Model for Developing Students' Critical Thinking Skills

The conceptual framework developed in this study represents an approach to Islamic Education that integrates CBL as a pedagogical strategy for fostering students'

critical thinking skills. Conceptually, the framework illustrates the relationships among the core components of learning, beginning with its theoretical and philosophical foundations and extending to the expected learning outcomes. From an epistemological perspective, the framework is grounded in the constructivist view that knowledge is actively constructed by learners through engagement with authentic and contextual problems. Accordingly, learning is understood not merely as the transmission of knowledge but as a process of meaning-making through inquiry, reflection, and interaction with real-world situations. Within this context, CBL enables students to connect Islamic teachings with contemporary realities, thereby fostering a more contextual, reflective, and meaningful understanding of religious knowledge.

The learning syntax embedded in the framework demonstrates a systematic sequence of learning activities. Students are first introduced to authentic cases relevant to their social and religious contexts. They are then guided to identify key issues, gather information from authoritative sources, including the Qur'an, Hadith, and relevant scientific references, analyze the problem, and formulate solutions grounded in both rational inquiry and Islamic values. These learning stages reflect the development of higher-order thinking skills, particularly analysis, evaluation, and creation, as emphasized in contemporary educational frameworks.

The framework also highlights several key characteristics of CBL within Islamic Education, including student-centered learning, independent inquiry, collaborative problem-solving, and the integration of Islamic values with contextual realities. These characteristics indicate that learning is directed not only toward cognitive achievement but also toward the development of affective and ethical dimensions. Consequently, students are encouraged to become active learners who can make informed judgments while remaining guided by Islamic moral principles.

At the center of the framework lies the development of students' critical thinking as the primary educational outcome. This position signifies that all instructional components, including learning activities, pedagogical characteristics, and contextual case analysis, are oriented toward strengthening students' abilities to identify problems, evaluate evidence, formulate arguments, and develop reasoned solutions. The expected educational impacts include improved academic competence, enhanced analytical and reflective thinking, strengthened contextual understanding of Islamic values, and improved communication skills. These outcomes suggest that CBL contributes not only

to academic learning but also to the development of transferable competencies that are highly relevant to the demands of twenty-first-century education.

The findings of this study support and extend previous research on the role of CBL in promoting students' engagement, analytical thinking, and active participation in learning. Earlier studies primarily emphasized the practical implementation of CBL and its effectiveness in improving learning outcomes, collaborative learning, and critical thinking skills (Hidayati & Wisudariani, 2023; P. Simbolon, 2022; Sugiansyah et al., 2025). Similarly, studies conducted in Islamic Education contexts have generally focused on classroom implementation rather than on the broader conceptual and pedagogical dimensions of the approach (Wijaya et al., 2023). In contrast, the present study moves beyond implementation-focused discussions by providing an integrative conceptual framework that synthesizes insights from constructivist learning theory, experiential learning, student-centered pedagogy, critical thinking theory, and Islamic educational values.

These findings are consistent with Constructivist Learning Theory, which emphasizes that knowledge is constructed through active engagement with meaningful learning experiences. The use of authentic cases encourages students to investigate, interpret, and negotiate meaning through inquiry and discussion. Likewise, Experiential Learning Theory highlights the importance of reflection on concrete experiences as a means of developing deeper understanding and practical wisdom. Within the CBL framework, real-life cases function as experiential learning opportunities that stimulate reflection, contextual understanding, and critical judgment. Furthermore, the emphasis on problem identification, evidence analysis, evaluation, and solution formulation aligns closely with Facione's framework of critical thinking, particularly the dimensions of interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation.

From the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy, the findings also resonate with the educational thought of Al-Ghazali and Al-Attas. Al-Ghazali emphasized that education should cultivate both intellectual excellence and moral refinement, enabling learners to employ reason while remaining guided by ethical and spiritual values. Similarly, Al-Attas argued that education should lead to *ta'dib*, namely the development of proper knowledge, ethical awareness, and responsible action. In this regard, the integration of contextual case analysis with Islamic values within the CBL framework enables students not only to develop critical thinking skills but also to exercise moral

judgment rooted in Islamic teachings. Thus, critical thinking is understood not merely as a cognitive process but also as a reflective and ethical endeavor directed toward the pursuit of truth and responsible decision-making.

Recent studies further support the argument that effective twenty-first-century learning requires instructional approaches that integrate contextual inquiry, reflective thinking, collaborative learning, and authentic problem-solving. Contemporary research has demonstrated that case-oriented and inquiry-based pedagogies contribute significantly to the development of higher-order thinking, reflective judgment, and learner autonomy because students are encouraged to engage critically with complex realities rather than passively receive information (Khalaf & Zin, 2022; Männistö et al., 2023). Other studies have similarly shown that student-centered learning environments are more effective in promoting analytical thinking and adaptive competencies when supported by meaningful interaction, reflective dialogue, and experiential learning processes (Leijon et al., 2024; Santos & Serpa, 2022). Within values-based education, contextual pedagogies that incorporate ethical reflection and real-life issues have also been found to strengthen students' moral thinking and critical awareness simultaneously (Afdal et al., 2023; Alasmari & Ahmed, 2024).

Therefore, this study contributes to the growing discourse on contextual and student-centered learning by demonstrating that critical thinking can be strengthened through the systematic integration of case analysis, reflective inquiry, contextual learning, and Islamic values. The findings suggest that the effectiveness of CBL depends not only on the use of cases but also on the quality of pedagogical design, the learning environment, and the integration of ethical reflection throughout the learning process. Consequently, this study offers a pedagogical framework that synthesizes educational theories, Islamic educational philosophy, and previous research findings to support the development of students' critical thinking within contemporary Islamic Education contexts.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study suggest that Case-Based Learning (CBL) has strong potential to foster students' critical thinking skills through contextual, student-centered, and reflective learning processes. The reviewed literature indicates that authentic cases encourage students to engage with real-world problems, understand learning materials

within their social and religious contexts, analyze causes and consequences, evaluate situations critically, and formulate reasoned solutions systematically. The processes of problem identification, case analysis, discussion, reflection, and solution development constitute important stages in strengthening students' critical thinking, particularly in developing analytical, evaluative, and reasoning abilities. In the context of Islamic Education, CBL contributes not only to the enhancement of cognitive competencies but also to the integration of affective dimensions and Islamic values through meaningful and contextual learning experiences. Therefore, the proposed CBL-based Islamic Education framework offers a relevant pedagogical approach for supporting students' critical thinking and preparing them to respond constructively to contemporary educational and social challenges.

Theoretically, this study contributes to Constructivist Learning Theory, Experiential Learning Theory, and Critical Thinking Theory by demonstrating that critical thinking develops through active engagement, contextual inquiry, reflective learning, and authentic problem-solving processes. The findings also align with the educational philosophy of Al-Ghazali and Al-Attas, both of whom emphasize the integration of intellectual development, ethical awareness, and value-based judgment within educational practice. Accordingly, this study provides an integrative conceptual synthesis that connects Case-Based Learning, critical thinking, and Islamic educational values within a coherent pedagogical framework for Islamic Education. This synthesis highlights that critical thinking in Islamic Education encompasses not only analytical and reflective capacities but also ethical and value-oriented judgment grounded in Islamic teachings.

This study is limited by its reliance on a library research approach and the absence of empirical classroom implementation. Future studies are therefore encouraged to employ experimental, qualitative, or mixed-method designs to examine the practical effectiveness of the proposed framework across different educational contexts. Practically, this study recommends that educators and educational institutions adopt contextual and case-oriented learning strategies while strengthening pedagogical competence, reflective learning practices, and the integration of authentic case materials to support students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills more effectively.

REFERENCES

- Adams, S. N., Kater, K. A., Khan, A., & Sher, J. (2026). Development of a Case-based Learning Framework for Medical Education: A Scoping Review. *Medical Science Educator*, 36. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40670-025-02583-6>
- Afdal, G., Solbrekke, T. D., & Wiese, E. (2023). Ethics, Reflection, and Critical Learning in Higher Education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 28(6), 1241–1257. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2021.2015758>
- Alasmari, A., & Ahmed, S. S. (2024). Contextualized Learning and Moral Thinking in Religious Education Classrooms. *Education Sciences*, 14(2), 176. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14020176>
- Arvianto, F., Hudhana, W. D., Rahma, R., Nurnaningsih, N., & Suwandi, S. (2023). Menyiapkan Mahasiswa Abad 21 Menghadapi Era VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, & Ambiguity) melalui Pendekatan Berbasis Pengalaman. *Lingua Rima: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia*, 12(1), 43–56.
- Arvianto, F., Nugroho, A., & Prasetyo, D. (2023). Critical Thinking Competencies in the VUCA Era: Challenges and Strategies in Higher Education Learning. *Journal of Educational Innovation and Research*, 18(2), 145–158. <https://doi.org/10.21009/JEIR.18.2.145>
- Børte, K., Nesje, K., & Lillejord, S. (2023). Barriers to Student Active Learning in Higher Education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 28(3), 597–615. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2021.1903852>
- Cahyani, A., & Putri, S. O. (2019). Inovasi Pendidikan melalui Kemampuan Berpikir Kritis. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pendidikan FKIP*, 2(1), 286–297.
- Cen, L., Ruta, D., Powell, L., Hirsch, H., & Ng, J. (2021). Quantifying the Effects of Problem-based Learning and Case-based Learning in Higher Education: A Systematic Review. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 26(4), 483–501. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2020.1779687>
- Chapakiya, A., Abdullah, A. R., Salleh, M. N. M., Luthfi, S., & Panjalu, G. F. (2025). Development of Higher-order Thinking Skill for Students in Madrasa Southern Thailand: Engaging Case-based Learning Methods. *Journal of Instruction and Islamic Religious Education*, 1(2), 121–134. <https://doi.org/10.63826/jiire.v1i2.174>
- Dolmans, D. H. J. M., Loyens, S. M. M., Marcq, H., & Gijbels, D. (2022). Deep and Surface Learning in Problem-based Learning: A Review of the Literature. *Advances in Health Sciences Education*, 27(2), 389–411. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10459-021-10091-9>
- Dori, Y. J., & Herscovitz, O. (2005). Case-based Long-term Professional Development of Science Teachers. *International Journal of Science Education*, 27(12), 1413–1446.
- Dzaiy, A. H. S., & Abdullah, S. A. (2024). The Use of Active Learning Strategies to Foster Effective Teaching in Higher Education Institutions. *Zanco Journal of Human Sciences*, 28(4), 328–351.
- Ellis, R. A., & Steadman, S. (2022). Student-centered Pedagogies in Higher Education: The Role of Teachers and Learning Design. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 41(5), 1458–1472. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2021.1969544>
- Facione, P. A. (2020). *Critical Thinking: What it is and why it Counts*. Insight Assessment.
- Fallon, G. (2020). Teacher Pedagogy and Twenty-first Century Learning: Challenges and Implications for Educational Practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 95, 103141. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2020.103141>
- Fauzan, & Setiawan, A. (2023). *Monograf Relevansi Keterampilan Membaca Kritis*. UMM

Press.

- Fosnot, C. T. (2022). *Constructivism: Theory, Perspectives, and Practice* (3rd ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Fratiwi, R., Neviyarni, S., & Nirwana, H. (2025). Manfaat Metode Pembelajaran Hypnoteaching dalam Proses Belajar. *Journal Educational Research and Development*, 1(3), 311–316.
- Halstead, J. M. (2021). Islamic Values and Islamic Education in Contemporary Society. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 43(2), 123–135. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2020.1868388>
- Hidayati, N., & Wisudariani, N. M. R. (2023). Case-based Learning to Improve Student Engagement and Critical Discussion in Classroom Instruction. *International Journal of Instruction*, 16(3), 221–236. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2023.16313a>
- Hmelo-Silver, C. E. (2023). Problem-based Learning and the Development of Collaborative Knowledge Construction. *Educational Psychology Review*, 35(2), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-023-09724-8>
- Khalaf, B. K., & Zin, Z. B. M. (2022). Traditional and Inquiry-based Learning Pedagogy: A Systematic Critical Review. *International Journal of Instruction*, 15(2), 345–364. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2022.15220a>
- Kyndt, E., Dochy, F., Struyven, K., & Cascallar, E. (2023). The Perception of Workload and Task Complexity and its Influence on Students' Approaches to Learning. *Studies in Higher Education*, 48(4), 612–627. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2021.1968362>
- Lase, Y. N. S., Zendrato, N., & Belo, Y. (2025). Pentingnya Keterampilan Hidup dalam Mewujudkan Ide-ide Bisnis yang Inovatif. *Nian Tana Sikka: Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa*, 3(1), 93–106.
- Leijon, M., Malmberg, J., & Tieva, Å. (2024). Student-centered Teaching and the Development of Critical Competencies in Higher Education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 49(1), 88–103. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2022.2142381>
- Listrianti, F., Hidayah, T., & Lama, A. V. (2025). Enhancing Contextual Understanding and Critical Thinking in Fiqh Learning through Problem-based Learning. *Journal of Islamic Education Research*, 6(1), 111–124. <https://doi.org/10.35719/jier.v6i1.469>
- Männistö, J., Fornaciari, A., & Tynjälä, P. (2023). Reflective Problem-solving and Higher-order Thinking in Student-centered Learning Environments. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 24(3), 227–242. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14697874211058428>
- McCuen, R. H. (2023). *Critical Thinking, Idea Innovation, and Creativity*. CRC Press.
- Nikola, M. (2021). Teaching Competencies and Student-centered Learning in Higher Education. *Education Sciences*, 11(7), 342. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11070342>
- OECD. (2023). *OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030: Learning Compass 2030*. OECD Publishing.
- Olfah, H. (2024). Pendekatan Interdisipliner dalam Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam: Memperkuat Keterpaduan Kurikulum dan Metode Pembelajaran. *SENTRI: Jurnal Riset Ilmiah*, 3(5), 2507–2517.
- Rahman, A. (2024). Contextual Islamic Education and Students' Reflective Understanding in Contemporary Society. *Journal of Islamic Education Studies*, 9(1), 88–104. <https://doi.org/10.15642/jies.2024.9.1.88-104>
- Rukajat, A. (2018). *Pendekatan Penelitian Kualitatif*. Deepublish.
- Sani, R. A. (2019). *Pembelajaran Berbasis HOTS*. TiraSmart.
- Santos, A. I., & Serpa, S. (2022). Education and Learning Processes in the Twenty-first

- Century: Implications for Higher Education. *Education Sciences*, 12(4), 234. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12040234>
- Shi, Y., Zhang, L., & Chen, H. (2025). Case-based Learning and Competency Development in Student-centered Education. *Education and Information Technologies*, 30(1), 411–428. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-024-12841-6>
- Sidiq, M. A., Pahrudin, A., Jatmiko, A., & Koderi, K. (2025). Transformasi Pendidikan Abad ke-21 melalui Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi: Sinergi antara Peningkatan Mutu dan Pembentukan Generasi Inovatif. *Didaktika Dwija Indria*, 13(5), 764–771.
- Simbolon, D. H. (2022). Pengaruh Model Case-based Learning (CBL) terhadap Hasil Belajar Mahasiswa. *Bullet: Jurnal Multidisiplin Ilmu*, 1(3), 181–184.
- Simbolon, P. (2022). The Effectiveness of Case-based Learning in Improving Students' Analytical Thinking and Learning Achievement. *Journal of Educational Research and Evaluation*, 6(4), 512–521. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jere.v6i4.45872>
- Siregar, H. L., Nurmayani, N., & Junaidi, J. (2025). Development of a Problem-based Learning Model in Islamic Religious Education to Enhance Students' Critical Thinking Skills. *Jurnal Iqra': Kajian Ilmu Pendidikan*, 10(2), 169–185. <https://doi.org/10.25217/ji.v10i2.5820>
- Siregar, Z. A. B., Kadir, A. K., Muhibbudin, M. M., & Jannah, R. J. (2026). Analysis of Learning Assessment Suitability with Learning Outcomes in the Implementation of Outcome-based Education (OBE) Curriculum. *Jurnal Eduscience*, 13(1), 51–63.
- Sisternans, I. J. (2020). Integrating Competency-based Education with a Case-based or Problem-based Learning Approach in Online Health Sciences. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 21(4), 683–696.
- Sugiansyah, R., Putra, M., & Wibowo, A. (2025). Case-based Learning as a Strategy for Fostering Critical Thinking Skills in Higher Education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 50(2), 301–315. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2024.2314589>
- Sujarwo, S., Safitri, D., & Ibrahim, N. (2022). Developing 21st Century Skills: Critical Thinking Skills in Case-based Learning in Social Studies. *Edukasi IPS*, 6(2), 14–23. <https://doi.org/10.21009/EIPS.006.02.02>
- Tight, M. (2023). Student Engagement, Participation, and Active Learning in Higher Education. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 24(1), 3–15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14697874211018678>
- Widiastuti, F., Amin, S., & Hasbullah, H. (2022). Efektivitas Metode Pembelajaran Case Method dalam Upaya Peningkatan Partisipasi dan Hasil Belajar Mahasiswa pada Mata Kuliah Manajemen Perubahan. *Edumaspul: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 6(1), 728–731.
- Wijaya, R., Sulaiman, A., & Hidayat, T. (2023). Implementation of Case-based Learning in Islamic Religious Education Courses and its Impact on Students' Thinking Patterns. *International Journal of Islamic Educational Psychology*, 4(2), 133–149. <https://doi.org/10.18196/ijiep.v4i2.18921>
- World Economic Forum. (2023). *The Future of Jobs Report 2023*. World Economic Forum.
- Yang, W., Li, H., Su, A., & Ding, L. (2023). Application of Problem-based Learning (PBL) and Case-based Learning (CBL) in the Teaching of International Classification of Diseases Encoding. *Scientific Reports*, 13(1), 15220.
- Yoo, M. S., & Park, J. H. (2022). Effects of Case-based Learning on Communication Skills, Problem-solving Ability, and Learning Motivation in Higher Education. *Nurse Education Today*, 109, 105229. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2021.105229>
- Yoon, S., & Kim, H. (2024). Case-based Instruction and Collaborative Thinking in Higher Education Classrooms. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 43(1), 77–92.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2023.2265114>

Yu, L., & Zin, Z. M. (2023). The Critical Thinking-oriented Adaptations of Problem-based Learning Models: A Systematic Review. *Frontiers in Education, 8*, 1139987. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2023.1139987>

Zed, M. (2014). *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan*. Yayasan Obor Indonesia.

Zhao, Y. (2022). *Learners without Borders: New Learning Pathways for all Students*. Corwin Press.